

LANCASHIRE MOTH GROUP

JANUARY 2017



Mapwing Swift



Marsh Pug

WELCOME

Welcome to the 2016 winter Newsletter. The time slot for organising this was during the Christmas period and, whilst most records are certainly in, there may be a few stars of the show still to come, not the least some 'gen detted' micros.

This was the final year of the National Moth Atlas and, whilst the weather could have been a bit better for the early part of the year, I think our coverage has been pretty good and will compare favourably with the rest of the country. In this respect, the recording set-up in Lancashire was well-established prior to the Atlas and our coverage in recent times has been more about fine-tuning a few habitat/regional gaps than wholesale expeditions to massive white holes as was the case in e.g. Cumbria with vast tracts of difficult to access upland areas.

The end of the macro moth atlas is not the time however to pat yourself on the back, put your traps up for sale on EBay and get stuck into recording obscure flies and beetles instead. What you can do, of course, is get involved in the identification of the obscure flies and beetles which end up IN your moth trap! Steve Garland and others are willing to help here. The other major ongoing aspect is the Microlepidoptera recording scheme and again we are very fortunate to have the expertise in this area to help beginners along with leaf mines, spinnings and other visible features as you wander around during the day. Page 19 onwards of Sterling and Parsons gives a good overview of the opportunities in the field and Ben Smart's Microtips Facebook site is invaluable. Please also visit the Lancashire Moths website for Microlepidoptera advice, notably the dangers of jumping to conclusions with identification. I'm also certain that there are a few Macro moths out there to be discovered, as well as range extensions and contractions to monitor, so please keep sending your records in and using your e.g. 15W actinic to go searching new areas of woodland.

Thanks to everyone for their efforts during the macro moth atlas period and to the following people who have been a fantastic help keeping the recording and admin sides going: Graham Dixon (Mapmate hub - assembles all the records), Richard Walker (VC59 recorder), John Girdley (VC60 micro recorder), Alex Parsons (construction of and ongoing advice on the spreadsheet), Steve Palmer (ongoing advice on micros, especially gelechids), Kevin McCabe (maintaining the moth matrix for all our 10km squares), Nigel Rogers (gen-detting), Brian Hancock (pugs and organising the Silverdale AONB records), Dave Bickerton (presentation and organisation of the Newsletters), Ben Smart (help and advice with early stages of microlepidoptera), Jonny Scragg and Ash Baines (for setting up the Lancashire Lepidoptera Facebook site). Then of course all the people who were intensively involved in setting up the moth recording as we now know it in Lancashire: Steve Palmer, Graham Jones, Chris Darbyshire, Kevin McCabe, Steve Garland, Carolyn Palmer. Also, thanks to Dave's daughter, Heather Bickerton who's worked her magic over the presentation of this newsletter. I hope I haven't missed anyone else!

One final thing. We do need to sort out the Moth Social soon in the usual late March avoiding Easter slot - speakers etc. and I won't have time to do this myself and may not be able to attend anyway. Graham (Dixon) is sorting the on-site logistics at the Barn, Cuerden, but we need someone to organise the meeting content and a volunteer or two to come forward and give a presentation. There should be enough money to bring in an 'external' speaker if that is the desire.

Thanks,

Pete Marsh (VC60 recorder)

Mothing on the Cheap

Kate Hughes

Despite a lifelong interest in the natural world, I had never considered just how many different fascinating species of moth, there are out there! That is, until I went to the Woolston Eyes Open Day in 2013, where following a most enjoyable guided tour of the reserve, we were introduced to a very knowledgeable lady and her catch of moths from the previous night. I was captivated...

On returning home, I looked at my tiny back garden that was planted with very few native species - the only redeeming feature being a mass of ivy covering a long dead crazy willow - not very promising. My enthusiasm was further dampened, when I checked out the prices of moth traps. It appeared that it would be rather expensive to discover the few moths that would live in such a poor habitat.

Over the spring of 2014, I decided that I would construct a cheap trap myself – the ‘cheapskate’ trap was cobbled together for under a fiver (excluding the 20W blacklight bulb). As a temporary measure, the bulb holder was screwed to a scrap of wood and suspended over the funnel with two wire coat hangers, which in turn were stuck to the lid of the plastic storage box with Blu-Tack - sad to say that two and a half years on, this is still the case!



First turn-on was mid-June and one of the visitors that first week was an exquisite **Elephant Hawk-moth**, followed the next week by a mesmerising **Buff Arches** (unfortunately no return visit). Later in the year I had several stunning **Merveille du Jour** and a final total of species for 2014 of just over 150.



2015 saw some native hedging and flowering plants introduced into the garden. Also, the discovery of the Lancashire Lepidoptera Facebook group, where invaluable help has been forthcoming in identifying those species that us novices find difficult. Unsurprisingly, on finding out that I lived in the under recorded SD54 area (although only just), Pete Marsh asked if I would submit my records to help fill gaps of lowland species for the 10km square. Some of the species that I managed to add in 2015 include **Alucita hexadactyla**, **Udea ferrugalis**, **December Moth**, **Autumn Green Carpet**, **Treble-bar**, **Mottled Umber**, **Black Rustic**, **Red Sword-grass**, **Brown-spot Pinion** and **Orange Sallow**. Undoubtedly, my best record for the year was to have a *Palpita vitrealis* on 14th August and a second on 25th August. Year species total a little under 200.

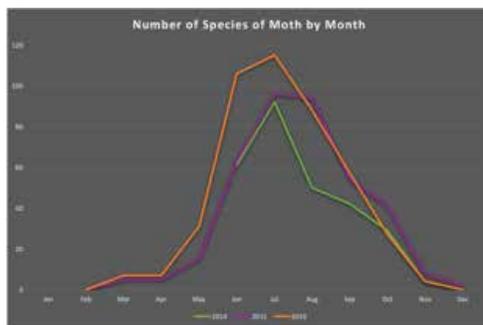


In early 2016, the construction of a new housing estate pushed farmland, hawthorn hedging and mature oak trees farther from my door, which I thought might have an adverse effect on my catch – but species numbers were up throughout spring and summer. Prior to 15th June, I recorded 94 different species as opposed to the paltry 33 species the previous year in the same period. New for garden were **Brindled Pug**, **March Moth**, **Streamer**, **Purple Thorn**, **Lime Hawk-moth**, **Alder Kitten**, **Cherry Bark Moth**, **Small Rivulet**, **Brown Silver-line**, **Argyresthia trifasciata**, **Bryotropha affinis**, **Bordered White**, **Bright-line**, **Brown-eye**, **Purple Bar**, **Epinota bilunana**, **Clouded Silver**, **Beautiful Golden Y**, **Small Fan-foot** and **Diamond-back Moth**.

A notable difference for 2016 was that many more moths were found resting on the nearby garage wall rather than entering the trap than in the previous years. New for garden in July included Plain Golden Y, White Satin, Water Veneer, Lesser Swallow Prominent plus a few more micros and the return of one of my favourites, the delicate Swallow-tailed Moth. A few more NFG appeared in August and September and for the third year running Merveille du Jour was new for year on the same date - 30th September. Year species total just under 220.

In the two and a half years that I have been trapping, I have recorded over 250 species – a rather modest number compared to most of you – but I am looking forward to hopefully seeing some interesting new moths this year and the return of those previously encountered.

The ‘cheapskate’ trap will hopefully see some modification in 2017, as Sellotape has become a significant component on the now somewhat-brittle plastic box! It may have cost next to nothing, but given the decent habitat on our family farm in Cheshire, more moths than I could deal with were attracted to this poor man’s trap.



A Trio of Pugs

Brian Hancock

It's not long before the first Blackthorn (Sloe) bushes are in blossom, a sure sign that the Pug season is starting. My target is the Sloe Pug one of the three that belongs to the genus *Pasiphilia*. The rest of the Pugs bar one belong to the family Eupitheci. We are fortunate to have all three British *Pasiphilia* in Lancashire. They have slightly broader more rounded forewings than the Eupitheci and their larvae are more stumpy and grub like than the typical loopers of the others.

The Green Pug, *Pasiphila rectangulata* is familiar as it will be attracted to most garden traps in June. The Sloe pug, *Pasiphila chloerata* is close in appearance and easily overlooked but is probably widespread wherever Sloe bushes occur whilst the Bilberry Pug, *Pasiphilia debiliata* is quite distinctive and is so far known from only one site in Lancashire, Lords Lot wood. The three do come to light, actinic more than MV, but as with most Pugs they are more easily found by netting just after dusk around their foodplant. A warm still evening will increase success. The Sloe and the Green Pug may be found around Sloe bushes in June while the Bilberry Pug seems confined to Bilberry growing in woodland cover especially conifers. Apart from the Lords Lot wood site a similar habitat on Docker Moor was searched on a warm evening in late June 2015 without success. If anyone knows of a woodland with a good ground cover of Bilberry, then a search after dusk in late June or early July would be well worthwhile. The moth was only added to the Cumbria list in 2008 and has since been found at four widely separated sites by targeted searching.



Bilberry Pug from Lords Lot Wood 23.6.14

Larvae of the three species can be found by an appropriate search. I have found the Green Pug larvae mostly by beating Crab apple blossom but also Sloe blossom. The latter more often produces the Sloe Pug larva. I advise beating blossom almost at the end of the flowering season of the target bushes. This can be from mid-April to the first week in May. The density of larvae is low and I probably only get a positive hit in about 1 in 8 beating sessions, so don't give up. I prefer to collect the blossom beatings in an upturned umbrella or large net. I bring these home and spread them out on a sheet. Careful searching may produce a larva or two. I put these in a small plant pot lined with moss and add fresh blossom, cover with netting and leave outside. I get about 50% success in emergence of an adult in early June. An alternative is simply without searching to empty the bashing in a large pot covered by netting. If this is left in the rain the blossom will become very compacted making it difficult for the adult to emerge so shelter the pot but keep it lightly misted to prevent desiccation.



The Bilberry Pug larvae can be found by careful searching in the second or third week of May for Bilberry leaves lightly spun together. If occupied, the majority will be by July Highflyer larvae. Even in a site where the Pug is easy to net at dusk my strike of larvae is only about one per 20 minutes of searching. However provided I take only final instar larvae I have had 100% success in rearing them through.

Some targets for this spring. Happy hunting and good luck.



21ST ANIVERSARY PRESENTS

Stephen and Carolyn Palmer

2016 saw my wife, Carolyn, and I celebrate a significant milestone in moth recording since we moved into Lancashire — our 21st full year of recording moths in our Preston garden.

What more fitting tribute then could there be for it to be a bumper year of new species for the garden and, surprisingly, all coming in a two week period in late May and early June.

The action started with a species that has probably been present for some time but had simply been over-looked. A change in mowing regime in the front garden a few years back meant we were allowing grasses, rushes and other flowering plants the opportunity to complete their annual growth before cutting in the autumn. The benefits were immediate with a **Common Spotted Orchid** found, which has now expanded to three spikes, and **Coleophora otidipennella** found on the 28th May 2016, the larva no doubt using the extensive Field Wood-rush that was now spreading across the 'lawn'.

Garden light trapping in June can sometimes be a bit hit and miss but from the 4th to the 9th the trusty Robinson MV certainly helped us celebrate our mothing milestone in style by adding four macros to our garden list. On the 4th **Small Elephant Hawk** appeared unexpectedly and presumably had wandered down from the hills (or maybe inland from the coast — who knows). On the 6th **Silver Hook** was another delightful wanderer probably never to be repeated. Finally on the 9th June, we were delighted to find both **Orange Footman** and **Scorched Wing** in the trap. Some of these have also proved to be new for the 10km square in the final year of the Macro-moth Atlas fieldwork.

To add five new species to a well recorded garden in one year is surprising and for it to be in an otherwise quite poor year for moths generally was most unexpected. I suspect this is one of the main reasons why moth recording can be a life-long hobby and provide so much joy and excitement.



GOODBYE
HEYSHAM
MOTH TRAP

“ THE INFAMOUS HEYSHAM TOILET TRAP! THIS COMPRISES A ‘PRISON-BARRED’ EAST-FACING WINDOW IN A ROOM WHICH IS NOT USED (PURPOSE-BUILT OFFICE WITH SPARE TOILET). ”

Trapping in Aughton Woods During the Winter Months

Justine Patton



When I first started trapping in the autumn of 2012, I had no idea about what constituted to a good trap site or what I should expect to see. The first obvious thought was for it to be concealed, but not much thought was given to anything else. Due to the time of year I started, I knew nothing of the immense diversity that would enter the trap in the coming months, so never questioned the low counts attributed to the season. This lack of knowledge kept me trapping and testing sites along the way, seeing what was successful and what wasn't. At first there were a lot more failures than successes.

If one thing has been learnt from trapping, it is that habitat is key. Unless you live near prime woodland, then using portable traps are necessary if you are to see the species of this season. Mixed deciduous woodland has provided the best results thus far, with bias towards ancient oak and small leaved lime woodland. However, small stands of trees recently planted with very little age can produce high numbers of Winter moth for example. But the assumed best sites are not always that. Warton crag is species rich throughout much of the year, but from late November to March, it doesn't fare much better than a garden for reasons unknown. One place that has really stood out in my opinion is the short stretch of woodland that runs parallel to the river Lune, Aughton woods. Aughton woods can be a difficult place to trap for many reasons, the walk is a good country mile to the start of the best woodland and very muddy due to it being steep with lots of water run-off.

Much of the initial footpath is also liable to flooding with very little warning as I have discovered on a couple of occasions. This is to be expected as the woodland is situated at the edge of flood plain. Footpaths are often narrow, leaving little room for error whilst walking them and landslips are common on the water laden slopes. With all these factors taken into consideration, trapping here is limited to ideal conditions during autumn and winter i.e. mild temperatures, with light winds and rain.

The advantage this difficult site brings is that very few people are adventurous and that is ideal as leaving the trap off the path is virtually impossible, although I do try just to be on the safe side. I find it impossible to show the gradient of the hillside in photographs.



The most significant single species count for this site is from Mottled umber, with 1164 in and around the trap in December 2014. Subsequent trapping at this site has shown that this is not an isolated occurrence when again this autumn over 300 were attracted to a single light and again at the end of the year, another 402 were added to the growing list of high counts. The winters of 2015 and 2016 proved difficult to do much trapping due to high rainfall and significant flooding. Mid December seems to be the optimum time to trap large numbers and is possibly the peak emergence period for them. Visits to the site during spring have shown subsequently large numbers of larvae and must contribute substantially to the diets of insectivorous birds.



Some of the trees observed appeared to be infested with Mottled umber larvae. The only other species I have noted in large numbers is the larval stage of *Coleophora laricella*. Although precise counts have not been undertaken, each Larch tree – of which there are many – appeared to hold thousands of larval cases on their lower branches in early spring.

Looking back at records from the past there are relatively few recorders associated with this site. The main contributor of records being the late J. Newton, with winter records restricted to daytime observations. Despite this, observational information is detailed and mirrors similar experiences personally during the quieter months. Only 163 species have been recorded here with the first species only recorded in 1989. This surprises me, but in my opinion reflects the effort required to get results. Even S. Palmer and K. McCabe have wandered through during autumn looking for mines (there is very little of Lancashire left unturned by these two!). The only month where recording via a trap has not taken place is April. My attention is drawn towards recording Barred-tooth striped during this month, but a whole host of species are surely to be found by one or two visits.

I'm sure that in the years that follow, more species will be added to the list for this site, showing potential to hold a few hidden gems. But the main question that remains with me and a growing number of others is, what makes this site so fruitful during winter? And, surely it is not alone? My questions are only ever answered with more questions and so have not reached a conclusion, so only speculation remains at present



MOTH REPORT 2016

VC 60 in 2016

For various reasons it was a rather low key mothing year for VC60 with tried and trusted sites visited perhaps less intensively than in 2015, certainly in the case of the author especially with respect to the excellent Docker Moor site. This meant that several 'out of garden' species, especially those with limited emergence periods which missed out on the more intermittent trapping effort, were in very low numbers. The notable exceptions were the great effort put in by Carolyn & Steve Palmer and Barry Dyson in the SD35 Fluke Hall area and Justine Patton's efforts in various woodland sites, often requiring a long slog and steep slopes, especially the Aughton Woods area, some excellent SD54 gaps filled by Kate Hughes and some similarly valuable additions from Denis Lambert up the Ribble valley. Hopefully not all records are in yet as it has so far revealed a coastal Fylde virtual blank where a few odds and ends were hoped for in this final Atlas year. A notable exception was **Rose Tortrix** larvae located at Lytham St Annes and bred through by Mark Young and Carolyn and Steve Palmer along with Barry Brigden's efforts just inland at Bispham.

The Microlepidoptera section of this report is rather limited as quite a few potential key species have yet to be identified in what might be described as a genitalia determined backlog! This reveals just how reliant we are on key individuals who have the necessary skills to fully confirm the specific identity of many of the (usually smaller) moths. Thanks to John, Steve and Nigel. There is also a possibility that some of the published records are provisional as there is a major micro review meeting coming up. Notable 'micro' records include **Eriocrania sparmannella** from Heysham Moss LWT on 4/5 (Justine Patton - JP), **Banksia conspurcatella** from the famous (eg Waved Black) Carnforth Station underpass on 25/1 and 9/3 (Tim Hutchison - TH), the localised **Agonopterix conterminella** on Heysham Moss on 26/7 (JP) and a whole series of records of **Mompha jurassicella** from Morecambe Westgate, Morecambe Morrisons complex area, Mellishaw Lane and Heysham NR toilet trap comprising 10 individuals (JP, Pete Marsh (PM)). This is definitely the Lancashire hotspot for this species! **Phtheochroa inopiana** saw 6 records at its main site at Heysham NR toilet trap, reflecting the amount of Common Fleabane. **Acleris hastiana** was a good record from Brockholes NR on 30/8 (Jim Beattie (JB)). A "shed-hopping" **Indian Meal Moth** entered a moth trap at Bolton le Sands on 26/7 (Steve Garland (SG)). The upland limestone of Leck produced two more records of **Eudonia murana** from an observer who encounters it regularly in his usual nearby upland Yorkshire Dales sites (Terry Whitaker (TW)).

The only clearwing which has been submitted this year (apparently one 2015-prolific Currant Clearwing site was sprayed) was a **Lunar Hornet** found on a car bonnet next to the requisite willow tree at Wennington on 13/6 (Jackie and Willis Harrison).

Whilst common enough in the northern woodlands, a **Large Emerald** must have been a nice surprise at Fluke Hall on 23/6 (BD, S & CP). A **Little Emerald** at Birkbank on 27/5 (John Girdley (JG)) adds to the rather odd disjointed distribution. **Blood Vein** is still very scarce in VC60 and records came from Fulwood (Alan Powell (AP)), Lightfoot Green (S & CP) and the Leighton Moss trap. Two unexpected second brood **Small Blood Vein** were recorded at Lytham at the only known VC60 site on 20/9 (Ash Baines (AB)). **Barred Hook-tip** has been absent for a few years, so it was good to see three records from Warton and Yealand Conyers gardens (Brian Hancock (BH) and Peter Stevens (PS)).

Heysham Moss LWT is becoming the best site for observing the day-flying **Orange Underwing** and hopefully this isolated prolific population will find the railway corridor suitable for colonising the birches at Heysham NR (JP et al)



Small Blood-vein

A **Clay Triple-lines** at Westgate, Morecambe was a surprise for an observer who usually encounters it (including 2016) on the eastern side of Warton Crag (JP). **Red Twin-spot Carpet** once again confirmed that it is a single-brooded early summer species of moorland or moorland edge sites with records from Beacon Fell, Thrushgill, Docker Moor, Starkers Moor, Ashleys Farm (near Perry Moor) and Leck Fell. In the same habitat, but restricted as far as we know to a single bedstraw-filled ride at Thrushgill plantation, is the day-flying **Small Argent and Sable** and a suitable afternoon visit on 10/6 revealed at least 6 individuals (flying with **Red Twin-spot Carpet**) (Jean Roberts (JR), PM). Also in SD66 in lowland Wray, two **Spinach** were a welcome garden trap record on 19/7 (Gary Jones (GJ)) for an observer aware of the pitfalls of misidentifying Northern Spinach off the fells. That now routine species in northern VC60, **Devon Carpet**, materialised for Denis Lambert (DL) at Hurst Green and will no doubt be a regular in that area in the next few years



The nationally-endangered **Netted Carpet** saw double last year's larval count at 84 individuals in the Hying wood and area but the status of the foodplant - Yellow touch-me-not Balsam is giving cause for concern as was the paucity of adult moths with just 8 individuals to light/torchlight we are aware of (Dave Grundy (DG), SP, BH, JP, P Hatcher).

A **Beech-green Carpet** at perhaps its most reliable site (unless the Leck valley is covered), Gaitbarrows on 12/8 (JP) was welcome.



Ruddy Highflyer is now clearly established at two sites, Heysham Moss and Heysham NR with two each recorded this year (JP, PM). **Pretty Chalk Carpet** has been sporadically recorded away from its Jack Scout stronghold as per scattered Traveller's Joy and this year one was found at Hying Scout Wood on 22/7 (BH)

The cave-hibernating Tissue was located at Burton Well cave, Link Pothole Easegill, Lower Kirk Easegill and Warton Crag Dog Holes Cave (top score with 15) (Gail Armstrong (GA) and Gary Hedges (GH)). However, there were also welcome 'first for the garden' at Wray West on 9/5 (GJ) and Ashleys Farm on 24/9 (PM).

The stars of the show macro-moth-wise at the aforementioned Fluke Hall effort were two **Grass Rivulet** on 5/6 and 23/6 (SP, Carolyn Palmer (CP), Barry Dyson (BD)). These are very scarce in VC60 with just one other record of three individuals from a known site at Lytham on 10/6 (MY, S & CP). Pugs are always worth a lengthy section in our region! Four **Haworth's Pug** were recorded in BH's garden at Yealand Conyers and **Toadflax Pug** was seen away from Heysham NR with two larvae at Middleton NR on 15/9 and an adult nearby at the old Pontin's site on 24/8 (JP). A **Netted Pug** in BH's garden in Yealand Conyers on 10/6 was an excellent record, as were two **Ochreous Pug** at Docker Moor on 26/5 (PM) and a **Shaded Pug** away from Heysham/Middleton at Sunderland Point on 9/6 (JR).

Perhaps the 'star pug', however, was a **Plain Pug** on the shore at Bolton-le-Sands with the requisite foodplant nearby on 22/6 (Steve Garland (SG)). Two pugs which have become very scarce in recent years produced only two records in VC60 in 2016. A **Tawny Speckled Pug** was at Fulwood on 16/7 and a **Bordered Pug** in 'Margarets garden' near the RSPB centre at Fairhaven on 30/7 (Graham Dixon (GD) et al).

Welsh Wave can be quite common on the northern rowan-filled moorland edge sites and there were 46 in two traps on Docker Moor on 11/6 (PM) and it was predictably recorded at Hurst Green in similar habitat on 9/6 (DL). The nationally scarce **Barred-Tooth Striped** was very late this year with non prior to 14/4. Just the one general area, Warton Crag LWT, was productive with two traps producing 12 and 11 respectively and 16 other individuals noted, some daytime finds (JP). The even more threatened **V-Moth**, albeit with a stronghold in NW Lancs/Lyth valley saw an excellent record from Silverdale Moss RSPB on 10/7 (JP), a welcome record from the Leighton Moss orchard trap on 22/7 along with two more predictable Warton garden records (PS). **Scorched Wing** was recorded away from the northern strongholds at Hurst Green on 9/6 (DL) and Bay Horse on 11/6 (Nigel Rogers (NR))

Along with a record from Catterall on 12/8 (Kate Hughes (KH)), **August Thorn** at Warton on 7/9 was a great record with another from the same family being equally welcome in the form of a **Lilac Beauty** at the Hermitage, Halton on 27/6 (Steve Graham (SG)). A **September Thorn** at Catterall on 26/8 (KH) was another extremely valuable SD54 record. Single **Lunar Thorn** were recorded from near Thrushgill on the moorland edge on 5/6 (predictable) and a big surprise in a coastal garden on Heysham road on 6/6 (John Holding (JH)). One of our nationally scarce species, **Belted Beauty** was another late starter in the April weather with peak adult counts of 40 on 17 April and 32 on 23 April (Lancashire Moth Group).

When you think of moth numbers and 'plagues in traps', the first species which comes to mind is **Large Yellow Underwing**. However the LYU trap maximum was only 165 in 2016 and the money in recent years has been on **Mottled Umber** on a decent late autumn/early winter night in Aughton Woods, **Buff Footman** at Docker Moor or **Dark Brocade** on the moorlands of Botton Head in early-mid June. The first and last of these species obliged in 2016 but were run very close by **Broom Moth** at Botton Head. More on the noctuids later, but 71 **Scarce** and 335 **Mottled Umber** at Aughton on 2/12, followed by 402 **Mottled Umber** there on 30/12 (JP). These were in fact low catches compared to the previous year with over 1000 Mottled Umber! For many, the under-recorded Scarce Umber is an 'out of season' absentee from garden/site lists and this was rectified at Brockholes NR on 22/11 (JB)



Mottled Umbers

Annulet away from Gaitbarrows are notable and there were singles at Silverdale Moss RSPB on 19/7 and Warton Crag LNR on 10/8 (JP). **Grey Scalloped Bar** is an excellent record away from the Trough of Bowland and one was fortunately located outside the trap at Crossdale Grains (thanks for cutting the grass Wolfy!) on 3/7.

The national moth night theme was 'hawk moths' and the excellent night of 9/6 saw fell-edge traps deployed in order to stand the best chance of the two Elephant Hawk-moth species. This worked a treat at Greenbank Farm, Thrushgill with 33 **Elephant** and 25 **Small Elephant** in a single trap and indeed the SD66 'trap round' for that night saw all 5 of the species you could expect up here.

Puss Moths are nowhere near as common as they used to be and the two records were very welcome - Morecambe Westgate on 2/6 (JP) and Bolton-le-Sands on 4/6 (SG). **Alder Kitten** saw some range extending records from Catterall on 29/5 (KH) and Hurst Green on 9/6 (DL). After appearing to want to colonise a few years ago and then completely disappearing,

Black Arches made a single return in the Leighton Moss trap on 19/8 (Irene Mower (IM), BH) and similarly welcome there was a **Four-dotted Footman** on 27/6. **Dingy Footman** is now more numerous than Common Footman at Heysham NR but the largest single catch was 45 at Heysham Moss LWT on 31/7 (JP) and there was a range extension/infill at Catterall (KH). The star of the show, footman-wise was definitely the completely unexpected **Orange Footman** at Lightfoot Green on 9/6 (MY, S & CP)



Small Elephant Hawk-moth

The only record of **Archer's Dart** was from the Fairhaven garden used on 30/7 (GD et al). **Heart and Club** consolidated at Heysham NR after last year's influx with a preponderance of the more tricky darker forms, so do watch out for this compact and 'stubby' species amongst the Turnip Moth and Heart and Dart.

The midsummer **Fen Square Spot** was found at a few upland sites near mossland and three were recorded at Ashley's Farm with the likely source, Perry Moor, within visual range 1/2km to the north (PM). There were a few wandering **Triple-spotted Clay** away from the AONB limestone stronghold, given the necessary due care and attention as regards identification whilst recorded as singletons at Morecambe Westgate (JP), the Hermitage (SG) and Bolton-le-Sands (SG). I've seen more likely misidentification of this species on the internet than any other, apart from perhaps Red Twin-spot Carpet.

Two species which have become much scarcer are **Nutmeg** and **Shears**. The former saw a welcome record at Fluke Hall (SP, CP, BD), but only three other (coastal) individuals in VC60 and the latter seems to be becoming most reliable in its darker upland form and was recorded as such near Lost John's Cave on Leck fell (TW et al). More surprising, however, was just a single record of **Grey Arches** - in a Warton Garden on 11/6 (Martin Elsworth (ME)).

Broad-barred White is an 'annual ones and twos' and this year the sole record was from Heysham NR on 7/6. The related **Marbled Coronet** is a slightly more regular lowland species and a record from the Hermitage on 4/7 (SG) was a welcome range extension. After the excellent numbers in 2015, **Lead-coloured Drab** at Herring Head Wood produced just 6 records from four visits but one of these did include a singing Firecrest!

A **Striped Wainscot** in a Warton Garden on 22/6 (PS) continued the 'occasional scattered record' status of this species in recent years as regards the whole county. Occasional permission to trap is the order of the day at Millhouses where the target species on 30/10 saw an excellent 42 **Sprawler** (PM) with a singleton at the Hermitage also a notable record (SG). The most prolific single trap in the region was at Middle Gill in upper Hindburndale on national moth night 9/6 and this included 320 **Dark Brocade** and 309 **Broom Moth!**



Lunar Underwing

One of the surprises of the year was the resurrection of **Lunar Underwing** from what seemed a boom and terminally bust scenario in this area with 16 in the Sunderland Point trap between 21/9 and 8/10 (PM). Two rather similar species which occurred together in good numbers were **Alder Moth** (16) and **Coronet** (13) at Greenbank, Thrushgill on the superb night of 9/6. A **Brindled Green** was a good record at Catterall on 31/8 (KH) and nearby a **Light Knot Grass** appeared at Oakenclough on 8/6 (Graham Hulme (GH)). Three **Old Lady** visited KH's Catterall garden in August! The unobtrusive and sometimes elusive **Small Rufous** saw seven records on three nights at Heysham Moss (JP) and welcome singletons at Heysham Road (John Holding (JH)) and the Hermitage (SG).

Two very unexpected suburban records were a **Bordered Sallow** on 6/7 and especially a **Silver Hook** on 6/6 at Lightfoot Green (SP). Where is the nearby habitat for the latter, and is it about to be built on e.g. occurs at a brownfield site at Middleton NR? An **Oak Nycteoline** was a good record at Fulwood on 2/4, as was a **Golden Plusia** on 7/7 (AP). Three **Gold Spangle** records from Yealand Conyers (BH) are worthy of mention for a species which has become very scarce recently (BH) and indeed the only other record was from Middle Gill, upper Hindburndale (PM). **Marsh Oblique-barred** put on a mini-show at Heysham Moss with six located during the day at this known site/predictable specialised habitat on 3/7 (JP). Finally two excellent records from DL - a **Beautiful Snout** at Hudd Lee Wood on 10/6 and especially a **Beautiful Hook-tip** at Spout Farm on 25/7 - the only VC60 record in 2016



Beautiful Hook Tip

MIGRANT MOTHS IN VC60 2016



The year was dominated by a massive **Diamond-back** Moth invasion and it all became political as the Daily Mail used it in its regular 'European insects invading Britain' drivel by suggesting the British Christmas Dinner was under threat as they had eaten all our sprouts.....on the morning I received a nice big bag full in the organic veg delivery box! Counts 'in the hundreds' were received by people walking through coastal grassland, notably 700 at Fluke Hall on 5/6 (SP, CP and BD). No Antler-moth-like devastation of vegetation or crops was reported in this area. In contrast, **Rusty Dot Pearl** and **Rush Veneer** had more modest years as the late autumn/early winter invasion of the former did not reach this far north. **Rusty Dot Pearl** was mainly recorded at Sunderland Point with with 8 records on 6 nights 25/8 to 21/9, two at Heysham road (JH) and Fulwood (AP) and singles at Leighton Moss, Catterall (KH), Cottam (SP) and Westgate (JP).

Rush Veneer saw 9 singles at Sunderland Point 30/8-4/10, three in September at Heysham Road (JH), singles at Ashley's Farm on 14/9 and 29/9, singles at Heysham NR on 12/6 and 25/7, singles at Leighton Moss on 14/6 and 13/9, single at Hardhorn on 27/7 (A Smith (AS)), Lytham on 20/9 (AB) and Catterall on 7/10 (KH).

As regards the rest of the migrants, the year had its moments, especially for those who persevered in late autumn and in one case went for the 'longshot' of something decent overnight 6-7/12, as suggested on the Migrant Lepidoptera Facebook site.....but implicitly meaning somewhere "down south"! This included a session at Millhouses, deep in the oakwoods of the Hindburn valley and not the place to predict the first December record of **White Speck** for northern Britain.

Other species recorded during the year included a decent run of **Vestal**, mainly at Morecambe Westgate (4 on 15-19/9) and Sunderland point (singles 19 & 23/9) with singletons at Ashleys Farm on 27/8 and Heysham road on 17/9 (JP, PM, JH). A **Gem** was at Yealand Conyers on 27/10 (BH). A live **Convolvulus Hawk**-moth was found on the seawall at Rossall Point on 15/9 (Josh Swales) and a dead one at SD497714 on 16/9 (Linda Renshaw)

Dark Sword Grass was scarce this year with just 10 records from 26/7 to 29/10 with two each from Heysham Road (JH), Leighton Moss (BH), Sunderland Point (PM), Warton Crag LNR (JP) and singletons from the Hermitage (SG) and Little Singleton (Sue and Ron Bedford).

Scarce Bordered Straw were recorded at Warton on 23/9 (Martin Elsworth) and Heysham Road on 24/9 (JH) and the average numbers of **Silver Y** peaked at Sunderland Point with 24 on each of 14/9 and 16/10.



VC 59 RECORDS OF NOTE - RICHARD WALKER

It has been a year in which the phrase “white holes” has been mentioned in connection with the forthcoming moth atlas. White holes referring of course to those 10K squares which need filling with moth records. It is with this in mind that I have changed the usual format in this report, deciding to mention individuals who have spent time and effort in gathering data from what for many is their local 10K square (home) and listing some of their records. In most cases this lists moths which were found in very small numbers. (1 to 3; unless warranting special mention).

I can't name everyone who recorded in each square but have condensed it to the main recorders. It may be that some names have slipped through the net either through delaying sending their final records or poor eyesight on my part! Sorry if it applies to you. Some of the micros are provisional identifications as this Newsletter precedes a meeting of the Micro recorders to discuss VC59/60 records



SJ 89. Phyllonorycter Ulmifoliella

SJ 89. Andrew Miller.
Caloptilia falconipennella, Phyllonorycter corylifoliella, Phyllonorycter ulmifoliella.

SJ 79. Kevin McCabe.
Six-spot Burnet, Large Emerald, Large Twin-spot Carpet, Dark Spinach, Tissue, Phoenix, Dingy Shell, Bordered Beauty, Marbled White Spot, Round Winged Muslin, Southern Wainscot.

SJ 59. Dave Owen, Ray Banks.
Carpatolechia fugitivella, Leucoptera laburnella, Coleophora coracipennella, Cochyliomorpha straminea, Psychoides filicivora.

SJ 58. Joy Mitchell-Lisle.
Oidaematophorus lithodactyla, Bordered Beauty, Chocolate Tip, Round-winged Muslin, Obscure Wainscot, Brown-veined Wainscot, Lempke's Gold Spot.

SJ 49. Terry Ferguson.
Pyrausta purpuralis, Small Elephant Hawk-moth.

SJ 48. Carol Cockbain, Paul Hillyer.
Argyresthia semifusca, Pandemis cinnamomeana, Pyrausta aurata, Small Blood-vein, Campion, Old Lady, Straw Underwing, Heath Rustic, Deep-brown Dart, Bulrush Wainscot.

SJ 38. S Collier.
Scarlet Tiger. New for VC59 & 60 this year. Allotment gardens in Liverpool.

SJ 35. Les Ward.
Monopsis obviella, Caloptilia robustella (very likely but was it dissected to exclude C. alchimiella), Phyllonorycter geniculella.

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SJ 58. Chocolate Tip



SJ 48. Small Blood Vein



SI 82. Small Elephant Hawk



SD 52 Small Wainscot



SD 82 & 83 Athrips Mouffetella



SD 50 Nemophora Degeerella



SD 42. Cypress Carpet



SD 42 Fen Wainscot



SD 41 Chilo Phragmitella



SD 41 Marsh Pug

SD 82 & 83. Geoff Turner.
Athrips mouffetella, Autumn Green Carpet, Juniper Carpet, Lempke's Gold Spot, Gold Spangle, Small Elephant Hawk-moth.

SD 72. Dave Bickerton.
Bucculatrix nigricomella, *Pammene fasciana*, *Pterophotus pentadactyla*, Wood Carpet New to VC59 & 60, Dingy Shell, Grey Chi, Gold Spangle.

SD 71. Jane Jones, Jim Ormerod.
Barred Hook-tip, Red Sword-grass, Small Wainscot, Lempke's Gold Spot.

SD 52. Graham Dixon.
Acleris holmiana, *Epiblema rosaecolana*, Juniper Pug, Clouded Brindle, Brindled Green, Small Wainscot.

SD 50. Christopher Darbyshire.
Phyllonorycter platanoidella, *Nemophora degeerella*, Grey-shoulder Knot, Hummingbird Hawk-moth, Rufous Minor.

SD 42. Rob Yates, Bob Pyefinch, David Unwin & Simon Tobin, G Jones & John Girdley.
Bulrush Wainscot, Fen Wainscot, Saltern Ear, Southern Wainscot, Red Sword-grass. Brindled Green, Orange Sallow, Coronet, Treble-bar, Tawny-barred Angle, Rufous Minor, Green-silver Lines, Red Underwing, *Coleophora taeniipenella*, *Eudemis profundana*. *Pyrausta ostrinalis*. New to VC59 2016 GJ. Cypress Carpet. New to VC59 & VC60. 2016 BP.

SD 41. S Palmer & John Girdley, Mere Sands Wood, Rufford.
Ectoedemia atricollis, *Stigmella salicis*, *Stigmella perpygmaeella*, *Stigmella luteella*, *Parornix devoniella*, *Phyllonorycter maestinggella*, *Phyllonorycter geniculella*. Plus many others.

SD 41. David Unwin, Simon Tobin, Steve Priestley.
Tischeria ekebladella, *Cochylis roseana*, *Chilo phragmitella*, *Pyrausta purpuralis*, *Achroia grisella*, *Pyrausta aurata*. Poplar Kitten, Marsh Pug, Red Underwing.

SD 40. Ron Moyes, John Watts, J Dempsey.
Syndemis musculana, Figure of Eighty. Maiden's Blush. New to VC59 & 60, 2016. JD.

SD31 Mapwing Swift



SD 21 Small Purple-barred



SD31 Double Dart



SD30 Leopard Moth



SD 21 Dark Tussock



SD30 Shark



SD 20 Portland Moth



SD 20 Sand Dart



SD 20 Lyme Grass

SD 33. Peter Hardy.
Burnet Companion, Brown Silver-line, Treble Bar.

SD 31. Ron Moyes, Colin Daley, S Tobin, Richard Walker.
Pyrausta aurata, Heart and Club, Forester, Portland Moth, Red-tipped Clearwing, Heart and Club, Double Dart, Map-winged Swift.

SD 30. Richard Walker, Ron Moyes, Colin Daley, John Girdley, Joy Mitchell-Lisle, Mary Dean, Rod Hill, Su Haselton.
July Belle, Shark, Bordered Beauty, White Satin Moth, Common Heath, Heart and Club, Portland Moth, Feathered Gothic, Shore Wainscot, Brindled Ochre, Feathered Ranunculus. Leopard Moth, Goat Moth, Aroga velocella, Hedyia salicella, Platyptilia pallidactyla.

SD 21. Ron Moyes, Colin Daley.
Grass Rivulet, Dark Tussock, White-line Dart, Portland Moth, Feathered Gothic, Least Minor, Small Purple-barred.

SD 20. Richard Walker, Trevor Davenport, Dave Grundy, Ron Moyes, Joy Mitchell-Lisle. Alex & Shelagh Parsons.
Mullein Wave, Chocolate-tip, Tawny-barred Angle, Bordered Beauty, Satin Beauty, Heart and Club, Feathered Gothic, Sandhill Rustic, Shore Wainscot, Archer's Dart, Lyme Grass, White-line Dart, Portland Moth, Brown Rustic, Red-tipped Clearwing, Currant Clearwing, Map-winged Swift, Small Blood-vein, Treble-bar.

As to be expected the commonest recorded moth was Large Yellow Underwing, followed closely by Lesser and then Lesser Broad-bordered YU, Brimstone, Dark Arches, Shaded Broad-bar, Engrailed, Silver Y, Straw Dot with Diamond Backed Moth and Light Brown Apple Moth amongst the micros.

At the close of 2016 it remains for me to thank you all for your continued efforts in sending in records.

Recording

Please do get in touch with the following recorders for any general queries

PMrsh123@aol.com Peter Marsh – VC60 Macro
john@birdtours.co.uk John Girdley – VC60 Micro
rbkvwalker@gmail.com Richard Walker - VC59 Macro & Micro
troubleatmill@btinternet.com Graham Dixon – MapMate hub

Several people help with the determination of micros from VC59 and VC60. In this respect, we recommend that you post the trickier ones which can be identified by photos (both aspects please, lateral ones can be very important in the identification process) on the Lancashire Moths Facebook site where several people, including Ben Smart, can offer advice. Sometimes a moth has been posted and released where the identification is not certain. I'm afraid we cannot document 'probables'. We recommend you retain the moth until the identification process has been either sorted - maybe just an extra pic of a small feature required - or sent in the direction of 'dissection required'.

Where the specimen requires dissection, it is entirely up to you whether you wish to pursue this option. However, acceptance of the record without dissection is unfortunately not an option with several species. If it is likely to be a rare and localised species, where perhaps a new population in VC59 or 60 is a possibility, can we please urge you to retain the specimen for dissection and therefore confirmation or otherwise. Thanks

If you do not wish to own MapMate, please could you send your records in, if possible, using Alex Parson's spread-sheet, the details of which are on the Lancashire Moth Group website.

Of course, we will still accept paper copy or any other means of sending records in - it is not a problem entering these. However we will not be entering casual postings on the Facebook site where the location has not been pub-lished. We have had problems requesting details from people whose mothing motivation is not the 'recording scene'.

Thanks once again for all your efforts and good mothing!

USEFUL LINKS

Lancashire Moth Group Website <http://www.lancashiremoths.co.uk>

Lancashire Moths Yahoo Group <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/lancashiremoths/info>

Lancashire Lepidoptera Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/119829941488294/>

Lancashire Micro Moth Tips FB Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/580000418802001/>

UK Moths Website <http://www.ukmoths.org.uk>

Leaf Mines UK <http://www.leafmines.co.uk>

Gelechiid Recording Scheme <http://www.gelechiid.co.uk/>

Butterfly Conservation <http://www.butterfly-conservation.org>

Butterfly Conservation Lancs <http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/306/lancashire-branch.html>

Norfolk Moths <http://www.norfolkmoths.co.uk>

Hampshire Moths <http://www.hantsmoths.org.uk>

European Butterflies & Moths <http://www.lepidoptera.eu>

The National Bio-diversification Network <https://data.nbn.org.uk>

Mersey Bio Bank <http://www.merseysidebiobank.org.uk>

Lancashire & Cheshire Fauna Society <http://www.lacfs.org.uk>