HOVERFLY NEWSLETTER

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Hoverfly Recording Scheme — *Biological Records Centre*

I hope the next issue of the **Hoverfly Newsletter** will have an article on the Hoverfly Recording Scheme from our new National Organisers, Stuart Ball and Roger Morris. I gather they have been working hard! It has been another very active year with progress on many fronts. P. Beuk has a very nice paper on *Epistrophe melanostoma* new to the British Isles in **Entomologist's mon. Mag.** (see Recent Publications). Larval searches have gone well with *Callicera aenea* and *Microdon devius* now reared as reported by Alan Stubbs in **British Wildlife 1(5)**. How many of us have records of the new *Platycheirus* species recently described by Goeldlin de Tiefenau et al in **Dipterists Digest 5** - lets have details for the **Hoverfly Newsletter.**

Contributions now badly needed for the next **Hoverfly Newsletter**, by March 1st please, to: Graham E Rotheray, Royal Museum of Scotland, Chambers St., Edinburgh EH1 1JF.

CONTENTS

HOVERFLIES IN CORNWALL 1989

Simon Grove, Biological Survey Team, The National Trust, Spitalgate Lane, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 2DE.

As the two zoologists on the National Trust's Biological Survey Team, myself and Keith Alexander were, in summer 1989, lucky enough to be able to spend nine weeks zoologising (mostly entomologising) on NT properties (and a few other sites) throughout Cornwall. The county is relatively poorly worked for hoverflies (or at least poorly recorded), but just as many species of insect become rarer towards the north, so do many towards the west and so the apparent scarcity of some hoverflies in Cornwall is probably genuine. However, our surveys produced new records for a number of species which indicate that they might not be as scarce as previously believed, and entomologists visiting the area are advised to keep their eyes open (notepads at the ready) for the following species that we encountered. To help future entomologists, all records should be sent to the Cornwall Biological Records Unit, at Trevithick Building, Tevenson Road, Pool, Redruth TR15 3PL.

It is the records held at the CBRU that give us some idea of the status of these hoverflies in the county, and which ultimately helps in their conservation.

Xanthandrus comtus: Millook Valley, NE Cornwall. Also three CBRU records, all pre-1940.

Platycheirus fulviventris: Pendower undercliff, near Portscatho; Trescowe marsh, near Goldsithney. No CBRU records.

Xanthogramma citrofasciatum: Beagles Point, Lizard Peninsula. Only two CBRU records, both pre-1940.

Chrysotoxum elegans: Sennen Cove, Land's End Peninsula; Pendower Beach, near Portscatho; Northcott Mouth, near Bude; Paradoe Cove, Nare Head. Five CBRU records, all pre-1940.

Portevinia maculata: Trelowarren Woods, Helston; Frenchman's Creek, Helford. CBRU records not searched.

Sphegina kimakowiczi: Millook Valley, NE Cornwall; Coombe Valley, NE Cornwall. No CBRU records.

Sphegina clunipes: Clerkenwater, Bodmin. Four CBRU records, all pre-1940.

Brachyopa insensilis: Higher Hill Wood, Trencrom, St. Ives. No CBRU records.

Ferdinandea cuprea: Trelowarren Woods, Helston. CBRU records not searched.

Neoascia meticulosa: Loe Pool, Helston. No CBRU records.

Brachypalpoides lenta: Tremayne Woods, Helford; Tidna Valley, Morwenstow. Three CBRU records, all pre-1940.

Xylota sylvarum: Penrose Estate, Helston; Boconnoc Park; Lost Withiel; Millook Valley, NE Cornwall; Lanhydrock Park. Four CBRU records, three pre-1940, one post-1980.

Xylota ?florum (individual escaped capture): Colquite Woods, Bodmin. CBRU records not searched.

Chalcosyrphus nemorum: Trelissick Woods, Feock. No CBRU records.

Tropidia scita: Gunwallow Marsh, Helston; Pendower undercliff, near Porthscatho. No CBRU records.

Criorhina berberina: Cotehele Woods. Six CBRU records, all pre-1940.

Parhelophilus versicolor: Gunwallow Marsh, Helston; Cotehele Estate. Four CBRU records.

Anasimyia contracta: Cotehele Estate. No CBRU records.

Eristalinus sepulchralis: Duckpool, NE Cornwall. Six CBRU records, five pre-1940, one post-1980.

Microdon mutabilis: coastal mire near Zennor, Land's End Peninsula. One CBRU record, pre-1940.

Eumerus sabulonum: St. Gennys, NE Cornwall; The Gribbin, SE Cornwall. CBRU records not searched.

Pipizella virens: Newdowns Head, St. Agnes. CBRU records not searched.

Some of these records deserve further comment. *Eumerus sabulonum*, for instance, was recorded at several spots on the Hartland Peninsula along the N Devon/N Cornwall border this June during the Diptera Recording meeting, and it seems that this area is a stronghold for the species. Like these records, mine at St. Gennys, just down the coast, was taken within a few feet from the coast on a hot area of short coastal heath, and in the light of this a possible larval host-plant would seem to be spring squill (*Scilla verna*) (assuming all the Eumerini feed in bulbs). However, to confound the issue, my other specimen at The Gribbin was from a short-mown path amongst dense bracken on a sheltered bit of coast; spring squill is apparently absent from this section of coast, though bluebell is abundant.

Xanthandrus comtus is another species that turned up in NE Cornwall and NW Devon during the Diptera Recording week. My Millook specimen was seen hovering a metre above the ground in a small dappled sun-lit glade in a valley ash/oak wood, about 10 m from the wood edge.

Chrysotoxum elegans is generally considered a woodland species further east, but in Cornwall it appears to be quite widespread on the coast. Our specimens came from a variety of cliff habitats, including dense bracken-covered slopes and a rocky beach!

Brachyopa insensilis is supposed to breed in elm sap-runs, but my specimen, a female, was watched as it inspected the nooks and crannies between the buttress roots of an old beech in an apparently ancient woodland where elms are absent [larvae are found about sap runs on a large variety of deciduous trees - Ed.].

Finally, while surveying at Morwenstow in mid-July during a strong offshore (easterly) breeze, I was interested to see swarms of *Episyrphus balteatus* zooming up the cliffs from out at sea and heading off inland against the wind at a height of about 50 cm. They were barely discernable until I got my eye in, but I estimate that several flew immediately past me every second, and this influx continued all afternoon. I would be interested to know whether this was just a local phenomenon, or did anyone else observe such mass migration?

ALDERNEY HOVERFLIES

Ian Wynne, 161 Maplestead Road, Dagenham, Essex RM9 4XU

I was interested to read Tim Lavery's account of the hoverflies recorded from Guernsey (**Hoverfly Newsletter 9**) and here give some hoverfly records for one of the smaller Channel Islands, Alderney.

Alderney, the most northerly of the Channel Islands, is only 7 miles from the French coast and measures approximately 3 sq. miles. In the few visits I have made to the island I have only managed to record a total of 46 species. It was surprising then to read that the much larger island of Guernsey should have an even smaller list. However Alderney, unlike Guernsey, is not under pressure from intensive agriculture and much of the island remains uncultivated or as rough pasture which may account for a greater hoverfly fauna. Perhaps a more likely explanation is that not enough dipterists take their holidays in the Channel Islands!

Among the most interesting finds on the island was *Chrysotoxum elegans*, found flying low amongst vegetation and feeding at umbels in a sheltered, scrubby locality. All individuals observed were of the dark form once treated as a separate species, *C. latilimbatum* Collin. Another interesting find was a female *Orthonevra* specimen which keys to *splendens* but the thorax lacks the greenish colour present in that species.

The only previous hoverfly records for Alderney that I can find are for *Episyrphus balteatus, Metasyrphus corollae* and *Eristalis tenax*, reported by the late R. B. Freeman, a natural historian who frequently visited the island.

The following is a list of the hoverflies that I have recorded from Alderney. The majority of records were obtained during an 8 day visit in June 1989. *Eristalinus aeneus* and *Neoascia podagrica* were taken in April 1988.

Cheilosia albitarsis, C. pagana, Chrysogaster solstitialis, Chrysotoxum bicinctum, C. elegans, C. festivum, Dasysyrphus albostriatus, Epistrophe eligans, E. grossulariae, Episyrphus balteatus, Eristalinus aeneus, E. sepulchralis, Eristalis arbustorum, E. intricarius, E. nemorum, E. tenax, Eumerus tuberculatus, Helophilus pendulus, Leucozona lucorum, Meliscaeva auricollis, Melanostoma scalare, Merodon equestris, Metasyrphus corollae, M. latifasciatus, M. luniger, Myathropa florea, Neoascia podagrica, Orthonevra sp., Paragus haemorrhous, Pipiza noctiluca, Pipizella varipes, Platycheirus albimanus, P. angustatus, P. clypeatus, P. manicatus, P. scutatus, Pyrophaena granditarsa, Scaeva pyrastri, Sphaerophoria scripta, Syritta pipiens, Syrphus ribesii, S. vitripennis, Volucella bombylans, V. pellucens, Xanthogramma pedissequum, Xylota segnis.

JERSEY HOVERFLIES

Martin Drake, Nature Conservancy Council, Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA

This sequel to "Guernsey Hoverflies" (**Hoverfly Newsletter 9**) is a response to Tim Lavery's request for more information on Channel Island hoverflies. Tony Warne of NCC has undertaken surveys of insects in Jersey since 1984, for the States of Jersey Island Development Committee. His recent move to Peterborough gave him convenient access to my identification services, just across the corridor, in exchange for named beetles. Alan Stubbs also identified some of Tony's catches from 1985 and he kindly put a name to a non-British *Merodon* in the batches that I was responsible for. The keys I used for identification included Stubbs & Falk (1983), Torp (1984, *De danske svirrefluer*), van der Goot (1981, *De zweefliegen van Noordwest-Europees Rusland, in het bijzonder van de Benelux*) and Verrall (1901, *British Flies 8*) who provided some useful figures and full descriptions of standard British fare. I found Martin Speight's paper very useful in checking for foreigners (Speight, 1988. *Dipterists Digest* **1**, 2-35).

Pope (1972, *Bulletin of the Societe Jersaise*, **21**, 140-144) listed 61 species from Jersey and 12 more were added in updates by Long & Long (1976, *op. cit.*, **26** and 1977, *op. cit.* **27**. There are no non-British species in these lists and it appears that only Coe (1953, *Handbook X (1)*) was used for identification, so some continental species may have been overlooked. The records of all but nine of these are presumably recent - 35 species date from 1972 onwards and 29 are noted as "generally distributed", by which I assume that these species have been frequently recorded since Smith's review of Jersey Diptera (1958, *Ent. Gaz.* **9**, 203-214). Below, I list 55 species caught by Tony Warne in 1985-89, to which may be added the exciting but unconfirmed sighting of *Milesia crabroniformis* and one, probably stray, species that has yet to be determined. Fourteen species are added to the Jersey hoverfly fauna, indicated by "new" in my list, bringing the total to 87 species and leaving only seven species not seen since 1972. As Tony is not a dipterist, it is unlikely that my list is comprehensive.

Tim Lavery suggested that half of the 30 species he listed may have disappeared from Guernsey since 1945. This is somewhat pessimistic if the fauna on Jersey is anything to go by. I do not think that the greater isolation, smaller area and possibly more degraded landscape of Guernsey can account for the large difference in the size of the two species lists. In my list, species that Lavery regarded as present in Guernsey are marked with an asterisk (*) and those that he thought had disappeared with a cross (+). Six of the suspected extinctions are species that Pope (1972) described as "generally distributed" (and two of these as "common") and five are in my list (*M. mellinum, P. clypeatus, P. manicatus, E. sepulchralis* and *M. equestris*). It would be interesting to confirm the presence of at least these few common species on Guernsey. Thanks go to Tony Warne for letting me use his data.

Baccha sp., *Melanostoma mellinum* +, *M. scalare* *, *Platycheirus albimanus* *, *P. angustatus* new, *P. clypeatus* +, *P. manicatus* +, *P. peltatus* * new, *P. scutatus*, *Paragus haemorrhous* new, *Dasysyrphus albostriatus*, *D. venustus* new, *Epistrophe grossulariae*, *Episyrphus balteatus*, *Meliscaeva auricollis*, *Metasyrphus corollae* *, *M. latifasciatus* + new, *Sphaerophoria scripta*, *S. taeniata* new, *Syrphus ribesii* *, *S. vitripennis*, *Scaeva pyrastri* *, *Cheilosia albitarsis*, *C. illustrata*, *C. paganus*, *C. variabilis* new, *C. vernalis* + new, *Ferdinandea cuprea* +, *Rhingia campestris*, *Chrysogaster hirtella*, *C. virescens* new,

Lejogaster metallina +, *Neoascia podagrica*, *N. tenur*, *Orthonevra splendens*, *Sphegina kimakowiczi* new, *Eristallinus sepulchralis*, *Eristalis arbustorum* *, *E. intricarius*, *E. horticola*, *E. nemorum*, *E. pertinax* *, *Anasimyia lineata* new, *Helophilus pendulus* *, *H. trivittatus*, *Myathropa florea* +, *Eumerus strigatus*, *E. tuberculatus* *, *Merodon equestris* +, *Merodon albifrons* new, non-British, *Volucella bombylans* *, *Sericomyia silentis* new, *Syritta pipiens* *, *Xylota segnis*.

ADDITIONAL RECORDS OF HOVERFLIES AT LIGHT

Colin Plant, Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, Stratford, London E15 4LY

Having spent some of the 1989 xmas break looking at the hoverflies which had been slowly building up in store boxes I discovered some additional data on hoverflies taken at my light. Three new species are involved, over and above the combined lists of Tim Lavery, Joan Morgan, Steve Christmas and myself in **Hoverfly Newsletters 8 & 9**. These are:

Parasyrphus punctulatus	-	1 female in a static trap;
Eristalis pertinax	-	1 female in a static trap;
Volucella bombylans	-	1 male taken on a white sheet.

A single male each of *Melanostoma scalare* and *Platycheirus clypeatus* taken at a light over a white sheet are both new in that I have only previously recorded females (though Joan Morgan's list from Bangor does not give sexes).

FLOWER PREFERENCE IN *EPISTROPHE GROSSULARIAE*

Alan E Stubbs, Nature Conservancy Council, Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 4DS

I have usually associated *E. grossulariae* with flowers of *Heracleum* (hogweed). Hence it seemed surprising in early August 1989 to find a single specimen at *Centaurea nigra* (knapweed) in my garden in central Peterborough (at least a mile from woodland). This is the only observation of the occurrence of the species in my garden which has many cultivated and wild flowers, including *Angelica*, to choose between. It is also worth noting that on the same occasion there was my first *Dasysyrphus albostriatus* for the garden, also at *Centaurea nigra* (and a similar observation some days later). Presumably there was a movement of Syrphinae at the time.

At Birkham Wood in W. Yorkshire on 30 August 1989, or rather just outside the wood along a river bank, *E. grossulariae* was unusually common. The scrub clad areas with remnants of grassland had plentiful flowers. Again the species showed a strong preference for *Centaurea nigra*. However, in glades with *Succisa pratense* (devilsbit scabious), numbers of the hoverfly were congregating at these flowers, completely ignoring adjacent *Centaurea nigra* and *Angelica*.

DIDEA ALNETI IN NORTHUMBERLAND

G Simpson MBE, Forestry Commission, Redford, Hamsterley, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham DL13 3NL

On 11 July 1989 Malcolm McEwan brought a hoverfly to me which he had caught in Slaley Forest, Northumberland (NZ 9454) on the previous day. I identified it as *Didea alneti* Fallen (identification kindly confirmed by Alan Stubbs). A further specimen was brought to me a few days later and M McEwan said there were more in the forest. I asked him to refrain from collecting further samples. I cannot describe the colour of living specimens but the recently killed insects showed a green tinge to the white abdominal markings. The insects were feeding on a small patch of rockery plants introduced into the forest. The site is surrounded by recently restocked conifer forest and 50 year old conifer plantations. The conifer species are Sitka Spruce and Scots Pine. Broadleaved trees are few and far between except for several hundred young transplants used on restocking sites. About 500 m south of the site the forest changes to open, heather moorland. The pedology is a thin peat and forest litter layer over a dry podsol underlain by parallel-bedded sandstone.

The nearest alder trees are 1 km away from the site except for a few recently introduced transplants. I wonder if the huge populations of the Green Spruce Aphid *Elatobium abietinum* which have defoliated Sitka Spruce in the last two summers, have encouraged this small colony of *Didea alneti*?

A SIMPLE METHOD OF TRAPPING FULLY-FED APHIDOPHAGOUS HOVERFLY LARVAE?

A A Allen, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London SE7 8QC

On the ground under an elder bush in my garden, very heavily infested last summer (1989) with grey-black *Aphis sambuci* L. aphids, a disused plastic bin lid has lain for some time. I was interested, on picking it up this February and glancing at the underside, to see syrphid larvae in considerable numbers (some already pupated) which had taken up residence mostly on both sides of the inner (downward projecting) rim of the lid. They must have found it a favourable pupation site - more so, it would appear, than the natural one which presumably is the usual ground-litter under the bushes. A few weeks later, finding the majority now pupated, I collected most of the puparia (being firmly fixed, care was necessary in detaching them) in order to see what species would result. From late March to mid-April a fairly steady emergence of the common spring hoverfly *Epistrophe eligans* took place, but no other species appeared.

Two questions arise from this. Is the choice of such a site something peculiar to *E. eligans*, or would other species (had they been present) have done likewise? And if they would, as seems probable, might not some such method - suitably modified to fit the circumstances - have its uses in larval and other studies? At least it could be easily tried. One foresees problems in keeping out ground predators, and for general use in the field; but in a garden or other place where the trap could be left undisturbed for long periods, and be inspected from time to time, I believe it offers possibilities.

AN UNEXPECTED REARING RECORD FOR *MERODON EQUESTRIS*

B & I D Wallace, Liverpool Museum, William Brown St., Liverpool L3 8EN.

This spring we reared *Merodon* from an "Amaryllis" *Hippeastrum* sp. The plant, in its pot, was placed outdoors in spring 1988, until flowering ended and the leaves became long and sprawling. In autumn, the bulb was re-potted and brought into the house in the hope of another flower spike. None appeared but the plant remained indoors on account of its attractive leaves. Inexplicably, in late December, first the outer then the inner pair of leaves withered and the plant was banished to the spare room without water.

On April 4th this year we found a newly emerged *Merodon* sitting on the pot and the reason for the plant's demise became clear.

On inspection one empty puparium and one live specimen were found in the compost. The bulb was firm with good roots but showed no signs of re-growth. The interior had been hollowed out by the *Merodon* larvae. Their emergence holes were in the base of the bulb.

Hippeastrum is in the same family as the Daffodil for which *Merodon* is a known pest. We have many daffodils and bluebells in the garden and occasionally encounter *Merodon* adults there.

OVIPOSITION BEHAVIOUR IN TWO HOVERFLIES

B & I D Wallace, Liverpool Museum, William Brown St., Liverpool L3 8EN.

1. On 7.6.1989 at Craig Rhiwarth, Llangynnog, (grid ref. SJ060265), VC 47) about mid-day on a warm still sunny day a female of *Brachypalpus laphriformis* was captured whilst sitting with her ovipositor inserted into a wet groove at the entrance to an enclosed water-filled hollow in a solitary oak (species not recorded). The tree was on moorland but a small oak wood lay nearby. The water-filled hollow did not appear to be a classic rot-hole as it was shallow and had a firm bottom with only a few leaves. The water was however, tea coloured. A few rocks, presumably placed there by humans, littered the bottom. The hole had probably filled with water from rain two days previous and the overflow was still wet. It was this overflow which appeared to attract the female.

2. Following from the "mystery photograph" in **Hoverfly Newsletter 9** and the note by Ian Wynne in **Hoverfly Newsletter 10** on the foodplant for *Cheilosia albitarsis* we here report seeing what appeared to be pre-oviposition behaviour on 10.6.1989 at Welshpool (narrow gauge) station (grid ref. SJ215074, VC 47). It was a warm still sunny day at about mid-day when a female of *Cheilosia albitarsis* Meigen was observed moving up and down leaf stems of Creeping Buttercup, *Ranunculus repens* L. testing them with her ovipositor. After a couple of minutes it was obvious she would fly off so we captured her. She was incarcerated in a plastic tube with some leaf stems of the buttercup but no eggs were laid.

Both females are deposited in the collections of Liverpool Museums.

MYSTERY SOLVED - *RANUNCULUS REPENS* IS A FOODPLANT OF *CHEILOSIA ALBITARSIS* AFTER ALL!

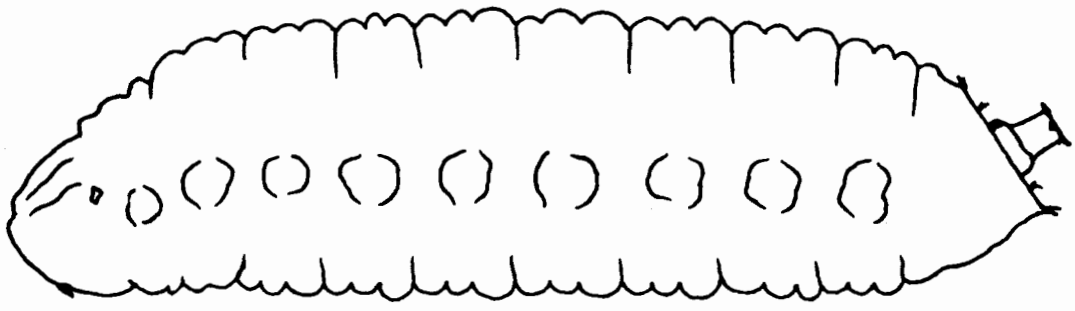
Graham E. Rotheray, Royal Museum of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1JF.

I can now confirm suspicions (see B. & I. Wallace's note above and **Hoverfly Newsletters 9 & 10**) that Creeping Buttercup, *Ranunculus repens*, is a foodplant for *Cheilosia albitarsis*. In June this year I saw several females of *C. albitarsis* darting down towards the base of buttercup leaf stems in a shaded site near my home just south of Edinburgh. On examining these stems I noticed several syrphid-like eggs and collected these for rearing.

Within a few days larvae had emerged from all the eggs. The tiny larvae were unmistakeably syrphid with fused posterior spiracles and with *Cheilosia*-like with mouth-hooks. The larvae soon tunnelled their way into the rootstocks and were hidden from view.

Over the next few weeks I collected more eggs on leaf stems and larvae in rootstocks at several sites in Midlothian and soon had a flourishing group of larvae in culture. Their posterior breathing tubes have four pairs of spine-like projections around the rim, exactly as shown in the "mystery photograph" (**Hoverfly Newsletter 9**).

For much of the summer, larvae grew very slowly and I was concerned that all was not well. However the poor rate of larval development was confirmed when comparing larvae in culture with freshly collected material obtained at various points during the summer months. Only now, in the autumn, have larvae grown rapidly. Their slow development, perhaps "delayed" is a better means of expressing the phenomenon, is interesting. If this is a feature of other *Cheilosia* species then finding larvae in the summer months may be particularly difficult on account of their small (up to 4mm long) size and extra care may be needed when searching for *Cheilosia* larvae. The larva of *Cheilosia albitarsis*, along with others, will be described elsewhere. In the meantime a quick sketch of the third stage larva is given below.



...AND NOW, ANOTHER MYSTERY...

Can we do it again? Those beautiful *Chrysotoxum* hoverflies! Where do they breed and what do their larvae feed on?

The few available details suggest an association with ants. I have seen a female *Chrysotoxum bicinctum* oviposit around the edges of a nest of the common black ant, *Lasius niger*. Martin Speight found a puparium of *Chrysotoxum festivum* associated with the same ant species in Ireland (1976. *Entomologists Rec.* **88**: 51-52). Perhaps *Chrysotoxum* larvae (they resemble other predatory larvae in general shape and form) feed on root aphids that are sometimes "cultured" by ants. How to find out? Well, searches of ant colonies at various times during the autumn and spring might work. Hand searching is best but sieving might also be tried. So come on folks - lets go for it! Who can come up with the first *Chrysotoxum* larva??

SYRPHUS VITRIPENNIS MEIGEN WITH YELLOW HIND FEMORA?

Colin W Plant, Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, Stratford, London E15 4LZ

Females of *Syrphus ribesii* and *vitripennis* are traditionally separated in the field by the yellow hind femora of the former, compared with the largely black hind femora of *vitripennis*. Using the revised key to the genus by Speight in *Dipterists Digest* a curious specimen in my collection keys to either *vitripennis* or *sexmaculatus* Zetterstedt. However, it is clearly not the latter species which also has yellow hind femora.

Although the specimen is teneral the tarsi are fully darkened suggesting that the hind femora would have been yellow in the mature adult insect. However, Martin Speight has commented that the mechanism of pigment deposition is not properly understood and that it is possible that two processes are involved; the first, including the tarsi, taking place in the pupal stage and the second, including the femora, involving post emergence secretion of pigmentation.

However the truth may be, it is clearly unreliable to continue separating *S. ribesii* and *S. vitripennis* in the field on the basis of leg colour unless it is certain that the specimen is not teneral. This may involve retaining the specimen, alive, for a couple of days - itself defeating the point of identification "in the field".

A REARING RECORD FOR *DIDEA FASCIATA*

David Lees, Conservation Unit, Mill House, Windmill Road, Mitcham Common, Surrey, CR4 1HT

On 3 June 1990 a fully grown syrphid larva was found on the upper surface of a sallow (*Salix caprea*) leaf about 1.5 m. above the ground, beside Kew Lake, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Surrey.

The larva was extremely conspicuous for a syrphid larva, being uniformly dark purplish in colour on the dorsum, about 17mm in length and somewhat reminiscent in shape to the larva of *Thecla quercus*, and it was retained. The larva soon voided the contents of its hindgut and pupated. The adult fly, a female *Didea fasciata*, emerged some time between the 30 June and 16 July when I returned from a trip abroad.

Sallow is possibly an unusual plant on which to find this hoverfly. Most of the few larval records have been for pines. In the present case the larva may have been feeding on the large willow aphid, *Tuberlachnus salignus*. An additional observation was made on 27 July 1990 when a male *D. fasciata* was caught flying around the branches of a 2m. tall isolated sallow bush on Mitcham Common whose stems were infested with this aphid.

IDENTIFICATION OF FEMALE *BACCHA*

H H Carter, The Town Hall, Reading Museums & Art Gallery, Blagrave Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 1QH

Those with long series of *Baccha* females are invited to try out the following separation:

- Central shining stripe of frons extending all the way from the ocellar triangle to the antennae, without or with only the slightest trace of rugae (view from above with light coming from a little to one side); mesopleuron all black, at most with the extreme hind margin yellowish; tegulae bearing 8 or 9 black setulae .... *elongata*.

- Frons with central shining stripe usually ending well behind the antennae, the anterior part at least thinly grey-dusted, seldom shining, frequently with rugae which when complete are horse-shoe shaped and embrace the dusted area; mesopleuron never wholly black, with up to the posterior quarter yellowish in ground colour (best seen from behind as heavy dust obscures the ground colour); tegula with from 2 to 9 black setulae, usually 5.....*obscuripennis*.

One might expect female *elongata* to have the more heavily dusted frons like the male, but this does not seem to be the case.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Orkney Biological Records Centre - has recently been set up by the Orkney Field Club and needs records, funds etc, contact **Mrs M Eggeling, Orkney Field Club, Stackoldbrae, Stromness, Orkney.**

Dipterists Digest - is a must for hoverfly enthusiasts. **Dipterists Digest 5** for example is a complete revision of the *Platycheirus clypeatus* group. Subscription information from **Derek Whiteley, 730 Eccleshall Road, Sheffield, S11 8TB.**

174 Hoverflies from Essex - more details in the Provisional Atlas of the Hoverflies of Essex. Copies obtainable at £2.30 (includes postage) from **R.G.Payne, Central Museum, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 6EW.**

Hoverfly Recording in the North West - details of field meetings, update on progress etc from **Darwyn Sumner, 54 Blackshaw Lane, Royton, Oldham, OL2 6NR.**

Hoverfly Recording in Scotland - records from Scotland badly needed for computer based mapping scheme, please send them to **Ken Watt, Dept., Zoology, University of Aberdeen, Tillydrone Aven., Aberdeen, AB9 2TN.**

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

BEUK, P.L.Th., 1990. A hoverfly of the genus *Epistrophe* (Dipt., Syrphidae) new to Britain. *Entomologist's mon. Mag.* **126**: 167-170.

LOHR, P.W. 1990. Hoverflies (Diptera, Syrphidae) from Malaise traps in Angermanland, coastal northern Sweden. *Entomol. Tidsk.* **111**: 79-82.

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