Hoverfly Newsletter
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This is an abridged version of the newsletter shortened to fit within the permissible bounds of the DF Bulletin. The full issue, with additional articles, is available as a pdf. on the UK Hoverfly Facebook page or can be obtained upon request from Roger Morris (syrphid58@gmail.com). This change will apply in the future whenever the newsletter exceeds eight pages.

Copy for **Hoverfly Newsletter No. 70** (which is expected to be issued with the Autumn 2021 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 20th June 2021.

The hoverfly illustrated at the top right of this page is a female *Cheilosia vulpina*.

The 11th International Symposium on Syrphidae

Dear Fellow Entomologists,

The 11th International Symposium on Syrphidae will take place in Barcelonette (Alpes de Haute Provence, France) from Monday 6th to Saturday 11th September 2021.

The provisional schedule is as follows :

Arrival : Monday 6th September 2021
Symposium : Tuesday 7th to Thursday 9th September 2021
Excursion : Friday 10th September 2021
Departure : Saturday 11th September

Access :
A bus will be be available from and to Marseilles (railway and bus station Saint-Charles) on Monday 6th, departure around 15:00, and on Saturday 11th September, departure around 09:00. The Marseille Saint-Charles railway station is easily accessible by high speed train from neighbouring countries, including London (via Paris), or by bus from Marseille Marignanne International airport.

Accommodation will be available on the congress venue : Seolane center (https://seolane.org/) or at local hotels in Barcelonette, ca. 10 minutes walk from the venue. During the Symposium a room with binocular microscopes will be available to delegates. The excursion will be in the nearby Mercantour National Park (http://www.mercantour-parcnational.fr/fr).

At this time, we would like interested entomologists to complete the registration of interest online at https://syrphidae11.sciencesconf.org/ to receive further information about the ISS11. Please be assured that the email you will indicate on your account on the sciencesconf.org web site will be used only to keep you informed about the Syrphidae congress !

Further details about accommodation, prices and booking will be announced with the second circular and online. If you have any question or suggestion regarding the Symposium, feel free to contact us at syrphidae11@imbe.fr

We are looking forward to welcoming you in beautiful Provence !

The 11ISS local Organizing Committee
Gabriel Neve, Benoit Geslin, Arne Saatkamp, Jean-Yves Meunier. Camille Ruel, Marine Berro, Alrick Dias, Vanina Beauchamps-Assali

Appeal for Irish hoverfly records

The National Parks and Wildlife Service, in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, have published a series of All-Ireland Red Lists, including lists covering a range of invertebrate groups (www.npws.ie/publications/red-lists). Hoverflies have been identified as the next major invertebrate group to be assessed for an All-Ireland Red List. As part of preparatory work for the development of this red list, I am compiling a database of Irish hoverfly records.

The core of the database will be the hoverfly records held by the two Irish Biological Records Centres: the National Biodiversity Data Centre's Syrphids of Ireland dataset (maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Dataset/159); and the records held by the Centre For Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR; www.nmni.com/CEDaR). In addition, the UK Hoverfly Recording Scheme has kindly agreed to supply the Irish records that they hold. However, I am also appealing for additional records that are not included in the above datasets. If you have any such records, and are prepared to make them available for this database, please send them to me at tgittings@gmail.com. I am happy to receive records in any format, providing they include the following minimum basic information: species, location, grid ref, sampling date(s), sampling method, recorder and determiner.

Updates about the progress of this project, and the development of the All-Ireland Red List, will be posted on the UK Hoverflies and Insects/Invertebrates of Ireland Facebook pages.

Tom Gittings, Cork, Ireland, tgittings@gmail.com

Hoverfly Recording Scheme Update: Spring 2021

Stuart Ball, Roger Morris, Joan Childs, Ellie Rotheray and Geoff Wilkinson

What a strange year 2020 was! Not only did we have an amazingly warm and sunny spring, but we also found ourselves 'locked down' and unable to visit many of our favourite sites. Travel was severely restricted during the peak for spring hoverflies and only became viable again from the middle of June; by which time many species had already disappeared. One can only reflect on what might have been, as we saw plenty of sunshine and warm days that were ideal for recording hoverflies. We will find out in due course how this state of affairs has affected data for specialist species.

Despite the travel ban, lockdown was not quite the disaster it might have been. Lots of people took the opportunity to explore their local areas (subject to rules of social distancing) and the numbers of records generated will as likely as not prove to be higher than normal. We also saw a flood of new members on the UK Hoverflies Facebook group and at times it was challenging to keep up with the volume of activity. In the week commencing 19 April the data extraction team logged 1,634 records; numbers that were surpassed on just two occasions (weeks commencing 21 June and 5 July) (Figure 1).

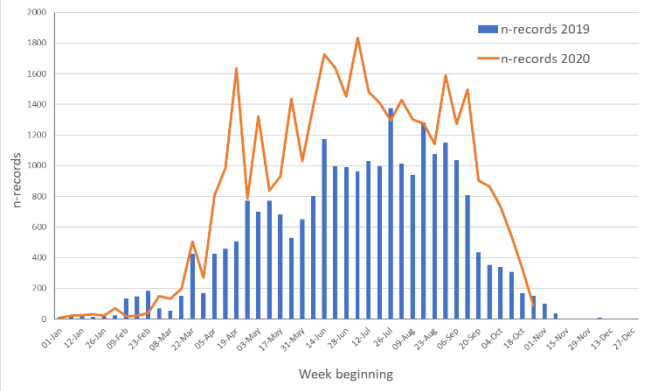


Figure 1. Weekly records from the UK Hoverflies Facebook group in 2020 (orange) and 2019 (blue).

At this time, we logged 202 active recorders; a level only repeated twice in June and once in July when one might expect activity to have normally reached its peak. As can be seen in Figure 2, levels of recorder activity we constantly high until early July

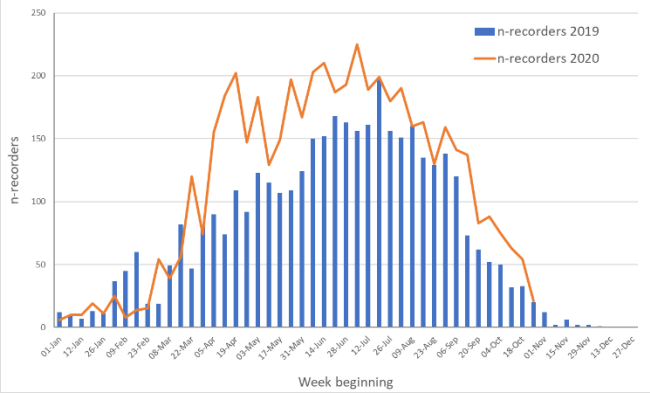


Figure 2. Weekly numbers of recorders contributing to Facebook data in 2020 (orange) and 2019 (blue).

It seems highly likely that this volume of activity was directly related to lockdown but, as always, it is difficult to be sure because the confounding effects of good weather may also have played their part. What is clear, however, is that although the greatest diversity of hoverfly species occurred between April and June (Figure 3), the numbers of records per recorder were considerably higher in late summer. This difference suggests that spring records were dominated by a higher proportion of 'casual' records as opposed to the autumn, when the data are largely generated by a much smaller cohort of very committed recorders (Figure 4). Bearing in mind that the overall shape of 2019 and 2020 for the records per recorder are very similar (ignore the large figures at the beginning and end of the years), it would appear that there was very little difference in overall recorder behaviour between the two years. A possible explanation for this consistent trend is that as spring enthusiasm wanes, only the most committed recorders carry on.

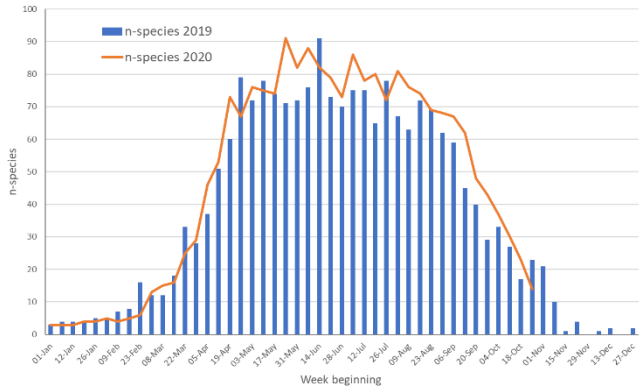


Figure 3. Numbers of species recorded each week in 2020 (orange) and 2019 (blue).

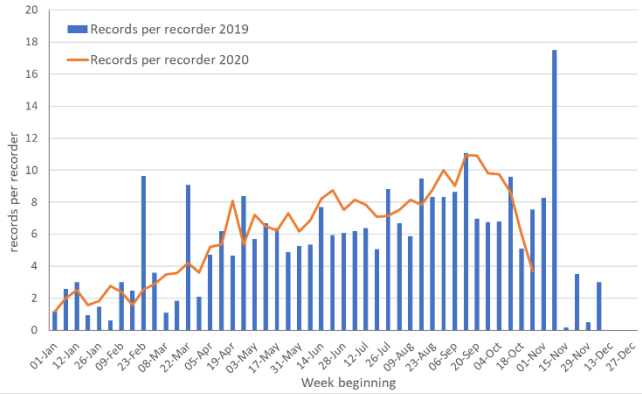


Figure 4. Numbers of records per recorder each week in 2020 (orange) and 2019 (blue).

The question that follows is 'how did 2020 compare with previous years?' We won't know until we have compiled all the datasets from recorders who keep spreadsheets. That is a big job and won't be complete for some time hence. In the meantime, we get an indication of the levels of activity from the overall numbers of records including data extracted directly from Facebook and other platforms. The evidence suggests that 2020 was more active than any preceding year (Figure 5) with the numbers of records surpassing any preceding year by a sizeable margin (a total of more than 44,500 full and partial records at the time of writing, which is almost 7,500 records more than the previous best (37,082) in 2016. We also saw a substantial increase in the numbers of contributors in 2020, that partially reversed what has been an apparent decline in numbers in recent years (Figure 6). It should be stressed, however that the apparent downward trend in recorder numbers based on data extracted directly from Facebook is misleading because a big effort was made in 2016 and 2017 to encourage participants to maintain spreadsheets. A similar effort will be needed in 2021!

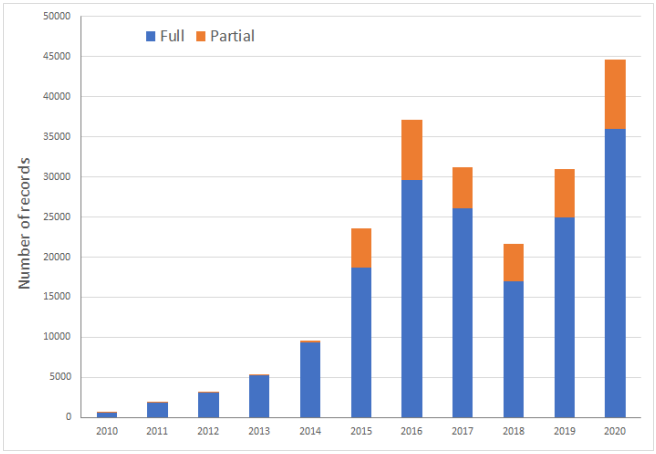


Figure 5. Numbers of full records (blue) and partial records (orange) between 2010 and 2020 extracted from social networking platforms. 2018 seems to have been particularly badly affected by the extreme temperatures that year.

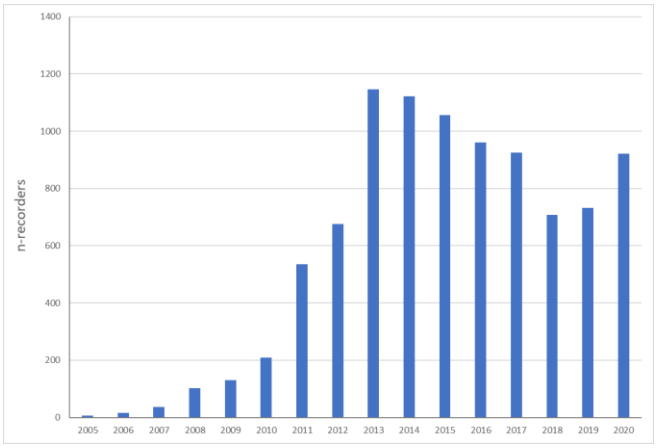


Figure 6. Number of recorders each contributing to the dataset of records extracted directly from social media platforms between 2010 and 2020. It should be noted that until 2016 efforts were made to monitor a wide range of platforms and that many of the recorders had posted just a single record. No effort is

made to monitor other platforms now, as the level of work needed is beyond our capacity.

Did the sunny and warm spring affect the numbers of records of commoner species?

It is always hard to compare different years and to make firm links between particular phenomena and the abundance of individual species. Each year is different but, moreover, the abundance of a given species is more likely to be related to the productivity of the last generation of the previous year. So, we cannot be sure whether the data for 2020 represent a real or perceived correlation between the weather and the abundance of a given species.

We can say, however, that for Facebook recorders it was the spring of *Eristalis pertinax* (Figure 7). It certainly looks as though the proportion of records of this species within the dataset was unusually high when compared with the average for the preceding ten years (Figure 5). A similar story seems to emerge for *Epistrophe eligans* although it is nowhere near as pronounced (Figure 8).

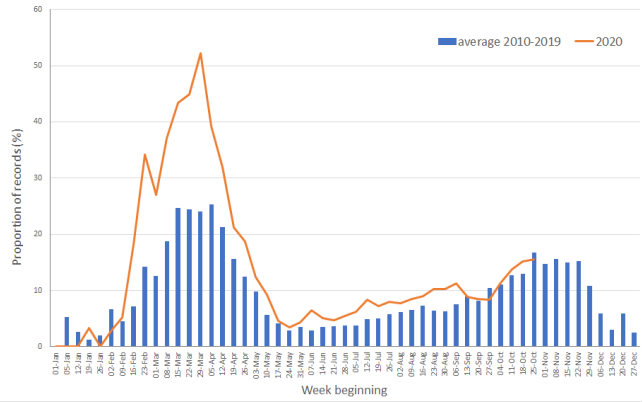


Figure 7. The proportion of weekly records of *Eristalis pertinax* in 2020 (orange) compared with the preceding 10-year average (blue).

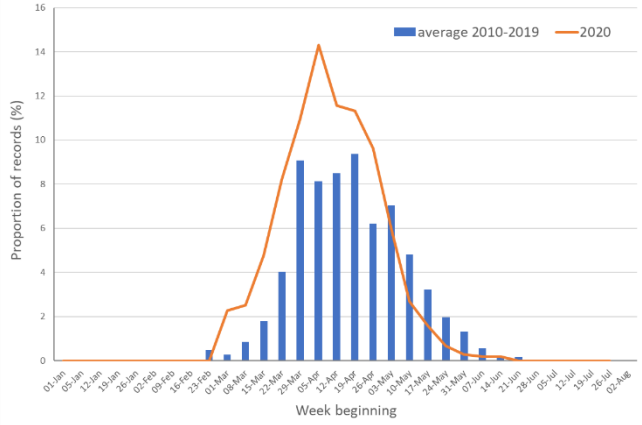


Figure 8. The proportion of weekly records of *Epistrophe eligans* in 2020 (orange) compared with the preceding 10-year average (blue).

Effects of the summer heatwave

In late July and early August southern Britain was hit by a profound heatwave that saw record temperatures for six consecutive days from 7-12 August. In south-east England the heat was so extreme that RM was effectively confined to the house for much of the day. When he did venture out, there was nothing to be seen! The impact of this event was immediately felt on social media with numerous active recorders saying 'where have all the hoverflies gone?' Had they died off, found shelter, or perhaps not come out of diapause? We will never know for sure, but we do have some data to show what happened in terms of records received.

In south-east England, the numbers of records dropped dramatically (see Fig. 9 below), but this drop continued a trend that had started some ten days earlier. There is pretty good, but less pronounced replication of the trend in the south-west. It is notable that we also saw a recovery in numbers in September. The graphs for northern England and Scotland (Figure 10) are somewhat different as the decline in records is far less precipitous and longer-lasting.

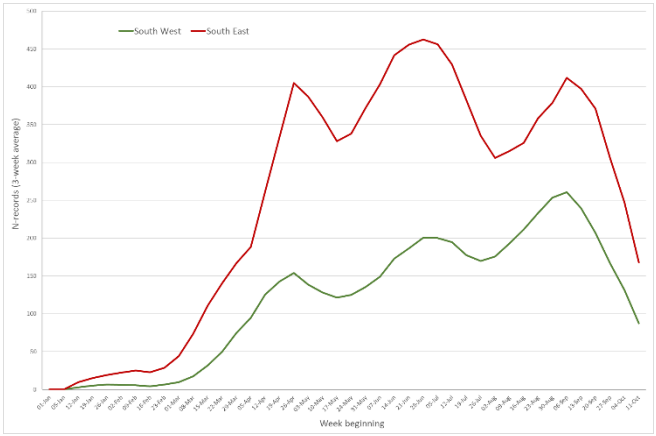


Figure 9. Three weekly average numbers of records extracted from Facebook for south-west England (green) and south-east England (red).

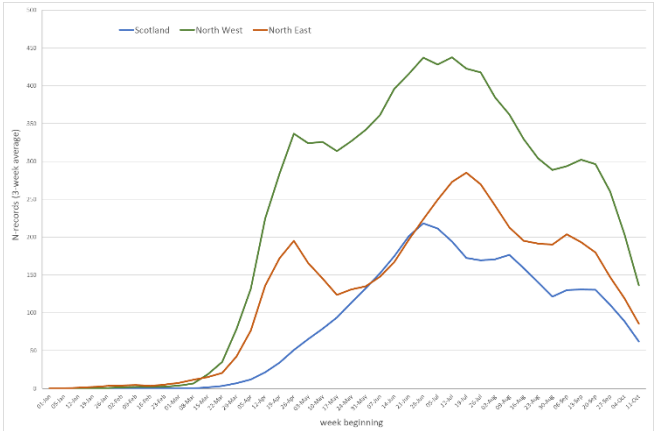


Figure 10. Three weekly average numbers of records extracted from Facebook for north-west England

(green) and north-east England (orange) and Scotland (blue).

These graphs are a simple 'snap-shot' and do not represent all the data for 2020; we won't get a full picture for months or even years, but data extracted directly from Facebook are now so substantial that they form a useful dataset in their own right.

Cheilosia caerulescens in Gloucestershire

David Iliff, Green Willows, Station Road, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, GL52 9HN

During July 2020 I was invited to take part in a survey of wildlife in the churchyard of St. Michael and All Angels, Bishops Cleeve SO9627. On 20th July I found 8 hoverfly species at the site, including a *Cheilosia* on ragwort flowers which I caught and took home for identification. It was a bare eyed female, but my attempts to determine the species via the keys that I had available led nowhere. I therefore examined the insect looking for characters that might assist in its identification. It proved to be very distinctive, with a very protruding face, white hairs at the tip of the scutellum and on the thorax and abdomen, and, most strikingly, the outer cross veins on the wings were darkened. This combination of features indicated that what I had was *Cheilosia caerulescens*, and my failure to key it out was explained by the fact that the species had only been added to the British list in 2008, after the keys I used had been published. After identification I photographed it, on 22nd July, and released it in my garden. Later on the 22nd I returned to the churchyard to check whether there were any houseleeks (*Sempervivum* – the larval food plant) growing there. I found none, though a colleague (John Widgery) found some later on two graves, however I did capture another *Cheilosia*, this time on Hebe flowers, which to my surprise turned out to be another female *C. caerulescens*. I passed this second example to Martin Matthews for his collection. These were the first records for Gloucestershire.

The Hoverfly Recording Scheme website showed that the species had so far been recorded in 44 hectads, only 3 of which were away from East Anglia and the Home Counties; the three outliers were in the Swindon area, west of Salisbury and in the peak District.

It appears that *Cheilosia caerulescens* is now well-established in the south-east and is gradually expanding its range northwards and westwards.

Cheilosia caerulescens female. Photo: David Iliff)

Chalcosyrphus nemorum larvae in a beech stump hoverfly lagoon

Rob Foster and John Leach
2 Yorkshire Bridge Villas, Bamford, Hope Valley S33 0AZ robdfoster@yahoo.co.uk

Hoverfly stump lagoons are hollows cut or drilled into the tops of tree stumps which fill naturally with rainwater to simulate the rot-holes in which certain hoverflies lay their eggs and raise their larvae. They are especially useful in revealing the presence of hoverflies that have elusive adults that would otherwise pass unnoticed. They have notably been used in discovering the presence of the Furry Pine Hoverfly *Callicera rufa*. In the Summer 2020 edition of the Hoverfly Newsletter, we gave an account of just such an exercise and its ultimate success on (NT) Longshaw Estate, in the Derbyshire Peak District. Hoverfly lagoon creation was carried out in early April 2019: a chainsaw was used to cut lagoons into about 20 pine (Pinus) stumps. Whilst doing so, we came across a similarly suitable beech (Fagus) stump. Out of curiosity, we cut a lagoon into that also: just to see what would happen. A similar procedure was used. This was based on that described in an on-line leaflet issued by the Buzz Club of the University of Sussex as modified by Ken Gartside. A pyramid-shaped wedge of wood was removed and the resulting hollow filled with sawdust and chainsaw chippings. Lacking the wood off-cuts with bark on them that would have been used for pine stump lagoons, we overpacked the surface of the lagoon with thick strips of dead bark, peeled from the outside of the beech stump. The lagoons were then filled with water from a nearby stream and kept topped-up from time to time during prolonged periods of dry weather.

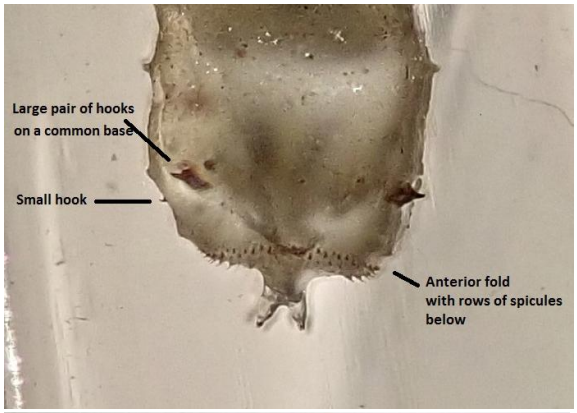
Beech stump lagoon packed with bark strip (photo: Rob Foster)

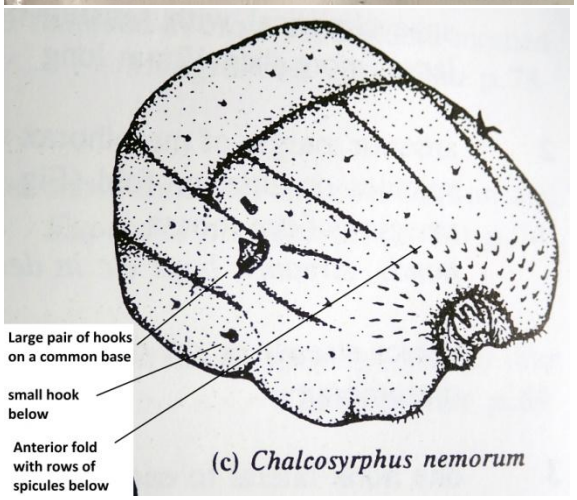
Short tailed hoverfly larva on mossy bark strip (photo: Rob Foster)

By early July, after only a few months, the pine stump lagoons had developed a population of long-tailed larvae (larvae with long posterior respiratory processes (PRPs)) that proved later to be mostly larvae of the hoverfly *Myathropa florea*. At the same time, in the beech stump lagoon, it was noticed that larvae with shorter PRPs were developing, embedded in moss on the surface of the bark (see above, lower photo). It took us some time to work out exactly what they were. The larvae had three lappets on their anal segments a characteristic of larvae of the *Xylotini* group of hoverflies. Reference was made to the "Bible" of hoverfly larvae identification - Rotheray's *Colour Guide to Hoverfly Larvae in Britain and Europe* (1993). They most resembled the photo of a larva of *X. sylvarum* : a hoverfly which was reasonably common in the area. So, initially, this is what we assumed they would prove to be.

Mature larva [Photo Rob Foster]

By early August, the larvae had grown sufficiently to allow identification, they were collected and photographed. This revealed that they had a pair of small hooks at each side of the front of the thorax (see photo) They could not therefore be *Xylota* larvae: so, back again to Rotheray's Guide and specifically to Figure 14 Thoraces of hook-bearing larvae. The hooks were vaguely triangular in outline - rather like curled rose thorns. The pair of hooks curled in opposite directions although they shared the same linear base. No other hooks or spines were obvious. There were, however, lines of very short bristles below the front of the thorax (in the anterior fold) which gave the appearance of a set of fine teeth when they were briefly glimpsed as the larva progressed. The illustration that most closely corresponded to the larvae appeared to be that of *Brachypalpoides lentus*, so that was our tentative new identification when we posted the photographs onto the Facebook UK Hoverflies Larval Group site. However, when hoverfly larva expert Ellie Rotheray looked at them, she noticed a tiny additional hook on the side of the thorax (see photo); this was significant; it indicated that they were in fact the larvae of a *Chalcosyrphus* species.





Distribution of hooks and spicules :Above: Stacked photo from above of thorax of live larva [Rob Foster]

Below:- *Chalcosyrphus nemorum* Thoraces of hook bearing larvae [modified figure from Rotheray, G.E. 1993]

Larvae of *Chalcosyrphus* species are not well documented. Two *Chalcosyrphus* species occur in the UK, *C. nemorum* and *C. eunotus*. *Chalcosyrphus nemorum* was the more likely possibility; we had recorded it only half a mile away in Padley Gorge (also on the Longshaw Estate) - on a fallen beech tree. The larva of this hoverfly is usually found under the bark of logs and branches lying in wet conditions, feeding on decaying sap. It was probably important that we packed the beech stump lagoon with strips of dead beech bark. However, we could not eliminate the possibility that it might be *Chalcosyrphus eunotus*, the Logjammer Hoverfly, since its larva, although not well known, appears to be similar. Photographs in a Staffordshire Wildlife Trust study of the species (Jukes et al. 2009) confirm this; however, when grown to full size it is significantly larger (22mm cf. 13mm). Also, based on a description of the integument of a puparium in a paper by Maibach & Goeldlin de Tiefenau (1992), the larva may lack a small hook on the side of the prothorax, but this is not clear. *Chalcosyrphus eunotus* is also a species breeding under the bark of waterlogged trees, but apparently with a preference for the rotten sap wood. Although thought previously to be confined to Wales and the West Midlands, it had, according the *State of Nature in the Peak District* (Anderson, P. 2016), recently been found, not that far away, in Staffordshire

So we felt obliged to breed out the larvae to the adult hoverflies: not that easy, as it turned out. One of us (Rob Foster) tried to breed a larva in a specimen tube, immersed in water with bark and wood chippings from the lagoon. He managed to grow to full size (13 mm) and to over-winter the larva, but it failed in pupation. John Leach on the other hand overwintered larvae on wet mossy bark strips in a terrarium and succeeded in raising an adult fly which emerged in May. The hoverfly is clearly identifiable as *Chalcosyrphus nemorum* (see his photographs). He also searched the terrarium and found a pupa (see photo). This eventually perished, possibly because it had not managed to extrude its pupal respiratory horns. Otherwise, it closely resembles illustrations of the puparia of *Xylota [Chalcosyrphus] nemorum* in a monograph on the *Larvae and Puparia of the Syrphidae of Illinois* (Heiss, E.M. 1938).

[Photos John Leach]

Chalcosyphus nemorum bred from larvae collected from beech stump lagoon. This male hoverfly has reddish-grey spots on the abdomen identical to illustrations in *British Hoverflies* (Stubbs and Falk, 2002). It is similar to males of *Xylota jakutorum*, *X. abiens* and *X. florum*, from which it is distinguished by its robust hind femora and entirely black tibiae

Pupa (top photo) recovered from mossy bark strips kept in terrarium (lower photo)
[Photos John Leach]

The larva of *Chalcosyrphus nemorum* was described by Hartley in 1961 under the name *Xylota nemorum*. It was necessarily covered fairly briefly in a paper covering the larvae of many British Syrphidae. For brevity, the taxonomies of the larvae of *Xylotini* were mostly described as variations on that of the larva of *Syritta pipiens*, with much emphasis on the distribution of sensilla (small sensory papillae with fine bristles): not something which is easily observed in live specimens. *Chalcosyrphus nemorum* larvae were not illustrated except for a figure showing the distinctive angular tip of the rear breathing tube (posterior respiratory process (PRP)). The species is also covered in Rotheray's *Colour Guide to Hoverfly Larvae in Britain and Europe*. There is no photograph of the larva, however the hook positions and general chaetology of the thorax of *Chalcosyrphus nemorum* is illustrated, together with those of other larvae with hooks on their thoraces for comparison purposes. The illustrations are based on larvae which have been preserved using a par-boiling process. This causes their prolegs to protrude and their anterior folds to open, exposing the surfaces and spicules below, which makes examination and identification much easier. In live specimens, these features are for the most part concealed on their undersides and only briefly exposed during movement. This occurs when the larvae are crawling forwards over wet surface, which is their normal method of movement. However, they are at home just below the surface of the water and can, at need, move through it, albeit in a slow jerky haphazard manner, with rolling wriggling action. This causes their prolegs to extend and, at times, exposes their underside allowing their features to be glimpsed. So we include a series of photographs of a larva moving in a shallow layer of water. Because the water was quite murky, the photos are not ideal, but show most of the larva's features. We hope they will be useful in increasing familiarity with this little photographed or illustrated species. Surprisingly, the only other photograph of the larva we could find on the internet was from the USA: one taken in 2010 by O.Keller, posted on the website – www// Bugguide.net.

[Photo John Leach]

Distinctive features as noted by Hartley and Rotheray -

:a relatively flat-bodied larva with a short tail (anal segment);
: anal segment with 3 equally sized triangular fleshy lappets on the sides;
: two black hooks with a common base: the outer one curved: the inner one relatively stubby and straight and a single small hook below. [This hook may however be missing or not be present on one side (Maibach et al (1992)]

Other features -

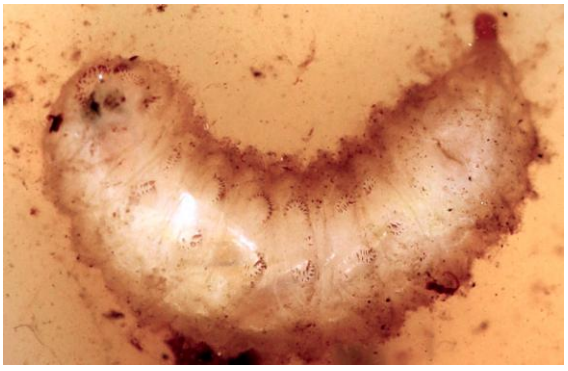
: anterior fold with a row of 3-4 rows of spicules.
: posterior respiratory process about 4 times as long as broad, tubular with a shallow groove down the middle of its upper and lower sides; in end view, it is vaguely angular. From its tip, extend branched, hair-like setae that are hydrophobic and spread out on the surface of the water exposing the slit-like spiracles at the tip of the breathing tube for respiration whilst the larva is submerged, typically gripping wood or bark surfaces with its hooks and crotchets.

Underside view seen whilst swimming

When moving underwater, a pair of prolegs extends forwards like parallel keels at the front of the larva, below the prothorax. The entrance to the digestive system is enclosed in the hollow created by the folding down of anterior fold and between the front prolegs. The head skeleton and mouthparts are internal. The larva ingests water, removing debris with modified mandibles that have evolved into filters, and feeds on suspended bacteria etc..

[photos John Leach]

The prolegs are relatively short; there is a pair on the thorax and 6 pairs on the abdomen. Claw-like bristles –crotchets - on the edges of their generally oval soles, give the prolegs grip. These are arranged in primary, secondary and tertiary rows, each of 6-8 crotchets. Descriptions indicate that the secondary crotchets are larger, but primary and secondary crotchets seem to be of a similar size. Tertiary bristles, interstitial between and behind the secondary crotchets, are much smaller and inconspicuous. At the front of the abdomen, the rows of crotchets, on balance, face forwards, on the sides they generally arc outwards, and at the back they are arranged in a ring - allowing forwards of backwards motion. Behind these, on segment 7 of the abdomen, there is a pair of small, inward-facing hooks.



[Photo John Leach]

Maybe this technique - using lagoons cut in hardwood tree stumps packed with bark strips - will prove to be a way of finding *Chalcosyrphus* species and other hoverflies with larvae which develop under bark, feeding on the rotting sap of logs lying in boggy conditions. Worth a try?

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Graham Rotheray for comments on a previous draft of this article.

A key to female *Sphaerophoria* – call for specimens

Roger Morris

I have a test key to *Sphaerophoria* based on the two Scandinavian keys but I really need a large number of specimens to test that it works and also to populate the necessary illustrations.

Recognising *Sphaerophoria scripta* is relatively straightforward as the microtrichia on the second basal cell cover at most 40% of the cell. Specimens with a complete yellow stripe along the side of the top of the thorax with more microtrichial coverage are what I need to see. Separating *S. rueppellii* and *S. loewi* is far more straightforward as only these two species have a broken yellow stripe.

I would welcome a supply of specimens, especially from northern and western areas – please contact me as syrphid58@gmail.com

An observation of *Volucella zonaria* entering a wasp's nest

Roger Morris

A post by Ann Miles on the UK Hoverflies Facebook page raises an interesting question about the ways in which *Volucella* enter the nests of social wasps. (https://www.facebook.com/groups/609272232450940/permalink/3458087590902709/)

Ann watched a female *V. zonaria* attempting to enter a *Vespula* nest (I think *V. vulgaris*). In the process, the fly was definitely investigated by the 'guard wasp' (photographed), which clearly determined that the fly was not a threat (and also not a meal for its grubs).

This observation raises an interesting question: was the fly protected by a specific chemical cue? Work on *Volucella inanis* and *V. pellucens* (Rupp, 1989 – unpublished PhD) reports that two separate strategies seem to be employed. In *V. inanis* intruders are readily challenged and the flies have to wait for an opportunity to enter the wasp's nest. Conversely, observations suggest that *V. pellucens* enters unhindered. What is the cause of these differences? We might surmise that the wasps are alert to the ill-intent of *V. inanis*, whose larvae actively feed on wasp

grubs in their cells, whereas *V. pellucens* and *V. zonaria* feed on detritus in the base of the nest.

Top: guard wasp investigates female *Volucella zonaria*; **bottom**, guard wasp detects no threat and flies off.

Although we understand *V. zonaria* to be a scavenger in wasp nests, it seems likely that they will consume moribund wasp larvae. Do they, by this means, acquire some level of pheromone protection in a manner similar to *Microdon* or does *V. inanis* gain the wrong pheromones by consuming healthy wasp grubs? Might this be a practical student project combining chemical analysis with behavioural observations?

Poetic Inspiration

Who would have thought that hoverflies would be the inspiration for poetry? We saw a great example of this during a recent conversation on the UK Hoverflies Facebook page. For some odd reason, discussion of the eutrophic ooze emanating from a silage clamp triggered poetic thoughts that led to this wonderful verse:

Syrphidomania

By Pat Merchant

Eristalines will gaily choose
To bathe in our eutrophic ooze
But when I pile the silage high
I scarcely see a hoverfly

I find that knapweed's always good
And horsemint grows well in the mud
Silentis flies around the marsh
Its colour-scheme a trifle harsh

Blue scabious by the river grows
The Syrphids like it, and it shows
Helophilus all gather where
The scent of these flowers fills the air

Ignore the wasps, but if you see
A creature like a bumble bee
Before you turn away your lens
Do check it's not superbiens.

A word about Geraniums
Look, something tiny this way comes!
Segnis scuttle round Hortensia

Giving photographers dementia!

Just the sight of blooming Aster
Makes a Scaeva's heart beat faster
But the marmalades can get quite stroppy
When ten of them land on one poppy

There's hybridus and trivittatus
Thinking they can both outsmart us
"I'm just a pendulus," they say
"You need not look again my way"

But down to earth – we have the team
To tell us what we haven't seen
Ha! Just you wait, you'll all go greener
When at last I spot a metallina!