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April 2005

Hello again,

Welcome to another monthly newsletter clogging up your inbox or filling your post box with 'mothy stuff'.

The circulation of this email / paper newsletter now reaches approximately 50 individuals or organisations within the County and wider region. As the group expanded I always knew that it would need to adapt, and the newsletter going monthly is one way of doing it - I hope you enjoy it? Once more if you can think of anyone else who would like to receive this newsletter please let me know, or even better get them to contact me.

Thanks to those people who came to the Introduction to Moths event held at the Shropshire Wildlife Trust on March 23rd. It was great to see some familiar faces as well as few new ones. Particular thanks to go to Stephen Lewis of The Shropshire Wildlife Trust for hosting the event and Butterfly Conservation for sponsoring it.

Following on from what Jenny Joy said at the meeting, copies of Mapmate are still available to give to anyone keen to enter their own butterfly or moth data. It's really pretty easy to use and BC hold regular "Mapmate clinics" to offer advice and training. The maps used within this newsletter were generated using the same software.

Records and news

Thanks to the ever-reliable Howard Davies for sending records of the winter and early spring catch at Brokenstones to me.

I recorded a single **Early Grey** (one of my favourite moths) in my garden on the 1st of March, I also tried the following night and on the 22nd but got nothing. Stephen Lewis trapped on the 22nd at Dragonfly Cottage and had the usual spring species including all three **Quakers**, **Clouded Drab**, **Early Grey**, **Dotted Border** and **Oak Beauty**. Ian Cheeseborough had a similar catch plus **Brindled Pug** on the 25th.

Since the last newsletter I have spent a few evenings sorting out the Rothamstead trap records from Dave Poynton. In the context of my rather limited database it is particularly exciting to see **Scarce Silver-Y** (2nd record), **Anomalous** (1st record), **Dingy Footman** (3rd record), **Broom-tip** (1st modern record – all others from the 1960's), **Streak** (2nd record), **Grass Rivulet** (1st record), **Cloaked Carpet** (7th site) and **Smoky Wave** (4th site).

Thanks to Richard Southwell for sending me an electronic copy of Dave Grundy's excellent report on the work he has been doing on **Common Fan-foot** in the Wyre Forest. Despite the name this is a Nationally Notable species which lives in open structured oak woodland. I have the report available to send out via email if anyone would like to see it and learn more about one of our very scarce moths. Within Dave's report a new moth for Shropshire was noted, namely **Lead-coloured Pug**. This was found in two traps by M. Kennard and then by Alan Prior and Val Weston, both on the 9th July last year in the Wyre. The moth is another Nationally Notable for our list, being pretty widely distributed nationally, but very local. Larvae feed upon the flowers of Common Cow-wheat and Yellow-rattle. It's nice to mention Alan and Val as they are old friends of the group, having attended some of my moth nights at Whixall, and despite being from much further away than anyone else, they were always last to leave.

Viv Geen from the Shropshire Wildlife Trust contacted me regarding a project to collect data within the Shrewsbury area to enable the Community Strategy 2004-2012 to reflect the need for a green network for Shrewsbury to link up new and existing sites. The group has been asked whether it would like to be involved in the survey by taking part in some of the training events to raise awareness and to supply data for the area. Are any group members interested? This sort of links nicely to what you are about to read in the next few paragraphs. Viv can be contacted by email at vivgeen@shropshirewt.cix.co.uk or by phone on 01743 284289, for further details.

The time has come to discuss the use of the biological records as sent to me by your good-selves. As some of you may know Colin Wright has been looking into the possibility of setting up a **Virtual Local Records Centre** for Shropshire. This follows an investigation to set up a "proper" records centre that seems to have not borne much fruit – despite a large input of funds for the investigation, and much volunteer time by a number of people. Anyhow I was keen to find out the national policy for such a proposal, as County Recorder I felt it was only proper to see what BC would prefer as the path for the Shropshire moth records to enter "the system". After discussions with BC I have been asked to support such an initiative and so I will be handing over data gradually, as and when it is in an acceptable state, and as and when some form of protocol is established. Unfortunately it isn't as simple as that, as a virtual records centre would require some form of input from the group to manage "our" part of the centre. It seems to me that there are pros and cons to this system. The more positive outlook is that we perhaps would get more control over the data than with a proper records centre; however this would mean more work for yours truly. I would like to open this up to your comments?

Not totally unconnected but we have also been offered some web space by Dan Wrench at Shropshire County Council on the biodiversity website. I'm pretty keen on

this as it would enable us to offer the newsletters and advertise events etc to a wider audience. I haven't tried to use it yet but Dan assures me it is really easy to use and develop - Cheers Dan! It could be a really good resource with space for photographs and dot maps etc – so if anyone is keen to help out – please let me know.

It is perhaps a good time to discuss the future of the group itself also. As those of you who know me will appreciate I am quite time limited as I am working full time as a consultant, studying part time for an MSc and doing my role of County recorder when time allows, as well as recording other groups. This last month has just started the inevitable snowballing of things; I've had several emails from research students after data, or advice. I've had proposals for other projects that require attention and feel now is the time to delegate. So here it is fellow moth group members, please don't be shy, would it be possible to start a discussion about how we can further build up the group but not land me with sole responsibility? I cannot commit to further volunteer recording, especially in areas away from where I live.

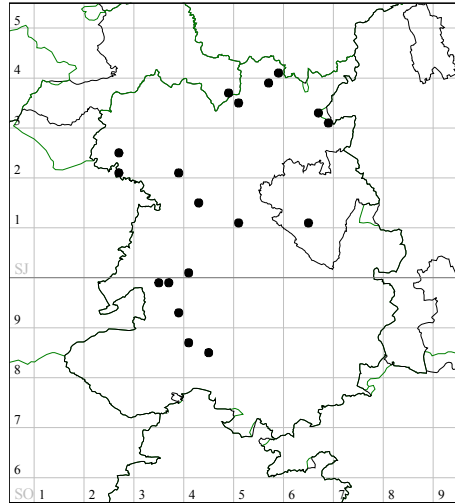
- Are there any others amongst you who might be interested in doing moth group events, general, public or targeted on biodiversity targets in small groups? If so it might be worth us trying to get grant aid to pay for some moth group kit? If so anyone good with grants?
- Anyone have the time to transcribe data onto excel or Mapmate or such?
- Anyone a computer whiz or has basic skills and access to a computer who is interested in working on the SCC website idea?
- Anyone want to submit articles for future newsletters about any aspects of moths in Shropshire – macros or micros, field trips, species information etc?
- Anyone have any ideas about the group and what it should become, or the direction it should move it?
- What about a determiners panel or committee?

All comments appreciated! I do urge you to let me know your ideas and opinions.

In line with the above promise to start shipping my excel database into Mapmate I have started at the very beginning with a small group of moths that are highly visible at certain times of the year. As the dataset I hold comprises of *your* records I think it is only fair that *you* get to see the distribution maps before anyone else does so here are 'the swifts'.

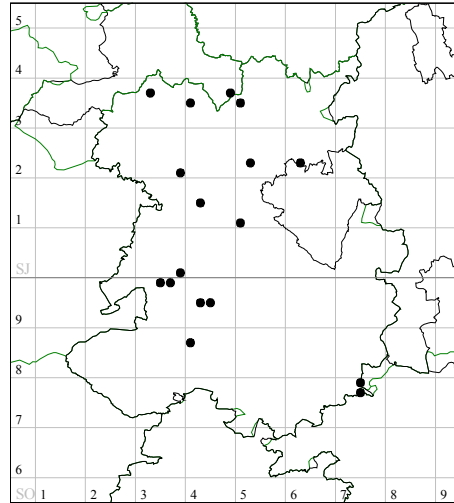
I will work on another group for next time and try and make it a regular monthly process of including distribution maps. As with everything else I'm sure some of you will spot errors, or omissions. Please let me know if you find either, and remember – these records **only reflect the records I have on my database at the time I publish them** and should not in anyway be treated as definitive distributions in the County. Once this newsletter has been published I will then offer the data for these species to the VLRC as discussed earlier.

0014 *Hepialus humuli*



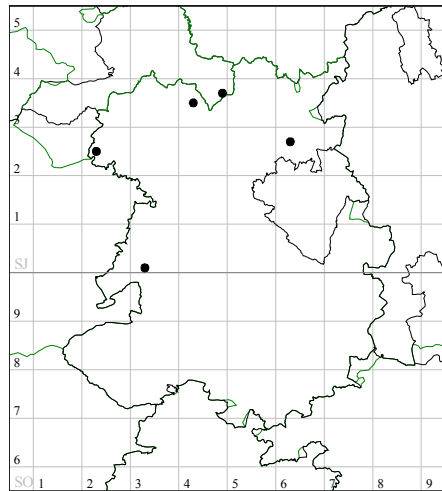
Ghost Moth

0015 *Hepialus sylvina*



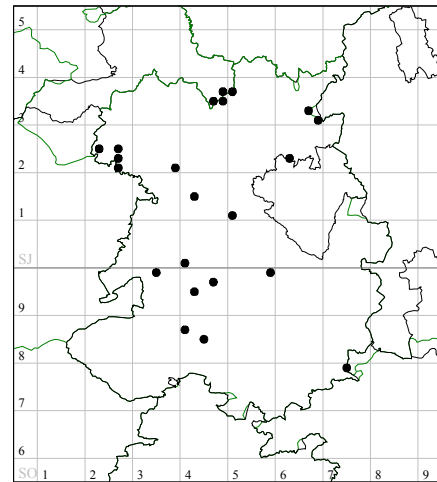
Orange Swift

0016 *Hepialus hecta*



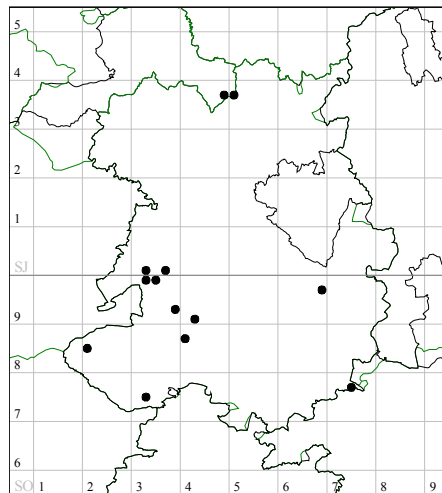
Gold Swift

0017 *Hepialus lupulinus*



Common Swift

0018 *Hepialus fusconebulosa*



Map-winged Swift

Future Events

June 7th 2005 – Forester Moth event. Meet at the Snailbeach Car Park at 10.00 am. This follows on from the survey work carried out during 2004 around the Stiperstones area. Please let me know if you intend to come along.

July 9th 2005 – National Moth Night. Daytime event. Fenn's, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses NNR meet at 12.30 at the Morris' Bridge car park (near Furber's yard, Moss Lane, Whixall). Please let me know if you intend to come along.

Wyre Forest – contact Rosemary Winnall rosemary@wyreforest.net or 01299 266489 or mobile 07732 203393 for further details.

Fri 22nd April 2005 – Wyre Forest Visitors Centre car park, meet at 7.30 pm

Fri 27th May 2005 – Wyre Forest Visitors Centre car park, meet at 8.00 pm

Fri 24th June 2005 – Wyre Forest Visitors Centre car park, meet at 8.30 pm

Fri 29th July 2005 – Wyre Forest Visitors Centre car park, meet at 8.00 pm

As ever please continue to send your macro-moth records for VC40 to;

Peter Boardman
7 High Street, Weston Rhyn, Shropshire, SY10 7RP
peperouda@btinternet.com

Mapmate sync 1ha – please send as email attachment or on disk, the computer I use with Mapmate is not connected to the internet and so I cannot sync with the Mapmate server.

Please send your micro-moth records for VC40 to

Godfrey Blunt, 8 Holmes Orchard, Alveley, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV15 6NX
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