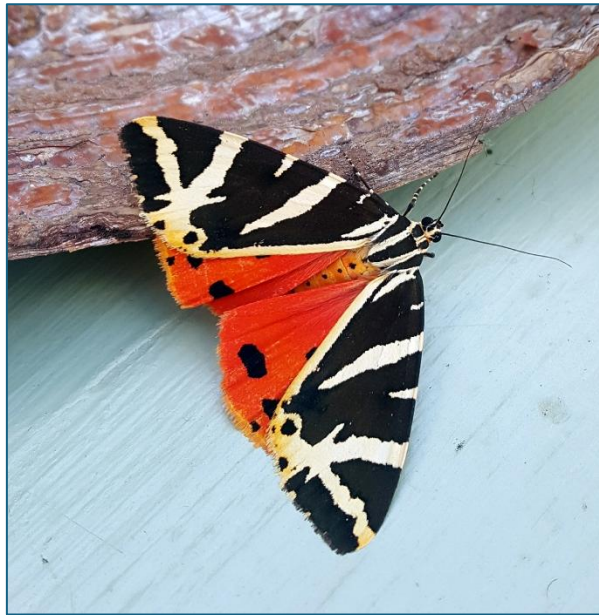


## National Moth Recording Scheme

### Winter 2025/2026 Newsletter

Welcome to the winter newsletter for the National Moth Recording Scheme.



*Jersey Tiger, Ben Sale*

## Big Butterfly Count 2025

The Big Butterfly Count continues to reach more people and this year we reached our highest ever number of participants, with over 125,000 people taking part, recording 1.7 million butterflies and moths. Between 18<sup>th</sup> July and 10<sup>th</sup> August participants recorded an average of 10.3 butterflies and moths during each 15-minute count. While the more Lepidoptera-friendly weather led to a marked improvement on last summer's record low average count of just 7.2 butterflies or moths, this year's numbers were only broadly average by modern standards.

One of the species that fared well this summer was the [Jersey Tiger](#) Moth, which had a record year. Over 11,000 individuals were spotted within the three-week survey period, an increase of 174% when compared to 2024. It is thought this summer's record breaking warm, relatively dry conditions have helped them spread their wings in abundance and settle in parts of the UK where they have may never have occurred before.

Furthermore, many of our inboxes across the organisation were flooded this summer with reports of Jersey Tiger sightings with photographs from Cardiff, Birmingham, Cambridgeshire and Essex. This has been a great opportunity to introduce new people to the world of moths and recording them. We expect following your verification of this year's records to see a continued expansion of this stunning moth's UK distribution.

A big thank you to everyone who took part in this year's Big Butterfly Count and helping to promote the survey in your local area. The Big Butterfly Count in 2026 will run between 17<sup>th</sup> July and 9<sup>th</sup> August so be sure to make a note in your diary.

## UK Moth Recorders' Meeting

The upcoming UK Moth Recorders Meeting will be held via Zoom on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026. The programme has been finalised, and bookings are [open here](#)

**10:00** Welcome *Julie Williams, CEO, Butterfly Conservation*

**10:10** National Moth Recording Scheme update. *Richard Austin, Butterfly Conservation*

**10:30** Uncovering the Mysteries of More Magnificent Moths. *Rebecca Levey, Butterfly Conservation*

**10:50** *Comfort Break*

**11:00** Butterfly Conservation Northern Ireland's progress on our Goal 1 Moth Species. *Rose Cremin, Butterfly Conservation*

**11:20** Title TBC *Andrew Crory, County Moth Recorder for Northern Ireland*

**11:40** Title TBC *Abigail Lowe, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology*

**12:00** *Comfort Break*

**12:10** The impacts of urbanisation on moths and other pollinators *Emilie Ellis, University of Sheffield*

**12:30** The Jewel Box – how moths illuminate nature's hidden rules *Tim Blackburn, University College London*

**12:55** *Closing remarks*

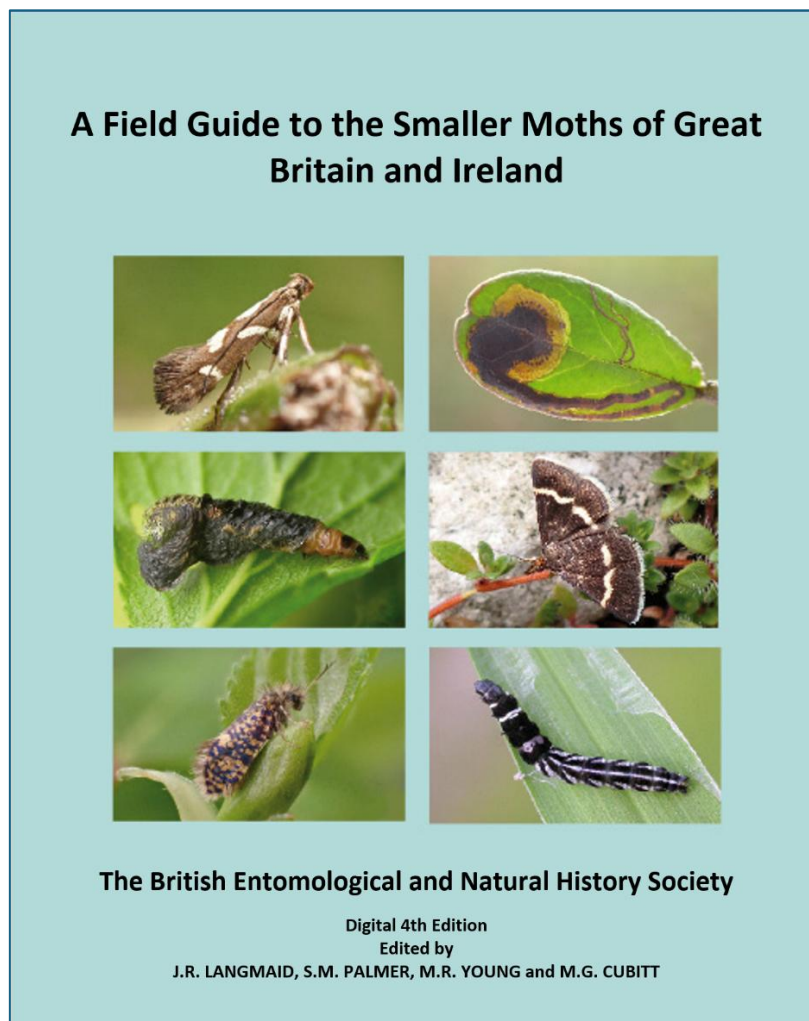
**13:30 – 15:00** County Moth Recorder and Verification Assistant Meeting, by invitation via a different meeting link

## Are you interested in micro moths? Mark Young

If you are interested in finding and enjoying micro-moths, there is a brand-new, up-to-date version of *A Field Guide to the Smaller Moths of Great Britain and Ireland*, available **FREE** for you to download and use! Just visit:

<https://www.benhs.org.uk/publications/smaller-moths-4th-edition/>

The previous edition of the field guide was published in 2018 and since then the editors, Steve Palmer and Mark Young, have been accumulating lots of new information on the lives of micros, so that a new edition was urgently needed. Steve and Mark were delighted to be able to add Mark Cubitt to the editorial team and, with his expert computing skills, the *updated 4<sup>th</sup> edition is now available*, not just as a new version of the PDF file of the text, but as a *fully searchable* Excel-based version, and also *an APP of the searchable version*, that runs easily on Android phones.



*Front page of the new 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the field guide. Mark Young*

Each of these three versions are available as free downloads on the website of the British Entomological and Natural History Society, from the address above. The BENHS is the publisher for the Field Guide and, as part of their excellent and very welcome policy to make important material free to all entomologists, now have the latest Lepidoptera Checklist and the Field Guide as free downloads on their website.

When you find signs of a micro-moth, using the searchable version, either as the Excel spreadsheet on your computer, or as the APP on your phone, you can enter 'life cycle stage', 'month found', 'associated foodplant', 'species name', or any 'free text' and the likely candidate species are selected and displayed for you, together with their standardised life cycle text, as this appears in the full guide. As a final help, if you double click on a species name, you are immediately transferred to the account and photos of the micro in UKMoths.

All this should make it easy for field workers to begin to identify the micros that they are finding as larvae, mines, leaf shelters or any other feeding sign, as they survey their favourite sites. There is also a box on the website to allow anyone to add comments and new life cycle information, so that when the underlying field guide is updated at the end of every season, their new findings can be included.

Good hunting!

## Recording team – plan for 2026

This year has seen significant staff changes here at Butterfly Conservation. In late spring I took on the role of Recording Schemes Officer after Zoë Randle left the organisation earlier in the year. In the summer, Claire Pascaretti took onto the Biological Data Officer after Les Evans-Hill's retirement. More recently, Sujan Sapkota has begun as the new GIS Officer after we said goodbye to Karen Purdy.



*Richard Austin (Recording Schemes Officer), Claire Pascaretti (Biological Data Officer) & Sujan Sapkota (GIS Officer)*

This month we said farewell (for now!) to Claire as she began her maternity leave. Here is the plan for the team over the coming months:

- **January:** Interviews for maternity cover for the Biological Data Officer role. In this transition period, please use [recording@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:recording@butterfly-conservation.org) for all communication regarding data. Please continue to send data as this will be picked up by the Biological Data Support Officer once they are settled in post.
- **January** UK Moth Recorders meeting to be held on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup>, held online. This will be followed by a County Moth Recorders meeting, also held online.
- **February - July:** The new Biological Data Support Officer will be in post for a 12-month role. They will continue Claire's work with backlog imports following the new guidelines, support county recorders with data-related queries and data-exchange processes. They will export data on request.
- **July:** Claire is planning to return as Biological Data Officer, and our Biological Data Support Officer will continue in post for approx. 6 months which will give greater capacity to the team. We hope this can achieve faster clearance of the data backlog, an opportunity to modernise data flows and improve the database structure. Furthermore, enhanced support for county recorders and volunteers, especially during the busy periods.
- **July – August:** Big Butterfly Count 2026 will take place between 17<sup>th</sup> July and 9<sup>th</sup> August.

## Alastair Somerville

Sadly, we have some news to share with you regarding Alastair Somerville, the County Moth Recorder for Dumfriesshire (VC72), Kirkcudbrightshire (VC73) and Wigtownshire (VC74). Earlier this month, Alastair passed away at home surrounded by his family after a short illness. He has left a lasting legacy within the moth community, and we are immensely grateful for the time and effort he gave in his role as County Moth Recorder. We would like to share our condolences with Alastair's family and his friends and colleagues across Scotland.

Reuben Singleton, the County Moth Recorder for Peeblesshire, said of Alastair:

*'I first met him over 30 years ago when he worked for Scottish Wildlife Trust. Although he has focussed on moths latterly, being county recorder for my neighbouring counties of Midlothian and then Dumfriesshire, he was immensely knowledgeable about natural history and conservation in general. More importantly he was a good man who always found time to share his knowledge. He will be a big loss to the Scottish nature community.'*



## The Big Give Christmas Challenge

We would like to thank everyone that supported our Big Give Christmas Challenge appeal. This year we showcased the striking Dark Bordered Beauty alongside our campaign and set a sizeable target of £75,000 (from match funding and public donations) to reach in 7 days. We were thrilled to reach our target of £35,000 from public donations in this period.

We also hosted a webinar during the campaign period that linked to the appeal theme of the Dark Bordered Beauty. The webinar reached the 1,000 limit very quickly, with well over 500 attending on the evening. The webinar is available to watch now on the [BC YouTube channel](#).



*Dark Bordered Beauty, Roy Leverton*

## The Biological Data Support Officer

The job advert for the Biological Data Support Officer is now live on our website. If you are interested in the role, or know anyone who you think may be interested, please take a look at the following link:

<https://butterflyconservation.livevacancies.co.uk/#/job/details/179>

## Thank you

I just want to take the opportunity to thank you all for your hard work this year. I appreciate that there has been a lot of change over the past 12 months, so thank you for your patience as new staff have taken time to get up to speed with new systems and better understand how the verification community is set up across the UK.

Regrading data repatriation of moth records within the Big Butterfly Count data, this is very much in progress. Due to more urgent recruitment issues and enquiries, I have had to focus my time elsewhere this month, but the data will be sent out early next year. Thank you for your patience.

I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year and I look forward to working with you all in 2026!

Richard

Recording Schemes Officer

