

THE COLEOPTERIST'S NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1989

NUMBER 35

CERY SOLINA ORICALCIA (Müll.) IN SCOTLAND. Mention of C. oricalcia in "Newsletter" 34 reminded me that my somewhat curious experience of this species may be of interest, and that its Scottish status needs clarification.

Adjacent to my house when I lived in Hawick, Roxburghshire, there was a small area of waste ground by the river. I first found C. oricalcia there by street lamp light in 1975, and often each year subsequently up to 1982 when I left the area. All the occurrences, except one, were from August to September, and the beetle was sometimes present in considerable numbers. The exception was one occasion when it was plentiful in May. They were found on the leaves of goutweed (ground elder), dog's mercury and butterbur, and all were black with a slight bronze reflection, presumably var. hobsoni Stephens.

My only other find of C. oricalcia took place in May 1987 - one specimen on goosegrass near my present home in Denholm, Roxburghshire. It was also var hobsoni.

In September 1978, a friend, Andrew Buckhan, found the species in fair numbers on nettles near Kelso, Roxbs. Most of them were green, but a few were metallic dark blue or reddish-purple.

Fowler gave its Scottish status as rare in the Solway and Tweed districts. I have not been able to find actual records for either area but A. Murray in his Cat.

Col.Scot. (1853, p.91) gave Dumfriesshire and the Peaseburn, Berwickshire, as localities for it. It has also been found in Northumberland, near Berwick (Embleton, R., 1835, Hist. Berw.Nat.Club, 1:66). It was included in a list of Berwickshire beetles by G.Dunlop a few years later (ibid., 1842:20). All these pre-Fowler reports refer to the beetle as Chrysonela lamina Fabr. It is not included in the index of Scottish species maintained in the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh.

An odd feature of the Hawick colony is that they appeared to be completely nocturnal. I could find them during daylight neither by sweeping nor by grubbing about under the leaves even when they had been common the previous evening. Are these beetles normally, or often, nocturnal? Could this explain why C.oricalcia does not seem to be found very often, although widely distributed in Scotland? And what are the larval foodplants?

Magnus Sinclair,
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Roxburghshire, TD9 8NU

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MICROLESTES MAURUS Stn. In December 1988 I found this species overwintering socially under the bark of a dead Lombardy Poplar at Beckford, Worcestershire, above a sunny bank with ruderal herbs. I cannot for the moment recall a similar such observation.

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

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AMISCHA CAVIFRONS (Sharp) NOT AN EXCLUSIVELY UPLAND SPECIES.

In 19?? (Tom and I agree only that it was after the War) I sent a few Amischa to Tom Eccles for scrutiny and comment. They arrived, as luck would have it, at a time when he was actively considering the striking polymorphism that occurs in A.analis (Grav.) on which I trust more will be said publicly.

Mr Eccles decided that two specimens were A.cavifrons,

one being from as low an elevation as 10m O.D. near Bredon's Hardwick, Worcestershire. His findings further highlight Mr A.A.Allen's clear eye of faith, for it was he who previously stated that this specimen was "apparently A. cavifrons." I should like to thank both these people for assisting me in this difficult area.

P.Whitehead, Little Comberton.

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TRINOPHYLUM CRIBRATUM BATES. I have referred elsewhere to the occurrence of this species at Broadway, Worcestershire. By what means, if any, it is sustained in the wild is not yet known, but the meagre evidence at the moment suggests little as a possibility.

However, it is now known to breed prolifically in hardwood logs originating at the site. Apple and pyracantha are recognised hosts, and the behaviour of the larvae may be characteristic. They particularly favour sapwood (of logs of much reduced moisture content) and appear to cut "swaths" through this, working from one side to the other, parallel to the bark and sometimes emerging through it. Left in their wake are relatively shallow flat-bottomed depressions. They may co-habit with Clytus arietis (L.) which penetrates into heartwood as larvae, thus reducing competition.

P.Whitehead.

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A CENTRAL AMERICAN BOSTRYCHID FROM SKYE, INNER HEBRIDES. On 14th April 1988 I received, via a series of intermediaries, a specimen of an obviously non-European species of Bostrychidae. The specimen had originated from one Dr.Charles Granger of Portree, Isle of Skye, Inner Hebrides. In a telephone conversation with him I learned that the beetle had emerged, in his house, from the wooden frame of a tapestry purchased in Mexico during February 1988. He had

subsequently travelled around Mexico and Belize and enquired whether the beetle could have entered the frame during his travels. I expressed the opinion that the beetle would have been in the wood, probably as a larva, at the time of manufacture of the frame.

Reference to the collections in the Natural History Museum, London, quickly confirmed the specimen's identity as a female Amphicerus cornutus Pall. The males possess the horn-like extensions at the anterior angles of the pronotum, a feature common to many Bostrychidae. As in most wood-boring species specimens vary considerably in size. The Skye specimen was approximately 10mm in length, while specimens in the British Museum collection ranged from 7 - 15mm, with most in the range 10 - 13mm. The Blackburn Type from Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands, was named Bostrichus migrator by David Sharp, a fitting name for such an easily transported beetle. Other specimens showed its range to be from Central and northern South America, including Columbia, Equador, British Guiana (Guyana), Guatemale and the West Indies, with a separate sub-species recorded from the Galapagos Islands.

R. Colin Welch, I.T.E., Monks Wood
Experimental Station, Huntingdon.

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A NOTE ON TWO CARABIDS. In August 1988 whilst working the back of the beach at Formby, Lancashire I was surprised to count some 850 Trechus quadristriatus (Schk.) in a kilometre length. The few that looked like T. obtusus all turned out to be T. quadristriatus too. Whether this abundance is a short-lived phenomenon is not clear, but it was not apparent on previous visits. It is difficult to find clear distinctions in the habitats of these two - I had felt that obtusus was the more likely on mineral soils, but recently took one in a tall-herb fen. The only other situation in which I have found Trechus to dominate a fauna is on high mountain summits, and there, there was nothing but obtusus.

P. Whitehead.

DUNGEON BANKS. When at the age of 13 I acquired my first binoculars it was to Dungeon Banks on the Mersey that I headed. The day deteriorated and apart from a close understanding of fog, I saw nothing but an odd little bird committing itself to a pile of algae-covered bricks (it was not until much later that I knew this to be a rare upriver occurrence of a maritime Purple Sandpiper).

Nowadays, Oglet shore and the outlying mudflats of Dungeon Bank afford first-class opportunities to study organisms at the interface of town and country, and its boulder-clay cliffs are even fronted by a sand beach with Glaux, Honkenya and extensive drifts of Potentilla anserina and Sonchus arvensis, both facultative halophytes. Here are some of the beetles I have recorded from the "beach" and its strand-line:

Trechus quadristriatus (Schkl.)

Bembidion tetracolum Say.

B. harpaloides Serv.

Pterostichus melanarius (Ill.)

Anara aulica (Pz.)

Calathus piceus (Marsh.)

Dicheirotichus gustavi Crotch

Haliphus fluviatilis Aub.

Ptenidium nitidum (Heer)

Anotylus rugosus v pulcher Gr.

Stenus clavicornis (Scop.)

S. melanarius Stph.

Rugilus rufipes Gm.

Staphylinus ater Gr.

Quedius pallipes Lucas

Tachinus laticollis Gr.

Spedophilus marshami (Stph.)

Cordalia obscura (Gr.)

Alloconota gregaria (Er.)

Atheta coriaria (Kr.)

A. marina (M&R)

A. vestita (Gr.)

Halobrecta flavipes Thon.

Polystoma grisea (Kr.)

Coccinella undecimpunctata L.

Corticaria crenulata (Cyll.)

Corticarina fuscata (Cyll.)

Phaedon armoraciae (L.)

Otiorhynchus sulcatus (F.)

The most ecologically sensitive species are the stenotypic littoral staphylinids; many of the others are ecological opportunists. One wonders whether Cordalia obscura is a native species - it is frequently encountered in beach debris in the western Mediterranean.

P. Whitehead, Little Comberton.

LLANDWYN ISLAND, ANGLESEY. Although the littoral fauna of this exposed site (a National Nature Reserve) may not be extensive, conditions there permit species of opposed climatic and ecological tolerance to coexist, producing a rather odd mixed fauna:

<u>Calathus fuscipes</u> (Gz.)	<u>Quedius aridulus</u> Jan.
<u>C. micropterus</u> (Dft.)	<u>Q. obliteratus</u> (Er.)
<u>C. mollis</u> (Marsh.)	<u>Q. semiobscurus</u> (Marsh.)
<u>Amara tibialis</u> (Pk.)	<u>Falagria thoracica</u> (Marsh.)
<u>Dromius linearis</u> (Ol.)	<u>Atheta amplicollis</u> (M&R)
<u>Cercyon littoralis</u> (Gyll.)	<u>A. fungi</u> (Gr.)
<u>Stenus nigritulus</u> (Marsh.)	<u>A. vestita</u> (Gr.)
<u>S. ossium</u> Stph.	<u>Phylan gibbus</u> (F.)
<u>Cafius xantholoma</u> (Gr.)	<u>Ctenopus sulphureus</u> (L.)
	<u>Otiorhynchus atroapterus</u> (Dg.)

Cychrus rostratus (L.) used to breed under seaweed 25 years ago and may still do so. P.Whitehead.

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A FURTHER OBSERVATION ON BEMBIDION QUINQUESTRIATUM Gyll. In a recent note on this enigmatic beetle, I suggested that it might have a preference for low light levels. Some support for this has come unexpectedly. Whilst glancing recently at a map that quantified duration of sunlight in Britain, I noticed that the Pennine Chain, is, quite simply, dull.

At the same time it dawned on me that this area, taking in Leeds, Halifax and Harrogate, has a clear focus of records of B. quinquestriatum. This area has less than 30 days a year with more than 9 hours of bright sunshine - it is at least tempting to equate these two facts.

P.Whitehead.

(My only encounter with this species was in Cornwall - the beetle was to be found in a pile of rubble against a wall in the yard of a preserved mine pumping engine - J.C.)

PROCAS ARMILLATUS (F.) (CURCULIONIDAE) FROM CUMBRIA. I found three specimens of this weevil in deep leaf litter and general humus in Chapel Wood near Bassenthwaite, Cumbria (NY12) on 13th January, 1988. The wood lies at an elevation of about 300 meters on a steep, south-east facing hillside above the remains of Wythop Chapel. It is composed mainly of Sessile Oak with occasional trees of Mountain Ash, Silver Birch and Hawthorn. According to W.B.Yapp, 1953 North Western Nat., 24:194, the lower part of the wood was felled in 1945, and from evidence of tree rings on the old stumps the wood may also have been cleared during the last century.

P.armillatus is regarded as being extremely rare (RDB3) in Britain and has been recorded from a small number of counties; Surrey, West Gloucestershire, Norfolk, East Sussex, East Kent, South Devon, North Essex and Notts. A.A.Allen (1971, E.M.M., 107:52) recorded the weevil from Devonshire and gives a summary of its distribution in this country. He also mentions that the species was particularly abundant in a field near Brighton, East Sussex in May, 1930. While going through the F.H.Day collection of general Coleoptera in the Tullie House Museum, Carlisle, I found six specimens of P.armillatus which were collected by E.C.Bedwell on 14th May, 1930 and presumably this is the same locality as mentioned by Tony Allen.

I wish to thank Dr M.L.Cox (CIE) and Mr Richard Thompson (BM(NH)) for very kindly identifying and checking my specimens of P.armillatus, and I also thank Dr Paul Hyman for the distributional data.

R.W.J.Read, 43 Holly Terrace, Hensingham, Whitehaven,
Cumbria, CA28 8RF

PHENOTYPIC VARIATION IN ANOMOGNATHUS CUSPIDATUS Er. In January 1989 I extracted a small staphylinid from underneath bark of a willow log at Childswickham, Worcestershire - it proved to be a male A.cuspidatus, in splendid isolation.

On the same day, some 100 yards distant, I located a close concentration of 80 A.cuspidatus, mostly males, under the bark of a fungoid log. All of these were quite markedly uniform in conformation, their maximum width being slightly in excess of 0.3mm. The solitary specimen was in comparison quite massive, being just over 0.5mm in width, with very much more strongly tuberculate and punctured abdominal tergites.

I have no other personal experience of such intense social organisation in A.cuspidatus, but it may be that in such conditions the more marked expressions of gender are reduced.

P.Whitehead.

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BOOK REVIEW Handbooks for the Identification of Polish Insects, Volume 15 Leiodidae. by Marian Nunberg. 1987. 59 pages 256 figures.

This is a somewhat strage book and must reflect the difficulty Polish scientists experience in obtaining the published work of other entomologists.

The book fall into two sections, the first, dealing with the Leiodini, is modern and up to date, being based largely upon Daffner's monographic revision of the Palaearctic Leiodini (Folia Ent. Hung., 44(2), 1983) but with a fair contribution of original work too, especially with regards to illustrations. The second part, covering the Anisotomini (or Agathidiini as given in the Handbook) is based upon Elisnikovsky's 1964 Monograph. As such it repeats many of the errors and short-comings of that major work. More recent researc by Angelini and DeMarzo has revolutionised our understanding of the Anisotomini. With this in mind it is perhaps unfortunate that these

author's works seem to have gone unnoticed by Nunberg. However, such criticism ought not to detract from the value of the Handbook which will be very useful indeed as an adjunct to studying this difficult family.

The Handbook covers all the British species except for Aglyptinus agathidioides - which, with the other members of the genus being restricted to Central/South America and only the two Type specimens being found in Britain, is perhaps no great surprise. The figures taken from Daffner's Revision, or the original figures by Nunberg are excellent, those from Hlisnikovsky are not as good as they might be, but all are of help. Acquisition of this Handbook will be far more straightforward than obtaining both Daffner and Hlisnikovsky's detailed works.

In all a most useful addition to a very useful series. If anything would convince me that I ought to learn the Polish language, it is this fine series of Handbooks.

J. Cooter.

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ELYTRON VOLUME 1. (Bulletin of the European Association of Coleopterology, Barcelona, 1987).

This is the first volume produced by the Association, which now has well over 200 members in over 30 countries. With such a wide international subscription, the content of the volume is similarly international and contains the following: Habrocerus rougemonti, nuova specie della Thailandia (R. Pace); Revision del genero Gerallius (Col., Buprestidae) (A. Cobos); The ratio weight/length in Coleoptera (G. Marcuzzi); Why beetles have strikingly different rates of chromosomal evolution? (E. Petitpierre); Aphaleria brodskyi new species from Soviet Middle Asia (J. Picka); Nuevos datos sobre la Seccion Calymnaderus (Anobiidae) (F. Espanol); Iberoplinthus casalei nuova specie di curculionidae della Iberica (N. Meregalli); Description d'une espece nouvelle de Longitarsus d'Algerie (S. Doguet); Nachtrag zur Monographie der Scydnaeniden Venezuelas (H. Franz); On the biology of Oligomerus brunneus (Anobiidae)

(I.N.Toskina); Synonymies, diagnoses et bionomie de quelques Lamiaires africains du genre Eunidia (Cerambycidae)(P.Tecchi); Sul genere Haptotapinus (Carabidae)(S.L.Straneo); plus an obituary notice of Prof. Manuel Garcia de Viedma e Hitos and a discussion of "Sexual selection and animal genitalia" by W.G.Eberhard.

The volume consists of 115 pages of good quality gloss paper, the printing and production are of a high standard. With an often experienced difficulty in finding a publisher, this journal would seem to supply a very much needed outlet and I am sure will be well supported and we can look forward to many significant and important papers in future volumes.

Anyone wishing to support this admirable initiative should contact; Association Europea de Coleopterologia, Departamente de Biologia Animal (Invertebrados), Facultad de Biologia, Universidad de Barcelona, Avda. Diagonal 645, 08028 Barcelona, Spain.

J.Cooter.

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THE POTATO BEETLES (The genus Leptinotarsa in North America. (Col., Chrysomelidae)). Richard L.Jacques Jr.

FLORA AND FAUNA HANDBOOK No. 3, E.J.Brill, 1988.

This book covers the 31 species of Leptinotarsa known to occur in Canada, USA and Mexico (out of a world fauna of 41 known species). The genus is essentially confined to the New World, except for the cosmopolitan L.decimlineata - the notorious Colorado Beetle - which has been spread throughout the world by commerce. To the British student, this species alone will probably be the main interest in this thorough and well researched book.

The work begins with the expected introductory material, then follow Chapter 1-The Classification of potato beetles Ch. 2 Plants and host specificity; Ch.3 Early History of the potato beetle; Ch.4 Research methods; Ch.5 Potato Beetle biology; Ch.6 The taxonomy of potato beetles. This chapter covering over 80 pages gives a key to the North American species as well as a key to the genera of the Tribe Doryphorini a supplementary key covers the species known from the USA, Each species is then treated individually in detail. The work ends with an extensive bibliography and a good index; finally a note about the author.

Although dealing with a foreign fauna, the book contains much of interest to the student of British Coleoptera. The chapter covering Plants and host specificity in particular as well as, for a more general insight into decimlineata and potato cultivation, the Early History of the potato beetle is most informative.

The book is of 144 pages and illustrated with 69 clear text figures. The covers are attractively illustrated by Adelaide Murphy, who was also responsible for the text-figures depicting host-plants.

Even with the very restricted British interest, this book ought to have value to the Coleopteris and more specifically the economic entomologists concerned with pest control and agriculture. In all another well produced and highly recommended book from E.J.Brill.

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INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF COLEOPTEROCLOGY Barcelona, September 18th - 23rd, 1989. So far the following persons have accepted and given details of topics they will present: R.A.Crowson, "Relation between Coleoptera and Cycads"; G.Halffter "La evolucion del comportamiento de los Insectos: el ejemplo de los Scarabaeidae coprofages"; S.B.Peck "Evolution and Biogeography of the Beetle Fauna of the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador."

E. Petitpierre "Chromosomal and genomic evolution in two families of Coleoptera (Chrysomelidae and Tenebrionidae)." In addition there will be various workshops, exhibitions, video sessions and slide presentations, also field meetings and social events.

Registration for participating and for submitting a contribution is April 15th, 1989. Details from:

Asociacion Europea de Coleopterologia,
 Departamento de Biologia Animal (Invertebrados),
 Facultad de Biologia,
 Universidad de Barcelona,
 Avda. Diagonal, 645,
 08028 Barcelona, Spain.

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ELATEROIDEA: PROVISIONAL WARWICKSHIRE ATLAS. Thirty-two species are recorded and mapped, each map has the record entered as a date category. Alongside each map are brief details as to habits and frequency.

The Atlas is intended to stimulate recording of this group, at the same time presenting the data already amassed in a clear and concise form. It consists of five duplicated pages, the first of which is taken up by the "Introduction", and the last page an Index.

Published by the Warwickshire Biological Records Centre, and may be obtained from the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Jordan Well, Coventry.