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AMATEUR ENTOMOLOGISTS' SOCIETY

A COLEOPTERIST'S HANDBOOK

A compendium, published in which

AMATEUR ENTOMOLOGISTS' SOCIETY

THE AMATEUR ENTOMOLOGISTS' SOCIETY
**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 Hodges. 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.

**BOOK REVIEW**


Its 92 pages are packed with useful practical information.
and advice, but was rather pricey at £8.50p (from E.W. Classey Ltd.). Also, 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

THE HABITAT OF QUEDLUS FULIGINOSUS (GRAY.), AND NOTES ON THE OTHER SPECIES OF QUEDLUS (STAPHYLINIDAE).

In Col. News. 40: 11-13, Mr P.F. Whiteshead 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 sea-level to ca. 760 ft.

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. schachtmaryi Grid. among a group of beetles I recently examined from a pit-fall trap near Waterman 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.

Odeumera nobilis (Scop.)
Males and females were found in large numbers on the flowers of hawkbit, milfoil and ragwort on the South Head, St. Bees (NY9511), 9 and 21 July.

Asessum striatum (L.)
Two were found on larch logs in Blencadale Forest, Gosforth (NY0809) on 27th May and two in dead wood of a large felled pine on the edge of Beacon Plantation near Ravenglass (500995), 7 June.

Terops praeusta (L.)
One beaten from common sallow on Braithwaite Moss (NY2324), 8 June.

Denacia 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 Armaghwaite (NY5044), 23 May.

Anthribus nubulosus (Forst.)
One beaten from hazel in Baron Wood (NY5144), 23 May. P.H. Day recorded the beetle from Galt, Kirkbridge and Orton.

Attelasus nitens (Scop.)
One beaten from oak in Baron Wood near Armaghwaite (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 1909.

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

Otiurhynchus arcticus (Fab.)
One specimen was found at the foot of the Wastwater 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 triangulin 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 Metoecus?

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 here was a considerable variation in the colour of the abdomen, from completely black to completely yellow, to yellow with black spots/tip.

Ernie Ives, Sprottownton, Suffolk.

MORE ON PHYTOBIUS ZUMPTI WAGNER (CURCULIONIDAE).

In response to the appeal by Dr Morris (Col. Nws/ 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, Carmarthen, August 1974; Bernerey, 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 '81), 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 banded 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 spines 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 Kingsussie, Easterness, 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 good 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 BES Handbook Orthocerous Weevils (Handbk. Ident. Br. Ins. 5, pt 6, by N.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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METOECS 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 Swatopiluk Biff, published by Treasure Press, 1990. Biff 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. Peetz 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. Massee, 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 hydrocolapathi and female violaceum. In fact, as Freude, Harde and Lohse point out (1981/1983, Die Käfer Mitteleuropas, vol. 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 punctuation of the second sternite always provides positive identification and so far I have found this to be an infallible and unambiguous method of determination.

violaceum

hydrocolapathi

ROSTRUM slightly curved, longer, shorter and broader, cylindrical usually straight, narrowed from base to apex

PRONOTUM slightly elongate and more or less tympanum usually broadest in the middle

PRONOTAL PUNCTURES larger and more diffuse

PRONOTAL PUBESCENCE each seta clearly longer than 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

PUNCTURATION large and obvious

OF STERNITES little more than pin

2 & 3

pricks; hardly evident

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

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

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
cosmtal 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.
aeneus (Fab.) and A. radiolus (Marsh.) on Valva 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

PSEUDOMICRODOTA JELINEKI FRASA (STAPHYLINIDAE) NEW TO
BRITAIN

On a visit to Box Hill on 14 July 1991 I collected a small
staphyllinid which turned out to be an example of
Pseudomicromota 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
homeopathicus 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
eamples.

Superficially, P. jelineki resembles Atheta (Microdota)
benickiella Brundin. The species was originally included in
Atheta (Microdota) as jelineki Frasa, 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, E.W. and

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