LEICESTERSHIRE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

VC55

NEWSLETTER 64

January 2021

Dragonflies in Leicestershire and Rutland 2020

2020 will long remain in the memory as an exceptional year in many ways, and this description certainly holds true in terms of dragonfly recording in VC55. A period of unusually favourable early-season weather coincided with a large number of recorders having much more time on their hands than usual, either agreeably or imposed under duress! Overlay this onto an Odonata population which included a handful of new colonists and several other species with clearly expanding populations and the result is what can only be described as a season of dragonfly revelation.

Hairy Dragonfly *Brachytron pratense* was the first species to hit the headlines, as more and more sightings materialised from previously unrecorded localities. Between the end of 2019 and the end of 2020 this species demonstrated a 28% population increase in terms of 1 km grid squares occupied. Although the increased-observer factor must be considered, an ongoing range expansion of this species seems beyond doubt.

Small Red-eyed Damselfly, Measham, Leicestershire, August 2020.

The warm and dry spring weather also enabled focused recording efforts to establish a much better understanding of the VC55 populations of two new colonists, the Scarce Chaser *Libellula fulva* and Beautiful Demoiselle *Calopteryx virgo*, in the south of

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In this edition

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The editor will be happy to receive articles, short notes and photos (in focus please!) about insects or other invertebrates 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 2021

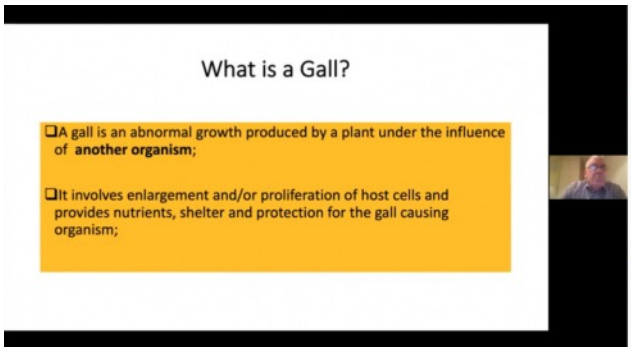
"You're still on mute"

When I was a child, Zoom was an ice-lolly in the shape of a space-rocket. These days it is a facility on the internet for virtual meetings, widely used by locked-down business but also by natural history societies for broadcasting lectures. Anyone with a screen and a connection can log in, having first received an invitation link from the organiser.

The first few minutes of a Zoom meeting are often chaotic, as newcomers struggle to find the controls – and need to be prompted to switch on their microphones – but things generally settle down and it works well. One big advantage over an in-person performance is that lecture attendees can sneak out to make a cuppa or (dare I say it) drop out un-noticed if the presentation does not live up to expectations.

This was certainly not the case for Chris Leach's excellent talk to the Leicester Lit. and Phil. Society (Natural History Section) on 6 January entitled *The challenging world of plant galls*. One of the topics covered in the talk appears on page 5. The Section has kindly made a recording of the talk available:

https://youtu.be/ceO5IHbpvbc



For more information about their other meetings, see:

https://www.leicesterlitandphil.org.uk/natural-history-section/

LES Members have once again answered my plea for articles and I am grateful to all contributors. It is heartening to see that we have some active and observant members, covering a range of insect orders, who are prepared to write down their experiences for all to enjoy.

Editor

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VC55. The distribution of the Scarce Chaser was plotted along the River Welland and, although more work remains to be done, it is apparent that its distribution is restricted to certain favourable sections of the river and it is certainly absent from many narrow and fast-flowing legs. Similarly, the Beautiful Demoiselle is tied to the relatively few suitable sections of the rivers Welland, Avon and Swift and therefore exhibits a very patchy distribution. Concerted observer effort did, however, pay dividends and between the end of 2019 and the end of 2020 this species demonstrated a 67% population increase in terms of 1 km grid squares occupied; there are now 15 occupied squares on the three rivers.

Another significant upsurge in records was witnessed with the Small Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma viridulum*, which really seemed to come to the fore in 2020 as the species' status leapt from something of a scarce and erratically distributed resident to the most common late summer species at a significant number of sites. Between the end of 2019 and the end of 2020 this species demonstrated a 40% population increase in terms of 1 km grid squares occupied. The most recent arrival to VC55, the Willow Emerald *Chalcolestes viridis*, also made its presence felt with some force, with recorded sites rising from two to six and with three-figure counts being made at Melton Mowbray Country Park; it seems inevitable the expansion of this species is set to continue with some vigour.

Willow Emerald ovipositing scars in willow branch. These distinctive linear or spiral markings are formed after eggs are laid directly into branches (usually willow) overhanging water, and galls develop. The galls are especially easy to find in the winter months then, in the following spring, the larvae hatch and fall to the water to develop within three months to adult emergence.

Scarce Chaser, River Soar June 2020.

Willow Emerald, Eye Brook, Sept 2020.

The species with the most enigmatic distribution in VC55 is the Common Hawker *Aeshna juncea*, which has for the last ten years retained a toe-hold in the sub-optimal habitat of remnant lowland

Common Hawker, Albert Village, Leicestershire, August 2020.

heaths in the north west of Leicestershire. After a recording absence of three years it was fantastic to chance upon a pristine adult close to a likely breeding pool at Albert Village, renewing confidence that our scarcest resident is still alive and well in VC55.

Two other events worthy of mention in this 2020 summary were the creation of a Leicestershire and Rutland Dragonfly Facebook Group, which has served as a great conduit for information and a general stimulant of wider dragonfly interest, and also the publication of a fully revised VC55 Dragonfly Checklist, which is hosted on the NatureSpot website. I would conclude by thanking the small but diligent band of VC55 recorders for their continued support in plotting the ever-changing distributions of our Odonata population during a particularly fascinating period of change.

Ian Merrill

Florodelphax leptosoma – a new planthopper for VC55

I recently picked up a useful field tip. If you're like me, there are certain species which you know well but can never remember the names of. The trick is to assign them a name you can remember, then look them up when you get home.

Among the hoppers (Auchenorrhyncha), the Planthoppers are easy to assign to the family Delphacidae (characterised by a large, apical movable spur on the hind tibiae), but mostly tricky to identify to species level. One exception is *Conomelus anceps*, which I find at almost every site I visit - but can never remember the name of. I have been able to resolve this difficult by christening them "Minions" (see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minions_(Despicable_Me)). Problem solved.

On a recent trip to New Lount, a few small dark Minions stood out from the crowd in the tray. On examination, these turned out to be *Florodelphax leptosoma* (confirmed by Alan Stewart).

This is a fairly common species found in a wide range of wetland habitats across the UK, but the fact that it has never been recorded previously in VC55 points to how seriously under-recorded the Auchenorrhyncha are as a group.

Alan Cann

Fig. 1 *Conomelus anceps*

Fig. 2: *Florodelphax leptosoma*

Are there crypt keepers raiding our oak galls?

Most of us are familiar with the fact that most of the wasp galls we find on oaks are subject to attack from inquilines (lodgers), ectoparasites and endoparasites all of which themselves may be subjected to further parasitism. Each type of gall, therefore, represents a small eco-system of as many as 30 different species. We can often see evidence of this multiplicity of inhabitants in, for example, the variety of exit holes seen in common marble galls. Caused by *Andricus kollari* (Fig. 1), it has always been assumed that all parasitoids (collective name for the inhabitants of these galls other than the gall causer) must be capable of ovipositing in an appropriate location within the developing galls and be capable of boring their way out of the gall once they are mature. But is this so?

Fig. 1. Marble Gall caused by *Andricus kollari* showing a multiplicity of exit holes of variable dimensions.

Over many years, I have observed a few mature *A. kollari* that have not quite been able to escape their galls. They seem to get to break through the outer layers of the galls and then die. (Figs. 2, 3 & 4). It seems to be so unfortunate; almost there but not quite. During 2020, a closer look at these dead wasps revealed that they are merely hollow "skins" and that there appear to be holes in their heads or upper thorax. The immediate thought was that these might have been attacked by weevils (or similar) awaiting for the "almost" emergence of their prey. Entrapped by the head, the wasps would be easy pickings for any hungry predator.

There is, however, another possible explanation. A wasp *Euderus set*, referred to as the "crypt keeper" wasp, has been described as a parasitic wasp which attacks the gall causing *Bassettia pallida*, a native of California and other states in the South West of USA. *B. pallida* oviposits in the finer branches of oak trees and the emerging larvae live in typical cynipid cavities causing the branches to swell into galls. Colloquially, these galls are called crypts. The crypt keeper wasps lay their ova in the galls and, on emerging, the larvae either feed alongside the *B. pallida* larvae or bury into their bodies. It seems that, in endoparasitic mode, the *E. set* larvae cause their hosts to begin to gnaw their way out of the gall but only until it reaches the surface.

Fig. 2: The head of a dead *Andricus kollari* plugging the narrow exit hole.

Fig. 3. A dead *Andricus kollari imago* in the exit channel of a marble gall.

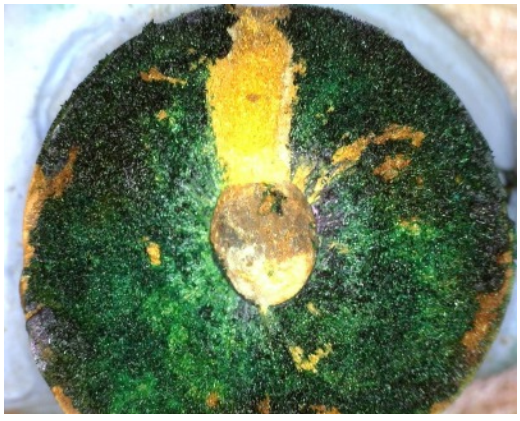

Fig. 4. A section of a cut marble gall with the cut surface stained to show the narrowing of the exit hole near the surface.

The gall wasp ceases to gnaw its way out but its head remains as a plug in the exit hole. The parasites continue to feed on their hosts finally burrowing through their hosts' heads, a much easier route to escape than boring through the hard oak branch. The outcome leaves hollowed skins of the gall wasps

plugging their gall exit holes (Ward *et al*., 2019). This begs the question, are the observations of the galls of *A. kollari* reported here the result of a similar attack by crypt keeper wasps. It would be helpful if LES members would collect and send me samples of marble galls over the next season for further examination (emaillbelow).

NB: *Set* is the Egyptian god of war, chaos and storms. Seems that the crypt keeper is aptly named.

Reference

Ward, A. K. G., Khodor, O. S., Egan S. P. , Weinersmith, K. L. and Forbes, A. A. (2019). A keeper of many crypts; a behaviour-manipulating parasite attacks taxonomically diverse array of oak gall wasp species. *The Royal Society Biology Letters* http://doi.org/10.1098/rsbl2019.0428

Chris Leach
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Fungus Beetles – a novice's experience

After the invertebrate abundance of summer ends and the autumn sets in, it is a good time to turn to fungus for a few 'easy find' beetles to top up the entomologists' lean time to come over winter. On most woodland walks, or indeed anywhere with a few mature deciduous trees, preferably beginning to die back, and with some fallen branches and trunks, there is always a chance of finding bracket fungi in the Polypore family, such as Hoof Fungus *Fomes fomentarius*, Dryad's Saddle *Polyporus squamosus*, Turkey tail *Trametes versicolor* or the *Ganoderma* species and, probably most commonly the Birch Polypore *Fomitopsis betulina*.

Fig. 1: *Mycetophagus quadri-pustulatus*

In all of these can be found beetles across several families. Many are very small – around the 1-4 mm size - and require a good microscope and an accurate key to arrive at least family, then to genus and, for many, even to species. The key that recently opened the door to these often-overlooked beetle groups is Andrew Duff's **Beetles of Britain and Ireland Volume 3: *Geoptrupidae* to *Scraptiidae*** (2020). For a keen amateur with a great will to learn and a lot of patience, this set of keys is a wonderful companion.

Fig. 2: *Tetratoma fungorum*

Fig. 3: *Dacne bipustulata*

The downside is that, without good dissection skills on tiny specimens and, in some cases, access to microscopy up to x100, some beetles remain beyond definitive identification to species but it is a good starting point for learning which families, and which genera within these, are likely to be found in various commonly occurring fungi.

With this as my focus, I have been on weekly forays for fungi across a number of sites in VC55. On every occasion I have returned with beetles aplenty. In order not to destroy habitat, I have only investigated or collected fungus samples where there have been more than two or three brackets of various ages on a given branch/trunk and have not taken very new brackets, as I have found older ones are more likely to be inhabited. Many samples have been looked through on site and left on or at the base of the tree they came from. Collected fungus samples are kept in lidded plastic buckets or large snap seal bags and worked through at home. An atomiser water spray keeps them moist enough for this. Where possible samples are returned to the original site once investigated, as there are many other inhabitants of the fungi that I am not collecting or identifying which can carry on their life cycles.

Below are a few finds from 2020. The identifications are mine, using Duff (2020) and the record numbers given are from the annotated ***Checklist to the Beetles of VC55*** (2020) compiled by Graham Finch.

Firstly, one of the larger fungus beetles I have found, in the Mycetophagidae family – commonly known as Hairy Fungus Beetles. This common species is *Mycetophagus quadripustulatus* (Fig. 1), this specimen being 5 mm. It was found in a Birch and Hazel copse by the Eyebrook, between Tilton and Skeffington, in a very 'ripe', wet Birch Polypore which had fallen to the ground. With 67 records, it is common, perhaps well recorded because of its size and noticeability and relative ease of identification.

Another fairly noticeable and commonly recorded beetle is *Tetratoma fungorum* (Fig. 2, 38 records), strikingly bi-coloured with a metallic blue lustre. This 5 mm specimen was found at Charnwood Lodge NNR in December on a Birch Polypore harvested from a

recently fallen trunk. The family Tetratomidae are commonly, and aptly, called Polypore Fungus beetles.

Smaller but again quite striking in appearance, is this species in the genus *Dacne*, in the beautifully named family of Pleasing Fungus beetles, properly known as Erotylidae. The orange pronotum of this 3 mm specimen makes it *D. bipustulata* (Fig. 3), again common with 33 records. This one was found in a large mixed outcrop of *Trametes versicolor* and old polypores on rotting logs in Aylestone Meadows in December.

There are many fungus-dwelling beetles which are harder to identify and it is within these families and genera I am striving to improve my skills. This example is a beetle in the Monotomidae family, sub-family Rhizophaginae, which live mostly under the bark or in fungi on broad leaved trees and can be mycophagous. Using Duff, this 3.5 mm specimen keyed out to *Rhizophagus bipustulatus* (Fig. 4). It was found in very rotted fungal birch wood at Charnwood Lodge in August. It is very common (74 records) and can be confused with the also common *R. dispar*.

Fig. 4: *Rhizophagus bipustulatus*

One of the hardest but nevertheless intensely interesting families is *Ciidae*, minute to small mycophagous beetles, within which is the genus *Cis*, my most frequently found genus on all kinds of Polyporaceae. Minute can mean a little over 1 mm with a 'big' species achieving up to 4 mm. With most *Cis* I have been finding ranging from 1-2 mm, I have struggled with my available microscope magnification and have not been able to dissect out an aedeagus to distinguish between species such as *C. festivus* and *C. vestitus*, if I have arrived at that point in Duff's key. However, I have been lucky enough to find the distinctive *Cis bilamellatus*, the male of which carries two very pronounced plates on the front of its head (clypeus) and the front of the pronotum. So it was helpful to find males among a sample of about 50 beetles in a Birch Polypore on the Rough at Charnwood Lodge in December. I have found upwards of 100 various *Cis* beetles across several sites so far, including some in very woody Hoof Fungus, but have not yet been able to key them out confidently. Looking at the VC55 checklist, it is clear that, while some *Ciidae* species have been recorded in good numbers, the majority have few records, a situation which could have resulted for some species from their difficulty of identification as much as from their scarcity, but we cannot be certain of that. Improving my microscopy and hopefully, sometime after lockdown, being able to get some supportive tuition, might enable me to move on from writing '*Cis* sp.' so often in my record notes.

Fungus foraging has taken on a whole new meaning for me and my lockdown exercise for the coming winter months will hopefully be filled with more of this activity and new finds to learn about. As my identification skills improve and with the help of supportive experts, I hope to put a few records on the VC55 map.

Annie Smith

Oh Deer

It is not unusual these days to find a Muntjac or Roe Deer on the roadside, killed by traffic.

So why is this Roe Deer, from Old Dalby in Sept 2019, in an entomological newsletter?

Look closer ... we are looking not at a deer but a seething pile of maggots in the shape of a deer. They have shaved off the fur which rests on the ground like a halo.

Steve Woodward

True Bugs (Hemiptera: Heteroptera) of Leics & Rutland

This article presents records of new and rarer species of True Bugs (Hemiptera: Heteroptera) in Leicestershire and Rutland over the last ten years.

There is an ongoing trickle of new insect species into Great Britain via many sources and this is often said to be a result of global warming. These generally arrive in the southern counties in the first instance but then begin a northward dispersal, arriving in the Midlands with the potential of encountering VC55 as their first county in the region. In this report the term region means the counties of Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire with Rutland (VC55). Another aspect which contributes to the discovery of these species is the persistent and detailed observations of the many naturalists whose efforts are now well augmented by the availability of modern digital cameras and the fantastic wealth of imagery on the Internet. These tools have contributed to the new species findings and the following is a brief update on some new, rarer county records of Heteroptera. Recorders' names are decoded at the end of the article. Space constraints have prevented all records from being included.

CORIXIDAE

Cymatia bonsdorffi – all records had been pre-1990 but there are now more recent reports from Priory Water, Asfordby (TC) since 2009 with a quantity of five in 2018. By comparison, this species has been recorded in several locations across Derbys. or Notts.

NAUCORIDAE

Ilyocoris cimicoides (Fig. 1) – the first record appears to be from 1969, followed by three later records to 2008. It has since been recorded from two locations at Lockington Marshes in 2010 (LK) and then at Watermead CP in 2015 (DN). The latest were in 2018 near Great Glen, Leicester (GC), Groby Pool, Leicester (DN) and Priory Water, Asfordby (TC).

NOTONECTIDAE

Notonecta obliqua – this species was not listed for Leics or Rutland up to 1955 (Massee, 1955) but a later publication listed 3 locations up to 1949 (Clements & Evans 1970) which suggests that there was a lack of communication at that period. Further reports went on into the 1960s with another gap until the 1980s. Since then the only next modern record was from Bradgate Park in 2013 (SFW & HI) but the most recent is now from 2018 at Slawston-Medbourne (TC & FC).

Fig. 1: *Ilyocoris cimicoides*. Photo: Steve Woodward.

Fig. 2: *Stephanitis takeyai*

HEBRIDAE

Hebrus ruficeps – There appears to have been just the one record in 2012 at Great Bowden Borrow Pit, Market Harborough (TC & FC).

TINGIDAE

Dictyla convergens – This wetland species of lacebug is quite local and a possible first for VC55 was reported in 2014 from Donington le Heath, Coalville (SFW).

Stephanitis takeyai (Fig. 2) – This is a new species to the Midlands being recorded mainly in the south after first appearing in London in 1998. It is a native of Japan off *Pieris japonica* and was introduced into the USA and Europe by the horticultural industry. It will also feed on *Rhododendron* & *Azalea* species and can become a pest. It was first reported from Notts & Leics in 2014, Anstey (MH); Staffs in 2016 and then another new location from Leics in 2018, Clarendon Park, Leicester (AS).

MIRIDAE

Dicyphus escalerae – This species was first reported in the UK in 2007. It feeds on *Antirrinum* plant species and is again likely to have arrived via the horticulture trade. First reports in the region have come from Staffs in 2016, Notts in 2014 and VC55 in 2008, Kingsway, Braunstone, Leicester (DG), where it was still present in 2009. A second location in 2011 was Sharnford Rd, Sapcote (GC).

Fig. 3: *Closterotomus trivialis*.

Fig. 4: *Pseudoloxops coccineus*. Photo: Mark Skevington.

Closterotomus trivialis (Fig. 3) – This southern European species is another plant bug to have recently arrived in the UK, having been found in London in 2008. There was a report for VC55 from Sapcote (GC) in 2018. The individual shown is a female with a general green coloration. By contrast the male appears generally more black except for the reddish tips to the wings (cuneus).

Pseudoloxops coccineus (Fig. 4) – This pretty plant bug was recorded in 2018 whilst light trapping at Whetstone (MS). It is the first report for VC55 although there are two records from the Derby area.

Oncotylus viridiflavus (Fig. 5) – This species has become more common since the possible first record for the region being in 1983 from Thorpe Satchville Cutting SSSI, Great Dalby by DGG. It was reported again from VC55 in 2008 Narborough Bog NR, (DG) and a further two locations in 2015 were Ketton Quarry (AJC, DG) and Wymeswold Meadows (DG). A second specimen from Ketton Quarry (KHN) was found in 2017 and the most recent records from 2018 are Empingham, Oakham (AD), Bagworth (ST) and Bagworth Country Park (ST). The bug is often found feeding on the flowering heads of Common Knapweed.

ANTHOCORIDAE

Tetraphleps bicuspis – This was recorded from Attenborough Arboretum, Knighton (GB) in 2013. It was previously reported from Braunstone in 1907 and later from Shepshed in 1964.

REDUVIIDAE

Empicoris vagabundus – The last of the earlier records of this species came from Ulverscroft (KNAA) in 1984 and the latest most recent records were from Sapcote (GC) in 2011 and Cropston (KHN) in 2015.

Reduvius personatus – This was reported from Market Harborough in 1949 but has now been recorded from near Buckminster,

Fig. 5: *Oncotylus viridiflavus*. Photo: Sue Timms.

Colsterworth (AR) and Whetstone, Leicester (MS & DN), both in 2015. There appears to be no previous records from Rutland.

LYGAEIDAE

Megalonotus antennatus – Another scarce ground bug from the south of England but one that was new to VC55 in 2009 from Little Stretton, Leicester (HB).

Megalonotus emarginatus – This species is also found mainly in the southern counties but was reported as possibly new to VC55 in 2010 at Croft Hill, Croft, Narborough (GC&JB).

Peritrechus lundi – This new county record was in 2014 from Croft Hill (MS).

RHOPALIDAE

Stictopleurus abutilon – Another southern England species which is rarer than the next and was not found in VC55 until 2006 and the last of the six location reports was in 2018 at New Parks roundabout, Leicester (DN).

Stictopleurus punctatonervosus – This species was considered to be the most northerly member of the genus in Europe, being found along the south coast from Kent to Dorset. By the turn on the present century the distribution had spread to the southern counties of England and into the Midlands. By 2010 it had reached Leicester and further records have appeared since – all clustered in the region of the city but for a Rutland specimen in 2014 Ketton Quarry (MS). Since 2010 it has rolled further north into Derbys & Notts but those fewer records are more widespread.

CYDNIDAE

Legnotus limbosus – This is another species which is widespread over southern Britain. The first VC55 record was in 2007 from Leicester and the latest from Attenborough Arboretum, Knighton (GB) was in 2014.

Sehirus luctuosus – There are only two VC55 records for this species; the first from Quorn (PG) in 2006 and the second in 2014 from near Slawston, Hallaton, Uppingham (TC).

SCUTELLERIDAE

Eurygaster testudinaria – Leicestershire has now had its first record for the Tortoise Bug. This was found at two locations in 2018. The first being from Leicester, Shady Lane Arboretum, Evington (SR) and the second near a sphagnum pond on Bagworth CP (ST). There was also a first record for Derbys in 2018.

PENTATOMIDAE

Rhacognathus punctatus – This was a new species for VC55 in 2017 from wet heath at Timberwood Hill, Charnwood Lodge NNR (RW). It is surprising that it had not been reported previously from the small amounts of wet heathland in Leicestershire.

Rhaphigaster nebulosa – This new arrival was first reported in London in 2010 and continues to be recorded from various parts of south London. A specimen was recorded however in 2018 from Magna Park (Industrial Warehouse Complex), Bitteswell, Lutterworth (CB). This was found and photographed amongst pallets of a distribution company and could therefore have likely been transported to this location.

Acknowledgements

The following list gives the recorders' names for the initials used in the text. Their records are acknowledged as an ongoing contribution to our knowledge of this group of insects within Leicestershire & Rutland. There are however many other recorders who submit ongoing records but are not mentioned as well as those who have provided earlier records. All of these efforts are likewise implicitly acknowledged but a more comprehensive report for VC55 is being compiled and all recorders will then be credited by name.

AD Andrew Dejardin; AR Adrian Russell; AJC Alan Cann; AS Annie Smith; CM Craig Mabbett; DG David Gould; DGG Don Goddard; DN Dave Nichols; FC Frank Clark; GB Gareth Burton; GC Graham Calow; HB Howard Bradshaw; HI Helen Ikin; JB Joe Botting; JC James Calow; KHN Kate Nightingale; KNAA Keith Alexander; LK Louisa Knight; MH Mike Higgott; MS Mark Skevington; PG Peter Gamble; RW Richard Wilson; SFW Steve Woodward; SR Saharima Roenisch; ST Sue Timms; TC Tony Cook.

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Dave Budworth

Cerambycid beetle, Borneo

Malay Harlequin *Paralaxita orphua*, Borneo

Katydid, Sri Lanka

Millipede, Borneo

Preying mantis, Costa Rica

Diopsid (Stalk-eyed Fly), Borneo

TROPICAL TREATS

Just a few goodies from my photo collection

Steve Woodward

2020 wildlife recording at Charnwood Lodge NNR during Covid 19

Yes, it's been a new challenge to adapt but willing legs, a much needed new pair of boots and an ever present camera have helped my recording continue.

In late April I was recruited by Neil Pilcher from LRWT to assist with animal husbandry at Charnwood Lodge National Nature Reserve, joining a small, merry band of volunteers across the week. It became necessary to block and later lock the vehicular entrance to prevent non-members and literally hordes of other visitors parking on the driveway, following the closure of Beacon Hill (amongst others) however I think Covid had a positive effect for some wildlife.

Having more time to look and observe certainly paid off as the weeks rolled by. I'll start with perhaps my favourite group: Moths. With two daytime finds *Grapholita internana* (not illustrated), a Gorse feeder and although widely distributed, it is very local. Found in Marl Field on the 18 May. Possibly under-recorded with only seven records of 24 moths, most of which are in NW Leicestershire. This was swiftly followed by *Pammene regiana* a Sycamore feeder that can often be found at rest on the bark.

Moth *Pammene regiana*

Six-spot Burnet *Zygaena filipendulae* f. *stephensi*

Forester Moth *Adscita statices*

Black-headed Cardinal Beetle *Pyrochroa coccinea*

Common in the UK with some 74 county records, more especially at light traps.

Any report in my mind would be lacking without a Forester Moth *Adscita statices*. A meadow species where Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa* is present. There seems to be few sites where it is recorded, with the nearby Warren Hills and Ulverscroft being other noted locations. From the same family (Zygaenidae) I also found a Six-spot Burnet *Zygaena filipendulae,* this one (I am told by the County Recorder Adrian Russell) is a form *stephensi*. This moth is the UK's commonest day-flying Burnet with its main food plant of Bird's Foot Trefoil.

Leopard Moth *Zeuzera pyrina*

The Charnwood Lodge Moth group was allowed in a very limited way to operate on seven different nights and we actually managed to amass 271 species (only 16 fewer than in 2019) and the star find was our first Leopard Moth *Zeuzera pyrina*, it not having been recorded on site since 2008.

Tearing myself away from moths, I recorded a number of beetles on the reserve. Four of the five species I shall detail are Saproxylic species (larvae feeding on dead wood). This supports the need for woodland to be left to become ancient woodland and even the conifers count.

Starting with what I thought was probably the best record, the Black-headed Cardinal Beetle *Pyrochroa coccinea* with three in the family. This was only the second record for the site and indeed the County, with only six other records.

Next find was an equally colourful click beetle *Ctenicera cuprea.* Associated with heath and moorland habitat, it is a large (11-16 mm) and variable species whose range apparently comes down from Scotland but not much past Northamptonshire. Luckily it was at the top of a grass stalk so an easy spot, 43 County records.

A click beetle *Ctenicera cuprea*

Beetle *Arhopalus rusticus*

Malthinus flaveolus was probably one of the smaller beetles I saw (5 mm). It is part of the Soldier Beetle family and is the largest of four in the genus. Most often found in hedgerow and woodland, but I must admit when I first saw it I thought it was a bug. With 33 VC55 records is almost restricted to ancient woodlands, so again confirms the quality of the woodland, which is pleasing.

A soldier beetle *Malthinus flaveolus*

Beetle *Salpingus ruficollis*

I cannot quite do a whole section without mentioning moth trapping again, as this *Arhopalus rusticus* popped along one evening. This mahogany coloured beetle is a conifer specialist, mainly nocturnal and living under pine bark, it eats just the pine needles. With only six VC55 records, this beetle has almost exclusively been recorded coming to light.

To complete my more unusual beetles *Salpingus ruficollis*. one of asmall family with 11 recorded members in the UK. This beetle is often mistaken for a weevil. It is generally found in association with dead wood and often predates on other insects: 29 VC55 records.

Moving to another order, Flies. Oh my, they are tricky things, so again thanks to the experts. I can start with one of the easier ones. I had several records for the Tapered Drone Fly *Eristalis pertinax*. although perhaps my favourite was the Bog Hover Fly *Sericomyia silentis* quite an unfortunate name for it, to my mind. Both are large

Tapered Drone Fly *Eristalis pertinax*

Bog Hover Fly *Sericomyia silentis*

A fruit fly *Terellia tussilaginis*

and colourful, the latter being less common (about 40 records).

One of the Fruit flies (*Tephritidae*) was observed in August, *Terellia tussilaginis,* a gall fly. The larva feeds within the flowering heads and later the achenes (fruit) of Burdocks as well as Spear and Creeping Thistles.

My nose led me to a first VC55 record in early November, ably assisted by Annie Smith. A fly taken from a Stinkhorn fungus has been verified as *Dryope decrepita* (Dryomyzidae), one of three in this family distinguished by having a slight wing shade and no setae on vein R1. Its larvae are reared from decaying organic matter and the adults can also be found on the same material.

Changing now into the mysterious world of galls. Oaks *Quercus* seem to attract a good number of gall forming species. On Turkey Oak (*Q. cerris*, a species which is reported as 'aggressively colonising areas of the British countryside and displacing native plants') I found, what is sometimes referred to as the Slug Gall. It is caused by the larva of the Cynipid gall wasp *Neuroterus saliens*. First recorded in the Country in 2006, there are three other VC55 records.

It would be remise of me not to mention a Caddisfly *Athripsodes bilineatus*. It was attracted to a light trap not far from the stream that runs through the reserve. Previously well recorded but, I believe, with only a few records since the 1990s.

Caddisfly *Athripsodes bilineatus*

So – an exciting year with some unexpected results, no doubt afforded by that precious thing – time, plus a good appetite to do endless searching of websites and pester several experts. My thanks to those who continue to enthuse, encourage and assist with identifications, especially for this article. It continues to amaze me what Charnwood Lodge NNR has to offer and is a real County gem.

My thanks in particular to Ann Smith and also to Adrian Russell, Chris Leach, Graham Finch, David Nicholls, Ray Morris and Brian Wetton.

A fly *Dryope decrepita*, SK471154, 12 Nov 2020. Ray Morris determined the specimen, which will be added to the county reference collection. Photo: Ann Smith.

"Slug Gall" on oak made by a cynipid wasp *Neuroterus saliens*

Margaret McLoughlin

Update on adult caddis recording in VC55

We currently have about 12,000 records of adult caddis many of which have been taken at light traps throughout VC55. The local list now stands at 120 species with the possibility of a couple more that could be expected to be found in VC55. The 2020 results (69 species and 4,000+ specimens so far) are not quite complete but even so we are averaging around 1,300 records each year since intensive monitoring started about five years ago. All specimens that are sent to me are checked for identity by genitalia examination. In some cases the recorder has sent a photograph with a suggested identity which, when the corresponding specimen is examined, is found to be incorrect. Adult caddisflies have a tendency to be some sort of "brown" job (Figs. 1 & 2) although a handful are easily recognised using photos.

Fig. 1: *Halesus radiatus* Leicester Forest East, 5 Oct 2020, Dave Gamble.

In addition to adult caddis, larval records are periodically received from the Environment Agency (which does surface water invertebrate quality monitoring) via National Recorder of Trichoptera, Ian Wallace, and these add vital information on the habitats favoured by some species – but not all! A good example is *Limnephilus auricula* which is a frequent visitor to light traps in spring and autumn but has only been recorded as a larva from two ponds. The species breeds in small water bodies which are not covered by the EA scheme. Accordingly by combining larval and adult records a reasonably accurate assessment of our VC55 fauna can be arrived at.

The few so-far unrecorded species that can be expected to turn up in VC55 tend to be the overlooked so-called "micro-caddis". One way to increase our idea of the frequency of these very small (<5 mm) caddis is by collecting the inevitable "dust" at the bottom of a light trap which contains much more than moth scales! An example of this was when Graham Calow sent me the

Fig. 2: *Phryganea grandis* (female) Broughton Astley, 19 May 2020, Adam Poole.

debris from his Sapcote trap of 24 June 2020. The catch of 18 species (412 individuals) included in the debris one female *Agraylea multipunctata*, 44 male *Agraylea sexmaculata*, one female *Hydroptila tineoides* and 21 male *Oxyethira flavicornis*. Along with these were 61 *Leptocerus tineiformis* (22 male, 38 female) and an amazing 264 *Mystacides azurea* (all but four being female). I am more than happy to wade through such debris as many of our smaller species are under-recorded.

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 (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):- Paul Palmer palmerpjp@gmail.com.

Arachnids (Pseudoscorpions):- Ed Darby 01509 569670 lboro.ecols@ntlworld.com

Biological Recording:- Sue Timms, Leics & Rutland Environmental Records Centre; Room 400, County Hall, Glenfield LE3 8RA. 0116 3054108 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: finchgraham1@gmail.com

Collembola: Alan Cann, 17 Overdale Road, Leicester LE2 3YJ. alan.cann@gmail.com Online identification guides: https://collembolla.blogspot.com/p/identification-guides.html

Diplopoda:- Helen Ikin (see Chilopoda).

Diptera (Some families):- 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. davidnicholls125@gmail.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:- County Moth Recorder Team:- VC55CMR@gmail.com

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.

Plant Galls:- Maggie Frankum, see page 2.

Psocoptera:- Helen Ikin, see Chilopoda.

Thysanoptera: - Ivan Pedley, see Arachnids - Mites.

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

2021-2022 Indoor Meetings Programme

It will not have missed your notice that the indoor programme 2020-2021 has been curtailed by the present pandemic!

However, we live in hope that our 2021-2022 winter indoor session will be able to go ahead and the dates below have been provisionally booked at Kirby Muxloe Free Church.

At this time, no programme has been arranged and it is likely that if the present situation continues sessions may have to be by video link. Accordingly we will ask potential speakers if they are willing to give their presentations either in the flesh or by Zoom - either way this will allow the LES to function more normally! If by video then bring your own chocolate digestives!

Any offers/suggestions for contributions to the programme should be sent to our Secretary, Anona Finch. Dates provisionally booked, all Thursdays:

21 October 2021 - Members' contributions

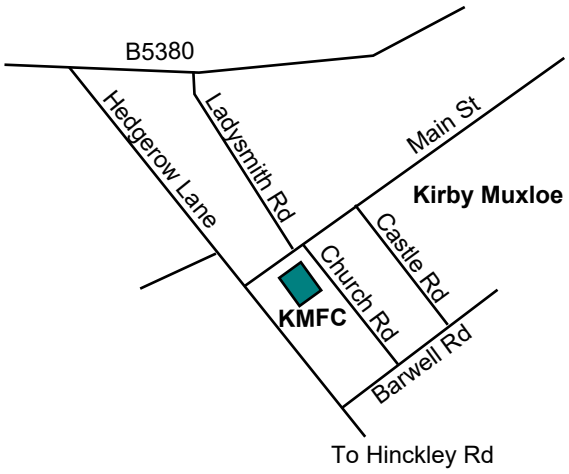
18 November

16 December

20 January 2022 - AGM

17 February

17 March



Ray Morris, LES Chair