

Newsletter No. 20

Autumn 2015

Editorial

Martin Drake & Adrian Plant

I often wonder why I spend so much time looking at little black dots that, to a rough approximation, no-one else notices (you, readers, excepted). But I hope the Newsletter does show that we inch forward in our understanding of those black dots, translated here into hectads on maps. Some real patterns are emerging even without the 2/3 million records that the Hoverfly Recording Scheme can boast, but more information is always welcome.

Four new localities for the UK BAP Empidid fly *Empis limata* Collin, 1927 in Worcestershire and Shropshire

Nigel Jones

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Until 1989 *Empis limata* was considered as a possible endemic to Britain, at that time only ever having been recorded from a very small patch of the planet, centred on Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Monmouthshire, with very few known records – in fact just seven records are noted in the JNCC status review of Empidoidea (Falk and Crossley, 2005). Despite quite extensive survey and revision of the central and northern European *Empis* fauna (e.g. Chvála, 1994), *E. limata* was not noted outside Britain. However, Albert *et al.* (1989) and Stark (2000) revealed its presence in the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Baden-Württemberg regions of Germany and Parvu (1998) has reported it from the Mara Basin of Romania. There is also an unconfirmed report of *E. limata* from Hungary (Laszlo Papp, pers. com.). Despite its non-endemicity and in part consideration of the remarkable range-disjunction of the species, *Empis limata* remains of international as well as national conservation importance. It remains a very rarely recorded species in a global context.

In the foregoing context, the discovery of four new localities in Worcestershire and Shropshire, in the last four years, ranks as a noteworthy extension to the known range of *E. limata* in Britain. The records are summarised below.

Mick Blythe collected two males at Bockleton Study Centre in north west Worcestershire (SO590620) on 10 July 2010. The specimens were netted from a small swarm close to a sunny brick wall, coated with espalier fruit trees.

At Coachroad Coppice, Wyre Forest (SO699764) on 31 July 2010, Mick swept a single male from low vegetation surrounded by scrub, bordering a large forest pool.

Mick made a third Worcestershire record from Black House Wood, Suckley (SO733521) on 7 June 2014. Unfortunately, on this day collecting was done in difficult conditions of almost continuous rain, and the specimen ended up in a sample collected from over a wide area, so that precise details of the habitat cannot be defined. Black House Wood is a mixed deciduous/conifer woodland on mainly calcareous soils.

Finally, on 20 June 2014, at Buildwas in Shropshire (SJ637054), Nigel Jones found a single male in a sample collected by sweep-netting across an area that sat mainly on power station ash waste; featuring exposed ash soils, a shallow pool, and vegetated areas on damp soils – all at the edge of a sliver of old broadleaved woodland. Again, precise habitat details cannot be given – an abject lesson in the importance of carefully sampling from well defined areas of habitat!

Unfortunately, although it is terrific news that we now know that *E. limata* exists outside the very restricted area in Britain that it was formerly known from, the new records do not really advance our understanding of this fly's habitat requirements much further. It appears to be present in a range of wooded or tree lined habitats, and from the data available, Adrian Plant (*pers. com*) has speculated that it may be associated with disturbed ground near water and fairly open areas, and that is certainly a feature of the Shropshire site. Finally, these four records at least indicate that *E. limata* flies during mid June – late July.

Acknowledgements

Mick Blyth for quickly responding to my enquiry about his Worcestershire records. Adrian Plant for receiving my *E. limata* specimen and confirming its identity, and also for providing information on European records of *E. limata*.

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Some *Platypalpus* distribution patterns

Adrian Plant

Following after the publication of a key to *Platypalpus* (E&DRS Newsletter No 17, Spring 2012), it seems logical to provide a summary of what we know of the distribution of species in this large hybotid genus. There are currently 16,678 records on the database and although coverage is far from even (see Fig. 1) it is starting to be possible to get a reasonably clear view of the general distribution of a lot of the species.

Many species are very widespread and no less than 33 occur throughout mainland Britain (e.g. the very common species *P. pallidiventris*, *P. longiseta* and *P. calceatus*) with a few reaching as far as Shetland or St Kilda (e.g. *P. nigritarsis*). Although widely distributed, they are not always equally abundant throughout their ranges and might, for example, be attached to some particular locally distributed habitat. A good example of the latter is *P. cothurnatus* which occurs mostly in ancient woodlands and is most frequent in England but also found in old woodlands in Scotland. Only two species are strictly coastal, *P. albocapillatus* and *P. strigifrons*; the latter at least being limited to dune formations and back-dune.

One striking feature of *Platypalpus* is that unlike many Empididae, very few, if any species have distributions that are northern and western; a possible exception being *P. carteri* but for which there are only 10 records in total, from Wales, NW England and the Scottish Lowlands, and some of these records may be questionable in any case. *P. pygmaeus* and *P. tuomikoskii* are restricted to the Scottish Highlands and the acid bog specialist *P. alter* has but one outlying English record. *P. commutatus*, *P. confinis*, *P. ecalceatus* and *P. stigmatellus* are also essentially northern species with very few records from England and Wales. Martin Drake, in his recent article on dolichopodid distributions (E&DRS

Newsletter No 19, Autumn 2014) noted that many acid heath specialists have widespread distributions but are largely absent in the zone between the Wash and the Severn Estuary. This pattern of distribution is infrequent in *Platypalpus* but *P. verralli* and *P. notatus* (Fig. 2) are however reasonably good examples of it, although *notatus* in particular sometimes strays to less acid sites.

Rather more species have southern distributions. *P. albifacies*, *P. cryptospina*, *P. pallidicornis*, *P. ruficornis* and *P. stigma* for example have ranges covering much of England and Wales whereas *P. aristatus*, *P. albiseta*, *P. infectus* and *P. unicus* are more or less restricted to south of the Humber – Mersey line. Some southern species are characteristic of warm lowlands; *P. aristatus* and *P. divisus* for example, have distributions almost exactly bounded by the Spring (May) soil temperature >12°C isotherm and the range of *P. cryptospina* is approximately bounded by the >11°C isotherm. Of course, correlation is not the same as causation; warm soils might be necessary for development of the early stages (so far as we know, all *Platypalpus* larvae inhabit soil), but warmer soils are generally found in dryer areas, so rainfall, or other variables, could be more important factors determining distribution. At least four essentially southern species have strong calcareous associations (Fig. 3) with underlying chalk and/or limestone geology (*P. incertus*, *P. leucocephalus*, *P. leucothrix* and *P. caroli*) and others (e.g. *P. ingenuus* and *P. pulicarius*) seem to favour such localities although they may not be exclusive to them. The strength of the relationship varies, being strict for example in *P. leucothrix*, whereas *P. incertus* occasionally occurs elsewhere. Species with eastern distributions such as the fen specialist *P. pygialis* are not very prevalent and *P. praecinctus* which has a practically Lusitanian distribution in Europe, is, rather bizarrely, almost absent from the west of Britain (Fig. 4).

Platypalpus articulatoides and *P. politus* have curiously disjunct distributions, both being found in the east but also having outlier populations in SE Wales and basal SW peninsular England although there are a few records from the English south coast (Fig. 5). Other apparent disjunctions affect *P. mikii* which is an ancient woodland species and *P. luteolus* which is most often found around pioneer vegetation on the banks of rivers. Both species are present in a band from SE Wales across southern England, and separately in Yorkshire (Fig. 6). It is tempting to suppose that these distributions reflect the collecting habits of certain active empidoid enthusiasts but the map of coverage does not really support such a conclusion.

It is clear from this that much remains to be done to determine the true ranges of British *Platypalpus* species and the understanding of the habitats they use is still in its infancy. They are present and often conspicuously abundant throughout Britain and the majority of species are quite easy to identify so there are few impediments to recorders filling in some of the many gaps.

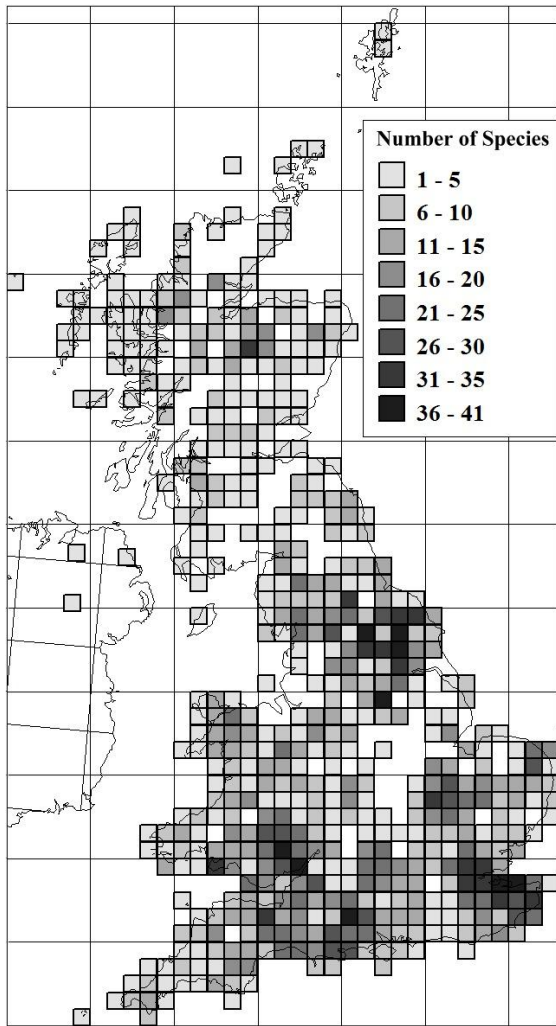


Fig 1. Number of species of *Platypalpus* per 10km square

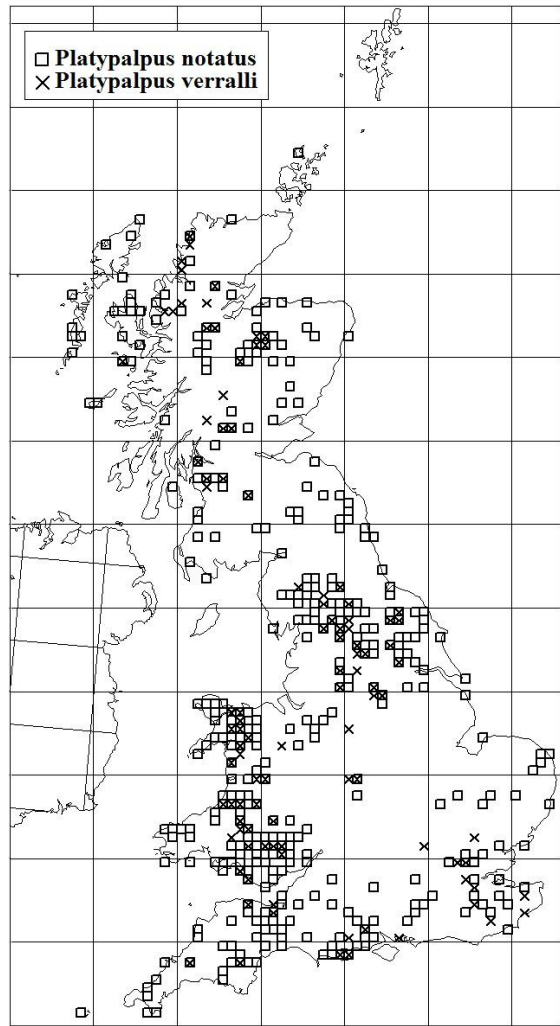


Fig 2. Distribution of *P. notatus* and *P. verralli*

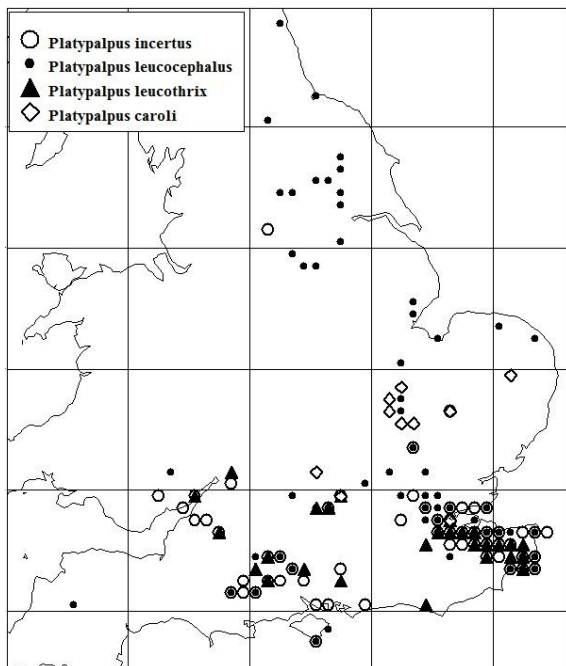


Fig 3. Distribution of *P. incertus*, *P. leucothrix*, *P. leucocephalus* & *P. caroli*

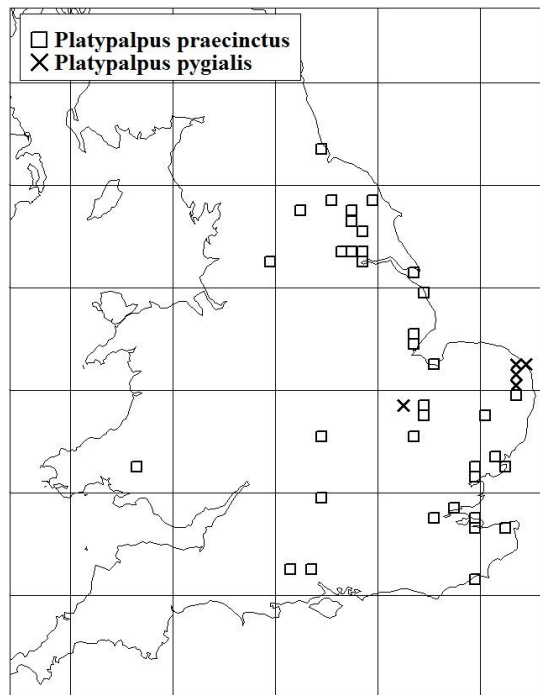


Fig 4. Distribution of *P. pygialis* & *P. praecinctus*

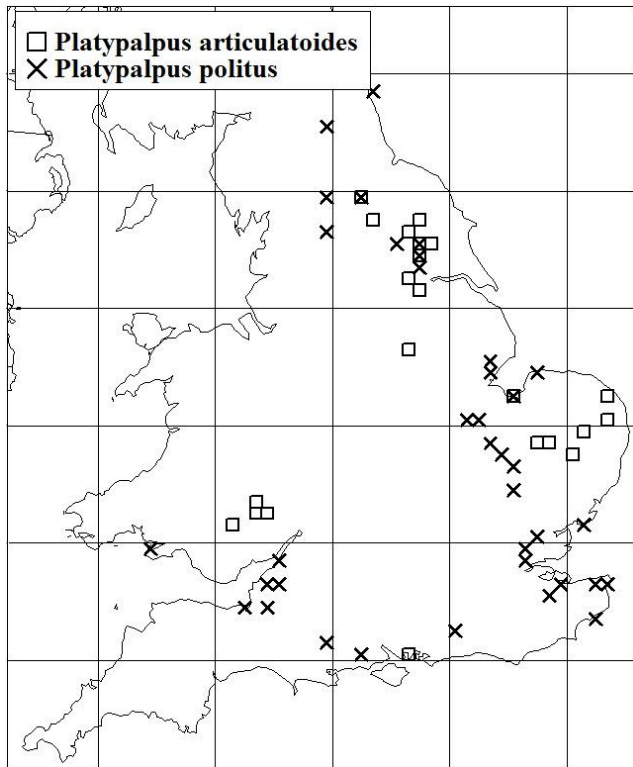


Fig. 5. Distribution of *P. articulatooides* and *P. politus*

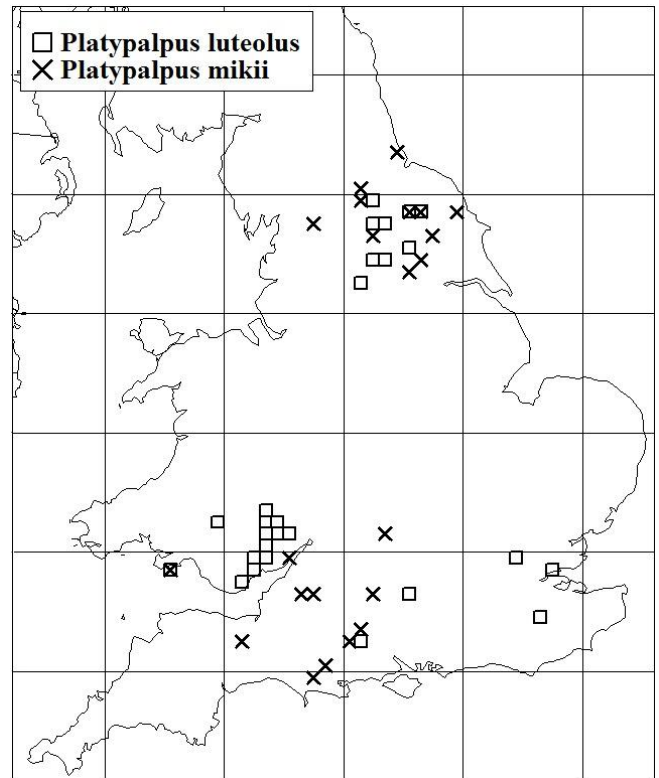


Fig. 6 Distribution of *P. mikii* & *P. luteolus*

Some scarce Dolichopodidae, Empididae and Hybotidae of watercourses in Shropshire

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During 2014 I spent a three days (22, 24, 29 June) searching for the infrequently recorded therevid fly *Clorismia rustica* (Panzer, 1804) along the Cound Brook near Shrewsbury in Shropshire (Jones 2014). Whilst searching for the target species, I took the opportunity to also sweep around for other flies and I particularly focused on exposed sediments along the watercourse. Exposed riverine sediments appear to be little explored, as a number of species associated with these sediments are regarded as scarce or rare, but my experience is that sweeping exposed sediments along rivers and streams often yields so-called scarce species quite readily – e.g. the dolichopodid *Syntormon macula* Parent, 1927 and the lonchopterid *Lonchoptera nigrociliata* Duda, 1927.

Along the Cound Brook I made a special effort to collect small-fry, and my efforts were well rewarded. Amongst some more common Hybotidae were several *Tachydromia morio* (Zetterstedt, 1838) and a few *T. woodi* (Collin, 1926) – two species with a distinctly northern and western British distribution. I swept both *Tachydromia* species from very sandy sediments, containing some gravel, finding *T. woodi* at two locations.

Previously, on 28 July 2013, I spent a couple of hours sweeping beneath some old willows on a bank of a wide and deep section of the River Severn near Shrewsbury. There was much silty sediment beneath the trees and I swept a good volume of Diptera from this shady, riverside situation. Here, I was delighted to find several of the rather attractively white marked *Hilara albiventris* von Roser, 1840, which had been first brought to my attention just a few weeks before, under shade alongside the River Wyre in Lancashire, during the

Dipterists Forum's 2013 field week. Also in the River Severn catch were another two scarce flies – a single female of the distinctively orange marked *Argyra grata* Loew, 1857 and a single male *Rhaphium micans* (Meigen, 1824). Both these dolis have poorly understood habitat requirements, having been discovered in widely varying situations, so they may not be strictly riverine species, but *H. albiventris* appears to have a strong association with damp riverine sediments under shade (Falk & Crossley, 2005), and must surely be worth seeking out along rivers across Britain, particularly in northern and western areas.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Adrian Plant for determining my specimens of *T. woodi* and *T. morio*, and to Roy Crossley for confirming by photograph the specimen of *Argyra grata*.

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Tachydromia smithi Chvála, 1966 – a fourth British record

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Dan Wrench, one of Shropshire Council's county ecologists, gave me a single male *Tachydromia* that had caught his attention whilst making a visit to a disused sand and gravel quarry at Eardington near Bridgnorth, Shropshire (SO723900) on 7 May 2014. I determined the specimen as *T. smithi*, a species that David Gibbs reported as discovering as

new to Britain from Nottinghamshire in 2006 (Gibbs, 2006). Intriguingly, as was the case in Nottinghamshire, the Shropshire specimen was collected close to a pool with nearby trees (although at Eardington the pool is small seasonal feature). However, more specifically, this specimen was taken off a timber post that had been installed more-or-less in the centre of an area of bare and sparsely vegetated sand, rather than off a tree trunk. Adrian Plant advises me that this is the fourth British record for *T. smithi* and that two other records were made in a chalk pit and a quarry, so there is an emerging theme of sites containing disturbed ground for this species.

Acknowledgement

My thanks to Adrian Plant for checking my determination of *T. smithi*.

Reference

Gibbs, D. 2006. *Tachydromia smithi* Chvála, 1966 (Diptera, Hybotidae) new to Britain discovered in Nottinghamshire. *Dipterists Digest* Second Series **13**, 27-29.

Interesting dolichopodid records from the Bangor field meeting, 7-11 July 2014

Martin Drake

Last summer's Dipterists Forum field meeting based at Bangor produced 101 species of dolichopodids. Many thanks to those who handed me specimens during the week (which included about 70 of this total). Joan Morgan (1990) listed 75 valid species recorded from Anglesey, ignoring mainland records, during the 1987 Dipterists Forum field meeting; in 2014 we found a remarkably similar total of 74 species from Anglesey. Joan's total list, including all known records, was 99 species, whereas I now have 112 species in the E&D database (and these don't include all the species from the 1987 meeting!). This small increase suggests that it pays to return to previously visited field meeting sites.

Dolichopodids appear to be poorly recorded in Wales but this is probably just lack of records submitted. One result of having to interpret available record is that the southern strip of Wales appears to be a hotspot, followed by Anglesey and nearby vice-counties. There may be some truth in this but I cannot believe it entirely. For instance, there's a group of coastal species that includes *Dolichopus clavipes* Haliday, *D. diadema* Haliday, *D. sabinus* Haliday and *Machaerium maritime* Haliday which are well recorded in Anglesey and along the south coast but not or very rarely in between, and an equivalent group from inland habitats that includes *D. longitarsis* Stannius, *D. picipes* Meigen, *Syntormon tarsatum* (Fallén), *Hercostomus nanus* (Macquart), *Tachytrechus notatus* (Stannius) and *Teuchophorus spinigerellus* (Zetterstedt). These all have some degree of habitat specialism but they are hardly rare species, and are probably scattered more widely in Wales. The species mentioned below may well be rather more localised and reflect the rich 'lowland' habitats found in the northwest corner of Wales.

Dolichopus strigipes Verrall – Newborough Forest (SH4067), Anglesey. Several males and females of this distinctive saltmarsh fly were found at a huge expanse of *Bolboschoenus maritimus* (sea club-rush) on the sandy estuarine upper saltmarsh zone of Malltraeth Sands. Until

this record, the fly was found mainly on the east coast marshes from the Humber estuary to north Kent and in the Solent and Poole stretch, with outliers at east Devon marshes, and one at the Gwent Levels. This record takes its distribution a long way up the west coast of Britain. The population was clearly large.

Ethiromyia chalybea (Wiedemann) – Cors Geirch (SH3235, SH3335) on Lley, found at three points on this mire; the first for mainland Wales away from the south coast, although recorded on a mire on Anglesey in 1987.

Hercostomus gracilis (Stannius) – Tywyn Aberffraw, Anglesey (SH3567, SH3568, SH3668); a large and structurally varied dune system where *H. gracilis* was widespread and sometimes numerous, particularly on low sallow and dwarf willow by dried-out slacks. This is one of the few dolichopodids that specialises in dry sandy areas, although some records may be from wetter parts of such well-draining sites. It is widespread on the south coast of Wales but sparse up the west coast, picking out sand-dune systems. There are unlikely inland records that need checking.

Hydrophorus balticus (Meigen) – Tywyn Aberffraw, Anglesey (SH3668, SH3568, SH3567), near water around this large dune system (river, shore, ditches), and Llyn Coron (SH376700), a *Phalaris*-lined lake. Previously it had been recorded widely at Newborough Warren but remains stubbornly confined to this SW corner of Anglesey in Wales away from the south coast (Pembrokeshire).

Muscidideicus praetextatus (Haliday) – Red Wharf Bay (SH535798), Newborough Forest (SH430623) and Llanfairyneubwyll (SH299760), all upper saltmarshes where you'd expect this undistinguished but scarce species. As with several other species (like *Hydrophorus balticus* just mentioned), this fly has been found only at Anglesey away from south Wales and Pembrokeshire.

Gymnopternus brevicornis (Staeger) – Plas Talhenbont, Lley (SH462390). This is the second record for Wales but this widespread and sometime abundant species is likely to be often overlooked as the national map shows clusters that look suspiciously like where active recorders work.

Lamprochromus bifasciatus (Macquart) – Cors Geirch (SH3335). Another 'second record for Wales' but this time the fly is very small and seems to be scarce north of the south-east English lowlands.

Scellus notatus (Fabricius) – Porth Neigwl (SH243285) on a seepage on soft-rock cliff, the first record for the north half of Wales, and sufficiently obvious that it will not have been overlooked.

Teuchophorus simplex Mik – Marl Hall Wood (SH797789), the second record for Wales, found in large numbers at a tiny seepage on limestone in dull secondary woodland.

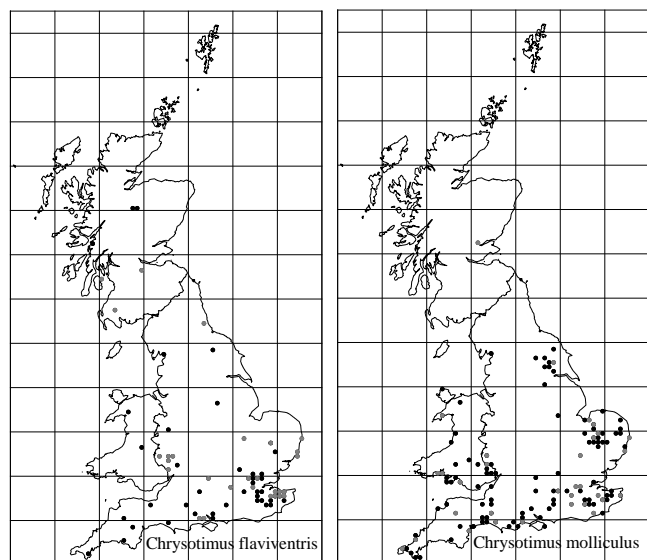
Reference

Morgan, J. 1990. The Bangor visit was well worth while. *Empid and Dolichopodid Study Group Newsheet* No 8, February 1990.

Chrysotimus in Scotland

Martin Drake

Nigel Jones was surprised to have found *Chrysotimus flaviventris* (von Roser) at the Dipterists Forum's summer meeting in the Spey valley in 2012, as he thought this was way too far north. This prompted me to delve into the records. Both species in the genus are widespread in the southern third of Britain but *C. flaviventris* has been recorded sparsely in Scotland. In contrast, *C. molliculus* (Fallén), which is clearly the commoner species in the south, is represented by only one Scottish record (specimens checked and correctly identified). So here's one of those examples of the less common species having a wider distribution than the 'commoner' one (depending where you live!). Roy Crossley (*in litt.* to Nigel and myself) adds: "Over the past 25 years I have found *molliculus* in about ten sites, mostly, but not all, around here – a classic example of a good place for insects being where an entomologist has lived! [forming an obvious cluster in Yorkshire on the map]. Incidentally always swept from tree foliage." Map dots: black – 1990 onwards; grey – earlier.



The haunts of *Aphrosylus* species

Roy Crossley

Aphrosylus species are believed to breed in the inter-tidal zone around the coast (Assis Fonseca 1978 p.42). Parent (1938, p.332), mentions a 1903 paper by Roubaud suggesting that the larvae of an un-named *Aphrosylus* species prey on barnacles and limpets. Ray Poulding referred to the Roubaud paper in his account of his own researches in Cornwall (Poulding, 1998), which showed that the late larval instars of *A. celtiber* Haliday are predators of the sessile barnacle *Chthamalus montagui* Southward, and regularly feed on the soft parts of this species.

It is tempting to guess that other *Aphrosylus* species may also be predators of barnacles, but the following observations might point to another possibility. On 8 June 2011, I swept specimens of *A. ferox* Haliday in Walker, from rotting seaweed washed up on to the chalk cobbles at the base of the cliffs at Dane's Dyke (TA21.69.) and South Landing (TA23.69.), both sites being on the south side of the Flamborough Headland, East Yorkshire.

On 23 June 2014, as the tide was coming in at South Landing, I swept *A. ferox* from piles of wet Bladderwrack (*Fucus vesiculosus*) lying on the sand beyond the under-cliff chalk cobbles. Every sweep of the net just skimming the seaweed produced dozens of specimens, most of which proved to be males. If the flies were breeding in the seaweed then their habitat would seem to be washed in and out with every tide.

A. ferox is, of course, a minute fly, and it is perhaps far too small to be experimentally reared. Thus the life history may for ever remain a mystery, but breeding in rotting seaweed might be a possibility.

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Distribution and ecology of *Campsicnemus magius* (Loew) (Diptera, Dolichopodidae)

Martin Drake

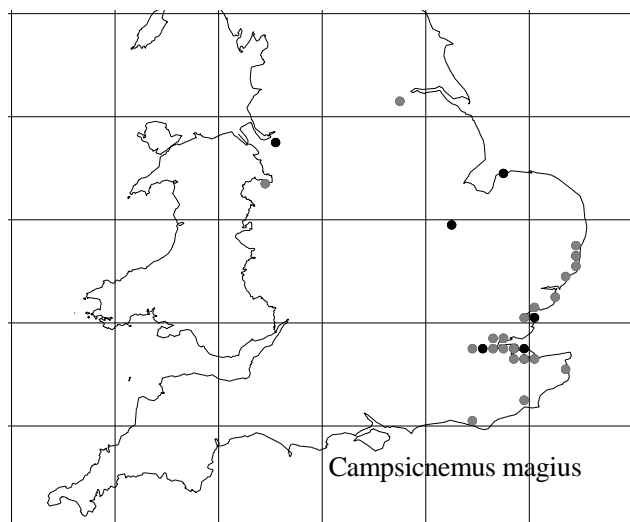
We all know this species from the front covers of *A Dipterists Handbook* (Chandler, 2010) and the journal *Studia dipterologica* – its wonderful legs had clearly captivated other dipterists. In fact the ornamentation is so bizarre that when Loew first described it Gerstaecker blamed him for making a new species from a fly whose legs were deformed by fungoid growth (Verrall, 1905).

As part of the Biodiversity Action Plan for Coastal Saltmarsh, I was asked some years ago to review the distribution and ecology of *Campsicnemus magius* as one of four rare invertebrates associated with the transition from saltmarsh to brackish grassland (Lee *et al.*, 2012). This zone is severely threatened by our propensity to build sea walls, leading abruptly to saline conditions to seaward and freshwater on terra firma. I here present a cut-down version that may be of interest to dolichopodid recorders.

In search of records that may not have reached the Empidid & Dolichopodid Recording Scheme, I asked dolichopodid enthusiasts and checked some popular entomological journals published later than 2000, post-dating the leg-work by Roy Crossley and Stephen Falk for the Empidoidea review. These records and one found later included 64 records that appeared to be unique and probably correct, and another three shown on the map below but which have not been verified.

Campsicnemus magius is almost restricted to the coast between east Kent and north Norfolk, with most records coming from the Greater Thames Estuary characterised by its saltmarshes and mudflats. The extensive marshes from Cliffe to Sheppey hold the largest recorded population. Various outliers are a mix of correct records and possible

errors. Of those on the coast, the records for Norfolk and the estuarine River Weaver in Cheshire are single females which appear to be correctly identified, and the isolated dot on the Kentish east coast is Assis Fonseca's (1957) captures made on several occasions. The two East Sussex records have not been confirmed but are from likely locations. There are three inland records. One from Fenn's and Whixall Moss in Shropshire can be dismissed as an error (a peat bog miles from the sea) although Wallace Pugh's specimen has not been examined; it is probably at Manchester Museum where he worked. A population existed for many years on a cut-over peat moor, Thorne Moors in SW Yorkshire, in a brackish pool receiving waste water pumped from a colliery where the mine shaft passed through a saline layer. The record (♂) from a disused clay pit between Peterborough and Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire, may be attributed to slightly brackish water derived from the Oxford Clay; similar habitat existed in disused clay pits near Peterborough where coastal species were recorded (Drake, 2002). These inland records reinforce the fly's requirement for mildly brackish conditions. They pose interesting questions about the mobility of a fly that has a reputation for flying so low over the water that it is difficult to sweep – so how did it fly so far to such remote and relatively recent brackish sites?



At least 80% of the records were from coastal grazing marsh, or from lagoons or ponds on coastal marshes that were probably once drained pasture (Table 1). There is some uncertainty for records for which I had to guess the habitat from the location details, but only four records were likely to have been taken on upper saltmarsh. Some of the disparity between the preponderance of records from the landward side of the sea wall may lie in recorders' preference for collecting along ditch and pond margins rather than along muddy saltmarsh but this is unlikely to be the main reason.

The main habitat requirement appears to be slightly to strongly brackish water margins with exposed mud. Where detailed grid references allowed the position of the record to be accurately placed, almost all records were made within a few hundred metres of the sea wall, and many were made at borrowdykes which provided soil for building the sea wall. Locations with records further inland were at ditches, fleets, ponds or lagoons directly linked to larger inlets or drains that were probably tidal and therefore mildly saline. The apparently strong association with brackish conditions in Britain does not tally with its occurrence in Austria, Czech

Republic and Hungary which lack coastlines although records in these countries may be from inland saline sites (I have no evidence).

The small-scale habitat appears to be well defined. Several recorders mentioned mud, which is assumed or explicitly stated to be bare expanses, sometimes caused by cattle-trampling. Males have been recorded flying low over shallow water or expanses of gently sloping wet mud so they probably need this for courtship, and Assis Fonseca (1957) found males resting on damp sand by a ditch next to a golf course that was once dunes. Other recorders have seen males running over the shallow water and mud, skating around on the water surface about four feet away from the margin, and displaying on mud where they were fairly numerous but difficult to net. Most of the records from one site were from pitfall traps, even though sweep-netting had also been used here – another indication that the fly keeps close to the ground. There is unlikely to be any specific requirement for particular vegetation structure. Only two records mention what may be moderately tall and perhaps dense vegetation (reed, sea club-rush) but even these sites were likely to have had patches of short vegetation or bare mud. It may be assumed that short marginal vegetation would be used as shelter on these exposed sites.

Two-thirds of sites (22) were SSSI, and only four were definitely not SSSI or wildlife trust sites. We know recorders' bias towards sites of greater intrinsic value, but the scarcity of the fly outside sites of high quality suggests that its requirements are not easily met in the wider countryside.

Table 1. Principal habitats used by *Campsicnemus magius*.

Habitat	Count of records
coastal grazing marsh	40
coastal marsh	3
coastal marsh, reedbed, ponds	1
coastal lagoon	5
coastal dunes?	3
upper saltmarsh	4
upper saltmarsh?	2
inland clay pit	1
inland peat moor	2
inland peat bog (error?)	1
unknown (coastal)	2
total	64

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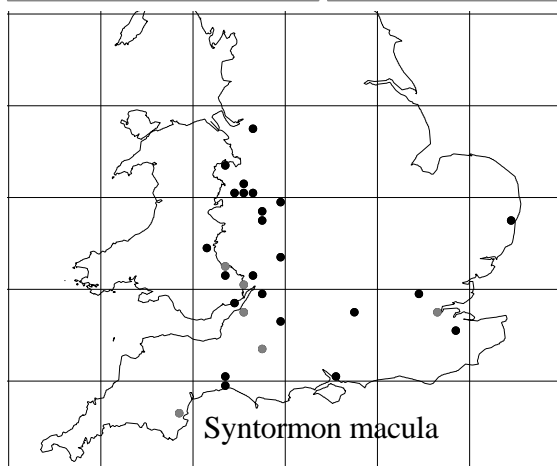
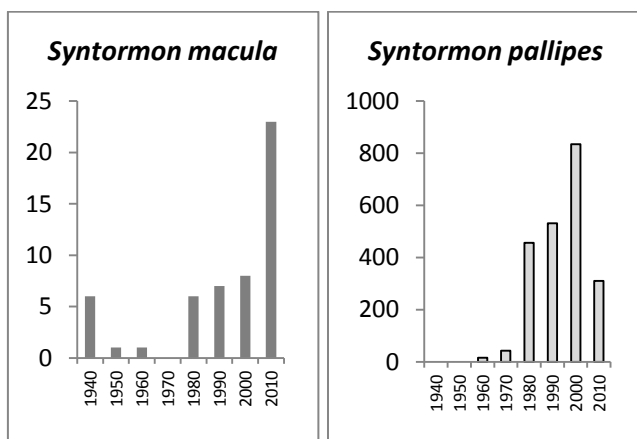
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***Syntormon macula* Parent (Dolichopodidae) becoming commoner**

Martin Drake

Syntormon macula was added to the British list by Assis Fonseca (1948) from specimens he found near Bristol. It remained little-recorded after his spate of early records, and still relatively uncommon after his handbook was published in 1978. In recent years, it has been more often recorded, and I wonder whether it is becoming more common. Nigel Jones has mentioned *Syntormon macula* being too frequent to be considered scarce (his article on p4) and I have recorded it several times this April. Here are the records by decade, with *S. pallipes* (Fabricius) for comparison. I have not corrected the records for the fly being found at two or more nearby sites in the same collecting session. The trend does seem to show a real increase in the occurrence of *S. macula* compared to the very common *S. pallipes*, which I'm assuming has undergone no change. Map dots: black = 1990 onwards, grey = earlier.



Reference

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***Rhaphium pectinatum* (Loew) (Dolichopodidae) not extinct**

Robert Wolton

On 25 June 2015 I visited the Devon Wildlife Trust's Old Sludge Beds reserve (SX950889), at the head of the Exe Estuary on the outskirts of Exeter city, and caught a single male *Rhaphium pectinatum* (Loew, 1859). This species has been only recorded once before in the Britain, by Verrall in 1868 at Richmond (Surrey), when he caught a male and female on 19 July (Fonseca 1978). It was therefore presumed extinct in Steven Falk and Roy Crossley's 2005 review of the Empidoidea (JNCC 2005). The Old Sludge Beds is the site of former sediment settlement lagoons linked to a sewage works which lies sandwiched between the Exeter Ship Canal and the head of the Exe estuary. The reserve is now covered with a range of tall fen habitats, primarily *Phragmites* reedbed, with willow patches. I recall catching the fly in a patch of open habitat caused by tidal inundation due to an accidental breach in the estuary wall, but cannot be certain because samples from different parts of the reserve were not kept separate. There are extensive tidal reedbeds nearby as well as grazing marsh. It is possible that the fly is associated with brackish conditions - the Thames is tidal as far as Richmond. I am grateful to Martin Drake for confirming the identification. He and I visited the reserve the following week but did not find any further specimens.

Scottish records added to the E&D database

Martin Drake

Iain MacGowan gathered a large number of Scottish records in the 1980s, leading to his *A preliminary survey of Dolichopodidae (Diptera) in Scotland* (Nature Conservancy Council, Edinburgh, 1987). This report is still a good source of synthesised information on species that are apparently confined to Scotland, and gives distribution maps of 18 species showing contrasting distribution patterns. Iain lent me his record cards and I have now input all c. 3500 records to the E&D database. Few were already in the database so the exercise was particularly worthwhile; Scotland is now darker on maps of several species. I am most grateful to Iain.

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