

After the Larger Brachycera, Hoverflies, Tipulids and the rest, how about Empididae and Dolichopodidae? At the Dipterist's meeting in November one or two brave souls confessed their addiction to these families, and Alan Stubbs led a useful discussion on the way forward. There was general agreement that it was too early to set up a formal Recording Scheme, in view of uncertainty on the level of interest and the possible workload on a few individuals. The best course seemed to be to publicise in the Bulletin the idea of a 'Dollies and Empids' Study Group, to name contact points and to wait and see what reaction this produced.

Roy Crossley in Yorkshire, and I in Hampshire, have offered to get the ball rolling, although I for one do so with some trepidation. I would not want to create the impression that I am particularly well qualified to teach my dipteran grandmothers to suck eggs. All I have is enthusiasm, a copy of Collin and a growing collection of empids (but without, I should guess, any real 'treasures'). I have spent less time with the Dolichopodids, largely because I find the Larger Brachycera and the Empids occupy 105% of my spare time. Much of my local collecting has been done on Ministry of Defence land in the north-eastern corner of Hampshire.

The genus Platypalpus creates, for me, most of the main problems; I have P. annulipes, P. minuta, P. agilis and P. fasciata, with others awaiting more time and effort to identify them. From the subgenus Empis I have E. praevia, E. aestiva, E. planetica, E. nuntia, E. nigripes, E. chioptera and also (from Belgium) E. pulicaria (One m, one f), which Collin describes as 'little known' and 'continental, with female unknown'; it would be interesting to learn if this species has yet been found in the UK. Among other interesting species I have Bicellaria pilosa from the New Forest, Pararhamphomyia tarsata from NE Hants and several Holoclera and Rhamphomyia spp.

As I remarked above, while neither Roy nor I are keen to take on a substantial extra workload, both of us are willing to contribute notes towards an (irregular) Newsletter and to act as contact points for information for onward transmission. We shall have to wait and see how events unfold.

The note below is contributed by Roy Crossley. Please send notes or comments to me or to Roy at the addresses given below. Now let battle commence ... and Good Hunting.

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My interest in empids began in 1983 when I collected a few common spring species on the banks of the river Wharfe near my home in Otley. Here in lower Wharfedale the river has an upland aspect being shallow at normal level with a number of exposed shingle beds. The banks are predominantly sandy silt with a variety of trees and shrubs overhanging the water, and there are also extensive open stretches dominated by grasses and typical riverside herb species including umbels of various kinds.

Later in 1983 I came across Hilara albiventris which in August that year could be swept in large numbers from willows at the river's edge. J E Collin (Empididae, British Flies 6:676), records this species only from Herefordshire, especially the Monnow Valley, and Llangammarch (Brecknock). Clearly this was an exciting find, and spurred on by my beginners luck I have since then collected regularly along the river banks having been joined on a number of occasions by visiting dipterists. In addition to empids I have also collected dolichopodids as the two seem to me to go together rather well and in any case they are regarded as comprising a single superfamily by Chvala in his latest volume in the Fauna Ent. Scandinavica series.

So far 56 species of Empididae and 29 Dolichopodidae have been recorded of which the following are the more notable, the comments in parentheses being distribution notes quoted by Collin.

Tachydromia woodi one specimen, a female, 8.8.85 (Monnow Valley only); Platypalpus subtilis frequent, both by the river and also on a tributary stream (River Monnow only); P. luteolus two females (four specimens only, all from Herefordshire, including Monnow Valley); Leptozeza borealis one male, 24.6.83 (one female, Stirlingshire 1910); Hilara apta; H. biseta; Chelifera aperticauda; C. concinnicauda; Hemerodromia unilineata; H. baetica; Rhaphium fractum one male and one female 20.7.85; R. nasutum two males 20.7.85 R. rivale a single female 23.6.85 but two males have been taken further downstream outside the Otley area, and a single male has been taken in a local forest; Campsicnemus marginatus one female 29.9.84 Teuchophorus monacanthus; T. calcaratus frequent, but so far I have not taken this species elsewhere than on the river banks at Otley although it has been recorded at Burley in Wharfedale a few miles upstream.

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