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Dipterists Forum Forum

www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/index.php

Photographs: Above *Cheilosia* and *Xylota*, front cover *Oxycera*. Darwyn Sumner, Cartoons opposite from Ken Merrifield, there are undoubtedly very bad puns associated with these, you'll have to ask him.

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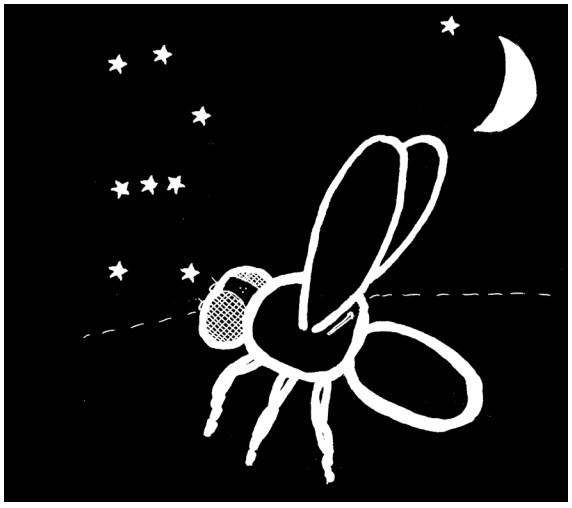

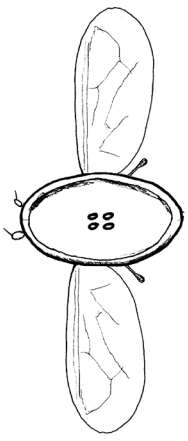

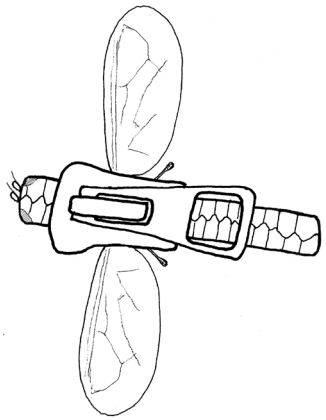

Editorial

Homeopathic entomology

Have you ever stood in a frustrated mood in the field after an unsuccesful hunt for something or other and just looked around thinking "the darned thing must be around here somewhere"? Homeopathic principles offer you room for some optimism under these circumstances, we can be reassured that if the particular beast has been in the area at some point in time then, according to homeopathic principles, the environment will have retained a memory of it.

Homeopaths use a sequence of 1 in 100 dilutions to prepare their elixirs, typically they do this 30 times to produce something they call "30C" dilution. This is equivalent to 1 molecule in a sphere that is 8 light minutes across (the radius of this sphere is the distance from the Earth to the Sun). Adopting their terminology gives us quite a useful rule of thumb for gauging species scarcity, your chances of sweeping something randomly from an area or an individuals' "luck" factor in securing such a beast. So if you have not been fortunate enough to capture the 30C *Doros conopseus* or the 29C *Pseudopomyza atra* then homeopathy offers you another useful technique that will ensure that it remembers you are looking for it the next time you visit; you could resort to **succussion** in which you bang your head briskly ten times on a leather and horsehair surface.

Goldacre, B., 2008. *Bad Science*. Fourth Estate, London

ALERC

Many of you will no doubt have some degree of involvement with your Local Records Centre and will be interested to learn that they have elected from their ranks throughout the country a group of people to represent their profession in the form of a professional association. This is the **Association of Local Environmental Records Centres cic,** (constituted as a Community Interest Company) you can find details at www.ALERC.org.uk or get involved in debates via their online forum at http://forum.lrcs.org.uk/index.php

Photogenic?

I've received a number of encouraging comments about the use of colour photographs in this Bulletin. Regrettably we have still to resolve the issue of how best to distribute the coloured version (pdf) to members but rest assured that it is still on the agenda.

Part of my job of compiling the Bulletin entails searching for suitable pictures to illustrate various items, one example being the *Gasterophilus intestinalis* opposite. Whilst I seem to be building up a reasonable range of such illustrations I do struggle to find reasonable ones for every eventuality.

So could I appeal for the many photographers in Dipterists Forum to spend a little time organising their digital photographs this autumn. There are many applications which will do this job on your computer but I've yet to find a better one than IMatch (free evaluation version from www.photools.com/). Amongst many other functions in IMatch is a configurable panel to which you can add an endless number of categories in a structured "tree" arrangement. I have mine arranged to reflect Diptera taxonomy and after assigning all my new photographs to a category I can search on the same categories, and even add a filter to show only the best ones.

Darwyn Sumner

Forum News

News from the schemes

Brief notes from the scheme organisers

The recording schemes will be represented by presentations at this year's Annual Meeting in London. Scheme organisers are encouraged to take something related to their scheme, be it specimens, PowerPoint presentations or poster displays; it will probably be one of the best live audiences you will get for some time.

http://www.dipteristsforum.org.uk

Cranefly Recording Scheme — John Kramer

Cranefly News #19 is included in this Bulletin

Fungus gnat Recording Scheme — Peter Chandler

Newsletter #3 is included in this Bulletin.

Hoverfly Recording Scheme — David Iliff

Newsletter #47 included with this Bulletin

Oestridae Study Group — Andrew Grayson

The demands of life, and the attractions of summer fieldwork, have caused me to postpone much necessary research work over recent months; hence, a newsletter which has been in preparation since mid 2008 is still not ready for publication. If any readers of this article would like to furnish me with any notes or papers for inclusion in a future newsletter, they would be most welcome, as would any Oestridae records. Please note that my address has now reverted to 56, Piercy End, Kirkbymoorside, York, YO62 6DF, e-mail andrewgrayson1962@live.co.uk.

Some progress has been made in establishing an electronic national database for Oestridae, and I began the task of transferring records onto 'spreadsheets' earlier this year. Examination of museum material is proving slightly frustrating in-as-much-as about half the available material is devoid of any locality details, which are of course essential in helping to plot an acceptable historical distribution of species. An historical distribution is all that is now possible for eradicated species such as *Hypoderma bovis* and *H. lineatum*. My personal fieldwork during 2009 has thus far only produced *Gasterophilus intestinalis* males 'hill-topping' on the Gower during the Dipterists Forum meeting based at Swansea University.

The Tipulid Recuration Project at the Natural History Museum, London

I have just completed a 6 month project working closely with John Kramer and Erica McAlister to re-curate the British and world Tipulid (cranefly) collections at the NHM. The collection was re-housed in modern museum-standard storage materials and updated with the latest nomenclature and taxonomic information, ready for the move to the new Darwin Centre.

The collection covers the superfamily Tipuloidea consisting of the families Pediciidae, Limoniidae, Cylindrotomidae, and Tipulidae. There are 80 drawers of British material and over 400 drawers of material from the rest of the world. It represents around a quarter of the world's Tipulid species and contains a large amount of primary type material. As there had been no significant curation work carried out on the collection for around 15 years the majority of the material was on cork slats, and had not been updated with the recent taxonomic revisions to the group. The specimens were moved into plastazote-lined unit trays and reorganised and relabelled using various sources of taxonomic information, particularly Pjotr Oosterbroek's excellent website 'Catalogue of the Craneflies of the World'.

I joined the Dipterists' Forum in January this year and attended the field meetings at Scarborough and Swansea which I found extremely interesting and useful. I look forward to future meetings, especially the AGM in November which will be held in the Natural History Museum's exciting new Darwin Centre building.

Hannah Cornish

In Praise of Muscids

Why are the Muscidae so often neglected by dipterists? After all, they have a great deal going for them. What attributes does a fly family needs to make it suitable for collection and study?

First, it would be good if you could find them in a wide variety of habitats. Well, the Muscidae certainly fit that criterion – you find them in woodlands, grasslands, heaths, marshes, dunes, kitchen windows - just about anywhere, in fact. They are a family almost certain to turn up wherever you choose to collect. Second, a long season is helpful. The fact is that given suitable weather there is no month of the year when Muscids cannot be found. Third, the species list should be long enough to be interesting but not so vast (and unstable) as to be unmanageable; Peter Chandler's checklist notes 279 British species – perfect! Fourth, and most importantly, good keys need to be available. The RES handbook is still useful (though out of date in terms of nomenclature), and *The Muscidae of Central Europe*, which is more up to date, keys almost all of the British species and gives a detailed description of each one. The Muscidae have few rivals in the ready availability (and affordability) of such literature.

Apologies if this is not a muscid (ed)

So given all of these advantages, what is it about the Muscidae that puts people off? I have heard it said that they are dull to look at, too many being rather greyish and non-descript. This argument has a certain force, but the family is not without its beauties – just watch the black and gold *Mesembrina meridiana* basking in sunlight, or take a look down the microscope at the jewel-like gold and silver head of a male *Schoenomyza litorella* – stunning! Another apparent problem for some people is the heavy reliance of keys on the arrangement and position of leg bristles; but once you are used to the nomenclature these are, in fact, quite easy to work with, and are much less likely to be lost than the bristles of the head and thorax. At least you don't have to spend your life macerating and contemplating genitalia!

So let's hear it for the Muscids. They may lack glamour, but they are a highly important family for a number of reasons, some good, some bad. On the bad side, some spread pathogens among farm animals; on the good side, many make a contribution to clearing away corpses and animal waste. A family with such large impacts on humanity is surely worthy of study.

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Chandler, P. (ed.) (1998) RES Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects, Volume 12, *Checklist of Insects of the British Isles*, Part 1, Diptera.

D'Assis Fonseca, E. C. M. (1968) RES Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects, Volume X, Part 4(b), *Muscidae*.

Gregor, F. et al., (2002), *The Muscidae (Diptera) OF Central Europe*, Masaryk University, Brno.

Howard Bentley

Scathophaga stercoraria: a long-term population study

In 2005, I began a part-time PhD with the Open University, investigating the long-term effects of modern farming practice on populations of the Yellow Dung Fly *Scathophaga stercoraria,* with particular reference to the use of cattle wormers. Perhaps inevitably, this is producing more questions than answers.

Why S. *stercoraria*? They are apparently ubiquitous, not endangered and generally (unlike bees) not thought to be of any great benefit. However, like erstwhile common bird species such as the house sparrow, one would expect a gradual decline well before it becomes obvious that numbers are dropping. In general, flies are fewer than before. As a child, I remember it was necessary to clean the windscreen periodically when driving in the summer, but not now. Insecticide and pesticide use has escalated over the last 30 years and cattle farming has both declined and become more intensive, so there is less available dung.

Avermectins (e.g. Ivermectin, Doromectin, Eprinomectin) are extensively used by farmers for prevention and treatment of lungworm (a nematode) and for other internal and external parasites. Formulations include injection, intragastric bolus and pour-on (i.e. absorption through the skin). Whatever the route, the effects last for weeks or months. Excreted unchanged in the dung, the drugs affect non-target dung fauna to a variable degree (Floate et al 2005). Besides lethal effects on developing larvae, sub-lethal effects on adults include developmental abnormalities and reduced fertility. Most Avermectins require a withdrawal period before the cow provides either milk or meat, though Eprinomectin can be given throughout. Besides the Avermectins, there are various other wormers such as the Benzimidazoles (e.g. Oxfendazole and Fenbendazole) which are considered less ecotoxic. Farmers' practice varies considerably. I have encountered a range from no chemicals (organic); treatment of symptoms but not given for prevention; prevention given with careful consideration of the requirements of different age groups, and routine prevention for all cattle in May and December. Damp conditions favour lungworm nematodes, so organic management here presents problems to the farmer, especially on permanent pasture.

S. *stercoraria* are potentially a useful marker for dung dependent fauna in general. Furthermore, they are a food source for birds and bats, and their larvae play a part in the degradation of dung. Dung communities are complex ecological structures. Skidmore (1991) lists more than 350 species (mainly Coleoptera and Diptera) which have been found in dung in the UK, including bacteria and fungus feeders, parasitoids and carnivores. Any drug which interferes with some components of this food web may have far-reaching effects on the whole community. Moreover, Diptera species such as *Asilus crabroniformis*, which prey on dung organisms, might potentially acquire harmful amounts of such drugs from their prey.

S. *stercoraria* have an egg-to-egg generation time of 5-7 weeks. Adults are predaceous on other flies as well as feeding on nectar. Eggs are laid on the surface of the dung, larvae feed on dung (and may also be carnivorous) and pupate in the lower part of the pat or surrounding soil. Over-wintering as pupae, there is then a big spring flush, with hatching occurring ahead of the cattle turnout in April. Numbers decline in hot weather, adults preferring shade, and there is a smaller autumn peak. It is possible to find some adults even in December on mild days. Depending on the weather, there may be 3-5 broods a year in the UK.

Investigating population numbers has proved interesting. In each field, I have counted the S. *stercoraria* on fresh dung pats and used the mean of the best five counts on any one occasion. Many factors affect S. *stercoraria* numbers, including weather, season, size of dung pat and total amount of dung. Allowing for these, my results to date (and previous research) indicate that wormer treatment does not affect the number of S. *stercoraria* present at dung pats in the field. On the other hand, emergence trapping shows that the Diptera yield from dung is considerably dependant on the treatment, both in terms of numbers and diversity, and that other wormers besides the Avermectins may also have some toxic effects. S. *stercoraria* are necessarily highly mobile, as dung is an ephemeral food source and they can probably travel several kilometres in search of fresh dung. This leads to the question whether Avermectin treated dung is acting as a sink and depleting the population.

Noting that the NBN website showed large areas of the UK where

S. *stercoraria* have not been formally recorded, I decided to try and involve the general public in collecting more data, by developing a website. Here, I have asked for a photo of a "hot pat", in order to count the S. *stercoraria* 10-15 minutes after deposition (http://www.dungflies.info/index.html). I would be grateful if everyone reading this article would access the site, so that it makes its way up the search engine pages, and even more grateful for submitted data.

In retirement from a career in medicine, I am enjoying excursions into ecology, entomology, pharmacology, veterinary practice, farming practice and website construction. I would be most glad of any comments on this work, knowing that many readers will be much more expert than myself. Ultimately, the biggest challenge will be to determine what influences farmers' decisions about pesticide use and the formulation of evidence-based guidelines which actually change practice.

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Skidmore P (1991). *Insects of the British Cow Dung Community*. Field Study Council, AIDGAP series.

Floate KD, Wardhaugh KG, Boxall ABA, Sherratt TN (2005) *Fecal residues of veterinary parasiticides: Nontarget effects in the pasture environment*. Annual Review of Entomology 50:153-179

Olwen Williams
Cambridge

Other news

Conservation & BAP News

Quinquennial Review

Every five years, the statutory nature conservation agencies (Natural England, Countryside Council for Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage), working through the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), are required to review Schedules 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and to Ministers for the Environment in the Scottish Government and Welsh Assembly Government for changes to these schedules. Schedule 5 lists animals (other than birds) which are specially protected, and Schedule 8 lists plants which are specially protected. This Review was conducted in 2008 and beside many other NGOs and GOs we were asked for comments and to suggest species for inclusion. Currently, no Diptera species are included in this Schedule. The majority of the Committee of Dipterists Forum voted for suggesting five species for inclusion as it was felt that these were threatened enough to meet the very stringent criteria. The decision was made and the ministers accepted these decisions in late 2008.

The full report can be downloaded from the JNCC website (http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4630). It includes an Executive Summary, which is a good summary of the whole process. The last paragraph in this summary reads as follows: 'A number of respondents raised concerns about perceived inconsistencies in the legislation, requesting amendments to bring Schedules 5 and 8 in line with one another. The effectiveness of the UK BAP in providing species protection was also raised, with the suggestion that an alignment of species conservation and protection measures is needed. These issues are outside the scope of the Fifth Quinquennial Review.' I do not want to comment on this paragraph, but would like to point out that several issues seem to be discussed in the conservation community concerned with insect conservation at the moment. These are rather controversial and include whether we need more or less single species protection and whether collecting should be more restricted. However, I would like to point out that some time ago **Germany** protected all species except if they had particularly been excluded from this protection. This meant that **all recording is only possible under license**, which can take one year to obtain. The last I heard was that discussions have started to change this rule as it was felt that the **data gap is getting even larger and it is hindering recording immensely**. I will try and follow these discussions, but should you have any news I would like to hear from you.

The good news is that the hoverflies *Blera fallax* and *Hammerschmidtia ferruginea* have both been suggested for protection under the Act; it has been suggested to include them for habitat protection in Scotland. This is good news as the largest threat to these two species seems to be decline and destruction of habitat. However, the Scottish Government has so far not implemented the suggestions of the Fourth Quinquennial Review, so it is uncertain if these new recommendations will be implemented.

BAP

Unfortunately, I still do not have much news on the BAP front. Some of the actions have not been uploaded onto the webpage (follow the link on www.ukbap.org), but they are still being discussed as the BAP process now seems to be the responsibility of

the devolved bodies. This has complicated keeping up with all the news regarding BAP, so please keep me updated should you be involved with any work or decision making which is part of this process.

At last some work is underway on some of our species. Work on the Scottish species is being carried out by the Malloch Society and Scottish National Heritage (SNH) has funded various projects so far. I believe that the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) has also funded some work, but due to budget cuts of an already low budget I learnt recently that Natural England does not have funding for work on BAP Diptera species in this financial year. I do not know if the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is funding any work, but would appreciate receiving any news on this or other projects that are either specifically related to or include Diptera BAP species.

Please note that all our BAP species stand for a whole group of species with similar needs and hence work on one species will most likely benefit a larger group of species. I will keep trying to find funding in my limited spare time for projects by our members, but I hope that some of you will be more successful than me.

Adopt a species

You might recall that I appealed for volunteers to come forward for this scheme in several Bulletins in 2007 and 2008. I am not going to repeat a summary of this call again, but rather refer you to these two Bulletins or the Dipterists Forum webpage, where you can find it in the Forums section.

Over the last two years I received comments that this scheme favours single species conservation and might encourage the managing of sites for just one single species. First of all, I do not think that we stand a chance of managing a site for just one single fly species taking into account how hard it is to convince NGOs and GOs that flies are a crucial part of our ecosystem. Also, if we do not know the detailed needs of our species this is impossible.

However, I do believe that groups of species with similar needs should be taken into account when it comes to managing a site for conservation. Please note that I am not talking about two or three species when I mean a group, but rather larger numbers. Account should also be taken of species groups which form important assemblages on a site, i.e. species associated with seepages in a fen.

You might have noticed when you look at the recently published reviews (and also at the reviews submitted for publication) that many species could not be assessed in sufficient detail to establish their formal conservation status and have therefore been assigned 'Data deficient'. This is because we know so little about them, their distribution and/or habitat association, that we can only say 'we think this species is under threat, but until we know more about it we cannot assess how severely.' These represent a large group of species that need working on and should you feel that you would like to do this please get in touch.

News from 'Adopt a Species'

I would like to thank all of you who already adopted a species and have contributed to this or other Bulletins or kept me updated so that I could summarise your work. Your contributions are very much appreciated and I, certainly, appreciate getting them. So, please keep me updated, I would very much appreciate receiving information on the BAP and adopted species that you published in other journals or receiving copies of reports (if possible) which include information on our BAP species.

Your work is very encouraging and I hope that some other dipterists might follow. Currently 13 of our 35 BAP species and 3 species with conservation status have been adopted. Below you can find my summary of information supplied by several 'adopters' on 'their' species and also an update by Adrian Plant on *Empis limata*. Thank you very much for these contributions and good luck with your quests. So far *Blera fallax, Campsicnemus magius, Clusiodes geomyzinus, Dorycera graminum, Empis limata, Hammerschmidtia ferruginea, Idiocera sexguttata, Lipara similis, Lonchaea ragnari*, *Milichia ludens, Mintho rufiventris, Myolepta potens, Odontomyia hydroleon, Rhamphomyia hirtula, Rainieria calceata* and *Salticella fasciata* have been adopted.

Please help our threatened species by getting involved in their active conservation and adopt a species. I hope to hear from you soon.

Please bear with me if you do not always get an immediate response from me. Sometimes I am buried under work and, as I am doing this job in my spare time as a volunteer, I sometimes have to ask for help from other dipterists. I might sometimes need to approach several before I can help. I will eventually get back to you, but this might occasionally take some time.

Barbara Ismay

Adopted species

Asindulum nigrum – please check the last Dipterists Digest for some news on this species.

Blera fallax – you can find an update on the Malloch Society webpage if you follow this link: http://www.mallochsociety.org.uk/blera-2006-status . It sounds as if something is happening on the *Blera* front, so please keep your fingers crossed for the survival of this species in Britain.

Campsignemus magius has also been adopted and some of the old sites are being re-checked this summer, so we hope to receive some news (good or bad) soon. Please watch this space.

Dorycera graminum has been re-found by Jolyon Alderman and this will be published in the next Dipterists Digest.

Lipara similis – we recently were informed of two more records, one from Norfolk and one from the New Forest.

Odontomyia hydroleon – I was very glad to be informed by Roy Crossley, who has adopted this species, that the management of its only current site will continue since it seems to favour this (and possibly other) species. Also, the habitat requirements of this species will be included in the long term management plan for the site; hence, we hope it is safe for the time being. Roy has monitored this species for some time and will continue to do so, but in addition, he is investigating another potential site this season. Thanks to Roy's long term hard work and also some work by Andy Godfrey and the support of the Forestry Commission, this species is doing well at its present site.

Photograph appeal
The editors would greatly appreciate suitable photographs of the adopted species. New members may not be familiar with them and the striking appearance of some may result in the discovery of new sites (ed)

***Rainieria calceata*,** a micropezid and RDB species was rediscovered by Martin Woolner while searching one of its old sites. This search also revealed an adult of *Chrisophilus laetus* (Rhagionidae). We hope that this will be submitted for publication in Dipterists Digest – so watch out for it.

If you wish to contact any of the adopters of the species above, please email me (Barbara Ismay) and I will forward this to them or try and get in contact with them via the Dipterists Forum webpage. You can post a query or information for them under Forum and there under 'Adopt a species' if you are a member of Dipterists Forum.

Salticella fasciata. Please note that the season of this species is late September/early October, just as you receive this copy of the Bulletin and fancy a weekend break at the seaside. Details of where to look for it are at http://www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/wiki/bap:new:salticella_fasciata

Darwyn Sumner

***Empis limata* Collin**. The following is the text of a note submitted by Adrian Plant.

Empis limata is a small (3.5 mm) black empidid known only from the Welsh / English borders of VC 35 & 36 although is was originally described from a single male collected in 1889 at Painswick in Gloucestershire. There are 14 post 1980 records in three 10KM squares & 2 old records from two separate 10 KM squares. Essentially, the species is confined to the region of periglacial sand deposits around the Monnow & Usk valleys. Although until recently thought to be a British endemic it has now been confirmed from the Mara Basin of Romania and there is an unconfirmed record from Hungary.

Details of its British haunts are limited but it has usually been taken along woodland edges, hedgerows along field margins and wooded river banks. Flower visiting (ground elder) has been noted and hot weather activity is suggested (the latter a point also specifically noted for the Romanian captures) Recent records mostly fall in a short period between late June and early July, suggesting a short adult emergence period but there are historical records as late as 12 August.

We know little about its habits but comparison with other *Empis* species enables some conjectures about them. It most likely needs a mosaic of habitats which could be different for display, immature stages, feeding etc. The immature stages will be terrestrial:- presumably in periglacial sands on the flood planes of rivers. Suitable nectar sources will need to be present and the availability of appropriate swarm sites is likely to be important to it. It probably forms mating swarms perhaps in edge shade situations, with males entering swarms with prey or displaying with prey in a swarm into which females are attracted (which method is likely determined by abundance and sex ratio at the time). Edge shade situation could include river marginal shrubs, hedgerows and old woodland judging from the data.

In trying to find out more about *E. limata* the need is to first assess its distribution in the Usk & Monnow, paying particular attention to swarm sites and searching for any flower use. If display sites can be recognised (as they can with all the common *Empis* spp.) then it ought to be possible to follow mated pairs leaving the swarms and locate larval oviposition sites. Unfortunately, all attempts to do this have so far failed completely. Indeed the species is very hard to find and despite many previous efforts it was only on 27 July 2008 that I finally found my first individual, a male swept from high in a bush next to the Lawn Pool at Moccas Park in Herefordshire. Three hours of staking out the site for aerial activity followed by exhaustive sweeping failed to reveal any more. In 2009 I spent a day each at likely sites on the Usk, Monnow and nearby Dore rivers during the supposed peak adult activity window. A single male resulted from Clytha Park on the Usk, a couple of hundred metres from where Peter Skidmore found it in 2002. The individual was making a fast erratic flight where a tall and well developed hedge bounded a field of maize. I had been staking out the site chasing any Empidinae in flight, but while it is usually possible to make an educated guess as to the identity of most *Empis* and *Rhamphomyia* by their flight patterns and reflectivity (e.g. the wild zig-zags with bright white wings in sunlight of *E. albinervis* or the slower, less erratic dancing of *R. tarsata* at the interface of light and shade; both of which were displaying at the time), the short glimpse before capture of *E. limata* was not sufficient to help establish anything about flight patterns. Another stake-out and persistent sweeping of the same site a few days later failed to find it again.

Most if not all species of *Empis* s. str. do form aggregations and I am still hopeful that one day I will encounter such a swarm of *E. limata* or find it feeding in numbers at flowers. Careful observations then should reveal a little more about its habits and point the way to finding out more about its ecology and conservation needs. Meanwhile persistent searching and stake-outs for aerial activity will continue. Should anybody fancy joining in, the key localities where the species has been found are as follows:-

Painswick, Gloucestershire [VC34], exact site unknown, old record from 1889.

Stoke Wood, Herefordshire [VC36], SO6040, old records from 1908 & 1909.

Moccas Park, Herefordshire [VC36], SO3444, 6 records post 2000

Clodock (R. Monnow), Herefordshire [VC36], SO3227, 6 records, 1985

Clytha Park (R. Usk), Monmouthshire [VC35], SO3609, 2 records post 2000

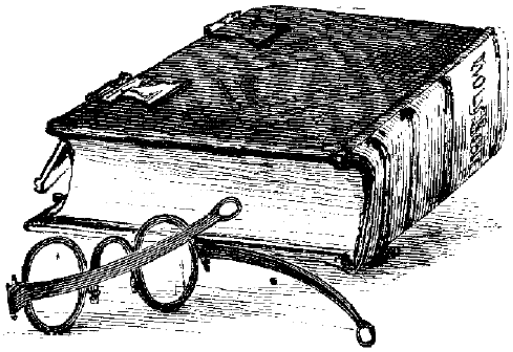
Adrian Plant

If you wish to contact Adrian, either get in contact with him via the Empididae Recording Scheme (which he runs) or email me (Barbara Ismay) and I will forward this to him or try and get in contact with him via the Dipterists Forum webpage. You can post a query or information for Adrian under Forum and there under 'Adopt a species' or under the Empididae Recording Scheme Forum if you are a member of Dipterists Forum

If after reading all this you feel that we should stop talking and rather start to help our threatened species, then please get in contact – you might be able to help! If none of the BAP species is in your area, why don't you try and work on one of the species included in the Species Statuses (RDBs)?

Barbara Ismay

Publications



Keys

Identification of the British Muscidae and Fanniidae with the help of European keys

The Royal Entomological Society's 1968 publication entitled Diptera, Cyclorrhapha, Calyptrata section (b), Muscidae (d'Assis-Fonesca, 1968) (RES) will be well known to those Forum members with an interest in the Muscidae and Fanniidae. The keys are detailed and are relatively easy to use (a personal opinion; some may wish to disagree). Nevertheless, as with most publications of such vintage, names have been revised and changes have been made to the British list. This can lead rise to problems both with possible misidentification and with confusion arising through the use of old names.

Changes include: elevation of the subfamily Fanniinae to separate family status, so removing them from Muscidae as currently defined, absorption of the old Muscidae genera ***Alloeostylus, Ophyra*** and ***Pogonomyia*** into ***Thricops, Hydrotaea*** and ***Drymeia*** respectively and the addition of 13 species to the British list. Changes to individual species names can be easily found by reference to the British Diptera checklist (Chandler, 1998). A note by Judy Webb published in Dipterists Forum Bulletin 67 (Spring 2009) lists the individual papers in which all the additional species were added.

Luckily for the keen dipterist, two other very useful relatively recent (English language) publications individually covering the Muscidae and Fanniidae are available at reasonable cost (At the time of writing Pemberley Books was quoting £15 and £10 respectively):

- The Muscidae (Diptera) of Central Europe by Gregor et al , 2002

- The European Fanniidae (Diptera) by Rozkosny et al, 1997

The Muscidae (Diptera) of Central Europe (MUS)

This 280-page book provides identification keys to all 397 central European species of Muscidae. Central Europe is defined to cover Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Switzerland. Current names are used throughout and species descriptions are given. A tabulated checklist of the confirmed species occuring within each county is provided. Some species that are likely to occur in the central European area, but which have not been confirmed as such, are also included in the keys but are not described in detail and do not appear in the checklist. This is a useful aspect of this book which works to our advantage, as the book actually covers the majority of the British Muscidae.

The following British species are included in the MUS keys, but do not appear in the MUS species descriptions or the checklist:

Coenosia brevisquama, C. stigmatica, C. vibrissata, Phaonia fusca, P. longicornis, P. suecica, Helina pulchella, Hydrotaea lundbecki, Thricops albibasalis, T. foveolatus & T. hirtulus.

All is not lost, as all but *H. lundbecki* and *P. longicornis* are keyed out and therefore briefly described in RES. If using RES for this purpose, it is worth noting that *P. suecica* appears as *P. colbrani* and *T. albibsaslis* as *Alloeostylus albibasalis*. (*H. lundbecki* and *P. Longicornis* have been added to the British list since the publication of RES.) There are, however, some omissions. The following British species do not occur within the central European area and as such, are not included in MUS:

Lispocephala rubricornis, Polietes hirticrus, Spilogona griseola, S. septemnotata S. trianguligera & S. trigonata.

Once again all is not lost, as all these species, with the exception of *S. trigonata*, can be keyed using RES and there have been no name changes. As RES describes these species as either scarce or uncommon, their omission from MUS is therefore not seen (by myself) as a particular problem. This leaves *S. trigonata* as the only British member of the Muscidae which cannot be keyed out using either MUS or RES, but a description of this species is available in Pont and Horsfield (1989).

The European Fanniidae (Diptera) (FAN)

The Fanniidae are small (3-5mm) black flies, often found hovering over woodland paths. There are approximately 260 described species worldwide and this 80-page book presents identification keys to all 82 known European species, including all the 60 described British species. FAN includes shorts descriptions of each species and uses current names, with two exceptions; *Fannia glaucescens* is now *F. lucidula* and *Piezura boletorum* is now *P. pardalina*.

The FAN keys are easy to use, but are not as detailed as those in RES. The latter covers all the current British species with the exception of *Fannia lineata*, which is described in FAN as rare. This makes RES useful as confirmatory key, although there has been some renaming (RES → FAN):

Fannia coracula → F. fuscitibia, F. mutica → F. lepida, F. hamata → F. lustrator, F. nitida → F. pauli, F. pretiosa → F. posticata, F. verall i→ F. verrallii,

Piezura miki → P. graminicola, P. graminicola → P. boletorum (which is now *pardalina*)

Conclusion

Both the MUS and FAN books, with their modern keys and use of current names, provide the means to identify all the British Fanniidae and the vast majority of the British Muscidae. As such, both MUS and FAN are seen as essential occupants of Forum members' bookshelves.

Judy Webb's list of those Muscidae species which have been added to the British list since the publication of RES published in the last Dipterists Forum bulletin (no. 67, page 9) is also very useful. All these species, with the exception of *Spilogona trigonata*, are covered by MUS.

As changes to the climate extend the northerly ranges of European species, there is an increasing possibility of encountering both migrants and new residents. With their European coverage extending to the UK, both MUS and FAN should prove useful for the identification of such species.

With the inclusion of RES, the number of 'un-keyable' British Muscidae and Fanniidae species reduces to a single Muscid. It is therefore recommended that RES be retained/obtained for use as

a confirmatory key for the Fanniidae and for descriptions of those Muscidae not covered by MUS. RES is also useful for confirmatory help with some of the Muscidae, but care must then be taken with any keying problems which may arise through some of the species not being covered. A list of the current Muscidae species which are not covered in RES, including a look-up table for converting to the new names, is easily compiled with the aid of the Dipterists Forum checklist and is left as a task for the reader. It should also be possible to use RES and Pont and Horsfield (1989) to integrate the species not covered by MUS into the MUS keys themselves. This would enable identification of the British Muscidae with a single volume, but the feasibility of doing so has not been investigated.

References

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Books

New Edition of A Dipterist's Handbook

As reported in the Spring Bulletin, the Forum has taken on the role of revising the Dipterist's Handbook, which was first published by the AES in 1978 as Volume 15 of the Amateur Entomologist. That first edition was a collaborative work involving 25 authors, edited by Alan Stubbs and Peter Chandler and published as a paperback book of 255 pages. The new edition will be a hardback book of similar size to the recently published Coleopterist's Handbook and will include more illustrations, with some in colour.

A majority of the original authors will be involved but a good number of new authors are also taking part. Since the spring authors have been found to cover most of the sections where new input was necessary, while the editors will bring some other subjects up to date. The three main sections where offers of assistance with updating would be appreciated are the Diptera of vertebrate Nests, Roosts and Burrows, association of Flies with Micro-organisms and Studying the Behaviour of Diptera

New topics to be covered include Brownfield sites, Soft rock cliffs, Forensic entomology and Flies on the Web. Any other suggestions or offers to write about additional subjects would also be appreciated.

Several contributions have already been received and the end of 2009 is still set as a date for final submission of drafts. I should have been in touch with most authors to discuss progress by the time this Bulletin appears.

Peter Chandler

Dipterists Digest

Scope

Dipterists Digest is the journal of Dipterists Forum and publishes papers and notes on British and European Diptera. All items offered are subject to review, where possible by specialists in the field concerned. It is a scientific journal but is intended for amateur as well as semi-professional and professional field (as well as deskbound) dipterists.

The purpose and scope of the journal are stated on the inside cover page preceding the instructions to authors. The scope is wide, the common factor being the emphasis on new observations and many items that appear in Recording Scheme newsletters would merit inclusion, often with little further work required. The principal subjects covered are behaviour, ecology and natural history of flies; taxonomic revisions including descriptions of species new to science and notes on identification; new and improved techniques; the conservation of flies; accounts of scarce species and of those new to regions, countries etc. and local faunistic accounts. Each issue also contains details of changes to the British and Irish checklists.

Since the Second Series began in 1994, a volume comprising two issues has been published each year, so in 2009 we have reached Volume 16. Publication date is irregular and has been largely determined by the availability of material and this has led to some recent issues being published in the year following that of the volume concerned. For the same reason the size of issues has varied but in recent years this has been standardised at 86 pages of text, sometimes a little more depending on content but keeping within the limit for the type of binding now being used.

Request for contributions

Material for the next issue is now eagerly awaited. If sufficient text has been received by the end of October it should be possible to restore the publication schedule and produce another issue in December. So if you have hung up your net in response to changeable weather there should be ample time for recording all those exciting discoveries that you can't wait to make public.

Please read the instructions to authors on the inside cover page and follow the layout of recent issues before submitting any papers or notes.

Highlights from latest issues

In the Spring Bulletin it was reported that the second part of volume 15 was about to appear and by the time the Bulletin was distributed it had been published, comprising a single paper on the Diptera of the Western Isles by Peter Skidmore. Work on this had been in progress for many years and the possibility of devoting an issue to it was already being discussed when I became editor in 1998. There was always more to be done to make the paper more comprehensive so I am pleased that its author was at last able to see it brought to fruition. Throughout the time from submission of the first draft in August 2008 and during the review and editorial processes I was aware that Peter Skidmore was seriously ill, yet every query was dealt with in meticulous detail by him with the assistance of his wife Heather. Thanks to their input over a period of several months the quality and accuracy of the paper was greatly enhanced. He had hoped to return to the islands to fill in some of the gaps. Now that this is no longer possible it is hoped that his paper will encourage others to do this.

The first part of volume 16 has also now appeared. If you haven't yet seen it this could be because you haven't paid your subscription for this year. If, however, you are a Forum member but do not subscribe to the Digest you are urged to add this to your subscription.

Volume 16 Part 1 was printed about a week before the stated publication date of 10 July and was distributed 2 days before, so many subscribers will have received it before that date. This could be significant as there are descriptions of three new species and if any of them have been described elsewhere in the same year actual publication dates become important to establish seniority.

This first issue for 2009 is full of interesting articles and notes on a wide range of families and subjects, including species new to Britain and others rediscovered after many years such as the dragonfly biting midge *Forcipomyia paludis*, found again at Wicken Fen by Mark Telfer. One of the newly described species is a scatopsid found by Andy Godfrey on exposed riverine sediments of the River Lune and represents a genus new to Britain. The distinctively marked North American drosophilid *Chymomyza amoena*, which has been spreading across Europe in recent years and long expected to arrive here has turned up in Kent, one of several contributions in this issue by Laurence Clemons on the Diptera of Kent. There is an account of unusual courtship behaviour in the robberfly *Choerades marginatus* by a new contributor Ian Rabarts. An article about hoverflies of the Falklands Islands continues the theme of covering British dependencies overseas and will be useful to those planning an Antarctic expedition. The other two newly described species are dolichopodids of the genus *Argyra* from the far east of the Palaearctic Region, outside our usual coverage but will be of interest to the dolie enthusiasts. Unusually there are three items on fungus gnats by different authors, including two species new to Britain and one new to Wales, which provides the cover illustration (see also Fungus Gnat Recording Scheme newsletter appended to this Bulletin).

Peter Chandler

Forum Matters
Membership Matters

The Number of Members & Subscribers at the time of writing (21st July 2009)

Are as follows :

Dipterists Forum Members	294
Dipterists Digest Subscribers	281

The Breakdown of these figures is as follows :

There are 253 UK based Members & Subscribers to both Dipterists forum & Dipterists Digest

There are 14 Overseas Members & Subscribers to both Dipterists forum & Dipterists Digest

Some 26 UK Members and 1 Oversea Member are Dipterists forum Only = 27

And some 4 UK and 10 Overseas are Subscribers to the Dipterists Digest Only (12)

(This amounts to a total of 308 individuals, as on the 21st July 2009)

We have had some 27 New Members join during the first half of 2009,

There are an additional 57 Members/Subscribers who have yet to renew for this year,

And they are currently off the Mailing list, awaiting renewals.

Membership renewals are usually sent out towards the autumn, to any of those who have

not renewed by then, But, as can be seen by the Membership figures, if only a small proportion of last years Members renew, then, we will easily exceed 300 Forum Members,

If all those renew then that figure climbs to 350+!! (Although, in reality I expect it to be about the same as last years total of 330)

And, I am hopeful that more New Members will join during the second half of 2008

There are still a small number of members & subscribers who continue to pay at the

Old rate, And, I would be grateful, if those who have yet to top up their membership fees

Could please do so or pay me in person if you wish, I plan to be at all the main entomological

Events this autumn.

There will also be a Dipterists Forum stall at the Amateur Entomologists Exhibition

On Saturday October 17th October 2009, at Kempton Park Racecourse, Starting at 11.00am.

More details are available from the AES Website http://www.amentsoc.org/exhibition.htm

This will be manned by various Committee members, and advice on a wide range of

Issues including all membership issues can possibly be resolved here,

Back issues of the Dipterists Digest will also be on sale,

All members & potential members are welcome to introduce themselves.

Mick Parker, Membership Secretary.

Income and Expenditure Account

to 31st December 2008

			2008	2007
INCOME				
Subscriptions				
	Forum		£2,131.00	£1,778.00
	Digest		£2,538.00	£2,738.00
			£4,669.00	£4,516.00
Dipterists Digest back issues			£26.00	£306.00
Donations				£78.00
Interest			£412.00	£296.00
Total Income			**£5,107.00**	**£5,196.00**
EXPENDITURE				
Dipterists Digest		13.2		-£1,533.00
		14.1		-£1,652.00
		14.2	-£1,264.24	
		15.1	-£1,257.68	
			-£2,521.92	-£3,185.00
Bulletin	62/3			-£576.00
	64			-£547.00
	65		-£565.00	
	66		-£581.63	
			-£1,146.63	-£1,123.00
Publicity				
	British Wildlife		-£164.50	-£165.00
	Leaflets			-£181.00
			-£164.50	-£346.00
AGM			-£152.75	-£350.00
Buglife subscription			-£10.00	
Workshop				-£390.00
Membership Secretary's expenses (inc AES exhibition)			-£287.14	-£43.00
Treasurer's expenses				-£2.00
Secretary's expenses (inc. Bulletin postage)			-£296.78	
Series 1 digests for Silesian Museum			-£25.00	
Software purchase			-£300.00	
Total expenditure			-£4,904.72	-£5,439.00
Surplus of income over expenditure			**£202.28**	**-£243.00**

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2008

Cash Deposits		
Alliance and Leicester current account	£1,938.92	£2,148.31
Alliance and Leicester depoit account	£11,565.19	£11,153.05
Total	£13,504.11	£13,301.36

General Fund		
Balance at 1st January 2008(7)	£13,301.36	£13,544.00
Surplus for year	£202.28	-£243.00
	£13,503.64	£13,301.00

J. Howard Bentley, Honorary Treasurer

Correspondence

DMHF (Dimethyl hydantoin formaldehyde)

This substance has been used widely for making genitalia preparations of insects (and in my case for mounting whole specimens of small Nematocera) for several years and has so far given good results. However, the suppliers from whom this has been available in previous years can apparently no longer obtain it. I am aware that a number of people who use DMHF are running low on supplies and don't know of a current source, while there are others who would like to use it but cannot obtain it.

I have been in touch with a company who manufacture this in the USA and will only supply it in bulk quantities in Europe. I need to gauge the amount of interest in obtaining the product before determining whether this is going to be a viable option. Could anyone who has an interest in obtaining supplies of DMHF please contact me as soon as possible (contact details in Dipterists Digest). Prices for small quantities would be reasonable.

Of course if anyone already knows of a reliable source please let me know.

DMHF has the advantage over some other mountants of solubility in water and in preparations remaining clear and colourless. Liberti (2005) provided a useful comparison of the properties of DMHF and other mountants.

The NHM website cites the other two references given below for information on the use of DMHF as an entomological mountant:.

Bameul, F. (1990). Le DMHF: un excellent milieu de montage en entomologie. L'Entomologiste, 46(5): 233-239.

Liberti, G. (2005) Improved solutions of two water-soluble media for mounting beetle genitalia. The Coleopterist 14: 29-35.

Steedman, H. F. (1958). Dimethyl Hydantoin Formaldehyde: a new water-soluble resin for use as a mounting medium. Q. Jl. microsc. Sci., 99(4): 451-452.

Peter Chandler

How to Tell the Sex of a Fly

A woman walked into the kitchen to find her husband stalking around with a fly swatter.

"What are you doing?" She asked.

"Hunting Flies" He responded.

"Oh! Killing any?" She asked.

"Yep, 3 males, 2 Females," he replied.

Intrigued, she asked. "How can you tell them apart?"

He responded, "3 were on a beer can, 2 were on the phone."

Anon

Data quality debate

A series of communications between Buglife, the NBN and a number of National Recording Schemes gave rise to a large number of comments and observations concerning the validity of data on the NBN Gateway and several related matters. Members of the Dipterists Forum were involved in the short-lived debate and I can assure them that their comments and observations have not been ignored. The NFBR has taken up the cudgels on everyone's behalf and key aspects of the debate will form part of their forthcoming conferences. Roger Morris became the unofficial hero of this flutter of communications with the following observation (amongst other more serious ones): "*How about funds to allow some of us to take early retirement and go out recording during weekdays when the weather is at its best?*"

Additionally, Natural England have a conference planned for 23rd September 2009 entitled "Mobilising Biological Information in England and the UK" with speakers from Butterfly Conservation, BSBI, NBN and ALERC. I'm unsure as to the scope of their invitations to this event, I'm guessing it's mainly LRCs, Recording Schemes plus agencies, BRC, NFBR and NBN. The outcomes will be of significance to all Dipterists Forum members who do any recording so I'll try to keep you informed.

Darwyn Sumner

Obituary

Peter Skidmore 1936-2009

"The tulip and the butterfly
Appear in gayer coats than I;
Let me be drest fine as I will
Flies, worms and flowers exceed me still"

Those words of Isaac Watts on the cover of the Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Peter Skidmore could not have been more appropriate for someone who was constantly in awe of the wonder and beauty of creation. Peter had died the previous week after a lengthy illness and he had had a part in the planning of the service with Heather and their friend the Revd. Kevin Watson, Moderator of the United Reformed Church, Yorkshire Synod. Mr Watson spoke powerfully and movingly when we gathered at Hall Gate United Reformed Church in Doncaster on the afternoon of Sunday 26th July, the church where Peter and Heather had worshipped, and afterwards enjoyed plentiful refreshments in the church hall.

According to my straw poll, taken from the rear of the church, it appeared that coleopterists slightly outnumbered dipterists amongst the large congregation, which was entirely fitting when we were celebrating the life of someone whose interests and formidable knowledge ranged widely over the field of entomology.

I had first encountered Peter when, as a bachelor, he arrived 'over the Pennines' in the mid 1960's to take up a post at Doncaster Museum. For a short time, as a novice entomologist, I had been temporarily holding the diptera record cards of the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union until someone more suitable turned up. That 'someone' was of course, Peter, and he quickly made his mark.

Peter Skidmore (left foreground in navy blue jacket) showing larval material to Mike Pugh, Malcolm Smart and a member of Field Studies Centre staff at the 2002 Preston Montford meeting

I well recall our first field trip together on a bleak March day early in his time at Doncaster when we met up at Skipwith Common. As Peter began to take bits of equipment out of his capacious rucksack I quipped that he seemed to have brought everything except the kitchen sink, whereupon he produced an enormous plastic washing-up bowl and metal garden sieve. It was only a few minutes later that he was extracting all kinds of entomological goodies from wet sphagnum including minute *Hebrus* bugs I had never seen before, and the following day I was in our local hardware shop kitting myself out with the same!

Later there were excursions with him to his beloved Thorne Moors, for whose conservation he fought with great tenacity, and many 'indoor' meetings of the Entomological Section of the YNU of which he was Secretary for many years. Whether indoors or outdoors Peter was always the most amiable of companions, with unrivalled knowledge and true modesty. Indeed it wasn't until much later in our acquaintance that I accidentally discovered that he had considerable artistic talent; had he been more ambitious he could have become a distinguished illustrator. I greatly admire the paintings he produced to illuminate his recent masterly compilation on the invertebrates of Thorne and Hatfield Moors.

A formal obituary for Peter is being written by his old friend Colin Johnson, so below we publish a selection of informal reminiscences by friends who wish to pay tribute to our esteemed former colleague whom we all will remember with great affection.

Roy Crossley

I first met Peter at a Raven Society AGM and Dinner at Jolley's Café in Southport in 1953 or 1954. He was very kind to me and offered to identify specimens that I was having difficulty with. Later he wrote out for me short keys for small families, translated from German and modified for identifying British species.

I still remember with enormous happiness the wonderful collecting holiday we had in 1958 when we went to Velden am Wörthersee in Carinthia, Austria. We had wonderful weather and glorious countryside for our collecting, which was marvelously fruitful. It was on this trip that he introduced me to lager. I took one sip, grimaced and immediately handed the glass back to Peter. I have never touched beer ever since!

Sadly, the lovely woods where we collected are now gone, replaced by a motorway and urban developments.

After that, life for me became very busy with medical studies, graduation, hospital jobs, marriage, family, more hospital work, two years abroad, and then twenty-two years in general practice. Then, when I retired, I decided to write the story of the Raven Society to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. Chasing up various former members, I eventually tracked down Peter and resumed a friendship that I treasured very much. I have fond memories of his companionship with Raven Society members on holidays in Spain and in the Dordogne. Last year, when I celebrated my seventieth birthday, he presented me with three prints of his marvelous colour illustrations of a beetle and four flies. I have had them all placed together in one frame, which now graces our lounge. It is a constant reminder to me of a wonderful man, artist and entomologist.

Richard Underwood

In 1957 or 1958, when I was first becoming interested in Diptera, I joined Len Parmenter's Diptera study group in the Amateur Entomologists' Society. Len used to circulate a batch of reprints and original observations around the group, and there were always notes on captures and observations by Peter Skidmore. As a beginner, I was filled with admiration for someone so active, so productive, and able to identify everything that he caught. A few years later I came to know Peter personally, and although we met only a relatively few times over the years we remained in regular contact through our mutual love of the Muscidae. I was always impressed by the wide range of his interests, and his knowledge and expertise in several different fields. It was my privilege to be invited to be one of Peter's examiners for his M.Phil. degree, and at the time I recommended that he expand his quite outstanding thesis on the biology of Muscidae into an account of the world species. This he did, though I can hardly imagine the effort it must have cost in those days before word processors, and his monumental book "The Biology of the Muscidae of the World" (1985) remains the standard work on this subject and is a fitting testament to his dedication, perseverance, and deep knowledge of these flies. It is worth adding that the classification that he proposed was rather different from what was accepted at the time, but subsequent analyses based on both morphological and molecular data and on cladistic methods have confirmed many of his suggested changes.

Peter searching for larvae at the 2002 Preston Montford meeting

Adrian Pont

As a short-trousered boy of 11 I first met Peter at the Oldham Natural History Society weekly meetings at Werneth Park Study Centre in the mid 1960s. It was a terrific introduction to Natural History subjects with insects frequently presented in talks by regular members Peter, Colin Johnson and our resident curator, Leonard Kidd. After a few years Peter left for foreign parts and it was 30 years or so before I met up with him again, just the two of us in the subterranean library at the RES on the day he gave his talk to the Dipterists Forum AGM. He turned to me and said he thought he recognised me; on my pronouncing my name he said "Oh hello, the last time I saw you, you were in short trousers"

Darwyn Sumner

Although Peter Skidmore and I had common acquaintance with Len Parmenter in the late 1950`s, I did not actually meet Peter until the mid 1990`s when I returned to England after many years of working overseas.

My first close encounter with him was at the Dipterists Forum AGM in November 2001. I was asked to chair a session in the late morning during which Peter was to give a pre-lunch talk about "Flies and Archaeology". His unquenchable enthusiasm for the subject was evident from the start and he kept the audience spellbound for the whole of his allocated time slot. However, it became obvious that he was completely oblivious to the traffic light system in use to warn speakers of the approach of the end of his time slot. The yellow light was ignored, as was a red & yellow combination and finally a plain red. Attempts by me to politely interrupt him and loud stomach rumbles from the now hungry audience also went ignored. I finally had to physically walk in front, thank him for his presentation and (gently?) usher him off in order to quench his boundless desire to keep talking.

Peter had an amazing ability to instantly recognise species of Diptera and other orders on sight and to remember their names, but he could become a little confused where name changes had occurred. In 2004 I became involved in reporting and analysing data from a survey of biodiversity in ancient orchards. Large numbers of Malaise trap samples had been collected and Peter had been contracted to identify the insect material from many of those samples, a truly monumental job. He produced Excel worksheets with lists of species in each sample. When I came to combine the data from the various samples it was obvious that Peter has simply looked at each specimen and typed out its name from his head without reference to any standardised list. The result was that some species were listed under two or three different names – an old name, a later revised name and sometimes a slight misspelling of one of the preceding - all emanating directly from his prodigious brain.

As part of the same study, I was required to give an assessment of the general habitat associations of the species recorded. This was to be achieved as far as possible by linking the species lists to existing habitat preference lists. So it happened that I became acquainted with another of Peter's monumental works - a wonderful little book entitled "Insects of the Cow Dung Community" Wow - what a title!!! From that I was able to load his cow dung species list into a database and use it to flag which of the recorded species were likely to be associated with dung from the cows which regularly grazed in the orchards!

Malcolm Smart

I did not know Peter very well, apart from meeting him at Diptera meetings, but I collaborated with him on a short paper (Dipterists Digest 2006 13:43-46), in which we recorded and confirmed *Zaphne proxima* (Malloch) (Anthomyiidae) as British. His ability

as a field worker is well illustrated by the way in which he surveyed the reserve at Thorne Moors, Yorkshire. His observations on the ecological data of this Reserve was astonishing, with a wide knowledge of the botany of the area. In addition his wide knowledge of the immature stages of Muscoidea, and in particular of the puparia of *Zaphne* species was impressive. I was left only to add a few notes on the taxonomy and distribution of *Z. proxima.*

His knowledge of Muscidae was very large, as his research and publications on the biology of the Muscidae illustrate, but others will no doubt comment on this. I found him very helpful in correspondence, and a pleasure to collaborate with.

Michael Ackland

I feel that a 'presence' has definitely gone from us. Peter could genuinely be considered one of the most complete entomologists of our time. His work on the Muscidae placed him in the front rank of Dipterists and it is arguable that his work on the Coleoptera raised him to similar eminence in that field- especially with regard to his remarkably detailed ecological studies of the lives of numerous saprophagous species. Possessed of a dry sense of humour, he was an excellent companion in the field, full of amusing anecdotes and always with constructive suggestions regarding problems in practical fieldwork. There was also a more profound philosophical aspect to his nature that made him stand apart from others . His erudition enabled him to produce a diverse range of publications from those suited to an academic audience to those readily accessible to the average student of natural history.

Mike Bloxham

I owe a great debt of gratitude to Peter for it was he who initiated me into the mysteries of Dipterology, and then, some 12 years later, re-energised that interest. As a PGCE student in 1967, at the University of Leicester, I did voluntary work at the Leicester museum. I was allocated to Peter as a gopher while he re-curated the Diptera collection there, and I learnt a lot. In 1979 I went to Rhyd-y-creuau Field Study Centre, Snowdonia, to do a week of independent field work and by coincidence Peter was there with John Burn. He welcomed me into the small group and we had a very enjoyable week, doing field work every day. Through Peter's patience, enthusiasm and great knowledge, again I learnt a great deal about the flies we found. By this time my family were becoming independent and I was able to find the time to develop that interest. I soon joined the Hoverfly Recording Scheme, and then the Dipterist's Forum, and so, thanks to Peter I have had decades of pleasure.

John Kramer

And lastly, a reminder of another of Peter's wonderfully memorable legacies, the vernacular naming of the very hairy *Phaonia jaroschewskii as* the "Hairy Canary fly" because its survival on Thorne Moors acted similarly to the coal miner's canary as an environmental indicator. This delightfully named fly has since become a BAP species, its popular name forever encapsulated in publications such as:

"*Phaonia jaroschewskii* Schnabl (Diptera: Muscidae), the Hairy Canary", Naturalist, 116: 69-71, 1971; and

"The haunts of the Hairy Canary". Naturalist, 121: 41-49, 1996 (Peter's Presidential Address to the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union at York on 2 December 1995 - a masterly summary of the long campaign to save the Moors with which Peter was associated for most of his time in Doncaster).

Friends

The quest for the Saltern tangle-foot fly

Roy Crossley (left) and Peter Skidmore at Thorne Moor, Yorkshire on 22 July 1979, trying to spot *Campsicnemus magius* (Dolichopodidae), a highlight of the site. A few other dipterists had called in to seek this species at its only known inland site and enjoyed an interesting tour of Thorne Moor conducted by Peter Skidmore. We had stopped off while returning home from the summer field meeting held that year at Newton Stewart in Galloway, where we are again holding a field meeting in September this year. We were successful in seeing this curious fly in some numbers and two males I caught that day remain the only specimens of *C. magius* in my collection. This species is otherwise recorded in Britain only from coastal sites in the south and east so its occurrence at Thorne was one of the many surprises of this locality, where it apparently occurred due to previous saline flooding of the area and was recorded during the period from 1976 to 1983 (Falk & Crossley 2005). Roy tells me that he returned to the Thorne site in mid July this year in an attempt to re-locate *C. magius*, but with no success. He comments that the old dyke where it occurred had dried up following the closure of the colliery and cessation of pumping, and the former muddy areas are now completely overgrown with *Phragmites*, so there is little chance of its survival in the area.

Peter Skidmore is well known to have coined the English name of another Thorne Moor speciality, the celebrated Hairy Canary (*Phaonia jaroschewskii*, amended for BAP purposes to Hairy Canary Fly to avoid confusing the ornithologists). He didn't stop there but included some others in his major work on the invertebrates of Thorne and Hatfield Moors (Skidmore 2007). In that work he illustrated *C. magius* in one of his excellent paintings and called it the "Saltern tangle-foot fly", which has priority by a year or so over the more prosaic "Fancy-legged Fly" coined to popularise studies of it as a BAP species. A line drawing of this fly, showing the extreme ornamentation of the male legs, also adorns the cover of the journal *Studia dipterologica* and tangle-foot is clearly an appropriate name for this remarkable insect.

However, Roy tells me that he is not a supporter of English names for flies and thinks that it is "high time the entomological 'establishment' put their collective foot down on this nonsense of polynomial inventions." He quotes the FBA book on Lakeland (Fryer 1991): "Many scientific names are used in the text. A lot of organisms have no other. These should not deter. They are no more complicated than the two (or more) names borne by every reader,"

In his dealings with the media about *Odontomyia hydroleon* Roy has stressed that there is no 'English' name and that has never been a problem as they find that *Odontomyia* rolls off the tongue. One wonders what they would have made of the Barred Green Colonel if that name for it had been disclosed; it could have led to speculation as to what or where he had been barred from, while so inexperienced. Perhaps a translation of the specific name (Water Lion) might have had more impact.

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Fryer, G. (1991). A Natural History of the Lakes, Tarns and Streams of the English Lake District. 384 pp. Freshwater Biological Association Special Publications 1.

Skidmore, P. (2007). An Inventory of the Invertebrates of Thorne & Hatfield Moors. 168 pp, 18 colour plates. Thorne & Hatfield Moors Monograph No 2.

Peter Chandler

Review

A Review of Dipterists Forum Field Meetings 1998-2009

The field meetings for the period 1973 to 1997 have already been listed (Stubbs, 1999), That spans the period from the first Cranefly Recording Scheme field meeting into an era when the Dipterists Forum was in charge of such events.

The pace of running field meetings has been maintained, indeed increased following the introduction of an annual spring long weekend in recent years. There has been a growing need for an update log of where we have been and when, so this paper continues the earlier published format, noting some of the new to Britain and other exceptional finds.

1998

27- June- 4 July, Dorchester, Dorset

1999

12-20 June - Grange-over-Sands/Lake District

13-17 October - Oxford

2000

27 May- 3 June Launceston/Devon & Cornwall

11-15 October - Epping Forest

2001

7-14 July Launceston/Devon & Cornwall

10-14 October - Warwickshire

Epidapus absconditus Sciar. New GB

2002

25 May- 1 June - Muir of Ord, Easter Ross

9-13 October - north Norfolk

Agathomyia sexmaculata Platy. New GB

Seri obscuripennis

Dicranota gracipipes Limon. New East Anglia

Bradystyla longiseta Mycet. New GB

2003

11-18 July - Hengrave Hall, Breck

15-19 October - Lackham. west Wiltshire

2004

29 May- 5 June - Lackham. west Wiltshire

2005

4-5 June 2005 Stamford (for Northamptonshire)

2-9 July Durham

2006

13-14 May, Hereford

10 June Burnham Beeches, Bucks

24 June-1 July - Plumpton, Nr Lewes, Sussex

18-22 October - Radnorshire

2007

17-20 May - Norfolk pingoes

26 May - Langley Country Park, Bucks

14-20 July - Aberystwyth

17-21 October - Charnwood Forest

2008

19-20 May - Castle Acre, W Norfolk

28 June- 5 July - Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore

17-21 October - Loughborough/Charnwood Forest

Agathomyia lundbecki Platy. 2nd GB male

Roger Morris

Reports

Picture-wing Workshop

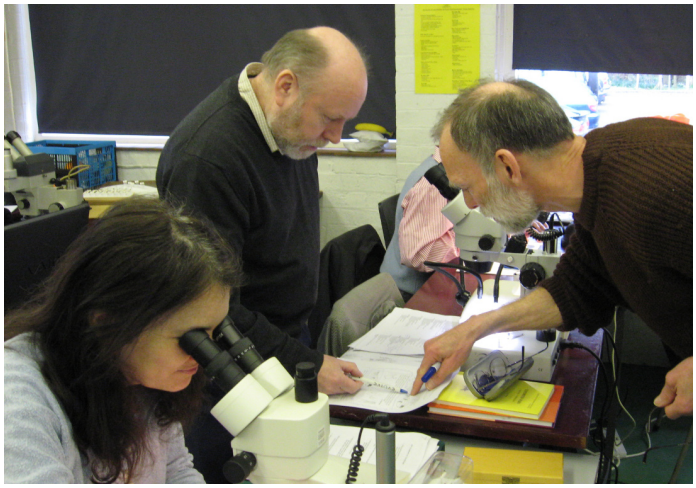
Preston Montford 6-8th March 2009

John Wheeler and I arrived at Preston Montford on Friday afternoon after driving across from Northants. We met Sue Townsend, who runs the Field Centre, as we looked around for other Dipterists. Sue greeted us warmly and told us to help ourselves to tea or coffee and the delicious cake that had been put aside for us in the kitchenette in the Darwin Building. She also told us which labs would be being used, so we were able to get set up after the tea. Soon other members started drifting in and we were able to reminisce about last year's field work and look forward to the coming season.

After dinner, Sue gave us a brief welcome and introduction to the Field Centre and the two groups repaired to their respective labs to start the weekend's workshops. One group were attending the Hoverfly Workshop being run by Stuart Ball and Roger Morris, whilst we joined the Picture Wing Fly workshop. Alan Stubbs gave us a general introduction to the groups of flies being covered, which included all those with wing markings except the Sciomyzids, which had been subject to a workshop only a couple of years ago. Alan had produced some useful keys and diagrams to help get to family as well providing updated keys to the species of Tephritids, Ulidiids, Platystomatidids and Pallopterids. He also gave us some helpful tips on habitats and finding larvae. Many Tephritids hibernate as adults and can be found in winter where microhabitats are sufficiently warm. Also Ulidiids can be found in winter as galls on thistles. Indeed on Saturday Alan collected some examples to show us. By 9pm we started to make our ways to the bar for a well earned pint or two of the local Shropshire beer.

Saturday was spent working through the keys using specimens the members had brought with them or looking at the large collection of picture wing flies that Richard had brought from Liverpool Museum. The chance to see a good range of species, compare similar ones and note areas of the keys that cause you problems is one of the great strengths of these workshops. It also, of course, is tremendously helpful to have experts on hand when you really are struggling to interpret a couplet with an unfamiliar specimen in front of you.

On Sunday morning Martin Drake gave us an informative short presentation on the Opomyzids and Geomyzids before we worked on specimens with keys that he had provided. He also explained how to extract the ovipositor of females to help with identification. Martin provided some tips on how to quickly spot the more unusual species when confronted with a net-full of these insects, which can be found in large numbers in grassland sweepings.



Martin selects a couplet

On late Sunday morning Barbara and John Ismay gave a short presentation to the Hoverfly workshop on killing and preparing specimens. A number of the Picture Wing Fly workshop members attended too and I am sure picked up some new information. I know I did.

By mid Sunday afternoon people started making their farewells and set off for home. Everybody had seemed to enjoy the workshops and the socialising over meals and in the bar, where both groups could get together and share information and stories. I am already looking forward to next year's workshop but firstly let's have a good season's field work and maybe meet up with some old and new friends at some of the Dipterists Forum field meetings.

John Showers

Hoverfly Workshop

All ten of us who attended this course must surely have come away enthused about hoverflies and eager to get recording. I know I have – I feel I now have the confidence to venture boldly into the mysteries of the Diperist's world. Under Roger and Stuart's expert and patient tuition we learnt how to identify hovers, so that even complete beginners like me felt we could have a good crack at the majority of species. The identical boxes of Syrphidae, each with 25 different specimens, that Roger prepared for us were a tremendous learning aid. As well as finding out how to use the keys and tell our humeri from our squamae, Roger and Stuart told us about the life cycles and larval feeding habits of different groups of hovers, gave us a slide show about what to look out for in the spring, and demonstrated how best to catch the insects. Just before we left, John and Barbara Ismay gave us a most useful session on good labelling and storage techniques, so altogether we had a rounded introduction to fly entomology.

Stuart shows his big fly boxes to Rob Wolton

My thanks to Stuart and Roger for sharing their expertise and passion for flies with us, and to all members of the Dipterist Forum involved in arranging the course. It really was most enjoyable. As I write, I can hardly wait for the winter cold to go so that I can get out there, find some hovers and put my new found skills to use.

Rob Wolton

Spring Field Meeting

Scarborough & the North York Moors 30-31 May 2009

The spring field meeting is a relatively recent addition to the Dipterists Forum field meetings agenda, having been introduced because several members commented that they found the week-long summer meeting too long. What is primarily billed as a two-day event actually ends up as a three day meeting because the option of a third day has become a tradition that is popular with those members who have retired (or want to). And so it was that the nucleus of this year's meeting gathered on the evening of Thursday 28 May – a gathering likened by me to "Last of the Summer Wine" because of the age structure of the group. Three hot sunny days awaited us and the North York Moors could just as easily have been the Pennines above Holmfirth. True, Foggy, Compo and Clegg were missing, but we were capable of fielding an equally amusing and lovable cast although the roles are probably best left to the reader to determine.

Alan Lawson, Alan Stubbs and Howard Bentley engrossed in the contents of a net

Day one saw us at Forge Valley NNR where we met up with Roy Crossley who had done us proud with access to some fantastic sites. The pungent smell of wild garlic greeted us as we arrived at this idyllic gorge woodland which boasts seepages with tufa and beds of butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*) and of course sheets of ransomes (*Allium ursinum*). Needless to say, *Portevinia maculata* was one of the most abundant flies, which in hoverfly terms was closely followed by *Neoascia obliqua*. More interesting hoverfly records included *Orthonevra brevicornis* (recorded by three members), *Brachyopa scutellaris* (which occurred at a total of four sites in total) and *Criorhina asilica*. This site epitomised the whole meeting however, because despite its potential richness there were few flies as demonstrated by the cranefly haul – just 24 species when 40 would have been a more respectable number. Surprisingly, despite being the richest site in Yorkshire, it also yielded just six species of Empidoidea.

Part of the team resting at Forge Valley Woods
L-R Alan Lawson, Alan Stubbs, Howard Bentley, John Kramer (background), Jonathan Cole, Roy Crossley, Andrew Halstead & Malcolm Smart.

Our party progressed on to the beautiful upland valley at Jugger Howe which comprised boggy areas with bog myrtle (*Myrica gale*), the occasional eared willow (*Salix auriculata*) (still in flower) and alder woodland along the stream. This site was reached via a field with an extremely large bull in it. Those that knew about these things reasoned that the bull must be docile because he was the proud master of half a dozen heifers; and anyway no sane farmer would surely put such a brute into a field traversed by a public footpath unless they were amiable! They were quite right for although we traversed the field with trepidation; the great beast paid us barely more than a quizzical eye and ambled off in pursuit of his harem. One considerable surprise was the hoverfly *Brachyopa scutellaris* which I would not normally associate with upland alders.

A further upland bog at Helwath Beck followed. Records of interest included *Didea fasciata* and *Chrysotoxum arcuatum* at eared willow, and *Sericomyia laponna*. By this stage the heat of the day caught up with us and the lure of ice-cream became too strong a temptation: we headed off in search of nectar having resisted the possibility of a rope climb down Bees Cliff or a scramble down Hayburn Wyke.

Day two saw further arrivals and we reached full strength – a total of 14 members and friends. Thankfully these members were a good deal younger and brought the average age down very considerably. After a short stop at Chafer Wood, a lovely wet woodland with seepages, our main venue was Fen Bog which lies adjacent to the North York Moors Railway. Apparently this site has doubled as the great Grimpen Mire in dramatisation of the Sherlock Holmes story The Hound of the Baskervilles. And, of course, the railway stops at Goatland (aka Adenfield in the TV series Heartbeat). Whilst a truly lovely site, Fen Bog has little shade and on a hot day it can be challenging. Finally we headed to Littlebeck Wood which is reached by a challengingly narrow and precipitously undulating minor road! Although it yielded few hoverflies, Littlebeck Wood proved to be the richest site for Dolis and Empids on this meeting with 22 species (closely followed by 20 species at Sievedale Fen).

DF swarm on to Sievedale Fen on 31 May 2009.

Our final day took us to Dalby Forest and the wonderful Sievedale Fen , home to *Odontomyia hydroleon* (which we were too early to see). This lovely site lies adjacent to a children's play area with what appears to be a machine-gun range! Jolly noisy and unfortunately risky for equipment left unattended; as Roy Crossley discovered when he propped his net against a fence post to search for his lost pooter. Upon returning unsuccessfully from this search he found that some unspeakable individual had stolen his net! Whilst we were too early for *Odontomyia hydroleon*, Malcolm Smart took clouds of the minute *Oxycera pygmaea* on one mossy flush. Sievedale Fen also yielded the *Rhamphomyia plumipes* which is one of just four Yorkshire sites and the only one to have yielded this species in the last twelve years!

By this time the party was dispersing: many members hailed from southern England and headed south at lunchtime. The stalwarts carried on to Sand Dale where a hillside of calcareous flushes intermingled with mature hawthorns and alders. This site epitomised all that we had seen in the previous days – wonderful location, fantastic habitat but hard work finding very much. All too quickly the trip was over and the party dispersed with lingering memories of a wonderful landscape and excellent company: oh and a lot of flies to attend to this winter.

Attending members

The overall attendance comprised; Howard Bentley, Hannah Cornish, Jonathan Cole, Roy Crossley, Kim Goodger, Andrew Grayson, Andrew Halstead, Alan Lawson, Erica McAlister, Roger Morris, John Showers, Julian Small, Malcolm Smart, Alan Stubbs.

Roger Morris

Summer Field Meeting
Swansea 4-11 July 2009

Numbers attending field meetings continue to surpass expectations. When I booked 25 Rooms at Swansea University in the autumn of 2008 I was uncertain that we would fill them. I need not have worried, however, as there was a late rush of members seeking rooms and all were filled. In the end we were a much bigger group than expected because several members attended but stayed off-site. In all 30 members and friends attended in some way over all or part of the week. This included several who were new to the field meetings, which is greatly encouraging because we want to maintain this wonderful institution.

The workroom at Swansea with a few night-owls

The week previous to our meeting had been extremely hot and sunny but the weather changed with a series of fronts coming in from the west. When we (the Peterborough Mafia) left eastern England on the Saturday morning it was hot and sunny but the further west we went we encountered overcast and dull. None-the-less we managed a few squares in south Wales (one that had no hoverfly records at all and the other only with pre-1980 records).

Day one and the usual throng of members trying to work out where to go proved to be remarkably straightforward. Maybe it was Mike Howe's introduction to the area the previous night; or maybe because of the risk of rain most people had decided upon sand dunes. I usually find this first day quite stressful because it is difficult to be sure where to send people, but on this occasion the last carload found an empty room at 9.15. Perhaps there are merits in choosing a venue with a smaller number of large sites available to visit?

On that first day, we (the Mafia) were joined by Rob Wolton who had developed a wealth of experience in finding *Microdon* larvae in red ant nests. Our first call was a Rhos pasture owned by Butterfly Conservation that was characterised by *Molinia* tussocks with lots of wet ground and an abundance of Whorled Caraway. Little tufts of *Sphagnum* and patches of *Calluna* completed the sward. This is very similar to Culm grassland in Devon where Rob has found *Microdon* adults, larvae and puparia in abundance. It was not long before he found very young larvae and some vacated puparia at this site. We hoped that once we knew what we are doing we should be able to find more sites and record outside the flight period. In return, we showed Rob how to find *Cheilosia* larvae although we only managed *C. albipila* and some rather irritated frosted orange moth larvae!

The first full day's effort yielded an interesting array of flies that improved with the week. *Xylota xanthocnema* at two sites on the first day was a great surprise. Less surprising but still interesting was *Rhingia rostrata*, which is rapidly expanding its range. A specimen of *Thereva fulva* from Oxwich dunes caused a flutter of interest because this species has not been reported for many years although Oxwich is a known site historically. Similarly, a male *Tabanus sudeticus* was the cause of some excitement and resulted in some excellent photography – see photo – with a suitable backdrop!

The horsefly *Tabanus sudeticus* was seen at various locations but here met its match with Roger Morris in the background. (Photo Rob Wolton)

Swansea is located ideally for the south Wales sand dunes. Whiteford Burrows, Crymlyn Burrows, Oxwich Dunes, Pembrey Sands, Rossily Bay, Kenfig and Merthyr Mawr, comprise the majority of the sites so it is not surprising that dunes figured highly in the itinerary. In addition, the weather (intermittent showers and more heavy rain) made coastal sites most attractive. The quality was variable and the abundance of flies matched this. The most productive was Whiteford Burrows which was literally heaving with Stratiomyidae. *Nemotelus* were to be expected, but the transition marsh here is particularly rich with beds of yellow flag iris and marsh mallow plants, so we were also inundated with *Oplodontha viridula* (in quite astounding numbers), the bright green and black *Oxycera trilineata* and *Vanoyia tenuicornis* proved to be relatively common. *Hercostomus gracilis*, *Herina palustris* and *Erioptera meijerei* were also noted from this amazing site.

Elsewhere, many of the dunes are over-stable with extensive bracken in places (Oxwich) or heavy infestations of sea buckthorn (Pembrey). Duneland specialities of note included *Villa modesta* (Merthyr-Mawr), *Philonicus albiceps*, *Pamponerus germanicus*, *Thereva fulva* (Oxwich Dunes and Merthyr-Mawr), and the spectacular dolichopodid *Hercostomus nigriplantis* which was found widely on the dunes of the Gower and elsewhere on the south Wales coast. On the fore dunes *Tetanops myopinus* (Ulidiidae) was recorded at several localities including Pembrey Burrows and Nicholaston Dunes.

Dunes also proved productive for Acroceridae with records of *Ogcodes pallipes* and *Acrocera orbiculus* (several) from Whiteford Burrows. *Villa modesta* was noted at Nicholaston Dunes and at Merthyr Mawr. Oxwich Dunes were a popular venue and also yielded *Cryptonevra diadema* (Chloropidae), *Homoneura notata* (Lauxaniidae), *Trupanea amoena* (Nicholaston end) and *Thinophilus ruficornis* (Dolichopodidae). The list of important records extended beyond Diptera with *Episinus maculipes* a spider that has recently extended its range beyond its historic home on the Isle of Wight and whose known range is still strongly southern.

Most of the saltmarshes in Wales are grazed, and the ones we saw would have done credit to a billiard table. This made them difficult to work, especially in windy conditions. The best way of recording in these conditions is often to sweep the lee of nearby bushes and this proved very successful in several places. Saltmarsh species noted included *Haematopota bigoti* (Whiteford), *Haematopota grandis* (Merthyr-Mawr), *Dolichopus notatus* (Pembrey), *Dolichopus sabinus* (several localities) and *Poecilobothrus principalis* (Merthyr-Mawr).

Other features of the Gower Peninsular include wet moorland with *Molinia* tussocks that make movement quite tiring; steep sided woodlands that still smelt of wild garlic; seepages and flushes on hillsides; and of course wetlands including some lovely wet valleys close to the coast. One of the nicest wet coastal valleys was the Pennard valley below the Gower Heritage Centre, which yielded *Hercostomus plagiatus*. The wet moors of the Gower are grazed by ponies that proved a lure to our Tabanid and Gasterophilid specialist (Andrew Grayson) who found *Gasterophilus intestinalis* at Cefn Bryn.

The Pennard Valley - a ridal stream with adjacent freshwater marsh that was rich in the commoner Stratiomyidae such as *Oplodontha viridula* and *Oxycera rara*.

Whilst the focus of our visit concentrated on coastal sites, there are some wonderful woodlands on the Gower and within the valleys range of Swansea. The relatively cool conditions meant that we spent comparatively little time in them, however. Even so, we found a variety of unusual flies including: *Pseudopomyza atrimana* (Carmel Wood) (new to Wales), *Acanthiophilus helianthi* (Carmel Wood), *Tipula marginella* (Carmel Wood), *Arctophila superbiens* (Carmel Wood), *Xylota florum* (Millwood, Dinefwr) and *Limonia trivittata* (Park Wood).

The woodlands also produced most of the about 102 species of fungus gnats recorded, a reasonable total for a summer meeting though numbers were low in most woods visited. Most were common species or yet to be identified, but Clyne Valley Country Park produced *Keroplatus testaceus* and *Mycomya occultans*, the latter with only one previous Welsh record from Monmouthshire. Nicholaston Wood was the most productive site with 40 species recorded from two visits and many species were newly recorded for the Gower area.

Craneflys are a further important component of the field meeting with most members arriving back with specimens for Alan who readily accepts these welcome offerings. Swansea was hard work and for much of the week it seemed that we were unlikely to manage anything approaching 100 species. Alan has since reported that the list is likely to hit 100 species or thereabouts. Apart from those species mentioned elsewhere in this account, Alan tells me that the collection of both *Erioptera meijeri* and *E. neilseni* from Crymlyn Bog (Pant-y-Sais) was very unusual because fen and poor fen species generally do not occur on the same site.

Although much time was spent on sand dunes and salt marshes, we did manage visits to other sites; the majority of which were by necessity localities that might be expected to dry out quickly. The windy conditions meant that we spent very little time on the soft cliffs of the Gower, which might have been very productive under calmer conditions. Even so, *Chrysotoxum elegans* was noted on the cliffs at Rhossili and the Tephritid *Myopites eximius*, which is associated with golden samphire on cliffs, was noted at Port Einon. This latter species, together with *Terellia plagiata* from Overton Quarry. *Herina paludum* (Old Castle Down) and *H. palustris* (also from Willow Springs) formed just a few members of the broader assemblage of picture-winged flies that were noted during the week.

Eric Philp - waterbeetling at Broad Pool, Gower. Our group comprised a mixture of Dipterists and Coleopterists which works extremely well.

Putting this brief account together has made me realise that despite the challenging weather, we did pretty well and as usual a good range of interesting flies was found. Doubtless more gems lie in the material collected for this winter's studies and so we must expect more in due course. This is the cue for organising the next meeting – I must get on with bookings for the Autumn meeting and finding new venues for the summer meetings!

Attending members

Keith Alexander, Stuart Ball, Howard Bentley, Peter Chandler, Kevin Chuter, Andrew Grayson, Roger Hawkins, Mike Howe, John & Barbara Ismay, Nigel Jones, John Kramer, Brian Levey, Hannah Bryant, Ken & Rita Merrifield, Roger Morris, Mick Parker, Mark Pavett, Eric Philp, Adrian Plant, Ivan Perry, Mike Pugh, Malcolm Smart, Chris Spilling, Alan Stubbs, Darwyn Sumner, Richard Underwood, Judy Webb, Derek Whiteley & Rob Wolton.

Roger Morris

Forthcoming Events Calendar 2009-10

Dipterists Forum & selected meetings

Check the Dipterists Forum website for changes and meetings added after publication of this Bulletin, www.dipteristsforum.org.uk)

12-16th September 2009, DF Autumn Field Meeting Newton Stewart, Dumfries & Galloway, 16-19th – Galashiels, Selkirkshire. Contact Roger Morris to book, 7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 1QE, roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com

30th September 2009 'Insect Biodiversity and Conservation in Gardens' Joint RES and RHS meeting 10:30-17:00 at RHS Wisley. See www.royensoc.co.uk

17th October 2009, AES Annual Exhibition and Trade Fair, Kempton Park, London. DF will have a publicity stand and publications for sale. See www.amentsoc.org

7th November 2009, Worcestershire Entomology Day, organised by the Wyre Forest Study Group. Heightington Village Hall near Bewdley. MalcolmSmart@talktalk.net

7th November 2009, BENHS Annual Exhibition and Dinner, Imperial College, London. DF members invited to exhibit flies. www.benhs.org.uk

20th November 2009, National Biodiversity Network Conference. Theme 'Non-native Species'. The Faraday Theatre at The Royal Institution of Great Britain, Albermarle St., London. See: www.nbn.org.uk

28-29th November 2009, Dipterists Day and DF AGM, Natural History Museum, London. Details of programme in this issue and on DF website as soon as known.

10th December 2009, Insect Ecology Special Interest Group 'Insect Spatial Ecology' Oxford University Dept of Natural History, Parks Rd, Oxford. See: www.royensoc.co.uk

16 & 17th January 2010, 'Introduction to Fly Families' course for beginners (limited to 12 people) led by John and Barbara Ismay, BENHS, Dinton Pastures, Hurst, Reading. Bookings to: Ian McLean [ianmclean@waitrose.com]. See also www.benhs.org.uk

13th February 2010, Diptera workshop on Tachinidae led by Chris Raper & Matt Smith. BENHS, Dinton Pastures, Hurst, Reading. For up to 20 people. Bookings to: Ian McLean [ianmclean@waitrose.com]. See also www.benhs.org.uk

20th February 2010, Diptera Workshop on Ephydridae led by Martin Drake & Tony Irwin. BENHS, Dinton Pastures, Hurst, Reading. For up to 20 people. Bookings to: Ian McLean [ianmclean@waitrose.com]. See also www.benhs.org.uk

5-7th Mar 2010, DF Identification Workshops. Beginner's workshop on 'Introduction to Fly Families', Advanced Workshop on Muscidae, Preston Montford, Shrewsbury. Details in this issue and will be posted on the DF website and on FSC website:
www.field-studies-council.org/prestonmontford

May 2010, Proposed 2 day DF Spring Field Meeting to Windsor Forest and Great Park. Details yet to be finalised – on the DF website as soon as known. Contact Roger Morris to book, 7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 1QE, roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com

12-19th June 2010, DF Summer Field Meeting, Stackpole, Pembrokeshire**.** Contact Roger Morris to book, 7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 1QE, roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com £40 deposit reserves a place, full payment needed by 27 Mar 2010.

21-27th June 2010, National Insect Week, See: www.royensoc.co.uk

22-25th July 2010, DF Short Summer Field Meeting, Somerset Levels & Mendips, based at Wells Cathedral School. Limited to 15 people. Contact Roger Morris to book, 7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 1QE, roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com

Judy Webb

Footnote on the imperatives of going to the Stackpole field meeting.

Alan Stubbs has further researched the priorities in Pembrokeshire by going into an English Tourist Office and getting a copy of *BRITAIN PLANNER: The Official Guide to the Nations and Regions.*

Page 101 lists the TOP 10 EXPERIENCES in Wales. Some are very pertinent:-

'Indulge in an ice-cream at the Victorian sea-side resort of Tenby'

'Take a step of faith off Pembrokeshire's cliff edge in the wild sport of coasteering.'

'Take a bucket and spade to Barafundle Bay'

So there should be something for everyone. Tenby is only a few miles from Stackpole. It is explained that coasteering involves leaping off a cliff into the sea but there is no reason why one should not hold a sweep-net to sample inaccessible ledges on the way down. The location of Barafundle Bay is not given, so clearly a secret, but there must be an opportunity for digging up therevid larvae at the back of a bay somewhere near Stackpole.

Alan has booked into the meeting accordingly.

Details of the Dipterists Forum meetings

Autumn Field Meetings

Southern Scotland – September 2009

Bridgenorth - 10th to 14th October

These meetings fall so close to the publication of this Bulletin that Roger is unable to make arrangements for anyone who has not already contacted him. More detailed notes about these events on page 28.

Darwyn Sumner

Annual Meeting 2009

Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London

Saturday and Sunday, 28th & 29th November 2009

DIPTERIST DAYS PROGRAMME

Saturday 28 November 2009

9.45am. Assemble in the foyer of the new Darwin Centre 2 Lecture Theatre. Coffee, tea and biscuits will be available. Exhibits and Posters may be set out in the foyer and viewed during the coffee and lunch break.

Programme of Talks

10.15am Talks:

1. Introduction - Brief welcome to the Natural History Museum - Erica McAlister
2. Dipterology: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow - Chris Thompson
3. The Natural History Museum Darwin Centre - Stuart Hine.

11.30 am – 12.00pm Coffee Break

4. Functional morphology of higher Dipteran larvae - Graham Rotheray
5 The distribution of hoverfly species-richness in Great Britain - Stuart Ball & Roger Morris

1.00 – 2.00pm Break for Lunch

Bring sandwiches, which may be eaten in the common room, or use the local restaurants. View the exhibitions and displays of the Recording Schemes. Organisers please contact the Secretary to book a table for exhibits.

2.00 – 2.30 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - See below for the Agenda

Close of Afternoon Session. The building must be vacated by 5.00pm

2.30-5.00pm Presentations by the Recording Schemes

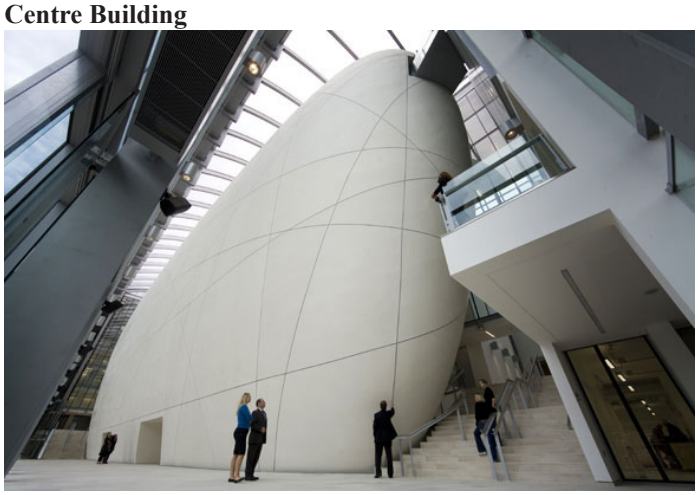
1. Tephritid Recording Scheme - Laurence Clemons
2. Stilt & Stalk Fly Recording Scheme - Darwyn Sumner
3. Cranefly Recording Scheme - Alan Stubbs & John Kramer
4. Hoverfly Recording Scheme - Stuart Ball & Roger Morris

6.00 - 8.00pm Dipterists' Supper It is hoped to organise a meal with drinks on Saturday evening for a reasonable fixed price. This will be at a local restaurant. **Please let Erica or your Secretary know by Friday October 30th if you wish to attend.**

All new members are especially welcome!! Come and meet everyone

Sunday 29 November 2009

From 10.00am. There will be a guided tour of the new Darwin Centre Building



The Angela Marmont Centre will be available, with microscopes.

The museum will be open until 5.00pm for those who wish to use the collections. The Centre also houses the Library of the London Natural History Society which will be available to members for viewing.

Anyone wishing to examine the collections and have the facilities to study them (microscopes, etc.) should make contact with Erica in advance. Bookings for bench space and microscopes

will be made on a first come, first served basis. The collection itself is not open to groups but drawers will be available on order. If you state the species/group you wish to access on the day, they can be fetched for you.

Details of the museum and its collections, location, etc. can be supplied in advance by contacting Erica McAllister (e.mcalister@nhm.ac.uk).

Accommodation

It is hoped to negotiate a group price reduction with a local hotel. Please let Erica or your Secretary know by Friday October 30th if you wish to stay in London on the night of 28th November.

Please bring an exhibit if you can

A £25 prize is awarded to the best exhibit

Any material relevant to Diptera will be welcomed. This might include drawings, photos of specimens and habitats, as well as live or set specimens. Larvae are a neglected area, and the apparatus used for keeping them. **Computer-based presentations are welcomed.** Any new publications, or websites would also add interest. Displays can be laid out in the lecture theatre foyer where there is plenty of space. See also www.dipteristsforum.org.uk

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 28nd November 2009

The Chairman will open the AGM at 2.00pm

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the last AGM and matters arising.
3. Proposed change to the Constitution. 30 day Rule for Committee Proposals. (See item in previous Bulletin)
4. Proposed increase of Subscription to Overseas members.
5. Secretary's Report.
6. Treasurer's Report.
7. Membership Secretary's Report.
8. Dipterists Digest Editor's Report.
9. Election of Officers: See details below

The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and other elected officers with specific responsibilities (detailed below) require annual election. The constitution (7c) currently requires nominations 120 days in advance of the AGM, **although it is proposed to reduce this to 30 days (see above).**

Ordinary elected committee members serve for two years.

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

Office	Officer
Chair	Stuart Ball
Vice Chair	John Ismay
Secretary	John Kramer
Treasurer	Howard Bentley
Membership Secretary	Mick Parker
Field Meetings Secretary	Roger Morris
Indoor Meetings Secretary	Malcolm Smart
Bulletin Editor	Darwyn Sumner
Assistant Editor	Judy Webb (Proposed)
Publicity Officer	Judy Webb
Website Manager	Stuart Ball
Conservation/BAP Officer	Barbara Ismay
Committee Members	Erica McAlister (Proposed) Chris Spilling (Proposed) Martin Drake (Proposed) Alan Stubbs

Post 4 was elected in 2008 and is therefore due for re-election in 2010.

10. Any Other Business.

John Kramer Secretary

Diptera Identification Workshops 2010

Preston Montford Field Studies Centre

Friday 5th - Sunday 7th March 2008

Do you know anybody who might benefit from some help in starting with the Diptera? If so, why not pass the details of the following on to them?

Beginner's Workshop – Introduction to Diptera (Two-winged Flies)

Led by John & Barbara Ismay

Arrive Friday in time for supper at 6.30pm - depart 4.00pm Sunday.

In 2010 the Dipterists Forum will be running an introductory course on the Identification of Fly Families - **Introduction to Diptera**. This is designed to help people getting started with identification and recording of this fascinating group of insects. Flies are very varied in their behaviour and they can be found in nearly all habitats. They can also be used in the assessment of the quality of many different types of habitat.

The course will be taught over a weekend by enthusiastic expert tutors frorn the Dipterists Forum – John & Barbara Ismay. It is aimed at absolute beginners and will guide them through many hurdles, both as a group and as individuals. Each attendee gets a lot of individual help and will work using a microscope on their own set of specially prepared flies which are examples of all the dipteran families. A set of keys with colour illustrations has been specially produced for this course and these in themselves have been much sought after! Each attendee leaves with their own set of valuable keys plus advice on how to collect and pin flies for identification and and for retention as voucher specimens.

All materials and equipment (microscopes, lights etc.) will be supplied by the Field Centre.

Advanced Workshop – Muscid flies

Led by Steven Falk with assistance from Mike Bloxham

Arrive Friday in time for supper at 6.30pm - depart Sunday afternoon. This workshop will deal with flies in the housefly family (Muscidae). This is a rather neglected family of approximately 280 British species, similar in numbers to the hoverflies and presenting a similar level of challenge - much of the family is relatively straightforward to identify using external morphology and is served by good published literature. The family contains some of our most abundant, conspicuous and synanthropic flies including the almost cosmopolitan Housefly *Musca domestica* and a plethora of species associated with dung and fungi. But another interesting feature of this family is the variety of life cycles and habitat requirements. Many habitat specialists are present, including some associated with important habitats such as saltmarsh, mire, coastal dune, montane, wetland and ancient woodland. Some of these species prefer the oldest and most pristine examples of such habitats and have potential to act as ecological flagship species (a situation recently formalised with the UK BAP *Phaonia jaroschewskyii* (Peter Skidmore's 'Hairy Canary'). There is an RES Handbook (Fonseca 1968) supplemented by some good European literature, notably Gregor et. al. 2002 (see above). Additional test keys may be available amongst support material provided at the workshop. Find out how to separate Muscidae from similar groups such as Calliphoridae and Anthomyiidae.

The workshop will follow the standard format of presentations, informal discussion and practice running through test keys, either with prepared material (specimens provided) or flies you have brought yourself so bring along your material, problem specimens, or images. If you have your own microscope, lamp etc. then please bring them along. The centre does have some, so don't feel that you cannot come along if you don't have them.

Fees & Booking Procedure for either workshop

Dipterists Forum members:

Single Room Resident:	£160 full board accommodation
Shared Room Resident:	£140 full board accommodation
Non-resident:	£75 incl. packed lunches & evening meals

Non Dipterists Forum members (fees include one year's membership):

Single Room Resident:	£240 full board accommodation
Shared Room Resident:	£220 full board accommodation
Non-resident:	£155 incl. packed lunches & evening meals

If you are not a Dipterists Forum member and wish to attend, note that it is well worth joining the Forum before booking as it will result in a considerable cost saving!! (contact Membership Secretary or visit DF website.

To book a place on either of these workshops please contact

Preston Montford Field Centre, Montford Bridge, Shrewsbury, SY4 1DX
Tel: 01743 852 040 Fax: 01743 851 066
Email: enquiries.pm@field-studies-council.org

You will be required to pay a deposit of £50 (cheque payable to Field Studies Council) to the address above. Payment of the balance of the course fee will be due 30 days before beginning of course. Cancellation after this date may leave the customer liable for the full amount - a condition which is accepted when the booking is confirmed.

Organiser: Malcolm Smart

Early Summer – Stackpole, Pembrokeshire

12-19 June 2010

Pembrokeshire has been beyond our reach until now as a suitable central venue has never been available. However, one of the premier National Trust estates in the county is at Stackpole and it is now offering the accommodation that would suit - hence we have jumped at the chance.

The arrangements for the meeting will differ a little from previous meetings because there is a need to organise external caterers. To save money we propose not to book breakfasts – I suspect very few of us actually eat cooked breakfasts at home and so it should not be too much of a hardship to bring cereals, bread and coffee etc to provision ourselves. Those who wish to indulge in a cooked breakfast might want to club together to create a traditional fry-up.

Accommodation will be in a series of cottages that sleep variable numbers. Details can be found on the website: http://www.stackpolecentre.org.uk/accommodation.htm. We have been allocated Kingfisher House which sleeps 17 in single rooms or utilising one twin and one double for couples it could accommodate 19. In addition, three cottages have been allocated: Rosemary, Lavender and Thyme which in theory would sleep six each but given the membership's predilection for single rooms the package gives us between 26 and 28 places in total. The package will cost:

Assuming 26 rooms filled accommodation is quoted at £22.00 per person per day (£154 per week). It will inevitably be more if fewer rooms are filled. If necessary I will cancel rooms in March to avoid a major surcharge on costs, so please book early! There will be an additional charge for a workroom, which I have estimated, to breakdown to approximately £20.00 per head (possibly reduced to between £14 &15 depending on numbers attending). In addition I will organise external caterers to provide an evening meal, the cost of which is likely to be in the order of £12.00-15.00, bringing the overall cost of the meeting to between £255 & £275.

As the costs of catering are dependent upon the size of the group the costs quoted are for all group members accepting the external caterers. I have also looked at alternative eating arrangements as there is a very nice looking pub nearby that does high-quality meals that are likely to exceed the caterer's prices. I have therefore concluded that this is not a viable option apart perhaps from the arrival day when people might arrive late and would therefore miss the meal this option could be factored in closer to the time and dependent upon what people want. Quotes for the rooms received to date include VAT at 15% so it is likely that there will be a small increase as higher VAT rates are likely to have been imposed by then.

The agreement with the National Trust requires payment in full, **TEN** weeks in advance of the meeting and consequently **I SHALL BE SEEKING FULL PAYMENT BY 27 MARCH 2010. A deposit of £40 made payable to Roger Morris can secure a place.** Stackpole is mid-way along the south coast of the Tenby peninsula, with calcareous lake, marsh, cliffs and sand dunes. The peninsula is mainly composed of Carboniferous Limestone and Old Red Sandstone, with plenty of high quality habitats including saltmarsh, cliff seepages, lots of sand dunes etc. Thus although the location is less suitable for a wide radius of travel, it is felt that there is plenty of popular habitat at hand. There is a toll bridge at nearby Pembroke for those who wish explore further afield.

Roger Morris

Additional Field Meetings 2010

As the main field meeting falls relatively early in the year, it is difficult to schedule a spring meeting sufficiently far apart from the main meeting to give space to breath. Consequently I have looked at a change to the programme and have therefore organised accommodation for a three-day break in late July in Wells, Somerset, which will hopefully appeal to a few members who cannot make the main meeting. In addition, I have started to look at some additional possibilities. If I can secure permission I will organise a meeting at Windsor Great Park over one weekend in May 2010. This meeting will be over the full weekend but I will not be organising accommodation – those members who want to travel to the meeting and stay overnight will need to organise their own accommodation. I will, however, need to know who is attending in order to make sure permits are properly organised. As part of the organisation for this meeting I asked Alan Stubbs to pen a brief account of Windsor Great Park (below).

I have yet to organise a venue for the Autumn meeting in 2010 and will advertise this in spring 2010. Meanwhile, the Autumn meeting this year comprises two trips; one to southern Scotland in mid-September which will have passed before this bulletin is published; the other will be to Bridgenorth from 10-14 October. Unfortunately it is likely that this notice will not appear until October and by this time I will not be able to organise accommodation for any additional attendees – anyone wishing to participate will have to arrange their own accommodation.

A further idea Alan and I have had is to revive the Leckford survey that was carried out in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This is a more challenging task and I expect that a small scouting party will be organised for 2010. It will not be a proper DF meeting on this occasion but hopefully we will arrange something more comprehensive in due course. Meanwhile Alan has also penned a brief note on this exciting venue and the history of the Leckford survey.

Short Summer Field Meeting 22-25 July 2010

Wells Cathedral School

This is an excellent opportunity to visit Somerset and a wonderful ancient venue. The Cathedral School offers accommodation in a range of rooms that could be single or shared. I have booked us for single rooms, which means that the maximum size of the group is constrained to between 12 & 15 working on single occupancy. Rooms may have a wash basin but don't have en-suite.

At this stage I have booked us as a group for between 10 and 15 people in single rooms. We may secure a bigger group if some of us were to share (I expect the Peterborough Mafia will bunk together). Prices to be confirmed but the costs look to be in the order of £35.00 per night plus whatever the charge is for the lab.

Wells is well placed for the limestone of the Mendips and also for the Somerset Levels. We last visited the area in 1985 and many of our current group will not have been there.

Please contact Roger Morris to secure a place. Vacancies are extremely limited.

Windsor Forest and Park

proposed visit May 2010, dates to be arranged

The Royal Estate at Windsor includes three prime entomological components lying adjacent to one another:

Windsor Park, a deer park with many veteran oaks, one of the major such concentrations in Europe. A public road runs through the park and extensive public access leads to acid grasslands, scrub and secondary woodland, which can be productive in flies.

Virginia Water, a dammed valley with patches of good lakeside vegetation, surrounded by woodland which includes old beech and streams. This too is popular with the public for walking and is contiguous with the parkland.

Windsor Forest, pasture woodland with veteran beech and oak. Much has been planted with conifers but there are some important stands of ancient trees, especially at High Standing Hill. Since many of the special flies prefer beech rather than oak, and woodland rather than open parkland, this is the area most famed for its fly fauna. This area is closed to public access.

Public access to some of the best parts have been restricted. Historically, it was only those entomologists who were able to get a grace and favour permit that had sufficient access. The coleopterist Donisthorpe first brought the area to fame through recording in the first half on the 20th century. As regards Diptera, seemingly Cyril Hammond (co-author of 'British Flies') was the pioneer going back to the 1930s. He had a permit (possibly eased by the fact that his sister was in service at Haughton Hall, Norfolk), seeming as rare as bird's teeth since you had to have connections. Thus he invited Peter Chandler & me to join him in the early 60s, prepared to discretely become inconspicuous should a member of royalty come by on horseback. By the 1970s we each had our own permits and things loosened up so much that non-royal horse riders became a regular sight.

It is still a matter of privilege to get a permit for a group. Thus this is a rare opportunity for others to experience a visit to this hallowed ground, one of the top saparoxylic fauna sites in Britain. May is a prime time for the hoverfly fauna and much else. This meeting, once organised, will be advertised on the Forum Website and in the Spring Bulletin.

Leckford Estate

This magnificent section of the River Test Valley is very private, best known for its fly fishing rather than Diptera fauna. John Spedman Lewis, the founder of the John Lewis Partnership stores network, acquired the estate. He made a collection of insects on the estate during the Second World War and the estate was left to the Partnership. Ted Lockett, one of the leading spider experts moved to a house on the estate in his retirement. He discovered that John Lewis had bequeathed a sum of money to promote natural history, a concept in limbo.

With fellow arachnologist Eric Duffey, and Warren Gilchrist, a lepidopterist who had retired from the navy to enter senior management of the partnership, they set off the John Spedmen Lewis Trust fund. In the ensuing period they converted the village bathhouse into a field centre (a work room and collection room) and launched a survey of the estate. In autumn 1969 an invertebrate survey team was convened, including myself as dipterist: a promptly roped in Peter Chandler for such a big remit. Eric Philp (a member of DF) came down on a few occasions to record molluscs and some minor groups. The estate comprises about 2 square miles, with high quality valley fen and chalk grassland as major ecological components, small 'reserve' areas being demarcated with a view to seeing how they fared within an estate otherwise managed commercially as farmland, fishing beats and a golf course.

The main period of recording activity was 1970-4 (including review of the collection and notes made by Lewis between 1940 and 1945). In essence, a period of 40 years will have passed if renewed survey were to be instigated 2010-14. The idea of the 2010 advance visit is to determine the practicalities of establishing generating sufficient interest to make an annual visit at different dates in the season over a 4 or 5 year period. For those who took part in the 1970s it was a magical place with many exciting species.

And now ...

Quantitative easing

So what is the government doing about the shortage of flies? Last year saw us freefall into a severe depression in the number of flies whilst, to public dismay, the Ministry of Flies failed to act in time.

It is no good blaming the fat cats for eating too many *Tipula paludosa* craneflies. Nor the banks for making loans of Rotting Organic Matter (ROM) in an over inflated habitat market to those who patently would not be able to keep-up repayments with their quota of flies. Now the fly market has collapsed, especially in futures, the root of the World crisis in dipterological confidence.

The clear solution is quantitative easing in the availability of flies. Yes, this may involve printing (more books on flies) but we need more people breeding flies to alleviate the deficit in the fly supply.

It is tempting to place the blame on the last USA Administration for allowing the ROM economy to get so over-heated. We have yet to see if World leaders will respond in time. But note, China is no longer issuing edicts to its peasants demanding that they eradicate all flies by sweeping with nets and banging gongs so that flies fall from the sky through exhaustion.

Voting patterns are changing. The recent EU elections had new parties, including Animals First which got several thousand votes (so it was not just dipterists who voted for them). Meanwhile, the major political parties don't seem to know their pupa from their puparium.

Yet there is a serious point. About a quarter of the food we eat is insect pollinated. The implications of the decline of bees, both domesticated and wild, have been well voiced in the media. Yet the significance of pollination by other insects is not explained, especially relevant if bees are insufficient or absent to pollinate fruit trees for example. Thus the despised fly has significance in the real economy in this and many other ways, even ROM flies. So, you see, quantitative easing of the fly supply has World economic relevance after all.

Alan Stubbs

How to contribute articles

Text

1. 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. Email text alone will not be accepted.
2. 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 would also be useful.
3. Please note the width of the borders used in Dipterists Bulletin; for conformity with style would newsletter compilers please match this format.
4. **Do not** use "all capitals", underlining, blank lines between paragraphs, carriage returns in the middle of a sentence or double spaces.
5. Scientific names should be italicised throughout and emboldened only at the start of a paragraph,
6. Place names should have a grid reference.

Illustrations

7. Colour photographs are now used extensively in the Bulletin, they appear coloured only in the pdf.
8. Please include all original illustrations with your articles. These may be suitably "cleaned up" but please do not reduce their quality by resizing etc..
9. 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's name to be changed to its caption (e.g. 049.jpg becomes Keepers Pond NN045678 12 Oct 2008.jpg). All group pictures should identify all the individuals portrayed.
10. Powerpoint files may be submitted, they are a useful means of showing your layout and pictures are easily extracted.
11. Pictures contained within Word files are of too low quality and cannot be extracted for use in the Bulletin.
12. Line artworks are also encouraged - especially cartoons
13. 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.
14. 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.

Tables

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

When to send (deadlines)

Spring bulletin

17. Aims to be on your doorstep before the end of February, contributions should therefore be made to the editor **by the end of December**, it will be printed then distributed half way through February in time for the March workshop meeting. Please note that the date for contributions is now 1 month earlier than for previous Bulletins.

Autumn bulletin

18. Aims to be on your doorstep in mid September, 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 Autumn field meeting (although you would be well advised to contact Roger Morris before this time and consult the DF website) and in time to provide details of the Annual Meeting. Please note that the date for contributions is now considerably earlier than for previous Bulletins

Where to send

19. Would Bulletin contributors please ensure that their items are sent to BOTH Darwyn Sumner and Judy Webb

Hoverfly Newsletter

Number 47
Autumn 2009

ISSN 1358-5029

I thank the contributors to this newsletter, particularly Roger Morris, without whom this issue would have been a rather thin one. In the first sentence of the recording scheme update he and Stuart Ball have clearly rated 2009 as so far yet another disappointing year. Yet my experience of this year has been somewhat different as, although I have not found hoverflies to be abundant, I have seen an excellent diversity of species. During 2009 to date I have seen two species I had never seen before (*Dasysyrphus friuliensis* and *Myolepta dubia*) and the hoverfly species list for my garden has increased by four.

International interest in hoverflies continues to grow as witnessed by the completion of yet another successful international symposium (the fifth). In Roger's write up of this year's event he refers to two newly-published books on hoverflies. I can recall that when I began recording the only reference work I had was a photocopy of R. L. Coe's out-of-print key. This was supplemented in 1969 by a reprint of Verrall's book, to be followed in 1981 by van der Goot's **Zweefvliegen**.and in 1983 by the first edition of **British Hoverflies**. How things have changed since then! Once I have obtained copies of the two new books I shall have at least seventeen hoverfly books on my shelves.

Articles and illustrations (including colour images) for the next newsletter are always welcome. Copy for **Hoverfly Newsletter No. 48** (which is expected to be issued with the Spring 2010 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 December 2009.

Hoverfly Recording Scheme update July 2009

Stuart Ball
255 Eastfield Road, Peterborough, PE1 4BH, stuart.ball@dsl.pipex.com
Roger Morris
7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 1QE, roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com

What a year it has been so far! April came and went with few great opportunities for recording in nice weather; May was uninspiring at weekends and June was fiercely hot for much of the time. This seems to follow a pattern that has been seen in other recent years and there are reflections in the assemblage of hoverflies encountered. Aphid-feeders appear to have fared particularly badly with the website's "forum" echoing with concerns about the absence of *Syrphus* species. Stem and root-dwellers seem to have fared better as have some saproxylic species such as *Criorhina*, but *Eristalis* too seem to be down.

For us, the highlight of the year so far has been the International hoverfly symposium in Serbia, which provided a welcome stimulus and break. We have lots of ideas and are very keen to get down to writing the text for a draft atlas which will be produced to coincide with the 2011 hoverfly symposium in Glasgow. If you have not forwarded records please do so as we really need to get the data up to date. Remember that we will be providing copies of the draft atlas to post 2000 contributors of 150+ records (at the moment about 150 people).

Plans to launch a monitoring scheme for hoverflies came to a shuddering halt because Roger found he had bitten off too much: a combination of a heavy work commitments and the demands of organising field meetings for Dipterists Forum played havoc with the need to provide guidance. Hopefully this will be rectified this autumn and we will be able to launch in 2010. Meanwhile, Butterfly Conservation are trialing some limited hoverfly monitoring as part of their butterfly transect programme. This involves recording a limited suite of hoverflies and other insects over the last 200 metres of the transect. The hoverflies chosen are:

Episyrphus balteatus
Rhingia campestris
Volucella pellucens
Eristalis pertinax
Leucozona glaucia
Sericomyia silentis

So far this year there have been no reports of new additions to the UK list, but there is exciting news of *Myolepta potens*, which we leave to a separate report from John Phillips. Where else might this enigmatic species occur? Perhaps we should organise a survey of horse chestnuts in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire this winter? Any takers?

Our own survey activity has been quite curtailed by the hoverfly symposium that has meant that we have not made our annual pilgrimage to Scotland. We hope to rectify this in August with a trip to the west coast. Hopefully we will have a lot more to report in the autumn. Meanwhile keep an eye open for a new website to serve the international hoverfly community that Stuart is in the process of constructing.

The brevity of this update is symptomatic of the year. The best bits of the hoverfly symposium are discussed in a separate note but perhaps this is the place to start to encourage readers to think about attending the Symposium in Glasgow in 2011. We plan to schedule this for August but have yet to confirm dates. It would be great to have a large UK contingent, as the representation at recent events in Europe has been a bit thin – just four of us went to Novi-Sad.

Myolepta potens in Gloucestershire

John Phillips
Yorkleigh Cottage, Pope's Hill, Gloucestershire GL14 1LD

On 15 June 2007 I visited Blaisdon Wood, just outside the Forest Of Dean about 12km west of Gloucestershire. This is a privately owned mixed woodland which has been a favourite hoverfly site of mine for some years and which has produced some interesting finds, including the dead-wood, rot-hole or sap-run species *Brachypalpoides lentus, Callicera aurata, Criorhina asilica* and *Volucella inflata*, as well as other notables such as *Arctophila superbiens, Didea fasciata* and *Eriozona syrphoides*. On this occasion my attention was drawn to a hoverfly which settled fairly close by, about a metre above the ground on top of bramble bush. In the few seconds for which it was in view I had an impression of a shiny-looking black hoverfly, about the size and with something of the jizz of *Xylota segnis*, but with mostly black legs and what seemed to be yellow colouring on the abdomen, visible through the closed wings. It had landed in a position where it was impossible to catch, but I managed to take a poor photograph before it flew away.

I realised that, unlikely as it might seem, it could have been *Myolepta* sp. This impression was reinforced when I read in Stubbs & Falk (2002) that *M. dubia* "can be overlooked as *Cheilosia impressa* owing to the yellow coloration showing through the wings and giving the impression of yellow wing-bases." This is exactly what I had briefly done.

I returned to the wood (between the downpours) a number of times that year and a few times in 2008, but with no further sightings of anything *Myolepta*-like. Then, on 3 June 2009, I again had frustratingly brief views of a shiny black hoverfly with large yellow patches on the abdomen, very close to the site of the original observation. This time I failed even to get a photo before it vanished, but I was quite confident it was *Myolepta* - but which species? *M. dubia* is scarce enough nationally, and has been found almost exclusively in south-east England, with no records from Gloucestershire and no dots on the map closer than about 50 miles from Blaisdon (Ball & Morris 2000). Even so, it seemed far more likely than *M. potens,* a fabulously rare BAP species with a handful of specimens from the Bristol area between the 1940's and 1961 (Levy & Levy 1998) and a record of larvae at Moccas Park, Herefordshire in 2002 (Stubbs & Falk).

Subsequent visits to Blaisdon Wood in 2009 drew a blank, but on 22 June this year I went to another of my regular local sites at Welshbury Wood, a Forestry Commission woodland on the west edge of the Forest of Dean, about 2km from Blaisdon Wood. This wood has a lower proportion of old broad-leaved trees than Blaisdon, but has nevertheless produced some interesting hoverflies over the years. On this visit I had only walked a couple of hundred yards from the car when I glimpsed a suspiciously black-and yellow looking hoverfly, again on flowering brambles, close to the track. It immediately flew up, but settled down again in the same bush - out of reach of any trapping equipment but giving reasonable views through binoculars. This time I was certain I was looking at *Myolepta,* but the views were such that I couldn't begin to guess which species. Again, I just managed to get a couple of very poor photos before it zoomed off.

I hung around the bush for some time, hoping it might come back, but with no luck, so I continued up the track, trying to feel delighted that I had confirmed Myolepta rather than disappointed because I didn't know which species! It was with feelings of incredulity that, a couple of hundred yards further on, I found what was clearly another Myolepta, again on a bramble bush but this time at not much more than knee height. I wasn't carrying a net, but after a few seconds of heart-in-the-mouth stalking, I managed to get it safely into a tube. It was a male, but I realised I had forgotten which way round the abdomen patterns of dubia and potens were, so I had to wait until I got home, ten minutes later, before discovering from Stubbs & Falk that it matched potens.

I took several photographs of it live in the tube. One of these is shown below.

Myolepta potens male from Welshbury Wood (John Phillips)

This was obviously hot news, so I took it to David Iliff's home a few miles away so he could see it and check the identity. We confirmed the key characters again and also ran it through the key in van Veen (2004), which uses the extent of yellow and black on tergite 3 in addition to the width of the facial stripe to separate the two species. The specimen was later pinned by Martin Matthews. Once it was mounted, he and David gave it further very critical examination and were able to compare it directly with a specimen of a male *M. dubia* which David had collected only five days previously in the New Forest.

Two intriguing questions are what is the species' true status in the Forest of Dean - has it been overlooked in the large areas of apparently suitable habitat? And is *potens* the only species of *Myolepta* in the Dean, or could *dubia* be here as well?

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5th International Symposium on the Syrphidae

Fusca Gora Reserve, Novi-Sad, Serbia

19-22 June 2009

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(with Stuart Ball and Alan Stubbs)

When we arrived at Alan's house on Tuesday 16 June at 3.25am, there were no signs of life. We rang the bell, and again, and again! We tried knocking and then Stuart went home to try ringing Alan! I heard the phone run its full course at least three times before concluding we would have to leave Alan behind; I went to the car to write a note to put through the letterbox. Lucky I did this as we learned subsequently that Jane had seen me from the window, realised who it was and alerted Alan. A rather cautious Jane answered the door whilst Alan frantically packed. Ten minutes later we were speeding towards Heathrow.

"Slow down, this is an average speed camera section" Stuart warned as we hurtled on to the Peterborough ring road. It was a fast drive to Heathrow but we made it and had time for a rest and a coffee before our 8.15 flight. A lovely cloudless morning meant that we could see a great deal of our route – tracking over Dungeness, northern France, the Alps and on to the Danube floodplain. Serbia and her neighbours are still relatively undeveloped in terms of agriculture but even now it is clear that the traditional strip system is being replaced by big monocultures, eliminating an agricultural heritage that has persisted for generations.

And so began our visit to Serbia – the land of the Danube; of poplar plantations and reedbeds; windblown soils and sands; and of a language that defeated the Peterborough Mafia completely. Between us we boasted the finest schoolboy French but little else other than an aversion to anything beyond the Anglo-Saxon idiom. Fortunately we were met at the airport in Belgrade and effortlessly delivered to the Halls of Residence in Novi-Sad. Our rooms were pleasant apartments with en-suite and catering facilities too.

The visit split fairly neatly into two: the conference and visits to wildlife sites. We arrived a couple of days early with the intention of hiring a car and travelling out to nearby sites. Stuart had a long wish list for birds and had done some reading around. The one problem we had not anticipated was the absence of good maps so our range was rather limited. We managed Fuska Gora National Park on the first afternoon – a section of rather even-aged lime woods perhaps 70 years old (very little of Fusca Gora is much older). We eventually found a flowery open area where insects were abundant. Flies were singularly scarce but we did find a spectacular hornet-mimicking clearwing moth (*Sesia* sp.) - one of four species of clearwings seen on the trip.

The following day we were much more adventurous and headed for Carska Bara, a reserve comprising alluvial riverine forests and large open water bodies. The forests were alive with mosquitoes and we fed them well. These woods comprised a mixture of willows, poplars and ash together with the occasional cherry plum and mulberry. There was plenty of dead wood from some very ancient willows and poplars but we saw few dead-wood insects. This area did yield some very spectacular insects, including a large asilid (*Choerades* sp?) (see photo below) and a variety of Cerambycidae. Birds seen included Golden Oriole, which proved to be widespread in the poplar plantations that cover much of the wetter ground (for export to Italy for paper-making), and a magnificent colony of Bee-eaters in a road cutting on the route to the reserve. Stuart got his first big "tick" - Pigmy Cormorant. The most interesting fly was possibly a spectacular long bodied red tachinid (photo below). Hoverflies, meanwhile, were noticeably absent!

Our attempts to find habitat along the Danube on the Thursday morning were less successful and we were greatly heartened to find that the conference centre was embedded in the woodlands of Fusca Gora – a wonderful setting with an area of open grassland abutting the woodlands. Here we enjoyed several hours entomology – more clearwings, several asilids and dozens of male *Merodon* jostling for territory on a hot concrete track. During our stay we also saw the spectacular blue Cerambycid *Rosalia alpina* which is a very great rarity – it drew a large crowd and was much photographed.

The great thing about staying at Fusca Gora is the wonderful buzz of insects – a low hum interspersed by the shrill sound of cicadas and crickets. This hum is millions of honey bees that visit the lime trees for nectar. This puzzled us at first until on one woodland walk we found the explanation: a cornucopia of beehives stacked as mobile units on coaches and lorries modified to transport hives (photo below).

Finally, our wildlife quest was richly rewarded by a visit to Delabato Sands on the Monday as the conference excursion. This wonderful expanse of blown sand and loess supports amazing flower-rich grasslands. The range of flowing plants is almost mind-blowing, but it gives a fantastic impression of what Steppe habitat would have been like, with the Mongol hordes pouring across. The nomadic way of life has gone, but there are still shepherded flocks and some very unfamiliar breeds of sheep and cattle (photo below). This proved to be a birding excursion as several delegates were keen birders and those less well acquainted were given the opportunity to improve their lists – we too saw Pigmy Cormorant as well as Squacco Heron, a colony of Bee-eaters and several storks.

The conference itself was excellently organised and included many presentations of the high standard we have come to expect. The sessions were:

Past, present & future of Syrphidology, which included talks by Alan Stubbs (Growth of the British Hoverfly list since 1901) and Francis Gilbert: The future of Syrphidology. We were also introduced to the new Dutch hoverfly atlas, which is a magnificent volume of over 400 pages, in which it is suggested that *Chalcosyrphus valgus* is extinct in Holland. This announcement triggered the same response as can be expected in the UK – it was re-found just a few days after publication of the atlas! Alan's talk, meanwhile, showed how the UK list had grown at a rate of almost one species per year in the past 108 years. This session also saw the introduction of part one of Hans Bartsch's amazing book on the Syrphidae of Sweden.

Faunistics & Zoogeography, which included talks on the fauna of Togo (Axel Ssymank), the fauna of the high Altai mountain range in central Russia (Anatoli Barkalov) and the fauna of the Galicica National Park (Vladimir Krpac). This topic also elicited a wide range of posters along similar themes including details of the fauna of Surinam (Menno Reemer) and the Syrphid fauna of the Kamchatka peninsular (Valery Mutin).

Taxonomy & Phylogeny, that included a very stimulating presentation on the Microdontinaae (Menno Reemer) and an investigation into the genus *Chrysotoxum* (Jeff Skevington & Daniele Sommaggio) in North America. The former showed just how diverse the Microdontinae are, whilst the latter illustrated the challenges of trying to define species when the morphological characters are very similar and the DNA

profiles appear to be equally narrowly defined. Two presentations on the genus *Eumerus* (Martin Hauser – *Eumerus* in Australia; and Dieter Doczkal – the phylogeny of *Eumerus*) provided plenty of food for thought. Many of the Australian species appear to have arrived through human activity including *E. strigatus* and *E. funeralis*, but there are natives including the magnificent *Eumerus superbus* whose larvae develop in Cycad cones.

Ecology & Conservation, which included two talks from the Hoverfly Recording Scheme organisers ("The distribution of hoverfly species richness in Great Britain" [Stuart], and "some species of hoverfly which are expanding their British ranges" [Roger]). Other presentations included Jeff Skevington who described some of the work on hoverflies that is happening on the back of the North American initiative on pollinators. This will include a guide to the hoverflies of North-east North America (400 species). Tom Gittings described the work of an Irish team looking at Syrphidae in non-designated wetlands in Ireland, which showed that relatively small sites have a remarkably rich wetland fauna worthy of recognition.

The full range of presentations was too long to report in detail, but as in previous years, the meeting proved very stimulating and of course we came back with lots of ideas and several big jobs. Stuart has taken on the biggest job – a web portal to start to develop descriptions of all taxa using wikki technology that will also be used to capture and disseminate records in the form of maps.

Who knows about "hill-topping"? This is a concept I certainly had not encountered before but it is clearly well understood elsewhere. Jeff Skevington is a singular exponent when searching for pipunculids but it appears to hold good for Syrphidae too. In essence the evidence suggests that certain flies will congregate at the top of isolated hills, sometimes in considerable numbers. Jeff quotes several hundreds of pipunculids on occasions – orders of magnitude more than I find these flies each year! Apparently there is no telling which hills will be productive but when the right hill is found the results can be remarkable. Alan and I now understand the purpose of Leith Hill (Surrey) and maybe this and others such as the Wrekin should be visited to ascertain their productivity as a site for hill-topping hoverflies? Can you think of an isolated hill near you?

News of new or potential new species also emerged with Tore Nielsen introducing *Eristalis obscura*. This is seemingly a cryptic species that is very similar to *Eristalis rupium* – so hold on to male *E. rupium* and tease out the genitalia.

Finally, we were invited to confirm previous undertakings to run the next Symposium in the UK. We have risen to the challenge and have a venue (Glasgow University) and an organising committee (Stuart Ball, Francis Gilbert, Geoff Hancock, Graham Rotheray and yours truly).

Choerades species? This spectacular asilid was relatively abundant in some poplar plantations.

This tachinid looks familiar but is much bigger than British species.

Lorry mounted beehives. These were the source of the background hum that pervaded the forest around the conference centre.

F. Christian Thompson & Stuart Ball lead the discussion on new initiatives to integrate data across Europe and maybe the World.

The speaker holds the attention of the audience – from back to front: Francis Gilbert, Frank Dziock, Menno Reemer & Dieter Doczkal.

Cattle herding at Delbato Sands. This is a traditional way of life that has reached the 21st Century but surely cannot last much longer with likely negative consequences for these wonderful flower-rich grasslands.

Diary of a square-basher – spring 2009

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The winter dragged on terribly this year – from January onwards I was itching to get away and start recording. March came and went with little opportunity to record: just one day when I visited Wakerley Great Wood and took several *Platycheirus discimanus* and *Melangyna quadrimaculata* – both of which I've had here before. Two *Cheilosia grossa* were actually of more interest as additions to the site list. And so into April: the first weekend in April was booked as a walking trip to Swaledale so I did not expect to do much entomology. But on the Sunday we visited Whitcliffe Wood west of Richmond – a fantastic piece of limestone scarp with nice grasslands where the fertiliser could not go – thyme and rock rose were very evident. In the wood itself I was amazed at the number of hoverflies hovering over and settling on dried leaves – the four specimens taken all proved to be *Melangyna lasiophthalma*.

Easter weekend approached and I waited with bated breath – would the weather be o.k. for a trip? I had a visit to North Wales in mind. Strangely it did not materialise – I think I made a mistake with the forecasts as the weather was actually good. By Sunday I was champing at the bit and the forecast said that if I went north I could get past the overcast front and into sunny weather – and it was totally right. The cloud front was clearly demarcated at the northern end of the North York Moors and I sped into sunny weather. It was hard work and rarely very productive but some useful observations were made. For example most sites yielded *Eristalis intricarius*, which has been quite scarce in recent years. Virtually all sites yielded *Melangyna lasiophthalma*, sometimes in numbers. The big surprises were *Criorhina ranunculi* from a heathy upland conifer forest (taken at *Salix* together with one of the spring *Myopa* that I have yet to check). The other surprise was *Platycheirus discimanus* from a *Salix* in a damp valley between two larch plantations. I'm beginning to wonder whether larch is a common denominator as it is also in Wakerley Great Wood. The following day was a wash-out as the sea fog gripped the coast and it took me a while to work out where to go. Still, it was a nice break.

Two trips to northern England had me gripped: I love the less popular dales, and so it was no surprise that I sped north again in late April. This time I aimed to look at Swaledale and Teesdale. Day one was o.k. but not terribly productive. Vast banks of ramsons were just coming into flower but there was no sign of *Portevinia maculata*. The odd cherry *Prunus avium* proved to be a useful lure and I hoped to find *Criorhina ranunculi* – but to no avail (it turned up inspecting the base of an oak in Teesdale, however). My overnight stop was the Black Bull at Reeth – a wonderfully quirky place with the best black pudding on any menu I have tried. Having booked in I took an early evening jaunt down the valley to Stainton Low Wood and Scar Spring Wood. Here the bird cherry *Prunus paduus* was in flower and made a splendid splash. Not much was attending and I retreated to the Black Bull for a nice pint of Theakston's. Day two was a case of 'chase the sun'. My first stop at Whitwell Forest east of Catterick was remarkably productive for the Vale of York: *Platycheirus ambiguus*, *P. tarsalis*, and *Helophilus hybridus*. I see the latter very infrequently and often wonder whether this is an oversight. More unproductive stops were followed by a stop in Ellers Wood on Hawnby Moor (N. York Moors) where a big *Prunus avium* proved to be very

productive: 12 species including *Melangyna arctica*, *Platycheirus ambiguus* and *Ferdinandea cuprea*. Several *Criorhina ranunculi* cruised the upper branches but were well above net height even with my extendable landing net handle that allows me access to branches at around 18 ft.

This spring has been a terrible frustration. More often than not the weekdays have been much nicer than weekends, and I have spent many miserable days stuck at the computer and cursing that I could not go out to play! Time to retirement 9 years and three months plus a few days …. "oh …. if only" has been the cry this spring. So, the May Day bank holiday weekend was eagerly awaited, only to be dashed by unpromising forecasts. I generally don't travel far unless the weather looks good. A 500 mile round trip has to be productive to be justified; especially when it includes an overnight stay. That does not mean that I don't do such trips as the Saturday of the May Day weekend showed.

On Saturday 2 May I was up and ready for off by 7 am. On the road shortly after 7, I was in North Wales by 10.30 on a nice warm sunny morning. First stop on a roadside verge on the A5 east of Betws-y-Coed was promising with lots of *Leucozona lucorum* and a fair few other hovers (the list was actually just 9 species including a rather small *Cheilosia albipila*). Not a bad start and I hoped for greater things. Not so; several further stops yielded very little and I started to realise why so much of Wales is poorly represented on the maps. This realisation happens every time I go to North Wales and yet I still go back! The nutrient-poor acid upland soils are pretty inhospitable and most stops were unrewarding. Stops in the vicinity of Lake Vyrnwy gave some respite and at one I noted the first *Sericomyia lappona* and *Chrysotoxum arcuatum* of the year. By 16.00 I was casting my net in search of a room. The pub at Clun was not appealing as I had stayed there a while back and had a dreadful night because the front door seemed to slam every five minutes until 1.30 in the morning! Knighton was not appealing; Presteigne looked good but was too expensive. I gave up looking at 18.30 and headed for the M5 and home. A good Indian meal rejuvenated me after 14.5 hours at the wheel and 475 miles for just 46 records!

The following two weekends were a real disappointment – changeable, windy and few sunny spells on most days. I managed a trip to Norfolk on 10 May – looking at six poorly recorded squares that form a block below Norwich. I've been there before and achieved very little and the same happened this time. As usual, I realised after I got back that poorly recorded squares are generally so because there is so little decent habitat. But this was not entirely the case as I found some quite acceptable woodland and a really nice set of lanes with flowery verges and tall hedges. None were as productive as Wothorpe Woods, which are a short walk outside Stamford and which I generally visit late in the afternoon on days when the weather picks up late in the day. My first visit this year on 9 May yielded an amazing 23 species – at least for a rather scruffy bit of ash-sycamore woodland.

What was particularly interesting on this and on subsequent visits to Wothorpe Woods was the number of *Criorhina asilica* males. These really are excellent solitary bee mimics when in flight – for a predator faced with a glancing view of a moving insect they look just like *Andrena scotica*. This convinces me that when looking at mimics we need to think not about the absolute colours but at the overall visual image, especially when on the move. This is also the case with *Pipiza* which when flitting amongst bugle can be highly reminiscent of *Lasioglossum* bees. When one bears in mind that a predator possibly has but a split second to make a decision to attack, that little bit of indecision counts. It is also an issue for the entomologist as I have stopped and thought twice before following up with the net and often miss individuals as a result.

By the middle of May I was fretting at the difficulty of getting any recording done. Weather forecasts for the Bank Holiday weekend were not wholly encouraging. Checking the forecasts on 18 May I looked widely – Richmond (Yorks), Berwick on Tweed and Dumfries – maybe a hint of good weather on Saturday – I must pray hard! In the end I spent two days on the north Pennines and the vale of York across to the North York Moors. This was really hard work because there were so few hoverflies about. True, I found *Portevinia maculata* almost wherever I looked and found ramsons. Overall I made around 155 records of hoverflies which in my estimation is well down on other years. Several species were notably missing, especially *Syrphus* species whose general absence has been the subject of debate on the Hoverfly Recording Scheme website's "forum" (http://www.hoverfly.org.uk/viewtopic.php?t=644).

There were of course a few high points from this trip, with the best being the lovely gorge woodland at Gill Beck, which runs into the River Tees and Brignall Banks. This fantastic little site comprised alder carr on flushed banks with ramsons (*Allium ursinum*) and butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*) with mixed deciduous woodland in the gorge that had obviously received some attention from a landscape gardener. *Neoascia obliqua* was evident amongst the butterbur and was a nice addition to the haul, but better was to come. Near the stream I investigated the sunlit base of a sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and found an absolute cloud of *Brachyopa*. A little further down into the gill I was even more surprised to find good numbers of *Brachyopa* around the base of a large western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*). All of the specimens taken seem to run to *Brachyopa scutellaris* although I have some nagging doubts about the shape of the antennal pit. Still, this appears to be the first record of a *Brachyopa* in association with a non-native conifer in the UK. This site also yielded two *Dasysyrphus venustus* whose form differed greatly from many that I see, being rather longer-bodied and perhaps a bit hairier. I wonder when the splits of this species will be published? Perhaps we will find out in Novi Sad?

The other high point for me was at Clay Bank – a forestry plantation at the northern end of the North York Moors where I found *Sphegina sibirica* in some numbers (together with *S. clunipes*). This represents a consolidation of the known distribution because Roy Crossley has already taken *S. sibirica* on the North York Moors. Nonetheless it should be a reminder to everyone to keep an eye open for this species when visiting conifer plantations.

This trip actually proved to be my last before the summer field meeting. One weekend at the spring field meeting in Scarborough (see the DF newsletter), the Hoverfly Symposium at Novi-Sad and the summer field meeting occupied most of my time and coincided with the best recording weather. So for 2009 records from June will be very limited. At the time of writing I am planning a couple of trips to northern England and southern Scotland for late July and August. I'm hoping for better conditions and a good haul of records.

Hoverflies and mimicry

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The relationship between hoverflies and Hymenoptera as mimic and model has been a matter of considerable interest for many decades. Attempts to match hoverflies to particular bee and wasp models (e.g. Howarth *et al*., 2000) serve to reinforce this perception. Perhaps it is true, but the question then arises as to how it can be that the mimic often greatly outnumbers the model or occurs at a time of year when putative models are not flying. Furthermore, many mimics only bear weak resemblance to the model, so how do they gain protection by mimicry? Perhaps the answer lies not in the absolute form of the mimic but in a combination of form and behaviour?

My own observations of three species seem to provide useful indications of the importance of behavioural mimicry by hoverflies:

Criorhina asilica males can be found in May flying low and fast above low vegetation in a manner that highly resembles *Andrena scotica* rather than *Apis mellifera* which Howarth *et al*. suggest. When faced with these fast-moving objects I have frequently found myself stopping to think before attempting to capture a specimen to confirm its identity. Once caught, it is clearly a fly but it sounds like an angry bee.

Criorhina ranunculi often fly high amongst sallows or at *Prunus avium*. At first glance they are bumblebees flitting from flower to flower, but there are subtle behavioural differences and flight patterns that ultimately separate them from bumblebees. It takes a while to be certain, however.

Small pipizines can frequently be found cruising amongst ground ivy flowers. In this mode they readily resemble the small *Lasioglossum* bees that are also in attendance, yet they bear little resemblance to these bees once dead and pinned, perhaps explaining why Howarth *et al*. don't list this link.

The point about these examples is that whilst they are obviously not bees when caught and examined, their behaviour is sufficiently similar to a bee that a dipterist (predator) is confused, consequently reducing the chances of capturing the individual mimic. A plausible explanation for the surfeit of mimics over models is that some degree of imprinting means that many young predators recognise the unique combination of colour, behaviour and sound made by Hymnoptera. Consequently, they do not attack mimics whose deception is sufficient to confuse and perhaps even enough to reinforce the association between the various behavioural characteristics and an unpalatable meal? In human terms the most obvious analogue is that of *Volucella zonaria* which is quite obviously a fly when at rest and yet it is frequently confused by non-dipterists as a hornet.

This behavioural mimicry might help to explain why some recorders find some genera more readily than the majority of recorders. I certainly think this may be so for the Pipizini as in my experience the genera *Pipiza*, *Pipizella*, and *Heringia* are often quite abundant. Perhaps this is because I also take an interest in small aculeate Hymenoptera that they appear to mimic?

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Some interesting Welsh Records for 2008

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I agree with Nigel Jones (Hoverfly Newsletter No. 46) that although 2008 was not a particularly fine year weatherwise, nevertheless I recorded some interesting species, namely:

Criorhina asilica sex unknown as the insect evaded capture, Hawarden Park, Hawarden, Flintshire, 20 May.

Criorhina berberina female The Warren, Talacre, Flintshire, 30 May.

Criorhina floccosa female Mynydd Llwydiarth, near Pentraeth, Isle of Anglesey, 14 May

Chrysotoxum festivum male Greenfield Valley, Bryn Celyn, Flintshire, 1 July, male Greenfield Valley, Greenfield, Flintshire 20 June, female The Warren, Talacre, Flintshire , 26 July.

*Helophilus trivittatus l*ocally frequent at coastal sites in Conwy and Flintshire

Heringia heringi male North Wales Path, Rhyl, Denbighshire, 13 May

Heringia pubescens male North Wales Path, Rhyl, Denbighshire, 19 May

Pipizella virens female Holywell, Flintshire, 12 June

Rhingia rostrata male Greenfield Valley, Bryn Celyn, Flintshire, 29 July

Sphegina elegans female Greenfield Valley, Bryn Celyn, Flintshire 24 June

Sphegina verecunda male Hawarden Park, Hawarden, Flintshire 6 June; female Greenfield Valley Bryn Celyn, Flintshire 28 June.

Fungus Gnats Recording Scheme

Newsletter 3 Autumn 2009

Progress on Distribution Maps of Fungus Gnats of the British Isles

BRC have continued to input data and this is now completed up to and including data gathered in 2008. Whether any further data is included on the final maps will depend on how long until publication is practicable. I again express my gratitude to all who have submitted specimens and records that have contributed towards these maps.

Mycetophila cingulum and *M. sigmoides*

Since drawing attention to the presence of *M. sigmoides* in Britain in the previous newsletter, an article by David Gibbs has appeared in *Dipterists Digest*, giving the distinctions between these species and listing all data so far obtained for *M. sigmoides*, indicating that it is now widespread in southern England. Further specimens have been identified in other collections but the earliest known record in this country is still from 1998 so there is a strong likelihood that this species is a recent immigrant here.

Digest Gnats

The paper by David Gibbs cited above also added *Exechiopsis seducta* to the British list, on the basis of a single specimen found at Elveden Center Parc, Suffolk. This species is widespread but uncommon in Europe but in view of the location of this find the possibility that it is yet another recent introduction with imported plants cannot be excluded.

Also in this issue of the Digest there is a note by Keith Alexander and Judy Webb recording *Ditomyia fasciata* as new to Wales and an article by John Dobson concerning field observations of *Asindulum nigrum*, which has recently been accorded the English name of the **Fen Flower Gnat** on account of it having been selected as a BAP priority species. He found that he was able to locate these gnats at rest on grass stems within a dense sward of tall, ungrazed, grassland in one of its known sites at Winnall Moor, Hampshire

Nursery Gnats

The paper mentioned last time about four species of South American gnats that have, like *Leia arsona* previously known from these situations, become established in nurseries in the Netherlands has now been published (Chandler & Pijnakker 2009). Diagnostic characters are described and figures are provided of male genitalia and wings for each species. Discovery of these species in the British Isles is awaited with trepidation by horticulturalists.

Urytalpa revised

Kjærandsen et al. (2009) have revised the North European and North American species of the keroplatid genus *Urytalpa* Edwards. In addition to figures of genitalia and wings there are illustrations of whole insects in colour, including the three British species. A key to the world species of *Urytalpa*, compiled from the literature, is also included.

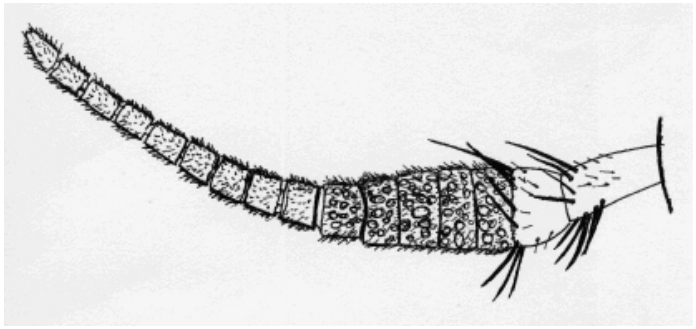
The authors uncovered previously unsuspected nomenclatural problems, resulting in the need to fix a new type species. They found that F.W. Edwards and subsequent authors had misidentified the type of *Platyura ochracea* Meigen, 1818 and had used the name for the common *Urytalpa* species that has been so called. In fact it was another common species in the genus *Orfelia* for which Staeger's 1840 name of *unicolor* has been used. Consequently the *Orfelia* is now to be known as *Orfelia ochracea* (Meigen) while the next senior name of *Urytalpa dorsalis* (Staeger) is to be used for the *Urytalpa* species.

An infestation of truffles – a gnat that can sniff them out

I recently received from Chris Thompson photographs and subsequently specimens of fungus gnats that had been found to be infesting truffles being cultivated in Tennessee and had been forwarded to him by the grower. The truffles concerned are of French origin, the prized Périgord ("Black Winter") variety. It was evident from the photographs that the gnats belonged to the genus *Stigmatomeria*, characterised by a dark mark on the mid and hind coxae, as seen in this photograph of part of one of the Tennessee gnats.

This was very interesting as little has been recorded of the biology of this genus except a comment by Edwards (1925) under the old name of *Allodia crassicornis* that it had been bred from *Tuber* (then a loose generic term covering a range of truffles). He did not state the provenance of the record but this new discovery lends support to its accuracy.

The above photograph shows a male, which has relatively slender antennae. Females of *Stigmatomeria* have the base of the flagellum swollen with the flagellomeres of this basal part bearing numerous irregularly distributed (probably sensory) pits, as shown below in a figure of one of the Tennessee females.

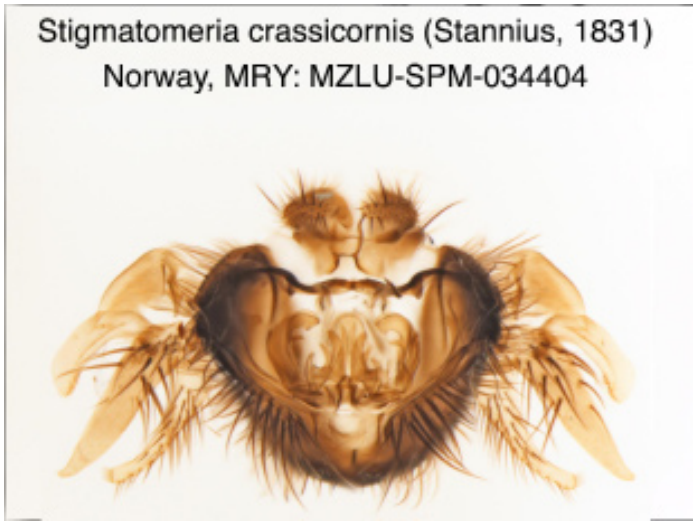


As this is an uncommon character among fungus gnats Jostein Kjærandsen (pers. comm.) has suggested a connection to the females sniffing for truffles like pigs or dogs. He may take some SEM pictures of the female antenna to try to uncover the structure of these pits and sensilla in more detail.

Stigmatomeria crassicornis is the only species of this genus found in the British Isles and has been regarded as Holarctic in distribution, North American specimens having been assigned to this name. However, a second species *S. obscura*, till recently confused with it, has now been recognised as distinct in Europe and this is mentioned in the Swedish checklist (Kjærandsen et al. 2007), where it is stated that *S. obscura* differs in having more slender lobes of the gonostylus than in *S. crassicornis* but comparative figures have not yet been published. I am grateful to Jostein Kjærandsen for forwarding to me photographs of the male genitalia of Scandinavian specimens of the two species, taken in rear view with the lobes of the gonostyli splayed out laterally, which are reproduced here. From these it was possible to confirm that all available British specimens were *S. crassicornis* while I have a few examples of S. *obscura* from eastern Europe.

North American specimens are very similar to those from Europe but Jostein considers that they are specifically distinct, although with some variation tending more towards *S. obscura* and some approaching *S. crassicornis*, and is preparing a paper on this subject. The Tennessee specimens that I have forwarded to Jostein appear to belong to the latter species so must have colonised the truffles there rather than having been imported from France with the original stock.

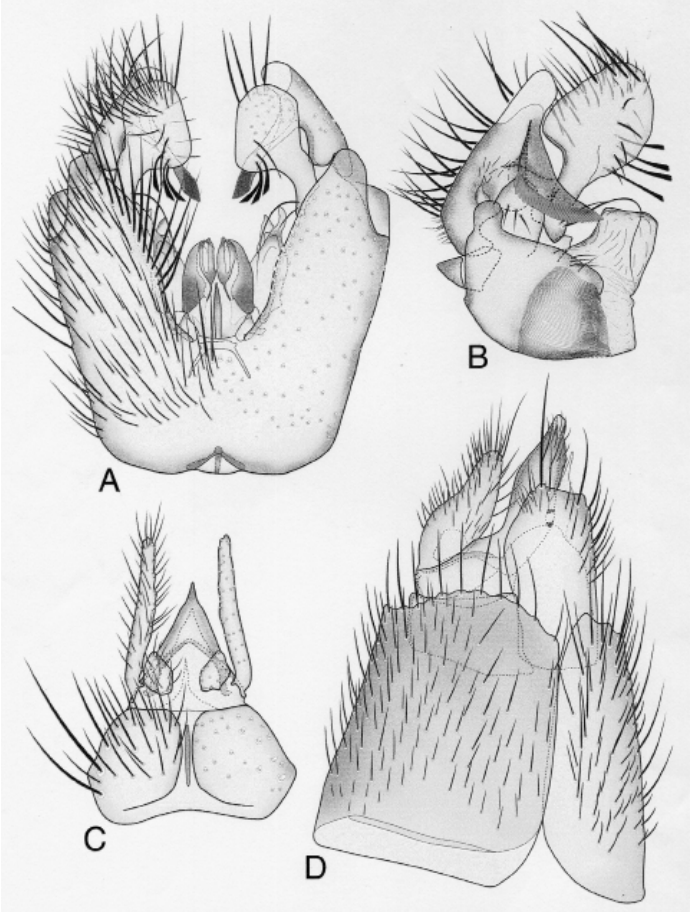
Further observations to confirm whether there is a specific association with truffles would be interesting, but the absence of any other information on the biology of these common gnats could be explained if they normally develop in subterranean fungi. Some other flies, the syrphid *Cheilosia soror* and several species of *Suillia* (Heleomyzidae) are known to regularly develop in truffles. Marie-Anne French, who exhibited specimens of *Cheilosia* and *Suillia* that she had reared from truffles at a BENHS Exhibition a few years ago, recently sent me some further heleomyzids that she had reared but confirmed that she had not reared any fungus gnats from these fungi.



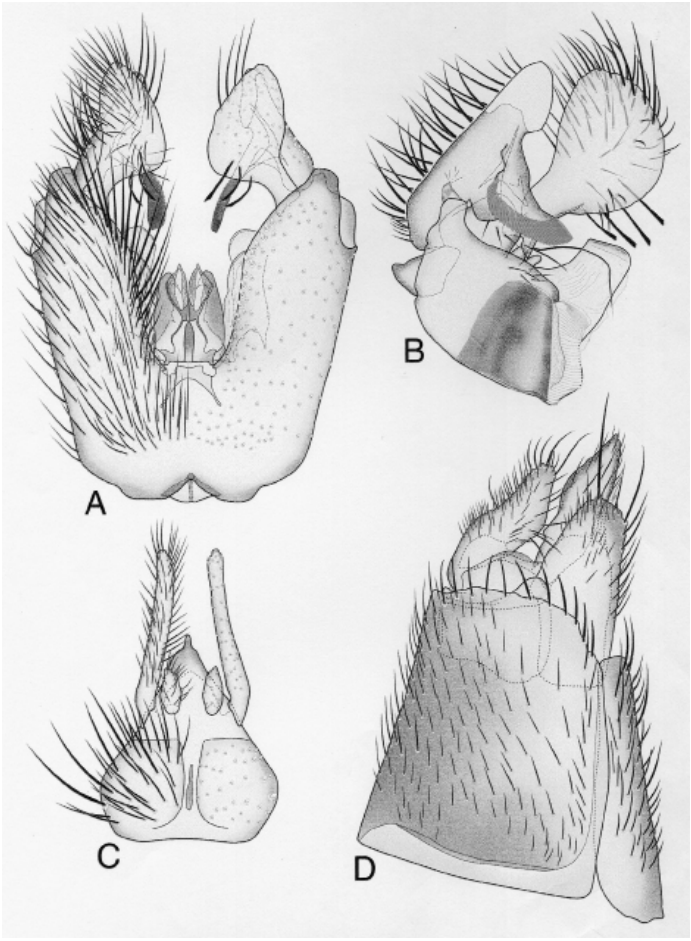
Till recently unrecognised sibling species in *Pseudexechia*

A recent paper by Jostein Kjærandsen (2009) revises the European fauna of this genus, from which it is apparent that there are four species in Europe that have been previously confused under *P. trisignata* by various authors. As indicated in the checklist changes section of the latest Digest, British specimens previously assigned to *P. trisignata* belong to two of these species, *P. trisignata* itself which was described from British material by F.W. Edwards and the newly described *P. tuomikoskii* Kjærandsen.

Re-examination of available British specimens has shown that both species are widespread so it is not yet possible to assign most earlier records to either species and in particular any records for which specimens have not been retained can only be placed to *trisignata* agg. In his paper Jostein indicated that the figures given for *P. trisignata* in my paper (1978) on the genus *Pseudexechia* were in fact of *P. tuomikoskii*, thus accounting for differences of detail from the figures given by Edwards (1913).



***Pseudexechia trisignata* genitalia (from Kjærandsen 2009).**



***Pseudexechia tuomikoskii* genitalia (from Kjærandsen 2009).**

The figures of the two British species of this complex are reproduced here from Jostein's paper. In each case A = male genitalia in ventral view, B = internal view of male gonostylus, C = male tergite 9 and cerci in dorsal view and D = lateral view of female ovipositor. In the male the angled dorsal edge of the ventral lobe of the gonostylus (that bearing thickened blunt setae) is characteristic of *P. trisignata* while this is smoothly sloping in *P. tuomikoskii*. In the female of *P. trisignata* tergite 7 has a slightly scalloped apical margin with longer marginal hairs, while this margin is smoother in *P. tuomikoskii*.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Chris Thompson for the photograph of American *Stigmatomeria* and to Jostein Kjærandsen for supplying the photographs of *Stigmatomeria* genitalia and for the use of his figures of *Pseudexechia*, reproduced from his paper, for which Zootaxa is also to be thanked.

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Peter Chandler

Cranefly Recording Scheme Newsletter

Newsletter 19 Autumn 2009

BRITISH CRANEFLIES:

progress report

A draft text has been sitting in the wings since Spring 2005. In May 2009 a subgroup of the BENHS Publications Committee came to Peterborough to discuss how to shift the project forward. In particular it was necessary to define how much of the draft could be accommodated within the book at an affordable price.

The main decisions are as follows:-

On checking with the likely printer, it emerges that costs are reasonable (at present) so there is no need to drastically trim the content (as had been advocated earlier).

The 'British Soldierflies' book is the model, with separate chapters for the main family/subfamily groups: total page length may be a bit higher. Keys will be to adults only.

An allocation of 30 colour plates gives scope for wing photos, whole set specimens and field photos.

It is intended to include whole male genitalia drawings (reason for the book needing more pages). Whilst the ideal was to redraw all in the same style, it is now accepted that the aim should be uniformity within each family/subfamily by culling from existing literature.

Little action is likely during the current field season but progress needs to kick in this autumn.

A publication date is not yet definable. Autumn 2011 is the earliest possible but that may prove over-optimistic.

Tasks.

Keys have been in circulation for some years now. If there are any comments on utility/errors, then this is the time to report in. Edited versions are to go on the web to allow everyone to check whether their point has been accommodated.

Chris Spilling is master-minding photos of representative wings. Required coverage/needs will need re-evaluating.

Photos of whole set specimens will be representative rather than comprehensive (many look similar at casual glance). That is a task yet to begin: it could be shared between several people to make the task less daunting.

Photos of live craneflies. Various dipterists have some good shots and anyone with a camera is welcome to have a go. Two objectives merge, both the need for a nice selection in the book and also the longer term goal of a photo gallery on a Cranefly Recording Scheme website (under discussion with BRC/or within DF).

There are 10 paper copies of the 2005 draft that were circulated by very little feedback has been forthcoming. Also, some people have the E-version. It will be very useful to hear of any bits that need further attention.

Fine editing, both general and technical, is covered but further independent attention may be called upon.

Alan Stubbs

FIELD WORK REPORTS –

Spring Field Meeting – North York Moors

29 -31 May 2009

Beautiful wooded valleys with streams flowing through were a major focus of our attention on this meeting in North Yorkshire. The weather was good and a reasonable list was obtained.

Our first visit on 29 May 2009, was to Forge Valley (SE9886) where I first collected from the banks of the River Derwent as it flowed through Scarwell Wood. The sample included a good variety of woodland seepage/stream species, including *Eloeophila verralli*, (Nb) *Antocha vitripennis*, *Erioptera verralli (RDB3)* and *Limnophila schranki*.

The second site of the day was Scar and Castlebeck Wood NR. (SE9597). I followed the stream through the wooded valley recording *Dolichopeza albipes, Erioptera griseipennis*, and *Eloeophila trimaculata (Nb)* . *Dicranomyia mitis* and *Dicranota pavida* were also commonly taken among a total of 19 species.

On the way back to Scarborough we visited a Sphagnum bog, –Staintondale Bog –(SE9599) where *Phylidorea squalens* was abundant. *Erioconopa trivialis* was also netted here.

On Saturday 30th May we first visited Chafer Wood in Netherby Dale (SE8983). *Tipula maxima* and *Dicranota subtilis* were recorded, with 16 other species. Then on to Ellerbeck on Goatland Moor, (SE8598) near Fen Bog, where *Dicranota guerini* (Nb), *Limonia dilutior* and *Molophilus propinquus* (Nb) were found. I finally explored another wooded river valley, that of Little Beck (SE8804). This proved to be another interesting site where *Lipsothrix errans*, (Nb) along with *L. remota* was swept from around the many natural dams formed by fallen branches. *Erioptera verralli (Nb)*, *Rhabdomastix edwardsii*, and *Achyrolimonia decemmaculata,* were also recorded with a total for the site of 25 species of craneflies.

John Kramer

Dipterists Forum Summer Field Meeting – Swansea,

4 – 11 July 2009.

Being based at the University of Wales, Swansea gave us access to

a good variety of habitats, and therefore of cranefly communities. Gower itself can provide enough variety for a week's work, but there are also Kenfig Burrows, Merthyr Mawr, Crymlyn Bog and the southern edge of Brecon well within range.

The most interesting cranefly record of the week was made by Chris Spilling at Merthyr-mawr (SS8677) where he recorded *Tipula livida (Nb)*, a first for Wales. *Erioptera meijerei* was also recorded by Ivan Perry at Mill Woods, Penrice (SS4988) on the 9th of July.

Along the southern edge of Gower there are outcrops of Carboniferous Limestone with deep wooded valleys. Some of these are dry where the rivers go underground, but others, such as Bishopston, (SS8757) are damp, with rivers running through. In these damp wooded valleys there is the

usual spectrum of common species with *Limonia nubeculosa* and *Austrolimnophila ochracea* heading the list. Also found there were *Limonia trivittata*, *Dicranomyia fusca* and *Atypophthalmus inustus*, the larvae of which are fungus feeders. The river margin had *Dolichopeza albipes*, *Dicranota bimaculata* and *Dicranota pavida.*

Clyne Valley Country Park (SS6191) provided a good seepage just to the west of the small lake (SS6127.9122) where *Dolichopeza albipes*, *Tipula (Schummelia) yerbury*, and *Dicranomyia aquosa* were swept from beneath vegetation overhanging a vertical wall of *Pellia* liverwort. *Tasiocera robusta* was recorded with *Dicranota pavida* from the margin of a small stream which fed the lake from its northern end.

Tasiocera robusta – style | Tasiocera robusta – aedeagus

The long stilletto-like tapering ventral process of the aedeagus is visible with good light and x40 magnification protruding through the posterior aperture, without dissecting.

The northern edge of Gower, adjacent to the Burry Estuary, provides a very large area of salt marsh dominated by sea lavender. Access to suitable damp parts is very difficult, and good local knowledge would be necessary to save time exploring. The north-west corner is formed by the Whiteford Burrows NNR and here dunes, dune grassland and dune scrub are accessible. *Nephrotoma scurra*, *Symplecta stictica*, *Molophilus pleuralis*, and *Dicranomyia sera* were recorded here.

The western coast at Rhossilli (SS4188) contains a section of exposed Old Red Sandstone. A stream flows down near the old rectory and near the top, its source is surrounded by an acid bog with *Sphagnum* moss, bog asphodel, sundew and tussocks of tufted hair grass.

The boggy margin of the stream yielded plenty of *Tipula lateralis*, as well as *Gonomyia tenella*, *Phylidorea squalens*, *Euphylidorea meigenii*, and *Pedicia (Crunobia) littoralis.*

Other areas of *Sphagnum* were found on the boulder clay which caps Gower's hill – Cefn Bryn. Broad Pool (SS5191) is a lake which contains the bog bean and the fringed water-lily. The margin was inhabited by *Prionocera turcica*, *Erioptera flavata* and other marsh species. Higher up there are some excellent seepages which yielded *Helius flavus* in abundance, *Dicranota (Ludicia) claripennis*, and about 10 other marsh species. It was good to see so many small heath butterflies here.

My final day was spent exploring some calcareous seepages near Merthyr Tydfil, with Mike Howe and Richard Underwood. The list of species includes *Nephrotoma analis*, *Antocha vitripemnnis*, and *Dicranomyia lucida*.

John Kramer

Some Interesting Records.

a) **Judy Webb** – *Triogma trisulcata*. This was recorded from the Lye Valley Fen, Oxon, (SP5405) on 22/4/09.

b) **Ian Rabart** , *Dictenidia bimaculata*. Seen at Cranwich, Norfolk TL7894

a. 13.vi.2007 at 14:55 ovipositing in a fallen rotten beech *Fagus sylvatica* trunk

b. 9.vi.2008 at 13:48 feeding at a sap run on Oak *Quercus robur* about 30m from the previous year's oviposition site.
c. 30.vi.2008 the same fly (b, right hind leg missing as on 9.vi) appeared at the rotten beech, questing along the length for an oviposition site. The trunk was pretty dry and after two passes along it the fly flew off.

2. *Nephrotoma crocata*. Seen at Cranwich, Norfolk.This appeared in the garden and meadow at TL7894:

a. 12.vi.2007 at 10:04, resting on a bramble *Rubus fruticosa* leaf in the Walled Garden

b. 15.vi.2007 at 15:30 seen in the Wildflower meadow flying an erratic path along the mown strip edging the grassland, dipping its abdomen into the herbage, presumably ovipositing. When rain started she stopped ovipositing and disappeared into the long grass.(The heathland asilid *Eutolmus rufibarbis* is also resident here.)

Ian writes, '*I have seen neither of these species this year. We had a disastrous crop spraydrift last year which appears to have resulted in the total destruction of one of the only two sap run populations here (including* Brachyopa bicolor*) and I suspect the spray carried on another 8-10m to contaminate the rotted fallen beech.*'

c) **Geoff Hancock** *Tipula luridirostris*

I collected a male and female of *Tipula luridirostris* by sweeping along bankside vegetation. This was on the River Carron at Achnashellach, 19 May 2008 (NH0248), Wester Ross.

d) **Alan Phillips** - *Nephrotoma crocata*.

A female was captured on the Whisby Nature Park, near Lincoln, on 24 May 2009. This is 0.5 hectares of sand up to 3 m deep,washed from a gravel pit, and abandoned in the 1970's, which has formed a heath-like biotope, colonised by some coastal species.

(N. crocata *seems to be getting scarcer. Records would be especially appreciated. Ed*)

Notes on collecting adult *Dicranota robusta* Lundstroem

Dicranota robusta Lunstroem is a characteristic vernal species of upland streams, usually first or second order streams (if one uses the classification of Strahler; see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strahler_number). Apart from being fast-flowing these streams are low in nutrient levels and have exposed margins of shingle or small stones (see figure 1).

Figure 1

When turning over larger stones that are partly submerged or close to the water margin several invertebrates can often be seen. These include Ephemeroptera and Plecoptera with their exuviae, numerous chironomids and other dipterans and spiders (principally lycosids). *Dicranota* species are part of this population of invertebrates sheltering from the wind. Adults of *Dicranota* will have just emerged from their aquatic predatory juvenile stages. *Dicranota robusta* in particular can most easily be recorded by this method. This is mainly due to their usually shortened and narrow wings which have only a minimal function for flight. Although some may have longer wings these individuals are still reluctant to fly (figure 2)..

Other species of *Dicranota* take flight immediately and cannot immediately be identified so that sweeping along the stream margins is necessary. Some simple behavioural experiments I conducted a few years ago at a site in Lancashire showed that individuals will not readily abandon the rock surfaces. If forced, they will only manage to flutter down at an angle unless the wind blows them further. (See 1990, Notes on the biology of *Dicranota robusta* Lundstroem (Diptera; Tipulidae). *Dipterists' Digest* **6**: 20-22.)

Figure 2

On an afternoon in late April, 2009, along the local moorland edges near where I now live in South Lanarkshire, Scotland, I found *D. robusta* in every such stream visited over a distance of several miles (Lambhill, NS70-39-; Kype NS71-40-; Glengavel, NS74-40-; Wedder Hill, NS70-39-). Both sexes were seen. The best stones are the flatter ones that are lodged at an angle creating a small overhang. The stones may be partly in the water but no more than a few feet away from the margin. As it was a cold and windy day on this occasion none were exposed to view but under better conditions they will move out from their shelter and sit on the sunny surfaces sometimes in some numbers. It was under these conditions that, in 1959 John Coulson found serendipitously the second GB site for *D. robusta,* having got a closer view of things after stumbling on the bed of a stream (Observations on the Tipulidae (Diptera) of the Moor House Nature Reserve, Westmorland. *Trans. R. ent. Soc. Lond.* **111**: 157-174). In warm weather these flies are likely to scuttle away when approached resulting in a game of 'hide and seek' if one wants to collect a sample.

E Geoffrey Hancock
(Hunterian Museum, Zoology, University of Glasgow)

5. Wingate's Craneflies – Part II, Limoniidae

This is the second item to draw attention to the sites visited by the Rev. W.J Wingate between 1896 and 1902, and the craneflies that he recorded there. In the Spring Edition of Cranefly News I listed details of Wingate's sites, and his records of Tipulidae and Pediciidae.

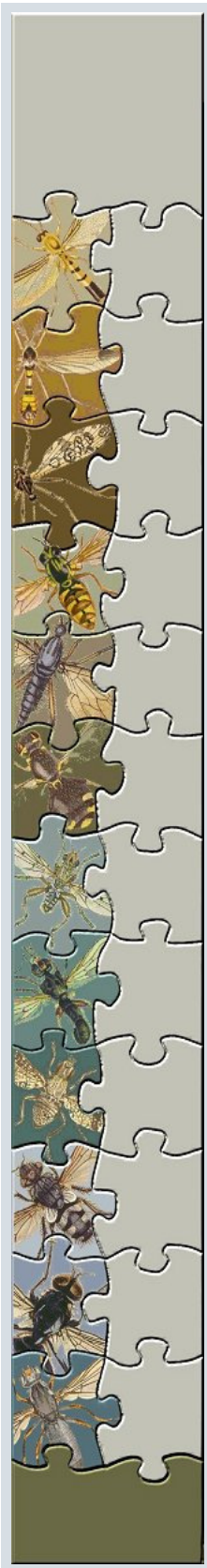
Thirty-eight species of Limoniidae were recorded by Wingate from the region. As with the Tipulidae many of these are common and ubiquitous species but one or two are worthy of special attention. *Dactylolabis transversa (Mg) (as gracilipes* Loew 1869) was recorded at Harperley (NZ 17463 53017) on the wooded banks of the Wear, in June 1900, with Euphylidorea dispar Mg. Tricyphona unicolor (Pediciidae) is also listed from here in June 1902.

>From 'South Durham' *Molophilus propiquus* Egg and *Euphylidorea lineola* Mg were recorded in June 1902. This is defined rather vaguely as 'an interrupted strip about 4-12 miles broad along the southern border'.

All of these sites would be worth putting on your field work schedule for 2010.

John Kramer

The copy deadline for the next edition of the Cranefly News is December 20th 2009.



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Recording Schemes & Study Groups

Whilst all schemes will readily accept records in written form the following symbols are used to indicate some of the known (or surmised) methods by which Scheme Organisers may currently receive records electronically:

Recorder **MapMate** **Microsoft Access** **Spreadsheet (Excel)**

Square brackets indicate that the organiser can handle records in the format indicated.

Potential recorders really need to know your preferred recording format so please inform the Bulletin Editor in time for future updates

Chironomidae

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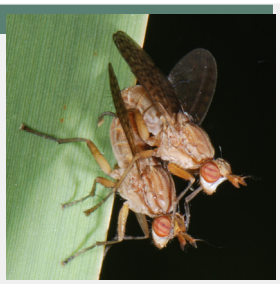
Dipterists Forum

Sciomyzidae - Snail-killing Flies



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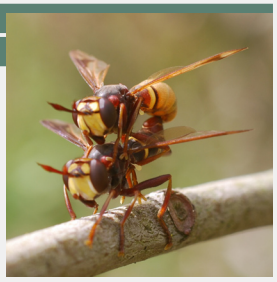
Conopidae, Lonchopteridae, Ulidiidae & Pallopteridae



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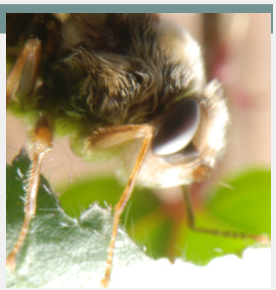
Oestridae



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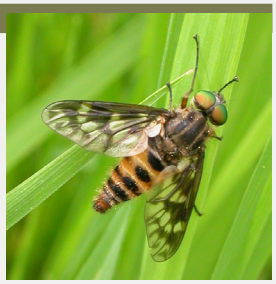
Larger Brachycera



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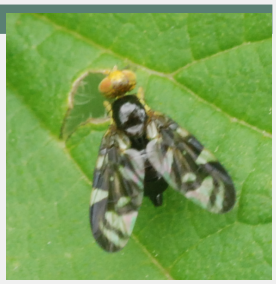
Tephritid Flies



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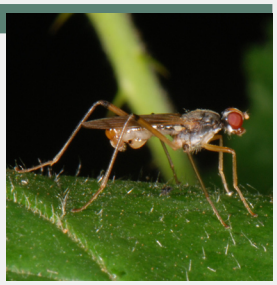
Stilt & Stalk Fly



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