

# THE COLEOPTERIST'S NEWSLETTER

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Many people have written to me on the subject of lack of up to date keys and other difficulties relating to the determination of our beetles. In an effort to help, I have listed in this issue the papers and other publications I find necessary for working with the Leiodidae. If any others would care to submit similar listings for the Families that they are particularly interested in, so much the better.

I well recall the days of my youth when almost every beetle was very difficult to name, and am eternally grateful to all those older Coleopterists that so kindly took the time to help me with identifications, some alas, are no longer with us. It would seem that the best advice that can be given to the novice, or indeed experienced Coleopterist tackling an unfamiliar group is "keep at it" and make full use of your local Museum collection (even if it is not a very good one). Beetles seem unique among the insects in that most keys rely upon comparative characters rather than a clear-cut either/or choice at each couplet. It never ceases to surprise me on consideration that the Coleoptera are such a popular Order despite of the real difficulties of determination.

1983 SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE. PLEASE SEND CHEQUES OR POSTAL ORDERS TO MR. P. HODGE, 8 HARVARD ROAD, RINGMER, nr LEWES, EAST SUSSEX, BN8 5HJ (PAYABLE TO 'Coleopterist's Newsletter').

RECORDING SCHEMES: One of the duties of the Scheme organiser is to correct odd bits that the compiler of the cards has wrongly entered or fill in parts left blank. With the Cerambycidae, the most usual 'fault' I have to correct is the use of letters for the 100km reference, this should be quoted as a numerical code. In an effort to make life easier Paul Harding has sent a stock of grid maps for circulation - copy enclosed.

BETLES FROM FAGGOTS

Our editor's suggestion that 'beetles from faggots' may have been just another good 'Massee story' may possibly be true. Certainly my own faggot traps, put out hopefully in Monks Wood in the early 1960's were unprofitable in themselves. The operation was not entirely valueless, however, as my only example of Tropideres sepicola was taken from my beating tray bag which was laid aside while the faggots were soundly beaten with a heavy stick over a sheet, in recommended Massee style.

However, I think other evidence points to Massee's being perfectly sincere in his suggestion that faggots were productive of Coleoptera. The fact that the following Massee story was told partly against himself is perhaps one indication of its veracity. 'AMM' had set a large number of faggot traps at Ham Street. They were laid out over a wide area and the 'round' of beating each faggot over a sheet took about a day to complete. One Sunday he was nearing the end of a particularly unprofitable round when he met a forester who stared at him in some amazement. Massee explained what he was doing and the forester said Well, there's a funny thing ! In 30 years' working in this wood I never saw no-one else doing that. But yesterday another gentleman was thwacking those very same bundles of sticks, just like you've been doing.' Massee said that he recognised the forester's description of the 'gentleman' as an eminent coleopterist whom he had introduced to the mysteries of faggot-beating at Ham Street some few weeks previously!

Massee told me that Ham Street was very good for Anthribids and other faggot beetles in the 1940's and early 50's - and I think this may be borne out by his collection.

My only other additional snippet of information is that my only specimens of Trachodes hispidus were beaten from hazel faggots in a wood near Gondhurst in 1961. In general, it must be supposed that 'progress' and increased agricultural efficiency must have greatly reduced the number of hedges which support uncommon Coleoptera.

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RHYNCHAENUS POPULI (L.)      John Parry has very kindly drawn up this key to enable this newly added weevil to be distinguished from its congeners:

- 1 Hind femora not enlarged for hopping (3 spp only) . . . . . 2
- Hind femora enlarged for hopping . . . . . remaining species.
  
- 2 Eyes meeting in the middle, rostrum longer than head and pronotum together, colour entirely black including legs and antennae . . stigma (Gm.)
- Eyes well separated in the middle, rostrum shorter than the pronotum, at least tibiae red . . . . . 3
  
- 3 Size larger, around 2.5mm. Legs entirely red, except for hind femora, antennae entirely red . . . . . populi (L.)
- Size smaller, around 1.6mm. Tibiae only red, antennal club dark. . . . . foliorum (Mull.)

(The funiculus in populi appears to be 6-segmented. R. populi does not superficially resemble any other British species of Rhynchaenus. Only two specimens are so far known from Britain, both from Kent, and an exhaustive search has failed to turn up the species in either of the two localities concerned).

J. Parry

Tenterden, Kent.

DENDROCTONUS MICANS Kug.

Doubtless many readers will have heard of this addition to our fauna; it had received quite widespread coverage in the media, even, I am told, making 'The Times'. In the Midland, where the beetle was first detected, we were offered several minutes of television time with some good close-ups of the larvae, adults and their galleries - and of course burly Forestry Commission men exterminating them. It would seem to be very wide spread and should be looked for in Norway or Sitka Spruce, especially those damaged by previous timber extraction. or ones growing on shallow soil in areas of low rainfall. The tell-tale sign is a tube of frass (red-brown) mixed with dry sap/resin (white), this tube may be as long as 1½ inches and extends outwards from the entry hole.

J. Cooter

Bartestree, Herefordshire.

DECLINING SPECIES ?

Early in 1981 I promised a short article for the 'Newsletter'; this was simply to list some 'common' species which I had failed to find in twenty years in Gloucestershire, though there were older records for the County. That article was postponed because I have been fully occupied with writing an annotated catalogue of Coleoptera of Gloucestershire. In the course of this some more serious changes have become apparent:- a number of species, especially weevils and chrysomelids, have become much more scarce in the last decade.

For purposes of comparison, for the years 1960 - 1970 inclusive I have some 15,000 records (one record is for n-specimens of one species in one place on one date), and for 1971 - 1981 9,000. The decrease of records, however, was not evenly spread throughout the year: in the 1960's I did a lot more 'tussocking' in the winter months; summer records remain high. Nor did I ignore 'common' species in the 1970's - a lot of work in Nature Reserves required the listing of every species when found.

To dispose of elusive 'common' species first. Despite much searching I have yet to find in Gloucestershire the following: Carabus nemoralis, Dyschirius aeneus, Anisodactylus binotatus, Laemostenus terricola, Eusphalerum torquatum, Quedius boops complex, any Mycetoporus (except splendidulus), Bryaxis bulbifer, Onthophagus ovatus, Meloë proscarabaeus; also, perhaps not 'common' but hardly rare: Oxyporus rufus, Thanatophilus sinuatus, Mysia oblongoguttata, Melandrya caraboides, Phytodecta decemnotata, Apion pomonae and Magdalis ruficornis. Have I been unlucky, or are these species no longer 'common' ?

The second list, of declining species, is as follows:

SPECIES	1960 - 1970	1971 - 1981
<u>Bembidion gilvipes</u>	29	1
<u>Pterostichus macer</u>	21	0
<u>Astenus lyonessius</u>	26	0
<u>Phyllotreta atra</u>	19	1
<u>P. undulata</u>	34	7
<u>Longitarsus luridus</u>	56	10
<u>L. melanocephalus</u>	24	4
<u>Chaetocnema concinna</u>	71	18

Species	1960-1970	1971 - 1981
<u>Apion nigritarse</u>	27	0
<u>Ceuthorrhynchus contractus</u>	76	2 (1972)
<u>C. erysimi</u>	15	4
<u>C. pollinarius</u>	25	4
<u>Anthonomus rubi</u>	29	1
<u>Miccotrogus picirostris</u>	33	6

These and other decreases are not balanced by a few increases, such as Carcinops pumilio, Plagiodera versicolora and recent immigrants like Aridius bifasciatus (at the expense of nodifer).

Have others had similar experiences ? This year I shall make positive efforts to track down these erstwhile common species and not merely record them when they turn up. If the decline is widespread, what factors are responsible ?

D.B.Atty

17a Eldorado Road, Cheltenham, Gloucs.

(This is an excellent account, obviously David has been most assiduous in his recording over the years. It would indeed be interesting to find out if these declines listed are local, Western or National. Another correspondent commented upon the fact that he too had not found Oxyporus rufus. I had spent several seasons looking for this beetle, but, as so often happens, came upon it by chance. I have since found it not uncommonly, though of course it is restricted by its habitat preferences. My first three specimens came from a small (c.a. 1½ inch dia) "toadstool" type fungus growing in an area of "rough lawn". In July Michael Darby and I found it in plenty in Boletus at Downton, Herefordshire. Again the fungi were growing in short grass singly. My fruitless searches had been in masses of "toadstool" type fungi but it would appear to prefer those growing singly or in scattered groups).  
J.C.

Species that spring to mind as being very little recorded these days include: Acmaeops collaris (L.), Callidium violaceum (L.) and Carabus caltratus L. and C. monilis F. A recent eighteen month search for Carabus violaceus has so far proved fruitless.

BOOK REVIEW

The Buprestidae (Coleoptera) of Fennoscandia and Denmark. by S.Bily (Fauna Entomologica Scandinavica Vol. 10 ). 111 pages two colour plates.  
Scandinavian Science Press, 1982. Price D.Kr. 100.

The Fauna Entomologica Scandinavica Series began in 1973 with the publication of volume 1 ''Stratiomyidae'' and it might come as a little surprize that the first volume devoted to the Coleoptera should cover the Buprestidae. I think most had expected to see the Carabidae in print, doubtless it would have appeared if Prof. Lindroth were still alive. For those unfamiliar with this excellent series I quote ''Fauna Entomologica Scandinavica is issued as separate volumes and published at irregular intervals. Each volume is separately priced. All volumes are published in English and profusely illustrated, usually with original figures. A volume deals with a systematic unit, usually a family, and most volumes include all species known in northern Europe including N.Germany and Great Britain.''

The present work follows the usual format of the series with chapters on the morphology of the adult and immature stages, biometrics and ecology, collecting and preserving. There is a brief outline of Buprestid classification and taxonomic history in the Introduction. Keys to the adults and larvae at sub-family, tribe and generic level are separate from the species keys. Important subspecies are also included. The main text is given over to generic characteristics and detailed notes on each species (rather like an up-to-date ''Fowler''),, including distribution and biology.

There are some rather odd features (from the British standpoint) most notably the omission of Agrilus sinuatus (Ol.). Minor points include the listing as British Buprestis rustica L., Anthaxia quadripunctata (L.), Chrysobothris chlorostigma (L.), Agrilus pratensis (Ratz.) and Habroloma geranii (Silfv.) in the catalogue - pages 100 - 105 - but omitting Aphanisticus emarginatus (Ol.). However, these errors are not repeated in the text and must be put down to a printing error or some other form of oversight. Phaenops cyanea (F.) received no mention as ''British - extinct'' or ''doubtfully British, 19th century record''. One change that might effect our List is the reversion to the much preferred Agrilus biguttatus (F.) instead of pannonicus (Pill. & Mitt.)

Apart from these minor errors, which, fortunately are rather obvious thus unambiguous, the work is very sound and a great expansion on the R.E.S.

Handbook. It does however deal with 48 species, and as our fauna includes only twelve buprestids, almost all of which can be determined in the field with little difficulty, and the omission of Agrilus sinuatus will probably make the book unattractive to the British Coleopterist. However, it puts our limited fauna in perspective, and contains much more information, as one would expect, than our own R.E.S. Handbook.

The standard of printing and quality of paper are good, the 108 text figures and seventeen colour illustrations excellent. The work is bound in stiff cloth. In all a very good volume that will be of use to the more serious student - the R.E.S. Handbook contains all the necessary information for the general Coleopterist.

J.C.

NB. The next beetle volume in the series will be on the aquatic Adephaga. If difficulty is experienced in obtaining the book from British suppliers, it can be had from the publishers = Scandinavian Science Press Ltd., Christiansholms Parallevej 2, DK 2930 Klampenborg, Denmark. (A discount of 10% is available for anyone wishing to subscribe to the entire Coleoptera section of the series).

#### LEIODIDAE.

This family has always been among the more difficult in our fauna. Some parts of it present no problem, but the majority are quite difficult, more so without authentic material for comparison. The Leiodinae, and especially Leiodes are the most difficult. Recent advances have been made, most notably the work by de Marzo and Angelini on Agathidium, at last reliable and constant characters have been found. Alas, the British fauna has yet to be studied in more detail. The females of Leiodes are, at times, impossible to place and the external anatomy of the males can vary a great deal, making a key based upon external characters very tricky to use (or useless). In the list I give the works that I find myself referring to when studying these beetles. It is always a good thing to dissect the male and female genitalia when the specimens are fresh. The antennae should be gummed flat, making sure all the segments lie in the same plane - they are not true cylinders, so proportions and length: breadth ratios will not come true if the antennae are twisted.

The series of papers by the late D.K.Kevan are invaluable, but alas in short supply. They have stood the test of time well (see below). The European fauna has been reasonably well studied, but British workers have, in general, been quite uninspired by this family.

Collecting: Catopids can be collected in great numbers by pit-fall traps, especially in the winter. Leiodes breed and frequent underground fungi, this must add greatly to their 'rarity'. From my own researches, it seems that a lot of species are about in late autumn and December, again this is a factor against their collection, and adds to the 'rarity'. If anyone knows how to locate underground fungi, without the use of a trained pig or dog, PLEASE let me know. Colon seem to be generally elusive, they turn up from time to time, and I think prefer more damp clay soil than Leiodes. My personal opinion is that this genus needs, as far as the British fauna is concerned, critical study, as it is likely that further species might be detected - confused with brunneum for example.

LEIODES Latr.

Joy, N.H., 1911, 'A Revision of the British Species of Liodes Latr. (Anisotoma Brit. Cat.)' Entomologist's Monthly Magazine, 47: 166-179

Strand, A., 1957, 'Über die nordischen Arten der Gattung Liodes Latr. (Col., Liodidae). Norsk Entomologisk Tidsskrift, 10(2 - 3):119 - 130 + 3pl.

Allen, A.A., 1965, 'Annotated Corrections to the List of British Species of Leiodes Latr. (Col., Leioididae). Entomologist's Monthly Magazine, 101: 178 - 184.

Allen, A.A., 1967, 'Leiodes clavicornis Rye (Col., Leioididae) New to England; with Diagnostic Notes' Entomologist's Monthly Magazine, 103: 262 - 263.

HYDNOBIUS Schmidt.

Strand, A., 1944, 'Die nordischen Arten der Gattung Hydnobius Schmidt Norsk Entomologisk Tidsskrift, 7: 74 - 79.

Vogt, H., 1961, Die mittel- und nord-europäischen Arten der Gattung Hydnobius Schmidt, Entomologische Blätter, 57(3): 141 - 171.

COLON Herbst.

Kevan, D.K., 1947, 'A Revision of the British Species of the genus Colon Hb. (Col., Colonidae). Entomologist's Monthly Magazine, 83: 249 - 267.

Szymczakowski, W., 1969, 'Die mitteleuropaischen Arten der Gattung Colon Herbst (Col., Colonidae)' Entomologische Abhandlungen, 36(8): 303 - 339.

Szymczakowski, W., 1969, Klucze do Oznaczania Owadow Polski, Coleoptera: Zeszyt 14 Colonidae (28pp) (= the Polish equivalent of our R.E.S. Handbooks).

CHOLEVA Latr.

Kevan, D.K., 1946. 'The Sexual Characters of the British Species of the Genus Choleva Latr. including C.cisteloides Frohl. New to the British List (Col., Cholevidae). Entomologist's Monthly Magazine 82: 122 - 130.

CATOPINAE.

Kevan, D.K., 1945, 'The Aedeagi of the British Species of the Genus Catops Pk., (Col., Cholevidae).' Entomologist's Monthly Magazine, 81: 69 - 72.

Kevan, D.K., 1945, 'The Aedeagi of the British Species of the Genera Ptomophagus Ill., Nemadus Th., Nargus Th., and Bathyscia Sch. (Col., Cholevidae).' Entomologist's Monthly Magazine, 81: 121 - 125.

Kevan, D.K., 1946, 'Catops nigriclavus Gerh. (Col., Cholevidae) New to the British List', Entomologist's Monthly Magazine, 82: 155 - 157.

Kevan, D.K., 1946 'The Aedeagus of Catopidius depressus (Murray)(Col., Cholevidae).' Entomologist's Monthly Magazine, 82: 308 - 309.

Kevan, D.K., 1964, 'The Spermathecae of the British Species of Ptomophagus Ill., and Parabathyscia wollastoni (Jansen)(Col., Catopidae).' Entomologist's Monthly Magazine, 99: 216.

Szymczakowski, W., 1961 Klucze do Oznaczania Owadow Polski, Coleoptera Zeszyt 13 Catopidae (68pp).

Also useful is Freude, Harde & Lohse (1971) Die Kafer Mitteleuropas, Family 14 Catopidae by W. Szymczakowski, pages 204 --237.; Family 15 Colonidae by A. v.Peez, pages 237 - 243; Family 16 Lioididae by A. v.Peez, pages 243 - 265.

AGATHIDIUM Pz.

Cooter, J., 1978 'The British Species of Agathidium Panzer',  
Entomologist's Monthly Magazine, 113 (for 1977): 125 - 135.

I have a few reprints of this key if anyone is interested, please send s.a.e.

It should be noted that later papers often correct errors or facts in earlier ones - Joy's 1911 paper is a good example, being corrected later by A.A.Allen. Kevan's figure of the aedeagus of Catops nigriclavus Gerh. is incorrect, see Freude, Harde & Lohse or Szymczakowski.

J.Cooter.

KENT COLEOPTERISTS' WORKSHOP 22nd JANUARY 1983.

A second meeting will be held at Maidstone Museum on Saturday 22nd January 1983 from 2pm to 5pm and anyone interested in beetles is welcome to attend. Again this will be an informal gathering with a chance to meet and chat with others of similar interests. Any exhibits will be welcome, suggested subjects being Water Beetles (particularly Haliphus) and Weevils (particularly Apion and Bagous). For beginners there will be a demonstration of setting and again contributions towards this theme will be welcomed; a theme that even the most experienced can always learn a bit more. With luck it is hoped to be able to provide the odd cup of tea.

Eric Philp, Maidstone Museum.

1983 MEETINGS.

Unfortunately personal circumstances have forced me to abandon all idea of organising the hoped for week long meeting centred on the Forest of Dean. However, if anyone is thinking of organising a meeting for next year, please let me know and it will get good publicity in the 'Newsletter' (readership is slowly increasing, approx 80 - 90). Anyone passing through Hereford or holidaying in the Wye Valley or Welsh Marches would be warmly received by me at Hereford City Museum, Broad Street (0432 268121 ex 207 or 334)

J.Cooter, Bartestree.