

Flat-footed Fly Recording Scheme

Newsletter 2 Spring 2018

Introduction

The Flat-footed Fly Recording Scheme was launched in the 2016 Autumn Bulletin and the first Newsletter reported the recording situation as it was at the end of July 2016. The scheme covers the 35 British species of the family Platypezidae, but also accepts records of the single British species of Opetiidae.

Records are acceptable in any form and specimens can be submitted to me for checking. Data received is being added to the spreadsheet begun in 2016, which now includes all records known to me, presently 4700 of Platypezidae and 945 of Opetiidae. These are arranged under the following headings in the sequence: species name, grid reference, county, locality, date, recorder, number and gender of specimens. If it is in a museum collection or a published record, this is noted under these additional headings.

The first Newsletter included sections on identification, fieldcraft (with separate accounts for smoke flies *Microsania* and for the others), fungus hosts, recognition of immature stages, phenology of adults, and the history of platypezid studies in the British Isles. The updated manuscript key mentioned in the identification section, and colour versions of both Newsletters are available as pdfs on request.

More recently a comprehensive work on the Dutch Platypezidae (Reemer & de Jong 2016) has appeared and was reviewed in the 2017 Spring Bulletin. The text is in Dutch but an English translation of the key is included. The most useful and attractive feature is the inclusion of colour photographs of live adults of most species, with at least one sex represented for 37 species and both sexes for 30 of them. This work is recommended as a helpful guide to identification of the British species.

Since the Recording Scheme was launched additional platypezid data has been provided by Howard Bentley, Mike Bloxham, Phil Brighton, Laurence Clemons, John Coldwell, Andrew Cunningham, Martin Drake, David Gibbs, Martin Harvey, Tony Irwin, Nigel Jones, Mark Mitchell, Ivan Perry, Jeremy Richardson, Del Smith, Mark Welch and Rob Wolton. I thank them for the interest they have shown.



It seems that 2016 and 2017 have been rather unproductive of platypezid records and several recorders who sent me their past records in 2016 have reported that they have few or no records to add for the latest two field seasons. They have been particularly sparse on Forum field meetings. The July 2016 summer meeting in Kent produced only one record of *Callomyia amoena* caught by Alan Stubbs at Clowes Wood (TR1363), and no platypezid records came from the June 2017 Snowdonia meeting. However, there are records of 24 species from the two years, 22 species for 2016 and 20 species for 2017 (see pp 5-6).

The female of *Polyborivora ornata* (above photo by Jeremy Richardson) has been adopted as the emblem of the Recording Scheme.

Status review

Newsletter 1 also included discussion of the level of knowledge of distribution nationally and its bearing on conservation status. The Status Review, first compiled in 2012 [updated from that in Falk & Chandler 2005], has since been further revised. It is expected that this Review will have been published on the Natural England website in January 2018.

In reaching the final assessment of statuses for the Review it was fortunately possible to take into account records submitted to me for the Recording Scheme after the appearance of the first Newsletter. In particular this provided a good number of additional post-1989 records which gave a better idea whether there had been any changes in status since the pre-1990 period. Criteria by which statuses can be moderated have also now been adopted by Natural England, which has enabled Nationally Scarce status to be excluded from the more frequent and widespread species that are presently recorded from less than 100 post-1989 hectads.

IUCN statuses have been applied to *Callomyia elegans* (Critically Endangered – it may be extinct in Britain), *Agathomyia collini* (Endangered) and *Agathomyia lundbecki* (Vulnerable), while six species are treated as Data

Deficient: *Agathomyia sexmaculata*, *Callomyia dives*, *Microsania collarti*, *M. pallipes*, *M. straeleni* and *Platypeza hirticeps*. These statuses are based on post-1989 records only. The status of all *Microsania* species is unclear because of lack of records other than at smoke.

For GB rarity statuses all of the above species would qualify for Nationally Rare status, i.e. known from less than 16 post-1989 hectads. Thanks to the moderation procedure mentioned above, only the following three species are now to be treated as Nationally Scarce, a status applied to species likely to occur in from 16 to 100 post-1989 hectads: *Agathomyia boreella* (14 hectads, so on the cusp), *A. woodella* (23 hectads) and *Seri obscuripennis* (21 hectads). The two latter species have shown an increased number of hectads over the earlier period (12 and 4 respectively). The biology of *A. woodella* remains unknown but the increased recording of *Seri* may result from its development in common species of *Polyporus* becoming well-known.

Three of the six species only recorded in Britain since 1990 are treated as adventive (i.e. likely to be recent arrivals in this country), so are not assigned a conservation status: *Agathomyia cinerea* (33 hectads), *A. wankowiczii* (58 hectads) and *Paraplatypeza bicincta* (26 hectads). The above number of known hectads is greater than stated in the Review (for these three and for *Seri*) because of further records becoming available since it was finalised, and the continuing spread of these species tends to confirm their adventive status. Two other species only recorded since 1990 that have few records, *Microsania vrydaghi* (3) and *Platypezina connexa* (1), were not evaluated. The position of the sixth species added in the later period, *Agathomyia sexmaculata*, is also uncertain, as discussed below in relation to the two further records that have accrued.

Status of *Callomyia dives*

Callomyia dives is a curious case as it is widespread in Britain, but most records are of single individuals, so it apparently has low population levels that are easily overlooked. There are only 8 known post-1989 hectads but 27 hectads from the earlier period, with two in common. Its present status is unclear, and it cannot be certain if a significant decline has taken place. There are 39 records altogether, of which 15 are pre-1960 and 16 are in the period 1960-1989, so only 8 since then might suggest a decline but there was little in common between the periods in the counties and sites where it was recorded. The eight recent records are widely scattered – from Kent, Middlesex, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Cumbria, Stirlingshire, Inverness-shire and Glamorgan, so it is apparently still widespread.

The most recent record of *C. dives* is, however, of interest in that it was from the Warburg Reserve (SU7187), Oxfordshire on 26 July 2014, a male found by Ivan Perry. This was a site where I had also found a male of *C. dives* on

9 July 1972 and it had not been not found there in the intervening period, despite intensive surveys of the site by Ivan in recent years. The only other post-2003 record was a female from Waterhouse Plantation (TQ1469) in Bushy Park, Middlesex on 22 August 2012, caught by Erica McAlister when she accompanied me at this locality. This record was unavailable when my account of the Diptera of Bushy Park (Chandler 2015) was written, and was unexpected given my frequent recording there with results including 14 species of Platypezidae but not *C. dives*. These findings tend to confirm that a species with low population numbers can be readily overlooked even in well-worked sites.

The two species confused under *Callomyia amoena*

It was reported in Newsletter 1 that two species had been confused under *Callomyia amoena* by Chandler (2001), and that both occur in Britain. Only a few British males of one of these species, that had dark-stemmed halteres and differently formed surstyli, had been seen from northern England, while the other species usually identified as *C. amoena* is common throughout the British Isles. It was unclear to which of these species the name *amoena* Meigen, 1824 correctly applies, but Meigen's types have been obtained on loan so that resolution of this problem should now be possible.

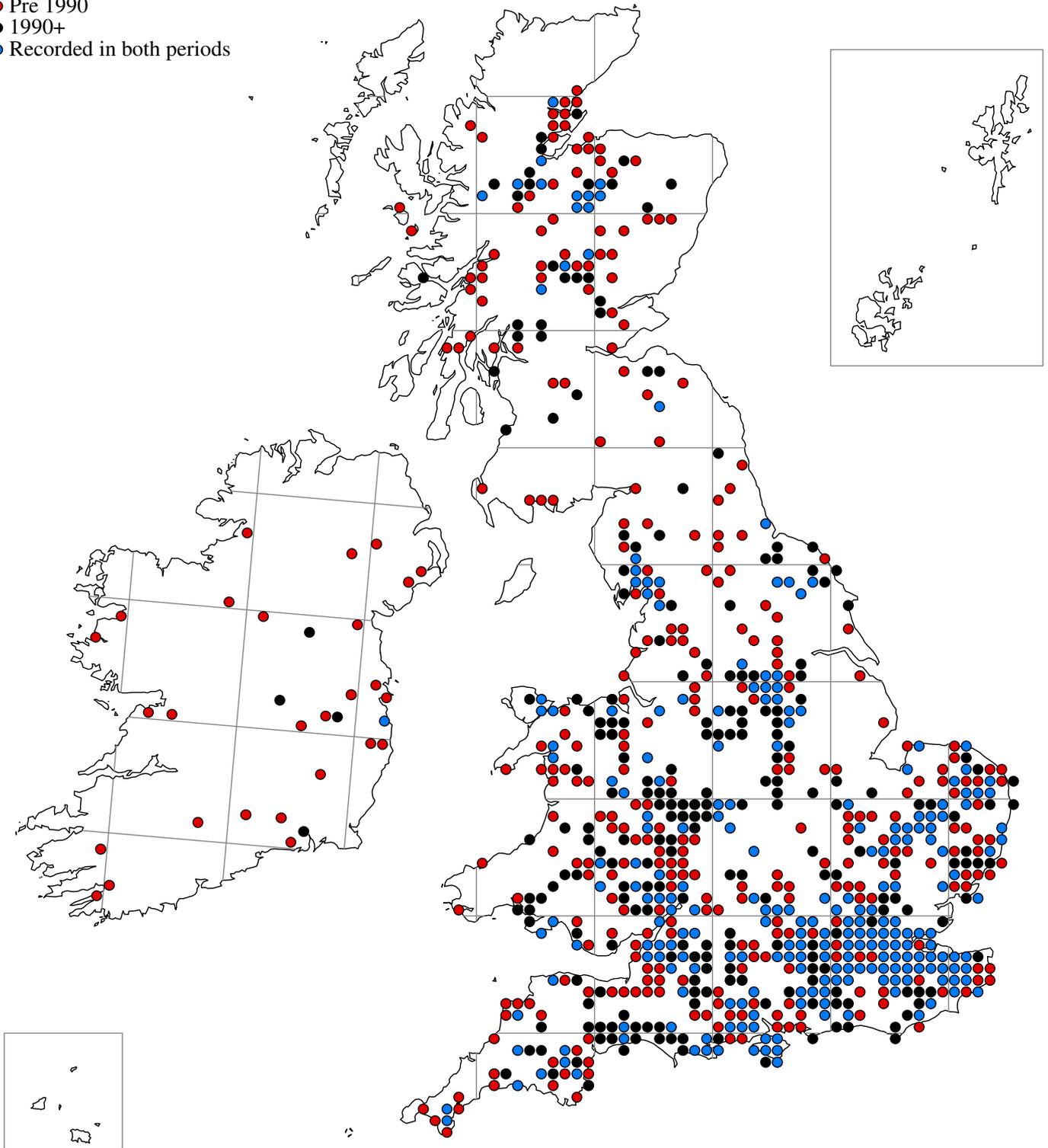
Advances in knowledge of distribution

The available data on which the maps in the first Newsletter were based included records from 738 of the hectads in the British Isles, of these 711 were in Great Britain or 25 per cent of the total hectads (2845), but there were records from only 27 hectads in Ireland. Of these 711 hectads, 522 had records up to 1989, while only 377 had records from 1990 onwards, with just 188 in common between the two periods. Although not all of the British hectads include woodland, in which most platypezids are found, this indicated a relatively low level of recording nationally, which has now been taken into account in determining status.

The data, on which the map opposite is based (also included in the new Review), include records from 769 hectads in Great Britain and 32 in Ireland. This takes into account all records received by the end of 2016. The number for both periods in Great Britain had increased, now 540 pre-1990 but more substantially (466) for the more recent period to the end of 2016; there were now 238 hectads with records from both periods.

There have been no records at all of the genus *Microsania* in the British Isles since 2008 – a situation entirely due to potential recorders not having encountered bonfire smoke attracting male swarms since then.

- Pre 1990
- 1990+
- Recorded in both periods



Distribution of all British Isles Platypezidae records to 2016, showing date classes to 1989 (red), 1990-2016 (black) and records from both periods (blue). The updated map still demonstrates the extensive gaps in recording and the south-eastern bias, with concentrations of records in some other areas indicating location of collectors or of field meetings, particularly those taking place in the autumn. There remains plenty of scope for recording in new or underworked regions, and in Ireland, where only 16 species have hitherto been recorded.

***Agathomyia sexmaculata* – two more British records**

This was first recorded in Britain from a single female that I swept at Thompson Common, Norfolk on 13 October 2002 (Chandler 2002b). It could not be certain if this was a vagrant or represented an established population, and subsequent searching at the site by Ivan Perry didn't produce any further examples or any likely fungus hosts. As reported in Newsletter 1, larval development is in the bracket fungus *Bjerkandera fumosa*, with which it has been found to be associated in the Netherlands and Finland, respectively on *Populus* and *Salix* (Reemer *et al.* 2014).

However, on 4 October 2016 Alan Stubbs found a male of *A. sexmaculata* at Alwalton, Cambridgeshire, about 80km due west of Thompson Common. The site at TL133963 was a small area of willow carr with a ground cover of nettles. Alan commented that this carr, which is adjacent to the River Nene, is subject to winter flooding, but that the carpet of nettles suggested that flooding is transient. On 22 October Alan returned to Alwalton in very dull conditions, but located only two small clusters of bracket fungi on the crack willows *Salix fragilis*, but neither was *B. fumosa*.

Then on 3 October 2017, Ivan Perry caught a female of this species at Flitwick Moor Nature Reserve (TL046352) in Bedfordshire, a site that he has been surveying intensively since 2014 (see Fungus Gnat Newsletters). This includes wet alder woodland as well as birch and oak woodland (see p. 6 below regarding other species found at this site).



***Agathomyia sexmaculata* female (photo Dmitry Gavryushin)**

These new finds confirm that *A. sexmaculata* is an established member of the British fauna, now known from three widely separated localities. The male is all black and best identified by examination of its genitalia, but the female is easily recognised as it is mainly grey dusted with a black triangle each side of tergites 3-5. *Bjerkandera fumosa* is widespread in Britain, and it is hoped that a fungus host association for the platypezid in Britain can soon be confirmed.

***Agathomyia collini* – a new record from London**

While looking at the Natural History Museum collection after the 2016 Dipterists Forum AGM, I was surprised to find a female of *Agathomyia collini* collected by David Notton on 15 July 2012 at Lewisham (TQ376762) in South London; it had been identified by Nigel Wyatt. This remains the most recent find of this species in Britain and is only the second for this rare species in the present century, the other being a male caught by Ivan Perry at Bradfield Wood (TL930573), Suffolk, but near to a garden, on 22 May 2007. Although the biology is unknown, it is considered probable that the larvae develop in bracket fungi like other members of the genus, and occurrence of the fly in orchards and gardens has suggested that a fungus that grows on old fruit trees of the family Rosaceae, e.g. *Phellinus tuberosus* (= *P. pomaceus*), might be the host.

David Notton confirmed that the fly had been caught in his garden, which is small and contained some young rosaceous trees that lacked fungal growth, though there was a large log pile which bore a range of small (mainly encrusting) fungi. However, the garden backed on to the Brookmill Nature Reserve, a wooded mound that was a disused railway embankment that is now managed for dead wood, with a range of mature trees, mainly ash and sycamore, but said to include a large plum tree, which might have been relevant.

I visited the site on 2 July 2017, when I saw several small plum trees around the perimeter, but didn't locate the large plum tree said to be present. No platypezids or bracket fungi were observed, though presence of the fungus gnat *Mycetophila cingulum* suggested that its host *Polyporus squamosus* must have fruited there earlier in the year. I did record about 40 species of flies, including 10 species of hoverflies on hogweed flowers lining a ride on the summit of the mound, *Volucella zonaria* and *Cheilosia soror* among them. Apart from flies the highlight was a Jersey Tiger moth *Euplagia quadripunctaria*, flitting along the track, which I hadn't seen alive before; it is well established in this part of London (David Notton and Nick Pond *pers. comm.*).



***Agathomyia collini* female (photo Thomas Legrand)**

***Agathomyia cinerea* new to Scotland**

This is thought to be one of the recent arrivals in this country (so not given conservation status for that reason) as the first British record was Hankley Common, Surrey in 1992, since when it has spread widely across S England. There are also two Welsh records, from Monmouthshire in 2008 and Anglesey in 2012. The most northerly previous record was Winscar Reservoir (SE1503) in S Yorkshire, three females collected by John Coldwell on 26 and 29 September 2015, so that finding that it had already reached Scotland was unexpected. There are now records from 33 hectads nationally.

On 9 September 2017 I swept a male of *A. cinerea* at Ross dhu (NS3589), a former deer park that is now a golf course, situated by the west shore of Loch Lomond. It was amongst low vegetation in a wet hollow beside the track into the site, and was apparently freshly emerged though not near any obvious fungi. Its recent rearing in the Netherlands by Reemer (2015) from the bracket fungus *Ischnoderma benzoinum* growing on pine was discussed in Newsletter 1. The male can be recognised, among other mainly black *Agathomyia* males, by having indistinct pale yellow patches on the sides of the abdomen, while the female is one of the species with zoned coloration on the abdomen (see below).



***Agathomyia cinerea* female (photo Nigel Jones)**

***Agathomyia falleni* new to Wales**

Bryan Formstone sent a photograph of a female of *A. falleni* (wing length 4.9mm), taken on 2 October 2017 from an old beech trunk at Erddig Hall (SJ328484), a National Trust property near Wrexham, in Denbighshire (V.C. 50). He reports that the wood at Erddig Hall has many very large old beech trees, of which several have blown down over the years, while a couple have snapped 25 feet from the ground, leaving good standing trunks. The trees at this site are left

where they fall to decompose naturally, and many bracket fungi are present on them. This is a significant extension to the range of this species – the nearest previous record to Wales was the find on 7 October 2010 by Martin Drake at Lord's Wood (SO547151) in the Upper Wye Gorge SSSI in Herefordshire. The most northerly English records are from two sites in Norfolk, in 2004 and 2013.



***Agathomyia falleni* female from Erddig Hall, Denbighshire (photo Bryan Formstone)**

Other recent records

Records cited here relate only to 2017. Altogether, records of only 20 species are so far available for the year, comprising 75 species/site records from 37 hectads, of which 9 hectads are new for the family and another 7 new for post-1989 records. This recent sparseness of records has no bearing on conservation status, as that is based only on the number of hectads in which a species has been recorded since 1989, so is determined by range rather than abundance.

On the 2017 autumn field meeting based at Farnborough, Hampshire (see Fungus Gnat Newsletter) they were rarely encountered, with only *Protoclythia modesta* seen more than once (six sites, usually where honey fungus *Armillaria* was sprouting). However, four other species were recorded; *P. rufa* at Hazeley Heath, *Agathomyia falleni* (caught by Mark Mitchell) and *Platypeza consobrina* at Yateley Common and *Seri obscuripennis*, a female caught by Alan Stubbs at Selborne Hanger on 16 October.

On my visits to Windsor Forest and Great Park in 2017 records, mostly of single individuals, were made for *Agathomyia antennata*, *A. viduella*, *Callomyia amoena*, *Lindneromyia dorsalis* (on an *Agaricus* species cap) and *Protoclythia rufa*. My visits to Blenheim Park, Oxfordshire also produced records of 5 species, including the only 2017 record known to me of *Bolopus furcatus*; females were present on a colony of its host fungus *Polyporus squamosus* on a fallen horse chestnut branch on 14 June. Four species found at Blenheim on 12 October included a female of

Paraplatypeza bicincta, as well as *Agathomyia unicolor* and both *Protoctyphia* species. On the Scottish trip when *Agathomyia cinerea* was found, the only other platypezid seen was a male of *Callomyia amoena* at Glen Feochan (NM876246) on 14 September.

Records of *Agathomyia wankowiczii* continue to be added based on mycologists finding galls on *Ganoderma applanatum*. Seven 2017 records, all by different recorders, include Derbyshire, Cheshire and South Lancashire near its known northern limit.

Ivan Perry recorded 5 other species apart from *Agathomyia sexmaculata* (see above) at Flitwick Moor in 2017, including *A. falleni* and *A. woodella*, *Callomyia amoena*, *Polyporivora ornata* and *Protoctyphia modesta*. This increased the total he has recorded there since 2014 to 12 species. He also found *Lindneromyia dorsalis* at two sites.

Richard Fortey reared *Polyporivora ornata* and *P. picta* from their usual host *Trametes versicolor* at his Grim's Dyke Wood (SU738843), Oxfordshire. Adults emerged in December 2016 to January 2017.

Jeremy Richardson had a poor season generally and noted only 4 species from his usual recording areas at Tottenham and Hackney: *Agathomyia antennata*, *Lindneromyia dorsalis* and both *Protoctyphia* species.

Phil Brighton provided records of males of three species: *Agathomyia antennata* at Thurstaston Common (SJ243850) and *Lindneromyia dorsalis* at Red Rocks Nature Reserve (SJ206879), both sites in Cheshire, on 29 August 2017, and *Agathomyia lundbecki* at the Smithills Estate (SD675125), South Lancashire, on 14 September 2017.

Howard Bentley swept a female of *Agathomyia viduella* from ground vegetation in mixed deciduous woodland at Vinters Valley Local Nature Reserve (TQ775561), Kent on 11 May 2017.

Andrew Cunningham recorded the two species of *Protoctyphia* in Devon, both at Tiverton and *P. rufa* also at Exeter, in October 2017.

Mark Mitchell also found both *Protoctyphia* species and *Platypeza consobrina* on honey fungus at the Brookwood Cemetery (SU9556), Surrey on 13 October 2017.

Mark Welch reports a female of *Polyporivora picta* pootered from a pile of birch logs in a woodland ride at Roydon Common NNR (TF693225), Norfolk on 14 October 2017.

Sam Thomas recorded a male *Protoctyphia rufa* on a *Cornus* leaf at Monument Park (SU647973), Oxfordshire on 21 August 2017.

Nigel Jones recorded 7 species of Platypezidae and *Opetia nigra* in Shropshire in 2017. He reports below (pp 7-8) on the Shropshire fauna of these families.

Acknowledgements

Stephanie Rorke is thanked for providing the map included here, which also appears in the Status Review. Martin Harvey kindly alerted me to the platypezid records on iRecord, which added some useful data. New data was also obtained during visits I made to the Manchester University Museum, the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff and the Natural History Museum, London; I am indebted to the authorities of these museums for the opportunity to examine their collections. I am grateful to Nigel Jones for his contribution on the flat-footed flies of Shropshire. David Notton provided details of his find of *Agathomyia collini*, which assisted my visit to Lewisham described above; I am grateful to Jessica Kyle and Nick Pond of Lewisham Borough Council for permission to record at the Brookmill Nature Reserve. Alan Stubbs and Ivan Perry are thanked for information on their finds of *A. sexmaculata*, and Bryan Formstone for letting me know of his find of *A. falleni* in Wales. I also thank all other recorders cited above for their contributions. I thank Dmitry Gavryushin and Thomas Legrand for use of their photographs of *Agathomyia* species.

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Peter Chandler

Flat-footed flies (Platypezidae and Opetiidae) in Shropshire

by Nigel P. Jones; email: nipajones@talktalk.net

For many dipterists, finding numbers of even the commonest Platypezidae is not easily achieved, and this has certainly been my experience. Looking back over my own Shropshire records, I find I've managed a rather meagre 123 records of 17 species over an eleven year period (2006 – 2017), and many of these are multiple records from one site or another. Nonetheless, Peter Chandler informs me that I have been one of the more successful recorders, and on that basis I offer here a short review of Shropshire Platypezidae. Fortunately, my own records can be bolstered by those of a few other recorders, not the least of whom is Wallace Pugh, who collected numerous specimens of 16 species during the 1920's and 30's. Peter Chandler has re-determined all of Pugh's surviving material, which is held at Manchester University Museum. At the end of 2017 I am aware of 24 species that have been recorded in Shropshire.

The earliest Shropshire records of Platypezidae were made by Wallace Pugh (Pugh 1926-39), beginning with the common *Paraplatypeza atra*, which he recorded several times in the Oswestry area during June – August. This has since proved to be the most widely recorded Shropshire platypezid, with records from eleven, largely woodland sites. Few of the remaining species have been encountered widely, but *Lindneromyia dorsalis* has been noted on 18 occasions from five sites, with 13 of those records coming from my own Shrewsbury garden. Field mushroom *Agaricus campestris* is the host fungus, so *L. dorsalis* is likely to occur in many open situations across the county.

Continuing in the subfamily Platypezinae, another ten species have been discovered in the county. Three of these were recorded by Pugh in the Oswestry area, but have not been found since – *Platypeza fasciata* during September and October in 1927-33; *Polyporivora picta* September – October in 1931 and 1935 and *Protoctylthia rufa* on 25 September 1938. There are October 1987 records, by Peter Chandler from Lydham and Caynham Dingle, and by Alan Stubbs from Blakeridge Wood near Bishop's Castle, for *Platypeza hirticeps* – this is the fourth species awaiting rediscovery in the county.

The most notable of the remaining platypezines is *Seri obscuripennis*, which was regarded as rare enough in Britain to merit "Near Threatened" status by Falk & Chandler (2005), so it was rather surprising that I found it in two woodlands in the Shrewsbury area – it is, however, now known more widely in S England, with records from 21 hectads; three sites in Norfolk are the most northerly previous records. My first encounter arose from the collection of platypezid-infested *Polyporus badius* fungi at Stevenshill Wood (SJ5603) in May 2008. From this fungus,

between 24 July and 27 August, some 35 specimens of *S. obscuripennis* emerged. Interestingly, 22 of these (14 ♂ and 8 ♀) emerged on the first of these dates. Seven years later, on 20 October 2015, I swept a single female from the floor of broadleaved woodland at Haughmond Hill (SJ5414), near Shrewsbury.



***Seri obscuripennis*: male left, female right**

Paraplatypeza bicincta, which was first noted in Britain in 2001 in S England at Esher, Surrey (Chandler 2002a), has clearly expanded its range since; I have recorded *P. bicincta* during 2016 and 2017 in the woodland at Haughmond Hill.



***Paraplatypeza bicincta* female**

This woodland has also provided a single record of *Platypeza aterrima*, which was also recorded by Pugh at Oswestry (October 1928), and by Peter Chandler at Lydham (October 1987). Pugh recorded *P. consobrina* at Morda near Oswestry (September 1931), whilst I have found it at Haughmond Hill, in my Shrewsbury garden and from woodland near Ironbridge, indicating that this is likely to be a widespread species in the county. *Polyporivora ornata* has been recorded on a number of occasions by Pugh, David Gibbs and myself; from Oswestry, Much Wenlock and central Shropshire. My own records include two from open

situations; most notably on one occasion when I swept a swarm of males, hovering next to a single large dead oak standing alone in an open arable field near Brompton (SJ539082). *Proctoclythia modesta* has been widely recorded in Shropshire. I found it for the first time in 2017, when I swept a few males that were running around on sycamore leaves during September in the productive woodland at Haughmond Hill, but prior to this Wallace Pugh, John Ismay, Mike Pugh and Peter Chandler had all noted it from several sites in Shropshire, mainly in September and October, but with one July record from Wallace Pugh.

Ten species of Callomyiinae have been discovered in Shropshire, the most widespread of which appears to be *Callomyia amoena*, which has been noted from ten woodlands dispersed across the county, including four different locations on Wenlock Edge – records made by David Gibbs in mid June 1992. *Callomyia speciosa* has been found at four woodland sites in the vicinities of Oswestry (1935), Shrewsbury, Ironbridge and Wenlock Edge.

Agathomyia unicolor has been found in six woodlands in central and south Shropshire. I have made two records of *A. antennata* from the woodland at Haughmond Hill and from nearby Attingham Park, whilst Pugh recorded it from Candy Wood near Oswestry in May 1933. Pugh recorded *A. viduella* twice - in 1928 from Oswestry and in 1939 from Llanforda Wood, to the west of Oswestry, and I have taken it from woodland near Pontesbury in 2016.



***Agathomyia viduella* female**

Agathomyia wankowiczii, so readily recorded from galled brackets of *Ganoderma applanatum*, has eluded me, but early in 2017 Roger Littleover sent me a clear image of galled *G. applanatum* from woodland at Dudmaston near Bridgnorth (SO7489), and later, Herefordshire mycologist Jo Weightman sent another record from the same woodland.

The remaining *Agathomyia* species recorded from Shropshire have all been found at one site each: *A. cinerea* (♀ 13 October 2015) and *A. woodella* (♀ 25 September 2016, ♂ 22 September 2017) at Haughmond Hill; *A. lundbecki* from trees along riverside at Preston Montford

Field Centre, 1♀ on 2 October 2016, and *A. boreella* which David Gibbs found on Wenlock Edge on 17 June 1992.



***Agathomyia woodella* female**

Despite investigating the smoke from fires near trees on several occasions, I have not yet found any *Microsania* (smoke flies). Pugh's 1937 record of *M. pectipennis*, from the smoke of a fire at Wrekin Scout Camp, remains the sole Shropshire record of any Microsaniinae.

Finally, the “honorary platypezid” *Opetia nigra* (Opetiidae) has been widely recorded across the county, from 14 sites – mainly woodlands and occasionally from damp sites with a good tree presence.

Finding flat-footed flies

The well-known habit of many Platypezidae to run rapidly around on large leaves, helps the dipterist to spot them when walking through woodlands. I have found platypezids most in evidence when such leaves are sunlit. However, I find that sweeping across ground vegetation in woodlands yields far larger numbers of platypezids. Warm days with sunshine are useful, but overcast days can be productive too, particularly if sweeping is targeted on areas with prone dead wood and/or where fungal fruiting bodies are prominent. Sweeping as high as one can reach across tree foliage in woodland also captures reasonable numbers of platypezids, and is very effective for collecting *Opetia nigra*. I often inspect fungi for the presence of platypezids and I collect fruiting bodies that are infested with Diptera larvae. To date though, for me, this has only yielded the discovery of *Seri obscuripennis* described above. I shall keep looking.

Acknowledgement: My thanks are due to Peter Chandler for kindly allowing me access to the recording scheme data and for helpful comments on my text.

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