

# THE COLEOPTERIST'S NEWSLETTER

Number 23

January 1986

## KENT COLEOPTERISTS' WORKSHOP - 15th FEBRUARY, 1986

The fifth annual meeting will be held at MAIDSTONE MUSEUM on Saturday 15th February 1986 from 2pm until 5pm; anyone interested in beetles will be welcome to attend. As usual, exhibits on any aspect of collecting and studying beetles will be welcomed but the suggested theme in "ADDITIONS AND AMENDMENTS TO JOY". As most will be aware, A Practical Handbook of British Beetles by N.H.Joy published in 1932 is still the most widely used book for the identification of British Beetles, but beginners particularly have problems because of the large number of additional species that have been recorded since then. The theme for the meeting should then give everybody a chance to produce an exhibit, either with additional species or with problems using the existing keys.

No formal meeting will be held but there will be plenty of time for informal discussion, or to name, or have named, any problem specimens. Tea will be available.

Eric Philp.

Maidstone Museum.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION Guy Menendez (Dept. Pure & Applied Zoology, University of Reading, Whiteknights, PO Box 228, Reading) is researching the life history of Xestobium rufo-villosum and is anxious to know of the whereabouts of infested trees in order to compare the life-history of wild populations and those in building timbers.

J.C.

EUCONNUS PRAGENSIS (MACH.) AND MICROSCYDMUS MINIMUS

(CHAUD.) AT STAVERTON PARK, SUFFOLK. On June 21st, 1985 I revisited Staverton Park with Charles Watt of DSIR, Auckland. During our search for Helops caeruleus he dismembered an ancient fallen oak and later, using the Tulgren funnels at the British Museum (Natural History), he extracted a number of Coleoptera from the debris. Prior to his return to New Zealand (via the Continent) he sent me all the Staphylinoidea from his samples. Among the material were single females of the very rare Scydmaenidae, Euconnus pragensis and Microscydmus minimus, both of which have since been checked by P.M. Hammond.

E. pragensis has previously been considered to be one of the Windsor Forest specialities. The most recent of the three known records being 1940. Furthermore this species was regarded as myrmecophilus with Lasius brunneus, a species not recorded within 100km of Staverton (K.E.J. Barrett, 1979, Provisional Atlas of the Insects of the British Isles, Pt.5, Hymenoptera: Formicidae, map 33). It is however possible that it may be associated with another species of Lasius. What seems more likely is that both L. brunneus and E. pragensis require oaks of a similar age and state of decay.

The second minute scydmaenid, Microscydmus minimus, was previously known to British coleopterists as M. nanus, under which name R.A. Crowson et al (1966 Ent. mon. Mag., 102: 70-72) last recorded it from the Ayr Gorge twenty or more years ago. Earlier records for Scarborough, Sherwood and Bradfield were reviewed by A.A. Allen (1969, Ent. Record, 81: 239-246).

A list of 21 "Additions to the beetle fauna of Staverton Park, Suffolk" is to be published in Trans. Suffolk Nat. Soc. and includes one female Scydmorephes sparshalli (Denny) from oak leaf litter collected in The Thicks. Neuraphes elongatulus (Mull. & Kunze) and Stenichnus godarti (Latr.) were fairly common in the same samples, together with the pselaphid Batrisodes venustus (Reich.)

R. Colin Welch, I.T.E., Monks Wood, PE17 2LS

DOWROG COMMON, PEMBROKESHIRE. Dowrog Common lies just over one mile to the north-west of St. David's at grid ref., SM 772270, and consists of some 200 acres of lightly grazed common with extensive development of wet grass-heath. In the north-east corner and around the river Alun and Dowrog Pool, tall herb, marsh and fen communities are developed. There are several small pools in addition to the main one, some permanent, some seasonal.

The Common belongs to The National Trust but is managed by the West Wales Trust for Nature Conservation as a nature reserve. It has been designated a SSSI by the NCC, and has recently been added to the Nature Conservation Review as a Grade 1 Heathland Site, i.e. on a par with sites such as Thursley and Hankley Commons (Surrey), and Morden Bog (Dorset). This recognition is based upon vegetational characteristics but the limited entomological work carried out to date certainly suggests that it is a very important site.

The West Wales Trust are very keen to have further information on the invertebrate fauna, particularly as regards the implications to their management work. It is

hoped that a base can be found to support meetings in the area, but in the meantime, if anyone is likely to be visiting West Wales, and would be interested in sampling the Dowrog fauna, then they should contact John Comont, at West Wales Trust for Nature Conservation, 7 Market Street, Haverfordwest, Dyfed, SA61 1NF (tel., 5462), and he will issue permits, give you details on how to find the site, car-parking, and supply maps of the Reserve.

Coleoptera reported include Blethesia multipunctata, Chlaenius nigricornis, Paracymnus scutellaris, Psammoecus bipunctatus, Rhantus grapii, Cassida murraea, Galerucella calmariensis, Agonum piceus.

Keith Alexander, The National Trust, Cirencester, GL7 2DE

AN UNCOMMON CLERID FROM NORTH WALES. I am always willing to accept invitations to join botanists on field outings as they usually seem to be visiting localities which are new to me and with good potential for new insect records.

On August 21st, 1985, I accompanied two botanists to Cwm Llefrith, a remote area in south Caernarvonshire. The weather was reasonable (by 1985 standards) but soon after we reached 1500ft the cloud came down and mist and rain enveloped us. This almost put a stop to insect collecting but the bones of a dead sheep attracted my attention and yielded two specimens of the Clerid beetle Necrobia violacea (L.). There are more sheep than people in Wales and plenty of bones in upland grazing areas but I have not come across this species before.

On checking my files I find that there are very few records for North Wales. In Anglesey it was found at Newborough Warren NNR., 3.vi.1963 (R.G.Loxton), and on a dead gull on the dunes 8.vi.1979 (R.S.Kay). There are two

old records for Caernarvonshire; an old specimen in the collection of the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff (? pre-war), and four were taken from a dead sheep in the Aber Valley near the north Wales coast in July 1943 (J.Hobart). P.Skidmore and C.Johnson (Ent.Gaz., 20:200 (1969)) give four records for Merionethshire and indicate that they consider the species to be extremely local or rare.

On the same bone as the Clerids I found a single Anacaena globulus Payk. which Joy describes as "occurring in stagnant water" so its alternative habitat here seems not unreasonable.

Mrs M.J.Morgan, School of Animal Biology, U.C.N.W., Bangor.

#### OLD TREES AND DEAD WOOD IN NATIONAL TRUST PARKS AND WOODS.

An advisory paper has recently been circulated to National Trust regional staff involved in the management of parks and woods, which outlines the conservation value of large old trees and deadwood, and considers the management requirements and potential conflicts with landscape appearance and public safety.

It is hoped that the Trust's past reputation for "tidy-mindedness" at the expense of natural history interests will become a thing of the past, although changes in policy and practice will doubtless be slow in some regions. However, if particular problem sites are known by readers of the "Newsletter", I would appreciate hearing about them.

It would also be very useful if coleopterists who know particular N.T. sites could send me their beetle lists. Some of you will already have been contacted by myself or Dave Clements, and may already have contributed useful

information, for which many thanks. The more information we have, the greater the recognition of the Nature Conservation interests by the managers, and so the greater the degree of protection given. So, please send me your records.

Any survey work which involves disturbing dead wood and collecting specimens is contrary to N.T. Bye-laws, and written authority is needed. Permits are dealt with by the relevant N.T. Regional Office. I have lists of addresses should you need them.

Keith Alexander, National Trust, Spitalgate Lane,  
Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 2DE (Cirencester  
61818)

1985 "NEWSLETTER" ACCOUNTS.

Expenditure		Income	
Bank fees	£0-96	Subscriptions	£211-70
Postage	£105-36		
Headed paper	59-00		
Stencils, envelopes etc.	20-61		
Duplicating	10-00		
	<u>£195-93</u>		
Surplus for year	<u>15-77</u>		
	£211-70		<u>£211-70</u>
Balance at 1st January 1985	=		£16-05
Balance at 1st January 1986	=		£31-82

P.J.Hodge.

ALEOCHARINAE translation from "Die Kafer Mitteleuropas" Freude, Harde and Lohse, with some additional material for the British Fauna has been produced by Robert Marsh with help from Bill Ely.

Anyone wanting a copy should send a 24p stamp and their address to Mr R.Marsh, 1 Clifton Drive, Sprotbrough, Doncaster, DN5 7HL, South Yorkshire.

The translation cover the keys to Tribes and Genera and excludes generic keys to species level. 25 pages, with illustrations. Actocharis and Pseudopasilia have been included to complete the key for all known British genera. Highly recommended - J.C.

COLEOPTERA IN THE DIET OF WORCESTERSHIRE HOUSE MARTINS

Here ((32)967429) in Little Comberton, House Martins regularly nest under the fascia boards of the house. It had always puzzled me how the faecal sacs voided by the nestlings contained almost exclusively beetle fragments.

Occasionally, whole beetles would be found, but as they were mostly skeletal fragments, I decided in 1983 to select two sacs voided on August 13th and send them to Mr F.J.Osborne of the University of Birmingham, who supplied the following list of beetle taxa they contained:

- Amara sp. 2
- Helophorus cf brevipalpis Bedel 2
- Xantholinus linearis (Ol.)  
or longiventris Heer 1
- Tachinus sp. 4
- Meligethes aeneus (F.) 3
- Coccinella septempunctata L. 6

<u>Propylea quatuordecimpunctata</u> (L.)	5
<u>Anatis ocellata</u> (L.)	1
<u>Oulema melanopa</u> (L.)	10
<u>Longitarsus</u> sp.	1
<u>Chaetocnema</u> sp.	3
<u>Sitona lepidus</u> Gyll.	1
<u>S. lineatus</u> (L.)	19
<u>Ceuthorrhynchus floralis</u> (Pk.)	1 complete

This is clear proof that the birds are unselective samplers of the aerial fauna in an immediate area of arable land usage, and that chitinised beetle fragments escape their digestive processes. My experience of Anatis ocellata is that it is uncommon, possibly even rare locally.

I am grateful to P.J. Osborne for his help. A copy of these findings has been lodged with the journal British Birds.

P.F. Whitehead, Moor Leys, Little Comberton, Pershore,  
Worcestershire.