Cranefly News

Dipterists Forum Cranefly Recording Scheme

For Superfamily Tipuloidea & Families Ptychopteridae & Trichoceridae

Newsletter No 27 **Spring 2014**

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Nigrotipula nigra (Photo G. Calow)

Notice

Cranefly Workshop Spring 2014

The next Cranefly Workshop will be held at the BENHS headquarters, Dinton Pastures Country Park, Hurst, RG10 0TH.

Dates: Saturday 22nd - Sunday 23rd March 2014.

Times: 10.30am - 4.00pm each day.

See BENHS website for more details.

Field Work

Records from 2013

I have received some good batches of records in for 2013. Thanks to James McGill for 470 records of widespread species (2012 & 2013). Thanks also to Howard Bentley and Laurence Clemons for records from Kent, to Phil Brighton for Lancashire Records, and to Mick Blythe for his records from Worcestershire.

The following item was published in the Highland Naturalist, but is of especial significance for the Cranefly Recording Scheme. The original article has been slightly shortened (for space) by JRD.

Prionocera pubescens in Highland

In May 2013 I discovered a strong population of *Prionocera pubescens* in a bog in Blackmuir Wood, Strathpeffer, NH479572 just 250m behind my house. Adults were flying between 21 May and 9 June, though elsewhere in UK they can be active later. This is in the early part of the season which tends to be poorly recorded for insects as it falls outside the main holiday times.

This is only the second site known in Scotland and the most northerly site known in Britain.

Left:
Prionocera larva

Above:
Prionocera anal disc showing spiracles

The other Scottish site was at Dalfaber near Aviemore (NH903134) some 60km S. of Blackmuir, in June 1981. As that site has since been developed, the continued presence of the fly is unknown.

Three members of the genus have been recorded in Britain; *Prionocera pubescens, P. subserricornis* and *P. turcica* although more occur in Scandinavia. *P. turcica* is also in Highland, and I have seen it flying with *P. pubescens* at the Blackmuir Wood site. It is generally more widespread and frequent, and may have a longer season than *P. pubescens*, with records extending from April to August.

P. pubescens frequents bogs with *Sphagnum* moss and *Carex* sedges, and sometimes with carr. The Blackmuir bog has scattered saplings and young trees of several species.

It is a scarce insect throughout Britain (See map p. 6) and is generally very poorly known. It is classed as 'Vulnerable' in Great Britain, and is included in the Scottish Biodiversity List of Species of Principal Importance for Biodiversity Conservation under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. However there is a strong probability that *P. pubescens* is much more widespread in Highland than we know, especially as the habitat of open bog in woodland clearings is very common here, and It would be worth looking out for it in any such situation.

Adults of the genus are easily recognised. The antennae of *Prionocera* are hairless and serrate (saw-toothed) especially in the males, which can easily be seen in the field with a lens.

The species may be separated fairly easily (even in the field with a little experience) by the length and colour of the rostrum (the extended 'nose'). In *P. pubescens* it is short and black; in *P. turcica*, longer, and extensively pale at the sides.

Contents

Inner clasper

Tergite 9

Prionocera pubescens

P. pubescens, as the name suggests, possesses prominent downy hairs on the thorax and antennae, but these can wear off, and *turcica* has some hairs as well. Although the genus is recognisable in the larval stage, the larvae of each species cannot at the moment be identified to species level.

If anyone suspects they have found either species, but especially *pubescens*, a specimen should be kept for confirmation - preferably a male (club-ended abdomen), as examination of the genitalia provides absolute certainty. *P. pubescens* is a smallish cranefly at 13-15mm in length.

As our knowledge of craneflies in Highland is limited, there is a need for entomologists to record this fauna. We have several montane and autumn flying species that are probably seriously under-recorded, as well as a wealth of species flying in summer. Anyone interested should get in touch with me.

Murdo Macdonald
Highlands Biological Recording Group Database Manager
www.hbrg.org.uk

Obituary

Leonard Kidd

Leonard Kidd, who died recently, worked at Werneth Park Study Centre & Natural History Museum, Oldham, and made a significant contribution to our knowledge of the craneflies of Lancashire, and other districts. (See biography and bibliography in Dipterists Digest Vol. 21 No.1). He recorded 62 cranefly species in Holden Clough (SD9301). Some of the more notable species there include *Dicranota guerini* (LM), *Pedicia straminea*, *Arctoconopa (as Erioptera) melampodia, Erioptera divisa, Gonomyia simplex, Ilisia vicina* (LM)*, Molophilus curvatus, M. niger, Neolimnophila carteri*, *Scleroprocta sorocula, Limnophila schranki* (as *punctata*) and *Limonia dilutior.* Richard Underwood tells me that voucher specimens of some of these species, marked (LM), are held at Liverpool Museum. Leonard lived at Greenfield, a village to the east of Oldham where he recorded *Neolimnophila carteri* (LM). (See Cranefly News 16, 2008 and above.) In 1954 he recorded a number of craneflies in Derbyshire, and these included *Dactylolabis transversa*, and *D. sexmaculata*.

Bibliography

Kidd, L. N., 1953. Some records of northern Tipulidae with special reference to those occurring in the Oldham district. *Annual Reports*, *Proceedings and Transactions of the Manchester Entomological Society.* 1941-1951: 26-32.

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Kidd, L. N. (1957). Some craneflies of a Lancashire clough, including several new county records. *The Naturalist* 1957: 101-102.

Kidd, L. N. (1971). In: *Holden Clough, the natural history of a small Lancashire Valley*. Ed. Kidd, L. N. and Fitton, M. G: pp. 126-130.

In the Footsteps of Audcent

Part II: Shapwick

In the last edition of Cranefly News (#26) I wrote about the results of my 2013 fieldwork in Leigh Woods and the records that Henri Audcent made there from 1927 - 49. (In the Footsteps of Audcent - Leigh Woods).

Another site visited by Audcent was Shapwick, Somerset, and I followed in his footsteps, with some members of the Bristol Naturalists, in June 2013. There are nine villages within the Avalon Marshes. Shapwick and Sharpham are both mentioned as locations by Audcent in his annual reports of the Bristol Insect Fauna but we did not explore the latter. The Parish of Sharpham lies to the East of Shapwick CP and now contains large areas of active, and of flooded peat excavations.

The woodland species *Dictenidia bimaculata* was recorded there by Audcent in August 1923. Their larvae feed on a variety of the dead decaying wood of trees such as birch sallow and oak. Other interesting wetland species such as *Dicranomyia ventralis*, *Helius longirostris* and *Molophilus pleuralis* were also recorded there. Therefore a visit to Sharpham might be worthwhile, and these species may well also occur on the Shapwick reserve.

On 23 June we assembled at the Avalon Marshes Centre car park (ST425414) on the Somerset Levels. We then made our way down the road to the entrance on to the Shapwick Heath NNR.

Shapwick Heath is an ancient wetland dating from the end of the last ice age when it was covered by water. Many changes have taken place since then, and there is evidence for a number of marine transgressions where the area was flooded by the sea. It has changed from being part of the tidal Severn Estuary, to reed swamp, fen, raised bog and woodland. It has been inhabited at least since Neolithic times 6,000 years ago, and an ancient track, the 'Sweet Track' has been uncovered by archaeologists. This is the oldest route way in Britain crossing about 2km of reed swamp. Many interesting artefacts which cast light on this period can be seen in the Tribunal Museum, Glastonbury.

The Romans probably were the first to cut peat for fuel, and this continued until 1950. It began again on a large scale for horticultural use between 1960 and 1995. Drainage began in the 14th century, to produce land suitable for agriculture and food of a high quality has been produced from the Somerset levels since then.

We explored the grid square ST 4240 with habitats such as reed bed, ditches (locally called rhynes), fen, meadow and wet birch woodland.

There are currently 50 craneflies on the list from Shapwick. I recorded 29 species from the visit in June of which 23 were new records for the site. As in the previous Leigh Woods species list, (Cranefly News 26) where a species was commonly seen, Audcent records them as 'G and S (Gloucester and Somerset), 'common' or 'fairly common'. Where it seems possible that a common species recorded thus by Audcent was also seen at Shapwick, though not explicitly recorded there, I have included the 'common' status given by Audcent.

The '*Pales lunulicornis'* collected by J. W. Saunt at Shapwick in May of 1936 was probably wrongly identified. Audcent's Key (Audcent 1932) describes it as having a distinct black stigma, no black spot at front end of each straight lateral stripe on prescutum, and sternite 8 of the male with no process; ovipositor of female with blunt apex. The diagnostic black spot behind each compound eyes was not described and the known habitats today are on sandy substrates by fast-flowing rivers, very different from the ditches and drains at Shapwick.

The other cranefly species recorded there are credible. The rare *Dicranomyia (Idiopyga) danica* (RDB 3) occurs in brackish wetlands often near the coast from May to October and Audcent recorded it again at Clevedon (22/09/1941).

It can be seen that more visits throughout the year would yield a more complete list and it is hoped that this can be done. (See Table below.)

Other Audcent firsts:

In addition to the *Dicranomyia danica* above (Shapwick 6/8/1927) Audcent also had the first British records for *Molophilus niger*, (Tockington, 29/4/1927) and *Lipsothrix nobilis,* from Matley Bog in the New Forest (Audcent, 1934a). I was not aware of Audcent's record when I reported in Cranefly News 24, on the DF field meeting in the New Forest in May 2012 where, in the very wet alder woodland of Matley Bog I recorded a male specimen of *Lipsothrix nobilis*.

Bibliography

Audcent, H. 1932. British Tipulinae (Diptera, Tipulidae). *Trans.ent.Soc.S.Engl*. **8** (1).

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Audcent, H. 1935b. *Tipula peliostigma* Schum. in Leicestershire. *Journal of the Society for British Entomology* **1** (10).

Audcent, H. 1949. Bristol Insect Fauna: Diptera. *Proceedings of the Bristol Naturalist' Soc.* **27** (5).

Audcent, G. D. 2013. Louis Felix Henri Audcent and his contribution to British Diptera. *Dipterists Digest* (*Second Series*). **20** (2).

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Rhian Rowson for access to papers by Audcent, to Mark Pajak for organising the site visits, and to members of the Bristol Naturalists' Society for their company on the field meetings.

John Kramer

New Leicestershire Records

The photo of *Nigrotipula nigra* used in the banner heading of the first page was taken by Graham Calow in his garden light trap at Sapcote, Leicestershire (VC 55) this Summer. The specimen arrived in Graham's moth trap on 20 July 2013 and it is the first verifiable Leicestershire record.

On the current British distribution map there is a large gap across the Midlands, so this record is also noteworthy in terms of the National distribution of this species. It is a cranefly associated with reed beds and of course it would be good to know its habitat in Leicestershire, and where the aquatic larvae feed.

The current entry in The Craneflies of Leicestershire and Rutland (Kramer, 2011) is:

> ***Nigrotipula nigra*** *Linnaeus, 1758 June-August*
> *The sole VC55 sighting comes from Narborough Bogs when P.A.H. Muschamp recorded it in his notebook as Tipula nigra adding that it was 'a freak'. The species is easy to recognise and it may be a true record from a time when the site was much wetter. However, there are no other details – no date and no recorder. It is not recorded in the Victoria County History (Vice, 1907). We do not know what Alan Muschamp meant by the word 'freak' in his notebook; was it a unique occurrence, or perhaps blown in by the wind, or a melanic mutation?*

Henri Audcent's biography has recently been published in the latest edition of the Dipterists Digest (2013, **20** (2)). I noted the following reference in the Bibliography to the article:

> Audcent 1935b *Tipula peliostigma* Schum. in Leicestershire. J. Soc. Brit. Ent.**1** (10).

The record is a brief one. It simply says:

> ***Tipula peliostigma Schum. (Dipt., Tipul.) in Leicestershire.*** *On 10 June 1934, Mr. E. Rivenhall Goffe took a pair of this species by the side of the Fosse Way in the neighbourhood of Six Hills, Leicestershire. The species is uncommon and records of its capture are infrequent. H.L.F. Audcent.*

Thanks to Peter Chandler for sending me a copy of the reference. This represents another new County record for VC55 so it is one to look out for. The larvae seem to feed in twigs and leaf litter, and they have been found associated with birds' nests.

I was also hoping to add one or two species of *Paradelphomyia* to the Leicestershire list, but that is proving troublesome and will need more work.

John Kramer

Reference

Kramer, J. (2011). The Craneflies of Leicestershire and Rutland (VC55). LESOPS 26. http://www.naturespot.org.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/LESOPS%2026%20Craneflies.pdf

			H. Audcent in *B.I.F	J. Kramer 2013
	Species	**Audcent Name**	**Date**	**Date**
1	*Ctenophora. pectinicornis*	*Flabellifera pectinicornis*	3/06/1946 Coll. J. Cowley	23/06/2013 Coll.T.Smith
2	*Nephrotoma lunulicornis*	*Pales lunulicornis*	31/05/1936	
3	*Tipula fulvipennis*		5/07/1947	
4	*Tipula unca*		'fairly common'	23/06/2013
5	*Tipula cava*		11/7/1925	
6	*Tipula fascipennis*	*Tipula fascipennis*	5/07/1947	
7	*Tipula varipennis*	*Tipula variipennis*	20/5/1923	
8	*Tipula obsoleta*	*Tipula obsoleta*	17/10/1924	
9	*Tipula pagana*	*Tipula pagana*	20/10/1928	
10	*Tipula oleracea*	*Tipula oleracea*	'very common'	23/06/2013
11	*Tipula pierrei* Tonn.	*T. solstitialis* Westhf.	7/8/1925	
12	*Nigrotipula nigra*	*Anamaloptera nigra*	10/7/1927	
13	*Cylindrotoma distinctissima*	*Cylindrotoma distinctissima*	9/08/1947	
14	*Phalacrocera replicata*	*Phalacrocera replicata*	1/05/1927	
15	*Tricyphona immaculata*		20/05/1923	
16	*Cheilotrichia cinerascens*	*Empeda nubila*	'common'	23/06/2013
17	*Erioptera flavata*	*Erioptera flavescens*	31/5/1918	23/06/2013
18	*Erioptera fusculenta*		'common'	23/06/2013
19	*Erioptera lutea*	*Erioptera lutea*	'very common'	23/06/2013
20	*Ilysia maculata*	*Ilysia maculata*	'common'	23/06/2013
21	*Ilysia occoecata Edw. 1936*	*(Ilysia maculata)*	not recognised	23/06/2013
22	*Molophilus appendiculatus*	*Molophilus appendiculatus*	'not uncommon'	23/06/2013
23	*Molophilus medius*			23/06/2013
24	*Molophilus obscurus*		24/05/1925	23/06/2013
25	*Molophilus occultus*			23/06/2013
26	*Ormosia albitibia*	*Ormosia albitibia*	6/9/1930	
27	*Ormosia nodulosa*	*Ormosia nodulosa*	24/05/1925	
28	*Rhypholophus bifurcatus*	*O. (Rhypholophus) bifurcata*	12/9/1928	
29	*Rhypholophus haemorrhoidalis*	*O. (R) haemorrhoidalis*	27/9/1925	
30	*Symplecta stictica*		'common'	23/06/2013
31	*Austrolimnophila ochracea*	*Austrolimnophila ochracea*	'common'	23/06/2013
32	*Epiphragma ocellare*	*Epiphragma ocellaris*	26/5/1947	23/06/2013
33	*Dicranophragma nemorale*	*Pilaria nemoralis*	'common'	23/06/2013
34	*(Paradelphomyia senilis)*			(23/06/2013 f)
35	*Phylidorea ferruginea*		'common'	23/06/2013
36	*Phylidorea fulvonervosa*		'common'	23/06/2013
37	*Pseudolimnophila lucorum*			23/06/2013
38	*Atypophthalmus inustus*		not recognised	23/06/2013
39	*Dicranomyia mitis*	*Dicranomyia mitis var. lutea*	11/08/1925	
40	*Dicranomyia autumnalis*		31/08/1924	23/06/2013
41	*Dicranomyia lucida*			23/06/2013
42	*Dicranomyia modesta*		'fairly common'	23/06/2013
43	*Dicranomyia danica*	*Dicranomyia danica*	⊙ 6/8/27 First British Record	
44	*Helius flavus*			23/06/2013
45	*Limonia macrostigma*		26/08/1925	23/06/2013
46	*Limonia nubeculosa*		'V. common'	23/06/2013
47	*Limonia phragmitidis*	*Limnobia tripunctata*	20/05/1923	
48	*Metalimnobia quadrinotata*	*Limnobia quadrinotata*	1/8/1918	
49	*Neolimonia dumetorum*	*Dicranomyia dumetorum*		23/06/2013
50	*Rhipidia maculata*	*Rhipidia maculata*	'common'	23/06/2013

Table of Cranefly species recorded at Shapwick Heath NNR

[See: In the Footsteps of Audcent Part II: Shapwick (pp 2-3)]

***B.I.F. -** Record published in the **Bristol Insect Fauna** (See Bibliography above)

Workshops 2013

It was good to see everyone at the workshops in Northants, Lincs., Worcs., London NHM, Marsland, Glasgow and Aberdeen. Please keep in touch.

The photo shows some of the Devon group in their excellent Centre at Marsland, tucked away in a deep Devon Valley.

I am currently planning the 2014 programme, so let me know if a follow-up, or even a first workshop would be useful.

Identification Problems - Look-Alikes

Crypteria* v *Neolimnophila

These two genera are members of the family Limoniidae, subfamily Chioneinae. Separating these genera from other limoniids is not difficult, at least, once you know where to look, since they all share a distinctive conical 3rd antennal segment and are therefore placed together in the tribe Cladurini.

Antenna: *Crypteria limnophiloides*

However, from then on, confusion is possible. *Crypteria limnophiloides* Bergroth 1913 has a bowed Rs vein, whereas it is straight in species of *Neolimnophila.*

Wing: *Crypteria limnophiloides* - Rs bowed

Wing: *Neolimnophila carteri* - Rs straight

NB. The cross-vein r is frequently absent in *Crypteria* spp. (See Cranefly News 16, Spring 2008).

The thorax of *Neolimnophila placida* Meigen 1830 has a pair of dark brown stripes on top (on the prescutum) whereas that of *N. carteri* Tonnoir 1921 is unmarked.

The first British Records seem to be as follows:

Crypteria limnophiloides Bergroth 1913: F. W. Edwards, Knebworth VC 20, 1921.

Neolimnophila carteri Tonnoir 1921: This was first identified as a separate species from *N. placida* and from *C. limnophiloides* in 1921, so all records prior to that date must be of museum specimens identified later. The first specimen taken by F. W. Edwards seems to be in 1926 at Gormire in Yorkshire (VC 62) (as *Crypteria carteri* Edwards 1921). A specimen also exists, taken by A. E. J. Carter at Polton, Midlothian on 25.5.1915.

Neolimnophila placida Meigen 1830: The earliest records I have of this are in 1921, recorded by Cheetham and Edwards, from Yorkshire (VC62).

There are the following numbers of records known to me:

Crypteria limnophiloides: 218 records (Nb).

Neolimnophila carteri: 40 records (RDB 2)

N. placida: 18 records (RDB 1). Most of these are from Yorkshire.

John Kramer

What lives on peat moors in September and keys out as *Limonia flavipes*?

A contract to survey sample areas of the West Penwith Moors – between St Ives and St Just in West Cornwall – has produced some craneflies that key out as *Limonia flavipes* using the British literature. But *L. flavipes* is a spring woodland species isn't it?

The craneflies turned up on three sites, taken by pitfall-trapping, and in each case from areas of low humid heath vegetation on shallow peat.

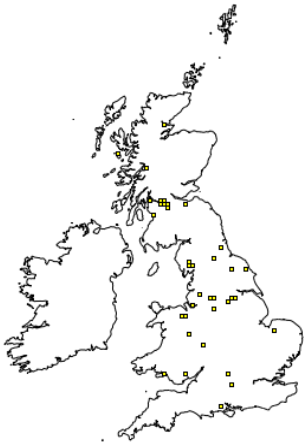
The other Diptera present include *Campsicnemus alpinus, Euphylidorea meigenii* and *Tipula melanoceros*. One male and five females of the *Limonia* were taken over the period 4th to 11th September 2013.

Woodland is nowhere to be seen from these moorland sites. So what are we dealing with? I would be interested to have some suggestions.

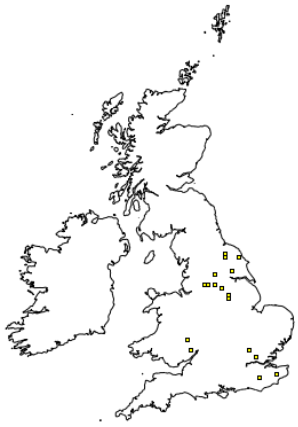
Keith Alexander
keith.alexander@waitrose.com

Distribution Maps for Species discussed in Cranefly News 27, Spring 2014

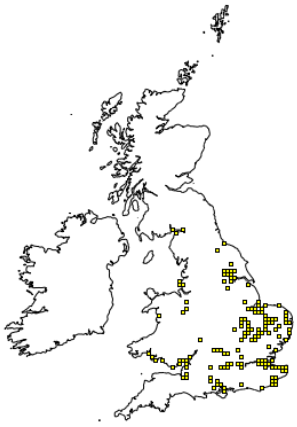
Prionocera pubescens



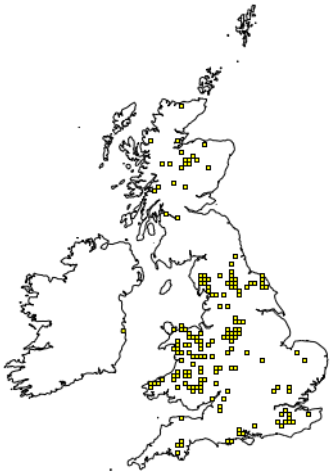
Neolimnophila carteri



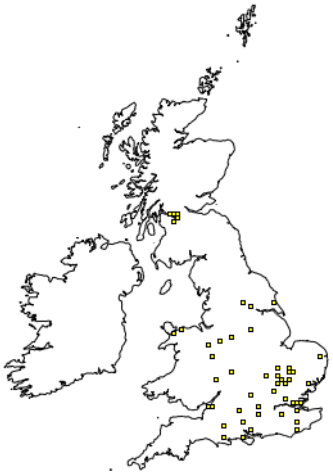
Neolimnophila placida



Nigrotipula nigra



Crypteria limnophiloides



Tipula peliostigma

The authors' deadline for the Autumn 2014 issue (28) of Cranefly News is **15th July 2014**.

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