HOVERFLY NEWSLETTER

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I thought it would be appropriate to commemorate the publication of the twentieth issue of the Hoverfly Newsletter by inviting the two previous editors to contribute articles. I therefore thank Philip Entwistle, who started the newsletter off, and, I recall, wrote most of the early issues single-handed, and Graham Rotheray, who edited issues 5 to 15. My thanks also to everyone else who has submitted articles.

This newsletter is also the first in the hoverfly series to be issued under the auspices of the Dipterists Forum. Recorders who are not members of the forum should, as in the past, have received their copies from the Biological Records Centre (BRC). However recorders who are not in the Dipterists Forum and do not intend to join it are warned that BRC may not circulate more than one newsletter per scheme per year; since there is nearly always sufficient material to justify the issue of two Hoverfly Newsletters per year, there is therefore a danger that non forum members may not receive the odd-numbered issues. I am attempting to resolve this problem, but should I fail, I would be willing to supply copies of those newsletters to any non forum members who request such a service in exchange for the cost of photocopying and postage. Those who wish to join the Dipterists Forum should contact **Liz Howe, Ger-y-Parc, Marianglas, Tynygongl, Benllech, Gwynedd, LL74 8NS**.

In the following pages a number of further changes to the nomenclature of hoverfly species and genera are introduced. I am aware that the recent plethora of name changes has not been universally welcomed, though few, I believe, would dispute the logic of the generic name changes, e.g. the splitting of *Chrysogaster* into two genera or the separation of *Ripponensia* (with its significantly different wing venation) from *Orthonevra*. The basis for one specific name change is however challenged in this newsletter. In this period of change I have not attempted to update the scientific names in articles offered for inclusion in the newsletter provided they conform to the names in Stubbs and Falk, which is no doubt the source used by most recorders.

Beginning with this issue, publication dates for the newsletter will be August and February. Copy for newsletter No. 21 should be sent to me, **David Iliff, Green Willows, Station Road, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos, GL52 4HN**, to reach me by 1 December 1995.

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HOVERFLIES NORTH OF INVERNESS

Philip F Entwistle
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The Highland Region of Scotland, an area which can be roughly defined as lying north of a line from Elgin, running south-west down the Great Glen to the Sound of Mull, has been, and still is for that matter, notably short of resident entomologists. Most of the exploration of its insects has relied on periodic visits in holiday seasons. Verrall must have been the first of such short term visitors concerned especially with the Diptera, whilst the renowned and shadowy Colonel Yerbury (1912-1913) stayed rather longer and worked an area roughly extending from Golspie on the east coast to Lochinver on the west. The rest is bits and pieces, the expansion of studies roughly concurrent with the advent of the Diptera recording schemes. Kenn Watt at Aberdeen has provided a great service in collating all the Scottish hoverfly records; hence, in this brief note I will comment mainly on features I have personally encountered.

Since about 1982 I have been lucky enough to spend quite long periods of the year in the far north and have largely worked in areas beyond Inverness. But despite collecting for over a decade I am sure I have far from exhausted questions of the specific constitution of the hoverfly population or its distribution. And as for biology and phenology.....! For instance during the last two years *Arctophila fulva* has been added to my list, my most recent sighting being on *Succisa pratensis* flowers on 22 October 1994. Almost as recently I have taken *Scaeva selenitica* in mid August feeding with *Metasyrphus nielseni* on composite weeds in a garden lawn - there is an area of Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris)* not far away; these three in Sutherland just north of

Dornoch Firth. Another recent addition was *Portevinia maculata*, on ramsons, of course, in a little wood near Dingwall (22 May 1994), thus, as far as I can tell, extending its known range another 80 miles north (Entwistle, 1986). Ramsons are not uncommon in the Highland Region, extending right up to the north coast, so we may anticipate further discoveries of this species. Perhaps the most instructive range extension is that of *Callicera rufa*: by searching out potential breeding sites in *Pinus sylvestris* Graham Rotheray and Iain MacGowan (1990) showed this species to be omnipresent in the Caledonian pine forest relict areas of Scotland: for the first time they found it to be well established into the Highland Region. More notable even than these records of the ranges of known species is the recent discovery by Alan Stubbs of *Sphegina sibirica,* new to the British Isles, at Dornie, within the Highland Region but well south of Inverness opposite Skye (Stubbs, 1994). We shall now be vigilant in looking for this species north of Inverness, as indeed we are for the elusive *Chamaesyrphus caledonicus*, known definitely only from Culbin Sands just outside our area. The fickleness of the early season up here is notorious and one wonders how some species survive. But survive they do. Amongst them are *Melangyna barbifrons* and *Melangyna quadrimaculata*, both on *Salix* catkins in April. At the time of writing, 25 April 1995, the catkins are well out, but because of continuously poor weather I have not so far seen a single hoverfly on them!

A notable and controlling aspect of plant ecology up here is the dominance of huge areas of moors, botanically debased by grazing and routine burning. Essentially it is only on the west and east coasts that richer habitats with well developed deciduous woodland are at all common, and even here, alas, the hardwoods have been heavily commercially exploited. The climate, soils, topography and botany of the east and west coastal area are markedly different and with this differences in the hoverfly fauna have yet to be correlated. The west will be productive, but, I think, the east more so. The huge discouraging centre, however, is not to be totally disparaged. In the ditches and low-lying parts lurk such species as *Anasymia lineata* and *Chrysotoxum arcuatum*, whilst *Eristalis rupium* could be expected on lush patches. Up in the actual mountains, as Graham Rotheray and David Horsfield (1995) recently remarked, the insect fauna remains largely unexplored and so presents a considerable and attractive challenge. We may anticipate *Platycheirus melanopsis*, found by Yerbury at Loch Assynt, Sutherland, to be not infrequent, while *Melanostoma dubium*, which Rotheray and Horsfield now suggest to be a montane and probably temperature-controlled morph of *Melanostoma mellinum*, should receive further study.

In common with areas further south, much coniferous softwood has been planted, especially in the post-war years, in the Highlands. Because it has been perceived as especially tolerant of deep undrained peat areas, much of this has been lodgepole pine, *Pinus contorta*. The impact of this process on highland entomology has still to be assessed, but it must be considerable. The new forests are not to be thought of simply as sterile expanses of coniferous monoculture: they enclose unplanted rocky, boggy and riverine areas in which, because to a large extent the tall forest fences exclude deer and sheep and so diminish grazing pressure, there is considerable herbaceous and woody regeneration. Such lacunae or refugia, protected by the shelter of tall conifers, would otherwise not exist! Their proper exploration could well provide a guide

to the possibilities of more planned and less accidental assays into conservation and biological diversification. Perhaps because of such extensive afforestation there have been both northward and southward flows of insects. For instance, the very flashy *Eriozona syrphoides*, an immigrant species to the British Isles now to be found north of Lairg, Sutherland (Entwistle, 1995), has probably hopscotched (no pun intended) from Continental Europe to hyperborea across a checkerboard of coniferous forests, probably mainly spruce (*Picea* spp.). A reverse flow is fairly well documented for *Xylota coeruleiventris* which has spread at least as far south as the Severn Estuary (Stubbs, 1983; Entwistle and Stubbs 1983). Martin Speight (1977) recognised *Metasyrphus nielseni* for the first time in the British Isles, observed its association with Scots pine in the Grampian area and speculated on a possible growth of its range through plantings of other pine species: Alan Stubbs (1983) noted a single record from a wood in Oxfordshire (deciduous but with a small area of introduced pines) and suggested such an extension may be taking place. Meanwhile there is little doubt that in the Highlands new coniferous plantings have extended the habitat of some otherwise very localised species. *Chamaesyrphus scaevoides*, a notable *Pinus sylvestris*-associated species, but which I took in a lodgepole pine plantation at Achfary at the head of Loch More in Sutherland (its northernmost known sighting) is probably a case in point, whilst *Didea intermedia* and *Epistrophe grossulariae* seem also to enjoy this habitat. We must hope to see *Blera fallax*, possibly where trees are being felled, in these man-made forests and outside its known Spey Valley domicile. On the other hand, it seems unlikely that *Callicera rufa* will be supported by the new forests: the trees are too clean grown and possibly felled too early to provide the necessary breeding sites of rot holes at branch junctions and so on. But could we encourage Forest Enterprise to leave us some stands of lodgepole pine to grow to maturity and senescence to see what eventually happens? Or could we even create artificial rot holes as Iain MacGowan did successfully for Scots pine? His recent observation (MacGowan, 1994) that *C. rufa* will also breed successfully in larch (*Larix decidua)* encourages this idea.

As recently defined by the Malloch Society study, the status of aspen in Scotland is decidedly insecure (MacGowan, 1993). And yet at least one very rare hoverfly, *Hammershchmidtia ferruginea*, may be totally dependent on this tree. Until recently this fly was thought to be restricted to the Spey Valley, but a few years ago I found it visiting a bird cherry (*Prunus padus*) in one of the few notable aspen areas in Sutherland. Subsequently Graham Rotheray found its larval stage under aspen bark not far away. Incidentally in this same lush valley I took *Brachyopa insensilis*, *Brachyopa pilosa*, and *Chalcosyrphus nemorum*. Thinking of xylophagous species we also have *Criorhina ranunculi*, which Verrall described as " perhaps the grandest of all our British Syrphidae", at least as far north as Alness, eastern Ross-shire (Entwistle, 1980); if you are here in late spring and early summer, try the flowers of gean (*Prunus avium*) and be prepared to strike very fast!

The identity of at least one species remains unresolved. *Dasysyrphus venustus* of the form *hilaris* (complying with Verrall's 1901 description) was collected near Lairg, Sutherland in May 1980. Male genitalia were distinct from *D. venustus* sensu stricto and it may be that this is a true British record of *D. hilaris*, but further material for study seems desirable (Entwistle, 1982).

Visitors who experience very wet weather - not unheard of up here - might console themselves by looking in the totally enclosed globeflower (*Trollius europaeus).* Try this in the pouring rain and even in the middle of the night and you are likely to find lots of *Cheilosia antiqua*! Rather few insects have discovered the trick of squeezing between the petal-like sepals of this plant, and that select community which has done so makes an interesting study for excessively fluvial periods (Entwistle, in press).

Entwistle, P F (1982): *Dasysyrphus friuliensis* Van der Goot (Dipt., Syrphidae) in Welsh coniferous forests. **Entomologist's Monthly Magazine 118**, 245.

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Entwistle P F (1995): *Eriozona syrphoides* (Dipt., Syrphidae) in Sutherland, Scotland. **Entomologist's Monthly Magazine 131**, 40.

Entwistle P F (1980): *Criorhina ranunculi (*Panz.*)* (Dipt., Syrphidae) in N E Scotland. **Entomologist's Monthly Magazine 115**, 256.

Entwistle P F (in press): Insects associated with *Trollius europaeus* L. flowers in Sutherland, Scotland. **Entomologist's Monthly Magazine**.

Entwistle P F and Stubbs A E (Eds.) (1983): Preliminary atlas of the hoverflies (Diptera, Syrphidae) of the British Isles. Biological Records Centre, Huntingdon.

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Rotheray G E and MacGowan I (1990): Reevaluation of the status of *Callicera rufa* Schummel (Diptera Syrphidae) in the British Isles. **The Entomologist 109** (1), 35-42.

Speight M C D (1977): *Metasyrphus nielseni* D & L (Dipt. Syrphidae) in the British Isles. **Entomologist's Record 89** 154-155.

Stubbs A E and Falk S J (1983): British Hoverflies: an illustrated identification guide. British Entomological and Natural History Society.

Stubbs A E (1994): *Sphegina (Asiosphegina) sibirica* Stackelberg 1953, a new species and sub-genus of hoverfly (Diptera Syrphidae) in Britain. **Dipterists Digest 1994 1** (1), 23-25.

Verrall G H (1901): Platypezidae, Pipunculidae and Syrphidae of Great Britain. British Flies, volume 8. Taylor and Francis, London (reprinted, E W Classey, Hampton 1969).

Yerbury J W (1912-13): A list of Diptera met with in Wester Ross, with notes on other species known to occur in neighbouring areas. **The Scottish Naturalist**, October (226-232), and December (271-275), 1912; January (13-17), April (85-91), May (109-114), June (136-140) and August (173-177), 1913.

WHAT FOOD FOR *MELANOSTOMA* LARVAE?

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Asked to name the most common hoverflies, many enthusiasts would usually include *Melanostoma* species. The experience of most collectors and field workers is that they are particularly abundant in Britain, and the same is probably true over much of the northern hemisphere. In just about every habitat and season, wherever hoverflies occur, *Melanostoma* adults will be seen. However, when it comes to *Melanostoma* larvae, the opposite is the case: they are rarely seen. In fact, where they occur and what they feed on is a mystery. In my view *Melanostoma* larvae are one of the biggest unresolved mysteries in predatory hoverfly biology.

When tracking down larvae of particular hoverfly species, the first step often involves identifying sites where adults occur. However, because *Melanostoma* adults are everywhere, this approach doesn't help much. Their ubiquity makes lack of knowledge about larval feeding habits all the more frustrating. Our understanding of the prey of many predatory hoverflies has grown enormously in recent years, yet the prey of these common hoverflies remains in doubt. We assume they are predatory on the basis of mouthpart structure and the numerous observations in laboratories of *Melanostoma* larvae eating aphids.

The problem is that when aphid colonies are examined very few *Melanostoma* larvae are found. For example, only 6 *Melanostoma* larvae were found out of about 3500 larvae I collected in Wales from 25 different plant species in 1977-9. Where are they in the field and what do they feed on?

In fact, the mystery involves other hoverflies. Into the category of species with ubiquitous adults and lack of knowledge concerning larval prey fall species such as *Platycheirus clypeatus*, *P. albimanus* and *Pyrophaena* spp. The larvae of many of these species will readily eat aphids in the laboratory but are almost absent from aphid colonies in the field. What are they doing in nature?

Melanostoma larvae are highly distinctive, being bright pea-green in colour with a somewhat amorphous, white, fat body overlying the hind gut. These larvae lack the stripes and bars of other green predatory larvae (Rotheray, G E 1994: **A Colour Guide to Hoverfly Larvae. Dipterists Digest No. 9**). The most successful method for finding them is to wait until winter when they can be located in leaf litter. But of course by that time they have finished feeding.

The only aphid colonies where I have found larvae are *Brachycaudus* sp. on red campion (*Silene dioica*), *Brevicoryne brassicae* on cabbage (*Brassica oleraca*), and *Cavariella* sp. on hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*). Apart from these occasions, the only time I found actively feeding *Melanostoma* larvae was among wet leaf litter beneath sycamore trees in Wales where, I assumed, they were feeding on the many dead and dying sycamore aphids knocked off the trees by heavy rain. One spring in

Scotland I swept numerous *Platycheirus clypeatus* puparia from an isolated patch of long grass, the larvae having probably ascended from the ground.

Perhaps these larvae feed on root aphids. Perhaps they scavenge leaf litter. Perhaps someone with enough time and diligence to make the necessary investigations will be good enough to solve the puzzle.....

IDENTIFICATION PROBLEMS WITH MALE *MELANOSTOMA*

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Although a casual collector of hoverflies for many years, I only joined the recording scheme and began systematic collecting in the spring of 1994, and immediately came up against an unexpected problem. By early May I had collected *Melanostoma* from several sites and was surprised to find that all the females keyed to *scalare* and the males to *mellinum*, the latter having tergites 2 and 3 almost one and a half times as long as wide (**British Hoverflies**, p.47).

This was an unlikely situation, so I approached Roger Morris, who advised that the males too were likely to be *scalare*, and also drew a freehand sketch, from memory, of the body outline of the two species. The problem was solved on 11 May with the emergence of another species of *Melanostoma* with a shorter and broader abdomen, having tergite 2 quadrate and tergite 3 slightly transverse. The shapes of the abdomens corresponded closely to the freehand sketch. The additional characters given by Verrall (**British Flies**, Vol.8, Syrphidae etc., p.304), relating to the dusting of the face and the pubescence of the arista, confirmed that the first species was indeed *scalare* and the second *mellinum*.

I wondered how the misconception of the length to breadth ratio could have arisen. The segments are not of course perfectly rectangular, but measuring length and breadth at different positions hardly changed the ratios. For *scalare*, the ratio of the greatest length to narrowest breadth was never more than 1.6, far from twice as long as wide. There may also be an element of optical illusion; the elongate yellow spots give the impression of the abdominal segments being longer than they really are. However examination of old dry specimens showed that the tergites had rolled into an almost cylindrical shape, making the abdomen much narrower than in the fresh material previously examined. It is probable that Alan Stubbs bases the measurements and drawings in **British Hoverflies** on such old specimens. I will now make a mental adjustment to the key to *Melanostoma* males, which I hope allows for dry as well as fresh material; *scalare* has tergites 2 and 3 markedly elongate, at least one and a half times as long as wide, while *mellinum* has tergites 2 and 3 less than one and a half times as long as wide.

XYLOTA FLORUM IN CORNWALL

Leon Truscott
59 Cremyll Road, Torpoint, Cornwall, PL11 2DZ

Rod Belringer and I have recently been recording hoverflies in Cornwall as members of the Caradon Field and Natural History Club. Our records have been forwarded to the Cornwall Biological Records Unit.

Among the species found in 1994 was *Xylota florum.* This was a female found on the leaf of hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) on 9 July 1994 at Lydcott Wood (SX303584) near Hessenford. This may be a new species for Cornwall. The specimen is held by Rod Belringer.

MERODON EQUESTRIS IN OCTOBER

Rod Belringer
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During a recent visit to the Isles of Scilly in October 1994, Leon Truscott and I found some very late examples of *Merodon*. We are familiar with *Merodon equestris* in East Cornwall during May and June, but to find them in October made us think about the possibility that they might be examples of another European *Merodon* species such as *M. clavipes*, but on closer examination we found them to be only very late *M. equestris*. We came across six in all, four on St. Martin's on the 9th, one on St. Mary's on the 14th and one on St. Agnes on the 19th. Of the six, five were of the variety *narcissi*, the remaining one being of the variety *equestris*.

The farmers on these islands are renowned for growing early daffodils which are picked for market from October onwards. Could this, combined with the well above average temperatures for autumn in the Scillies, have produced a second brood of *M. equestris*?

BEHAVIOUR IN FEMALES OF *CHRYSOTOXUM FESTIVUM* AND *XANTHOGRAMMA CITROFASCIATUM*

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The note by Alan Stubbs on the behaviour of a *Chrysotoxum bicintum* female (**Hoverfly Newsletter No. 18**, July 1994) prompts me to report a similar observation involving a female *C. festivum* in my St. Albans garden on 22 August 1994. The female was seen flying low in rough grass that had been allowed to grow at the margin of a small pond dug two years previously. Landing on a patch of ground between bare tussocks, the fly spent several seconds walking around in a seemingly purposeful way (perhaps searching for ants?) before flying off.

This reminded me of an observation I had made in Barking, Essex, on 29 May 1986, involving a female *Xanthogramma citrofasciatum* and an ant mound in rank grass by a drainage ditch. If my notes and memory serve, the ant mound was between 15 and 20 cm in height and around 30 cm in diameter and had several grass stems emerging from it. The female flew slowly through the grass and landed on one of the emergent grass stems. It then proceeded slowly down the stem to the surface of the nest on which it walked (again in a purposeful way) for a few seconds before flying off.

Oviposition was not noted in either case.

CHRYSOTOXUM FESTIVUM AND *XANTHOGRAMMA CITROFASCIATUM*: NOMENCLATURE

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Ian Wynne's article above comparing the behaviour of *Chrysotoxum festivum* and *Xanthogramma citrofasciatum* has prompted me to write about another feature which is common to these two colourful and superficially similar-looking species, namely the fact that for many years there has been considerable dispute over which of them is the hoverfly named *Musca festiva* by Linnaeus. The specific name for the *Chrysotoxum* is derived from *Musca festiva*, but Thompson, Vockeroth and Speight proposed in 1982 that *Xanthogramma citrofasciatum* should be named *X. festivum*, arguing that this species and not the *Chrysotoxum* was the true *Musca festiva* of Linnaeus.

Linnaeus' description of *Musca festiva* is however of a hoverfly with black antennae which are longer than the head; this description fits *Chrysotoxum* but not *Xanthogramma*, the antennae of which are short and bright yellow. The specific name

Xanthogramma citrofasciatum should therefore be retained. A more detailed article on this subject has been submitted to **Dipterists Digest**.

MORE NAME CHANGES IN BRITISH HOVERFLIES

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Two recent papers by Alain Maibach, Pierre Goedlin de Tiefnau and Martin Speight convincingly review some of the Chrysogastrine hoverflies at the generic level. This has given us some name changes in the British species and as these do not seem to have percolated down to everyone yet I thought readers of the newsletters may be interested to learn what has been decreed! The changes affecting recorded British species are as follows: *Chrysogaster hirtella* and *C. Macquarti* are moved to the genus *Melanogaster*. The correct name for *C. Macquarti* is *M. aerosa*; the correct name for *Lejogaster splendida* is *L. tarsata*; *Orthonevra splendens* is moved to a new genus called *Riponnensia*.

To clear the confusion, I have set out the relevant portions of the revised checklist as follows:

CHRYSOGASTRINI
CHRYSOGASTER Meigen, 1803
cemiteriorum (Linnaeus, 1758)
= *chalybeata* Meigen, 1822
solstitialis (Fallen, 1817)
virescens Loew, 1854
MELANOGASTER
hirtella (Loew, 1843)
aerosa (Loew, 1843)
= *macquarti* Loew, 1843
LEJOGASTER Rondani, 1857
metallina (Fabricius, 1777)
tarsata (Megerle, in Meigen, 1822)
= *splendida* (Meigen, 1822)
ORTHONEVRA Macquart, 1829
brevicornis Loew, 1843
geniculata Meigen, 1830
nobilis (Fallen, 1817)
RIPONNENSIA Maibach, Goedlin de Tiefenau & Speight, 1994
splendens (Meigen, 1822)

The two references are as follows:

Limites génériques et charactéristiques taxonomiques de plusiers genres de la tribu des Chrysogastrini (Diptera: Syrphidae). 1. Diagnoses génériques et description de

Riponnensia gen. nov. **Ann. Soc. Entomol. Fr.** (NS) 1994.**30(1)**: 217-247.

Limites génériques et charactéristiques taxonomiques de plusiers genres de la tribu des Chrysogastrini (Diptera: Syrphidae). 2. Statut taxonomique de plusiers espèces étudiées et analyse du complexe *Melanogaster macquarti* (Loew). **Ann. Soc. Entomol. Fr.** (N.S.) 1994. **30(3)**: 253-271.

SOMERSET HOVERFLIES: REQUEST FOR RECORDS

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We are at present working on a companion county booklet of maps etc, for Somerset, similar in design to **Dorset Hoverflies**, which proved quite successful and is still selling steadily. We would appreciate any hoverfly records from readers who have collected in Somerset: old or new, common as well as rare, but with basic data of name, date and locality (grid reference if possible). We would prefer to see specimens that seem unlikely or rare, as we did when compiling the Dorset booklet.

In November we shall (hopefully) take another look at the historic specimens in museums, including Oxford and the Natural History Museum. So anyone knowing of Somerset collections in local museums would also be a great help to the project.

THE FOUR-X FLY: THE TRUE IDENTITY OF THE BUG-IN-THE-BOG

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I always thought that it was my role as a museum biologist that allowed me access to all sorts of weird and wonderful discoveries. Not so. In spite of the fact that I have been made redundant, they still crawl out of the woodwork!

So it was that Fran Bailey at the National Rivers Authority in Reading passed to me an enquiry from a lady who found maggots in her toilet bowl. "Apparently the maggots are breeding in her toilet", I was told. Somewhat less than convinced., I agreed that the lady in question, one Ms Evans, should send me a maggot direct. The next day the package arrived. The first thing I saw was a "field description" which would put any field naturalist to shame. Utterly perfect! Accurate sketches, carefully coloured, of ventral, dorsal and lateral aspects, body segments correctly drawn and numbered, "horns" and other adornments correctly positioned, coloured and even measured in millimetres. Accompanying notes gave me details of time, date and place, the fact that the body was translucent, the number of times it surfaced for air, the fact that it did not leave a slime trail when placed in the sink, etc., etc. I immediately recognised it as a larva of *Myathropa florea* even before I took the elastic band off the box. When I did open the

box, sure enough it contained a recently formed pupa of *M. florea*. The adult, a male, emerged a week later.

So what was it doing in the loo? I telephoned the lady of the house. An hour of telephone conversation later I established that the toilet was upstairs in a modern house with good condition plaster walls, central heating and sealed unit double-glazed windows that do not open. The cistern is sealed and the tank in the loft is also enclosed, being fed directly from the rising main. The loo is in normal use so there is no way that the larva could have been born and raised in the bowl. The only clue was that the family dog apparently drinks from the bowl so I wondered whether he or she would somehow have imported the larva from the local woods. This was the point that Sarah (we had achieved first name terms by now) told me that this was the second larva to be found this year and that it had happened in the two previous years, always at the same time of year, March. Further the larvae were always in their final instar, ready to pupate.

I decided that this was too big a problem to handle. So a telephone call to Maggot Man Rotheray (sorry, Graham. it was not me who christened you!). The only conclusion that Graham could reach was that perhaps the final instar had been bred in a drain somewhere and had wandered from here to look for a pupation site and had somehow done an "incy-wincy spider" impersonation and climbed up the spout. I knew rot-holes and hollow trees as breeding sites for *M. florea;* Graham also suggested rotten tree roots and added that it was quite possible for the larvae to wriggle their way up the toilet pipe to the first floor. Back to Sarah and full marks to Graham; an old cherry tree had been causing problems with the drains for years. The roots had penetrated the rather elderly sewer which drains the loo in question, and regularly caused a blockage. As a result, the roots are periodically exposed for repair and covered over again. Presumably the adult female fly had laid eggs when the roots were exposed. Later the fully fed larvae would have only two choices of direction for escape: down to the sewage works or up to the loo. What happened to those that travelled downstream we shall probably never know, but ours clearly managed to travel some 10 metres along and 4 metres up before finally negotiating the U-bend. Some feat!

Oh, yes - the name. Sarah did not like scientific names and felt that an English one ought to be invented for this particular beast. We thought "bug-in-the-bog" eminently suitable. However we later realised that when Sarah first encountered the larva two years previously she had exclaimed in a loud voce to the household: "what the XXXX is that?" Thus, if one applies the rules of zoological nomenclature strictly, the "bug-in-the-bog" must be reduced by synonymy! I thus propose "*the XXXX Fly* Evans", 1993 as the English name for *Myathropa florea*.

THE HOVERFLY'S KNEES

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Having read the editor's piece entitled " and finally, introducing the propellor-driven hoverfly" in **Hoverfly Newletter No 18**, I was reminded of a shop in Plymouth which I have passed many times. It is a clothes shop called "The Bee's Knees", and , yes, it should really be called "The Hoverfly's Knees". It has a logo painted on the shop front which, although not scientifically accurate, is a real ringer for *Dasysyrphus tricinctus*, with very similar abdominal markings.

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