



BULLETIN OF THE
Dipterists
Forum

Bulletin No. 82

Autumn 2016



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Photographs: Front cover Steve Crellin and Rob Wolton at Conyer Creek, 4 July 2016, **Darwyn Sumner**, above *Chrysops sepulchralis*, Hartland Moor, Purbecks, 18 July 2016 **Alan Outen**. Other photographs as supplied by the authors or the editorial panel who would be pleased to receive illustrations for general purposes - many thanks for those already sent. If you want to catch the next front cover, please think about the orientation, it must be upright (portrait)



BULLETIN OF THE **Dipterists** Forum

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Dipterists Forum Events

Please consult the Dipterists Forum website for latest details of our events.

Booking form for meetings & Membership form: downloadable from Dipterists Forum website or contact the organiser.

The following Newsletters and other special items are incorporated into the package for the printers after completion of the Bulletin. They are not to be found in any pdf version of this Bulletin and they have their own pagination. Please contact the Newsletter editors for full colour pdfs, back issues may also be found on the DF website.

- Hoverfly Newsletter #61** 
- Flat-footed Fly Newsletter #1** 
- Empid & Dolichopodid Newsletter #21** 
- Fungus Gnat Newsletter #9** 
- Crane-fly Newsletter #31** 

A number of links  and downloads referred to in this Bulletin are to be found on our website under **Web links**.

Fly Sheets



Editorial

Save Fonseca's seed fly *Botanophila fonsecai* Ackland

Plans for a 236 hectare golf course near the Dornoch Firth in the Scottish Highlands could put one of Scotland's rarest species at threat of global extinction. Fonseca's seed fly is restricted globally to a short stretch of coast in northern Scotland. It is known from adjacent sites and the habitat is similar on the development site so the inference is that the fly should be there too. Its population is perilously small and is thought to be closely associated with Ragwort, Sow-thistle and the sand dune systems found in this area. The proposed golf course would destroy important habitat for this species and fragment the already fragile population. Stabilisation of the dunes and creation of fairways and greens will destroy the habitat for the species. There are already seven golf courses within 20 minutes of the proposed new course.

This would be impact on an SSSI. A precedent was set when Donald Trump was controversially given permission to build golf courses on sand dunes within an SSSI on the Aberdeenshire coast. The saga had a further twist when Trump objected to planning permission being given for a large off-shore wind farm (distant but within visibility on a clear day), leading to him selling his golf course before he injected the funds for larger developments (that would have created the local employment that was the carrot for his planning permission infringing on the SSSI). One might hope for reluctance in opening another controversy over a Scottish minister over-riding the integrity of an SSSI.

Buglife has objected to the proposal and there is considerable local opposition drawing upon the extinction risk to this fly. Hopefully this episode will give incentive to ascertain the host plant and other aspects of the ecology of this endangered insect.

Alan Stubbs

Coincidentally, protests about golf courses were at the very heart of the origins of our public open spaces, Writing in the Observer (28/8/16), Rowan Moore tells us of a riot in 1897 when several thousand objected to the enclosure of common land at One Tree Hill in Honour Oak, London. Golf magazine said "*We are not likely to hear anything more of the alleged right-of-way over One Tree Hill which nature evidently intended for a golf course*". The development failed and the place is now an open green space - kept at public expense for the benefit of everyone. Moore tells us we've to thank Mancunian communists for much of our open spaces access (I'm guessing this refers to the mass trespass on Kinder Scout.)

Fungi collecting banned

The impact of over-collecting of fungi is mentioned in Peter Chandler's latest Fungus Gnat newsletter and in addition features in Rob Wolton's Conservation account in this issue. This topic has also featured in the newspapers, Mail Online (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3283801/Gangs-mushroom-pickers-banned-New-Forest-National-Trust-organisation-declares-impossible-police-numbers-taken.html>) describes a weak response from the National Trust landowners (catch you several times and they might threaten you with prosecution). Writing in the Observer (4/9/16), Robin McKie reports that bans are now in place for Epping Forest and New Forest. Fungi expert Professor Lynne Boddy of Cardiff University observed that foragers "*ripped up other plants and trampled down the undergrowth, thus destroying important habitats for insects and other species.*" ... "*They do incredible damage.*"

Nature watchdog?

Under the title "*Leaked documents reveal plan to rein in England's nature watchdog*" (<https://energydesk.greenpeace.org/2016/08/16/leaked-documents-reveal-plan-rein-englands-nature-watchdog/>), Greenpeace's Energydesk quote a Natural England source as saying that "*the body is becoming more reluctant to regulate*" and conservation charities as expressing concerns that NE is already withdrawing its opposition on local planning decisions concerning wildlife habitats on a "widespread and significant" level across the country. Workers in the field have suspected this for some time but now we have it in print, it was even featured on BBC Radio.



Virtual entomology

At considerable expense, enormous 3D cameras are being transported into remote parts of the world and used to make precise recordings of areas such as Mayan temples deep in the jungle. The recordings are then used to create a virtual reality which can be explored using the appropriate headsets whilst sat at home. Not much fun for the naturalist, though, as the whole thing would be fixed in time and unpopulated by fauna.

An enthusiastic entomologist has come up with an answer to that particular problem. Satoshi Tajiri spent his youth exploring the countryside near Machida on the outskirts of Tokyo until development concreted over it all. In response he invented Pokeman Go in which virtual creatures are placed in real locations and are now hunted down by hordes of youngsters using mobile phones instead of insect nets. With a little work he'll surely be able to recreate habitats lost by development, put virtual *Botanophila fonsecai* on golf courses, watchdogs in offices, all sorts of fungi in impoverished woodland sites and elephants back into the virtual wild once they're extinct.

Maybe if all golfers, ivory collectors and TV chefs were virtual.

Darwyn Sumner

Notice board

Recording Schemes

Please send your records to the
Recording Schemes ...

... and specimens to the Study Groups

Empid & Dolichopodid Recording Scheme

Newsletter #21 included in this Bulletin

Martin Drake

Fungus Gnat Recording Scheme

Newsletter #9 included in this Bulletin

Peter Chandler

Platypezidae Recording Scheme

This scheme is now launched, the first newsletter "Flat-footed Fly Newsletter #1" is included in this Bulletin

Peter Chandler

Hoverfly Recording Scheme

Newsletter #61 included in this Bulletin

David Iliff

Cranefly Recording Scheme

Newsletter #31 included in this Bulletin

John Kramer

Stilt & Stalk Fly Recording Scheme

Silly Psilids

"That should be straightforward, I'll have it done by next week!"

That was my naive response to Darwyn's request for my micropezid and psilid records. The micropezids were straightforward, but not the psilids, so two months later I've got them all databased, but still unable to identify two species. The troublesome group is the *Chamaepsila nigra/atra/clunalis* aggregate – all black body, darkened legs (not all yellow, like *rosae*), and three or four dorso-centrals. All the species have 3 verticals (vt). According to all the keys, *nigra* has 3 dc and 1 ors (upper orbital), and *atra* and *clunalis* have 4 dc and 2 ors. The two latter species are separated by the structure of the male genitalia and the female ovipositor.

Should be a doddle ...

- Sort by the number of dc bristles, then by ors.
- Admittedly the absence of a head on some specimens leads to a bit of guesswork, but my specimens separated quite readily into 30 of *nigra* (3 dc 1 ors), and 26 of *atra/clunalis* (4 dc 2 ors).
- But then there were the 5 specimens with 4 dc and 1 ors. Mmmm ...
- Male genitalia – that will clear things up ... bring a bit of certainty to this project.
- The 14 male *nigra* all look the same, and do look a bit like one of Shatalkin's (1986) three drawings of *nigra*, so that's OK.

The 8 male *atra/clunalis* are evidently two species, but neither of them is *clunalis* according to Shatalkin's drawing or Collin's (1944) description. So what other all black *Chamaepsila* with 4 dc and 2 ors could they be? Several dozen pdf's from the Ent. Soc. library later ... none.

Well, one of them has to be *atra* ... but there don't appear to be

any consistent differences apart from the genitalia ... maybe in the original description? ... Meigen (1826) writes that he only had males, and that the legs are reddish-yellow with the femur (excluding its tip) and apical half of the tibia black. Perturbingly mine have the tibiae darkened, with a pale base and tip.

Next up is Becker (1902) who looked at Meigen's psilid types. He notes that there is a male type in Paris, a bit damaged, but still possible to see that it has 4 dc. No mention of leg colour.

Then Séguy (1934) who describes Meigen's type [which has mysteriously changed sex, and is now a female] – completely black. Halteres, knees and first segment of tarsus red. [Different yet again!]

Hennig (1941) helpfully suggested that the interpretation of the species is not in doubt because Séguy has looked at the type [even though the sex was wrong], and the combination of 3 vt, 4dc, 2 ors is unique.

Collin (1944) then describes *clunalis*, but does not say how he decided which of his two species was *atra*. [He may have seen Meigen's type, and hopefully it's changed back to a male.]

And all the other keys since – *atra* and *clunalis* are distinguished by black body, dark legs, 3 vt, 4 dc and 2 ors.

Wang (1988) did suggest that the number of dc may have little diagnostic value – noting that the position of the anterior dc in *atra* can be unstable, but she still produced a key using number of dc as a character. Her figures of *atra* genitalia are difficult to match to either of my species.

I agree with her that the number of dc (or ors) are unreliable characters – I have specimens in which the number of dc differs on each side (and similarly with ors). The 5 specimens with 4 dc and 1 ors are all females, so I'm getting nowhere with those!

The next thing I guess is a trip to Paris to see Meigen's type. If it's a female, then problem solved – it's not the type, and we can find a nice new dissected German *atra* to be a neotype. If it is a male (and thus the type) will I get permission to clear the abdomen (if it hasn't been done already)? Or should we try X-ray microtomography, or DNA analysis, if there are enough spare legs?

In the meantime, it would be good to assess the distribution of *atraA* and *atraB* in Britain, so if anyone has any all black *Chamaepsila* with 4 dc, I'd love to have a look at them, or I can send photos of the genitalia for you to compare. Any with 3 dc and two ors would also be interesting. There's no rush – I have quite a bit of other stuff to catch up on thanks to these silly psilids!

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Tony Irwin 15 April 2016

Records for the DF Summer Field Meetings

2015 Nottingham

I collected and collated these records and published them to the NBN Gateway on 31st March (notified on DF website on 14/4/16)

The link that they sent me is <https://data.nbn.org.uk/Datasets/GA001532> which gives the summary containing a further link to a map showing the spread of the records:



Should anyone make any enquiries concerning records collected by contributors during our Field Week then providing them with the above link should suffice.

Notification to landowners such as Wildlife Trusts and National Trust and other parties who were kind enough to assist with permissions and information (such as Local Environmental Records Centres) are achieved by sending a copy of this Bulletin to those bodies. Many thanks to them all.

2016 Canterbury

I've volunteered to collect the records for this year's Canterbury Field Meeting.

The principles are the same as last time, this seemed to work fine. Please look upon any suggested timings as "milestones" rather than "deadlines":

1. End "product" comprises records published onto NBN Gateway
2. Agencies such as Wildlife Trusts, Natural England, National Trust, Forestry Commission etc. are all accustomed to using NBN Gateway as a source of records to assist in their "management plans", it's what the Gateway is for.
3. Records to be published annually, before the start of the following years' field season, end of March seems about right as a milestone, publishing to NBN Gateway can be done during April.
4. If recorders take longer than that then there's no need for them to worry, their records will be added to the NBN Gateway batch the following year (or the year after that).
5. Absolutely no criticism intended to anyone who sends in records late (or never), it was your holiday, hope you had a good time with us, we certainly enjoyed your company. No pressure, if you want just to take photographs, that's fine.

6. Non-Diptera records. Confined solely to Symphyta provided they have been verified by Andrew Halstead who usually attends the field meetings, They have to be matched up with the species dictionary developed by NHM who then put them into the **Recorder** dictionary. All other taxa should be submitted to the appropriate National Scheme

7. **Recorder 6 is being used.** If you are one of the 8 Recording Schemes that use it, or if you are a member who has a copy for personal use then you are welcome to the Survey file (one Survey file will contain everything from one Field Meeting) I'll look into popping it into the Member's only section of the DF website. Very useful if you plan to visit areas where we've previously held our Field Meetings, especially if you've got Recorder 6 on a laptop.

8. **The administrative burden.** I'm very well aware of how "extras" can create such a burden if enquiries are made prior to publication on NBN Gateway. Full-time workers in a Local Records Centre do this daily. So I'm proposing "no extras" (but see 11), even if the records are submitted in the autumn, they're not dealt with until the spring - and then they're published, after which anyone can access NBN Gateway to answer enquiries.

9. **Turnaround time.** Commissioned work from consultants can be very fast, they're usually getting paid. Large recording schemes have their own staff and can also be fast. Other schemes rely on volunteers and may take years. We're proposing one year, that's a pretty good compromise and puts us on a par with the big recording schemes that can afford full time staff.

10. **Records of special interest.** If you've got something from the Field Week that's special then you've a whole range of additional things you can do with it. Send it to whoever is doing the write-up to the Field Meeting (this only works during the first couple of weeks immediately after the Summer Field Meeting), tell Rob Wolton if it is of conservation interest, send it to the appropriate Recording Scheme organiser (perhaps for their newsletter), upload the image to iSpot, DF Forum or diptera.info for identification. Duplication of records that might arise in this way is simply not an issue. **Most importantly, keep the meeting organiser (Laurence Clemons) informed.**

11. Feedback to other groups

Anyone arranging these meetings will be pretty keen to ensure that they can keep landowners and permit-granters up to date on our findings. At the outset we have a product they can have, the account of the meeting in this Bulletin (Alan Stubbs). Clearly nothing useful can be conveyed to these agencies until we actually have data. Slow dribbles of information to these agencies seem important to some folk but keeping that task separate from the main task of collating the bulk of the records (see 8) is seen as a key means by which the overall job (NBN Gateway) might get done.

Fortunately we have a volunteer to do this dribble job for the Canterbury meeting, **Laurence Clemons** who did such a lot to organise meetings in the area.

So please, when you get around to sending your records to me, [copy Laurence in.](mailto:cp@laurenceclemons.com)

Darwyn Sumner (darwyn.sumner@ntlworld.com)

Laurence Clemons (laurenceclemons@gmail.com)

Turn up the heat!

I've never been a fan of boiling potassium hydroxide. The prospect of losing a critical set of genitalia through violent splurting, never mind the discomfort of hot caustic splashes just doesn't do it for me. So I tend to clear stuff in cold KOH overnight (or longer if required).

But there are occasions when I really want a quicker answer, in which case I compromise – by heating little pots of KOH on a hotplate. It takes between 10 minutes and an hour to get a result. The pots are hot (and must be treated with caution) but not too hot, so they can be handled.

As for the hotplate, bench space and cost are both important considerations, so I devised a device which satisfied on both counts. It consists of the base of an old lava lamp, into which is fitted a 40W candle bulb. The lamp is plugged into a dimmer adapter (ca. £5.00), and a glass petri dish is placed over the lamp base. It doesn't take long to find the right setting to give the ideal temperature.



If you haven't got a defunct lava lamp [I knew it would be useful some day!], then a batten lamp holder and baked bean tin could be persuaded to serve the same purpose.

Incidentally, the mini-hotplate is excellent for melting glycerine jelly on slides as well!

Tony Irwin (dr.tony.irwin@gmail.com)

The Great *Hilara mcgonagalli* Tragedy

Twas in the summer of 1999 that will be remembered for a very long time
That a tragedy o'ercame the River Usk as the sun was setting in the July dusk
And for which the people living along its banks who did not ask and did not pine
To be drowned and swept away down river... towards the brine.

In shingles and sediments along the shore an army of insects began to gnaw
At their pupal cases with chitinous jaw
First one, then ten, then a thousand, then a million more... of that I'm (more or less) sure!
ecdyssed and took tentative flight and began to swarm.

In truth it was a dreadful sight
To witness *Hilara mcgonagalli* on its nuptial flight
As numbers grew the sky was dimmed and day turned to night

Whilst on the banks, the good folk fled their hovels
like excrement from shovels

Colonel Ostwald Fitzgibbons was a redoubtable man

He'd fought natives in Burma and tigers in Siam

Now he rested on his country seat passing the time shooting peasants and pheasants for their meat

On spying the loathsome dark cloud of *mcgonagalli* he leapt to his feet

Grabbed his blunderbuss and cried "I'll give them some heat"

Amongst the swarm bullets rained like hail but it was all to no avail

for *Hilara* riled is a fearsome beast, and working all as one turned on him,
consumed his flesh 'till he was deceased

fragments of his shredded flesh were bound in silken bands secreted from their tarsal glands

thus swarming males found their would-be mates were not miffed

to be presented with such nuptial gifts

Thus fortified with a protein meal they resumed swarming with great zeal

(as static built within their growing ranks, thunderous discharges were heard to peal)

Of this hilarine terror their seemed to be no end!

'till a passing hawk caused panic and the swarm did descend

into the mud which caused the river to block and thus great flood

That was not altogether very good.

For a tsunami of torn flesh and fly (mixed with plastic trash and dead sheep)

washed surrounding land with water that was very deep

and the hapless villagers who'd yet to flee

were drowned awhile they sleep

Now I must conclude my lay and the moral say, most publicly

'though guns be fun lead shot is not the best way to allay

The fervour of epigamic display

For the net tis more powerful than the gun and to a dipterist far more fun

Fellow dipterists! Take your weapon in your hands

Catch *Hilara* across the land.

Free us from this dreadful blight

And with that I bid you goodnight

Postscript. *Hilara mcgonagalli* is a manuscript name for a new species that will eventually be found to swarm over 'silvery' pools on the rivers Tay and Usk and having an uncanny association with disasters such as train derailments and bridge collapses. It will most likely be captured by throwing peas at it.

Adrian Plant

Conservation News from the Conservation officer

The Hoverfly Lagoons Project

This is an exciting and very worthwhile citizen-science project which Ellie Rotheray is leading on, on behalf of the Buzz Club, a UK-wide citizen science charity set up to generate data on pollinators, pollination and much more! The point of the project is to create garden-friendly breeding habitat for hoverflies. Hoverfly lagoons are basically artificial tree-holes - they are small containers filled with organic matter - such as leaf litter, sawdust or cut grass - and water. (The larval stage of some hoverfly species depend on these little microbe-rich swimming pools.) The project aims to develop the most effective lagoon and Ellie is asking for our help in promoting the project. Please help if you can. May I also encourage DF members to trial lagoons in our own gardens, on our balconies or in any outdoor space?

Please do visit the Buzz Club web pages and follow the links to the Hoverfly Lagoon Project. You will find full details there, including an introductory video and another giving details about how to make and monitor a lagoon.

Fungi collection

Alan Stubbs, in his April fly report in *British Wildlife*, draws attention to the collateral damage inadvertently and thoughtlessly caused by collecting fungi as “food for free” or simply for identification on fungal forays. As Alan points out, fungal fruiting bodies are known to important often essential, larval habitat for perhaps 500 species of fly. The picking of fungi is likely to cause significant stress to the populations of at least some of these. Even where the “toadstools” are not maggot-ridden, they are likely to have eggs laid on them or small inconspicuous larvae. The harm caused is likely to be particularly bad in years when fungi are scarce, since at these times virtually every fruiting body in an area may be removed or damaged by collectors or recorders. Worse still, people often pick toadstools only to almost immediately discard them, very probably reducing the quality of the habitat for the fly and other insect larvae using them for food. We should do what we can to encourage responsible collection of fungi, including by those leading fungal forays or advocating “food for free”.

This problem is recognised by Natural England, Plantlife and other bodies, and plans are currently afoot to revise relevant strategies and develop partnerships, including with commercial foragers. The direction of travel is to move away from indiscriminate collection and to develop management mechanisms for all foraging of plants and fungi. The Dipterists Forum has been invited to play a leading role in providing evidence relating to the impact of fungi collection on invertebrates including Diptera.

Climate change and fungi

Those many invertebrates that feed on fungi are also likely to be affected by climate change. Already in northern Europe some clear trends are apparent – spring fruiting species are fruiting earlier on average, while the fruiting season of autumnal species is both being extended and becoming on average later. These generalisations hide a wealth of detail. For example, in southern England, 25% of species have started to fruit earlier (with an advancement of over 8 days per decade), while 40% now start to fruit later (over 7 days per decade). While this has usually led to an extended fruiting season, for a few species the fruiting season has contracted. There are differences too between fungal groups. Again in southern

England, while 33% of wood decay species have a significantly extended fruiting season, only 10% of mycorrhizal species have. The impact of climate change on the amount of fruiting bodies produced, or in inter-year variation between yields, is not yet clear. However, it may be expected that some species will have “good” years less often, and that some will overall produce fewer fruiting bodies. This will all have an impact on the flies and other invertebrates that rely on fungi, especially on those that are host specific. For further information, see Boddy *et al.* (2014). Climate variation effects on fungal fruiting. *Fungal Ecology* 10, 20-33.



Holt Country Park 2/9/14 [D.Sumner]

Damage to upland seepages and flushes

In his *British Wildlife* report, Alan also refers to the damage being caused to upland springs and seepages in the northern Pennines by motorcycles, quad bikes and even by people sliding down the centre of flushes on towels. Given that these are scarce and very fragile habitats essential for a range of plants and invertebrates, especially for flies (which are probably the best indicators of habitat quality), this is deeply concerning. Of course, it is not intentional damage, but rather reflects lack of awareness and understanding. It highlights the need for all bodies concerned, including our society, to join together in educating the public and providing key management advice. The habitat is a Buglife priority.

Since I joined the Dipterists Forum nine years ago, and developed my interest in entomology beyond moths, I have become aware for the first time of just how important tiny areas of special habitat

can be for a wide range of flies and other invertebrates. As a practicing nature conservationist, I should have realised this a long time ago, but instead like my colleagues focused almost exclusively on wider habitats, often overlooking the all important detail. We introduced grazing to sites without thinking much about the impact on that hidden spring, or woodland management with thinking about the one surviving rotting hulk. Today, in the nature conservation community, there is a strong focus on landscape-scale initiatives. While there are good ecological and practical reasons for this approach, and it is one I support, nevertheless there remains the danger that tiny features like seepages, sap runs and riverine shingle banks get overlooked.

As fly enthusiasts, we should be on our guard for the dangers risked by broad-brushed approaches and provide the detailed habitat management advice required to safeguard important species and communities that would otherwise be overlooked.

Wood Pastures Manifesto

Currently, in the Common Agricultural Policy (which we are still part of, for better or worse), farmland with scattered trees and shrubs is discriminated against for EU payments with the result that much wood pasture is being lost. I have been pleased to add the Dipterists Forum's support to the wood pastures manifesto being produced by the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism. This manifesto is gathering support from many organisations across Europe and calls for urgent EU policy changes. For further information carry out a web search under Wood Pastures Manifesto.

UK BAP & Adopt a species

Species news from fly guardians (adopters) and BAP species contacts

My thanks to Ellie Rotheray, Alan Stubbs, Iain MacGowan, Steven Falk, Judy Webb, Ian Andrews and Mike Howe for providing information and text which I have used in the report below and news above.

There are still a number of BAP species without guardians, adopters or key contacts, and indeed a great many rare or threatened species for which it would be very good to have someone willing to take a leading role in their conservation. Please do let me know if you are interested. You can do as much or as little as you like, without commitment.

Blera fallax, Pine Hoverfly, by Iain MacGowan

The situation continues to give concern and is being monitored closely by the Hoverfly species action group which includes members from Malloch Society, RSPB, Coille Alba, SNH, CNPA, FCS and RZSS. Only a few larvae were detected over the winter of 15/16 and this will be a critical year to gauge whether numbers are responding to management efforts. Full survey of the key sites is anticipated in the autumn which will give us a better idea of the current status of this species. Will George from RSPB spent a two week sabbatical looking for adults in mid-June at the key sites but unfortunately none were seen. His visit coincided with a fortnight of poor weather after what had been a glorious May with sun and little rain so it is possible that much of the adult activity had already taken place. As ever with *Blera* we wait with hope!

Campsicnemus magius, Fancy-legged Fly (Dolichopididae)

During the DF summer field meeting in East Kent, we caught this

fly at a couple of sites on the Thames estuary, its main stronghold. I am most grateful to Laurence Clements for showing me where to look for this strange insect with its amazing front feet. Its favoured habitat is apparently rather evil-smelling brackish wet mud near the sea, preferably with a green algal mat on top. The sort of mud which when scraped is black underneath. Since the fly hugs the surface, it is, Lawrence tells me, often easier to pot than net – certainly if sweep netting you end up with a seriously filthy net, as I found out. But worth it!

Rob Wolton

Dorycera graminum, Phoenix fly (Uliididae)

Steven Falk reports that this attractive species has turned up at various southern coastal sites - mostly rank grassland with umbellifers – while I caught one in a wide woodland ride at Clowes Wood, part of the Blean Woods complex near Canterbury, at the DF summer field meeting.

Rob Wolton.

Hammerschmidtia ferruginea, Aspen Hoverfly, by Iain MacGowan

It seems to have been a good year for the aspen hoverfly; larvae were present in numbers in Strathspey, especially in the Aviemore and Grantown areas. A survey of the Findhorn woodlands was undertaken in April but no suitable dead wood was found. This is not too concerning as it is a large and complex site and no doubt the species is still present in some of the more inaccessible areas.

Perhaps the highlight was re-finding larvae on the east shore of Loch Ness at a site where it has not been seen for about 12 years. We have since had a site meeting with Forestry Commission Scotland which owns the site to discuss further positive management action to ensure that the aspen at the site is maintained in as good a state as possible. (There's a good article on this find, and about the hoverfly, in the Summer 2016 issue (No. 58) of the online newsletter, The Forum, published by Scottish Natural Heritage.)

Lipara similis, Least Cigar-Gall Fly (Chloropidae).

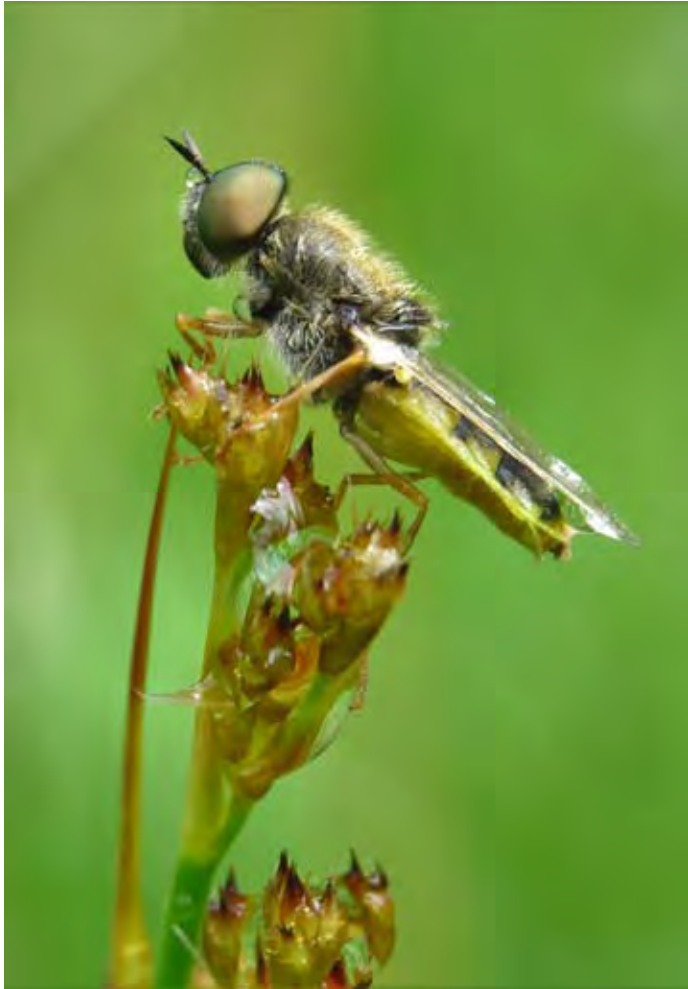
After Martin Drake and I discovered this fly last year in reedbeds in a former sewage works at the head of the Exe Estuary in Devon, well beyond its known stronghold in East Anglian fens, we found two more this year, in tidal reedbeds nearby, in the Exe Estuary Reedbeds Devon Wildlife Trust reserve. This involved a boat trip at low tide arranged by the warden, who had never actually set foot on the reserve before, despite being responsible for it for many years, so difficult is the access. Our first landing spot nearly resulted in disaster and the coastguard being called out when one of us nearly got inextricably stuck in the mud, but after that we found firmer places from which to venture into the reeds (which towered over our heads). We were really searching for *Rhaphium pectinatum*, the doli that was presumed extinct until found on the sewage works site last year, but in this we were unsuccessful: we have yet to find more or where it resides.

Rob Wolton.

Milichia ludens (Milichiidae), by Judy Webb

This small black fly with its distinctively notched wing was again confirmed as present in a hollowing ash tree occupied by Jet Ants *Lasius fuliginosus* on drier soil in Cothill NNR, part of Cothill fen SAC. Newly emerged adult flies were seen on the tree bark just above the ants entrance/exit hole into the trunk on 14th May 2016. It was not possible to locate any new Jet Ant occupied trees within the normal time window for this fly, i.e. May-June.

Odontomyia hydroleon, Barred Green Colonel, by Ian Andrews



Odontomyia hydroleon, Ian Andrews, July 2016

Following a couple of years with no sightings of the Barred Green Colonel, it was a great relief to find the species on the wing again this year. On the 3rd July two females and a male were swept from the usual seepages and on the 11th July three males were found. The latter visit was in drizzly conditions and no sweeping was possible, but in a brief sunny spell between the showers, three males were found climbing up rush stems. It is possible that the species was missed the previous two years as visits were timed around the 12th July (the apparent main emergence period in recent years) and the fly may have already come and gone. Thanks to all those who offered ideas and advice about management of the site, as a result of which the springhead was cleared out last autumn, resulting in more water entering the main slope, and cattle were reintroduced last winter. Those two actions have definitely improved the habitat, and the grazing, though light, clearly opened the seepages up and allowed more warmth to reach the runnels. This coming winter, grazing is to be stepped up, under close observation, and a work party is coming in to cut and rake rushes around the seepages. Thanks are due to the Forestry Commission, and especially their ecologist Cath Bashforth, whose interest and support with management has enabled positive steps to be made for protecting the delicate habitat.

Conservation Officer note: Mike Howe reports that he spent several hours at the Welsh locality for this species on a couple of days in early July and failed to find it. The soldierfly was last

seen here in 2006 so it looks pretty ominous now. Mike says the irony is that grazing over the last few years has got part of the site in good condition for the fly – open runnels in short vegetation similar to the 1980s, after a long period dominated by tall *Carex paniculata* and *Equisetum telmatei*. On a positive note, relatively good numbers of *Oplodontha viridula*, *Oxycera rara* and *Oxycera trilineata* suggest that commoner species have responded to the improved management.

Rhamphomyia hirtula, Mountain Dance-Fly, by Iain MacGowan

It's not too common to come across this species in the field as most records relate to specimens captured in water traps. However on 2nd June a fresh male was taken in the Ben Alder area of the central Highlands by sweeping *Racomitrium* heath at 900m. This slightly extends its known distribution across the higher mountains of the Highlands.

Stratiomyia chamaeleon, Clubbed General Soldierfly, and Odontomyia angulata, Orange-horned Green Colonel Soldierfly, by Judy Webb

At the time of writing (23rd July 2016) these soldierflies are still being recorded on the wing in Cothill fen SAC, although numbers are decreasing and the current heat wave is expected to cause an early finish to the emergence period. After a wet and cool June when water levels were higher, the recent heat wave has meant fen pools are drying down fast to mere damp mud with dying stonewort *Chara* algae. Very good numbers of *Odontomyia angulata* were recorded over the last few weeks (more than 10 swept on one day) but very few *Stratiomyia chamaeleon*. Whilst adults of *O. angulata* are often found sitting on leaves near the breeding sites (old moss/black bog rush/*Chara* filled peat cut), it is rare to find *S. chamaeleon* doing this and only two were actually swept from fen vegetation. It is my supposition that individuals of *S. chamaeleon* are most likely offsite looking for favoured nectar sources, such as hogweed or wild parsnip, in drier areas nearby (two years ago they were found on wild parsnip flowers in an old dry sandpit 750m away as the crow flies). Fair numbers of the large chalcid parasite *Chalcis sispes* of *Stratiomyia* species are still on the wing.



male *O. angulata* PM 24 06 2016 JWIMG_3093, Judy Webb

This year lucky observations were made of a female *S. chamaeleon* ovipositing a mass of light green eggs on the underside of a reed leaf overhanging a marshy breeding pool at Parsonage Moor. The next week I was able to observe a *Chalcis sispes* female crouched over a similar (presumed *Stratiomyia* species) egg mass under a reed leaf, apparently ovipositing into the mass.



The State of Nature 2016

Published on 14th September this is downloadable from the RSPB. It's an update of the first 2013 report and the source of Buglife's figure of **59% of invertebrate species in decline** used by Matt Shardlow in recent newspaper accounts.

The BBC treated this report (foreword by Sir David Attenborough) as a single "claim" rather than multiple findings backed with evidence and thus accompanied it with a "counter-claim" by an NFU spokesperson. This "phony balance" is the kind of bad science about which there have been many complaints regarding the way they treat other scientific studies such as global warming. The evidence in the report is provided in large part by us recorders.

Darwyn Sumner

News from the regional groups Northamptonshire Diptera Group

The group has held field meetings each Sunday from the last week in April. In addition, members of the group have carried out individual field work and contributed to the Wildlife Trust's Hoverwatch project and a bioblitz. It was a slow first half to the season and not all records have been received as yet so there is not a lot to report.

Amongst the craneflies, *Nigrotipula nigra* was found at two nature reserves in the Nene Valley. This species seems to be well distributed on the flood meadows along the valley. These sites have a number of fenland species, including water and ground beetles. With the Wildlife Trust managing these sites as wetlands, I am hoping more interesting species will turn up.

A spring and flush on limestone in the North of the county produced several soldierflies, including *Oxycera analis*, *Oxycera rara*, *Vanoyia tenuicornis* and *Stratiomys potamida*.

The Hoverwatch project found very few hoverflies in the early counts but in late June, we did find several *Volucella inflata*, and single *Myolepta dubia* and *Eumerus ornatus*. *V. inflata* was also recorded on an oak sap-run in the garden of Castle Ashby on a couple of occasions and in one of the woods in Rockingham Forest. This latter site also turned up three *Sericomyia silentis* in a small bog. This species is decidedly scarce in Northants, where most acidic areas are heavily developed. By the end of July we had had three reports of *Volucella zonaria*. The only *Criorhina* reported was *C. floccosa* from a site in the extreme South-west of the county.

The distinctive mine of *Chromatomyia ramosa* was found on teasel at one site, then having become familiar with it, I found it at two more sites in the following week.

The Calliphoridae workshop in February provided useful keys to this family and amongst the species found have been *Cynomyia mortuorum* and *Bellardia vulgaris*.

The last remaining area of wooded heath in the county produced *Nowickia ferox*. Other Tachinidae reported from elsewhere include a female *Exorista rustica/mimula*, *Gonia picea* and *Lypha dubia*.

If anyone wishes to come along to any of our meetings please contact me.

John Showers

Chalcis sispes on *Stratiomys* egg mass 20 06 2016. [Judy Webb]

My on-going rearing studies on these soldierflies from Cothill Fen SAC, Oxon, continue to produce interesting information, especially on the feeding habits of *Stratiomys* and *O. angulata* larvae. They definitely both feed by means of constantly moving mouth 'brushes' on algal film covering the sides of an aquarium (leaving feeding trails similar to those of pond snails) and harvest material (unknown) with their mouth brushes from the surfaces of the branches of the stonewort alga (*Chara* sp.) in the rearing aquarium. *Stratiomys* larvae also seem to ingest quite a quantity of marly mud from the pools, producing quantities of coiled faeces resembling loose worm casts. These characteristic faecal remains can be identified on the bottoms of shallow, warm, favoured breeding pools. I hope to be able to write up all these observations more fully this winter. I'm grateful both to the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) and Natural England for permission to remove small numbers of mature *Stratiomys* and *Odontomyia* larvae and puparia for rearing study over the past couple of years.

***Triogma trisulcata*, Dimple-cheeked Damselfly, a cranefly (Cylindrotomatidae), by Judy Webb.**



Triogma trisulcata larva LVNF 18 03 2016. [Judy Webb]

This small brownish cranefly was on the wing again around 21st April 2016 in Oxon calcareous fens: Cothill fen SAC and Lye Valley SSSI fen, Oxford; over short vegetation and waterlogged moss mat that the larvae prefer. A frilly, well camouflaged *Triogma* larva was found in Lye Valley fen by hand searching moss mat in March.

Rob Wolton

Members

Membership Matters

By Mid July 2016 we had 330 paid-up members of Dipterists Forum and 292 subscribers to Dipterists Digest. This is down a bit on last year's subscriptions. So far in 2016, 21 new members have joined. Although we have had one or two resignations, and, sadly, members passing away, the main loss seems to be down to people who have not yet paid their subscriptions for this year.

I do urge all members to keep up to date with subscriptions, which fall due on 1st January each year. I am happy to answer any email queries about subscriptions if you are not sure you have paid.

All subscriptions, changes of address and membership queries should be directed to John Showers at:

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Tel.: 01536 710831
E-mail: showersjohn@gmail.com

Membership & Subscription Rates for 2016

Members and Subscribers are reminded that subscriptions are due on 1st January each year. The rates are as follows:

UK

Dipterists Forum: £8 per annum. This includes the Bulletin of the Dipterists Forum.

Dipterists Digest: £12 per annum.

Both of above: £20 per annum

Overseas

Dipterists Forum and Dipterist Digest: £25 pa.

There is only this one class of membership. Payment must be made in Pounds Sterling.

Cheques should be made payable to "Dipterists Forum".

BANKERS ORDER PAYMENTS

You can set up a banker's order or bank transfer to pay the subscription via online banking using the following details:

Dipterists Forum
NatWest Bank
Sort code 60-60-08
Account no. 48054615

Please add your name to the payment reference or we will not know from whom the payment was made.

Alternatively you can send your bank the banker's order mandate form, which can be found on the DF website. This form explicitly states that it cancels previous payments to Dipterists Forum.

John Showers

Correspondence

Skye 1991

Dear Darwyn,

Thanks to you and Judy for yet another 'Bulletin' packed full of interest. They are always a real treat.

I can immediately solve your conundrum (p.10 Field Weeks records collation: Skye 1991). Culbin Sands is indeed a long way from Skye, but the DF summer meeting in 1991 was based at Taradale House, Muir of Ord, north of Inverness from 13-20 July. It was from there that we visited Culbin Sands where specimens of *Sympycnus septentrionalis* were collected. A superb site. There may have been a Skye meeting at some other dates in 1991 but I didn't attend it!

Regards and best wishes,

Roy Crossley



Meetings

Reports

2016

Workshop: Calliphoridae, Sarcophagidae and Rhinophoridae Preston Montford Field Studies Centre 19 - 21 February 2016



Olga and Antoni during the workshop [James McGill]

Staffordshire Invertebrate Science Fair 5 March 2016



Mike Bloxham at our stand [Malcolm Smart]

Just a handful of us Dipterists at this show. This was the one where Steve Falk launched his new bees book and his new book on British Blowflies and Woodlouse Flies (online at <http://www.dipterists-forum.org.uk/t4977-British-Blowflies-%28Calliphoridae%29-Woodlousee-Flies-%28Rhinophoridae%29.html>)



... and Malcolm at the same event

Darwyn Sumner

NFBR Conference: National Schemes & Societies

Lancaster University
12-14 May 2016

Alan Stubbs wrote to several of us about this conference which many of us attended. The organisers said they were keen to understand how the organisers of National Recording Schemes and Societies (NSS) perceive current issues in biological recording, and whether NFBR could do more to support NSS and represent their views. Just before the event, Alan had responded to their questionnaire as Cranefly organiser, he remarked to me that he considered the involvement in the wider biological recording sphere to be important to Dipterists Forum as a whole.

Several of us attended, Martin Harvey, Chris Raper, Peter Boardman, Derek Whiteley, Darren Mann and there were innumerable familiar non-Dipterist faces like Garth Foster (Coleoptera), Steve Garland and Jon Webb.



Some delegates at the NFBR Conference - a good sprinkling of Dipterists [D.Sumner]

Those who attended our recent Lancashire field meeting will recollect the excellent accommodation at Lancaster University and a residential course lets you do a lot of useful networking.

You'll find a full account of the conference and details of the outcome of the questionnaire on the NFBR website (www.nfbr.org.uk)

Darwyn Sumner



We decided to head for Abbeystead instead of the official ramble, vegetation recovery after the floods was astonishing but very little was flying. [D.Sumner]

Darwyn Sumner

Summer 2016 Field Meeting Canterbury 2-9 July 2016

East Kent did not disappoint. The university accommodation was ideal and well located for radiating out for day trips. The weather was warm and dry, and we benefitted from the heavy rains of late June which perked up vegetation and wetlands after earlier drought.

Most of our field meetings are in areas that are poorly recorded for Diptera, with the constraints that there need to be enough good quality sites within range to keep a large party happy for a week and that suitable accommodation is available a non-extortionate price, a very difficult combination to resolve. However, it is nice occasionally to be in a well recorded county, thanks to the great diligence of Laurence Clemons as county recorder for Diptera over many years, and Canterbury was a super base for visiting a concentration of high quality sites.

No doubt we all went to Canterbury with high expectations. I am not a twitcher but there were two larger Brachycera that had eluded me for decades, and I found both en route to Canterbury. I anticipated that a geological site, Swanscombe Skull Site NNR, might still have some sandy ground suitable for *Thereva fulva*, and indeed swept examples from a sparsely vegetated bank being invaded by scrub. Rather than head for a chalk grassland that I knew, I turned off the M2 for Darland Banks NR and sure enough found *Leptarthrus vitripennis* on what I felt was the most productive chalk grassland of the week. The latter robberfly was found to be present of most of the inland chalk grasslands visited (notably not at Wye & Crundale Downs NNR), indeed much more prevalent than the more familiar *L. brevirostris*.

For some other people, the dolichopodid *Campsicnemus magius*, with its flamboyantly divided front legs, was the 'must see', sitting on brackish mud. This tiny fly can prove elusive but it was found at several sites and overall brackish marsh proven very productive for an interesting fauna. Rave reviews came back from those who visited Elmley NNR, on the Isle of Sheppey, including the horseflies *Atylotus latistriatus* and *Hybomitra expollicata*: the soldierflies *Odontomyia tigrina* & *Stratiomys singularior*; the ulidiid picture-winged flies *Melieria picta* and *Ceroxys urticae*; the crane-fly *Erioptera bivittata* as well as *Campsicnemus magius*. During the week there were several reports of *Stratiomys*

longicornis at brackish coastal sites, and also of a number of the scarcer dolichopod species including *Thripticus smaragdinus* and the ephydrid *Nostima picta*.

Some coastal sites have important brownfield. One male of an *Elachiptera* species yet to be added to the British list was taken at Swalecliffe behind the sea wall, in ruderal habitat and grassland (there is a previous record from Essex). At Pegwell Bay a concrete hoverport apron dates from the late 1960s when hovercraft were technological cutting edge, now partly vegetated and still with a sandy cliff behind. Immediately south we looked at freshwater seepage reed beds onto saltmarsh, and to the north a small remnant of sandy bay vegetation, a very interesting mosaic. The site had plenty of scarce flies that are elusive in many other counties, such as the rhinophorid *Stevenia deceptoria*. Samphire Hoe Country Park is accessed via a tunnel, very fitting since it made land at the base of the western section of the White Cliffs of Dover, comprising Chalk Marl excavated in construction of the Channel Tunnel. The pools here were surprisingly brackish, even having the saltmarsh crane-fly *Dicranomyia sera* and levels crane-flies such as *Molophilus pleuralis*, *Tipula pierrei* and *Helius pallirostris*, presumably colonised after wind assisted flight from some miles distant. The brackish dolichopodid *Poecilobothrus principalis* was found at both Pegwell Bay and Samphire Hoe. At a site on Sheppey, John Ismay found a single *Paragus albifrons* which ranks as one of the very few records this century for one of the most endangered hoverflies in Britain [cf *Chrysotoxum octomaculatum* on southern heathland and *Blera fallax* in Scottish native pinewoods].

There had been high hopes for Dungeness, a large coastal shingle foreland famed for its unusual species assemblages. Perhaps the chosen day was too hot that particular day, accounting for a shortage of flies but there were some welcome finds, including the proposed critically endangered chloropid *Polyodaspis sulcicollis* being still present, plus the sarcophagid *Agria mamillata* and the tachinid *Erynnia ocypterata*.

Hothfield Common is one of the few remaining pieces of heathland in Kent, often referred to as Hothfield Bog. Those who visited this site found it to be very productive within the valley bog area. Elsewhere, the Lower Greensand outcrop supports various springs and seepages, including Seabrook Valley SSSI which is possibly unique in being the only SSSI specifically designated for crane-flies (administratively separate from another SSSI which contains the upper part of the Seabrook which arises on the Chalk before crossing Gault Clay): pleasingly, the SSSI was one of the most productive for crane-fly numbers and species richness. By using a map to identify likely 'unknown' springs, we discovered an excellent one outside conservation site protection. The Chalk outcrop in Kent is fairly substantial in the eastern part of the county but springs are few (best ones within MoD bounds). However, there are some fens (a rare habitat within the Wealden counties). Stodmarsh NNR had the stratiomyiids *Vanoyia tenuicornis* and *Nemotelus pantherinus*, but a wildlife trust NR near Sandwich proved to be more productive for flies, including plenty of the strats *N. pantherinus* and *Oplodontha viridula*, and notably having the *Stratiomys* hymenopterous parasite *Chalcis sispes*, a species more associated with the North Kent Marshes (*Stratiomys potamida* was found on the NR though other *Stratiomys* species may also breed here). Several calcareous sites with springs or seepages had the pretty tiny strat *Oxycera nigricornis*, though the larger *O. rara* proved scarce.

Woodland received much attention, both the Blean Woods complex on clay and the North Downs woods (on Chalk and Clay-with-

Flint). *Dolichopus virgultorum* was found in both areas. In rides at Clowes Wood the very rare hoverfly *Pipizella maculipennis* was accompanied by the BAP ulidiid *Dorycera graminum*. Parts of Blean Woods include streams, the best place for fungus gnats and with other interesting species such as the BAP drosophilid *Phortica variegata*. Apart from the Blean complex, at Denge Wood, which includes a large chalk grassland glade, the dolis *Argyra grata* and *D. arbustorum* were among the interesting species.

Peter Chandler reports that fungus gnats totalled 114, so better than Nottingham with only 83 recorded. The best find was *Trichonta fusca*, a male caught by Andrew Halstead at Yocklett's Bank NR on 8 July. This is the second British record, the only previous being 2 males found at Monk's Wood NNR in 1972. Others are new to Kent include *Grzegorzekia collaris* from Ham Street. The best site was Church Wood, Blean with 48 species followed by Ham Street Woods NNR with 41. Blean Woods as a whole produced 62 species and the Ham Street area (including Rob's 26 species at Fagg's Wood) 55 species. John Kramer and myself identified about 70 species of craneflies during the meeting, middling along for the area at this time of year, though these flies have been too often in poor numbers in the drought prone SE England in recent years.



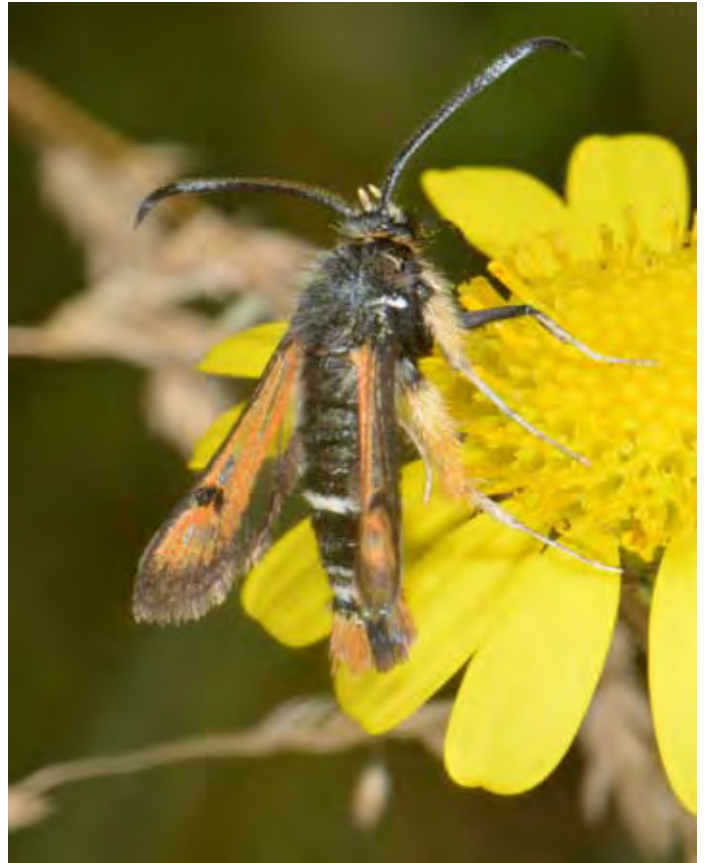
John Kramer and Rob Wolton at Church Wood [D. Sumner]

John and Barbara Ismay found it was the best field meeting in recent years for chloropid flies, with 69 species. Notable (Proposed) species were found during this week: *Chlorops adjunctus*, *Chlorops planifrons*, *Cryptonevra nigratarsis*, *Dicraeus scibilis*, *Dicraeus tibialis*, *Meromyza nigriseta*, *Meromyza depressa* misident., *Oscinimorpha arcuata*, *Speccafrons halophila* (status will be published in the near future by Natural England). Another *Meromyza*, new to Britain but un-named at present, was found close to Yocklett's Bank NR.

It was also a more productive meeting than usual for the number of sepsids and thus rewarding to Steve Crellin the recording scheme organiser (which have declined in recent decades): several sites yielded *Sepsis thoracica* which is normally elusive. As expected hoverflies were not at peak, though some of the more charismatic ones such as *Volucella inflata*, *V. zonaria*, *Criorhina berberina* and *Chrysotoxum cautum* gained attention.

As usual there was effort to record various other insects. With the lure of a honey pot prize, data was raised for over 67 species of sawflies in a period when these insects were scarce. Extra occurrence data was gained for a forthcoming provisional atlas to the shield bugs and allies of Kent. Aculeate Hymenoptera and

Coleoptera specialist were among us. As a Lepidopterist/dipterist, Tony Davis (of Butterfly Conservation) gave a party a treat by taking them to see fresh specimens of the Fiery Clearwing, a protected species.



Fiery Clearwing *Pyropteron chrysidiformis* near Sheerness 7/7/2016 [D. Sumner]

At the beginning of the meeting Laurence set us the challenge of equalling the total of over 1000 species which had been recorded in Kent between 2-9 July over previous decades combined. Sheepishly, we will probably admit to having fallen short. However, we can claim the second British records of three species that are not yet officially on the British list, two chloropids and a drosophilid. Hopeful the wealth of material awaiting identification will include plenty of useful data for the Kent county list. It was also a meeting when Jann joined us (see his report), only 12 years old (accompanied by adults), a very enthusiastic and intelligent young man who was absorbing new knowledge avidly.

Sincere thanks go to the Kent dipterists Howard Bentley, Victoria Burton and Amanda Morgan for undertaking the administration of arranging the meeting. Also to Laurence Clemons the county recorder for Diptera who provided local advice and led some of the day outings.

Alan Stubbs

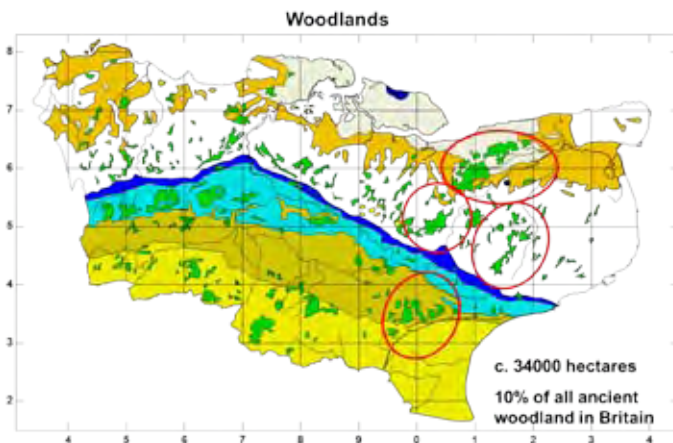
Kent Field Club

Laurence Clemons is a supporter of Kent Field Club (<http://www.kentfieldclub.org.uk/>), you'll find several of his Diptera articles amongst their publications.



"Fly mosaic" - the opening slide in Laurence's presentation

His excellent presentation at Canterbury provided a summary of what he hoped we might find.



West and East Kent from Laurence's presentation. Clockwise from top; Blean, Lyminge Forest, Orlestone Forest, Challock Forest.

From existing records he'd calculated that during this particular week we could find up to 1039 Diptera species and 80 Symphyta - we shall see how well we did when the records come in.

Canterbury diary

Hello, my name is Jann Billker and I am 12 years old. I live in Long Crendon, and love going outdoors. I became interested in flies three years ago, when John and Barbara Ismay held a field course at the local school. They have taken me to field meetings, courses and behind the scenes in the Natural History Museum in Oxford and London.

After a days drive to Canterbury, along with my friends John and Barbara, so don't worry, I didn't drive myself, we arrived at North Holmes Campus at about 8:30 pm. Upstairs there was still a bustle of entomologists, all huddling around one map, choosing the best places to go to. I didn't do much that night.

Get up time the next morning: 7:00 am. After a large breakfast at 8:00am, everyone met upstairs in the lab again, deciding where to

go. That day I went with John, Barbara, Andrew Cunningham and Martin Drake. First we went to South Swale LNR near Seasalter. After the first site we had a lunch of sandwiches. This habitat was predominantly marshy. The next site we went to was Swalecliffe. This was also by the sea but had two main habitats: ruderal grassland and shingle. On the shingle, I caught one Coelopidae. After this we all enjoyed a nice ice cream. The final site was East Blean Wood. This was, as the name suggests, a wooded area. We arrived back at the campus in time to unpack and get changed before dinner at 6:00pm. The night went by with everyone pinning the flies they had caught that day in the lab.

The next day the main habitat was chalk grassland. That day I went with John, Barbara, Alan Stubbs and Ken Merrifield. First we went to Lydden Temple Ewell NNR, then to Dover White Cliffs NT, which was mainly a windy cliff edge, and finally Samphire Hoe. This was a beautiful place with water and shrub. Across that day I caught five asilids that I had never seen before and I caught a sepsid (*Saltella sphondylii*) at Lydden Temple that did not have any wing markings. This got Steven and Howard impressed. I got a nice scare when I nearly stepped on an adder in Samphire Hoe!

On my final day I went with John, Barbara, Ken and Dawn Painter. We went to Conyer Creek. This site had a saltmarsh and a brown-field habitat. The marshy area was covered by sea lavender and Sea Purslane and some *Spartina*, and the brown field was covered in a flower rich flat and bushy area.

After that day I had to go back home as I was playing in a concert, but I really enjoyed those few days and I hope I can come for the whole week next year.

I would like to thank Alan for giving me some of his identified Asilids, Stratiomyids, Tephritids and Tabanids, as well as Peter Chandler for giving me some identified fungus gnats for my collection. I would also like to thank Richard Underwood for all the tips and tricks.

All in all, I had a great few days, and hope to come back soon!

Jann Billker

Sawflies

Thanks to the assistance of 16 participants in the 2016 Dipterists Forum summer meeting, 51 sites in Kent had at least one sawfly recorded during 2-9 July. The total number of species was 75, which is just short of the target of 80 set by Laurence Clemons at the start of the week. This compares with totals for the previous three years of 71 (Nottingham), 49 (Bangor) and 62 (Lancaster). Peak emergence of most sawfly adults is in May-June, so a July meeting tends to catch the tail end of many species. Many of the species recorded were seen just once or twice during the week. My personal tally of sawfly species during the week was 35 species, so the value of other people's contribution is clear.

The Honeypot Challenge for the person bringing me the greatest number of sawfly records was won by Andrew Cunningham, who amassed a total of 44 points, easily outstripping Alan Stubbs (24 points) and Rob Wolton (17 points). Andrew Cunningham's haul of sawflies was made up of 23 species. The most frequently recorded species during the week was *Athalia rosae*. Most of the species recorded were relatively common species. The most notable find was *Hartigia nigra*, found by Dawn Painter at Conyer brown field site in East Kent.

Andrew Halstead

Declining to comment

Many of the schemes reported substantial numbers of records on this field week, giving a brief summary of their successes at the

end of the week. The total for the Micropezids/Tanypezids reported to me during the week was 6, hopefully a few more will drift in as the records are compiled; as Tony Irwin shows in this issue, several of them are hard to do - and I was photographing rather than netting so I don't expect to locate many (my total = 0). Kent resident Howard Bentley, writing in mid-September, talks of the place as being semi-desert following a long period of no rain, perhaps the recent State of Nature report could suggest reasons for my lack of success - I should have gone in 1970!

Darwyn Sumner

Birdfair 2016

Eggleton, Rutland Water

19 - 21 August

Despite this annual event being on my doorstep I'd ignored it until this year when a conversation with some local birders led me to understand that it was about a lot more than just birds.

It took us a complete day to explore this fair and realistically I should have gone back for a second day just to do justice to the 10 or so second hand bookshops who had taken all their natural history books. From the big shops down to the little ones whose owners are semi-retired and only appear with their stock on this one day in the year. Plenty of bird books of course but all the other subjects as well, I doubt if as many New Naturalist titles have ever been assembled in one place, next time I'm going to take a wish list of those with me. A nice copy of the highly desirable first edition *Flies of the British Isles* by Colyer and Hammond there, but I already have a spare of that so it might still be there next year - this is the book that's a must for encouraging new dipterists (despite its lack of the *Tanypeza* plate). The event was swarming with naturalists of all kinds seeking not just birds and exotic holiday destinations (lots of them, nice chats with the people from Panama, Belize, Falkland Islands and Australia) but crafts people (a complete marquee devoted to those) from sculptors and the Society of Wildlife Artists to photographers, local produce, outdoor clothing, camera and other optics (Zeiss were very chatty about their microscopes, Nikon most useful with their advice but still no-one else making equivalents of the Pentax Papilio close-focus binoculars). Fairly well represented were invertebrate groups closer to our interests, the British Arachnological Society had a stand there, as did Buglife, Butterfly Conservation, Woodland Trust & Field Studies Council. Many Wildlife Trust stands too, I met up with the warden of Norfolk's Holme Dunes, turns out he's a keen dipterist and became quite enthusiastic about *Salicella fasciata* which I told him about - he'll be there now hunting for it.



A huge audience for potential recruits to dipterology and a fascinating day out, maybe we should have a stand there next year,

Darwyn Sumner

Forthcoming

We are adopting a slightly different approach to our regular Bulletin notification of meetings. The Bulletin will contain our own meetings plus the one key exhibition (AES) which we regularly attend and where there is a good prospect of being able to chat to our members. Details of our Affiliates (BENHS, The Northants and Peterborough Diptera Group, The Devon Fly Group) are also included.

More reliance is now being placed upon our website to provide up-to-date details of our meetings (and others). This method will allow several members to make contributions and ensure that this Bulletin is not delayed by late meeting arrangements.

The following links will be found useful:

A **booking form for Dipterists Forum events** can be downloaded from the DF website in the "Dipterists Forum information" section at <http://www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/viewtopic.php?pid=15522#p15522> (used for our Summer Field Meeting and may be asked for for other field meetings). A good deal of invaluable background information about Dipterists Forum is also to be found in this section.

Calendar of events: Judy Webb's comprehensive calendar is to be found in the "News" section at <http://www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/t4918-Forthcoming-events-calendar-2016-17-interested-flies.html> Please check this same "News" section for late notification of details of our meetings. We have plans to improve the presentation of this calendar, being particular admirers of the system used by the British Dragonfly Society at <http://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk/content/upcoming-events>

Dipterists Forum Workshops: Invariably held at Preston Montford Field Studies Centre. Dipterists Forum knows the dates and topic well in advance of FSC advertising the workshop on their website, to book you will need to check the FSC website (<http://www.field-studies-council.org>) around early October and hunt around for our specific workshop which will be under <http://www.field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/natural-history/animals/other-invertebrates.aspx> I spoke to them, they can't do better than "October/November" and that email address so you'll have to visit the site periodically.

2016

AES Exhibition

1st October 2016

AES Annual Exhibition and Trade Fair, Kempton Park, London Sunbury-on-Thames, TW16 5AQ, UK. DF will have a publicity stand and publications for sale.

See www.amentsoc.org

Autumn Field Meeting

9-12 October

Northamptonshire

This meeting will concentrate on a range of Wildlife Trust sites in Northamptonshire and has been organised in conjunction with the Northamptonshire Diptera Group. Those who wish to attend might want to arrive on the 8th for field work commencing on 9th, but we can organise a rendezvous on 9th to allow attendees to drive to Northants on that morning.

For details contact Roger Morris roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com

Meetings

Annual Meeting

Saturday 26 & Sunday 27 November 2016

Natural History Museum



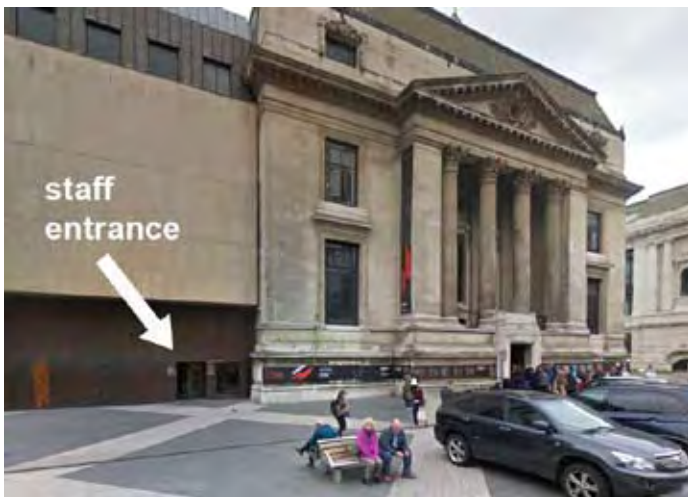
Cromwell Road, London, SW7 5BD

This year's Dipterists Forum meeting will be held at the Natural History Museum on 26 and 27 November. A series of presentations will be given on the Saturday and the Museum's Diptera collection will be accessible to visitors on the Sunday. The venue will be open from 10.00 am with presentations due to begin at 10.30; the programme of talks will be posted on the Dipterists Forum website when it has been finalised.

For those who know the museum the meeting will be held in the Neil Chalmers suite in the Darwin Centre, near the base of the cocoon.

This event is free and is open to members and non-members alike; there is no need for prior booking.

Anyone attending the meeting should enter the Museum through the staff entrance on Exhibition Road and sign in for a visitor pass at the reception desk. There may be a queue to the public entrance when you arrive, but you may cut through to access the staff entrance.



Travelling to the Natural History Museum

Engineering works affect London's transport network at weekends so remember to check the Transport for London website before planning your journey. The Museum is close to South Kensington tube station which is served by the District, Circle and Piccadilly Lines, note that this station does not have step free access. A

number of frequent bus services also pass by the Museum; route information can be found on the TFL website and also on bus shelters. A day travel card will give you access to the combined underground and bus network. Alternatively you can use contactless bank card to pay your fares, these operate like an Oyster card and will be charged at the same rate. Buses in London no longer accept cash payments.



Parking

Finding a parking space in South Kensington can be difficult and expensive, typically costing between £30 and £50 per day. If you are travelling to the Museum by car it may be easier to park further out of London and complete your journey by train.

Accommodation in London

For those planning to stay over in London on Saturday night our advice is to book early. There are many options for accommodation in London but not surprisingly these can be expensive. For the budget traveller there are a number of hostels in the area offering cheaper accommodation. These can be found at through general web searches.

Please bring an exhibit for the Saturday meeting; there will be a prize for the best display.

Pemberley Books will be present on Saturday.

On Saturday evening we will be holding the Dipterists Supper in a local restaurant. If you would like to attend please contact Duncan Sivell (d.sivell@nhm.ac.uk) prior to the meeting.

Annual Meeting

Speakers are currently being arranged for our Saturday meeting, please check our website for details.

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 26 November 2016

London Natural History Museum

The Chairman will open the AGM at 12:00 noon

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Approval of the Minutes of the last AGM and matters arising

(See Spring 2016 Bulletin 81, pp 35-37, for the Minutes of the 2015 AGM)

3. Secretary's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Dipterists Digest Editor's Report
6. A.O.B.
7. Chairman's Vote of Thanks to retiring members
8. Election of Officers: See details below

The Chairman is elected biennially. The Secretary, Treasurer and other Elected Officers with specific responsibilities (detailed below) require annual election. The constitution (7c) currently requires nominations 30 days in advance of the AGM. Ordinary elected committee members serve for two years.

The Officers and General Committee proposed for re-election or election this year, 2016, are as follows:

Office	Officer
Chair	Rob Wolton (Proposed)
Vice Chair	Howard Bentley (Proposed)
Secretary	Amanda Morgan (Proposed)
Treasurer	Victoria Burton (Proposed)
Membership Secretary	John Showers
Field Meetings Secretary	Vacancy
Indoor Meetings Secretary	Martin Drake (Proposed)
Bulletin Editor	Darwyn Sumner
Assistant Editor	Judy Webb
Publicity Officer	Erica McAlister
Website Manager	Stuart Ball
Conservation Officer	Vacancy
Members Elected 2015	Chris Raper
	Malcolm Smart
	Peter Boardman
	Duncan Sivell

Ex Officio (Editor: Dipterists Digest) Peter Chandler

9. Chairman's thanks to hosts and formal closing of the Annual General Meeting.

Appeal

The committee of the Dipterists Forum supports the work of the organisation as a whole, planning field trips, arranging for bursaries, publicity, training and other events, as well as producing our two publications. Many of the current committee have been carrying out their vital roles for several years, and of course everyone has other endeavours such as involvement in Recording Groups or Local Groups. We meet three times a year as a committee, and have many in-between discussions via email. If you think that you could contribute to the work of the committee and would like to be considered for nomination, please contact the Chairman Howard Bentley for more information at howard@hbentley.wanadoo.co.uk

Amanda Morgan, Secretary

2017

Diptera Workshops 2017

Snail-killing flies (Sciomyzidae) and Fruit flies (Drosophilidae)

Preston Montford Field Studies Centre

17 - 19 February 2017

Tutored by Stuart Ball & Peter Chandler

Details on FSC website: <http://www.field-studies-council.org/prestonmontford> from 17th October.

(search in Individuals & Families then Natural History Courses)



This advanced workshop tackles two Diptera families with a similar number of species but very different biologies. Sciomyzidae and Drosophilidae are among the best-studied acalyprate families, for different reasons. Sciomyzids were once thought to provide the answer to slug and snail pests so their larval ecology is exceptionally well known, but British dipterists have found them a useful group reflecting the quality of wetlands since most feed on wetland snails. With 72 mainly large and often attractive species, sciomyzids are easy to get to grips with and several can be reliably identified in the field. The family has one of the longest running recording schemes.

Drosophila melanogaster is the geneticists' favourite pet, while a few drosophilids reach pest status when they are attracted to fruit. Drosophilids are more of a challenge to identify, which is a good reason for including them in the training course. Many are well marked, which helps with their identification, and some are most attractive. A few even have males that sing during courtship. They are relatively small flies often associated with ripening fruit, but among the 68 British species there are many that develop in fungi, others are associated with sap runs and a few are leaf miners. Our fauna also includes introduced species, some of which are now well established. Handouts to identify both families will be provided at the workshop.

If you would like to attend, check the FSC website or contact Preston Montford directly. Bookings usually open in October. The cost of the course will be £275 for a single room, £250 for a shared room and £190 for non-residents. Dipterists Forum members get a £95 discount on these prices (which are then respectively £180, £155 and £95). If you do not bring your own microscope, you can use one provided by the field centre but do but please contact Preston Montford in advance to book one if you need it.

Field meetings 2017

Spring 2017 Field Meeting

There will not be a spring field meeting in 2017. This is because the normal date of the spring meeting is very close to the date for 'Dipterists Week'; making it impractical to run two residential meetings in close succession.

Roger Morris

Summer 2017 Field Meeting

Snowdonia National Park

10 - 16 June 2017

We have booked accommodation at the Snowdonia National Park Environmental Studies Centre at Plas Tan y Bwlch, details at <http://www.eryri-npa.gov.uk/study-centre> Location: LL41 3YU - SH655406, across the valley from Maentwrog; the area was much explored by Peter Crow and the centre's grounds are the famous location of *Cheilosia semifasciata*. (see "Peter Crow's Merioneth Syrphids (Diptera, Syrphidae)" in Dipterists Digest Vol 1. No. 2.)

Centre facilities comprise standard rooms (shared bathroom facilities) and ensuite. There are 25 of these ensuite rooms, and while many rooms are single there are shared options as well, so everyone should be happy! The price will include breakfast, cooked evening meal and a packed lunch. It will also include use of the workroom (the field work room) and the use of two minibuses.

The cost has not been finalised and more details will be announced later. You can reserve your place by sending a £50 deposit to the Treasurer (also tell the Secretary you've done that.)

Many widely varying habitats are within easy striking distance, including the huge dunes of Morfa Harlech and Morfa Dyffryn, soft-rock cliffs on the Llyn coast, numerous valley woodlands, plenty of acid mire and a few calcareous fens, and the spectacular montane habitat of Snowdonia. **More details will be given in the Spring 2017 Bulletin and the DF website.**

DF website <http://www.dipterists.forum.org.uk>

Autumn 2017 Field Meeting

Mid October 2017 (usually)

The venue for this meeting has yet to be agreed.

Please keep an eye on the DF website for details.

Roger Morris at roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com

Events Calendar 2017

<http://www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/t4918-Forthcoming-events-calendar-2016-17-interested-flies.html>

Affiliates:

BENHS Dinton Pastures Open Days in the Pelham-Clinton Building, Hurst, Reading. Open 10:30-16:00 on second and fourth Sunday in each month except April to September when only on the second Sunday of each month (except for August when there are no Open Days). We encourage you to bring along your pinned flies and use the Diptera Collections and library for identification. Other Dipterists are usually present meaning good chat and assistance with identifications may be possible. The grid reference for Dinton Pastures is SU 784718, turn left off the B3030 driving North from Winnersh. The site is about 15 minutes walk from Winnersh station, which has trains running

on a half-hourly service from Reading and Waterloo.

See: www.benhs.org.uk

The Northants and Peterborough Diptera Group hold meetings every weekend from end of April until sometime in September/October.

See: northantsdiptera.blogspot.co.uk or contact John Showers on email: showersjohn@gmail.com

The Devon Fly Group will be holding regular field meetings throughout the year.

Contact Martin Drake (01460 2206650, email: martindrake2@gmail.com).

Judy Webb

2018

9th International Congress of Dipterology

Stellenbosch University, South Africa

25 - 30 November 2018

<http://icd9.co.za/>

http://www.nadsdiptera.org/ICD/ICD9_home.htm

And now ...

Pink Elephants

I know, it's a shame. None of us has been doing enough training to represent Britain in the Rio Olympics (as far as I am aware). That, despite hours of sweeping, plus breathing exercises involved in using a pooter. And even if one were on the starting line, it is only the medal winners who enter the Hall of Fame, most soon forgotten. Even a World Record will be soon surpassed. Hardly worth the effort then compared with spending energy on studying flies.

The path to fame is to get a real first at something. How about leaping out of a plane just using an extra large sweep net as a parachute? That would certainly make you an international celebrity for a world first, and quite probably no one else will attempt to become second in the world for such a feat.

Yet we do have a contender for a world first within our ranks. Peter Chandler has appeared on TV showing a fungus gnat in his pooter, and able to identify it as *Mycomyia cinerascens*. Millions of viewers will have witnessed this remarkable footage. Now I venture to suggest that TV film has never encompassed a fungus gnat in a pooter before, and certainly not *Mycomyia cinerascens*. Surely this should qualify for the Guinness Book of Records. Hence there is no purpose getting out your pooter and in lobbying TV companies to repeat this epic event, Peter has the only claim to fame.

Alan Stubbs



Contributing Bulletin items

Text

- Articles submitted should be in the form of a word-processed file either on disk (3.5", CD or USB Flash) or via E-mail which should have the phrase "DF Bulletin" in the Subject line or placed in the appropriate Dropbox, details of which are emailed out by the editors to committee members (others please enquire). Email text alone will not be accepted.
- Please submit in native format (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_and_foreign_format) and in "text-only" Rich Text Format (.rtf) and additionally send pictures in their original format. An accompanying print-out (or pdf) would also be useful.
- Please note the width of the borders used in Dipterists Bulletin; for conformity with style would newsletter compilers please match this format. The document must be A4.
- Do not** use "all capitals", underlining, colouring, blank lines between paragraphs, carriage returns in the middle of a sentence or double spaces.
- Do not include hyperlinks in your document.** Since they serve no purpose in a printed document and the editor has to spend time taking them out again (the text is unformatable in DTP if it has a hyperlink attached), documents containing hyperlinks will be sent back to you with a request for you to remove them. There's a guide on how to remove Word's default hyperlink formatting at <https://www.uwec.edu/help/Word07/hyperlinkfor.htm>
- Scientific names should be italicised throughout and emboldened only at the start of a paragraph.
- Place names should have a grid reference.

Illustrations

- Colour photographs are now used extensively in the Bulletin, they appear coloured only in the pdf (older Bulletins may be viewed in colour on our website) or on the covers.
- Please include all original illustrations with your articles. These **should** be suitably "cleaned up" (e.g. removal of partial boxes around distribution maps, removal of parts of adjacent figures from line illustrations) but please do not reduce their quality by resizing etc. .
- Please indicate the subject of the picture so that a suitable caption may be included, in some cases it will be possible for the picture file's name to be changed to its caption (e.g. 049.jpg becomes Keepers Pond NN045678 12 Oct 2008.jpg) or add the appropriate metadata to your picture. All group pictures should identify all the individuals portrayed.
- Powerpoint** files may be submitted, they are a useful means of showing your layout and pictures are easily extracted.

- Pictures contained within Word files are of too low quality and cannot be extracted for use in the Bulletin.
- Line artworks are also encouraged - especially cartoons
- Colour pictures and illustrations will be printed in black and white (uncorrected) and so it would be wise to see what a B&W photocopy looks like first, although the print quality from Autumn 2009 onwards gave excellent B&W results.
- A suitable colour photograph is sought for the front cover (and inside front cover) of every copy of the Bulletin, note that it must be an upright/portrait illustration and not an oblong/landscape one for the front cover.
- Due to the short time-scales involved in production, the editors will not use any pictures where they consider there to be doubt concerning copyright. **Add your personal details to the metadata of the picture**, guidelines to this in Bulletin #76.

Tables

- Tables should be submitted in their original spreadsheet format (e.g. Excel)
- Spreadsheet format is also appropriate for long lists

When to send (deadlines)

Spring bulletin

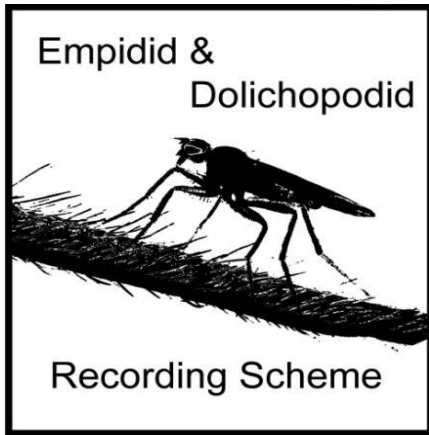
- Aims to be on your doorstep before the end of February, the editorial team has very little time available during January and so would appreciate as many contributions as possible by the middle of December; the deadline for **perfect copy is the 31st Dec**, it will be printed then distributed in late February. Please note that the date for contributions is now earlier than for previous Bulletins.

Autumn bulletin

- Aims to be on your doorstep in early October, contributions should therefore be made to the editor **by the end of July**. It will be printed then distributed in time for final notification of the Annual Meeting, although late details may be posted on our website. Please note that the date for contributions is now considerably earlier than for previous Bulletin

Where to send (deadlines)

- Would Bulletin contributors please ensure that their items are sent to **BOTH** Darwyn Sumner and Judy Webb.
- Compiling and proofreading take place immediately upon receipt. Please send only your final proofs.



Newsletter No. 21

Autumn 2016

Editorial

Here is another dolichopodid-orientated newsletter. If you'd like to read more about empidids then please send us some contributions. I've included maps of several dolichopodids that I discuss to show that we are slowly covering the country, and a map of species-density to help target the obvious holes in the maps. Even the latest hoverfly atlas has gaps so we are unlikely to achieve anything like full coverage, but I'm hoping the map may prompt some effort. I've been writing and illustrating new keys to replace Fonseca, but it's slow work so don't expect drafts to test for a while. The Royal Entomological Society have shown interest in publishing it, as part of their drive to get more Handbooks into print.

Liancalus virens habitat preferences

Duncan Sivell

Liancalus virens was one of the first Dolichopodid species I collected, mainly because the individual in question was so obvious, sitting on an evergreen shrub in central Peterborough at an odd time of year; before spring had really sprung. I was lucky to be carrying a small net in my bag at the time. A glance at the NBN showed that most records are coastal or upland, so Peterborough seemed a rather strange location for this fly. However, when I showed the specimen to Alan Stubbs he suggested the cathedral could be the breeding site, as areas where rainwater trickles down the stonework could create the suitable habitat for the larvae.

Once seen *Liancalus virens* is very recognisable, and after my first encounter with this dolly I have found it on coastal cliff seepages, exactly where you would expect to find it. I have also seen *L. virens* in abundance in central Europe; in sandstone crevices which never catch the sunlight where the rock surface is covered in moss and algae. So wet surfaces with a matt of plant growth seem to be the key. More recently I have come across *L. virens* a number of times in London; along Regent's Canal, in South Kensington and at the Natural History Museum itself. This dolly has been recorded in the NHM Wildlife Garden over a number of years. One of the three ponds in the garden has an outflow trickling over large rocks, with associated algal growth, which would appear to create the right breeding site for this fly. The Museum building itself should not be overlooked, however, and the site where I see *L. virens* most frequently is by an outside tap that I typically walk past four or five times

a week. This tap seems to have been dripping for several years, encouraging the growth of algae on the wall (see photo).

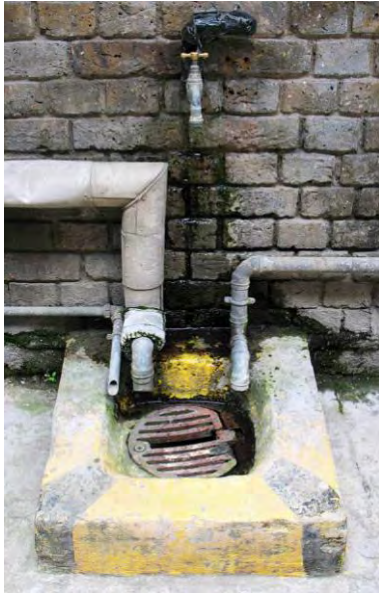
When I first came across *Liancalus virens* in Peterborough I wondered if the sighting was a little bit odd. Now I consider *L. virens* to be an urban-adapted species and I would half-expect to find this dolly in a built-up city centre. Ultimately Fonseca had it right in his 1978 RES Handbook; *Liancalus virens* can be found "wherever fresh water is trickling down a vertical rock-face", but we can add brick and concrete to the list of substrates.



Liancalus virens resting on the wet brickwork.



Going up in the world? *Liancalus virens* can be found along streets like these in South Kensington.



A dripping tap outside the NHM where *Liancalus virens* adults are frequently seen.

***Dolichopus cilifemoratus* in Northamptonshire VC32**

John Showers¹, Brian Harding² and Graham Warnes³

1 showersjohn@gmail.com, 2 bharding1946@msn.com, 3 gawarnes@aol.com

On 5th July 2015 three members of the Northamptonshire and Peterborough Diptera Group visited Irthlingborough Lakes and Meadows, a relatively newly acquired nature reserve of the Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants. The reserve consists of a series of flooded gravel pits with a number of meadows, which are flooded most years. Over the past two winters these meadows have had a large amount of scrub removed and have been grazed with cattle. We spent about three hours searching and sweeping and took voucher specimens away for identification.

A couple of days later, Brian Harding e-mailed me to say that he had found a scarce dolichopodid but declined to tell me which until I had had a chance to examine my catch. Amongst my specimens were four male and one female *Dolichopus cilifemoratus*. I replied to Brian that I had taken this species and he confirmed that it was the same as the one he was referring to. I contacted Graham Warnes to ask him to check his dolichopodids and he confirmed that he had taken it too.

This is only the second record for Northamptonshire. In total 7 males and 1 female were recorded, although some female dolichopodids were discarded, so this figure may be an underestimate.

The meadows where they were taken consist of rough, damp grassland with some ditches and pools at SP949701 and SP951703. They are subject to flooding in some winters and are managed as grassland to attract waders and wintering wigeon *Anas penelope*.

Acknowledgements

Our thanks go to the Wildlife Trust for permission to collect in this area, which is not open to the general public.

Interesting dolichopodid records from the Nottingham field meeting, 11-17 July 2015

Martin Drake

There was a collective groan when we learned that the summer meeting was to be held at Nottingham, an area previously avoided by dipterists because it was "known" to be dull. How pleasing to be shown wrong! Here is my analysis of just the dolichopodids; no doubt other families will follow suit. I use records on the E&D MapMate database, and clearly I have not captured many previous records so the conclusions may have to be toned down somewhat.

With the help of ten other members of the group who handed me specimens during the week, we collected dolichopodid records of 96 species from 54 sites in 24 hectads. To put that into the context of the 100km square SK, there were exactly 96 species from earlier records in the database from rather more hectads (41), but whereas these earlier records included only three species recorded at a reasonable number of places (10-20 sites), during the Nottingham meeting we found 11 species at 10-20 sites and another 8 species from 20-43 sites. We now know of 127 species in square SK. As a consequence of the greater density of records, square SK no longer stands out as a pale blob on map of the commoner species. This seems ample justification for these DF meetings.

The Nottingham meeting's total included four nationally scarce species, compared to nine in earlier records, although some of these date from the early part of the 20th century so may be incorrect. The four species were:

Argyra atriceps, frequent at Meden Trail, Pleasley (VC56, SK511648) in both dry woodland on the river gorge sides and among tall herbaceous vegetation by the River Meden.

Rhaphium micans, a single female at Attenborough Reserve (VC56, SK523344) at the margins of this large flooded gravel pit.

Sciapus zonatulus, a single female that is almost certainly this species from Spalford Warren, (VC56, SK8267), a sand-blown heathland.

Systemus leucurus, a male from Sherwood Forest (VC56, SK622678) in dry oak woodland. Adults are reputedly rarely swept but more often reared from rot-hole debris.

Local but quite uncommon species included:

Chrysotus cupreus, Ploughman Wood (VC56, SK641466), deciduous woodland with one *Typha*-dominated pond on sand in a grassy area This species is far less frequently recorded than before 1990.

Gymnopternus assimilis, Forbes Hole LNR (VC56, SK496323), in a flowery meadow. This is a fen species, but see the next species

Gymnopternus blankaartensis, Forbes Hole LNR again, at emergent vegetation by woodland pond. This species is normally found only in high quality fens, so what it was doing in this post-industrial shaded pond-scape is quite beyond explanation.

Hercostomus plagiatus, Annesley Woodhouse Quarry (VC56, SK486534) at a lake shore with a tiny inflow stream and weak seepages in a disused limestone quarry, and at

Wilford Claypit (VC56, SK571355) at seepages in a disused claypit. The species is on the north-west edge of its lowlands range here.

Neurigona suturalis, Meden Trail, Pleasley (VC56, SK507648) at the river margin.

Medetera diadema, Erewash Meadows (VC56, SK439493) on an isolated hawthorn trunk in cattle pasture.

Poecilobothrus chrysozygos, Carvers Rocks (VC57, SK331226) at a drying reservoir shore with a tiny patch of acid mire. The record is on the north-west edge of its range in the English lowlands.

Rhaphium antennatum, Attenborough Reserve (VC56, SK518337) at the water margins of a marsh. The species appears to be less frequently recorded now than before 1990.

Name changes

Martin Drake

I was looking at the updated check list in the Dipterists Forum website when I noticed that the spelling of some *Syntormon* has reverted from neuter in Chandler's 1998 check list to masculine, as in Fonseca's *Handbook*. These names are *Syntormon aulicus*, *monilis*, *pumilus*, *silvianus*, *tarsatus* and *bicolorellus*. *Poecilobothrus chrysozygos* has gone back to *chrysozygos*. *Ethiomyia chalybea* is feminine, as stated by Brooks (2005) who erected the genus, so not *chalybeus* as in the 1998 check list and Fonseca. These changes have reached the downloadable pdf but nowhere else in the DF website.

Users of MapMate and the Natural History Museum's species dictionary will continue to be irritated with the old spelling of *E. chalybea* and, together with *Gymnopternus blankaartensis* that it is still left behind in *Hercostomus* (as in the map legends later in this newsletter). While *Hercostomus* is a rag-bag genus, *Ethiomyia* and *Gymnopternus* are clearly monophyletic, and their removal from the *Hercostomus* starts the long-overdue process of emptying this dustbin of the more obviously distinct genera. Brooks (2005) grouped *H. chetifer* and *fulvicaudis* (and by implication the very similar *rothi*) with the non-British type species of *Hercostomus*, leaving many others in another phylogenetically distinct group, but suggested that *nanus* and *parvilamellatus* were more similar to *Sybistroma*. One day, perhaps, there may well be at least two more genera to consider.

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Fenland dolichopodids

Martin Drake

Continuing the series on habitat specialists, I now turn to those of base-rich wetlands. As with all generalisations about habitat needs, some of my allocations may be suspect or too rigid. Clearly, since dolichopodids include predominantly wetland species, and neutral to base-rich wetlands includes a large range of habitat types, I have to draw a line between the clear specialists and those that will be common but not restricted to fenlands. Nor does it help that plant ecologists have understandable trouble defining

their communities, as the introductory overviews of the National Vegetation Classification make obvious (Rodwell 1991, 1995). So I am taking a very primitive 19th century definition of fen, being short to tall vegetation on saturated peat with base-rich influence, producing a species-rich plant community sometimes with much reed or sedge. Apologies to parts of northern Britain for being chopped off the maps. Date division on maps is 1990.

Achalcus britannicus. This tiny species was described new to science from Marazion Marsh, the largest reedbed in Cornwall. It is found in reedbeds, valley fen, wet grassland and washlands with ditches, occasionally in carr woodland and some more swamp-like sites. Clearly it is not restricted to reedbed or rich fen, nor does it characterise some of Britain's best fens, for instance, it is rather uncommon in Broadland fens.

Achalcus nigropunctatus. With only records from six Broadland fens (Norfolk), the information is limited, but while some were collected from open short fen vegetation, more were from tall fen vegetation, including reeds, and from sallow and alder carr with large tussocky *Carex*. There seems to be a requirement for rather dense, even tangled vegetation, partly confirmed by all the records having been made by suction sampling.

Achalcus thalhammeri. An association with tall reed or tall mixed fen vegetation at water margins - ditches and ponds - seems to be constant. This precise requirement is far clearer than for other *Achalcus* species. Some sites are on clay so there is no restriction to peat soils, and therefore it is not confined to conventionally recognised fen.

Achalcus vaillanti. At first this may seem a good fen species as it is widespread in Norfolk's Broadland fens, but the association is more with swamp-like conditions or low to tall sedges, reeds and *Glyceria maxima* by often at water margins but not necessarily so in the wettest sites. So it only just qualifies as a 'fen' species, and perhaps should be thought of as a swamp species.

Argyra elongata. Most records from the southern half of England are from fens, in the broad sense, with reeds, sedges and sometimes carr, although some sites are ditches in wet grasslands or swamp at pond and lake margins, often with large *Carex*. Most sites are almost certainly on peat but they cannot all be neutral or base-rich, particularly those in northern England and Scotland.

Dolichopus laticola. This is a fenland species par excellence. It is almost confined to England's best eastern fenland where it is widespread in freshwater (not mildly brackish) vegetation. It is not been possible to be more precise about the microhabitat it occupies although it is infrequent in fen carr.

Dolichopus longitarsis. In southern England, at least, this species appears to be strongly associated with fens, often close to water margins within them. In northern England and Scotland it also occurs on more acid, often peaty sites, although some of these may be poor-fen with reed and sedges. Pollet (2001) suggests that it requires tree canopy but this does not fit many sites where it occurs in Britain.

Dolichopus nigripes. This species is also almost confined to Broadland fens but must be more fussy than *laticola* since it avoids the very best fens here. It appears to prefer more

open vegetation, and avoids dense reed and saw-sedge (*Cladium*), and may perhaps be more associated with fen-meadow than true fen.

Ethiomyia chalybea. This species is perhaps one of the most characteristic species of true fens on peat where it can be common but it also occurs in small patches of swamp or water-margin emergents on mineral soils. It is also found in fen carr but whether as strays or residents is not clear.

Gymnopternus assimilis. This is another species with a reputation for being a fen specialist but, while it is undoubtedly abundant in true fens and reedbeds, it also occurs in peat or mineral swamps by water margins, the latter making up many of the dots on the distribution map.

Gymnopternus blankaartensis. As well as being almost confined to fens, there seems to be a preference for some shade, either as scrub, carr or tall reed or tall herb-fen vegetation. Even where abundant in Norfolk's Broadland fens, it is not often found in shorter herb-rich fen. Nearly all the sites are on peat, with rare occurrences on mineral soils.

Teuchophorus spinigerellus. I suppose fens are the place where this species occurs most abundantly but it turns up in so many unshaded wet places that it only just qualifies as a fen specialist. Like some other species, the association seems to break down in northern England where it is as likely to be found at upper saltmarsh, freshwater seepages and wet grasslands.

Thrypticus smaragdinus. Apart from one outlying site in Poole Harbour, Dorset, this species is confined to Norfolk's Broadland where it is widespread in the northern fens. There seems to be no constant feature in the structure of the vegetation where it occurs, but reed is mentioned many times in the site descriptions (more than for some other fen species), and this is consistent with its reed-mining larval habit (Dyte 1993).

A few other species may be common on fens but are also found at other habitats, for example *Argyra vestita* (also saltmarsh) and *Hercostomus plagiatus* (also coastal soft-rock and some inland mineral seepages). *Telmaturgus tumidulus* is probably associated with peat as it is found in bogs in Dorset and Hampshire as well as fens in Norfolk and north Wales. Other species may be abundant in fens but cannot, at least in Britain, be classed as fenland species. For instance, Pollet (1992, 2001) included *Lamprochromus bifasciatus*, *Rhaphium fasciatum*, *Syntormon bicolorellus* and *Micromorphus albipes* (comprising at least three species in Britain) as 'marshland' or 'reed marsh' species (his equivalent of my 'fenland') but all are often found in other wet places such as seepages, river margins, acid wet grasslands and wet woods.

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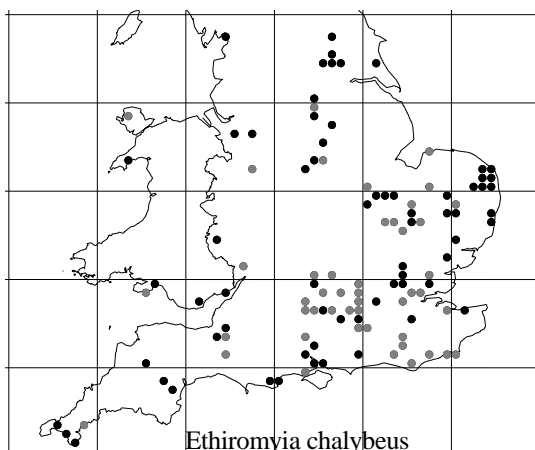
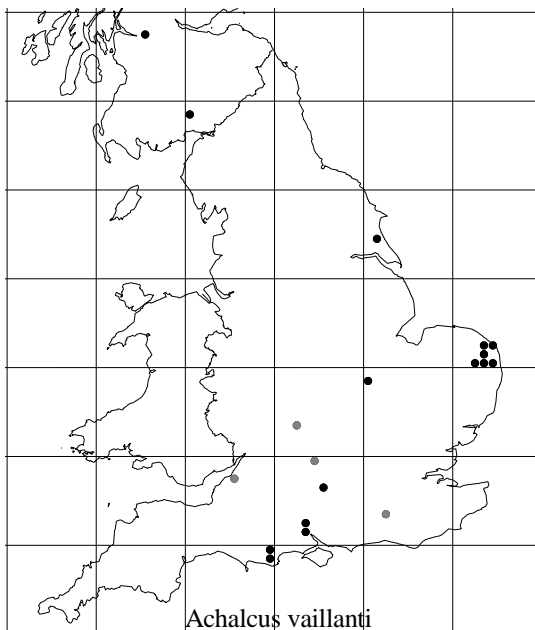
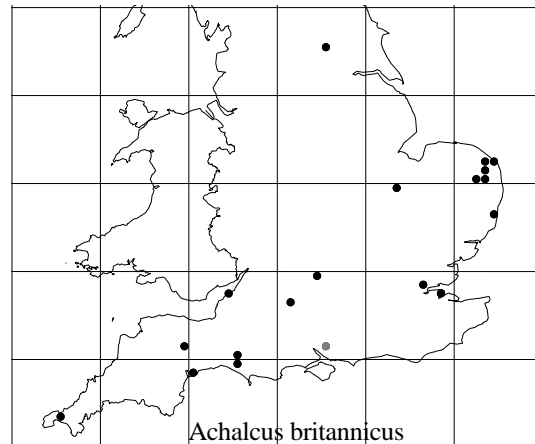
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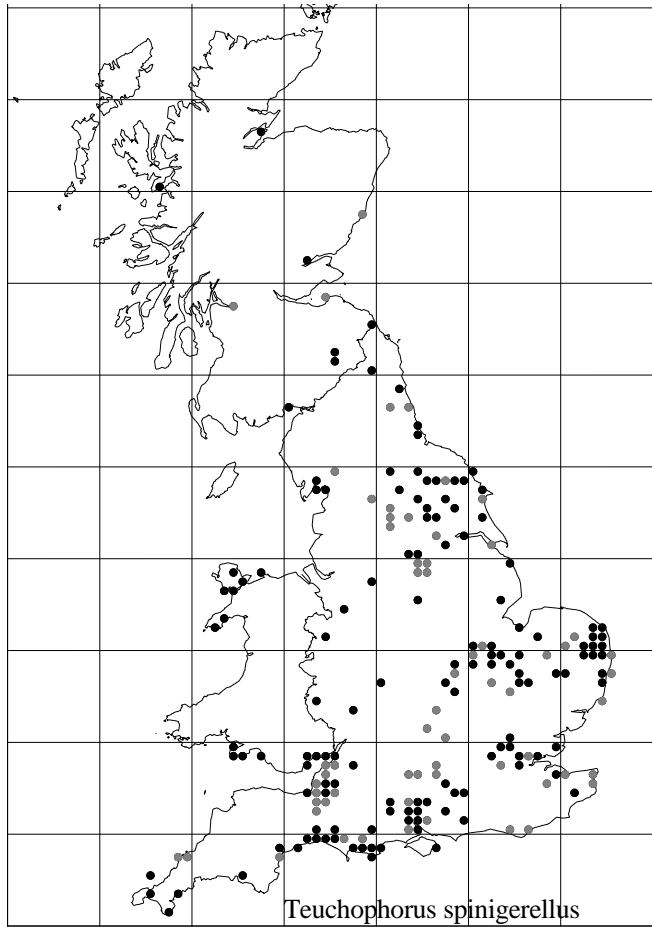
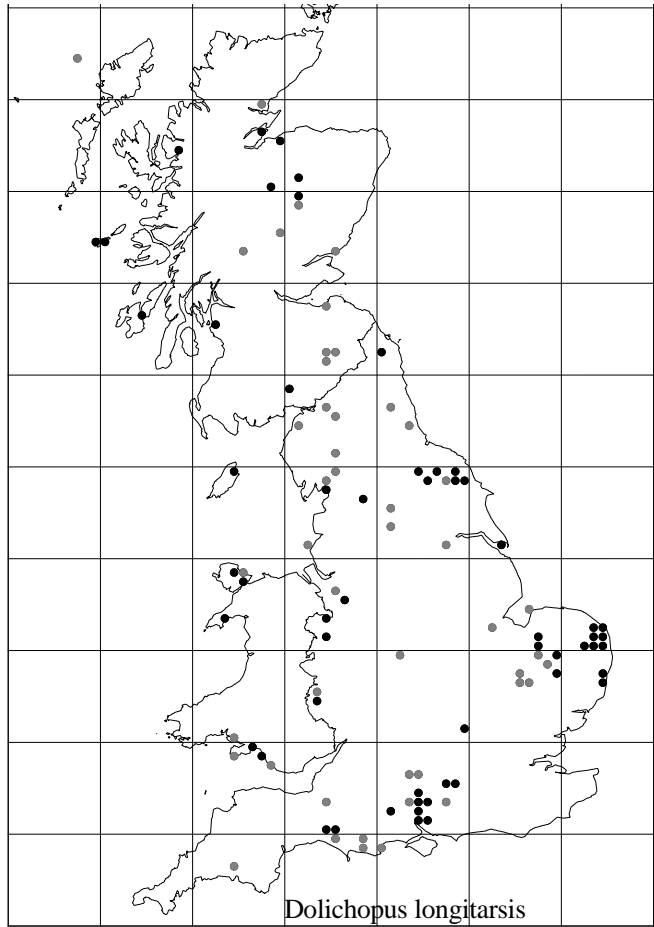
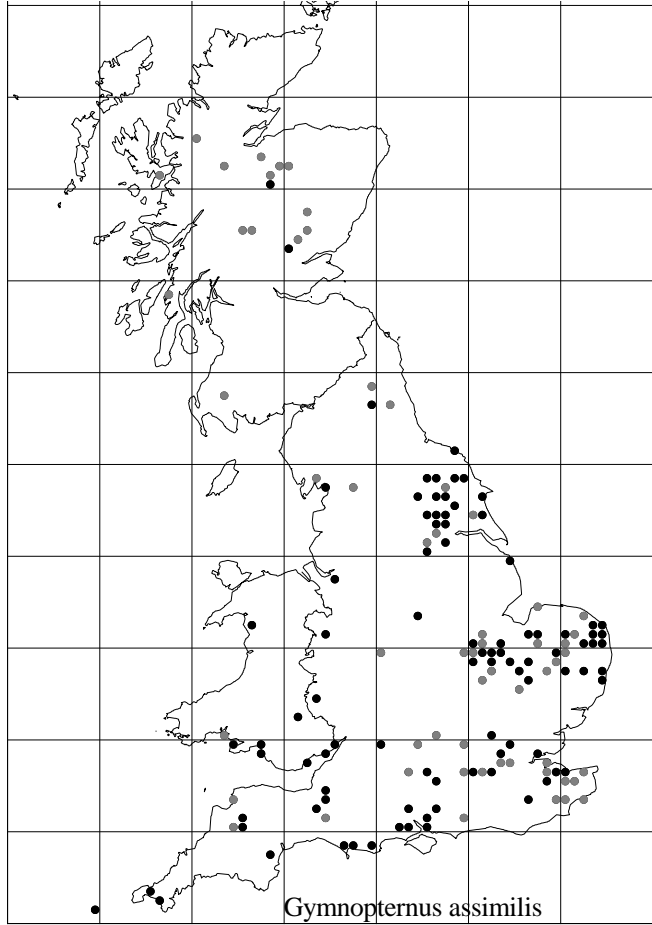
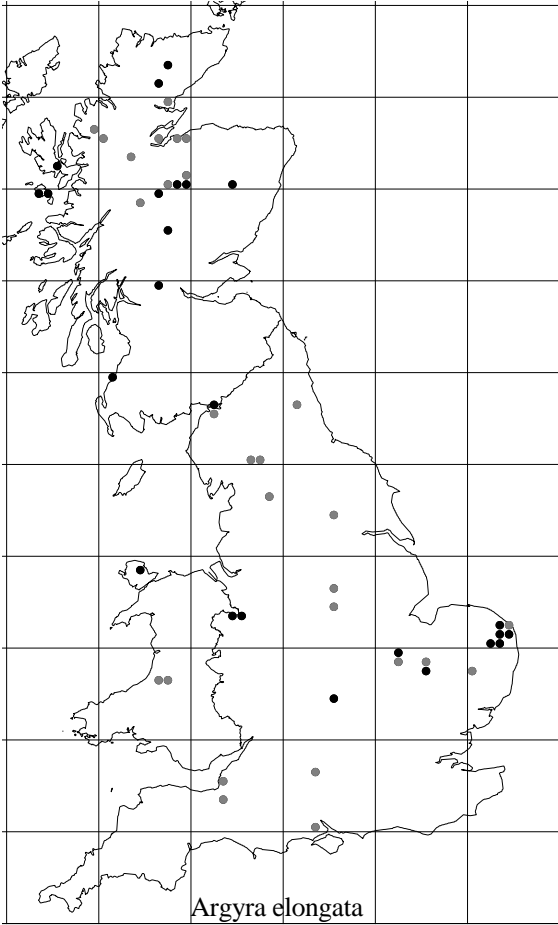
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Dolichopodid Male Secondary Sexual Characters

Roy Crossley

Male Secondary Sexual Characters (MSSC) are a feature of many dolichopodids, and they are particularly obvious in *Dolichopus* species, especially the large and often spectacular lamellae.

Rather less obvious examples of MSSC's are modifications to the tarsal segments of either the 1st (front) or 2nd (middle) legs. These may involve segments that are strikingly enlarged, plumose, compressed, silvered, or a combination of these, and the characters are used in identification keys. *Dolichopus plumipes* is a familiar example.

A possible MSSC is the markedly sinuate margin of the wing between the anal (A1) and postical (Cu) veins. This occurs in a number of species, and again a common example is provided by *D. plumipes*. Occasionally the shape of the margin can become distorted, probably during the drying process after pinning, and in order to see the character clearly it may be necessary to manipulate the specimen and examine it from various angles.

Some time ago it occurred to me that species with modified tarsi also often possess sinuate wing-margins, and in recent years I have examined males of all 54 British *Dolichopus* species with the exception of *D. plumitarsis*, (but there is a full description of this in Duzee *et al.*, (p.172) on which I have relied). I have 45 species in my collection and I examined the remainder in the collections of the Natural History Museum, London, in March 2010.

The following species have clearly sinuate margins:

<i>argyrotarsis</i>	<i>popularis</i>
<i>lineatocornis</i>	<i>subpennatus</i>
<i>nigripes</i>	<i>urbanus</i>
<i>pennatus</i>	<i>wahlbergi</i>
<i>plumipes</i>	

All except *lineatocornis* also possess some form of modification to the tarsal segment(s). Except for *nigripes* in which it is on the front leg, the remainder have it on the 2nd leg. Only two British species have tarsal modifications and lack sinuate margins. These are *D. signatus* which has tarsal segments 4 and 5 of the middle leg silvered on the anterior face, and *D. planitarsis* which has an enlarged and dorsally flattened 5th tarsal segment of the middle leg. *D. signatus* has a smoothly rounded wing-margin and *D. planitarsis* has a straight margin.

Thus the majority of British *Dolichopus* with some form of modification to the tarsal segment(s) of the middle leg also have a sinuate rear wing-margin. Put another way, the majority of species with a sinuate margin also have tarsal modification(s) to the middle leg.

The situation is quite different in species which have some form of modification to the tarsal segment(s) of the front leg. All have rounded or straight margins, with the exception of *D. nigripes* as noted above. These are:

<i>brevipennis</i>	<i>plumitarsis</i>
<i>claviger</i>	<i>migrans</i>
<i>discifer</i>	<i>nigripes</i>

D. longitarsis is omitted because the enlargement of the last

segment of the front leg is not pronounced; it has a smoothly rounded margin.

The results of this study are summarised in the following table:-

Species	Modification to tarsi		Wing-margin	
	1 st leg	2 nd leg	straight/rounded	sinuate
<i>argyrotarsis</i>		X		X
<i>pennatus</i>		X		X
<i>plumipes</i>		X		X
<i>popularis</i>		X		X
<i>subpennatus</i>		X		X
<i>urbanus</i>		X		X
<i>wahlbergi</i>		X		X
<i>brevipennis</i>	X		X	
<i>claviger</i>	X		X	
<i>discifer</i>	X		X	
<i>plumitarsis</i>	X		X	
<i>migrans</i>	X		X	
<i>nigripes</i>	X			X
<i>signatus</i>		X	X	
<i>planitarsis</i>		X	X	
<i>lineatocornis</i>	--	--	--	X

It is usually assumed that flies use modified legs in some form of display or in securing prey in the case of predatory species. Whether wing-margin sinuation noted here has any connection with leg-waving display or is some kind of aerodynamic adaptation can only be speculated on at this time. It might all be coincidence! However I draw attention to it as a possible subject for investigation by others more able than I.

Reference

Duzee, M.C. Van, Cole, F.R., Aldrich, J.M. 1921. The Dipterous Genus *Dolichopus* Latrielle in North America. *United States National Museum Bulletin* 116.

Acknowledgements

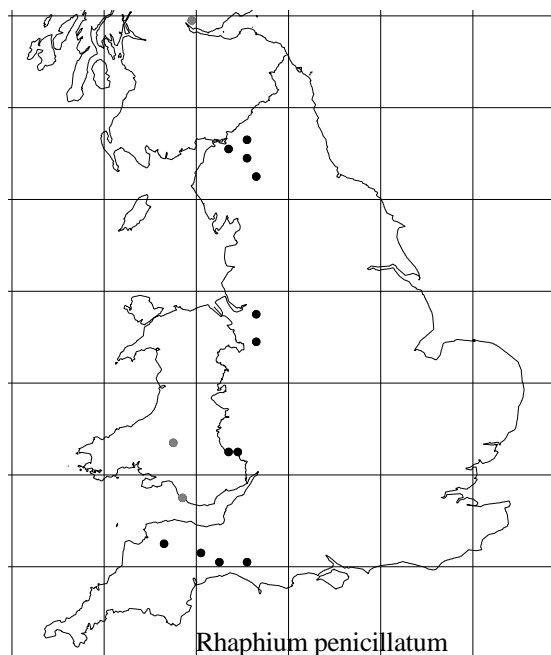
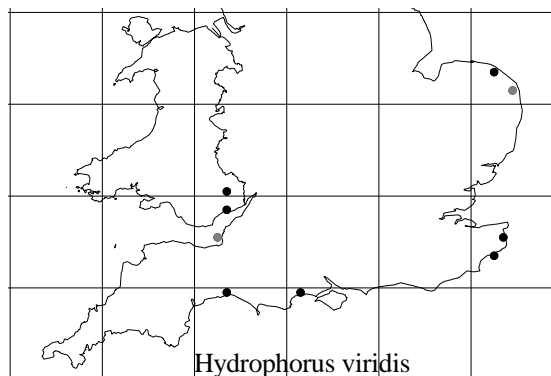
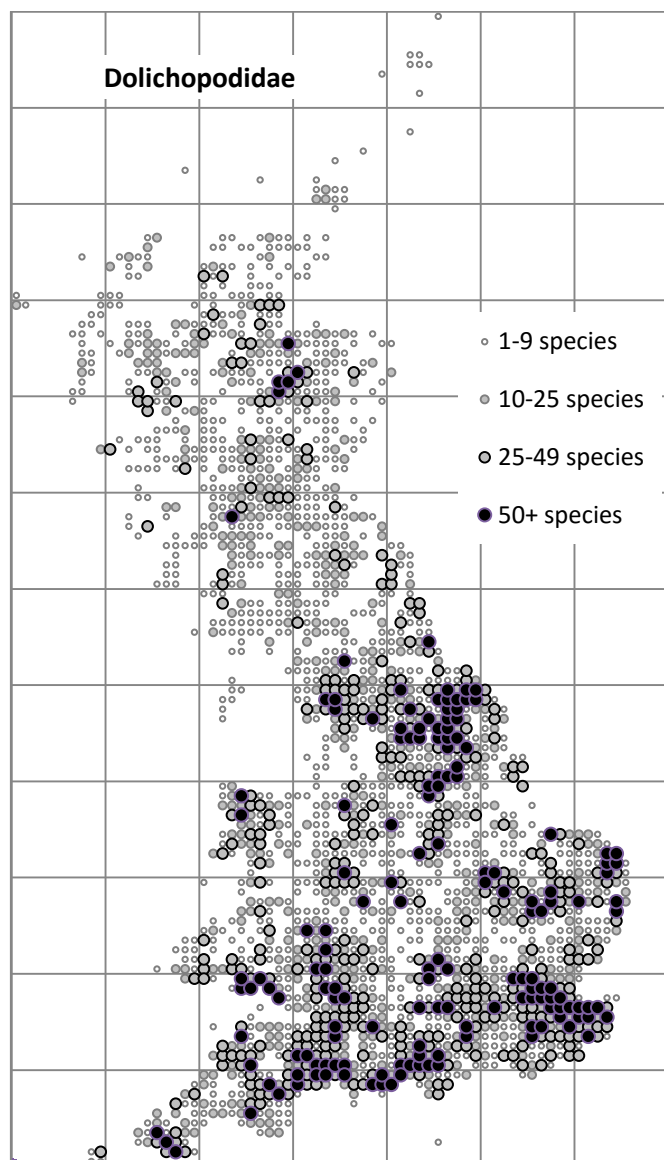
I am obliged to Martin Drake, the late Peter Dyte, Marc Pollet and Duncan Sivell for helpful correspondence, and to Duncan for kindly re-checking specimens of *D. nigripes* in the collection of the NHM. Also to Erica McAlister and other staff members at the NHM for help during my visit in 2010.

Species density of dolichopodids in Britain

Martin Drake

I've plotted the number of species of dolichopodids with records in the E&D MapMate database, using four classes of species-richness. As is expected in relatively early days of a recording scheme, the richness reflects locally enthusiastic recording rather than real underlying regional differences. For example, Yorkshire is black due mainly to Roy Crossley, Kent to Laurence Clemons and East Devon to me, but the New Forest - Dorset heaths, Norfolk Broadland and Spey Valley will probably always be near the top. There are some unreal 'holes' in the map which are just due to the low numbers of records submitted. Top of the poll are seven

hectads with >100 species and they in six different 100km squares.



Interesting records submitted for 2015

Only four rare species were found in 2015, apart from Rob Wolton's 'extinct' *Rhaphium* (Wolton, R. & Drake, C.M. 2015. *Rhaphium pectinatum* (Loew) (Diptera, Dolichopodidae) re-found in Britain. *Dipterists Digest (Second Series)* 22, 127-130). Two of these, *Syndyas nigripes* (Hybotidae) and *Syntormon macula* (Dolichopodidae) were near sites with existing records so are not mentioned here.

Hydrophorus viridis, 1 female, Llanwern TATA Steel plant, ST3685, VC35, 11 August 2015, David Gibbs. With the exception of one correctly identified record from inland Gwent, this species is restricted to the coast.

Rhaphium penicillatum Hunkin Wood (Woodland Turst), Uffculme by River Culm, ST083135 and nearby at ST077134, VC3, 7 males altogether, 27 May 2015, Martin Drake. Nearly all records are from stony or sandy rivers, with a decidedly western distribution. The eastern-most Dorset record may be wrong.

Recuration of the Dolichopodidae collection at the Natural History Museum

Duncan Sivell

The British and Irish Dolichopodidae collection has recently been recurated; transferring specimens from the old cork slats into cardboard unit trays with plastazote bases. This modular tray system makes it much easier to move material around when studying the collection and gives individual specimens added protection.

As part of the recuration the family has been reorganised to comply with Peter Chandler's checklist. One exception to this is we have recognised the subfamily Peloroepodinae to keep the British and Irish collection consistent with the NHM's World collection. The Peloroepodinae includes the genera *Acropsilus*, *Anepsiomyia*, *Chrysotimus* and *Micromorphus* and is physically located between the Neurigoninae and Rhaphiinae. In the British and Irish fauna the Peloroepodinae only contains five species, so adopting this subfamily does not create a great departure from the formal checklist, but it is something that visitors to the collection should be aware of.

We also used the recuration process to build expansion space into the collection. This is important as the next major task for the Dolichopodidae will be incorporating recently accessioned material, particularly specimens from Peter Dyte's collection. The existing British and Irish collection

holds nearly 24 000 Dolichopodidae, and the Dyte collection contains another 6000 specimens. Not all of Peter Dyte's material will be kept at the NHM, some will be going to the BEHNS collection at Dinton Pastures, but it will still give a significant boost to the holdings in London and hopefully include some of the British species we are still missing.

Special thanks go to Howard Bentley who has already put names to a large number of Peter Dyte's unidentified specimens, and to Rob Wolton for his recent donation of *Rhaphium pectinatum*, the only specimen we have at the NHM!

Anyone wishing to view the NHM collection is very welcome to do so, and should contact Duncan Sivell to make an appointment (d.sivell@nhm.ac.uk).



Xanthochlorus specimens, before and after the recuration.

More on *Campsicnemus magius*

Martin Drake & Dawn Painter

In E&D Newsletter 20 (2015), I summarised what is known about the ecology of *C. magius*. During the Dipterists Forum summer meeting at Kent this summer, some of us found this species. Although you will know it from the front cover of *A Dipterists Handbook*, here are some images taken by Dawn

at the NHM of one of this year's catch (Rushenden Marshes, Rob Wolton) and Fonseca's from Sandwich Bay, as mentioned in his *Handbook*. Quite what use it makes of these ungainly legs is not clear. Someone needs to sit in the muddy patches where it lives and watch it.



Acknowledgements

Thanks to those who submitted records in 2015 (Andrew & Janet Graham, Andrew Cunningham, David Gibbs, Geoff Foale, Geoff Wilkinson, Howard Bentley, Laurence Clemons, Mike Pugh, Murdo McDonald, Nigel Jones, Phil Brighton, Phil Porter, Richard Dickson, Rob Wolton; Birmingham Museum collection from which records were extracted at 2015 Dipterists Day).

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Fungus Gnats Recording Scheme

Newsletter 9 Autumn 2016

This newsletter mainly relates to 2015. 2016 records are added for *Macrorrhyncha hugoi*, *Greenomyia mongolica* and *Trichonta fusca*. The last of these, found in Kent by Andrew Halstead on the July 2016 summer field meeting, is a significant record as it was only previously recorded in Britain in 1972. Other findings for 2016 will be deferred to a later newsletter.

The updated review of the conservation status of all species carried out in 2012-2013, mentioned in the previous three newsletters, has still to be adopted at the time of writing. Its publication was, thought to be imminent in the early part of 2016, but that possibility has receded. As stressed previously it was not practicable to make full use of post-2011 data in the assessments of most species and the continuing delay in publication makes it increasingly less relevant to the present knowledge of the status of species.

Further additions continue to be made to the British list and 2015 produced an interesting range of new records.

Numbers of species and individuals recorded in 2015 were generally lower than in other recent years, both on the Dipterists Forum field meetings and in my recording at other sites. This was attributed to climatic factors, including those prevailing in the latter part of 2014. In contrast to this general perception, good results were obtained at damp woodland sites in south-west England by Rob Wolton, Martin Drake and Keith Alexander, and Ivan Perry did well both in the Scottish Highlands in May and at the two English sites he regularly visited.

The total number of species for which records are so far available from all sources for 2015 is 356. Thus a little over 200 of the British species were not recorded, but this is not unexpected given the relatively small number of recorders and the coverage of sites visited.

Results of Field Meetings in 2015

There were three Dipterists Forum field meetings in 2015, all of which I attended.

The number of species recorded at each meeting were: Cromer, Norfolk 15-17 May (26); Nottingham 11-17 July (83); Swanage, Dorset & the New Forest, Hampshire 10-17 October (137: 109 in Dorset and 90 in the New Forest). The combined total for the four areas visited was only 176, compared to 231 for the four meetings in 2014 and 203 for the five meetings in 2013.

Cromer: Some of the sites visited, especially the coastal habitats, were not likely ground for gnats, but even the wooded



and more inland localities produced remarkably few. Roger Morris and Alan Stubbs contributed to the records. Nothing uncommon was found.

Nottingham: In the report on the autumn 2014 field meeting held in Nottinghamshire, it was mentioned that the areas of Sherwood Forest and Clumber Park visited showed great potential for the 2015 summer field meeting. This was not totally reflected in the 2015 results, and in the case of Sherwood Forest this was considered to be mainly because of the prevailing dry conditions.

There were gnat records for 38 sites across Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire. Of the 83 species recorded, 40 were additional to the 110 species recorded on the 2014 autumn meeting. So the 150 species altogether recorded provide welcome additions to the records for this generally under-recorded part of the country.

Those participating in this meeting who contributed records of fungus gnats were Andrew Cunningham, Steve Crellin, Martin Drake, Andrew Halstead, John Kramer, Roger Morris, Alan Stubbs and Rob Wolton.

With gnats thin on the ground, Calke Park (SK3622) in Derbyshire was the most productive site, but with only 21 species recorded, mainly in the more humid wooded slopes near the ponds. Among the more interesting finds were *Ditomyia fasciata* at Bunny Old Wood NR (SK5828), near the northern fringe of its distribution, *Macrocera fascipennis* at Carvers Rocks (SK3372) and *Manota unifurcata* at Lathkill Dale (SK190158) (R. Wolton) and Ploughman Wood (SK414466) (C.M. Drake). Most surprising were the finds of *Mycomya pectinifera* at two Derbyshire sites, Miller's Dale (SK1573) and Priestcliffe Lees NR (SK1473) (R. Wolton); this is an extension into the Midlands of the range of a species that was at least till recently restricted to the south-west of England and Wales, but may have been spreading.

Dorset: Records obtained for 13 sites over the period 10-13 October comprised 733 specimens of 109 species. Contributions to this catch were made by Andrew Halstead, Roger Morris, Chris Spilling and Alan Stubbs.

Five sites produced 30 or more species with the largest total of 43 at Piple Wood, Studland (SZ0383) on 11 October. Among the species recorded at Piple Wood was the second British record of *Mycomya danielae*, added to the British list from a single male found in Surrey on the autumn meeting there in 2013

(Chandler 2014). That site also produced *Keroplatus testaceus*, *Allodia neglecta* and *Phronia forcipula*. On the same day we visited Wytch Heath (SY9784), where conifer plantations had produced a good catch on the previous spring meeting in this part of Dorset; it again produced *Mycetophila caudata* and *M. sublunata*, which occurred there on the earlier visit. *Mycomya pectinifera* was found at Puddletown Forest (SY7493), *Mycetophila deflexa* at Langton West Wood (SY9979) and *M. sigmoides* at Arne RSPB Reserve (SY9788).

New Forest: From 14 to 17 October visits were made to 22 sites, and 484 specimens were obtained of 90 species. Again these included contributions by Andrew Halstead, Roger Morris and Alan Stubbs.

In general gnats were more thinly spread than was the case in Dorset, which was attributed to various factors, including the mainly dry conditions. Many of the sites visited were subject to high levels of grazing, the closely cropped vegetation reducing the amount of cover around fallen dead wood. It was also apparent that commercial collecting of fungi was having an effect in the more publicly accessible areas. The highest site total was 27 species at Denny Wood (SU3305-3306), which was subject to all these factors. Pondhead Inclosure (SU3007), which had both less grazing pressure and a greater diversity of terrestrial fungi than seen elsewhere in the Forest, produced 22 species but much of the area was dense coppice less accessible for recording.

There were new records for the New Forest of two species that have recently spread widely in southern England. These were *Greenomyia mongolica*, of which Alan Stubbs caught a female at the Rufus Stone (SU2712) on 14 October, and *Mycetophila sublunata*, of which Andrew Halstead caught a male at Anderwood Inclosure (SU2406) on 17 October.

Gnats new to Britain

Like other recent additions to the British list, the three species introduced here can presently only be treated as Data Deficient; one of them was found towards the end of 2014. The second British records of *Mycomya danielae*, *Ectrepesthoneura tori* and *Exechia spinigera* are reported elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Two of the three new additions of which details are given below were discovered by Ivan Perry during his trip to Scotland in May. Like several other species recently added to the British list from Scotland, they can so far only be recorded on the basis of single specimens, which gives no indication of their present status or the extent of their distribution. This suggests that there is still considerable potential for finding previously overlooked species in the Scottish Highlands. The extent of deforestation in recent centuries may have resulted in some impoverishment compared to comparable habitats in northern Europe. Nevertheless, isolated populations of many species have evidently managed to hang on and may have recently had the opportunity to increase again with reforestation.

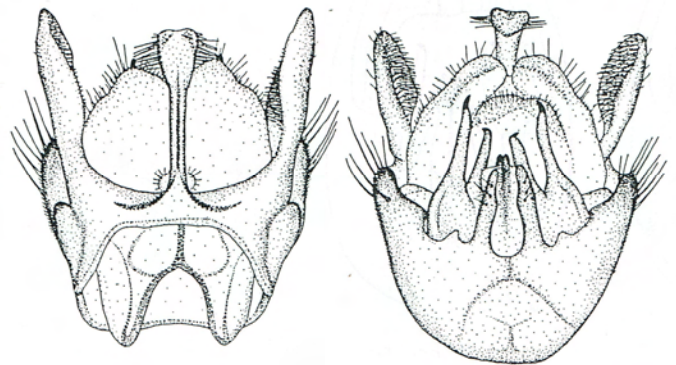
Mycomya (*S. Mycomya*) *bicolor* (Dziedzicki, 1885)

One male was caught by Ivan Perry at the Carie Burn (NN614565), a stream in mixed, mainly coniferous, woodland in the Rannoch Forest on 29 May 2015. This is a Holarctic species

that is widespread in Europe and in the northern parts of North America and which has been frequently recorded throughout its range. It is also a moderately large species with distinctive genital structure, so it is surprising that it has not been noticed previously in the British Isles.

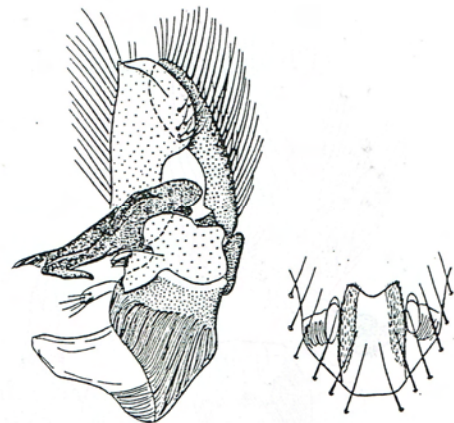
The thorax is yellow with three brown scutal stripes, the abdomen brown with narrow yellow hind margins to the tergites, and the legs yellow. It runs in the key by Hutson *et al.* (1980) to the couplet including *M. winnertzi* and *M. wankowiczii*, which it resembles in size and coloration. Both those species differ distinctly in the form of the tergal part of the genitalia, in particular in having a short broad and apically emarginate median processus and relatively short lateral appendages. In *M. bicolor*, the processus is for the most part long and narrow with a broad apical part, while the lateral appendages are also elongate. All three species have the lateral appendages longer than the processus.

The biology is unconfirmed but Plassmann (1971) mentioned that he had reared a male in Germany from a larva found under an unnamed polypore fungus in January.



Mycomya bicolor, male genitalia: left, tergal view; right, sternal view (from Väisänen 1984)

Brevicornu improvisum Zaitzev, 1992



Brevicornu improvisum, male genitalia: left, internal view of gonostylus; right, ventral view of median gonocoxal process (from Zaitzev 2003)

One male was caught by Ivan Perry at the Birks of Aberfeldy (NN853475), Perthshire on 23 May 2015. The site is broad-leaved woodland in a gorge with a fast-flowing stream. This is also a Holarctic species that was described from Alaska and is widespread in northern and central Europe, with records from

Corsica, mainland France, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and northern Russia (Karelia). There is no obvious reason why a single specimen should now turn up in the Scottish Highlands other than Ivan's diligent recording over many years. The biology of this species is unknown.

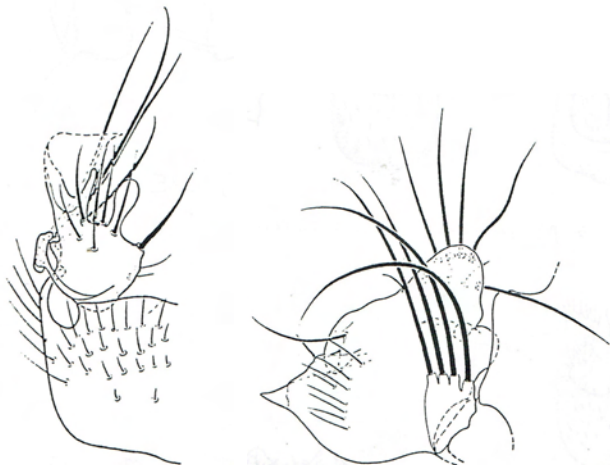
It is, like most species of *Brevicornu*, separable only on details of the structure of the male genitalia, in particular the form of the gonostylus and gonocoxal process as illustrated.

***Mycetophila hyrcania* Laštovka & Matile, 1969**

Three males were obtained by Martin Townsend in an aerial trap at Chalkhills Farm (SU640780), Buckinghamshire. These were from a sample collected from 10 November to 6 December 2014 in an area of calcareous woodland.

This is an unexpected addition to the British list. It was described from Iran by Laštovka & Matile (1969), but has since been found to be widespread in central and southern Europe with records from Bulgaria, Italy, Malta, Spain, the Czech Republic, Germany and southern France.

It is small mainly dark brown species, with yellow legs and unmarked wings. It thus resembles *M. immaculata* but lacks the anterodorsal bristles on both mid and hind tibiae that are present in that species. It also has very distinct genitalia, bearing a comb of long bristles on the dorsal lobe of the gonostylus.



Mycetophila hyrcania, male genitalia: left, ventral view of gonocoxite and gonostylus; right, dorsal view of dorsal lobe of gonostylus (from Laštovka & Matile 1969)

New findings on *Macrocera*

Last year (Chandler 2015a) it was reported that specimens of *Macrocera pusilla* caught by Martin Drake at two sites on the Devon coast, showed variation in wing venation which suggested that *M. propleuralis* might be synonymous. The latter species was described from a single female caught by F.W. Edwards (1941) on the window of a beach shelter at Sidmouth, Devon on 11 June 1938, and had not been recognised more recently. This synonymy has since been formally proposed by Chandler (2015b), reducing the British Keroplatidae to 51 species.

Macrocera longibrachiata. A female found at Hollies Wood (SJ5313), Shropshire on 18 September 2015 by Nigel Jones, is

considered to belong to this species. It was hitherto known in Britain only from two males, from Clovelly, Devon on 3 August 1927 (H. Womersley) and Weston Big Wood, Somerset on 1 September 2001 (D. Gibbs). I found a male in a limestone gorge in Belgium in 1990 but it is uncommon in Europe, with records otherwise only from France, Germany, the Czech Republic, Italy and Estonia.

It is possible that the female has not previously been recognised. It runs to this species in the key by Hutson *et al.* (1980) in having the abdominal tergites dark on at least the apical half, but the dark areas are broadly extended forwards medially and narrowly on the side margins, leaving a pair of yellow lateral patches on each tergite.

Recording at Windsor Forest and Great Park

Having made fourteen visits during 2014 to the Highstanding Hill and Badger's Brook area of Windsor Forest, I made three further visits to that area in April and May 2015. Gnats were considerably less numerous than on the 2014 visits at that time of year and only 57 species were recorded on those three visits, compared to 70 over the three 2014 visits in those months. Only five were additional to that total, including *Tetragoneura sylvatica* which had been noted as curiously absent from the 2014 catch.

Then I transferred attention to the east side of Windsor Great Park, concentrating on areas accessible from the Bishops Gate entrance, and made seven visits from June to October. Initially the areas to the south were sampled, including those around the Cow Pond (SU9771) and to the south of it. Then on the last three visits the enclosed Deer Park (SU9772) to the north of Bishops Gate was visited. Again fungus gnats were sparse and altogether 67 species were recorded, providing an overall total for the Crown Estate of 90 species during 2015, compared to 161 species in 2014. Of those 90 only 16 (including the five mentioned above) were additions to the previous year's total of 161 species.

Of these 16 species, 6 are new records for the Windsor Forest and Great Park area (hectad SU97), bringing the total of fungus gnat species recorded for this hectad to 260. These additions are *Bolitophila glabrata*, *Macrorrhyncha hugoi* (see below), *Macrocera lutea*, *M. maculata*, *Cordyla fusca* and *Exechia bicincta*. Species found during 2014 that occurred again included *Mycetophila lastovkai* (10 males, all three areas, 5 dates iv-ix), *M. lubomirskii* (1 male Badger's Brook 7.v and 1 male, near Cow Pond 28.viii) and *M. sublunata* (1 male near Cow Pond 28.viii).

Both the newly visited areas include many old partly decayed trees, with some secondary growth. Cow Pond is fairly formal but mainly surrounded by woodland. A nearby area with old beeches has large logs, both on the ground and strapped vertically to the trunks of standing trees to provide a habitat for saproxylic Coleoptera.

The open areas of the Deer Park are closely cropped grass with scattered trees, which appears to be preferred grazing for the deer. A large part is, however, more wooded with bracken ground cover and a good quantity of fallen dead wood. A significant number of standing dead trees are present. Although only 36 species of fungus gnats were recorded on the three visits to the Deer Park, further investigation of this area is invited.

There is a small stream, but the habitat is generally dry, so it is not anticipated that results comparable to those from the vicinity of Badger's Brook at Highstanding Hill could be achieved.

Visits to the area south of Bishops Gate have continued in 2016 and the copse known as "Wilderness" to the south-west of this area has also been visited on three occasions, for the first time since 1967. There some dead and dying beeches provide habitat for fungal growth but the absence of younger beeches precludes continuity. The Deer Park has so far been visited twice.

A full account of the Diptera of Windsor Forest and Great Park is in preparation. Malaise and interception trap samples obtained by Keith Porter at several sites on the estate in 1992 and 1993 are being determined to boost the data.

New finds of *Macrorrhyncha hugoi*

A male of *M. hugoi* was found by sweeping the vegetation on the slopes of a deep ditch beside the path alongside the Cow Pond (SU975714) at Windsor Great Park, on the Berkshire/Surrey border, on 23 June 2015. This species was only previously known in Britain from Hampshire, with records from five ancient woodland sites in the New Forest (in the period 1988-2000) and from Whitmoor Vale in the north of the county (1990). It was only otherwise known from Jersey in The Channel Islands and from Sweden (Kjærandsen & Chandler 2011).

Its biology is unknown but I found a female around a standing dead beech trunk at Mark Ash Wood in the New Forest, suggesting a saproxylic association. Keroplatid larvae spin webs on various substrates and are either carnivorous or feed on fungal spores. Adults of most *Macrorrhyncha* species, including the common British species *M. flava* Winnertz, feed at flowers, especially of umbels (Apiaceae), for which their elongate proboscis is adapted. It is not known whether *M. hugoi*, which has a shorter proboscis than *M. flava*, also has this habit.

In 2016 several visits have been made to the area between Bishops Gate and the Cow Pond in search of a drosophilid new to Britain that was found there in 2015. On two of these occasions single females of *M. hugoi* were found near the wooded stream in this area (SU976717) on 22 and 30 June.

It was even more surprising when a sample from Wychwood Forest, Oxfordshire, was found to contain two males of *M. hugoi*. I looked at many samples from Keith Porter's Malaise trap catches from Wychwood in the 1990s, but in July 2016 received from John Ismay a sample that had somehow been missed in the earlier circulation. This was from Cyder Well (SP334171) collected from 4 July to 3 September 1991. These males both have the thorax entirely yellow as in the female, and the abdomen yellow except for tergites 6-8 which are dark brown; males typically have indistinct brown stripes on the thorax and narrow dark bases to tergites 2-4.

Other recording in 2015

Batches of fungus gnats were received from Keith Alexander, Andrew Cunningham, Jonty Denton, Martin Drake, Adrian Dutton, Andrew Foster, Nigel Jones, Roger Morris, Ivan Perry, Alan Stubbs, Martin Townsend and Rob Wolton. Several species reared from reliably named fungi were received from Richard Fortey.

As mentioned above, Ivan Perry's visit to Scotland from 23 to 30 May 2015 proved very productive of fungus gnats, which often predominated in his catches resulting in records of 177 species, including the two species new to Britain discussed above. Since it was a late season and cold conditions persisted throughout his stay, he was surprised that gnats were as numerous as during his visit in the previous September, when he recorded 180 species. In 2015 he made ten visits to six sites, in the Rannoch and Aberfeldy areas of Perthshire. The highest total for a single site visit was to Dall Burn (NN590560) in Rannoch Forest on 30 May, with 80 species found, including *Dynatosoma nigromaculatum*, *Phronia electa* and the second British record of *Ectrepesthoneura tori* (one male). That species was only previously recorded from Britain on a male in a Malaise trap sample from Bognacruie in the Abernethy Forest in 1999 (Chandler 2006). Other finds included *Bolitophila nigrolineata* and *Allodia angulata* (Linn of Tummel, 24 May), *Gnoriste bilineata* (Pass of Killiecrankie, 27 May) and *Exechiopsis dryaspagensis* (Dall Burn, 28 May).

Ivan was quickly followed to Scotland by Roger Morris and Stuart Ball on their way to run a hoverfly course on Orkney. They collected on their journey up (3-4 June, Spey Valley) and while returning (9-12 June, northern areas). Roger provided samples from 17 sites, which comprised 84 species, but reported that fungus gnats were generally sparse, suggesting a sudden change in populations since Ivan's recent visit, although a direct comparison is not possible as different regions were visited. The highest site catch was 28 at Loch Maree (NG907710) on 11 June, which included *Rymosia setiger*.

The combined total for the two Scottish trips (May and June 2015) was 198 species.

Ivan Perry also made seven visits to the **Warburg Reserve** (SU715879), Oxfordshire, which is mixed woodland on chalk, from 10 May to 4 October, and recorded 142 species of fungus gnats, continuing to add to the inventory for this rich site. The additions to his previous fungus gnat records brought the total for his visits from 2010 onwards to 254 species. New 2015 records included *Dynatosoma thoracicum* and *Mycetophila dziedickii* (both on 8 August). Among species also recorded by Ivan in previous years were *Neoempheria bimaculata*, *Exechiopsis davatchii* (both 4 October), *Dynatosoma cochleare* (8 August), *Mycetophila sublunata* (11 July and 4 October) and *Sceptonia tenuis* (10 May).

Some of Ivan's finds in his local area are reported elsewhere here. He also made five visits to **Flitwick Moor**, Bedfordshire, from 7 May to 26 September, adding to his previous records for that site, which comprises both wet alder wood and oak and birch woodland. These visits produced 116 species, which on 7 May included *Sciophila buxtoni* and *Phronia portschinskyi*. The latter was also found here by Ivan in 2013 and 2014. All other British records of *P. portschinskyi* are from wetlands in Wales and East Anglia.

Keith Alexander had a good catch of 1123 specimens comprising 127 species of fungus gnats from four flight interception traps deployed at **Clayhidon Turbary** Devon Wildlife Trust Reserve (ST1515) from 18 August to 17 November 2015. These included *Exechiopsis dumitrescae*, *Mycetophila lastovkai*, *Mycomya pectinifera*, *Sciophila geniculata* and *Trichonta nigrigula*. The site includes heathland and mires, with some old trees and wet woodland. The largest of his four catches was 99 species from a

trap placed at the edge of wet birch and willow woodland above a recently cleared area reverting to mire. A trap suspended from an oak tree adjacent to a *Molinia* mire and a pile of cut logs produced 66 species.

Samples trapped by Keith at four sites in **Kedleston Park**, Derbyshire included 53 species. *Ditomyia fasciata*, from Vicars Wood (SK318396) in the period from July to October was near the northern limit of its known range, like the record of *D. fasciata* from the Nottingham Field Meeting (see p. 1 above).

Rob Wolton ran two Malaise traps at **Scadsbury Moor**, Rutleigh, on his Devon farm, and again obtained a considerable catch of gnats, which were pooled for each trap for the entire collection period. The total catch comprised 183 species. The larger one was from April to November at a wet woodland and *Molinia* grassland interface (SS520015), comprising 1531 specimens of 172 species. These included *Epicypa fumigata* (see below), as well as *Exechia dizona*, *Exechiopsis ligulata* and *Mycetophila sigmoides*.

The other trap was in alderwood (SS517014) and sited over a rotting stump from May to November; it produced 253 specimens of 69 species. Among these were *Ectrepesthoneura colyeri* and *Trichonta pulchra*. The presence of both *Brachypeza armata* and *B. bisignata* indicated *Pleurotus* in the vicinity.

It was reported last year that there were by then records of 204 species of fungus gnats for Locks Park Farm, of which these sites are a part. The 2015 catches have added 32 species, bringing the total to 234 species for the farm (all within hectad SS50). In 2015 Rob also provided records for 12 sites elsewhere in Devon, amounting to 70 species, of which 16 were additional to those found on his farm, giving him a total for the year of 199 species.

Martin Drake provided, in addition to his catches from the Nottingham Field Meeting discussed above, numerous samples collected by him in 2015 in Devon and Somerset. These related to 67 visits to 58 sites on 42 days, with wet woodland habitats predominating. The overall species total of fungus gnats was 190. Some of the more interesting finds are detailed below under "Other significant records". Some localities and dates were in common with specimens examined for Rob Wolton and Andrew Cunningham, relating to excursions by the Devon Fly Group.

The samples supplied by Martin Townsend from **Chalkhills Farm** (SU640780), Buckinghamshire, comprised 55 species collected in 2014. In addition to the first British records of *Mycetophila hyrcania* reported above, there were *Mycetophila deflexa*, *M. sigmoides* and *Rymosia spinipes*.

Material received from Andrew Foster was mainly from various parts of **Horner Wood NNR**, Somerset, with records of 64 species boosting knowledge of the gnats of that rich site. These included *Mycomya insignis* and *Mycetophila immaculata*, both from a bottle trap on oak (SS899430), in the period 2-29 September 2015. Although within the southern part of its scattered distribution, this is the first British record of *M. immaculata* in the present century; there are previous records from ten hectads, the latest being from Scotland in 1999.

Samples from **Hollies Wood** (SJ51), Shropshire were examined for Nigel Jones. These included 62 species; the most interesting find *Macrocera longibrachiata* is reported on above. A male of *Mycetophila sublunata* was caught on 13 October. He also reared *Ditomyia fasciata* from *Meripilus giganteus* at this site.

Richard Fortey reared several species from fungi collected at **Grim's Dyke Wood** (SU738843), his own woodland in the Chilterns. These included *Bolitophila occlusa* from a *Postia* species, and *Trichonta vitta* from *Schizopora paradoxa*.

On 20 September 2015, I attended the inaugural meeting of the BENHS Saproxyllic Group at **Shotover Hill** and **Brasenose Wood**, Oxfordshire, led by Keith Alexander and Ivan Wright. Fungus gnats were sparse with only 13 species recorded, but these included *Sciophila thoracica* from Shotover Hill (SP5606), which was also among the samples from this site examined for Ivan Wright in 2013. Its occurrence at Aston Rowant NNR was mentioned in Newsletter 7 (Chandler 2014) – it has a scattered distribution in S England, with records now from 13 hectads.

In addition to the fieldwork mentioned above, I made four visits to **Bushy Park**, Middlesex in 2015. Dry conditions still prevailed with gnat numbers even lower compared to other recent years. All records to date were included in an account of the Diptera fauna of the Park (Chandler 2015c), which listed 168 species of fungus gnats that had been recorded in the period 2010 to 2015.

I reported last year that in September 2014, I began to visit the **Fleet Pond** Nature Reserve, Hampshire, with diverse woodland and wetland habitats in the 1km squares SU8154, SU8254 and SU8255. Six afternoon visits were made from 9 September to 3 December 2014. In 2015 I made 5 visits from 12 May to 2 September. Only 40 species of gnats were found, including 9 new to the site, bringing the total for the reserve to 83 species.

Other significant records (mostly for 2015)

Macrocera estonica

Lampert Mosses, Northumberland, 9.ix.2015: 1 male NY701761; 1 male, 1 female NY700770; 1 female NY691745 (A. Dutton). Scottish records were reported in Newsletter 8 (Chandler 2015a); these new records are within the Pennines part of its known distribution.

Anatella ankei

Bewley Wood (ST291064), Devon, 13.v.2015, 1 male; Radish Plantation (SY184920), Devon, 25.vi.2015, 1 male (C.M. Drake). Of the 5 previously recorded British hectads, the only English record was Cogley Wood, Somerset in 1986. There are more recent records from Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

Epicypa fumigata

Scadsbury Moor (SS520015), Rutleigh, Devon, iv-xi. 2015, 7 males in Malaise trap (R. Wolton). This species was new to Britain when recorded by Rob Wolton in 2013 (Chandler 2014) and was found by him again in 2014 (Chandler 2015a). It has yet to be found elsewhere in Britain.

Exechia spinigera

Newton Wentlooge levels (ST2378), Monmouthshire, 4-6.viii.2014, 1 male (D. Gibbs). This species was recorded as new to Britain by Gibbs (2011) on a single male from the Gwent levels and this is the second British record, from a nearby site.

Exechiopsis dryaspagensis

Knapp Copse (SY1595), Devon, 18.iv.2015, 1 male (C.M. Drake). A Scottish record is cited above.

Greenomyia mongolica

Lode (TL531626), Cambridgeshire, 16.viii.2015, at *Bupleurum fruticosum* flowers in garden (I. Perry); Wimpole Hall

(TL335515), Cambridgeshire, 3.ix.2015, at ivy *Hedera helix* flowers in parkland (I. Perry); Woodwalton Fen, Cambridgeshire, 10.xi.2015, 1 male (A.E. Stubbs); Pegwell Bay, aspen and sallow scrub on concrete at disused hoverport (TR3564), Kent, 5.vii.2016 (A.E. Stubbs). Alan's record from the Rufus Stone in the New Forest is mentioned above (p. 2). The biology, distribution and recent spread of this species were discussed in the previous Newsletter (Chandler 2015a). The 2016 record obtained during the summer field meeting based at Canterbury is included to bring records up to date; it is of interest in indicating one of the routes by which this species may have first entered the country.

Manota unifurcata

Sycamore Farm Wood (ST290058), Devon, 30.vi.2015, 1 male (C.M. Drake). Records from two sites, respectively in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, are also reported above. This species was discussed in some detail in Newsletter 7 (Chandler 2014), including a distribution map showing scattered records in S England north to Cambs, and in S Wales. It was mentioned that it is possibly too secretive in behaviour to be detected more frequently. In Newsletter 8 (Chandler 2015a) records from Surrey and N Wales were added.

Mycetophila lastovkai

Further records of this species are mentioned elsewhere in this Newsletter. It was also recorded at several sites in Devon by Rob Wolton and Martin Drake. It is now being recorded regularly at sites in southern England, so is evidently well-established albeit with as yet unknown biology.

Mycetophila lubomirskii

Mid Holmwood Common (TQ1646), Surrey, 8.x. 2015 (J. Denton). A Windsor record is cited above.

Mycetophila strigatoides

Marsland Nature Reserve (SS222172), Welcombe, Devon, 30.ix.2015 (R. Wolton).

Mycetophila sublnata

Burridge Common (ST316063), Devon, 16.v.2015, 1 male (C.M. Drake); Wadenhoe (TL0083), Northamptonshire, 22.x.2015, 1 male (A.E. Stubbs); Morkery Wood (SK9418), Lincolnshire, 11.vi.2015, 1 male (A.E. Stubbs). Five widely scattered 2015 records from other sites are reported above. These reinforce the conclusion from other records since first recorded in Britain in 2011, that it is well established in the southern half of England.

Mycetophila uliginosa

Charlton Musgrove (ST731204), Somerset, 11.vi.2015, 1 male (C.M. Drake); Wordley Wood (SK895003), Leicestershire, 29.vi.2015, 1 male (A.E. Stubbs).

Mycomya collini

Clipsham Park Wood (SK976171), Northamptonshire, 11.vi.2015, 1 male (A.E. Stubbs). This species is widely distributed in England north to Cumbria, but with previous records from only 5 hectads it remains very little known, and nothing is recorded of its biology.

Trichonta fusca

Yocklett's Bank Nature Reserve, in broad-leaved woodland (TR1248), Kent, 8.vii.2016 (A. Halstead). This is an unexpected find as the only previous British record was of 2 males from damp broad-leaved woodland at Monk's Wood NNR on 12.vi and 19.ix.1972 (Cole & Chandler 1979). Its biology is unknown.

Acknowledgements

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I am indebted to Colin Gray and Rachel Jones for enabling me to continue surveys at Fleet Pond. I thank Natural England and the Crown Estates for permission to continue with surveys of Windsor Forest and Great Park, and the Royal Parks ecologists for enabling my further visits to Bushy Park.

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Peter Chandler

Flat-footed Fly Recording Scheme

Newsletter 1 Autumn 2016

A new recording scheme

A new scheme is launched here to cover the 35 British species of the family Platypezidae, and has been added to the Diptera Recording Schemes recognised by BRC.

This small family, with fungus feeding larvae is varied in form and coloration, with females in particular often exhibiting attractive patterns, e.g. the female of *Polyporivora ornata* (photo Jeremy Richardson) shown above.

Records are acceptable in any form and specimens can be submitted to me for checking. At present available data is being assembled into a spreadsheet, with name, grid reference, county, locality, date, recorder, number and gender of specimens. If it is in a museum collection or a published record this is noted.

Identification

Platypezidae is a distinctive group of primitive Cyclorrhapha, characterised by a broad head with holoptic eyes in the male, erect antennae with a terminal arista, a humped thorax, acrostichal bristles either as a median uniserial row or absent, broad wings with a well-developed anal cell, and the hind legs more or less enlarged and often with broadened tarsi – particularly broad and flattened in the females of subfamily Platypezinae, hence the name Flat-footed Flies.

While males of most species and females of some are mainly dark coloured, the sexes often differ in coloration. In these cases the females are usually more brightly coloured, with distinctive patterns of brown, grey, silver, yellow or orange markings.

All British species may be identified using the keys to the European species in Chandler (2001), except that *Agathomyia elegantula* of that work was shown to be a complex of at least five species in northern Europe by Ståhls *et al.* (2014). The only member of this group confirmed to occur in Britain is *A. boreella*, under which name it was first introduced as British by Dr J.H. Wood (Wood 1905).



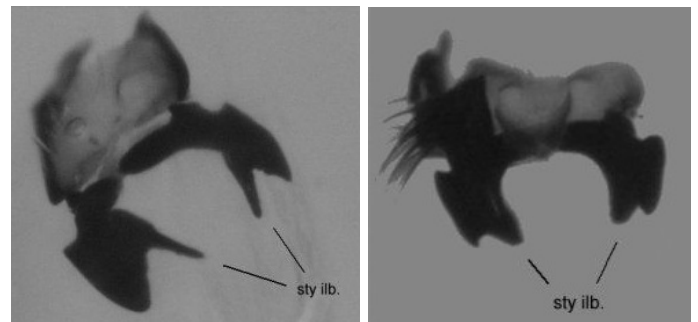
Ståhls *et al.* (*op. cit.*) also include revised keys to the European species of *Agathomyia*.

A manuscript key to the British species was circulated to those attending the workshop on fungus-associated flies held at Preston Montford in 2011. This needs to be modified in respect of the above-mentioned changes, and also to add *Platypezina*. It is available on request. A colour version of this newsletter is also available as a pdf.

Two species confused under *Callomyia amoena*

There is also a cryptic species that was confused under *Callomyia amoena* by Chandler (2001), and which closely resembles both sexes of that species in coloration. It was recognised as distinct in Germany a few years ago by Claus Claussen, who observed that males that had a dark stem to the halteres differed in the form of the surstyli.

Chandler (2001) considered that the dark-stemmed form, which predominates in northern Europe, was an intraspecific variation. However, this difference in surstyli clearly shows that it represents a different species, and this has been confirmed by Gunilla Ståhls using DNA. The correct nomenclature for these species awaits re-examination of Meigen's type of *amoena*.



Surstyli of *Callomyia amoena* sensu lato: left, common form in British Isles, with halteres all yellow; right, with dark stem to halteres (photos by Claus Claussen; sty ilb = inner lobe of surstylus).

It can be reported that both species occur in Britain, as a few males with dark-stemmed halteres, agreeing with the

above photograph in the form of the surstyli, have been seen from northern England. It is presently unclear if females can be separated on a similar basis. Hence the total of 35 species found in Britain.

Opetiidae

Chandler (2001) also included *Opetia nigra*, which was formerly in Platypezidae but is now separated as family Opetiidae. It differs in having a two- instead of three-segmented arista, irregular thoracic bristling between the dorsocentrals without distinct acrostichals, distinctive wing venation and the hind legs are simple without any enlargement. Small and black in both sexes, it has been reared from rotten wood but the immature stages are unknown – their discovery would be an exciting development in determining its phylogenetic position. *Opetia nigra* is common, with British records from at least 230 hectads. Records of this species will also be accepted.

How to find platypezids

(1) Smoke Flies – *Microsania* species

These are small and black in both sexes, with distinctive wing venation – a short R_1 , an associated stigma with a distinct margin, M_1 free basally and crossveins absent.



Wing of *Microsania pectipennis* (photo by NHM)

They are rarely recorded away from the smoke of burning wood or other vegetation. Records have diminished in recent years due to such fires being less often available for recording, but this is unlikely to indicate any decline in their populations. Males are often numerous when observed in aerial swarms, in which there are often two or more species present in the smoke, though presumably in species-specific sub-swarms (unconfirmed). Females may be found entering the swarm or settled in the vicinity.

The frequency with which they are found when smoke is investigated suggests that they are common everywhere in wooded districts, so what they do otherwise is a mystery. Collin (1934) swept two species from marram grass and one had been found on a poultry house window in 1926 by F.W. Edwards. Russell (1960), when recording them in bonfire smoke, also noted swarms near the upper branches of a nearby sycamore; he didn't say how tall the tree was.



Microsania meridionalis (S Europe) male, with mites on abdomen (photo Rui Andrade)

The larval habitat remains unknown. The adult flies often have clusters of pink mites on the abdominal membranes, which has not been recorded in other Platypezidae, so that should be a clue to the likely habitat. However, the several attempts to have these mites identified have produced different results, with four different mite taxa being implicated (Chandler 2001, Tkoc *et al.* in press) – in general they are dung or compost associated mites but this is at present too imprecise to reach a satisfactory conclusion. It is unclear whether this is a purely phoretic association or, in view of its frequency and the numbers of mites involved, a parasitic relationship.

A phylogenetic study of Platypezidae using DNA (Tkoc *et al.* in press) has suggested that *Microsania* is not closely related to other Platypezidae and represents a clade of uncertain status. There are many differences, not least in wing venation, but they do resemble other platypezids in the antennal structure with a terminal arista, the thoracic chaetotaxy with uniserial acrostichal bristles, the enlarged male hind tarsi and the structure of the male genitalia. They are retained in Platypezidae pending any further investigation of their relationships.

The finding of early stages of *Microsania* (as with *Opetia*) would be helpful in establishing its systematic position.

(2) Other Flat-footed Flies

Platypezids are mainly restricted to wooded habitats, as most of the fungi in which they develop are saproxylic. An exception is *Lindneromyia dorsalis* as it develops in field mushrooms.

Both sexes may be observed running about on broad leaves in erratic fashion like Phoridae; in this members of the subfamily Platypezinae are more energetic and more often found in this way than are those belonging to the subfamily Callomyiinae. They apparently feed on honey-dew or other surface deposits. This is the only known adult feeding activity – they don't visit flowers (it isn't known if *Microsania* feed as adults). Leaves of trees and shrubs are favoured but some herbaceous plants are also visited. Presumably leaves at all heights can be utilised so abundance may not be easily determined from sampling

foliage within reach, as use of a long handled net has suggested (see Plate 3, Fig. 4 in the *Dipterist's Handbook* – Malcolm Smart has proved adept at catching platypezids in this way). Callomyiinae are more often swept from low vegetation, so their adult activity is less often observed.

Males of all species are believed to form aerial swarms to attract females for mating, although this has been observed in relatively few species. Swarms may be up to several metres from the ground, often in a gap in the canopy, so are easily overlooked. The distinctive colour patterns of many females are thought to aid recognition when they enter the swarm.

Females may be found visiting the fungal hosts for oviposition, and will usually be seen on the underside of the cap, at the pore surface of polypores, or between the gills of a gill fungus. Finding females on a fungus is an obvious clue to host selection, e.g. *Agathomyia lundbecki* females were found on *Inonotus radiatus* growing on alder *Alnus* some years before it was confirmed to be the host.

Platypezids are overlooked by many recorders because of their small size, specialised behaviour, close association with their fungus hosts, the mainly autumnal flight period of many species and possibly relatively low population densities. They are, however, a rewarding group to study, once the techniques for finding them are understood.

Fungus hosts

All Platypezidae other than *Microsania* are certainly fungus feeders as larvae. Most are monophagous or oligophagous, in the latter case restricting the choice of host to one or a few related genera, or to fungi with a similar form or texture.

Chandler (2010) listed the known fungus hosts of British species. Since then *Paraplatypeza bicincta* has been reared from *Pluteus* and knowledge of the biology of the genus *Agathomyia* has improved with recent work in Scandinavia and the Netherlands (see below).



Puparium of *Callomyia gilloglyorum* (a North American species) (from Kessel 1961)

Callomyia larvae feed at the surface of encrusting fungi on damp rotten wood and it is unclear if they have any

specific associations. Their larvae and puparia are rather flat-bodied and very distinctive in having two branched processes at the side margins of each segment.

Platypezina connexa has been obtained in emergence traps over decayed fallen spruce *Picea abies* trunks in Finland (Ståhls & Kahanpää 2006), but it is yet to be established whether it has any specific fungal host. The immatures are undescribed.

Agathomyia larvae develop internally in polypore fungi. Only three of the eleven British species, *A. collini*, *A. viduella* and *A. woodella*, have yet to be reared; it is still thought that *A. collini* is associated with *Phellinus pomaceus* on rosaceous trees, but its rarity has precluded any progress on that. All are highly specific to their hosts but only *A. wankowiczii* is known to cause gall formation, its galls being conspicuous on the underside of brackets of *Ganoderma applanatum*. Part of the photograph below is included in Tyler (2010).



Underside of *Ganoderma applanatum* brackets well-covered with galls of *Agathomyia wankowiczii*, each with an exit hole (photo John Tyler)

Larvae of *Agathomyia* resemble those of Platypezinae in having only a single lateral process on most segments (see photos on p. 4). They are more cylindrical in form, as are larvae of three genera of Platypezinae that also develop in polypores (see photo of *Bolopus* larva on p. 8). The latter choose brackets of softer texture than those selected by most *Agathomyia* species: *Bolopus* in *Polyporus squamosus*, *Seri* in *P. durus* and allied species, and both *Polyporivora* species in *Trametes versicolor*.

The remaining genera of Platypezinae – *Lindneromyia*, *Paraplatypeza*, *Platypeza* and *Protoclythia*, develop in gill fungi. They have broader-bodied larvae (see photo on p. 4) that often feed at the surface of the gills. The last two of these genera are principally associated with honey fungus (*Armillaria* spp), while both British species of *Paraplatypeza* develop in *Pluteus cervinus* and *Lindneromyia dorsalis* develops in *Agaricus* species (field mushrooms) and other similar fungi, e.g. the parasol mushrooms (*Macrolepiota* spp).

The records of *Proctoclythia* and *Platypeza* from boletes and *Lycoperdon*, and *Lindneromyia* from *Calvatia* and *Boletus*, require confirmation. It is always possible that larvae may wander in a mixed collection of fungus fruiting bodies, which may lead to misleading conclusions about hosts, so it is important that fungi are isolated for rearing.



Larvae of a *Platypeza* species (photo Judy Webb)

Larvae and puparia of Platypezidae have a good range of structures that aid identification at both genus- and species-level. They are illustrated in many of the works cited here, and descriptions of diagnostic characters of 14 species in 11 Holarctic genera were given by Rotheray *et al.* (2004).

There is plenty of scope for adding to knowledge of platypezid hosts and early stages.

New hosts in *Agathomyia*

Thanks to recent efforts in Finland and the Netherlands the fungus hosts are now known for a further four of the British species of *Agathomyia*, confirming the exclusive association of this genus with polypores. The new findings concern rearing of *A. sexmaculata*, *A. cinerea* and species of the *A. elegantula* group including *A. boreella*; *A. lundbecki* has also been confirmed to develop in *Inonotus radiatus*, as had been expected since females had been observed on this fungus in Britain (Chandler 2001).

Agathomyia cinerea was reared by Reemer (2015) in the Netherlands from *Ischnoderma benzoinum*, a bracket fungus that grows mainly on Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris*. The fungus was growing on pine in a coastal dune area. The rearing took place following an observation of a female of *A. cinerea* ovipositing on the fungus. The article includes photographs of the fly and the fungus, which has a reddish brown cap with a whitish rim. *Ischnoderma benzoinum* is widespread in Britain, growing mainly on conifers but there are occasional records from broad-leaved trees such as horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*. Most of the sites where *A. cinerea* has been recorded in Britain

are broad-leaved or mixed woodland, so observations to establish its host here would be of interest.

Agathomyia lundbecki was a new record for Finland when it was reared in numbers from *Inonotus radiatus* (Ståhls & Kahanpää 2006), confirming that host association.

The *Agathomyia elegantula* group was revised by Ståhls *et al.* (2014), from which it is concluded that British material previously identified as *A. elegantula* should be assigned to *A. boreella*. The latter species has an entirely dark-bodied male while most other members of this group including *A. elegantula* have the male abdomen partly yellow or orange, as in the females of all species in this group.

It was found in Finland that *A. elegantula*, *A. boreella* and a third newly described species *A. alneti* develop in fungi of the genus *Antrodiella*; *A. boreella* was obtained from both *A. faginea* and *A. pallescens*, *A. elegantula* from *A. pallescens* and *A. alneti* from *A. serpula*.



Larva of *Agathomyia boreella* (from Ståhls *et al.* 2014)

These small bracket fungi grow in colonies of annual fruiting bodies and are responsible for a white rot, but some species occur only on trees already decayed by other polypores; *A. pallescens* is usually on birch following attack by *Fomes fomentarius*, and *A. serpula* on alder attacked by *Inonotus radiatus*, while *A. pallescens* occurs on a wider variety of broad-leaved trees including beech, oak, poplar and willows. *Antrodiella* species are evidently locally common in Scandinavia but apparently rarer here.

Agathomyia sexmaculata larvae have been found in *Bjerkandera fumosa* in both Finland and the Netherlands (Reemer *et al.* 2014). The Finnish larvae, found in this fungus growing on a decayed willow *Salix caprea* trunk, were identified by DNA barcoding. In the Netherlands oviposition was first observed, followed by rearing; here the fungus was growing on a fallen decaying poplar *Populus* trunk. The larva was described and illustrated, together with photographs of adults and the habitat.

These findings demonstrate what can be achieved with diligent observation of potential larval habitats. All of these new fungus hosts, and other polypores not yet known to be platypezid hosts, should be searched when fresh for ovipositing females. An article on the fieldcraft necessary to locate immature stages of cyclorrhaphan Diptera (Rotheray 2016), a neglected field, is presently to appear in *Dipterists Digest*.

Phenology

The table below shows the adult flight period for each species, based on British data except for *Agathomyia sexmaculata* and *Platypezina connexa* where each is known only from a single British record in October – the flight period for mainland Europe is given in these cases.

Species	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
<i>Paraplatypeza atra</i>								
<i>Agathomyia collini</i>								
<i>Lindneromyia dorsalis</i>								
<i>Agathomyia antennata</i>								
<i>Bolopus furcatus</i>								
<i>Agathomyia viduella</i>								
<i>Polyporivora ornata</i>								
<i>Microsania collarti</i>								
<i>Microsania pallipes</i>								
<i>Microsania pectipennis</i>								
<i>Callomyia amoena</i>								
<i>Callomyia speciosa</i>								
<i>Callomyia dives</i>								
<i>Agathomyia wankowiczii</i>								
<i>Seri obscuripennis</i>								
<i>Agathomyia sexmaculata</i>								
<i>Agathomyia boreella</i>								
<i>Callomyia elegans</i>								
<i>Platypeza consobrina</i>								
<i>Platypeza fasciata</i>								
<i>Agathomyia woodella</i>								
<i>Microsania straeleni</i>								
<i>Microsania vrydaghi</i>								
<i>Agathomyia lundbecki</i>								
<i>Platypeza aterrima</i>								
<i>Platypeza hirticeps</i>								
<i>Polyporivora picta</i>								
<i>Protoclythia rufa</i>								
<i>Protoclythia modesta</i>								
<i>Agathomyia falleni</i>								
<i>Platypezina connexa</i>								
<i>Paraplatypeza bicincta</i>								
<i>Agathomyia unicolor</i>								
<i>Agathomyia cinerea</i>								
Total per month	7	14	19	23	29	31	25	8

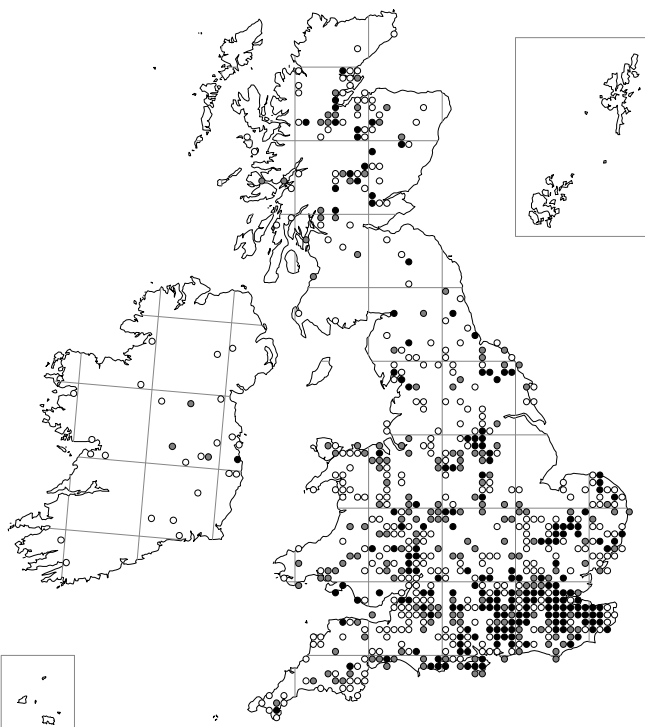
This suggests that September is the most productive month, with August as a close second. However, while the autumn flying species may start to appear in August, there are relatively few records of them for that month, and October is usually the most productive month in numbers of individuals. Some species are found mainly in spring and early summer. *Agathomyia wankowiczii* flies only in May and June, and most records of *A. viduella* are from those months. These and species that only appear from July onwards are probably univoltine. The few records of *Polyporivora picta* in April and of *Agathomyia unicolor* in June and July may suggest that they are occasionally bivoltine. The species with an extended flight period, such as *Paraplatypeza atra*, *Lindneromyia dorsalis* and *Polyporivora ornata* are probably bi- to multivoltine, depending on appearance of their fungal hosts.

Museum collections

Platypezid collections at the following museums were studied in the 1970s and 1980s, some of them (*) also more recently: Natural History Museum, London*; National Museum of Ireland, Dublin*; National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh*; National Museum of Wales, Cardiff*; the University Museums at Oxford*, Cambridge, Manchester and Glasgow; the World Museum, Liverpool; the local authority museums at Colchester*, Winchester*, Reading, Doncaster, Ipswich, Nottingham, Leicester and Maidstone; the BENHS collection at Dinton Pastures*.

If anyone knows of other collections please let me know.

Present knowledge of distribution



All hectads with platypezid records:
open circles = pre 1990 records only, grey circles = post 1989 records only, black circles = both periods

The available data includes records from 738 of the hectads in the British Isles, shown on the above map. This, and the other maps shown on pages 7 and 8, were kindly prepared by Stephanie Rorke of BRC. The total of 738 includes 711 or 25 per cent of the 2845 hectads including land in Great Britain, but only 27 hectads in Ireland. Although not all of the British hectads include woodland, in which most platypezids are found, this indicates a relatively low level of recording nationally, which needs to be taken into account in determining status.

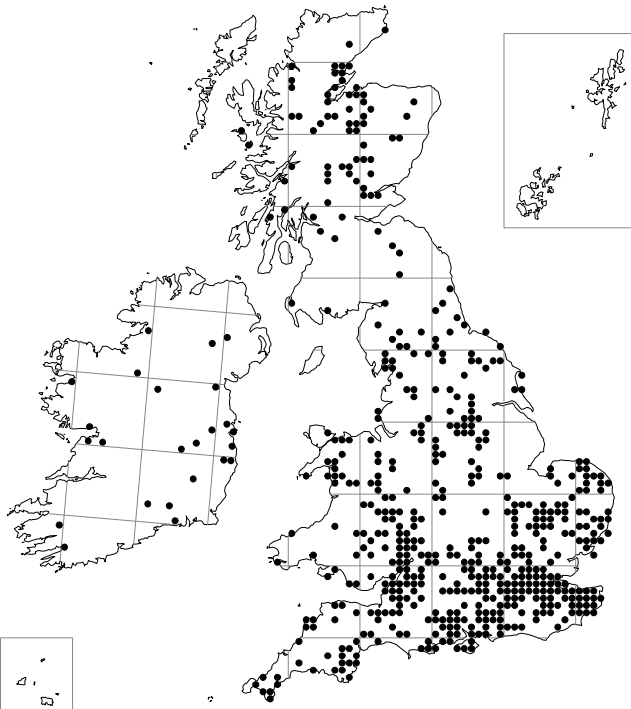
Platypezidae was included in the review of scarce species by Falk & Chandler (2005), when eleven species were accorded conservation status (2 Vulnerable, 1 Near Threatened, 1 Data Deficient and 7 Nationally Scarce). Ten of these had been listed with status by Falk (1991); *Agathomyia wankowiczii* (cover photograph of the 2016 Spring Bulletin) was added although considered likely to have been a recent arrival in this country (first record in 1990) because of its conspicuous galls on *Ganoderma*, which were unlikely to have been overlooked earlier.

Four other species had been added to the British list too recently to be assessed: *Agathomyia cinerea* (added in Chandler 1998, first record in 1992, now 19 hectads in S England north to Leicestershire and Anglesey in N Wales); *Agathomyia sexmaculata* (added by Chandler 2002a, recorded in that year at Thompson Common, Norfolk, not yet found again in Britain); *Paraplatypeza bicincta* (added by Chandler 2002b, first record in 2001, now 16 hectads in S England); *Microsania vrydaghi* (added by Ismay 2002, first record in 2001, since found at two other sites). Only one other species has been added since, *Platypezina connexa* (Halstead 2016, found in the New Forest, Hampshire in 2015). It is possible that some or all of these species are recent arrivals in Britain, and the spread of *Agathomyia cinerea* and *Paraplatypeza bicincta*, following on that of *Agathomyia wankowiczii*, tends to confirm this.

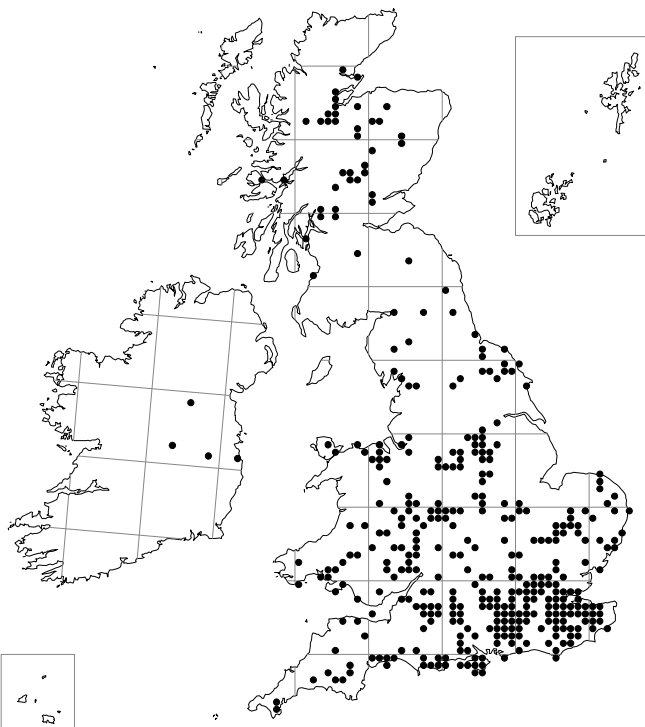
In 2012 a new status review (as yet unpublished) was carried out. This attempted to assess whether there had been recent changes in status, basing the comparison on the numbers of hectads in which a species had been recorded before 1990 and since 1989. When carrying out the earlier review published in 2005 (first compiled in 1995) there was a general trawl only for records of the species already assigned status by Falk (1991). There was a good idea of the frequency of other species from the recording experience of myself and others, and from my examination of museum and other collections, which provided a good coverage of the historic records. For the new review, records in the Dipterists Forum database and on the NBN were also available.

However, the number of post-1989 hectads for several common or frequent species was significantly less than for the pre-1990 period. This is not too surprising as the earlier period encompassed more than a century, going back to the treatment of this family in Verrall's 1901 *British Flies* volume and into the 19th century with recording by Dale, Haliday and Walker. Overall there are more than 100 hectads known for 10 species and none of those is likely to warrant conservation status. As, however, the post-1989 hectad total was less than a hundred in most cases, this could indicate at least Nationally Scarce status *if the level of recording for the family nationally wasn't taken into account*.

A comparison is made here between the number of hectads in which there are records for the family in the two periods. Of the 711 hectads for which there are platypezid records in Great Britain, 522 have records up to 1989 while 377 have records from 1990 onwards, with just 188 in common between the two periods.



Hectads with platypezid records up to 1989



Hectads with post-1989 platypezid records

These maps demonstrate the extensive gaps in recording and the south-eastern bias, with concentrations of records in some other areas indicating location of collectors or of field meetings, particularly those taking place in the autumn. There is plenty of scope for recording in new or underworked regions.

The Irish fauna is especially poorly known, with a high proportion of the records from my own collecting, some provided by Jim O'Connor and the 19th century records by Haliday. However, 16 species have been recorded there, more than half the British fauna before the post-2000 additions.

The status of *Bolopus furcatus*

Bolopus furcatus is a widespread species found throughout the British Isles. It develops in the common dryad's saddle bracket fungus *Polyporus squamosus* and may be locally numerous, but it is small and entirely dark coloured in both sexes, lacking any sexual dimorphism in colour pattern. It is also closely tied to its host fungus.



A female of *Bolopus furcatus* ovipositing under a bracket of *Polyporus squamosus* (from Ståhls *et al.* 2012)

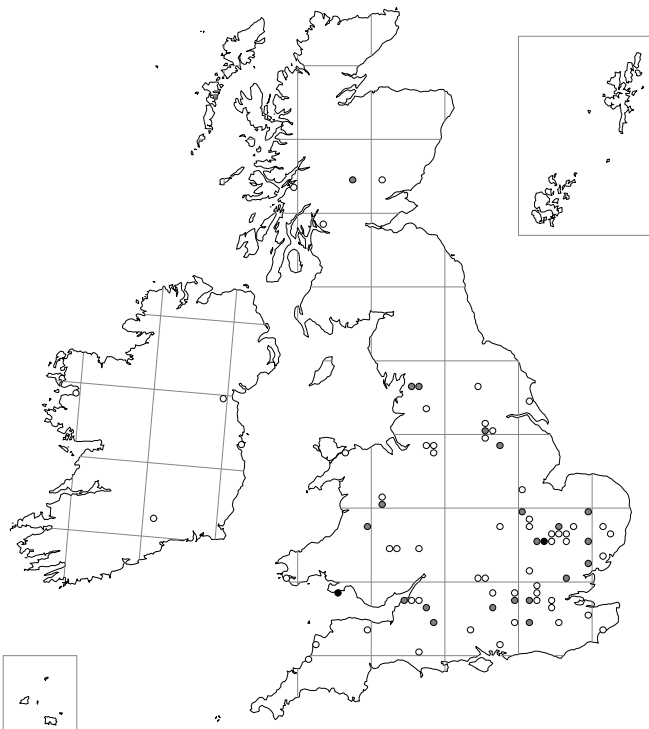
The fungus is parasitic on deciduous trees, especially elm (*Ulmus*), beech (*Fagus*) and sycamore (*Acer*), where it causes a white rot decay. The brackets are produced annually from spring to summer, with *Bolopus furcatus* adults visiting from April to September, and larvae being found from May to September. Females may be readily observed assembling for oviposition on the white underside of fresh brackets, but because of this specialised behaviour they only occasionally come to the notice of general recorders. Ståhls *et al.* (2012) illustrated adults and larvae, when confirming its presence in Finland

Because very few recent records were known to me, dipterists likely to have recorded it were contacted in February 2016, increasing post-1989 hectads to 23.



Females of *Bolopus furcatus* under brackets of *Polyporus squamosus* (from Ståhls *et al.* 2012)

The map below shows that, while there are only 23 hectads with records from 1990 onwards, it had been recorded in 56 hectads in Britain and 4 in Ireland before 1990. Comparing these numbers of hectads alone might suggest that a substantial decline had occurred in the population of *B. furcatus*. However, as with most widespread species, the records up to 1989 are from a much longer period, spanning more than a century of recording but by a limited number of recorders, and consequently a relatively small number of hectads are recorded within each decade.



Distribution of *Bolopus furcatus*: open circles = pre-1990 records only, grey circles = post-1989 records only, black circles (only 2) = both periods.

A breakdown of records into periods, each of two decades from 1890 to 2011, shows the following results:

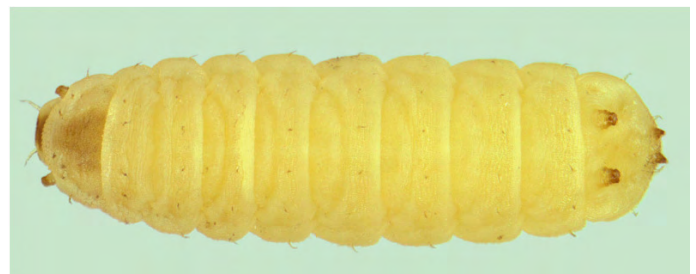
- Post-2011 5 hectads (3 recorders)
- 1990-2011 18 hectads (12 recorders)
- 1970-1989 22 hectads (9 recorders)
- 1950-1969 19 hectads (13 recorders)
- 1930-1949 8 hectads (7 recorders)
- 1910-1929 8 hectads (7 recorders)
- 1890-1909 7 hectads (8 recorders)

Only eleven hectads appear in more than one of these recording periods, and only two of the 23 post-1989 hectads had previously been recorded for *B. furcatus*. Overall there have been 43 recorders, 22 of whom have contributed a single record. More than 350 specimens are known to be in collections, relating to 126 records, of which 19 were made by me and 11 by Ivan Perry, i.e. a quarter of all records were by two recorders.

The map shows how widespread it is. It is known from 96 sites in 31 counties in Britain (25 counties throughout England; Caernarvon, Glamorgan and Montgomery in Wales; Dunbartonshire, Argyll and Perthshire in Scotland) and 4 widely separated counties in Ireland. Nine records are of rearing from larvae or puparia found in the host fungus; 21 other records are certainly of adults found on the fungus, and this was probably also true of many others where this information wasn't recorded.

The low number of hectads in common between any of the periods suggests that total recording has covered only a small proportion of hectads within the area of occupancy. That a quarter of all records were made by two recorders confirms that intensive and exhaustive recording by a larger number of recorders and targeting the host fungus would result in a more comprehensive knowledge of its distribution and abundance. There is no reason to suppose that it no longer occurs in any of the recorded hectads where suitable habitat is present. It is thus likely to occur in many more than 100 hectads, and probably does not warrant conservation status.

However, one has to be there on the right day, when the fungus is fresh, to find visiting adults of this species.



Larva of *Bolopus furcatus* (from Ståhls *et al.* 2012)

The past

The history of recording of *Bolopus* related above, and other historic records of platypezid distribution, demonstrate the debt owed to past recorders of this family.

It was thanks to George Verrall (1901), who included Platypezidae with Syrphidae and Pipunculidae, in his first volume of *British Flies* that a firm basis was provided for study of flat-footed flies in the British Isles. In his usual style he gave detailed descriptions of the 14 species known to him, as well as *Opetia nigra* and *Atelestus pulicarius* (as *Platycnema pulicaria*), two species which are no longer included in the family. These were illustrated by drawings of wings, abdominal patterns and other diagnostic features, drawn by his nephew James Collin.

Most of the species then recognised had been described by the early 19th century European authors Meigen, Fallén and Zetterstedt, but one of the species included by Verrall was described by their contemporary, the Irish dipterist Alexander H. Haliday. This was *Platypeza infumata*, now *Polyporivora ornata* (Meigen's name proposed earlier in the same year (1838) having priority, as discussed by Verrall). Verrall (1901) also described two new species, *Agathomyia collini* found by his nephew, and *Platypeza hirticeps* by Dr John H. Wood; both names are still valid.

There had been an earlier treatment of the British Isles species by Francis Walker (1851), who recognised 15 species, with some input from Haliday. Some of these were concluded to be synonymous by Verrall, but *Platypeza aterrima*, previously described by Walker in 1835 and placed in synonymy with *P. fasciata* by Verrall, has since been recognised to be a good species.

The remarkable contribution to knowledge of British Platypezidae by Dr John Wood was described in the recent issue of *Dipterists Digest* devoted to him and to Colonel Yerbury (Chandler 2015: pp 34-35). It wasn't mentioned there that his records, including those of *P. hirticeps*, had already added substantially to the data cited by Verrall. Wood went on to add five species to the British list in the genera *Callomyia* and *Agathomyia*.



Callomyia elegans female (photo Dmitry Gavryushin)

Yerbury's specimens from South Wales added *Callomyia elegans*, though it had been correctly recorded by Walker (1851) from Ireland (in Haliday's collection) under its synonym *C. leptiformis*. Walker's "elegans" comprised a male of *C. amoena* and female of *C. speciosa*. *Callomyia elegans* had also been found earlier in England (Glanville's Wootton, Dorset in 1861 and 1890) by C.W. Dale.

Smoke flies (*Microsania* species) came to notice as British insects belatedly when the two most frequent species *M. pectipennis* and *M. pallipes* were recorded by Collin (1934, see p. 2), but records at bonfire smoke rapidly followed starting with Edwards (1934).

My interest began in 1966 when I found *Agathomyia falleni* at Knole Park, Kent (Chandler 1968). This was then a recent addition to the British list, first found by Len Parmenter (1953) at Box Hill in 1952. It is now known to occur widely in S England (31 hectads) but still arouses delight whenever it is seen in the field. Like *A. unicolor* it develops in the bracket fungus *Bjerkandera adusta*, but is much less widespread.



Agathomyia falleni female (photo Jeremy Richardson)

Chandler (1974) attempted to clarify the nomenclature and synonymy in *Callomyia* and *Agathomyia*, and added *Microsania collarti* (as *M. stigmatalis*), *Agathomyia lundbecki* (as *A. biseta*) and *Seri obscuripennis* to the British list. McLean & Chandler (1982) added *Microsania straeleni*. Later additions from 1990 onwards are discussed above (p. 6).

Acknowledgements

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Malcolm Smart and Del Smith. Ivan Perry has also provided other data on his recent finds, as have Laurence Clemons, Mark Mitchell, Jeremy Richardson and Judy Webb on theirs. I thank Gunilla Ståhls for the use of photographs from her papers, the Natural History Museum London for the *Microsania* wing photograph, and Rui Andrade, Claus Claussen, Dmitry Gavryushin, Jeremy Richardson, John Tyler, and Judy Webb for their photographs included. I am also indebted to the authorities of the museums mentioned above for the opportunity to examine their collections.

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Peter Chandler

**Hoverfly
Newsletter**
Number 61
Autumn 2016
ISSN 1358-5029



It is probable that in most years we entomologists complain about the seasonal shortage of insects in the families that we study, however 2016 (at least till the beginning of August when these words are being written), seems to be quite exceptionally bad, not just for hoverflies and other Diptera but for many other insect orders too (Lepidoptera and Hymenoptera for example). In the case of hoverflies, this year's records in my area include a good range of species, but numbers of individuals are well below expectation. Of course we all hope that this is merely a temporary setback and that in due course we shall see a recovery.

In 2001 the first Symposium on the Syrphidae was held in Stuttgart. Since then these symposia have been held in alternate years in different countries, and the 9th in the series will take place in Brazil next year. With the permission of the organisers the invitation and details of the event are included in this newsletter. Please note that the September date for registration of interest is not a final deadline for application to attend the Symposium. Further details can be found on the website <http://syrphidaesymposium.wixsite.com/iss9-curitibabrazil>

Copy for **Hoverfly Newsletter No. 62** (which is expected to be issued with the Spring 2017 Dipterists Forum Bulletin) should be sent to me: David Iliff, **Green Willows, Station Road, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos, GL52 9HN, (telephone 01242 674398), email:davidiliff@talk21.com**, to reach me by 20 November 2016. The hoverfly illustrated at the top right of this page is *Helophilus pendulus*.

Hoverfly Recording Scheme Update Summer 2016

Stuart Ball, Roger Morris, Ian Andrews, Joan Childs and Ellie Rotheray

For those who are wondering what has happened to the update of the atlas, please bear with us! It is proving to be a somewhat bigger job than we had expected, not least because there has been a significant increase in the volume of records arriving (see Figure 1 below). We now have all of the 2015 data uploaded but know that there are several datasets we have yet to get. Another reason for the delay is that Stuart has been busy rewriting the HRS website; this is progressing well and will hopefully go live before too long.

So, when will the atlas revision emerge? Realistically it is a few months away. We have still to check some records and make sure that there are as few errors as possible. Then the text will need vetting by CEH at Wallingford. Hopefully all this will be completed by spring 2017.

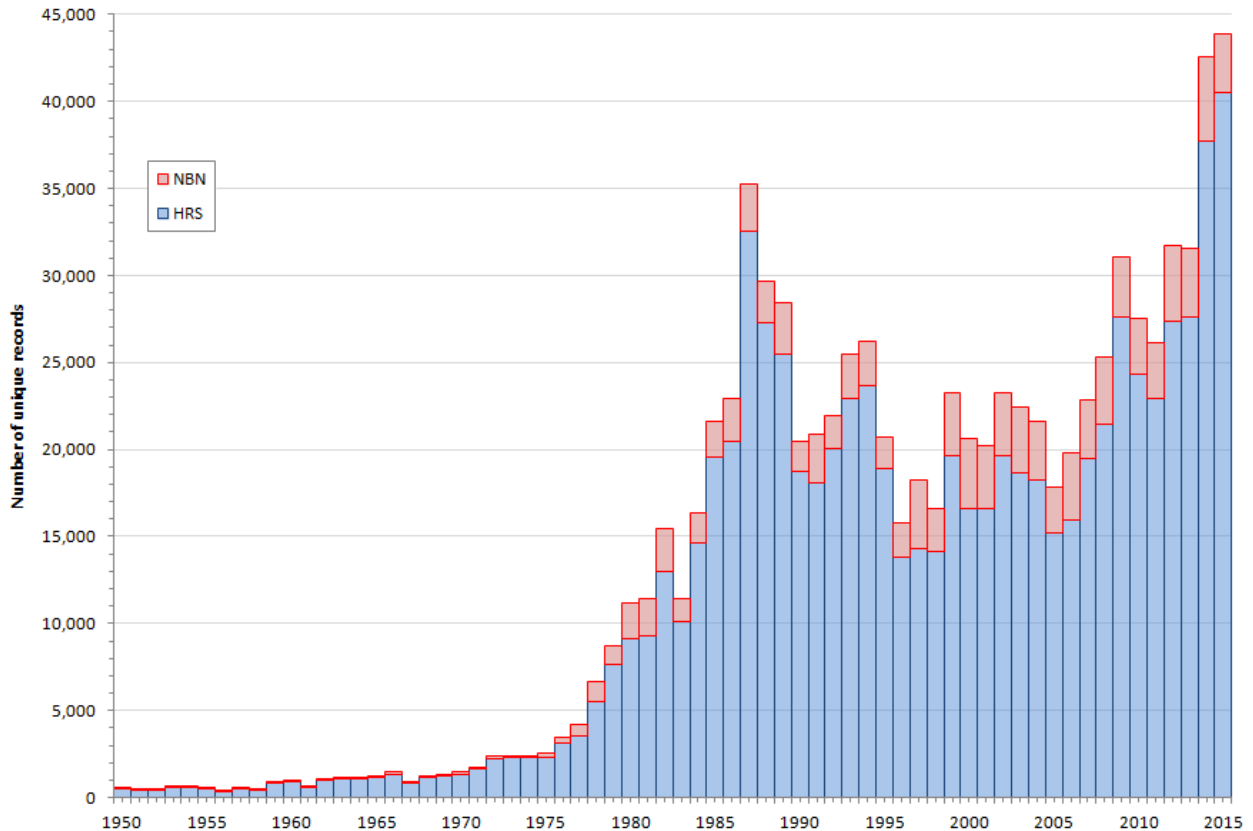


Figure 1. Numbers of 'unique' full records available, separated into data held directly by the Scheme database and additional data held on the National Biodiversity Network (NBN). (note that 'unique' data are those species' records from separate dates and grid references).

The main reason for the jump in recording is the level of activity generated by the UK Hoverflies Facebook group. In the last three years, this group and other web-based sources have received contributions from more than 1,000 people each year and seen a substantial number of very active recorders become established. This can be seen in Figure 2, which also shows how recording by photographers has developed between 2013 and 2016. The growth in recording effort is actually more dramatic than this figure suggests because some of the more active photographers have switched from only submitting photos to submitting their full records via spreadsheets but getting a few photos checked when they are unsure of identifications. This change is a very positive demonstration of the ways in which the internet can be used as a teaching medium.

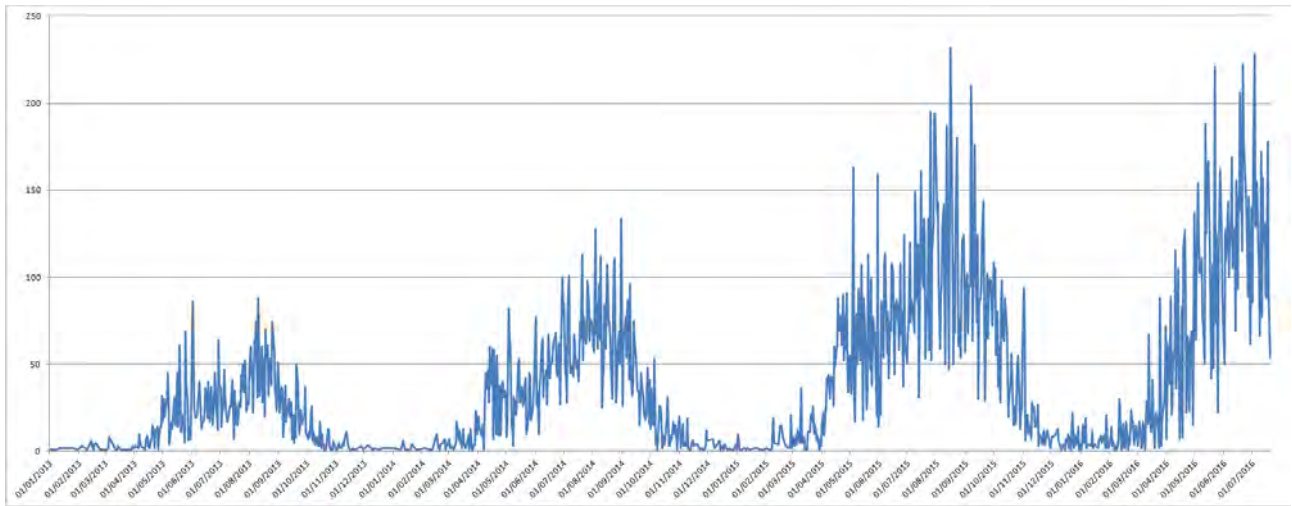


Figure 2. Daily records from photographic sources between 2013 and July 2016.

One of the most striking features of the Facebook group is the way it has stimulated recording during winter months. Last winter was quite a revelation, with amazing numbers of hoverflies recorded in the depth of the winter (also illustrated in Figure 2). We really did not have an idea of how active hoverflies could be during those months, although it is clear that the winter of 2015-2016 was not “normal” with the period Dec-Feb being the mildest on record. It remains to be seen what will happen in future years, but the establishment of a really big and active group has the potential to explore this issue in much greater detail. In addition, there is also a growing group of people who record from their gardens or a favoured site on an almost daily basis. This sort of recording has huge potential to develop into a long-term monitoring scheme which would be similar to the idea promoted by Alan Stubbs many years ago.

A further reason for increased recorder effort must be that the impact of the training programme is beginning to be seen. Not every course generates new recorders, but occasionally a course has a significant effect. This result is best demonstrated by the level of activity in Norfolk where participants in our course at Wheatfen now make a highly significant contribution to incoming data. Can this outcome be repeated elsewhere? Stuart and Roger are still available to run courses and as yet have no bookings for winter 2016/2017. The most effective courses are those where there is somebody locally who wants to get a county recording scheme moving. Anybody with such aspirations might like to contact us so that we can see what might be done.

Pocota* v parakeets! Potential competition for rot holes between *Pocota personata* (Syrphidae) and ring-necked parakeets *Psittacula krameri

Joan Childs

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On 16 May 2016 I visited Abney Park Cemetery in Stoke Newington, north London, to look for *Pocota personata*, which had been reported at this location by Mick Massie on the UK Hoverfly Facebook Group a few days earlier. On first arriving at the cemetery I noticed that there were many ring-necked parakeets flying over and perching in trees. A large feral population of the ring-necked parakeet has become established in the UK through escapes or deliberate release of captive birds. From an initial breeding population in Kent in 1969, they are now particularly numerous in the London area, but are spreading increasingly further afield.

Starting to explore the cemetery, I located a large ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) tree with multiple rot holes that looked likely for *Pocota*. One of the holes in this tree was occupied by a ring-necked parakeet, presumably nesting (photo 1). I did not see a *Pocota* at this tree.

At another mature ash tree, I located a *Pocota personata* investigating a number of rot holes, flying from one to another, between a height of approximately 6 and 9 metres. A parakeet had taken up residence in one of the holes in this tree. A second bird, presumably its mate, was sitting close by on top of another rot hole (photo 2). The *Pocota* repeatedly buzzed around this right hand rot hole, frequently coming into close vicinity with the bird sitting on top. The parakeet was clearly agitated by being buzzed by the fly, looking around and snapping repeatedly at it as it came close.

I can only speculate on whether there is competition between *Pocota* and parakeets for prime rot holes (or if *Pocota* might prefer wetter holes and the parakeets drier ones), or if the interaction might be deleterious enough to put *Pocota* off finding a mate or laying eggs, or indeed if a parakeet might have any real chance of catching a *Pocota* that might be irritating it. However, I thought that the interaction was of note.

I would like to thank Mick Massie for his *Pocota personata* photo, which was much better than mine!



Ring-necked parakeet occupying tree hole in ash
(photo: Joan Childs)



Pair of parakeets dominating two tree holes contested
by *Pocota personata* (photo: Joan Childs)



Pocota personata, 13 May, Abney Park Cemetery
(Photo:Mick Massie)

Basking and mating habits of *Orthonevra geniculata* at Wicken Fen

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There are 123 species of hoverflies listed on the Wicken Fen database, one of which is a Red Data Book species and nine being Nationally Scarce. The local and declining *Orthonevra geniculata* is represented on the database by seven records. The first for the reserve was recorded on 9 June 1932 by J E Collin. The remaining six records, each a single specimen, were all made by Ivan Perry, the latest being in 2001. The records are spread from 12 April to 9 June.

When I started working at Wicken in April 2014 I was keen to establish if this species was still present on the Fen. It was not one I was familiar with, so I had no field experience of it. The only hint to method of collection in the Wicken database was that a male had been 'swept from buckthorn'.

In my first field season on the Fen, I spent time looking specifically for this species through sweeping and searching flowers by eye, including extensively working willow blossom which is listed as a preferred food source. However, I was unable to confirm its continued presence.

On 21 April 2015, I arrived on the Fen early morning with the intention of undertaking survey work. The conditions were sunny and warm, but very windy. I decided to concentrate my efforts in some sheltered wet woodland on the boardwalk close to the Visitor Centre in the Sedge Fen, part of the National Nature Reserve. Conditions were very wet in the woodland with standing water at the base of the trees. I spotted a pair of mating flies some distance into the woodland, on the sunny side of an ash tree, *Fraxinus excelsior*, and took some photos in order to get a clue as to their identity. Back in the office, magnifying the images showed that the flies were an *Orthonevra* species. The third antennal segment was highly elongated and the legs were partially yellow. Additionally, the male fly had one wing extended, showing some dusky shading, and dark marks at the inner end of the stigma and cross-vein r-m. All of these features indicated *O. geniculata*. I returned to the wet woodland and located several individual flies on similar trees in the immediate area, with a mating pair on a different tree from the one where the original pair was found. I collected a specimen and was able to confirm the identity as *O. geniculata*. Incidentally, several male *Cheilosia pagana* were exhibiting similar behaviour, which I have observed previously in this species.

Having 'got my eye in' to the behaviour of *O. geniculata*, I located a number of additional individuals and mating pairs in similar circumstances around the boardwalk and Nature Trail in the Sedge Fen throughout April, both on live standing trees and felled trunks. They seem to particularly like basking on sunny trunks along rides, which appear to provide ideal lekking and mating opportunities as they are frequently seen in cop. I have not seen reference to this behaviour in *O. geniculata*.



Initial sighting of *Orthonevra geniculata* in cop on ash tree at Wicken Fen



Close-up of mating pair of *O. geniculata*



Ash tree in wet woodland where *O. geniculata* was originally located

An additional species of *Sphaerophoria* exhibiting an interrupted thoracic stripe

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I was interested to read the article in the last Dipterists Forum Hoverfly Newsletter by David Iliff and Martin Matthews about a specimen of *Sphaerophoria scripta* with an interrupted thoracic yellow stripe above the wing base, resembling that found in *S loewi* and *S rueppellii*. The key in Stubbs and Falk already notes that some specimens of *S fatarum* and *S virgata* can have a broken thoracic stripe.

I have also found this condition in a male *S interrupta* taken from Yealand, Lancashire on 8 June 2012 (identification from genitalia examination). As can be seen in the photograph, there is absolutely no hint of the yellow stripe continuing posteriorly.



male *Sphaerophoria interrupta* (photo: Joan Childs)

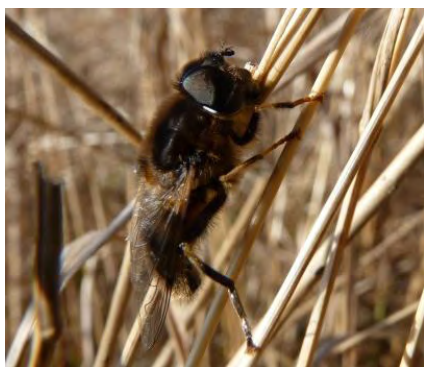
A comparison of pollen cover of male and female *Eristalis pertinax* at Wicken Fen

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On 20 March 2016 I was staking out some thistles on a muddy drove at Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire, looking for early *Cheilosia*, when I noticed a number of female *Eristalis pertinax* coming down to oviposit on the mud. Additional females were perched on adjacent dry reed stems. Every female that I could see had an obvious covering of pollen, presumably from the sallows on the edge of the drove, the only obvious pollen source in the vicinity, and certainly abundantly available. There were also a number of male *E. pertinax* which were either holding territory patrolling airspace over the mud or perched on the reed stems near the females. None of the males had any pollen covering at all. There were approximately equal numbers of each sex (about 10 of each). Among the possibilities, one conclusion might be that the males are prioritising mating over feeding whereas the females, needing to nourish their eggs, do not miss an opportunity to feed. Certainly, the males seem to spend a lot of time patrolling airspace, which is presumably territorial behaviour.



Male *Eristalis pertinax* showing no pollen cover (photo: Joan Childs)



Female *Eristalis pertinax* showing extensive pollen cover (photo: Joan Childs)



The 9th International Symposium on Syrphidae - 2017 1st Circular - June 24th 2016

Welcome

Dear Fellow Dipterists and Friends,

It is a great pleasure to invite you to attend the 9th International Symposium on Syrphidae (ISS9). Taking place for the first time in the Neotropical Region, the ISS9 will be held in Curitiba (Brazil) from 28th August to 1st September 2017. We are sure it will be an excellent opportunity to establish new research collaborations and share experiences on Syrphidae.

This information is also available at www.syrphidae.com and www.diptera.info.

Location

Curitiba is located in the South Region of Brazil and most of its inhabitants are of northern European descent. It is an important cultural, political, and economic centre in Latin America. Although Curitiba holds a population of 2 million inhabitants, it is managed to preserve its mid size town atmosphere. It was founded by the Portuguese over 300 years ago and settled by immigrants (such as Italians, Polish, Ukrainians, Germans, and Japanese). The name "Curitiba" comes from the Tupi words *kurí tyba* (= many pine seeds), due to the large number of pinecones of Paraná pines (*Araucaria angustifolia*) occurring in the region by the time of its foundation.

The ISS9 will be held in the Hotel la Dolce Vita located in a preserved region of rich nature, close to the "Serra do Mar", 40 km away from Curitiba's metropolitan area.

Further details about prices and booking will be announced soon.

Transport

Curitiba is served by the Afonso Pena International Airport and the Symposium venue is located about 18 Km from the airport.

If you are coming to Curitiba from abroad there are flights from all the larger capitals (São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Brasília and Porto Alegre). The easiest way is to take a flight to São Paulo (São Paulo International Airport - GRU) with a connection flight to Curitiba (CWB).

Registration and Travel support funds

Registration fee and travel support grants will be estimated based on the available funds.

At this time, we would like to ask you to complete and return a 'Registration of interest' to receive further information about the ISS9 and to assist us in planning the symposium.

Abstract submission and presentation

Submission of abstracts will be opened in early 2017. Further details will be announced soon.

Preliminary Program

Following the previous Symposium, the scientific program will include sessions on Faunistics and Biogeography; Systematics and Phylogenetics; Biology and Ecology; Biodiversity Assessment and Conservation; and Integrated Pest Management and Biocontrol.

Day / Time	Monday August 28 th	Tuesday August 29 th	Wednesday August 30 th	Thursday August 31 st	Friday September 1 st
8:30 - 9:00		Opening	Opening	Opening	Excursion
9:00 - 12:30		Symposium	Symposium	Symposium	
12:30 - 13:30		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
14:30 - 17:00	Arrival	Symposium	Symposium	Symposium	
17:00 - 19:00	Registration				
19:30 - 21:30	Welcome Dinner	Dinner	Banquet	Dinner	

Important dates

Until 15th September 2016: Registration of interest

28th – 31st August 2017: Symposium

1st September: Excursion

Excursion

We are still planning the best option for an excursion. As soon as we have the itinerary, it will be announced.

Weather

Curitiba has a mild humid temperate climate with warm summers and no dry season. The months of August/September are characterized by *gradually falling* daily high temperatures, with daily highs ranging from 20°C to 23°C over the course of the months, exceeding 26°C or dropping below 16°C only one day in ten (Source: <https://weatherspark.com/averages/33386/9/Curitiba-Parana-Brazil>).

For questions or suggestions, you can reach us at:

Dr. Mírian Morales

Universidade Federal de Lavras

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We cordially invite you to attend the ISS9 and contribute to the scientific program by presenting your research. Come and meet colleagues from all over the world, exchange ideas, develop collaborations and enjoy!

We look forward to meeting you all in Curitiba.

Best regards,

Mírian Morales & Luciane Marinoni
The Organizing Committee

Registration of interest

To receive further information about the 9th International Symposium on Syrphidae and to assist us in planning for the event, please complete and return this form to <syrphidae9@gmail.com>, by 15th September 2016.

Name:

Title (Dr., Prof., etc.):

I am a student: ()

Postal address:

E-mail:

() I am interested in presenting a talk.

() I am interested in presenting a poster.

() I will need a letter of invitation.

Accommodation at the Dolce Vita Hotel:

() I would like to require a single room.

() I would like to require a double room [additional bed for child: ()]

() I would like to share a room [Options - () twin room; () triple room; () quadruple room].

Additional requirements:

Book Notice: Hoverflies of Southampton by Southampton Natural History Society 2016 ISBN: N/A Paperback and in colour. 60pp. @£3.50 (including p & p)

Phil Budd philipbuddathos@gmail.com

The Southampton Natural History Society (*Registered Charity No. 264662*) is a small, non-profit making organisation that can date its origins back to 1907. Its aims are to study, record and teach others about all aspects of flora and fauna in the Southampton area. Our President is Chris Packham of BBC Springwatch fame. More details can be found on our web-site: <http://sotonmhs.org>

Over my time as Chairman, i.e. most of the last 17 years, it has been realised that many taxonomic groups, especially flora, fungi, birds, butterflies and moths, are well served by other recording groups in the Southampton area. Therefore the SNHS has decided to concentrate most of our project work on the less well recorded insect groups. To this end we previously produced the Ladybirds of Southampton (2005) and Shieldbugs of Southampton (2007).

The Hoverflies of Southampton was based on a members' survey launched in March 2013 with much additional information provided by non-members and also records accessed with permission from the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre database. 3,037 individual hoverfly records of 148 species were available up to the end of 2015. Each of the 148 species is listed in the well illustrated guide along with a wealth of other information gleaned entirely from the survey data and other observations. Three examples of the pages are illustrated below.



Myolepta dubia **Nationally Scarce**
National Status: Local and stable. **Local Status:** A woodland hoverfly; our only record is at Holly Hill Woodland Park (27/05/2008). **Food Sources:** This species has been recorded feeding on Hemlock Water-dropwort.

Neoscia geniculata
National Status: Frequent and stable. **Local Status:** An overlooked species; our only record is at Lower Test (1991). **Food Sources:** Not recorded.

Neoscia meticulosa
National Status: Frequent but declining. **Local Status:** Recorded in damp habitats, including Lower Test, Emer Bog, Lower Itchen, Hackett's Marsh and Hamble Common. **Season:** April to June. **Number of Records:** 14. **Food Sources:** Not recorded.

Neoscia obliqua
National Status: Frequent but declining. **Local Status:** Only three local records, all at Lower Test Reserve (1992, including 21/05/1992). **Food Sources:** Not recorded.

Neoscia podagrica ☺
National Status: Widespread but declining. **Local Status:** Widespread and frequent, including some garden records. **Season:** April to September. **Number of Records:** 16. **Food Sources:** This species has been recorded feeding on buttercup flowers.

Neoscia tenur
National Status: Widespread but declining. **Local Status:** Widespread and common in damp or wet habitats. **Season:** April to August, but most common in May. **Number of Records:** 19. **Food Sources:** This species has been recorded feeding on flowers, but there are no further details.



We have almost 200 copies of the Hoverflies of Southampton to sell at £3.50 each, inclusive of postage and packaging. If you would like a copy please send a cheque made out to Southampton Natural History Society to Sue Channon, 12D Farmery Close, Southampton. SO18 2JX. I'm sorry but we are not yet able to accept any form of electronic payment.

Interesting Recent Records:

Dasysyrphus pinastri: Castlett Wood SP082262, Gloucestershire. Two females, 16 May and 24 June 2016 (Martin Matthews); a county rarity, last recorded in Gloucestershire in 1996 (also a female), and only second and third VC33 records (previous one was in 1923).

Pipiza fasciata: The Mythe SO8834, Gloucestershire. Female 3 May 2016 (Martin Matthews). Eighth county record, and only second for VC33.



Cranefly News

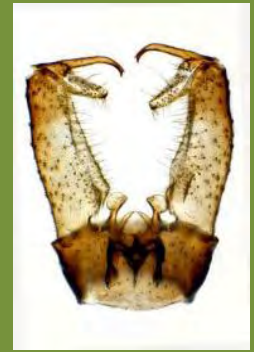
Dipterists Forum Cranefly Recording Scheme
For Superfamily Tipuloidea & Families Ptychopteridae & Trichoceridae

Newsletter No 31

Spring 2016

Editor: John Kramer

Sub-editor: John Dobson



Dicranophagma separatum (M. Ackland)

Notices

Draft Cranefly Keys - 2016

There will be a new and revised issue of the draft cranefly keys for 2016. They will take account of the revisions to the British Checklist (Stary & Stubbs, 2015) species new to Britain and additional amendments. While retaining the macro diagnostic features, some microscopic confirmatory characters have been added to help in identification. An example is given at the end of this newsletter.

As usual, if you want copies please let the editor know, and all feedback would be useful.

John Kramer

Field Work

Gillfield Wood

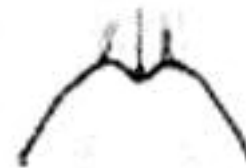
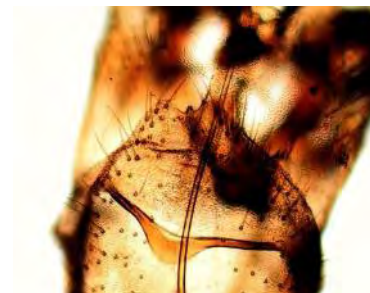


Another day-long visit was made to Gillfield Wood, Sheffield (SK30.78, VC 57) with the Sorby Naturalists on 27 Sept 2015. Organised by Derek Bateson, eight people attended and with contributions by Derek Whiteley, Chris Measures and Kevin Walker, we succeeded in adding twelve cranefly species to the list for Gillfield Wood, making a total of 58 craneflies for the site.

By wading in Tottle Brook (not Loxley Brook, an error in Issue 30) and sweeping the marginal vegetation 6 species were netted from the family Pediciidae (Hairy-eyed craneflies), 5 of which have aquatic larvae. The habitat of the larvae of *Lipsothrix remota* (found here in Gillfield Wood) is in the dams of wet twigs that you can see in the photo of a small section of the brook. Autumn woodland species found included *Tipula luteipennis*, *T. confusa* and *T. staegeri*, *Erioconopa diuturna*, *Rhypholophus bifurcata* and *R. varia*.

Tipula holoptera in Scotland.

While checking the identification of a male specimen from Seil Island, off the west coast of Scotland which looked like *Tipula* (*Savchenkia*) *pagana*, I examined sternite 8 and found it to be the close relative and look-alike *T. (S.) holoptera*.



Tipula holoptera – sternite 8. (Note that the median brush of fine hairs is missing in the photographed specimen).

Females of *T. pagana* are brachypterous, with short wings, while female *T. holoptera* have the wings fully-formed and functional.

I believe that this is the only record of the species in Scotland and the most northern record to date.

(continued)

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The details are as follows: The record is for Seil Island, NM785200, collected and determined as *Tipula (Savchenkia) limbata* by Peter Skidmore, 17/10/2001. Re-determined as *T. holoptera* by JK, 28/10/2015. The specimen is curated at the NMW, Cardiff and is on loan to the author.

Thanks to Adrian Plant for permission to examine the specimen, and to Geoff Hancock and Ashleigh Whiffin for confirming the status of *T. holoptera* in Scotland.

John Kramer

Reference

Skidmore, P. (2008). *A review of the Diptera of the Western Isles of Scotland*. Dipterists Digest, Scottish Islands edition. 15(2), 124. (Specimen recorded as *T. limbata*).

Craneflies in Northamptonshire in 2015

This is a round-up of the highlights of 2015, although not all specimens have yet been identified.

The two MV moth traps at Pitsford Water Nature Reserve (SP787699) produced a number of craneflies in the by-catch. Not all were retained by the trappers but of those that were, the following table summarises the findings. The results for 2013 and 2014 were presented in Cranefly News 29 (Spring, 2015).

The Northants and Peterborough Diptera Group

Table showing numbers of cranefly species recorded at each MV trap (water's edge & woodland clearing) in 2015.

Species (Tipulidae)	MV 1		MV 2		Species (Limoniidae)	MV 1		MV 2	
	Water's Edge	W/land Clearing	Water's Edge	W/land Clearing		Water's Edge	W/land Clearing	Water's Edge	W/land Clearing
<i>Nephrotoma appendiculata</i>	1	0			<i>Dicranomyia modesta</i>	1	0		
<i>Nephrotoma flavescens</i>	4	1			<i>Erioptera</i> sp.	4	1		
<i>Nephrotoma quadrifaria</i>	0	1			<i>Molophilus ochraceus</i>	0	2		
<i>Tipula lateralis</i>	4	2			<i>Ormosia nodulosa</i>	4	1		
<i>Tipula obsoleta</i>	1	1			<i>Phylidorea ferruginea</i>	1	0		
<i>Tipula oleracea</i>	2	0			<i>Rhipidia maculata</i>	2	1		
<i>Tipula paludosa</i>	3	1			<i>Symplecta hybrida</i>	3	0		
<i>Tipula pierreii</i>	1	0							
<i>Tipula scripta</i>	2	0							
<i>Tipula submarmorata</i>	0	2							
<i>Tipula vernalis</i>	0	1							

Recent Articles published during 2015

Dipterists Digest 2015, Vol.22, No.1.

Hancock, G. (2015). Apparent bivoltine pattern of *Molophilus pusillus* Edwards, and some other cranefly emergence patterns in Scotland, 2009. (Diptera: Tipulidae, Limoniidae). Dipterist Digest (22)1, 29-32.

The data for this paper were gathered from a Malaise trap on the east side of Loch Lomond. Bar charts are presented (no. of Individuals vs. week no.) for four species. *Molophilus pusillus* shows a very distinct bivoltine pattern, with peaks in May and early October. Since numbers are usually not recorded, it is very difficult to investigate patterns of

met most Sunday mornings from the end of April to early September. Amongst the cranefly records the following stood out. At Irthlingborough Lakes and Meadows Nature Reserve (SP9570) on 5th July many *Nigrotipula nigra* (Linnaeus, 1758) were swept in the damp meadows. This is a relatively newly acquired reserve and consists of several flooded gravel pits with winter-flooded meadows alongside. The two meadows where the craneflies were found have been recently cleared of encroaching scrub to open them up for wildfowl grazing. There are many damp areas, pools and ditches on the site and we will be making further visits in the future.

At High Wood and Meadows Nature Reserve (SP5954), near Daventry, on 26th April Brian Harding found *Erioptera verralli* Edwards, 1921. This is a new record for the group and a scarce species in the East Midlands. So far all the other species reported this year have been common ones for our area. However, the county has not been well recorded so even records of common species are filling gaps in our knowledge of the county's diptera.

My thanks go to The Wildlife Trust for Beds., Cambs. and Northants. for permission to sample their reserves and to the members of the Northants. and Peterborough Diptera Group for their records.

John Showers

emergence on a national scale. Geoff's paper invites further work on this topic so that national patterns can be established.

[The national database supports the bivoltine nature of the *M. pusillus* life-cycle, although this is modified by local factors. Six other species of *Molophilus* have a pattern of spring and autumn emergence, the strongest of which is *M. pleuralis*. [Ed.]

Kramer, J. A Review of the genus *Paradelphomyia* Alexander (Diptera, Limoniidae) in Britain. 43-57.

This is a distinctive genus, although many of the species have proved difficult to separate. Ejaculatory apodemes are illustrated and criteria for

the identification of all of the British species are evaluated.

Chandler, P. J. Diptera recording at Bushy Park, Middlesex. 69-110.

A total of 1037 Diptera species have been recorded in Bushy Park and this includes a good list of 54 Craneflies, including *Gnophomyia viridipennis* and *Rhipidia ctenophora*.

Stary, J. and Stubbs, A. E. (2015). Five species under *Dicranomyia* (*Dicranomyia*) *mitis* (Meigen 1830) (Diptera, Limoniidae). *Zootaxa* 3964(3). 321-334.

Dicranomyia affinis (Schummel), *D. imbecilla* (Lackschewitz), *D. lutea* Meigen, *D. mitis* Meigen, and *D. quadra* Meigen are species in the *mitis* group described in the past by the authorities shown. Unfortunately the holotypes have been destroyed or damaged beyond use and this group of species has caused problems for a long time.

F. W. Edwards noted the range of variation in his 1938 paper (see Cranefly News 20, Spring 2010). In addition to *D. mitis* Meigen 1830, he described two other different forms of this species. These were, var *lutea* Lackschewitz 1928 and var *affinis* Schummel 1829. The problem is that the male genitalia of these forms, now proposed as species, are very similar, and hence they were grouped as varieties of a single species by Edwards, and other workers. Alan Stubbs, in his draft key to the Limoniinae, (DF Bulletin, 1998) proposed that these be again raised to species level, using the characteristics of the pleura, claws and rostral spines to separate them. In addition he noted two other forms which he called provisionally; Species A and Species B.

Jaroslav Stary has done an excellent job in redescribing the males and females of these five species. His meticulous work has shown that the names *D. imbecilla* (Lackschewitz) and *D. quadra* Meigen, as described by the original authors, provide a good fit with the Species A (*quadra*) and Species B (*imbecilla*) as described by Alan Stubbs. Alan has also added notes on the ecology of the different species. This important and well-illustrated paper will provide a good basis for further work in Britain. [See Appendix for a key to these new species.]

John Kramer

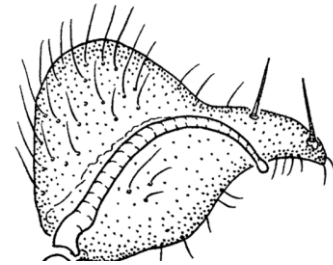
Species Look-alikes

Dicranomyia didyma v. *D. consimilis*

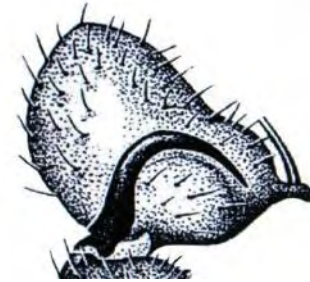
These two species have a similar appearance, the wings having a row of 4 dark spots along the costal edge (see Limoniinae key) and they could be easily confused.

D. didyma is a common but local species of waterfalls, laying its eggs in the adjacent wet moss.

D. consimilis is a rare northern species. The 2016 edition of the key has been amended accordingly.



Style of *Dicranomyia consimilis*
Illustration from Savchenko and Krivolutszkaya, 1976.



Style of *Dicranomyia didyma*
Illustration from Podenas, Geiger, Haenni & Gonseth, 2006.

John Kramer

In the footsteps of Harry Britten: Cotterill Clough revisited

Leafing through the pages of Kidd and Brindle's 1959 *Diptera of Lancashire and Cheshire*, one is struck by the frequency of certain place names (which are listed only for finds of the rarer species). Many of these fruitful sites now seem to have been engulfed in the growth of the Greater Manchester conurbation or refer to a rather large area such as the Delamere Forest (SJ57).

One conspicuous exception is Cotterill Clough, which can be located on the 1:25000 OS map at SJ8083. This narrow steep-sided valley has been carved by a small stream out of the sandstone of the Bollin Valley, which falls from a height of 56m at Castle Mill farm to 36m at the Castle Mill bridge. It has been a nature reserve since 1934, and was designated as an SSSI in 1950, but has only narrowly escaped obliteration by the second runway of Manchester Airport. As it is, the upper reaches of the Clough have been cut off by an embankment bearing the A538 to nearby Wilmslow.

Now in the care of the Cheshire Wildlife Trust, the Clough in spring presents a sea of ramsons covering the flat ground in the wider sections and extending up the steep slopes. The mixed deciduous trees rise tall and straight to an immense height, but allow a fair amount of dappled sunlight through. There is a promising amount of "coarse woody debris" in and around the stream with its stretches of sandy sediment. The level wooded ground at the top of the northern slope is rather overrun by bracken and bramble, but there are some damper pools and flushes up there.

(continued)

In the brief periods of calm between aircraft arrivals and departures, it is possible to imagine that the Clough is much as it was in the heyday of Harry Britten (senior), assistant keeper of entomology at Manchester Museum from 1919 to 1938. His initials HB appear many times on virtually every page of Kidd and Brindle.

I have recently started transcribing the set of record cards maintained by him for his own and others' records in Lancashire and Cheshire. I have just completed the craneflies (including Trichoceridae and Ptychopteridae) amounting to a total of 2206 records, of which 55% are credited to Britten himself.



Harry Britten in about 1923

I have been able to determine that 83 species were recorded in Cotterill Clough between 1923 and 1957, all but three by Harry Britten. His final cranefly record from there was on 6 June 1950, when he found *Nephrotoma crocata*, only 4 years before his death at the age of 84.

Other rare or scarce species recorded were *Ormosia aciculata*, *Hoplolabis vicina*, *Molophilus niger*, *Paradelphomyia nielsenii*, *Tricyphona unicolor*, *Tipula peliostigma*, *Trichocera rufulenta* and *T. rufescens*.

So it was with some high hopes that I set out on my first diptera survey in Cotterill Clough on 30 April this year, followed by two further visits on 3 August and 19 October.

The finds on the first visit were not spectacular, but I did get a personal first of *Ormosia lineata*, previously recorded by Britten on 5 May 1942. The August visit produced *Atypophthalmus inustus*, which was found on 1 July 1939 by F. W. Edwards – the only cranefly record from the site ascribed to the leading British cranefly expert of the time. This species was then considered very rare but by 1998 it was “proving widespread in low numbers” (Alan Stubbs, draft key to Limoniinae).

On that visit I also found what I identified as *Paradelphomyia dalei*, following consultations with John Kramer, who kindly supplied an advance copy of his article on this genus in *Dipterists Digest* (Vol 22, No 1): it seems not to have been previously recorded in Cheshire or Lancashire. Eight days later, I also found this species in the Delamere Forest. Ironically *P. dalei* was first described by Edwards in 1939 from a specimen taken in Dorset just a few weeks after the *Atypophthalmus* specimen.

In all I have found 39 species at the site, 11 of which are not in the historic (pre-1970) records. This seems a very good result, particularly when considering the large number of visits over which Harry Britten's records extend – 14 in 1942 alone.

His policy seems to have been to record species only once or twice for a given site through the whole 30 years of collecting. Even *Limonia nubeculosa* was recorded only twice, once by Britten and once by Leonard Kidd. There is then a gap of over 40 years in the records until Steve McWilliam visited the Clough in August in each of 2000 and 2001, adding a further two species to the site list, which therefore now stands at 96. Another three of the new species were not known to Kidd and Brindle from Cheshire: *Molophilus pusillus*, *Erioconopa diuturna* and *Ula mollissima*. (The last of these was not distinguished from *U. sylvatica* by British recorders before the 1970s, according to the Stubbs key).

Another of the additions to the site list is *Erioconopa trivialis* and it is curious that a species as common as this has not been recorded previously. It was certainly widespread in Lancashire and Cheshire, with 18 records in the Harry Britten dataset from a range of locations – for comparison the count for *Limonia nubeculosa* is only 37, even though it was listed by Kidd and Brindle as very common. (The respective nationwide counts on NBN are 3211 and 7158 at the time of writing.).

One can only hope that further collection of data will yield more clues about whether there have indeed been significant real changes to the cranefly fauna of Cotterill Clough in the last fifty years and about the causes of any such changes.



Cotterill Clough in early March 2015

I would like to thank Sue Tatman of Cheshire Wildlife Trust for permission to survey the site, Dmitri Logunov of Manchester Museum for access to the Harry Britten record cards, Eric Fletcher of the Cheshire Local Records Centre for their cranefly data, and lastly John Kramer as noted above for his help with *Paradelphomyia*.

Phil Brighton

The Photographic Work of Michael Ackland

Many of you will have read the very useful articles on photomicroscopy by Michael Ackland in the recent editions of the Bulletin. The first one was in Bulletin 78 of Autumn 2014 where he described the equipment and methods he used. In Bulletin 80 of Autumn 2015 he described how to make and use glycerine jelly to hold specimens firmly in position while taking a series of photographs.

Michael is a specialist in the Anthomyiidae but in this latter article he used some excellent photos of the genitalia of the limoniid crane fly *Erioptera lutea* as illustrations. He has also produced photographs of a number of other crane flies which set a high standard and will be of interest to readers. All of the specimens are well cleared while retaining their structure, and they are well presented. I have included some examples below.



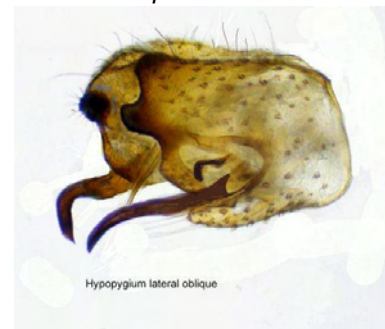
Molophilus bifidus



Molophilus medius



Erioptera lutea



Molophilus ochrescens



Erioptera fuscipennis



Dicranophragma separatum

Craneflies in the Cambrians

As part of a PhD project, William Stiles of Aberystwyth University Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS), has been carrying out a study of crane-fly populations in the Cambrian Mountains, North Wales. This is an important survey and we look forward to reading the full results in due course.

William writes: 'These surveys form part of a larger body of work all designed to understand the effect of two key environmental drivers, livestock grazing intensity and pollution from nitrogen deposition, on the ecology and ecosystem processes of the sensitive upland ecosystem.'

The researchers from this project selected crane-flies as target organisms, as many higher-order trophic level species rely on this key invertebrate group as a food source. Thus certain species within the Tipuloidea super-family could be considered as keystones in the upland ecosystem. The surveys were conducted in blanket bog, heath and acid grassland habitats, using emergence traps, inverted baskets with sticky internal panels to capture individuals.



Whilst significant numbers of small bodied species such as *Molophilous ater* were recorded, populations of long-palped crane-flies (*Tipula* spp.) were very sparse. This is clearly a worrying sign for ecosystem health and functionality as one species alone within this group (*Tipula subnodicornis*) is understood to account for approximately 75% of annual aboveground invertebrate biomass for blanket bog habitat.



Figs. Emergence trap in-situ and example of large bodied crane-fly specimen (*Tipula subnodicornis*)

There have been population declines and losses of species of conservation concern, such as the golden plover in the uplands. The loss of such an important prey group as the large bodied crane-flies may at the least partly account for the recent observed declines in such breeding bird populations.

William Stiles

Stop Press ! Crane-fly Crosses the Atlantic !!

Andrew Cunningham of the Devon Dipterists Group collected a male species of *Nephrotoma* at light while on holiday in December 2015, in the Algarve region of Portugal. After working through the Palaearctic Keys, I sent photos to Piotr Oosterbroek in Amsterdam, the authority on this group. He was able to identify the crane-fly as *Nephrotoma suturalis vulpiana*, a Nearctic species, possibly originating in the USA. Perhaps by similar cause and effect, a male specimen of the same species arrived at the same time in the post to Geoff Hancock, Emeritus Research Fellow at the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow. and again Piotr provided the name. The species is widespread and has been recorded across the USA from California to Washington.

It seems very improbable that these two specimens winged their ways across the stormy ocean to reach landfall in the Algarve. What seems more likely is that they travelled as larvae or pupae tucked comfortably into the soil around the roots of some imported plants to emerge as adults into the warm air of Portugal.

This is quite a common story in these times of global trade, so keep looking and who knows what might turn up.




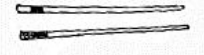

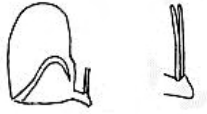

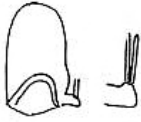

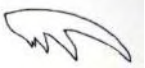
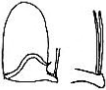

John Kramer

Next Copy Deadline: The deadline for authors for Crane-fly News Autumn 2016 (issue 32) is **20 July 2016**

APPENDIX:

Draft key for *Dicranomyia*; Group 4 Both sexes (*mitis*/*chorea* group; small spot at apex of Rs, or absent).

Wings with few if any markings, those with markings in addition to the stigma have the minimum of a spot over the apex of vein Rs. Main style inflated, often elongate, the beak short with a closely spaced pair of spines near apex (some species in other groups are rather similar).

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>1. Femora narrowly black at apex. Abdomen often strongly banded. Male main style compact, beak short with spines short (about as long as from their base to the beak apex).</p> |  |  | <p><i>chorea</i></p> |
| <p>- Femora with apical marking different or absent.</p> | | | <p>2</p> |
| <p>2. Femora with a subapical dark ring, sometimes darkened to apex resulting in a long dark apex. Wings normally with some dark markings, at least over the apex of Rs. Sc distally with hairs near apex. (as <i>chorea</i>)</p> |  |  | <p>3</p> |
| <p>- Femora often only vaguely darkened at apex. Wings often without even a dark mark over the apex of Rs. Sc without hairs.</p> | |  | <p>4</p> |
| <p>3. Pleura blue-grey dusted, propleuron dark. Top of thorax dusted but often with a shining black median line. Beak of male gonostyle with both spines equidistant from apex.</p> |  | | <p><i>affinis</i></p> |
| <p>- Pleura yellow-grey dusted, propleuron yellow. Top of thorax dull dusted. Male style beak with spines oblique or in line from apex.</p> |  | | <p><i>mitis</i></p> |
| <p>4. MALES</p> | | | <p>5</p> |
| <p>- FEMALES</p> | | | <p>7</p> |
| <p>5. Smaller species without stigma. Tarsal segments 4 & 5 very short, 5 flattened (as <i>chorea</i>). Claw as shown.</p> |  | |  <p><i>imbecilla</i></p> |
| <p>- Tarsal segments 4 & 5 normal, elongate cylindrical. Claw with several teeth.</p> | | |  <p>6</p> |
| <p>6. Yellow species. Stigma pale or absent. Main style very elongate when dry (sometimes less so fresh), spines very long and adpressed together. Wing less elongate (see female)</p> |  | | <p><i>lutea</i></p> |
| <p>- Stigma dark. Main style fairly elongate. Rostral spines shorter and obviously separated. Wing longer and narrower (see female).</p> |  | | <p><i>quadra</i></p> |

7. Females: Stigma and spot over apex of Rs usually dark and obvious. [streams, can stray]
[Separation of this and the next 2 species can be difficult in females].



quadra

- Stigma and spot over apex of Rs usually faint or absent.

8

8. Wing slightly longer. Bright yellow when alive. [calcareous, terrestrial but can occur with Species A by streams].

lutea

- Wing slightly shorter, weaker slightly smaller species. Weaker yellow when alive though colour stronger when dry. [calcareous seepages].

imbecilla

Notes on Species (*Dicranomyia*: Group 4)

- chorea** Common, even in gardens. May be swept from tree foliage or evening swarms. Subject to varieties from all yellow to very dark, and abdomen not always banded. Some forms occur in unusual situations. Most abundant in early spring and autumn.
- affinis** Scarce. Mainly heathland and moorland.
- lutea** Common in some districts. Swept from tree and bush foliage on dry calcareous soils, including Chalk. Can occur with Species A where streams are present. A yellow species, but sometimes darker.
- mitis** Common in some districts. Moist woodland soils, calcareous to neutral. Spring, rarely later to autumn. [note new strict definition].
- quadra** Common in west and north. By woodland streams, including ravines. Mainly spring and summer. Top of thorax likely to be partly darker than in *lutea* but both species variable. [within *mitis* var *lutea* of Coe].
- imbecilla** Rare. Northern and western. Calcareous seepages on rock faces or other rather bare surfaces. Shaded in woodland, or within ravines or tall herbage by waterfall splash zone. Summer.

County Recorders



Scotland	
Dumfries & Galloway ERC	
Fife Nature Records Centre	
Lothian Wildlife Information Centre	
Glasgow	
Highlands & Islands	
North East Scotland	
unassigned	
Outer Hebrides	
Shetlands BRC	
Orkney BRC	

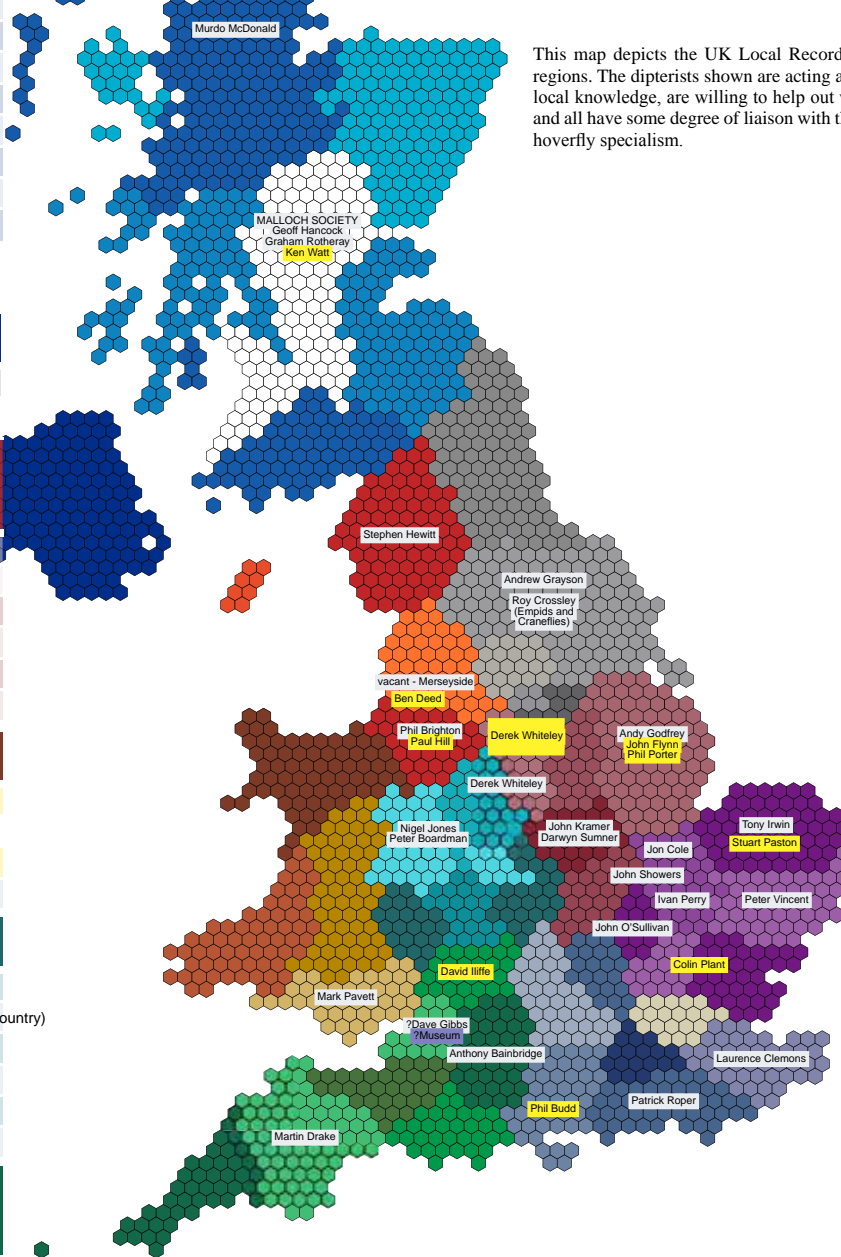
Ireland	
CEDAR (Ulster Museum)	

North West England	
Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre	
Greater Manchester LRC	
Lancashire Envi. Record Network	
Merseyside BioBank	
rECORd (Cheshire)	
Isle of Man	

Wales	
North Wales (Cofnod)	
Powys & Brecon Beacons	
South-East Wales	
West Wales BIC	

West Midlands	
Staffordshire Ecological Record	
EcoRecord (Birmingham & Black Country)	
Herefordshire BRC	
Warwickshire BRC	
Worcestershire BRC	
Shropshire	

South West England	
Bristol ERC (BRERC)	
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly - ERCCIS	
Devon BRC	
Dorset ERC	
Gloucestershire Centre for ER	
Somerset ERC	
Wiltshire & Swindon (WSBRC)	



This map depicts the UK Local Records Centres arranged by standard UK regions. The dipterists shown are acting as County Recorders. They have good local knowledge, are willing to help out with Diptera enquiries in their region and all have some degree of liaison with their LRCs. The yellow labels indicate hoverfly specialism.

North East England	
North & East Yorkshire EDC	
West Yorkshire	
North East	
Rotherham, Doncaster	
Sheffield	
Barnsley	

East Midlands	
Leicestershire & Rutland ERC	
Lincolnshire ERC	
Northamptonshire BRC	
Nottinghamshire	
Derbyshire (closed)	

East of England	
Norfolk Biodiversity Info. Service	
Bedfordshire and Luton	
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	
Hertfordshire ERC	
Essex (closed)	
Suffolk	

Greater London	
Greenspace Information for G. L.	

South East England	
Hampshire BIC (HBIC)	
Thames Valley ERC	
Kent & Medway BRC (KMBRC)	
Surrey BIC (SBIC)	
Sussex BRC (SBRC)	
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes	
Isle of Wight	

Many thanks to everyone who helped with this survey which began with an enquiry to all Local Records Centres and then led on to an investigation of Dipterists known to be working in various areas.

Treat this as a first draft, if you know of workers in areas which seem not to be covered or wish to assist in recording then please contact your LRC (list at www.ALERC.org.uk) and the Bulletin Editors.

Darwyn Sumner



Recording Schemes & Study Groups

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Tephritid Flies

Laurence Clemons
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Stilt & Stalk Fly

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Mycetophilidae and allies - Fungus gnats

Platypezidae - Flat-footed flies

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Empid & Dolichopodid

Adrian Plant
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Oestridae

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Sepsidae

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Whilst all schemes will readily accept records in written form the symbols are used to indicate some of the known (or surmised) methods by which Scheme Organisers may currently receive records electronically. All schemes will accept records in an Excel spreadsheet, add your initials to the filename. If you are sending a list of mixed Families to several schemes simultaneously please add a column with Family names.

