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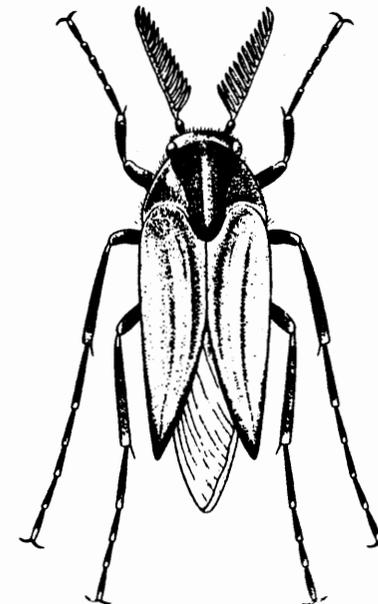
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# THE COLEOPTERIST'S NEWSLETTER

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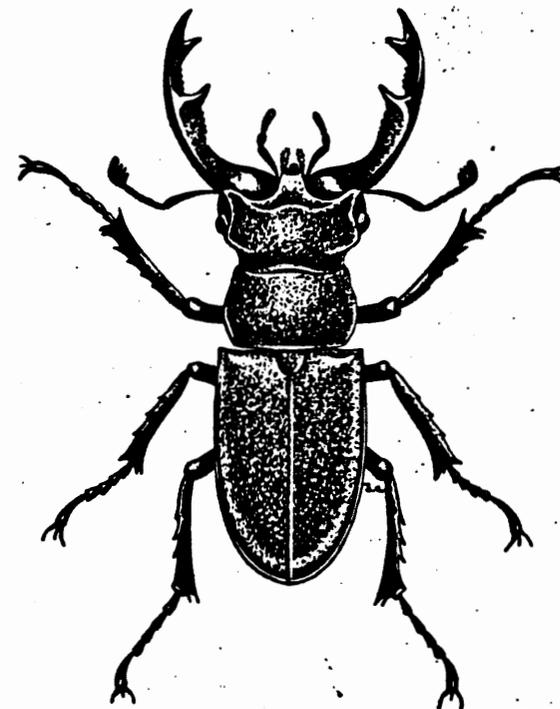
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**THE AMATEUR ENTOMOLOGISTS' SOCIETY**

*Coeliodes nigritarsis* Hartm.

Several specimens were beaten from silver birch on the edge of Cumwhitton Moss (NY5151), 24 August. This is also a new record for v.c. 70.

R.W.J. Read

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# THE COLEOPTERIST'S NEWSLETTER

August/November 1991

Numbers 44,45

## EDITORIAL

In order to spread the scant fund as far as possible, the August and November editions have been combined. From 1992, Howard Mendel will be taking over the production of the *Newsletter*; I have been doing this with varying success for ten years and feel that the time has come for new blood.

To all those that have sent copy, subscribed and helped in other ways I tender my sincere thanks. Especially I must mention the invaluable help of Peter Hodge. He initially took over the financial side of the *Newsletter* but as time went on became lumbered with a variety of other tasks all of which he has conducted with great efficiency. Peter will continue as Treasurer. Roy Anderson's help has also been invaluable in recent years. With his help, the *Newsletter* has been transformed from its duplicated 'broadsheet' style into something approaching a professionally produced journal.

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## BOOK REVIEW

The November 1990 *Newsletter* carried a review of the excellent book *The Curation and Preservation of Insects* by Walker & Crosby, published by the Entomology Division, Dept. of Science and Industrial Research, Auckland, New Zealand.

Its 92 pages are packed with useful practical information

and advice, but was rather pricey at £8.50p (from E.W. Classey Ltd.). Alas, a correspondent has recently informed me that the price has now risen to the amazing sum of £14.00p. An increase of £5.50p seems excessive and is bound to put potential purchasers off. You have been warned!

J. Cooter

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THE HABITAT OF *QUEDIUS FULIGINOSUS* (GRAV.), AND NOTES ON THE OTHER SPECIES OF *QUEDIUS* (STAPHYLINIDAE).

In *Col. Newsl.* 40: 11-13, Mr P.F. Whitehead suggested that *Quedius fuliginosus* may be a scarce species, and Mr A.A. Allen (*ibid.* 41: 2-5) observed that it is not uncommon in S.E. England. I have many records of this species from many parts of Scotland from Caithness southwards, as well as a few from various parts of England. The great majority of these beetles were found in wet places such as "mosses", i.e. fens and bogs and the swampy margins of lochs, ponds and burns. Most were taken in a pond net while working well-vegetated spots for water-beetles. My records do not indicate a preference within this variety of wet places, but those beetles I have found in other types of habitat have all been in humid situations e.g. damp moss or under logs. The records are for altitudes from almost sea-level to ca. 750ft.

I have only two records of *Q. nitipennis* (Steph.), both from the south of Scotland. Both were in wet moss, one by a small stream, the other in a floating *Sphagnum* bog.

Finally, there were a few specimens of *Q. schatzmayri* Grid. among a group of beetles I recently examined from a pit-fall trap near Watenan in Caithness. This trapping was part of an invertebrate survey of Caithness carried out in 1986 by a M.S.C. team led by Mrs M. Spirit, whom I thank for the record.

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RECORDS OF SOME NOTABLE BEETLES FROM CUMBRIA

The following beetles were found during the course of general collecting and survey work carried out at various sites in Cumbria during 1991.

*Oedemera nobilis* (Scop.)

Males and females were found in large numbers on the flowers of hawkbit, milfoil and ragwort on the South Head, St. Bees (NX9511), 9 and 21 July.

*Asemum striatum* (L.)

Two were found on larch logs in Blengdale Forest, Gosforth (NY0809) on 27n May and two in dead wood of a large felled pine on the edge of Beacon Plantation near Ravenglass (SD0995), 7 June.

*Terops praeusta* (L.)

One beaten from common willow on Braithwaite Moss (NY2324), 8 June.

*Donacia aquatica* (L.)

One specimen was collected from low herbage by the side of Newlands Beck, Braithwaite Moss (NY2324) by John Owen, 8 June.

*Phytodecta pallida* (L.)

Beaten in small numbers from hazel trees by the River Eden near Armathwaite (NY5044), 23 May.

*Anthribus nebulosus* (Forst.)

One beaten from hazel in Baron Wood (NY5144), 23 May. F.H. Day recorded the beetle from Galt, Kirkbride and Orton.

*Attelabus nitens* (Scop.)

One beaten from oak in Baron Wood near Armathwaite (NY5144), 23 May. This is a local beetle in Cumbria. Specimens in the F.H. Day Collection at the Carlisle Museum are from Orton and were collected in 1900.

*Apion simile* Kirby

One beaten from silver birch in Baron Wood (NY5144), 20 July, and several beaten from birch on Cumwhitton Moss (NY5151), 24 August.

*Otiorhynchus arcticus* (Fab.)

One specimen was found at the foot of the Westwater Screes just below High Adam Crag (NY1504), 16 July. This is a new record for Cumbria and vice-county 70, Cumberland.

the eggs are laid in late summer into cracks in dead wood (there is plenty of that around the house in the form of firewood heaps) from which the wasps will take wood fragments to build their nest the following year. The triungulin larva hatches in spring and waits for a wasp to carry it to the nest. There the larva develops first as an endoparasite and later as an ectoparasite. It pupates in the cell of the attacked wasp and the adult emerges in summer and does not feed during its short life-span.

Most authorities state that the beetles are normally confined to underground wasps' nests. Only a few instances seem to have been recorded of beetles from an above ground nest, and then the numbers emerging have been few.

Now to the puzzle.

Did they come from the previous year's nest? Or is it more likely that I have a wasp nest that I do not know about?

Did the *Vapona* kill off the wasps and leave the *Metococcus*?

How many were actually in the nest? I surely only found a small proportion of the total.

Did I find so many dead or near dead specimens because their short life span was spent trying to get out of the loft?

I was able to confirm the degree of colour variation of the male and female elytra and pronota. The male elytra were a fairly constant dull orange brown and the outer margin of the pronotum a somewhat similar colour. By contrast, the outer pronotal margin of the females was a bright distinctive yellow but the elytra varied considerably from completely black to a red brown margin with darker central areas. The female elytra always seemed noticeably darker than the males. However, in both sexes there was a considerable variation in the colour of the abdomen, from completely black to completely yellow, to yellow with black spots/tip.

Ernie Ives,  
Sproughton,  
Suffolk.

#### MORE ON *PHYTOBIUS ZUMPTI* WAGNER (CURCULIONIDAE).

In response to the appeal by Dr Morris (*Col. Newsl.* 42: 1,2) for records of this species, I had a close look at the eight specimens which I had standing above the name '*Phytobius quadrituberculatus*' and found that four are *P. quadrituberculatus* and four are *P. zumpti*. All of the latter were taken at coastal sites viz. - Pembrey, Camarthen, August 1974; Berneray, Outer Hebrides, July 1976; and Sandhead, Wigtown, 25 May 1989 (on a joint visit with Magnus Sinclair). The exact circumstances of these captures were not recorded, but, more recently (7 June '91), John Read very kindly took my wife and myself to a saltmarsh near Ravenglass, Cumberland where we found on *Glaux* one *P. zumpti* adult and numerous larvae from which I reared (on *Glaux*) eight *zumpti* adults.

Dr Morris lists four features distinguishing between *P. zumpti* and *P. quadrituberculatus*. Of these, I find that the presence of the dark band centered in the proximal half of the tibiae in *quadrituberculatus* and the absence of banding in *zumpti* is the most useful. It should be noted that in *P. zumpti*, especially in fresh specimens, the tibiae have fine dark spines distributed over a band at the middle which cause the tibiae, viewed superficially, to appear somewhat banded. The intrinsic colouring of the tibiae, however, is uniformly flavous. There are also coarser darker spines at the apices of the tibiae which make the apices look distinctly dark.

All my specimens of *P. zumpti* have second and third funicular joints of the antennae of equal length. In three out of four of my *P. quadrituberculatus* specimens, the third funicular joints are shorter than the second (as quoted by Dr Morris) but, in the fourth specimen the joints are exactly equal in length. I have detached both antennae and mounted them flat in dimethylhydantoin formaldehyde (d.m.h.f.) to make sure that I was not looking at a parallax error. The specimen, a male, has clearly banded tibiae and pronounced humeral protuberances. It was taken at Oxshott, Surrey in September 1974, a long way from the nearest site for *Glaux*.

Dr Morris quotes Tischler (1985, *Faun.-Okol. Mitt. Suppl.* 6:1-180) in stating that *P. zumpti* is monophagous on *Glaux*.

I fed my larvae on *Glaux* but I found that the newly emerged weevils ate both *Polygonum aviculare* and *P. amphibium* (terrestrial form), preferring the former when they were presented together. At the moment the significance of this is unclear. It would be of interest to see whether larvae found on *Glaux* eat *Polygonum* spp. Unfortunately, my larvae matured quickly, before I thought of trying this.

For the sake of the record, my other specimens of *P. quadrituberculatus* were taken at Epsom, Surrey, April 1976, Cambus O'May, South Aberdeen, June 1977 and Kingussie, Easternness, 20 March 1991.

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ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF *APION HYDROLAPATHI* (MARSH.) AND *A. VIOLACEUM* KIRBY (APIONIDAE).

On several occasions in the past the pages of the *Coleopterist's Newsletter* have carried an exhortation to make full use of reference collections in local museums. This is undeniably sound advice but it is not always practical for those of us living in the more rural parts of Britain. Without recourse to named specimens, the identification of even the commonest beetles can sometimes result in uncertainty and I am sure that there are many coleopterists who find "notes describing how to separate closely related species" of great value. Amongst the species-pairs I have agonised over is *Apion violaceum* Kirby and *A. hydrolapathi* (Marsh.), and I am aware from conversations with other entomologists that I was not alone in my confusion. Eventually the situation became clear when John Owen alerted me to the fact that the male genitalia of the two species were distinct. After dissecting a number of specimens of both species I was able to cast a critical eye over the two series and establish a list of surface characters by which to distinguish the species. Some of these characters had previously been utilised by Fowler (1888) and/or Joy (1932) but they had been included with other unreliable or erroneous characters which had negated their value. In the recent RES Handbook *Orthocerous Weevils* (*Handbk. Ident. Br. Ins.* 5, pt 6, by M.G. Morris) reliance

discounted that the close proximity of Ye Old Sportsman had anything to do with it remaining undiscovered for so long.....

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*METOECUS PARADOXUS* (L.) (RHIPIPHORIDAE) - A PUZZLE.

The tale may begin last summer (1990) when I had a wasp's nest in an inaccessible part of the roof space of my home but the entrance being near opening lounge windows, 'she who must be obeyed' said to get rid of it. A bee-keeper friend suggested a piece of 'Vapona' block to partially obscure the entrance and after a few weeks of erratic fluctuations in the numbers of wasps using the entrance, all wasp activity ceased. No wasp activity has been noticed this year (1991) although the roof space is connected with the neighbours and it could be that there is another nest somewhere.

On August 13th 1991, I found a female *Metoecus paradoxus* (L.) at the bathroom window. Taking it to a coleopterist friend for confirmation, he remarked that he had never seen one in forty years of collecting. Beginner's luck?

Over the next few weeks until September 5th 1991, I took a further 41 specimens, males and females in roughly equal numbers, from the bathroom and under the loft trap door. It would appear that they came from the loft and tried to get between the hinge joint of the trap door. Many either did not make it without damage or were dead or only just alive when found in the bathroom window (the nearest bright window). After collecting the first few, the active *Metoecus* were taken to an open window when they flew away quickly and strongly.

The most readable account of the life-history of *Metoecus* that I found was in a colour guide to beetles by Swatopluk Břlř, published by Treasure Press, 1990. Břlř states that

not figure the genitalia. The species has been recorded from a number of European countries stretching from Norway to Italy and including France but it is apparently very rare throughout its range. Whether it has been a long-term inhabitant of Britain or is a recent arrival remains to be determined. Very little is known of its life-history but it has been reported to occur in decaying animal and vegetable matter.

I thank Mr. R.M. Locock, Manager, National Trust Box Hill Estate for permission to study beetles on the estate.

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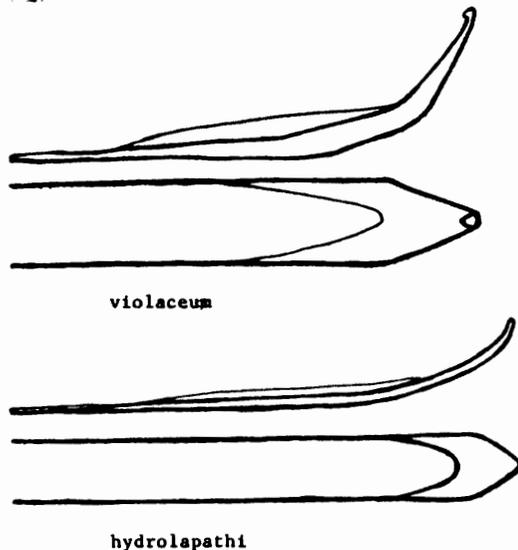
*CORTICARINA TRUNCATELLA* (MANN.) (LATHRIDIIDAE) IN EAST KENT

On 19 March 1990 I took a specimen of this very local lathridiid at Seasalter on the R. Swale. There appears to be no previous record for East Kent. Since my original capture it has been taken several times in different months, but always in small numbers. The species is very difficult to separate in the field from the more common *C. fulvipes* (Comolli) and is not easy under the microscope; however, the aedeagi of both species are very distinct and the identification of dissected males is not difficult (see A.v. Peez in *Die Käfer Mitteleuropas*, vol. 7, pp. 189-190). The locality at Seasalter is very pleasant in the summer and popular with bathers, but harsh in winter, and consists of fine sand mixed with tiny pieces of seashell supporting a mixture of low plants. The yellow horned poppy is well established. The beetle was found by grubbing at roots and sieving the sand. It is also present a few yards inland where the sand is mixed with soil and supports coarse grass. Seasalter was for many years a favourite locality for the (then) South London Entomological Society field meetings led by the late Dr. A.M. Masee, so it might be expected that we should have discovered this insect before. It can be

has been chiefly placed on rostral characters but the differences can be slight and it is important to compare individuals of the same sex. However, if comparative material is to hand, most specimens can be correctly determined on the basis of the shape of the rostrum; the greatest similarity occurring between female *hydrolapathi* and female *violaceum*. In fact, as Freude, Harde and Lohse point out (1981/1983, *Die Käfer Mitteleuropas*, vols. 10 & 11), none of the upper surface characters are entirely reliable and some specimens cannot be determined from above with absolute certainty. However, by implication these authors suggest that the puncturation of the second sternite always provides positive identification and so far I have found this to be an infallible and unambiguous method of determination.

	<u>violaceum</u>	<u>hydrolapathi</u>
ROSTRUM	slightly curved, longer, cylindrical	shorter and broader, usually straight, narrowed from base to apex
PRONOTUM	slightly elongate and usually broadest in the middle	more or less quadrate and sub-parallel
PRONOTAL PUNCTURES	larger and more diffuse	fine and dense
PRONOTAL PUBESCENCE	each seta clearly longer than diameter of puncture	setae as long as diameter of puncture
PRONOTAL STRIA	short and deep	shallow and usually extending towards the middle of the pronotum
ELYTRAL PUBESCENCE	most setae on interstices 2 - 4 arranged in two regular rows; setae on outer interstices longer, overlapping	setae on interstices 2 - 4 arranged in three irregular rows; setae on outer interstices shorter than gap between each other, i.e. not overlapping
PUNCTURATION OF STERNITES 2 & 3	large and obvious	little more than pin pricks; hardly evident

Using the characters listed above, it should be easy to name specimens without having recourse to dissection, but for confirmatory purposes I here append illustrations of the male genitalia.



Males can be distinguished by the small 'peg' which projects from the underside of the first (basal) segment of the hind tarsus, although this can sometimes be obscured by the surrounding pubescence. The aedeagus of *hydrolapathi* is, on average, slightly longer and narrower (0.97 X 0.13mm) and is abruptly rounded to a blunt tip; that of *violaceum* is shorter and broader (0.91 X 0.16mm) and is markedly acuminate at the apex. In profile, the stouter aedeagus of *violaceum* is abruptly steepened and somewhat angular at the apex, terminating in a conspicuous swelling, whereas in *hydrolapathi* the aedeagus is uniformly and shallowly curved.

In Cardiganshire, *A. hydrolapathi* has been taken on *Rumex crispus*, *R. obtusifolius* and *R. sanguineus*. It is widespread and common on coastal cliffs and shingle beaches but also occurs in dry grassland habitats inland. In coastal localities *hydrolapathi* tends to be much more frequent than *violaceum*, the latter species occurring in such sites on *R. crispus*, *R. obtusifolius* and *R. acetosa*. Most of the records for *violaceum* to date are from flushes,

poor-fen and wet pasture, where it can be abundant on *R. acetosa*, but it has been taken in a variety of habitats on this foodplant and is clearly a widely distributed species in the county. Unlike other species pairs (such as *A. aeneum* (Fab.) and *A. radiolus* (Marsh.) on *Malva sylvestris*) I have never taken both *hydrolapathi* and *violaceum* together on the same individual plant. This may simply be due to chance as I have not systematically collected collected all *Apions* encountered on a particular 'dock' but perhaps further ecological study could reveal whether one or other species is competitively dominant in the adult or larval stages.

A.P. Fowles

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*PSEUDOMICRODOTA JELINEKI* FRASA (STAPHYLINIDAE) NEW TO BRITAIN

On a visit to Box Hill on 14 July 1991 I collected a small staphylinid which turned out to be an example of *Pseudomicrodota jelineki* Frasa, apparently the first to be recorded from the British Isles. The specimen, a female, was obtained by sieving the residues of an old bonfire site at which my friend Norman Heal and I had found *Acritus homoeopathicus* Woll. some months previously. Examination of the residues of the bonfire two days later and again with Norman Heal on 14 August failed to uncover any other examples.

Superficially, *P. jelineki* resembles *Atheta* (*Microdota*) *benickiella* Brundin. The species was originally included in *Atheta* (*Microdota*) as *jelineki* Krasa, 1914 (= *flavicollis* Brundin, 1948) but taxonomic reassessment, including the discovery that the tarsal formula was 4,4,5 (rather than 4,5,5) has shown that it is not an *Atheta* (Lohse, 1972 in *Die Käfer Mitteleuropas*, eds. Freude, H., Harde, K.W. and Lohse, G.A., vol. 5, p.41).

A brief description of the beetle, together with figures of the genitalia, are provided by Palm (1970, *Svensk Insektfauna* 9 Coleoptera Fam. Staphylinidae pt. 6, p.187). Lohse (*loc. cit.*) gives a more complete description but does