

CARMARTHENSHIRE MOTH & BUTTERFLY GROUP NEWSLETTER

Newsletter No 24

Spring 2018

Editor: Ian Morgan

INTRODUCTION

The current newsletter has the usual format of summaries of the previous season's moth recording efforts in Carmarthenshire and the subsequent results. The regular trappers continue to add species to their home (or other) trap sites and some particularly pleasing records were made. With the macro moths, two records stand out – Mel Jones's ruddy carpet from Llansteffan and newcomer Paul Aubrey's reddish light arches, which was caught twice at Pembrey Burrows. Both are new county records – and they fully deserve the joint 'top prize' for macros in 2017. However, there was also quite a wide tranche of excellent other records made by many of us, adding scarce or localised species to new sites (sometimes extending their known range in the county), or helping to confirm some past records that lacked supporting proof. Some of us also ventured into, or consolidated our interest in, the fascinating world of micro-moths, where many are quite easy to identify but others considerably less so! Personally, I found my daytime or dusk-time searching for micros particularly enjoyable and I recommend it (and it does not impact on your sleep patterns as nocturnal trapping can do). The County Moth Recorder, Sam Bosanquet summarises progress in micro-moth recording elsewhere in this newsletter and, as always, we thank Sam for all his hard work and guidance.

MACRO-MOTH HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017

– Ian Morgan

The upland-edge Graig Farm near Halfway (Llandovery) kicked off the season in terms of good records with a series of captures of **small brindled beauties** in February-March and, indeed, this was to prove yet another very successful season for Stephen Ruttle at this site. A relative newcomer to mothing – Adam Dare (AD) at Burry Port – provided an excellent record in the form of a **northern drab** on 10/3, a species that was also noted at the aforementioned Graig Farm. It is said to be a species associated with saltmarshes (which makes sense, given Adam's proximity to Pembrey Saltings) in southern Britain, but evidently it occupies other habitats too. There was only a single sighting of **orange underwing** in 2017, at a known, regular site at Mynydd Mawr Woodland Park, Tumble where it was noted around its typical habitat on 27/3 – birch tops. I was pleased that visiting Pembrokeshire moth'er Rosemary Royle also managed to see one here on the same afternoon, after we'd bumped into each other, with both of us independently looking for the same species.



Above: northern drab at Burry Port (Adam Dare) and blossom underwing at Rhandirmwyn (Jane Hand).

White-markeds turned up in traps at Graig Farm (SR), Carmel (Matt Ridley, MR), Rhandirmwyn (Jane Hand, JH) and near Salem (Vaughn Matthews, VM) in the late March-early April period and Jane also caught a **blossom underwing** at Rhandirmwyn on 4/4 & 20/4 finally confirming records made many years ago at nearby Ty'r Ysgol by Dafydd Davies. Incidentally, I've personally never seen any of the above species (except orange underwing) so, well done to all of you - albeit expressed with a hint of jealousy!

Barry Stewart found, whilst surveying bryophytes, a caterpillar of a **northern rustic** at Garreg Las on Mynydd Du on the 1st of April; this upland/coastal species is already known from this general area. Down at the coast, AD had an **oblique-striped** in his Gors Road garden trap, possibly a wanderer from Pembrey Burrows or even from adjacent urban rough ground (an area that used to be duneland). A **Welsh wave** was seen and photographed by Keith and Alison Noble near the Usk Reservoir on the exceptionally early date of 17/4 (when I first saw the date I'd thought that it was incorrectly transcribed, but it was not!).



Above: Welsh wave near the Usk Reservoir. K & A Noble.

Into early May, a **seraphim** at Tyrwaun (Pwll, IKM); **alder kittens** at Rhandirmwyn (JH), Graig Farm (SR) and Cwmllywd (Steve Clarke, SC); and a **tawny pinion**, also at Graig Farm, were all worthy records. Records of the very attractive **pine beauty**, a local species in our county, came from Tyrwaun, Pwll (IKM) and also from Pontyberem (Chris Manley, CM).



Above: orange footman, Tyrwaun, Pwll. Ian Morgan.

An **orange footman** at Tyrwaun, Pwll on 11/5 and subsequent dates (IKM) were the first records of this scarce coastal moth for some time. May continued to provide good records in the form of a **tawny shears** at Rhandirmwyn (12/5, JH); **glaucous shears** at Rhandirmwyn (14/5, JH); a **seraphim** at Graig (SR, 18/5) and a **satin wave**, caught by a visiting lepidopterist at Cwm Palis near St Clears on 20/5 (Stephen Passey). A migratory **small mottled willow** at Graig on 22/5, (SR), and a **small clouded brindle** (typically a wetland moth) at Gors Road, Burry Port (AD) on the same date were both noteworthy records. Stephen Palmer found 3rd instars of **grass eggars** at Pembrey Burrows during a moth-productive visit on 17/5, when he also spotted a pristine **shaded pug** (this latter moth was also seen at a known, regular site – North Dock dunes, Llanelli on 13/6, IKM). **Dog's-tooth** records came from the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust Penclacwydd site at Llwynhendy (23/5

Olivia Pargeter, OP); Tyrwaun, Pwll (25/5, IKM) and at Gors Road, Burry Port (29/5, AD) – all typical sites for this mostly saltmarsh species.



Above: dog`s-tooth and small clouded brindles, both caught at Burry Port. Adam Dare.

A big surprise was in store for Mel Jones (MJ) on 24/5 when she caught a **ruddy carpet** at St Anthony`s Well near Llansteffan – a fantastic new county record of a species that is primarily found in southern England, though it also occurs in SE Wales.



Above: a new county record – a ruddy carpet caught by Mel Jones at Llansteffan. On the right is a poplar lutestring, trapped at Maenol by Chris Handoll.

Inland, another first-class record was made by Chris Handoll (CH) in the form of a **poplar lutestring**, a very scarce Carmarthenshire moth. A **small argent and sable** at Nant y Garreg farm in northern Carmarthenshire (26/5, Sally Hall (SH), also noted here in late June) and a couple of **small clouded brindles** at a wet willow carr site at Dafen, Llanelli (IKM) concluded the more noteworthy May records. CH really `scored` when he caught a **striped hawk-moth** at Maenol on 26/5, a prize that he deserved, given his dedication to regular recording at his home patch. I bet that his eyes `popped out` when he first saw it in his trap!



Striped hawk-moth at Maenol. Chris Handoll.

The very beginning of June brought a nice batch of records of species that are typically upland in nature in our county: a **lead belle** at Cwmllywd (SC), where a **dark brocade** was also caught, and this species additionally was trapped at Graig Farm (SR). Also at a semi-upland site was the diurnal **small purple-barred** (a feeder on milkworts, probably heath milkwort in this habitat) at Rhos Pwll y Gawnen near Trelech in the NW of the county (George Tordoff *et al*). Back on the coast, **Freyer's pugs** were trapped at Tyrwaun, Pwll (IKM) and Pembrey Post Office (Huw John, HJ) on 1/6 and a couple of nights later a **Vine's rustic** was caught at the latter site, as well as a **small clouded brindle**. Still on the coast, Barry Stewart (BS) made some useful daytime records of moths within or near the Visitors Centre at WWT Penclacwydd, Llanelli – **double dart**, **dog's-tooth**, another **Vine's rustic** and a **lime hawk-moth** (all 9/6). Trapping at Garreglwyd (overlooking Pembrey village) produced a **small clouded brindle** for HJ, presumably emanating from adjacent wetlands such as Ffrwd Fen.

The **dotted carpet** is a scarce moth found in unpolluted areas with rich lichen growths, so the capture of one at Rhandirmwyn by JH on 9/6 was certainly a good record. Graig Farm (SR) and Maenol (CH) were two north Carmarthenshire trapping sites that yielded other worthy records in this mid-June period, with a migratory **gem** (14/6) and a **cloaked carpet** (at Maenol, 18/6), and with a **Welsh wave** (a rowan feeder) and a **seraphim** (associated with aspen and poplars) at Graig Farm on 16/6. A laudable venture up to the 'Cennen ravine' above Cwmllywd was rewarded by the capture of another **dark brocade** for SC (as well as some excellent micro records). Coastal records during this same mid-late June period included a **heart and club** at Gors Road, Burry Port (14/6, AD) with a **grass wave** and a **dog's-tooth** on the same night at Tyrwaun, Pwll (IKM).



Above: grass wave at Tyrwaun, Pwll. Ian Morgan.

A few nights later, **cream-bordered green peas** were caught at the author's home traps at Tyrwaun, Pwll (together with a **marsh oblique-barred** from adjacent fen habitat) and – not to be outdone – M J also had a couple of **cream-bordered green peas** at Llansteffan on the same night (18/6). Indeed, Mel had a further two later June records from Llansteffan, indicating that it is also established there, as well as in the already-known Pwll-Pembrey coastal area to the east.



Above: cream-bordered green peas at Pwll and Llansteffan. Ian Morgan & Mel Jones.

MJ also caught 3 **sand darts** at St Anthony's, Llansteffan on 19/6, with another at Llansteffan the next night; this coastal moth was also noted at Pembrey Burrows LNR (Paul Aubrey, PA) and east of Burry Port (IKM, all in late June). A **heart and club** turned up at Burry Port on 19/6 (AD). Around this time, a **double dart** was at Maenol (CH), a **July belle** at WWT Penclacwydd (OP), and **clouded brindles** at Llansteffan (MJ) and Tyrwaun, Pwll (IKM). New moth'er Paul Aubrey made some good records in the form of a **broad-barred white**, **shore wainscot** and a **red sword-grass** at Pembrey Burrows and Saltings LNR on 21/6; all are localised species. But, to cap it all, he also made an absolutely first-class record – indeed a new county record – a **reddish light arches** on the same date. This latter moth is known from Cwm Ivy (Gower), on the opposite side of the estuary and it is said to be a moth of calcareous or sandy substrates so perhaps the later repeat catch by Paul suggests that it may well be resident at Pembrey.



Above: reddish light arches, Pembrey Burrows, new to Carmarthenshire Paul Aubrey.

OP trapped an **obscure wainscot** at WWT Penclacwydd on 20/6, whilst an **l-album wainscot** at Gors Road, Burry Port (21/6) provided a pleasing record for AD. An **olive** was captured on the coast east of Burry Port on 26/6 (IKM); it is much scarcer than the very similar **double kidney**.



Above: an olive, east of Burry Port. Ian Morgan

Some inland late June records are also mention-worthy: a **wood carpet** at Graig Farm (22/6, SR); a **smoky wave** at Cwmpengraig (24/6, SH, also here on other dates); **toadflax pug** and **brown-line bright-eye** at Rhandirmwyn (24/6, JH), and a **crescent** at the National Botanic Garden (24/6, Marigold Oakley). 'Dusking' at the North Dock dunes and saltmarsh LNR (Llanelli) on the evening of 25/6 was productive for the compiler of these notes as he

recorded his first **rosy waves** (25/6) and, a few nights` later, he also noted **southern wainscots** and a **bordered sallow** at a wet *Salix* site in the east Pwll area (all IKM). There was a decent batch of records of the beech-dependent **clay triple-lines** in 2017, it being noted in the Stradey Woods area near Llanelli (including 8 on 21/6, IKM); at Maenol (CH, 17/7) and Graig Farm (22-23/8, SR). **Clouded brindles** were caught within a day or so of each other in late June, at Llansteffan (MJ) and at Tyrwaun, Pwll (IKM). Some 45 records were made of the **double line** in 2017, demonstrating that Carmarthenshire is a stronghold for this species.



Above: rosy wave, North Dock dunes, Llanelli. Ian Morgan.

July was announced by a rich haul of moths caught by Barry Stewart on 2/7 at Glyn Hir (a now regular venture for Barry as part of the BSBI recording week) and amongst the `goodies` caught were **Blomer`s rivulet**, **clouded magpie** (both associated with wych elm), **bilberry pug** and a **satin beauty**.

CH had another **cloaked carpet** at Maenol on 3/7 (as well as a **slender brindle**) but the next night, SH also caught this species together with a **smoky wave** and a **golden-rod pug** at Cwmpengraig in the north of the county. A **cloaked carpet** (whose caterpillars feed on stitchwort *Stellaria* spp.) was additionally caught at Graig Farm by SR (together with another **wood carpet**) on 9/7. The first of the season`s **four-spotted footmen** turned up at Tyrwaun,Pwll on 4/7 (IKM) and it was on this night that PA made a second capture of **reddish light arches** at Pembrey Burrows. In 2017, a few trapping sessions were carried out by IKM at a site near Ty-llwyd farm (near Pont Abraham on the M4) during 2017 in order to boost recording levels in SN50. The site includes a remnant raised bog, marginal birch woodland and mixed forestry and it was in a clearing of the latter that he caught a **satin beauty** on 5/7 and a **ling pug** earlier recorded on the bog on 19/6 and a **bilberry pug** on 5/7 were also mention-worthy, as were some **heath rustics** caught there later in August, 24/8. A **bordered sallow** and a **silky wainscot** trapped at a locality at the eastern end of Pwll were neither particularly surprising as common rest-harrow (food-plant of the former) and wetland areas for the latter moth species abuts the site. However, a **cypress carpet** presumably came from screening plantings of cypresses around the nearby sewage works (IKM, all 6/7).



Above: cypress carpet, Pwll 10/7. Ian Morgan.

A **scarce burnished brass** at Tyrwaun, Pwll (13/7, IKM) and a **double-lobed** at Gors Road, Burry Port (17/7, AD) are two uncommon moths that are usually associated with wetland habitats. **Four-spotted footmen** were caught at a west Llanelli suburban trap site (IKM) and also at Llansteffan on 17/7 (MJ), a date when Kirsten Dick made an useful record of a **blue-bordered carpet** at Llanboidy, in a rather under-recorded general area of Carmarthenshire. A **small blood vein**, caught by MJ at St Anthony's, Llansteffan on 13/7, is a scarce coastal moth that is infrequently trapped. Dusking on the previous evening (16/7, IKM) at the North Dock dunes/saltmarsh (on the Llanelli coast) and the next day in the Pembrey Old Harbour saltings provided more records of **rosy waves**. A **v-moth** at Maenol on 9/7 (CH) followed by a later record (12/7) by Jacqueline Galliford near Newcastle Emlyn, pleasingly confirms the survival of this much-declined species that feeds on red and blackcurrant as gooseberry leaves and compliments CH's records from Maenol, also in north Carmarthenshire. An **old lady** moth was recorded at Godrecynnen Barn (SN32, W.Carms) on 19/7 (Belinda Jackson).



Above: v-moth near Newcastle Emlyn. Jacqueline Galliford.

Bleached pug and **neglected rustic** records were end-of-July noteworthy offerings from the moth-productive Graig Farm (SR).



Above: twin-spot carpet Cwmllywd. Steve Clarke.

Twin-spot carpets were reported from both Cwmllywd (4/8, SC) and Maenol (11/8, CH) in early August. A **scorched carpet**, caught at Garreglwyd (Pembrey, an already-known site) was one of several records made of this spindle-feeder (10/8, HJ) who earlier (2/8) trapped a **bulrush wainscot** at nearby Ffrwd Fen NR. An impressive series of August records of **oak lutestrings** at Graig Farm (SR) was also significantly noteworthy. Indeed, Graig had other good August 'offerings' in the form of a **barred hook-tip** (22/8 & 28/8) and an **anomalous** on the latter date. Other late August records include a **northern rustic** at Cwmllywd (22/8, SC), two **old lady moths** on 22/8 and a single on 25/8 (with an **oak nycteoline**), together with a **silky wainscot** (29/8), all at Tyrwaun, Pwll and **neglected** and **heath rustics** at Mynydd Llangyndeyrn on 29/8, as well as at Ty-llwyd bog a few nights earlier (all IKM).



Above: heath rustic, caught on a remnant raised bog near Ty-llwyd. Ian Morgan

It is not often that a *resting* **hummingbird hawk-moth** is spotted as, more typically, they are seen in flight, but Veronica Haines spotted one at rest by the Pwll Fishing Lake, on the coast

to the west of Llanelli, on 18/8 (note the various sightings of this moth are referred to by Sam in the migratory moth section). A **privet hawk-moth** caterpillar was spotted by Sam Bosanquet (SDSB) at Cnwc y Llwyn, Brechfa on 26/8, and he also found **beautiful yellow underwing** caterpillars at Mawnbwll Du Mawr (Mynydd Du area) on 27/8.



Above: privet hawk-moth caterpillar, Cnwc y llwyn. Sam Bosanquet and a resting hummingbird hawk-moth at Pwll (Veronica Haines).

Early September saw a **cypress pug** caught at Tyrwaun, Pwll (3/9, IKM) and an **l-album wainscot** at the same site and also at St Anthony's (Llansteffan, 23/9, MJ). Inland sites also did well in terms of additional noteworthy moth records (both of migrant and resident species) in late September and into October, repaying the efforts of recorders. They include migrants such as the **gem** noted by SC at Cwmllywd on 24/9, with others at Rhandirmwyn (9/10 & 18/10, JH), and at coastal Tyrwaun, Pwll (where two were caught on 26/10).

Vestals were first noted at Cnwc y llwyn, Brechfa (29/9, SDSB) followed by Rhandirmwyn (11/10 & 18/10, JH), Maenol (15/10, CH), Graig Farm (18/10 & 22/10, SR), Tyrwaun, Pwll (18/10 & 26/10, IKM), Cwmllywd (26/10 & 28/10, SC) and at St Anthony's (Llansteffan, 31/10, MJ). **Pearly underwings** were seemingly confined to north-east Carmarthenshire with records from Rhandirmwyn (25/9, JH) and Graig Farm (28/9, SR), with another seen at the latter locality on 22/10; there were widespread records in the county of **dark sword-grass** this year. The moth-bountiful Graig Farm did even better, with a **scarce bordered straw** on 28/9 and a **convolvulus hawk-moth** on 18/10 – *and* there were two outstanding micros caught on that date too!





Above (top to bottom) an October 'moth bonanza' - vestals, convolvulus hawk-moth, sprawlers and scarce bordered straw - all at Graig Farm near Halfway, Llandoverly. Stephen Ruttle.

Of the late season resident species, a **brindled greens** were at Hafod farm (SN73, Liz Goodyear), Salem (VM) and Cnwc (SDSB), **small chocolate tip** larva at Median Farm, Cross Hands (4/10, George Tordoff), an **l-abum wainscot** and a **cypress carpet** at Tyrwaun, Pwll (14/10, IKM), **brown-spot pinion** at Maenol on 14/10 and **autumn green carpet** at the same site (17/10, CH, a new locality for the latter species), as well as several records of **red sword-grass** (9/10 & 17/10, Rhandirmwyn, JH; 17/10, Maenol, CH – indeed this species had a good year with other records also being made). **Sprawlers** were noted at Rhandirmwyn (11/10, JH) and on more than one date at Graig Farm, including a dozen on two separate occasions! Towards the end of the trapping season – and often missed by those who cease trapping

rather too early – **scarce umbers** were amongst the commoner late autumn/early winter moths at Rhandirmwyn (JH), Tyrwaun (Pwll, IKM), Maenol (CH), and at Pontyberem (CM). An **autumnal moth** recorded again this year at Graig Farm on 22/10 (SR) is a noteworthy record of a probably under-recorded species.

(For grid references of the majority of sites mentioned in the text, please refer to earlier newsletters).

MICRO-MOTH HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017

– Sam Bosanquet

Micro recording in Carmarthenshire continued to produce good species, including 11 new to the county. Most Carmarthenshire recorders are now identifying Micros, sometimes with help from the Blog, which is a very positive situation compared with some other Macro-focussed counties. Diurnal searching is often the best approach for finding Micros, as Ian suggested in his introduction, and it really would be excellent if more moth'ers went out actively searching for Micros (including leaf-mines) in their parts of the county.

Six recorders were responsible for the 11 new VC44 Micros recorded in 2017, although embarrassingly only two of them are permanent residents of the county, and I failed to add anything during my return visits. The additions are, in 'traditional' Bradley & Fletcher order (I still haven't converted the database to the new coding): *Trifurcula headleyella*, a tiny Nepticulid which feeds on Self-heal that George Tordoff caught at Pembrey (10/5), new for Wales, dissected by Andrew Graham for confirmation; *Stigmella ulmivora* mines on Elm, recorded at Pembrey by Huw John (14/9); *Coleophora albidella* larval cases on *Salix*, found at Pembrey by GT on 22/5 and subsequently also caught at Tyrwaun, Pwll by IKM (gen. det. SDSB); *Elachista poae* reared from mines on *Glyceria maxima* from Pontnewydd on 24/4 by IKM; *Biselachista scirpi* from Tyrwaun, Pwll (14/6) and Llangennech (17/6), caught by IKM (gen. det. SDSB), although these gen. det. individuals allowed me to belatedly identify the same species from a 2016 photo that Mel Jones took at Llansteffan, which I had mistaken for *B. albidella*; *Eulamprotes wilkeella*, a larva found wandering over moss at Pembrey on 17/5 by Gelechid Recorder Stephen Palmer; *Chrysoesthia sexguttella* caught at Tyrwaun, Pwll by IKM on 16/7, with mines subsequently noted at Ferryside and Llangennech; *Pexicopia malvella* larvae in *Malva* seedheads found by IKM at Burry Port (24/7) and Llangennech (10/8); *Oegoconia quadripuncta* caught at Graig, Halfway by Stephen Ruttle on 24/6 and gen. det. by Norman Lowe; *Coleophora prunifoliae*, a larval case found at Pembrey on 17/5 by Stephen Palmer, reared, gen. det. and new for Wales; *Celypha aurofasciana* trapped at St Anthony's, Llansteffan by Mel Jones on 19/6, with another there on 13/7, and with an additional record made by Barry Stewart at Glynhir on 1/7.

138 'uncommon' Micros – with fewer than 15 previous Carmarthenshire records – were seen during the year, and it would be impractical to list all of them. Again, I will discuss them in roughly Bradley & Fletcher order, picking out a few star species. A spring push to find *Eriocrania* mines on birch leaves across south Wales led to welcome VC44 records of *Eriocrania unimaculella*, *Eriocrania salopiella*, *Eriocrania sangii* and *Eriocrania semipurpurella*. Several other leafminers with fewer than 15 records were found, especially

by IKM. The most noteworthy of the leafminers were the second county record of *Ectoedemia argyropeza*, at Caeau Ffos-fach on 4/10 (GT), the 2nd and 3rd records of *Incurvaria pectinea*, from Cnwc-y-llwyn, Brechfa on 2/7 (SDSB) and Morfa, Llanelli on 17/9 (IKM), and the 2nd record of *Phyllonorycter emberizaepennella* from Dafen Pond (IKM 12/10). An imago of the elm-feeding *Bucculatrix albedinella* caught at Tyrwaun, Pwll by IKM on 25/5 represented just the second county record, whilst a mine of *Bucculatrix demaryella* on birch at Siloh (SDSB 24/8) was the third for VC44.

The sixth Carmarthenshire record of the longhorn *Adela cuprella* was made by Olivia Pargeter at WWT Penclacwydd on the amazingly early date of 14/3 – she emailed a confirmatory photo to IKM and SDSB. The bagworm *Luffia ferchaultella* only had three previous county records, so it was good to find cases of this species on lichen-covered trees at three localities in Dinefwr Deer Park (SDSB 13/4) as well as at nearby Glanmyddyfi. *Argyresthia dilectella* came to IKM's light trap at Tyrwaun, Pwll on 30/6, representing the 2nd county record, and VC44's fourth *Ocnerostoma friesii* was photographed by OP at Penclacwydd on 15/6.

The genus *Coleophora* fills many moth'ers with fear, because so many species look similar and a lot require dissection to confirm IDs. IKM collected quite a number for subsequent 'gen. det.' by SDSB, which produced some excellent records, although the effort involved with dissecting so many small moths means this may not happen so much in future years (!). Highlights included the second VC44 record of *Coleophora pyrrhulipennella* from Ty-llwyd Bog (19/6), the 2nd *C. salicorniae* from Tyrwaun, Pwll (5/7), the 2nd to 4th records of *C. atriplicis* (Llanelli North Dock 17/7, Pembrey Old Harbour 17/7 and Pembrey Old Harbour 21/8), and the 5th to 8th records of *C. adjunctella* (Llangennech, Llanelli & Pwll). IKM's record of feeding damage of *C. artemisicolella* from Morfa Roundabout (12/10) was only the third time this species has been noted in Carmarthenshire. *Elachista* also confuse people, so three records of uncommon upland species were welcome: Steve Clarke's *Elachista subalbidella* at Cwmllywd (17/5) was the 13th county record, SDSB's *Biselachista serricornis* at Mawnbwl Du Mawr (27/8) was the 3rd record and disjunct from the previous two at Carmel and Disgwylfa, and IKM's *B. albidella* Ty-llwyd Bog (19/6) was the 4th record.

The distinctive white-edged Oecophorid *Pleurota bicostella* had just 5 previous records, so Steve Clarke's sighting at Cwmllywd (14/6) was notable. Even more unusual were Adam Dare's three records of *Tachystola acroxantha* – a non-native moth that is gradually spreading through Wales – in Burry Port (11/5, 24/5 & 26/5) as there is only one previous county record. Although *Diurnea fagella* is a common spring moth, its autumnal relative *D. lipsiella* has just two records VC44 sightings, so one at Graig on 18/10 was very welcome. Huw John made the 4th Carmarthenshire record of *Agonopterix purpurea* at Pembrey on 2/8, Stephen Ruttle's *A. umbellana* at Graig, Halfway on 22/10 was another county 4th, and Steve Palmer noted *A. nanatella* at Pembrey on 18/5 (6 previous records, all from Pembrey).

National Gelechid Recorder Stephen Palmer visited Pembrey on 17-19/5 and made several excellent records (in addition to the two county firsts mentioned above). Their Gelechid

highlights were *Bryotropha umbrosella* (14 previous records), *Caryocolum alsinella* (5 previous records) and *Anacamptis populella* (8 previous records). Other recorders chipped in with the 6th *Scrobipalpa salinella* (IKM gen. det. SDSB Pwll 2/6) and 5th and 6th *Caryocolum blandella* (Chris Handoll at Maenol on 4/8 and Stephen Ruttle at Graig on 24/8).

There is only one previous record of the bluebell-feeding *Hysterophora maculosana*, so Chris Handoll's photograph from Maenol (28/5) was very welcome. IKM recorded *Phalonidia manniana* (6 previous records) at Pwll (6/7 & 8/7), *Gynnidomorpha vectisana* (7 previous records) at three coastal sites, and *Phalonidia affinitana* (15 previous records) also at three coastal sites. Stephen Palmer reared the county's 8th specimen of *Cnephasia longana* from *Cerastium* at Pembrey, whilst SDSB located a second Carmarthenshire colony of *Acleris caledoniana* on Mynydd Llanllwni (23/8), many kilometres from the previous site on Mynydd Du.

Both *Celypha cespitana* (10 previous records) and *C. rivulana* (4 previous records) appeared at Morfa Roundabout (27/6), with the latter also at Llansteffan (19/6 & 13/7). A *Piniphila bifasciana* caught by IKM 'above Cwmbach on 21/6 was the 4th VC44 record, as was an *Endothenia nigricostana* spotted by IKM at Tyrwaun, Pwll on 22/5; the 5th *Epinotia rubiginosana* appeared at Tyrwaun on 25/5. A *Pammene rhediella* spotted flying around the top of a hawthorn by Stephen Palmer was only the 3rd county record. Two new sites for *Pammene gallicana* – Morfa Roundabout (27/6) and Burry Port (25/7) – were very welcome. *Dichrorampha simpliciana* on mugwort at Llanelli North Dock (8/8) was gen. conf. as the third county record.

Peter Sturgess' *Crambus pratella* at Graig, Halfway (16/6) represents the 5th Carmarthenshire record, although three of the previous four are from Graig. The same site struck migrant gold on 22/10, when Stephen Ruttle photographed both *Diasemiopsis ramburialis* (3rd record) and *Palpita vitrealis* (5th record). Six records of *Orthopygia (Hypsopygia) glaucinalis* from 2017 double the county total of this species, which was recorded new for the county as recently as 2015! Two records of *Pempelia (Rhodophaea) formosa* from Tyrwaun, Pwll (18/6 & 8/7) continue that site's VC44 monopoly on the species, with all four previous records coming from there. The alien *Pachyrhabda steropodes*, originally discovered by Jon Baker at Aberglasney Gardens near Llandeilo in 2006, is evidently spreading – it was found at several sites around Llandeilo, Cilsan Bridge and at Gelli Aur by VM & IKM in early May.

MIGRANT LEPIDOPTERA IN VC44 IN 2017

– Sam Bosanquet

2017 did not really feel like a vintage migrant year, and there were only brief flurries of activity in the summer, but migration hotted up in the autumn and the final tally was really rather good. Final totals for species such as *Udea ferrugalis*, *Nomophila noctuella*, vestal, gem and dark sword-grass were in the top 3 or 4 years for each, and a couple of outstanding migrant pyralids were noted at Graig.

- 28 records of *Plutella xylostella*, which is back to average after 2016's influx;

- 65 records of *Udea ferrugalis*, making 2017 the 2nd best year ever for this species in Carmarthenshire, after 94 records in 2006;
- 33 records of *Nomophila noctuella*, which is the 3rd best total, following 49 in 2014 and 45 in 2006;
- 1 *Diasemiopsis ramburialis* at Graig, Halfway on 22/10 (3rd record);
- 1 *Palpita vitrealis* at Graig, Halfway on 22/10 (5th record);
- 13 records of **vestal** at widely scattered sites between 22/8 and 31/10, making 2017 the 4th best year after 2006, 2016 and 2013;
- 6 records of **gem**, from Maenol (14/6), Cwmllywd (24/9), Rhandirmwyn (9/10, 11/10 & 18/10) and Pwll (26/10), representing the 24th to 29th Carmarthenshire records and making 2017 the 2nd best year after 1996;
- 1 **convolvulus hawk-moth** at Graig on 18/10 (30th record);
- 16 **humming-bird hawk-moth**, which is about average;
- 1 **striped hawk-moth** at Maenol on 26/5 (7th record);
- 12 records of **four-spotted footman**, now believed to be resident here;
- 76 records of **dark sword-grass**, which is the largest annual total for VC44 by a considerable distance, beating 41 records in 2013 and 37 records in 2006;
- 4 records of **pearly underwing**, from Rhandirmwyn (25/9) and Graig (28/9, 18/10 & 22/10);
- 8 records of **l-album wainscot**, which is believed to be resident on the VC44 coast;
- 4 records of **small mottled willow**, from Cwmpalis (22/5), Pwll (28/5), Glynhir (1/7) and Graig (13/8), representing the 27th to 30th records for Carmarthenshire;
- 1 **scarce bordered straw** at Graig on 28/9, the 37th VC44 record;
- 194 records of **silver-y**, which is the 5th highest annual total.

Remember to please send your 2018 records to the County Moth Recorder, Sam Bosanquet at sambryo@aol.com



Above: *Pachyrhabda steropodes*, Aberglasney Gardens. Photo: Chris Manley.

Micro-moth photos from 2017



Left: *Tachystola acroxantha* Burry Port AD; Right: *Trifurcula headleyella* Pembrey Forest GT.



Left: *Elachista poae* Pontnewydd IKM; Right: *Diasemiopsis rambularis* Graig Farm SR.



Left: *Palpita vitrealis* Graig Farm SR; Right: *Ectoedemia argyropeza* Median Farm, Cross Hands GT.



Left: *Acleris caledoniana* Mynydd Llanllwni SDSB; Right: *Pexicopia malvella* caterpillar from marsh mallow seed Llangennech IKM.



Left: *Pleurota bicostella* Mynydd Du SC; Right: *Hysterophora maculosana*, Maenol CH.



Left: *Celypha aurofasciana* Glynhir BS; Right: *Dichrorampha simpliciana* North Dock, Llanelli IKM