Cranefly News

Dipterists Forum Cranefly Recording Scheme

For Superfamily Tipuloidea & Families Ptychopteridae & Trichoceridae

Newsletter No 26 **Autumn 2013**

Editor: John Kramer Layout: John Dobson

Ctenophora ornata (Keith Godfrey)

Field Work 2013

The 12 months from March 2012 to March 2013 was one of the wettest years on record and March 2013 was the coldest for 50 years. What effect did these extremes of weather have on our cranefly fauna? From my own observations some insect species seem to have benefitted. For example, I have seen unusually high numbers of meadow brown and small white butterflies.

Alan Stubbs was summoned by Radio Cambridge to comment on air, on the abundance of the 'tiger cranefly', *Nephrotoma flavescens.* This species was also common in my own garden, where I have never seen as many. I watched a female laying eggs in a patch of the lawn moss (*Brachythecium rutabulum*), which certainly flourished in the cold wet conditions of this winter. See also below the reports on *Ctenophora ornata* and *Nephrotoma dorsalis*.

Rockingham Forest, Northamptonshire

The first Dipterists Forum field meeting of the year was held in VC 32 from 17th-19th May 2013. The weather was good and there were plenty of Spring craneflies about. *Tipula varipennis*, and *T. oleracea* were present in some numbers and specimens of *T. flavolineata, T. submarmorata* and *T. lateralis* were also recorded. Other species taken included *Erioptera griseipennis*, *Molophilus variispinus*, *M. curvatus*, *Ormosia lineata*, *Euphylidorea dispar* and *E. lineola*. The Limoniinae included *Limnophila schranki*, *Limonia flavipes* and *L. nigropunctata*. This latter was present in good numbers, especially at Glapthorn Cow Pasture.

Dipterists Forum Summer Field Meeting – Lancaster; 6th-13th July 2013

This coincided with one of the hot summer weeks and a number of the exposed habitats were dry and barren. A number of classic sites were within striking distance and good list of species was obtained from shaded river margins and wet woodland sites. These included *Nephrotoma analis*, *N. dorsalis*, *Tipula couckei*, and *T. montium. Diogma glabrata* was present at a number of sites and sometimes in good numbers, for example on the foliage of *Ranunculus repens* on the floodplains by the River Wyre.

Species of Limoniidae included *Molophilus crassipygus*, *Ormosia pseudosimilis*, *Idioptera pulchella*, *Atypophthalmus inusta*, *Dicranomyia didyma, D. distendens* and *Limonia trivittata.*

The total list for the week was over 90 species. The field meeting report in the Bulletin gives details of species, including craneflies.

Alan Stubbs writes: Much of Lancashire has been largely neglected since the 1970s. Alan Brindle carried out considerable recording in the 1950s and 60s whilst at Manchester Museum. He lived at Nelson, in the SE of the county, and was part of the entomological survey team that compiled a faunal list for Ainsdale/Freshfield coastal sand dunes in the SW of the county.

Thus when the Cranefly Recording Scheme started in 1973, Lancashire and the Manchester fringe were regarded as well recorded so effort was focused on the huge swathes of Britain which lacked data. As a result, Lancs. has become one of the least recorded areas during the last 40 years.

Lancashire contains 5 main units. The coastal plain, much of which is rather dreary apart from the dunes mentioned later. The saltmarshes are most grazed too hard. In the southern part there are the remnants of raised bogs, extensively cut for peat so that the remnants are left high and dry.

In the SE the edge of the Pennines provide rather rounded uplands dissected by valleys. Woodlands of any worth are mainly sparse and the valleys are widely developed so roads can be slow, so not a 'must visit' place, nor top of a holiday itinerary.

In the NW lies the Arnside/Silverdale outcrop of Carboniferous Limestone (and at one time the county included some rather similar outcrops on the north side of Morecambe Bay). This district is a renowned hot-spot for biodiversity. The hoverfly fauna is fairly well studied but knowledge of other fly families is not as good. There has been a fair bit of recording of craneflies since 1970, including the discovery at Gaitbarrows of a cranefly new to science, subsequently named *Dicranomyia pauli*. That species was from very dry woodland but there is a rich cranefly fauna in the associated wetlands in the district.

Otherwise the northernmost part of Lancashire is a mix of little visited low and high land.

Contents

That leaves us with the fifth unit, in the middle, the Forest of Bowland. It is the middle of nowhere, between the lures of the Yorkshire Pennines to the east and the Arnside/Silverdale areas. The field meeting gave an opportunity to record in this modern cranefly record gap. And it proved worth it. The wooded valley's had plenty of springs and groundwater seepage habitat, often calcareous, ideal for craneflies. The moorland blanket bogs were easily accessible, though here, as with the fauna of flowing water, the timing of our forays was between emergence peaks.

The Lancaster field meeting reached beyond Lancashire to some very interesting places for craneflies, such as Rusland Moss in the southern Lake District which had *Phylidorea longicornis* as one of the most plentiful species (and not seen in Lancashire where the right type of fen would appear to be absent). The Forest of Bowland was largely off the dipterist's radar but deserves much stronger attention. For craneflies, we now need to fill in knowledge of the spring and autumn faunas.

News of *Ctenophora ornata*

A significant dispersal of *Ctenphora ornata* has been recorded from areas around Windsor Great Park. The larvae of this very striking species feed in rotting beech wood.

There was a report from David Rowe of a specimen in his house (on 9/7) close to Swinley Park, a relic of Windsor Great Park. Ken Merrifield reported a male from the light trap in his Eastcote garden (Middlesex, 14/7). Specimens were also reported from Rob Andrews (Tring, Herts, 16/7) Lauren Barr (Cowley, 23/7), Adam Bassett (24/7), and Sam Jones (Silwood Park, 18/7). Sam lives on the Imperial College post-grad campus there, and reported 5 records of *Ct. ornata* that had come into the windows of flats on the campus, attracted by the lights at night between 16-24 July.

Ct. ornata from Swinley Park.
Photo: D. Rowe

This dispersal of *Ct. ornata* was noted during the hot summers of 1974 and 1975.

Martin Albertini (Moth Recorder for Bucks) who regularly operates a light trap, also commented on the seeming effect of hot weather on the dispersal of *Ct. ornata* males when 3 of them turned up in the garden mv light of Roger Hayward in Langley (30/6/2006), just over 2km from a known habitat in Langley Park, Bucks. In addition to Langley Park, Burnham Beeches and the Ashridge Estate are other known Buckinghamshire habitats.

Ken Merrifield has informed me that the nearest known site to his Ruislip garden is Langley Park, some 12 km away, so just how far can the species fly? There may be undetected *Ct. ornata* populations in a number of other woodland sites near Ken's garden. For example, the Ruislip Woods NNR was a major source of firewood for London in the past, and it may be that a deadwood species has survived there. A number of other ancient-woodland invertebrates, associated with beech, have been recorded there. Most beech trees are located in Bayhurst Wood, 4-5km away from the Eastcote garden, and there are also a few over-mature beech trees in Park Wood, about 2km away, so either of these sites could provide the larval habitat for *Ct. ornata*. [Thanks to Ken Merrifield for additional details on his local woodland habitats. See refs 1 & 2.]

This surge in numbers seems at present to be confined to the Windsor area, and Keith Godfrey (See Cranefly News 17, Autumn 2008) reports that, although he runs his mv trap nightly at Ashurst, on the edge of the New Forest, he has had no recent records of *Ct. ornata*. Apart from the mysterious specimen in the Wingate Collection (Cranefly News 24, Autumn 2012), the most northern record of *Ct. ornata* at present was sent in by Trevor and Dilys Pendleton and found on 02/07/09 in Sherwood Forest, Notts. Following this influx of records from the Windsor Great Park area I made contact with Trevor who mailed back as follows:

"*With your email in mind, we did trap moths for over an hour last night, in an area not far from our 2009 record and were delighted (slightly understated to say the least) when one appeared at the light. It was a male and our first since the 2009 one, despite trapping in the same area many times since hoping for another. We never thought we would see one again.*"

Ct. ornata (Sherwood Forest).
Photo: T.& D. Pendleton

This increase in frequency of observations raises the question about the cause. Did the wet winter encourage fungal growth in the rotting beech? Did fewer larvae die and was adult development accelerated, or was it simply an effect of the higher temperatures on migratory behaviour?

Reference

Message posted on Yahoo BMERC Discussion Group
"*Ctenophora ornata* - RDB1 Cranefly"
http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/BMERC/message/2872.
C. Bowlt: Pers. Comm to Ken Merrifield.

John Kramer

***Ctenophora pectinicornis* and *Dictenidia bimaculata* reared from larvae found in old apple trees in traditional orchards in Herefordshire**

While surveying traditional orchards in Herefordshire for the People's Trust for Endangered Species during March 2012 I came across a number of cranefly larvae in the decaying wood of old apple trees. These were retained for rearing in order to identify the species concerned. *Ctenophora pectinicornis* emerged from larvae found in wood mould in the decaying heartwood of living apple trees at two sites:

> Holme Farm, Lyonshall (SO346546); larva collected from a 1.16m gbh apple tree and a female was subsequently reared.
>
> Sunny Bank Farm, Almeley (SO350531); larvae found amongst white-rotten, relatively dry wood mould of old 1.40m gbh apple tree, and 2 males and a female subsequently reared.

In contrast, a larva retained from white-rotten wood in a fallen dead apple trunk at Lower Farm, Preston-on-Wye (SO387418) emerged as a *Dictenidia bimaculata.*

These records demonstrate that traditional orchards can provide suitable breeding habitat for both species, at least in Herefordshire – traditional orchards are effectively a type of wood pasture habitat.

Keith Alexander

In the Footsteps of Henri Audcent

In the last edition of Cranefly News (No. 25, Spring 2013) I wrote about Henri Audcent's collection of Craneflies, curated at the Bristol Museum, and his series of papers which constitutes a valuable source of records, collected by him in the Bristol District between 1927-49.

In early and late June this year, I made a visit, with the Bristol Naturalists to Leigh Woods NNR, one of Audcent's collecting sites. This is an area of wet woodland situated on Carboniferous limestone on the west bank of the River Avon (VC 6, North Somerset). Located in four grid squares (ST 5474, ST 5574, ST 5573 & ST 5473) it lies at a maximum elevation of about 100m and slopes quite steeply down to the River Avon to the east.

I have listed here all of the 81 species found there since 1918 and below I have made some comments on selected records. This is a shorter summary of a piece written by me for the Bristol Naturalists and published in their journal, 'Nature in Avon'.

Where a species was very common, Audcent records them as 'G and S' (Gloucester and Somerset), 'common' or 'fairly common'. Where it seems likely that a species recorded thus by Audcent was also found at Leigh Woods, although not explicitly stated, I have included these on Audcent's list, as 'common'.

Tipulidae

Audcent probably recorded about 18 species in the family Tipulidae in Leigh Woods. *Ctenophora pectinicornis* was added to the list by d'Assis-Fonseca in 1943. Six species were the black and yellow 'Tiger' Craneflies (genus *Nephrotoma*) These are: *N. analis, appendiculata* ('common'), *cornicina, flavipalpis* and *guestfallica* and *quadrifaria* ('common').

14 species of *Tipula* were recorded from Leigh Woods, including *Tipula lateralis*, *T. oleracea*, and *T. paludosa*, (all 'common'). The rare *Tipula* (*Vestiplex*) *nubeculosa* listed in the 1929 paper was omitted later, and so certainly wrongly identified. However, its commoner close relative *Tipula* (*Vestplex*) *scripta* does occur in Leigh Woods, and was recorded there by Audcent.

During my visits I have added 5 species of Tipulidae to Audcent's list from Leigh Woods. These are: *Nephrotoma quadrifaria*, *Dolichopeza albipes* (the 'White-footed Ghost'), *Tipula maxima, T. variicornis*, and *T. lateralis.*

Cylindrotomidae - 1 species

Diogma glabrata was recorded in Leigh Woods by A. E. Hudd. Although no date is given, Hudd seems to have been collecting around 1913. Although a rare species, this is not an impossible record, but David Gibbs (2002) writes that a specimen caught in Monks Wood, north of Bath in July 1999 was the first record for the area since 1929, so it seems that it has not been recorded in Leigh Woods since Audcent's time.

I must confess that, while in Leigh Woods, when I first saw the yellow thorax and black thoracic stripes of *Lipsothrix nervosa* in the net (see later), together with the three medial veins, I thought at first that I had *Diogma glabrata*. *L. nervosa* was not added to the British list until 1938, and if A. E. Hudd took it in Leigh Woods before then he would certainly have wondered what it was. He may perhaps, like me, have identified it wrongly as *Diogma*.

Pediciidae - 5 species

Rather surprisingly none of the aquatic species of this group of 'hairy-eyed craneflies' were recorded by Audcent from Leigh Woods. The larvae of these species live in streams and are predatory on smaller invertebrates. Presumably all of the streams now present in Leigh Woods were flowing in Audcent's day

The waterfall, probably an ornamental feature in the old arboretum, is an excellent habitat, and the large, orange *Pedicia littoralis* was common there at the beginning of June 2013. The smaller dark *Dicranota bimaculata* and *D. pavida* are not rare and these two species were found at the margin of

the stream flowing northwards from the Paradise Bottom Ponds.

The larvae of the species of *Ula* feed in fungi, and they were all grouped together as *Ula pilosa* in Audcent's day, and then later as *U. sylvatica.* It was only in 1962 that two British species were separated. *Ula pilosa* is recorded by him as 'bred' in 1923, and it emerged from a fungus, *Tricholoma album* (Schaef) in February (Audcent, 1949). I collected a specimen of *Ula sylvatica* in early June. *Tricyphona immaculata* is a common wetland species.

Limoniidae - 53 species
(*For the full list see next page*)

Chioneinae

Many of these species are small and require a good microscope to identify them accurately. We are more aware today that differences in the structures of genitalia may be minute, or concealed by bristles making accurate identification in the field impossible. A difference between the 1949 and the 2013 lists lies in the number of these small species in the latter.

Gonomyia recta, and *G. simplex* are two local species associated with limestone, as is the rarely recorded *Molophilus lachschewitzianus*. This was added to the British list in 1973 by Alan Stubbs. *M. corniger* and *M. variispinus*, both Notable, were also found here this year. The latter was not added to the British list by Alan Stubbs until 1977. The genus *Rhypholophus* emerges in the Autumn and so should be searched for then.

Limnophilinae

There is not much to be said about these common species. The two species of *Euphylidorea* recorded by Audcent emerge in May and I may have been too late to find them during my June visits.

Limoniinae

Although records from wet woodland occur, *Dicranomyia didyma* is a species which occurs near waterfalls and their larvae feed in the surrounding damp mosses. *Dicranomyia sericata*, recorded by A. E. Hudd, is associated with limestone quarries, so those in Leigh Woods would be worth investigating from May to early June. David Gibbs reports (pers. com.) that he has taken this species in the limestone quarry on the opposite bank of the River Avon, so Hudd's record is very plausible, although the quarries may now be too scrubbed over to support this species. I have not yet found either of these species in Leigh Woods.

Species of the genus *Lipsothrix* are associated with wet rotting wood in which their larvae feed and which is in plentiful supply around the Leigh Woods streams. *Lipsothrix remota* is a common species, but *L. nervosa* is more local and associated with calcareous habitats. (See map on page 8). It was discovered as new to science in 1938 by F. W. Edwards (Edwards 1938).

Summary & Conclusions

There are now a total of 82 species on the check list for Leigh Woods and 38 have been confirmed by the recent visits. The most notable are those restricted to wet limestone woodlands, of which this is an excellent example. There is still a lot of useful work remaining and at least 6 visits need to be carried out from April to October to thoroughly monitor the cranefly species present.

References

Audcent, H. (1929–34). Bristol Insect Fauna: Diptera. *Proceedings of the Bristol Naturalists' Soc.*

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Audcent, H. 1932. British Tipulinae (Diptera, Tipulidae). *Trans. Ento. Soc. of the South of England.* **8** (1).

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Stubbs, A. E. and Chandler, P. J. (1973). *Molophilus lackschewitzianus* Alexander new to the British Isles. *Proceedings and Transactions of the British Entomological and Natural History Society.* **6**. 18-19.

Stubbs, A. E. (1977). *Gonomyia limbata* and *Molophilus variispinus* new to Britain, from Wales. *Proceedings and Transactions of the British Entomological and Natural History Society*. **10**. 100-103.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Mark Pajak for organising the site visits, and to members of the Bristol Naturalists' Society for their company.

John Kramer

A Checklist of Cranefly Species from Leigh Woods (1918 to date)

Tipulidae
Ctenophora pectinicornis
Dolichopeza albipes
Nephrotoma analis
N. appendiculata
N. cornicina
N. flavipalpis
N. guestfallica
N. quadrifaria
Tipula flavolineata
T. lateralis
T. luteipennis
T. maxima
T. obsoleta
T. oleracea
T. pagana
T. paludosa
T. scripta
T. signata
T. submarmorata
T. variicornis
T. varipennis

Cylindrotomidae
Cylindrotoma distinctissima
Diogma glabrata

Pediciidae
Dicranota bimaculata
D. pavida
Pedicia litoralis
Tricyphona immaculata
Ula sylvatica

Limoniidae
Chioneinae
Cheilotrichia cinerascens
Ellipteroides lateralis
Erioptera flavata
E. lutea
Gonomyia recta
G. simplex
Ilysia maculata
I. occoecata
Molophilus appendiculatus
M. bifidus
M. cinereifrons
M. corniger
M. griseus
M. lackschewitzianus
M. medius
M. ochraceous
M. pusillus
M. serpentiger
M. variispinus
Ormosia albitibia
O. nodulosa
Rhypholophus bifurcatus
R. haemorrhoidalis
Tasiocera murina

Limnophilinae
Austrolimnophila ochracea
Dicranophragma adjunctum
D. nemorale
Eloeophila submarmorata
Epiphragma ocellare
Euphylidorea dispar
E. lineola
Limnophila schranki
Neolimnomyia filata
Paradelphomyia senilis
Pseudolimnophila sepium
Limoniinae
Achyrolimonia decemmaculata
Dicranomyia chorea
D. didyma
D. fusca
Dicranomyia mitis var. *affinis*
D. mitis var. *lutea*
D. modesta
D. sericata
Limonia flavipes
L. macrostigma
L. nubeculosa
L. phragmitidis
L. stigma
L. trivittata
Lipsothrix nervosa
L. remota
Metalimnobia bifasciata
M. quadrinotata
Neolimonia dumetorum
Rhipidia maculata

Cranefly recording in the Mersey Basin

Following John Kramer's kind mention of last year's results in the Spring 2013 bulletin, our recording activities around Warrington are expanding this year to cover a wider range of sites.

There has been a big investment of effort from the Wildlife Trusts for Cheshire and Lancashire in acquiring and restoring lowland peat bogs (known locally as mosses) in the area between Warrington and Manchester, collectively designated under EU law as a Special Area for Conservation. This was the hazardous region that Stephenson's original Liverpool to Manchester railway had to cross, but since then much has been turned over to agriculture or subject to industrial peat extraction. Only last year, there was nationwide publicity when a final planning appeal to continue peat mining on Chat Moss was rejected by Eric Pickles' department following a prolonged campaign.

As well as degraded bog habitat, the region also contains many post-industrial sites reverting to nature, such as former pit heaps, wartime army camps, and the dredging lagoons for the Manchester Ship Canal known as the Woolston Eyes – these last are already designated as an SSSI as one of the few breeding sites in the UK for the black-necked grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*).

Monitoring the present distribution and future changes in the diptera fauna of such sites as they revert to nature will hopefully be an interesting ecological study. As a kind of control, or baseline, there will be visits to other mere and moss sites in the more rural areas of Cheshire on behalf of the Wildlife Trust. We also maintain a more continuous watch in our wildlife garden.

It is still very early days, but a good range of less common species has already turned up. John highlighted *Nephrotoma scurra*. Not only has this re-appeared in our garden, but also *N. flavipalpis* and *N. dorsalis*. *Metalimnobia quadrinotata* is at Bold Moss pit heap – turned back to nature less than 20 years ago – and in our local nature reserve of damp secondary woodland which has grown up on an abandoned wartime RAF camp.

On a visit to Lancashire Wildlife Trust's Astley Moss, a striking yellow and black insect on the hogweed of a former carrot field proved to be *N. crocata*.

Both *Tanyptera* species have been found: *T. nigricornis* at Holcroft Moss, the only uncut lowland bog in the area; and *T. atrata* at Bagmere, a fenny site which is the last refuge in Cheshire of the small pearl-bordered fritillary (*Boloria selene*). Plenty of felled birch is to be found at both locations. My photos of *T. atrata* in action have duly impressed the Trust's conservation officer.

Phil Brighton

Tanyptera atrata (*photo*: *Phil Brighton*)

[Regarding unusually high numbers of *N. dorsalis*, Phil writes**: "***There seems to be a mass outbreak of* N. dorsalis *in this area - I am up to 7 records, 4 male and 3 female from 4 different locations*." **Ed.**]

Museums Focus

Following on from my item on the Audcent Collection in the last edition, another collection held by the Bristol Museum is the Payne Collection.

The Payne Collection of Craneflies – Bristol Museum

(*Biographical details and photo from Chandler*, *2011*)

Ron Payne (1922-2010) came from a family of Naturalists and had a wide interest in Botany and Entomology. He grew up in London and, after his marriage in 1948, moved to Loughton, Essex, on the edge of Epping Forest. He first explored entomology as a coleopterist from the age of 17, but later collected many different families of flies from all over Britain.

His first cranefly records date from 1959 when he was 37. Ron was an early mentor to Alan Stubbs and he first visited Ron at Loughton with a box of craneflies in 1965. In 1966 Ron moved to South Wales for his work as a civil servant, and there he was host to Alan, Peter Chandler and Raymond Uffen for a few days of field work. This field meeting, which took place in May 1968, encouraged Alan to organise field meetings for his fellow dipterists. These began in 1973 in the Forest of Dean with members of the Cranefly Recording Scheme, and continue to this day.

Promotion caused Ron to move to a number of places in the south of England and, with the exception of a few records in 1977, most of his

cranefly records date from between 1960 and about 1970, when he turned his attention to hoverflies. Further promotion then took Ron to East Harptree in 1978 where he joined the Bristol Naturalists' Society. He became President of the Society, of the Entomology and Botany sections.

Ron became more and more interested in the grasses, and as a result, in 1989, he deposited his Diptera collection of some 50 store boxes of Diptera at Bristol Museum. He also donated a collection of craneflies to the BENHS with some specimens going to other museums. **All of these collections contain data yet to be transcribed**.

Ron's publications on Diptera are listed in the reference cited below, and his records of craneflies from Essex from 1959 to 1977, collected by Del Smith, are kept by the Essex Field Club. **These latter would provide an interesting database for Essex dipterists to monitor**.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Del Smith of the Essex Field Club for sending me Ron Payne's cranefly records.

Reference

Chandler, P. J. (2011). Obituary, Ronald Malcolm Payne (1922-2010). *Dipterists Forum Bulletin* **72**, Autumn 2011.

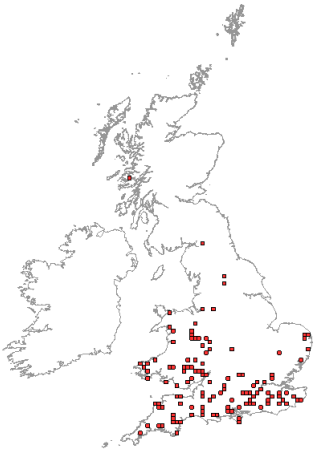
John Kramer

The authors' deadline for the Spring 2014 issue (27) of Cranefly News is 15th December 2013.

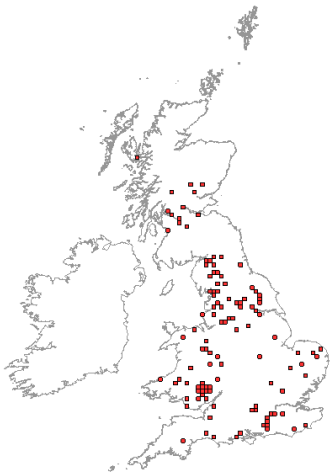
Please send copy to: john.kramer@btinternet.com

Distribution Maps for Species discussed in Cranefly News 26, Autumn 2013

Ctenophora ornata



Lipsothrix nervosa



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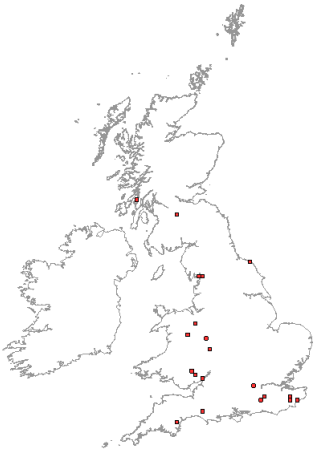
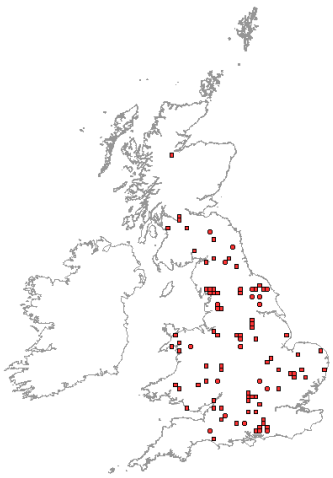
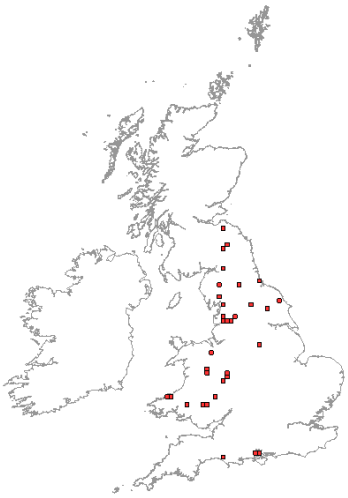


Molophilus lackschewitzianus



Diogma glabrata



Molophilus variispinus