GMS News
Early Summer 2024
Weeks 10-18

Contents

Editorial

I'd like to start by saying thank you to all those of you who have contributed to this and previous newsletters. Once more I've started putting it together, grateful for the never-failing contributions from Evan and Nonconformist, but wondering if there will be anything further. Then in the nick of time into my inbox come two or three items that illustrate the variety of techniques and views existing within the GMS community. Readers, keep them coming!

As always we start with Evan's review of the Quarter. Not surprisingly, in view of the strange weather we experienced, moth numbers were down in the worst 2nd Quarter since 2013. Apparently it's all the fault of the Jet Stream misbehaving. Evan's chosen moth this time is Least Black Arches, a favourite of mine. It's one of those species that can come to light in large numbers and it prefers to sit outside the trap rather than going in. This can result in a wall full of little silvery white moths, difficult to count accurately.

Next, Steve Roberts gives us a taste of the work going on to extract useful information from the impressive amount of data generated by the GMS over the years. It should have appeared in the previous edition – my apologies, Steve.

It's always good to try out new techniques and Richard Baylis shows us how to avoid losing all those interesting-looking moths that fly out of the trap before you can identify them. I'm going to give it a try and it we will see how many county firsts I register.

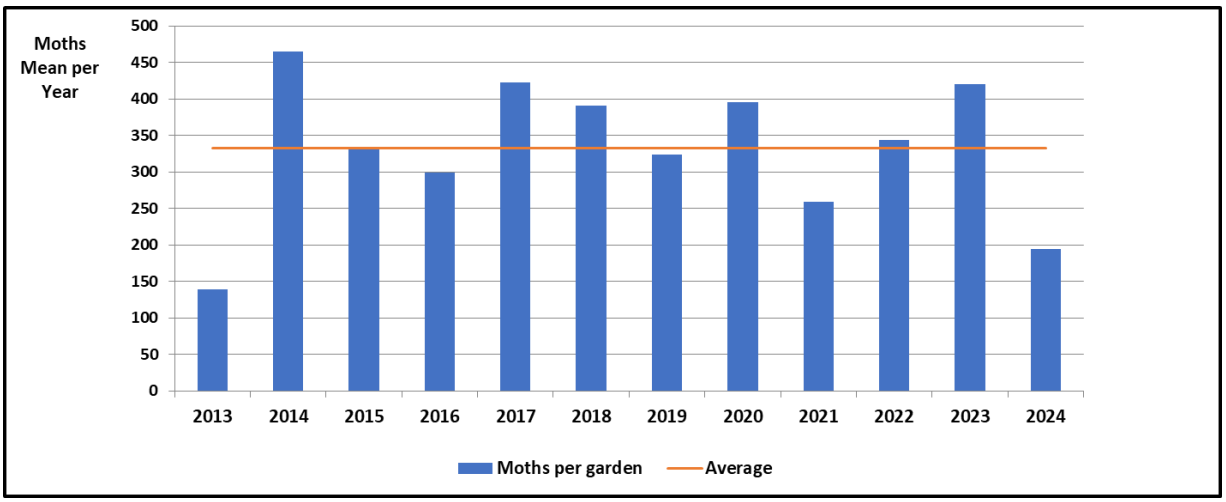
The final comment comes from Sean Ashton who welcome (with some slight reservations) the coming of vernacular names for all the micros. Then we finish with Puzzle Corner.

Overview GMS 2024 2nd Quarter

Evan Lynn

Perhaps this year's quarter with the lack of insects is one to be forgotten or possibly incorporated into the song by Pete Seeger – "Where have all the flowers gone?" (fig 1).

Fig 1. GMS 2024 Q2. Mean Quarterly Moth Numbers 2013 to 2024



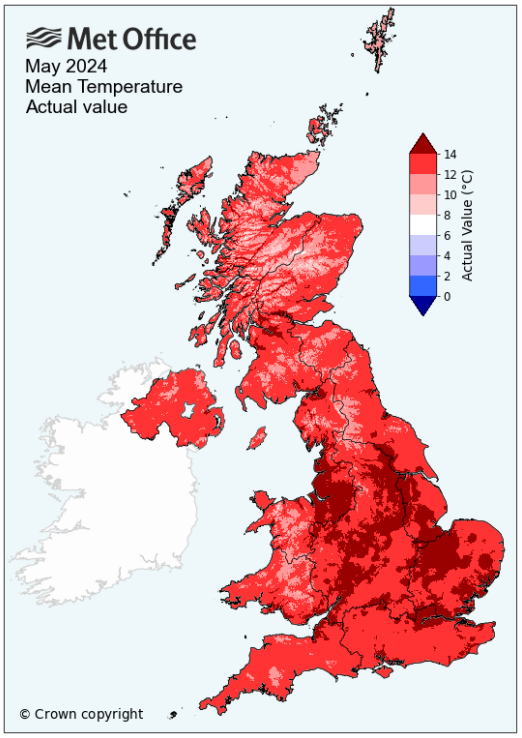
Last year I mentioned that one of the consequences of global warming was blocking highs in northern Europe producing intense heat waves over here. This year is different with wet and cool weather in June reducing the flow of nectar in the flowers, necessary for the insects to feed and pollinate. This was not just a local problem, as reports from different areas of Europe have reported the same.

May followed on from the unsettled April weather until a high-pressure system brought settled weather allowing many to see the strong aurora borealis on the 10th. Unfortunately, low-pressure systems returned near the middle of the month bringing wet weather and thunderstorms. Despite the rain, May was the warmest on record since 1884 being 2.4°C above average. In addition to the warmth, the UK experienced 82.5 mm of rain (116% of the historical average). Northern England saw 155% of its average May rainfall and Keswick had 94.8mm on the 22nd, higher than its previous record of 44.6mm. Ireland was the total opposite, being the driest region having just 63% of its normal rainfall. The month ended with a series of minor low-pressure areas without too many problems, though the south coast experienced strong winds towards the end.

While May was warmer than normal, June was cooler with northerly winds bringing cold arctic winds. Several frontal systems crossed the country producing brief scattered showers with a few thunderstorms in the south-east. The rainfall was much lower than historical records with only 70 to 80% of its normal amount. Scotland conversely ended the month with 122mm of rainfall (132% of its normal amount).

The weather this quarter may be a foretelling of future summer weather with intense short showers, torrential rain and hail from thunderstorms developing in hot weather or as some people will say "typical British weather".

Fig 2. Mean Temperature for May & June 2024 (with permission of the Met Office).



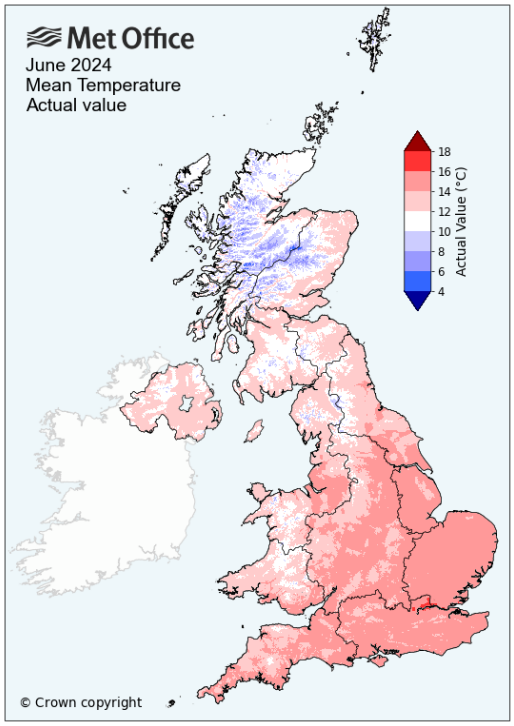
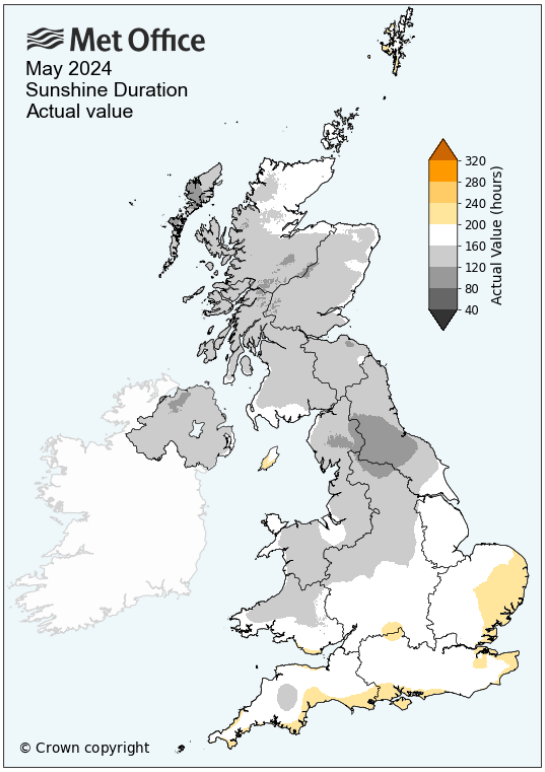


Fig 3. Hours of Sunshine for May & June 2024 (with permission of the Met Office).



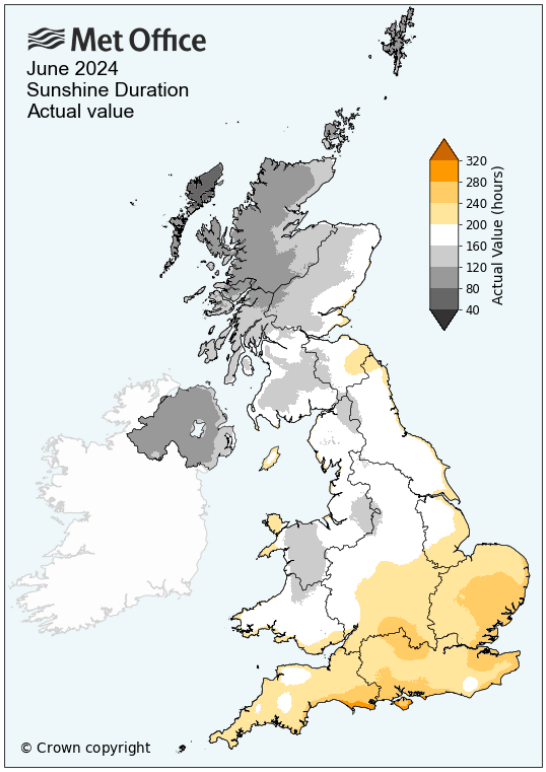
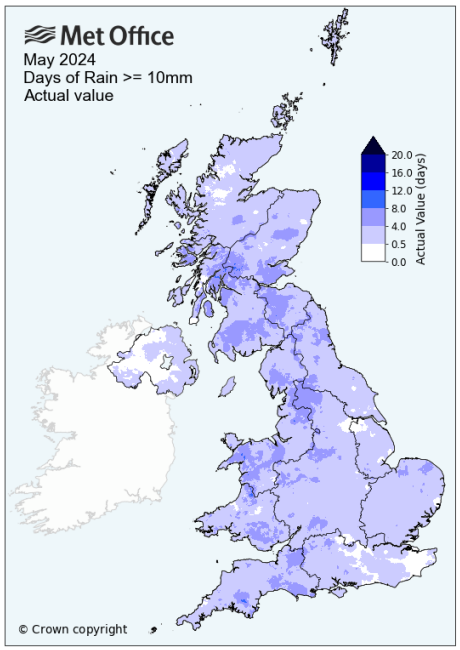


Fig 4. Days of Rainfall >10 mm for May & June 2024 (with permission of the Met Office).



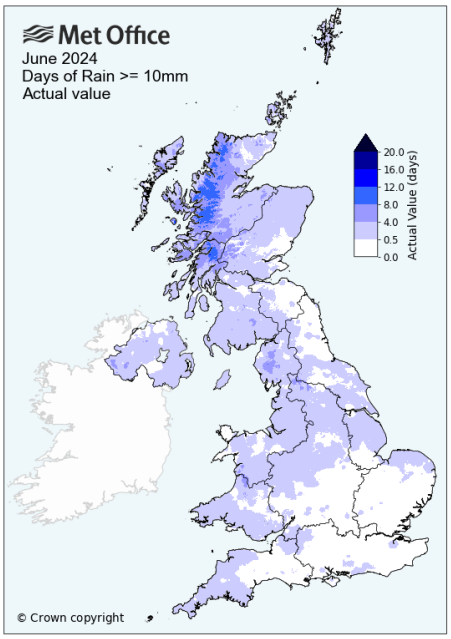
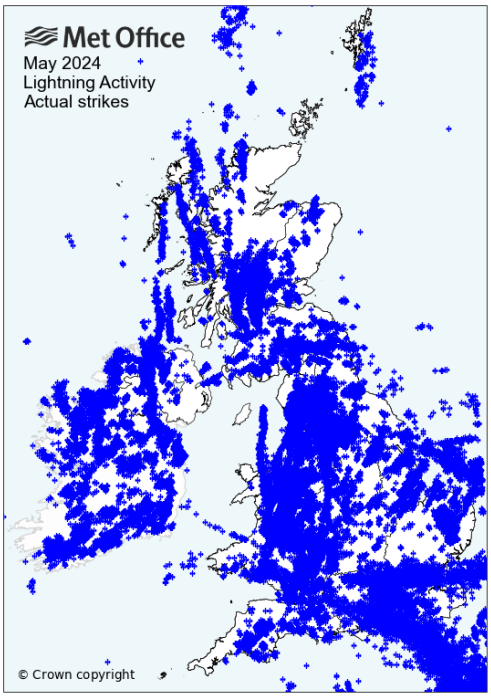
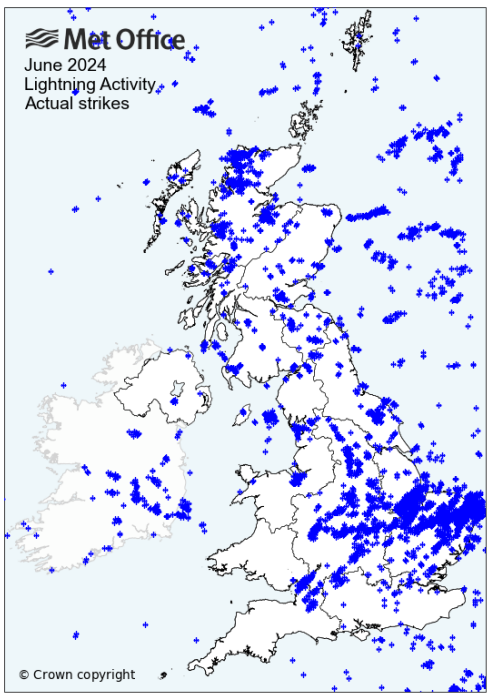


Fig 5. Lightning Strike Activity for May & June 2024 (with permission of the Met Office).





Just as “no man is an island” then the UK weather, for better or for worse, is part of the global weather pattern. Global warming is starting to flex its muscles inflating the effects of El Niño and El Niña which has a significant effect on our weather and has a knock-on effect on all aspects of wildlife.

Historically, El Niño occurred every nine years but the heating of the oceans has increased it to about every two years followed quickly by El Niña cooling the surface. Normally the trade winds in the Southern Hemisphere blow from east to west allowing an upwelling of deep water to the western coast of South America allowing nutrients to feed the vast anchovy shoals and maintaining the "normal" global atmospheric circulation However, if the Pacific becomes warmer than usual the opposite will happen.

This then upsets the normal pattern of jet streams with warmer surface water producing wetter and warmer air. Some experts believe that 2024 may be the hottest year on record. Extra heat does not always mean warmer conditions for the UK as warmer air holds more water which falls as rainfall. American meteorologists are predicting a strong hurricane season which after attacking the American east coast comes over here as storms or heavy rain. Early July saw hurricane Beryl approaching the US coast after ravaging Jamaica. Hurricane watchers claim that the hurricane season has started earlier than usual. Not only is the El Niño effect muddling our weather, but the 2022 Tonga volcano threw 58,000 Olympic-size swimming pools of water into the stratosphere adding more complications into the equation. These include a possible reduction in light from the sun and a further layer of greenhouse gases.

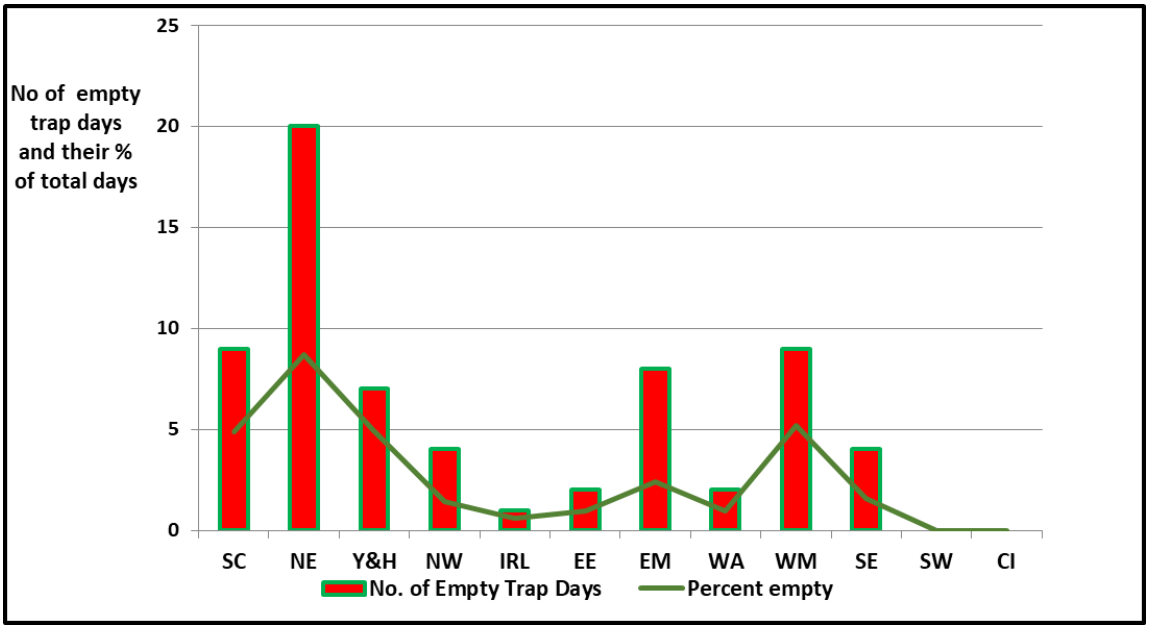
The disturbance of the global jet streams is shown in Figure 6. In "normal" years the jet stream which drags the storms along is situated north of Scotland giving Scotland and northern Britain a wet summer. This year, however, the jet stream has stalled over the south of the country bringing cold wet conditions to the south giving April the wettest on record.

Fig 6. GMS 2024 Q2. Jet Stream June 2024

BBC

Despite the low catches the number of empty traps has not been too high, apart from the North East which had a sky-scraping result but even then, was only 13% of the number of recorder days ((fig 7)

Fig 7. GMS 2024 Q2. Number of Empty Traps and Regional Percentage



Comparing the average number of moths caught weekly, last year's catches had slight differences until week 15 when the 2023 catches towered over those of 2024 (fig 8). This might be related to the differences in temperature between the two years.

Fig 8. GMS 2024 Comparison of 2023 & 2024 Catches

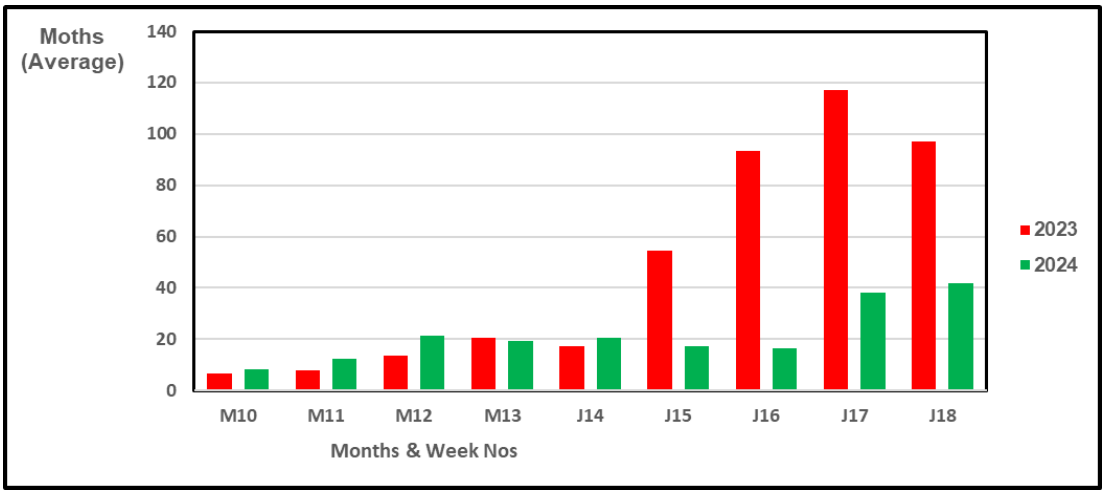
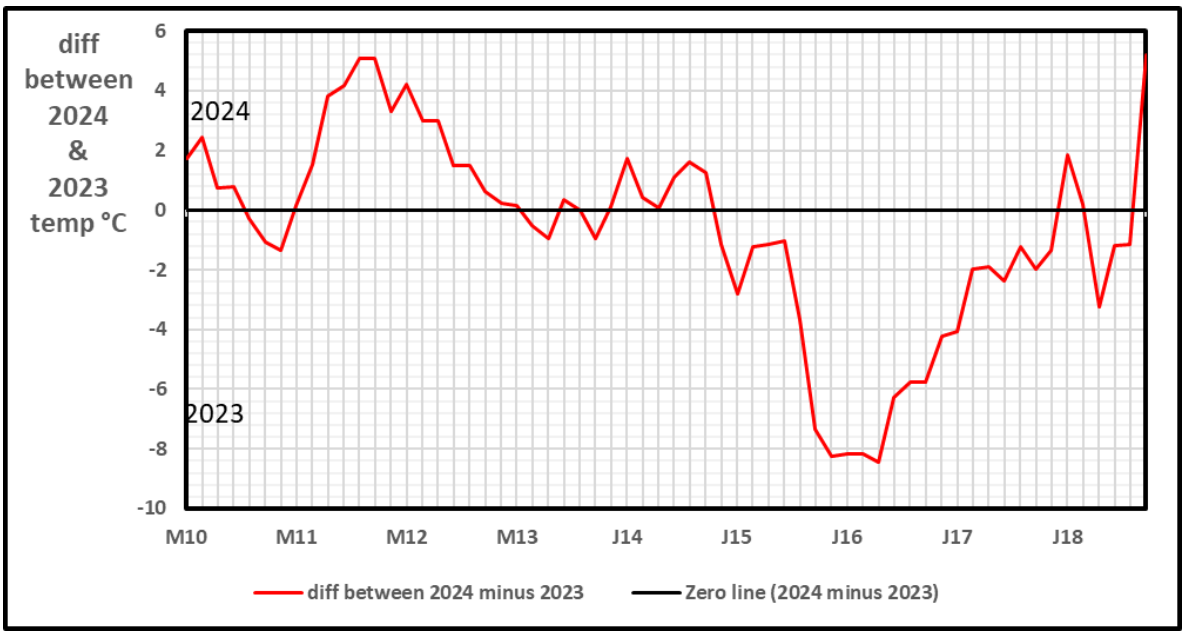


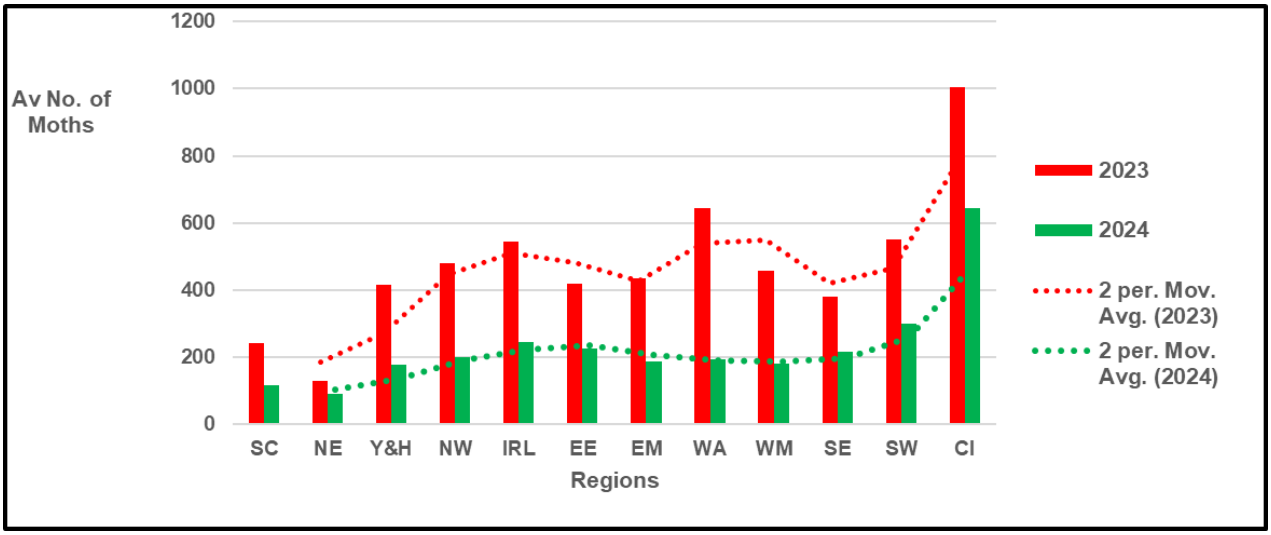
Figure 9 shows the variance between them by subtracting 2023 from 2024 with this year's May (2024) being warmer than that of 2023 followed by a cold June. As mentioned in last year's Quarterly Two report there was a worry that the poor performance of the bees could be the "canaries in the mines". This year their performance has been catastrophic with many hives having to be given extra food just to survive. Similarly, the number of insects plummeted, apparently because the weather was either too dry or cold for the flowers to produce sufficient nectar. This dearth of insects was not confined to this country but reports from various parts of Europe mention the same phenomena.

Fig 9. GMS 2024 Q2. Temperature Differences between 2023 & 2024 (2024 minus 2023)



This lack of catching is also shown by looking at the regional variations. Last year there were distinct differences between the regions as shown by the trend line. This year's trend line (2024) showed only minor differences between them all (Fig10).

Fig 10. GMS 2024 Q2 Regional Distribution 2023 & 2024



Statistics

By the time you read this, you should be under no illusions about the differences between 2023 & 2024. There were only four gains and even then, they were only minor ones. Two surprises were the Marbled Minor agg. and the Large Yellow Underwing both of which suffered numerically yet had higher percentages of garden visits.

Table 1. GMS 2024 Q2. Top 20 Core Species

Position		Top 20 Species	Mean Per Trap		Change	Catching Frequency (%. of gdns)		
			2023	2024				
2023	2024		294 Gardens	281 Gardens		2023	2024	Difference
2	1	Heart and Dart	53.6	17.2	-36.43	82	72	-11
6	2	Treble Lines	10.3	7	-3.24	100	42	-58
10	3	Buff Ermine	6.8	6.5	-0.29	98	63	-35
1	4	Garden Grass-veneer	56.5	6.2	-50.31	84	55	-29
8	5	Light Brown Apple Moth	7.7	5.3	-2.43	88	54	-34
5	6	Marbled Minor agg.	12.4	4.5	-7.84	56	59	3
11	7	Brimstone Moth	6.3	4.4	-1.83	81	62	-19
29	8	Common Marbled Carpet	3.1	4.4	1.4	75	62	-13
3	9	Dark Arches	23.3	4.4	-18.93	85	57	-28
7	10	Willow Beauty	8.4	4.4	-4	69	56	-13
22	11	White Ermine	4	4.3	0.31	81	53	-28
18	12	Flame Shoulder	4.7	3.8	-0.87	63	60	-2
4	13	Uncertain/Rustic agg.	16	3.8	-12.15	93	57	-36
63	14	Green Carpet	1.4	3.3	1.89	70	49	-21
9	15	Riband Wave	6.9	3.2	-3.72	70	54	-16
13	16	Large Yellow Underwing	6.3	3.2	-3.07	46	60	14
2	17	Ruddy Streak	2.3	2.8	0.51	67	25	-42
16	18	Heart and Club	5.1	2.7	-2.42	66	28	-38
21	19	Bee Moth	4.2	2.6	-1.63	49	50	1
30	20	Set Hebrew Character	2.8	2.4	-0.42	58	40	-18

Table 2. GMS 2024 Q2. Maximum Single Catch of the Top 10 Core Species

Top 10	2023	Region	Date	2024	Region	Date
Heart and Dart	198	WA	18/06/2023	56	WA	29/06/2024
Treble Lines	43	EE	24/05/2023	30	SW	18/05/2024
Buff Ermine	48	IRL	18/06/2023	69	NW	30/06/2024
Garden Grass-veneer	780	Y&H	27/06/2023	71	SW	29/06/2024
Light Brown Apple Moth	36	SC	18/06/2023	22	SW	11/05/2024
Marbled Minor agg.	52	SW	09/06/2023	22	SW	29/06/2024
Brimstone Moth	42	IRL	09/06/2023	14	EM	28/06/2024
Common Marbled Carpet	14	WA	11/06/2023	25	WM	28/05/2024
Dark Arches	176	NW	30/06/2023	29	EM	21/06/2024
Willow Beauty	39	SW	23/06/2023	19	EM	22/06/2024

Building on this, table 2 shows the maximum numbers of the top 10 moths caught in any one night, together with their region and date for both years. The largest value for each moth is highlighted – blue for 2023 and orange for 2024. Our congratulations to these recorders, and also to the unseen others, who caught nearly just as many.

Bringing these down to regional level table 3 lists the top 10 core moths for each region. The Buff Ermine has made a good recovery, or at least for us anyway, appearing in 10 of the regions

Table 3. GMS 2024 Q2. Regional Top 10 Core Moths

Scotland (22)	Mean	%	North East (27)	Mean	%	North West (32)	Mean	%
Heart and Dart	9.7	9.2	Heart and Dart	4.8	5.7	Heart and Dart	18.8	11.2
Brown Silver-line	7.9	7.4	Light Brown Apple Moth	4.3	5.2	Buff Ermine	12.6	7.5
Clouded-bordered Brindle	5.1	4.8	White Ermine	4.3	5.2	Garden Grass-veneer	5.9	3.5
White Ermine	4.7	4.5	Clouded-bordered Brindle	3.3	3.9	Common Marbled Carpet	5.6	3.3
Garden Grass-veneer	4.3	4.1	Bee Moth	3.0	3.6	Bee Moth	5.3	3.1
Common Marbled Carpet	3.5	3.3	Buff Ermine	2.9	3.4	Ruddy Streak	5.2	3.1
Pale-shouldered Brocade	3.0	2.8	Common Pug	2.7	3.2	Brimstone Moth	5.2	3.1
Buff Ermine	2.5	2.4	Hebrew Character	2.6	3.2	Flame Shoulder	4.8	2.9
Map-winged Swift	2.4	2.2	Diamond-back Moth	2.6	3.1	Light Brown Apple Moth	4.7	2.8
Mottled Beauty	2.4	2.2	Ruddy Streak	2.2	2.6	Marbled Minor agg.	4.5	2.7
Yorks & Humber (16)	Mean	%	Ireland (20)	Mean	%	East of England (25)	Mean	%
Heart and Dart	9.1	5.9	Heart and Dart	16.3	7.0	Heart and Dart	19.1	9.4
Buff Ermine	8.7	5.6	White Ermine	14.1	6.1	Treble Lines	15.5	7.6
Light Brown Apple Moth	7.8	5.0	Buff Ermine	11.7	5.0	Heart and Club	9.0	4.4
Green Carpet	5.0	3.2	Small Square-spot	10.3	4.4	Garden Grass-veneer	8.7	4.3
Flame Shoulder	4.8	3.1	Light Brown Apple Moth	9.8	4.2	Marbled Minor agg.	7.4	3.6
Garden Grass-veneer	4.4	2.9	Common Marbled Carpet	8.9	3.8	Willow Beauty	6.1	3.0
Marbled Minor agg.	4.1	2.6	Muslin Moth	6.4	2.8	Dark Arches	5.9	2.9
White Ermine	3.9	2.5	Brown Silver-line	5.4	2.3	Uncertain/Rustic agg.	5.8	2.8
Large Yellow Underwing	3.7	2.4	Flame Shoulder	5.4	2.3	Light Brown Apple Moth	5.7	2.8
Brimstone Moth	3.5	2.3	Green Carpet	4.8	2.1	Common Footman	5.1	2.5
East Midlands (40)	Mean	%	West Midlands (20)	Mean	%	Wales (26)	Mean	%
Heart and Dart	15.7	8.8	Heart and Dart	21.0	11.7	Heart and Dart	22.1	11.7
Brimstone Moth	7.3	4.1	Ruddy Streak	9.4	5.3	Treble Lines	13.7	7.2
Buff Ermine	7.2	4.1	Common Marbled Carpet	7.3	4.1	Buff Ermine	8.4	4.4
Dark Arches	6.0	3.4	Light Brown Apple Moth	6.9	3.9	Flame Shoulder	7.3	3.8
Garden Grass-veneer	5.9	3.3	Brimstone Moth	5.5	3.1	Brimstone Moth	6.6	3.5
Willow Beauty	5.8	3.3	Treble Lines	5.4	3.0	White Ermine	5.8	3.1
Setaceous Hebrew Character	5.4	3.0	Buff Ermine	5.1	2.8	Common Marbled Carpet	5.6	3.0
Light Brown Apple Moth	4.8	2.7	Uncertain/Rustic agg.	5.0	2.8	Marbled Minor agg.	4.9	2.6
Riband Wave	4.7	2.6	Dark Arches	4.8	2.7	Green Carpet	4.2	2.2
Green Carpet	4.6	2.6	Garden Grass-veneer	4.3	2.4	Flame	4.1	2.2
South East (29)	Mean	%	Southwest (23)	Mean	%	CI	Mean	%
Heart and Dart	22.7	7.6	Heart and Dart	24.5	8.1	Heart and Dart	87	15.2
Treble Lines	14.4	3.4	Treble Lines	16.4	5.5	Flame Shoulder	47	8.2
Garden Grass-veneer	12.4	2.6	Garden Grass-veneer	10.8	3.6	Marbled Minor agg.	44	7.7
Willow Beauty	8.8	2.5	Willow Beauty	9.6	3.2	Small Square-spot	42	7.3
Heart and Club	8.3	2.0	Marbled Minor agg.	8.5	2.8	Buff Ermine	25	4.4
Dark Arches	7.7	2.0	Common Marbled Carpet	7.7	2.6	White Ermine	25	4.4
Light Brown Apple Moth	6.4	1.8	Uncertain/Rustic agg.	7.4	2.5	Dark Arches	23	4.0
Uncertain/Rustic agg.	5.4	1.8	Buff Ermine	7.0	2.3	Bright-line Brown-eye	23	4.0
Marbled Minor agg.	5.4	1.8	Dark Arches	6.7	2.2	Ingrailed Clay	23	4.0
Riband Wave	4.8	1.6	Large Yellow Underwing	6.5	2.2	Willow Beauty	19	3.3

All the trap nights and catches completed by the recorders are summarised in Table 4. The minimum and maximum moth numbers caught in this nine-week period vary considerably, possibly reflecting location, type of trap, and/or the individual micro-climates. The minimum catches range from 11 to 164 and the maximum between 51 and 1215, while the trapping effort (Moth Trap Nights) is very high as per usual.

The third section shows the preferred night for trapping. Although Friday is the official night three nights on either side are acceptable as everyone hopefully has a life apart from mothing

Table 4. GMS 2024 Q2. Regional Statistics

Region	Gardens	Moths				Moth Trap Nights		
		Total	Mean	Min	Max	Possible	Actual	Percent
SC	22	2565	117	28	405	198	185	93
NE	27	2486	92	16	455	243	230	95
Y&H	16	2869	179	11	404	144	142	99
NW	32	6370	199	47	470	288	280	97
IRL	20	4937	247	60	593	180	174	97
EE	25	5664	227	60	555	225	211	94
EM	40	7444	186	24	541	360	334	93
WA	26	5014	193	32	579	234	210	90
WM	20	3615	181	43	364	180	174	97
SE	29	6165	213	44	510	261	253	97
SW	23	6929	301	80	1215	207	199	96
CI	1	644	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	9	100

Weekday Trap Nights							
Night	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
Days	68	80	177	1126	300	146	53
Percent	3	4	9	58	15	7	3

I was interested in this maximum catch of 1215 moths in the South West (table 4 in orange) thinking that the Grass-veneer would mainly bulk it up, but I was in for a surprise when I looked at his most abundant moths. This South West recorder had a bumper night in week 18 (Table 5).

Table 5. Selection of One Recorder's Higher Scoring Moths Week 18 in the South West

Moths	Quantity	Date
Garden Grass-veneer	49	29/06/2024
Dark Arches	28	29/06/2024
Snout	24	29/06/2024
Marbled Minor agg.	22	29/06/2024
Riband Wave	20	29/06/2024

As mentioned in previous reports, one part of the form that is often ignored is the lower section where you are invited to add moths that are not on the core/regional list.

The number of entries this quarter has been high as expected for this time of the year. There were 1243 rows of data coming from all of the regions giving a total of 2682 moths

of 347 species. Some of these may be duplicated several times when one recorder identifies it as the species whilst others record it as a sp. or an agg. Some recorders enter Latin, Vernacular or Latin & Vernacular. So here, before refining, you have three species (Table 6). The vernacular names for the micro species depend on whether a recorder uses an English name found on the net or the new "correct" ones as listed in the new Field Guide.

Table 6. GMS 2024 Q2. Top 20 Additional Species

	Total	SC	NE	Y&H	NW	IRL	Wa	WM	EM	EE	SE	SW	CI
Common Pug	220	0	0	0	0	0	0	120	0	0	0	100	0
Tawny/Little Grey	133	0	127	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0
Scoparia ambigualis	119	0	0	0	119	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Water Veneer	77	35	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	36	0
Freyer's/ Edinburgh Pug	76	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	76	0
Orange Footman	74	20	0	0	0	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Marbled Orchard Tortrix	68	0	0	10	0	44	0	0	0	0	0	14	0
Oak-tree Pug	62	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	62	0	0
Ruddy Highflyer	61	0	0	0	0	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Small Grey	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	49	0	0
Large Nutmeg	48	42	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0
Grey Pug	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41	0
Campion	39	0	0	0	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May Highflyer	38	0	0	0	0	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yellow-faced Belle	26	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0
Marbled Coronet	34	0	0	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Golden-rod Pug	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0
Shears	30	0	0	14	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	0
Ephesta woodiella	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	0	0	0	0
Crescent Tortrix	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	0

The Common Pug tops the list with 220 followed by the Tawny Grey/Little Grey (*Eudonia lacustrata*) with 133. The latter's vernacular name is now Tawny Grey and the Small Grey (Eudonia mercurella) listed above is now Garden Grey – a good case for standardising the names!

The Orange Footman weighed in with 74 with one recorder in the West Midlands catching 54 of them (table 7).

Table 7. GMS 2024 Q2. Orange Footman in the West Midlands

week 10	week 11	week 12	week 13	week 14	week 15	week 16	week 17
02/05/24	09/05/24	16/05/24	23/05/24	28/05/24	09/06/24	13/06/24	21/06/24
2	5	17	0	20	4	4	2

The Boxworm (Box-tree) Moth appeared at position number 45 with 13 being caught. This pretty micro-moth is causing consternation among gardeners. The Royal Horticultural Society has almost five times as many queries as in the same period last year and dominated the most common questions at the RHS Flower Show.

For interest other popular inquiries from members this year are the Fig Leaf Roller and the Buddleia Aphid.

Least Black Arches (*Nola confusalis*)

This small moth (wingspan 16-18 mm) can sometimes be overlooked as a micro moth and, as a result, may be under-recorded. It is a member of the Nolidae family and has undergone major, long-term increases in distribution (47%) and abundance (98%) since 1970. It remains most widespread in the southern half of England and in Wales, but has spread elsewhere, particularly in Scotland where it recently reached Orkney. The flight season has also advanced considerably since 1970 (Atlas of Britain and Ireland's Larger Moths).

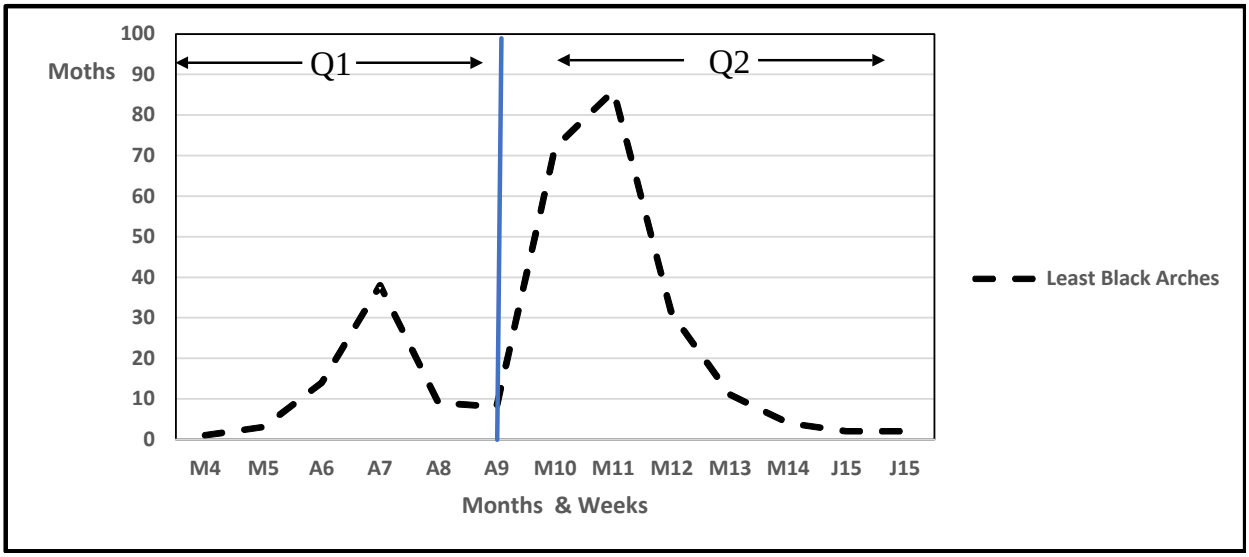
Its vernacular name is self-explanatory. The name *Nola* has a Gaelic and Latin origin and means "white shoulder" or "fair. The moth was first described by Herrich-Schãffer in 1847 and so named it *confusalis*, possibly because of uncertainty about its correct species classification.

It has a narrow whitish forewing with fine black cross-lines, the innermost V-shaped, and the outer middle one strongly curved in the leading half, often shaped like a question mark. There is also a narrow but fairly distinct grey-brown outer central cross-band and the whole area is often noticeably darker with small blackish dashes.

Its flight period is May to June and it comes regularly in small numbers to light. The larvae (June to August) feed on various broad-leaved trees including lime. Its main

habitats are woodlands, parks and gardens. It overwinters as a pupa, attached to a twig, as a cryptic, boat-shaped cocoon made from silk and bark or lichen.

Fig 11. GMS 2024 Flight Period of the Least Black Arches 2024



Analysing your Data

Steve Roberts

After some sterling work by Audrey Turner we now have a dataset that is ready for some serious analysis of the 17 years of the national scheme (soon to be 18). Both myself and Butterfly Conservation have copies of this dataset and we are planning to collaborate to, in the first instance, look at what the data says about long-term trends in moth populations over this time.

Here is a snapshot of what we have for the main season scheme with 2023 data still to be added:

Records	2,113,428
Gardens	1013
Traps	1339
Moths	7,460,923
Species *	451
Start Year	2007
End Year	2022
Garden-Years †	5180
Nights	180,585
Empty Traps	20,007 (11.1%)
Missed Weeks	5895 (3.2%)

* *Core species plus regional additions*

† *Completed years – an average of 5.1 years of recording per garden*

This represents an amazing effort by over 1000 volunteers – 7½ million moths identified including 865,000 Large Yellow Underwings and 20,000 mornings opening empty traps! I am currently preparing the data and working out exactly what we can do with it and how best to handle its various quirks to enable a rigorous analysis. We will be asking for your input in due course – watch this space!

Experiences Using a Pop-Up Mosquito Net for Recording

Richard Baylis

At the risk of ridicule by friends and family I purchased a pop-up mosquito net of double bed size that had an integral base sewn in. It was the largest of three sizes available and has two doors. I was inspired by a recent article sent to me by a mothing friend in GMS. It was mentioned as one of many suggestions and written by County Recorder Nigel Voaden VC85. From Butterfly Conservation it is entitled Maximising Moths and is in the Spring Issue 2024, No 145. He states that avoiding escapees when opening a trap can increase the number of species recorded by up to 20 on a busy night. Well worth a read.

The largest size was purchased which allows me to perch on a folding stool and manipulate pots and egg boxes with confidence, knowing any that decide to leg it will usually be in the top of the dome above my head for potting at leisure. I position a large wicker basket outside the door allowing me to dump checked egg boxes out of the net tent via a small opening in the zipper door which can be opened and re-zipped each time. Thereby not duplicating records and allowing recorded moths to fly off in their own time. Any I log and fly up can be potted and ejected through the same slit opening in the door. I only partially collapse the tent afterwards and stow in my shed for next time.

I pop-up the tent on our deck which has a green outdoor polypropylene carpet which I relay after each winter for comfort and no splinters. I plan to be self-contained for an hour or so, taking coffee, notebook, a good stack of pots and various plastic containers to separate micros from macros etc. Phone camera and magnifying glass. I can just get the job done before the loo calls.

The first time I popped-up the tent it nearly took off and bowled over the rails into the pond. Lesson learned; my wife sewed a loop onto each lower corner. I have a stack of heavy paviour bricks which I have drilled, raw plugged and screwed in stainless steel cup hooks at one end. Originally made to anchor grandchildren's play tents on the deck, they have proved very versatile. Hooked into each corner loop and stretched out, the complete cage is well and truly secure.

If you search for GLKEBY Pop Up Mosquito Net for Double Bed they are circa £32 for the large size I use. Other makes are available but I recommend one with a base, two doors and room to sit up and operate. So, I hope I am now making a better job of recording all that goes into the MV trap and the submission of more complete records to GMS and our county recorder, Mark Hammond VC32 who is probably taking his vitamins pending a huge dump of micros for ID this winter. Good on ya Mark.

I am currently one of over 300 interested moth-ers that have elected to retain Nocturnal Parasitoid Wasps for a British Museum led project to ID, DNA check and map their occurrence in the UK. These critters take off rapidly when disturbed and become invisible, easily evading potting from an open trap. However using the net tent, they are easily collected in the dome above. Gotcha! I potted 3 today that I had not seen in the trap nor noticed their upward departure. Me and the British Museum happy!

Ref: Butterfly Conservation Spring 2024 No. 145 p29 Maximising Moths – Nigel Voaden VC85 Fife and Kinross

What's in a name – the case for the defence

Sean Ashton

As a rebel from the Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire I would like to take the opposite side to my colleagues in the Shires in the debate over common names for micro-moths! I should start by saying that I completely agree with the importance of using the scientific names when sending in our data to the GMS scheme, the County Recorder and our local ecological records centre. Although we all enjoy moth recording for many reasons, there is tremendous value in the data and accurate records at a time when insects and the natural world are under constant assault from the climate and ecological crises we are facing.

A plant scientist by profession, I use scientific names on a daily basis. On the other hand, as a keen amateur gardener I plant potatoes, not Solanum tuberosum. So why not use common names for micro-moths? As the article in the Quarter 1 newsletter points out we have had vernacular names for macro-moths going back a couple of hundred years many of which do bring to mind the stately homes of England. However, at some point these will have been new and would have needed learning before they came into common usage and accepted as the standard names by the 18th and 19th century moth enthusiasts. Some micro-moths do have vernacular names and we should remind ourselves the distinction between macro and micro is an artificial human construct.

Micro-moths without vernacular names are only so because some species are not as obvious or easy to detect as others and not being 'common' lack a common name. However, with the rise in the number of people recording moths and using traps, the easy access to good digital cameras and online forums to share the images, these moths are being seen more often and people are becoming familiar with them.

So why not give them a common name? The new Sterling and Parsons field guide is a fantastic addition to any moth recorders library and I applaud them for an attempt to assign and standardise the common names, even if in the short term this will lead to some species having more than one common name. I actually preferred some of the names that have been changed and will particularly miss Dingy Dowd! Multiple common names is a phenomenon not restricted to moths, I should hasten to add, as Lapwing, Pyewipe, Peewit and Green Plover testify – all common names for Vanellus vanellus for the non-birdwatchers reading the article. Names come into common usage if they are adopted and given a chance to flourish.

The use of dinosaurs to make the case against common names for micro-moths also has its drawbacks. Dinosaurs are never likely to be commonly encountered and take on common names! That being said, T-rex is in common usage for Tyrannosaurus Rex and Stegosaurus is in fact only the genus name and a common name as used. Not many 5 year old schoolboys will use the species names stenops, ungulatus and sulcatus. If assigning micro-moths common names is an attempt to make recording moths more accessible and inclusive, I'm all for dumbing down.

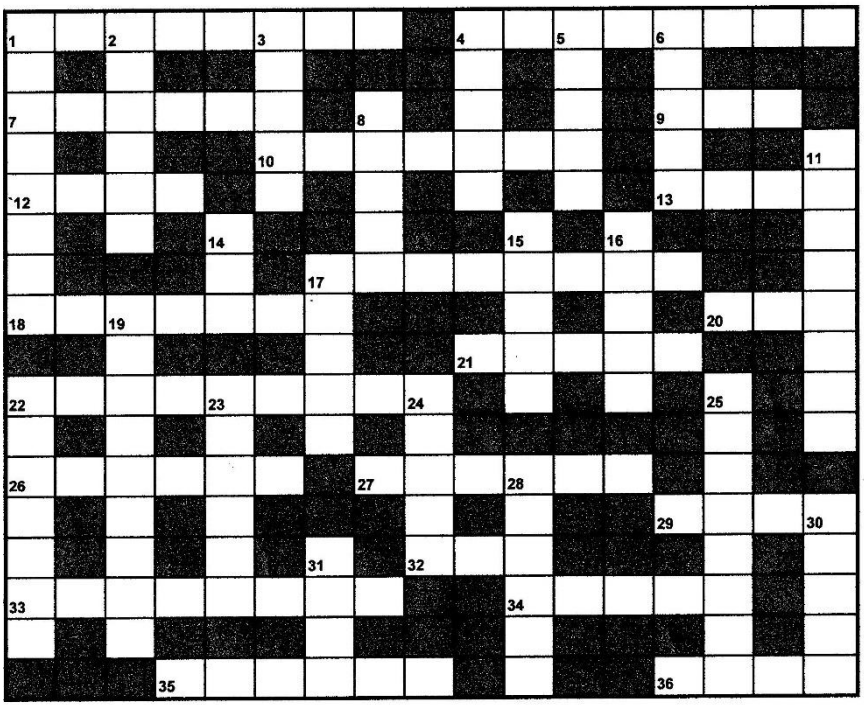
I have to come clean and admit that part of the lure of moths for me is the wonderful common names – who can't be fascinated by names like Manchester Treble-bar, Merveille du Jour, Mother Shipton and Shoulder-striped Wainscot. So if Beautiful Twitcher, Australian Orange-tip (or Ruddy Streak!) and Rock-cress Diamond-back capture

the imagination of children and young naturalists, firing an enthusiasm for moths, surely that's a cause for celebration? We should nurture the enthusiasm of newcomers to the hobby, not crush it by decrying the use of perfectly valid common names, for there is no surer way to lose somebody than to put them down.

The world changes and things move on, sometimes for the better. Identification apps and websites make moth identification easier for the novice. It is no longer acceptable to collect birds eggs and, hopefully, most of us no longer pin the moths we trap, instead being satisfied with the photos we take. As long as people send in accurate records the use of common names hurts no-one, and using both names can act as a check if one of them is spelled incorrectly. The late, great Nye Bevan describes a reactionary as a man walking backwards with his face to the future and I, for one, don't want to be that person.

Puzzle Corner

Lepidopteran Crossword No.24



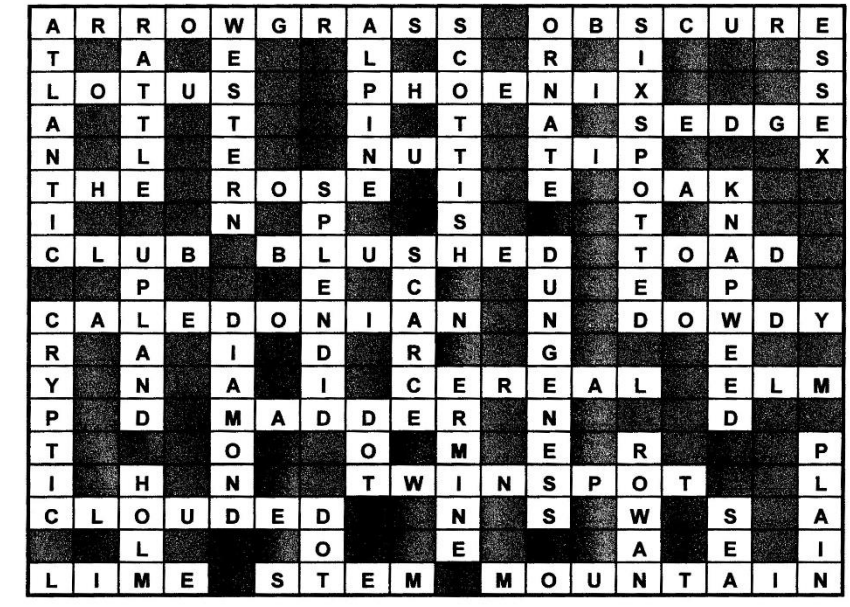
Across

1.A small dog with a silky coat would lead us to this unusual bufolinum.
4.Greyish Blue instrument, a splendid cutting edge moth.
7.We are all called this, even the males.
9.The residue from a burning wash-house.
10.This long distance visitor could be quite a character.
12.Could lead a big cat, knife or a large tuft of grass.
13.A avian shore dweller also associated with fields and Wimbledon.
17.Ray's come home to look for a woodland species.
18.Must be from down south, but not now.
20.Remains of a natural coloured moth in pale surroundings
21.With it's flower this type achieves its unmistakeable beauty.
22.Must be a very disturbed need to take on an old chalice.
26.This could join 6d. on the floor.
27.Both moth and plant often rubbed off one another in odd directions.

29.Surely Emily could do this distance , but awkwardly.
32.The original digital age moth.
33.When asked to play this pantomime role Dean thought he would look a “right flower”.
34.We certainly would give two beans to blend this little beauty.
35. Shade of a moth having had a visit from Midas plus Ian’s help.
36. This moth left the oak panelling and headed for a watery location.

Down
1.Could young Tam, a risk taking lad lead us to a sea-shore grower.
2.This moth has unusual headwear, how very singular!
3.Tiny specimen waiting for solar changes in order to emerge.
4.You only get meagre enjoyment when jealously logging this floor covering.
5.A woodland species whose red larvae actually move in reverse.
6.A material formed from Beech, alkanet and other plants.
8, 17d We find that Glyn led his party into the woods to find this “upright” specimen.
11.An Eastern master always hanging around at the end of the year.
14.Number 22: It’s all Greek to me.
15.Scarce specimen found in Humberside and nearby surroundings.
16.Musically we would put another one of these in the field surround.
17.See 8d.
19. Parts of a story or legend etc. could well be left on the shelf.
22.A high powered leader found more per acre on moorland.
23.A rare adventive, generically coming over in the fall.
24.Old Welsh species starting it’s days roving upland in disguise.
25.Not too strong when made with this tied lace.
28.Regularly, but sparsely, found on one’s custards?
30.A visitor who sounds as though he may come from Iceland?

Micro-moth Crossword No.1 Solution



I hope that you found all the correct names which are, in many cases, very different from the usual vernacular macro-moth names which are more familiar to us. Where you all go from here is entirely up to the individual?
Nonconformist

Communications & Links.

We have a new **GMS Website** which can now be found at
https://gardenmothscheme.org.uk/
In it are 5 Sections:
Home – the introduction
Information – lists the Regional Coordinators and gives some help with identification
Communications - includes past newsletters
Links – how to access our Facebook material and a link to UK Moths
Downloads - access to the regional recording forms and instructions.

Facebook Page - https://www.facebook.com/GardenMothScheme

Facebook Group - https://www.facebook.com/groups/438806469608527/ - currently with more than 2900 Members (not all active GMS participants) – open membership – all recording forms, instructions and micro-moth identification guides are available in the Files section.

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www.mapmate.co.uk