

PNHS Moth Evening at Muirshiel Visitor Centre

Friday 20th June 2025



Looking at moths in the trap

A wild night was had by the few who ventured out after 9pm on a Friday night to go mothing up by Lochwinnoch. Gordon Phillips had arranged with Pat Emslie, Ranger at Muirshiel Country Park, to host a moth trapping evening to which members of PNHS were invited, along with local moth experts, Paul Tatner and Paul Mapplebeck . Pat very kindly opened the Visitor Centre to provide power for the moth traps. This also gave us access to the facilities, which we greatly appreciated. Whilst Gordon was busy setting up the traps, we had a very civilized start to the evening, drinking cups of tea and eating delicious baking by Anne Phillips. Then, of course, we had to wait for it to get dark and the moths to arrive, so we had further tea and cake!



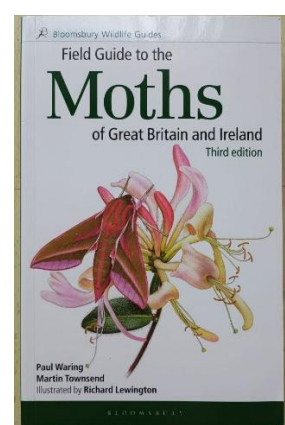
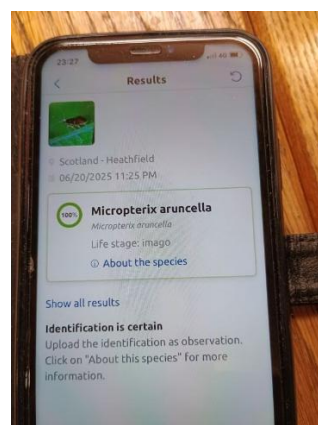
Set up of moth traps: Mercury vapour trap and white sheet behind trap to attract moths

Once the light started to fade we were kept very busy checking outside for moths flying around, and at the traps, and taking them indoors to identify them. Some could be trapped directly into the sample tubs, for others we used nets – not so easy to do. It was even more tricky to transfer the moths from the nets to the tubs. Sometimes we (usually me!) accidentally let them go and then had to run around inside trying to recatch them.



Fun trying to re-catch an escaped moth

A number of moth guides were available, as well as the expertise of Gordon, Pat, and the two Pauls. They recommended using the app 'Obsidentify' to help narrow down the search and then consult the guides to make a positive ID. All those identified were noted down and others which needed to be studied in more detail were set aside for later identification.



Transferring moth from net to sample tub Obsidentify app and Bloomsbury field guide

In the wee hours of the morning we released the moths which had been identified and turned off the traps and emptied them, counting what was caught. There appeared to be a silky, silvery sludge at the bottom of the traps. This turned out to be a mass of thousands of midges! We didn't need the trap to know there were midges there, as they had been biting us all evening. Another reason for appreciating the visitor centre being open - so we could escape indoors from them.



Moths clockwise from top left: Drinker, Mottled Beauty, Purple Clay, True Lover's Knot, Saxon

Our work done, we ventured home, tired but elated in having seen so many fabulous moths. The work wasn't done for Gordon though. He spent the next few days studying and identifying the unknowns and drawing up the list of what we had seen and captured that evening.

Report by Kirsty Menzies

Photographs by Gordon Phillips, Anne Phillips and Kirsty Menzies

Many thanks to Gordon, Anne and Pat for organising, hosting, providing refreshments and delivering a fabulous evening which we all thoroughly enjoyed.

Species List

Species list from communal traps around building

| | Count |
|---|-------|
| <i>Aproaerema anthyllidella</i> Vetch Moth) | 1 |
| <i>Argyresthia conjugella</i> (Apple Fruit Moth) | 2 |
| <i>Argyresthia conjugella</i> f <i>aerariella</i> (Apple Fruit Moth). | 1 |
| Beautiful Golden Y | 5 |
| <i>Blastobasis lacticolella</i> (Large Pale Masoner) | 3 |
| Bright-line Brown-eye | 1 |
| Brimstone Moth | 4 |
| Broom Moth | 2 |
| Brown Rustic | 8 |
| Buff-tip | 1 |
| <i>Chrysoteuchia culmella</i> (Garden Grass-moth) | 5 |
| Clouded Border | 3 |
| Clouded Silver | 1 |
| Clouded-bordered Brindle | 2 |
| Common Carpet | 1 |
| Common White Wave | 1 |
| Coxcomb Prominent | 1 |
| Dark Arches | 1 |
| Dark Brocade | 2 |
| Drinker | 41 |
| Dusky Brocade | 4 |
| Elephant Hawk-moth | 1 |
| <i>Epiblema scutulana</i> (Thistle Root-borer) | 1 |
| <i>Eudonia lacustrata</i> (Tawny Grey) | 2 |
| Flame Shoulder | 16 |
| Green Arches | 7 |
| Green Carpet | 7 |
| Grey Pine Carpet | 1 |
| Iron Prominent | 1 |
| Large Yellow Underwing | 15 |
| Light Emerald | 2 |
| Map-winged Swift | 13 |
| Marbled Minor | 2 |
| Marbled Minor agg. | 17 |
| Middle-barred Minor | 7 |
| Mottled Beauty | 2 |
| Narrow-winged Pug | 15 |
| <i>Notocelia trimaculana</i> (Hawthorn Shoot Moth) | 1 |
| <i>Pandemis cerasana</i> (Barred Fruit-tree Tortrix) | 5 |
| Peppered Moth | 3 |
| Purple Bar | 1 |
| Purple Clay | 12 |
| Red-necked Footman | 1 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Satyr Pug | 1 |
| Saxon | 2 |
| <i>Scoparia ambigualis</i> (Common Grey) | 1 |
| <i>Scoparia pyralella</i> (Brown-spot Grey) | 6 |
| Shaded Pug | 2 |
| Silver-ground Carpet | 10 |
| Small Phoenix | 1 |
| Snout | 3 |
| Spruce Carpet | 1 |
| Straw Dot | 1 |
| Triple-spotted Clay | 2 |
| True Lover's Knot | 4 |
| <i>Udea olivalis</i> | 4 |
| White Ermine | 2 |

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Additional species from Paul Tatner's trap at lower pond

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| Common Lutestring |
| Common marbled carpet |
| Flounced rustic |
| Gold swift |
| Northern spinach |
| <i>Phiaris schulziana</i> (Large Marble) |
| Poplar Hawk-moth |
| Rustic shoulder knot |
| Small angle shades |

Additional species from Paul Mapplebeck's trap in the woods

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| Welsh Wave |
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