Dipterists Forum
CRANEFLY RECORDING SCHEME

CRANEFLY NEWS #22 - AUTUMN 2011

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CRANEFLY RECORDING SCHEME
For Tipuloidea, Trichoceridae and Ptychopteridae

Fieldwork Reports
Cranefly news from Shropshire.

The season started well in Shropshire with more people taking an interest in the group due to the training we are delivering under the Invertebrate Challenge scheme. This is a three year lottery funded project that is encouraging local people to get into the identification of under-recorded groups of invertebrates within the Shropshire area – with craneflies being one of the groups selected. This has meant that, from just me and Nigel Jones collecting craneflies in the county previously, we now have half a dozen people taking samples and a couple more photographing specimens and submitting the photos for identification. Obviously photography doesn't allow all species to be identified but it is allowing us to add to our database with easily identifiable taxa in an age when travel expenditure is more and more expensive, particularly in a large county such as Shropshire.

Our first field trip under the Invertebrate Challenge badge was to Whixall Moss in North Shropshire, a lowland raised mire. It was during the very hot late April weather so craneflies were at a premium but we did encounter a few of the bog specialist flies such as *Idioptera linnei* Oosterbroek, 1992 in numbers on one of the sphagnum-filled ditches where it has traditionally been found. There were reasonable numbers of *Prionocera turcica* (Fabricius, 1787) and *P. pubescens* Loew, 1884 scattered around the site. The second field trip in May was to Loamhole Dingle in Ironbridge, long recognised as a good fly site. Searches for the sodden dead-wood specialist *Lipsothrix* species were successful with the capture of *Lipsothrix nobilis* Loew, 1873 and a good spread of spring woodland species.

Nigel Jones has for the past few years collected craneflies on his entomological field trips and passed them to me for identification. Therefore I was thrilled to find a couple of specimens of *Arctoconopa melampodia* (Loew, 1873) from the flies he took at Big Wood on 25/04/09 which was new to Shropshire. (See map on back page.)

An early foray onto Wenlock Edge on 16/04/11 brought my annual meeting with the limestone specialist *Dicranomyia sericata* (Meigen, 1830) and rather surprisingly *Limnophila schranki* (Oosterbroek, 1992), which I've always encountered close to water, whereas this specimen was taken on a very dry limestone quarry bank some distance from the nearest stream. *L. schranki* was taken in its more normal habitat several times elsewhere around this date.

The spring brought lots of photographs arrive of *Ctenophora pectinicornis* (Linnaeus, 1758) into my email inbox from various woodland sites around Shropshire. I saw a female on a large horse chestnut tree in the car park by Marks and Spencer in Bridgnorth Low Town on 01/05/11, a very urban setting for this woodland fly.

Also of interest were photos of *Tanyptera atrata* (Linnaeus, 1758) from two Shropshire parts of the Wyre Forest from Rosemary Winnall.
Ian Cheeseborough reported the white-footed ghost *Dolichopeza albipes* (Stroem, 1768) from the National Trust site at Hopesay Hill and most recently handed over a specimen which I was very happy to see was the chocolate tipulid, *Nigrotipula nigra* (Linnaeus, 1758), (2nd Shropshire record) from wet grassland at Colemere Country Park. I am wondering whether this fly has a short flight season as both Shropshire records (12 years apart) where recorded on the 23rd and 26th June.

Pete Boardman

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The Dipterists' Forum Summer Field Meeting, Exeter University. 3-8 July 2011

Devon is an interesting County for craneflies, with the addition of sea-shore biotopes such as salt marshes and soft cliffs to the other high-quality sites found inland. A seepage on a soft cliff near Seaton yielded a female *Orimargo virgo,* recorded here by A.E. Eaton on 21/6/1905. Another rare coastal species is *Geranomyia bezzii,* and the story of its re-discovery at a coastal site during the field meeting warrants its own paragraph. (See below).The banks of the River Teign also yielded some interesting records, some of these new to S.W. England. *Tipula montium, Cheilotrichia imbuta, Hoplolabis areolata* and *Rhabdomastix edwardsi* (See maps on back page.) fall into this category. A visit to a chalk-pit stream and marsh yielded a good list, amongst which were *Atypophthalmus inustus, Elipteroides lateralis, Lipsothrix nervosa* and *Dicranophragma separatum. Molophilus corniger* and *Dicranomyia lucida* were also common here.
Alan Stubbs reports that *Phylidorea abdominalis* was found on several bogs on Dartmoor, and *Ormosia pseudosimilis* was recorded in the valleys. On Exminster Marshes, an RSPB reserve, *Tipula pierrei* was found by Ken Merrifield along a grazing levels ditch. *Molophilus corniger* and *Dicranomyia lucida* were noted from a seepage fen within Decoy Country Park, just south of Newton Abbot. *Tipula yerburyi* was found in Yarner wood (by Martin Drake). Chris Spilling also had *Tipula yerburyi* on two occasions, male and female on 04.07.2011 in Hisley Wood, SX781797, and again on 08.07.11 in the same wood with *Lunatipula cava*. *Geranomyia bezzii, Nephrotoma analis,* and *Nephrotoma dorsalis* were other good records made by Chris. (See maps on back page.) The hairy-eyed cranefly *Pedicia littoralis* seems to be doing well and was seen by stream margins at a number of sites.
John Kramer

Craneflies of a Hedgerow
While at the Summer field meeting I had the pleasure of meeting Rob Wolton from Locks Park Farm, Devon, who is doing a study of the life in a hedgerow and associated ditch, on his farm. The hedgerow serves not only to provide food, but also shelter for a wide variety of living things and so far twenty-one species of cranefly have been recorded there. It raises questions about their role in that community. How temporary is their visit? Where, and on what do the larvae feed? What feeds on them? Species found so far are: *Tipula maxima, Tipula vittata, Tipula unca, Tipula fascipennis, Tipula lunata, Tipula oleracea, Tipula lateralis, Tricyphona immaculate, Cylindrotoma distinctissima, Erioptera lutea, Ilysia maculata, Molophilus serpentiger, Ormosia lineata, Symplecta stictica, Trimicra pilipes, Austrolimnophila ochracea, Dicranophragma nemorale, Epiphragma ocellare, Limnophila schranki, Phylidorea fulvonervosa, Limonia nubeculosa. Ula sylvatica* was bred out by Rob from a bolete (cêpe), *Leccinum aurantiacum,* which is a species specific to aspen (Populus tremula) found in the hedgerow. There is also a pond nearby. A comparison could be perhaps be made with hedgerows in other parts of the country.
John Kramer

The *Geranomyia bezz*ii Story

Geranomyia bezzii Photo.Chris Spilling

In the Spring 2010 edition of Cranefly News #19, there was a request for those who visit the coast, to try and find the rarely recorded species, *Geranomyia bezzii*. Perhaps the best sites are salt marshes and the edges of coastal pools where the green alga *Enteromorpha intestinalis* grows. July to the end of August seems the best time to search. On Sunday 3rd and Monday 4th July some members of the DF Summer field meeting were in the right place at the right time to collect a number of specimens of this cranefly which was common on sea purslane (*Halimione*) and Glasswort (*Salicornia*) on a saltmarsh near Dawlish. The chlorophyte algae *Ulva* and *Cladophora* seemed more common at the site than *Enteromorpha.* On the Sunday Chris Spilling captured a pair of possibly teneral *G. bezzii* in cop. Back in the lab their pale pleura with the characteristic black markings looked striking and unusual, causing some excitement! Then an hour later Andy Grayson generously brought along to me some detritus that he was about to throw out. This turned out to comprise of 5 rather battered specimens of *G. bezzii* which he had swept in some numbers from the saltmarsh vegetation. The next day Mike Howe visited the same area and brought back half a dozen specimens which could be carded. So at last we have some fresh British material from which to do a detailed description and to compare with specimens from other parts of Europe. I visited the site on the Wednesday and the Thursday but found nothing. Wednesday was a bad-weather day with some rain and strong winds driving the sea on shore and covering the saltmarsh. On Thursday conditions were excellent, but it was still absent. This suggests to me that the strategy of simultaneous mass emergence is used by *G. bezzii* to facilitate mate location on the wide expanse of the sea shore. The population of adults seems to die shortly after mating and oviposition. It would be an explanation of why it is so rarely found.

References:

F.W. Edwards, 1939. Additions to the List of British Craneflies. E.M.M. Nov.1939

Falk, S.F. 1991. A review of the scarce and threatened flies of Great Britain. *Research and survey in nature conservation*, no. 39. NCC, Peterborough.

Lowland Heathland Fauna within the Poole Basin

An intensive survey of part of the Poole Basin heaths is currently being undertaken by local entomologist Ashley Leftwich. The intension is to monitor a series of lowland heathland fragments within the Borough of Poole throughout 2011 to provide qualitative information on the cranefly fauna. As the range of habitats and

features present within the combined selection of sites includes dry and humid heathland, mire, poor fen, spring, acid wet and dry grassland, woodland and ponds, a rich fauna would be anticipated.

Beginning in February, the survey has so far sampled over 4000 specimens and revealed a very rich fauna with 113 species at the time of writing. All species have been captured exclusively by hand netting, and over 200 pinned voucher specimens have been retained. The phenology of most of these species has been revealed in relation to the weather and other species, and it is intended to use this dataset for a series of articles in 2012.

The usual heathland species are all in evidence such as *Phylidorea squalens* and *Euphylidorea meigeni*, along with ubiquitous wet soil species such as *Erioptera fuscipennis* and *E. lutea*. Many of the species identified by Buglife as being rarities of lowland heathland have been found such as *Tipula* (*Lunatipula*) *cava*, *T.* (*L.*) *helvola*, *Limonia dilutior*, *Erioptera nielseni* and *Dicranomyia affinis*. Indeed, *Tipula* (*Schummelia*) *yerburyi* appears to be relatively frequent and widespread. Others that might be anticipated and would have been in flight have yet to be found, such as *Nephrotoma scurra*.

A provisional total of 11 Nationally Scarce species and one Nationally Rare (RDB3) are present, the latter being *Tipula* (*Yamatotipula*) *marginella* which has local strongholds in the Poole Basin and New Forest. Nearly half of the species found are of at least Nationally Local status, emphasising the high quality of the fauna present.

The finding of a small resident population of *Dicranomyia distendens* is of considerable interest, as this is typically associated with northern and western Britain, and occurs elsewhere as outliers. There appear to be few English records for this species other than from the New Forest in 1937 and from Surrey in 1974. It appears to have a very short flight period, and therefore targeted searches might possibly detect further outliers.

Two new British species also appear to be present, based on initial separation on distinctive genitalia differences, wing characters and colouration, coupled with flight period information. They are currently being determined against European species to confirm their status.

Ashley Leftwich

George Henry Verrall F.E.S. 1848 – 1911

Verrall died on 16 September 1911, aged 63, and so, this year, the centenary of his death, it is appropriate that some light be shed on his life. He made an enormous contribution to British Dipterology, and also to the study of British craneflies, on which this short piece focuses. In 1881 he published independently his list of *A Hundred New British Flies* which included 28 craneflies, (Tipuloidea) in the sense that we use the word today. At that time the British Checklist was in a bad way and one of Verrall's goals was to correct the confused state of affairs. He published his first list of British Diptera in 1888 and wrote the first *List of British Tipulidae ("Daddy-Longlegs") with Notes*, in papers published in editions of the Entomologist Monthly Magazines from 1886 to1888. 146 species were described in these early papers which included the first keys in English to identify the genera, and some of the species of British Craneflies.

In 1901 Verrall produced the second edition of his *List of British Diptera*, helped by a few other Diptera specialists, and this included 173 craneflies (*sensu* Tipuloidea). He thus provided the foundation for future work on craneflies, in Britain. In addition, he himself named four new species of craneflies which occurred in Britain. These are:
Dicranota claripennis Verrall 1888, *Eloeophila submarmorata* Verrall 1887, *Pseudolimnophila sepium* Verrall 1886, and *Dicranomyia aquosa* Verrall 1886. He also had two new species of cranefly named after him. These were *Erioptera verralli* Edwards 1921, and *Eloeophila verralli* Bergroth 1912.

Verrall was very sociable as an entomologist, and as a citizen. He served as a J.P., a Councillor and an Alderman and fought three parliamentary elections. He was a member of the 'Entomological Club' of London, playing a very active part, often as host, and he well understood the importance of effective communication between members. His involvement in the Entomological Club provided the foundation in 1887 for his annual 'Verrall Supper' which brought entomologists together from all over the country, and continues to do so. He also encouraged others via his detailed correspondence with dipterists up and down the country. Verrall played a part, with Walter Rothschild, in the acquisition of Wicken Fen for the National Trust, and published two volumes of his British Diptera, the Syrphidae (1901) and the Stratiomyidae (1909). He was a man of energy, great warmth and integrity who was greatly missed by his fellow entomologists when he died 100 years ago.

References

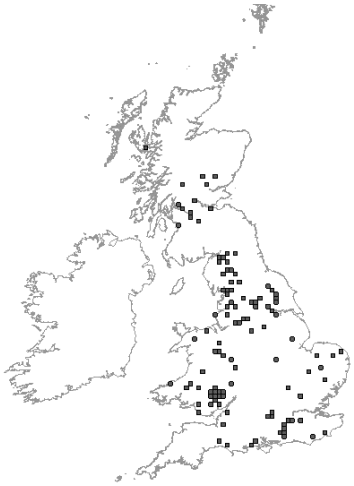
Verrall,G.H. 1886. A hundred new British species of Diptera. Entomologist's mon. Mag., 22: 179-182, 199-202, 230-234.
Verrall,G.H. 1886. List of British Tipulidae, &c ('Daddy-Longlegs'), with notes. Entomologist's mon. Mag., 23: 117-125,156-160
Verrall,G.H. 1887. List of British Tipulidae, &c ('Daddy-Longlegs'), with notes. Entomologist's mon. Mag. 23: 205-209, 263-267.
Verrall,G.H. 1887. List of British Tipulidae, &c ('Daddy-Longlegs'), with notes. Entomologist's mon. Mag. 24: 108-112.
Verrall,G.H. 1888. List of British Tipulidae, &c ('Daddy-Longlegs'), with notes. Entomologist's mon. Mag. 25: 20-27, 97-99.
Verrall,G.H. Obituary, Entomologist's mon. Mag. Nov. 1911 pp.262-264
Verrall,G.H. Obituary, The Entomologist, Vol XLIV, No.582, Nov. 1911. pp.328-332.

John Kramer

Don't forget ! Check out the distribution maps of all the species mentioned in the Newsletter, and those you find locally, at www.searchnbn.net

The next copy deadline will be on 15th December 2011, for the Spring 2012 Edition of Cranefly News.

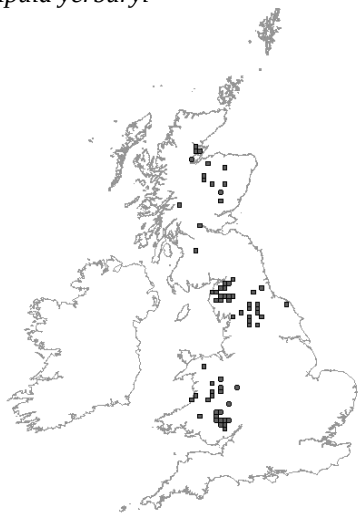
Distribution Maps of Craneflies discussed in the Newsletter © NBN



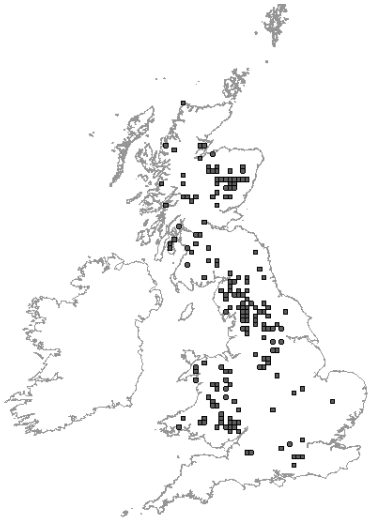
Nephrotoma analis

Tipula yerburyi

Nephrotoma dorsalis



Rhabdomastix edwardsi



Tipula montium

Arctoconopa melampodia