

## WARWICKSHIRE BRANCH MOTH EQUIPMENT

### 2005 - THE RECORDING CONTINUES



*Dotted Chestnut*

Alan Prior & Val Weston

Photographs by Patrick Clement



*Small Brindled Beauty*



*Chocolate tip*



*Oak Beauty*



*Orange Moth*



*Red Sword-grass*



*Red-necked Footman*

## **Introduction**

After a successful 2004, and with the branch equipment serviced and refurbished, the New Year promised much hard work. The main aim was to create as many records as possible for inclusion in "The Larger Moths of Warwickshire". Hopefully, Dave Brown have been able to get this book published in 2006. We trust you will all buy a copy of this valuable work.

As for 2005 it certainly had its ups and downs, mainly due to the vagaries of the British climate! It proved difficult to make any long term plans and some very late decisions were made to go recording. Overall though the hard work paid off as an interesting year produced many good finds. We hope you enjoy this account of events.

## **JANUARY (Yes – January!)**

It all began when Alan spoke to Nigel Stone in early December. He suggested a mothing trip as Val's birthday surprise, as she would never suspect it. Agreement was reached that if the weather was halfway decent that it would go ahead. Things looked promising and a secretive phone call the previous night meant everything was set for the big day. The day began grey and misty. We managed to see a splash of colour as we drove the couple of miles to see the hundred or so Waxwings that had invaded Birmingham. What a spectacular sight they were, enough to make anybody's day. The news was then broken to Val that she would also be going mothing. She was amazed and the next hour or so was spent gathering some treats together for a birthday picnic.

Just before dusk we arrived at Ryton Wood to meet Nigel and son Philip. Shortly afterwards Mike Slater joined us fresh from his day working in the meadows. As soon as the traps were up and running everyone retired to the car park to enjoy the picnic, including wine and birthday cake! How civilised is that? The evening surpassed everybody's expectations. With a grand total of 444 moths of 11 species recorded. We do have to admit that 353 of them were **Spring Usher** but it was great to witness so much life in the depths of winter. There was even a ridiculously early sighting of **Brindled Beauty** to complete the party. So when Alan came up with what he thought was this mad idea he never expected it to end with Val saying it was one of her best birthdays ever. Alan is going to have to go a long way to beat it next year! Thanks must go to Nigel, Philip and Mike for being equally mad to go along with the surprise.

## **FEBRUARY**

It proved to be a month after the Ryton trip until the weather made another venture out worthwhile. It was to Chaddesley Wood near Bromsgrove for the first time this year; a site that has never properly been recorded. So Alan and Wood Warden, Mervyn Needham, agreed to hold moth recording sessions once a month throughout the year. With the early start time it meant that Val wouldn't be able to go. However, Alan did manage to talk Patrick Clement and Roy Ledbury into attending. An early shower didn't have much impact on proceedings and the evening proved quite productive. All were happy with the 16 species recorded. **Small Brindled Beauty** and a good count of **Chestnut** (37) made a pleasing start to the site's recording.

## **MARCH**

As normal, March provided some good spring mothing. The first trip of the month was to Patrick's local patch of Uffmoor Wood. After a short delay Roy also arrived for the evening's recording. With the weather being good, as soon as the lights went on moths were heading towards them. A respectable 13 species were seen with a good count of **Yellow Horned** being the highlight.

The following evening Patrick and Alan were out again. It was back to Chaddesley Wood where Mervyn was there to meet them. There wasn't a breath of wind tonight and so Alan decided to set his traps on the highest and most exposed site he could find. While setting up he could hear and see Buzzards and Ravens heading off to roost. All very atmospheric! Mervyn had a problem getting one of his bulbs to light up and decided to nip home for a spare. While he was gone Alan twisted the bulb

in the socket and it came on. Luckily Mervyn only had to go a short distance home so he wasn't too upset and could laugh about it when he returned, as he was asked "How many Mervyns does it take to screw in a light bulb!?". After that things settled down for a while until a visit to Alan's top trap. An egg box was turned over to reveal a moth nobody recognised. On confirming in the field guide it turned out to be a **Red Sword-grass**, a third county record for Worcestershire. Obviously that was the highlight of the 20 species recorded. With Patrick and Mervyn having left, Alan packed up on his own. Just as he was leaving the wood something shot across the track in front of the car. The sighting of a very speedy Badger rounded off an excellent night.

The next night proved another adventure and would end like no other. A visit to Close Wood with Nigel and Roy started normally enough. With all traps up and running the usual tour of them was undertaken. Eventually, with the air beginning to cool, we decided to start packing up. We counted one of ours before heading off to Roy's and then Nigel's. While tallying Nigel's some headlights approached. A vehicle stopped and out jumped an angry gamekeeper! He enquired into our activities (although he wasn't as polite as we've put it!). After the initial shock everything calmed down as Nigel explained he had a permit and a key to the gate. Nigel searched and failed to find his permit and it was agreed we'd leave as soon as possible. So, shortly afterwards we were all on our way home. It turned out that mistakes had been made on all sides. Nigel's permit had run out and the Forestry Commission hadn't told the gamekeeper that moth recording had been going on. Thankfully everything was resolved amicably the following day. Oh yes, the moths; we recorded 12 species with **March Moth** (21) being the most numerous.

It took us almost a week to recover and venture out again. We went to Crown East Wood near Worcester. Owners, Richard and Carol Moore, had asked us to continue recording this year. We hadn't been able to persuade anyone else to join us so it was typical that tonight would be the night when we forgot the petrol can. After much discussion it was decided to run the traps until the fuel in the generator ran out. We switched on a little later than normal and hoped for the best. It proved to be the correct decision, as just as we were packing up the last trap the generator spluttered and died. So, in the end we had a good night with 16 species seen. Notably the **Small Quaker** count was on the rise (139) and we recorded our first **Twin-spotted Quaker** of the year.

As Val was on holiday, a trip down to Slimbridge was organised. An afternoon wander around the grounds produced a surprise sighting of an Avocet. Centre Manager, Neil Woodward, had agreed that we could trap in the evening, although he had to take some students for a meal. The weather was cool with a stiff breeze blowing. Not wanting to give up we searched for the most sheltered place we could and set the traps up. Once they were up and running we set off for a meal of our own at the nearest pub (Mr. Brown would be proud!). After a good feed and a couple of drinks in the warm we set off back to the traps. We were amazed at how far away we could see the lights. It was good to know they were still working. On our return we weren't too surprised to find only six species. It's always a pleasure to see **Oak Beauty** though. The best find was the micro *Depressaria daucella*.

The next night was a little more productive. Chris Johnson, Nigel and ourselves met Mike Slater at the entrance to the new BC Reserve at Ryton Meadows. Mike very kindly gave us a grand tour of the site. None of us realised how big it really is (32 acres we were told). We were all impressed and, as the weather was near perfect, couldn't wait to start. Unfortunately Mike was unable to stay and see for himself what an extraordinary evening would ensue. With one departure we had two arrivals as Jack Watkins and Martin Kennard joined us. Once we were set up we wandered over in Jack's direction. On our way we came across a Sallow in full blossom. It had hundreds of moths buzzing around the flowers. It was one of those sights that you read about but rarely see. However, if you are lucky enough to witness it you will never forget it. When we finally reached Jack we found he had put one of his traps under a similar looking Sallow. When it came to counting up, that particular trap had us all

standing around it for a considerable time. Each time an egg box was pulled out it was smothered in **Small Quakers**. The count reached almost 550 in that one trap! Added with the rest of us, the count finished somewhere around 1700. Jack also managed to get “Moth of the Night” with (another for Alan) **Red Sword-grass**. A quite superb night resulted in 27 species being recorded for the Reserve.

A week later a visit to Oversley Wood was on the agenda. On arrival we found Graham and Anona Finch waiting. They’d come over from Leicestershire for their first visit to “Pyralid” Wood. We had a good chat while waiting for Nigel and Dave Grundy to show up. When they did we realised that some dog walkers had parked in front of the gate making our entrance difficult. However where there’s a will... With a repositioning of some wooden posts (replaced afterwards) access was obtained. As we were setting up Jack strolled up asking if someone could let him in. Dave kindly drove Jack back to his car at the gate. With a lot of traps tonight we hoped for a good session. We weren’t disappointed as 38 species were recorded. Highlights were **Dotted Chestnut**, a moth which appears to be spreading northwards, and the lovely micro *Acleris literana*.

Easter Day and a trip to North Warwickshire; Pooley Fields Heritage Centre was the venue. Dave Grundy, Nigel and Philip had joined us by the time we had a very interesting tour of the site with Ranger Alan Markland. As we were setting up, Dave was kept busy giving Graham and Anona directions via mobile phone and Jack arrived late (again!) after getting lost. The weather wasn’t great. It was cool, damp and misty. We brightened up the evening by putting an empty chocolate Easter egg box in one of the traps. It gave everybody a laugh and we even got a moth on it (**Common Quaker**—what else!). Considering the conditions the 13 species recorded was a respectable effort with **Shoulder Stripe** being our favourite.

#### **APRIL**

The month began with a visit to Knowles Coppice in Wyre Forest. Patrick had permission to trap here and kindly invited Dave Grundy and ourselves to join him. We were a little apprehensive as on the only other occasion we’d been to this area of the forest the track to it was the worst we’d ever been on. Patrick assured us that it had been resurfaced and it would be OK. Seeing is believing and we were glad to find the track was in good order. Val still walked the last few hundred yards though! Between all of us we just about covered the site and so hoped that whatever was flying would be attracted to the lights. Dave was trying to be generous tonight by taking down everybody’s records on his “tippy-tap” palm-top computer. However, he had to change its battery and so lost the lot. So much for technology, give us paper and pen every time! Apart from that, we had a good night with 24 species recorded. The highlights were **White Marked** and **Blossom Underwing**.

The following evening was the first “official” monthly session at Chaddesley Wood. The response was amazing as people came from all over the place to contribute. Little did Mervyn and Alan know what they had started! With around 15 traps up and running the wood looked spectacular all lit up. However, one part kept going dark. It was because Alan hadn’t found a very level bit of ground for the generator. They can be a bit temperamental these generators and the lights went out a couple of times tonight. Finally, with some stability found, everything ran alright. An excellent night was had by all with 36 species seen. Just under 1000 **Small Quaker** were recorded with another **Dotted Chestnut** and a very good sighting of the micro moth *Pammene giganteana*.

A return trip to Knowles Coppice with the addition of Mervyn was next. A very cold night produced 22 species with **Frosted Green**, **Purple Thorn** and two more **White Marked** the highlights.

The latest of decisions to go out the following night meant Alan was on his own at Crown East Wood this time. The wood was very colourful with Primroses, Wood Anemone and Bluebells all in flower. Some Pipistrelle bats showed off their amazing flying ability at dusk and the constant hooting of the

Tawny Owls kept Alan company. Another 22 species were recorded with both **Powdered Quaker** and **Dotted Chestnut** being new for the site.

The first meeting of the Wyre Forest Moth Group was next. There was a good gathering of people at the Visitor Centre who all drove into the forest. Tonight's site was a part that we hadn't been to before. With the good turn out there were a lot of traps spread over a large area and it was difficult to get round them all. It would mean a good chance of catching more species though. A busy night ended with 45 species being found. The highlight was a second county record of **Golden-rod Pug**.

After such a good night it was a shame that the event at Whitacre Heath was plagued by freezing temperatures. Some Wood Mice under the bird feeders in the car park did keep us entertained as we waited for the few moths that did arrive. A very poor 11 species were noted with probably the best being the micro *Eriocrania salopiella*. A pat on the back and a vote of thanks to all who attended.

From such a disappointment, the month would end on a high note with the best night of the year so far. The visit to Ryton Meadows proved irresistible to Roy, Nigel and Martin Kennard. Chris Johnson and Mike Slater also joined us to "supervise"! Mike Astley was also in the area but in the wood. A thoroughly enjoyable evening produced an excellent 56 species. The star moth being the second County record of **Golden-rod Pug** again! This particular Pug species appeared all over the West Midlands region this year, with a lot being recorded in gardens. For a Nationally Local designated moth they seemed pretty common. It will be interesting if we managed to find them at the same rate next year.

## MAY

Mayday, where better to be than nothing at Chaddesley Wood! A heavy overnight rainstorm had left the wood very wet. It was a difficult decision everyone had to make—whether to take a chance and drive up the muddy track into the wood or park near the gate and carry the equipment. It turned out to be a split decision and it worked well as a large part of the wood was covered by the dozen or so traps. The good turn out tonight was bolstered by some "locals" who had come to find out what was going on. So we were lucky to have Richard Southwell on hand this evening when Mervyn's wife, Rose, asked him if he'd give a "little talk" on the night's events. Now, if anybody knows the current West Midlands Branch BC Chairman, you will realise what a difficult task this would prove to such a shy and retiring individual!!! Nevertheless he tackled the job with his usual gusto and our visitors left knowing everything there is to know about moths. With the weather being good tonight the moths kept arriving right up until the last light went out around 3:30 a.m. A very pleasing 54 species were found. **Barred Umber**, **Chocolate-tip**, **Orange Footman** and **Silver Cloud** were highlights although another excellent micro moth record, *Pammene argyrana*, probably just took the night's honours.

A flurry of phone calls ended in another late decision to go out; this time to meet Nigel at Meriden Shafts. After a good journey, Alan arrived half an hour early. He was just on his way back to the car after a quick look around the site when Nigel arrived 20 minutes early! You can be too keen you know! It turned out to be quite fortunate that both had arrived early as, just after the lights went on, it started to rain. Most of the evening was spent sitting and chatting in the car. Then as the rain eased it was decided to tally. It took a while to pack up as everything was so wet. However, a respectable 28 species were recorded with **Barred Hook-tip** and **Green Silver-lines** among the best.

The following night was a shocker. Dave Grundy's public event at Lodge Hill in Wyre Forest was a low point, literally! The great "general public" failed to show up and it was left to Mervyn, Rose, Roy and ourselves to ask silly questions of our event leader. "Why had we bothered" was one that was regularly asked. It would seem that not many moths will fly during Arctic winter conditions! A grand total of 12 species from eleven traps was almost a miracle. **Great Prominent** and **Pale Tussock** were

among the moths as mad as us. The highlight was Rose's Fruit Cake which gained instant icing as it was lifted from the tin!!

The weather was still cold when we made a forgettable visit to Chaddesley Wood and recorded a miserable seven species. Two days later the cold spell had finally broken and Alan made a return visit to Chaddesley Wood. The difference was startling as there was evidence of life everywhere. Pipistrelles zooming about, Muntjac Deer barking and then a terrible buzzing sound near one of the traps! First thought was "Oh no a Hornet". Thankfully it turned out to be the first Cockchafer Beetle of the year. All of that and moths too! It took ages to count up tonight due to the 50 species recorded in the traps. **Sloe Pug** and **Poplar Kitten** were among the best. So, it wasn't until 3:00 a.m. that Alan finally set off for home. That's a bit more like it!!

The hat-trick of visits to Chaddesley in the space of a week was completed when Patrick was talked into joining Alan. Ten minutes of light drizzle was as bad as the weather got and a terrific night was had. Even with the long trek between our trapping sites the night flew by. Counting up was began at 1:00 a.m., but it wasn't until 4:00 a.m. that we could head for home. We managed to find a superb 62 species with **Poplar Lutestring**, **Alder Kitten**, **Ruby Tiger** and a couple more **Golden-rod Pugs** amongst them.

Two days later and we were brought back down to earth as we attend Dave Brown's first organized event of the year at Great Wolford Wood. It started well enough as the site looked good and we'd taken along the **Purple Marbled** moth we had caught in our garden the previous night. The surprised looks we got were worth going to see on their own! It also made a few peoples' trip worthwhile so that was pleasing. However it was all downhill from there, as not long after the lights went on the heavens opened. The rain bordered on torrential and an early finish was agreed. A disappointing 21 species were seen although **Lime Hawk-moth** and **Nut-tree Tussock** were nice to see.

An improvement in the weather brought a phone call from Patrick to invite Alan over to Uffmoor Wood. Invitation accepted it wasn't long before the traps were up and running in the wood. Not long after Alan heard a loud POP echo around the wood. After checking that both lights were still on he thought nothing more of it. That was until a closer inspection of the furthest trap revealed shattered glass inside its wire mesh protector. The bulb had exploded but the filament was still lit! The problem was solvable as we always carry a spare bulb. The tricky bit was collecting all the glass. Eventually, a new bulb was installed without the loss of too much blood! It did explain the pop and the only explanation was that the bulb must have got wet somehow at Great Wolford Wood. Thankfully, the rest of the night was uneventful and a very good 76 species were found. **Peach Blossom** and **Scorched Wing** were two of the most striking. Alan just managed to make it home in time to make Val a cuppa before she got up for work as a small compensation for missing out.

A busy end to the month began with the regular trip over to the Wyre Forest. Val was pleased to see a lot of people tonight as she had plenty of leftover food from a charity fundraising day at work. Mike Southall kindly donated the back of his Land-Rover as a makeshift table and everybody tucked in. By dawn there was very little left! The only disappointing thing with events like tonight is that most of the people who come to them are not aware, or prepared to stay to the end. It means a lot of the time they miss out on seeing the best moths. So, if you do venture out to an event please try to stay as long as possible as you will normally be rewarded. Tonight was a prime example as we had the first 100+ species count of the year. Some of them are nationally rare; for example, **Common Fan-foot** and the unbelievably coloured micro *Oecophora bractella*. Although not quite as scarce, Alan was grateful to Martin Kennard for finding a **Speckled Yellow**. A very rare sighting for him as they usually fly during the day!

Lastly for May, we returned to Ryton Meadows with Nigel. A steady flow of moths entered the traps tonight. Maybe some of them were watching the distant firework display like us! Even on such a slow night we were happy with the 50 species recorded. **Ghost Swift**, **Silver Y** and the first **Elephant Hawk-moth** were amongst them.

## JUNE

The most exciting mothing month began with an invitation by Paul Nicholas to go over to Swift Valley in Rugby to do some recording. Mike Astley, Nigel and the “local” Mike Slater also made the trip. An entertaining night was had despite the imperfect weather. A respectable 67 species were newly recorded for the site. Some of our favourites were **Chinese Character**, **Dark Dagger** and **Large Nutmeg**.

Next was the large gathering at Oversley Wood. With so many traps spread over such a large area it was going to be impossible to get around them all. However all the records would be very useful for the book. So after splitting up, and getting to see as many traps as we could between us, it meant we were late to start counting up. When we finally finished at 5:00 a.m. there was only Dave Grundy and ourselves left. We’d managed to see 93 species with **Beautiful Carpet** and **Pale Oak Beauty** two of them. Moth of the night honours though went to the very rare Pyralid *Salebriopsis albicilla*. Both Dave and ourselves managed to record one each. See what we mean about staying to the end!?

A few hours later it was time for the monthly session at Chaddesley Wood. There were fewer people than we’d become used to tonight. It was probably due to the weather forecast being for rain. However this would not be the one night in seven when the forecasters actually get it right as we didn’t get any of the wet stuff. With there being not so many of us we decided to do the less accessible Santrey Hill Wood across the road from Chaddesley. It hadn’t been trapped before and fitted our group well. A reasonable 69 species were found with **Lobster Moth** and **Orange Footman** notable. Alan even saw a new micro. Thanks go to Tony Simpson for identifying *Ancylis laetana*.

Next it was Alan’s twice annual trip down to Essex to help his mum with some jobs. Freezing conditions at night made for a very poor catch of only 14 species on the first occasion. A slightly better second night produced 22 species and the last one was the best with 36 species. The most interesting moth recorded was the micro *Argyresthia cupressella*. This species was first recorded in Britain only half a dozen miles from his mum’s house in 1997. Amazingly only two weeks after returning from Essex we found the same species in our garden. Before you ask—NO he didn’t bring it back with him! It does show how quickly a moth can spread if conditions are favourable.

Next was a visit to Monkwood in Worcestershire. It was new BC West Midlands Branch Moth Officer, Mike Southall’s first Public Event. So, Dave Grundy, Nigel and ourselves went to lend support as it’s usually a well-attended event. This was to be no exception as there were plenty of interested people in attendance. Val was kept busy collecting some interesting moths for tomorrow’s Solihull Environmental Day. Thanks are due to Nigel who loaned her some brand new pots. It was difficult for her to decide which moths to take as we had a good selection. A successful night ended with the public going home happy and Mike had gained a little confidence in running such events. The moths were good too with **Lead-coloured Pug**, **Small Seraphim** and **Beautiful Hook-tip** amongst the 68 species recorded. However the highlight was probably the **Wood White** butterfly that Nigel found roosting by one of the traps!

Last night’s moths helped raise £246 at the Environmental Day which was doubled by Barclays and will go towards the book. The moths were then all released safe and well at the end of the day. After a short rest we were off to Alan’s favourite mothing site at Hednesford Hills. He’d obtained permission to visit the site as Dave Grundy wasn’t working there this year. When we arrived we were in for a

surprise. The entrance was blocked with vehicles and there were people everywhere. They were already queuing for a big event at the Raceway the following day. After a friendly chat we managed to gain access to the site. We did ask if they could ask future arrivals not to block the gate as we wouldn't be leaving until the early hours. We just had to hope that they would pass the message on. After driving to the usual spot and setting up the weather turned against us and became cool and clear. We should have been getting used to it by now, but we always live in hope of a warm, cloudy and humid night! In the end we were pleased with the 51 species we recorded with **Map-winged Swift** and **Satin Wave** being two of our favourites. As this was Val's first visit to the Hills we were hoping it wouldn't be remembered for not being able to leave! As we drove back to the entrance we were pleased to see it free and clear of obstruction. PHEW!

A few days later and Patrick phoned to say he was off to Knowles Coppice again. Alan didn't need to be asked twice and so off he went. It was the best weather we'd had on a visit here, but it did have a drawback. Being next to Dowles Brook the traps became infested with Caddis Flies as well as moths! We were grateful of the help from the Pipistrelles in trying to reduce their number. However, they didn't appear to make much of an impression. When we decided it was time to tally it became impossible as the Caddis kept disturbing every one you'd counted! It was agreed a list of species would have to do for tonight. Even with all the confusion we managed 111 species of moth. Some of them were **Bilberry Pug**, **Orange Moth**, **Great Oak Beauty**, some more **Orange Footman** and **Common Fan-foot**.

The following evening was the beginning of Val's holiday and it was started in the right way at Ryton Meadows. Nobody was able to join us which worked out well for Val as she could take a nap while awaiting the moths' appearance. As we were setting up we did see a Hobby catching insects so that was a good sign. An excellent evening produced 72 species seen. We were especially pleased as we'd set one of the traps completely in the open so any moths in that one would have had to fly a way to get there. Our favourites included the Pyralid **Thistle Ermine** and **Blotched Emerald**.

The following night we intended to join Dave Brown's session at Grove Hill. We found the meeting point OK but then Alan saw how steep the hill was and said he'd prefer to go somewhere a bit easier on the legs. The previous two nights were obviously catching up with him! We didn't feel too bad about it as there were plenty of people to cover the site. We also knew that Dave Grundy was holding a "rival" session around the corner at Oversley Wood, a much better site to be lazy at! So we asked if we could borrow Nigel's key to go and surprise Dave G. He agreed and so off we went. Dave G. was surprised and pleased to see us, as were Graham and Anona who had made the trip from Leicestershire. Our traps were quickly set up and switched on before joining the others at the "tripod trap". A nice leisurely night ended around 4:00 a.m. with 126 species seen. They included **Pretty Chalk Carpet**, **Satin Beauty**, **Red-necked Footman**, the lovely micro *Pamene aurana* and a first County record of *Opsibotys fuscalis*. We heard that everyone had a good night at Grove Hill too, where **The Fern** was recorded.

After a night off, Val's holiday continued by keeping a promise made years ago. Every Christmas she goes over to see old friends in Burton Upon Trent. As she's always driving she cannot partake of the home-made wine that's offered. Finally she'd got Alan to act as chauffeur for the night. Of course, a moth trap would also make the trip as our hosts, Eric and Joyce claim "they don't get any moths in their garden!" This was immediately disproved as Alan netted a **Red-barred Tortrix** before a light was even switched on! A very sociable evening was had with the wine flowing freely (for some)! A superb total of 63 species were recorded in "The Garden With No Moths!" We even managed to see a new one for us, **The Spinach**. Also we had **Netted** and **Bordered Pugs** amongst the others. Later, Nigel informed us that 22 species were new for the 10km square! We think a return visit almost

inevitable! We set off for home around 2:00 a.m. with our hosts having to change their minds as they do get moths, just like everyone else!!

After another night off Patrick joined us for his first visit to Crown East Wood. As soon as we arrived we gave him the “Grande Tour”. He had the whole wood to choose from as to where he could trap so, where did he pick? Yep, right by the gate. The lazy \*x\*x\*! A very busy night followed as the first large batch of micro species were now on the wing. Unfortunately many of them would have to go home with us for later identification. It’s a shame but it is important to find out what species are at a site. It took a long time to count up tonight as there were so many moths. We managed it just before dawn with the tally standing at 118 species. **Wax Moth, The Phoenix, Scorched Carpet** and the colourful and scarce Pyralid *Pempelia palumbella* just some of them. The most memorable event was when Val walked across the field to open a gate ready for our exit. As she looked back to see if we were on our way, she saw the moon appearing larger than normal just over the top the Malvern Hills. It was very clear and with a lonesome Pine tree in the foreground it made a wonderful scene. Val then persuaded Patrick and Alan out of their vehicles to have a look. It certainly made a pretty picture, it was a shame we didn’t have our camera. The following day we learnt that the moon had indeed appeared larger due to an optical illusion. OK Val, we believe you now!!

The monthly Wyre Forest trip was next and it was also memorable, although mostly for the wrong reasons. It had been raining on and off all day, but seemed to have cleared as we drove into the forest. Just after we’d finished setting up it started raining again. Shortly afterwards the lights went out. We decided to wait for the rain to ease before putting some oil in the generator and get it going again. When this was done Val set off to find the others while Alan, as usual, tried to keep up to date on record entering before following. By the time it came to counting up the rain had become torrential. We did our best to cover the trap but inside it was a very sad sight. Moths aren’t good swimmers at all! We packed up as quickly as possible and tried to save as many lives as we could. It was a great shame as there would have been a big count tonight, but we only managed a species list. Even so that resulted in 95 species and we’re sure we missed a lot. As we were trying to dry everything before putting it away Graham and Anona drove up with the catch of night. An extremely rare and lovely looking micro called *Schiffermuellerina grandis*. The only other recent records of this moth have also been made in heavy rain! Well it takes all sorts to make a world! Others to lift our spirits were another scarce micro *Pempelia formosa*, **Scarce Silver-lines** and Val’s favourite **Lilac Beauty**. After such a soggy experience we’ve now come up with a plan to keep the traps (and moths) drier on the next such occasion. We really wouldn’t want to go through the agony again. However, sometimes the wet nights can be the best nights and so we wouldn’t want to become “fair weather mothers”.

We were ready now for anything the weather could throw at us and so the following night were determined to keep the moths dry. It turned out to be a dry night with only the threat of the wet stuff. This year the annual Moths In The Middle Group field trip was to Ladywalk Nature Reserve in North Warwickshire; a deliberate choice to get some more records for the book. We were all grateful to Mike and Annie West for arranging access for our visit. Dave Grundy and Nigel were already there when we arrived and we were soon joined by Patrick, Mike and Annie, John Bates and Darren Taylor. With everybody ready we all drove onto site and set up. After switching on it was time for a break. Patrick had given Val some rhubarb earlier in the week and she’d made a huge pie. The pie, along with custard and cream, was laid out in one of the bird hides and was soon dispatched into the many eager stomachs! A very entertaining and sociable evening was had by all. We weren’t overwhelmed with moths but a very good tally of 104 species was recorded. They included **Small Scallop, Eyed Hawk-moth, Mere Wainscot** and a first county record of the micro *Metzneria lappella*. A very successful night and thanks go to everyone (Mike!) for making sure there wasn’t any pie left to take home!

The last trip of the month was a return to Hednesford Hills. It didn't look promising as there had been heavy rain on and off throughout the day. We arrived to find the hills shrouded in mist and set up in the usual spot. Thankfully the rain had passed and the mist slowly lifted. On one visit to the traps Alan thought he could hear the churring of Nightjar. After moving further away from the generator he was able to confirm it was indeed a Nightjar. The fantastic churring kept us captivated for ages although no amount of white handkerchief waving could entice a sighting. Nice try though! On returning to look at the traps in one we found a very large, bedraggled looking moth. The shape gave it away as a **Pine Hawk-moth**, although Mervyn would have been proud of its lack of scales! Alan was convinced it would be a first county record and so reluctantly we took it home as proof. It was later confirmed as a first for Staffordshire. Our guess is that the moth had got dragged north in the strong southerly winds that accompanied the heavy rain, but we'll never really know. It did turn out to be a good night with another 100+ species recorded. **Plain Wave** and **Dark Spectacle** were other good moths we saw. As usual it was 4:00 a.m. before we set off for home.

## JULY

Val's last official day on holiday and we took a trip down to Slimbridge. Another poor weather day meant a proposed search for Clearwings had to be postponed. Instead an afternoon stroll around the grounds was taken. We managed to see Neil briefly as he was leaving to see a Shakespeare play performed in somebody's garden, with his wife! We know where he'd rather have spent the evening! Dave Grundy had said he would join us for the evening but hadn't arrived before we set off for the nearest pub and our dinner. After a nice meal we set off back to the Centre to put up the traps in the Reed Bed Filtration System. As we were doing that Dave finally turned up having had a horrendous journey from London. After a brief chat he headed for the pub and some well-earned rest and sustenance. When he returned everything was up and running and we'd already managed to pot the moth he wanted to see. The **Obscure Wainscot** settled happily for a photo and got the evening off to a good start. After such a long day, Dave set off for home around midnight glad that he'd made the effort. We stayed on and started counting up around 2:00 a.m. We managed a respectable 76 species with **Lackey** being a new one for us. We were also pleased with the **Bordered Beauty** and weird looking **Silky Wainscot**. We were not quite so happy with the 174 **Heart and Dart** we had to count! However, we had been warned of their abundance earlier in the day. Before we left we just had time to look at Neil's trap and scare his wife, Sue! She's not used to seeing people (unless it's Neil) at the end of the garden at that time of night!

Chaddesley Wood was next up and a venture into the Black Meadow. As all we could do here was put the traps in a long line up the middle of the meadow everyone helped everyone else get all the equipment to where it had to go. Quite rightly, Alan was the furthest from the gate. A super night was had in this unique bit of the woods complex. An excellent 114 species were recorded with everyone contributing something different. It was certainly worth the effort to get all the gear in the meadow. It was easier packing up as people drifted away at various times. That was until Alan was the last one left and realised how far into the meadow he was! Dawn's early light was spreading around the meadow as the last bit of equipment was ferried back to the car. Some of the moths seen were **Round-winged Muslin**, **Suspected**, **Lunar-spotted Pinion** and the rare micro *Monochroa lutulentella*. The journey home got off to a slow start as a young Tawny Owl was sitting in the middle of the road and was reluctant to move! Eventually it did fly into the wood. Incredibly a hundred yards further on a second Tawny Owl did the same thing! Thankfully it proved an uneventful return home after that.

Due to our neighbours being particularly noisy, Alan went back to Chaddesley Wood for some peace. That objective was achieved although a busy night with the amount of moths provided no rest. A respectable 85 species were recorded with a good count of **Drinker** (12), **Slender Brindle** and **Lackey** being among them. Probably the best record was of the micro *Coleophora betulella*, a rare resident in Worcestershire. Not surprisingly it was all quiet when Alan got home at 3:00 a.m.!

National Moth Night, Middleton Hall and Alan's birthday—what a combination!! Also joining the festivities were Nigel, Roy, John Bates, Margaret Moore (volunteer Warden for the Hall) and Roger Wasley, who had travelled all the way from Cheltenham to join us. With such a great area to choose from it was no surprise that we all ended up in different habitats spread all over the site. Roy was in the reeds, Nigel on the edge of the lake, Roger by a bit of young woodland and we were in an old orchard and on a different side of the lake. With the distances involved everybody could work up an appetite for the lavish picnic that Val had put together. Roger kindly loaned the back of his vehicle to be used as a table and everyone tucked in each time we passed it! Roger's trap was by far the busiest and we all had trouble keeping up with the amount of moths around it. Roger couldn't cope either and so after going through and gleaning as many species out of it as we could for the list he decided to call it a night. Well, you couldn't blame him as he did have a fair trek to get home. It took the rest of us ages to tally as it proved to be the biggest night of the year. Appropriate really as it was National Moth Night! An amazing 185 species were found with **Leopard Moth**, **Sloe Pug**, **White Satin**, **Garden Tiger** and **Southern Wainscot** being amongst the many highlights. We finally finished our count as dawn was breaking and the Swallows were having their breakfast over the lake. We were glad it was only a half hour drive home from the Hall.

After a few days recovery time, Nigel and Alan agreed to go and try to fill in a few blanks for the distribution maps at Crackley Wood near Kenilworth. Not being the most secure of sites, they had an early finish due to a "kind" member of the public unplugging a generator. Despite that, a very creditable 113 species were recorded. They included a second County record for the micro moth *Morophaga choragella*.

The following night's site couldn't have been more secure, as Dave Brown had managed to arrange a brace of visits to Bishops Hill. Alan was very disappointed not to be able to attend the first one and was determined not to miss out this time. Joining Dave and Alan were Mike Astley, Nigel and the site owner's ecologist Abel Drewett. The only drawbacks to these visits were the early finishing time that had to be agreed of 1:00 a.m. Even so the site showed its potential as by the deadline we managed to record a magnificent 165 species between us. Around 90 individuals of our target species, **Chalk Carpet**, were seen. That was the largest ever count for Warwickshire. Other highlights were **Dark UMBER**, **Pine Hawk-moth**, **Heart and Club**, **Bordered Sallow** and **Blackneck**. It really makes you wonder what might be found here given the opportunity to cover it properly.

Due to the rearranged dates for Bishops Hill, a date became free for a thorough session to take place at Ryton Meadows. As we had a good turn out tonight there was good coverage of the Meadows although a few decided to set up in the Wood. It made for a slightly disjointed arrangement of traps with a bit of a hike to the ones in the wood. As usual, Dave Brown's first hike was down to the nearest pub. He did, however, manage to persuade a few of the patrons of that establishment to return with him and join us! We had some good moths to show them. **Oak Eggars** are always impressive and with **Shark**, **Olive**, **Dingy Shears** and **Dusky Sallow** among the 100 species seen, a nice selection was able to be viewed.

The following evening Alan went to support Patrick on his annual Halesowen Wildlife Group Moth Night at Uffmoor Wood. It was just as well, as Patrick's brother-in-law, Gordon, had forgotten to bring the choke for his trap and so it wouldn't work. So, Alan ended up running a trap when he wasn't expecting to. It was a short session of only 2½ hours but 75 species were still recorded. The highlight was the sight of the Wildlife Group Chairman peddling up the main track with lights flashing everywhere. It was like a Christmas Tree on wheels. A vision that will live long in Alan's memory!!!

For the third consecutive night Alan was out. This time he made a solo visit to Hednesford Hills. Another cool, clear night still rewarded his efforts with 110 species being seen. **Dotted Clay** and **Straw Underwing** were two of them. The biggest problem of the night was a persistent Southern Hawker Dragonfly. Not long after the lights went on it flew into one of the traps and caused chaos. It didn't appear to matter how many times or how far away it was taken, it would return like a boomerang! Eventually it was put in a large pot and released once the car had been loaded at the end of the night. There always seems to be something to keep you busy.

After a well earned night off Alan returned to Hednesford Hills. This time Patrick came along for his first visit. A tour around the site was followed by the setting up of the traps. It was even cooler tonight than last time but it still proved a hit with Patrick. He managed to see quite a few new moths amongst the 108 species recorded. **Grass Emerald** and **Chevron** were two of them. Moth of the night though went to the micro *Rhopobota ustomaculana* which is at the southern end of its range at Hednesford. A successful first visit for Patrick to a very good site.

The annual B-B-Q and Moth Night at Windmill Hill, Nuneaton was next. After some of the mothers stuffing themselves silly it was time to set up the traps. Martin Kennard had a target species for tonight and so disappeared in a different direction but still close by. The rest of us tried to set up in a convenient route so everyone could wander easily from trap to trap. Always a well-attended event, the public stay later here than at other places and always seem to have had a good time before heading for home. However none of them made it to the finish at 4:00 a.m. when we did the same. A very good 142 species were seen tonight and they included Nigel's "bogey moth", **Scarce Silver-lines** and one of our favourites, **Bird's Wing**. Also Martin managed to find his target species which was **Annulet**. A very good night all round.

Val had a bit of a panic this evening as she wasn't sure if she would arrive home in time to go to the monthly Wyre Forest event. The previous day's tornado in Birmingham had left debris over her normal route home. It meant that the buses were taking unusual detours. Luckily, she just made it in time. We were glad to see Dave Grundy at the Visitor Centre as he lives only a few yards from where the tornado struck. A select group tonight with Dave, Graham and Anona, Mervyn and Rose, Patrick and ourselves having traps. Also with us were a couple who'd arranged their holiday from London around tonight's session. Let's hope we wouldn't let them down! We had a very good night and our visitors were suitably impressed by the moths that the Experimental Pools area of the forest produced. Among the 121 species were **Small Purple-barred**, **Dark Marbled Carpet**, **Golden-rod Pug**, **Black Arches**, **Waved Black** and **Double-lobed**. Yet again, our guests didn't manage to make it to the end and our 5:00 a.m. departure for home. A very good finish to the month.

## AUGUST

The month began with Alan talking Roy into joining him at Crown East Wood. Another guided tour was given for the first timer before the choosing of spots to set up. For a change an uneventful night passed as a steady stream of moths came to the lights. It proved to be the last 100+ species count of the year. Of note were the six **Thorns** (that's **August**, **Canary-shouldered**, **Dusky**, **September**, **Early** and **Purple**) as well as **Least Yellow Underwing** and **Antler Moth**.

A return visit to Middleton Hall was next. After last time it had a lot to live up to. The weather wasn't as good and so we set our sights a little lower. Even with it being arranged at the last minute, Nigel, John and Dave Grundy were able to attend. Also Margaret had a bit more time than on our previous visit and so managed a full tour of the traps. We recorded an interesting range of moths among the 69 species, with yet another **Golden-rod Pug**, **Sallow**, **Rosy Rustic** and **Bulrush Wainscot** being some of them.

The monthly trip to Chaddesley Wood had come around again. As it was the height of the holiday season only Roy, Jack and Mervyn joined Alan tonight. Plenty of “fun” ensued as the Hornets had “turned” and were coming to the lights. Despite the Hornets a good night was had with Roy taking catch of the night honours with **Devon Carpet**. Mervyn was runner-up with the only moth in his actinic, an **Angle-striped Sallow**. Yet another **Golden-rod Pug** came a distant third amongst the 78 species recorded.

An eventful night at Hednesford Hills with Roy will live long in the memory! After returning from a tour of the site we ran into a young lad walking his dog. We got chatting, or, to be more accurate, listening. Occasionally managing to get the odd word in, we told him why we were there. He appeared interested and said he would return, after taking his dog home,. On his return the evening ran a little out of control and ended up with Roy enjoying Baked Potatoes freshly prepared on a fire. It wasn't until Alan said that he'd have to be really quiet as we counted up the traps that our guest went home. The glory of peace finally being ours!!! We think it was the realisation that he wouldn't be able to keep quiet that finally did it. Amazingly, through all the chaos we managed to record 95 species. Another County and so of course another **Golden-rod Pug**, along with **Deep-brown Dart** and the Pyralid moth *Eudonia truncicolella* were some of them.

Some sanity was restored by the weekend. Val returned from the pub to learn she was off to Ryton Meadows as it was due to be done again. On arrival we waited for a short shower to pass before setting up. After that the clouds kept passing over without releasing any rain until they cleared completely. With no cover and wet ground the temperature dropped and it was time to count up. We were happy with the 46 species recorded from the two traps. **Flame Shoulder** and **Six-striped Rustic** were two of the most numerous.

Alan and Patrick met Dave Grundy in a pub in deepest Worcestershire for the next event. After Roger finally joined them it was off to the trapping site for this evening. The wonderfully named Grimley Brick Pits was the final destination after going through a gate and across three fields. It was a lovely spot right next to the River Severn. After a short discussion everyone had decided where they would set up. It seemed a really slow night as there was plenty of time for friendly banter. A thoroughly enjoyable evening reached 1:00 a.m. and time to tally. The odd “new for the night” species kept arriving right up to the end. It was a real surprise to find out that we'd amassed 88 species in total. **Rosy Footman**, **Red Underwing** and **Pinion-streaked Snout** were all good moths. The one that made us laugh was the micro *Euzophera cinerosella*. It feeds on Wormwood. Alan hadn't seen it before and so finding out the foodplant shouldn't have been surprised as his traps were in a field overflowing with the stuff!

A return trip to Ryton Meadows was prompted by a phone call from Mike Astley. Jack also made it. Although both Mike and Jack headed for the wood, Alan stuck to the meadows. After switching on, Alan took the ten minute walk over to the others to find out exactly where they were. After returning to his own traps Alan was pleased to see a torchlight heading his way from the middle of the meadow. All credit to Mike for making the effort. After looking in our traps Alan joined Mike for the return journey. Making a circuit of the “wood” traps meant time was getting on and by the time Alan got back to the meadow it was time to start tallying. A productive night in both habitats produced a list just short of the hundred species. While still counting, Mike's headlights approached and Jack got out and produced a **Gold Spot**. A really lovely moth. Thanks were given to them both for bringing it up the hill before goodbyes were exchanged. Alan's best moths were both micros. **Beautiful China-mark** and *Cnephasia pasiuana* which are both very uncommon in Warwickshire.

A return trip down the M5 to Slimbridge was next. We enjoy helping Neil on his public events as we get to hear his talk and slide show. It's always entertaining and informative. Unusually for us, we had

to leave early tonight as we had a long day tomorrow. However the generator forced our hand as it reluctantly ran for a couple of hours before giving up totally. So we packed up even earlier than we expected. It didn't mean we left any earlier though as a local guy called Angus had three traps still running as well as Neil's. With plenty of moths still to be enjoyed we stayed on and even saw a couple of new species for us. Both **Gold Spot** and **Lempke's Gold Spot** were caught. It was very useful having the time and comfort of the Peng Observatory to look closely at the differences between the species. Neil then disappeared for a few moments before returning with a bag of sunflower seeds from the shop. As well as the seeds, the bag contained lots of **Indian Meal Moths** running around. They weren't quite as impressive as **Lempke's Gold Spot**, but a new moth all the same. As we left early (2:00 a.m.) the evenings tally only reached 40 species but disappointed we weren't!

Thankfully a midweek visit to Nigel's meant the generator was up and running again for the eagerly awaited visit to Hartlebury Common. A good turn out gathered at this really different site. Angus, the guy we met at Slimbridge, had been busy on the phone and so a mate of his, Steve Whitehouse, was a new member of the crowd tonight. Unfortunately we couldn't get his trap working. The Common was still well lit with most of it covered. It looked superb. The mothing was excellent with plenty of the sites specialties on show. When it came to tally time, Val went back to the car park to take care of Patrick's "mobile photographic studio" in the back of his truck. It was then that we had the usual visit from the local Constabulary. Rosemary Winnall, who arranged our visit, had already told the Police that we'd be there. However, it appears the Police didn't tell the Police!! Val managed to convince them everything was above board and they left happy. Their parting comment informing us that the Police dogs are trained on the common around 3:30 a.m. added a little urgency to the count. All was well as we'd all finished with half an hour to spare. A very good night ended with 88 species being seen. All the usual quality moths were found such as **White-line Dart**, **Archer's Dart**, **Beautiful Yellow Underwing**, both **Heath** and **Hedge Rustics**. Nigel managed to get the find of the night with two individuals of the micro *Pempelia palumbella*. It's a moth that Tony Simpson had been searching for on the common for a long time. Unfortunately for him he'd already left when it was found!

With both Alan and Nigel having to take home the *Pempelia* moths to identify, it enticed Tony to join us at Crown East Wood so he could see one for himself. Patrick and Roy also made it down to the wood. A bit later Richard and Carol joined the throng. A magnificent night was had by all as Tony imparted his local knowledge on the history of the wood. The traps were arranged in a good circular shape which made for a good wander from one to the next. There were plenty of moths to keep everyone entertained too. Everybody had headed for home by the time we managed to start counting up at 3:00 a.m.! Eventually the final tally was an excellent 93 species with **Pale Eggar**, **Maiden's Blush** and **Centre-barred Sallow** some of our favourites.

## SEPTEMBER

As Alan had a long standing agreement to go to a Rugby League game in Wakefield, this month's Chaddesley Wood date was brought forward a day. Another excellent turnout of recorders meant good coverage of the wood tonight. As we had to leave early (again!), we decided not to get blocked in the wood and so set our traps up in Black Meadow across the road. With everyone else up in the wood, Alan was the only one to get collared by a local wildlife writer and photographer that Mervyn knew. He'd been trying to find us at the wood for the last three months. This was the first time he'd actually seen a light as he passed. He wanted to get a photo of people around a trap. Unfortunately, Alan was it and so had to have his picture taken! It did have an up side as, while kneeling by a trap, he found a roosting Purple Hairstreak butterfly. After one tour of the many traps it was time for us to start counting up. We recorded a good 66 species which included some more **Pale Eggar**, **Autumnal Rustic**, **Feathered Gothic** and **Pink-barred Sallow**.

The following day Alan arrived back from Wakefield to find Val sitting in the dark! The power had been off for over an hour causing her to miss Coronation Street! Shame! She was not happy! It didn't get any better after a phone call to find out what was going on (or off). She was told it could be hours until power was restored. So Alan, not wanting to miss a nights recording, put the generator to use in the yard. The light from the trap managed to light up the back room and so some record entering could take place while producing more at the same time. Thanks to the generator a creditable 25 species showed up with **Blood-vein**, a very fresh looking **Speckled Wood** and our largest count of **Large Yellow Underwing** for the year being recorded. The power finally returned after a few hours.

A late decision by Patrick and Alan to give Knowles Coppice a go was made as the weather looked OK. There was a little bit of mist hanging around as we arrived, but it was still quite warm. It soon cooled down as the skies cleared and the mist rose so it was a slow night. Alan had a laugh as Patrick (I never get any Hornets) found one of his traps full of them! He had to switch off the light and move the trap before switching on again. As it was cool, the Hornets stopped flying. There weren't many moths flying either. The ones that were had some quality. Both **Oak Lutestring** and **Neglected Rustic** were new for Patrick among only 28 species recorded.

Another last minute decision surprised Val as she found herself on the way to Ryton Meadows. Nobody else made it and they probably were glad when we found ourselves in the middle of a large thunderstorm. The traps were already up and running by the time the rain started and the plan to keep them dry was working well. When the storm had finally passed and we ventured out to look in the traps we found them well populated with moths. A very satisfying 51 species were recorded. It was all worthwhile as we got an excellent record for the micro *Depressaria badiella* as well as seeing **Dark Sword-grass**, **Brindled Green**, **Mouse Moth** and the spectacular **Frosted Orange**.

Another visit to Chaddesley Wood was made a couple of weeks later. Alan left a message for Mervyn to say he was going and after an awful journey was pleased to see him waiting by the gate. We were later than planned and so it was a bit of a rush setting up. For once, the weather stayed good with high cloud keeping the temperature up. With there being no wind at all a steady stream of moths flew to the traps. As Mervyn had been up since 5:00 a.m. he decided to call it a night around 10:00 p.m. Alan gave it a few more hours before doing the same. A very good 29 species were recorded with some really colourful ones such as **Barred Sallow** and the superb **Merveille du Jour**.

With the nights drawing in it was a struggle for Val to make it to the last Wyre Forest trip of the year. Her determination was rewarded as we made it just before the 7:00 p.m. meeting time. Quite a few people had come along but only Dave Grundy, Mervyn and ourselves had traps. We'd just managed to set up in the Park House area before it started to rain. It was a bit breezy too so we weren't expecting a great night. Everyone kept cheerful throughout the bad weather and enjoyed the circuit round the traps. The rain did finally stop but it then got cold. Most of the non-trappers then headed for home. The rest of us started to count up and as usual that's when the best moth arrived as a **Merveille du Jour** landed on Dave's thumb. We managed 27 species between us with **Vapourer**, **Oak Nycteoline** and a persistent **Red Admiral** amongst them.

## OCTOBER

First Sunday of the month, so it must be Chaddesley Wood. A magnificent turnout tonight allowed us to find traps all over the wood. Ours tended to be full of those pesky Hornets as one of them was right near a nest. It kept Alan busy anyway! It wasn't a particularly warm night but with no wind again the moths were flying. A very enjoyable night ended with a superb 39 species being found. **Yellow-line Quaker** and the late flurry of **Green-brindled Crescent** were two of them.

With Val on holiday, we ventured down to Essex to help with the autumn jobs at Alan's mums. The first night was good weather wise and we were very pleased with the 33 species we found; especially so as we got two of our target species, **The Mallow** and **Feathered Ranunculus**. The next night wasn't quite as good but we still managed 26 species. **Red-line Quaker**, **Orange Sallow** and **Large Wainscot** were three of them.

Returning to the Midlands a visit to Ryton Meadows was next. A wet and breezy night was braved by Alan and Mike Astley. They both got a right good soaking but didn't mind as they'd managed 22 species. The first **November Moths** of the year were seen, but what made it all worthwhile was the **Dusky-lemon Sallow** that was in one of Mike's traps. A very good record for Warwickshire.

A few days later and Patrick phoned to say he was off to Uffmoor Wood. Alan joined him for what proved to be another damp night. They did well though, as the moths didn't seem to mind too much. The first one in Patrick's trap was a new one for him, a **Deep-brown Dart**. That made it worth coming straight away. When the rain stopped and the full moon became visible, it was time to tally. The best trap turned out to be the one next to the boot of our car, typical!! A satisfactory 19 species were recorded with **Autumnal Moth**, **Green-brindled Crescent** and the micro *Epinotia sordidana* being new for both of them.

The month ended with another visit to Chaddesley Wood. The warmest October day provided a perfect night for moths. Mervyn popped by to say "hello" but didn't stay and so Alan could continue with the draft of this epic! While he was doing that, he kept hearing fallen leaves being shifted. As he'd heard Muntjac Deer calling earlier he suspected that was what was causing the noise. However, after about three hours of this he finally managed to get the torch in the right spot to see the culprit. A Water Rail looking back at him was not what he expected! At least the mystery was solved. With 20 species being recorded it took quite a while to tally tonight. Another new one for us was **Figure of Eight**. Also recorded were **Pale November Moth** and **Dark Chestnut**. A very successful trip. We later found out that Mervyn had a **Figure of Eight** in his garden the same night and it was new for him too.

## **NOVEMBER.**

With the weather not being the best, Alan and Mervyn were happy to forget the usual session at Chaddesley Wood. That was until Jack phoned and talked them both into it. Jack deserves all the credit for the really good night they had. Although there are not that many moths around at this time of year, a steady round of all the traps always produced a new one for the night. All very enjoyable but by 10:00 p.m. (well we had switched on at 5:00 p.m.!) it was agreed to tally. A species count of 14 was very pleasing. We'd managed to get all three **November Moth** species (that's **November**, **Pale November** and **Autumnal Moth**), **Sprawler** and one of our all time favourites, **December Moth**. Thanks Jack. If you force us into some more nights like that we won't complain!!

After that night the weather that had been a pain most of the year took a real turn for the worse. Constant northerly winds for the next three weeks ended the year early. However, the equipment was used on one more occasion. After that horrendous night in Wyre Forest earlier in the year where it rained and rained, Val put in a request to Barclays Community Affairs for some umbrellas to shelter the moths. They were provided as long as Barclays could get a photo of them in action for publicity purposes. So at the social gathering at Wyre Forest Visitor Centre Val set to work. As it was such a cold night it wasn't worth setting the traps for real so the car-park was the venue for this extraordinary event! Mervyn was roped in to help and Annie got a good photo. Job done. So if you do see this photo anywhere you'll know who was behind it!

## CONCLUSION

Well, what a busy year. Hard work sometimes, but enjoyable 99% of the time. Some interesting things have been discovered with plenty more still to be. Thanks to the British weather we'll never get two years the same but we could do with another similar to 2003!! Hopefully you'll have enjoyed reading this second year report on what's been happening with YOUR equipment.

Once again thanks to all the wonderful people we've come across in 2005. Let's hope all our enthusiasm will still be firing in 2006.

## QUICK REFERENCE

Date	Site	Species
15/01/05	RYTON WOOD, Warwickshire	11
17/02/05	CHADDESLEY WOOD, Worcestershire	16
08/03/05	UFFMOOR WOOD, Worcestershire	13
09/03/05	CHADDESLEY WOOD, Worcestershire	20
10/03/05	CLOSE WOOD, Warwickshire	12
16/03/05	CROWN EAST WOOD, Warwickshire	16
17/03/05	SLIMBRIDGE, Gloucestershire	6
18/03/05	RYTON MEADOWS, Warwickshire	27
25/03/05	OVERSLEY WOOD, Warwickshire	38
27/03/05	POOLEY FIELDS, Warwickshire	13
02/04/05	KNOWLES COPPICE, Shropshire	24
03/04/05	CHADDESLEY WOOD, Worcestershire	36
11/04/05	KNOWLES COPPICE, Shropshire	22
12/04/05	CROWN EAST WOOD, Worcestershire	22
22/04/05	WYRE FOREST, Worcestershire	45
23/04/05	WHITACRE HEATH, Warwickshire	11
29/04/05	RYTON MEADOWS, Warwickshire	56
01/05/05	CHADDESLEY WOOD, Worcestershire	54
06/05/05	MERIDEN SHAFTS, Warwickshire	28
07/05/05	WYRE FOREST (Lodge Hill), Worcestershire	12
13/05/05	CHADDESLEY WOOD, Worcestershire	7
15/05/05	CHADDESLEY WOOD, Worcestershire	50
19/05/05	CHADDESLEY WOOD, Worcestershire	62
21/05/05	GREAT WOLFORD WOOD, Warwickshire	21
25/05/05	UFFMOOR WOOD, Worcestershire	76
27/05/05	WYRE FOREST, Worcestershire	104
29/05/05	RYTON MEADOWS, Warwickshire	50
02/06/05	SWIFT VALLEY (Rugby), Warwickshire	67
04/06/05	OVERSLEY WOOD, Warwickshire	93
05/06/05	SANTREY HILL WOOD, Worcestershire	69
06/06/05	WEELEY, Essex	14
07/06/05	WEELEY, Essex	22
08/06/05	WEELEY, Essex	36
10/06/05	MONKWOOD, Worcestershire	68
11/06/05	HEDNESFORD HILLS, Staffordshire	51
16/06/05	KNOWLES COPPICE, Shropshire	111
17/06/05	RYTON MEADOWS, Warwickshire	72
18/06/05	OVERSLEY WOOD, Warwickshire	126
20/06/05	WINSHILL (Burton), Staffordshire	63

22/06/05	CROWN EAST WOOD, Worcestershire	118
24/06/05	WYRE FOREST, Worcestershire	95
25/06/05	LADYWALK, Warwickshire	103
29/06/05	HEDNESFORD HILLS, Staffordshire	104
01/07/05	SLIMBRIDGE, Gloucestershire	76
03/07/05	BLACK MEADOW, Worcestershire	114
07/07/05	CHADDESLEY WOOD, Worcestershire	85
09/07/05	MIDDLETON HALL, Warwickshire	185
13/07/05	CRACKLEY WOOD, Warwickshire	113
14/07/05	BISHOPS HILL, Warwickshire	165
16/07/05	RYTON MEADOWS, Warwickshire	100
17/07/05	UFFMOOR WOOD, Worcestershire	74
18/07/05	HEDNESFORD HILLS, Staffordshire	110
20/07/05	HEDNESFORD HILLS, Staffordshire	108
23/07/05	WINDMILL HILL, Warwickshire	142
29/07/05	WYRE FOREST, Shropshire	121
02/08/05	CROWN EAST WOOD, Worcestershire	100
06/08/05	MIDDLETON HALL, Warwickshire	69
07/08/05	CHADDESLEY WOOD, Worcestershire	78
10/08/05	HEDNESFORD HILLS, Staffordshire	95
13/08/05	RYTON MEADOWS, Warwickshire	46
15/08/05	GRIMLEY BRICK PITS, Worcestershire	88
17/08/05	RYTON MEADOWS, Warwickshire	98
20/08/05	SLIMBRIDGE, Gloucestershire	40
26/08/05	HARTLEBURY COMMON, Worcestershire	84
28/08/05	CROWN EAST WOOD, Worcestershire	93
03/09/05	CHADDESLEY WOOD, Worcestershire	66
04/09/05	OUR BACK YARD!!, Worcestershire	25
06/09/05	KNOWLES COPPICE, Shropshire	28
09/09/05	RYTON MEADOWS, Warwickshire	51
21/09/05	CHADDESLEY WOOD, Worcestershire	29
30/09/05	WYRE FOREST, Worcestershire	27
02/10/05	CHADDESLEY WOOD, Worcestershire	39
06/10/05	WEELEY, Essex	33
07/10/05	WEELEY, Essex	26
11/10/05	RYTON MEADOWS, Warwickshire	22
16/10/05	UFFMOOR WOOD, Worcestershire	19
27/10/05	CHADDESLEY WOOD, Worcestershire	20
06/11/05	CHADDESLEY WOOD, Worcestershire	14

## TRIPS BY COUNTY

Essex	5
Gloucestershire	3
Shropshire	5
Staffordshire	6
Warwickshire	26
Worcestershire	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>



*Scarce Silver-lines*



*Gold Spot*



*Bird's Wing*



*Pale Eggar*



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