



**Lancashire & Cheshire Entomological Society
Newsletter**

Incorporating



The Cheshire Moth Group Newsletter

June 2004

Number 1011

The newsletter is available to download in colour from the NWMoths group pages at www.yahoo.com

Welcome!

Summer is well under way, if you call the wet and windy weather we have had in June a summer! The season to date seems to have been very poor weather wise. I was trapping in late May in Dorset for Dingy Mocha and the temperature at dawn was 3.5 degrees centigrade – I've known warmer nights in the middle of winter! Mind you, I did catch a single example of the target species just showing that moths will fly even in far from perfect conditions. If I had been at home I probably would not have bothered running the traps.

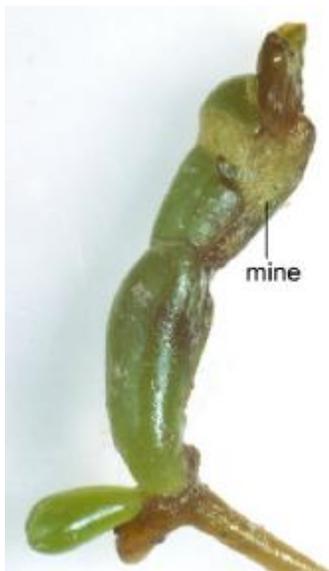
A few other recent trips have also brought home the importance of overnight trapping. On a BENHS meeting in Lincolnshire surveying for Marsh Moth many of the participants left around midnight. The first of 6 examples of this rare animal arrived half an hour later. Similarly, on a trip to the Wyre Forest for Common Fan-foot the only example arrived after 3:00am and on Salisbury Plain last week the first of 23 Pale Shining Brown again came in after midnight. This was a very 'exciting' evening as the site adjoins a military range – moth trapping to the accompaniment of machine gun fire and main battle tanks roaring backwards and forwards was an interesting experience! The moral of all this is clear. If at all possible consider spending the night on site when moth trapping. This also makes sense safety wise. Firstly, it is much easier packing up in daylight and secondly the drive home is easier after a few hours sleep in the car. The added bonus is that you may pick up that extra special record.

Hopefully we will, at some point this year, get some hot and sunny days and warm and sticky nights. Does anyone remember those hot and humid nights we used to get when moths would come tumbling out of the skies in their hundreds? Lets hope that by the start of the indoor meetings we have had a summer to remember.

Adrian Wander, Newsletter Editor

Field Visit to the Dee Estuary

Four L.C.E.S. members; Dave Hardy, Kevin McCabe, Ian Smith and Don Stenhouse, met as a result of a 'hotline' message on the cloudy, but dry, 11th May 2004 for a day's entomology on the salt marshes of the Dee.



Left: 2 cm seedling of *Salicornia*, mined by *Scrobipalpa salinella*. Heswall 11/5/04.

Below: Imago of *Scrobipalpa salinella* ex larva in *Salicornia*, Heswall.

(Photos: IF Smith Further photographs and a detailed description can be viewed on www.ukmoths.force9.co.uk)



A prepared list of salting plants, with larvae to be expected in May, was used by the lepidopterists to focus their search. Larvae of the hoped for *Scrobipalpa salinella* were found on glasswort (*Salicornia*), sea-blite (*Suaeda maritima*) and sea-aster (*Aster tripolium*) at Heswall, SJ258809, and Flint Castle, SJ247734. Seedlings of glasswort and sea-blite, only 2 cm high, growing on bare mud that is inundated by every tide, contained 6 mm larvae in mines and spinnings. The larvae were subsequently reared, and their identity confirmed by J. Langmaid. These are the first records for VC51, Flintshire and VC58, Cheshire.

Black horehound (*Ballota nigra*), growing on the sea wall at Heswall, had the cased larvae of *Coleophora lineolea*, only the third locality in Cheshire for this species. (Subsequently, a fourth record at Ness Quay SJ289759 on 8/6/04.)

Despite persistent search of the plentiful scurvygrass (*Cochlearia officinalis*) at Flint Castle for the larva of *Rhigognostis senilella*, none was found.

Don was particularly interested in looking for beetles that dig burrows in the mud or sand, such as *Bledius*, *Dyschirius* and *Heterocerus* spp. At Flint Castle he was pleased to find *Heterocerus maritimus* Guérin-Ménéville. At Heswall he found the blind white woodlouse *Platyarthrus hoffmannseggi* Brandt in the nest of the Yellow Meadow Ant *Lasius flavus*



Platyarthrus hoffmannseggi (Photo IF Smith)

Near Flint Castle salting, two abandoned sacks of rotting cockles produced a stench that at 100 metres distance seemed strong enough to fell the gulls from the sky. The lepidopterists gave them a wide berth, but coleopterists are made of sterner stuff, and Don made a beeline for the sacks in the hope of carrion beetles. He observed a black shape disappear through the mesh of a sack, but discovered he had lost his knife. Nothing daunted, he tore the sack apart with his bare hands, only to find the beetle was a bluebottle. When it was time to depart, by a strange coincidence, each of the drivers discovered they were not returning by Don's route. Eventually Kevin relented, and Don got home for decontamination.

The day was rounded off by a visit to the banks of the Dee at Queensferry, SJ324684, to see a previously discovered colony of the larvae of a plume moth, *Platyptilia ochrodactyla* on tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*). There, the Sun broke through to encourage a late afternoon flight of butterflies at the end of an enjoyable day in good company.

Ian Smith

Insects Other than Moths in my Garden Light Trap

Since I started moth-trapping in my garden (Romiley SJ931900 VC58) in 2000 I have always been aware of the fact that as well as the expected range of moth species there have been a good variety of other insect orders attracted to the light. I normally use a standard 125w Mercury Vapour lamp and this seems to attract a lot more in terms of numbers of specimens and species of other insects (including moths) than actinic tubes.

Whilst I am a complete novice in most of the other insect orders I usually know (or can guess!) the order in which most insects belong and can therefore more often than not contact the correct



Giant Lacewing *Osmylus fulvicephalus*

person to ask for assistance with identification.

I recently caught a specimen of the Giant Lacewing *Osmylus fulvicephalus* and this prompted me to compose a short piece about some of the other insects that regularly visit the trap both at home and in the field. I hope that this is of interest to readers, as I am aware that this issue of the newsletter contains a request from the local county recorders for some of these groups for specimens attracted in this way.

Rather surprisingly I have occasionally caught butterflies in the trap. I have seen single Large White *Pieris brassicae* and Peacock *Inachis io* and assume that these have been in the herbage adjacent to the light and made their way in. There are well-documented cases of butterflies such as Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta* and Purple Hairstreak *Neozephyrus quercus* being attracted to light and perhaps, therefore my own finds were not that surprising after all. Still a bit of a shock though when you see one in the trap. (*Migrant butterflies turn up fairly regularly in traps at coastal sites – Ed*).

Lacewings (Neuroptera) are regular visitors to the trap and although the Giant Lacewing *Osmylus fulvicephalus* was the only one I have seen, the 'standard' green species are quite common. I also see quite a few of the small brown species earlier in the year and these require careful scrutiny to identify. Having only recently bought the excellent key by Colin Plant I have not yet tackled these.



A typical Caddis-fly

Caddis-flies (Trichoptera) are often notoriously common in traps and especially where people live close to water. I have heard of people that catch literally thousands each night for short periods. Thankfully I get fewer of these than this but there appears to be

quite a wide range of species. Some of the caddis-flies are quite moth-like in appearance showing their common ancestor; they do of course, lack the obvious coiled proboscis of most moths.

Ear-wigs (Dermaptera) are only occasional visitors to the trap and usually only on the top of the box.

Hymenoptera are commonly attracted to light and in the late summer, common wasp species are a major problem for me. I regularly catch over 150-200 in a single night and it makes sorting through the catch the next day a pretty hazardous exercise! I have been informed that the majority of these wasps are likely to be males and thus have no sting. I have never taken the time to try and confirm this though. Interestingly, when this period starts, I find that a change to an actinic tube reduces the catch of wasps to around 2 or 3. As well as 'common wasps' I also see quite a few parasitic wasps, mainly of the ichneumon type. Many of these species require either dissection or examination with reference to keys, which can be complex. Be warned - although they look harmless enough, they can give a painful sting when putting your hand in the trap to look at moths! After speaking with Adrian Wander recently he confirmed that in some areas of the country Hornets can be a major problem when moth-trapping. As a general rule, if you start attracting a few at the start of a session it may be best considering a move to a slightly different site. Whilst they are normally docile creatures, they should always be treated with respect. Adrian was once trapping in a wood in Norfolk and caught 40+ Hornets in a trap left overnight. When they collected the trap in the morning they identified a few moths from the bits of wing in the bottom of the trap, which was all that was left - they had eaten every single moth in the trap!!!! Also during a visit to the New Forest for the Crimson Underwings Adrian walked around freshening up some sugar patches while being chased by a number of Hornets. With cries of 'why are you hounding me' (or unprintable words



Tipula maxima

to the same effect) it dawned on him that he was carrying an open jar of sweet smelling sugar.....(*lies, all lies – Ed*)

Coleoptera make regular visits to the trap. The Carrion beetles are always impressive and come complete with mites swarming over their head and mouthparts. They often leave a foul smell inside the trap or the pot they are contained within. The most impressive visitors though are the May Bugs or Cock-chafers. They sometimes come to light in large numbers in the spring and I have been hit on head on several occasions with quite a thud. Up to 500 were caught in a single night once

at Little Budworth. Water Boatmen (Corixidae) are relatively common traps and I suspect more so nearer water. I only occasionally trap these beetles.

Diptera are one of the more numerous orders attracted to light although many of them are tiny and end up dead in the light-fitting! Bill Hardwick has kindly identified a few for me as follows:

Metatrichocera rufescens (Edw.), *Scathohaga furcata* (Say), *Copromyza equina* (Fall.), *Copromyza nigrina* (Gimm.), *Scathophaga stercoraria* (L.), *Eupeodes luniger* (Meig.), *Tipula maxima* Poda, *Phytomyza ilicis* Curt



Froghopper species.



Adult Hawthorn Shieldbug *Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale*

I am sure that there are probably more species of fly attracted to light than there are moths in the average year! One of the largest UK insects in terms of 'leg-span' is the crane-fly *Tipula maxima*, a photograph of this impressive species is shown above.

Hoverflies (Syrphidae) are common in and around the trap although I have never had any species formally identified.

True Bugs (Herteroptera) are irregular visitors to my trap but again can be very numerous in the field. They fly with a high-pitched buzzing and are again quite boisterous.

Froghoppers are another common group in the trap varying greatly in size. An example caught recently is shown above.

As can be seen from the brief details provided above, there is a great diversity of animals attracted to our traps and I hope that this will inspire readers to try and confirm their identity and submit records. Some of the photographs above are of unidentified species and if anyone can put a name to them this will be greatly appreciated.

Shane Farrell

Non-lepidoptera in Light Traps.

The following recorders would welcome appropriate specimens from light traps.

Parasitic wasps (Hymenoptera)

Particularly the yellow/orange nocturnal species. Specimens from light traps in all counties sought. Preferably in alcohol. Also acceptable in tubes live, or dead and dry - Not pinned please.

Dr Gavin Broad, Coordinator of Zoological Data & Research, Biological Records Centre, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Monks Wood, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon PE28 2LS office: 01487 772406 mobile: 07779020809 fax: 01487 773467 email: gabro@ceh.ac.uk
<http://www.brc.ac.uk>

Beetles (Coleoptera)

Specimens from light traps and other sources in Cheshire and Wales sought. Preferably in alcohol with acetic acid added. Also acceptable in tubes alive, or dead and dry. Confidently identified records of non-critical species accepted without specimens.

Don Stenhouse, Flat 6, 15 Park Road, Stretford, Manchester. M32 8FE. Tel. 0161 865 3267
email: don.sten@ntlworld.com

Water boatmen (Corixidae)

Specimens from light traps and other sources in sought. Preferably in alcohol. Also acceptable in tubes alive, or dead and dry.

Andy Harmer, 79a High Street, Frodsham, Cheshire. WA6 7AN. Tel. 01928 735847 email:
Andyharmer@btopenworld.com

LCES Publication for Sale

Macro-moths in Cheshire 1961 to 1993, by C.I.Rutherford, 1994, 89pp, paperback £8 inc. p&p.

Please send cheque, payable to LCES, with order to; LCES Secretary, I.F.Smith, 12 Fernhill, Mellor, Stockport, SK6 5AN

North Western Naturalists' Union - Insurance Policy

(The following article is reproduced with kind permission of the North Western Naturalists Union from the North Western Naturalist Vol. 6 No. 1. The insurance policy provides cover for LCES members, as the LCES is an affiliated society and has paid the appropriate premium).

This article is intended to explain the main provisions of the insurance policy that the NWNLU has with Royal & SunAlliance. It does not contain the full provisions or interpretations of the policy although excerpts from the policy are included in the appendix for the assistance of members. Nor does it constitute a legal contract between the NWNLU and the affiliated societies or members or other participants in activities of the NWNLU. Members who wish to see a full copy of the policy should apply to the Treasurer of the NWNLU (if they are members) or to the Secretary of the Society of which they are a member if it is affiliated to the NWNLU and has subscribed to the policy.

The policy is a “Public/Products Liability” policy under which the NWNLU and the affiliated societies and their members and non-members are indemnified when participating in the societies' activities. As such, it indemnifies the societies, members and non-members, subject to the terms of the policy, against claims made by third parties for loss or damage caused by their activities. It also includes 'member to member' cover such that one participant on a society activity can claim against another on the same activity where the actions of the one have resulted in a liability to the other

Societies and leaders of activities must make all reasonable efforts to ensure that risks are identified and minimised and that participants are told of them, and that participants act responsibly because the policy will not cover the consequences of wilful or reckless behaviour.

The policy is not an ‘all-risks’ or “personal accident” policy and will not cover participants who suffer loss as a result of participating in societies' activities where neither the society

concerned nor any other participant is adjudged to be liable. Persons who need such cover (for example, for loss of earnings if an injury under such circumstance causes them to be absent from work and to lose pay as a result, or for loss or damage of personal property) should take out appropriate cover themselves, either through their normal household insurance or under an appropriate policy.

Appendix

This appendix sets out **some** of the provisions of the policy. [Wording in square brackets does not form part of the policy.]

Under the policy “The Company [Royal & SunAlliance] will provide indemnity to any Person Entitled to Indemnity

1. Up to the Limit of Indemnity against legal liability for damages in respect of
 - accidental injury of any person
 - accidental loss of or damage to Property
 - nuisance trespass to land or trespass to goods or interference with any easement right of air light or water or way other than legal liability for damages which result from a deliberate act or omission of the insured or which is a natural consequence of the ordinary conduct of Business and which could reasonably have been expected by the insured having regard to the nature and circumstances of such an act or omission.happening during any Period of Insurance in connection with the Business

2. against legal liability for claimant's costs and expenses in connection with 1 above

[3.some cover for legal costs] “

With the exception of a small number of affiliated societies which have negotiated higher limits, the limit of indemnity is, as follows:

- Any one event - £1,000,000
- All events happening during any period of insurance in respect of products supplied - £1,000,000
- All incidents considered to have occurred during any period of insurance in respect of pollution or contamination of buildings or other structures or of water or land or of the atmosphere - £1,000,000

[The NWN Executive would be grateful to any member who is a solicitor or an insurance professional who would be prepared to examine the policy and comment on this interpretation. Anyone who would be prepared to do so should please contact Mike Walton on 01606 832 613 or email mikea.walton@virgin.net]

Hummingbird Hawkmoth near Ruthin

Amongst the invasion of Painted Ladies in late May and early June 2004 a number of Hummingbird Hawkmoths (*Macroglossum stellaratum L.*) appeared in the Ruthin area.

At this time of year they are usually seen feeding at honeysuckle or valerian which are plentiful in and around the local villages. However, my first sighting this year was at Eyarth Rocks (SJ122545) on 8th June. Taking a drinks break during a day's bracken strimming we noticed one of these moths nectaring for two or three minutes at a clump of goosegrass (*Galium aparine*), also known as cleavers. This plant has the tiniest flowers and presumably the tiniest of nectaries. To the human mind it was difficult to imagine that the energy gain from this visit could even equal the energy expended in hovering in front of these flowers. (My son was recently in a similar energy situation in Cambodia, where upcountry “garages” sell petrol by the bottle or jamjar rather than from a pump !).

Of course, other plants in the same genus are larval foodplants for this moth which may have aroused its interest but it was definitely feeding and showed no signs of egg-laying.

Has anyone heard of goosegrass as a larval foodplant ?

Rob Whitehead

The Establishment and Expansion of Range in Lancashire of *Argyresthia trifasciata* Staud. Lepidoptera: Yponomeutidae

This distinctive micro moth is a classic candidate for the study of a rapid range expansion as it spreads throughout the county. Firstly it comes to light, which will mean anyone operating a light trap in their garden stands a good chance of attracting the species. Secondly, it utilises a foodplant range, Leyland Cypress and other garden conifers, that mean it could establish itself in most areas. The final key factor is that it is easily identified. There are no other very small moths with a combination of the shining brassy forewing colour and three narrow silvery-white bands across the wing.

It first occurred in Britain in 1982, when it was found in London and has since spread patchily across England and Scotland presumably assisted by plants brought in by garden centres. It reached Cheshire in 1997 and the first records for *Argyresthia trifasciata* in Lancashire (Vice County 59) came from Flixton (Kevin McCabe) on the 12th and 14th May 2000. The only other records in that year were two from Littleborough in the east of VC59 on the 16th and 18th June (Ian Kimber). In line with its unpredictable appearance, the next sighting came from St Annes (new to VC60) on 26th May 2001 (Jeremy Steeden) which was the only record from anywhere in the county that year. In 2002, the number of records from Littleborough expanded considerably where the moth was present from 23rd May to 3rd July on nine nights with a maximum of four present on 2nd June. The Flixton site had one moth that year and it appeared for the first time in Chorlton, VC59 on the 12th May (Ben Smart) and Orrell, VC59 on the 16th June (Pete Alker).

2003 showed a continued expansion of its range in the county to include Parr, St Helens, VC59 (Ray Banks), Billinge, VC59 (Chris Darbyshire), Heysham, VC60 (John Holding) and Lightfoot Green, Preston, VC60 (Steve Palmer). It was noted on the wing from 10th May to the 30th July considerably increasing the flight period mentioned in Volume 3 of *The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland*. Early indications are that it is being recorded regularly at several sites, but so far no new ones, during 2004.

I would be interested in hearing about any new sites for this species in Lancashire, North Merseyside and most parts of Greater Manchester (ie the area covered by VC59 and 60) and records should be sent, with any other moth records, to Steve Palmer, 137 Lightfoot Lane, Fulwood, Preston, Lancs. PR4 0AH

S M Palmer

Suggestions for Indoor Meetings Programme 2005

Our indoor meetings have been very popular and well attended in 2004. The indoor programme for 2005 will be planned by Council this autumn. The input of ideas by all members can help us ensure a worthwhile programme. If you have any topic or particular

speaker you would like to see included, please let the Secretary know and he will raise it at Council. Please let him know if you have a presentation you would be willing to give.

Our Christmas Social is usually well attended, but the videos shown usually depend on the efforts of one or two members. More would be welcome, and perhaps other ideas for adding to the Social.

Nectar Sources used by Butterflies – a Request for Records

Peter Hardy is assisting Roger Dennis on a project on nectar sources used by butterflies. They would be grateful of as many records possible. The information requested for each record is as follows:

- Date, county (R.Dennis prefers to work on "modern" counties)
- 10km grid reference (e.g. SJ79)
- butterfly species
- plant species
- number of individuals seen using the plant.

Please send records to Peter at 10 Dudley Road, Sale, M33 7BB or pgll@btopenworld.com.

Peter B. Hardy

Provisional Matrix for Micro-moths in VC58 (Cheshire)

Following publication of the Provisional Matrix for Macro-moths in VC58 (Cheshire) by Shane Farrell in the previous newsletter (macro matrix), a similar matrix for the micro-moths has now been produced for this edition of the newsletter (micro matrix).

The micro matrix has been produced from the Mapmate recording package, which currently holds over 62,000 micro-moth records for VC58. Most of these have been obtained during the past 30 years. There is still a large amount of data to be input, especially of historical content, which will hopefully be added during the next few years. If anyone has any data that they have not yet passed onto me, I would be interested in hearing from them. The matrix shows records for 747 species, which is over a hundred short of the county total, so this matrix is still very much a provisional one and should be treated as such.

The date bands used for the macro matrix were chosen to reflect those used in the Macro-moths of Cheshire 1961-1993 by Ian Rutherford. As the micro moths had not previously been published in this format, there was a certain amount of discussion before it was decided to use the following four sets of date bands. Post 2000 was chosen to reflect those most current, 1981-2000 for recent records, which includes the bulk of those on our database. 1901-1980 covers a period when recording was not necessarily undertaken with the same amount of detail as it is today and many of our records lack precise details. These are the records we need to follow up on and confirm that they still exist in the area. Lastly to pre 1901, the historic records. It would be especially gratifying to rediscover species at sites where they have not been seen for over a century.

Looking in more detail at the results, shows that there is at least one record for 48 of the 49 hectads (10km squares) within VC58. As yet we have no records from the small area of SJ63. Several of the other hectads that are only partially within the County and contain only small areas of land will be missing several common and widespread species. Allowing for the

reduction in suitable habitat in these hectads, reveals the areas where most recording has taken place within recent years. The hectad containing the most records is SJ98, with 454 species, although this is only just over 50% of the county list, so there are probably still many discoveries to be made even in the most thoroughly worked areas. The most widespread species appears to be *Anthophila fabriciana* the Nettle-tap Moth, missing only from SJ48 (and SJ63).

I would like to thank all those who have passed on their records and to those that have contributed to the inputting of the data, without whom this matrix would not have been possible and especially to Shane Farrell for his work in formatting the matrix.

References

- Farrell S. (2004), Provisional Matrix for Macro-moths in VC58 (Cheshire)
- Rutherford C.I. (1994), Macro-moths in Cheshire 1961 to 1993
- Cheshire Moth Group database

Steve Hind, VC58 (Cheshire) Micro-moth Recorder

Contacts and Web Sites

- The Lancashire and Cheshire Entomology Society (LCES) can be found at: <http://www.consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk/entomol/lces>
- Lancs. & Chesh. Ent. Soc. can be contacted through The Hon. Sec., Ian Smith, 12 Fernhill, Mellor, Stockport, SK6 5AN. Tel. 0161 427 3887. or at ifsmith@onetel.com or, for subscriptions and membership, through The Hon. Treasurer, R.W. Whitehead, Haulfryn, Graigfechan, Ruthin, Denbs., LL15 2HA or at roboud@haulfryn99.fsnet.co.uk
- **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 Macro-moth Recorder, Shane Farrell shane.farrell@ntlworld.com or via snail mail at 15 Westover, Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 3ER
- 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>
- 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/cm/cmg.htm>
- 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