

**Hoverfly
Newsletter**
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No doubt many readers are frustrated by the shortage of hoverflies this year, as described in the recording scheme update below; my own experience agrees with the first paragraph except that I did not even find good numbers of hoverflies in May and June. In spite of this lean period, interest in hoverflies continues to grow, with new enthusiasts regularly appearing on the scene, some no doubt spurred on by the new **WILDGuide**, and in recent days a hoverfly Facebook group has been set up (see Stephen Plummer's article below).

While this newsletter was being compiled the 7th International Symposium on the Syrphidae was taking place in Russia. It has been the custom with all the previous symposia to include a report on the event in this newsletter. As I have received no feedback to date, I hope to include some news of it in the next issue - at the very least an indication of the titles and authors of papers that were presented.

Copies of Hoverfly Newsletters issues 1 to 40 can be found on the Hoverfly Recording Scheme website. If anyone would like to receive copies of issues 41 onwards as pdf. documents, please email me and I can send them.

Articles and illustrations (including colour images) for the next newsletter are always welcome. Copy for **Hoverfly Newsletter No. 56** (which is expected to be issued with the Spring 2014 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 2013. The hoverfly illustrated at the top right of this page is a female *Myathropa florea*.

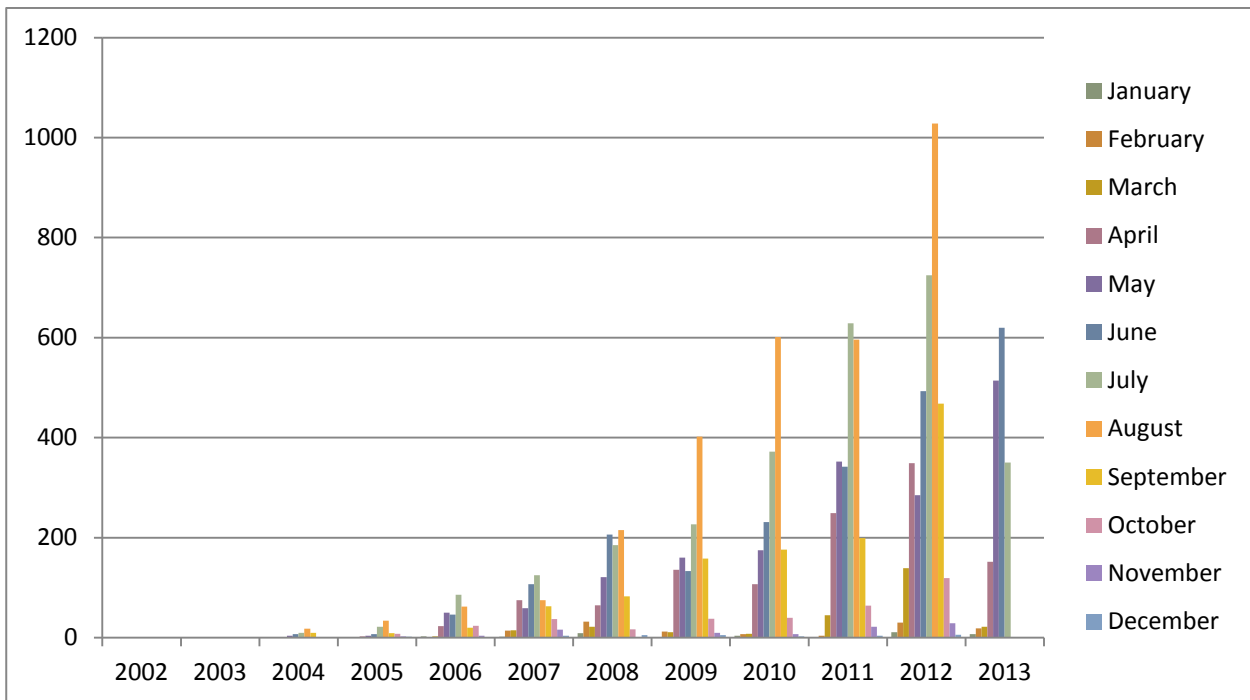
Hoverfly Recording Scheme update: July 2013

Stuart Ball
255 Eastfield Road, Peterborough, PE1 4BH
Roger Morris
7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 1QE

What a strange year it has been! A cold winter followed by a non-event in April and then good numbers of hoverflies in May and June suggested that this would be an excellent year. And then came the heat-wave of July. Hoverflies seemed to disappear overnight and this was clearly shown in the posts of photos on the web as illustrated in the graph below.

At the time of writing there were a few days to go before the end of July but the numbers of photos posted were less than half the total for July 2012 and barely more than half the number posted in June 2013. If nothing else, this clearly shows how exceptionally hot weather can affect the numbers of hoverflies on the wing, but it potentially tells a much more significant story as it is indicative of wider impacts on invertebrates. One must wonder what has happened to species associated with wetlands that seemed to be recovering after the deluge of 2012. *Eristalis* species are far less common, and there appears to be no evidence of a repeat of the huge numbers of *Helophilus trivittatus* that we saw last year. Is this a real or perceived phenomenon? Your observations would help to fill in the picture, but we will really only know as the year unfolds and data for 2013 arrive in the autumn and winter.

Figure 1. Monthly totals of photographs gleaned from internet sources. The data show how there has been a continuous increase in the numbers of records from such sources. Data for July 2013 are extremely weak compared to 2012 and to May and June 2013.



The big news of 2013 is the publication of our **WILDGuide: Britain's Hoverflies**. After a lengthy wait and wondering whether we might ever see it on the bookshelves, the book arrived in March, just in time for the spring. It has apparently flown off the shelves and we understand it is the fastest-selling of the series. Quite how many have actually been sold is unclear, but one month after arriving around 1200 had been sold in the UK. We have now sold around 200 copies including the copies pre-booked by members. We retain stock and can supply copies at £18.00 inclusive of P&P. This is rather less than we had hoped to sell at but unfortunately Amazon and some of its associated booksellers have pitched their prices so low that we have to cut our price to match theirs. The royalties and income from book sales are going to Dipterists Forum, so we hope that this will contribute to funds to take on new projects.

The book looks fantastic and it is very much to the credit of Rob Still and Andy Swash that it is appealing to people who had hitherto held little interest in hoverflies. It may help to make hoverflies the new dragonflies! We have seen a few reviews and those that we have seen are generally very positive. If you don't already have a copy, do please buy it! There are a few glitches and we do want readers to point out problems. We have quite a long list of minor problems and two bigger ones that should be noted. Firstly, on page 69 the upper of the two *Melanostoma* abdomens is *M. mellinum* and not *M. scalare*. Secondly, Table on page 210 has the antennal colours of *Helophilus* and *Parhelophilus* transposed. Quite how these happened is a mystery! They will be rectified in the second edition, which will also need to be slightly updated to take account of the arrival of *Eumerus sogdianus* (added by Adam Wright in the last edition of Dipterists Digest), and any other additions that happen before we attend to the text.

One such project is the development of a revised key to *Platycheirus*, making use of detailed macro shots of key features and revision of the keys to make them a little bit more user-friendly. The key will be accompanied by new text too and will be presented as a small book that we hope to publish this winter. It is likely to be produced under the auspices of Dipterists Forum rather than the BENHS and we think it may be the first of a series that will ultimately form the basis for a complete revision of Stubbs & Falk. We will post details on the HRS website as and when we have definitive dates for publication and the price.

We also hope to use some of the funds to hold a one-day conference for HRS contributors this winter. It is likely to be held in London, but we have not progressed very far as yet. Timing and location will be announced on the website, but

in the meantime we would like to hear from people who would be interested in attending. We will provide advanced warning if you send Roger an e-mail (roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com).

Finally, we ran an intermediate training workshop at Cardiff Museum in April that was very well attended. It gave us the opportunity to develop new training material and we now think we can provide this sort of assistance to other groups. Again, we hope to run another meeting this winter and will make the details available on the website. The likely venue is London. Please let Roger know if you are interested. We will focus on *Cheilosia* and *Platycheirus*, but if there is time it should be possible to include some *Pipiza* and *Sphaerophoria*.

UK Hoverflies Facebook Group

Stephen Plummer
stephen.r.plummer@gmail.com

Following email correspondence with Roger Morris, I have set up a "UK Hoverflies" Facebook Group. The Group description reads: "UK Hoverflies is an open group for anyone interested in UK hoverflies and

matters relating to them. It is for anyone, whether novice or expert, to encourage one another by posting photos, helping with identification, reporting sightings, sharing interesting observations and disseminating relevant news and information. It is designed to complement the work of the Hoverfly Recording Scheme.

The Facebook address for the group is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/609272232450940/>

Hoverflies on Flickr

Steven Falk
stevenfalk@sfalk.wanadoo.co.uk

Some of you will be aware of my growing collection of natural history images on Flickr, including a growing number of fly families. I've just finished the biggest collection to date, British hoverflies. Sets for over 250 British species can now be found at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/63075200@N07/collections/72157629600153789/> (or just type 'steven falk flickr' into a search engine and drill down the taxonomically-arranged collections).

These sets provide photographs of living and pinned specimens, critical features photographed down the microscope (e.g. *Sphaerophoria* genitalia), photographs of habitat(s) for the scarcer or more habitat-specific species, and accompanying text that provides an up-to-date summary of each species. Text accounts are also provided for all genera, and for the family as a whole. Live hyperlinks have been added for any related web-based information e.g. *Callicera spinolae*. The hope is that this new resource will be used in conjunction with literature and collections. It covers many rare and difficult species, especially within genera like *Platycheirus*, *Eupeodes* and *Cheilosia*.

Saying it is finished is a little misleading. I've simply assembled everything I currently have to hand. I will continue to add photos, species and information as these become available. That's the joy of websites, especially when applied to a subject area that is constantly changing as new information comes to light.

I am grateful to those who have allowed me to use their photos to fill gaps or improve species sets – credits can be found accompanying photos. If you have photos that you think will fill gaps (for any of the Diptera families I'm covering), feel free to get in touch. Your copyright will not be affected. Given the very high percentage of inaccurate hoverfly images on the web and the growing popularity of this family, it is important to have a single source of reliable photos with accompanying text – an on-line field guide that can be used by novices and experienced workers alike.

Some Interesting Welsh Records for 2012

Malcolm Hughes
Elvira, 1 Woodside Avenue, Sandy Cove,
Kinmel Bay, Conwy, Wales, LL18 5ND

Although it is generally agreed that 2012 was a poor season for recording, a few interesting observations were made. 22 May was quite a fine day in this area and I found a promising new mixed woodland site in the vicinity of Ysbyty Abergele (Abergele Hospital), Abergele, Conwy. On subsequent visits to this site I recorded:

Criorhina berberina: 2 typical females and one female form *oxyacanthae* on 14 June and 20 June.

Criorhina floccosa: 1 female on 25 June.

Brachypalpoides lentus: 1 seen briefly.

7 and 8 September: I noticed some bright looking *Rhingia* so I thought they were worth checking out. I took several specimens home for critical microscopic examination and was delighted to discover that along with the common *Rhingia campestris* there were several *Rhingia rostrata* of both sexes. This confirms that this species is indeed extending its range into Wales. There seemed to be at least as many, if not more, *rostrata* as *campestris*.

The attractive Asilid *Dioctria oelandica* (male and female) were very frequent at the site in June, so I assume they are breeding there.

Britain's Hoverflies (2013) is a splendid publication; congratulations to Stuart Ball and Roger Morris for all their hard work (and hassle!) in bringing this to print. They are credit to entomology.

Chrysotoxum arcuatum in the Forest of Dean

David Iliff
Green Willows, Station Road, Woodmancote, Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire, GL52 9HN ,davidiliff@talk21.com

The dot maps in the Atlas of Hoverflies of Great Britain (Ball, Morris, Rotheray and Watt, 2011) illustrate graphically the apparent mutually exclusive distribution in much of the UK of *Chrysotoxum arcuatum* and *Chrysotoxum cautum*, with *C. arcuatum* occurring northwest of a line between the Severn and the Humber and *C. cautum* southeast of that line. *C. cautum* has been recorded regularly in Gloucestershire since the late 19th Century, but the county had no records for *C. arcuatum* until 15 August 1993 when I found a female and a male of the species at opposite ends of the Poor's Allotment nature reserve in the southwest of the Forest of Dean, well south of the species' known range at that date. Since then *C. arcuatum* has been found regularly though infrequently within the Forest of Dean, which would now appear to represent the southeastern boundary of its range. It has not been found elsewhere in Gloucestershire, though *C. cautum* occurs throughout the county, including the Forest.

Forest of Dean records of *Chrysotoxum arcuatum* to date are as follows:

15 August 1993 1 female Poor's Allotment ST5598
(David Iliff)
15 August 1993 1 male Poor's Allotment ST5699
(David Iliff)

20 May 2007 1 female Ruardean Plantation SO6316
(John Phillips)
12 July 2008 Great Palescot SO6411 (John Phillips)
6 August 2009 Edgehills Bog SO661155 (John Phillips)
15 July 2012 1 male Awre's Glow SO643116 (John Harper)
24 June 2013 1 female Blakeney Straits SO655080
(Maris Midgley)
29 June 2013 1 female Staunton Meend SO5412
(Martin Matthews)

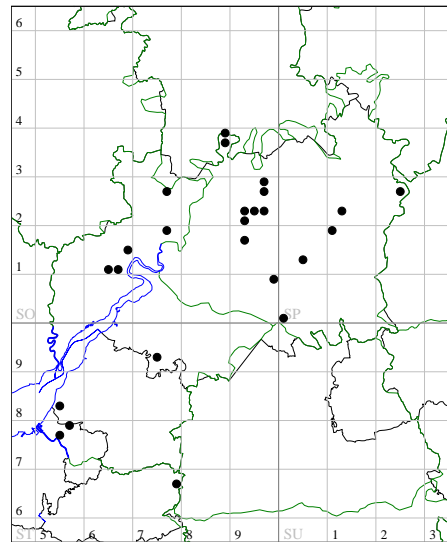
A third member of the predominantly yellow *Chrysotoxum* species (the group called the "difficult five" in Britain's Hoverflies (Ball and Morris, 2013)) is *Chrysotoxum verralli*. The provisional version of the Atlas (issued in 2000) showed that this species was then largely confined to the south east of England. However Martin Matthews discovered two females at The Mythe near Tewkesbury in 2006, since when it has been recorded at least nine times in Gloucestershire, the sightings coming from all the main geographic divisions of the county (the Cotswolds, the Severn Valley and the Forest of Dean). This westward spread has also of course affected other several other counties; see John Harper's article below on an even further spread of this species.

Since the arrival of of *C. verralli* in Gloucestershire, county records of *C. cautum* have decreased disturbingly. Until this year the last record had been in 2009. It is therefore pleasing to report that John Phillips saw a female *C. cautum* at Pope's Hill SO6814 (in the Forest of Dean) on 21 June 2013.

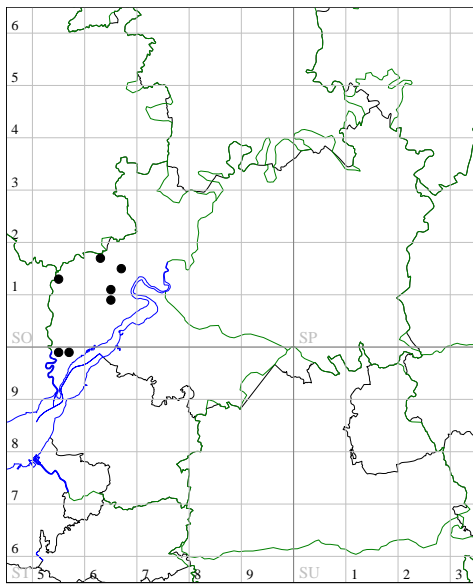


Chrysotoxum arcuatum female (photo: Maris Midgley)

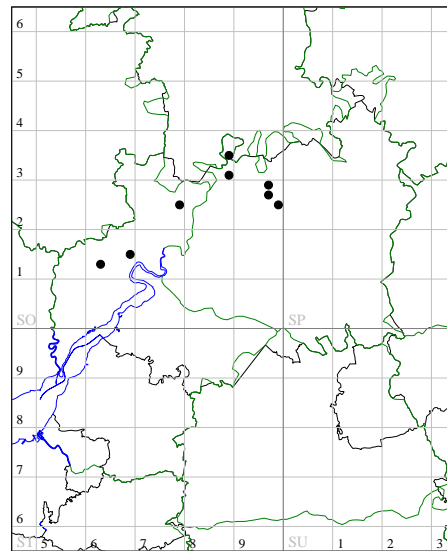
Gloucestershire distribution maps for the three species are shown below:



Chrysotoxum cautum



Chrysotoxum arcuatum



Chrysotoxum verralli

***Chrysotoxum verralli* - new to Wales**

John Harper

4 Fairhome, Gilwern, Abergavenny, NP7 0BA

jfh22@tiscali.co.uk

On 1st July 2013 I collected a male of *Chrysotoxum verralli* from the Flood Alleviation Area in Monmouth town, vc35, SO503127. This seems to be the first record for Wales, although the border with West Gloucestershire vc34 is only 3km away in the Forest of Dean. The increasing occurrence of the species in Gloucestershire was summarised by David Iliff in Hoverfly Newsletter No. 52, Spring 2012, p.9, and it seems logical that it would spread further in suitable

habitat. My thanks to David Iliff, Stuart Ball and Roger Morris for confirming the ID and the species' current distribution.

The flood alleviation scheme is designed to reduce the chances of the entomologically famous River Monnow from flooding the lower parts of Monmouth town. It consists of a large pool and surrounding ditches which are well vegetated with a variety of shrubs and trees, as well as ruderals which have to be vigorously controlled. Although as far as 22km from the Severn Estuary the altitude of the pool area is only 20m asl.

While much of inland southern Wales is upland, there are several fingers of lowland that wind their way far into the Principality, particularly relevant are the

Rivers Wye, Monnow and Usk, whose valleys connect in the Monmouth/Usk area; these seem to act as

corridors for “English” species to infiltrate Wales.

Interesting Recent Records

Pipiza bimaculata: male, The Mythe, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire SO887341, 2 May 2013 (Martin Matthews). Second record of the species for VC33, and the 92nd hoverfly species within the Gloucestershire Wildlife trust reserve and the neighbouring flood meadows (90 of these were first recorded there by Martin himself).

Myolepta potens: female, Pope's Hill SO6814, 23 August 2013 (John Phillips); in Hoverfly Newsletter No. 47 John described his discovery of a male of this species at nearby Welshbury Wood in 2009.



Myolepta potens female (photo; John Phillips)

Recent Images

Below are two photos by Paul Brock of mating pairs of hoverflies in the New Forest.



Microdon analis pair (photo: Paul Brock)



Caliprobola speciosa pair (photo: Paul Brock)