BULLETIN OF THE
Dipterists
Forum

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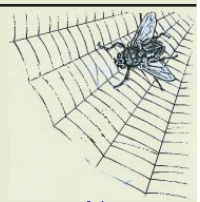

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Dipterists Forum Forum www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/index.php

Photographs: Front cover *Sericomyia superbiens* from Norfolk, September 2013 **Darwyn Sumner**, Stuart Ball says that's what we've got to call it now, "*Arctophila fulva*" had so much more cachet**.** Other photographs as supplied by the authors or the editorial panel who would be pleased to receive illustrations for general purposes - many thanks for those already sent. If you want to catch the next front cover, please think about the orientation, it must be upright (portrait)

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Dipterists Forum Events

The following Newsletters and other special items are incorporated into the package for the printers after completion of the Bulletin. They are not to be found in any pdf version of this Bulletin and they have their own pagination. Please contact the Newsletter editors for full colour pdfs, back issues may also be found on DF website.

Hoverfly Newsletter #56

Cranefly Newsletter #27

Fungus Gnat Newsletter #7

Booking form for meetings - see this or previous Bulletins & Dipterists Forum website

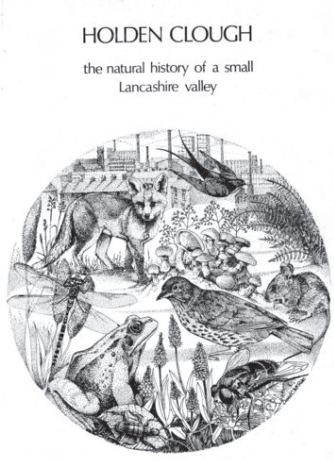
Membership form

Desktop publishing: Darwyn Sumner

Editorial

An introduction to flies

It is hard to imagine a better introduction to Natural History than the one presided over by Leonard Kidd when I was first indoctrinated as a youth. Werneth Park Study Centre (the former mansion of Marjory Lees) housed a natural history collection, two ancient weekly natural history societies (Monday & Friday nights), a huge natural history library and Leonard's office filled with fascinating diptera collections. Encouragement was there by the bucket load, Peter Skidmore and Colin Johnson were regulars at the Oldham Natural History Society meetings in the days before they went on to higher things elsewhere and we once or twice met up with Roy Crossley and his acolytes in the field when Saddleworth was still Yorkshire. Even my Biology teacher, Dave Hallett, was a regular and part of the team that got us all working on the famous 1971 Holden Clough report.



When I found the scarcer Odonata too elusive to pursue much further (hitch-hiking to Coulin for *Aeshna caerulescens* and not finding it,) Leonard kindly gave me my first introduction to Diptera, a copy (inscribed by him) of Colyer and Hammond's "Flies of the British Isles" and numerous papers on Craneflies and Syrphidae. I've progressed; with Diptera I can now not find many more species.

Sadly little of all that now survives, my wife (then a Librarian in Oldham) took me to see the library as a huge mound on the floor of a branch library back room, the collections were dispersed and the ONHS folded after we lost the rooms. The Oldham Microscopical and Natural History Society (the "Oldham Micro" or "the muck and worm club") still thrives (http://www.oldham-micro.org.uk/ ,)

Leonard Kidd was responsible for a good deal of encouragement to aspiring naturalists, it's sad to see him go, many thanks to him and to Peter Chandler for compiling a superb obituary in this Bulletin.

Darwyn Sumner

Comings and goings

This edition of the Bulletin marks significant changes in the make-up of the Committee. Duncan Sivell is now well settled in as Indoor Meetings Secretary. Roger will be retiring from Field Meetings Secretary, but will complete this year's three meetings. There is as yet no replacement Field Meetings Secretary. As the Secretary John Kramer makes way for his successor the editorial team are just beginning to get to grips with a different flavour of presentations. John has been helpful in assisting his successor Nathan Medd with his new role and whilst the writing style of the new chaps begins to appear in these pages, there will undoubtedly continue to be contributions from John and Roger. John will be concentrating on the Craneflies so you'll be reading his stuff again whenever he produces a newsletter and Roger is still working on the data from the Field Weeks so we can expect something from that in the future. As an editor I'll particularly miss the thoroughness with which Roger dealt with reports from Field Weeks, especially the pictures. You can find all the formal thanks and speeches and the like in Nathan's account of the AGM in this Bulletin and an outline of the Field Meeting Secretary's tasks in the Meetings section. Nathan is working with his predecessor and the Bulletin editors to ensure a smooth transition, good luck to him.

We've also an influx of new people on the general Committee so expect some interesting Bulletin contributions and "profile raising" from the Natural History Museum, Field Studies Centre and the Species Dictionary afficionados.

Report on Local Authority Planning

The Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE) have published a report recently concerning the competence of English Local Authority Planners in delivering their statutory obligations for biodiversity. The Planning system is the only process we have to ensure that our sites are protected and it's where our efforts to record wildlife play an important part in conservation. The report shows that many local planning authorities do not currently have either the capacity and/or the competence to undertake the effective, and in some cases necessarily lawful, assessment of planning applications where biodiversity is a material consideration. Entitled "**Ecological capacity and competence in English Planning Authorities**" it is to be found at http://www.cieem.net/news/158/alge-publish-report-on-ecological-capacity-and-competence-in-english-planning-authorities

Here's one quote from the report: *Whilst biodiversity is an acknowledged material consideration in the planning system, its importance to many local authorities in relation to their obligations for statutory-based decision making appears not to be given sufficient priority. As a result, with current budget restrictions the use of specialist input seems to be considered an 'optional extra'.* In respect of Natural England's **Standing Advice**, this is one of the least well used sources of ecological advice likely to influence planners' judgement over whether biodiversity will be affected by an application. For instance, 27% of Local Authorities in the survey report that they only ever use it 'occasionally' or 'rarely', and 22% 'never' refer to it.

Biodiversity Offsetting

There's a report on the Guardian website about this with respect to ancient woodlands (http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jan/04/ancient-woodland-cut-down-biodiversity-offsetting) and a recent "ancient trees are sacrosanct" appeal by Tony Juniper in Independent on Sunday (33 ancient woodlands will be smashed by HS2 alone). Rotted beech stumps in the New Forest are 200-300 years in the growing and ~200 years in the rotting down so how will planting 100 new trees somewhere else recreate that *Caliprobola speciosa* habitat as Owen Paterson proposes. His "*better environment over the long term*" will take about 500 years, I doubt they could wait that long.

Scotland

BRISC's latest newsletter is available now at http://brisc.org.uk/newsletters/Pending/BRISCRecorderNews92.pdf Items of interest include "tree dieback" by Steve Woodward (Aberdeen) and one about mobilising the records of the late Philip Entwistle

Robot bees

Sheffield University roboticists plan to develop robot bees to replace real ones according to New Scientist. They intend to send swarms of robot bees in to pollinate plants and they've got a lot of it sorted out except they can't carry enough computer processing on board or enough power, so these swarms will all have to be individually tethered by power cables and wires to a central unit - you couldn't make this sort of stuff up (http://www.shef.ac.uk/news/nr/green-brain-honey-bee-model-sheffield-university-1.212235)

Darwyn Sumner

What do dipterists do?

What are your interests?

The DF Committee would like to understand the interests of the Forum's members better. This will help us to meet expectations and provide better support to new members, to organise relevant events, to put museums in touch with those willing to help with curation, and to revitalise the mentor system.

Would you spend a few minutes replying to the questions below? No need to answer them all, just the ones that are relevant to you.

1. What are your taxonomic interests (families / larger taxa - just the top few that you are most comfortable with or help to develop expertise in)?
2. How would you rate your current level of expertise, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being a beginner to 5 an expert, for each area of interest?
3. Are there other groups that you'd be prepared become actively involved with, if supported by a specialist?
4. If you have a specialism, are you willing to help newcomers (via correspondence, checking specimens) to that specialism (or more widely)?
5. Are you interested in giving curatorial help at museums, or extracting records from them?
6. Are you prepared to give talks at our annual Dipterists Day or to local fly or other natural history groups (and in what areas of competency, eg natural history, behaviour ....)?
7. Can you help extract records from journals?
8. Are you willing to organise or help with organising local field events (e.g. checking out suitability of venues)?
9. Would you be interested in joining a local Diptera group if one existed?
10. Would you be interested in helping start a local group if there is not one already?
11. Are there any other points you would like to make?

Please post or email replies to Martin Drake – see back page of Bulletin, Empid & Dolichopodid scheme, for contact details.

I won't distribute this information *en masse* but don't feel obliged to disclose anything you'd rather keep to yourself. It's just meant to help us provide a better service for our members.

It's more to help us move the Forum and flies forward.

Many thanks,

Martin Drake

Late News

BRC has invited Diptera Recording Scheme Organisers to a seminar at the Natural History Museum on 23rd January. They will be presenting items surrounding their online recording programme based upon iRecord, Martin Harvey will relate this to recording schemes and Paula Lightfoot will give an NBN perspective and discuss NBN Gateway issues related to the managing of online datasets. Approximately 9 of our 18 schemes will be attending so expect some debates and reports in the next issue of this Bulletin.

Cranefly Recording Scheme

Newsletter #27 included in this Bulletin

John Kramer

Notice board

Recording Schemes

New Recording Scheme

Muscidae Recording Scheme

While a good number of fly families are well-catered for by the Dipterists Forum Recording Schemes, Muscidae are not. This is something I intend to rectify. At this early stage my aim is to develop a working collection of Muscids. To this end if any dipterists collect spare material, of either common or scarce species in 2014, I would be very pleased to receive it. Likewise I can give a good home to historical specimens. Once I am in a position to offer identification help, hopefully within two years, I will look to develop recording capacity for the family and at this stage also start to receive records.

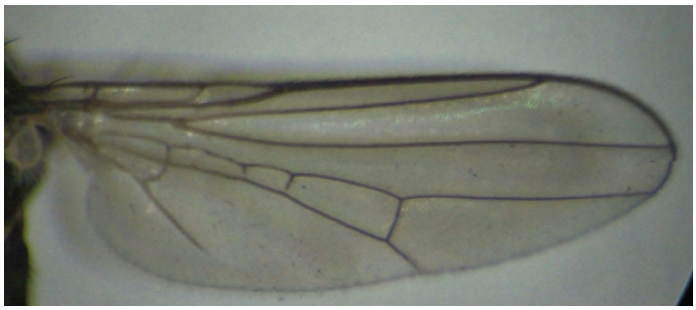
If this is something you would like to help with, please get in touch by email to j.mcgill@outlook.com or by post to 13 Cresswell Avenue, Taunton, Somerset, TA2 6LS.

James McGill

Sepsidae Recording Scheme

It is a year since my last update but during that period I have received sepsid records from Jon Cole, Laurence Clemons, Howard Bentley, Phil Brighton and Ian Andrews, so thanks to all of you and apologies to anyone I've missed. Additionally, I receive the sepsids caught in water traps operated by Fred Bennett, in his Laxey garden, to add to the scheme database and my reference collection. During July 2013, I was able to attend the Forum's summer field trip based at Lancaster University at which I was able to supplement my own captures with donations from Nigel Jones, Alan Stubbs and Andrew Grayson. All told, I think that about five hundred observations have been added to the scheme database over the last year.

Amongst some undetermined sepsids loaned to me by Duncan Sivell was one that provoked a "what the heck" exclamation from me when I looked at it under the microscope. Here's a photograph of what caused this response.



Unusual *Themira* wing venation

In case it isn't obvious, the cross vein (R-M) between the upper basal cell and the radial cell is missing but the discal cell has practically been subdivided into three cells. Both wings were similarly effected. The proud owner of these bespoke wings? – a male *Themira putris*.

Steve Crellin

Fungus Gnat Recording Scheme

Newsletter #7 included in this Bulletin

Peter Chandler

Hoverfly Recording Scheme

Newsletter #56 included in this Bulletin

David Iliff

NBN Gateway chestnuts

Described by several who attended the recent NBN Conference as "that old chestnut", Stuart Ball's comment about "rubbish data" being submitted from LRCs to the NBN Gateway has again stimulated debate. It's a remark also made to me some time ago by Adrian Plant regarding the reason why he was disinclined to upload data to the NBN Gateway (there was so much data already there that he was unable to check) and the same reluctance was expressed recently by Laurence Clemons.

But maybe the situation nowadays isn't so bad as it seems, there have been key changes made recently by NBNG which go some way to addressing this chestnut and a meeting scheduled between Dipterists Forum's recording schemes, BRC and NBNG may go some way towards helping resolve those issues.

Stuart was recently made an honorary member of NBN Trust.

Data flows: LRCs

Some of the schemes are getting substantial amounts of data from LRCs and, as Stuart commented, some of the LRC's datasets are "fine". I've not been able to locate any LRCs whose NBNG datasets are not "fine" but the data flows through LRCs are by no means standardised as my investigations (see County Recorders) have revealed.

Grid references and Vice Counties

BSBI (Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland) have a utility on their website that converts from grid references to Vice County if you need it. It's at http://herbariaunited.org/gridrefVC There's also a "place name to vice-county converter" there too.

Vice County checking is built into the NBN Record Cleaner - more details about that after the Recording Schemes have met up with BRC & NBN in January.

Recorder 6 at risk

JNCC's support for Recorder 6 is being re-evaluated, their "vision" paper requires they "*Understand the requirements – we will work with partners to improve understanding of their requirements with regard to the capture, management and use of biodiversity data.*" LRCs have been swift to respond, short deadlines mean that the responses of our recorders must mainly rely on ALERC's work.

Darwyn Sumner

County Recorders

I promised to do something about this in the last edition of the Bulletin and have now conducted a preliminary survey. The results are on the inside back page of this Bulletin in the form of a map. The choice of vague regional borders and hexagonal tiles is entirely calculated, their vagueness means that you have an approximate idea of the zone and we don't have to enter into debates about Vice Counties. The **zones** depicted are those of Local Records Centres (as listed) and these are grouped according to official HM Government **regions**. LRCs themselves will provide you with details of their boundaries and you can find them all through a Google-type map on the ALERC website at www.ALERC.org.uk and as a list on the NFBR website.

Our traditional view of county recorders will be informed by the lists of experts we used to see published by various Natural History Societies, you'll probably still find them for some NHSs or more likely groups of them under the banners of the likes of the North Western Naturalists Union or the Yorkshire Naturalists Union, you'll also find some on LRC websites (try Hampshire's HBIC). For highly popular taxonomic groups you'll even be able to locate an entire network of county recorders for the whole Country (e.g. BSBI). With a membership of around 400 we dipterists cannot hope to emulate the botanists so the picture that emerges for us is complex because we have to adapt to circumstances in a host of different ways in order to create our support network.

Local knowledge

Primarily we have the Recording Schemes but local knowledge is of considerable value, here's an opinion on that from Eric Fletcher (manager at the Cheshire LRC, rECOrd):

> *I would always support a local expert verifying data at a local level where possible, this keeps the job manageable and the expertise easily accessible. You can have knowledge of the species groups, but that I would argue needs to be supported by local knowledge too. I would rather have a local expert supported by a group of peers (local or national) than solely a national expert whose time is at a premium and who, potentially, doesn't know the local area.*

Eric also told me that "*our Diptera data is a bit of an unknown; we have received a lot of data from a number of recorders over the years, but could never get anyone to do any verification on it.*" (he's got access to a local Hoverfly expert but not a general one at the time of writing - see next article for progress). I suspect that this type of situation is true of many of the unlabelled zones on the map where I was unable to obtain information, a valuable insight from Eric that may go some way towards explaining the chestnut.

The network

Alan Stubbs also came up with some interesting observations, he states that the concept of county recorders needs qualification as to context, he provided the following categories:

1. LRC with a staff/resident dipterist
2. Entirely voluntary affair
3. No LRC

Alan proceeded to subcategorise each of those. I'm betting Alan is the only dipterist who already knew all the information that's on the map - am I right?

The County Recorder model, however, is not necessarily one that is ideal in all areas, the situation in Scotland, for example is driven largely through the Malloch Society and its members

(Geoff Hancock for Tipulids, Ken Watts for hoverflies), Graham Rotheray tells me that "*We are all, of course, interested in the status and distribution of Scottish Diptera*" (expect an update to Malloch Society website around February).

The survey

I conducted a fuzzy, vague survey and in the light of the responses I've had it seems that that was a good move, pretty well everything has turned out to differ, from model to specialisms..

A summary of the contact methods I used in the survey is as follows:

- Posting on the ALERC forum (all LRCs)
- Direct emailing of many LRCs
- Direct emailing of Dipterists (Committee, Schemes, individuals)
- Direct emailings of some museums and organisations

The 50+ responses haven't been comprehensive but the vague nature of the outcome (labels on a map) means that any further information which comes our way can be easily incorporated into the next version.

Alan pointed out the value of museum-based LRCs with resident dipterists in establishing a geospatial network, so for example we have Steve Hewitt in Cumbria and Tony Irwin in Norfolk.

There's still a lot of searching that could be done (e.g. locating county invertebrate recording groups via the NHM directory of Natural History Societies) but I'm inclined to call a halt to this intensive enquiry phase now, hopefully the blanks on the map will encourage volunteers to make themselves known to us and their LRC. I could make informed guesses about some of the blanks but I feel it's better to await volunteers rather than press people.

Matters arising

One of the rare benefits of wearing two hats as I do (DF and ALERC) is that now and then it's possible to introduce "colleagues" to one another to their mutual benefit. I was struck by the lack of awareness regarding the Malloch Society and all their works by the Scottish SBIF as it was forming in 2012 (Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum http://www.wildlifeinformation.co.uk/SBIF.php well worth a look at) so was able acquaint the latter with the former some time ago. Similarly the manager of the Dumfries and Galloway LRC, Mark Pollitt helpfully replied to my survey to say he hadn't any luck in finding Diptera expertise (remember he's a generalist and not a dipterist) - so I was able to point him in the direction of the ever-helpful Graham Rotheray and the rest of the Malloch team - one good turn deserves another.

There's been some other interesting information arising from my survey, it clearly links to ongoing surveys regarding data flows and the all-important issue of verification. Paula Lightfoot (NBN Data Officer) observed links to a GBIF questionnaire regarding data quality (GBIF are the worldwide equivalent to NBN Gateway - see www.gbif.org) and to FSC's Biodiversity Fellowships programme.

Many thanks to all who have responded to this survey.

I can't say exactly what it is we've finished up with on the back cover of this Bulletin, maybe it will lead to a little improvement in the verification of diptera records we see online, maybe a few more good records will get released by LRCs, maybe ecotourist dipterists will engage more with the locals, I'll leave the last word to Paula Lightfoot: "*I think the map is a very good way to highlight gaps and motivate people to volunteer to fill them*"

Darwyn Sumner

Diptera records in Local Records Centres

It's one of the jobs of a Local Records Centre to hunt around for local datasets from recorders; biological records and site surveys are their *raison d'etre*. They will be in receipt of records from a range of sources, from museums and famous names to non-specialists and online trawls. Precisely how much of this information is out there in LRCs and just how much of it has been converted from specimens, notebooks and so on to a machine-readable format is unknown.

Phil Brighton has been working with **rECOr**d, the Cheshire LRC to ascertain their data holdings and sent me the following email:

Cheshire

"During the summer field trip, I mentioned to you how there seemed to be much more diptera data on rECOrd than on the NBN Gateway for Cheshire, and you encouraged me to make enquiries.

I've raised this with Eric Fletcher, manager of rECOrd, who explained that this was simply because of the need to validate and verify the data for submission to NBN. He was only too glad to have any help I could give on this process. We have now been through the data to scope the size of the problem.

Altogether there are about 59,000 diptera records. Eric is already getting help on the Syrphidae from Paul Hill. This leaves 51,433 records from all the other families. This amounts to about 9% of the current total recorded on the NBN gateway for non-syrphid diptera and so will be a significant addition.

I have broken this down family by family to see how the dataset matches up with the current diptera recording schemes. This is a summary of the main large blocs of data. (I have the full family breakdown on a spreadsheet.)

Nematocera:- 12655 records (5% of NBN total)
Including
Craneflies 4774 (3%)
Fungus gnats 1270 (9%)
Cecidomyiidae 3191 (43%)

Brachycera not in Cyclorrhapha:-
Empids and Dollies 6681 (11%)
Soldierflies & Allies 3124 (6%)

Aschiza & Acalypterates:- 15339 (14%)
Including
Chloropidae 1328 (15%)
Conopidae et al 951 (10%)
Sepsidae 1053 (10%)
Tephritidae 873 (11%)
Agromyzidae 3756 (48%)

Calypterates
Tachinidae 1039 (4%)
Scathophagidae 1678 (20%)
Anthomyiidae 2375 (21%)
The rest 8542 (21%)

So as you can judge from this figures, virtually every family is

represented and there is a marked bias towards better coverage of the more difficult families compared to the current NBN national data. There has evidently been particular interest in leaf-miners.

I've done a bit of browsing on the NBN website to look at the processes and procedures involved in validation and verification of the data, including details of the Record Cleaner. I'm glad to find that all the concepts involved are familiar to me by now, no doubt because I've sat at the feet of some of the people behind this - particularly Stuart Ball who is a co-author of the software I see.

I've also downloaded the verification report - I see Martin [Harvey] was responsible for the section describing how the rules have been set up for the Brachycera (now known as the Soldier Flies and their Allies) - hence I'm copying him in to this. So it would seem that this is a group that we can run through the system and see what it flags up pretty straightforwardly - a good place to start. What I don't know is the extent to which such rules have been or are being developed for other groups. Presumably in the more esoteric groups this will still largely be down to judgements by a handful of national experts.

Any comments, suggestions or further guidance on how to organise this would be gratefully received!"

Phil Brighton (helophilus@hotmail.co.uk)

That's a considerable treasure-trove of diptera data from just one of the 60 LRCs that has emerged from some close working between a county recorder and an LRC. I do hope that Phil's meticulous work hasn't put off any of the other county recorders from producing similar scoping analyses, if you've volunteered to take on the county recorder role then you are the person who defines what it involves. It's a very good first step though and I know that several of the Recording Schemes will be contacting Phil and Eric to offer to check the data so that rECOrd can upload verified records to the NBN Gateway.

Darwyn Sumner

The Devon Fly Group

Fly enthusiasts in Devon and neighbouring counties have agreed to form a Devon Fly Group, and invite readers to join us (even if your main interest is not flies!).

We held our first meeting on 17 August, at the Woodland Centre in Yarner Wood, part of the Bovey Valley Woods and Heaths National Nature Reserve, courtesy of Natural England. After a brief field excursion (more about this below), the ten of us present agreed that the basis of the group should be an informal network with no formal committee structure or membership. Our main aims should be to share knowledge and to increase knowledge about the distribution of flies in the county through recording. We also hope to increase understanding about the ecology of species and further the conservation of key ones. Equally important to all this are social opportunities to meet up with like-minded people, visiting nice places in the process.

Our intent is to hold programmed field meetings on the third Saturday of each month from May to October. In addition, we hope that *ad hoc* meetings will be arranged at short notice on intervening dates, perhaps linked to the activities of other natural history groups. During the winter months we plan to hold one or more meetings focussing on knowledge exchange and learning, and to which people can bring specimens for identification. This February Martin is leading a workshop on the recognition of Diptera families.

We have got off to a good start, holding field meetings in August, September and October. This being Devon, rain has hampered our early activities, but not dampened our enthusiasm. At our first meeting, in the Bovey Valley, we had about 90 minutes before the rain started in earnest. Even so, during that time we made some good records, in particular Nicola Bacciu potted a strange orange tachinid which turned out to be *Ceromyia silacea*, a rarity previously only known from 3 British sites, none of them in the West Country – thanks to Chris Raper for confirming that identification.

Ceromya silacea, head, Vinimore Marsh, Bovey Valley, 17 Aug 13

We also caught a new spider for the county, a spectacular green species, *Micrommata virescens*.

Micrommata virescens 17-08-13 (2), Bovey Valley, Geoff Foale

For our September meeting we chose the stunning calcareous coastal cliffs and coasts at Branscombe in East Devon. Here we found a good selection of hoverflies including *Ferdinandea cuprea*, and the conopid *Thecophora atra*, as a well as a good assortment of solitary bees and heteropteran bugs. In October our target was the craneflies of a private woodland on the edge of Dartmoor near Buckfastleigh. The rain held off for two hours, during which we found very few craneflies but a good selection of other flies including heleomyzids and lauxanids. Those of us interested in leaf mines and galls, whether made by moth, wasp or fly, found plenty of interest.

At all three meeting we found it very helpful to get together around a table afterwards to examine specimens. Beginners found it particularly helpful to have the main families collected pointed out. Reflecting this, we shall try and hold at least some field meetings in places where we can get under cover at the end of the day to look at what we have caught. The offer by the DF committee to buy a USB microscope for the group is very welcome, and should make it much easier to help participants with identification.

Ferdinandea cuprea [Darwyn Sumner]

To fulfil our conservation aspiration, we have a drawn up a short list of Diptera species for which Devon is of particular significance, and intend to target at least some our field meetings towards these species. Fortunately, they nearly all occur in beautiful, exciting places!

We would be delighted to hear from anyone who wishes to join the Fly Group. We welcome both beginner and expert, and it does not matter if your main focus is not flies – the wider our range of interests, the more interesting meetings will be. And you need not reside in Devon – people from Cornwall, Somerset and Dorset have already taken part in our field meetings. Please contact Andrew Cunningham at ajc321@hotmail.com if you wish to join the network – he will invite you to join the Yahoo Group which is our preferred means of communication.

Our thanks to the Northants Diptera Group and to John Showers in particular for inspiring us to set up the Devon group.

Rob Wolton and Martin Drake

Museum Collections

Your local Museum needs You

In recent years staffing levels at local museums have been reduced and the resources available for maintaining collections are rapidly diminishing; the situation is now critical. At the same time, it is increasingly apparent how important are the collections they hold as a historical record of the fauna of their local area, and a source of records for assessing both national distribution and the conservation needs of species at a local and national level.

All museums benefit from the involvement of local volunteers, and their role is now ever more crucial. Many museums house Diptera collections, but some are more widely known than others. A list of museums with Diptera collections, compiled by Alan Stubbs, is included in the starter pack (available from the Dipterists Forum website). This lists 27 local museums, in addition to the six national and university museums that are well-known for their Diptera collections. However, this list omits all three of the museums mentioned in the present note. It's clear from this that we don't know how many local museums hold Diptera collections, or in how many cases local dipterists are involved in maintaining or documenting these collections.

The article on the life of Henri Audcent in the latest issue of *Dipterists Digest* (2013. 20: 103-119) drew attention to the rich resource that exists in the Diptera collections held at the Bristol City Museum, where our AGM was held in 2012. That museum also holds the collection of Ron Payne (see Obituary pp 19-20 in Bulletin No. 72, Autumn 2011). It became apparent from visits to Bristol to view the Payne and Audcent collections that a considerable amount of work is needed to bring the curation and layout of these collections up to date, to validate identifications and to make the data provided by them more widely available (see pp 114-115 of above article).

Recent visits that I have made to Colchester and Winchester have shown that these same needs apply more generally to other local museums, and I summarise below the position at these two museums, in order to publicise their particular needs. In both cases there are presently no curatorial staff dedicated to curation of their insect collections, and currently no local support from dipterists. The Forum has members who are local to both these museums, but who may be unaware of the quality and importance of the collections held there. The level of assistance that can be offered will be dependent on the time available and particular skills of local dipterists, of which we may also be unaware (hence the questionnaire in the present Bulletin). The museum staff would appreciate any level of involvement by dipterists, if only to consult the collection or donate specimens to fill gaps.

There are often diaries or other personal records associated with collections, which may contain relevant background information and details concerning the circumstances of collection of specimens; transcribing information from these may be another way that volunteers can assist in making information more widely available.

The possibility has also been discussed of adopting an NHM initiative of a 'Museums Bioblitz', where specialists could descend on a local museum, to work with the collections, check identifications and note the data from labels, though the logistics and duration of such visits have yet to be considered.

As financial constraints are likely to worsen, museums need all the help they can get. All members are urged to make contact

with their local museums. This would also be helpful in building information on what collections are held and the present state of these collections. See also page 132 of *A Dipterist's Handbook* (2010) concerning the disposal of collections. Better knowledge of the existing museum resources may assist in deciding where to lodge your collection.

The Colchester Museum - John Bowden's collection of Diptera

Following on from the obituary of John Bowden (pp 16-20, Bulletin No 76, Autumn 2013), I made a visit to the Colchester Museum Resource Centre, on 30 September and 1 October 2013, to assess the collection of Diptera that he had bequeathed to the museum in 2012. I am grateful to Sophie Stevens of the Colchester Museum for permitting me to examine this collection, and to her and to Nigel Cuming, a local volunteer who is arranging their Coleoptera collection, for assistance during my visit.

John Bowden's large world collection of bee-flies had been given to the Natural History Museum some years ago. His British collection, now at the Colchester Museum, is also substantial and presently remains in the boxes in which it had been received. It is intended to transfer their contents to cabinets, that it is hoped to acquire for this purpose. Arrangement would be according to the latest checklist when this work is carried out. It is proposed to maintain the collection as a separate entity and not to integrate it with material from other sources. There was already a Diptera collection at the museum, including specimens collected by the previous curator Jerry Bowdrey, but it is recognised that the Bowden collection is more comprehensive.

The Bowden Diptera collection is arranged in 40 store boxes of various sizes. There are representatives of most families of Diptera and in most of these the great majority of specimens had been named, i.e. they were placed above a name label in the box, but with no specimens bearing individual determination labels. In general this appeared to be with a good degree of accuracy, although some misidentifications were found in the families studied during my visit (Platypezidae and some of the fungus gnats).

Altogether there were 1589 named species, mostly British but including a few from Spain, Egypt and Kenya. These were distributed among major groups of Diptera as follows: Lower Diptera (Nematocera) 274, Lower ('Larger') Brachycera 76, Empidoidea 186, Aschiza 181, Acalyptratae 392, Calyptratae 480. The Lower Diptera were poorly represented. Best represented were the Lower Brachycera, Syrphidae (128), Anthomyiidae (131) and Muscidae (138) and there were long series of many species in these families.

The collection is important as a local resource, as it is predominantly from Essex, with the majority of local specimens labelled only as Colchester and collected in the period 1991 to 2006. It is believed that many of these were collected in John Bowden's garden, but this could not be confirmed in the absence of any supporting documentation. A few were stated to have been found indoors on windows or at light. Some specimens bore other local site names, Lexden Road, Hilly Fields and Sussex Road Spinney, and this particularly applied to sites of collection of fungi, from which rearing had taken place.

There was also some material from Hertfordshire, collected in the 1970s and 1980s when he was based at Rothamsted. Some of these were labelled Rothamsted or Harpenden, while many were from Geescroft, an area of deciduous woodland (oak and ash with holly understorey) that has developed on arable land abandoned in 1885. Specimens collected at Long Ashton, Somerset when he was there in 1964 were also included, but only a few were noted from the Bristol district from the period when he started to collect Diptera in the 1940s, e.g. *Bombylius major* and *B. discolor* from Hiatt Baker Gardens at Bristol University on 9 and 10 April 1945, and *B. discolor* from Blackhorse, Mangotsfield on 11 April of that year. The two species of Oestridae in the collection were from that period: *Oestrus ovis* reared from larvae in sheep nostrils at Bristol on 1 May 1945, and *Gasterophilus intestinalis*, two females collected at Wellsbridge near Bristol on 14 September 1943. Some bombyliids were from other collectors, including some early specimens: *Villa venusta* from Wareham Heath, 1 August 1917 (N.D.F. Pearce) and *Bombylius canescens* from Henbury, Bristol, 1 June 1903 (C. Bartlett).

John Bowden evidently collected most specimens himself, although he usually omitted his name from the labels, only writing JB on those of some earlier specimens. Those from Geescroft had been labelled in a different hand, possibly an assistant at Rothamsted. It was of particular interest to me that 13 of the 14 species of Platypezidae in the collection had been obtained at Geescroft, but only 9 from Colchester. Many of the fungus gnats in the collection had been reared from named fungi, although in some cases the identity of the fungus had been queried and it is assumed that John Bowden was responsible for all fungus identifications. Fungus gnats so far checked are mostly common species, but it is of interest that he had collected the Nationally Scarce species *Azana anomala* at Colchester on 5 occasions from 1996 to 2006; the geographically nearest records for it are pre-1990 from Herts and Cambs, while the only other post-1990 records are from Oxfordshire (Frilford Heath), North Yorkshire and Scotland.

Assistance with verification of identifications in this collection would be welcomed, and with the layout in cabinets when these have been obtained. Any input from local dipterists would be appreciated.

Diptera at Winchester

A visit was made on 13 December to view the Diptera collections of the Hampshire County Council Museum Service at Chilcomb House, Winchester, at the suggestion of. Stephen Miles, who has been assisting with the curation of their aculeate collection. The opportunity was taken to assess the present level of curation of the Diptera collection and its future needs. I am grateful to Christine Taylor, Keeper of Natural Sciences, for facilitating this visit and for assistance while I was there.

The nucleus of the collection is that of K.G. Blair (1882 - 1952), which I last saw at the Christchurch Museum in 1967; it was moved to the present site in 1969. Kenneth Gloyne Blair was primarily a coleopterist, employed at the Natural History Museum, and his Diptera were part of a collection largely formed following his retirement to Freshwater in the Isle of Wight. It was received tightly packed in small store boxes, mostly sorted to family but with varying degrees of identification to species level, and those families yet to be arranged in cabinets remain in this condition. More recently acquired collections are those of Ian Hudson and Simon Grove. Chris Palmer, who was responsible for the collections until his recent retirement, also added a large amount of material. Currently Richard Dickson is regularly donating Diptera material, which is being incorporated in the groups already laid out.

Chris Palmer had arranged some groups according to the 1998 checklist, incorporating specimens from all collectors in a single layout. This includes the following families, the number of identified species being indicated in brackets: Tipulidae (47), Pediciidae (7), some Limoniidae (19), Bibionidae (7), Lower Brachycera

(122), some Hybotidae (8) and Empididae (20), Dolichopodidae (125), Syrphidae (237), Pipunculidae (51), twelve of the smaller acalyptrate families (184, including 63 Tephritidae and 43 Sciomyzidae), Tachinidae (137), and to a limited extent other calyptrates (43). There are therefore just over 1,000 named species represented in the cabinets, forming an excellent reference collection of these families. The Tipulidae, Lower Brachycera, Syrphidae, Tephritidae and Tachinidae are particularly well represented, with good series of many species.

The above families are displayed to a high standard in plastozote-lined drawers housed in six modern 20-drawer metal cabinets. The Diptera collection has had two of these cabinets added over the last 18 months, and it is expected that further new cabinets will be obtained to enable the layout of other families to continue. Records of some families have been databased, and the drawers for which this has been completed are labelled accordingly. Families for which there are recording schemes that have been databased are Tephritidae and Sciomyzidae, and these records are available to those recording schemes if not already included. The standard of identification was generally good; a few corrections were made during my visit.

Apart from a few drawers of miscellaneous material awaiting identification, there remains in store boxes a considerable amount of specimens that await incorporation, including those of all families not included in the cabinet layout described above. Of 34 boxes, about half are entirely or mainly from the Blair collection, with smaller numbers from the other collectors mentioned above. There is a box each of Hippoboscidae and Ptychopteridae that are laid out ready for incorporation. There are single boxes containing specimens collected by A.F. Brazenor (1930s) and J.F. Marshall, and two boxes of mixed Diptera (mostly syrphids and Lower Brachycera) recently donated by Michael Salmon.

Without any curatorial staff now employed at the museum, there will be dependence on voluntary assistance. There is thus a great opportunity for work to be done by volunteers to further enhance the collection, which would ideally involve checking determinations. Databasing of the collection will continue, and making data available for recording schemes should also be a priority, as with other local museum collections.

Doros profuges [Darwyn Sumner]

Hampshire specimens predominate in the collection, but many other regions are represented. Chris Palmer and Ian Hudson had given a lot of attention to the New Forest and reared a number of saproxylic species, especially from Brinken Wood. The latter include *Ctenophora ornata*, *Systenus scholtzii*, 10 specimens of *Xylomya maculata* and 17 of *Mallota cimbiciformis*, which was otherwise represented only by two old Blair specimens from Wimbledon and Freshwater. Five specimens of *Doros profuges* are all from Oxenbourne Down. Blair's 1944 specimen of *Myennis octopunctata* from Thorndon Fen, Suffolk, is also there.

Peter Chandler

Digitising Museum Collections

Here's an interesting sequence of stories that tie together well, starting with an appeal:

Birmingham Museum of Natural History

Everyone will probably be pleased (and astonished!) to hear that the wildlife collections of the old Birmingham Museum of Natural History (including Diptera) are shortly going to be available for use again.

After many years of storage in different places (including beneath the Great Hall of Birmingham University) and later in the Museum store warehouse, the collections are being newly curated and preparations are being made to digitise information following some 16 years of neglect. There is a vast amount of work to be done, but the collections are in surprisingly good condition.

The details of the new Curator are given below:

Luanne Meehitiya luanne.meehitiya@birminghammuseums.org.uk
Natural Sciences Curator, Birmingham Museums Trust
Tel. 0121 202 2251 Twitter: Thinktank@thinktankmuseum
www.birminghammuseums.org.uk

We do need some more volunteers

Crowd-sourcing museum digitisation ?

Alan Stubbs sent me a link from **Entomology Today** which has an appeal from the Essig Museum of Entomology in California, they are using crowd-sourcing (remember the SETI project?) to help digitise their collections (it would take 100 years for their current staff to do the job), take a look at http://entomologytoday.org/2013/12/16/now-you-can-help-digitize-insect-collections-from-your-own-home/ Have a go at transcribing a record yourself, it's pretty straightforward.

Thinking that maybe this is an idea that could be used by UK museums too, I contacted Teresa Frost (Cumbria LRC manager, a colleague of Steve Hewitt at Tullie House and key presenter at a recent Linnaean Society plenary "**The Role of Museums and Collections in Biological Recording**"):

"*I get the impression this is a bit of a hot topic and I believe this idea was discussed at a meeting at NHM last week that Steve went to. It is starting to happen here – have you seen Herbarium at Home?* http://herbariaunited.org/atHome/"

Teresa also tells me that NHM are considering it too, the following news item "**People power helps turn historic collection digital**" http://www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/news/2013/november/people-power-helps-turn-historic-collection-digital125721.html gives an introduction to the project and the pdf "**No Specimen Left Behind**" at http://vsmith.info/files/NSLB%20poster%20A0%20FOR%20PRINT%20%281%29_0.pdf explains how it is all done (**SaTScan**), the authors mix up "draw" and "drawer" we hope that the volunteer digitisers make less errors. The NHM are concentrating on Butterflies in their pilot, so the question for us now is how to get started with Diptera.

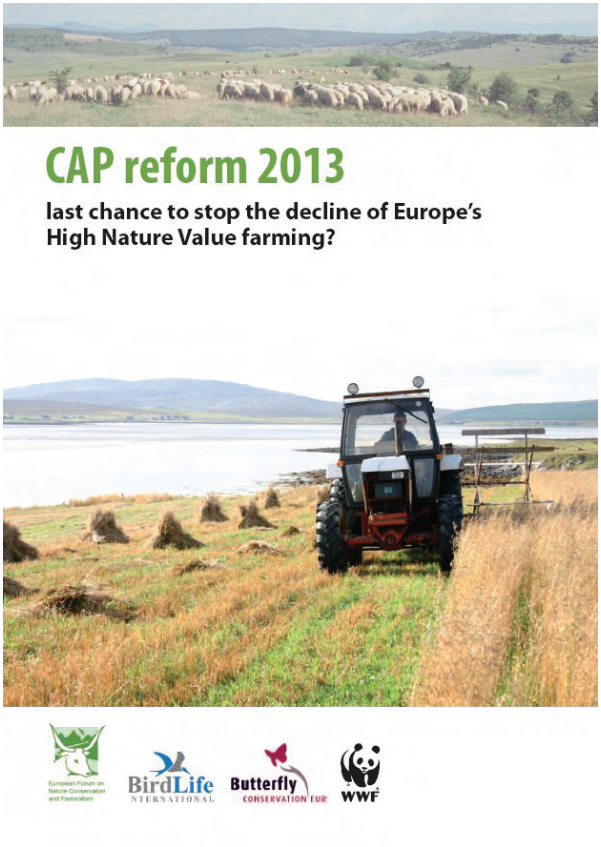
Darwyn Sumner

Conservation

News from the Conservation officer

Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy

The CAP is the most significant influence on how EU farmland is managed, so the current reform process has the potential to have a considerable impact on the wildlife of the British countryside. In summer 2013 the EU agreed the framework for the reform, and Defra held a public consultation in November on how it should be delivered in England. I assume that similar consultations were held in other UK countries, but do not have details of these.



The reform has two major elements: the greening of direct payments (currently delivered under the Single Payment Scheme), and the content of each country's Rural Development Plan (RDP).

Greening of direct payments is about strengthening the environmental conditions attached to main subsidy that farmers receive. Currently, these are set out in a set of rules known as cross-compliance. Under the reformed CAP, ministers in England are minded to do the minimum possible towards greening – amounting merely to arable farmers having to diversify their crops slightly, to keeping a lid on overall loss of permanent pasture, and, again on arable land, to retaining (not necessarily managing) existing landscape features such as hedges. The last point, retaining existing landscape features, will meet three fifths of the EU's greening requirement that arable farmers should manage 5% of their land as 'Ecological Focus Areas'. The remaining EFA requirement can be met by having features such as buffer strips, fallow land, short-rotation coppice or (strangely) nitrogen-fixing crops. Since cross-compliance rules (which will be retained) already protect landscape features, and most arable farms will already have sufficient buffer strips etc., greening is unlikely to deliver any significant benefits for wildlife, at least in England. Across the Channel and Irish Sea, however, it may have a major impact. Both north and south of the political boundary that divides Ireland, hedges, for example, continue to be removed rapidly, and the same is true over much of Europe – notably in France. These countries do not have nearly as rigorous cross compliance rules protecting landscape features as we do in England, Wales and Scotland, so greening measures must surely improve their conservation.

The one positive element of greening in England is that government is keen to promote measures that will enhance survival of pollinators. As I write (December) it remains to be seen whether any specific measures will be taken in this respect, beyond simply retaining hedges, buffer strips and fields of legumes. Our challenge is to ensure that flies are recognised as important pollinators alongside bees.

The real gains to be had are under the England RDP, which includes agri-environment schemes (e.g. the successor to Environmental Stewardship (ES)). Here the proposal is to transfer the maximum amount of *additional* money possible from the direct payment budget (the so called Pillar 1) to the RDP (Pillar 2). Government is proposing to transfer the full amount allowable, 15% of Pillar 1 money. This is positive, although it remains to be seen whether it will result in the successor to ES having a larger budget, given that overall CAP spending is being reduced.

The ES successor scheme is currently referred to as NELMS (New Environmental Land Management Scheme), and is being developed by Defra and Natural England. The primary objectives will be biodiversity and water quality. New agreements under the scheme will start on 1 Jan 2016, and will last for just 5 years. The proposal is to have a single scheme (not the two tiered Entry Level-Higher Level scheme we currently have), and for this to be more closely targeted than before. There will be no overall land cover target: whereas about 70% of farmland is currently under ES, in future this is likely to be much less. It is probable that resources will be focussed on those areas which already have high levels of biodiversity, to maintain and enhance these. Landscape scale clusters of agreements will be favoured.

While those invertebrates that are specialists on scarce habitats will potentially benefit from improved management under this scheme because of the tighter focussing of available resources, wider countryside species must surely be placed at greater risk. Large chunks of landscape may not be eligible for any grant aid at all. There is just a suggestion that a capital grant scheme could be introduced for these "white" spaces. This could cover work such as hedge or pond restoration. Let us hope that this becomes a reality, otherwise it will seem as if the wildlife of most of the countryside, especially of our most productive land for growing food, is effectively being abandoned.

Biodiversity offsetting

Another Defra consultation held last autumn was over the content and introduction of what is known as biodiversity offsetting. This is an idea from the USA and other countries where developers must compensate any loss of wildlife habitat through the creation of new habitat elsewhere, so there is no net loss. The principle remains that developers and planning authorities should first try and avoid or mitigate any on-site loss, offsetting only coming into play where such loss is unavoidable. Each habitat area to be lost is assigned a value (or metric) according to its quality and local distinctiveness, and the developer must then create or restore an area of habitat elsewhere of at least equivalent value.

The concept is a good one, since at present there is rarely any onus or mechanism for developers to make good any habitat lost other

than for top-quality nature conservation sites. However, some conservation bodies are worried that developers and planners will use it as an excuse not to first try to avoid or mitigate any on-site loss. If offsetting is agreed, then regulators and non-governmental organisations will need to keep a very careful eye on this. However, surely the potential improvement to the current situation makes it worth supporting the idea in general, while pressing for appropriate safeguards.

Ecological expertise among planners

Darwyn has drawn my attention to a report just produced by the Association for Local Government Ecologists, looking at the levels of ecological competence and capacity within planning authorities in England. This makes it clear that resources are stretched very thin indeed. Only one third of authorities have in-house ecologists, and some 90% of planners have only basic relevant skills. Given the considerable wildlife conservation responsibilities and duties held by planning authorities, this is worrying. Government and local authorities must allocate more resources in this area, especially if biodiversity offsetting arrives.

My apologies for this conservation news being so focussed on England. I would very much welcome information from other UK countries – please do draw my attention to relevant reports and so forth.

UK BAP & **Adopt a species**

Clusiodes geomyzinus

Graham Rotheray and Geoffrey Wilkinson have published a paper assessing the status and distribution of this fly, the pine heartwood clusiid, in the most recent edition of Dipterists Digest (vol. 20 (2), pp. 135-139). Alarmingly, exhaustive searches for the distinctive puparium from 2000 onwards, and particularly in 2012, found evidence of survival at only one historical site, in Strathspey. This suggests that the species has declined since the 1980s, when it was known from several sites. Graham and Geoffrey are at a loss to explain this decline since there appears to be plenty of suitable habitat, and stress the need for further research to better understand the habitat preferences and distribution of the fly in Scotland.

Dolichopus laticola and *Dolichopus nigripes*

Also in the most recent edition of the Digest, Martin Drake has published a paper on the distribution and abundance of these two Section 41 (the new and far less catchy name from UK BAP species in England) long-legged flies (Vol. 20 (2), pp 191-199). Martin has previously summarised his findings in the Bulletin, so I won't repeat them here. In his DD paper, he notes that for *D. laticola* at least geographic barriers which appear trivial may limit the distribution of the fly, such as just a kilometre of unfavourable habitat. This demonstrates how important habitat connectivity may be for the conservation of many rare flies.

Stratiomys chameleon, Odontomyia angulata and Triogma trisulcata

I am delighted to say that Judy Webb has offered to adopt these three further flies, all from Oxfordshire fens: the clubbed general soldierfly *Stratiomys chameleon* (RDB1), the orange-horned green colonel *Odontomyia angulata* (RDB1), and a damsel cranefly *Triogma trisulcata* (RDB 3). This cranefly, a member of the Cylindrotomatidae, has as yet no common name but Judy proposes the 'Dimple-cheeked Damsel'. She says it is a small brown inconspicuous cranefly with a head covered by pock/dimple marks, out in early spring. These three species are in addition to *Milichia ludens*, previously adopted by Judy.

Judy writes: *"I am working closely with Natural England and Oxford City Council locally to provide advice and practical voluntary work to help restore the alkaline calcareous valley-head spring-fens here in Oxfordshire to good condition. I have applied to NE for permission to remove a bucket of mud containing* S. chameleon *larvae from a good shallow proven breeding pool in Parsonage Moor, Cothill fen SSSI/SAC, and deposit that mud in appropriate restored shallow pools in Lye Valley SSSI fen in Oxford city. Historically Lye Valley fen (known in the past as Hogley bog, Ogley bog, Hockley in ye Hole) used to have* S. chameleon *(there are specimens in the Oxford University Museum) but it was lost after 1920, probably due to dense reed and scrub invasion. This growth has now been removed and rare plants such as marsh helleborine, grass of Parnassus, marsh lousewort and bog pimpernel are showing vast increases in numbers. There are good tufa-forming springs and shallow warm marly pools which already have* Stratiomys potamida *and* S. singularior, *associates of* S. chameleon *at Cothill. Oxford is too far from Cothill to expect this species to fly there on its own."*

"Also I am involved in voluntary monitoring the quality of water entering the Cothill fens – over the last year I have gathered evidence of significant amounts of nitrate entering these fens from adjacent arable fields (barley and maize on sandy, leaky soils). These fens are both an SSSI and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the habitat is at risk from anything other than the lowest of the low nitrate level emerging from the springs. In some areas, nitrate is stimulating filamentous algae which are overgrowing and eliminating the stoneworts and tufa- forming bryophyte carpets that the soldierflies and Triogma *need. The Environment Agency is also involved in monitoring water quality and liaising with farmers to improve agricultural practice nearby. As I write (December), I'm off to collect some more water samples: midwinter is a good time to do this. I have a chemist/hydrologist friend who very kindly has analysed a few samples for free for me."*

O. angulata m reared Cothill fen 14.05.2012 [Judy Webb]

O. angulata larva Cothill fen 18.04.2012 [Judy Webb]

Milichia ludens

Judy reports that this fly is still on the site where she originally recorded it in Oxford City which is good news. Despite the destruction of the original nest tree, the jet ants must have moved operations to an adjacent decaying Lombardy poplar, because she caught one *Milichia* there last spring.

Information on UK BAP species

Steven Falk has been placing basic information for these species (i.e. S41 species in England, S42 in Wales and those on the Scottish and Northern Ireland Biodiversity Lists) and their habitats on his excellent Flickr site.

Steven writes: *"If people would like to help increase the coverage of flies (new species, new photos, especially of habitats/key sites) that would be great, image copyright not affected. It's just about creating a simple, easily updatable, one-stop shop for information. All those sets have species accounts, just hover your cursor near the top and the account will appear with hyperlinks to other web sites e.g. JNCC datasheets."*

You can find sets for about 40 species of threatened invertebrates, including ten flies here on the Flicker site. Simply search for Steven Falk Flickr Collections – the UK BAP sets are in the first collection on the page. The photographs of both insects and their habitats are brilliant and the species notes helpful – I can thoroughly recommend them.

Rob Wolton

[*Once you've got Steve's Flickr site open, go to the three dots ... on the right hand side of the site's toolbar, click it to reveal a drop-down list, select Collections - ed*]

Reliquantha variipes – a new genus and species of fungus-associated anthomyzid from Britain

Anthomyzidae mainly develop in herbaceous plants and until recently only the genus *Fungomyza*, with a single British species *F. albimana*, was known to develop in fungus fruiting bodies. The monograph on the Palaearctic species by Jindřich Roháček (2009) referred to a single female in the collection of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, apparently of a different species, that had been found on a bracket fungus on elm at Oxford by George Varley on 15 July 1975. This had been provisionally considered to belong to *Fungomyza*, supported by its habitat association. But a puzzling male anthomyzid that I had found at Oxwich Wood on the Gower Peninsula on 5 July 2009, during the summer field meeting held at Swansea University, has proved to be the previously unknown male of the Oxford female.

The Oxwich specimen was at the time of collection identified as *Fungomyza*, although it differed most obviously in having brown preapical bands on the mid and hind femora, while *F. albimana* only has dark markings on the fore legs. The presence of leg markings distinguish both species from other British Anthomyzidae, which have entirely yellow legs. This Welsh specimen also lacked the erect ctenidial spine on the fore femur that is characteristic of many Anthomyzidae, including *Fungomyza*.

Male of *Reliquantha variipes* (note preapical brown bands on femora)

The paper describing this new species (Roháček 2013) came just too late to be cited in checklist changes in Volume 20 Part 2 of *Dipterists Digest*. The paper includes the photograph reproduced here of the male from Oxwich Wood, taken before it was dismembered to enable its diagnostic features to be studied. Study of the structural characters, including the genitalia, of both sexes showed that it had a unique combination of primitive and derived characters otherwise unknown in the Anthomyzidae, which led to it being assigned to a newly described genus *Reliquantha* as *R. variipes* Roháček, 2013. Similarities to the Baltic amber fossil

genus *Lacrimyza* suggested that it might represent an otherwise extinct Tertiary clade of the subfamily Anthomyzinae. The Oxwich Wood specimen has been designated as holotype and has also been deposited in the Oxford University Museum of Natural History.

Oxwich Wood is an ash and sycamore woodland on limestone, with many large old trees, and is situated on a steep slope overlooking Oxwich Bay on the Gower Peninsula of South Wales. The precise location at which the male was caught in Oxwich Wood was not recorded, as it wasn't recognised in the field. However, I did on that occasion record a number of drosophilids that were numerous around a decaying colony of the soft bracket fungus *Polyporus squamosus*, and that may have been where the anthomyzid was found. Certainly *F. albimana* is most often caught hovering over fungi and has been recorded visiting *Polyporus* as well as several genera of both terrestrial and lignicolous agarics. It has been reared in Britain from a *Boletus* species, and elsewhere in Europe from *Macrolepiota, Paxillus* and *Russula*.

The reference in the Dipterist's Handbook (p. 438) to *F*. sp. from bracket fungus on elm refers to the Varley record of *R. variipes*. When that record was made less importance may have been attached to the identity of fungus species on which insects were recorded, so there is no indication whether the fungus concerned was *P. squamosus* or some bracket of tougher texture. Roháček (2013) provides the information that it may have been collected during George Varley's study of elms affected by Dutch Elm Disease.

When the significance of the Oxwich Wood specimen became apparent, I made two visits to this site in 2013, on 19 June and 22 July, to investigate possible habitat associations. On the first visit the only fungus noted was the oyster mushroom *Pleurotus cornucopiae*, growing on a decayed fallen trunk. This was attracting numerous *Hirtodrosophila trivittata*, a recent addition to the British drosophilid list that is particularly associated with oyster mushrooms, which has spread widely in southern England and has now evidently reached South Wales. On the second visit some young growth of *Polyporus squamosus* was found on one stump. The fungus gnat *Mycetophila cingulum*, which specialises in this fungus, was recorded but it was too fresh to be attracting any other insects. An interesting find on 22 July was the rare fungus gnat *Manota unifurcata*, which Ivan Perry had found at Nicholaston Wood on the opposing side of Oxwich Bay, on 9 July 1994 (see Fungus Gnat Recording Scheme newsletter included in this Bulletin for more information on this species).

Further visits to Oxwich Wood in 2013 were not practicable. However, it seems possible that a species otherwise only known from Oxford might turn up anywhere in southern Britain. It is to be hoped that there will be further records of this species now that its existence has become known, and that its biology will be elucidated. If fresh material becomes available some specimens could be used for molecular analysis, which would be important for investigation of the relationships of the basal lineages of Anthomyzidae.

I am grateful to Jindřich Roháček for comments and for supplying the photograph of the fly.

References

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Peter Chandler

Photography

I've been working with iMatch5 for a while now, if I'd know what a huge task the scanning of some 8,000 transparencies from my pre-digital days was going to be I probably wouldn't have started it but they're all nicely organised complete with sequential filenames, dates, locations and copyright stuff and I even have a lot of them assigned to categories. They're only rough scans, I'll use iMatch to select out the ones I want in good quality and try to use my copying stand, macro lens and a nice little lightbox to attempt better quality copies - oh and maybe a bit of work with an air duster wouldn't go amiss either.

I've also made an attempt to work on the various pictures that have been sent to me for use in the Bulletin. I still have a handful I've not used from Alan Outen, Paul Brock, Adrian Plant, Ian Andrews and others. The one thing I noticed about these pictures, and I hope they'll forgive me for criticising in any way, is that they are pretty much short of any copyright stuff in the metadata. I've tried to add it retrospectively but some of the files are read-only.

So a proposed New Year resolution to all you photographers would be to check through the software you use to download pictures from your camera (and the camera itself) to make sure your name is firmly stamped on every picture you take. Not only does this protect you from legalised theft (see last Bulletin) but it helps me know the who (what, when and where too if you start using iMatch) of material kindly sent for use in the Bulletin.

I'm on the hunt for pictures of all the BAP species now, so that I can pop in at least a couple of illustrations to Rob Wolton's compilations every time. I'd perhaps use Steve Falk's material but I'll have to beg them from him as you can't download directly from Flickr.

Meeting pictures

Adrian Plant has organised his Dipterists Forum meeting photographs and uploaded them to Picassa pages at https://picasaweb.google.com/109302321292967633385/DipteristsForumMeetings

Spanish Bugs

Gallery at http://www.getwoodworking.com/albums/member_album.asp?a=30051

Members

Membership Matters

By end of December 2013 we had 466 people registered with Dipterists Forum and 400 who also take the Dipterists Digest. 405 have resubscribed or joined for the first time in 2013, leaving 61 people who have not renewed their subscription since 2012.

As a matter of course we send out the Spring Bulletin to all people who had subscribed the previous year but thereafter will not send out further Bulletins or any Dipterists Digests until subscriptions are up to date. Chasing late payers is very time consuming so I do urge you to check that you are up to date. I am happy to answer e-mails on membership queries.

All subscriptions, changes of address and membership queries should be directed to John Showers at:

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Rothwell,
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Tel.: 01536 710831
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Membership & Subscription Rates for 2014

Members and Subscribers are reminded that subscriptions are due on 1st January each year. The rates are as follows:

UK

Dipterists Forum: £8 per annum. This includes the Bulletin of the Dipterists Forum.

Dipterists Digest: £12 per annum.

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Dipterists Forum and Dipterist Digest: £25 pa.

There is only this one class of membership. Payment must be made in Pounds Sterling.

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Alternatively you can send your bank the banker's order mandate form, which can be found on the DF website. This form explicitly states that it cancels previous payments to Dipterists Forum.

I have received very few changes to Banker's Orders ready for the new account and subscription rates. Also a number of new mandates were sent to me immediately before or after Christmas and, although I forwarded them immediately to the bank, the chances are that the bank will not have had time to process them before the 2nd January payment run is made. This means that there may be many members who have paid at the old rate and to the old bank account. Please check your payment from the bank and if it is at the old rate, amend the banker's order as above and arrange to pay the balance either as a one-off credit transfer or by cheque to me.

John Showers

Obituary

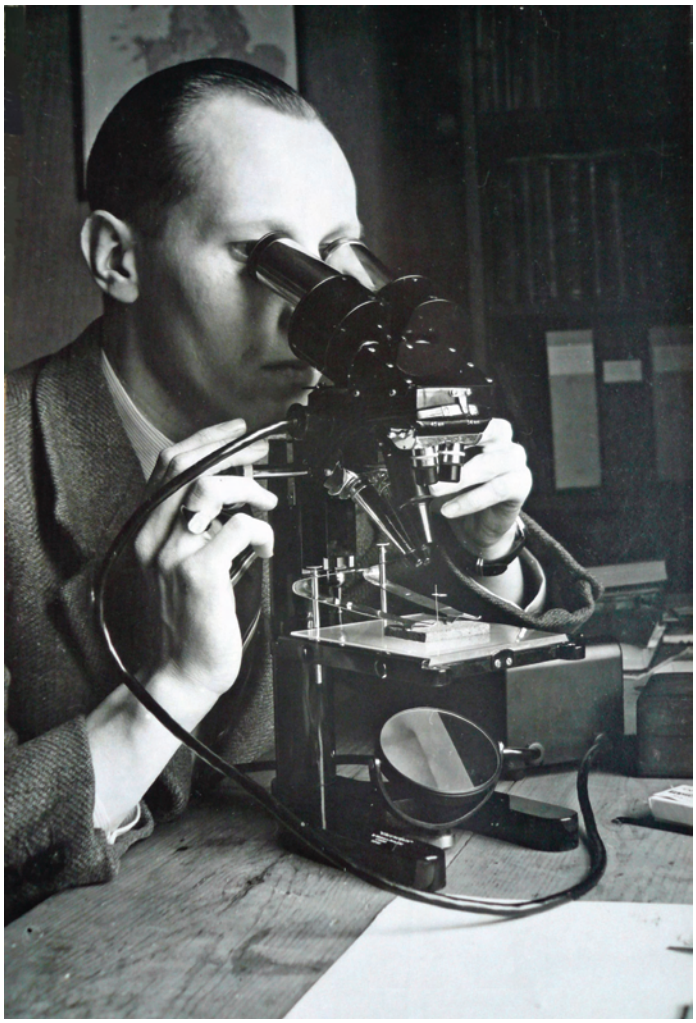
Leonard Nixon Kidd (1920 - 2013)

We recently learned of the death on 3 November 2013 of Leonard Kidd, an active dipterist from the 1950s until the early 1980s, while he was employed at the Werneth Park Study Centre & Natural History Museum, Oldham. He collaborated with Alan Brindle of the Manchester University Museum on the Diptera list for Lancashire and Cheshire, with Mike Fitton on a detailed study of the natural history of Holden Clough, Lancashire and with Tony Hutson and Michael Ackland on part 1 of the Royal Entomological Society Handbook on fungus gnats. He was therefore well-known to those of us who took up the study of Diptera during that period. Following retirement he concentrated more on local and family history studies, limiting any further interest in Diptera, and he did not become a member of Dipterists Forum.

Leonard Nixon Kidd was born on 26 January 1920 at Crewe, Cheshire, where his father managed a jeweller's shop. In 1931 the family moved to Manchester and in 1934 to Oldham, where his father was departmental manager and buyer for the Oldham Industrial Co-operative Society's Jewellery Department. Following Leonard's marriage in 1958 to Dorothy Mary Wood, they lived in her home village of Greenfield, West Yorkshire, to the east of Oldham.

From an early age Leonard had been fascinated by plants and animals, had studied biology, and was connected with various natural history societies. In 1948 he was successful in obtaining the post of Assistant-in-Charge of Werneth Park Study Centre & Natural History Museum, Oldham, where he remained for 33 years until his retirement in 1981. Here he was responsible for the routine museum work of organising public displays and lecturing to various organisations and schools. While he had an interest in natural history generally, he began to devote more of his research time to the study of insects, especially to Diptera. He was encouraged in taking up this study by Douglas Hincks, who supplied him with many papers on Diptera and other insects. In 1949 he became a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society of London and in 1951 a Fellow of the Linnean Society.

The list of his publications provided here shows that his interests in Diptera were wide, with notes on Rhagionidae, Syrphidae and several acalyptrate families. My first correspondence with him in 1967 related to his study of the recognition that there were two species in the sciomyzid genus *Limnia* (1967a, 1969c). Some of his earlier papers (1953a, 1954e) showed a particular interest in craneflies, on which he concentrated his collecting for several years, and he was responsible for the Nematocera part of the Diptera of Lancashire and Cheshire, produced with Alan Brindle (1959, supplements 1964, 1971b). During the 1950s he became interested in fungus gnats; describing a new species *Mycomya britteni* in 1955 may have stimulated this interest, and he was able to boost the local records of this group in the subsequent county lists. In 1959 Ralph Coe, of the Natural History Museum, acknowledged his expertise by offering him the opportunity to work on the fungus gnats that he had collected in the former Yugoslavia.



There was a series of further notes and papers on fungus gnats in the 1960s and 1970s (1962, 1966b, 1969a, 1969d, 1970a, 1970b, 1971, 1974, 1975b, 1975c). Some of these were in collaboration with Michael Ackland or Tony Hutson, and a study of the *Mycetophila ruficollis* group (1975b) was with the Czech fungus gnat specialist Petr Laštovka, who had previously revised the European species of this group.

In 1967 he discussed with Michael Ackland, then at the Hope Department of Entomology at Oxford University Museum, the possibility of preparing a handbook on the British fungus gnats, for which Michael would contribute the illustrations. During a visit to Oxford by Leonard in that year they collected together at Wytham Wood. Leonard then studied Michael's fungus gnat material collected in Scotland, and their joint papers (1969a, 1970a, 1970b) followed. In 1969 Tony Hutson, then at the Natural History Museum, also became involved in the proposed handbook and some joint papers (1971d, 1974c, 1975c) appeared in preparation for this. The keys were carried through to fruition by Tony, who became the lead author. It was originally proposed to include the entire group in a single handbook. However, in view of the number of unresolved taxonomic problems in the subfamily Mycetophilinae, it was decided to produce the first of two parts dealing with the 203 species of the smaller subfamilies (some of which have since been raised to family rank). This was published in 1980, coinciding with Leonard's imminent retirement. My correspondence with him continued until 1995, when he wrote that he was pleased to hear that research on fungus gnats was progressing well.

Leonard's studies of fungus gnats resulted in the addition of a number of species to the British list and the description of two further species new to science, *Synplasta ingeniosa* (Kidd, 1969) (described in *Allodiopsis*) and *Mycetophila britannica* Laštovka & Kidd, 1975. Some new species of Mycetophilinae, that he recognised as distinct in collections, were described subsequently by others, and in 1991 I named one of these as *Zygomyia kiddi*. He noticed this from the report on additions to the British list that then appeared in *Antenna*, and wrote to thank me for honouring him in this way. Another of these, *Brevicornu rosmellitum*, that he recognised as new in the Oxford University Museum collection, remains known as British only from the type specimens collected by Jim Brock at Waterperry Wood in 1968.

During his time at the Oldham museum, he also produced in 1977 a small book on *Oldham's Natural History* for the Libraries and Museums Department. The illustrations for this work were prepared by David McRae, an illustrator employed at the museum, who became a bat recorder on retiring to Scotland in the 1990s, but sadly died from rabies following a bite he sustained whilst handling a bat. In 1971 Leonard was joint editor with Mike Fitton of *Holden Clough: The Natural History of a Small Lancashire Valley*, for which he wrote several chapters, including that on Diptera. Alan Stubbs (pers. comm.) highlighted the importance of this publication as the most comprehensive survey of the fly fauna of this regional habitat (clough = steep sided wooded valley)

Leonard was an active member of the Oldham Natural History Society and, always interested in conservation, he helped found the Medlock and Tame Valley Conservation Association in 1971. He chaired the inaugural meeting and, over the subsequent 15 years, served as president, chairman, vice-chairman and committee member of this local group. They have acknowledged the contribution brought to them by his extensive knowledge of the local fauna and flora. The accompanying photograph shows him in 1996 with a plaque commemorating 25 years of this association.

Leonard Kidd's collection was donated in 1989 to the Liverpool Museum, who also acquired his entomological.library at the same time. The collection comprised 12,000 specimens, of which 3,000 were fungus gnats and 1,500 other Diptera; the remainder was made up by 1,500 Lepidoptera, 5,000 Coleoptera and 1,000 Trichoptera, Heteroptera and spiders (the latter in spirit). It was noted at the time that it contained vouchers for many published records. The Diptera are currently being curated by Richard Underwood, who visited Leonard in recent years to discuss this work. Patricia Francis, now of the Oldham Museum, who had also visited him, has commented that his house was in an exposed position, with a magnificent view towards Dovestones. He related to Geoff

Hancock that when leaving his garage door open it acted like a Malaise trap and caught many interesting insects.

The accompanying list of his publications here concludes in 1982, but following retirement he concentrated on genealogical studies, and continued to publish until 2004 a series of articles on local and family history, several concerning the Saddleworth area. In 1997 he produced, with W.F. Edwards, *A Flora of Saddleworth* for private circulation. His involvement in family history resulted in meeting many new friends and previously unknown relatives, several of whom shared his great love of music. His family bought him his first computer for his 80th birthday, and he spent many hours searching the internet in his family history quest and for many other facts and information. His computer was later adapted to compensate for his failing eyesight. His latest work was a 263 page account of his mother's Nixon family, produced for private circulation in 2004, in collaboration with Millicent Nixon. Other interests included keeping aquaria, an aviary, and several hives of bees including an observation hive, during his museum days.

Leonard's wife Dorothy died in 2005. He is survived by their two sons Malcolm and Jonathan, four grandchildren and his two cats Gracie and Luna. I am grateful to Malcolm Kidd for supplying biographical information, the photographs of his father shown here and the list of publications that appears below. I am also grateful to Michael Ackland, Tony Hutson, Geoff Hancock, Richard Underwood and Patricia Francis for their reminiscences of Leonard Kidd, and to Stephen Judd for supplying information on the composition of Leonard's collection.

Peter Chandler

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1953a. Some Records of Northern Tipulidae with special reference to those occurring in the Oldham District. *Annual Reports of the Manchester Entomological Society* 1941-1951, pp. 26-32.

1953b. Notes on some Winter Diptera from Lancashire, Cheshire and Derbyshire. *Journal of the Society for British Entomology* **4:** 136-137.

1953c. Some West Cheshire Diptera, with an appendix on a new species of *Clusiaria* (Diptera, Clusiidae) by J. E. Collin. *Journal of the Society for British Entomology* **4:** 137-139.

1954a. *Aeshna grandis* (L.) preying upon *Apis mellifera* L. *Entomologist* **87:** 148.

1954b. *Scoliocentra villosa* (Meigen) (Dipt., Helomyzidae) and *Trichocera maculipennis* Meigen (Dipt., Trichoceridae) taken in Derbyshire caves. *Journal of the Society for British Entomology* **5:** 87-88.

1954c. *Capsus wagneri* Remane (Hem., Miridae) at Askham Bog, Yorkshire. *Entomologist's monthly Magazine* **90:** 172.

1954d. *Geomyza apicalis* (Meigen) (Dipt., Opomyzidae) in Derbyshire. *Entomologist's monthly Magazine* **90:** 240.

1954e. Notes on some Derbyshire Craneflies. *Journal of the Society for British Entomology* **5:** 86-87.

1955a. A Reinstatement of *Rhagio strigosa* (Meigen) (Dipt., Rhagionidae) as a British species. *Entomologist's monthly Magazine* **91:** 137.

1955b. A new species of *Mycomyia* (Dipt., Mycetophilidae) taken in Cumberland. *Entomologist's monthly Magazine* **91:** 258.

1956a. Notes on some Alien Plants of the Oldham area. *The Naturalist* **1956:** 132.

1956b. *Craspedacusta sowerbyi* Lankester and its Hydroid *Microhydra ryderi* Potts in Lancashire. *The Naturalist* **1956:** 139-140.

1957. Some Craneflies (Dipt., Tipulidae) of a Lancashire clough, including several new County records. *The Naturalist* **1957:** 101-102.

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1967a. A note on *Limnia paludicola* Elberg (Dipt., Sciomyzidae) with a comment by Mr. J. E. Collin. *Entomologist's Record & Journal of Variation* **79:** 22.

1967b. *Ostearius melanopygius* (O.P.-C.) as a household Pest. *Bull. No. 36 Brit Spider Study Group* p. 4.

1968. Holden Clough Nature Reserve. *Strix* No. 1. *Quarterly Bulletin Of the Oldham Public Libraries, Art Gallery and Museum.*

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1969b. A Stroll in Holden Clough *Strix* No. 2. *Quarterly Bulletin Of the Oldham Public Libraries, Art Gallery and Museum.*

1969c. A further note on *Limnia paludicola* Elberg (Dipt., Sciomyzidae). *Entomologist's Record & Journal of Variation* **81:** 176-177.

1969d. A new species of *Allodiopsis* Tuom. (Dipt., Mycetophilidae) taken in Berkshire. *Entomologist* **102:** 201-202.

1970a. *Mycetophila bohemica* Laštovka and *Dynatosoma nigromaculatum* Lundstroem new to Britain, and notes on other little known fungus gnats (Dipt., Mycetophilidae). *Entomologist* **103:** 10-17 [Kidd, L.N. & Ackland, D.M.].

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1971d. Notes on British Bolitophilinae including three species new to Britain (Dipt., Mycetophilidae) *Entomologist* **104:** 219-226 [Hutson, A.M. & Kidd, L.N.].

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1974a. *Medlock Valley Nature Trail* [edited anonymously from notes supplied by D. Hallett, H. Hodson, and L. N. Kidd]. 20 pp. Medlock & Tame Valley Conservation Committee.

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1974c. Notes on British *Bolitophila*, *Diadocidia* and *Macrocera* (Diptera, Mycetophilidae). *Entomologist's monthly Magazine* **110:** 27-39 [Hutson, A.M. & Kidd, L.N.].

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1975b. Review of the British and notes on other species of the *Mycetophila ruficollis*-group, with the description of a new species (Dipt., Mycetophilidae). *Entomologist's monthly Magazine* **110**(1974)**:** 203-214 [Laštovka, P. & Kidd, L.N.].

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J. Mike Nelson (1932 – 2012)

Rather belatedly I have learnt that J.M. Nelson of Edinburgh, invariably known to his friends in entomology as Mike, died on 7 September 2012, at the age of 79, after an 11 year struggle with vascular dementia.

He joined the Nature Conservancy, based at Merlewood, Grange-over-Sands in the late 1950s, then moved to their Moor House Field Station, near Alston (1961 – 1968) before spending the latter half of his career based at Hope Terrace, Edinburgh. Employed as an Invertebrate Zoologist, his early publications from 1958 – 1984 (some 21 articles) ranged widely with many faunal lists, as well as specialist papers on aculeate Hymenoptera, Ephemeroptera, Trichoptera, Coleoptera, Collembola, Arachnida, millipedes and mites, and occasionally Diptera. However, careful perusal of his faunal lists reveal a slight bias towards Diptera and by 1980 this bias had become more pronounced.

Maybe it was his apparent discovery of the scathophagid *Scoliaphleps ustulata* (Zett.) new to Britain in 1965, only to find he had apparently misidentified *S. hyalinipennis* Ringdahl (he identified the true *ustulata* as new to Britain in 1992! – however, František Šifner has more recently decided that these species are conspecific) or his discovery of the scathophagid *Conisternum tinctinerve* Becker, new to Britain, at Beanrigg Moss, Roxburghshire in 1972, that led him to abandon the Anthomyiidae, in which he was just becoming proficient, in favour of the Scathophagidae. A study of the prestomal teeth in adult Scathophagidae (1988) heralded the start of 15 years work unlocking the biology of the Dung-flies. One by one, first *Ernoneura argus* (Zett.) (in 1989), then *Parallelomma* species (in 1990), *Acanthocnema glaucescens* (Loew) (in 1992), *Cordilura* (*Scoliaphleps* treated as a subgenus) *ustulata* & *C. hyalinipennis* (in 1992), *Trichopalpus fraternus* (Meigen) (in 1995), *Cordilura similis* Siebke (in 1998), the stranded seaweed species (in 1998), *Norellisoma flavicorne* (Meigen) (in 2000), and *Scathophaga tinctinervis* (Becker) (in 2000) received his attention.

Interspersed with these biological studies he was doing collaborative work with overseas colleagues in Spain (with Javier Blasco Zumeta, 1993), in Norway (with Lita Greve, 1997, 1999 & 2002) and in the Czech Republic (with František Šifner, 2000). This latter colleague named a new Czech species of Scathophagidae, *Conisternum nelsoni* Šifner, 2003, in recognition of Mike's contribution to the study of the Scathophagidae.

Always dogged by ill-health, his joint checklist of Norwegian Scathophagidae with Lita Greve in 2002 brought to a close his entomological investigations and his final struggle with his health became all consuming. I am indebted to his wife Nancy for additional information. A full list of his publications is given below. His insect material has been incorporated into the collections of the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Keith Bland, 35 Charterhall Road, Edinburgh, EH9 3HS & Valbland728@btinternet.com.

Entomological publications by Mike Nelson [where there is co-authorship this is listed in square brackets after the citation; otherwise they were single authored]

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Review

Internet

Blog: Biodiversity in Focus

Read about the weevil that mimics a Sarcophagid at http://www.biodiversityinfocus.com/blog/2012/08/09/new-species-wants-you-to-see-no-weevil/

Blog: Buglife

Matt Shardlow has started a blog at http://www.buglife.org.uk/blog/matt-shardlow-ceo/welcome-my-blog-matt-shardlow - he aims to entertain

Books

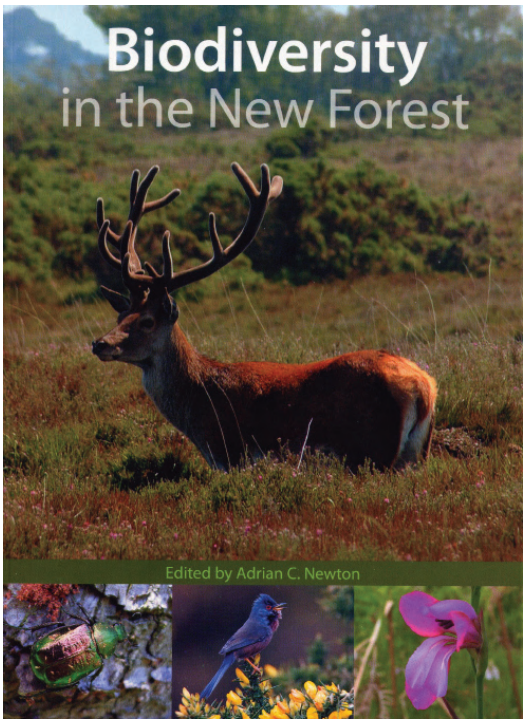
Diptera larvae (aquatic)

Michael Dobson
Diptera Larvae - Review and Key to European Families
ISSN: 1755-084x
Freshwater Biological Association
List price £15
https://www.fba.org.uk/shop/product_info.php/products_id/115

At the BENHS Exhibition I mentioned to Peter Chandler that a new key to aquatic Diptera larvae has been published by the Freshwater Biological Association. This is by Mike Dobson who until recently was the Director of the FBA and I remember Mike came to the Dipterist's Day at Manchester Museum a few years ago. Mike claims this is a new key and it avoids head characters which characterise earlier keys such as those by Alan Brindle. Copies are available from the FBA (The Ferry Landing, Far Sawrey, Ambleside, Cumbria, LA22 0LP) for £15.00

Andy Godfrey

Biodiversity in the New Forest. Edited by Adrian C. Newton. 2010. 237 pp, with 74 figures, 58 tables and 60 plates (51 of them in colour). Bournemouth University.



This paperback book, well produced with a glossy cover, is a collection of 20 chapters by 39 authors on topics that were the subject of presentations at a symposium held in 2007. There was mention that this symposium had happened during e-mail discussion following our field meeting in the New Forest in May 2012, but it only recently came to my notice that this publication existed, thanks to it being on sale at the AES Exhibition.

Our concerns regarding the close-grazed sward and lack of nectar sources other than a few flowering hawthorns, at some of the sites we visited, were expressed by Rob Wolton (*New Forest challenges*, Bulletin No 74, Autumn 2012, p. 6). In that note Rob reported that he had been informed by Natural England that there had been no recent increase in cattle and pony numbers, and that the high level of grazing may be due to an increase in deer numbers. Deer have certainly increased over the past century to near their former population levels, since they were heavily culled following the Deer Removal Act of 1851, but are now being actively culled again by the Forestry Commission. However, in his overview of trends in the New Forest (Chapter 20) Adrian Newton cites figures of stock levels for cattle, ponies and pigs, provided by the New Forest verderers, which clearly indicate an increase in overall stocking since 1960, influenced mainly by an increase in pony numbers. He noted that the number of ponies has increased steadily since the 1950s and had exceeded 4,200 in each year from 2005-2007, greatly exceeding the carrying capacity estimated at 2,840. He added that the significance of pony numbers is greater because they consume more vegetation than ruminants, and the close grazing we noted, e.g. at Denny Wood, is more attributable to pony grazing.

The New Forest is acknowledged as being the most intensively grazed semi-natural habitat in Europe, and this has influenced the composition of its fauna and flora for a long time, as discussed by many of the contributors. Several chapters consider the ecology of the various habitats, and there are 11 chapters on particular groups of animals and plants. Vascular plants, lichens, fungi and bryophytes are treated separately. Coverage of vertebrates is limited to birds, bats, and reptiles and amphibians; fish are covered in a chapter on diversity in streams. Thus there are only 4 chapters on invertebrates: Odonata, saproxylic beetles and Lepidoptera are considered in detail, then the remainder are covered under the title 'The New Forest Cicada and other invertebrates' by Bryan Pinchen and Lena Ward. Diptera are indeed mentioned there and briefly in a couple of other chapters, but omission from the index makes it necessary to read the book from cover to cover to find them (not necessarily recommended).

In Adrian Newton's overview (Table 56) he quotes a figure of 403 species of 'other invertebrates' of conservation concern based on the English Nature 2001 management plan; Diptera are included in this total but of them he only quotes Tubbs (2001) that the Forest has 'the largest British assemblage of Diptera known'. Pinchen & Ward state that there are 495 species of insects with conservation status, of which 100 are Diptera, based on an Invertebrate Site Register for the New Forest. Bryan Pinchen had in 1999 written for English Nature: *A summary of New Forest invertebrates, their status and habitat requirements*, which would be interesting to see. The only fly mentioned by name in this chapter is *Asilus crabroniformis*, which is said to be exceptionally rare in the Open Forest, compared to grasslands and heaths outside the Forest boundary; as the dung on which it oviposits is abundant, this rarity is attributed to the absence of insect prey. The lack of structure in vegetation may also be a factor, which they suggest to be the cause of decline in Orthoptera, reported as very common in the Forest in a 1972 paper. The effect on ground-nesting aculeates of surfacing tracks

is also mentioned. They consider the reduction in nectar sources to be responsible for the decline of many insects, in particular Diptera and Hymenoptera, noting the scarcity of bumblebees. They suggest that the lack of flowering shrubs such as hawthorn may be why so few adults of saproxylic insects are recorded. They stress that those inclosures with a mixed vegetation structure, tall herbs and more nectar sources are richer in insects. Sims Wood and Roydon Wood are cited as lightly grazed examples. Reports on these sites to English Nature in 1997 to 2000, by D. Jones, Chris Palmer and Bryan Pinchen, evidently include some interesting Diptera records. Insect records from Roydon Wood are said to include a quarter of the species with conservation status known from the New Forest; of these it is stated that 5 RDB and 20 Nationally Scarce species are Diptera.

Diptera also figure in the chapter by Terry Langford *et al*. on the biodiversity of New Forest streams. They discuss conflicting views on the effect on stream management of coarse woody debris, but don't mention its importance for saproxylic fly larvae. A table of invertebrate groups shows that only 72 species of Diptera had been recorded from New Forest streams of 1,138 species claimed to occur in this habitat nationally (this seems high for streams so is this an estimate of all aquatic Diptera?). An appendix lists the invertebrate taxa involved, evidently based on larval records: 39 are chironomids (many identified only to genus) and 7 are simuliids (identified to species group). *Atherix ibis* and *Ibisia marginata* are listed. *Pedicia oculata* is an error for *P. occulta*.

We know that some Diptera species formerly found in the New Forest, such as *Villa venusta* and *Eristalis cryptarum*, are now extinct there, but losses overall are as yet uncertain and nothing is said on the subject in this book. Losses of species in many groups are, however, mentioned and are most evident among other groups of invertebrates. No bryophytes have been lost and only one vascular plant *Spiranthes aestivalis*, though Martin Rand and Clive Chatters comment that flowering plants also suffered when the introduction of grazing to inclosures during the second half of the 20th century led to 'catastrophic declines' of invertebrates. The monitoring data on fungi is considered insufficient to give firm evidence of decline, but Adrian Newton notes that 18 species of conservation interest have not been seen in the past 50 years; forestry activities, removal of dead wood and commercial collecting are mentioned as concerns. The nail fungus *Poronia punctata*, which grows on horse dung, was unrecorded in Britain from 1899 to 1967, but has recently been discovered to be widespread in the Forest. The importance of the New Forest for deadwood fungi on beech is demonstrated by comparison with other sites, using British and European indicator lists; this study led to new records of many rare species.

The New Forest is very rich in lichens, which are evidently doing well there generally, although 13 species have not been seen since the 19th century and 5 leafy species have disappeared since 1967. Neil Sanderson comments that the dominant epiphytic lichens in the Forest are those that thrive in partial shade and low nutrient levels, in contrast to those found in the open nutrient-rich conditions in parkland. Holly shading lower trunks in some areas is considered a problem. Ivy Wood is mentioned as a site with hazel-associated species that are rare in southern England, due to not surviving coppicing. This mirrors the situation in the uncoppiced hazel woods of western Scotland, also rich in lichens and specialist fungi that are absent in coppiced woods (see *Atlantic Hazel, Scotland's Special Woodlands* by S. & B. Coppins, 2012. 108pp. Atlantic Hazel Action Group, which dispels the myth that coppicing is necessary to maintain woodland ground flora).

Among mammals, apart from the large herbivores only bats are dealt with in detail, but it is noted that rodents are scarce apart from woodmice, and are largely missing from the Open Forest due to lack of vegetation structure. This has led to changes in behaviour by predatory birds, with kestrels feeding on lizards and dung beetles and tawny owls adding beetles to their diet of woodmice. There are important populations of Bechstein's bat and Barbastelle, which require extensive woodland with a well-developed understorey. Sparrowhawks and goshawks both mainly select conifers for nest sites, so have become dependent on their presence in the Forest. The sand lizard was extinct in the Forest by the 1970s, apparently due to excessive heather burning, but has been successfully reintroduced to selected areas.

Of the invertebrate groups covered in detail the Odonata seem to be doing best, with 31 species recorded and it is the main centre nationally for *Coenagrion mercuriale*. Only two riverine species, *Gomphus vulgatissimus* and *Platycnemis pennipes*, have done badly and *Gomphus* has disappeared. This is attributed to canalisation of streams. On the other hand the New Forest Cicada *Cicadetta montana* may now be extinct; elsewhere in its European range its nymphs feed on blackthorn stems, but here it was reduced to ovipositing on bracken. The rapid decline from the 1960s is attributed to the increased browsing of younger scrub on which it prefers to oviposit, this needing to be close to underground tree roots on which the later instars feed.

Andrew Barker and David Green present the situation on Lepidoptera, although they confine their account to the species with conservation status. It was no surprise that a decline in these had occurred, but quite shocking to see the extent of this. They note that the New Forest has been known as a rich area for this order since the mid 19th century and 1,488 species have been recorded there. Of these 264 are considered worthy of conservation status, but astonishingly only 132 of these have been recorded since 1980. It isn't stated whether a comparable decline has occurred among the species without conservation status. They list 124 species as the 'lost' Lepidoptera of the New Forest, of which 3 required conformation, also commenting that some other species, most notably the high brown and marsh fritillaries, had disappeared since 1980. They note that the greatest losses have occurred with species feeding on the herb and shrub layers in open woodland habitats, in particular those associated with early succession vegetation.

Coverage of Coleoptera is variable. Apart from the occasional references to dung beetles as a food source, water beetles are covered in the chapter on streams, where 34 of 300 potential species are said to have been recorded, while 35 are listed in the appendix to this chapter. In his summary (Table 56) Andrew Newton gives 1,539 as the number of Coleoptera species recorded in the New Forest, based on Tubbs (2001). According to Pinchen & Ward (Chapter 7) 240 beetle species have conservation status, of which 51 are in RDB categories, the remainder Notable. Detailed consideration of the Coleoptera is restricted to the saproxylic species in the contribution by Keith Alexander. He noted that at least 326 of 781 British species of saproxylic beetles had been recorded in the New Forest, a total only surpassed in Britain by Windsor Forest and Great Park, and that 53 of these have RDB status, inexplicably exceeding the number for all Coleoptera given in Chapter 7. Of these 53, two are extinct and a further 27 have not been seen for 25 years. It is noted that this may simply be due to insufficient recording and in some cases difficulty of discovery. Four BAP species are discussed in more detail, but of these only the stag beetle *Lucanus cervus* is well known from the Forest, and precise breeding sites are yet to be located for the others, which are all heartwood decay spe-

cies. One extinct species disappeared when blackthorn scrub was removed to improve grazing, while another last seen in 1927 was found under loose beech bark in sunny situations. As this habitat is abundant in the Forest, removal of affected trees alone seems unlikely to be the cause of its disappearance.

The extent to which the saproxylic Coleoptera are dependent on nectar sources isn't mentioned, but the increasing scarcity of these in the Forest may be as significant for them as it is for the saproxylic Diptera. In view of the situation described for Lepidoptera, it would be interesting to know how the phytophagous Coleoptera have fared but they aren't mentioned in this book.

The ecological chapters include one by Elena Cantarello *et. al*. giving an overview of the condition of habitats; this is of interest in defining the habitat types that are important in the New Forest. These are summarised under the headings dry heath and dry grassland; wet heath, wet grassland and mire; pasture, riverine and bog woodland; inclosure woodland; temporary and permanent ponds. The riverine and bog woodland, though of limited extent, are the most internationally important and also appear to be the least affected by recent changes, so should be of particular interest for the Diptera.

Very relevant to the Diptera fauna is the account by Adrian Newton *et al*. on the condition and dynamics of New Forest woodlands. Many of these woodlands have existed for more than 400 years and it is suggested that some may be primary in that they had never been cleared, so continuity of habitat is especially important. Previous work on these aspects is discussed, particularly in relation to the extent that effective regeneration is taking place. Evidence is presented of gaps in age structure, which implies that most tree recruiitment took place in three periods, the first including the first half of the 18th century, then from 1850 to the First World War and finally subsequent to the Second World War. The second and third of these periods coincided with a relaxation of grazing, and map evidence suggests that woodland became more extensive by infilling in the period after 1867. That the first period took place when browsing pressure was high couldn't be explained; however, the hurricane of 1703 may help to explain this, in that a large quantity of fallen wood then may have provided the protection for germination of saplings, in addition to the replanting that would have taken place anyway to replace fallen trees. The studies reported indicated that when there is protection from herbivory, e.g. by understorey shrubs, regeneration took place.

They discuss Vera's theory of grazed woodland becoming grassland on death of the trees, to be later replaced by new woodland being generated among advancing thorn scrub. They comment that it isn't based on any original data and has not been rigorously tested (e.g. do saplings apparently protected by spiny shrubs mature into adulthood), also noting that there is no historical evidence for concentric expansion of woodland in the New Forest. Evidence of canopy collapse due to drought and storm damage at sites such as Denny Wood is illustrated; high grazing levels preventing regeneration in such situations might be expected as a stage in Vera's cyclical theory. Such canopy collapse at Mark Ash is welcomed in the chapter on lichens, as admitting more light to the remaining trunks. However, as there is no significant thorn scrub left uncleared to continue this cycle, encouraging regeneration in the existing woodlands will best ensure the continuity of habitat, and regenerating beech at Mark Ash is indeed shown in Plate 7. For another view on Vera's theory read *The Ash and the Beech* by Richard Mabey (2013. Vintage Books, pp 227-230), who points out that grazing animals will in winter or when hungry enough graze spiny shrubs to the ground. He adds that there are too many exceptions for Vera's theory to be a universal model of woodland succession, noting that while large herbivores are part of a natural ecosystem then so are the 'vanished big predators which ate them, on which inconvenience Vera does not dwell.'

Another factor considered by Newton *et al*. is the volume of fallen dead wood and standing dead trees available at sites within the Forest. Fifteen sites found to have good quantities in a 1986 survey are listed, but this work had also stressed that removal of fallen wood was a serious issue in many easily accessible woodlands. The drought of 1976 and storm of 1987 had an effect generally, but a recent survey concluded that levels are relatively low compared to old growth forests in Europe and North America.

The ecological accounts are concluded with a clear account by Rory Putman of the effects of grazing on the ecosystem, which provides an overview of the issues raised in other chapters. He notes that the planned restructuring of many coniferous plantation areas, to heathland or broad-leaved woodland, will have a marked effect on the relationship between habitats and the relative distribution of both deer and livestock.

The proposed wetland restoration through LIFE II and III projects is described. Current and future management are discussed in the chapters on the National Park and Crown Estate, and the trends in habitat and species composition are summarised by the editor. The afterword by Clive Chatters highlights the differences of opinion between contributors and strongly advises against single interests expecting changes that suit their enthusiasms. This perhaps misses the point that .the issues affecting many groups, such as scrub clearance, and loss of nectar sources and of herbaceous vegetation, are the same and this should not be used as a reason for not addressing these concerns. As he says this symposium demonstrated how much work has already been done on the fauna and flora of the Forest, and the opportunities there are for contributing to increasing knowledge of its ecosystem in the future.

The excellent colour plates show a range of the species and habitats of the New Forest. I particularly liked Plates 14 (Roydon river, providing good foraging for barbastelles), 53 (wood accumulation in Highland Water in winter 1997) and the fungi in Plates 36-39.

It is clear that despite all the losses, the New Forest is still a very rich area for biodiversity and will hopefully be managed in the future more sympathetically than has been the case in recent decades. That Diptera were only touched on briefly in this book should be an encouragement for us to gather together the information that exists and to become more involved in future recording.

Peter Chandler

Journals

Exchange of Czech journals with Dipterists Digest

Since 2008 an exchange has been in place of *Dipterists Digest* with the journal *Casopis Slezskeho Zemskeho Muzea* (**Série A, vedy prírodní**), published by the Silesian Museum in Opava. This was kindly arranged by Jan Ševčík and Jindřich Roháček of that museum. As Dipterists Forum does not have a library, the arrangement has been for the journal to be placed in the BENHS library at Dinton Pastures.

A similar exchange has now been arranged with the journal *Acta Entomologica Musei Nationalis Pragae*, at the suggestion of Michal Tkoc of the Prague Museum. This exchange is to be retrospective, so all issues of the Digest (both series) that remain in print have been supplied in exchange for previous issues of their journal from 1988 onwards. Information on the journal can be found on the website www.aemnp.eu.

Both journals publish in English and often contain articles on Diptera, as well as other aspects of entomology. They can consulted at Dinton Pastures, where reasonably priced photocopying is also available.

Peter Chandler

New online journal - open access

Biodiversity Data Journal
http://biodiversitydatajournal.com/browse_articles

Craig Macadam has drawn our attention to this new journal, it is completely open access, relying on community peer-review, and all background data for the published research must be made fully available in a machine-readable format online. A number of invertebrate papers are already available.

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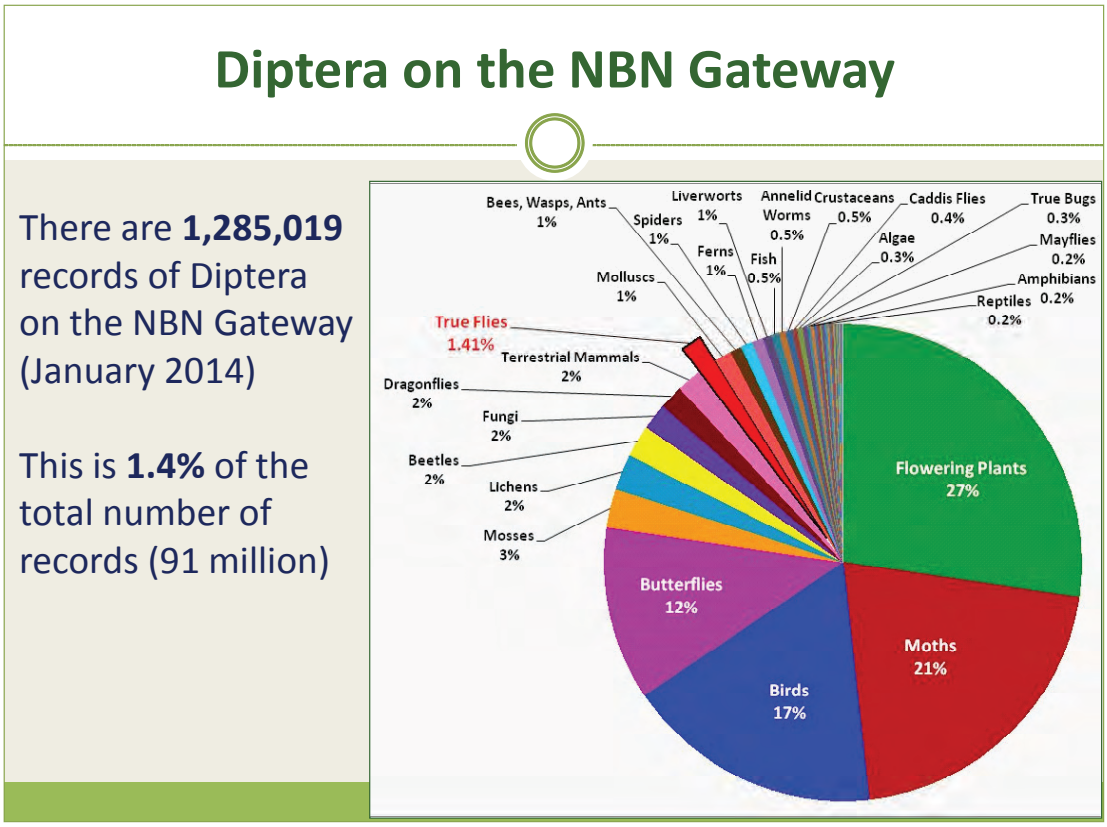

Part of an excellent presentation by Paula Lightfoot (NBNT) at a recent meeting of Dipterists Forum Recording Schemes with Biological Records Centre. More on the outcomes of this meeting in the next Bulletin

Meetings

Role of Field meeting Secretary

There are several stages to running field meetings. The most crucial being to secure a venue comprising sufficient single accommodation for 25 participants in a location that offers good potential for recording and easy access to sites over a radius of 25-30 miles. Considerations that should be borne in mind are:

1. Members like single rooms and generally prefer that the venue should provide half board.
2. A large secure room is needed for evening lab work. This should be available without restricted access times as many members like to work late into the night or to start early in the day.
3. There should be a good range of sites within reasonable proximity of the venue. It is wise to check the distribution of National Nature Reserves, Wildlife Trust sites and Forestry Commission land. Open access land is preferred so as to minimise the process of gaining permission to visit sites.

Organisation of the summer field meeting needs to start 15 months in advance so that the venue can be booked in time to advertise in the Autumn bulletin. Bearing in mind that the copy for the Autumn Bulletin needs to be submitted by the end of July, this means that bookings need to be made by the end of June the previous year. So, it is likely that this will coincide with preparations for the current year's field meeting. I usually start looking for venues 18 months in advance and generally try to have a list of possible venues in mind for several years hence.

The FMS is responsible for making arrangements for access permission. Generally a suite of between 30 and 40 sites is desirable. The FMS may have to make contact with individual landowners and will also be responsible for providing data feedback to owners/occupiers.

In addition, the FMS is responsible for arranging the booking of the accommodation and for taking deposits and chasing for payment of the final balance. These days, a DF paying-in book should be available to allow the FMS to deposit cheques. Maintaining a register of monies paid into the DF account and keeping the Treasurer informed is also essential.

When at the venue, the FMS is responsible for matters concerning the group and providing an interface with the venue staff. This can include dealing with emergencies and you should be aware that you may get woken at odd times because of problems (e.g. who has the key for the workroom).

The FMS is also responsible for assembling the data generated by the meeting. There may be scope for another member to do the data entry onto RECORDER but in recent years this job has also been undertaken by the FMS.

Finally, there is a need to prepare Bulletin announcements and to write-up the meetings. Preparing Bulletin announcements is the FMS responsibility but meeting accounts can be prepared by another member.

Roger Morris

Reports 2013

More recording at Dundreggan in July 2013

As also reported in the Fungus Gnat Recording Scheme newsletter included with this Bulletin, I made another visit to the Trees for Life Estate at Dundreggan in Glen Moriston from 8 to 11 July 2013. Since my September 2012 visit, there had been an unusually dry winter and spring, a drought that had affected much of the Scottish Highlands. Conditions remained dry during my stay and it was as hot as in the south, in the week coinciding with the Forum's field week at Lancaster.

Visits were made to the herb-rich fields by the River Moriston, on the first and last days. On the first occasion a male of the asilid *Dioctria cothurnata* was found flying among low vegetation. Graham Rotheray recorded this when he did a survey of the Estate in 2010. On my second visit to these fields, several of both sexes of *D. cothurnata* were found in the same localised area in a sheltered field corner below the road.

Alan Watson Featherstone, Director of Trees for Life, accompanied me on the second day, when attention was given to the vicinity of streams in the birchwood where aspen was present. The older aspens here bore the tough brackets of the fungus *Phellinus tremulae* that is specific to this tree. It was borne in mind that a fungus gnat *Sciophila bonnevalensis,* with larvae forming webs on this fungus, had recently been described from the French Alps. No trace of larval webs was found here, or on the same fungus examined at Invertromie on the Kingussie field meeting in September. Possibly the fungus is too rare in Scotland for this gnat to be expected, but it is worth looking out for.

These streams in the birchwoods arise from the lower slopes of the moors above and were practically dry but a rock face, in a sheltered position by one of these streams, remained moist. Here a surprising find was the cranefly *Orimarga virgo*, usually found on nearly vertical seepages from limestone outcrops, where the larvae develop amongst damp moss.

On this day we encountered Jane Bowman, who was using a pheromone capsule attached to a birch trunk to attract males of the Welsh clearwing moth *Synanthedon scoliaeformis*; its efficacy was demonstrated by the appearance of several moths during a few minutes of observation. The occurrence of the goat moth (*Cossus cossus*) in birches on the Estate was highlighted in the autumn 2012 Bulletin No 74 (photo on p. 17). Jane had been recording goat moth trees locally and had found that they were more frequent and widespread in the area than had been realised; she had noted 15 affected trees of varying age on the Estate, and altogether a total of 32 *Cossus* trees throughout the length of Glen Moriston, from Invermoriston to Ceannacroc in the west. All these Highland goat moths have been on birch, in contrast to the range of trees it inhabits elsewhere. Jane is presently rearing, on a plentiful supply of apples, 214 goat moth larvae, which hatched from eggs laid by two females caught in a light trap in August. A sap flow on the *Cossus* tree near the Estate's wild boar enclosure had on the previous day attracted the hoverfly *Ferdinandea cuprea* in addition to the usual blow-flies and *Drosophila obscura*.

I also learned from Jane that she had recorded the golden horsefly *Atylotus fulvus* on the Dundreggan Estate in 2005, and others had found it there in subsequent years. This species had till then been

thought to be extinct in Scotland, where it had last been recorded at Rannoch in 1923 (see *British Soldierflies*). However, I later heard from Murdo Macdonald that it had recently been found at Rannoch on 13 July by Hayley Wiswell, during a meeting of the Highland Biological Recording Group that took place on the weekend following my visit to Dundreggan (see the group's website at www.hbrg.org.uk for information on this and other interesting finds in the Highlands). I didn't see *A. fulvus* during my visit but other tabanids *Haematopota pluvialis*, *H. crassicornis* and *Hybomitra montana* gave persistent attention, particularly on higher ground. A single female of *H. distinguenda* flew into my car near the juniper walk area, while *Tabanus sudeticus* arrived while I was in the fields near the river on the final day.

The only stream found to still be flowing freely was the Red Burn (Allt Ruadh), which arises on higher ground and, as mentioned in the FGRS newsletter, where fungus gnats were observed in large numbers, along with other flies in need of humidity. I concentrated recording there on the last two days. On the first occasion I followed the stream into the open moorland beyond the birchwood and reached a narrow gorge, also providing shelter for gnats and other flies, with mature pines nearby.

On the way to the woods from the offices at Dundreggan Lodge you pass a field corner with a large stand of hogweed, probably the only such stand for miles around. This was attracting a good range of common syrphids and a few flies of other families. Dundreggan always produces something unexpected and a small tachinid, found feeding at these flowers, appeared distinctive with a grey disc to the thorax but scutellum and abdomen entirely orange. This proved to be a female of *Hyalurgus lucidus*, of which there are some old records from Scotland (see Ivan Perry's article about Francis Jenkinson, 2007 *Dipterists Digest* **14:** 49-73). However, the most recent previous British record was from the Wyre Forest in 1938. It is a parasitoid of tree-dwelling sawfly larvae and is frequent in northern Europe, so there is no obvious reason for its scarcity in Britain. A closer look at umbels in Scotland may be worthwhile.

Hyalurgus lucidus and *Dioctria cothurnata* were included in an exhibit at the 2013 BENHS Annual Exhibition and also shown at the DF AGM. Only a few of the species recorded have been mentioned here, and Dundreggan shows great potential for adding to knowledge of the Diptera of this otherwise under-recorded region of Scotland.

I thank Alan Watson Featherstone for this further opportunity to record Diptera at Dundreggan and for his assistance during my visit. I am also grateful to Jane Bowman and Murdo Macdonald for related information, and to Alan Stubbs for identifying craneflies including *Orimarga virgo*.

Peter Chandler

ANNUAL MEETING

Natural History Museum, London

Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th November 2013

Dipterists Day 2013

The witness was a fly: the importance of Diptera in forensic entomology casework – Amoret Whitaker

Not many talks on entomology come with a warning of the sort: 'sensitive viewers may find some slides distressing'. This was, however, necessary for our first talk of the day by Amoret Whitaker.

Amoret is a forensic entomologist working at the Natural History Museum. Her work constitutes a mix of research, case work and training in the field of forensic ecology, a field that has seen a massive increase in publications in the last 40 years. The main application of her study is the estimation of time since death of cadavers. Medical methods fall short in most cases, only being able to predict the age of a corpse up to 80 hours old. Enter the blow flies! *Calliphora vicina* is the commonest and active throughout the year, whilst other blowflies are more restricted in occurrence. *Lucilia sericata* seems to be found more frequently in casework these days. The succession of necrophagous insects to a body gives a timeline since death that can be traced to give an estimate of cadaver age well beyond that of medical methods alone.

Amoret gave a brief history of forensic entomology before explaining some of the more technical aspects of the field. There are many extrinsic factors effecting the arrival and development of insects on a corpse and Amoret stressed the importance of knowing the developmental biology of the insects involved. Much of Amoret's research involves work on pigs as surrogates for human bodies, a practise sometimes questioned in courtrooms. An important result of recent work has been to prove that pigs offer a very accurate model of human corpses. Amoret highlighted the need for further research on some of the more poorly known insects of forensic importance such as the species of Phoridae ('coffin flies') such as species of *Conicera* and *Megaselia*, as well as research on the cold temperature development of well-studied species.

Tachinid Recording Scheme - Matt Smith and Chris Raper

The Tachinid Recording Scheme was started in the year 2000 by Chris and Matt and in this talk they highlight some of the patterns of recorder behaviour and interesting species they have encountered in the last 13 years. They have received approximately 17200 records of tachinids, which have contributed to the now extensive species distribution maps now available through the NBN. Chris and Matt have seen a notable swing in submissions toward photogenic species, with many records now coming from internet photo sources such as iSpot. Chris advised on the importance of networking within the entomological community and told of cases where amazing specimens had been sourced through a little international cooperation.

Cylindromyia bicolor 17/6/2009 [Roger Morris] - identified by Chris Raper

Gymnocheta viridis 13/03/2011 [Alan Outen]

Lake of Flies and Feathers – Philip Sanders

Philip, a PhD student with the Natural History Museum, is studying the ecosystems associated with Lake Bogoria, a saline lake located in the Rift Valley of western Kenya. Philip's work focuses on the interaction between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems: More specifically how the biomass of chironomids emerging from the lake supports terrestrial food webs and how this has changed over time in relation to climate change. Using staple isotopes to map trophic interactions he has identified a subsidisation effect dependent on the amount of rainfall and consequent salinity of the lake. Philip explained the importance of the palaeolimnological (freshwater palaeontology) aspects of his project: Knowing the diversity and abundance of chironomids in the past can help us make predictions about past climate events and aid us in understanding future climate change.

Collecting and Studying Sarcophagidae – Daniel Whitmore

Daniel is the newest curator of Diptera at the Natural History Museum. He has a particular interest in the family Sarcophagidae and in his talk shared some knowledge on the study of this group. He showed some of the variation within the group with an excellent collection of images showcasing a range of the world's genera. Daniel went on to explain the range behaviours and habitats associated with the group. For example the larvae of the Sarcophagidae can be predacious or parasitic not solely sarcophagus as their name suggests. An entertaining video demonstrating the Kleptoparasitic nature of certain species was shown. To catch adults in the field Dan suggests a range of techniques: Sweeping sunny patches, hill topping, malaise trapping or baiting. The last option not being for the faint hearted as preferred bait involves rotting flesh or urine!

Sarcophaga 02/05/2010 [Mark Pajak]

The enigmatic biology of the Pallopteridae – Graham Rotheray

We often rely on descriptions of dipteran larval ecology found in old studies that are too infrequently re-examined. In this compelling talk, Graham Rotheray urges us to dig a little deeper, demonstrating what can be achieved with the example of the Pallopteridae.

There are 60 species in the family Pallopteridae worldwide. 23 of those species are found in the Palaearctic region with some 13 species occurring in the UK. Graham emphasises the difficulty of identifying certain UK species in their adult form and shows some beautiful photographs of larval morphology. Amazing variation in traits, such as the arrangement of front spicules (spines), shows that identification of a species from its larval form is more than possible.

Graham continued his talk with the results of his studies on larval ecology. It seems the habits of pallopterid larvae are fairly diverse. Some species were found to be saproxylic, some more herbivorous. *Palloptera modesta* larvae were found consistently in old thistle heads around January, feeding on the wet decomposing plant material. The adage that some pallopterids are predacious as larvae was not supported by Graham's study as larvae in predation experiments did not actively feed on any prey items tested. Graham emphasises the need for more larval study, not just in the Pallopteridae, but in Diptera as a whole.

Large Herbivores and vegetation composition and structure: a more natural way to conserve Diptera - Keith Alexander

Ancient open-grown oak, Windsor Forest & Great Park [Keith Alexander]

The role of grazing in maintaining important Diptera communities is a hot topic at the moment. Keith explained his view and invited debate upon the issue. Management for species of open warm conditions and saproxylic species is particularly important. Keith described examples of once good habitats that had deteriorated in the absence of any grazing. On the other hand there were also examples of overgrazing being damaging to invertebrate faunas.

Exmoor pony browsing holly [Keith Alexander]

Once upon a time the general view was that closed canopy woodland was the natural climatic climax community here ('high forest' hypothesis). To a certain extent this idea was produced by botanists during the interpretation of palaeoecological data (amounts of forest pollen in pollen diagrams from peat bogs and lake sediments). This led to 'non-intervention' as a woodland management resulting in closed canopies. However palaeoecological data on beetle remains provided evidence with is at odds with the existence of such closed canopy woodland in the past. Coleopterists have challenged the view of botanists and have suggested parkland was more likely. No fossil evidence for flies exists, unfortunately, but a more open parkland or woodland with extensive glades seems indicated to provide open mosaic of vegetation, warmth and sunshine plus abundant flowers as nectar sources to support complete Dipteran life cycles. Only open-grown trees seem to be able to age in a way that forms heartwood decay so important for many saproxylic Diptera and Coleoptera. Dynamic change in woodland with creation of all important edge effects can be driven by grazing by large herbivores such as horse, cow, red deer, elk, wild boar. Absence of our native large herbivores results in closed canopy conditions with cool shade, no nectar sources and no rot holes. Keith explained that trees die young in closed canopy woodlands – no time to show appreciable hollowing and no large lateral branches to provide future rot holes for all our saproxylic Diptera.

Caliprobola speciosa, Windsor Forest 23/5/10 [Roger Morris]

The right amount of grazing in a woodland prevents a carpet of young saplings growing up to a mass of crowded, straight, young trees close together, which soon form cool closed canopy woodland. Thus, although it may not seem an obvious connection, the conservation of saproxylic Diptera needs to focus on the management of large herbivores. However, how much grazing is the right amount and is poor grazing better than no grazing? There was lively debate following this talk and Keith left us much to think about.

Peter and Malcolm sweep with grazers 18/6/10 Tenby [Darwyn Sumner]

Nathan Medd & Judy Webb

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Natural History Museum, London

meeting opened by Chairman Martin Drake at 14:15

Apologies

Apologies were made for the following members unable to attend this year's meeting: Darwyn Sumner, John Ismay, Roy Crossley, Ken Merrifield

Minutes of the last AGM and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted to be a correct record of events. No amendments were suggested.

Secretary's Report - John Kramer, Retiring Secretary

Our retiring secretary: John Kramer

When I took up the post of Secretary in 2000 the membership stood 280. We now have about 450 members and this rate of increase is a good indicator of the present health of the Forum.

We have had three committee meetings during the year, as follows: at Dinton Pastures on Sat. 17 March, 2013, at Lancaster University on Sunday 7th July, and at the Natural History Museum, London, Saturday 26th October, 2013. Some of our discussions have been described by Martin in the 'Chairman's Round-up' in the Autumn Bulletin. In addition to the annual cycle of administrative problems, some larger issues have also occupied our thoughts.

Recording

We currently have 18 Recording Schemes or Study Groups on different families of flies – something for everyone. Recording by these groups has continued to provide a steady stream of records to the BRC and our field meetings make a useful contribution to this. There were 5 field meetings this year: Rockingham Forest (18-19 May), Eastbourne (7-9 June), Lancaster (6 - 13 July), Cairngorms (7-14 Sept), and Surrey (16-20 Oct). Beginners are most welcome at these events where they are assured of help from more experienced members. Roger Morris has done an excellent job in providing these meetings and very many thanks are due to him on for all of his hard work. Records from a very large number of sites have been gathered from the numerous field meetings over the past 40 years, but perhaps the most thorough recording can be done by those living near the sites. More frequent and regular visits can then be made throughout the season. At our last meeting the Committee decided to encourage the formation of local groups. These have already been established in Northants and in Devon, to provide for the region around, and it is hoped that more will follow. These local groups could perhaps also help with a 'Bioblitz' of the Diptera collection in their local Museums. These events, proposed recently in committee, could check identifications and record data from specimens which could then be sent to the BRC. A questionnaire about the Diptera interests of our current members to be included in the next Bulletin and the information gathered could assist in the formation of local groups.

Workshops

The annual Forum workshop, held as usual at Preston Montford, was on Lauxaniidae and Heleomyzidae. It was tutored by Mark Mitchell (Lauxaniidae) and Alan Stubbs (Heleomyzidae), with 25 people attending. In addition, if you look in the Forum Events Calendar in the Bulletin, you will see that there were about 15 other workshops, led by members of the Forum/Recording Schemes, all over the UK. Both field meetings and workshops are ways that we can recruit and enthuse new members. Can I use this opportunity to encourage beginners to join in these events. We are always very pleased to help with identification. We also have a fund to support student-members to attend workshops and field meetings, and a pool of equipment for them to loan or purchase.

Publications

A need for a Dipterists Forum Publication Strategy has been identified and, for example, there are a good number of smaller keys that are in need of publication. It has been decided that Stuart Ball and Roger Morris gather a team together to publish material on behalf of the Dipterists Forum. Stuart's Scathophagid Key will probably be the first key to be published.

Conservation

Rob Wolton, our Conservation Officer, has been busy during his first year in office. The Adopt-a-Species scheme continues successfully with interesting reports on a number of species in the Bulletins. There is comment in the Autumn Bulletin on the 'State of Nature' report, where there are 15 references to studies on flies quoted as evidence on habitat decline.

Members of the committee have been busy but can I also use my report to thank some non-committee members. Ken Merrifield keeps our website spam-free and keeps us provided with the Merrifield Pooters. Thanks also to Amanda Morgan who is helping Erica to raise the profile of the Forum. Members attending the AGM will have noticed our new and magnificent banner at the entrance. Thanks to Erica for organising its creation, and David Hall who created it for us.

Next Meetings

Bibionidae, Sepsidae and Scathophagidae Workshop

Preston Montford Field Centre 21-23 February 2014

Next Field Meeting:

Swanage, Studland area, 16-18 May.

Next AGM

With the usual provisos, the date for the next AGM should be Saturday 22 November at a venue in the northern half of the UK, as yet to be finalised.

Concluding Remarks

This is my final AGM as Secretary, and my thirteenth Secretary's Report since I took over from Alan in 2000. As I am retiring from the post it is perhaps timely to look back at my 13 years in office

and the many changes that have taken place.

The Internet now plays a much more prominent part than in the last millennium. The DF website, was set up by Ken Merrifield in 2002, and the Hoverfly website by Stuart in 2005. Continued support and mentoring by more experienced Dipterists is made easier via digital photography and the Internet. It is an area where members of the Forum have become increasingly involved over the past decade.

A great deal of data has been entered into the BRC database and distribution maps are usually available either on the NBN Gateway, or other sites, for a number of families of Diptera. Using this data, some status reviews have been undertaken. On the Conservation front, Biodiversity Action Plans have come and gone, and left an important legacy behind, especially in highlighting data-deficient species and what we need to know to manage habitats. 'Buglife' (the Invertebrate Conservation Trust) was formed in March 2001 and our previous Secretary, Alan Stubbs, has played a prominent part in this. Publishing ventures undertaken by members have included the British Soldierflies book, the Hoverfly Atlas, the Starter-pack, and the 2nd editions of British Hoverflies and the Dipterist's Handbook (2010).

You can see that steady progress has been made and I'm sure that this will continue in the future. My best wishes go to Nathan Medd who takes over from me as the next Secretary to the Dipterists Forum.

Treasurer's Report - Howard Bentley

A glance at the accounts shows that we had a surplus in 2012 of more than £6000. However, as I explained at last year's AGM, much of that was accounted for by an OPAL grant of £3000 earmarked for illustrations for the forthcoming cranefly book, and a grant of £1600 from Natural England for computer equipment for use in training courses. At the end of 2012 those moneys were still largely in hand. We were also holding more than £2000 in deposits for the new Hoverfly Wildguide. I explained at last year's meeting that these would be spent during the course of 2013, and I was therefore expecting a deficit for this year. At the present time it looks as if that prediction was correct, though the deficit is likely to be less than £1000.

We have plans for increasing our spending in some areas next year:

- We feel that the Forum has a responsibility to assist younger Dipterists in developing their interest. A 4-day course called "An Introduction to Diptera" was held earlier this year at Wells Cathedral School, and this was very successful. Students' fees for the course were subsidised by the Forum, and we consider this money very well spent. We hope to organise similar events in the future, keeping fees well below the actual running costs of the courses, so that students can afford to attend. I should like to take this opportunity to convey our thanks again to our very generous anonymous donor, who once again gave us £500 this year to help cover precisely this kind of cost.
- If and when our plans for occasional publications come to fruition we shall need money to set that up.
- We also have plans to update the software used by the editors of the Digest and the Bulletin.
- Printing costs, and especially distribution costs, have risen this year, and can be expected to do so in the future.

These expected increases in spending, and the fact that we are in deficit, are the reasons for the increases in subscriptions which take effect from the first of January. May I please remind everyone who pays by bank transfer to amend their instructions to their banks to cover the new rates, and to change the details of our account to those of our new NatWest account. I intend to keep the Santander account open until about the end of February, when the bulk of subscriptions will have been paid. After that this account will close, and all of our business will be conducted via the NatWest account.

Once again I must express my gratitude to Tony Pickles and his colleague Mr. Harmer, who have audited our accounts without expecting payment for their services. We are all very grateful to them.

I have now been treasurer of the Forum for seven years, and I don't want to reach the stage where I begin to make mistakes; so I feel that it would be appropriate now to pass on the job to someone younger. The job is not onerous: apart from conducting the day-to-day business of paying bills etc., the main tasks are the preparation of the annual statement for presentation to the auditor; making this report to the AGM; and keeping the committee abreast of our financial situation. You do not need any expertise in the business of finance.

Dipterists Digest Editor's Report – Peter Chandler

The first part of volume 20 was published on schedule in June and the second part had the date of the AGM as the publication date. Both parts include 102 pages of text, as did each issue of volumes 18 and 19, and I would like to maintain this as the standard issue size. Altogether they include 62 items by 55 authors, several of whom have not previously contributed. I am grateful to all authors for their support and hope that more new authors will be encouraged to contribute.

However, the part published in June contained nearly everything that had been submitted by that time and it was only during October that it was certain that there was enough material to complete the second part to enable publication within 2013. This was thanks to several people, who submitted notes to fill space at short notice. It wasn't possible to get it out in time for the AGM, but distribution was scheduled for early December.

Some further articles have now been submitted, so it is hoped to publish the first part of volume 21 within the first half of 2014. Further contributions of papers and notes are sought. Contributors are asked to follow the instructions to authors and consult the layout of recent issues to assist with this and save editorial time.

We didn't celebrate the centenary of any Dipterists in 2013, but the second part includes an article on the Bristol Dipterist Henri Audcent, adapted for Dipterists from a biography written by his great grandson Geoffrey Audcent. The inclusion of this resulted from a suggestion by John Kramer, following the Forum's annual meeting at Bristol in 2012.

2014 is the centenary of the death of the Herefordshire Dipterist Dr John Henry Wood, so I plan an article about him and Colonel Yerbury. They are linked as being cousins - their mothers were the Webb sisters, and it is 14 years until the centenary of Yerbury's death. The main problem with this is that there doesn't appear to be any photographic record of either of them, so if anyone knows of any images that might include them please let me know. Any other points of interest concerning them would also be appreciated.

The checklist has again been updated to include additions and changes reported in the Digest and the updated version placed on the website. I thank Stuart Ball for assistance with this.

Roy Crossley stepped down at the end of 2012 from distributing the Digest after many years and a volunteer was sought to take on distribution from the first 2013 issue. Richard Underwood kindly offered to take on this role immediately following the 2012 AGM. I am grateful to him for having carried this out so efficiently. I also

thank him and Mike Pugh for assistance with proof reading.

ravelling to the Natural History Museum

Any Other Business

Roger Morris passed on a request from Mike Pugh to have the presentations of the day displayed on the Forums website. Duncan Sivell agreed to attempt this at some point shortly after the meeting.

Roger also informed the meeting of the latest updates on field meeting arrangements. He encouraged members to submit their deposits for the summer field meeting to be held in Bangor, Wales, 5th - 12th July 2014. He also highlighted possible accommodation arrangements for the spring meeting to be held in Swanage, 16-18th May 2014. A guest house may be available for between eight and ten people. Please get in touch with Roger for more details and to book your place if you have not already done so.

Barbara Ismay re-emphasised the apologies of John Ismay who was not able to attend the meeting. John passed on his best wishes to new members of the committee and his thanks to all retiring members for their contributions to the forum.

Chairman's Vote of Thanks to Retiring Members.

Roger Morris

Roger has been on the Dipterists Forum Committee for 20 years. 11 of those years were spent as Field Meetings Secretary, years over which a huge increase in attendance at the field meetings has been seen. This is in no small part is due to Roger's enthusiasm and proficiency in this role.

John Kramer

John is only the second Secretary the forum has had since its formation. He has been Secretary for 13 years and it was unanimously agreed that he has done a fantastic job. Thanks were given for all of John's hard work over the years.

Dipterists Forum Officers old and new. From left to right: Nathan Medd, John Kramer, Roger Morris, Martin Drake

John Ismay

John has sat on the committee of the Dipterists Forum for 9 years in several roles, including Chairman. John has been instrumental in organising meetings and with the general smooth running of the Forum. Many thanks were passed to John for his contributions.

Election of Officers

The Chairman is elected biennially. The Secretary, Treasurer and other elected officers with specific responsibilities (detailed below) require annual election. The constitution (7c) currently requires nominations 30 days in advance of the AGM. Ordinarily elected committee members serve for two years.

The officers and general committee proposed for re-election or election this year 2013 and accepted, were as follows:

Committee 2013-14

Office	**Officer**
Chair	Martin Drake
Vice Chair	Stuart Ball
Secretary	**Nathan Medd**
	(Proposed: Roger Morris, 2nd: John Showers)
Treasurer	Howard Bentley
Membership Secretary	John Showers
Field Meetings Secretary	**Vacancy**
Indoor Meeting Secretary	Duncan Sivell
Bulletin Editor	Darwyn Sumner
Assistant Editor	Judy Webb
Publicity Officer	Erica McAlister
Website Manager	Stuart Ball
Conservation Officer	Robert Wolton

Committee members proposed for election or re-election 2013

Malcolm Smart	
Chris Raper	
Mark Pajak	Proposed: Erica McAlister, 2nd: John Kramer
Peter Boardman	
Vicky Burton	

Members Elected 2012

Chris Spilling

Mick Parker

Chairman's thanks to hosts and formal closing of the Annual General Meeting

After thanking all at the Natural History Museum for facilitating this meeting, Martin brought the AGM to a close at 14:55.

John Kramer, Secretary

Forthcoming Field meetings 2014

Please note that whilst Roger Morris has resigned as Field Meetings Secretary, this comes into effect in Summer 2014. There is a need for a new organiser for the summer field meeting but spring and autumn meetings will continue to be organised by Roger. Anybody interested in taking on the job should contact Martin Drake. A brief synopsis of the job follows the details of this year's meetings (*actually I've put it prominently right at the start of the Meetings section so you don't miss it - Ed*).

Spring Field Meeting 2014

Swanage 16-18 May 2104

This meeting has been organised to provide an opportunity to visit Studland Heath and the many other excellent habitats in the vicinity. We will be staying in guest houses. Anybody interested in joining us should let Roger Morris know (roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com). I will assemble a list of possible guest houses but participants will be expected to book their own accommodation.

Summer Field Meeting 2014

Bangor, North Wales 5-12 July

I have booked 24 rooms in Halls of Residence on the Friffoedd site in Upper Bangor. Two options are possible: catered (half Board) or self-catering. I have booked 16 catered rooms and 8 self-catered rooms but can adjust this as required. Once rooms have been finally confirmed as self-catering it will not be possible to change (but there may be flexibility up to two weeks before the meeting). We have a work room within this part of the campus.

Costs:	
Half Board	£365.00
Self catering	£210.00

Provided I get bookings in good time it should be possible to increase the numbers of rooms booked. So, early booking would be helpful. A deposit of £50.00 is sought – payable to Dipterists Forum. Please send to Roger Morris, 7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 1QE.

That's the last of the meetings organised by Roger Morris, future meetings will depend upon our electing someone to take on the post of Field Meetings Secretary

Autumn Field Meeting 2014

Possibly Sherwood Forest

At this stage, various ideas are under consideration and no final decision has been taken. Please watch the DF website for announcements. Details will be circulated to those who regularly attend, and to those who have expressed an interest in attending.

Annual Meeting 2014

Carlisle 22-23 November

More details in the next Bulletin

Events Calendar 2014

Dipterists Forum & selected meetings

21-22 February 2014, DF **Identification Workshop** 'Bibioniidae, Sepsidae and Scathophagidae'. Preston Montford Field Studies Centre, Shrewsbury. Details on FSC website: http://www.field-studies-council.org/prestonmontford/

15 Feb 2014, The Devon Fly Group Training Day in Fly Families. Devon Wildlife Trust's Woodah Farm centre, in the Teign Valley near Doddiscombsleigh, at SX847867. Probably starting 10.00 (to be finalised). £3 donation to Trust for use of the centre requested. Contact Martin Drake (01460 2206650, martindrake2@gmail.com).

26th March 2014 RES Scottish Regional Meeting on Forensic Entomology, Perth Museum & Art Gallery, Perth, PH1 5LB Convenor: Jenni Stockan jenni.stockan@hutton.ac.uk

22-23 March 2014,10.30-16.00 each day. Identifying Craneflies. Tutor John Kramer. Pelham-Clinton Building, Dinton Pastures, Hurst, Reading. See: www.benhs.org.uk

29 March 2014 - BENHS Annual General Meeting and Presidential Address. University Museum of Natural History, Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PW. See: www.benhs.org.uk

16-18 May 2014 DF **Spring Field Meeting** to Swanage. Chance to visit Studland Heath and other good areas. Contact Roger Morris (7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire, email: roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com

30 May - 01 June 2014, Hoverflies, Soldierflies and Robberflies - an Introduction to Diptera. Tutor: Martin Harvey. Flatford Mill Field Studies Centre, Suffolk. For details and booking see: http://www.field-studies-council.org/

7 June 2014 Oxford Festival of Nature including Bioblitz. Could local Dipterists help?. Contact judy.webb@virgin.net

7- 8 June 2014, Two-day BENHS Regional Meeting at Manchester Museum. Organiser: Claudia Watts (regmtgsec@benhs.org.uk).

23-29 June 2014, NATIONAL INSECT WEEK See: http://www.nationalinsectweek.co.uk/

27 June 2014 Perivale Wood Bioblitz. Could local Dipterists help? See www.amentsoc.org

5-12 July 2014, DF **Summer Field Meeting to Bangor**, N Wales. Accommodation in University halls of residence. Contact Roger Morris (7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire, email: roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com

3-8 August 2014, RES 10th European Congress of Entomology, York. See: http://www.royensoc.co.uk/meetings

10-15 August, 2014, 8th International Congress of Dipterology in Potsdam, Germany. See Congress website at www.icd8.org

September 2014, Two-day BENHS Regional Meeting in Yorkshire. Organiser: Claudia Watts (regmtgsec@benhs.org.uk).

Autumn 2014 – DF **Autumn Field Meeting**. Possibly Sherwood Forest. At this stage, various ideas are under consideration and no final decision has been taken. Contact Roger Morris (7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire, email: roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com

October 2014, AES Annual Exhibition and Trade Fair, Kempton Park, London Sunbury-on-Thames, TW16 5AQ, UK. DF will have a publicity stand and publications for sale. See www.amentsoc.org

1 November 2014 Worcestershire Entomology Day.

8 November 2014 BENHS Annual Exhibition and Dinner

22-23 November 2014 **Dipterists Day and AGM**, Tullie House Museum, Carlisle.

BENHS Dinton Pastures Open Days in the Pelham-Clinton Building, Hurst, Reading. Open 10:30-16:00 on second and fourth Sunday in each month except April to September when only on the second Sunday of each month (except for August when there are no Open Days). We encourage you to bring along your pinned flies and use the Diptera Collections and library for identification. Other Dipterists are usually present meaning good chat and assistance with identifications may be possible. The grid reference for Dinton Pastures is SU 784718, turn left off the B3030 driving North from Winnersh. The site is about 15 minutes walk from Winnersh station, which has trains running on a half-hourly service from Reading and Waterloo. See: www.benhs.org.uk

The Northants and Peterborough Diptera Group hold meetings every weekend from end of April until sometime in September/October. Contact John Showers on: showersjohn@gmail.com

The Devon Fly Group will be holding regular field meetings throughout the year. Contact Martin Drake (01460 2206650, martindrake2@gmail.com).

2015

2-4 September 2015 RES Ento '15 Annual National Science Meeting and International Symposium **"Insect Ecosystem Services"** Venue: Trinity College Dublin

Symposium

Biological Records Centre

We are pleased to announce a symposium to mark the 50th anniversary of the Biological Records Centre. We hope that you will join us in celebrating the rich and inspiring legacy of biological recording in Britain and Ireland. The symposium will review the causes of change in species distributions and consider the opportunities for biological recording which will be presented by scientific and technological developments.

The symposium will be held in Bath from 27th to 29th June 2014 and will be combined with a field visit to Salisbury Plain. I hope you can keep these dates free. We will circulate further details as they develop, including financial support to help recording scheme organisers attend.

(*Note this was circulated to Recording Scheme Organisers only - ed*)

David Roy, Head of Biological Records Centre

Conference

National Forum for Biological Recording

10th to11th (+12th) April 2014

Habitat - what is it and why do we need to know? Derby Conference Centre, see http://www.nbn.org.uk/Events/Events-and-Training.aspx. There's a field trip on Saturday 12th too, a good opportunity to meet up with other groups like Riverflies, Dragonflies, Botanists, Conchologists etc. Register your interest with John Newbould at johna72newbould@yahoo.co.uk

International

8th International Congress of Dipterology

Potsdam, Germany, 10-15 August 2014

See the full page notice in Bulletin #76. Final applications were due in by February 2014 so this notice simply serves as a reminder to those who have booked.

And now ...

Quizzes

I am utterly useless at quizzes. At the last one I think I only got one question right out of 60. And memorably at one quiz, I gave the correct answer, rejected because it was not that given in the source book used by the quiz master.

Of course, I blame the futility of the questions. How am I supposed to know 'in which year was Felicity Flatbottom thrown into a duck pond' AND, for a bonus point, 'for what was her 13th husband famous for?' Perhaps throwing her in the duck pond. Even the theme 'science' raises no hope; 'How long did it take Felicity Flatbottom to empty the duck pond with a bucket'.

Coincidence or not, at Christmas I was given a book titled *1,339 facts to make your jaw drop*. Ha. I now know that it would take 1.2 million mosquitoes, all sucking at once, to completely drain the human body of blood. Has anyone carried out the macabre experiment to prove this 'fact'? Is the human body surface large enough to accommodate so many mosquitoes all at once? Would not it be very impractical to suck out the last pint? Size of mosquito and size of human guinea pig surely has some bearing on the result.

Did you know that a midge beats its wings at 62,750 times a minute? Who's counting at this speed? Stop watch, 'set', 'go'. What if the midge has a hang-over from a night out on fermented nectar, or blood for that matter?

Now here is a fact new to me. '**No more than 2 flies are allowed by law in any public toilet at one time in China**'. The solution, surely, is to make the toilets bigger, rather than have long queues of muscids waiting with their legs crossed. Anyway, who polices this, a commune asild or a comrade big hairy spider? Perhaps every toilet has an officially approved fly swat, or rolled up copy of the *Shanghai Times* to thwack any unlawful number of flies, leaving just two But I mock not, for in my youth it was one's civic duty to clout ALL *Musca domestica* as the scourge of civilisation: fortunately I missed a few, so it not quite extinct.

I cannot recall the year in which Linnaeus described *Syrphus ribesii* (more strictly, 'published'). However, I suspect that when Felicity Flatbottom gets round to naming a blood-sucking midge with incredibly fast beating wings, only known by specimens swatted in a Chinese toilet, as excess to lawful assembly, the date will be very memorable, providing, that is, that it gets into the national media and in response I produced an '**And Now…**'.

Alan Stubbs

Contributing Bulletin items

Text

1. Articles submitted should be in the form of a word-processed file either on disk (3.5", CD or USB Flash), via E-mail which should have the phrase "DF Bulletin" in the Subject line **or placed in the appropriate Dropbox, details of which are emailed out by the editors to committee members (others please enquire)**. 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 (or pdf) 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. The document must be A4.
4. **Do not** use "all capitals", underlining, blank lines between paragraphs, carriage returns in the middle of a sentence or double spaces.
5. **Do not include hyperlinks in your document.** Since they serve no purpose in a printed document and the editor has to spend time taking them out again (the text is unformattable in DTP if it has a hyperlink attached), documents containing hyperlinks will be sent back to you with a request for you to remove them. There's a guide on how to remove Word's default hyperlink formatting at https://www.uwec.edu/help/Word07/hyperlinkfor.htm
6. Scientific names should be italicised throughout and emboldened only at the start of a paragraph.
7. Place names should have a grid reference.

Illustrations

8. Colour photographs are now used extensively in the Bulletin, they appear coloured only in the pdf or on the covers.
9. Please include all original illustrations with your articles. These **should** be suitably "cleaned up" (e.g. removal of partial boxes around distribution maps, removal of parts of adjacent figures from line illustrations) but please do not reduce their quality by resizing etc. .
10. 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 file'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.
11. **Powerpoint** files may be submitted, they are a useful means of showing your layout and pictures are easily extracted.
12. Pictures contained within Word files are of too low quality and cannot be extracted for use in the Bulletin.
13. Line artworks are also encouraged - especially cartoons
14. 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, although the print quality from Autumn 2009 onwards gave excellent B&W results.
15. 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.
16. Due to the short time-scales involved in production, the editors will not use any pictures where they consider there to be doubt concerning copyright. **Add your personal details to the metadata of the picture**, guidelines to this in Bulletin #76.

Tables

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

When to send (deadlines)

Spring bulletin

19. Aims to be on your doorstep before the end of February, the editorial team has very little time available during January and so would appreciate as many contributions as possible by the middle of December; the deadline for **perfect copy is the 31st Dec**, it will be printed then distributed in late February. Please note that the date for contributions is now earlier than for previous Bulletins.

Autumn bulletin

20. 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 the Field Meetings organisers 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

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

Cranefly News

Dipterists Forum Cranefly Recording Scheme

For Superfamily Tipuloidea & Families Ptychopteridae & Trichoceridae

Newsletter No 27 **Spring 2014**

Editor: John Kramer Layout: John Dobson

Nigrotipula nigra (Photo G. Calow)

Notice

Cranefly Workshop Spring 2014

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

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

Times: 10.30am - 4.00pm each day.

See BENHS website for more details.

Field Work

Records from 2013

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

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

Prionocera pubescens in Highland

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

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

Left:
Prionocera larva

Above:
Prionocera anal disc showing spiracles

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contents

Inner clasper

Tergite 9

Prionocera pubescens

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

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

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

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

Obituary

Leonard Kidd

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

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

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

In the Footsteps of Audcent

Part II: Shapwick

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other Audcent firsts:

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

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Acknowledgements

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

John Kramer

New Leicestershire Records

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

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

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

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

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

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

The record is a brief one. It simply says:

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

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

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

John Kramer

Reference

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

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

Table of Cranefly species recorded at Shapwick Heath NNR

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

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

Workshops 2013

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

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

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

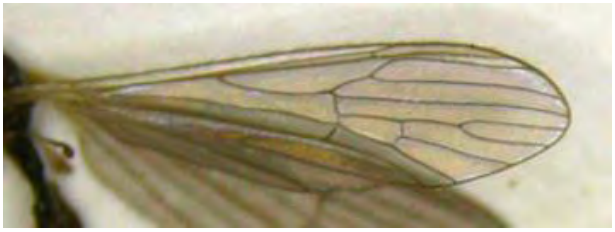
Identification Problems - Look-Alikes

Crypteria* v *Neolimnophila

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

Antenna: *Crypteria limnophiloides*

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



Wing: *Crypteria limnophiloides* - Rs bowed

Wing: *Neolimnophila carteri* - Rs straight

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

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

The first British Records seem to be as follows:

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

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

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

There are the following numbers of records known to me:

Crypteria limnophiloides: 218 records (Nb).

Neolimnophila carteri: 40 records (RDB 2)

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

John Kramer

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

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

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

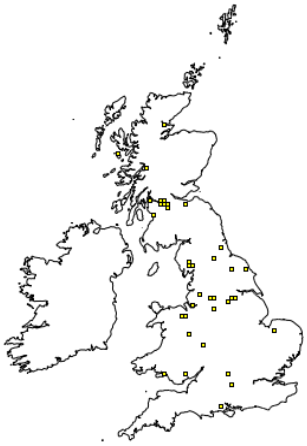
The other Diptera present include *Campsicnemus alpinus, Euphylidorea meigenii* and *Tipula melanoceros*. One male and five females of the *Limonia* were taken over the period 4th to 11th September 2013.

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

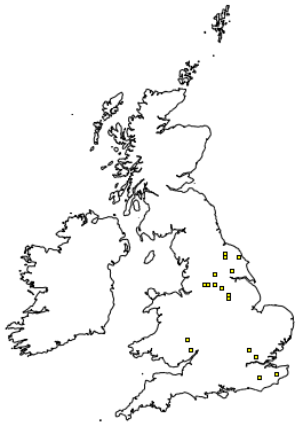
Keith Alexander
keith.alexander@waitrose.com

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

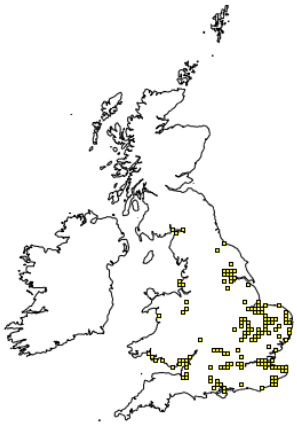
Prionocera pubescens



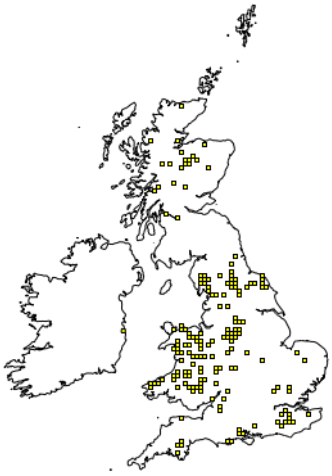
Neolimnophila carteri



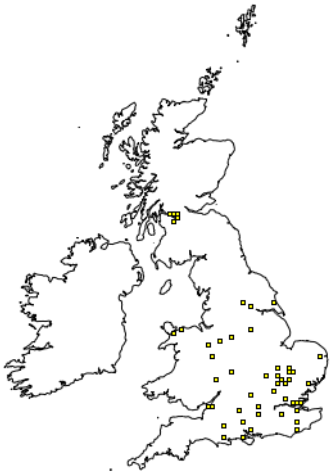
Neolimnophila placida



Nigrotipula nigra



Crypteria limnophiloides



Tipula peliostigma

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

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

Fungus Gnats Recording Scheme

Newsletter 7 Spring 2014

It was reported in the previous newsletter No 6 (Spring 2013 Bulletin) that a review of the conservation status of all species had been undertaken as part of a Review of Diptera statuses according to the latest IUCN criteria, organised by Buglife on behalf of Natural England. This review suggested trends by comparing numbers of hectads recorded for each species up to 1989 with those from 1990 to 2011. Its conclusions, which have yet to be adopted, result in a significant number of status changes from those proposed by Falk & Chandler (2005). These involve both changes to threat category and assigning statuses to species previously treated as Data Deficient, while the latter category is suggested for recently added species of uncertain status.

Results of Field Meetings in 2013

There were unusually five Dipterists Forum field meetings in 2013, four of which I attended. The summer meeting at Lancaster coincided with my trip to Dundreggan. It was, however, a slow start for the gnats, with a cold spring followed by hot and dry conditions in the summer, so significant numbers were not experienced until the September meeting in Scotland.

Numbers of both individuals and species were low on the earlier meetings. The number of species recorded were: Rockingham Forest, Northamptonshire 17-19 May (45), Eastbourne, Sussex 7-9 June (48), Lancaster University 6-13 July (29), Kingussie 7-14 September (135), Dorking, Surrey 16-20 October (94). The combined total for the four English meetings was only 144 and for all five meetings it was 203.

Remarkably, however, the two autumn meetings each produced a species new to Britain and these are dealt with separately below.

Northamptonshire: Nothing uncommon was recorded during this meeting, but it was useful to have records from a previously under-recorded area. The most productive time was the morning spent at Geddington Chase (SP9084 and SP9194), with 31 species recorded, mostly near a stream. Grafton Park Wood (SP9381) produced 16 species.

Eastbourne: The most productive site was High Wood (TQ7109), where 32 species were recorded from the vicinity of a stream enclosed by steep slopes, where they were sheltering among undergrowth and around dead wood. The small copse near Birling Gap, which had been teeming with gnats on the 2011 autumn meeting, was on this visit gnatless with only *Leia fascipennis* recorded. Park Wood, which produced an extensive list in 2011, yielded only 7 species on this occasion.

Lancaster: Gnats were recorded at 15 sites thanks to the efforts of John Kramer, Alan Stubbs, Rob Wolton and Andrew Halstead. The most abundant species was evidently *Coelosia flava*, which was recorded at twelve of these sites, sometimes in numbers and it was the only mycetophilid species found at some of them. The uncommon northern species ***Mycomya vittiventris*** was found at Dalton Park Wood (SD545747) on 1 July.

Kingussie: Here the party was split between 7 at the Star Hotel in Kingussie, and a NHM group of 6 staying in a cottage outside the town. The results presented here relate to the Star group, and included contributions by Alan Stubbs, Roger Morris. and myself. The NHM group included Vladimir Blagoderov, whose vigorous sweeping obtained an excellent catch of gnats, and Erica McAlister, so their results are awaited with interest.

Recording was hampered by wet weather on some days and gnats were still sparse following earlier drought in some of the areas visited. To have already identified 135 species from this week, including *Exechiopsis forcipata* new to Britain, is therefore quite pleasing and has exceeded expectations during the meeting. Most of those recorded were widespread, with just a few of the Scottish specialities. Among those *Brevicornu fennicum* was found at Sluggan (NH8721), *Mycomya shermani* at Coylumbridge (NH9110) and *M. trivittata* at Laggan Forest (NH5690) and Inshriach Forest (NN9405). A more significant find was ***M. denmax***, only previously known in Britain from two Scottish males (Tokavaig Wood, Skye 1991, Glen Lochay, Perthshire 1997). Alan Stubbs caught a third male on a detour to Bochel Wood (NJ228235) near Tomintoul on 13 September.

Tarnania dziedzickii was found at Uath Lochans (NH8302) on 9 September. This has a scattered distribution in the west of Britain, with some records from caves, so may be under-recorded due to lack of recorder effort in such situations; with the most recent previous records from Swineholes Wood, Staffs (1997) and the Mar Lodge Estate in Aberdeenshire (2000).

A surprising find was ***Anatella bremia***, of which one male was swept along the wooded riverbank immediately east of Nethy Bridge (NJ0121). This is the first post-1990 record of this species, as all British records are from the 1980s Welsh wetland surveys, with the exception of a more recently discovered older museum specimen from the Isle of Arran (1953). There is no information on the habitat of the latter record. The Welsh sites include water meadows, floodplain fens and the floating fen at Llyn Hafodol, eroded peat hags and *Molinia* bog. As the biology

is unknown, its occurrence at this rather different Scottish site cannot yet be explained.

Dorking: A wide range of sites was visited and there were reasonable numbers of gnats at several of them. Two visits to Ockham Common on 18 and 20 October together produced 47 species, and 44 species were recorded at Headley Heath. At the latter site, most gnats were concentrated among the dense tall bracken in the birchwood fringes, and this is where *Mycomya danielae*, which is new to Britain, was found. Also at this site numbers of gnats were among visitors to a large clump of ivy in flower by the entrance. Swept from the ivy were *Bolitophila saundersii*, *Synapha vitripennis*, *Cordyla crassicornis*, *C. fissa*, *Exechia cincta*, *E. fusca*, *Mycetophila ocellus*, *M. tridentata* and *Sceptonia membranacea*. It could not be confirmed whether feeding at the flowers by these species was taking place.

Following rain on Saturday afternoon, we visited oak woodland at Friday Street, where the bilberry ground cover provided shelter for gnats and 38 species were recorded, suggesting that a finer day could have been quite productive there. The visit to Ockham Common on 18 October concentrated on the area around Bolder Mere (TQ0758), where *Exechiopsis seducta* was a surprising find. *Ditomyia fasciata* was also found there, as well as at Gomshall alderwood (TQ0947) on 17 October.

Exechiopsis seducta was only known in Britain from two sites nearly 6km apart within the same hectad (Elveden Centerparc 2008; Brandon Country Park 2010, 2011) (Gibbs 2009, Chandler & Perry 2011). Both of those sites adjoin Thetford Forest, a largely coniferised area of former Breckland. This may be a recent arrival in Britain, so its occurrence in a part of Ockham Common that is mainly pine woodland is of some interest.

After the rest of the party had departed on the Sunday morning, I sampled the area near the 19th century semaphore tower (TQ0858) where mature chestnut woodland, with a good amount of fallen dead wood, produced 30 species, including two males of ***Mycetophila sublunata***. The latter species was also recorded at Nower Wood SWT Reserve (TQ1954) on 17 October and at Ranmore Common (TQ1250) on 18 October, one male at each site. These are the first records since it was added to the British list from 5 sites in 2011, so it was interesting to see that it is clearly well distributed in Surrey.

Three gnats new to Britain in 2013

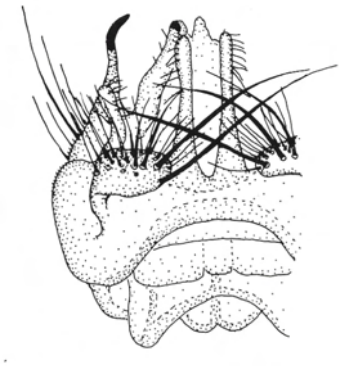
These further additions to the British list are all based on single specimens, like the five reported a year ago. As reported above two were discovered on field meetings. It was interesting to find a third, *Epicypta fumigata*, among material from Devon submitted by Rob Wolton.

Again it isn't possible to determine if they are recent arrivals or overlooked natives, and the status of these and the species newly reported in Newsletter 6 can presently only be treated as Data Deficient. There have been no further records of those five but there have been new records in 2013 of some other recently added species, including *Exechiopsis seducta* and *Mycetophila sublunata*, both reported above from the Surrey field meeting. The others in this category, of which records are reported below, include *Exechiopsis davatchii*, *Greenomyia mongolica* and *Phronia forcipula*.

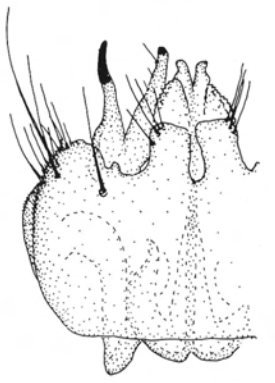
Mycomya (S. *Mycomya*) *danielae* Matile, 1972

One male was swept from bracken in birch woodland at Headley Heath (TQ2053), Surrey on 17 October 2013. This species was described from a single male collected in Savoie, France in 1970 (Matile 1972). It has since proved to be a Holarctic species that is widely distributed in Europe, from Scandinavia to Rumania, across to the eastern Palaearctic, and is widespread in Canada, extending as far south in North America as Arizona and New Mexico (Väisänen 1984. Kjærandsen *et al*. 2007). It might therefore be considered surprising that it has not previously been recorded in Britain. Further recording in Surrey will be necessary to determine if it is established in that area.

The thorax is yellowish with brown stripes, the abdomen brown and narrow yellow markings at the margins of the tergites, and the legs yellow. It runs in the key by Hutson *et al*. (1980) to *M. trivittata*, since it has vein Sc interrupted before the costa, but the male genitalia are quite different. They are very distinctive, as illustrated below, with the median tergal processus divided into two long slender lobes, while the lateral appendages are curved towards each other and bear strong bristles.



Mycomya danielae, male genitalia tergal view (from Väisänen 1984)



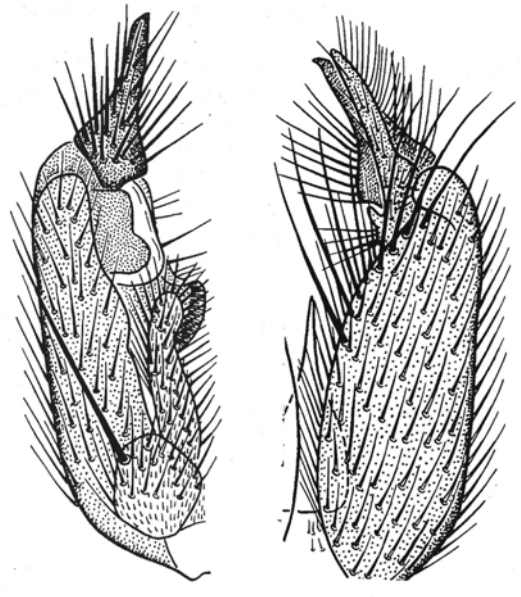
Mycomya danielae, male genitalia sternal view (from Väisänen 1984)

Exechiopsis (S. *Exechiopsis*) *forcipata* (Lackschewitz, 1937)

One male was found at the west end of Loch Morlich (NH8509) on 8 September 2013. It was swept along a wooded stream, running close to the road, near where it flowed into the Loch.

The thorax is yellowish with brown dorsal stripes, abdomen brown with yellow hind margins to tergites 2-4, and legs yellow.

It is best recognised from the structure of the male genitalia, with the gonostylus comprising narrow lobes and a series of strong marginal bristles on the gonocoxites.



Exechiopsis forcipata, male genitalia: left, dorsal view; right, ventral view (from Zaitzev 2003)

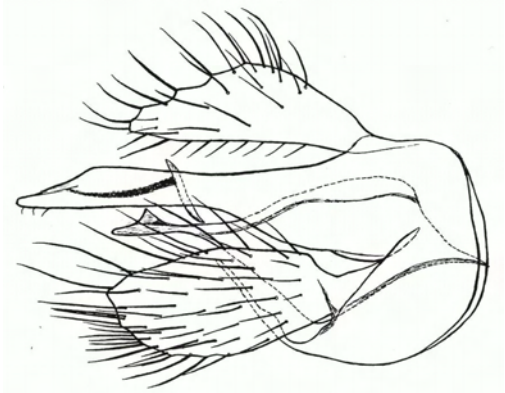
This too is a widespread species, mainly northern in Europe with records from Scandinavia, Germany, Poland and Austria, and in Russia from Karelia, the Altai and the Far East Primorye region (Zaitzev 2003). Occurrence in Scotland is therefore not unlikely.

Epicypta fumigata (Dziedzicki, 1923)

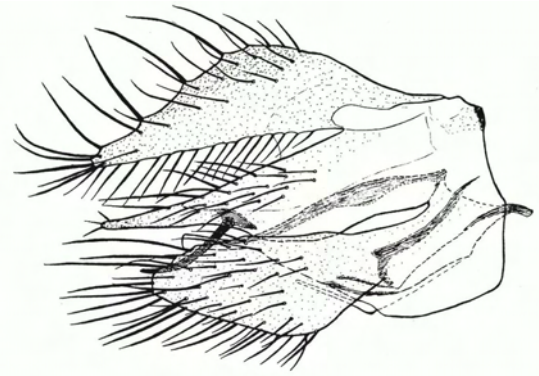
One male was found at Rutleigh Wood (SS521009), Devon by sweeping carried out by Rob Wolton in the period October to November 2013. Rutleigh Wood is a large (about 50 hectares) ancient semi-natural wood, some 1.25 km from his study hedge at Locks Park Farm (see comments in Newsletter 6). The wood is mainly oak dominated, on acidic soils, but with extensive areas of wet willow woodland, and alder carr on the thin alluvial plain alongside the River Lew, that forms the southern boundary. The actual area sampled is called Parsons Wood, being glebe land (Rob Wolton pers. comm.).

Epicypta fumigata is black bodied, with yellow legs and is externally very similar to *E. aterrima* (Zetterstedt, 1852). Like all *Epicypta* species it has a pair of long bristles on the second abdominal sternite. The other British species *E. limnophila* Chandler, 1981, which is smaller and occurs in wetlands, has the abdomen partly yellowish brown, only dark dorsally. These two species are certainly distinguished only by the male genitalia, in which the lateral lobe of the gonocoxites in *E. fumigata* is distinctly longer than the cerci and with an angular truncation apically, while in the other British species it is evenly tapered apically and not exceeding the cerci in length (see lateral views). The parameres, as seen in the ventral views are also angularly truncated apically in *E fumigata*, but with a slender apically rounded apical portion in *E. aterrima* and in *E. limnophila*

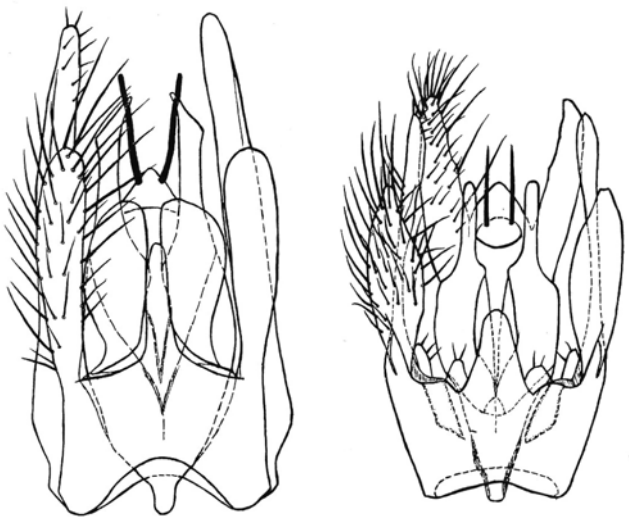
Epicypta species have the genitalia contracted into the end of the abdomen and it is usually necessary to extrude the genitalia, most readily accomplished with specimens preserved in alcohol, in order to determine the sex of specimens. It is therefore possible that undissected dry specimens of *E. fumigata* could have been determined as *E. aterrima*. However, *E. aterrima* is widespread in Britain and this is the first British specimen recognised to be *E. fumigata*, so it would appear to be much less common even if previously overlooked.



Epicypyta fumigata, male genitalia, lateral view (from Chandler 1981)



Epicypyta aterrima, male genitalia, lateral view (from Chandler 1981)

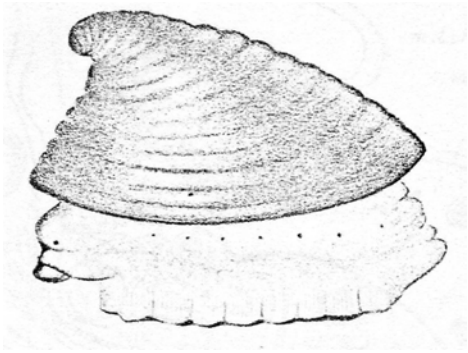


Epicypta male genitalia ventral view: *E. fumigata* left, *E. aterrima* right (from Chandler 1981)

Chandler (1981) revised the Holarctic species of this genus, following the discovery that the British species previously identified as *E. scatophora* (Perris) was not that species, which has conspicuously long cerci, but an undescribed species *E.*

limnophila with short cerci like *E. aterrima* and *E. fumigata*. At that time only one Austrian specimen of *E. fumigata* was available for examination, but I have since examined specimens from France, Switzerland and Italy. It is also known from Finland and Sweden and is widespread in Russia across to the Far East (Zaitzev 2003).

The ovoid larvae of *E. aterrima* live on the surface of moist rotten wood within conical black cases of distinctive form (Edwards 1925); Perris (1849) recorded similar biology for *E. scatophora*. Jakovlev (2011) reared *E. fumigata* in Finland from a decayed hazel log bearing the encrusting fungus *Hyphodontia*, but it wasn't recorded whether the larvae were case-bearing. The biology of most other species of the genus is unknown, but is likely to be similar. *Epicypta* is a large genus in the tropics, and Holmgren (1907) described a similar larval case for the Peruvian species *E. ancyliformans* (his illustration of larva and case is reproduced here).



Larva of *Epicypta ancyliformans* (from Holmgren 1907)

Larvae of this genus thus resemble those of *Phronia* in form and those of some species of that genus in constructing protective cases. Pupation takes place within the case, unlike the case-bearing *Phronia* larvae, which pupate in a separate cocoon (Edwards 1925).

Visit to Dundreggan 8-11 July 2013

I made another visit to the Dundreggan Estate to continue recording Diptera there. There had been a dry winter and spring since my September 2012 visit and conditions remained dry, and it was as hot as in the south, during my stay that coincided with the field week at Lancaster.

The streams in the birchwoods arising from the lower slopes were practically dry, the only stream still flowing being the Red Burn (Allt Ruadh) which arose on higher ground. Consequently gnat numbers were low except by that stream, where they were congregating in large numbers. On 10 July I followed the Red Burn beyond the birch- and alder-lined lower slopes as far as a narrow gorge, which had some mature pines nearby, where gnats were also sheltering. I then made a further visit to its lower part on the final day to maximise sampling there.

Altogether 82 species of gnats were recorded, of which 22 were additions to the Estate list to the end of 2012, bringing the total for the Estate to 190.

The additions included *Keroplatus testaceus*, of which two males were found flying along the lower reaches of the Red Burn (NH3214). Scottish records are still sparse for this species, but it has been known from the north since I reared a female from a larva found in 1992 at Amat Forest, West Ross (Chandler 1992). The Amat record was from a larva found in its web on a *Fomes fomentarius* bracket on a birch branch close to ground level. A similar vacated web on a fallen branch on the bank of the Red Burn was considered most likely to have belonged to *K. testaceus*, although no vestige of its cocoon was found.

Mycetophila mohilevensis was the most interesting find during the visit. One male was caught near aspens by one of the dry streams in the birchwood (also NH3214). This is only previously known in Britain from three records from damp broad-leaved woodlands in the Scottish Highlands (Dalnapot, Morayshire 1962; Camusurich Wood, Perthshire 1979; Dinnet Oakwood NNR, Aberdeenshire 1993). It has been reared in Slovakia from the soft polypore *Tyromyces chioneus* (Ševčík 2010)

Other significant 2013 records

Batches of material from diverse localities were received from Ivan Perry (141 species) and Martin Drake (134 species). Ivan noted that he had done less well in numbers of specimens than in previous years, evidently affected by the weather conditions, but had some interesting finds, in particular from Scotland and from his continuing visits to the Warburg Reserve at Bix Bottom, Oxfordshire. Material from Martin was mainly from his local area in the south-west, and he obtained some species new to that region.

Rob Wolton ran Malaise and moth traps in a small copse (SS516023) linked to the study hedge on his farm, and obtained 77 species. Twenty of these were additional to the 139 species trapped at his hedge in 2011-2012. These additions to the Locks Park Farm list included *Brachypeza armata*, *Exechia cincta* and *Sciophila nonnisilva*. This copse is only 1 hectare and is not ancient; oak dominates the canopy, but there are wet patches with alder and willow, as well as birch. The traps were set under an ash tree in an area that was coppiced about 8 years ago.

Geoff Hancock recorded Diptera on the treeless (and sheepless) island of Mingulay in the Western Isles, from 31 July to 3 August. He caught three species of fungus gnats, *Boletina dubia*, *Acnemia nitidicollis* and *Brevicornu nigrofuscum*. The last species was found in numbers and it could be assumed that the females of this genus, that were also caught there, are conspecific.

Batches from several sites examined for Keith Alexander, Martin Townsend and Ivan Wright provided gnat records, some of which are detailed below.

Trap samples of Diptera from a wooded hollow way near Linky Down at Aston Rowant NNR, were sorted by Judy Webb, on behalf of Natural England. These included 103 species of fungus gnats, with several interesting records; 101 species were recorded in a Malaise trap (SU723964) and 14 species caught in bottle traps placed in decaying trees (also in SU7296) added two more. The Malaise trap (photograph below) was set next to a rotting fallen trunk, which became covered with inkcap fungi for one week in the autumn (Judy Webb pers. comm.).

In addition to the significant records highlighted below the catch included *Keroplatus testaceus*, *Brachypeza armata*, *Docosia flavicoxa*, *Leptomorphus walkeri*, *Sciophila thoracica* and *Grzegorzekia collaris*, the last in samples from June to October.

Location of Malaise trap at Aston Rowant NNR (Judy Webb)

In addition to the fieldwork mentioned above, I made two visits to Oxwich Wood on the Gower peninsula and five visits to Bushy Park, Middlesex. Dry conditions prevailing at the latter site were considered responsible for the smaller numbers of individuals and species observed there compared to the visits in 2011 and 2012. An area that I first visited in August 2013, comprising a strip of woodland between Brewhouse Fields and the Longford River, with a good quantity of fallen trees and dead wood, produced interesting finds in other families and invited more attention in 2014.

The following records are noted:

Mycomya collini Cinderford, Gloucestershire (SO634153), 30.viii-5.ix.2013, male (M. Townsend). There are five previous British records scattered in England north to Cumbria and this is a new regional record.

Greenomyia mongolica Minsmere NNR (TM478665), 28.viii.2013, male in sallow and alder carr at edge of a reedbed (I. Perry). Records of this species are still relatively few but it is clearly now widespread.

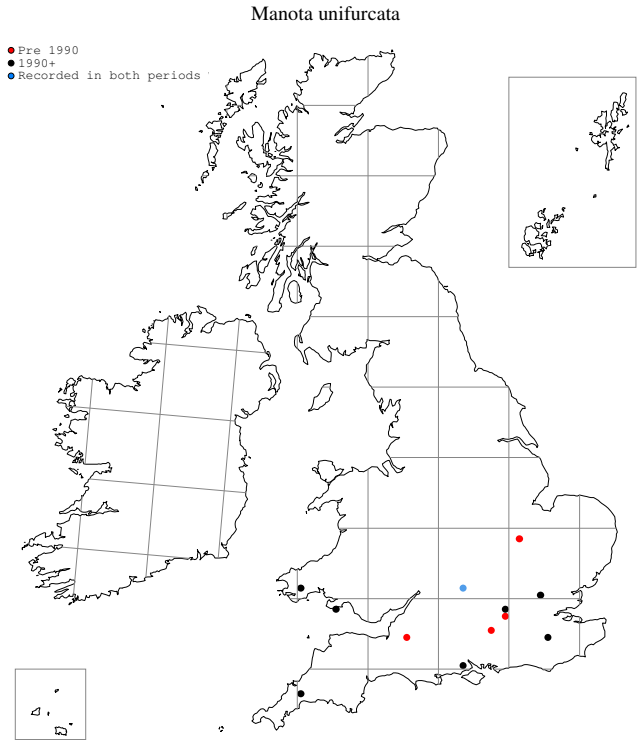
Palaeodocosia flava Warburg Reserve, Oxfordshire (SU715879), 8.vi.2013, male in mixed woodland (I. Perry). Ivan also found it at this site in 2012, which was the first British record since Standish Wood, Gloucs in 2004.

Manota unifurcata Oxwich Wood, Glamorgan (SS5086), 22.vii.2013, male in ash and sycamore woodland on steep slope (P.J. Chandler).

Aston Rowant NNR, Oxfordshire (SU7295), males in Malaise trap catches for periods 24.vi-1.vii and 8-15.vii.2013 (J. Webb).

This very distinctive species, with antennae set high on the head and median veins (M_1 and M_2) interrupted basally (see Kurina 2010 for habitus photograph), is known from scattered records in S England north to Cambs, and in S Wales. It is usually seen singly and in the current review of conservation statuses mentioned above, where Near Threatened status is provisionally retained, I have suggested that it is possibly too secretive in behaviour to be detected more frequently.

It was reared at Windsor Forest in 1967 from rotten beech wood bearing a myxomycete, but the precise larval habitat was uncertain as no early stages were observed. Zaitzev (1990) recorded larvae on decayed birch wood bearing an unidentified greyish white fungal growth; larvae were observed to penetrate the rotten wood with rapid gliding movements.



Distribution map of records of *Manota unifurcata* to end of 2011

Manota unifurcata belongs to a genus that is species-rich in tropical rainforests, in all zoogeographic regions, but it is the only European species of its subfamily. Jaschhof *et al*. (2011) commented on the rarity of records of *Manota* in Europe and North America, and considered the only species recorded from the latter region to be of South American origin. They noted that there are five further described *Manota* species in the eastern Palaearctic and that numerous undescribed species exist in Japan, of which at least five occur in the beech forests of north Honshu.

That only a single species exists in Europe is therefore surprising but, as it is not closely related to other known species, it appears to represent an ancient isolated lineage. Kurina (2010) summarised knowledge of the distribution in Europe of *M. unifurcata*, when he recorded it as new to Estonia. Jaschhof *et al*. (2011) added further records from Germany and Sweden, noting that most records are from old broad-leaved forests. Many records are from Malaise trap catches and both these papers include photographs of trapping sites. Jaschhof *et al*. show a site in Stenshuvud National Park in Sweden, which is in beech-dominated forest with limited ground cover, and also report its occurrence in swamp forests of black alder, both there and elsewhere in Sweden. Kurina's trap in the Alam-Pedja Reserve is situated in the herb-rich edge of mixed forest and resembles the trap location at Aston Rowant.

Anatella ankeli Bewley Down (ST287065), Devon, 30.vi.2013, male in wet broad-leaved woodland (C.M. Drake). The few records are widely dispersed in Scotland and Wales, with one from Somerset, so this one extends the distribution a little further to the south-west.

Exechiopsis (***Xenexechia***) ***davatchii*** Aston Rowant NNR, Oxfordshire (SU7295), male in Malaise trap catch for period 16.viii-30.ix.2013 and male in bottle trap on dead hazel in same

period (J. Webb). Recorded as new to Britain by Chandler & Perry (2011) and hitherto known from four widely scattered sites as detailed in the previous newsletter No 6 (p. 4). The biology of the subgenus *Xenexechia* remains unknown.

Rymosia affinis Warburg Reserve, Oxfordshire (SU715879), 29.ix.2013, male in mixed woodland (I. Perry). Ivan's previous records of *R. affinis* from this site in 2011 and 2012 were the first in Britain since 1980 (see Newsletter 6, p. 2).

Synplasta ingeniosa Burridge Common (ST311058), Devon, 20.viii.2013, male in wet woodland with stream (C.M. Drake). This is widespread in Britain, but generally scarce. There are records for Somerset, but this is the first for Devon.

Mycetophila lubomirskii Linn of Tummel (NN911606), 15.vii.2013, male in wooded ravine (I. Perry). This is new to Scotland, the previous most northerly record being from Sherwood Forest (Pittance Park in Edwinstowe Center Parcs, 13.vii.2008, D. Gibbs).

Mycetophila signata Andrew's Wood Devon Wildlife Trust NR (SX713520), South Devon, male in bottle trap catch for period 24.viii-26.x.2013, secondary oak and birch woodland (K.N.A. Alexander). This is the first record for SW England for this widespread northern and western species, with nearest previous records from Herefordshire and Somerset.

Phronia forcipula Aisholt Wood Somerset Wildlife Trust NR (ST197360), 20.vii.2013, male by stream in broad-leaved woodland (C.M. Drake). The five previously known British sites are in the south-east, Derbyshire and Yorkshire. This was first found in Britain at Langley Park, Buckinghamshire in 2007, then at Wortley Top Forge, Yorkshire (2009), Burton Mill Pond, Sussex and Bushy Park, Middlesex (both 2011), and Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire (2012). It is a small easily overlooked species, so it is unclear whether it is a recent arrival in the country.

Phronia portschinskyi Flitwick Moor NR (TL046352), Bedfordshire, 6.x.2013, male in area comprising wet alder carr and drier birch and oak woodland (I. Perry). As all previous British records are from wetlands in Wales and East Anglia, the carr seems the most likely habitat here.

Acknowledgements

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Peter Chandler

Hoverfly Newsletter
Number 56
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In the previous newsletter I expressed the hope that some feedback from the 7th International Syrphidae Symposium (2013) would be included in this issue, as has been the case with all the previous symposia in the series. I am sorry to say that this has not yet proved possible, but it is my intention that something should appear in the autumn newsletter.

Newsletter No. 55 also gave notice of the formation of the hoverflies Facebook Group. Although some readers were understandably wary of becoming involved in Facebook, this initiative is undoubtedly proving a success as demonstrated by the large number of images that have been posted (even in a sparse year for Syrphids) and the consequent generation of additional records. The group has probably introduced numbers of newcomers to the subject of hoverflies, and the images submitted to the site have the benefit of identification by experts.

Copies of Hoverfly Newsletters issues 1 to 40 can be found on the Hoverfly Recording Scheme website. If anyone would like to receive copies of issues 41 onwards as pdf. documents, please email me and I can send them.

Articles and illustrations (including colour images) for the next newsletter are always welcome. Copy for **Hoverfly Newsletter No. 57** (which is expected to be issued with the Autumn 2014 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 June 2014. The hoverfly illustrated at the top right of this page is a female *Melangyna umbellatarum*.

Hoverfly Recording Update winter 2013-2014

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Roger Morris
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In the last year there have been two further additions to the British hoverfly list (*Eumerus sogdianus* and *Scaeva dignota*, both added by Adam Wright and from the Isle of Wight). These additions immediately make the recent WILDGuide out of date (at least in terms of the species list) and rather complicate matters. It is probably wise to hold on to specimens of both *Eumerus strigatus* and *Scaeva selenitica* for the immediate future so that they can be examined critically if necessary.

Who knows what 2014 will bring! Hopefully it will be rather better than 2013, which many recorders report as disappointing. Our own efforts were rather limited and neither of us managed as much field work as we might have hoped to do. We remain active and have several projects on the go.

A supplement for Stubbs & Falk is desperately needed and is close to the top of our list of priorities. In addition, we have been working on a revised key to *Platycheirus*, using photographs of critical characters. Hopefully both of these items will emerge in the next year. We also understand that the current print run of the provisional atlas has sold out, and rather than reprint it we think there is a case for revising it and then reprinting. We are therefore making an interim call for records.

We had hoped to organise a one-day workshop for recorders this spring, but as time flies by it looks as though that will be delayed. Nevertheless, we will do our best to make a meeting happen and will make announcements on relevant websites (HRS and DF

websites). So please keep an eye on the announcements page of the HRS website.

A good many readers may already be aware that there is now a very active Facebook page (UK Hoverflies). We are very grateful to Stephen Plummer for setting this up. It has been quite a revelation because it has attracted a good number of new recorders and has generated lots of interest.

Linked to the Facebook group, we have started to develop a garden hoverfly monitoring project. Taking account of the difficulties encountered with 'Big Hover Watch' we hope that this will be a bit more flexible. We are extremely grateful to the small band who have trialled the BHW protocol and hope that some will try out the garden monitoring scheme. Details of the proposed protocol are shown below. Do please get involved.

Good numbers of records are arriving and it looks as though the 2013 data will pass the 10,000 records mark by the time this issue is published. These days we generally get around 20,000 records submitted each year, so there is a little way to go.

Our commitment to training has not diminished, but we have been less active this winter than in recent years. Nevertheless, we will be running several beginners' courses between now and April, and have in mind an intermediate course which we hope to run in London. Again, watch the websites and Facebook.

Garden hoverfly monitoring protocol

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Introduction

This project has been developed because there are relatively few means of validating trends in invertebrate abundance. Work by JNCC and CEH using Recording Scheme data shows that ad-hoc biological recording can form a powerful tool for monitoring, but there is a need for more rigorously collected data against which to test trends. In the case of hoverflies, we have two datasets: Jenny Owen's studies of her Leicester garden, and Alan Stubbs' garden monitoring scheme. Jenny has ceased recording but Alan is still very active. This is a good start, but more widely dispersed effort is needed. Reporting can have a powerful effect on conservation policy and political attitudes to wildlife, and it is hoped that we can place hoverflies on a similar standing to butterflies.

Purpose:

- To encourage the development of a community of hoverfly watchers whose cumulative data form the basis for monitoring variations in the abundance of hoverflies across Great Britain and Ireland.
- To establish a monitoring programme that gains in popularity that can be used cumulatively to report on changes in hoverfly abundance, in a similar manner to the approach developed in the RSPB's "Garden Watch" and Butterfly Conservation's transects.
- To develop a long-term dataset to generate the potential for feedback that can be used to assist in reporting on the state of Britain and Ireland's wildlife.

Note: This project will work best by developing a large network of all abilities, with regular new recruits to replace those who cease to record. The objective is very much to develop a long-term dataset which will be particularly valuable to test other data against.

Principles

- This initiative is open to recorders of all abilities. Nobody should be excluded.
- The mechanism for data collection should allow for the difficult species that cannot be taken to species (either because they require microscopic identification or because the recorder has limited experience).
- It should also make provision for people who lack a suitable monitoring area (i.e. garden) and is open to a choice of site – which ideally ought to be readily available for unscheduled visits.

- There is no obligation to record on a particular day. By choosing a site/garden in close proximity to home, it should allow visits when time allows.
- There is a need, however, to make sufficient records to generate meaningful data. At an "ideal" level, a set of records for one day per week is preferred, but gaps are inevitable owing to holidays/bad weather/other commitments.
- Daily visits or multiple visits each week are helpful but not essential – recorders should want to record rather than feeling they have to!
- There is no requirement to take specimens, but we do welcome recorders who wish to make more detailed records.

Technique

- Define a set route around your chosen "patch" (garden/wildlife area)
- Record those hoverflies seen during the course of a walk around the site, noting species and number.
- If you are unsure of the species, record to the taxonomic level you feel comfortable with – Species/Genus/Tribe/Family.
- Where unsure and able to get a photo – take shots and post on Facebook or send directly to Roger Morris (roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com)
- Recording details of the time and weather conditions will help to refine information.
- If the only time you get to record is early in the morning or in the evening please do so – we know relatively little about hoverfly activity at these times of day.

Note 1: Hoverfly activity does change over the day and is closely linked to temperatures. The best time for recording tends to be mid-morning, especially as the spring progresses. However, in very hot weather they may be more active early in the morning or late in the evening.
Note 2: Although many hoverflies will visit flowers, they are not exclusively flower visitors. Many are leaf baskers and some specialise in pollen from grasses and plantains. Developing field craft is part of the process of recording hoverflies and you can expect to see many more as you develop your knowledge of their habits.

Data assembly

- Details of your chosen site need to be logged – we will create a specific site with details of its size and a general description. Initial thoughts are to classify:
  - Urban/rural
  - Garden (small yard, modest - <100m^2, Medium (<300m^2), large <300m^2)
  - Urban park (with wild areas/formal gardens)
  - Wildlife area size <1ha, <5ha, <10ha, 10ha+
- Records should be retained on a spreadsheet using the following headings

Site name	Recorder	Grid ref.	Date	Time	Species	Number	Notes

Site name – if your garden, just keep to the town or street name (no need for house number)
Recorder – your preferred name
Grid Reference – using OS alpha numerical combination (get help from Roger Morris if necessary)
Date – preferably as dd/mm/yyyy
Time – rough time (e.g., 10.30 to 11 am)
Species – use full name please (e.g., *Episyrphus balteatus*)
Number – the count for the species
Notes – anything noteworthy such as a preferred flower. This can be as detailed as the recorder wishes but there is no onus on having to report exact flower visits.

Note: Using Excel you will find that it should be possible to simplify parts of the data entry – you can copy and paste basics such as your name and the site name and grid reference. We need this format as it is the most suited to uplift into RECORDER - quite a lot of time is spent formatting lists. **Please do not** leave gaps between days – these will have to be cleaned out before working with the data.

Polytunnel ton!

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The small polytunnel near Sandy, Bedfordshire, already mentioned in these pages (O'Sullivan and Wolton, 2011), recorded its 100th hoverfly species, *Brachyopa bicolor*, on 2nd June 2013. At just 21 square metres or so, this site might be worthy of some kind of blue plaque – though it would admittedly be rather hard to screw it to the wall.

Meanwhile, in Devon, the newer polytunnel has largely dried up. Rob attributes this to a resident flock of sparrows and other birds after the easy pickings. Next year he is going to net the entrances! A male *Microdon myrmicae* was a nice surprise in June 2011. The nearest known breeding site for this sedentary species is, however, just 200m away. Neither site has yet attained the glory of the railway signal-box at Oughtibridge in South Yorkshire, which, when its door was closed for the last time in May 1983, had accidentally amassed no fewer than 105 hoverfly species (Whiteley, 1987). However, if the vagaries of horticulture allow, who knows what might yet be possible…

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Bedfordshire plans a new book

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A new book on the hoverflies of the county is being planned by the Bedfordshire Natural History Society, with publication expected in about two years' time. If you have any records for the county that have not yet been passed to the County Recorder or to the National Recording Scheme, please send them to the above address, where they will be gratefully received. And if you are planning to visit Bedfordshire in the next two seasons, please do bring your net and let us know what you find. All three British *Callicera* have been recorded here, as well as all the *Brachyopa*, *Neocnemodon* and *Criorhina* species, not forgetting *Mallota cimbiciformis*, *Didea intermedia* and other sought-after hoverflies – so please come and discover more! All observers will of course be acknowledged in the book in due course. For more information, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

The Mythe - 25 years of hoverfly recording

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Background

The summer of 2013 was my twenty-fifth season of recording hoverflies at the Mythe, a small corner of English countryside a five-minute drive from my home. After a couple of years learning to identify the species that turned up in my own garden, I realised that, to make further progress, I needed a convenient, but more natural, site to visit and survey regularly. A 'mythe' is a tongue of land between two converging rivers, in this case the Severn and the Worcestershire Avon. Within this mythe, my chosen site, just north of the town of Tewkesbury, lies almost entirely within the 1 Km grid square SO 8834. This small area includes the eastern bank of the Severn, a tributary stream (the Mythe Brook), a disused railway track (now a Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust reserve), a large fishing lake (which intrudes into the neighbouring 1 Km grid square to the west), a rather inaccessible area of abandoned osier beds, a neglected meadow (which has not been grazed since the foot-and-mouth outbreak of 2001) and a sandstone scarp that lies along the east side of the GWT reserve and also encloses a strip of woodland lining the river as it flows towards the town.

Currently there is very little direct human intervention in the ecology of the site. Occasional scrub clearance in the nature reserve helps to retain open areas along the stony railway track and the adjacent sandstone scarp. The path along the riverbank and a wide strip of the meadow are mown annually to maintain access. Some years ago an attempt was made to eliminate American mink from the vicinity and, since then, there has been a gradual increase in fishing at the lake. The river also attracts anglers.

Although there is nothing overtly special about the Mythe, the varied habitats in close proximity, and the limited impact of human activity, have made this a valuable site for wildlife. Diptera that I have recorded over the years include the Dotted Bee-fly (*Bombylius discolor*), the Ornate Brigadier (*Odontomyia ornata*), the Large Marsh Horsefly (*Tabanus autumnalis*) and an uncommon conopid (*Leopoldius brevirostris*) as well as a wide range of hoverflies.

Over the years I have consistently visited the site at least once a month from April to October, and often more frequently, but I should emphasise that this has been a recreational activity and not a rigorous or carefully planned field study. My work, holidays elsewhere, bad weather, and other interests have inevitably restricted the time I have been able to spend there.

Recording experience

During my first year of recording hoverflies at the Mythe (1989), I found 28 species. This total proved to be typical of my first ten years' surveys (which averaged 28.8 species per year, with a range between 21 species in 1998 and 39 in 1995). After that, experience began to tell and during the decade from 1999 to 2008 I recorded an average of 36 species per year with a range between 27 species in 2001 and 43 in 2002. This increase was assisted by the arrival, in 2001, of *Rhingia rostrata* (which was expanding its range in Gloucestershire) and, in 2002, by successful identification of *Cheilosia ranunculi*, shortly after this new species had been separated from *C. albitarsis*. Through the last five years I have achieved a slightly higher average of 38.6 species per year, but this period includes the cool, wet summer of 2012 when I only saw 28 species, the same number that I had recorded in my first season at the site.

The accumulated total number of species I have recorded from the Mythe grew to 49 after five years of observations, 62 after ten and 78 after fifteen years (by the end of the 2003 season). The rate of discovery of 'new' species has been much less through the last ten years, but at the end of 2013 my personal accumulated total has reached 91.

As I retired on 1 January 2013, and spent the whole summer at home, I was able to make more visits than in the past, and time my activities to take advantage of favourable weather. So, it is no surprise that this year I have recorded 48 species, my highest annual total to date. Rather more surprising is that this total includes two 'new' species (*Melangyna compositarum* and *Pipiza bimaculata*), although it does not include a few species that I would normally expect to see at the site (eg *Cheilosia illustrata* and *Epistrophe grossulariae*).

Throughout the 25 year period of observations the Gloucestershire County Recorder, David Iliff, has supported me by checking and correcting my identifications and suggesting likely species that I might have overlooked. He has also visited the site himself occasionally and has found two additional hoverflies, raising the current overall accumulated total number of species recorded from the Mythe to 93.

Residents and regulars

I have only recorded five species in every year that I have been visiting the Mythe, they are: *Melanostoma scalare*, *Episyrphus balteatus*, *Eristalis pertinax*, *Helophilus pendulus* and *Myathropa florea*. I have seen a further fifteen species in at least 21 years: *Platycheirus albimanus*, *Epistrophe eligans*, *Leucozona lucorum*, *Syrphus ribesii*, *S. vitripennis*, *Cheilosia albitarsis*, *C. variabilis*, *Rhingia campestris*, *Eristalis arbustorum*, *E. nemorum*, *E, tenax*, *Volucella bombylans*, *V. pellucens*, *Syritta pipiens* and *Xylota segnis*. All of these hoverflies are common in Gloucestershire.

There are thirteen species that I have recorded in at least 11 but no more than 20 years: *Baccha elongata*, *Epistrophe grossulariae*, *Eupeodes corollae*, *E. luniger*, *Sphaerophoria scripta*, *Xanthogramma pedissequum*, *Cheilosia illustrata*, *C. pagana*, *C. vernalis*, *Rhingia rostrata*, *Eristalinus sepulchralis*, *Eristalis intricarius* and *Helophilus hybridus*. This group includes *R. rostrata*, a recent arrival which is now seen every year, and the probable migrant *E. corollae*, but it also includes conspicuous species such as *E. grossulariae* and *C. illustrata* (both recorded in 11 years) which I would expect to observe almost every year if they are permanent residents at the site.

A further twenty species have been recorded in at least 5 but no more than 10 years: *Melanostoma mellinum*, *Platycheirus clypeatus*, *P. peltatus*, *P. scutatus*, *Chrysotoxum bicinctum*, *Dasysyrphus venustus*, *Epistrophe diaphana*, *Eupeodes latifasciatus*, *Melangyna umbellatarum*, *Scaeva pyrastri*, *Cheilosia vulpina*, *Chrysogaster solstitialis*, *Neoascia podagrica*, *Riponnensia splendens*, *Helophilus trivittatus*, *Parhelophilus frutetorum*, *P. versicolor*, *Merodon equestris*, *Pipiza austriaca* and *P. noctiluca*. Some of these species are probably under-recorded residents (*M. mellinum*, *C. solstitialis*, *R. splendens*, the *Parhelophilus* and *Pipiza* species). *E. diaphana* and *M. equestris* were not seen at the Mythe in earlier years but appear to have become established there recently. *S. pyrastri* is a recognised migrant and perhaps some of the other species in this group (the three *Platycheirus*, *C. bicinctum*, *E. latifasciatus*, *M. umbellatarum* and *H. trivittatus*) are also migrants, or at least inclined to wander.

Much of the site, including the fishing lake, is subject to periodic flooding. This normally occurs during the winter and early spring, but there was an exceptional summer flood in July 2007. In Hoverfly Newsletter 44 (Spring 2008) I reported the occurrence of an unusually large number of *Helophilus trivittatus* at the Mythe immediately following this event, when very few other adult hoverflies could be found. It now appears that several species suffered marked population crashes as a result of the flood. *Leucozona lucorum*, *Cheilosia albitarsis*, *C. ranunculi* (from 2002 onwards) and *C. variabilis* were all quite common before the event, but have only appeared in low numbers since 2007; *Neoascia podagrica* and *N. tenur* were recorded less frequently in previous years but it may be significant that since 2007 I have only noted *N. podagrica* once (in 2010) and *N. tenur* not at all. The rare soldierfly *Odontomyia ornata* also seems to have been lost, although it was last seen there only seven weeks before the site was inundated.

One-offs and vagrants

There are nineteen species that I have noted in more than1 but fewer than 5 years: *Platycheirus angustatus*, *P. granditarsus*, *Chrysotoxum verralli*, *Dasysyrphus albostriatus*, *Melangyna labiatarum*, *Meliscaeva auricollis*, *M. cinctella*, *Parasyrphus punctulatus*, *Cheilosia impressa*, *C. proxima*, *C. ranunculi*, *C. soror*, *Melanogaster hirtella*, *Neoascia tenur*, *Eumerus funeralis*, *Eristalis horticola*, *Volucella inanis*, *Criorhina ranunculi* and *Xylota sylvarum*.

There are also another nineteen species that I have only seen once. Including the calendar year of each record, these are: *Platycheirus manicatus* (91), *P. tarsalis* (92), *P. rosarum* (09), *Chrysotoxum festivum* (10), *Didea fasciata* (98), *Leucozona glaucia* (01), *Melangyna cincta* (08), *Melangyna compositarum* (13), *Meligramma triangulifera* (89), *Syrphus torvus* (89), *Ferdinandea cuprea* (00), *Eumerus strigatus* (95), *Heringia vitripennis* (03), *Pipiza bimaculata* (13), *P. luteitarsis* (09), *Volucella inflata* (99), *V. zonaria* (06), *Chalcosyrphus nemorum* (09), and *Criorhina berberina* (89).

Some of the hoverflies in these two lists have probably been under-recorded. The smaller *Cheilosia*, *N. tenur*, *M. hirtella* and *H. vitripennis* are obvious candidates. *C. soror* may also have been overlooked in the past but seems to have become more common very recently. The more conspicuous species, such as *E. horticola*, the three *Volucella*, *L. glaucia* and *F.cuprea* were almost certainly represented by genuine individual transients. *C. verralli* has been expanding its range recently; my first capture at the Mythe was also a new county record. *N. tenur* was new to the East Gloucestershire vice-county and the record of *H. vitripennis* was the first in the vice-county for 80 years.

And finally, the additional species recorded by David Iliff are *Epistrophe nitidicollis* and *Melangyna lasiophthalma*.

Absent friends

Even after twenty-five years, there may still be more hoverflies waiting to be found in this very ordinary corner of the countryside. Quite apart from the possibilities provided by continuing climate change and pure chance, there are at least a few obvious absentees from the current list of species recorded at the Mythe. It is likely, for example, that *Anasimyia* occurs at the site; I have glimpsed possible examples there occasionally, and I have recorded *A. transfuga* at similar locations nearby. Other relatively widespread genera not represented in the site list include *Sphegina*, *Orthonevra*, and *Brachyopa*.

I have already, fortunately, ignored my original intention to stop monitoring the site regularly when I had a year with no 'new' species; this happened in 2007 (the year of the summer flood) and again in 2011 and 2012. I now feel inclined to carry on until we have recorded 100 species. The target is in sight!

Hill topping in *Sericomyia*

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Walking between rocky outcrops near the exposed windswept summit of Beinn Mhor, the highest point of South Uist, one of the larger islands of the Western Hebrides, I was surprised to find several *Sericomyia silentis*. That was in August 2012 and at the time I wondered what they could be doing there at some 620m above sea level: I had encountered none on the way up and there was little suitable larval habitat present so high. One I netted and this was a male. Was it, I wondered, an example of hill topping? In the few publications I have to hand, I can find no reference to such behaviour in hoverflies.

Returning to the Hebrides last summer, this time to the Isle of Skye, my wife, dog and I were walking in June along the edge of a high sea cliff edge when we encountered some *Sericomyia lappona* on a heathy knoll, about 200 m above the sea. We settled to watch and photograph them for a while and counted about 6 individuals, apparently all males. They would settle in a sheltered spot, flying up frequently to investigate any other largish insect flying nearby – usually as it happens one of the other males. Although no mating was observed, they gave every appearance of being on the lookout for females also coming to the highest point in the landscape to find mates – classic hill topping behaviour. Below us, about 50m away was a lochan with muddy edges, heavily used as a watering hole by cattle and sheep and much nutrient-enriched as a result (we found a huge leech there). This lochan was, I suspected, where the hoverflies came from, although we did not see any adults there.

Back in England, in mid-August, I climbed to a high point on the north-western corner of Dartmoor, only a few miles from where we live. Here at 530m above sea level, on the ruins of a raised Bronze-age hut circle at the end of a long ridge, I again found *Sericomyia*, this time *silentis*. I was watching them behaving in the same way as the male *lappona* on Skye, when one flew up to investigate a larger than usual insect. A quick and fortunate stroke of my net revealed this to be a male bot fly, *Gasterophilus intestinalis*, the first I had seen. Bot flies are, it seems, well known for hill topping. On my return downhill, I investigated Sourton tor, and here saw a queen wasp in the centre of a ball of males as well as a pair of mating wall butterflies *Lasiommata megera*. As with the bot flies, this butterfly is now very thinly spread across the landscape: the chances of finding a mate are much increased if both males and females fly to the highest point in the landscape and wait for a partner to arrive.

I should be interested to hear of any published accounts or observations of hill topping in *Sericomyia* or other hoverflies.

Sericomyia lappona (photo: Rob Wolton)

Xylota sylvarum and *Xylota xanthocnema*: colour of tibiae

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Some hoverfly genera include pairs of species where a relatively common one closely resembles a scarce one. One such pair comprises the widespread *Xylota sylvarum* and the Nationally Scarce *Xylota xanthocnema*. The key distinction between the two species given in British Hoverflies is the colour of the hind tibiae, the apical half of which is black in the case of *sylvarum*, but yellow (like the rest of the hind tibiae) in *xanthocnema*.

The same distinction is used to separate the two species in the new WILDGuide (Britain's Hoverflies). Use of this character can, as these books indicate, be problematic in the field as the black area on the hind tibiae of *sylvarum* is sometimes only visible from certain angles; from other angles the entire hind tibiae can appear yellow.

The fact that *sylvarum* differs from *xanthocnema* by having this black apical half to the hind tibiae is correct; but our (independent) observations reveal that it is not the whole story: in fact the apical halves of *all three* pairs of tibiae (not merely the hind pair) are black in *sylvarum*, while all three pairs of tibiae are entirely yellow in *xanthocnema*. Knowledge of this should make the task of separating the two species in the field considerably easier, as there would be a fair chance of catching the light sufficiently favourably to see the darkened area on at least one of the six tibiae of *sylvarum*, especially as the front and mid tibiae have reduced golden hairs.

This is not a new observation; the fact that all the tibiae of *sylvarum* have the apical half darkened was used in R L Coe's 1953 key to Syrphidae to distinguish it from *xanthocnema*, and the same is true of two fairly recent European publications (vanVeen 2004 and Bartsch 2009).

These features can be seen in the images below; but what also can be seen in Figs. 1 and 2 are the complications arising from different angles, shade, and perhaps colour rendering from surrounding surfaces.

Fig. 1 *Xylota sylvarum* female (photo: David Iliff)

Fig. 2 *Xylota xanthocnema* female (photo: David Iliff)

A closer look (Figs. 3 and 4) from a different angle reaffirms the points made above but also raises other interesting features:

Fig. 3 *Xylota sylvarum* female hind tibia (photo: John Harper)

a) in Fig. 3 the "shin" of the hind tibia of *X. sylvarum* is actually yellow under the shining golden hairs in the apical half which, if seen square on (ie. from above in the field) could give the impression of a completely yellow hind tibia. Thus using the front and mid tibiae as well would be a useful safeguard against misidentifications. Also they have shorter and less distractingly golden hairs.

b) the hind tibia in Fig. 4 of *X. xanthocnema* shows a dark smudge in the apical half, which at least in this specimen from Wales, could mislead the unwary into thinking that this is a case of a dark apex obscured by golden hairs as cautioned in British Hoverflies.

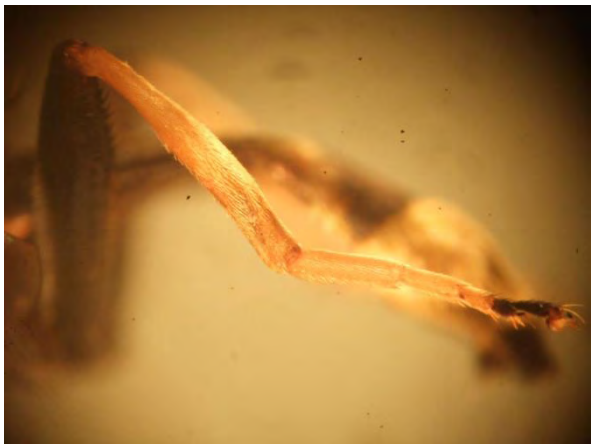

Fig. 4 *Xylota xanthocnema* female hind tibia (photo: John Harper)

An approach to hoverfly identification by a reluctant killer

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I've always been interested in observing wildlife, and for three decades travelled the world as an enthusiastic birdwatcher. Soon, butterflies and dragonflies also became subjects of interest, but I didn't notice hoverflies until I retired from work and spent a lot more time gardening. I found hoverflies colourful, interesting insects and I was surprised how many different species I could find in my garden. As my interest developed, I started looking for them in the woodland each day when I took my dogs for a walk.

When travelling overseas, I had also started taking photographs of butterflies as an aid to identification, and this was my initial, naive approach to hoverfly identification – take a lot of photographs and hope to use these to identify the hoverfly.

It wasn't long before I found that this approach often did not produce the results I'd hoped for, and I quickly learned that, in general, the majority of flies could not be identified to species level from photographs. On the other hand I've never been keen on killing any creature, and absolutely not for the sole aim of discovering what it is, so I found myself in something of a dilemma – I was seeing hoverflies that I knew I couldn't identify from a photograph, but I didn't want to kill them just to find out what they were!

Since my initial interest developed I have submitted all of my records to the Hoverfly Recording Scheme for verification, and having read the comments about collecting specimens in British Hoverflies (A. Stubbs and S. Falk, 2002), and in the section "The Ethics of Collecting" in the recent Britain's Hoverflies WILDguide (S. Ball and R. Morris 2013), I've changed my views and now believe that killing flies for **the purpose of identification and recording** is an acceptable practice. Nevertheless, I wanted to try to maximise the number of species I could identify, whilst killing as few hoverflies as possible. I explained the methodology I followed to Roger Morris when I submitted my records to him, and he suggested I write an article for this newsletter to share this approach with others who may share my reluctance to kill hoveflies en masse.

The approach I have adopted is as follows:

Firstly, I try to identify the hoverfly by sight. In the beginning, when I saw a hoverfly in the field I always photographed it but, as I've gained more experience, I've found I can identify certain species by sight. These include some larger species such as *Volucella* and *Sericomyia* species, *Myathropa florea*, *Cheilosia illustrata*, and smaller distinctive species such as

Episyrphus balteatus, Chrysotoxum bicinctum, Leucozona glaucia and *L. lucorum*, and others.

If I'm not able to identify the hoverfly by sight, I attempt to catch it. I don't possess a net, but I am usually able to catch the fly into a small plastic pot - though, frustratingly some do elude me! Once caught I try to identify the hoverfly in the field with the aid of a hand lens at x10 or x20. If successful, I then release the hoverfly.

If I cannot identify captured hoverflies in the field, I take them home. I usually place the flies in the fridge for a period to slow them down so that I can photograph them. Prior to taking the photographs I consult the identification guides and keys to try to narrow down the species options and then I attempt to capture the diagnostic details using a macro, close-up lens. If I am then able to successfully identify the hoverfly, I release it. Usually I do this in my garden which is adjacent to the woodland where I collect the specimens. If the habitat differs, I may opt to return the fly to where I found it the following day.

If I'm unable to identify the live fly from the photographs, I take my final option and kill it. Initially I used the freezer to kill the fly, but more recently I've bought some ethyl acetate and I now prefer to use that method. Usually I then take more macro photos of the dead specimen.

Finally, if I'm still uncertain, I seek the help of experts either to identify the specimens for me, or to verify my own attempt at identification. I would like to thank my county recorder David Iliff, and also Roger Morris, for helping me in this respect.

Analysis of my 2013 data submission to the HRS shows that I submitted 952 species records. I saw more species than I had seen in previous years - 87 species, of which the vast majority were found in my home patch, the Forest of Dean. I had 20 'lifers', of which 17 were caught, and 11 were subsequently killed for identification. My records show that I killed 56 flies – only 6% of my total records.

In conclusion, I've found that the number of species I've been able to identify has been greatly increased by catching hoverflies whilst, by adopting my multi-step approach, the number I needed to kill to achieve a successful identification was relatively small.

Myolepta dubia - still spreading?

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A male *Myolepta dubia* was taken at Ringstead Downs, West Norfolk (TF700400) on 2 June 2011. The site is a dry chalk valley, grazed by sheep, with surrounding secondary woodland. Access to the woodland is restricted, so it was not possible to check for suitable breeding sites. Unfortunately this record was too late to be included in the latest Hoverfly Atlas (Ball, S.G., Morris, R.K., Rotheray, G.E. & Watt, K. R: Atlas of the Hoverflies of Great Britain (Diptera Syrphidae), Wallingford, Biological Records Centre), but it would appear that this is the most northerly British record to date and the first for a Norfolk site.

Field Meetings Dipterists Forum

Booking Form - for rates see Bulletin

Meeting location and dates			
Name			
Address			
Telephone number			
Mobile phone number			
email address			
Intended stay (please indicate days and dates)			
Dietary requirements	Omnivore		Please tick relevant box
	Vegetarian		
	Vegan		
Allergies (food)			
Deposit			
Signature			Date

Please Note: We will endeavour to accommodate for part-weeks but this is dependent upon available accommodation and the policy of the host venue

Payment details:
Cheques made payable to Dipterists Forum

Deposits
Deposits will only be returnable if cancellation occurs before the published cut-off date for reduced rates.

Please send your booking form and cheques to:
Roger Morris
7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 1QE
Email: roger.morris@dslpipex.com

County Recorders

Scotland
- Dumfries & Galloway ERC
- Fife Nature Records Centre
- Lothian Wildlife Information Centre
- Glasgow
- Highlands & Islands
- North East Scotland
- unassigned
- Outer Hebrides
- Shetlands BRC
- Orkney BRC

Ireland
- CEDAR (Ulster Museum)

North West England
- Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre
- Greater Manchester LRC
- Lancashire Envi. Record Network
- Merseyside BioBank
- rECOrd (Cheshire)
- Isle of Man

Wales
- North Wales (Cofnod)
- Powys & Brecon Beacons
- South-East Wales
- West Wales BIC

West Midlands
- Staffordshire Ecological Record
- EcoRecord (Birmingham & Black Country)
- Herefordshire BRC
- Warwickshire BRC
- Worcestershire BRC
- Shropshire

South West England
- Bristol ERC (BRERC)
- Cornwall & Isles of Scilly - ERCCIS
- Devon BRC
- Dorset ERC
- Gloucestershire Centre for ER
- Somerset ERC
- Wiltshire & Swindon (WSBRC)

This map depicts the UK Local Records Centres arranged by standard UK regions. The dipterists shown are acting as County Recorders. They have good local knowledge, are willing to help out with Diptera enquiries in their region and all have some degree of liaison with their LRCs. The yellow labels indicate hoverfly specialism.

North East England
- North & East Yorkshire EDC
- West Yorkshire
- North East
- Rotherham, Doncaster
- Sheffield
- Barnsley

East Midlands
- Leicestershire & Rutland ERC
- Lincolnshire ERC
- Northamptonshire BRC
- Nottinghamshire
- Derbyshire (closed)

East of England
- Norfolk Biodiversity Info. Service
- Bedfordshire and Luton
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough
- Hertfordshire ERC
- Essex (closed)
- Suffolk

Greater London
- Greenspace Information for G. L.

South East England
- Hampshire BIC (HBIC)
- Thames Valley ERC
- Kent & Medway BRC (KMBRC)
- Surrey BIC (SBIC)
- Sussex BRC (SBRC)
- Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes
- Isle of Wight

Many thanks to everyone who helped with this survey which began with an enquiry to all Local Records Centres and then led on to an investigation of Dipterists known to be working in various areas.

Treat this as a first draft, if you know of workers in areas which seem not to be covered or wish to assist in recording then please contact your LRC (list at www.ALERC.org.uk) and the Bulletin Editors.

Darwyn Sumner

Dipterists Forum

ALERC Association of Local Environmental Records Centres

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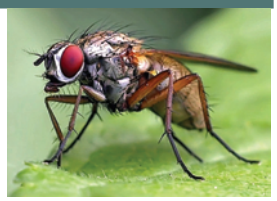

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Whilst all schemes will readily accept records in written form the symbols are used to indicate some of the known (or surmised) methods by which Scheme Organisers may currently receive records electronically. All schemes will accept records in an Excel spreadsheet, add your initials to the filename. If you are sending a list of mixed Families to several schemes simultaneously please add a column with Family names.

Recorder Mapmate Excel Access and other data-bases & tools uploaded to NBN Gateway, faded symbol = historic dataset

iRecord