

**Hoverfly
Newsletter**
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If readers are wondering why this issue of the newsletter is somewhat shorter than usual, the opening sentence of the recording scheme update probably says it all! It has been a very poor year for hoverflies to date, though in recent days I went to a field meeting at a Cotswold site that was surprisingly productive - hopefully a sign of better things to come. Forum members normally see issues of the Hoverfly Newsletter for the first time as an attachment to the Dipterists Forum Bulletin, where any colour images will appear in monochrome. The newsletters subsequently appear in full colour on the websites of both the Forum and Hoverfly Recording Scheme (and may be obtained from me as a pdf.); I know that some readers expressed surprise that the photographs illustrating Alan Stubbs' *Xanthogramma* article in the last issue did not appear in colour even in the on-line version. Alan has agreed to supply me with the colour images and these will be substituted in due course into the archived version of Hoverfly Newsletter No.52

Articles and illustrations (including colour images) for the next newsletter are always welcome. Copy for **Hoverfly Newsletter No. 54** (which is expected to be issued with the Spring 2013 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 20 November 2012. The hoverfly illustrated at the top right of this page is a female *Xanthogramma citrofasciatum*.

Hoverfly Recording Scheme Update July 2012

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Roger Morris
7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 1QE

What a miserable year! Rain, rain and more rain. Hoverflies have been very scarce and opportunities to record them even scarcer! The conditions have meant that our Big Hover Watch was badly washed out with several recorders commenting that they were unable to find a clear day that coincided with free time. We are still compiling the data but the overall impression is that the numbers were low. We hope for better luck next year but this does illustrate the difficulties of trying to establish some form of standardised surveillance initiative.

We have not been idle but it would be fair to say that we have not done as much as some years. Our own fieldwork has been constrained and we have concentrated on several other jobs (including work on the forthcoming Cranefly book). We think we have finally completed the

hoverfly status review and that this will be available this summer.

Wildguide

Those members who have booked a copy will realise that it has yet to emerge. We delivered the text and our design last Autumn, since when Wildguides have been developing their preferred layout. This has meant a certain amount of further dialogue and some major revisions to the text. We have seen some draft designs and at the time of writing we are expecting to see the full design that should go to the printers. This means we are looking at late autumn for the publication date. With luck it will be available for the Christmas stocking!

Training

Last winter we ran courses in almost every corner of England plus excursions into Wales. We have a programme organised for this winter but will look at further bookings. We hope to run an 'improvers' course next April, hopefully at Cardiff Museum and want to hear from people who would like to attend. It is difficult to say what the costs will be, but apart from our costs please add in whatever accommodation you prefer. We won't be organising communal accommodation but will

do what we can to organise communal meals etc. Please let Roger know if you are interested. roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com.

Hoverflies on the Web

Roger continues to monitor Flickr, ISPO and other sources for hoverfly records. So far over 1200 records

have been accumulated for 2012, suggesting that this year's data will exceed previous years. However, it is very noticeable that the weather had greatly constrained recording. June was an exceptionally poor month but it still outperformed the previous year, showing how web-based data sources are growing. This is depicted in figures 1 and 2.

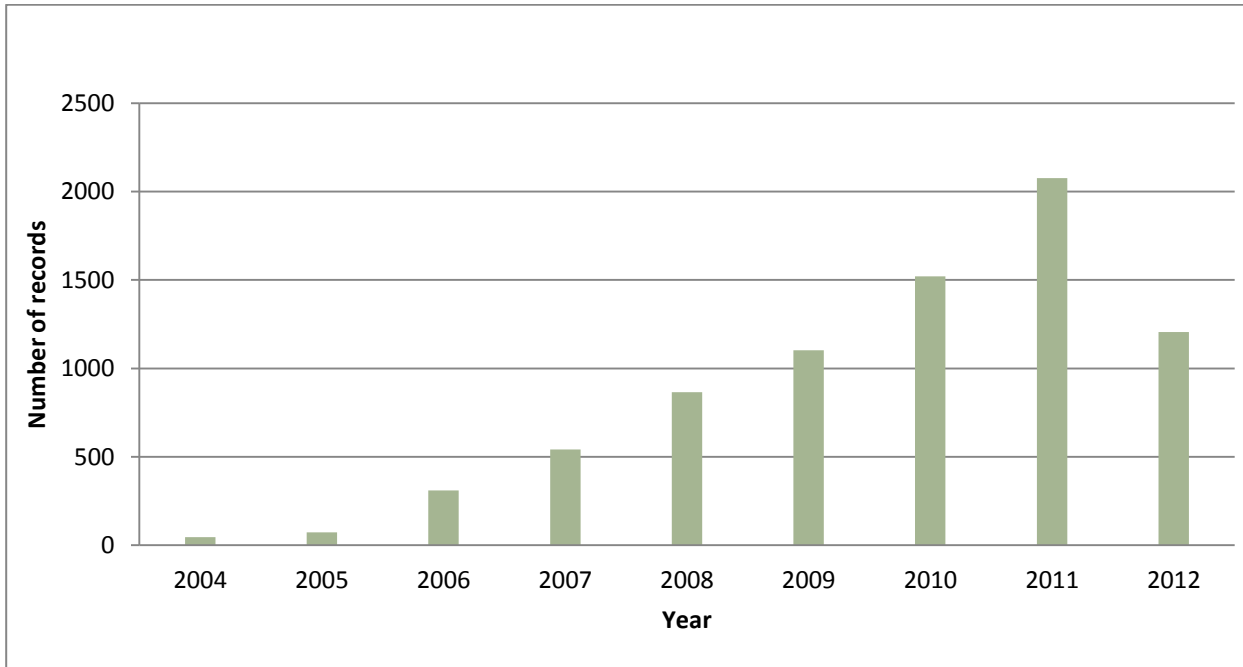


Figure 1. Total records harvested from the internet. The data suggest that this is still a growing source of records.

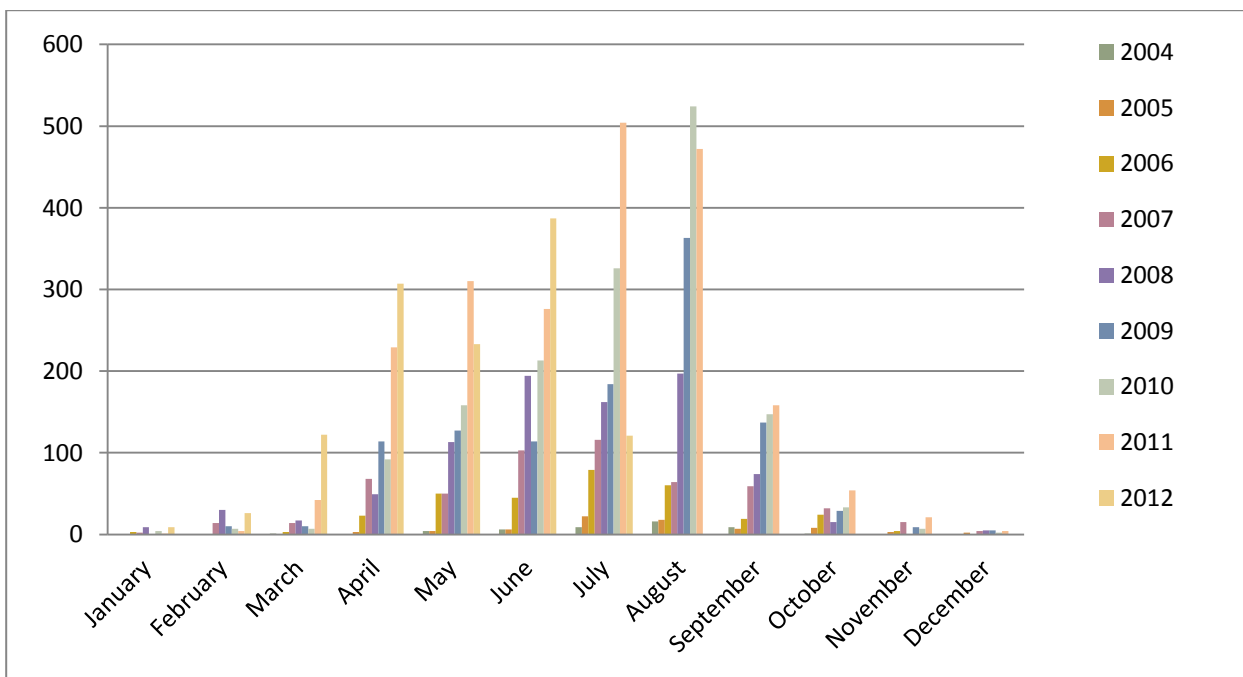


Figure 2. Monthly totals of hoverfly records from websites between 2004 to 2012. At the time of writing this suggests that July 2012 will not perform as well as 2011.

Summer field meeting 2012 – some reflections on the hoverflies

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This year's summer field meeting was based at Lagganlia Centre in Glen Feshie from 21 to 28 July, giving us access to the entire Spey valley and associated pinewoods. Although the weather was mixed, it was well-suited to recording Diptera for much of the time. However, the year to date had been very wet and cold, and this was reflected in the numbers of hoverflies.

We had been expecting good numbers of *Platycheirus* in the *Carex* beds along the Spey, but were immensely surprised how few individuals and species there were. *Platycheirus fulviventris* was relatively abundant but *P. perpallidus* was virtually absent and there were relatively small numbers of *P. clypeatus* and *P. occultus*. A very few *P. podagratus* were noted but *P. angustatus* was much more widespread. The other common *Platycheirus* was *P. nielsenii* which occurred across a wide range of sites.

It was noteworthy that flowery glades rarely yielded great diversity of hoverflies. Eristalines were relatively abundant: mainly *E. pertinax* and *E. horticola* but *E. rupium* was found at various localities. One useful note was that *E. rupium* seems to be highly attracted to valerian *Valeriana officinalis*. Anyone visiting Scotland might bear this in mind and watch out for *E. rupium* which is darker with a more heavily defined wing shade than *E. horticola*.

Relatively few of the Scottish specialities were noted. One specimen of *Chamaesyrrhus scaevoides* was reported by Nigel Jones, and Barbara Ismay was shown larvae of *Callicera rufa* by Iain McGowan. Otherwise the most noteworthy Spey Valley speciality was *Didea intermedia* which occurred at several sites. *Megasyrphus erraticus* was noted once (RM) and two specimens of *Eupeodes nielsenii* were also taken (Roger Hawkins).

My overall impression was that hoverflies were relatively scarce and that the season had been washed out by poor

weather. When good nectar sources were found, they generally yielded common species such as *Eristalis pertinax*, *Chrysogaster solstitialis* and *Leucozona glauca*; each was locally numerous but there were frequent occasions when they were barely seen on roadside umbels. The only other species seen in numbers was *Chrysotoxum arcuatum* which showed on numerous occasions.

My own haul of hoverfly records barely exceeded 150 and I doubt anyone else did any better. Thankfully fungus gnats and craneflies were reasonably abundant and provided a suitable distraction. Hopefully numbers and diversity will be better next year.



Eristalis rupium (female) photo: David Iliff



Didea intermedia (female) photo: David Iliff

Surprising numbers of *Epistrophe diaphana* in Gloucestershire

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2011 seemed at the time to have been a disappointing year for hoverfly recording in Gloucestershire – though with hindsight it now seems to have been positively rich when compared to this year! However in poor years there are sometimes species that buck the trend by being found more often than usual. Last year in the county that was the case with two species, *Chrysotoxum verralli* and *Epistrophe diaphana*. The higher than usual numbers of records for *C. verralli*, a relative newcomer to the county, was the subject of an article in the last newsletter.

The current status of *Epistrophe diaphana* is “notable”. Records in Gloucestershire during the 25 year period ending 2010 averaged only just above one per year, so it was always something of an event for a local recorder to find the species. Thus four records in 2011, which we considered a poor year for hoverflies in the county, was something of a surprise. This however was nothing compared to the incidence of the species in Gloucestershire in June of 2012 (an undisputed bad hoverfly year!). On 9 June Martin Matthews sent me an email message about a visit he made that day to the Mythe nature reserve near Tewkesbury telling me that he had seen there “lots (and I mean lots!) of *E diaphana*”. He later told me that it had been the most abundant hoverfly species at the site that day.

On 23 June Martin and I participated in a Gloucestershire Invertebrate Group field meeting at Campden House, Chipping Campden, a large estate which includes ancient woodland. Only three days previously I had done the second leg of my Big Hover Watch at another ancient woodland site and had found only four individual hoverflies (three species) in spite of perfect weather, so I had little confidence that we would have much success at Campden. However we had a successful day with a list of 24 hoverfly species, which included *E diaphana* in large numbers – outnumbered only at the site by *Eristalis pertinax*.

Martin revisited the Mythe on 8 July and again saw several *E. diaphana*, though not in as large numbers as on 9 June.



Epistrophe diaphana (male) photo: David Iliff

Criorhina ranunculi and other uncommon hoverflies in a Yorkshire wood

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Beadale Wood (mainly in SE7786 and SE7787) is privately-owned, and is predominantly deciduous woodland with a recent history of management by coppicing. I first visited Beadale Wood on 19th May 2009, and recorded a number of local species including the hoverflies *Criorhina berberina* and *Criorhina floccosa*. At the invitation of the owner, Mrs. Nicky Blyth, a more extensive study was carried out during 2011, when I made 19 visits between 16th April and 28th

October, focussing my recording effort on Syrphidae, which were conspicuously numerous, particularly during spring and early summer.

The 2011 study produced a list of 46 hoverfly species, including a good number of local and uncommon species. The tribe Xylotini was notably well-represented with ten species, including *Brachypalpoidea lentus* on 5th June, *Chalcosyrphus nemorum* on 5th June, *Criorhina asilica* on 29th April, *C. berberina* on 23rd and 25th April, *C. floccosa* on 23rd and 29th April, *Criorhina ranunculi* on all seven visits made between 16th and 29th April, and *Xylota florum* on 14th July.

Only six *Cheilosia* species were found, but these included *C. pubera*, which was very abundant along the woodland track from 16th April to 10th May. Other local species included *Ferdinandea cuprea*, which was

unusually numerous and seen on the nine visits made between 17th April and 20th June; *Brachyopa scutellaris*, which was fairly numerous on 23rd April; and *Portevinia maculata*, which was present between 29th April and 5th June, and was particularly numerous on 10th May.

The combination of topography and woodland causes most of Beadale Wood to be sheltered from even the most severe winds, regardless from which direction these winds blow. The canopy is sufficiently open during spring to cause a good number of warm sheltered sun-trap areas within the woodland. I found adult *Criorhina ranunculi* in Beadale Wood between 16th and 29th April 2011. They occurred throughout the woodland, and were locally common in the most sheltered sun-trap area towards the northern end (SE775874). The size of the population, probably at least between 25 and 50 individuals, was sufficiently numerous to allow behavioural notes to be made. Overall, the two colour forms, red-tailed and white-tailed, were equally frequent, but the white-tailed form distinctly predominated during earlier visits, and the red-tailed form was more dominant towards the end of the flight period. All my observations of *C. ranunculi* took place around trees which were moss-covered and rotting around their bases. These were principally *Acer pseudoplatanus* (sycamore), which were the dominant tree in the area with the best sun-trap, plus *Fraxinus excelsior* (ash) and *Betula* (birch).

My first 2011 visit to Beadale Wood was on 16th April, when I saw a red-tailed form of *C. ranunculi* at rest by the base of a tree. On the following day, there were several *C. ranunculi* in the wood; all seen around the moss-covered bases of *Acer pseudoplatanus* and *Fraxinus excelsior*, particularly in SE775874. White-tailed forms predominated on 17th April, and they seemed to show a preference for resting on the shady side of trees, slightly more so than resting in full sunshine. The same observations were made on 18th April, plus a white-tailed form occurred around *Betula*, near the more exposed eastern periphery of Beadale Wood.

My initial observations of *C. ranunculi* on 20th April were of a white-tailed form around a tree, and a red-tailed

form around a different tree. If the same two individuals were involved, then I saw them around the same trees about 10 minutes after the first sighting, hovering about the base, resting for a short while on moss or bark; then moving elsewhere. Further observations made on 20th April confirmed they often rest on the shady side of a tree, and when at rest on bark or moss, they continuously dab their tails onto that surface. The height at which they were seen at rest on tree trunks ranged from almost ground level to approximately three metres, but was generally a height between 10cm and 50 cm from the base of a tree.

Only two *C. ranunculi* were seen on 23rd April, but at least six, mainly red-tailed forms, were encountered on 25th April. One red-tailed form was quite aggressive to a *Ferdinandea cuprea* by the base of a tree, head-butting the *F. cuprea* twice as it attempted to rest. The end of April roughly marked the end of the flight period for *C. ranunculi* in Beadale Wood during 2011, as only one was seen on 29th April, and none were seen on the next visit, made on 5th May, or subsequent visits.



The area of Beadale Wood most often frequented by *Criorhina ranunculi* during Spring 2011 Photo: Andrew Grayson

7th International Symposium on the Syrphidae, 13th – 16th June 2013 in Novosibirsk (Russia)

The following information has been circulated to participants in the previous six hoverfly symposia:

The Symposium will be held in the resort hotel "Sosnovka" which is located in a pine forest, 35 km. from the city of Novosibirsk.

The Symposium fee is expected to be **100€**, which includes the program and abstract book, coffee breaks and a welcome reception. The cost of accommodation and meals is not included in the registration fee. Full board (three meals) and a single room is quoted as **€ 180** per day, with a double room at **€155** per person a day. The

organizers hope to secure additional funds or arrangements in order to make the fee a bit lower.

A trip to Teletskoe Lake in the Altai Mountains is planned as a post-symposium trip. The lake is in a mountain valley at an altitude of 430 m. and is considered to be the 'pearl' of the Altai Mountains. The trip fee should be **90€**, including cost of the bus, food and accommodation at the tourist camp.

John Smit has previously regaled us with tales of the Altai Mountains and the many interesting hoverflies that he encountered, so this meeting should appeal to those more adventurous spirits. Anybody who is interested in participating should contact the Siberian Zoological Museum mu4@eco.nsc.ru.

Dorset Hoverfly Report 2011

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Quite a good year for recording Hoverflies, despite the strange and extreme weather and climatic conditions. Certainly Autumn in this region has been dryer and warmer than we can recall and the mild temperatures encouraged second generation flowering by many hedgerow plants especially hogweed, which was found in bloom right through till the end of the year.

Dave has especially targeted Puddletown Forest, with surveys on 29 dates between April and September. We have also continued to record Hoverflies on DWT reserves and the interesting woods at Bishops Caudle. We are grateful to Ken Dolbear for his hoverfly lists based on photographs – mainly Portland, and to Angela Vivien for records received. The scarce and elusive *Triglyphus primus* was found at Throop woodlands by Mick Parker; this counts as new for Dorset, since the ancient record we found among museum specimens was not quite within Vice County 9, though still within the modern County boundaries. 109 species were recorded in total, and the following are the more interesting records:

Chrysotoxum elegans Portland June 23rd to August 21st (4 dates).

Didea fasciata Puddletown Forest July 23rd

Epistrophe nitidicollis Portland May 1st and 6th, Lodmoor May 11th

Eupeodes bucculatus Puddletown Forest September 2nd
Eupeodes lapponicus Puddletown Forest July 30th
Megasyrphus erraticus Puddletown Forest May 29th
Platycheirus ambiguus Puddletown April 8th
Parasyrphus annulatus Yellowham Wood April 21st
Platycheirus tarsalis Yellowham Wood April 21st,
Puddletown Forest April 26th, May 13th, Holt Hill Woods
May 6th
Scaeva selenitica Puddletown Forest July 9th to August
6th (4 dates)
Sphaerophoria batava Puddletown Forest July 8th to
August 7th (6 dates)
Sphaerophoria philanthus Puddletown Forest July 15th to
August 7th (4 dates)
Sphaerophoria taeniata Puddletown Forest July 15th to
August 19th (4 dates)
Xanthandrus comtus Puddletown Forest May 29th
Xanthogramma citrofasciatum Portland, Bottomcombe
Quarry May 5th, Portland, Culverwell May 9th
Arctophila superbiens Powerstock Common August 16th•
Brachypalpoidea lentus Puddletown Forest May 29th
Brachyopa scutellaris Puddletown Forest April 21st and
23rd
Chalcosyrphus nemorum Puddletown Forest April 24th,
29th and May 13th
Cheilosia carbonaria Ryewater Nursery May 13th
Cheilosia latifrons Puddletown Forest April 29th and
September 3rd
Cheilosia ranunculi Forde Abbey April 30th
Cheilosia vulpina Puddletown Forest April 29th, June 19th
and 26th
Criorhina floccosa Puddletown Forest June 24th and 26th

Eristalinus aeneus Portland April 11th, 17th, August 14th and 28th
Eumerus ornatus Puddletown Forest May 13th to July 3rd (4 dates)
Microdon analis Puddletown Forest April 23rd to May 21st (5 dates).
Neoascia obliqua Little Bredy May 13th
Parhelophilus frutetorum Chickerell Wood May 3rd
Pelecocera tricincta Puddletown Forest July 8th to September 3rd (10 dates)
Pipiza lugubris Throop Woodlands September 10th

Sphegina sibirica Puddletown Forest April 23rd to June 19th (4 dates)
Tropidia scita Weymouth May 21st
Triglyphus primus Throop Woodlands September 2nd and 3rd
Volucella inanis Puddletown Forest August 6th
Volucella inflata Puddletown Forest July 23rd
Volucella zonaria Sherborne July 23rd, August 24th, Radipole Lake August 14th, Puddletown Forest August 19th

Somerset Hoverfly Report 2011

E.T and D.A Levy (Hoverfly Regional Recorders)
 9 Chilton Grove, Yeovil, Somerset, BA214AN

This was quite a good year for Hoverfly recording, despite strange and extreme weather and climate conditions. Certainly autumn in this region was dryer and milder than most of us can recall, and such temperatures encouraged more second generation flowering by many plants especially in the hedgerows and verges!

This has been one of our busiest years for recording hoverflies and 17 sites were visited on 33 dates between April and the end of November! 98 species were recorded in total, though none were new to the Somerset list. We are grateful to R. Williams and Barrie Widden for their records and to Chris Iles for his lists backdated to 2005, several of them at new sites and including records of *Volucella inanis*, *V. zonaria* and *V. inflata*. Two exceptional records are mentioned briefly in the Bulletin of the Dipterist's Forum No. 73 (Spring 2012) for Somerset: *Pocota personata* was taken at Chew Valley Lake on 31st May 2010 and *Eristalis similis* - new to our list - has been confirmed from a specimen taken in the 2000s, though there may well be specimens in other collections that were misidentified!

The following are the most interesting records for the year:

Chrysotoxum festivum Yeovil garden May 19th
Dasyrphus tricinctus Long Sutton August 24th
Eupeodes bucculatus Great Breach Wood July 23rd
Leucozona laternaria Pink Wood June 24th, Great Breach Wood June 29th, Otterhead Lakes July 6th and August 10th
Melangyna cincta Bickham Wood April 20th
Parasyrphus punctulatus Bickham Wood April 20th
Platycheirus splendidus Bickham Wood April 20th
Platycheirus tarsalis Great Breach Wood June 29th
Sphaerophoria interrupta Aller Marshes August 5th, Ham Hill September 14th
Sphaerophoria rueppelli Long Sutton August 24th
Anasimyia lineata Little Norton May 24th
Chalcosyrphus nemorum Otterhead Lakes August 10th
Cheilosia antiqua Pink Wood April 16th
Cheilosia carbonaria Great Breach Wood June 29th
Cheilosia latifrons Bickham Wood April 20th
Cheilosia soror Great Breach Wood July 23rd, Pink Wood July 30th, Ham Hill September 14th
Chrysogaster virescens Ringdown NR May 14th
Criorhina asilica Marston Wood May 11th
Criorhina floccosa Yeovil garden May 19th, Little Norton May 24th
Myolepta dubia Long Sutton June 25th
Neoascia aenea West Hay NNR April 24th
Neoascia obliqua Little Norton July 24th
Heringia pubescens Great Breach Wood April 29th
Sericomyia lappona Bickham Wood April 20th
Sphegina verecunda Pink Wood August 24th
Volucella inanis Bath Golf Course July 28th

Interesting Recent Records

Cheilosia caerulescens, on bramble blossom Priory Park, Southend-on-Sea in Essex (TQ8787) 17 July 2012. The park has a walled garden with *Sempervivum tectorum*, but no leaf mines observed to date (Roger Payne)

Platycheirus scambus, female, swept from grey dunes behind Oldshoremore Beach, Sutherland, NC2058, 3 July 2012 (Roger Payne)

Lejogaster metallina, female, as above (Roger Payne)

Melanogaster hirtella, female on *Ranunculus*, roadside between Oldshoremore and Kinlochbervie, Sutherland, NC2157, 4 July 2012 (Roger Payne)

Platycheirus manicatus, frequent in garden in Kinlochbervie, Sutherland, NC2256, 3 July 2012 (Roger Payne)

Cheilosia chrysocoma, male, 2 May 2012 at Sherborne, Gloucestershire SP175154. Fourth county record, but first for more than a century (Richard Spyvee)



Cheilosia chrysocoma male Photo: Richard Spyvee