

NEWSLETTER 50

February 2014



Asexual gall of *Andricus grossulariae* on acorn. Photo: British Plant Gall Society picture library by kind consent of Michael Chinery.

Alien Gall Wasps (Hymenoptera, Cynipidae) - Another Reaches Leics.

Over the past two decades, several species of Cynipids (gall wasps) entered the UK for the first time. Most of these were initially recorded in the south, especially from the environs of Greater London, but, at differential speeds, spread north. Amongst these species that have established themselves and are now quite commonly recorded in Leicestershire are *Andricus aries* (Ram's Horn Gall, p 3), *Andricus lucidus* (Hedgehog Gall, p 3) and *Andricus grossulariae* (left).

These join the other common alien gall species of *Andricus quercuscalicis* (Knopper Gall, which invaded the UK in the 1960s) and *Andricus lignocolus* (Cola-nut Gall, a 1970s invader).

continued on p 3.

LES Fieldwork - a proposal

It has been a long time since the LES tried to run a programme of field visits to sites around the county. It did not work, perhaps because many people were doing other activities with family and friends at the weekends. The easier communication offered by the internet means that we could perhaps try again.

Would it work if people with similar interests were in email contact so that a group email could be sent round when any member was visiting a site? Mobile phones also make contact easier for those who might choose to arrive later. Apart from the social advantages it might help new members to learn more about different

insect groups. I am sure that it works to some extent now, and it was useful when Steve and Helen were visiting Grace Dieu Wood, but perhaps with publicity it might bring in some new people. Unless anyone else is keen to adopt the role, I will be happy to co-ordinate things. From the initial beginning it could evolve so that people would have their own individual networks. If you would like to be included, just send me your email and I'll add it to the group list. It might be worth a try.

John Kramer
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The editor will be happy to receive articles, short notes and photos (in focus please!) about insects or other arthropods in Leicestershire and Rutland, also news of members' activities further afield. Photos to be sent separately please at high resolution. Unless otherwise credited, photos are by the author of the article.

Next Copy Deadline: 5 Sep 2014

Editorial

The handful of LES Members who attended the Lit. & Phil. (Natural History Section) lecture on ladybirds on 22 January were treated to a first class presentation by Richard Comont of the Biological Records Centre, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (who stood in at short notice for Helen Roy). Richard's subject was the Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis* - "the most invasive ladybird on Earth" according to the UK Ladybird Survey <http://www.ladybird-survey.org/harlequin.aspx>. This native of East Asia was introduced to North America (and elsewhere) as a biological control agent for aphids and scale insects. All was under control to start with, as the introduced populations died out over winter. But in 1988 a variety appeared in Louisiana, a super-ladybird that became established and began to spread rapidly across North America. Inevitably, it reach the UK, the first records being in 2004. The ecological niche of this large and aggressive species overlaps some of our native species - so conservationists expressed concern over the potential impact on our ladybird fauna. The Harlequin not only competes for the same food, but actually predated other ladybird larvae and pupae. The Harlequin is now all over the UK. Most native species have been in steep decline since the arrival of the Harlequin, in particular the Two-spot *Adalia 2-punctata* (previously our most common species). There seems little doubt that the Harlequin is having an impact on other native invertebrates that nobody is monitoring.

Are there any predators or parasites that are catching up with the Harlequin, that might bring it under control? Richard mentioned some possibilities, but none shows much promise at the moment. So the prospect for our native ladybirds and other "small game" within its habitat looks gloomy. I cannot help wondering if there are other invaders belonging to less glamorous, under-recorded groups, that are poised to cause havoc among our native invertebrates.

And the good news? The essential role of the amateur naturalist is exemplified by the UK chapter of this story. Ladybird recorders (including LES members), via the UK Ladybird Survey, have collected most of the data. We should be encouraged to collect and submit records to well-organised schemes such as this.

Three cheers for Ray Morris, who has now offered to co-ordinate Harvestman recording (p. 7).

Steve Woodward

Alien Gall Wasps continued from p 1

Gall watchers have been waiting patiently for the arrival of one of the latest invader, *Neuroterus saliens* first recorded in London. The author also recorded galls caused by both generations of this species on the training grounds at Sandhurst, Surrey in 2008. However, progress north by this latter species seems to be much slower than that displayed by the various *Andricus* spp. As far as the author is aware there seems to be, until now, no records of this species further north than Watford. It was, therefore, something of a surprise to find three examples of the “slug” gall caused by *N. saliens* on a Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*) at Brocks Hill Country Park in July 2013. The alternative generation (“red tentacle acorn”) has not been found in the county. This is certainly one to look out for during 2014.

Another recently introduced Cynipid gall wasp is *Andricus gemmeus*. First recorded in the UK in 2008

Top: *Andricus aries* Ram’s Horn Gall; Bottom *Andricus lucidus* Hedgehog Gall (asexual generation). Photos: British Plant Gall Society picture library by kind consent of Michael Chinery.



Galls of *Neuroterus saliens*: Top: the “slug” gall of the sexual generation; bottom: the “Red tentacle Gall” of the asexual generation. Photos: British Plant Gall Society picture library by kind consent of Michael Chinery.



(Bowdrey, 2009) and at East Carlton Country Park, Nr Corby, Northamptonshire in 2010 (Farmer, personal communication), it turned up near Grace Dieu Wood in Leicestershire in 2012 (Ikin, 2013).

Although some of these are well established in the county, their numbers are, with the exception of *Andricus aries*, far from abundant. We would welcome further records of any of these species. (Send details to Chris Leach email c.leach23@btinternet.com).

References

- Ikin, H. (2013). A Gem for VC55. *Leics. Ent. Soc. Newsletter* **48**; 6.
- Bowdrey, J. (2009). *Andricus gemmeus* (Giraud 1879) a gall wasp (Hymenoptera: cynipidae) new to the British Isles *Cecidology* **24**, 34-38
- Wurzell, B. (2006). A New Oak Gall Wasp in Britain. *Cecidology* **21**; 46-48.

Chris Leach

Water Beetles from Great Bowden Borrow Pit

The Great Bowden Borrow Pit (SP743898) was created by the removal of Jurassic clay for local railway embankments in the 19th century and has developed into a marsh with a flora that is uncommon in VC55, including sphagnum moss (*Sphagnum squarrosum*) and Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*). There is an area of shallow water at the southern end of the marsh and a pond in an adjoining field, which were sampled for water beetles in April 2013. Derek Lott and J G Woodhead recorded 30 species of water beetles at the site in the 1990s (17 Dytiscidae, 9 Hydrophilidae, 1 Gyrinidae and 1 Noteridae) among which was the dytiscid *Hygrotus decoratus*, only previously recorded in VC55, from a site in Gumley, in the late 19th century (Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Records Centre). Using bottle traps (see Cook & Clark 2012) we recorded this species again as well as the following dytiscids new to the site; *Dytiscus marginalis*, *D. circumflexus*, *Rhantus grapii* and *Acilius sulcatus*. These additions support previous research that has shown bottle traps to be more effective than netting for sampling larger species of water beetles (Cook & Clark *opp. cit.*). *Dytiscus circumflexus*, sometimes called 'The Wasp' due to the contrasting black and yellow colouration on the ventral surface (Foster & Friday 2011), is known from only three other sites in VC55. *Rhantus grapii* has only been recorded from Priory Water in VC55 (Cook & Clark *opp. cit.*) where it was taken once by netting but in greater numbers by bottle traps. It is probable that both species are more common than records suggest and that in these and other cases rarity may sometimes be an artefact of the sampling methods used.

Our thanks to Kirsty Gamble at LRERC for making the water beetle records available to us and to Mr J G Jacobs (The Market Harborough and The Bowdens Charity) for allowing access to Great Bowden Borrow Pit.

References

Cook, A. & Clark, F. (2012) A study of the water beetles of Priory Water NR, Leicestershire. *LESOPS* 28 (December 2012). ISSN 0957 – 1019.

Foster, G.N & Friday, L.E (2011) *Keys to the adults of the water beetles of Britain and Ireland* (Part 1). Handbooks for the Identification of British insects 4(5). Royal Entomological Society and Field Studies Council.

Tony Cook & Frank Clark



Hygrotus decoratus
2.2 - 2.6 mm

Photo: Tony Cook

Identification Help for Molluscs

A new illustrated guide to the 50 species of land snails found in Leicestershire and Rutland is now available free of charge from NatureSpot. To download your copy visit the [Slugs and Snails Resources](#) page. An illustrated key to VC55 land snails will also be available from this page very soon.

Virtually all our snails can be identified from the adult shell so if you find any interesting shells do collect them. I am very happy to receive any images as well as both shells and living mollusc specimens to offer help with identification. Slugs and land snails will survive for a few days in a container supplied with damp cardboard. My contact details are at the back of the newsletter.



Left-right: Dark-lipped Snail *Cepaea nemoralis*, Amber Snail *Succinea putris*, Kentish Snail *Monacha cantiana*.

David Nicholls

The Top 20 Insects of 2013

Which species do people record the most? Whilst clearly this very much down to the interests of the recorders, by looking at data from a large group we can get a good idea of which species are most noticed. The multi-taxa on-line recording offered by NatureSpot provides us with this opportunity. NatureSpot only collects data for Leicestershire and Rutland so we get a picture of what is being seen and recorded locally. During 2013, 157 recorders submitted a total of 15,867 records covering 2,481 species. The majority of these recorders are local naturalists without any specialisms and many are new to recording.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most recorded group is birds which make up around a third of all the records. Predictably then, the most recorded species are all birds, with Buzzard (377 records), Little Egret (195 records) and Red Kite (160 records) taking the top three spots. All are large, spectacular birds that are often seen flying so easily observed. All three are also likely to be seen as noteworthy species that warrant being recorded. None of them would have been anywhere near the top of the list a few years ago which helps to show how dynamic our local fauna and flora can be. But what about the smaller and less obvious species? You have to go to number 15 on the list to find the first non-avian entry where the Peacock

butterfly makes the charts with a respectable 71 records.

So let's take birds out of the equation and see what else is being recorded. Insects immediately dominate the recording chart with only the Common Frog remaining as the sole non-avian vertebrate representative in the top 20 (at number 7). With birds out of the way and ignoring the Common Frog, it is not until number 40 that the first non-insect appears: the White-lipped Snail, *Cepaea hortensis*.



The Top 20 insects are tabulated below. As expected, it is the larger and more easily identified species that dominate the list, with 8 butterflies, 3 moths, 3 dragonflies, 3 bumblebees, 2 ladybirds and a solitary bug. It is interesting to note that a few years ago two of these species would not have been recorded at all, never mind make the top 20. The Harlequin Ladybird, in less than 10 years, has become possibly our most abundant ladybird. Similarly the Tree Bumblebee has become a common part of our local fauna, perhaps made more obvious by its liking for gardens.

Rank	Common Name	Scientific Name	Records
1	Peacock	<i>Inachis io</i>	71
2	Harlequin Ladybird	<i>Harmonia axyridis</i>	57
3	Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>	49
4	Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	42
5	Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>	42
6	Green Shieldbug	<i>Palomena prasina</i>	41
7	Common Carder Bumblebee	<i>Bombus pascuorum</i>	38
8	Silver Y	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	33
9	Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	33
10	Large Red Damselfly	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>	31
11	Nettle-tap	<i>Anthophila fabriciana</i>	29
12	Orange Tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	29
13	Azure Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	29
14	7 Spot Ladybird	<i>Coccinella septempunctata</i>	29
15	Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	28
16	Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	28
17	Tree Bumblebee	<i>Bombus hypnorum</i>	27
18	Red-tailed Bumblebee	<i>Bombus lapidarius</i>	27
19	Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	27
20	Heart and Dart	<i>Agrotis exclamationis</i>	26

Whilst this list does illustrate the bias in most recording towards those species that are most noticeable, the fact that just under 2,500 species were recorded during the year shows that some recorders are looking more closely – and are prepared to put more effort into identification. We all start out recording the larger and more recognisable species, but then progress onto more challenging groups. We are seeing this development with many of the regular recorders on NatureSpot which bodes well for future biodiversity recording in VC55.

David Nicholls

Caddis at light 2013

My note on the expanding caddis database published in Newsletter 49 (September 2013) has been further enhanced by the addition of another 1,000+ records of insects predominantly taken at moth traps in 2013. Several county mothers have been kind enough to send me their caddis catches with quite large data sets coming from two traps at Dadlington, one at Market Bosworth and one at Priory Water. Added to these are the records from Graham Calow who sends specimens from his Sapcote light trap to the National Recorder, Ian Wallace, at the World Museum, Liverpool.

As a consequence, 460 records of 1,110 specimens have provided data about 70 species with the peak number of species being in July. One outcome of

regular monitoring has been an apparent overall disparity in the proportion of male to females being recorded at light traps. However, this disparity is not reflected in every species. The pattern is apparent for *Hydropsyche instabilis* (8 male, 219 female) and *Mystacides azurea* (9 male, 137 female) but the opposite for *Limnephilus lunatus* (85 male, 25 female) and *Limnephilus auricula* (19 male, 6 female). This may be a reflection of one sex being more mobile than the other in moving away from their watery breeding sites, one sex may be more attracted to light than the other, or there is a difference in the number of each sex produced by each species. As usual with studies of insect populations, many other factors would probably have to be taken into account.

Of the 70 species (35% of the national list) recorded in 2013, 18 were recorded only as single specimen. Species of particular note are shown in Table 1. The record of *Hydroptila occulta* is particularly important as nationally there are only 112 records (NBN as of 05 January 2014) possibly due to past low recording activity.

The Trichoptera are regarded as a key group in evaluating natural water quality, the higher the diversity and numbers of each species indicating the general biological status of the water body. The capture of adult caddis at light traps, particularly near water bodies, is a useful tool in evaluating water quality and local diversity especially as many rivers

Species	2013 record	VC55 status*	National status**
<i>Agapetus ochripes</i>	19/06/13 Sapcote	3rd record	Widespread
<i>Agrypnia pagetana</i>	26/07/13 Priory Water NR	8th record, 1st as adult	Midlands and East
<i>Brachycentrus subnubilus</i>	07/05/13 Sapcote	3rd record	North and West
<i>Ceraclea fulva</i>	05/07/13 Sapcote	2nd record	Widespread but scattered
<i>Glossosoma boltoni</i>	02/07/13 Lubenham	1st record	North and West
<i>Holocentropus dubius</i>	07/07/13 Dadlington site 2	5th record 3rd as adult	Widespread but scattered
<i>Hydroptila forcipata</i>	30/07/13 Market Bosworth	2nd record in 21st century	Widespread but scattered
<i>Hydroptila occulta</i>	17/07/13 Dadlington site 2	1st record since Wood Brook 1982	Widespread but scarce
<i>Limnephilus binotatus</i>	12/09/13 Market Bosworth	1st record since 1970	Widespread but scattered
<i>Limnephilus griseus</i>	15/07/13 Dadlington site 2	1st record	Widespread but rare in Midlands
<i>Limnephilus stigma</i>	30/08/13 Market Bosworth	1st record since 1962	Widespread but scattered
<i>Lype reducta</i>	07/07/13 Dadlington site 1	1st adult record since 1990	Widespread south of Humber

Table 1: Notable species of caddis taken in VC55 in 2013. *VC55 status based on current database held by RM **National status based on NBN 2013.

are now almost inaccessible because of steep banks or canalisation. Records away from breeding sites provide essential information of the dispersal behaviour of species.

All moth trappers are encouraged to collect any caddis in their traps and send them to the author for identification and addition to the VC55 record database. Contact details on p 2 of the Newsletter.

Ray Morris

An unknown entity

Whilst searching for historical entomological records amongst old journals I came across this article: “*Gonopteryx rhamni* in December” published in *The Entomologist* of 1936 (vol 69, p43). Not a particularly interesting record, but the author, one C J Tatham, signs himself of as “Hon Sec, Barrow-on-Soar Entomological Club”. So far this is the only time I have come across this group and I wonder if anybody has heard of it.

Ray Morris

Looking for help?

The following are willing to act as an initial point of contact for providing advice and information to members.

Arachnids (Spiders, pseudoscorpions):- vacant.

Arachnids (Mites & Ticks):- Ivan Pedley, 48 Woodlands Drive, Groby, Leicester LE6 0BQ. 0116 287 6886. ivan.pedley@gmail.com

Biological Recording:- Sue Timms, Leics & Rutland Environmental Records Centre; Room 400, County Hall, Glenfield LE3 8RA. 0116305 4108 Sue.timms@leics.gov.uk

Chilopoda:- Helen Ikin, 237 Forest Road, Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves, Leics LE12 8TZ. 01509 890102. helen@canids.freeserve.co.uk

Coleoptera:- Graham Finch, 14 Thorndale, Ibstock, Leics. LE67 6JT: m.finch4@ntlworld.com

Diplopoda:- Helen Ikin (see Chilopoda).

Diptera (Acalypterates, Syrphids & Brachycera):- Darwyn Sumner, 122 Link Road, Anstey, Leicester LE7 7BX. 0116 212 5075. Darwyn.sumner@ntlworld.com

Diptera (Nematocera - Mosquitoes, Blackflies & Craneflies):- John Kramer, 31 Ash Tree Road, Oadby, Leicester LE2 5TE. 0116 271 6499. john.kramer@btinternet.com

Hymenoptera (Symphyta - Sawflies):- Dave Nicholls, 69-71 Church Lane, Ratby, LE6 0JF. nicholls.99@btinternet.com

Hymenoptera (Bumblebees):- Maggie Frankum, see page 2.

Hymenoptera (Other aculeates - Bees, Wasps & Ants):- Helen Ikin (see Chilopoda).

Hemiptera:- Dave Budworth, see page 2.

Isopoda (Woodlice):- Helen Ikin (see Chilopoda).

Lepidoptera:- Adrian Russell, 15 St Swithin's Road, Leicester LE5 2GE. 0116 241 5101. Adrian@wainscot.demon.co.uk

Mecoptera, Neuroptera, Plecoptera :- Steve Woodward, see page 2.

Mollusca: - Dave Nicholls (see Hymenoptera (Symphyta)).

Odonata:- Ian Merrill i.merrill@btopenworld.com

Opiliones (Harvestmen): - Ray Morris, see page 2.

Orthoptera:- Helen Ikin, see Chilopoda.

Phthiraptera, Siphonaptera:- Frank Clark, 4 Main Street, Houghton on the Hill, Leicester LE7 9GD. 0116 243 2725. ClrFlea@aol.com

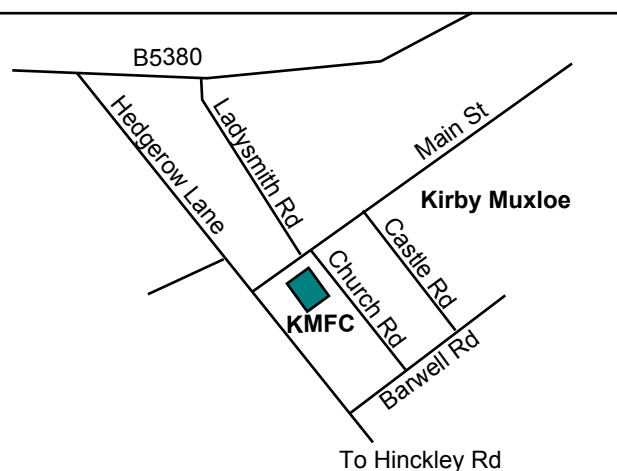
Plant Galls:- Maggie Frankum, see page 2.

Psocoptera:- Helen Ikin, see Chilopoda.

Thysanoptera: - Ivan Pedley, see Mites.

Trichoptera (adults):- Ray Morris, see page 2.

Indoor Meetings Programme



Our venue is Kirby Muxloe Free Church, Main Street, Kirby Muxloe LE9 2AN SK517042. The session starts at 7:30, but most members arrive half an hour earlier for a natter and a cuppa. Visitors are welcome. We need to be out by 10:00.

Thursday 20 February 2014 – A moth-er's memories of Leicestershire

Peter Gamble will recall his moth recording sessions carried out during the 70s and 80s with Jack Ward for the Loughborough Naturalists' Club. His slide show will show us how dramatically the sites have changed over the years and how our moth species have fared since those early years.

Thursday 20 March 2014 – British Butterflies

Steve Houghton will show his selection of British Butterflies. In order to capture some of these species on camera, Steve has left home at 4:30 a.m. to be on site at the best time of day. His standard of photography is excellent and - can you believe - it is seven years since his last visit, so this presentation is long overdue.

Anona Finch

Leicestershire Craneflies 2013

Tipula (Lunatipula) peliostigma

Henri Audcent's biography has recently been published (Audcent, 2013). In the bibliography I noted a reference: Audcent (1935), which I followed up. The record is a brief one. It simply says: "*Tipula peliostigma* Schum. (Dipt., Tipul.) in Leicestershire: On 10 June 1934, Mr. E. Rivenhall Goffe took a pair of this species by the side of the fosse Way in the neighbourhood of Six Hills, Leicestershire. The species is uncommon and records of its capture are infrequent. H.L.F. Audcent."

This represents a new Vice-county 55 record, so it is one to look out for. The larvae seem to feed in twigs and leaf litter, and they have been found associated with birds' nests.

References

Audcent, G. D. (2013). Louis Felix Henri Audcent and his contribution to British Diptera. *Dipterists Digest* 20 No. 2 pp 103-119.

Audcent, L. F. H. (1935). *Tipula peliostigma* Schum. (Dipt., Tipul.) in Leicestershire. *Journal of the Society for British Entomology* 1, 110.

John Kramer

New Sawfly for VC55 at Beacon Hill



Larva of a sawfly *Athalia scutellariae*.

While checking a rare plant at Beacon Hill, Lesser Skullcap, I found a caterpillar resembling a domino, feeding on its leaves. It turned out to be the larva of a sawfly *Athalia scutellariae*. It is evidently a first for Leics. and uncommon nationally. The larvae are pretty much specific to *Scutellaria* spp. I thank Dave Nicholls (county co-ordinator, Symphyta) and Guy Knight (Symphyta specialist, World Museum, Liverpool) for the identification.

Steve Woodward