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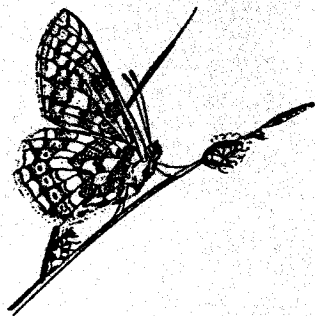
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THE COLEOPTERIST

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Editor: H. MENDEL

EDITORIAL

Support for *The Coleopterist*, measured by the amount of material offered for publication and the number of subscribers (now at 180), has increased steadily throughout the year. We must be doing something right! However, we are not (yet) perfect, for, following *The Coleopterist's Newsletter*, each of the first three parts of *The Coleopterist* begin at page one! When referring to papers in these parts, authors should remember to include the part number. Next year the page numbering will run through the three parts. Thanks to the efforts of John Owen, a detailed index to Volume 1 is included as an integral part of this issue.

**MAXIMIZE YOUR COLLECTING: NESTS CAN GIVE FLEAS AS WELL AS
BETLES**

R. S. George

As well as beetles, the nests of birds and mammals will frequently contain fleas which can be collected directly into 70% alcohol. Admittedly, there are few people in Britain who will/can identify fleas, but please remember that I am willing to identify any quantity of British fleas, from any source, from any host, from any locality, providing they are accompanied by the appropriate data.

From the point of view of the coleopterist the nests of moles, sand martins, voles and field mice are particularly useful. Throughout the country these hosts can provide up to 18 species and subspecies of fleas, some of them quite uncommon. The distribution of all of them is inadequately mapped. So, please remember, whilst collecting beetles please collect any fleas you see, and then send them on. Incidentally, your pet moggy and dog can be useful sources as well.

R. S. George

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**BEMBIDION OCTOMACULATUM (GOEZE) (CARABIDAE) REDISCOVERED IN
BRITAIN**

Richard A. Jones

After struggling through the rough scrubby woodland around the Powdermill Reservoir near Brede, East Sussex, on 23rd June 1992, my father, A. W. Jones, and I finally reached the water's edge. We found an area of open marsh covered with ribbon grass or reed grass *Phalaris arundinacea* (L.) Trin. Amongst the tussocks, the dead stems formed a dense mat, moist and springy underfoot. In the bright sunshine of early afternoon a large number of small carabids were running about over this mat, especially where our footprints had compressed and slightly flooded the vegetation. Ignoring the thousands of baby frogs and toads and seemingly endless hundreds of *Elaphrus riparius* (L.), I took a selection of beetles including several *Bembidion* species, fancying that I recognised *B. obliquum* Sturm and *B. fumigatum* (Duftschmid) amongst them.

Sure enough, the "haul" was a good one. *B. obliquum* was the commonest species, *B. fumigatum*, *B. varium* (Olivier) and *B. doris* (Panzer) were frequent and I was pleased to find a single specimen of *B. clarki* Dawson. However, the prize of the day was two specimens of *B. octomaculatum*, the first British record this century.

On hearing of the discovery, Mr Peter Hodge visited the reservoir on 25th June and confirmed the presence of a colony of *B. octomaculatum*. He also found *Pterostichus gracilis* (Dejean) and identified a *Badister*, which was very common there, as *B. anomalus* (Perris). A further visit by Peter on 28th June with Professor John Owen and Mr David Porter revealed more specimens of *B. octomaculatum* together with several examples of *B. quadripustulatum* Serville and a single *Badister unipustulatus* Bonelli.

Ironically, despite Fowler (1887) claiming it to be a "very distinct and pretty little species", *Bembidion octomaculatum* is easily overlooked in the field because of its small size (2-2.5mm). Under the microscope its elytra are delicately marked but the marks are almost invisible to the naked eye. Even using a hand lens the yellow spots and streaks are not clearly visible in all specimens. Incidentally, Joy (1932) is wrong in claiming that the pronotum is dull bronze. It is, in fact, quite shining as stated by Fowler (1887).

B. octomaculatum (previously *Bembidion sturmi* (Panz.)) appears to have been last recorded in Britain by Champion in Surrey (1875) and in the Isle of Wight (1887). Consequently, the recorded "distribution" of the beetle in Britain has not changed since Fowler's day. Allen (1965) pointed out that Moore (1957) omitted Gorham's (1872) record for West Sussex. Shirt (1987) places the species in the Appendix of the Red Data Book i.e. having no twentieth-century records. Its status was revised by Hyman (1992) who lists it as "extinct", commenting that it is a "presumed extinct resident and a possible immigrant".

All of the old records are of singletons, perhaps adding weight to the opinion that the beetle is a rare immigrant to Britain, unable to establish itself here permanently. However, the beetle's reappearance, in numbers, after a gap of 105 years supports the notion that the word "extinct" should never be used to describe the status of a British beetle; especially one with migratory tendencies.

The discovery of a colony of this beetle begs a whole series of questions. Has a single immigrant beetle successfully established the species here at last? Will the colony survive? For how long? We can only guess at some of the answers.

Certainly the beetle seems well established, at least for the time being. The water level in the reservoir is high, despite the current "drought" in the area. The streams feeding it are insignificant trickles but it seems that, at present, no water is being abstracted. Like most water-side species *B. octomaculatum* must be able to move and colonize new areas as water levels change. At its present site, a change in water level, either up or down, would completely alter the nature of the habitat. It is not clear whether or not other parts of the reservoir could offer similar conditions should the present habitat become unsuitable. It may be that the outer parts of the mat of *Phalaris* stems forms a raft, moving up and down with the water level - indeed it was difficult to explore beyond a certain point without adequate footwear!

The recent mild winters and hot summers have created any amount of debate but will inevitably affect the survival of many species which are at the edge of their range in Britain. We may well see *B. octomaculatum* here for a year (or a few years) before the wet and cold finally see it off. But there is always the hope that, this time, the colonizers will be of hardier stock and that they will establish themselves here permanently.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Peter Hodge for pursuing and confirming a most unlikely quarry, and (along with John Owen and David Porter) for allowing me to publish their beetle records here.

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Richard A. Jones

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**A SECOND BRITISH LOCALITY FOR *RHINONCUS ALBICINCTUS* GYLL.
(CURCULIONIDAE)**

Peter J. Hodge

This weevil was first discovered in Britain at Virginia Water, Berkshire where it was swept from lakeside vegetation on 15th July 1972 (Allen, 1974). It was later realised that the species was associated with *Polygonum amphibium* f. *natans* and the beetles could most easily be found by searching the floating leaves of this plant (Morris, 1976). The Berkshire colony of *R. albicinctus* appears to be quite stable as specimens have been found by several coleopterists who have visited Virginia Water between 1972 and the present time. However, the beetle has not so far been recorded from any other British site.

On 17th September 1992 a female *R. albicinctus* was swept off *Polygonum* growing on the damp muddy margin of Powdermill Reservoir, between Brede and Seddlescombe, East Sussex (TQ7920). My companion, Prof. J. A. Owen, subsequently swept a further two examples. It is very likely that a breeding colony is present, especially as *P. amphibium* f. *natans* was growing in the central channel between the mud-flats and in an isolated pool on the reservoir margin. The habitat at this East Sussex site contrasts sharply with that at Virginia Water. Like most reservoirs the water level is very unstable, for example, it fell by several metres between late June and mid September 1992 presumably due to water abstraction. Further monitoring will be required before it can be established whether this East Sussex colony is permanent.

Acknowledgements

I thank John Owen for allowing me to include his record in this note.

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P. J. Hodge,

8 Harvard Road, Ringmer, Lewes, East Sussex BN8 5HJ.

A LITTLE BIT OF BEETLING HISTORY - TWO LETTERS ABOUT BEETLE
COLLECTING FROM J.F. DAWSON (1802-1870) TO J.T. SYME (1822-1888)

Roger S. Key

Dave Hemingway of Wakefield, Yorkshire was lucky enough to find a cheap copy of J. F. Dawson's *Geodephaga Britannica* (Dawson, 1854) in a second-hand book catalogue. Inside the book were pasted two old letters from Dawson to J. T. Syme, by whom the book is signed on the inner fly-leaf. A short biography of Syme, who later became known as J. T. Boswell, is given by Darby (undated). The book also has the following note on the fly-leaf:-

from Dr. W. Wallace's collection of books, sold 1951
M. A. Swinburn,
"Fern Lea", Oak Road.
Healing. Lincs.

Dr W. Wallace, a Lincolnshire coleopterist, was co-author of *Lincolnshire Coleoptera* published in the Transactions of the Lincolnshire Naturalist's Union early this century (Thornley & Wallace, 1907-1915).

The letters give an insight into Coleopterists' thinking at the time, some interesting information on species of beetle now extinct or very scarce and opinions as to the best places for insect collectors in the mid-19th Century. They are given below exactly as written.

The first letter is undated, other than the day and month, and is in the form of a small booklet of 8 pages 11.2mm by 7.4mm.

The Woodlands
Bedford
Ap 6

My Dear Sir

I have sent you some particulars & if you have any difficulty in making them out pray apply to me for further particulars. You will perceive I do not commend Ramsgate - in fact 1 good day at Pegwell for work is ample. The sandhills at Deal I always found much

profitable The locality is described Zool p 2275. To get *A. curta* &c I pull up the lichen + moss on the slopes. I found the unique *Harp. cordatus* by pulling up the tall wiry grass on the sandhills. The hedges of dry sticks & bents of the ditch bank mark'd in your plan 5...4 was splendid - but this season is very late & I doubt whether you will succeed & fear it is too early in such localities as the East Coast. Nothing equal to the Isle of Wight at this season. I should like to get down to the latter - it is the time for *Drypta*, *Amara Strenua*, *Lymnaeum* etc

Yrs truly

J F Dawson

Some examples of *Meloe variegatus* were pick'd up in the ruts left by Bathing Machines and before you get to the Jetty under East Cliff Lodge

Pegwell

marked 1 on yr plan

1 Slopes next the shore covered with fennel & some bushes (beyond the preventive station & the perpendicular cliffs -) Here you may take at their base

Meloe cicutosus abundantly,

Meloe rugosus *Fab* sparingly.

On the slopes under the bushes *Otiorynchus raucus*

Likewise on the slopes among herbage *Dromius truncatellus*.

The loose sand further on towards halfway house - at the foot of the black clay among refuse - I took *Stenolophus exiguus* only once never found it again. Also by grubbing close to the base of the cliffs between these black

sands & the fennel slopes where the ground juts out toward the shore - I took *Bembidium clarkii*. *Meloe variegatus* was taken under the cliffs on the sea shore between Ramsgate + Dumton Gap - insects are washed up by the tide - the true locality I do not know - all I got were evidently washed thither by the tide. I got them only 1 year.

NB

I consider the vicinity of Ramsgate vile for collecting. I was there 2 autumns & 2 springs.

[Dawson was resident in Ramsgate in 1848!]

The description of "The locality" referred to in "The Zoologist" (Dawson, 1848) reads as follows :-"Extending for six or seven miles on the north of the town of Deal from Sandown Castle, and bordering on the sea, from which it is protected by a high ridge of shingle, is a sandy tract of uncultivated land, covered with herbage and plants of various kinds, which - as respects the nature of the soil, its ridges and pits of sand, its plants, and the general character of the insects found there - reminds me somewhat of the Chesil Bank in the Isle of Portland. Nor is it inferior (while it is more extensive) in its Coleopterous productions to that famous locality." He goes on to describe the finding of 44 species of rare beetle, from various families, including *Nedyus crux* (Walt) (now *Ceutorhynchus euphorbiae* (Brisout) and *Tychius nigrirostris* (Walt) (now *T. tibialis*) as new to Britain.

The second letter also only gives day and month, but reference to Syme's capture of the *Dyschirius* in Dawson's supplementary paper (Dawson, 1856) proves the date to be 1855. The letter is written on a single sheet 224mm x 185mm folded in half to form 4 sides for writing and bordered with black (mourning?) on the first page.

The Woodlands

Bedford

June 14.

My dear Sir

The storm of wind & rain followed me with out intermission when I left London so that it was useless to persevere in my intended expedition. I had a few fine days which I visited some friends in Brighton and I have not collected since I saw you at all. I hope however next week to visit the fumigatum locality in Lincolnshire & also Whittlesea Mere. Meanwhile I have looked out a few things you want from my Cabinet (for duplicates I have next to none). I am next to certain that those 2 long *Dyschirii* you took at Deal are really oblongus of Sturm & therefore new to Britain & when all Doubt is removed from my mind I shall record them in my supplementary paper. As I have monographed the *Geodephaga* I naturally want to render my collection as complete as possible Nevertheless I hardly like to ask you for one of the specimens as you have but two - however if you give me one of them I shall take it with me to Paris to make quite sure of its identity & as one good turn deserves another shall take a specimen of *Drypta* out of my Cabinet for you by way of compensation. I certainly took a single example of *Harp. Discoideus* at Woking - so if you examine yr. *Harp.* perhaps you found it - at all events it is to be found there - tho' everywhere apparently scarce - tho' I took 1 in the I of W several years ago. I never found another as long as I was there. My advertisements in Zool as yet has produced me no communications in the subject of localities. If next Saturday shd - be fine I may get disciodeus at Sandy tho' I took it there only once - these were the sole occasions - and Woking makes the 3d. I hope I may for my friends' sake as well as mine. I sent all the water beetles to Hamlet Clarke (those I took at Woking) but he says they are all common

except 5 specimens of angustus/ I wonder I did not get some.

Believe me

Yours very truly,

J F Dawson

The glass keeps falling & there is much appearance of rain.

The *Dyschirius* referred to is in fact *D. extensus* Putzeys. Dawson described it, as *D. elongatulus*, then apparently new to science, in his supplementary paper (Dawson, 1856) where he states :- "Two examples were captured by Mr. Syme, in April, 1855, on a damp spot of ground near Sandown Castle, Deal..."

The text of the book also contains numerous pencilled species annotations, all but two in the same handwriting as the signature of J. T. Syme on the inner fly leaf.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dave Hemingway for the loan of the book and letters and Dave Sheppard of English Nature for transcribing the letters and providing information on J. T. Syme.

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Roger S. Key

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REVIEW

A review of the scarce and threatened Coleoptera of Great Britain. Part 1. P. S. Hyman. (Revised and updated by M. S. Parsons). UK Nature Conservation:3. Peterborough: Joint Nature Conservation Committee. 1992. 484pp, A4 softback.

Available from the Natural History Book Service, 2 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5XN. Price £18.00 plus £3.00 p&p.

This enormous compilation is an updated revision of the discussion document produced by Dr. P. S. Hyman in 1985 in co-operation with the majority of contemporary active coleopterists. As such it brings together the most up-to-date information on the scarcer British Coleoptera belonging to the families covered. The remaining families will be dealt with in Part 2.

The 58 page introduction comprises 37 pages of appendices along with 16 pages of general introductory comments and 4 pages of relevant references. In the general comments in addition to definitions and criteria for the status categories which have become the common currency of conservationists we find a brief history of British Coleopterology including the current literature and details of the many recording schemes. The appendices give the proposed status categories together with those of the precursors of the present work by Hyman(1985) and Ball(1987), and the page where each species is discussed in the main body of the work. The remaining 424 pages, the 'data sheets', provide information on the synonymy, distribution, habitat and ecology, threats and management, with appropriate references, for each of the 1043 species included. As one of the original small team which formulated the pioneer listing of dead-wood Coleoptera at the request of Mr. P. Harding some 15 years ago, one is overawed by the colossal size of this work and the expertise which has gone into it. This is indeed a most impressive compilation, and one which is astonishingly free of typographical errors. A frontispiece depicting the weevil *Anthonidium unguiculare*, beautifully drawn by Tom Eccles, embellishes the work.

The purist may question some of the assertions regarding the ecology of certain species and the curious omission of other species (eg. *Epiphaniis cornutus*). In view of the vast literature on our ancient coleopterous fauna initiated by the 'Birmingham

University school', and ably continued by Buckland, Kenward and others, it is unfortunate that an historical dimension was not more apparent in the 'data sheets' section. The reviewer feels that it is crucial to recognise those ancient members of our fauna like *Bembidion humerale*, *Curimopsis nigrita* and *Bromius obscurus* whose present status is so precarious. Furthermore, it may appear unfortunate, in view of the recent re-discovery of some of the 'Stephens' rarities' such as *Exochomus nigromaculatus* and *Bromius obscurus*, that his work rather than Fowler was not taken as the baseline.

But these observations do not detract from the reviewer's appreciation of the overall excellence of this publication. Every British coleopterist will wish to obtain a copy of this book. He will spend many happy hours perusing the data sheets, delighting in filling in gaps and, hopefully, in sending his additional records to the author for inclusion in a revised issue.

The conservationist, and especially those non-entomologists charged with the protection of sites of scientific interest, will particularly welcome this book. Such, however, should recognise that the information made available is a two-edged sword which can be equally valuable to the developer seeking to destroy those cherished acres. Don't ditch the experienced coleopterist from your advisory panel yet!

P. Skidmore
169, Carr House Road, Doncaster DN4 5DP

REVIEW

Host plants of British beetles : a list of recorded associations (Supplement to *A Coleopterist's Handbook*). J. A. Bullock. Amateur Entomologist, volume 11a. Feltham: Amateur Entomologists' Society. 1992.

Obtainable from : AES Publications, The Hawthorns, Frating Road, Colchester, Essex CO7 7JN. Price £1.85 inc. p&p.

This booklet is essentially a cross-reference to the list compiled by Eric Philp for the AES's *A Coleopterist's Handbook*. In places the nomenclature has been updated, for example, the Ceutorhynchinae as listed by Morris (*Entomologist's Gaz.*, 42: 255-265).

Acquisition of this booklet is recommended. It enhances the beetle/plant list of the "Handbook" and is useful in its own right.

J. Cooter
19, Mount Crescent, Hereford HR1 1NQ.

TWO FURTHER CASES OF INTERSPECIFIC COPULATION

Roger S. Key

In 1987 I noted copulation between two species of *Cantharis* (Key, 1987) and speculated on the possibility of hybridization. I have subsequently noted copulation between a male *Sermylissa halensis* (L.) and female *Galeruca tanacetii* (L.) (Chrysomelidae - intergeneric copulation!) on a flower of *Achillea millefolium* at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe National Nature Reserve, Lincolnshire (TF4888) on 28th September 1991, and between a male *Cionus alauda* (Herbst) and a female *Cionus scrophulariae* (L.) (Curculionidae) on the foliage of *Buddleia globosa* in my garden at Crowland, Lincolnshire (TF2309) on 7th July 1992. In both instances I retained the pair to see if eggs were laid and in neither case did this happen. It would seem that such occurrences are not uncommon and presumably must result from mistaken identity!

Reference

KEY, R. S., 1987. Interspecific copulation in *Cantharis* species. *Coleopterist's Newsletter*, 30: 4.

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A PLEA FOR HELP WITH A FLORA OF LABOULBENIALES (FUNGI:
ASCOMYCOTINA) FOR GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Alex Weir

The Laboulbeniales are a diverse group of ectoparasitic fungi which are nowadays recognised as obligate parasites of insects and other invertebrates. Although almost 2,000 species have been recorded worldwide, with 356 in Europe (Santamaria, Balazuc & Tavares, 1991), the British and Irish floras remain underworked. At present there are 70 species known for the United Kingdom (24 of which have recently been added by the author) and 7 for Ireland.

The majority of known Laboulbeniales are parasites of insects although a number of species occur on mites and millepedes. Most of the species occurring on insects infect Coleoptera although the following orders are also known hosts: Blattaria, Dermoptera, Diptera, Hemiptera, Hymenoptera, Isoptera, Mallophaga, Orthoptera and Thysanoptera.

In many instances the fungi appear as short "bristles" (Figs 1 & 2) either darkly pigmented or rather pale. Some of these, such as the large genus *Laboulbenia*, are quite noticeable at low magnifications (x10), especially when they occur on the legs or antennae of infected insects. Others, for example the genus *Siemaszkoa*, are very pale and hardly distinguishable on their Ptiliid hosts.

The future publication of *The Ascomycete Flora of Great Britain and Ireland* provides a timely opportunity to include further information on the range of fungal species (and their arthropod hosts) occurring in Great Britain and Ireland. The author is in the early stages of preparing the accounts for the Laboulbeniales for inclusion in the above mentioned publication. To this end I would be pleased to receive any infected specimens from entomologists and those working on other arthropod groups. Ideally, specimens should be named and bear full collection and locality data. Specimens would be of most use if collected and stored in alcohol (allowing easy observation of ventral aspects) although pinned or mounted material would also be welcome.

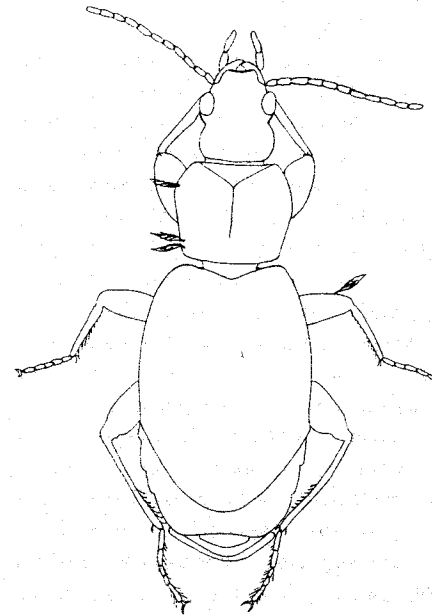
Reference

SANTAMARIA, S., BALAZUC, J. & TAVARES, I. I., 1991.
Distribution of the European Laboulbeniales (Fungi ;

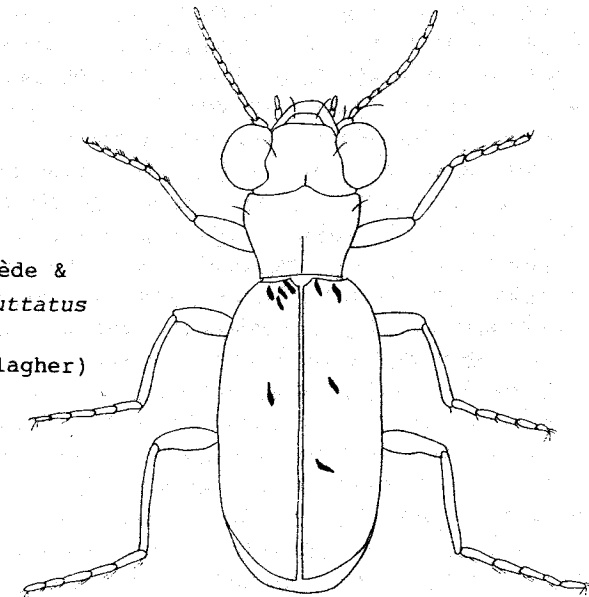
Ascomycotina) an annotated list of species. *Treballs de l'Institute Botànic de Barcelona*, 14: 5-123.

Alex Weir

32, Hartburn Lane, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS18 3QH.



Rhachomyces canariensis Thaxter
on *Trechus obtusus* Erichson,
Bassleton Wood, Thornaby, Cleveland.
(Illustration by Clair Gallagher)



Laboulbenia notiophili Cépède &
Picard on *Notiophilus biguttatus*
(F.), Burnham Beeches.
(Illustration by Clair Gallagher)

USING DILUTE ACETIC ACID FOR TEMPORARY STORAGE

R. G. Booth

When I first became interested in beetles in the mid 1970's, living in Devon, there were no coleopterists nearby to whom I could turn for advice. I learnt rapidly that beetles killed in alcohol or formalin would not relax, and could not be carded conveniently. Then, having used ethyl acetate to kill my specimens, I transferred them to a dilute solution of acetic acid for temporary storage if I was unable to process them immediately. I started to do this after reading a short note by Moore (1953). Since few coleopterists seem to use dilute acetic acid for temporary storage, this note is intended to introduce the method to those who might wish to try it, as well as to report my experience of it over the last sixteen years. To date, none of my dry specimens has disintegrated on its card, so I presume that there is no long-term danger in its use.

Moore (1953) proposed using a 2% aqueous solution of acetic acid as a cheap and effective relaxing fluid, by which '*I have relaxed and set with ease many thoroughly desiccated Hemiptera, Hymenoptera and Coleoptera, including such difficult groups as Histerids and Coccinellids....There appears to be no danger of overtreatment as I have had specimens immersed for several months with no deterioration or distension*'. My own experience, using dilute acetic acid for the temporary storage of freshly killed material, is slightly different from Moore's. Although I started using a 2% solution, I gradually increased its strength and have now used a 5% solution for many years.

There are both advantages and disadvantages with the use of dilute acetic acid. I find that some beetles, particularly many weevils, do not relax completely in ethyl acetate vapour but a few days in dilute acetic acid relaxes them completely. This is a very convenient alternative to the method used by some coleopterists, that of stunning the specimen first with a very short exposure to ethyl acetate, carding it, then returning it to the ethyl acetate vapour for killing (see, for example, Morris, 1991). Beetles of any size can be kept in dilute acetic acid for a day or two before carding or pinning. I always rinse the specimens in clean water before blotting them dry, and for pubescent species, it is often useful to rinse them in a drop of alcohol which, because it evaporates more rapidly, leaves the scales or pubescence in better condition.

For longer periods of time, the main effects of temporary storage can be loss of colour, distension of the body and a gradual breakdown of the soft body tissues. I have found that colour degradation is rarely a problem with beetles, provided that clean (preferably distilled) water is used to make up the solution. Some weevils, cerambycids and pyrochroids are exceptions. In ceutorhynchine weevils for example, the soft, white scales may lose their brightness, although this may be as much a problem of grease as the effect of the acetic acid. I have a specimen of *Clytus arietis* (L.) with very dull yellow markings and a rather dull *Pyrochroa serraticornis* (Scopoli), due to keeping them too long in acetic acid solution. If the water used to dilute the acetic acid is not clean, problems may arise. I once collected some beetles on the South Atlantic island of South Georgia which were stored in acetic acid diluted with water which came from a lake surrounded by a peat bog; a dull bloom was deposited over the specimens.

Distension of the body and a gradual breakdown of the soft body tissues I regard as an advantage for many beetles. With a light pressure applied to the abdomen and a gentle tug at the back end, the genitalia of most specimens pop out quite easily. For this reason, a relatively high proportion of specimens which I card are dissected. The task of identifying specimens of genera such as *Atheta* and *Longitarsus* for example is far easier when they are dissected. Dissection whilst mounting also saves a lot of time, in the long run, compared with softening up old dried material.

The big disadvantage of using dilute acetic acid is that the hind wings of many species become fluid-filled. For groups with full elytra, this can be overcome easily by releasing the fluid and tucking the wings back under the elytra before blotting the specimens dry, but in staphylinids, especially, the hind wings cannot easily be refolded. Because the bodies of most specimens do gradually distend with time, the excess fluid does need to be released before specimens are carded. This is easily done by partially rupturing the intersegmental membrane around the genital segment, achieved anyway by dissection, and then applying a gentle pressure to the abdomen when the specimen is being blotted dry. When carding staphylinids, if I partially remove the genital segment and squeeze the excess fluid from the abdomen, I rarely have problems with the abdomen telescoping up as the beetle dries. With the genital segment of staphylinids

mounted separately, one can then easily view the sixth visible tergite and sternite, both of which often show important taxonomic features.

For beetles smaller than about 1cm long, or those larger species with relatively smaller abdomens, I have found that temporary storage in dilute acetic acid for several months has not posed problems, and I have sometimes kept specimens for over a year before they deteriorate noticeably. Smaller specimens tend to keep better than larger ones over longer periods of time. *Cyphon* species are exceptions; their antennae are extremely delicate and fragment at the slightest provocation but their genitalia are always well preserved. For larger bodied beetles, for example geotrupids or *Carabus* species, I no longer store them temporarily in fluid, but will keep them relaxed in a tube containing tissue paper moistened with 5% acetic acid.

Because of the gradual breakdown of the soft body tissues, storage in dilute acetic acid is inappropriate if one wishes to keep specimens for internal examination. However, for the temporary storage of beetles before carding, I have found the method to be generally very satisfactory and convenient provided that the tube is not overloaded with specimens or left for too long.

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OBSERVATIONS ON *PROCAS GRANULICOLLIS* WALTON (CURCULIONIDAE)

Adrian P. Fowles

Following the discovery of this (once rare) species in Wales in 1991 (Fowles & Boyce, 1992), *P. granulicollis* is now known from five woodland localities in three Welsh vice-counties. At each of these localities it has been taken amongst bracken litter in glades of ungrazed woodlands. Feeding has not previously been observed and the adult foodplant(s) was unknown. However, besides bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* (L.) one of the few constant plant species at each of the sites was climbing corydalis *Corydalis claviculata* (L.). Searches in bracken glades without *Corydalis* in other woodlands have so far failed to produce specimens of *Procas*. This association with *Corydalis* was recognised at an early stage but a specimen kept in captivity from 4th July to 11th August 1991 did not apparently feed on *Corydalis* or any other woodland plants offered (Fowles, 1992).

On 22nd May 1992 I collected five specimens and kept them in an aquarium planted with *Corydalis* and wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosella* L. Over the next three weeks or so they were observed to feed on *Corydalis*, most frequently from early evening and through the night, by straddling a leaf and eating lengthwise until it became difficult for them to maintain a grip on the remaining part of the leaf. The result of this is that leaves are conspicuously half-eaten. Returning on 6th June to the same Cardiganshire site that had produced the captive specimens, I examined *Corydalis* plants and found that this feeding damage was obvious in the field. At 19.50 hours BST I found a single *Procas* in the act of feeding on a *Corydalis* leaf.

In captivity the weevils spent most of the time hidden and appeared to favour the hollow stems of last year's bracken fronds in which to secrete themselves. By mid June feeding had stopped altogether and the weevils effectively vanished, despite plenty of *Corydalis* being available. On 25th June all of the bracken stems in the aquarium were examined and one *Procas* was found inside a hollow stem; another individual was found hiding underneath the roof of the aquarium. This latter specimen was still in the same place when last inspected on 12th August 1992. Whether this behaviour is a product of captivity or is a form of obligate diapause is open to conjecture. It is interesting to note, however, that *Procas* becomes difficult to find in the field by sieving bracken litter after the end of May. Timed searches

indicate that it takes approximately five times as long to find specimens in June and July as it does in May.

Many questions remain to be answered about the life cycle of *P. granulicollis*. How long do the adults live? Do they have alternative foodplants? When are the larvae present and what do they feed on? Further observations on the captive specimens may solve some of these questions but careful fieldwork will be required to find all of the answers. How common is *P. granulicollis* in Britain? Is it confined to woodlands? Searches of *Corydalis* in the Norfolk Broads and amongst clifftop coastal heath in Cardiganshire have been unsuccessful so far but *Corydalis* occurs in a broad range of habitats and further investigation would be of great interest. If *Corydalis* is the sole foodplant of *granulicollis*, does this shed any light on possible foodplants for *P. armillatus*? Its British and European records point to a preference for sandy, often coastal, soils and fumitory *Fumaria* spp. would be a plausible host in such situations. Now that sites for *granulicollis* can be identified by searching for feeding damage on *Corydalis* there is considerable potential for undertaking ecological studies on this enigmatic beetle. It may even be possible in the future to apply this knowledge to searches for *armillatus*, which has not been seen in Britain for some forty years.

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THE CANTHAROIDEA AND BUPRESTOIDEA RECORDING SCHEME

K. N. A. Alexander

Introduction

This BRC Recording Scheme was launched in April 1986 and covers the soldier beetles (Cantharidae and Drilidae), glow worms (Lampyridae), net-winged beetles (Lycidae) and jewel beetles (Buprestidae). Newsletters have been produced every other year, the last - in May 1990 - included provisional dot maps for eight species. The maps for all species now show a good representative cover of records and the Scheme is moving towards a Provisional Atlas in the very near future. It would be appreciated therefore if coleopterists who haven't yet contributed their records would do so as soon as possible, please.

Glow worms

The glow worm map has had a good boost recently through the efforts of Robin Scagell to stimulate an interest in the species among the general public as well as field naturalists. He has teamed up with John Tyler and David Wareham to follow-up this interest by producing a set of guidelines for studying glow worm colonies. It is hoped that people will "adopt" their local colonies and generate some useful information on their performance.

No new records for *Lamprohiza splendidula* (L.) have turned up so far. Perhaps the old Kent specimen was just a vagrant or an accidental introduction. I am not aware of any recent records for *Phosphaenus hemipterus* (Goeze) - is it now extinct in Britain?

Keys

Little progress has been made on identification keys owing to a severe shortage of time to do the work. A few problems have been identified with the field key supplied with Newsletter No.1 - my thanks to everyone who has pointed them out and/or lent me problem specimens. The promised RESL Handbook could well be finished this coming winter (honest!), although I understand that there may be problems with the future production of this series.

Malthodes brevicollis (Paykull) has been the cause of some of the delay to the Handbook. The text and keys currently do not include it as no genuine specimen has been available for examination. There are no British specimens in the BM(NH)

collections and I have been unable to find any definite specimens under that name in Ashe material - I have been through Ashe's collection at Torquay Museum and examined his specimen held at Coventry Museum. Some further museum work is needed.

Malthodes maurus (Laporte) had also been a matter of some concern, with a number of specimens standing under that name in collections being wrongly determined. Until recently I was aware of only one recent record, but Adrian Fowles has turned it up in three Dyfed localities.

Ireland

I was fortunate in spending much of the period mid-May to mid-July this year (1992) on business in Northern Ireland. This has considerably improved my knowledge of the fauna there. The absence of *Cantharis decipiens* (Baudi), *C. livida* L., *C. rustica* Fallén and *Rhagonycha testacea* (L.) is quite fascinating, while *C. pellucida* F. appears to be a rare woodland species, perhaps confined to ancient woodlands. Unfortunately I had to leave just as the *Malthodes* were getting going, but did find *M. flavoguttatus* Kiesenwetter and *M. fuscus* (Waltl) at a number of sites and one locality for *M. guttifer* Kiesenwetter - possibly only the second Irish record. *M. marginatus* Latreille was widespread but it is possible that our other common *Malthodes*, *M. minimus* (L.), is absent.

Martin Speight has recently confirmed the continued presence of *Pyropterus nigroruber* (Degeer) in the Killarney Oakwoods of County Kerry.

There are no Buprestidae native to Ireland.

Scottish Buprestidae

I made a number of forays into southern Scotland last year (1991) in the hope of rediscovering *Trachys troglodytes* Gyllenhal and *Agrilus viridis* (L.). Single records for these species from Dumfries last century constitute Scotland's only records of any of this family. Unfortunately I was unsuccessful, but feel that the former species remains a distinct possibility. My discovery of *T. troglodytes* in an area of grazed humid heath in south-west Cumbria last year suggests that perhaps areas of lowland raised mire or other peatlands could still hold the species in south-west Scotland. Sea-cliff flushes are another possibility.

Agrilus pannonicus and news of other English Buprestidae

The discovery of new sites for *A. pannonicus* (Piller & Mitterpacher) in southern and south-eastern England apparently continues. The explanation of what is happening is at present unclear. Many of the "new" sites are classic ancient woodlands or pasture-woodlands with rich saproxylic faunas - could *A. pannonicus* have been present all along in very low numbers and hence escaped attention until the present increase in its numbers made it more noticeable? Or has it suddenly become more mobile and is now colonising new sites?

The same thing seems to be happening with *A. viridis*, with a sudden flurry of recent records.

A good recent record for *A. sinuatus* (Olivier) is Derek Lott's from Attingham Park, Shropshire, which suggests the possibility that it is more widespread in the Welsh Border counties than is presently recognised.

After the success of recording *A. sinuatus* and *Trachys troglodytes* by searching for signs of larval activity, I have been trying to flush out more records for *T. scrobiculatus* Kiesenwetter in Gloucestershire. I managed to find the leaf mines on ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) fairly readily at the single known site in the county but have so far only added one new locality as a result of this experience. The two Gloucestershire sites are areas of abandoned limestone pasture which have become invaded by coarse grass species and scrub. The ground ivy has a distinct growth form in this vegetation type, having pale green leaves borne on tall erect stems which are held upright by the enveloping grass blades. Leaf-mines may be on either the upper or lower sides of the leaves.

The Maps

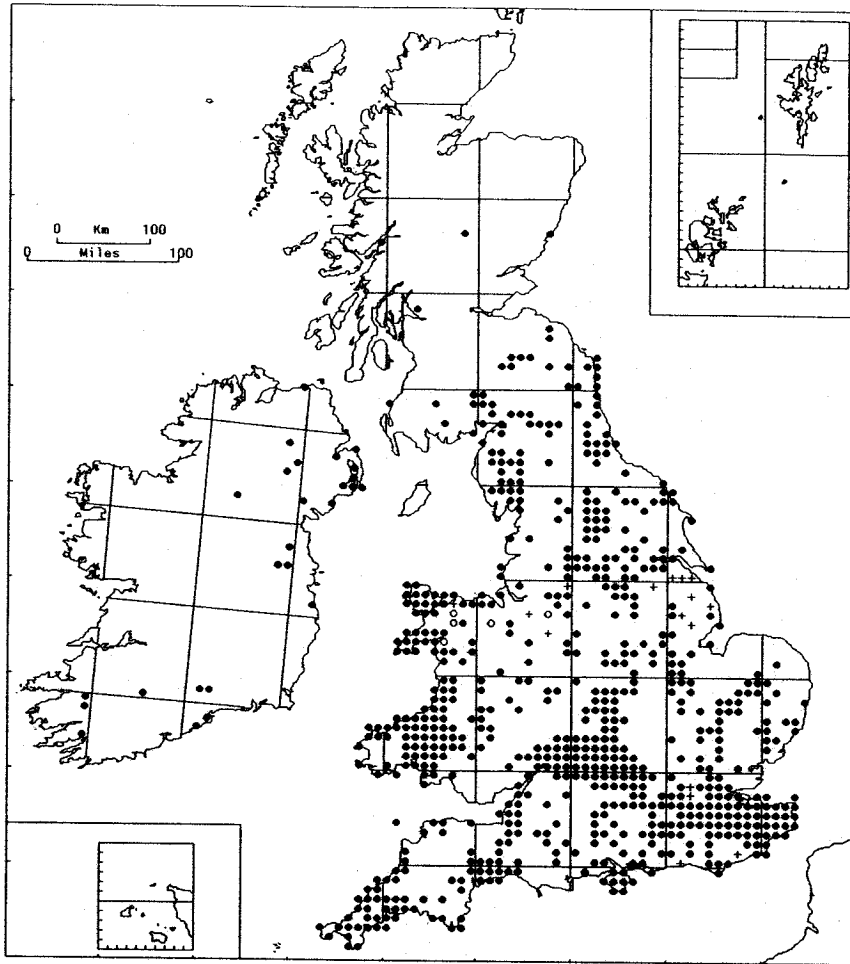
Two provisional maps are included with this report in order to show the coverage which has been achieved by the Scheme to date. *Cantharis cryptica* Ashe is an example of a widespread late spring/early summer species, while *Rhagonycha fulva* (Scopoli) is the widespread and abundant high summer species. Interestingly, this species which is generally regarded as ubiquitous over the whole of the British Isles, is proving to be rather thinner on the ground in Scotland.

The records are divided into three date classes:

+ pre-1950 o 1950-1969 ● post-1970

Rhagonycha fulva

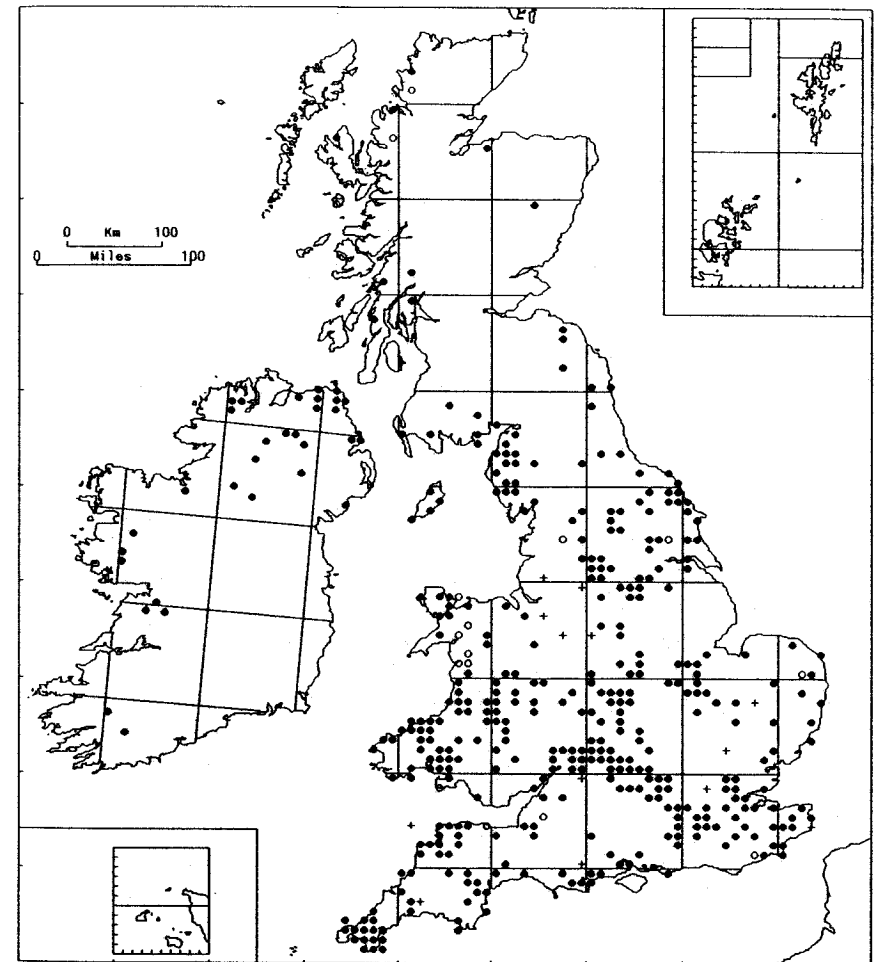
6455 43602



- 1970 onwards (GB-664, Ir-26, Ch.Is-0)
- 1950 - 1969 (GB-5, Ir-0, Ch.Is-0)
- + before 1950 (GB-16, Ir-0, Ch.Is-0)

Cantharis cryptica

6455 43501



- 1970 onwards (GB-363, Ir-31, Ch.Is-0)
- 1950 - 1969 (GB-16, Ir-0, Ch.Is-0)
- + before 1950 (GB-14, Ir-0, Ch.Is-0)

Acknowledgements

I would like to record my thanks to everyone who has taken the trouble to send me records and specimens and so ensured the success of the Scheme. There have been only about 10 major contributors so far but fortunately they are widely scattered across the country. The less prolific recorders have also been invaluable in filling in the gaps. Thanks also to Paul Harding and Brian Eversham of BRC for their support and assistance.

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**DISTRIBUTION OF THE WHARF-BORER, *NACERDES MELANURA* L.
(OEDEMERIDAE)**

A. J. Pitman

A study of the biology of the *N. melanura* L. is currently underway at the University of Portsmouth in conjunction with the Mary Rose Trust. The Wharf-borer is a pest of damp, decaying timber but was not previously considered of sufficient importance to warrant a detailed entomological study. However, Wharf-borer larvae were found causing serious damage to waterlogged archaeological timbers, prompting the current investigation.

As part of the study, attempts will be made to ascertain the up to date geographical distribution in the UK. This will make it easier for specimens to be collected for experimentation. We would be grateful for readers' assistance regarding the distribution of this species. Any information regarding the type of structures attacked, species of timber attacked, emergence of the adults etc. would be useful.

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SWIMMING IN *PHAEDON COCHLEARIAE* (F.)(CHRYSOMELIDAE)

R. W. J. Read

Sometime ago while searching for chrysomelids near Robertgate Bridge (NY0407) in West Cumbria I came across large numbers of adult *Phaedon cochleariae* on some partly submerged plants of *Rorripa nasturtium* in the corner of a small field. My attention was drawn to a few beetles that were on the water and, on closer inspection, they were observed to be actually swimming on the surface and making definite strokes with all six legs. Movement over the surface was slow but perhaps this was due to the water temperature. A few of these adult beetles were collected and taken home. They were later placed in a shallow plastic container which was half filled with water and after a few seconds they were observed to swim quite fast over the surface of the water. Movement through the water was made by rapid strokes of the forelegs followed by the midlegs and then the hind pair of legs. While swimming it was observed that the beetles kept their antennae clear of the water and held them back over the sides of the pronotum.

Two other species of *Phaedon*, *P. tumidulus* (Germar) and *P. armoraciae* (L.), were tested for their swimming ability. The former, when placed in water did not attempt to make any definite swimming strokes and merely floundered about. *P. armoraciae* was observed to make feeble strokes but movement through the water was slow and restrained. The swimming strokes performed by *P. cochleariae* were somewhat similar, although not quite as efficient, to those made by certain surface swimming curculionids in the Ceuthorhynchinae (Morris, 1976 ; Read, 1978) and in the Hyperinae (Read, 1982).

The ability to swim in terrestrial beetles, especially those that are associated with aquatic or semi-aquatic vegetation, would appear to be a useful adaptation.

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KENT COLEOPTERISTS GROUP

N. F. Heal

I am very pleased to be able to report that by popular request the "Kent Coleopterists Group" was reconvened on Sunday 5th July 1992. The well-attended gathering was held at the home of Eric Philp and proved, yet again, highly successful by providing an excellent forum enabling both experts and the not-so-expert to informally discuss the seasons' activities, exchange views, air identification problems and generally "talk beetles".

It had been hoped to see *Lucanus* flying in numbers in the garden but it was slightly cold and only a single *Dorcus* was observed. Amongst several interesting topics, John Owen displayed live specimens of *Pityogenes quadridens* (Hartig) and *Pityophthorus lichtensteini* (Ratzeburg) which had emerged during June, from pine twigs collected in Scotland the previous September. To the naked eye there is precious little detectable difference. Even under a microscope the finely-bordered posterior margin of the pronotum, which distinguishes the *Pityophthorus* genus, is very difficult to detect. John Owen pointed out that with normal setting the head of *P. lichtensteini* appeared to be more recessed within the thorax, thereby suggesting a slightly more-pointed outline.

Vic Measday produced a specimen of a longhorn species not on the British list - seemingly related to *Clytus* but not yet identified - found indoors at his home in Hildenborough, near Tonbridge. Prof. Ongram showed the results of a carabid study at Yockletts Banks, East Kent which included a specimen of *Pterostichus oblongopunctatus* (F.).

The event was crowned by the provision of excellent refreshments. All persons present wish to record their sincere appreciation to Eric and his wife for their generous hospitality and eagerly look forward to the workshop becoming an annual "hotspot" in the south-east coleopterists' calendar.

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M. J. Collier

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Editorial Policy

Short notes and longer papers about the species of Coleoptera recorded from, or likely to occur in, the British Isles are eligible for publication in *The Coleopterist*. In addition, the Editor invites more general articles and news items which are of relevance to British coleopterists. Authors who intend submitting papers which are longer than 3,000 words should consult the Editor. Selected papers will be submitted to a referee. Subject areas within the scope of *The Coleopterist* include: identification, species new to Britain, 1st county records, recording schemes, conservation, ecology, biology, behaviour, sampling and collecting techniques, rearing, specimen preparation, curation, field meeting news and book reviews.

There will be three issues of *The Coleopterist* each year, in April, August and November. Material accepted for publication will appear in the next issue of the journal, provided that it reaches the Editor before the stated copy date. In this way the majority of submissions will be published within 4 months of receipt. Exceptionally, a paper will be carried over to the subsequent issue. Opinions expressed in *The Coleopterist* are not necessarily shared by the Editor or the Editorial Panel.

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Manuscripts for publication should be typewritten, double-spaced with 3 cm margins on one side only of white A4 sized paper. Footnotes should be avoided and pages should be numbered. Only names of species and genera should be underlined.

Illustrations (figures) should be in black ink, boldly drawn and scaled to allow for a reduction to about 50% of original size. They must be the originals and not photocopies. The ideal position of figures should be indicated in the text. Every effort will be made to care for original artwork but the Editor cannot be held responsible for loss or damage. Material submitted on computer disc should be in ASCII format and accompanied by hard copy. Most disc sizes can be accommodated.

References to journals and books should be in the form:
 Heal, N.F., 1992. The discovery of *Lixus scabricollis* Bohe. (*Curculionidae*) in Britain. *Coleopterist*, 1(1): 2.
 Joy, N.H., 1932. *A practical handbook of British beetles*. 2 volumes. London: H.F. & G. Witherby.