

THE COLEOPTERIST'S NEWSLETTER

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REMARKS ON A FEW APION SPECIES IN RELATION TO THE BRITISH AND MID-EUROPEAN LISTS.

Mr R. Marsh will surely earn the gratitude of students of Apion with little German or without "Freude, Harde & Lohse" Vol. 10 (hereafter referred to by initials). There are three or four points arising out of this to which I would draw attention.

First, it must be understood that Continental authors have taken to using the name curtisi Stph. for the species that we in Britain call waltoni Stph.; if this is not realised, confusion will inevitably result. Thus, the curtisi of F.H.L. (as is quite clear from the description and food-plant given) is in fact our waltoni and not our curtisi. The latter is curtulum Desbr. of the German work, which Mr Marsh has not recognized as British. In this conflict of views we appear to have right on our side, to judge by the descriptions of both waltoni and curtisi in Stephens, (1839, Man. Brit. Col.) Incidentally, the latter species seems misplaced in the 1977 Check List where it is included in a heterogenous and artificial "subgenus" Eutrichapion; in F.H.L. it is correctly located in Catapion (as curtulum) along with the very similar seniculus Kirby, etc.

Secondly, it may have escaped notice also that our platalea Germ. is actually not the true species of that name but after Gyll., as is clear from a study of the two species in F.H.L., page 165 - a change in our List made in "Antenna" a few years ago (See last "Newsletter" - J.C.).

Another difference of opinion concerns the foodplant of difforme Germ., given as Polygonum spp. by British but Trifolium (chiefly arvense) by the German authors. As these plants belong to different Families it seems unlikely that both are correct, though doubtless not impossible. T.arvense being the certain host of its nearest ally A.dissimile Germ., one is tempted to wonder whether confusion has occurred, but perhaps this is unlikely. Personally I have taken difforme only singly by general sweeping in rather moist situations, e.g. along ditch-sides and under hedge-banks, where the hares-foot trefoil, a very local plant of dry sandy places, was surely absent.

Finally it is worth pointing out that two well-known British species, genistae Kirby and scutellare Kirby, are not included at all in F.H.L. The omission of the former is probably accidental, as it is on record for Germany: Bavaria only (Horion, 1951); the latter of them, however, would appear to be wholly absent from mid-Europe.

A.A.Allen, 49 Montcalm Rd., Charlton, SE7

BETLES FROM FAGGOTS: A POSTSCRIPT.

In mentioning the more notable beetles obtained from faggots in Ham Street Woods, E.Kent, in the autumn of 1950, I unaccountably forgot to include the Longicorn Pogonocherus hispidulus Pill. & Mitt. This is the larger of the two southern species (despite the diminutive termination of its trivial name) and the more striking by reason of the snow-white mottled band across the base of elytra; it is also of much less common occurrence than P.hispidus L., though when and where it does occur it may be more numerous. The beetle was present in some quantity in the faggots - probably largely hazel - unaccompanied by its smaller relative which, in my experience, is usually beaten singly out of old holly or hazel bushes. Apart from this I have only twice met with P.hispidulus: in numbers in one spot at Moccas Park (Herefds.) from dead oak boughs, and once at Fairlight Glen (Sussex) by beating twigs.

A.A.Allen.

REQUEST FOR IDENTIFICATION ASSISTANCE WITH MOORLAND STAPHYLINIDAE

The National Trust is undertaking a moorland invertebrate monitoring programme to study the effects and possible recovery of the heathland fauna following a significant reduction in grazing pressure. I will be running a series of pitfall traps over this season to identify any specific interests which may be useful for monitoring practices - I am attempting an indicator species approach to keep the workload to a minimum! This autumn I shall therefore be confronted with the pickled material and will particularly welcome help with the Staphylinidae. So, if anyone out there is willing to help me, I would be very interested to hear from them. They will be very welcome to keep any or all of the material - it is the data we want! The site being monitored is the Kinder Estate in Derbyshire (SK:0787).

Keith Alexander, National Trust, Phoenix House, Phoenix Way, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1QG

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HYLOTRUPES BAJULUS L. AND CALLIDIUM VIOLACEUM L. - Not having heard that there was currently an outbreak of the "House Longhorn" in parts of Surrey, I was interested in Mr Cooter's note. This is, I think, the first major infestation to be reported since the early or mid-1950's when it did serious damage to house timbers in at least the Esher district. Larvae may take up to 12 years to mature, no doubt because of the low moisture content of the sapless seasoned wood which they favour. The pine-clad area of Surrey lying between (roughly) Esher and Canberley has long been the headquarters in Britain of this species, and records from elsewhere - other than early ones - appear to be very few. The beetle seems able to persist at a very low density in the extensive pinewoods of the above area, though there is scarcely any direct evidence beyond a single record of specimens found on cut pine timber by Champion in the

woods near Woking (1917, Ent. mon. Mag., 53:174, footnote). Donisthorpe took a series on telegraph poles by the station at Weybridge, where I have more than once looked for it (without success, I need hardly add!).

Mr Cooter's mention of Callidium violaceum as a parallel case is much to the point, this being another Longicorn that prefers to breed in softwood * after it has been worked, but in outdoor situations - fences, sheds, summer-houses and the like. I have not heard of its occurrence since it was found freely on the spruce timbers of a woodshed in Bagley Wood, Berkshire, by R.W.Lloyd, in June 1952 - the only time that I have seen it alive; yet early records are numerous. Fowler (1890, Col.Brit.Isl., 4:223) says of it "in decaying fir posts and stumps" (my emphasis), and this is quite typical of older works. But does any reader know of its being so taken within living memory ?

* pine, spruce and larch

A.A.Allen.

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A RECORDING TIP FOR LAEMOSTENUS TERRICOLA (CARABIDAE): Further to my note in Ent. Mon. Mag. (1979, 113 (1977):236) on the association of this ground beetle with nests and burrows of birds and mammals, I have recently found that an easy way to find it in woodland is to search out a badger sett - a much more prominent feature than the beetle itself - and then turn over stones, logs and other loose debris in the general area. This has worked on a number of occasions in Dorset and Avon recently, producing beetles in May and June. Most of my pit-fall trapping encounters have been later in the year, during the breeding season, late August onwards. Not all of my badger sett finds were of live animals, on one occasion only one elytron was found - was it eaten by a badger ? If so, this particular host must result in a precarious life style!!

The species is also readily found at rabbit burrows - see Welch (EMM 100 (1964):99-100) for example.

Keith Alexander.

MERTHYR MAWR - Those Coleopterist's who visited Merthyr Mawr in South Wales last September may be interested to know that I have taken some 350 - 400 species of beetle there in the period 1981 - 1983, many being rare or local. With some species such as Aegialia rufa F and Panagaeus bipustulatus F I have only found one specimen. I am in the process of identifying these and when completed will prepare a list that can be available to interested persons.

Although September 24th was late in the season I found over ten species I had not taken before. May - July is the most prolific time for collecting, and before very dry weather a spring flows through the middle of the dunes which feeds several small ponds. Here Philonthus pullus Mor. was taken a year ago. It may interest youthful and hardy Coleopterists to know that there is a camping site (called Candleston) just by the car park (if you didn't notice it) open from April to Sept. I have left Glamorgan now, otherwise I would be glad to give accomodation to any one wishing to visit the site. If any one does go there I can send a rough map of the dunes to help you find your way around. Glamorgan has many varied and unspoilt habitats that are very good for beetles. A County List was made by Tomlin in four parts dated 1912 - 1915 with supplement in 1933. These were published in the Transactions of the Cardiff Naturalist's Society and are still available, some in the Journal, others as separates, from the Librarian, National Museum of Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff. Enquiries should be made to the Librarian. These lists give an idea of what has been previously found in Glamorgan and suggests lots of sites to look at, many of which are still there.

David Copestake, 22 Meadow Way, Banbury, Oxfordshire.

SOUTH WALES FIELD MEETING 23rd - 25th SEPTEMBER, 1983

This meeting began with a dinner on the Friday evening held in the Union of the University College Cardiff. It was attended by about one dozen Coleopterists who appeared to enjoy themselves, despite the fact, as Jonathan Cooter has already pointed out, that the juke-box was a little loud for conversation in the bar afterwards. Our Saturday venue was the unique dune system known as Merthyr Mawr. These dunes lie some two miles east of Porthcawl, and are the highest dunes in Western Europe, being built up on cliffs of Carboniferous Limestone. The river Ogwr runs along the eastern edge of the dunes, and together with various pools and the sea-shore to the south, make this a rich and diverse habitat with many rarities among its flora and fauna.

About twenty people met in the car park on the Saturday morning and set off along the stream bed into the dunes. Unfortunately, the late date meant a comparative paucity of beetles, despite the fine weather. The rare weevil Ceuthorhynchus pilosellus Gyll., despite diligent search, was nowhere to be found, though Peter Hodge had taken it earlier in the year among its food-plant. Other beetles were to be found, including large numbers of Nebria complanata (L.) under drift-wood and stones on the beach. While along the shore of the river Ogwr, Bledius unicornis Germ., was to be found in its burrows in the estuarine mud.

On Sunday, we held a morning session in East Aberthaw, a small salt marsh with areas of old beach, cliffs and sand dune cut off from the sea by a shingle bank. Brachinus crepitans can be found here in the correct season, but, unfortunately, not during late September. Various weevils such as Gymnetron antirrhini Pk., and Mecinus circulatus (Marsh.) and M. collaris Germ., were taken as well as a variety of salt-marsh Carabidae; Bledius unicornis occurred too. The meeting adjourned for lunch at the excellent Blue Anchor Inn, famous for its many kinds of real ale, and from thence we went our various ways and the weekend was at an end.

The following list is of captures made during the weekend by John Owen, Michael Darby and Derek Lott:

Merthyr Mawr: Nebria complanata (L.); Notiophilus biguttatus (F.); Elaphrus riparius (L.); E.cupreus Duft.; Brosicus cephalotes (L.); Benedidion minimum (F.); B.lunulatum (Fourc.); Calathus erratus (Sahl.); C.melanocephalus (L.); C.mollis (Marsh.); Laenostenus complanatus (Dj.); Anara tibialis (Pk.); Dicheirotichus gustavi Crotch; Dromius melanocephalus Dj.; Metabletus truncatellus (L.); M.foveatus Fourc.; Agabus bipustulatus (L.); A.nebulosus (Forst.); Helophorus flavipes F.; H.brevipalpis Bedel; H.fulgidicollis Mots.; Megasternum obscurum (Marsh.); Laccobius bipunctatus (F.); Kissister ninivus (Aube); Ochthebius minimus (F.); Leiodes dubia (Kug.); Nargus velox Sp.; Micropeplus staphylinoides (Marsh.); Proteinus brachypterus (F.); P.ovalis Stph.; Bledius germanicus Wagn.; B.unicornis (Germ.); Rugilus orbiculatus (Pk.); Anotylus sculpturatus (Grav.); Stenus aceris Stph.; Gyrohypnus fracticornis (Mull.); G.punctulatus (Goeze); Xantholinus longiventris Heer; X.linearis (Ol.); Philonthus mannerhemi Fauv.; P.cruentatus (Gn.) P.finetarius (Gr.); P.intermedius (Boisd.); P.marginatus (Strom) Staphylinus ater Gr.; Quedius seniobscurus (Marsh.); Q.tristis (Gr.); Lordithon trinotatus (Er.); L.lunulatus (L.); Alooonota insecta (Thom.); Microdota anicula Stph.; Thinobaena vestita Gr.; Autalia longicornis Scheerp.; Falagria caesa Er.; Nehemitropia sordida (Marsh.); Atheta fungivora (Thoms.); A.liturata (Stph.); A.anicula (Stph.); A.celata (Er.); A.castanoptera (Mannh.); A.crassicornis (F.); A.longicornis (Gr.); Aleochara intricata Mannh.; Aegalia arenaria (F.); Aphodius contaminatus (Hb.); A.equestris (Pz.); A.rufus (Moll); A.foetidus (Hb.); A.rufipes (L.); Meligethes obscurus Er.; Olibrus affinis (Sturm); O.liquidus Er.; Mycetophagus quadripustulatus (L.); Acrotrichis insularis (Mak.); A.atomaria (Dg.); A.intermedia Gillm.; Ptenidium intermedium Wank.; Rhyzobius litura (F.); Coccinella septempunctata L.; Cis boleti (Scop.); Phaedon concinnus Stph.; Galeruca tanaceti (L.); Longitarsus jacobaea Wat.; Sitona griseus (F.); Dorytomus rufulus Bed.; Apion loti Kirby; Orthochaetes insignis (Ab.); Ceutorhynchus contractus (Marsh.); C.hirtulus Germ.; Sibinia prinitus (Hb.).

Aberthaw: Nebria salina (F&L); Bembidion minimum (F.);
B.assinile Gyll.; B.lunulatum (Fourc.); Amara convexiuscula
(Marsh.); Dromius linearis (Ol.); Microlestes maurus (Sturm);
Enochrus bicolor (F.); Onalium laeviusculus Gyll.; Bledius
unicornis (Germ.); Sunius melanocephalus (F.); Xantholinus
longiventris Heer; Cafius xantholoma (Gr.); Tachyporus nitidulus
(F.); Drusilla canaliculata (F.); Atheta vestita (Gr.);
Brachygluta simplex (Waterh.); Subcoccinella vigintiquattuor-
punctata (L.); Chrysolina staphylaea (L.); Apion ulicis (Forst.);
Sitona regensteinensis (Hb.); Gymnetron antirrhini (Pk.).

David Edwards, 98 Clodien Avenue, Cardiff.

FOODPLANTS OF CHRYSOLINA BANKSI (F.) (CHRYSOMELIDAE):

I have long been intrigued to discover the foodplant(s) of this species. The textbooks say Black Hore-hound (Ballota nigra), White Hore-hound (Marrubium vulgare), or "various labiates". Whenever I have seen the beetle it has never been near either of these two plants, and generally nowhere near any labiates. Equally, when I have encountered Horehounds, there has never been any sign of the beetle. My records for banksi are all from SW England or SW Wales.

While in Cornwall last July (on a Dipterist's meeting!!) an opportunity arose to consider the matter of foodplants again. Sampling a grassy bank in the Luxulyan Valley, I took five banksi in a short sweep - the most I have ever seen at any one spot! Investigating further by hand and eye, I spotted five inactive beetles individually on the undersides of leaves of sorrel (Rumex acetosella), and two similarly on Cocksfoot Grass (Dactylis glomerata). No signs of feeding were apparent, but why else would the beetles be on the plants? There were no Labiates on the bank. Other plants present were Herb Robert (Geranium robertianum), Red Campion (Silene dioica), Creeping Jenny (Lysimachia nummularia) Ranunculus sp., bramble, Knapweed (Centaurea nigra), Bluebell and Hogweed. Again near Penzance, I found the beetles inactive on Sorrel. Can sorrel be the foodplant? I would be interested to hear other peoples experiences. Keith Alexander.

A NEW CICONES (COLYDIIDAE) FROM WINDSOR GREAT PARK

On a frosty day in February which produced a good number of Windsor specialities, the two specimens of Cicones identified "positively" in the field as variegata (Hellwig), were hardly memorable. Only later did it become apparent that we had a species new to Britain. Using Freude, Harde & Lohse (Die Kafer Mitteleuropas, band 7), they keyed readily to Cicones undata Guer., an identification kindly confirmed by Mr R.D. Pope at the British Museum (Natural History).

A paper describing the new species is in preparation.
Howard Mendel and John Owen.

COMMENT FROM THE EDITOR:

While short notes such as this are welcome, it is not my intention to give room to more detailed articles of this nature - such should appear in the established entomological press. However, I can see that the "Newsletter" has a part to play by initially advertising species new to our List in the hope that others will be stimulated to check their own material and if possessing the new addition confounded in a series, send the data to the person introducing the addition.

The "Newsletter" was started as a device for keeping Coleopterists in touch regularly, to spread news items rapidly (or rather more so than is otherwise possible!) and for notes and observations not suitable for the main Journals. As long as I remain Editor, I flatly refuse to register the "Newsletter" as a Serial Publication.

Once again Howard Mendel and Professor Owen have proved that a "site list" is never complete, nor have all the likely new additions been located even in such a well worked locality as Windsor.

J.C.

FIELD MEETING:

What field meeting? as yet no body has offered to organise any meeting for the current year. Anyone wishing to do so should remember there are two further "Newsletters" for 1984, so there will be ample chance to publicise an autumn venture. If not for this year, then what about 1985.

J.C.

Contributions for the "Newsletter" should be sent to J.Cooter, 222 Whittern Way, Hereford, HR1 1QP Items for the August issue should reach the editor by mid-July.