

NO:20 DECEMBER 2024

# MOTH NEWS

## FOR DERBYSHIRE 2024

Derbyshire Moths Facebook Group (DMFG)



VC57

### December Moth News

As expected, moth recording dies off dramatically during December, especially as the weather for the first quarter of the month produced heavy winds and rain, cold overnight temperatures, as winter began to set-in. Having said this there were one or two windows of opportunity, and as ever, our intrepid moth recorders took advantage.

Clive Ashton managed to run his garden light trap at Cromford on 1st and recorded 11/6 - **December Moth** 3, **Mottled Umber** 3, **Scarce Umber**, **Red-green Carpet** 2, **Winter Moth** and **Light-brown Apple Moth**. Not a bad start to the month.

Graham Finch recorded more *Psychoides filicivora* at Calke park on the 3rd, with larvae on Hart's Tongue Fern. Also in one of the tunnels there were 26 **Herald Moth** hibernating and a couple of **Grey-shoulder Knot** on tree trunks around the park.



**Winter Moth** - Clive Ashton©



**Scarce Umber** - Clive Ashton©

Mark Radford ran his garden light trap in Staveley on 15th from 16:00 to 20:30 and he recorded a **Red-green Carpet** for his efforts. Also Matt Leedell recorded a very worn **Yellow-lined Quaker** from his Belper garden light trap on 15th. Strong windy conditions became a problem at both sites.

## December Moth News

On 11th Dave Evans counted 53 ***Stigmella aurella*** mines at Wyver Lane. Searching for leaf mines certainly helps to establish the status of many micro moths that are very rarely seen or trapped. Also on 11th & 12th Matt Leedell found two different **Winter Moth** at his place of work in Pride Park, Derby.



The mine of ***Stigmella aurella*** - Dave Evans©



***Acleris hastiana*** - Christian Heintzen©

Despite mild weather conditions, that were predicted for mid December, very little was recorded. Another spell of mild weather arrived during the Christmas period and several species were recorded overnight on 24th including **Mottled Umber** and a **Light-brown Apple Moth** (Mark Radford - Staveley), a **Red-green Carpet** (Matt Leedell - Belper), a **Common Plume** (Sam Goddard - Fenny Bentley), 2 x ***Acleris hastiana*** (Christian Heintzen - Long Clough) and (Sid Morris - Staveley), **Red-Green Carpet** and **Light-brown Apple Moth** (Brian Hobby-Kirk Hallam) , 4 **Mottled Umber** and a **Light-brown Apple Moth** (Clive Ashton - Cromford).

An unusual report came in from Ian White when he discovered a noctuid species in a bag of lettuce purchased on 24th. The moth was completely devoid of scales and appeared to be dead, but it laid eggs overnight, so Ian is keeping the eggs in the hope they will hatch. The adult moth, looking at the images Ian posted, seems impossible to identify beyond family. We wait with interest.



**Mottled Umber** - Mark Radford©



## December Moth News

A selection of Ian's images, that were posted to the Derbyshire Moths Facebook Group, are reproduced here for the record. If anyone has any ideas on what the species might be, we would love to hear from you.



**Eggs of unidentified noctuid** - Ian White©



**Unidentified noctuid** - Ian White©



**Unidentified noctuid** - Ian White©



**Unidentified noctuid** - Ian White©

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Nikki Barrow was intrepid enough to put out her Moth Trap overnight on 29th in her garden in Shirland. The result was a single **Dark Chestnut**.



**Dark Chestnut** - Nikki Barrow©

On 31st Christian Heintzen discovered ***Psychoides filicivora*** on Hart's Tongue Fern (*Phyllitis (Asplenium) scolopendrium*) at Long Clough, a new site and location for this micro moth in the county, also **Angle Shades** and **Chestnut** overnight from 30th.

Well the end of another Moth Year in our county, and here is the final Moth News Bulletin for 2024. I do hope you all enjoy these monthly bulletin round-ups, which I intend to continue with throughout 2025. I wish you all a happy New year's moth-ing.

*Tony Davison*

Joint Derbyshire Moth Recorder.

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**A few statistics for the year** - Steve Thorpe kindly extracted the following data from the DMFG for 2024. The group finished on 345 members, a growth of 73 over the year. There were 1,721 posts and 222 "active" members.

**The final species count for 2024**, which I have based on available information, from DMFG posts, and iRecord was **853**.

**The database on iRecord** has increased significantly in the past twelve months. There are now a total of 139,844 accepted records. During 2024 there were 27,440 records submitted. This is really encouraging data and considering that this time in 2023, there were only 40,000 records on iRecord, the county's moth data is in a much better position. So, on behalf of the verification team, I wish to thank all the recorders for submitting their moth records into iRecord and helping to put Derbyshire Moth Recording back on the map.

**The Macro Moth Report for 2024** is now underway and I wish to make a request to all recorders to please ensure that their moth records for 2024 are submitted to iRecord by the end of **MARCH 2025**.

**The new [derbyshiremoths.org](http://derbyshiremoths.org) website** is now well and truly up and running. I never envisaged that it would turn-out to be such a comprehensive site on the county's moths. Richard Pittam and I have worked tirelessly over the past 6 months to get the site where it is now. I'm indebted to Richards help in the creation and design of the site and his IT management. The Macro Moths are fully completed with revised species pages, status codings, ID Categories and a full species index and checklist. The Micro Moth section is underway and is still work in progress, as there are over 800 species to cover. Will Soar has kindly agreed to join me in helping to compile the Micro Moth pages. Once we have finished this task, he will look after the Micro Moth section of the website, leaving me to take care of the general up-keep of the site and the Macro Moth section. Please remember, the website has been created especially for Derbyshire Moth Recorders, so please make use of it. I would encourage recorders to support the site by submitting any good quality moth images via the link provided, as photos are especially important for significant species, and rare migrants. There are already many photographers who are supporting the website by allowing the use of their images, which really help to enhance the website and I am extremely grateful to each and every one of them.

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Archie Braddocks second instalment of **Moths Now and Then**.

### THE SLOE PUG

This is the moth that finally proved to me there are species out there that do not respond to light traps. Tony records it as 'uncertain', and my own records might have confirmed that as I never had one at light in forty four years of light trapping. It was only in the last three years that I've taken two at my 20 watt shed light.

However some thirty years ago I discovered that a fellow moth-er in Lincolnshire had beaten several larvae from the flowers of Blackthorn. These flowers always appear before the leaf, in March and April, and are very noticeable among the leafless branches of Hawthorn and the other hedgerow trees and shrubs. Blackthorn is found alongside main roads, side roads, country lanes, in fact everywhere. It's remarkable just how many Blackthorn shrubs there are when you start looking.

So, off I went to Lincolnshire, found the area, which was a lane almost white over with blossom both sides of the road. Out came the beating tray, and out came the larvae. They looked just like a fat white maggot, but among them there were also plenty of Green Pug larvae. These are a pale green with a dark green or reddish dorsal stripe, and both species were abundant.

It was so easy that I had to try local hedgerows in Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire to test my theory, and sure enough there were the larvae, and in numbers. I had discovered that Sloe Pug could be found in reasonable numbers by beating Blackthorn bushes.

So what is my aim of this feature? Well, to persuade a couple of keen entomologists to go out at Blackthorn blossom time and give it a good go. If the moth is still common as larvae to-day, then we know for certain that there are species about that scarcely ever come to light. I'd do this myself but as I am well into my 87<sup>th</sup> year it's getting beyond me, so I hope a couple of you can oblige.

P.S. I spotted a Field Maple in full bloom during one trip, gave it a go and out came a dozen Maple Pug larvae!

*Archie Braddock*

Archie makes some valid points here. As most moth recording now takes place in gardens using light traps, it is very difficult to obtain accurate status and statistics on our moth populations. I suggest we get out there in the spring and give Archie's suggestion a go? Let's see what the results are, and maybe we will get a better understanding of the status of the **Sloe Pug** in our county.



## December Moth News

I am very pleased to announce that the long awaited **Derbyshire Macro Moth Report for the years 2019-2023** has been published in the latest DaNES Journal number 173 Part 1 2023. Out of interest, part two contains the Nottinghamshire Macro Moth Report for 2023.

The **Derbyshire Macro Moth Report** can be viewed/downloaded here:-

<https://www.derbyshiremoths.org/the-vc57-derbyshire-macro-moth-report-2019-2023/>

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who was involved in helping me to put this report together, including proof-reading, producing maps and general statistics, photographers for allowing the use of their excellent images, DaNES for publication and last but not least, you the county moth recorders. Without your valuable records there wouldn't be a report, so a massive thank you from me and on behalf of all the members of the verification team.

