

Cheshire Moth Recording Group Newsletter

Issue 3

April 2001

Welcome!

Welcome to the third issue of the Cheshire Moth recording group newsletter. Spring is now underway and hopefully you all have your traps out recording early season moths. Lots of adult moths that hibernate over the winter are now on the wing, as well as the first rush of spring moths that always seem to coincide with the blooming of the sallow bushes.

The current foot and mouth outbreak is playing havoc with recording meetings. The first case has now been confirmed in the county, and we have to be responsible in visiting sites. The meeting to survey the Biodiversity Action Plan specie, Belted Beauty, has been cancelled, as has the early season visit to Little Budworth. It seems that the restrictions are set to last for some time so doubtless other meetings will have to be abandoned. Marbury/Anderton is closed as well.

However, this also presents us with an opportunity to survey some less well known sites. We are currently trying to arrange visits to some areas that are still open - more news as soon as possible.

Despite the doom and gloom in the countryside, moths are flying. I've recorded a number of interesting moths in the garden already this year. Get your traps out in the garden and get catching!

Field Trips - Additional Meetings

The following are new field trip for your diaries. If anyone has organised trips and would like them included in future newsletter please let me know.

Saturday 7th April 2001. We have arranged permission to visit Lindow Common SSSI (many thanks to Steve Hind). The site is open heathland (heather), surrounded by mature trees and scrub, with a lake, a few pools and marshy areas and should produce an interesting selection of species. Access is easy. There is a car park at the northern end SJ833814.

Meet in the Car Park at about 7:15pm.

Friday July 27th The New Mills Natural History Society have arranged access to Jacksons Brickworks, Higher Poynton SJ9484 for a trapping session. Both the car park, which is normally locked at night and the reserve proper will be open for transporting generators and traps. The warden will be supplying a generator for the society. If anyone else would be interested in bringing their generators and traps along, they would have the opportunity to gain access to a number of areas on the reserve. The site is an abandoned brickworks which has developed a rich flora over the past thirty years. It joins the woodland at Middlewood and should produce an interesting moth list.

Directions to the site are as follows: From the traffic lights, in the centre of Poynton, travel east along Park Lane. After one mile, take the second left, after Hockley Post Office, along Middlewood Road. Continue for another mile until you see the sign for Jacksons Brickworks, then turn right into Pool House Road, cross Middlewood Way and the car park is straight ahead past Melrose Crescent at SJ947844.

The warden is expecting us around 9.00pm

Saturday August 11th Steve McWilliam will be running a moth trapping session at the famous Cotterill Clough Nature Reserve, beloved of TA Coward in the 40's, on National Moth. All are welcome.

Reports on Field Meetings

Wednesday February 21st: Little Budworth Country Park. I took advantage of a few days mild weather to visit Budworth for my first field trip of the year. The weather was excellent, with heavy cloud cover and a temperature, which was still 8 Celsius at 10:00pm. A sheet trap was set up amongst Oak trees and a further two traps complete with cables were run out. Upon starting the generator I discovered I had left my adapter at home so only the sheet trap could be plugged in. That bulb was duly started and the other two traps were returned to the boot of the car. Despite the single trap, over 50 individual moths were caught. The list was 16 Pale

Brindled Beauty (2 melanic), 11 March Moth, 1 Satellite, 1 Chestnut, 2 Dotted Border (1 melanic) and 21 *T. alternella*.

Saturday 31st March: Little Budworth Country Park

CANCELLED DUE TO FOOT AND MOUTH
Sunday 8th April: Leasowe

CANCELLED DUE TO FOOT AND MOUTH

Non-Moth Records – Requests

Following the note on flies in the last newsletter the following requests have been received.

Bill Hardwick, the County Diptera Recorder, would like you all to collect the flies which are attracted, to your moth traps. He will then identify them and thereby obtain more diptera records for the county and hopefully from parts of the county, which have not previously been recorded for diptera.

The easiest way to do this is to collect the flies and put them in the freezer for 15 mins to kill them.

They can then be transferred to a small tupperware box or jar lined with tissue paper (kitchen roll works well). Add a label indicating where the flies were caught, the date, and how (mv or actinic, etc.), and your own name address and telephone number and pop them back in the freezer. Either post them to Bill (address at the end of the newsletter) or bring them with you to a meeting and we will make sure they reach him.

If anyone can get flat-flies from birds via bird-ringing or from nests, or similar parasitic flies from mammals (especially bats), then Bill will also be extremely interested.

He also requests any bred parasitic flies from leaf mines, larva, rotten wood etc.

On a similar vein we have also received a request from Gavin Broad who writes

'Having read the bit on tachinids, I thought I'd mention that I am interested in any parasitic wasps that are reared by lepidopterists. I work on the family Ichneumonidae but am also interested in other groups. If you ever want to send specimens to me I would much appreciate it (I prefer them in alcohol but loose in a tube will suffice)'

Gavin's address can be found in the contact section at the end of the newsletter. The study of parasites is something we can all help with, particular if you breed out insects and can supply details of the hosts. When your hoped for moth fails to emerge and you finish up with some grotty fly, don't despair - someone is interested in the specimen.

Records, Records Records....

As well as my usual request for you all to send in your micro and macro records we have an amazing achievement to report. Steve Hind writes;

Complete Coverage

A few years ago, Eric Kearns started to note down which species of bramble *Stigmella aurella* was occupying, as well as its distribution. Within a two year period he managed to find the mines in every 1km square within his home 10km square, SJ99. The complete coverage of an insect, down to such a detailed level has probably never been achieved before, not even for some of our butterflies, never previously to my knowledge for a moth.

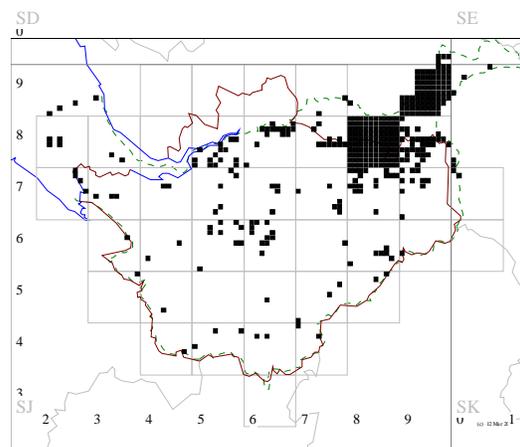
This feat has now been matched. Barry Shaw has now recorded *Stigmella aurella* in every 1km square in SJ88, although not over a period of years, in fact, in just 27 days! To be precise the first 27 days of January 2001.

As well as *S. aurella*, Barry also noted the following species in SJ88 (with the number of 1km squares occupied by each):

Ectoedemia septembrella (1), *Stigmella tityrella* (2), *Stigmella hemargyrella* (4), *Stigmella microtheriella* (1), *Emmetia marginata* (42), *Lyonetia clerkella* (2), *Caloptilia syringella* (25), *Parornix anglicella* (4), *Phyllonorycter oxyacanthae* (2), *Phyllonorycter maestingella* (53), *Phyllonorycter messaniella* (5), *Phyllonorycter leucographella* (18), *Phyllonorycter salictella* (1), *Coleophora discordella* (1).

Not a bad list, considering that most of our trees are leafless at present. This clearly shows what can be achieved out of season. Those species with the highest counts occupy shrubs which retain their leaves over the winter; *P. maestingella* on beech hedges, *E. marginata* on bramble, *C. syringella* on privet and one of our latest colonisers and now frequently abundant *P. leucographella* on firethorn. The complete coverage of *S. aurella* in a 10km square was now been achieved in two squares and it may well be possible, given the effort and dedication required, in most of the squares in Cheshire, as this is indeed a common and widespread species throughout the county.

VC58 1Km Square Records



My own square, SJ98, is adjacent to both those mentioned above, although it may be one of those

where a complete coverage is not quite possible. There are a couple of squares in SJ98, one of which is upland sheep pasture and the other, Park Moor, contains nothing but Purple Moor-grass and a few rushes, both of which probably lack any bramble, the main foodplant of *S. aurella*. *S. aurella* is not the only species in which I believe we could gain 100 % coverage of a 10km square. There are others, but which others. They would have to be ones that are both frequently encountered and readily identified and their foodplants would also have to be very common and widespread. So which other species might fall into this category? Are there any other leaf miners? Well, yes, I believe there are. Hawthorn is a common constituent of the hedgerows on the plain, so how about *Parornix anglicella* and *Phyllonorycter oxyacanthae* and possibly also *Stigmella oxyacanthella* and *S. hybnerella*. *Stigmella plagiolella* is a possibility on Blackthorn towards the south and southwest, although not in the northeast, where it appears to be completely absent. Hazel and oak are also common on parts of the plain, so possibly the mines of *Parornix devoniella* on Hazel and *Eriocrania subpurpurella* on the oaks. Could Sycamore occur over a sufficient area for *Caloptilia rufipennella* to be found in such density? *C. rufipennella* has only been present in the county for a few years, so this may be a candidate for the future as it is still absent from many sites. *Caloptilia syringella* occurs in gardens on Privet and Lilac and on Ash in the wider countryside and not forgetting *Lyonetia clerkella*, which occupies a wide range of foodplants, both of which are possibilities.

Looking at adults instead of larvae, how about *Anthophila fabriciana* amongst nettles, or the ubiquitous *Celypha lacunana*? What about migrants? *Plutella xylostella* may be possible. The common grass moths, such as *Chrysoteuchia culmella* and especially *Agriphila straminella* and maybe even *A. tristella*. I am not sure if any of the macro's would be as easy to find, although I hope I have suggested enough micro's for someone to take up the challenge.

Steve Hind, County Micro Recorder.

Cnephasia's

Jon Clifton is interested in receiving specimens of Cnephasia's caught during May as he is trying to survey the range of *C. communana*. Specimens can be sent to him via the address given in the contacts section. Sample tubes will be returned together with details of the id of specimens.

Nothing by Other Means

With the current foot and mouth outbreak keeping us off the countryside, other sites can still be profitably studied. I work at the Daresbury Laboratory, and as the site is active 24 hours a day, lights are left on, particularly in the toilets. I regularly check for moths that have been attracted overnight. So far this year the list stands at Pale Brindled Beauty, Satellite, March Moth, Yellow Horned, Common Quaker, Clouded Drab, Hebrew Character and Small Quaker - 8 species, all without the use of a trap! So, a challenge - who can record the most species at work without the use of a moth trap during 2001? Many of you must work at sites that have no records associated with them at all, so keep your eyes open.

Contacts and Web Sites

- Steve McWilliam's web site on Cheshire Moths can be found at:
<http://www.consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk/entomol/chmoths>
- The Lancashire and Cheshire Entomology Society (LCES) can be found at:
<http://www.consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk/entomol/lces>
- The Underwings (The junior section of the LCES) can be found at:
<http://www.consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk/entomol/underwng>
- **rECORd** – The Local Records Centre for Cheshire, Halton, Runcorn, Warrington and the Wirral can be found at:
<http://www.record-lrc.co.uk>

- Records of macro moths should be sent to Steve McWilliam at:
stevemc@consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk
- Records of micros should be sent to Steve Hind at:
steve@hind1.fsnet.co.uk
- Records from Shropshire should be sent to Peter Boardman, 7 High Street, Weston Rhyn, Shropshire, SY10 7RP or e-mail at peperouda@btinternet.com
- Submission of all biological records can be made to **rECOrd** at:
manager@record-lrc.co.uk
- Butterfly Conservation can be found at:
<http://www.butterfly-conservation.org>
- Cheshire Region Biodiversity Plans for butterflies can be found at:
<http://www.papilio.co.uk>
- Paul Hill can be contacted via email paul@papilio.co.uk or via snail mail at Paul M Hill Natural History Services, 1 Clive Cottage, London Road, Allostock, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9LT
- Jeff Clarke can be contacted about field trips at BirderJeff@aol.com
- The Lancashire Moth Group now has a web page at <http://www.lancashire-moths.org>
- Gavin Broad can be contacted at The Dept. of Biology, Imperial College at Silwood Park, Ascot, Berks. SL5 7PY
- Bill Hardwick can be contacted at 4 Caister Way, Over, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 1LT or by e-mail at bill@hardwick36.freeserve.co.uk
- Jon Clifton can be contacted via Kestrel Cottage, Hindolveston, Norfolk, NR20 5DE
- I can be contacted regarding field trips, items for the next newsletter etc. at:
a.wander@dl.ac.uk or by snail-mail at 54A Hartford Road, Davenham, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 8JF