

**Lancashire and Cheshire Entomological Society
Newsletter**

Incorporating



The Cheshire Moth Group Newsletter

August 2002

Number 1007

Welcome!

Welcome to the august issue of the Lancashire and Cheshire Entomological Society newsletter (incorporating the Cheshire Moth Group Newsletter). We are again dominated by Moth news from VC58 this time round. Contributions from all areas and on all orders are more than welcome – this is your newsletter and only your contributions can help shape its contents and coverage. The next issue is due out at Christmas so why not put pen to paper and contribute a note on your activities this season? (Contact details for the editor are included at the end of this issue).

Despite the poor weather and what seems like continuous heavy rain, there have been a number of exciting records this year, including a new macro moth for VC58 – Blomer's Rivulet. Full details of this, and other records we have received are enclosed within.

Work continues on merging the records held in recorder with those held in mapmate. Many thanks to Shane Farrell for taking on this Herculean task. When complete, all recorders running mapmate will have full access to the whole database of records we hold for VC58. However, at present records are fragmented between the two systems, and this has delayed the production of this years macro report. It WILL appear before the end of the year and we hope to distribute a copy with your bumper Christmas issue of the newsletter – honest!

Note that this is issue 7 of the Cheshire Moth Group Newsletter and issue 2 of the combined CMG/LCES newsletter. Inadvertently the number was missed off the cover of the last edition. We have implemented a new numbering system with this issue and from now the combined newsletter will be number consecutively from this issue which is 1007. Also, to reduce printing costs, all colour photos are

collected together in a photo gallery on pages 7/8.

If you have been house bound due to the dreadful weather this year then why not come out and do some field work on one of the late season field trips. These include a number of meetings aimed at surveying for leaf mines which will be run as workshops as well as recording sessions – an ideal way to get into this fascinating aspect of lepidoptera. The weather can hardly be worse for these sessions that its been for most of this year!

Field Trips – 2002 Meetings

31st August 2002: Pym Chair/Goyt Valley

Meet at 2:00pm for a search for daylight flyers that should include Small Autumnal Moth. Meet 8:00pm for evening light trapping for species such as the Golden-rod Brindle.

7th September: Snidley Moor Wood

A daylight meeting to search for leaf mines at a Woodland Trust reserve. This is predominantly birch woodland. An early autumn date has been picked as birch tends to be one of the first trees to loose their leaves. There is room for a few cars where the Sandstone trail crosses the Ridgeway @ SJ507748. Suggest meeting there at 11.00am and walking along the trail into the wood.

29th September: Crimes Lane, Beeston

Another daylight leaf mining session. Arranged primarily to search for the Blackthorn feeding species, especially with a view to sorting out the mines of *Deltaornix torquillella* from those of *Parornix finitimella*, which was found for the first time in Cheshire last year.

From Beeston Castle, travel west along Crimes Lane, continue along the track @ SJ526595 where the road bends sharply to

the left. Cross the railway and park alongside the track @ SJ517597. Meet at 11.00am.

**19th October: Lumb Brook Valley,
Appleton**

A third opportunity to come out and learn about leaf mines. There should be plenty of leaf miners to find along the brook and in the nearby woodlands.

Meet at 11.00am along Dingle Lane, at the northern entrance to Fords Rough @ SJ626846.

Field Trip Reports

4th May 2002: Pym Chair (SJ995767)

The daylight section of this meeting (plate 1) went well, finding a number of interesting moths including a number of pupal cases of the Emperor. Unfortunately no adults were seen. We have been slightly too late, and the cloudy weather also didn't help. Other highlights included the larvae of Northern Eggar and Heath Rustic together with a number of very pretty adult Green Hairstreaks. Unfortunately, in the late afternoon the temperature plummeted, heavy black clouds rolled in and the rain set in. As a result, the evening moth trapping session was cancelled.

1st June 2002: Pym Chair (SJ995767)

We ran traps in and around the Pym Chair car park recording 12 moths of three species. Not a high total but all three species are relatively rare in the county. The total was 6 Glaucous Shear, 4 Light Knot Grass and 2 female Fox Moth. Steve Hind also recorded a number of male Fox Moth at the site during day light. The records of Light Knot Grass are particularly exciting (plate 2) as we have very few previous records of this specie from VC58. The only records we are aware of are:

Stalybridge SJ99 1 in 1885-1990 J.Chappell
Danes Moss SJ9070 several in 1903 R.South
Disley SJ98 1 in 1929-1940 H. N. Michaelis

Taxal SK07 common to scarce in 1929-1940 H.N. Michaelis
Goyt Valley SK07 1 in 1962 R.B.Jones
Compstall SJ973914 1 on 17/6/90 SH Hind , IF Smith
Poynton SJ920841 1 on 25/5/92 A.M.Broome

If you know of any further records please let us know.

**15th June 2002
National Moth Night
Etherow Country Park**

Shane Farrell led a session at Etherow Country Park near Stockport and ran three traps (one 15w actinic and two MVs) and also had some wine ropes on the go. The session ran from 9.30pm to 2.30am or thereabouts. As the River Etherow forms part of the VC57 and VC58 boundary the opportunity to trap both sides of the river proved irresistible!

Highlights included Map-winged Swift, Green Arches, and the Herald.

This trip was held in conjunction with Butterfly Conservation (Cheshire and Peak District).

22nd June 2002: Venue TBA

With the awful weather in late June/early July this session was cancelled. Does anyone remember that big yellow thing that used to appear in the sky....I think it was called the sun!

**6th July 2002: Little Budworth
Country Park**

Cancelled due to illness of the organiser – I had the 'flu.

20th July 2002: Pym Chair/Goyt Valley
Steve Hind kindly led this session. Highlights included Northern Spinach, Welsh Wave, True Lover's Knot and the Antler. No new records for the site but some good species none the less.

Good Moths in VC58 in the First Half of 2002

A number of interesting records have been submitted so far this year. Andrew Charlton of Bramhall (SJ887842) caught an excellent Red-necked Footman (plate 3), Ian Landucci of Mouldsworth (SJ512706) had his trap graced by a superb Striped-Hawk Moth (plate 4) and pride of place goes to Sheila Blamire of Mere (SJ736813) who caught a Blomer's Rivulet (plate 5) on 2/6/2002. This represents the first record of this specie for VC58 and has been formally accepted by the Cheshire Moth Panel. On the same name Sheila also caught an Oblique Carpet with another being caught by the editor in Anderton (SJ622737) on the same date.

Over the border in South Lancs, Jeff Clark found a fabulous Lunar Hornet Moth (plate 6).

Beautiful Hook-tip New to VC58

Ian Landucci caught two interesting species last year in Mouldsworth (SJ512706). On 6/7/01 he caught a Beautiful Hook-tip. The specimen was retained (plate 7) and the record has been accepted by the Cheshire Moth Panel as new to VC58. (Unless you know of an earlier record!)

On the 30/7/01 he also caught a Dingy Footman. This appears to be the first record for VC58 since the 19th Century when the species was caught on the Wirral. With the Striped Hawk Moth (detailed elsewhere in this issue) it looks like Mouldsworth is the new hotspot in VC58!

An Influx of The Blackneck into the Region

This year we have seen an unprecedented influx of The Blackneck into VC58. We have very few previous records of this specie and the moth currently resides on Category 4 of the Cheshire Moth Panels

list. Fortunately this led observers to submit records as they occurred. So far we have received details of the following:

Romiley	13.7	Shane Farrell
Offerton	13.7	Eric Kearns
Marbury	14.7	Paul Hill
Romiley (2)	15.7	Shane Farrell
Higher Poynton	15.7	Steve Hind
Bramhall	15.7	Andrew Charlton
Stockport	16.7	Eric Kearns

In addition, Kevin McCabe of Flixton in South Lancs recorded the moth in his garden on 20/6, 22/6 and 15/7.

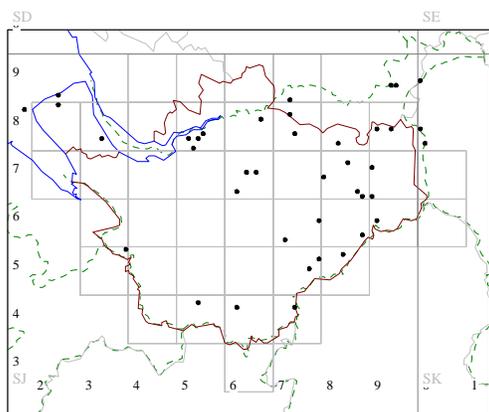
Clearly something interesting happened in mid July with this species. If you have any further records that can help us complete the picture please send them in. For the time being the moth will stay on category 4, but if the events of this year are repeated next year the status of the moth will be down graded.

More Things To Try Micro's in the Autumn

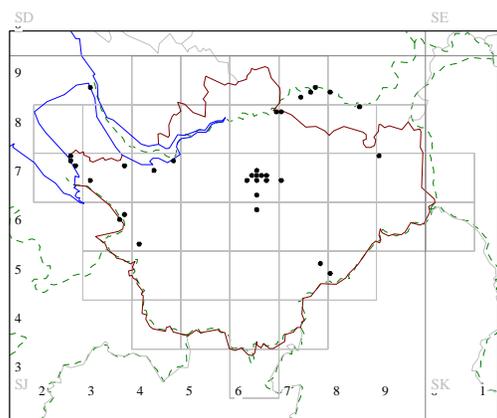
There are a number of things you can try in the Autumn. Firstly, why not join us on one of the leaf mining expeditions. There will be plenty of people around to explain the art of finding and recording leaf mines. But be warned – this really is addictive. Before you know it you will be absolutely hooked on looking for mines!

If you are out for a walk there are a couple of other moths you can easily find and record. The first is the Parsnip Moth, *Depressaria pastinacella*. This moth feeds internally in the stems of Hogweed. The moth makes neat exit holes in the stem (plate 8). If you split the stem you will find it full of frass. The current records we have for this moth are concentrated in the North and East of the county. This probably has more to do with observer coverage rather than distribution.

The second moth to keep your eyes open for is *Coleophora artemisicolella*. The larvae of this case bearing moth live inside a seed of Mugwort. They hollow out the seed and then use the hollowed seed as a case while they move to other seeds and



hollow them out in turn. The moth is easiest to detect by looking for the feeding holes in seed heads of the plant. Once you find a spike of the plant showing the characteristic feeding damage (plate 9), you will usually be able to find the case. It will appear to be a seed growing out the side of another seed. The current records of this moth we have are:



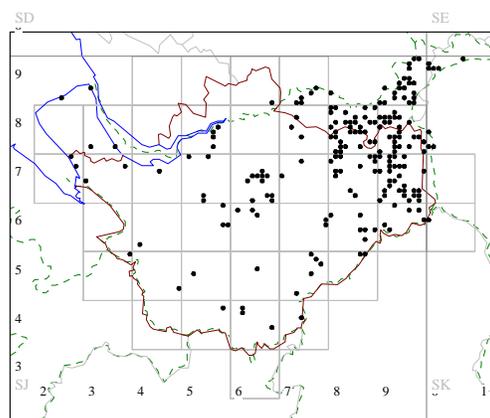
Again, the distribution is related to observer coverage rather than reflecting the true distribution of the moth. However, its absence from the east of the county is probably genuine as that area is well covered. The records around Anderton in SJ67 reflect the location of the editor!

If you manage to find either of these moths let us know and help us fill in the distribution maps.

Mompha's in Cheshire – More Things to Look Out For

Mompha Sturnipennella – new to VC58?

There are two other moths to keep your eyes open for during the next couple of months. Both of these are *Mompha*'s and can be found on Rosebay Willow Herb. The first is *Mompha raschkiella*. This moth makes a distinctive mine in the leaves which consists of a narrow gallery mine leading to a large blotch mine (plate 10). The moth appears to be widespread and common – the mine pictured was found in a few seconds in my garden that probably says more about my garden than about the true status of the moth! However, the distribution map shows the species to be widespread. The cluster of records in the east of the county again reflects the greater coverage of micros in that part of the county.



The second moth is more intriguing. This is *Mompha sturnipennella*. Until the appearance of volume 4 of Moths and Butterflies of Britain and Ireland we had no records of this species. Following its appearance we have some photos of possible adults of the species. In addition, in early August I was sun bathing in the garden while reading the *Mompha* section in MBGBI. Having read the section on this specie a quick look at the rosebay in my

Photo Galley



**Plate 1: Searching for larvae at Pym Chair
(Photo A. Wander)**



**Plate 4: Striped Hawk Moth,
Mouldsworth.
(Photo A. Wander)**



**Plate 2: Light Knot Grass at Pym Chair.
Top *ab suffosa*, lower typical form. (Photo
A. Wander)**



**Plate 5: Blomer's Rivulet, Mere
(Photo Sheila Blamire)**



**Plate 3: Red-necked Footman, Bramhall.
(Photo Andrew Charlton)**



**Plate 6: Lunar Hornet Moth. (Photo Jeff
Clark).**



Plate 7: Beautiful Hook-tip. Mouldsworth, 2001. (Photo A. Wander)



Plate 10: Leaf mine of *Mompha raschkiella* on rosebay willow herb. (photo A. Wander)



Plate 8: Feeding damage from the Parsnip Moth. (Photo A. Wander)



Plate 11: The gall in the stem of Rosebay Willow Herb formed by *Mompha* (photo A. Wander)



Plate 9: Feeding damage from *Coleophora artemisicolella* on the seeds of mugwort. (Photo A. Wander)



Plate 12: Male Kentish Glory – May in Scotland (photo A. Wander)

garden revealed a number of galls in the stem, each with a neat exit hole (plate 11). On splitting the stems they were found to be full of frass. The photos of the galls have been sent to John Langmaid who has confirmed that the galls are identical to *M. sturnipennella*. The moth has been found in Flintshire at Point of Ayr should be looked for on the Wirral and across the central Cheshire plain on any stands of Rosebay Willow Herb. The moth is currently notable b, and we have no idea of the distribution of this specie with the only records being the ones from the editors garden so any records really will help our understanding. Please have a look and let us know if you find it.

A Scottish Expedition – May in Abernethy

In early May Jon Clifton (from Norfolk) and I set off for the Scottish Highlands to join the RSPB/BENHS field meeting. We set off up the M6 late morning arriving at our base in Insh near Insh Marshes RSPB reserve in the early evening in plenty of time to unload our gear and then get out trapping. We were based at the RSPB Insh Marshes reserve and caught some fabulous moths during our stay. If you've never been to Scotland at this time of year I can highly recommended it, but be warned - it can get very cold so choose your weekend carefully!

Highlights of the weekend included large numbers of Scarce Prominent, Glaucous Shears, Light Knot Grass, the Scottish forms of Hebrew Character, a number of Netted Mountain Moth, Broom Tip and a stunning Kentish Glory (plate 12). This moth was found floating in a bucket of water alongside a trap being run in Abernethy Forest. However, when it finally dried out it proved to be a stunning individual – the only defect being a slight nick on the apex of the wing.

We ran traps for two successive nights around the Insh Marsh Reserve with

excellent results. The third night was disappointing as the temperature dropped and was only 2 centigrade at 11:30. The traps were left over night but a total of 12 traps only caught 5 moths!

In you fancy visiting the are at this time of year remember your sweep net and beating tray. The larvae of moths such as Juniper Pug, Juniper Carpet and Chestnut-coloured Carpet are easily obtained by beating Juniper in the area, while sweeping areas of heather will locate species such as Dark Tussock amongst many others, while searching under Reindeer Moss at high elevations may enable you to locate Northern Dart.

A Further Note On The Tawny Shears, *Hadena perplexa* Bernard Skinner

Adrian Wander's note on the Tawny Shears in the L&CES April 2002 Newsletter prompted me to put forward some of my own observations of the colour forms of this species. The east to west colour cline in southern England is pretty straightforward. The palest race, some of which are unicolorous white, occurs in southeast Kent. Going westwards the races of this species progressively become darker with the darkest race frequenting west Cornwall. Here the darkest specimens closely match ssp. *capsophila* The Pod Lover; a race found in the Isle of Man and Western Ireland.

There is also a similar cline from south to north with the darkest specimens I have seen occurring in Yorkshire. It should be stated here that these dark specimens in the north are dark brown and quite distinct from the grey-black race conforming to the Pod Lover.

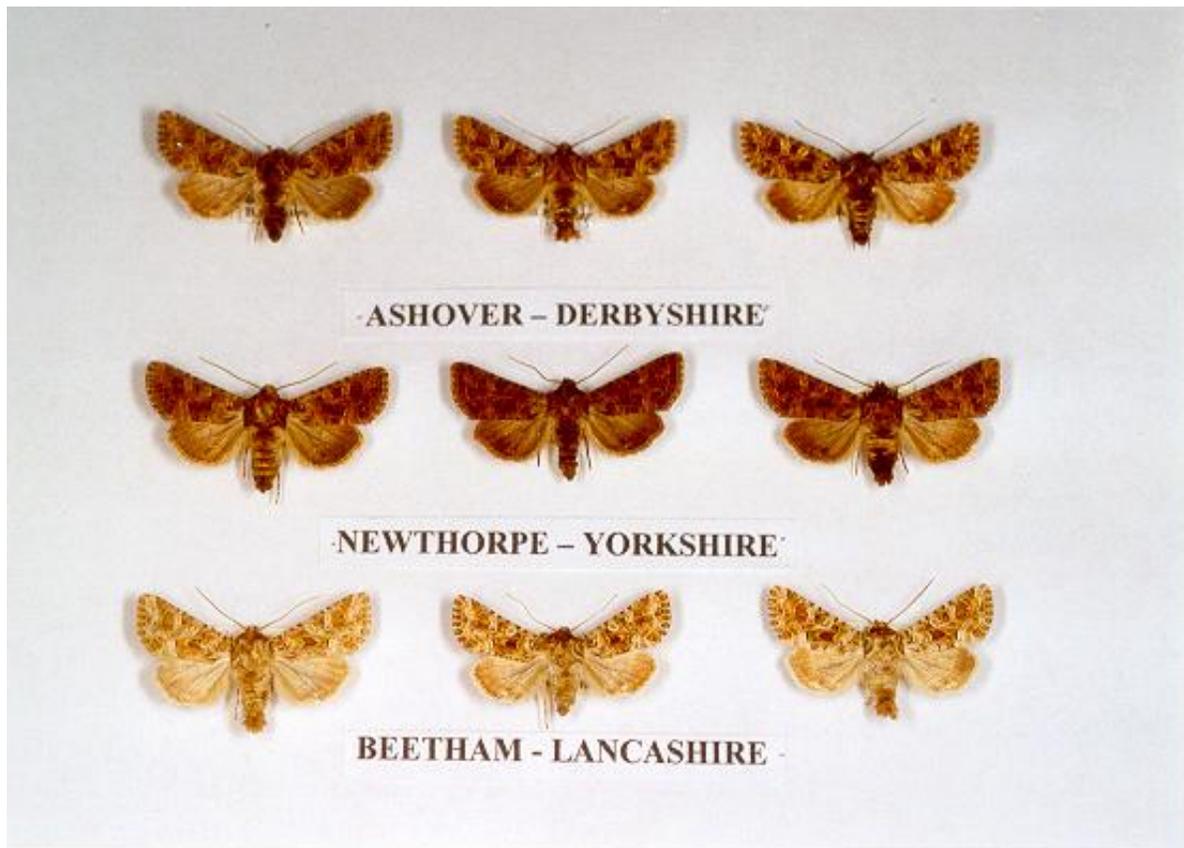
There are however, exceptions to most rules and in 1974 I found the larvae quite commonly at Beetham, Lancashire. Surprisingly, despite the site being over 30 miles further north than my Yorkshire site,

the resulting adults were much lighter than expected. In colour these specimens were closest to those I have bred from the coasts of Hampshire and West Sussex.

In view of this anomaly I would reiterate Adrian's request to recorders to note the colour of any Tawny Shears found in north-west England. All the specimens depicted

in the photograph were bred from larvae found feeding in the pods of Bladder Campion, *Silene inflata*.

Bernard Skinner, 5 Rawlins Close, South Croydon, Surrey, CR2 8JS



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>
- **rECOrd** – The Local Records Centre for Cheshire, Halton, Runcorn, Warrington and the Wirral can be found at: <http://www.record-lrc.co.uk>

- All records of macro and micro moths for Cheshire (VC58) should preferably be submitted to the Cheshire Moth Group Data Officer, Shane Farrell or via snail mail at 15 Westover, Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 3ER
- Records of macro moths in Cheshire can also be sent to Steve McWilliam at:
stevemc@consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk
- Records of micros in Cheshire can also 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>
- 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
- The Lancashire Moth Group now has a web page at <http://www.lancashire-moths.org>
- The Cheshire Moth Group also has web pages at
<http://www.consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk/lrc/cmz/cmz.htm>
- 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 16 Bramhalls Park, Anderton, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 6AH