

# Lepidoptera in Cheshire 2003

A report detailing records received for the micro-moths, butterflies  
and macro-moths of Vice-county 58 (Cheshire)



*The Biodiversity Information System for  
Cheshire, Halton, Warrington and Wirral*



**Lancashire & Cheshire  
Entomological Society**

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## Introduction

After a period of consolidation and determined work by all concerned to get reporting back on an even keel, we are now very happy to be able to produce the annual report for 2003 within 6 months of the end of the period to which this report relates. The numbers of people recording Lepidoptera is constantly increasing both nationally and locally and it is great to see records coming in from a variety of both old and new sources. Links have been re-established with some of the local Natural History Societies and such relationships will hopefully continue and flourish to enable the recording effort in our county to return to the synergy which once existed. That said, we should all be quite rightfully proud of the current levels of communication and commitment that exist amongst the Cheshire recorders of all orders.

Plans for the 'Atlas of Lepidoptera in VC58' continue and the groundwork is currently in progress. The data behind Rutherford's book, 'Macro-moths in Cheshire 1961 to 1993', has now been made available to us and will be a welcome addition to the information we hold. We will be scouring this paperwork over the coming year for any records not currently in our main recording database and this along with current data will allow us to form as full a picture as possible of the status of our species - both past and present.

In February 2004, a Provisional Matrix for Macro-moths in VC58 was published and a similar document for the Micro-moths will be produced with the next regular newsletter. The intention is to produce an updated version for each group of moths annually in future. Due to their nature, these documents will always be 'provisional' but will hopefully provide recorders with a regularly updated steer on distribution and abundance for the moths in our county. The value of the Macro-moth Matrix will be enhanced by the addition of the data referred to above and this will be reflected in the next version. If you have not received a copy of the Macro-moth Matrix, please contact Shane Farrell who will be able to furnish you with a free email copy. Please contact Shane if you wish to be added to the email circulation list and have not received a copy of this report by email. A stamped-addressed envelope would be very much appreciated if a hard copy by post is required/preferred. Alternatively, if you are attending either a L&CES meeting or a field meeting where one of the authors will be present please contact one of us and we can then make arrangements to bring along a free paper copy.

The planned report on the Pug Moths recorded in VC58 is still unfortunately just that – planned. It is hoped that this will be produced soon when time allows and after this annual report has been distributed.

As usual, we have produced a combined report covering micro-moths, butterflies and macro-moths rather than separate reports on all three groups. We will always accept suggestions for the improvement of this report and the kind and encouraging comments from readers of the 2002 report were particularly appreciated. Please note that there is a key to the species for which photographs are present within the photographic credits towards the end of the report.

**Many thanks to all recorders and organisations that have already submitted records for 2003 and for previous years. Without your efforts this report would not be possible. Please keep the records coming! This request also most definitely applies to recorders who have not sent in records for 2003 or even earlier. It is not yet too late to send in historic records as they will all be included within the above-mentioned Atlas when this is produced. The anticipated cut-off date for the receipt of records for incorporation into the Atlas is 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005.**

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## Micro-moths

The distribution of the plume *Amblyptilia acanthadactyla* (Hb.) appears to have changed in recent years. Up until the early 1990's there had only been five county records. Four were from the Wirral and the fifth, inland at Plumley Lime Beds SJ7075 in 1969 (HLB). Since 1993 it has been regularly reported from a number of sites on the Wirral, down to Chester and is now fairly common at all regularly worked sites in this area. A couple of adults in a garden at Elton SJ453753 during 2002 (MB, SHo) was not too far away. An adult at Bruntwood Park, Stockport SJ8687 on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2000 (BS) was



our first from the north eastern side of Cheshire. Reports for 2003 indicate that *acanthadactyla* is now rapidly colonising this area. There was an adult in a Bramhall garden SJ887842 on 7<sup>th</sup> April (ACh), followed by a series of five from Heald Green SJ853863 between 14<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> August (BTS) and twenty at Stockport between 15<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> August (EK). There were also sightings during 2003 from other areas of the county, at Alsager SJ819545 an adult on 11<sup>th</sup> August (MD) and at Utlington SJ5364 on 19<sup>th</sup> October, a vacated pupal case attached to Hedge Woundwort *Stachys sylvatica* (SHi, AW). These suggest that *acanthadactyla* may now have spread throughout the county.

During a visit to Arnfield SK006976 on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2001, *Coleophora tamesis* Waters was attracted to MV light (SF, PG, AW, SHi, PMH). As this was only the second county record I decided to search for larval cases in future years, to see if I could add a few more records. I was reminded of this following the capture of a female *tamesis* at Heald Green SJ852863 on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2003 (BTS). Searching the seedheads of Jointed Rush *Juncus articulatus* for the larval cases at Jackson's Brickwork's, Higher Poynton SJ9484 on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2003, soon produced cases, although not of *tamesis*. I had instead stumbled upon Cheshire's first *Coleophora taeniipennella* H.-S. During the next five weeks, with the help of KM and BTS, we managed to find further larval cases of *taeniipennella* at a dozen sites across the county.



After discovering *Psychoides filicivora* (Meyr.) larvae in the fronds of Hartstongue *Phyllitis scolopendrium* at three sites along the Wirral Way SJ28 during 2000, IS continued to examine Hartstongue ferns and has now been rewarded with the discovery of *P. verhuella* Bru. larvae. These were at Eccleston SJ412625 on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2003 and at Brabyns Park, Marple SJ963895 on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2003. Ian has also found three additional Wirral sites for *filicivora*, although this time in the fronds of Polypody *Polypodium*, as well as in Hartstongue fern along the Mersey Valley at Sale Water Park SJ808926.

Another new addition this year was the plume *Ovendenia lienigianus* (Zell.). I had been expecting this to be found soon, following its discovery at a couple of sites in South Lancashire, just north of the Mersey, during the last three years. It was almost missed, as it was the last species to be attracted to a light at Red Rocks Marsh, Hoylake SJ205882 on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2003 (SHi, KM). The same session produced the first *Cnephasia longana* (Haw.) since 1947. This may be the result of poor coverage at our coastal sites, as it was regarded as common on the sandhills in the past.

The False Codling Moth *Thaumatotibia leucotreta* (Meyr.) was also recorded for the first time this year. This was found at Bramhalls Park, Anderton SJ645754 on an inside kitchen window on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2003 and was probably imported amongst fruits (AW).

The Apple Leaf Skeletonizer *Choreutis pariana* (Cl.) was attracted to my garden MV light at Higher Poynton SJ945838 on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2003. This species is mapped as occurring in the county in *The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland Vol. 2* (Heath, 1985) p.398, although no records exist on the county database.

A number of species are worthy of note, as they have not been recorded in the county for at least a decade. A couple of *Bryotropha politella* (Stt.) were netted during an evening visit into the eastern hills on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2003, the first since 1955. A female at Pym Chair SJ9976, followed by a male at Errwood SK0174 (SHH). *Phalonidia affinitana* (Dougl.) is restricted to the salt marshes and has not been seen since 1936. IS found one by Gayton Cottage SJ265799 on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2003. Attracted to light traps were *Cedestis gyssemiella* (Zell.) at Lynwode House, Alsager SJ819545 on 24<sup>th</sup>



July 2003 (MD), *Eucosma obumbratana* (Lien. & Zell.) at Green Wood, Halton SJ568839 on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2003 (JC), the first county record since 1940 of *Dichrorampha simpliciana* (Haw.) was at Dudley Road, Sale SJ791926 on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2003 (PH), a Wax Moth *Galleria mellonella* (Linn.) at Carlton Avenue, Handforth SJ8582 on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2003 (GL) and a male Cacao Moth *Epehstia elutella* (Hb.) at Westover, Romiley SJ931900 on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2003 (SF). A female *E.elutella* was also found resting on an oak trunk in the Bollinhurst Brook Valley, Lyme Handley SJ9584 on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2003 (SHi). Also on oak trunks were a couple of *Argyresthia glaucinella* Zell. at Dibbinsdale Nature Reserve SJ3382, SJ3482 on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2003 and a larval case of *Narycia monilifera* (Geoff.) at Brookkeys Covert SJ7490, on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2003 (KM, DSt). Also on the last visit were ten tenanted mines of *Eriocrania cicatricella* (Zett.) on birch. Larvae of *Grapholita funebrana* (Treit.) were found in the fruits of plum from a garden in Highfield Road, Romiley SJ927908 on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2003 (IS).

It is intended that A Provisional Matrix for Micro-moths in VC58 (Cheshire) will be published in the next newsletter. As well as including all the above records, it will give an indication of our current knowledge as to the distribution of micro-moths within the county.

## Steve Hind VC58 County Micro-Moth Recorder

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### Butterflies

For the first time since the mid-1990s it is pleasing to report that butterflies in Cheshire (as well as elsewhere in the U.K.) appear to have enjoyed an excellent breeding season during 2003. Data received clearly shows that species that fared particularly well included the Small Copper, Common Blue, Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Painted Lady and Small Heath. There can be little doubt that the main reason for this success was the prolonged periods of ideal weather conditions which continued throughout most of the summer months. A record number of 32 species were recorded in the county during the year, whilst the conditions also produced the earliest emergence dates for several butterflies



including the Dingy Skipper, Large White, Green-veined White, Purple Hairstreak, White-letter Hairstreak and Silver-studded Blue. Any optimism must, however, be tempered by the fact that some perceived increases may have been merely due to contributors taking advantage of the sunny weather to spend longer “in the field”.

The year began quietly with few butterfly sightings in January, although a Peacock was seen at Hale on the 4<sup>th</sup>, followed by a Small Tortoiseshell at Delamere Forest on 23<sup>rd</sup>. No additional species were reported during the remainder of the month and despite several sunny periods in February none of the other hibernators put in an appearance.

High pressure throughout virtually the whole of March resulted in widespread sightings of the hibernating species, especially the Small Tortoiseshell. The earliest Comma was seen at Kerridge on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, with a Brimstone at Fiddler’s Ferry Reserve on the same date. An early Red Admiral was at Congleton on the 15<sup>th</sup> with the usual uncertainty as to whether it had successfully hibernated, or was an early migrant. The 17<sup>th</sup> produced the earliest ever Green-veined White in the county with a sighting at Holmes Chapel, followed by the earliest ever Large White at Hale on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. A continuation of warm sunny conditions encouraged the emergence of Small White butterflies at many localities throughout the county commencing at Macclesfield on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Towards the end of the month the Orange Tip was seen at Rowton on the 27<sup>th</sup> and a Holly Blue at

Great Sutton on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

The weather in April even surpassed that of the previous month being dominated by high pressure and exceptionally dry, sunny conditions - the temperature peaked at an unprecedented 25<sup>o</sup>C on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Throughout this period butterflies were recorded in excellent numbers with several species emerging earlier



than normal, most notably a Small Copper near Helsby on the 8<sup>th</sup> and Dingy Skipper at Ashton's Flash (Northwich) on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Other butterflies appearing on fairly typical dates included the Speckled Wood at several localities on the 5<sup>th</sup> and the Green Hairstreak near Astbury on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

It seemed inevitable that the good start to the year would not continue indefinitely and this proved to be the case during May. The month was dominated by Atlantic weather systems resulting in periods of prolonged heavy rain with few days conducive to butterfly recording. The earliest Wall butterfly was seen at Moore on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Common Blue was reported from Ashton's Flash (Northwich) on the 7<sup>th</sup>, whilst the first sighting of the Small Heath was at the same site on the 15<sup>th</sup> - all typical dates for the respective insects. In view of the weather conditions

sightings of single Painted Lady butterflies at Bickerton Hill on the 5<sup>th</sup>, Stonyfold Hill on the 8<sup>th</sup> and at The Cloud (Congleton) the following day were unexpected bonuses. Butterfly activity did not improve until there was a period of high pressure in the final week of the month with the New Ferry Butterfly Park producing the earliest Large Skipper on the 25<sup>th</sup>, followed by a Clouded Yellow at Ashton's Flash (Northwich) on the 29<sup>th</sup>. By the end of the month there were further sightings of the Clouded Yellow at Ness Gardens and Hale, whilst an early Meadow Brown was recorded at Haslington on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

The warmest June in the U.K. since 1976 produced consistent high daytime temperatures resulting in the early emergence of several species, plus widespread sightings of the migrant Painted Lady. An early Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary was at Bagmere on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Small Skipper appeared at Rixton Claypits on the 7<sup>th</sup> and the Silver-studded Blue at Thurstaston Common on the 15<sup>th</sup>. These sightings were followed by the earliest county records of the White-letter Hairstreak at Lea-by-Backford on the 21<sup>st</sup> and the Purple Hairstreak at Croughton on the 29<sup>th</sup>. The first Gatekeeper of the year was noted at Newchurch Common on the 24<sup>th</sup>, but highlight of the month was reserved for the fortunate observers who had a rare Camberwell Beauty at Woolston Eyes on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

With a continuation of ideal weather conditions during July most butterflies in the county enjoyed a successful breeding season. Noteworthy sightings included a Clouded Yellow at Nantwich on 6<sup>th</sup> July and a single Ringlet at a previously unrecorded site at Coxbank on the 9<sup>th</sup>. The earliest Grayling was reported from Thurstaston on the 14<sup>th</sup>, with butterflies also seen at the inland breeding colony at Sandbach later in the month.

The excellent weather conditions and high temperatures continued into August with the 2<sup>nd</sup> being a "red-letter day" with the only Dark Green Fritillary of the year at Handforth, plus an even rarer Marbled White at Fiddler's Ferry Reserve. On this same date there were noteworthy concentrations of 1,000+ "whites" near Heswall and 600+ along Hale Shore - it seems likely that a good proportion of these insects were migrants bearing in mind the coastal localities where these observations occurred. Good numbers of the Painted Lady were also widely recorded throughout the month, whilst a massive total of 816 Small Tortoiseshell butterflies on the 14<sup>th</sup> at Old Pale (Delamere) was the largest count in Cheshire for at least 10 years. Also on the 14<sup>th</sup> was an unusually late Large Skipper at Bagmere, whilst on the final day of the month a Clouded Yellow was seen at Birchwood - the last of only five sightings during the year.

By early September the migrant Red Admiral and Painted Lady were still being recorded in good numbers, but the Gatekeeper and Meadow Brown had already succumbed to the high temperatures and had disappeared from most sites. In addition, many nectar-bearing plants had withered in the hot weather with the result that there was a sharp fall in numbers of most other butterfly species. An exception was the Small Copper that was still being widely recorded and was experiencing its best year since the mid-1990s - highest count during the month was an impressive 52 at Saltersley Moss on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

October was a changeable month with often windy conditions, coupled with some spells of cold and wet

weather during the last two weeks. Butterfly numbers naturally dwindled throughout this period, although the Red Admiral was still recorded on most days. Most unexpected sightings at this time of year were again the Small Copper butterflies which featured prominently at many sites, including an excellent count of 33 at Old Pale (Delamere) on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Sightings of a partial third brood of the Wall at Hooksbank Wood (Bollin Valley), Heswall and Inner Marsh Farm were also noteworthy in view of its now perilous status in the county. November conditions were mainly unfavourable for late sightings, but still produced the latest ever county records of a Painted Lady at Chester on 6<sup>th</sup>, Small Copper at Heswall on the 12<sup>th</sup> and Small Tortoiseshell at Woolston Eyes on the 27<sup>th</sup>. A late Red Admiral was seen at Heswall on the 12<sup>th</sup>, although this was followed by an additional insect, probably attempting to hibernate, inside a superstore at Warrington Town Centre on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

## **SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES SEEN IN CHESHIRE & WIRRAL DURING 2003**

### **Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris* (Poda, 1761)**

Conflicting reports were received as to how well this species fared, even though one would have anticipated that the weather conditions should have produced better results. Whilst there was some evidence to suggest that most small colonies did reasonably well there are now few sites in the county where there is suitable habitat to support large populations. The main reason for this is that during the last few years many larger areas of open grassland have been developed, resulting in most surviving colonies now being confined to smaller marginal sites. Selected counts during July included 31 at Uplands Community Woodland on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 48 at Hale Road Woodlands on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 30 at Rixton Claypits on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 25+ at Dane-in-Shaw Pastures on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 25 at Primrose Vale (Congleton) on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 42 in the Wych Valley on the 13<sup>th</sup>. Earliest sighting at Rixton Claypits on 7<sup>th</sup> June; latest at Hooksbank Wood (Bollin Valley) and Old Pale (Delamere) on 14<sup>th</sup> August.

### **Large Skipper *Ochlodes venata* (Turati, 1905)**

During the year there was a slight increase noted, not only in maximum counts, but also the number of localities where the Large Skipper was recorded. Whilst the improved weather conditions may have accounted for a successful breeding season it is also possible that the weather ensured a more comprehensive coverage by contributors. Nevertheless, in recent years there have been no localities where significant populations have been recorded. During 2003 the only sites where double-figure counts have been noted were as follows:- Astbury Mere (20 on 8<sup>th</sup> June), Hale Road Woodlands (18 on 13<sup>th</sup> June), Handforth (32 on 13<sup>th</sup> June), Greasby (30+ on 13<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> June), Bagmere (23 on 13<sup>th</sup> June), Tattenhall (10 on 15<sup>th</sup> June), Crewe Business Park (10 on 7<sup>th</sup> July), Newchurch Common (20+ on 8<sup>th</sup> July) and Rixton Claypits (29 on 14<sup>th</sup> July). By coincidence, for the second successive year, the highest count was at Handforth - 32 on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2002 and 32 on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2003.

The earliest sighting was at the New Ferry Butterfly Park on the typical date of 25<sup>th</sup> May (the same date as in 2002). Latest sightings were later than normal at Woolston Eyes on 9<sup>th</sup> August and Bagmere on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

### **Dingy Skipper *Erynnis tages* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Regular monitoring of the prime Cheshire site at Ashton's Flash (Northwich) produced a maximum count of 54 individuals on 8<sup>th</sup> May. Only other reports during the year were from areas adjacent to the main colony where proactive management work is proving beneficial, plus very small numbers at two regular sites on the Wirral where there was a maximum count of only 3 insects at Thurstaston on 2<sup>nd</sup> June. Unfortunately, no information was received from the known colonies at Weaver Parkway.

For the second successive year there were April sightings in the county with the earliest at Ashton's Flash (Northwich) on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Latest sighting at Thurstaston on 9<sup>th</sup> June.



**Clouded Yellow *Colias croceus* (Geoffroy, 1785)**

It was a fairly average year for this species in Cheshire, although considering the large influx of Painted Lady butterflies it was surprising that there were so few reports of this migrant. Earliest sightings of single insects in late May were recorded at Ashton's Flash (Northwich) on the 29<sup>th</sup>, Ness Gardens on the 30<sup>th</sup> and Hale Shore on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Later in the year the only other reports were again of single insects at Nantwich on 6<sup>th</sup> July and Birchwood on 31<sup>st</sup> August.

**Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

The vast majority of breeding records still emanate from the east of the county, although there are now regular sightings in the north, especially along the Mersey Valley. 2003 did not produce any reports from the Wirral, but there were isolated sightings in the south-west of Cheshire along the River Dee and the Wych Valley. In the early part of the year most sightings occurred from mid-March to late May, with just a few individuals lingering throughout June. Insects of the summer emergence started to appear from mid-July, but were only observed in small numbers until late August, with even fewer sightings during September and October. Earliest sighting at Fiddler's Ferry Reserve on 2<sup>nd</sup> March; latest at Somerford on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

**Large White *Pieris brassicae* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

It was generally a better year for this species with the first brood peaking in late May and the second, considerably larger emergence, peaking in early August. Small numbers were still being recorded at several localities during October and may have been the result of a small third emergence. During the last few years there has been little evidence of significant migration in Cheshire, but from mid-July to early August there were up to 500 insects recorded along the Wirral coast near Heswall and good numbers along the Mersey, especially around Hale Head. It would seem likely that at least a proportion of these butterflies related to migrants bearing in mind the coastal localities and dates.

Earliest ever county record at Hale on 23<sup>rd</sup> March; latest sighting at Astbury on 18<sup>th</sup> October.

**Small White *Pieris rapae* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

As usual the second emergence during July and August was much more in evidence than the spring brood. Records also show that the Small White had a successful breeding season with sightings in 51% of recorded tetrads, against 39% in 2002. It would seem likely that large counts at coastal localities, including 500 insects near Heswall from mid-July to early August and 200+ at Hale Head on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, included a significant proportion of migrants.

Earliest sighting at Macclesfield on 19<sup>th</sup> March, followed by daily reports from around the county until the end of the month. Latest sighting at Heswall on 27<sup>th</sup> October.

**Green-veined White *Pieris napi* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

With its preference for damper habitats the Green-veined White was again the most widespread "white" in Cheshire. As usual the spring brood was mainly seen in modest numbers with the largest count of 60+ in Wildboarclough on 15<sup>th</sup> June. Significant counts during the summer period included 77 at Rixton Claypits on



14<sup>th</sup> July, 100+ at Caughall on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 90+ near Timbersbrook on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 52 at Handforth on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 200+ at Hale Shore on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 95 at Frodsham Marshes on 8<sup>th</sup> August and 41 on moorlands around the Cat & Fiddle Inn on 16<sup>th</sup> August. Earliest sighting at Holmes Chapel on 17<sup>th</sup> March; latest at Thornton Common on 15<sup>th</sup> October.

**Orange Tip *Anthocharis cardamines* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Warm weather during March and April meant that by mid-April this species was already being recorded in good numbers across the county, with egg-laying first observed at Handforth on 15<sup>th</sup> April. In

these favourable conditions peak numbers were seen slightly earlier than normal during April, including significant counts of 48 at Rixton Claypits on the 16<sup>th</sup>, 40+ at Vale Royal Locks on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 33 at Handforth on 23<sup>rd</sup>. Deterioration in weather conditions during May brought a sharp decline in numbers resulting in an average year for this butterfly. Sightings received from 161 tetrads, against 155 tetrads in 2002.

There were March sightings at Rowton on the 27<sup>th</sup>, Crewe on the 30<sup>th</sup> and Heswall Dales on the 31<sup>st</sup>. A few insects lingered into June with records from Congleton on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, Whirley (Macclesfield) on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Woolston Eyes on the 4<sup>th</sup>, Rixton Claypits on the 7<sup>th</sup>, Wildboarclough on the 15<sup>th</sup> and Eastham on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Most noteworthy record was confirmation of this species breeding at West Kirby. Not only was this the first breeding record for the Wirral, but the larva was found on Gorse *Ulex europaeus* and is the first time in Cheshire that the Green Hairstreak has been recorded breeding on this plant. Nowadays most colonies in the county are relatively small with the most significant counts during 2003 as follows:- 10 at Bickerton Hill on 18<sup>th</sup> April, 13 at Pym Chair on 18<sup>th</sup> April, 20 at Flaxmere on 9<sup>th</sup> May, 39 at Brookhouse Moss on 1<sup>st</sup> June and 13 at Cranberry Moss (Eaton) on 2<sup>nd</sup> June. An increase in recorded tetrads from 12 in 2002 to 19 in 2003 was mainly due to increased coverage in the Pennine hills.

Earliest sighting at Pot Bank (Astbury) on 11<sup>th</sup> April; latest at Cranberry Moss on 2<sup>nd</sup> June.

#### **Purple Hairstreak *Quercusia quercus* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Any annual assessment of the Purple Hairstreak is largely based on comments from those few keen recorders who venture out in the early evening to search for this treetop insect. Records for 2003 suggest that this butterfly only had a mediocre year, although reports of very small numbers were recorded across the county from Lyme Park in the east to Stapledon Wood (Wirral) in the west. Since 1990 the Purple Hairstreak has been recorded in 26% of tetrads, although still with a significant bias towards areas on the Wirral and the south-west of Cheshire.

The earliest ever county sighting was at Croughton on 29<sup>th</sup> June (previous record at Tattenhall on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2002). Latest reports from Crewe Business Park on 20<sup>th</sup> August and Chester the following day.

#### **White-letter Hairstreak *Satyrrium w-album* (Knoch, 1782)**

As usual the majority of sightings emanated from this species stronghold in South Wirral (SJ37 & SJ47). Reports from other known colonies included Thurstaston (SJ28), Coddington (SJ45), Wigg Island (SJ58), Leftwich (SJ67) and Bath Vale (SJ86). Each year new colonies of this elusive butterfly continue to be discovered with 2003 proving to be no exception with reports from New Ferry Butterfly Park (SJ38), Dibbinsdale (SJ38) and Barnton Cut (SJ67). Maximum counts during July were of 8+ at Wigg Island on 11<sup>th</sup>, 8 at Spital on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 8 at Dibbinsdale on 18<sup>th</sup>. Earliest ever county sightings at Lea-by-Backford on 21<sup>st</sup> June and Wigg Island the following day (previous record at Bache on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1996). Latest report from Bath Vale on 5<sup>th</sup> August.

#### **Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas* (Linnaeus, 1761)**

Since the warm, dry summers of the mid-1990s numbers of this butterfly had been declining rapidly, but favourable conditions in 2003 produced a significant improvement. During 2002 the Small Copper was only recorded in 55 tetrads, but this figure increased to 105 tetrads in 2003. This year there was a widespread and protracted first emergence commencing in mid-April with a first sighting at Helsby on the 8<sup>th</sup>, followed by reports from Delamere Forest, Abbot's Moss and Moore Nature Reserve on the 15<sup>th</sup>. At Saltersley Moss large-scale peat extraction has recently destroyed much of the habitat, but the work has resulted in a large area



of Sheep's Sorrel *Rumex acetosella* appearing which produced excellent counts of 38 on 28<sup>th</sup> May and 52 on 17<sup>th</sup> September. There were other notable counts in Cheshire included 49 at Old Pale (Delamere) on 30<sup>th</sup> August and even more surprising 33 at this site on 18<sup>th</sup> October. The improved figures for the Small Copper were reflected in most parts of the county, although there was little change noted at sites on the Wirral or along the Mersey Valley – a regularly worked tetrad at Risley Moss failed to produce any sightings, whilst nearby Rixton Claypits had a maximum count of only one insect. Evidence of a third brood was reported from several widespread localities in the county.

Earliest sighting at Queen Charlotte's Wood (Helsby) on 8<sup>th</sup> April; latest at Heswall on 12<sup>th</sup> November (previous latest Cheshire record at Walton Lock on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1997).

#### **Silver-studded Blue *Plebejus argus* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

As it is now nine years since this butterfly was introduced on Thurstaston Common the project can be considered a success, especially as many similar schemes often fail within this timescale. Numbers do, however, remain low with survey work in 2003 showing "very average" results. It would appear that the insect thrives in areas where there is pioneer Heather *Calluna vulgaris* and work is continuing at the site to ensure that more of this suitable habitat is available. A further problem in 2003 was that there were high numbers of the destructive Heather Beetle on the site, coupled with drought conditions. During the winter of 2003/2004 more management work will be carried out at this site and the small band of volunteers who carry out these ongoing tasks are to be commended for their dedication to this project.

A maximum count of 21 insects on 5<sup>th</sup> July was very similar to the 20 recorded on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2002. Sightings on Thurstaston Common extended from 15<sup>th</sup> June (the earliest ever county record) to 26<sup>th</sup> July.

#### **Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus* (Rottemburg, 1775)**

This once common butterfly is much more localised than in former times, although improved weather conditions in 2003 produced increased numbers at many sites. Reports from 85 tetrads, compared to 50 tetrads in 2002, was a welcome improvement over the last few years. Significant counts during 2003 included 70 at Ashton's Flash (Northwich) on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 50 at Thurstaston on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 135+ at Hale Shore on 4<sup>th</sup> August, 75 at Pickering's Pasture on 4<sup>th</sup> August, 86 at Arclid Sand Quarry on 4<sup>th</sup> August, 60+ along the Wirral coast between Meols and Moreton on 7<sup>th</sup> August and 94 at Rixton Claypits on 14<sup>th</sup> August. An increasing number of contributors are reporting that colonies are just as likely to be found breeding on White Clover *Trifolium repens*, rather than the more traditional favourite - Common Birdsfoot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*. Earliest sightings at Chester and Ashton's Flash (Northwich) on 7<sup>th</sup> May and Pickering's Pasture the following day. Latest sightings from Hale Bank on 24<sup>th</sup> September and Arclid Sand Quarry on 27<sup>th</sup> September could possibly have related to a partial third brood.

#### **Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Good weather conditions throughout most of the year should have produced an increase in records, but sightings were down from 94 tetrads in 2002 to 80 tetrads this year. As usual nearly 90% of sightings were from parks and gardens with a majority of these records from the western half of the county. It would appear that the Holly Blue is still on part of a downward cycle that has been continuing since the last peak in early 1999. This year the spring brood was recorded from 31<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> May, with the larger summer emergence seen from 25<sup>th</sup> June to 13<sup>th</sup> September.

Earliest and latest sightings were both from Great Sutton on 31<sup>st</sup> March and 13<sup>th</sup> September.

#### **Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Unlike the previous year, when records indicated that several insects overwintered successfully, the only early sightings in 2003 were from Congleton on 15<sup>th</sup> March and Woolston Eyes on the 30<sup>th</sup>. In view of the excellent weather conditions in March it is possible that these butterflies could have been early migrants, rather than having hibernated in Cheshire. Over the next three months the Red Admiral remained relatively scarce with only small numbers recorded. Sightings became more frequent during July and August, but it was not until September that numbers increased substantially, possibly as the result of a late influx from the continent. Highest counts during this period were of 30 along the Wirral Way on 14<sup>th</sup> September, 21 in a Helsby garden on the same date, 21 nectaring on Ivy *Hedera helix* at Northwich on 15<sup>th</sup> and 50+ also on Ivy at Siddington on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Latest "outdoor" sighting was at Heswall on 12<sup>th</sup> November, followed by an insect that was probably attempting to hibernate inside a superstore at Warrington Town Centre on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Large numbers of the Painted Lady were reported passing northwards over Gibraltar and southern Spain in early March so it was not unexpected when a significant influx reached Cheshire by early June. Insects were recorded in many gardens at this time, but the largest concentration was of 30+ at Frodsham Marshes on the 1<sup>st</sup>. During this same period migrants were reported moving along the Mersey estuary before heading inland. Numbers continued to be observed over a period of several weeks with faded specimens still on the wing during July when freshly emerged insects were also appearing. Widespread sightings continued throughout August and September with notable counts of 40+ at Red Rocks on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 44 at Old Pale (Delamere) on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 39 at Dane-in-Shaw in mid-August, 38 at Rixton Claypits on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 30 at Bridgemere on 16<sup>th</sup> August, 35+ at Bidston on 30<sup>th</sup> August and 52 along the Wirral Way on 14<sup>th</sup> September. Earliest sightings at Bickerton Hill on 5<sup>th</sup> May, Stonyfold Hill on the 8<sup>th</sup> and The Cloud (Congleton) on the 9<sup>th</sup>. There was a latest ever county sighting at Chester on 6<sup>th</sup> November (previous record at Ellesmere Port on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1996).

**Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Excellent weather conditions in the early spring produced a prolonged period of egg-laying resulting in a staggered emergence of the first generation. Freshly emerged insects were first noted around Delamere in late May, whilst by early June good numbers were at sites along the Bollin Valley and around Chester – in normal circumstances these butterflies are not seen in Cheshire until early July. By early August large numbers were again being recorded including 241 at Frodsham Marshes on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 103 at Oversley Ford (Styal) on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 100+ at Stapelford on the 14<sup>th</sup>. These numbers were, however, dwarfed by a massive count of 816 taking nectar on thistles at Old Pale (Delamere) on the 14<sup>th</sup> – by early September the continuation of hot weather meant that most plants at this site had withered, but many of these insects were relocated nearby on the more sheltered northern slopes where a nectar source was still available. It is a matter of conjecture as to how many of the butterflies seen at this time of year had bred locally or were the result of immigration - the vast majority were, however, freshly emerged butterflies concentrated close to nettle-beds where they had presumably bred. Thankfully, the downward trend of this butterfly was reversed in 2003 with records from 286 tetrads, compared to 220 tetrads in 2002, although these figures are still well below numbers seen in the mid-1990s. Earliest sighting at Delamere Forest on 23<sup>rd</sup> January; latest at Mottram St. Andrew on 10<sup>th</sup> November, Haslington on the 12<sup>th</sup> and Woolston Eyes on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Camberwell Beauty *Nymphalis antiopa* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Two observers at Woolston Eyes recorded this insect on 28<sup>th</sup> June. If this butterfly was a genuine migrant, rather than an escape from captive-bred stock, it seems likely that it emanated from southern Europe where its normal flight period is from mid-June to July. Most sightings in the U.K. do, however, occur in late summer and are thought to arrive from Scandinavia where it breeds later in the year. The Camberwell Beauty remains extremely rare in the county even though it has now been recorded in five of the last nine years – unfortunately, few of these insects have stayed around long enough for other enthusiasts to see them.

**Peacock *Inachis io* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

The comments by many contributors as to the scarcity of this species were borne out by the fact that there were sightings from only 47% of recorded tetrads, against 56% in 2002. In view of the weather conditions, together with the success of most other species, it is difficult to find a reasonable explanation for such low numbers. Largest count is invariably received from Rixton Claypits with 2003 being no exception with 283 recorded on 3<sup>rd</sup> August. The only other concentration of note was of 89 at Woolston Eyes in early August. During September the Peacock had almost disappeared at many sites and had apparently gone into hibernation even earlier than normal.

Earliest sighting at Hale on 4<sup>th</sup> January; latest sighting at Newchurch Common on 29<sup>th</sup> October.

**Comma *Polygonia c-album* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Despite variable weather conditions the population has remained relatively stable over the last few years, although increased recording activity in 2003 produced reports from some additional localities. Contributions were received from 168 tetrads in 2003, compared with 142 tetrads in 2001 and 141 tetrads in 2002. This year there was an interesting observation at Kelsall on 17<sup>th</sup> March where a pair were seen mating – not only was this a good early sighting, but this butterfly is rarely seen mating at any time. Peak numbers in Cheshire often occur in mid-July and again in late September, but this year there were overlapping broods with

butterflies seen in equal numbers throughout July, August and September - largest concentrations of 11 at Arley Park on 23<sup>rd</sup> July and 14 along the Wirral Way on 17<sup>th</sup> September.  
Earliest sighting at Kerridge on 2<sup>nd</sup> March; latest at Knutsford on 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

**Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary *Boloria selene* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)**

Since the last colony died out at Delamere Forest in 1996 the only sightings in Cheshire have been confined to a single breeding locality at Bagmere. Conservation work, including scrub clearance, has continued over a number of years at this private site in an effort to improve the habitat. Throughout this period numbers of the butterfly have remained at a low, but stable level, although it is encouraging to note that Marsh Violet, the foodplant of its caterpillar, is now spreading into recently cleared areas. The following figures show the maximum counts of the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary at this site over the last five years (bearing in mind that the 2001 figure represents a single visit due to the Foot & Mouth restrictions).

1999	11 on 13 <sup>th</sup> June
2000	19 on 16 <sup>th</sup> June
2001	8 on 17 <sup>th</sup> June
2002	16 on 6 <sup>th</sup> June
2003	19 on 6 <sup>th</sup> June

Earliest sighting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June; latest on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

**Dark Green Fritillary *Argynnis aglaja* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

The sighting of a single butterfly at Handforth on 2<sup>nd</sup> August represented the third year in succession that there has only been a single report for the county. In the past, the majority of records have been from coastal localities on the Wirral, with the remaining sightings being widely scattered across the county. As the Dark Green Fritillary has not bred in the county for many years it is a matter of speculation as to whether the occasional individuals in Cheshire emanate from colonies in the Peak District, or from coastal localities in the surrounding counties.

The sighting of an unidentified large fritillary in flight at Aldford on 1<sup>st</sup> August could possibly have been this species.

**Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Over the last 15 years the range extension of the Speckled Wood in Cheshire has continued at a remarkable rate with sightings during this period received from 91% of tetrads. In theory the weather conditions during 2003 were probably too hot and dry to provide optimum breeding conditions for this shade-loving insect, but despite this there were reports from 62% of recorded tetrads, against 51% in 2002. As usual there was a complicated pattern of overlapping broods throughout the year with an initial peak during late April and early May, followed by further peaks in August and September. Several contributors have, however, commented that few localities are now recording the high abundance levels that were a feature of some sites in the late 1990s. This year the largest counts all occurred during August - 50+ at Lower Heswall on the 15<sup>th</sup>, 35 at Woolston Eyes on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 40 at Rixton Claypits on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 33 at Saltersley Moss on the 27<sup>th</sup>.



Earliest sightings at Moore Nature Reserve, Astbury, Hague Bar and New Ferry Butterfly Park on 5<sup>th</sup> April. Latest report from Congleton on 27<sup>th</sup> October.

**Wall *Lasiommata megera* (Linnaeus, 1767)**

Whilst some counties experienced a welcome recovery in numbers during the year there was little evidence of this in Cheshire. The decline in the fortunes of the Wall has continued in the county for the past ten years and shows few signs of abating - in 1993 it was the 10<sup>th</sup> most widespread butterfly in Cheshire, but has now fallen to the 20<sup>th</sup>. Whilst it may seem encouraging that in 2003 this insect was recorded in 27 tetrads, against 24 tetrads in 2002, the improvement was solely due to better weather conditions enabling more recording to be undertaken. First brood butterflies were seen from 3<sup>rd</sup> May to 13<sup>th</sup> June and the second brood from 28<sup>th</sup> July to 4<sup>th</sup> September. During October there was evidence of a very small third brood at Inner Marsh Farm (Burton), Heswall and Hooksbank Wood (Bollin Valley). Most disturbing statistic is that the largest count at any site throughout the year was of only 6 insects at Inner Marsh Farm on 5<sup>th</sup> August.

Earliest sighting at Moore Nature Reserve on 3<sup>rd</sup> May; latest at Inner Marsh Farm on 23<sup>rd</sup> October.

**Marbled White *Melanargia galathea* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

There was a report of a single insect at Fiddler's Ferry Reserve on 2<sup>nd</sup> August – the first confirmed sighting in the county since 1994. The Marbled White is a distinctive butterfly that is normally confined to its breeding localities on areas of unimproved grassland in the southern counties of England from where it only occasionally wanders. This sighting did, however, occur during favourable weather conditions when a substantial number of migrants were being recorded Cheshire.

**Grayling *Hipparchia semele* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

During the last few years there have been few reports from the eastern side of the Wirral so a single butterfly seen along the New Ferry shore on 31<sup>st</sup> July was encouraging news. Possibly a small colony may still survive in this area where there has been considerable industrial developments in recent years. Other Wirral sightings were of small numbers at regular breeding sites along the coast between Thurstaston and Wallasey, with a maximum count of 18 at Thurstaston on 16<sup>th</sup> July. Visits to Cheshire's only inland breeding colony at Sandbach Flashes produced a maximum count of 13 individuals on 28<sup>th</sup> July.

Earliest and latest sightings were compressed to within a short period from 14<sup>th</sup> July at Thurstaston to 13<sup>th</sup> August at Red Rocks (Hoylake).

**Gatekeeper *Pyronia tithonus* (Linnaeus, 1771)**

This butterfly continues to prosper in the county and during late July and August is probably the most abundant species in Cheshire. This year records show that it peaked in late July with 1,000+ at Heswall on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, plus equally large numbers at Woolston Eyes during this same period. At Newgate tip (Wilmslow) a count of 1,080 on 26<sup>th</sup> July was exceptional for a site where this insect was unknown only five years ago. During the last few years the Gatekeeper has continued to extend its range into upland areas in the east of the county where it is now being regularly recorded in small numbers.

Earliest sighting at Newchurch Common on 24<sup>th</sup> June; latest at Greasby on 18<sup>th</sup> September.

**Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

This insect still remains one of the commonest and widespread of Cheshire's butterflies where it can invariably be found in most grassy areas. Unfortunately, many of these sites presently only support modest numbers as too many of its favoured haunts are heavily grazed, or are being developed. As a result there are nowadays fewer sites that support large populations – in 2003 significant counts included 336 at Hale Road Woodlands on 9<sup>th</sup> July, 400+ at Dane-in-Shaw Pastures on 10<sup>th</sup> July and 500+ between Thurstaston and Heswall on 22<sup>nd</sup> July.

Earliest sighting at Haslington on 31<sup>st</sup> May; latest at Newchurch Common on 23<sup>rd</sup> September and Arclid Sand Quarry on 25<sup>th</sup> September.

**Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Most significant report was of a single butterfly along a disused railway track at Coxbank on 9<sup>th</sup> July - this site, close to the Shropshire border, is a considerable distance from Cheshire's only established colonies in the Wych Valley. A lack of regular survey work at this main site means that we are still unsure exactly when this insect emerges or when peak numbers occur. Casual visits in 2003 would, however, indicate that numbers could have fallen since the previous year, possibly as a result of drier conditions which do not suit this butterfly - maximum count of 41 on 13<sup>th</sup> July.

Earliest sighting at Coxbank on 9<sup>th</sup> July; latest at Oldcastle Mill on 3<sup>rd</sup> August.

**Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

First impressions, with sightings from 33 sites in 2003 against 15 sites in 2002, were encouraging. This increase could, however, be almost entirely due to better weather conditions that enabled more monitoring to be undertaken, especially in the hilly areas in the east of Cheshire. Records in 2003 were mainly received from traditional sites in the Pennine foothills (18 tetrads), plus lowland sites on the Cheshire Plain (5 tetrads) and coastal sites on the Wirral (10 tetrads). Except for an impressive count of 100+ along Cumberland Brook (Wildboarclough) on 25<sup>th</sup> June, all double-figured counts from other sites were depressingly low compared with earlier times - 10 at Lower Heswall on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 11 at Ashton's Flash (Northwich) on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 13 by Macclesfield Forest on 26<sup>th</sup> June and 12 at Delamere Quarry on 4<sup>th</sup> August. Earliest sighting at Ashton's Flash (Northwich) on 15<sup>th</sup> May; latest at Macclesfield Forest on 15<sup>th</sup> September.

**Barry T. Shaw**  
**Cheshire County Butterfly Recorder**

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**Macro-Moths**

The following report is based upon the current records held on the main database for the Cheshire Moth Group and includes data from the database at rECOrd, the County Biological Information System. During the report certain comments are made regarding the status of selected species, usually relating to the number of records on the system that we hold. There are likely to be records of both common and rarer species out there that we have not seen, or records that we have not yet input. We are still working through the data behind Ian Rutherford's book as indicated in the introduction and this task will be completed in good time for the publication of the Atlas.

In comparison with previous years, we received an unprecedented number of records during 2003 with a dramatic increase in both the numbers of records and individual moths. This is perhaps explained by the relatively good summer that we enjoyed, although in some other counties, the numbers of moths have been reported to have been no more than average despite the good daytime conditions. We have seen several recorders join us this year who have added greatly to the database, especially in areas that are relatively sparsely recorded. Because of this, I felt it appropriate to produce a list of species which were new for their respective 10km squares. In order to create this list, I have referred to the records currently on the database as well as those registered on the macro-moth matrix produced by Ian Rutherford in 1997. On this basis I hope that this information is as close to the true position as possible.

To date we have received 28,192 records of 104,841 moths in 2003 representing 388 species. The total species list on the database for Macro-moths in VC58 stands at 508 species although I am pretty sure that there are approximately 20-30 to add to this. The totals for the last four years are summarized in the following table.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Records</b>	<b>Individuals</b>
2000	306	9,112	21,518
2001	394	17,131	62,131
2002	371	17,284	52,781
2003	388	28,192	104,841

The Buff Footman *Eilema depressa* (Esper, 1787) has recently been recorded several times in VC58 and is certainly a moth to watch out for in the trap during July. The following narrative is extracted from a short paper prepared for one of the L&CES indoor meetings in 2004. There could be, and probably are, records from other recorders in the County that have not yet been forwarded to me for 2003 and previous years. If anyone reading this report has such records then I will greatly appreciate them being sent to me.

Until 2002 this moth had never been recorded in VC58 and a recent spate of records in the County suggest that it is either becoming more common or is extending its range in the North-west of England (or, of course, possibly both or neither!). Further research will be required to confirm this and this is the main reason for the above plea for further records.



Interestingly, all the current records have been recorded from gardens rather than in the field. Statistically this is likely to be the case as most records come from moth'ers recording in their back garden. Records from the field will, therefore, be particularly appreciated.

The species was first recorded in VC58 on 13/7/1999 with one at Mere (SBI). There were then two in 2002 again both caught at MV light and, rather coincidentally, on the same date (25/7/2002) at Mere (SBI) and Romiley (SF). In 2003 further records were encountered and the numbers were an increase on those in 2002.

A summary of the records for 2003 follows:

- 15/7/2003 - 1 adult at MV light at Alsager (MD)
- 18/7/2003 - 1 adult at MV light at Great Sutton (MBe)
- 19/7/2003 - 1 adult at MV light at Great Sutton (MBe)
- 2003 No date given - 1 adult at MV Light at Cheadle Hulme (GL)

Whilst this is only a small sample of records and specimens it is hoped that recorders will, as a result of reading this section, be made aware of the possibility of this species appearing in their trap. The moth caught at Romiley was a particularly grey individual and bore a strong resemblance to Common Footman *Eilema lurideola*; it could potentially have been mis-identified as that species.

Whilst still a category 4 species, according to the CMG Panel criteria, it is likely that future records will be accepted if supported by a good quality photograph rather than a specimen.

### The Commonest Species in 2003

Seventeen species broke through the 1000+ individuals barrier this year, which is a big increase on the eight in 2002. The summary for each of these species is shown below and they are ordered according to the number of individuals recorded with the corresponding numbers for 2002 shown in brackets.

Code	Vernacular	Taxon	Records	Individuals	2002 Position
2107	Large Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	1048 (702)	33175 (12959)	1
2089	Heart and Dart	<i>Agrotis exclamationis</i>	552 (493)	4452 (2909)	3
2343x	Common Rustic agg.	<i>Mesapamea secalis</i> agg.	466 (283)	4290 (1728)	6
2126	Setaceous Hebrew Character	<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>	467 (242)	3162 (1002)	8
2190	Hebrew Character	<i>Orthosia gothica</i>	583 (376)	2645 (1895)	4
2321	Dark Arches	<i>Apamea monoglypha</i>	484 (311)	2482 (1210)	7
2187	Common Quaker	<i>Orthosia cerasi</i>	430 (323)	2457 (3274)	2
2102	Flame Shoulder	<i>Ochropleura plecta</i>	603 (365)	1862 (899)	10
2441	Silver Y	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	696 (224)	1853 (274)	48
2188	Clouded Drab	<i>Orthosia incerta</i>	322 (289)	1442 (1167)	9
1713	Riband Wave	<i>Idaea aversata</i>	385 (471)	1428 (1730)	5
0171	Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet	<i>Zygaena lonicerae</i>	23 (13)	1371 (97)	101
1764	Common Marbled Carpet	<i>Chloroclysta truncata</i>	548 (373)	1365 (789)	13

2098	Flame	<i>Axylia putris</i>	337 (245)	1359 (690)	17
2134	Square-spot Rustic	<i>Xestia xanthographa</i>	337 (205)	1343 (663)	18
2109	Lesser Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua comes</i>	369 (237)	1206 (568)	22
2111	Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua janthe</i>	262 (202)	1204 (799)	12

## Systematic List of Rarer Species in VC58 in 2003

At the other end of the spectrum we have received single records for 38 species on the list this year. Recordors should note that there is a new version of the recording form now available on line at the Cheshire Moth Group (CMG) website at <http://www.consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk/lrc/cmg/cmg.htm> Some species have had their codes amended and there have also been some additions to the list. It is essential for category 4 species (and preferable for category 3 species at new sites) that either a specimen is retained or a good quality photograph taken. It is also important that where a species is found far away from its normal habitat (if a habitat-restricted species, for example Light Knot-grass *Acronicta menyanthidis* or Red Carpet *Xanthorhoe decoloraria*) that recordors ensure they have ruled out all possible confusion species before formally submitting the record. Members of the CMG Panel are happy to be contacted (contact details can be found on the website or contact me for further details) and will be happy to assist with identification queries or confirmation request if required and possible.

A systematic list of the species for which 3 or fewer records have been received in 2003 follows. A brief comment on each is made regarding status and for species with ten records or less on the database, the number of VC58 records. This year we only had a single species added to the county Macro-list, which was the **Barred Hook-tip** *Watsonalla cultraria* at Mere, although **White-speck** *Mythimna unipuncta* at Nantwich was added retrospectively for 2002. Full details of both moths are provided below.

### **0016 Gold Swift** *Hepialus hecta* (Linnaeus, 1758)

This species appeared at two sites this year, all at MV Light. One at the apparently normal Allostock site SJ745712 (PMH) on 4-Aug-03. The other two were both at Marbury Country Park SJ653764 on 5-Jun-03 and 8-Jun-03 (LB).

### **0371 Lunar Hornet Moth** *Sesia bembeciformis* (Hübner, 1806)

A single, daytime record representing the only known breeding colony of this species in VC58. Thanks to the kindness of the owner of the house, the lucky observers (SF, PG, LH) saw four males, some attracted to a freshly emerged female. One managed to pair with her. She was seen later, egg-laying on the same bush from which a male had been seen to emerge earlier in the day (LH). Greasby, Wirral SJ257874 on 29-Jun-03.



### **0373 Curren Clearwing** *Synanthedon tipuliformis* (Clerck, 1759)

There were three daytime records of this species at two sites with all being in allotments and on cultivated currant bushes. At Hazel Grove SJ9286 six adults were attracted to a pheromone lure on 13-Jun-03 (SHi) At Marple SJ948887 a minimum of fifteen adults were seen over a mature line of currant bushes on 14-Jun-03 (SF) and a follow up visit on 20-Jun-03 at the same site located a single male and a pair in cop at rest on the bushes (SF, PG). These are the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> records on the database.

### **1637 Oak Eggar** *Lasiocampa quercus* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Although there were records of Northern Eggar *Lasiocampa quercus* f. *callunae* in

VC58 this year, the sole record of this species in 2003 again shows the benefit of using a virgin female to 'assemble' males in certain groups. A single male was located in this way at Anderton SJ645754 on 6-Jul-03 (AW).

**1638 Fox Moth *Macrothylacia rubi* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Just a single larval record for this species in 2003. This was at Wildboarclough SK0071 on 9-Sep-03 (NL). It is particularly pleasing when recorders venture out to little recorded areas.

**1643 Emperor *Saturnia pavonia* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

The only record of this species was of three adults at Thurstaston Common SJ248846 on 7-Apr-03 (DH).

**1647 Barred Hook-tip *Watsonalla cultraria* (Fabricius, 1775)**

Two adults were attracted to MV Light at Mere SJ736813 on 15-Sep-03 (SBI). These represent the first county record of this species – well done again Sheila!

**1658 Oak Lutestring *Cymatophorima diluta hartwegi* (Reisser, 1927)**

The productive garden at Mere SJ736813 again brought in a good species to MV Light on 21-Aug-03 (SBI). This was the only record for the county of this species in 2003.



**1665 Grass Emerald *Pseudoterpna pruinata atropunctaria* (Walker, 1863)**

There were three records of this species in 2003. They were all attracted to MV Light and at two sites. The first two were at Allostock SJ745712 (PMH) on 21-Jun-03 and 22-Jun-03 and the other was at Thurstaston Common SJ248846 on 10-Jul-03 (DH).

**1667 Blotched Emerald *Comibaena bajularia* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)**

This lovely species was recorded only once in 2003 with a single moth attracted to an Actinic trap at Mouldsworth SJ512706 on 22-Jun-03 (IEL).

**1674 Little Emerald *Jodis lactearia* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

This rather scarce moth was recorded three times in 2003. One was in an Actinic trap at Alvanley SJ507731 on 2-Jun-03 (AJ). The other two were attracted to MV Light and these were at Alsager SJ819545 (MD) on 14-Jun-03 and Marbury Country Park SJ653764 on 30-Jun-03 (LB).

**1677 Birch Mocha *Cyclophora albipunctata* (Hufnagel, 1767)**

This species is very rare in VC58 and the one trapped at MV Light at Thurstaston Common SJ248846 on 26-Jun-03 (DH) and appears to be only the second county record. This was the only record of this species in the county in 2003. The first record for the county was at Alderley Edge in 1992.

**1680 Maiden's Blush *Cyclophora punctaria* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Another rare moth and there was again just a single record. This was at MV Light at Bromborough SJ344798 on 9-Aug-03 (ES). This is only the 2<sup>nd</sup> record on the database and the first county record received since 1973.



**1693 Cream Wave *Scopula floslactata* (Haworth, 1809)**

Three records were received for this species in 2003. All were attracted to MV Light. At Marbury Country Park SJ653764, two were recorded on 10-Jun-03 and one on 30-Jun-03 (LB). The other record was on 9-Jul-03 at Bromborough SJ344798 (ES).

**1694 Smoky Wave *Scopula ternata* (Schrank, 1802)**

This moth is restricted to the hilly areas of the county and is often a reward for those tempted to be energetic enough to record in these areas. There were two records in

2003. The first was of seven specimens at Goyt Valley SK0074 on 7-Jun-03 (SHi) and the other a single moth at Wildboardclough SK0071 on 17-Jun-03 (NL). Both of these records were noted during the daytime.

**1705 Dwarf Cream Wave *Idaea fuscovenosa* (Goeze, 1781)**

This species could be more common than the records suggest. There were two records in 2003. The first was at Actinic Light at Anderton SJ645754 on 11-Jul-03 (AW) and the other to MV Light at Bromborough SJ344798 on 6-Aug-03 (ES). These are the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> records on the database.

**1709 Satin Wave *Idaea subsericeata* (Haworth, 1809)**

This species was recorded twice in the county this year. There were singles at Allostock SJ745712 on 16-Jun-03 (PMH) and Marbury Country Park SJ653764 on 29-Jun-03 (LB). In both cases they came to MV Light. These are the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> records on the database.

**1715 Plain Wave *Idaea straminata* (Borkhausen, 1794)**

A single record of this species came to MV Light at Elton SJ453753 (MB and SHo) on 3-Aug-03. There was also a single specimen at Thurstaston Common SJ248846 on 3-Jul-03 (DH). Neither moth appears to have been dissected in accordance with the normal CMG criteria.

**1716 Vestal *Rhodometra sacraria* (Linnaeus, 1767)**

This species was recorded at a typical time of year and is the first record since 2001 in the county. The only record was at Halton SJ568839 to MV Light on 17-Sep-03 (JC).

**1719 Oblique Carpet *Orthonama vittata* (Borkhausen, 1794)**

There was just a single record of this species in 2003. This was to MV Light at Allostock SJ745712 on 7-Jun-03 (PMH). This is the 7<sup>th</sup> record on the database.

**1748 Beautiful Carpet *Mesoleuca albicillata* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

This species was recorded three times in 2003. All were at MV Light. The first was at Mere SJ736813 on 28-May-03 (SBI) and the other two both at Alsager SJ819545 on 20-Jun-03 and 3-Jul-03 (MD).

**1749 Dark Spinach *Pelurga comitata* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

This moth is rarely recorded in VC58 and the sole record in 2003 was at MV Light at Elton SJ453753 on 30-Jun-03 (MB, SHo).

**1752 Purple Bar *Cosmorhoe ocellata* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Two records, both in the same week at light traps. The first was at MV Light at Romiley SJ931900 on 10-Aug-03 (SF) and the other at an Actinic Light at Alvanley SJ507731 on 16-Aug-03 (AJ).

**1761 Autumn Green Carpet *Chloroclysta miata* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

This species can be confused with Red-green Carpet *Chloroclysta siterata* but with care can be split via assessment of the external characters. There was a single record in 2003 at MV Light at Romiley SJ931900 on 2-Oct-03 (SF).



**1766 Blue-bordered Carpet *Plemyria rubiginata rubiginata* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)**

There were three records at three different sites but all to MV Light. They were at Mere SJ736813 on 4-Aug-03 (SBI), Nantwich SJ676525 on 5-Aug-03 (DT) and Marbury Country Park SJ653764 on 31-Aug-03 (LB).

**1767 Pine Carpet *Thera firmata* (Hübner, 1822)**

Much rarer than its counterpart, Grey Pine Carpet *Thera obeliscata*, this species was recorded just twice in 2003. One at Lyme Park SJ9682 on 19-Aug-03 (PF) and the other at Marbury Country Park SJ653764 on 4-Nov-03 (LB). Both moths were at MV Light traps.

**1775 Mottled Grey *Colostygia multistrigaria* (Haworth, 1809)**

One garden produced all three records in 2003 of this early spring species. It was recorded at MV Light at Mere SJ736813 on 28-Mar-03, 30-May-03 and 31-May-03 (SBI).

**1798 Small Autumnal Moth *Epirrita filigrammaria* (Herrich-Schäffer, 1846)**

Whilst this species is less likely to be mis-identified than the other members of this group, specimens caught away from their normal moorland habitat type should be scrutinized very carefully indeed. There were just two records at typical sites in 2003, both at Actinic Light. The first was at High Moor SJ96337024 on 7-Sep-03 (NL) and the other at Cat & Fiddle SK00547140 on 8-Sep-03 (NL).



**1807 Grass Rivulet *Perizoma albulata* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)**

Just one record of this species in 2003. It was at MV Light at Romiley SJ931900 on 1-Jun-03 (SF).

**1828 Satyr Pug *Eupithecia satyrata* (Hübner, 1813)**

This species is not often recorded and may be missed. Normally best to dissect for a new site but the specimen recorded in 2003 was at a known site. It was attracted to MV Light at Higher Poynton SJ945838 on 1-Jun-03 (SHi). This is the 8<sup>th</sup> record on the database.

**1831 Ling Pug *Eupithecia absinthiata* f. *goossensiata* Mabille, 1869**

Another species that is specifically restricted to hillier areas. There were two records this year with one moth seen during the daytime at Pym chair SJ9976 on 7-Jul-03 (SHi) and six at Actinic Light at High Moor SJ96306974 on 27-Jul-03 (NL). These were the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> records on the database.

**1838 Tawny-speckled Pug *Eupithecia icterata* (Villers, 1789)**

One of the more attractive and distinctive pug species, there were three records this year. All were at MV Light. There were records of singles at Allstock SJ745712 on 22-Jun-03 and 4-Aug-03 (PMH) and also Bromborough SJ344798 on 25-Jul-03 (ES).

**1839 Bordered Pug *Eupithecia succenturiata* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Three singles all attracted to MV Light. Present at Nantwich SJ676525 on 17-Jun-03 (DT), Romiley SJ931900 (SF) and Great Sutton SJ381751 (MBe) both on 5-Aug-03.

**1857 Dwarf Pug *Eupithecia tantillaria* Boisduval, 1840**

The only records of this species this year were singles to MV Light at Mere SJ736813 on 3-May-03, 19-May-03 and 26-May-03 (SBI).

**1875 Small White Wave *Asthena albulata* (Hufnagel, 1767)**

All the records in 2003 were at MV Light. There were moths present at Marbury Country Park SJ653764 with one on 23-May-03 and three 31-May-03 (LB). There were also two present at Thurston Common SJ248846 on 10-Jul-03 (DH). These are the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> records on the database.

**1879 The Seraphim *Lobophora halterata* (Hufnagel, 1767)**

Just two records again this year for this early flyer. Both were at MV Light. One was at Alsager SJ819545 on 16-May-03 (MD) and the other at Bramhall SJ887842 on 27-May-2003 (ACh).

**1897 V-Moth *Macaria wauaria* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

As for last year, the sole record of this species was of two specimens at MV Light at Marple SJ955892 (MS) on 4-Jul-03. This moth may, like Currant Clearwing *Synanthedon tipuliformis*, prove to be more common if specifically targeted in allotments where currants are grown.



**1907 Bordered Beauty *Epione repandaria* (Hufnagel, 1767)**

This year there were two records of individuals at MV Light. Both were at Marbury Country Park SJ653764 on 19-Jul-03 and 7-Aug-03 (LB). These are the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> records on the database.

**1918 Lunar Thorn *Selenia lunularia* (Hübner, 1788)**

The same site produced the only records of this species in VC58 in 2003. Two individuals came to MV Light at Allstock SJ745712 on 14-Jul-03 and 17-Jul-03 (PMH). This is a species that we will prefer a good photograph at a new site as we hope to establish the exact status of this species and several others in VC58, prior to the production of the atlas.

**1960 Early Moth *Theria primaria* (Haworth, 1809)**

This species flies very early in the season and on this basis has a very appropriate name! It may also find lights relatively unattractive and be found more readily with a torch at night around the foodplants. There were three records, all of single moths, in 2003 with two of them at the same site. Alvanley SJ507731 on 27-Jan-03 and 7-Feb-03 both at Actinic Light (AJ) and at MV Light at Nantwich SJ628472 on 2-Feb-03 (PGr).

**1972 Convolvulus Hawk-moth *Agrius convolvuli* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

This species saw a dramatic influx into the UK in 2003. Although we have received no records of adults caught at light, there were clearly adults present on the basis that there were two larval records in 2003. Both

were on the Wirral and this is perhaps to be expected. Three larvae were found at Leasowe Lighthouse SJ257913 on 4-Sep-03 (DH) and a further single larva at North Wirral SJ2390 In October 2003 (PB). Some of the larvae were reared to pupation and it is hoped that they may emerge this summer.

**1992 Small Elephant Hawk-moth *Deilephila porcellus* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

This is a surprisingly scarce species in VC58 and there was just a single record to MV Light at Bromborough SJ344798 on 23-Jun-03 (ES). This is the 10<sup>th</sup> record on the database.

**2035 Round-winged Muslin *Thumatha senex* (Hübner, 1808)**

There were just two records of this species in 2003. Both were at MV Light with first at Marbury Country Park SJ653764 on 7-Jul-03 (LB) and the other at Chester SJ411681 on 9-Jul-03 (TE).

**2040 Four-dotted Footman *Cybosia mesomella* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

The usual site at Mouldsworth SJ512706 again produced the only 2003 records of this species. Singles were present at Actinic Light on 15-Jun-03 and 17-Jul-03 (IEL).

**2056 Wood Tiger *Parasemia plantaginis* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

One of the nice surprises in 2003 was the discovery of a single specimen of this species during the day at High Moor SJ9669 on 16-Jun-03 (NL). Yet another reward for those willing to go into relatively uncharted areas.

**2068 Scarlet Tiger *Callimorpha dominula* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

This species was released into a wooded ride on the Wirral many years ago and still appears to be doing quite well. Five specimens were recorded during a short daytime visit to West Kirby SJ2186 on 29-Jun-03 (SF, PG, LH). This was the 3<sup>rd</sup> record on the database.



**2081 White-line Dart *Euxoa tritici* (Linnaeus, 1761)**

There were two specimens this year of this species, both at MV Light. One was at Greasby SJ257874, no date specified (LH) and the other at Red Rocks Marsh SJ206881 on 15-Jul-03 (SHi, KM – gen det male SHi).

Both this species and the very similar Square-spot Dart *Euxoa obelisca grisea* often require specimens to be retained and dissected to confirm identification. Sometimes a good photograph can assist where a particularly well-marked specimen is trapped.

**2085 Archer's Dart *Agrotis vestigialis* (Hufnagel, 1766)**

A single specimen of this scarce species was trapped at MV Light at the same session at Red Rocks Marsh SJ206881 on 15-Jul-03 (SHi, KM). This was the sole record of this species in 2003 and is the 10<sup>th</sup> record on the database.

**2088 Heart and Club *Agrotis clavis* (Hufnagel, 1766)**

Again this year there was just a single record of this species, to MV Light at Elton SJ453753 on 21-Jun-03 (SHo, MB).

**2105 Dotted Rustic *Rhyacia simulans* (Hufnagel, 1766)**

There was a single record of two adults to MV Light at Marbury Country Park SJ653764 on 8-Aug-03 (LB).

**2114 Double Dart *Graphiphora augur* (Fabricius, 1775)**

This year there was again just one record. This was to MV Light at Alvanley SJ507731 on 4-Jul-03 (AJ, TE).

**2142 Beautiful Yellow Underwing *Anarta myrtilli* (Linnaeus, 1761)**

On 13-Jun-03 a single adult was located in the daytime at Thurstaston Common SJ248846 (DH).

**2197 Southern Wainscot *Mythimna straminea* (Treitschke, 1825)**

All records in 2003 came to MV Light and there were single specimens at Marbury Country Park SJ653764 on 20-Jul-03 and 19-Aug-03 (LB) as well as at Nantwich SJ676525 on 25-Jul-03 (DT).

**2225 Minor Shoulder-knot *Brachylomia viminalis* (Fabricius, 1777)**

Just two records of this species in VC58 in 2003. It is possible that it may be overlooked as it is quite an unobtrusive species which often has few markings at all in the melanic form. There were single specimens at Actinic Light at Sale SJ791926 on 4-Aug-03 (PH) and at MV Light at Cheadle Hulme SJ876863 - no date specified (GL).

**2233 Golden-rod Brindle *Lithomoia solidaginis* (Hübner, 1803)**

The only record of this species was in the daytime in typical habitat. Four adults were located at Longdendale SK0398 on 16-Aug-03 (SHi) after 42 fence posts were checked – not a bad return!

**2255 Feathered Ranunculus *Polymixis lichenea* (Hübner, 1813)**

This species was only recorded once this year and again to the same site. It was at Greasby SJ257874 at MV Light – no date specified (LH). This is the 10<sup>th</sup> record on the database.

**2281 Alder Moth *Acronicta alni* (Linnaeus, 1767)**

Normally recorded in small numbers each year there were again just two records in 2003. This year they were both at the same site with singles at Alsager SJ819545 on 28-May-03 and 2-Jun-03 to MV Light (MD).

**2286 Light Knot Grass *Acronicta menyanthidis* (Esper, 1789)**

A single moth attracted to Actinic Light at High Moor SJ966694 on 16-Jun-03 (NL) was the sole record in 2003.

**2316 Lesser-spotted Pinion *Cosmia affinis* (Linnaeus, 1767)**

It is preferred if specimens or a good photo can be retained (most definitely the latter if possible) of this species for new sites as it will be interesting to see whether or not this elm species is recovering. There was a single confirmed report at Pensby Wood SJ266838 on 4-Aug-03 (AC) which was attracted to MV Light. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> record of this moth on the database.

**2327 Clouded Brindle *Apamea epomidion* (Haworth, 1809)**

There were three records of this species this year. All were at MV Light and at two sites. The first was at Bromborough SJ344798 on 22-Jun-03 (ES) and the other two at Great Sutton SJ381751 on 24-Jun-03 and 25-Jun-03 (MBe).

**2358 Saltern Ear *Amphipoea fucosa paludis* (Tutt, 1888)**

Like all of the Ear Moth group, this species normally requires dissection to confirm. There was a single specimen recorded at MV Light at Bromborough SJ344798 on 6-Aug-03 (ES). (gen. det. male (SF) confirmed SMP). This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> record of this species on the database.

**2360 Ear Moth *Amphipoea oculea* (Linnaeus, 1761)**

Again this year there was a single moth caught at MV Light at Romiley SJ931900 on 7-Aug-03 (SF) (rather coincidentally the same date exactly as the sole record in 2002). (gen. det. male (SF)).

**2367 Haworth's Minor *Celaena haworthii* (Curtis, 1829)**

There were three records in the same area this year, all within SK0071 at Cat & Fiddle and to Actinic Light. One was present on 28-Jul-03, another single on 7-Sep-03 and three on 8-Sep-03 (NL).

**2379 Small Rufous *Coenobia rufa* (Haworth, 1809)**

Two records for 2003 with both at MV Light. The first was at Elton SJ453753 on 26-Jul-03 (MB, SHo) and the other at Nantwich SJ676525 on 5-Aug-03 (DT).

**2380 Treble Lines *Charanyca trigrammica* (Hufnagel, 1766)**

Once again, there was just a single moth of this species in 2003. This time it was at an Actinic Light at Stockport SJ907902 on 25-Jun-03 (EK). This is the 9<sup>th</sup> record on the database.

**2391 Silky Wainscot *Chilodes maritimus* (Tauscher, 1806)**

This moth was recorded twice this year with the first at Marbury Country Park SJ653764 on 18-Jun-03 (LB) and the other related to two specimens at the productive night for scarce species at Red Rocks Marsh SJ206881 on 15-Jul-03 (SHi, KM). All moths were attracted to MV Light. These were the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> records on the database.

**2399 Bordered Sallow *Pyrrhia umbra* (Hufnagel, 1766)**

Yet another rare moth from the session at Red Rocks Marsh SJ206881 on 15-Jul-03 (SHi, KM) which was at MV Light and the only record for the county in 2003. This was the 6<sup>th</sup> record on the database.

**2400 Scarce Bordered Straw *Helicoverpa armigera* (Hübner, 1808)**

This is a rare species in VC58 and the only record in 2003 was attracted to MV Light. It was present at Great Sutton SJ381751 on 1-Oct-03 (MBe). This is the 6<sup>th</sup> record on the database.



**2425 Nut-tree Tussock *Colocasia coryli* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

This moth is the first confirmed record of this species in Cheshire. It was present at light in March 2003 at Heatley SJ625463 (EH). The only other entry relates to an unconfirmed record of one found during the daytime at Macclesfield in 1915.

**2462 Mother Shipton *Callistege mi* (Clerck, 1759)**

This day-flier was seen just twice this year with single moths being found at

Thurstaston Country Park SJ239832 on 15-May-03 (HD) and West Kirby SJ218854 on 1-Jun-03 (IS).

## **Additional Species Records Received Since the Last Report and Relating to 2002.**

In this section I have collated the records now received for 2002 and have extracted details relating to species for which three or less records were received that year but which were received too late to be included in last year's report. It should be noted that further records may have also been received which relate to the species included in last year's systematic list. These have not, however been included here but will, of course, contribute toward the Atlas database.

**1940 Satin Beauty *Deileptenia ribeata* (Clerck, 1759)**

There was just a single record of this species at Pensby Wood SJ266838 on 28-Jul-02 (AC). This was exhibited at one of the L&CES meetings. This is the 9<sup>th</sup> record on the database.

**1948 Small Engrailed *Ectropis crepuscularia* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)**

Most authorities consider this to be conspecific with Engrailed *Ectropis bistortata* but there was a single record on 15-Jun-02 to MV Light at Higher Poynton SJ945838 (SHi). It is generally considered that even dissection cannot split these two species (if they are indeed two species!).

**2080 Square-spot Dart *Euxoa obelisca grisea* (Tutt, 1902)**

There is a single record of this moth to Actinic Light at Nantwich SJ663518 – no date specified (MH and confirmed by PGr). This record will hopefully be accepted when further information is provided by the captor. This will be the 4<sup>th</sup> record on the database.

**2185 Lead-coloured Drab *Orthosia populeti* (Fabricius, 1781)**

Two records in the south of the county represent the only records for 2002. The records were at light at Nantwich SJ659534 (RJD) and at Nantwich SJ628472 on 07-Mar-02 (PGr).

**2203 White-speck *Mythimna unipuncta* (Haworth, 1809)**

A single specimen of this species was attracted to MV Light at Nantwich SJ628472 on 9-Oct-02 (PGr). This was a first county record. Thanks to PGr for sending me the records for this area via the Nantwich Natural History Society.



**2300 Old Lady *Mormo maura* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

This moth is not likely to be missed! (Although I appear to have missed it off last year's report!). It is, however, often more attracted to sugar than light, which could possibly explain the low numbers of records received. There were two records of single moths, one of which was rather surprisingly seen during the daytime. This was presumably flushed from its roost. This daytime record was at Marple SJ953882 on 14-Jul-02 (MSo) and the other at MV Light at Riverside Park SJ907751 on 27-Jul-02 (SF, SHi, RB).



**2375 Large Wainscot *Rhizedra lutosa* (Hübner, 1803)**

Just two records of this species in 2002 with both at light. One was at Crewe SJ691553 – no date specified (DC) and the other at Actinic Light at Frodsham SJ522778 on 01-Oct-02 (RBe).

**2437 Golden Plusia *Polychrysis moneta* (Fabricius, 1787)**

This lovely species was recorded just once in 2002 with a single record at light at Nantwich SJ663518- no date specified (MH).

## **Species New for their Respective 10km Squares in 2003**

As referred to above I have created a summary of the species, which according to the information available to me on the database at the present time, were new for their respective squares in 2003. This data will become more and more accurate as time goes by and I will welcome comment from anyone that has information to add to this summary. Some of the squares are only partially in VC58 and although species may have been recorded in adjacent counties, they are new for this side of the boundary. Some squares appear to have very few historic records and the contribution that the recorders in these areas have made has greatly enhanced the species list for these 10km squares in the last few years.

**SD90**

Vapourer *Orgyia antiqua* (JS)

**SJ27**

Humming-bird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* (MPo)

**SJ28**

Lesser-spotted Pinion *Cosmia affinis* (AC), Birch Mocha *Cyclophora albipunctata* (DH),  
Small White Wave *Asthena albulata* (DH), Freyer's Pug *Eupithecia intricata* (LH),  
Silky Wainscot *Chilodes maritimus* (SHi, KM),

**SJ29**

Convolvulus Hawk-moth *Agrius convolvuli* (DH) and (PB)

**SJ37**

Maiden's Blush *Cyclophora punctaria* (ES), Small Elephant Hawk-moth *Deilephila porcellus* (ES),  
Chevron *Eulithis testata* (MBe), Juniper Carpet *Thera juniperata* (MBe),  
Brindled Pug *Eupithecia abbreviata* (MBe), Oak Beauty *Biston strataria* (MBe),  
White-pinion Spotted *Lomographa bimaculata* (MBe), Buff Footman *Eilema depressa* (MBe),  
Old Lady *Mormo maura* (MBe), Brown Rustic *Rusina ferruginea* (MBe),  
Small Clouded Brindle *Apamea unanimitis* (MBe), Saltern Ear *Amphipoea fucosa paludis* (ES),  
Scarce Bordered Straw *Helicoverpa armigera* (MBe), Bordered Straw *Heliothis peltigera* (MBe),

**SJ38**

Straw Dot *Rivula sericealis* (AC)

**SJ46**

Dingy Shell *Euchoeca nebulata* (TE), White-pinion Spotted *Lomographa bimaculata* (TE)

**SJ47**

Scallop Shell *Rheumaptera undulata* (MB, SHo), Ochreous Pug *Eupithecia indigata* (MB, SHo),  
Scarce Silver-lines *Bena bicolorana* (MB, SHo),

**SJ56**

Copper Underwing *Amphipyra pyramidea* (BB)

**SJ57**

Freyer's Pug *Eupithecia intricata* (AJ, TE), Pale Pinion *Lithophane hepatica* (AJ)

**SJ58**

Vestal *Rhodometra sacraria* (JC), Red-green Carpet *Chloroclysta siterata* (JC)

**SJ64**

Nut-tree Tussock *Colocasia coryli* (EH)

**SJ65**

White-pinion Spotted *Lomographa bimaculata* (DT), Lunar Marbled Brown *Drymonia ruficornis* (DT),  
Tawny Shears *Hadena perplexa* (DT), Southern Wainscot *Mythimna straminea* (DT),  
Bordered Straw *Heliothis peltigera* (DT), Scarce Silver-lines *Bena bicolorana* (DT),  
Humming-bird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* (MSt) and (DT)

**SJ67**

Broad-barred White *Hecatera bicolorata* (AW), Merveille du Jour *Dichonia aprilina* (AW),  
Satin Wave *Idaea subsericeata* (LB), Spruce Carpet *Thera britannica* (LB),  
Currant Pug *Eupithecia assimidata* (LB), Small White Wave *Asthena albulata* (LB),  
Tawny-barred Angle *Macaria liturata* (LB), Brindled Beauty *Lycia hirtaria* (LB),  
Round-winged Muslin *Thumatha senex* (LB), Heath Rustic *Xestia agathina* (LB) and (MP),  
Green Arches *Anaplectoides prasina* (LB), Dog's Tooth *Lacanobia suasa* (LB),  
Dark Brocade *Blepharita adusta* (LB), Silky Wainscot *Chilodes maritimus* (LB),  
Pinion-streaked Snout *Schranksia costaestrigalis* (LB), Juniper Carpet *Thera juniperata* (MP) and (AW),  
Shears *Hada plebeja* (MP)

**SJ68**

Humming-bird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* (BMa)

**SJ77**

Leopard Moth *Zeuzera pyrina* (PMH), Oblique Carpet *Orthonama vittata* (PMH),  
Pale Pinion *Lithophane hepatica* (PMH), Suspected *Parastichtis suspecta* (PMH),  
Golden Plusia *Polychrysis moneta* (PMH), Heath Rustic *Xestia agathina* (SHi)

**SJ78**

Bordered Straw *Heliothis peltigera* (RHi), Blackneck *Lygephila pastinum* (RHi),  
Barred Hook-tip *Watsonalla cultraria* (SBl), Shark *Cucullia umbratica* (SBl),  
Barred Sallow *Xanthia aurago* (SBl)

**SJ79**

Scarce Umber *Agriopis aurantiaria* (KM, DSt), Grey Birch *Aethalura punctulata* (KM, DSt), Twin-spotted Quaker *Orthosia munda* (KM, DSt), Common Lutestring *Ochropacha duplaris* (PH), Small Dusty Wave *Idaea seriata* (PH), Flame Carpet *Xanthorhoe designata* (PH), Freyer's Pug *Eupithecia intricata* (PH), Small Yellow Wave *Hydrelia flammeolaria* (PH), Early Thorn *Selenia dentaria* (PH), Turnip Moth *Agrotis segetum* (PH), Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing *Noctua fimbriata* (PH), Least Yellow Underwing *Noctua interjecta caliginosa* (PH), Setaceous Hebrew Character *Xestia c-nigrum* (PH), Black Rustic *Aporophyla nigra* (PH), Cloaked Minor *Mesoligia furuncula* (PH), Pale Mottled Willow *Paradrina clavipalpis* (PH)

**SJ85**

Ghost Moth *Hepialus humuli* (MD), Common Swift *Hepialus lupulinus* (MD), Map-winged Swift *Hepialus fusconebulosa* (MD), Figure of Eighty *Tethea ocellaris octogesimea* (MD), Common Lutestring *Ochropacha duplaris* (MD), Orange Underwing *Archiearis parthenias* (SHi), Little Emerald *Jodis lactearia* (MD), Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet *Xanthorhoe ferrugata* (MD), Yellow Shell *Camptogramma bilineata* (MD), Streamer *Anticlea derivata* (MD), Water Carpet *Lampropteryx suffumata* (MD), Barred Yellow *Cidaria fulvata* (MD), Broken-barred Carpet *Electrophaes corylata* (MD), May Highflyer *Hydriomena impluviata* (MD), Lime-speck Pug *Eupithecia centaureata* (MD), Currant Pug *Eupithecia assimilata* (MD), Common Pug *Eupithecia vulgata* (MD), White-spotted Pug *Eupithecia tripunctaria* (MD), Grey Pug *Eupithecia subfuscata* (MD), Ochreous Pug *Eupithecia indigata* (MD), Oak-tree Pug *Eupithecia dodoneata* (MD), Treble Bar *Aplocera plagiata* (MD), Dingy Shell *Euchoeca nebulata* (MD), Seraphim *Lobophora halterata* (MD), Early Tooth-striped *Trichopteryx carpinata* (MD), Brown Silver-line *Petrophora chlorosata* (MD), Scorched Wing *Plagodis dolabraria* (MD), Pale Brindled Beauty *Phigalia pilosaria* (MD), Spring Usher *Agriopis leucophaearia* (MD), Waved Umber *Menophra abruptaria* (MD), Grey Birch *Aethalura punctulata* (MD), Common Wave *Cabera exanthemata* (MD), White-pinion Spotted *Lomographa bimaculata* (MD), Lime Hawk-moth *Mimas tiliae* (MD), Alder Kitten *Furcula bicuspis* (MD), Poplar Kitten *Furcula bifida* (MD), Pale Prominent *Pterostoma palpina* (MD), Pale Tussock *Calliteara pudibunda* (MD), White Satin *Leucoma salicis* (MD), Buff Footman *Eilema depressa* (MD), Muslin Moth *Diaphora mendica* (MD), Short-cloaked Moth *Nola cucullatella* (MD), Dotted Clay *Xestia baja* (MD), Heath Rustic *Xestia agathina* (MD) and (SHi), Gothic *Naenia typica* (MD), Lychnis *Hadena bicruris* (MD), Antler *Cerapteryx graminis* (MD), Powdered Quaker *Orthosia gracilis* (MD), Shoulder-striped Wainscot *Mythimna comma* (MD), Shark *Cucullia umbratica* (MD), Deep-brown Dart *Aporophyla lutulenta* (MD), Black Rustic *Aporophyla nigra* (MD), Red Sword-grass *Xylena vetusta* (MD), Grey Chi *Antitype chi* (MD), Dark Chestnut *Conistra ligula* (MD), Alder Moth *Acronicta alni* (MD), Dingy Shears *Parastichtis ypsilon* (MD), Clouded-bordered Brindle *Apamea crenata* (MD), Small Clouded Brindle *Apamea unanims* (MD), Rustic Shoulder-knot *Apamea sordens* (MD), Cloaked Minor *Mesoligia furuncula* (MD), Small Dotted Buff *Photodes minima* (MD), Crescent *Celaena leucostigma* (MD), Large Wainscot *Rhizedra lutosa* (MD), Bordered Straw *Heliothis peltigera* (MD), Gold Spangle *Autographa bractea* (MD), Small Fan-foot *Herminia grisealis* (MD)

**SJ88**

Buff Footman *Eilema depressa* (GL)

**SJ96**

Map-winged Swift *Hepialus fusconebulosa* (NL), Northern Eggar *Lasiocampa quercus f. callunae* (NL), Foxglove Pug *Eupithecia pulchellata* (NL), Ling Pug *Eupithecia absinthiata f. goossensiata* (NL), Double-striped Pug *Gymnoscelis rufifasciata* (NL), Wood Tiger *Parasemia plantaginis* (NL), Turnip Moth *Agrotis segetum* (NL), Flame Shoulder *Ochropleura plecta* (NL), Autumnal Rustic *Eugnorisma glareosa* (NL), True Lover's Knot *Lycophotia porphyrea* (NL), Ingrailed Clay *Diarsia mendica* (NL), Dotted Clay *Xestia baja* (NL), Square-spot Rustic *Xestia xanthographa* (NL), Heath Rustic *Xestia agathina* (NL), Bright-line Brown-eye *Lacanobia oleracea* (NL), Broom Moth *Melanchra pisi* (NL),



Dark Brocade *Blepharita adusta* (NL),  
 Light Knot Grass *Acronicta menyanthidis* (NL),  
 Brown Rustic *Rusina ferruginea* (NL),  
 Small Angle Shades *Euplexia lucipara* (NL),  
 Angle Shades *Phlogophora meticulosa* (NL),  
 Dark Arches *Apamea monoglypha* (NL)

**SJ97**

Ling Pug *Eupithecia absinthiata f. goossensiata* (SHi),  
 Red Sword-grass *Xylena vetusta* (SHi)

**SJ98**

White-pinion Spotted *Lomographa bimaculata* (SHi)

**SJ99**

Treble Lines *Charanyca trigrammica* (EK),  
 Bordered Straw *Heliothis peltigera* (SF),  
 Rufous Minor *Oligia versicolor* (SF, BS, MD, DT),  
 Pinion-streaked Snout *Schrankia costaestrigalis* (SF, BS, MD, DT)

**SK07**

Red Twin-spot Carpet *Xanthorhoe spadicearia* (SHi)

**SK09**

Red Sword-grass *Xylena vetusta* (PG),  
 Golden-rod Brindle *Lithomoia solidaginis* (SHi)

### Migrants During 2003

2003 was a good year for migrants in general with the commoner species being quite numerous. There were two species very prevalent in the UK as a whole and this was to some extent reflected in Cheshire.

Both Humming-bird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* and Convolvulus Hawk-moth *Agrius convolvuli* were unusually common in the rest of the UK and although the records of the latter species in Cheshire related to larval findings, the former species was much more common here than normal. Other highlights were the Scarce Bordered Straw *Helicoverpa armigera* trapped at Great Sutton (MBe) and several Bordered Straw *Heliothis peltigera* (Romiley SJ931900 11-Jun-03 MV Light (SF), Bowdon SJ760865 14-Jun-03 MV Light (RHi), Great Sutton SJ381751 28-Jun-03 MV Light (MBe), Nantwich SJ676525 11-Jul-03 MV Light (DT), Alsager SJ819545 5-Sep-03 and 14-Sep-03 MV Light (MD)) as well as the only Vestal *Rhodometra sacraria* in the last 2 years at Green Wood, Halton (JC). The records of all migrant species is summarized in the table below.

Code	Vernacular	Taxon	Records	Individuals	Status
1716	Vestal	<i>Rhodometra sacraria</i>	1	1	Migrant
1972	Convolvulus Hawk-moth	<i>Agrius convolvuli</i>	2	3	Migrant
1984	Humming-bird Hawk-moth	<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>	30	38	Migrant
2091	Dark Sword-grass	<i>Agrotis ipsilon</i>	97	151	Migrant
2400	Scarce Bordered Straw	<i>Helicoverpa armigera</i>	1	1	Migrant
2403	Bordered Straw	<i>Heliothis peltigera</i>	6	6	Migrant
2441	Silver Y	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	696	1853	Migrant



## Notable and RDB Species

Notable species and RDB species recorded in VC58 in 2003 are summarized below and further details for most of them can be found in the systematic list above. Recorders wishing to see clearwings are encouraged to search for Currant Clearwing *Synanthedon tipuliformis* in suitable allotments where mature currant bushes are present. Pheromone lures are not essential but do help. A search of the leaves can often yield results. Valerian Pug *Eupithecia valerianata* is also a species that the new Pug Moths book may assist recorders with in terms of having the confidence to suggest they may have one. Like many pugs though, a dissection should be carried out where this will be a new site for the species.

Code	Vernacular	Taxon	Records	Individuals	Status
0373	Currant Clearwing	<i>Synanthedon tipuliformis</i>	3	24	Nb
1821	Valerian Pug	<i>Eupithecia valerianata</i>	1	1	Nb
1928	Belted Beauty	<i>Lycia zonaria</i>	*	*	Na
2354	Sandhill Rustic	<i>Luperina nickerlii gueneei</i>	**	**	RDB2

\* and \*\* recording/monitoring work continues with both of these species and in the case of Belted Beauty *Lycia zonaria* recent trials have begun which are investigating the habitat requirements for this species.

## Shane Farrell VC58 County Macro-Moth Recorder

### Recorders

As always we would like to thank all the recorders that are included in the following list and who have made this report possible by being kind enough to share their data. Please accept our sincere apologies for any unintentional omissions. If you have not been included on the following list please, contact one of us to let us know and we will make sure your efforts are noted in the next annual report. Barry's report is an extract from his normal annual report which formally acknowledges the input of the appropriate recorders. That list has not been repeated here to save a little space. The contribution of those recorders is, of course, also greatly appreciated.

AC – Alan Creaser, ACh – Andrew Charlton, AJ – Alastair Jenkins, AK – Alan Kimber,  
 AMB – Tony Broome, AW – Adrian Wander, BB – Brian Bull, BM – B Murphy, BMA - Brian Martin,  
 BR – Bryan Roberts, BS – Ben Smart, BTS - Barry Shaw, CIR – Ian Rutherford, CK – Chris Knibbs,  
 DC – David Cookson, DH – David Hinde, DO – D Otter, DS – D. Stephenson, DSt – Don Stenhouse,  
 DT – Dave Taylor, EC – E. Chackal, EH - Elizabeth Hollingshead, EK – Eric Kearns, ES – Edwin Samuels,  
 GB – Gavin Broad, GC – Graeme Cooke, GJo – Graham Jones, GL – Geoff Lightfoot, GS – G. Stringer,  
 HD – Harry Davies, HEB – H.E. Beaumont, HLB - H.L.Burrows, IEL – Ian Landucci, IS – Ian Smith,  
 IW – Ian Wallace, JC – Jeff Clarke, JO – J. Oxenham, JS - John Sheldon, KM – Kevin McCabe,  
 LB – Liz Bentham, LH – Les Hall, MB – M. Barlow, MBe – Mel Bellingham, MD – Mike Dale,  
 MH – Mike Holmes, MM – Mike Mulholland, MP – Mark Payne, MPo - Maurice Pons,  
 MS – Martyn Stanyer, MSt – Mark Stubbs, MSo – Michael Stokes, NL – Nick Littlewood,  
 NS – N Stones, PB – Peter Bowler, PF – Paz Fletcher, PG – Paul Greenall, PGr – Paul Griffiths,  
 PH – Peter Hardy, PMH – Paul M Hill, RB – Roger Brereton, RBe – R. Bertera, RFB – R. F. Botterill,  
 RHi – Roy Hilton, RHo – Ray Holmes, RJD - Roger & Joan Davidson, SBl – Sheila Blamire,  
 SF – Shane Farrell, SHi – Steve Hind, SHo – S. Holmes, SMc – Steve McWilliam, SMP - Steve Palmer,  
 SO – Steve Orridge, SP – Sheila Pierce, TE – Tom Edmondson

## Photography Credits

Thank you to all photographers that have allowed their work to be used for this report. It is hoped that despite the unavoidable increase in the size of the file (for readers that receive an electronic version) the photographs make the report more readable and aesthetically pleasing.

p.2 *Amblyptilia acanthadactyla* – ACh, p.3 *Psychoides verhuella* – IS, Cacao Moth *Ephestia elutella* - SF  
p.4 Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae* – SF, p.5 Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus* – SF, p.6 Dingy Skipper *Erynnis tages* – SF, p.7 Orange-tip *Anthocharis cardamines* – SF, p.8 White-letter Hairstreak *Satyrium w-album* - PG, p.11 Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria* – SF, p.14 Buff Footman *Eilema depressa* – MBe, p.15 Currant Clearwing *Synanthedon tipuliformis* – SF, p.16 Barred Hook-tip *Watsonalla cultraria* – SBl, p. 17 Smoky Wave *Scopula ternate* – NL, p.18 Autumn Green Carpet *Chloroclysta miata* – SF, Grass Rivulet *Perizoma albulata* – SF, p.19 V-Moth *Macaria wauaria* (MS), p.20 Scarlet Tiger *Callimorpha dominula* – SF, p.22 Nut-tree Tussock *Colocasia coryli* – Phil King, p.23 Square-spot Dart *Euxoa obelisca grisea* – PGr, White-speck *Mythimna unipuncta* – PGr, p.26 Red Sword-grass *Xylena vetusta* – PG, p.27 Belted Beauty *Lycia zonaria* – SF

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## Useful Contact Details

If you would like a link or your contact details to be added to this list, please contact Shane Farrell.

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Web: [www.rECOrd-LRC.co.uk](http://www.rECOrd-LRC.co.uk)

UKMoths website - <http://www.ukmoths.force9.co.uk>

Cheshire Moth Group Website - <http://www.consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk/lrc/cm/g/cm/g.htm>

L&CES Website - <http://www.consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk/entomol/lces/index.htm>

BC Cheshire & Peak District Website - <http://www.butterfly-conservation.com/>