LEICESTERSHIRE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

VC55

NEWSLETTER 55

September 2016

The Campanula Bee

As its name suggests the Campanula Bee *Chelostoma campanularum* specialises on feeding from flowers of the *Campanula* genus. This includes Harebell, the native bellflowers and the garden varieties, of which there are many. It may also be seen visiting *Geranium* flowers.

This solitary bee is only 6 or 7 mm long and is easily overlooked as it resembles a small, black fly as it flits around the flowers – the feature to look out for is the white fuzz of pollen-collecting hairs underneath the abdomen of the female (p 3). The male (below) is smaller and narrower, with two small, blunt prongs on the end of the abdomen which are said to help to anchor itself in flowers when sheltering from adverse weather.

The female nests in tubular beetle borings and other small holes in wood or in hollow dried plant stems where it provisions each cell in the tube with pollen before laying an egg in the cell and sealing it up with a mud and nectar mix. The flight period is June to August – when the flowers are out.

Male *Chelostoma campanularum* in a bellflower in Belgrave Hall Gardens. This species is *oligolectic*, meaning that the adults visit a very restricted range of flowers. We have more records from gardens than in the wild. Photos: Steve Woodward.

Bruchidius villosus

This tiny black Chrysomelid beetle (3 mm long) is unlikely to be noticed by anyone other than a beetle specialist. Fortunately Graham Finch is on the case and we can enjoy more of his stunning close-up photos on pages 10-12.

Until our recent search, the only records for VC55 were from Jenny Owen's garden Malaise trap in Scraptoft Lane, Leicester. There were three species of *Campanula* growing in the garden. Having found this bee ourselves in 2014 on the "Kipper" roundabout, Barrow upon Soar, we have carefully searched *Campanulas* in gardens. We have recorded it from Woodhouse, Quorn, Barrowden, Melton Mowbray, Shenton House and Belgrave Hall, Leicester.

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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: 10 Jan 2017

Editorial

Beetlemania

We have several coleopterous contributions in this edition. I make no apology for including them all, beetles account for a quarter of all animal species yet locally they have been studied by very few naturalists. There is a lot of catching up to do! With the second volume of the *Beetles of Britain and Ireland* series published (Duff, A. G., 2016), one of the hurdles to identification (i.e. lack of up-to-date keys) is lowered. We have an enthusiastic and helpful county co-ordinator in Graham Finch so there is no better time to start recording beetles.

Where are our insects?

In *Newsletter* **53** I bemoaned the dearth of insects in 2015, hoping that 2016 would be better. Well, numbers have not recovered as far as I can see. Some orders seem to have become scarcer than ever. I can offer some data to support this, from my own biological records database. I put all my records onto this system (which I call Observant*), including provisional records and a handful from beyond VC55. I believe my recording effort has been comparable for the years 2013 to 2016, for the groups shown in Table 1. I have excluded groups such as stoneflies and moths, for which I tried harder in some years than others. I acknowledge that the 2016 season is not quite finished and the data set is far from being scientifically rigorous. But I wonder if anyone is collecting proper quantitative information across a wide range of groups?

Wasps have been very scarce - "hoorah" some people would say (those who are ignorant of the multitude of small species that bother no-one but perform key ecological roles). Only two Hornets have appeared so far this year (17 Sept).

I catch any Mayflies, Lacewings, Stoneflies and Scorpionflies that come my way (as I am co-ordinator for these orders), but hardly any have done so.

Grasshoppers and crickets did seem to benefit from good grass growth in 2015 - but numbers have crashed this year. Grassy sites that are normally buzzing with Orthoptera were curiously silent this year.

Dragon and damsel numbers in the last two years seem to be half of what they should be.

*My Observant records are sent annually to LRERC (or the county recorder) where they are validated then appended to the county database.

continued from p. 1.

The only record from a wild flower is from Harebell in Lea Meadows NR – diligent examination of the hundreds of Harebells in Bradgate Park over the last two years has been in vain, despite the use of optical technology to search for them (see right)!

Solitary bees require two things to be successful – a suitable nesting site and a feeding site. The nesting site seems to take priority as they are able to travel some distance to the right flowers for pollen. However, it helps if the two resources are reasonably close together – as they often are in gardens.

Female *Chelostoma campanularum*. Females of most bees have pollen-collecting hairs on their hind legs, but those in this family (Megachilidae) have them under the abdomen. As the white hairs contrast with the black body, they are easily spotted.

Mirror - Signal - Manoeuvre. Helen demonstrates a novel method of searching for specialist bees that hide inside Harebell flowers. A long-handled mirror avoids having to bend down to peer up into every flower. Despite the abundance of Harebells in the last couple of years on Bradgate Park, not one *Chelostoma campanularum* has been found. We suspect that nesting habitat may be the limiting factor. Photo: Steve Woodward.

We should be delighted to hear of any Campanula Bees in your garden and will come and verify the sighting if you offer us a cup of tea!

Helen Ikin & Steve Woodward

In the Loughborough Naturalists' Club journal *Heritage,* Peter Gamble (surely our most experienced local naturalist) also reports very low numbers of butterflies, based on data from many recorders. Howard Bradshaw, a keen observer of insects over many decades, gives a similar tale of woe for assorted "other insects" (including hoverflies).

Plummeting moth populations have been reported over the last few years. I worry that similar declines are occurring in the less popular orders. The reasons, no doubt, are complex: far beyond the LES to unravel...

I hope the conservation organisations are taking note and pressing for research to find out what is happening. As the charity *Buglife* reminds us, invertebrates are "the small things that run the planet".

Steve Woodward

Group	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bees	343	605	408	452
Social, Potter & Mason Wasps	46	26	9	8
Solitary Wasps	103	157	128	60
Butterflies	342	244	231	198
Booklice & Barklice	12	19	11	8
Lacewings	2	13	4	1
Grasshoppers & crickets	68	44	57	21
Dragonflies & Damselflies	72	60	31	34
Mayflies	6	15	1	1
Scorpionflies	5	5	1	1
True Flies	298	296	185	177
Totals	**1297**	**1484**	**1066**	**961**

Table 1. Number of records logged by the author in groups that received roughly similar attention between 2013 and 2016.

MAGGIE'S BUMBLE NOTES 2016

Flowers need bumbles (for pollination); bumbles need flowers (nectar to power flight and pollen for developing young); and gardeners need both for the fruit and vegetables that we grow:- courgettes, tomatoes, beans, raspberries, strawberries, apples, pears, plums, blueberries.....

Maggie's Bumble Stand

As usual, my bumble year started off at the 2016 Recorders Conference in Rothley on Sunday, 28 February, where I chatted to lots of visitors at the bumble stand.

The first opportunity to check bumbles again was at the Welford Road Cemetery Bioblitz (21 May), organised by Helen O'Brien of Leicester City Council. Weather conditions were not very favourable, with flying insects keeping a low profile in strong winds. Only three bumble species (workers) were seen in low numbers - *Bombus pratorum* foraging a large patch of Wild Garlic; *Bombus lapidarius* foraging patches of buttercups that had been left between the mown areas in the lower meadows; and *Bombus terrestris* foraging the Holly bushes that were in full flower.

At the Brocks Hill Garden Party (5 June), one visitor to my bumble stand casually mentioned seeing *lots* of bees near where they were sitting on a large log..... which on urgent closer investigation, turned out to have an active *Bombus terrestris* nest underneath! Visitors were discreetly moved some distance away to alternative seating and a "keep clear" notice put up. Armed with a Bumblebee Conservation Trust identification chart - it was an ideal opportunity for a bit of bumble education and the visitors were fascinated to watch all the "comings and goings" activity.

Bombus lucorum queen. Photo: Steve Woodward

There were three Bumble Workshops at the University of Leicester Botanic Garden in 2016. The first one (22 May) was the day after the Bioblitz. The recent mixed weather conditions, as well as making it difficult for the bumbles, also meant delays in the start of flowering periods (typical of many local gardens) and a limited choice of flowers to forage - comfrey, *Geranium*, Green Alkanet, *Bergenia* and *Azalea*. Even so, we caught and identified five bumble species, mostly workers - *Bombus pratorum*, *B. pascuorum*, *B. lapidarius,* and *B. hypnorum;* and a huge, long-tongued *B. hortorum* queen foraging *Rhododendron* (late getting her colony started). No cuckoo bumbles were seen on this occasion since they usually emerge about six weeks after their hosts. However, we did see lots of solitary Hairy-footed Flower Bees (*Anthophora plumipes*), looking like small furry bumbles - the black females were foraging comfrey and the brown males were on Bramble.

A month later, nine bumble species were seen on Botanic Garden Workshop 2 (19 June):- *Bombus pratorum* and its cuckoo *B. sylvestris*, *B. hypnorum*, *B. terrestris* and its cuckoo *B. vestalis*, *B. pascuorum* and its cuckoo *B. campestris*, *B. lapidarius*, and *B. hortorum*. They had a different range of flowers to forage - *Geranium phaeum*, *Nectaroscordon*, *Centaurea montanum*, *Arnica*, *Cotoneaster*, *Hebe, Phlomis, Bergenia, Veronica* sp., Thyme, *Aubrieta*, and Hedge Woundwort. There were no *Anthophora plumipes* this time because their life cycle had finished.

At the Botanic Garden Plant Sale & Family Day (3 July), visiting *Bombus hypnorum* drones were seen in a "drone cloud" dancing around the nest entrance in

Bombus lapidarius queen. Photo: Steve Woodward

the stonework above the door to Knoll House, waiting for new daughter queens to emerge, so they could mate with them. Activity was noticed for several days. Not all drones manage to find a mate.

On the Botanic Garden Workshop 3 (7 August), ten bumble species were seen, again including three cuckoo bumbles, although these were different species - *B. vestalis, B. campestris*.....but there were no *B. sylvestris* and only one dead drone of its Early Bumble host *B. pratorum* on the path at the end of its life cycle. The third cuckoo was *B. rupestris*, parasitic in the nest of *B. lapidarius*. For the first time in 2016, we did see several *B. lucorum* drones, but only one *B. hortorum* drone foraging *Salvia*, since the Hedge Woundwort that it favoured in June had been pollinated and gone to seed. The comfrey and *Aquilegia* had finished too, so there was no evidence of "robbery" by *B. terrestris*. Plants of note that the bumbles favoured this time were *Veronicastrum, Penstemon, Origanum*, *Eryngium echinops*, knapweed, scabious, Hemp Agrimony, *Inula*, and especially the lavender in the Herb Garden.

"Buzzing About on the Allotments":- This year, we decided to do three bumble walks at the Aylestone Allotments & Leisure Garden Society allotments over a longer period of time than previously, to show allotmenteers which bumble species are important for the pollination of fruit and veg crops. At Bumble Walk No. 1 (12 June) we recorded six bumble species - *Bombus terrestris, Bombus lapidarius;* and the raspberries were buzzing with lots of *Bombus pratorum* and *Bombus hypnorum* workers - expect a bumper crop! The broad beans had already set pods, courtesy of long-tongued bumbles such as *Bombus hortorum* and *B. pascuorum.* The latter were also pollinating the comfrey bells "properly", whereas short-tongued bumbles such as *B. terrestris* could not reach far enough down the corolla, so nipped round the back and bit a hole at the base of the tube to access and rob the nectar, thus by-passing the pollination process. Other opportunist bumbles then use the holes for "secondary robbery". This happens with runner beans and *Aquilegia* spurs too.

Bumble walk 2 (10 July). There was a brief rain shower and it was a bit breezy but these weather conditions do not necessarily bother foraging bumbles, unlike honeybees. This time only four bumble species were seen on the same route around the site:- *B. terrestris, B. pascuorum, B. lapidarius* and *B. hortorum*. There were no *B. pratorum* or *B. hypnorum* bumbles - because they had most likely reached the end of their annual life cycle, when all castes, the old queen, the workers and the drones all die. Only the newly mated daughter queens survive and go into hibernation until 2017. There were tomatoes in flower, requiring the specialist short-tongued bumbles such as *B. terrestris* to "buzz-pollinate" them. The pollen is held within the anthers and only bumbles are able to grab the anthers and vibrate their muscles at just the right frequency to release the pollen for collection - and the bumble moves on to pollinate the next flower. Where would our tomatoes be without our native British bumbles?

Bumble walk 3 (14 August). Only three bumble species were seen this time.:- *Bombus terrestris, B. pascuorum* and *B. lapidarius*. There were still one or two active workers with pollen loads, usefully pollinating the pumpkins and courgettes; and long-tongued *B. pascuorum* were still active on raspberries, blackberries and runner beans, however most of the bumbles seen were drones. These were visiting the open, easy access (less effort) flowers such as cosmos, marigold, ragwort, *Hieracium* and sunflower. Their role complete and with nothing else left to do than look after themselves, with an occasional slurp of nectar at the "bumble pub" until it was their turn to die.

Sometimes it is difficult to identify the bumbles because they get tatty and faded at the end of their life, however it looks as if the allotments (over time) support six regular "gardeners friends" to carry out the important process of pollination. The allotmenteers should learn to appreciate the hard work that the wild bumbles carry out on their behalf, and this autumn, plant lots of flowers in a corner or two of their plots, ready for 2017.

Maggie Frankum

Moth Trapping in Market Bosworth

We started "having a go" at trapping and identifying moths in 2002; the first record we can find is written in a little diary on the 31 March indicating a catch of four Hebrew Characters and one Early Grey. Later that same year, there is a record of 45 Large Yellow Underwings (see below) so we must have been doing something right. We were using an 12 inch Actinic Trap and occasionally fitted up a 150 W bulb over a white sheet in front of the patio windows so that we could sit in comfort but dash out to catch whatever moths appeared. Searching for this record has reminded us that these early records have not yet been entered in Mapmate which is where we now keep all our garden records. At this time, we were using Skinner's *Moths of the British Isles* to identify our catch and, as you well know, this is not the easiest of books to use for identification. From 2003 onwards, all records have been written in an A4 page-a-day diary – much more space!

This enthusiasm was greatly encouraged by our membership of the Market Bosworth & District Natural History Society (http://www.naturespot.org.uk/content/market-bosworth-district-natural-history-society) and coincided with several other members deciding to catch moths in their own gardens too. It has certainly helped to be able to compare notes and to ask for opinions on identification. The help and encouragement of Adrian Russell and Graham Finch has been a great help.

In 2004, we both went on a week-end course on Moth Identification run by the FSC (http://www.field-studies-council.org/), held at Flatford Mill and the tutor was none other than Richard Lewington. We learnt a lot at this course and came away feeling much more confident about our ability. Now that we had the *Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland* illustrated by Richard, we were finding it so much easier to find what we were looking for - in fact we soon decided that we each needed a copy! After borrowing a mercury vapour (MV) trap in 2005, we caught a Pine Hawkmoth and subsequently purchased a trap from Adrian and this has obviously increased our catch.

Large Yellow Underwing, often the most numerous moth in our trap in late summer. Photo: Steve Woodward

Our mercury vapour moth trap was made by Adrian Russell. We added the shroud at the back to avoid dazzling our neighbours.

Once Richard Lewington had illustrated another book, this time on Micro Moths, we have tried to identify as many of these moths as possible but it is not easy, particularly as we have no wish to identify them by genitalia. Would you believe it, but we have ten books on various aspects of moth identification! Our garden backs onto a permanent grass field so we do get plenty of grass moths.

When we first started using the MV trap, we were very conscience of disturbing our neighbours with the bright light so we (or should I say David) designed a wooden surround to the back sides and top of the trap so that the light was focused down the garden; this has proved very successful and does not seem to have affected the numbers of moths caught. The number of species caught each year ranges from 126 in 2003 to 245 species in 2015. The largest number was 293 in 2014 and we have recorded 487 species on our Mapmate recording scheme since 2006.

Since we have become more adept at identifying moths, we have been involved with three bioblitz events organised by the Market Bosworth & District Natural History Society as well as many "moths & brunch" events run by the Society – all very interesting and enjoyable. Whenever possible whilst staying at various holiday cottages, we have taken our trap, identified the moths and notified the relevant County Recorder; this extends our knowledge of moths found

in areas other than our own locality. Areas visited include Arran, Dumfries & Galloway, Northumberland, Somerset, Lincolnshire and Norfolk. On these occasions, our catch always proves of great interest to the owners of the cottages.

Graham encouraged us to join the Garden Moth Scheme (http://www.gardenmoths.org.uk/) which is proving useful nationally in monitoring particular species numbers from year to year.

Our one "claim to fame" was in 2004 when we found a pyralid that we were unable to identify. It was sent to Adrian and after much deliberation it was identified as *Sclerocona acutellus*. This is a moth that lives on reeds and it had presumably arrived from Central Europe on thatch which had just been used on a roof across the other side of the field.

We already identified the birds seen in our garden as we belong to the BTO Garden Birdwatch Scheme but the identification of moths caught in the garden has led to us recording dragonflies, butterflies and any insects that we can identify (or others can identify for us!) and has greatly extended our knowledge and love of the garden.

David & Mary Penton

Mimicry fools Hymenopterists

Excursions to the Holwell Iron Works site at Asfordby Hill often turn up interesting bees and wasps (see *Newsletter* **53**). So hopes were raised on 10 July when Helen Ikin and myself spotted two (or more?) puzzling yellow and black insects quartering the ground in a wasp-like manner. Once we had one in a pot, we scratched our heads and realised that the antennae were wrong for a wasp. The venation and markings on the wings were not very waspish either. It dawned on us that we had caught a clearwing moth, the Six-belted Clearwing *Bembecia ichneumoniformis*.

Steve Woodward

First VC record for solitary wasp *Nitela lucens*

A small (4 mm), black wasp on a wall near Lyddington church looked, to the naked eye, like any other. I put it under the microscope and ran it through key VII in the *Naturalists' Handbook for Solitary Wasps* (Yeo & Corbet, 1995), I noted a single submarginal cell in the forewing, cell 10 absent, no notch in the eye and cell 7 distinct from the submarginal cell. So far, this was a familiar route for small, black wasps, including the large genus *Crossocerus*. But the next step in the key asked me to look at cell 9. It was open at the far end. Also the borders of the eyes diverged between the front ocellus and the antennae (visible in the photo). These unusual features sent me to the unfamiliar genus

Nitela. There are only two British species, neither of which is reported from VC55. The difference is the surface texture of the propodeum (at the rear of the thorax): being "coarse and shiny" in one and "fine and dull" in the other. Words or even illustrations are little help with subtle differences like this - comparison with reference specimens is essential. There are no *Nitela* specimens at the Barrow collection, so I took my specimen to Liverpool Museum, where I was helped by Carl Clee. We agreed that my specimen matched *Nitela lucens* Gayubo & Felton, 2000. There are less than 20 spots (10 km squares) on the national distribution map (http://www.bwars.com/wasp/crabronidae/larrinae/nitela-lucens), most in the London area and none as far north as Rutland. Such a small wasp seems likely to be under-recorded.

Unfortunately, the abdomen from my specimen was lost before arrival at Liverpool. The tips of the antennae are also missing, so I am unable tell the sex of my specimen.

Record SFW131859, Lyddington, SP876969, 28 May 2016, coll. S. F. Woodward, conf. C. Clee.

Steve Woodward

Big-eyed Flies!

The Pipunculidae are small black flies (5-10 mm) that can be easily recognised because the head is virtually all eyes! About 90 species are known in Britain with many European species expected to be recorded eventually. They are not an easy group! The standard key is that of Coe (1966) while some updates are available on the Internet. There are virtually no records for VC55 but three genera are relatively easy to identify as they can be distinguished from other species in the family by the obvious presence of ocellar bristles, absent in other species. As these flies are being caught in the Rutland Water malaise traps I have had a go at two genera which have complete venation (*Verrallia*, *Jassidophaga*) while the third genus, *Chalarus* which has vein M1+2 missing, is more demanding.

Verralia aucta is probably the easiest being the only British species of this genus. It can be easily recognised as there is an appendix on vein m2. Currently there seems to only four records for VC55 being recorded by Richard Wright at Market Bosworth in 2011 and then at the Rutland Water Egleton malaise trap June-July 2015. No records seem to have been inputted to the NBN Gateway and nationally there are only 280 records in the database.

The *Verrallia* genus of Coe has been split into two with the *Jassidophaga* constituting four species with ocellar bristles. To date only *J. villosa* has been recorded in VC55, again at the malaise trap (July 2015). Nationally, there seems to be only 47 scattered records. The other three species - *J. beatricis, J. pilosa, J. setosa* - have similar numbers of national records. As tends to be the case with little-studied groups, national distribution indicates recorder bias rather than true occurrence. Hopefully VC55 will start to contribute to the overall picture.

Reference

Coe, R.L. (1966). Diptera: Pipunculidae. *RES Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects*, vol **10** part **2c**.

Ray Morris

Notes from Priory Water

Since the publication of *The ground beetles of Priory Water* (Cook & Clark 2013) an additional six species of Carabidae have been recorded, bringing the total count to 74. Although none of the additional species has either IUCN or GB conservation status, some are uncommon (or under-recorded) in VC 55, i.e. *Demetrias imperialis , Dyschirius aeneus* (see *LES Newsletters* **51** & **53** respectively) and *Trechoblemus micros* (pictured right), a species which is predominantly subterranean and apparently associated with small mammal burrows.

Trechoblemus micros
(3.8 - 4.5 mm)

Most of these additional species were found in pitfall traps at the edge of a reed-bed at Priory, the focus of current research. Trapping for carabids at the edge of the reed-bed also recorded three new species of water beetles for Priory; *Agabus bipustulatus*, *A. sturmii* and *Hydroporus angustatus*, all of which are fairly common in VC55, bringing the total number of water beetle species to 32 (see Cook & Clark, 2012). A total of eight species of water beetles were caught in pitfall traps, some in traps 2-3 metres away from the waters edge.

References

Cook, T. & Clark, F. (2012) A Study of the water Beetles of Priory water NR, Leicestershire. *LESOPS* **28** (December 2012) ISSN 0957 - 1019.

Cook, T. & Clark, F. (2013) The Ground Beetles (Carabidae) of Priory Water NR, Leicestershire. *LESOPS* **30** (December 2013) ISSN 0957 - 1019.

Tony Cook & Frank Clark

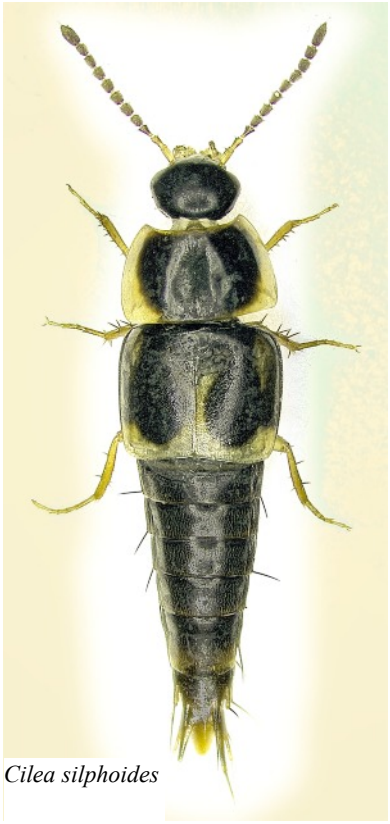
Beetle Highlights for 2016

Two new county records

Mycetochara humeralis. Two individuals of this distinctive species were beaten from a dead Oak branch lying on the ground in Bradgate Park by G. L. Finch on 18 June. Normally restricted to the south east of England and is given a Nationally Notable A status by the NBN.

Chrysolina herbacea. A singleton was found on Water Mint growing at Colony Reservoir at Charnwood Lodge on 26 June by G. L. Finch. This is another species that is found mainly south of the Wash and Severn, becoming very thinly distributed further north. Scrutinising any Water Mint colonies could repay the effort it is a large bright metallic green beetle so if it is around we should find it.

Mycetochara humeralis



Cilea silphoides

Significant records

Cryptocephalus aureolus. Many were found in Ketton Quarry by S. F. Woodward on 28 May on yellow composite heads. This represents the fifth record for this species and all other records are from Ketton Quarry in May and June. Sweeping meadows containing yellow flowers may help to add other sites for this species.

Cryptocephalus aureolus. Photo: Steve Woodward

Cilea silphoides. A singleton was sieved from horse dung near Saddington Reservoir 6 August by G. L. Finch. There have only been two previous records for this species both with scant details. Leicestershire 1894-1896 J. H. Woolley and Leicestershire 1907 F. Bouskell. This is a very small beetle approx. 3 mm in length, and the preferred medium of dung, manure heaps or decaying vegetable matter no doubt accounts for the very few records.

Lomechusa emarginatus. A singleton was found in an ant's nest (*Myrmica rubra*) at the "Rocks by Rail" museum, Cottesmore on 1 May by H. Ikin & S. F. Woodward. There are just three previous records for this species: Ketton Quarry 1994 and the other two from Buddon Wood 2011. There seems to be scant information available for this Nationally Notable species, which is very thinly scattered mainly through middle England.

Lomechusa emarginatus

Elodes minuta

Kateretes pusillus

Nitidula bipunctata

Elodes minuta. At least four individuals were swept from low vegetation at Sandhills Lodge, Ulverscroft on 14 July by G. L. Finch. There are just seven previous records for this species. First recorded in Stanford Park by F. Bates 1848-1895. Although widely distributed throughout England, this is designated as Nationally Scarce. I am sure this is another species that could easily be found by sweeping grassland areas in marshy situations, Misterton Marsh and the Soar Valley sites spring to mind.

Kateretes pusillus. This species was found at Mountsorrel Marshes on 31 March and Sandhills Lodge 27 May by G. L. Finch. Although there are 14 previous records it was last recorded in 1995 near Aylestone. I suspect this will prove to be a common species along the Soar valley and comparable marshy areas.

Nitidula bipunctata. A singleton was beaten from a bracket fungus in Cloud Wood on 1 July by G. L. Finch. With just three previous records: Bradgate Park 1848-1895 F. Bates, Kirby Muxloe 1922-1972 C. W. Henderson and Buddon Wood 1990 D. A. Lott.

Bruchidius villosus. See front cover. Three individuals were beaten off Broom from Swithland Railway sidings on 6 May by G. L. Finch. There are only five previous records for this species, given that Broom is a widespread shrub in the county this surely a concentrated effort would add significantly to our knowledge of its true distribution.

Corticeus unicolor. This species was added to the county list in 2012 at Cloud Wood by G. L. Finch. Additional individuals were found here in a totally different area where at least eight were beaten from a bracket fungus in a deeply shaded part of the wood. Also a remarkable high count of at least 80 individuals were beaten from a series of bracket fungi in Grace Dieu Wood, again in a very shaded area on 7 July by G. L. Finch. This constitutes a new VC55 site for this species. NBN status is IUCN (pre 1994) Rare, interpreted as being found in 15 or fewer 10 km squares.

Corticeus unicolor

Trichosirocalus barnevillei. At least five individuals were found on Yarrow at Great Central Railway sidings at Quorn on 28 April by G. L. Finch. There have been six previous records for this species; the last is stated Loughborough and interestingly also on the Great Central Railway in 1993 by P Kirby. The other records are very widespread, so it does not seem restricted to any certain locality, ranging from Cottesmore, King Lud's Entrenchments, Loughborough and even in Leicester City centre. The NBN maps show this to be on the extreme western edge of its distribution and designates it to be a Nationally Notable B. Yarrow is the main host plant for this species and

again considering how abundant this plant is, a dedicated search effort should add more records.

Graptus triguttatus Fabricius. Two individuals were found in Market Bosworth by D. & M. Penton at MV light. Nine previous records, last seen at Muston Meadows in 2014 by G. L. Finch, but previous to that, the last record was Loughborough Big Meadows in 1993 by A. C. Sanderson. With a host plant of Ribwort Plantain, another abundant plant in VC55, sweeping the host ought to add more records for us.

Graptus triguttatus

Stop press

The longhorn beetle ***Leptura quadrifasciata*** was photographed at Hick's Lodge on 27 August by S. Plant. Once the ID is confirmed this will be a new county record. It seems the larvae of this species prefer dead or decaying wood, especially of fallen trees or the lower parts of standing trees usually in the damper areas. I guess, as with most longhorns, it is just a case of looking closely at all flowers during the summer months, especially Umbellifers, knapweeds, etc., you never know.

The above represents quite an impressive list and demonstrates the possibilities that we have to add noteworthy beetle records to our knowledge. They do not have to be rare species and as there is hardly anyone seriously recording beetles in VC55 all records are important. The rare species are a bonus for the time and effort we put into our hobby. Also it is quite obvious there is the great potential of finding rare species plus species that are on the move, locally and from neighbouring counties. There are several other species not mentioned in the above list, which have very few records and seemingly (to us at least) no apparent reason for their restricted distribution, so the more of us that are looking, the more we will find. As with many other "small order groups" beetles are not getting the attention they deserve. There are over 4000 species in Britain and Ireland, over 2000 have been recorded in VC55, about 400 species get recorded annually, where are the other 1600 species? Okay some will probably never be re-found in the county, but that still leaves a lot of beetles out there for us to go at.

Graham Finch

More of Graham's beetle finds are regularly reported in Loughborough Naturalists' Club quarterly journal *Heritage* - Ed.

Wasp *Gorytes laticinctus* moving north

Despite the general shortage of wasps mentioned in the editorial, one surprising species that has shown up a few times in and around Leicestershire is *Gorytes laticinctus*. The first VC55 record seems to be my own from Croft Hill on 29 Jun 2014. The specimen ID was verified by Matt Smith of BWARS. The BWARS map http://www.bwars.com/wasp/crabronidae/nyssoninae/gorytes-laticinctus shows a thin scatter of dots in southern England, a few in East Anglia and one in Lincs. Helen Ikin received a specimen from Shearsby collected by P. Adams in July 2015. It was probably the same species, unfortunately the specimen is incomplete and certain identification is not possible. David Gould posted photos on NatureSpot of another at Aylestone Meadows on 16 August 2015. Wasps caught at Freeby and Ulverscroft by myself in 2016 appear to be this species, but I want to get them

Gorytes laticinctus female is about 13 mm long. Identification is fairly straightforward on a specimen, but a live insect may be

confirmed. I am more confident about further July specimens from Northants and Warks. The first Northants record, according to their records centre, was made the previous week! So this seems to be yet another "rare" (RDB3) wasp that is moving into the midlands.

Steve Woodward

Beetle bounty at North Farm, Shenton

Living in a Victorian farmhouse (SP394992) with adjacent brick buildings in various states of repair, surrounded by overgrown and weedy ornamental flower garden, vegetable garden and as a satellite, arable fields, we are used to a variety of wildlife crossing our threshold. As a rule, wild creatures are welcomed for the recording opportunities they bestow or, in the case of my Black Ant colony, the endless amusement experimenting with their choice of food and adventurousness. The Carabid beetle *Harpalus rufipes* is no stranger to the house and garden and is noted but poorly recorded every year, especially in late spring. Occasional years, however, seem to produce a real bounty, 2016 is one such, if not the best example we can remember for this easily identified beetle.

Harpalus rufipes, is one of 22 *Harpalus* species and is found commonly throughout the UK, it is a medium sized beetle of around 11-16 mm, with a general appearance of a red-legged, black beetle with a pubescent golden hue. A concise description and clear photographs can be found on the excellent Watford Coleopterist Group website www.thewcg.org.uk, or NatureSpot for description, photos and local sightings www.naturespot.org.uk. Looking at NatureSpot makes me realise that many of our common and fairly easy to identify species do need a boost from the recording community.

This is an easy beetle to find by turning logs and moving garden debris, bricks, sheets or similar and is often found with *Pterostichus madidus* and *Nebria brevicollis* and is, I expect, in most gardens especially those growing 'top fruit'. Despite the fact that, as with most Carabids, it is an active, nocturnal hunter it also revels in the name of 'Strawberry beetle' and is known to eat and be a serious pest of strawberry and raspberry fruit.

We often find odd examples of *H. rufipes* drowning in water barrels or stuck in buckets but 2016 has been a real explosion with tens of beetles in any upturned pot, jar or container with one or two specimens in all rooms of the house scurrying across the floor or marooned in the sinks or on a few occasions, the dog's dinner bowl (much to her disapproval). Unfortunately, we have only recorded a few examples of numbers in the past and these are a huge underestimate, however this year, we started with one on a woodchip pile on 2 May, on 20 May we noted 15 under a log on woodchip, on 29

Harpalus rufipes

May there were around 100 under a large sheet in the vegetable area and by the 4 June we counted around 40 inside the house and without moving from the back door counted a further 200 outside. On the 8th, I had given up on numbers and recorded '*Harpalus rufipes* everywhere in bowls, pots etc'. These numbers seemed to coincide with the hot and prolonged period of dry weather as by the 10 June I recorded 35 mm of rain in about 2 hours and 14 June 40 mm in a shorter time which put a severe dent in the numbers. I recounted this fact to Graham Finch (VC55 Coleoptera County Co-ordinator) on the 17 June and a quick check that day still produced five or ten beetles under any log or railway sleeper-sized object with close contact to the ground. Oddly, I have not noticed numbers as high as this on other parts of the farm or elsewhere.

A couple of ancillary comments I have noted on these beetles in the past are that it very commonly attracted to light and is often in our moth traps (both actinic and mercury vapour) but never in as high a number, around 30 on occasions, as we find sheltering under the MV light choke box placed on the floor. It appears to be attracted to the warmth. Beetles seem to be heading towards the house door rather than away from it.

We use very few slug pellets in the garden or on the farm but it and many other Ground beetles do appear to succumb to Metaldehyde pellets so be aware. Whether this beetle would be classified as 'living with man' due to its proximity to the house and our lifestyle, a garden pest or just a beneficiary of a non too tidy garden may be of some debate.

I had fully intended to make systematic counts throughout the Summer but unfortunately work commitments got in the way, however beetles were still being seen well into July but in much lower numbers.

I thank Graham Finch for his assistance.

Stephen Smith

DaNES
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Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Entomological Society 2016

The tiger bares his teeth

Fig. 1. Green Tiger Beetle larva, fished out of its burrow by poking a bit of grass down. I kept my fingers away from the sharp end! The blunt end of the larva is normally secured in the burrow by a pair of hooks (arrow) on its back. Photos: Steve Woodward

The Green Tiger Beetle *Cicindela campestris* is a large, predatory carabid. Like its namesake, the adult beetle (Fig. 2) grabs its prey with huge jaws. Its larva, however, is equally ferocious but hunts by stealth rather than running around. The larva (Fig. 1) digs a vertical tunnel in sandy soil then positions itself so that its flat head is flush with the ground's surface (Fig. 4). When an unsuspecting invertebrate wanders within range, the front of the larva springs out with is toothed jaws open (for a video of a related species, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6yfOQUiUbg). The victim is pulled into the burrow and consumed.

The Green Tiger Beetle occurs in several places at Bradgate Park, where it has been known since 1842 (Lott *et al*., 2011). A good place to see it is the path along the north wall, near Hallgates. The adult is around from March to August. Our records for larvae are between July and September. On 7 Sept 2016 we counted 100 holes (Fig. 3) in about 50 metres (SK538113), and the path is much longer than that. I guess there must have been 1000 holes.

Fig. 2. A pair of adults showing their fearsome white jaws.

Fig. 3. Many creatures (bees, wasps and other beetles) make holes in the ground, but with practice it is possible to pick out those likely to be occupied by Green Tiger Beetles. They are always on flat, open ground, neat, round holes, 4.5 mm diameter with no spoil heap. They are often clustered, like this. Probing six holes revealed a maximum depth of 110 mm. On the afternoon of 7 September, most holes were open, suggesting that the larvae had finished feeding.

Fig. 4. The larva's face is round and fits perfectly over the burrow like a man-hole cover. The jaws are held open in anticipation of the next meal!

The Green Tiger Beetle can also be found at Ketton Quarry NR and has recently turned up at Newfield Colliery (Woodward, 2012) and Bardon Hill (Finch, 2016). There are historic records for twelve sites (Lott *et al*., 2011) including the Vale of Belvoir - so keep your eyes peeled.

References

Finch. G. 2016. Beetles. *LNC Heritage* **222**.

Lott, D., Finch, G. & Price, G. A 2011. A Provisional Atlas of the Carabidae of Leicestershire & Rutland. *LESOPS* **25**.

Woodward, S. 2012. New Leics site for Green Tiger Beetle. *LES Newsletter* **47**.

Steve Woodward & Helen Ikin

The latest issue of *The Hemipterist* is now available for download at https://sites.google.com/site/thehemipterist .

The next issue will be published in Jan 2017.

More on Rutland Water Craneflies

The Malaise trap theme continues from *LES Newsletter* **54** as more work has been done to identify craneflies in the catches. There are now 35 species from the Rutland Water margin and another species has been added to the VC 55 list which now stands at 145 (the national total is 330). It is a member of the Cylindrotomidae called *Diogma glabrata*, a wet woodland species which seems to prefer the margins of aquatic habitats where some flooding occurs. It is widespread in Britain flying in June and July It occurred in a trap sample from Egleton in July 2015. The male terminal segment is very distinctive with its pincer-like claspers. The larvae have been found in terrestrial mosses on stones, or less often on soil. There are just four species in this family on the national list. The only other Leicestershire species is *Cylindrotoma distinctissima*, another wet woodland cranefly the larvae feeding on the leaves of Marsh Marigold, violet and some other small plants.

Another find at Egleton was *Tipula peliostigma*. The presence in VC55 of this species in 1934 was raised

by an historic record (*LES Newsletter* **50**, 2014) so it is good to know that it is still present. The larvae, unusually for a *Tipula*, have been recorded living in elm and birch logs. Five larvae were even found together in an old Song Thrush nest. Most records are in June from southern Britain but at Rutland Water it occurred in two trap samples in July 2015.

Male terminalia of *Diogma glabrata*.

A female specimen of *Tipula helvola* was trapped in the Heron Bay Malaise trap (sample 30/7-6/8/2015). I reported the first VC55 record of *Tipula helvola* from Dimminsdale NR in September 2015 (*LES Newsletter* **53**, 2015). This reserve spans the Leicestershire/Derbyshire border. Although the specimens were taken on the Leicestershire side of the boundary, it was only by about 100 m, so it is good to have a record from well within the Vice-County. *Tipula helvola* is widespread in the southern half of Britain and the adult emerges in June and July.

John Kramer

Looking for help?

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

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

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

Arachnids (Spiders, pseudoscorpions):- vacant.

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@btinternet.com

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

Diplopoda:- Helen Ikin (see Chilopoda).

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

Diptera (Syrphids & Stratiomyids):- Ray Morris (see page 2).

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

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

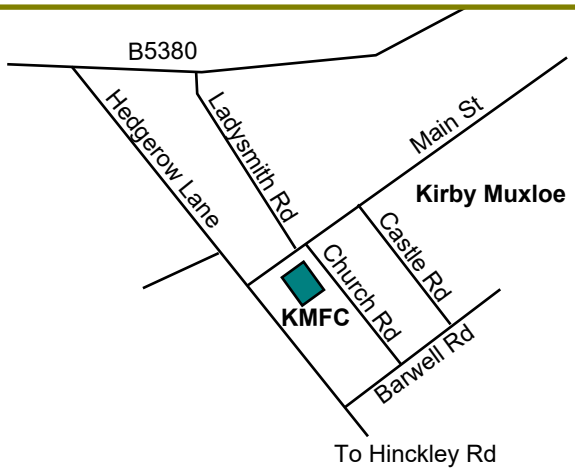
Plant Galls:- Maggie Frankum, see page 2.

Psocoptera:- Helen Ikin, see Chilopoda.

Thysanoptera: - Ivan Pedley, see Mites.

Reminder of spring ... this Peacock was one of the over-wintering generation.
Buddon Wood, 3 May. Photo: Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS.

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.

Thursday 20 October 2016 - Members' evening

This is your evening, a chance to share the highlights or disappointments of the entomological year. Bring along any digital images* or 35 mm slides plus anything you want to exhibit. New books or gadgets and your comments on their practicality are also welcome. If you are bringing 35 mm transparencies please bring your projector.

* if bringing digital media, please be sure to virus check them.

Thursday 17 November 2016 – 'Attenborough Nature Centre – The 1000 species challenge'

Tim Sexton will show us the habitats for visiting entomologists and the the challenge he set for himself to record a 1000 species in a year. Tim's photography is exceptional and he includes all invertebrate orders.

Thursday 15 December 2016 - LES Annual General Meeting.

The first part of the evening is our AGM. The second part of the evening is a feast of mince pies and Christmas cake, whilst watching members slide presentations* and/or exhibits.

Thursday 19 January 2017 – Speaker to be confirmed

Thursday 16 February 2017 – Kate Nightingale – 'How I got interested in insects'

Kate talk will tell us about her journey into the world of insects through her personal observations and their identification and will be illustrated by her super photographs.

March 2017 – 'Annual Moth Recorders Meeting' Date and venue to be announced.

Anona Finch