

# LANCASHIRE MOTHS

Newsletter 23

December 2010



Red Sword-grass (Photo: P Pugh)



Merveille Du Jour (Photo: B Dyson)

## EDITORIAL

Visits made by some of our group to sheltered deciduous woodlands at this time of year show the value of recording away from gardens during the late autumn and winter period. The numbers of moths attracted to low wattage actinic light, combined with “sugaring” in these locations, can be high in relation to what appears at much brighter garden MV traps. To demonstrate the benefits of such activities Richard Walker’s article on “Sugaring”, in this edition show what can be found using this traditional recording method.

Time spent looking for and studying larvae and their feeding signs, another traditional method, can also bring in valuable records, as shown by Ben Smart’s article. Several identical looking moths are readily separable based on the larval features, such as the Grey Dagger and Dark Dagger. This is also the case with two fairly widespread Pyralid moths in the genus *Phycitodes*, where dissection is often required to split the adults. Ben has put together an excellent article for us on how to identify them by their larvae and feeding methods. Hopefully this will produce more records of this under-recorded pair.

Organisers of the annual National Moth Night event have reluctantly decided to give it a rest in 2011 while ideas are discussed on how to go forward in 2012. It has covered a full double cycle of the available months over the many years it has been running and now does seem an appropriate time to have a break. This provides an opportunity to see how best to progress in the future.

## IDENTIFICATION OF THE LARVAE OF *Phycitodes saxicola* AND *Phycitodes maritima*

The adult stage of the two very similar pyralid moths, *Phycitodes saxicola* and *Phycitodes maritima* can usually only be confirmed by dissection. This has probably led to an under recording of the latter species as there are very few records for VC 59 and VC 60. The species was not recorded in Lancashire until 1984 when a dissected moth from Gait Barrows was confirmed as *P. maritima*. Steve Palmer, Lancashire Micromoth Recorder, feels the species may since have expanded its range although perhaps it is still being under recorded, possibly due to a reluctance to keep specimens for dissection.

An alternative to dissection as a means of identifying *Phycitodes maritima* is to look for the larval stage. Surprisingly, the two species, despite having almost identical adults, have larvae which are easily differentiated. The larvae of both species feed on the flowers of various *Compositae* and are not difficult to find (if present).

### ***Phycitodes saxicola***

Goater (1986) reports *P. saxicola* feeding on chamomile (*Anthemis* spp.) and other *Compositae*. Ian Smith (<http://ukmoths.org.uk/show.php?id=3399>) has reared *P. saxicola* from larvae found on common ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*) at Ashton Moss. He notes that "plants on dry substrate, e.g. on walls, dry banks, or old sand dunes, seem to be favoured." I have found the larva in the flower heads of yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), as well as ragwort, here in Chorlton, Manchester.

The larval stage appears to be from late July onwards. Active, feeding larvae may be found for two to three weeks after this, before they spin a cocoon to overwinter probably in the debris below the plant. The two larvae I have found of this species were a very small early instar larva on common ragwort on 30th July 2006 and a larger (10mm) apparently fully-grown larva on yarrow on 13th August 2006. I attempted to rear the larvae by using a half filled plant pot. The soil was covered with a variety of dried leaves, twigs and other plant debris. The larvae and a few flower heads were placed on the top of this. The pot was covered with fine netting and placed outside in a sheltered spot. One adult emerged on 3rd July 2007. The timing of the larval find and subsequent adult emergence suggests that this species is probably single brooded here, although the available literature seems unsure about this. The early and late instar larvae have little change in appearance other than size. The larva has a pale cream body, sometimes slightly tinged with green. There is a narrow reddish-brown (occasionally pinkish) dorsal stripe and a wider reddish-brown stripe sub-dorsally. There is also a broken reddish stripe along the spiracular line. The head is brown. The prothoracic plate is concolorous with the body of the larva but has a narrow blackish-brown strip posteriorly. This is consistent and clearly different from *P. maritima*.

### ***Phycitodes maritima***

Goater (1986) and Emmet (1988) report the larvae of this species using common ragwort, yarrow and tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*). I have recorded a few of this species at various locations around Chorlton, Manchester every year since 2006. The larva feed, often communally in twos and threes, amongst fairly densely spun ragwort flowerheads. The spinning contains lots of frass as well as half-eaten flower fragments. I have found larvae on dates from 28<sup>th</sup> July (in 2007) to 22<sup>nd</sup> August (in 2009). Ian Smith reported he found six *P. maritima* larvae burrowed into a dead ragwort flower head as late as 22<sup>nd</sup> September (1996, in Leicestershire).

I managed to rear two adults of *P. maritima* this year on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, from Chorlton, which were confirmed, after dissection by Steve Palmer, as *P. maritima*. However the larvae are so different from *P. saxicola* that identification could be made on the basis of larval characteristics alone.

The larva has a brown, sometimes purplish-brown, body with a black to mid-brown head. The prothoracic plate is wholly black as are the thoracic legs. There are no dorsal stripes. The larva is a little paler towards the underside. The pinacula are black and quite noticeable. Emmet (1988, p232) suggests that there are two generations of this species with larvae to be found in June, as well as in August, although does comment that "possibly there is a prolonged emergence period rather than

two broods". He also reports that early instars of the species feed in the leaf axils and stem of the plant, which explains why I have only found spinnings containing final instar *P. maritima* larvae.

As neither species is likely to be met with in adult form, other than by light-trapping, rearing the adults from the larval stage is a good way to confirm identification and to produce fresh-looking moths for photographic purposes. The photographs of the resultant adults show how difficult identification of these species would be from external characteristics alone.



Photos above 2 x *P. saxicola* larvae (left); 2 x *P. maritima* larvae (right)



Feeding signs of *P. maritima*



Freshly emerged *Phycitodes* moths (*P. saxicola* top and *P. maritima* below)

#### References

- Goater, B., (1986). British Pyralid Moths, Harley Books.  
Emmet, A.M., (1988). Field Guide to the Smaller British Lepidoptera (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) BENHS  
Smith, I.F., Species report on [www.ukmoths.org.uk](http://www.ukmoths.org.uk)

Thanks to Ian Smith for his comments regarding his experiences with these species, and to Steve Palmer for confirming the identity of the reared *P. maritima* adults. All photos are by the author.

Further good photographs of the early stages of *P. saxicola* and *P. maritima* can be seen at:

<http://ukmoths.org.uk/show.php?id=2462>

[http://www.lepiforum.de/cgi-bin/lepiwiki.pl?Phycitodes\\_Maritima](http://www.lepiforum.de/cgi-bin/lepiwiki.pl?Phycitodes_Maritima)



David Cameron (not known for his mothing activities, as far as I know, and definitely not a member of this rather exclusive Lancashire Club) has decided it is time to find out what makes the British people happy. A healthy and diverse natural environment would certainly come near the top of my list. On a more achievable level, one thing that would boost my happiness index would be the arrival of a Heart and Club in my garden trap.



**Heart and Club in Southport** (Photo: A Forest)

We have well over one hundred Heart and Club records on the county database, some of them going back to the nineteenth century, but the vast majority of the records have come in the last four years and from a surprisingly limited number of localities. Most recent records have come from coastal or near coastal localities and in 2004 a small number were found near Southport. By 2006 a strong colony had been confirmed in the Southport area and even though the original recorder has not been in touch recently, regular records are still being received from other recorders in nearby locations. Much further north in the county, in 2008, the first of many were found in Carnforth while attention was also focusing on an increasing number of records from the Formby area.

2010 proved to be the best year yet for this moth in the county, almost doubling the number of records on the database. This increased presence may of course be attributable to more moth enthusiasts operating light traps in these areas, but it seemed likely that the species was also experiencing a population expansion. I was therefore becoming quite hopeful that the species would start to spread to other parts of the county and with a little patience surely it will soon make its first appearance in Preston and membership of this exclusive club would be assured!

A quick look at the books and Moths Count distribution maps shows the moth to be widespread and common in many parts of southern Britain with recent records from Cumbria, Yorkshire and Scotland. The larvae are reported to thrive on a wide range of foodplants – all excellent news! Then I read the paragraph that put a complete dampener on my hopes of inner peace, tranquillity and a “Coalition Happiness Factor” of 10. The books say its sporadic distribution is linked to the moth’s habitat requirements, which are given as “coastal sand-dunes, chalk/limestone areas and other open dry habitats”. Oh dear - this doesn’t sound like anywhere in Preston I know! This longed for “happiness indicator” now looks to be more of a forlorn hope – ah well, at least I can rely on to Preston North End football club to keep me cheery throughout this long cold winter!

## COMMON SPECIES GUIDE

During the latter part of this year (2010) Graham Dixon has been beavering away on a new internet facility for the Moth Group – a month by month guide to the most frequently encountered moths at light traps in the county. It is an ongoing project which will be adapted and expanded as time permits. It is already proving itself to be an invaluable resource for anyone wanting to find out what species are most likely to be on the wing at certain times of year over most of the county and what they look like. You don't have to have any experience of moths to be able to use it to find what your moth was most likely to be. Graham is always after photos to enhance the site and can be contacted at [troubleatmill@btinternet.com](mailto:troubleatmill@btinternet.com)

The Common Species guide for Lancashire can be viewed at <https://sites.google.com/site/commonspecies/>

## SUGARING

**RICHARD WALKER**

Records from the Lancashire Moth Group have been made available listing moths and their numbers recorded on wine ropes or during sugaring sessions. The term "sugar" or "sugaring" will be used to cover both methods from here-on.

The earliest record and an isolated date is July 1948. However more regular records run from 8 June 1981 through to 28 July 2010. Sugaring occurred on 218 different nights during these dates and a total of 1,515 moths were recorded with 92 different species named. Some attempt has been made to "sugar" during all months except December; August being the most popular, followed by September and then July and October.

This is not a statistical analysis; the circumstances and varied parameters put paid to that. Simple additions, subtractions and a percentage give rise to simple facts with no conclusions other than those drawn by the reader.

13 moths of the 92 species were regularly recorded as follows:

Chestnut	367 individuals on 38 occasions
Common Rustic agg.	311 individuals on 14 occasions
Satellite	281 individuals on 35 occasions
Angle Shades	134 individuals on 64 occasions
Yellow-line Quaker	126 individuals on 20 occasions
Brick	90 individuals on 33 occasions
Large Yellow Underwing	90 individuals on 22 occasions
Square-spot Rustic	82 individuals on 12 occasions
Copper Underwing agg.	43 individuals on 16 occasions
Sallow	40 individuals on 18 occasions
Old Lady	55 individuals on 32 occasions
Dark Arches	37 individuals on 17 occasions
Mouse	18 individuals on 10 occasions
Red Underwing	10 individuals on 9 occasions

Of the remaining 79 species all were recorded less than 10 times over the 218 nights. The total of all moths (1,515) was heavily weighted by each species total being recorded on one particular night.

Common Rustic ag.	200	21 Aug 1985 at Pennington
Common Rustic ag.	52	19 Aug 1985 at Pennington
Square Spot Rustic	60	19 Aug 1985 at Pennington
Chestnut	4	Oct 2000 at Claughton
Chestnut	47	11 Oct 2008 at Hall Wood
Satellite	36	10 Nov 2008 at Hall Wood
Satellite	25	19 Nov 2007 at Hall Wood
Satellite	27	6 Mar 2008 at Hall Wood
Angle Shades	25	3 Oct 2000 at Claughton
Angle Shades	25	23 Oct 2000 at Claughton

The 5 species above accounted for 546 moths of the 1,515 moths recorded. The remaining 969 moths were recorded over 218 nights which roughly equates to fewer than 5 moths, not necessarily different species, per session. These are of course averages. The records show many nights with only one or two recorded whilst others, 19 Aug 1985 for example, saw Dave Wilson recording 17 species and 171 moths in total. Showing how variable results can be, two nights later he recorded 1 Sallow, 2 Copper Underwing and 200 Common Rustic agg.'s! (Or should I write aaaaaag?)

The 1939 edition, in two volumes, entitled *Moths of the British Isles* by Richard South (FES) states that Chestnut, Yellow-line Quaker, Common Rustic and Old Lady are all noted as attracted to sugaring. These four feature on our list. The extent to which the author, no doubt presenting a collective view held by his fellow entomologists, rated sugaring can be seen in his paragraph "Methods of Catching Moths" – see below.



**Angle Shades** (left) on sugar mix  
(Photo: E Langrish)



**Satellite** (right)  
(Photo: T Davenport)

"Use coarse brown sugar, treacle and beer, boiled down to a suitable liquid. Add, just before use, a small quantity of rum, but if autumn add jargonella pears or ribstone pippins. If following the second or third round of inspection does not give a satisfactory result and we feel inclined to retire discomfited, but as a forlorn hope we try once again, we secure one or two good things with a sprinkling of chiefly commoners. One must be prepared to accept the disappointments which are inevitable". Richard South had chosen a hundred yard "ride" in the New Forest, no less. Not my back garden by any means!

PS. Norman Riley, sometime keeper of entomology at the British Museum, after describing his "sugar" mixture, commented that adding stale beer and rum to the mixture "sometimes reduced them (the moths) to a most regrettable condition" and that "those moths without a proboscis cannot be lead astray". Whoa.... don't spread this thought around or the animal welfare league will send in their inspectors to close us down.

**Richard B Walker. Formby 11th September 2010**

[Ed. – further sugaring efforts this autumn, after this article was submitted, have produced marvellous results with Satellite, for example, reaching 62 moths spread over a few tree trunks at one site.]

## A SUMMARY OF MOTHS FOUND IN VC59 & VC60

This report covers all records of Lancashire's moths submitted and entered onto the Mapmate database between 1st July and 20th November 2010.

Before starting the July report, it is worthwhile noting a record of the Blackneck from a very well recorded garden in Heysham on 30th June (J Holding – JH). This is a new site for the species and is yet more evidence of the speed with which this moth is spreading across the county. Additionally, the records of several Ruddy Highflyers from Heysham NR in late May have also been confirmed, by dissection (J Girdley – JG).

### JULY



**Lunar Hornet Moth**  
(Photo: S Palmer)

A single Humming-bird Hawk-moth in Weeton (J Fennel) on the 1st July was, surprisingly, the first report of this moth for the year. It was followed by a further 19 sightings, nearly all of singletons, until the last at Gregson Lane (D Tucker) on or about 1st November; overall, an average year for this migrant moth. The Heart and Dart was having an improved season and peaked at 79 in a Bispham trap (B Brigden – BB) on 1st, while on the following day twenty Elephant Hawk were reported in Littleborough (Y Mynett and S Pinnington – YM&SPn). On 2nd, a search of the trunk of a large willow tree in Preston produced eleven pupal exuviae of the **Lunar Hornet Moth** (S Palmer – SMP); not a single adult had been seen despite much searching over the previous week or so.

Numbers of the local Heart and Club reached a high (of 14) in Formby (A & S Parsons – A&SP) at this time, while several local micromoths made appearances elsewhere. These included *Argyresthia curvella* in a Heysham garden (JH), *Ptycholoma lecheana* at Freshfield Dune Heath (J Donnelly – JD & C Fletcher – CF), *Bactra robustana* at Sunderland Point (JG), the first since the famous L T Ford had recorded it in Carnforth in 1955, and finally *Ephestia parasitella* (new to Lancashire) at Leighton Moss on 3rd (SMP). Perhaps the most unexpected find though was a larva of the Mullein Moth feeding on *Verbascum thapsus* in Towneley Park, Burnley (G Gavaghan – GG).

Following the reasonable start to the season for the Garden Tiger in June, records were received from a further eight different sites in July and early August. Although the moth is not as common as it used to be there are indications that the population has remained relatively stable for the last few years. The maximum total for one night were the three found at Astley Moss on 3rd July (I Walker – IW).

Over the next few days Buff Arches and Fan-foot numbers reached their peak with 18 and 15, respectively in Hardy Grove (G Riley – GR); the Spinach was found in Morecambe (JG) and Yealand Redmayne (S Stokes – SS), while the very local Dwarf Cream Wave and rare **Brussels Lace** appeared in the same light trap on 5th in Formby (T Davenport – TD).



**Brussels Lace**  
(Photo: T Davenport)





**Double Dart**

(Photo: T Davenport)

On the 3rd July, the first of a record annual number of Dingy Footman for the county was reported from Freshfield (JD, CF). Over the next two months the moth was found at sixteen different sites in the county, five of these from new 10km squares. Considering the first county record was only six years ago, the moth has shown a fair turn of pace in spreading to so many different parts in such a short time period. Local species encountered over the next few days included Clouded Brindle in Yealand Conyers (B Hancock – BH), Grass Emerald at Sunderland Point (JG) and **Double Dart** (one of only four records this year) in Dolphinholme (N Rogers – NR). Authorised surveying on Cockerham Moss during 2010 produced many records of note. On the 8th, several Purple-bordered Gold were found and later checks produced good-sized colonies of *Olethreutes schulziana*, *Aphelia viburnana*, *Argyrotaenia ljugiana*, Yellow-tail, Large Ear and Marsh Oblique-barred, amongst others (SMP). It should be noted that the Wildlife Trust are not yet able to approve public access to this site.

The amount of trapping activity close to coastal sites will usually dictate how many records of White-line Dart are received each year. 2010 turned out to be the best year for this moth in Lancashire since records began, mainly due to increased recording activity in the south and west coastal areas. The singletons that turned up in Preston on 10th July (SMP) and at Hale on 8th August (C Cockbain – CC) were new moths for these well recorded sites suggesting the moth was showing some dispersive behaviour. A declining species that has also done slightly better than usual this year is the V Moth. The first occurred in Silverdale (R Griffiths – RG) on 8th and over the following fortnight it was also located in Yealand Conyers (BH), Warton (M Elsworth – ME) and Yealand Redmayne (SS).



**Lobesia abscisana** (Photo: G Riley)

A Beautiful Carpet at Astley Moss (IW), *Ectoedemia decentella* in Wigan (S Tranter – ST) and a Golden Plusia in Hardy Grove (GR) were all of note at this time. The latter was one of only four in the county during the year, all the others being found at one site, Yealand Conyers (BH). In contrast **Lobesia abscisana** had a good year following an expansion its range northwards (mainly coastally) for several years. Around 9th July it was found in such locations as Adlington (P Krischkiw – PK), Hardy Grove (GR), Hoghton (G Dixon – GD) and as high up as Smithills Moor (A Barker – AB, E Langrish – EL) showing more of an inland element than previously.

*Hedya ochroleucana* is a very local moth in Lancashire, so it was good to get a record from one of its known



**Beautiful Snout** (Photo: E Langrish)

sites at Mill Houses on 9th July (P Marsh – PM). At this time another very local moth, the White Colon, was found in Crosby (JD) while slightly more common, but non-the-less of note, was a single *Eudonia pallida* at light in Adlington (PK). Also in Peter's trap that night were an astounding 77 Flame, a moth usually restricted to single figures at most sites. Large numbers of some species are a regular feature of mid July and this year included 106 Common Footman on Astley Moss (IW), 60 Muslin Footman in Yealand Conyers (BH), 47 Smoky Wainscot together with 19 Light Arches and 18 Double Lobed at Lower Burgh meadows (EL), 42 Snout in Flixton (K. McCabe - KM), 24 Dot Moth in Wigan (ST), 19 Purple Clay



in Brinscall (AB, EL) all trumped by a bumper crop of c500 Bird Cherry Ermine at Pennington Flash (C Darbyshire – CAD). The Brinscall trip on 16th (AB, EL) also produced records of **Beautiful Snout** (see above for picture), Pine Carpet, Green Arches, Satin Beauty and Welsh Wave.

The dissection of a Dagger species from Botton Mill on 10th produced the first record of Dark Dagger from the north-east of Lancashire and coincided with some other local finds such as *Carpatolechia fugitivella* in Morecambe and Crescent Striped at Sunderland Point (all JG). Other moths of note at this time included *Acrobasis consociella* in Billinge (CAD), Toadflax Pug in Hale (CC) and, of particular interest, **Round-winged Muslin** at Rosemary Wood Fisheries (JD, CF), all on the 12th.

A day earlier (on 11th) an unusual looking micromoth was found by Andy Bunting (ABg) in the trap he runs regularly at WWT Martin Mere. Following some detective work he identified it as *Blastobasis rebeli* and passed a photo on to SMP for verification. The moth itself was requested as this is a complex genus and, to assist with the research, Dr John Langmaid of Portsmouth very kindly supplied a detailed paper covering the many members of this genus. The moth was subsequently confirmed as this species and is new to both Lancashire and the north of England. Amazingly, another was found on 6th August (SMP) during a moth trapping session at Cuerden Valley Country Park.



**Round-winged Muslin**  
(Photo: C Fletcher)



**Blastobasis rebeli** (Photo: A Bunting)

A mid-July evening visit to Jack Scout (BH), to view Pretty Chalk Carpet and Haworth's Pug on "old man's beard" flowers, was very successful producing double figures of both species. Further south, in Preston, Alan Powell (AP) had a trap full of Swallow-tailed Moths (fifteen in all) to contend with; while a trap in Formby contained a **Triple-spotted Clay** (TD), a most unexpected find. The latter species also turned up at another new site, Sunderland Point (JG), on 6th August.

One species that has shown a worrying decline over the last few years is the Gold Spangle. Prior to 2007 fifty or more site records per year were not unusual. Since then there have been only three reported in 2007, eighteen in 2008 and 2009 and, so far, only four records have been received in 2010. Those found in the second half of the season were in Hoghton on 16th July (GD) and Yealand Conyers (BH) and Littleborough (YM&SPn) on 25th.



**Suspected** (Photo: J Holding)

In contrast the **Suspected** has had a reasonable season and was new to a well recorded garden in Heysham (JH) mid month. On 17th July a Forester moth was found by Andrew Brocklebank in a grassy area in Formby, a known



**Triple-spotted Clay**  
(Photo: T Davenport)

area for this national BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) species. Many thanks are due to Richard Walker for working with the National Trust on this and advising them of the significance and importance of having this species on their land. Another Forester was also observed on Freshfield Dune Heath on 27th July by M Rimmer.

The 17th July also produced a single migrant Rush Veneer in Yealand Conyers (BH), the first of 16 mid to late season reports of this moth, in what has turned out to be a below average year for migrants as a whole. On the following day, the first September Thorn of the year appeared in Flixton (KM) and to date we only know of one other record – on 4th September (NR) in Dolphinholme (accompanied by 6 Small Autumnal Moth).

In Newsletter 22, reference was made to a worn moth resembling a Lyme Grass found by TD in Formby on 19th July. It has now been dissected and confirmed as the fifth county record of this coastal species. A late Least Black Arches was found in an actinic trap in Silverdale (RG) on 23rd while over the next two days Grass Eggar was reported from Formby (RW), Scallop Shell (BB) in Bispham (also seen in Belmont (A Bateson – ABt), Marsh Pug in Chorlton (B Smart – BS) and four Blomer's Rivulet in Yealand Conyers (BH). On the 26th a visit to Cadishead Moss (KM) produced good numbers of Crescent and Marsh Oblique-barred together with a single



***Exaeretia allisella***  
(Photo: K McCabe)

***Exaeretia allisella***, a species not recorded in Lancs since 1998.

At the opposite end of the county eleven Netted Carpet came to light in a wood near Warton (BH et al) accompanied by a single Barred Carpet (G Jones – GJ). See under September for details on larval finds of the BAP species.

The Blood-vein has been spreading northwards in the county over the last decade or so. Despite this, 2010 proved to be a poor year for this moth north of the River Ribble with only one record received so far (back in June). In contrast, it experienced an extended second brood further south in VC59 occurring widely from 27th July in Hale (CC) to the 10th September on Astley Moss (IW). Although not closely related, the Small Blood-vein has also been spreading in Lancashire but at a much slower pace. The

second half of the season saw a noticeable increase in records from Formby, where it has been present for at least thirty years, possibly due to increased recorder activity - there was little change elsewhere in its range.

Over the last two days of July a **Four-spotted Footman** came to light in Preston (SMP), an early Sallow was found on Lower Burgh Meadows (EL) and 3 Annulet came to an actinic trap in Yealand Hall Allotments (BH).



**Four-spotted Footman** (Photo: S Palmer)

## AUGUST

It is always difficult to judge what will appear in August traps. This year, with no significant migration to entertain us, it was down to the resident species to put on a show. The micros obliged with the local *Athrips mouffetella* coming to light in Dolphinholme (NR) on 1st, the rare pyralid *Crambus hamella* appearing on Cadishead Moss (KM) on 4th and the exciting discovery of ***Ypsolopha vittella*** in a Morecambe trap (JG) on the 5th. This last species had not been recorded in Lancashire since 2003 so it was great to get a second record several weeks later (on 1st September) in Wigan (G & B Wynn – G&BW). One obvious feature of moth trapping in August is the build up of numbers of some of the common species. More often than not it is the Large Yellow Underwing that is most apparent due to its hyperactive nature. However, as well as this species (that peaked at 419 in an Euxton trap mid-month) other large catches included 64 Small Square-spot, 46 Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet and 32 Straw Dot, all in Adlington (PK), 58 Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing in Preston (AP), 44 Flame Shoulder and 37 Ingrailed Clay at Dolphinholme (NR), 32 Dog's-tooth at Sunderland Point (JG), 30 Shaded Broad-bar in Flixton (KM), 26 Shuttle-shaped Dart in Wigan (ST) and 23 Six-striped Rustic in Hale (CC). There were also two good counts of the less common species – 25 Oak Lutestring and 10 Barred Chestnut in Cragg Wood (JG).



***Ypsolopha vittella***  
(Photo: G & B Wynn)

Other moths of note, present in the first two weeks of August, included Saltern Ear at Dolphinholme (NR) and Sunderland Point (JG), Grass Emerald and Welsh Wave at Mill Houses (JG), Small Rufous in Cuerden (AB, EL) and Clay Triple-lines in Silverdale (BH). Manchester Treble-bar was located in two of its three known Lancashire localities, namely Loftshaw Moss (JG) on 8th and Blaze Moss on 31st (B Dyson – BD), while the only records of Barred Rivulet and Butterbur in 2010 came from Hardy Grove (GR) and Flixton (KM) respectively on 12th August. As usual, the few confirmed records of Dark Marbled Carpet came from isolated, mainly inland sites in the north of the county between early August and early September. An article on how to separate Dark Marbled Carpet from the very variable and often similar Common Marbled Carpet is planned for the next newsletter.

On the 14th August a **Poplar Kitten** was recorded in Hardy Grove (GR) while on 18th, Marsh Oblique-barred was a new species in Dolphinholme (NR) and the increasingly uncommon Hedge Rustic came to light in Yealand Conyers (BH). Only two other records of the latter species have been received this year, at Formby on 31st Aug (RW) and Freshfield on 2nd September (JD, CF). A late Ghost Moth female was found during the day in Preston (C Palmer) on 21st, while further south on the same date, a count of 13 Portland Moth at Formby Point (S Whitehouse et al) caused a big sigh of relief as reported numbers had been very low for a couple of years. During August Daisy Bailey had been keeping an eye on her local colony of Vapourer Moths in Prestwich and was rewarded by ten adults on the 25th. A couple of days earlier a second brood White Ermine had come to light in Adlington (PK) followed by a possible second brood Peach Blossom in Flixton (KM) – both of these were certainly very late if first brood individuals.



**Poplar Kitten** (Photo: G Riley)

## SEPTEMBER

Each year, as the autumn approaches, several members of the group set off into unrecorded parts of the county to search for leaf-mining larvae and their feeding signs. It is an excellent way of adding dots to the maps as well as being great fun. A visit to Hurstwood on 1st September near the Yorkshire border in East Lancashire (KM & S Hind) proved particularly worthwhile with many new 10km square records added to the



database. Most exciting however were the mines of *Stigmella magdalenae* found on rowan. This species is new to Lancashire. Elsewhere, on the same date, an Anomalous was found in Littleborough (I Kimber) and Feathered Gothic came to light in numbers at Ainsdale (J Clews, C Daly, R Moyes – JC et al). On the 2nd the local micro *Ypsolopha alpella* came to light in Flixton (KM) and the first of only three **Orange Sallow**, was found in Hardy Grove (GR) – the others being in Ormskirk on 11th (EL) and Fulwood on 2nd October (AP).



Orange Sallow (Photo: S Palmer)

Early September was proving quite benign for moths coming to the end of their flight periods. Late hangers-on included Shaded Broad Bar and Small Fan-footed Wave at Formby (RW) and July Highflyer in Dolphinholme (NR), all on 2nd. A presumed second brood specimen of Common Emerald was found at Flixton (KM) and a Buff Footman in Warton (ME), both on 3rd. These were followed by Yellow-tail at Heysham on 5th (JH), Common Carpet at Formby (TD) and Dark Spectacle in Billinge (CAD), on 8th. New area records or unusual sightings in early September included *Psychoides filicivora* in Poulton (A Smith – AES), Grey Chi in Oswaldtwistle (B Clegg – BC) and a wandering Heath Rustic in

Preston (SMP). However the moth of the month must be the Death's-head Hawk Moth in Healey Stones on 6th (unknown recorder), subsequently brought along to a Rochdale Naturalists' moth trapping event.



Netted Carpet larva (Photo: S Palmer)

As part of the BAP survey work during 2010, searches for the larva of **Netted Carpet** took place in early and mid September and significant numbers were located in the woodland site near Warton. Discussions have commenced with the owners to ensure suitable management practises are maintained in order to protect this important colony.

In Hale on 8th September, the annual Brown-spot Pinion (two in fact!) was accompanied by 60 Setaceous Hebrew Character and 22 Common Wainscot (CC). The former species was only otherwise noted in Carnforth on 10th (J Rae – JR). It seems it won't be long before we lose this species if it carries on with its current rate of decline and limited distribution. Also on 10th, Rosy Rustic peaked with 25 noted in Dolphinholme (NR) and the first Merveille Du Jour, appeared in Preston (SMP) – after a long flight period, the last was found on 5th November in Mill Houses (GJ). Mouse Moth also did well this autumn with one exceptional count of 17 in Rainford on 10th (S Williams – SW).



Dusky-lemon Sallow (Photo: C Cockbain)

Other species also doing well at this time included Frosted Orange, with eight at Lower Burgh Meadows (EL), 35 Light Brown Apple Moth in Heysham (JH) following a poor season for this usually abundant moth and 15 Black Rustic in Hale (CC). Late records continued to appear with Clouded-bordered Brindle at Adlington (PK), Single-dotted Wave at Astley Moss (IW) and Flame Carpet in Formby (A&SP) all on 12th.

This season proved to be the best so far for the Devon Carpet with most of the records in the first half of the

year. Second brood sightings were reported from White Moss and Lords-lot Bog (JG) as well as a new location in Dolphinholme (NR), when a worn one came to light at this well recorded site on the late date of 19th September. Other notable species present at this time included *Mompha locupletella* in Adlington (P Pugh – PP), **Dusky Lemon Sallow** (picture above) and Deep Brown Dart (one of a few) in Hale (CC). Other sightings of interest included Flounced Chestnut in Silverdale (RG) and a Mallow in Formby (M Dean & R Hill – MD&RH). The latter recorders also found a late Marbled Beauty in Formby on 20th, while other late records included Heart and Dart in Littleborough on 21st (YM&SP), a Silver-ground Carpet in Adlington (PK) and Bright-line Brown-eye in Poulton (AES) on 27th and a Riband Wave in Flixton on 28th (KM). The month ended with a good count of Red-green Carpet (nineteen in all) in Ainsdale on 30th (JC et al) – this last species proving to be much more widely reported than usual this autumn presumably due to the prolonged mild spell.

## OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

October started with a definite feel of late summer to it. Brimstone Moth was found in Flixton on 1st (KM) and a Square-spot Rustic in Hale on 3rd (CC). The 5th brought news of a second brood Flame from Adlington (PP), a Flame Shoulder on Yealand Hall Allotments on 8th (BH) and *Eudonia mercurella* in Flixton (KM) on 9th. A table of additional late records can be seen below (**Figure 1**). Traps were kept busy with good numbers of the late autumn species putting in an appearance. These included 14 Red-line Quaker in Cuerden (GJ) on 5th, while 41 Chestnut and 34 Brick were found at Brinscall (EL) on 8th. The Horse Chestnut leaf-miner continued to spread erratically northwards through the county turning up at Aston Hall Garden Centre, near Glasson on 9th (SMP).

Garden Carpet	10-Oct-10
Pinion-streaked Snout	10-Oct-10
Common Wainscot	13-Oct-10
Shuttle-shaped Dart	19-Oct-10
Straw Dot	21-Oct-10
Setaceous Hebrew Character	22-Oct-10
Small Square-spot	24-Oct-10
Lesser Yellow Underwing	28-Oct-10
Snout	30-Oct-10
Large Yellow Underwing	31-Oct-10
Blastobasis lacticolella	05-Nov-10
Common Marbled Carpet	05-Nov-10

**Figure 1**

During October, there were several occasions when apparently ideal conditions for migration were shown on the weather charts. Despite this, very few species seemed to be arriving in the UK and, of these, few made it to Lancashire. There were scattered reports of several Dark



***Exapate congelatella***  
(Photo: S Palmer)

numbers of Diamond-back Moths during October, but nothing indicating that a strong influx had occurred from any particular direction. In fact the only notable records came when a Rusty-dot Pearl and Pearly Underwing were recorded on 13th October in Adlington (PP) and a single Gem came to light in Yealand Conyers on 21st



***Acleris umbrana*** (Photo: S Palmer)

(BH). To make up for this numbers of the delightful tortricid moth, ***Exapate congelatella*** and the enigmatic Red Sword-grass visited traps in six different locations each. The mild weather during much of the month obviously helped these and other moths make the most of the late autumn nectar sources. Interesting micromoths located at this time included *Acleris ferrugana* for the first time in a well recorded Preston garden (SMP) and *Diurnea lipsiella* and ***Acleris umbrana*** (the third county record for *umbrana*) in Yealand Hall Allotments (GJ).

Despite efforts to locate it in several parts of the county, the Sprawler seems to have a very restricted distribution in Lancashire. Apart from a singleton south of Lancaster a

few years ago, records are limited to the Silverdale woodlands and the Mill Houses area, both of which have produced the moth this autumn (JG, BH, GJ). Included with the Mill Houses moth on 5th November were 20

Yellow-line Quaker, 17 December Moth, an Autumn Green Carpet and four **Northern Winter Moths** (GJ). This last species had been bred earlier in the autumn from a larva found in Chorlton (BS) – an alternative method of seeing this species for those who pack their traps away come the end of summer.



**Northern Winter Moth larva and imago** (Photo: B Smart)

Good numbers of the usual late autumn geometrids (eg Scarce and Mottled Umber) were being found in sheltered deciduous woodland well mid November but at the time of going to press the very cold conditions of late month have brought the season to a timely close.

### **And finally.....**

A report of a Small Argent and Sable found in the Cloughton area during 2010 has been passed on to the group but it is not known how accurate the record is. Anyone out walking in moorland areas where plenty of heath bedstraw occurs on or near grassy tracks may wish to keep an eye out for this apparently rare moth in the county. Records should be accompanied by a photo.

My grateful thanks go to all of you moth enthusiasts who have sent in records so far this year – do please keep the data rolling in. The deadline for receipt of records to be included in the 2010 Annual Report is the 5th January 2011 and for receipt of records and articles to be considered for Newsletter 24, is Friday 15th July 2011.

### **PAPER COPIES OF THE NEWSLETTER**

The Newsletter is primarily available for downloading direct from the Moth Group website [www.lancashiremoths.co.uk](http://www.lancashiremoths.co.uk) but several members have asked to for paper copies. The price for printing and delivery of each newsletter remains unchanged for this edition at £3 per copy, inclusive of postage. Cheques should be made payable to Mrs. C. A. Palmer and sent to 137 Lightfoot Lane, Fulwood, Preston, Lancs PR4 0AH.

To enable those receiving a paper copy to keep up to date with their renewals, a form has been mailed with this edition – please keep it safe as a reminder for when your next payment is due. If you currently receive this via the internet but would prefer to receive a paper copy, then please contact Carolyn Palmer at the above address or email [s.palmer12@btopenworld.com](mailto:s.palmer12@btopenworld.com)



# MOTH EVENTS 2011

The following includes events open to all, including members of Butterfly Conservation (Lancs Branch), Lancashire Moth Group and members of the public (unless stated otherwise). It is advisable to check that outdoor events are taking place with the organiser beforehand.

**Friday, 14th January 7.30pm**

**"Moths of Sunderland Point"  
by J Girdley  
Torrisholme, Morecambe**

"The Moths of Sunderland Point" – a look back at the highlights of three years of moth recording at this picturesque coastal site, by John Girdley

This is a North Lancs Naturalists' event at the Church of the Ascension, Torrisholme, Morecambe (hall in Michaelson Avenue, first left off Lancaster Rd. between White Lund roundabout and Torrisholme). There is a charge of £2 towards expenses; light refreshments are provided.

**Friday, 18th March  
7pm-10pm**

**Lancashire Moth Group Social  
The Barn, Cuerden Valley Country Park**

The Lancashire Moth Group Social will be held on Friday evening from 7pm to 10pm – entry charge £2 per head to cover costs. Tea, Coffee, Soft drinks and Biscuits will be included. The event is held at Lancashire Wildlife Trust headquarters, The Barn, Cuerden Valley Country Park, near Bamber Bridge. Members and guests are invited to bring along books, displays, slides, Powerpoint presentations or CDs to show to the group. The main speaker is John Girdley, who will give an illustrated talk on the "**Moths of Northern VC60**".

Please make a special effort to bring along display material and do get in touch with Steve Palmer before the evening to enable assessment of the space, equipment requirements and timing.

Directions: To find The Barn, come off the M6 at J28 and take the B5256 eastbound, crossing the A49 at the traffic lights. After one mile (and just as you leave the houses) turn left at the top of the hill onto Shady Lane. Proceed for about a mile past Nell Lane on your left then take the next right down Berkeley Drive. The Barn is on your left after a couple of hundred yards with ample parking beyond.

**Sunday, 10th April  
10.30am**

**Belted Beauty Count,  
Potts Corner (SD413571)**

A survey of the Belted Beauty colony, meeting in the Potts Corner Car Park (SD413571) at 1030am. Be prepared for cold wet and windy conditions. Waterproof walking boots or wellies are advisable. On occasions a charge is levied for parking but is unlikely to exceed 50p. Organiser Steve Palmer – [s.palmer12@btopenworld.com](mailto:s.palmer12@btopenworld.com) 01772 861570

**Sunday, 28th May  
8pm**

**Coronation Park, Ormskirk  
SD411081**

Meet at the Bowling Green SD 411081. A talk on moths at 8pm will be followed by a moth trapping demonstration between 9.30-11-30pm. Further details, contact Eddie Langrish 01257 232100 Email [edwinlangrish\[at\]btinternet.com](mailto:edwinlangrish[at]btinternet.com)

**Sunday, 29th May  
10am**

**Coronation Park, Ormskirk  
SD411081**

Meet at the Bowling Green SD 411081. A talk on moths will take place at 10am which includes opening a moth trap at 1030am which was run overnight. Further details, contact Eddie Langrish 01257 232100 Email [edwinlangrish@btinternet.com](mailto:edwinlangrish@btinternet.com)

**Sunday, 5th June  
from 10am**

**Moths of Lower Burgh Meadows  
SD 570152**

A talk on moths from 10am which includes a trap opening from the previous night's catch. Butterfly & Day flying moth walk from 1pm. Meet at Yarrow Valley Visitors Centre. Further details contact Eddie Langrish tel 01257 232100 or email [edwinlangris@btinternet.com](mailto:edwinlangris@btinternet.com)

**Sunday, 19th June  
Talk 10am and Walk 1pm**

**Moths of Fishwick Bottoms  
SD552289**

A talk on Moths from 10am which includes a trap opening from the previous night's catch. Butterfly & Day flying moth walk on the meadow from 1pm.

Meet Fishwick Bottoms Car Park, off London Road, Preston SD552289. Further details contact Eddie Langrish Tel 01257 232100 or email [edwinlangrish@btinternet.com](mailto:edwinlangrish@btinternet.com)

**Saturday/Sunday  
2nd & 3rd July**

**RSPB Leighton Moss - Annual Moth Event and  
Moth Breakfast**

The event starts with a moth trapping demonstration on Saturday night at 10pm - traps are then run through the night. On Sunday morning (8am to 10 am) the RSPB have arranged their usual moth breakfast. Booking is essential for the breakfast which is followed by the opportunity to examine the moths caught overnight. Cost: £8 (£7 RSPB members) including cooked breakfast. For further details and booking for the breakfast (essential) phone the RSPB on 01524 701601

## **E-MAIL GROUP**

Daisy Bailey and Graham Dixon run a Yahoo Group for the Lancashire Moth Group  
<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/lancashiremoths/>. Anyone interested in joining should contact  
Graham Dixon - [troubleatmill@btinternet.com](mailto:troubleatmill@btinternet.com)

### **NEWSLETTER EDITOR / COUNTY MICRO RECORDER**

Steve Palmer, 137 Lightfoot Lane, Fulwood,  
Preston, PR4 0AH. (01772 861570) or email:

[s.palmer12@btopenworld.com](mailto:s.palmer12@btopenworld.com)

**MOTH GROUP WEBSITE ADDRESS -**  
[www.lancashiremoths.co.uk](http://www.lancashiremoths.co.uk)

### **COUNTY MACROMOTH RECORDER:**

Graham Jones, 20 Houghton Road,  
Penwortham, Preston, PR1 9HS  
(01772 467952) or email:

[gra\\_ham\\_jones@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gra_ham_jones@yahoo.co.uk)