CRANEFLY RECORDING SCHEME NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2006

Progress with the Atlas.

Before the current bombshell regarding the future of CEH at Monks Wood burst upon us, steady progress was being maintained towards the completion of the next phase of the 'Atlas of British Craneflies' in September 2008. Hopefully we will be able to maintain the momentum, and so there is plenty of time to contribute to this part of the project. There are currently some 75,000 records entered onto the Cranefly database and which should now be accessible via the NBN Gateway, (www.searchNBN.net). However, many large databases from individuals and from museums still remain to be entered. If we can get most of the historical records entered by 2008 it will provide a firm base on which to build.

One source of historical records is from Museum collections, and volunteers are needed to work through local collections of craneflies. Even simply transcribing data from data labels is useful and many large collections remain to be catalogued. If you think you can help with your local collection, please let me know.

John Kramer

The book on British Craneflies

A first draft text was ready in spring 2004 and a polished draft in spring 2005.

There has been a substantial delay with the BENHS Publications Committee addressing the key editorial structural decisions. Thus momentum towards an autumn 2006 publication date is lost. However, it has been suggested that there should be male genitalia illustrations for all species (c. 350). Thus trial mock-ups at different scales have been prepared as basis for decisions. Apart from the matter of increasing page length, the task is not inconsiderable and would contribute to delay. It is felt too daunting to start from scratch in doing new illustrations in uniform style so it is a case of culling usable ones from the literature as far as is practical. Some are of poor print quality and may need computer enhancement (if not touching up with a pen). Some literature drawings are too crude or illustrations do not exist.

Since the book will become long to bind into one volume, one option is to trim introductory and other text so that one is left with a bald identification work. To me that would take much of the interesting guts out of the book. Another option is to split the book into two but this would lead to the combined cost being significantly higher and is probably unsatisfactory for those not yet sure whether to take up craneflies. (if they bought one book to see how they got on, their specimen would almost inevitably be in the other book).

We have to resolve the thorny matter of who would do the lay-out on computer, including those pesky thumb-nail sketches in the keys. Much of the cost of previous books has been saved via DIY, but it is not for the faint hearted and we would really like to pass the task to someone who has not done their stint before.

Many of you have test keys, and some have got a draft of the book. If there are comments, please feed them in so that we can get it right. I shall not be offended by well intended criticism – just say it straight.

Thus for the moment it is impractical to suggest a revised publication date. Meanwhile any views as to the options and ways to achieve them will be welcome. Previous books have gone through the same cycles and I have always found something useful to do during sabbaticals.

Alan Stubbs

Literature Data
A huge amount of data has been abstracted onto word files. However, it is not in consistent arrangement so cannot be transformed into Excel files. This may be a task that has to await sometime-never when BRC might take this on. On the other hand there may be a volunteer who has yet to put up his hand.

Gnophomyia
The next issue of *Dipterists Digest* will add *Gnophomyia lugubris* to the British list. It is in the test keys already.
Alan Stubbs

A Key to *Prionocera* Larvae?
Seeing a number of different species of *Prionocera* flying together on northern Swedish bogs made me wonder what ecological differences separate the niches of these different species. In order to tackle a problem like this you need to be able to distinguish between the different species in their larval phases and this is not easy. To make a start I went to a bog in southern Sweden where I thought there may be at least two *Prionocera* species sufficiently common to collect a number of their larvae. By fishing out handfuls of *Sphagnum* moss, straining them in a carrier bag with small holes in, and sorting by hand, I collected 10 larvae, at a rate of about one larva per ten litres of strained *Sphagnum*. These larvae have a very distinctive brown and yellow patterned posterior spiracular disc surrounded by hair-fringed lobes. My first hope was that each species would have a different distinctive pattern on its disc and I therefore tried to photograph them, in order to make a comparison. The larvae had other ideas. The disc is very conspicuous, and has the pattern of a face, with the two spiracles staring out like two large eyes. The effect is like the flash warning signal of the hind wing patterns of the emperor moth, and the peacock butterfly. I think that it must be used in the same way; rapidly flashed to deter predators while the prey makes its escape. Most of the time, when surfacing for gas exchange, the hair-fringed lobes open just sufficiently to make a small aperture connecting the air with the enclosed chamber between the lobes. From here, movement of gases occurs in and out of the spiracles. This means that the larva, hanging beneath the meniscus, and lying between the Sphagnum plants, is inconspicuous to would-be predators, and to dipterists. No doubt I could use a variety of methods to display the disc, but would the specimen survive, and emerge as an adult, so that the identity could be confirmed? That is the problem. I placed a larva in boiled and cooled water, in a narrow tube to restrict wriggling, and even tried to hold it between my fingers with the disc protruding, all with limited success. So, if anyone finds themselves on a good bog, with a few days to spare, the work still needs to be done!
John Kramer

Critical Species
Cheilotrichia imbuta v. Thaumastoptera calceata
Both of these species are small, pale yellow, and rather fragile, with conspicuous black knees. The wing venation is clearly different (Vide Coe and use 'Key to species with Open Discal Cell') but because the veins are difficult to see mistakes can be made. Please check any voucher specimens and send in all records of these uncommon species.
Also for *Cheilotrichia imbuta* see Edwards p118. For *Thaumastoptera calceata* see Edwards Plate 1 fig. 17

Short cuts to Identification
Phylidorea fulvonervosa

The conspicuous heavily schlerotized median hooked process is found as part of the genitalia of male *Phylidorea fulvonervosa*, but, surprisingly, is not referred to in any of the keys currently in use.

THE STATUS OF *Symplecta chosenensis* IN THE UK

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Symplecta chosenensis (Alexander, 1940) was added to the British list when Chandler & Crossley (2003) separated recent material collected in Yorkshire from *Symplecta novaezemblae scotica* (Edwards, 1938), which is still known only from a female holotype from Dingwall in Scotland. The paper also provides a list of UK records, including those previously published as *S. novaezemblae scotica* (Howe & Howe, 2000). *S. chosenensis* appears to be strongly associated, if not an obligate, of seepages on coastal soft cliffs (Figure 2) and further recording of such sites has provided additional records in north-west Wales, south Cardiganshire and Norfolk (Figure 1 & Table 1). Several of these were the result of a collaborative study between the Countryside Council for Wales and Liverpool Museum investigating the importance of key Welsh coastal soft cliff localities for invertebrates (Knight *et al*., in prep.).

References

Chandler, P. & Crossley, R. 2003. *Symplecta chosenensis* (Alexander, 1940) (Diptera, Limoniidae) new to Britain, with comments on the status of *S.scotica* (Edwards, 1938). *Dipterists Digest*, **10**: 49-54.
Howe, M.A. & Howe, E.A. 2000. Two recent records of the cranefly *Symplecta novaezemblae scotica* (Edwards) (Diptera, Limoniidae), including a first for Wales. *Dipterists Digest*, **7**: 23.

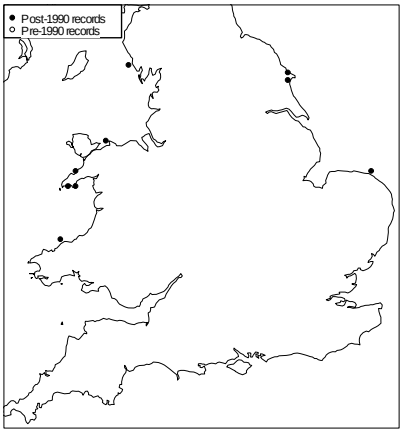

Figure 1. The distribution of *Symplecta chosenensis* in the UK.

Figure 2. Seepage at Traeth-y-mwnt, Cardiganshire supporting *Symplecta chosenensis*. *Idiocera bradleyi* has also been recorded from here.

Table 1. A list of known UK records of *Symplecta chosenensis*. Records marked * have already been published. All records attributed to Liverpool Museum were determined by T.H. Mawdsley.

Great Orme SSSI, Trwynygogarth sea cliffs	Caernarvonshire	SH750834	9.9.2004	Howe, M.A.	1 ♂
Gwydir Bay SSSI	Caernarvonshire	SH385474	8.8.2003	Howe, M.A.	1 ♂
Porth Ceiriad SSSI*	Caernarvonshire	SH313248	24.6.1999	Howe, M.A.	1 ♂
Porth Nefyn SSSI	Caernarvonshire	SH30684096	11-25.6.2002	Liverpool Museum	3 adults
Porth Nefyn SSSI	Caernarvonshire	SH30384087	25.6-4.7.2002	Liverpool Museum	3 adults
Porth Nefyn SSSI	Caernarvonshire	SH30684096	25.6-4.7.2002	Liverpool Museum	3 adults
Porth Neigwl SSSI	Caernarvonshire	SH289257	8.6.2005	Howe, M.A.	3 ♂♂
Porth Neigwl SSSI	Caernarvonshire	SH269275	26.6-4.7.2002	Liverpool Museum	5 adults
Porth Neigwl SSSI	Caernarvonshire	SH28772596	26.6-4.7.2002	Liverpool Museum	1 ♂
Porth Pistyll SSSI*	Caernarvonshire	SH323422	19.6.2002	Howe, M.A.	2 ♂♂ + 3 ♀♀
Porth Pistyll SSSI	Caernarvonshire	SH325425	26.6.2003	Howe, M.A.	2 ♀♀
Traeth-y-mwnt SSSI*	Cardiganshire	SN194519	20.7.2002	Howe, M.A. & E. A.	4 ♂♂ + 1 ♀
Traeth-y-mwnt	Cardiganshire	SN19455190	17.6-3.7.2003	Liverpool Museum	2 adults
Gutterby Cliffs*	Cumberland	SD097847	16.6.1999	Howe, M.A. & E.A.	1 ♂
Overstrand Cliffs	East Norfolk	TG250410	24.7.2003	Howe, M.A. & E.A.	2 ♂♂
Sewerby Cliffs*	South-east Yorkshire	TA1468	8.7.1997	Crossley, R.	1 ♀

Speeton Cliffs*	South-east Yorkshire	TA1476	17.8.1988	Stubbs, A.E.	1 ♀
Speeton Cliffs*	South-east Yorkshire	TA1575	20.7.2001	Crossley, R.	sev. ♂♂ + ♀♀
Speeton Cliffs*	South-east Yorkshire	TA1476	1.8.2001	Crossley, R.	sev. ♂♂ + ♀♀
Speeton Cliffs*	South-east Yorkshire	TA1476	26.7.2002	Crossley, R.	sev. ♂♂ + ♀♀

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