

NEWSLETTER 65

September 2021



Tachinid fly *Siphona geniculata*. See article on p. 14. Photo: Dave Nicholls.

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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 Jan 2022

Editorial

I opened up my moth trap this morning (19 September) to find it full of craneflies. I felt somewhat guilty about letting them go without trying to identify them, but there is a limit to what I can cope with.

For the past few years I have been concentrating on botanical recording, trying to even-up the recording coverage throughout Leicestershire and Rutland. Entomology has taken a back seat, however I do record a few "easy" insects during the botanical excursions: butterflies, day-flying moths, some Odonata, Orthoptera, and Horse-chestnut Leaf Miners! Many of the sites are unattractive to naturalists (that is why I am there), so I assume that my casual sightings of Red Admirals, etc., are useful for filling holes in the distribution maps. Occasionally something unexpected turns up - such as the hitherto unknown colony of Silver-washed Fritillaries in Garthorpe parish.



While botanising at Seaton, Rutland, in April we recorded the bee *Melecta albifrons* feeding on Ground Ivy *Glechoma hederacea*.

I extend my thanks once again to the authors of articles, including a couple that I have not included for reasons of space. They will appear in a future edition or in another format elsewhere. Please do consider writing a piece, half a page is fine. Maximum length for a Newsletter article would be about 4 pages (roughly 2000 words, depending on the number of illustrations). Please send text, sharp photos, graphics and any table data separately to make it easy for me to put them into Desk Top Publishing.

Editor

***Mocydiopsis attenuata* - persistence pays off**

My vacuum sampler (see Newsletter 63 p. 14) had been my constant companion during 2020. Mostly, I have used it so extract 120 species of spider - from *Agelena labyrinthica* to *Zygiella x-notata* - from their hiding places. In a normal year, 120 species would not be a very impressive proportion of VC55's 350 spider species, but as we all know this has not been a normal year. However, along with the spiders have come many other riches, and in mid-summer, the Auchenorrhyncha (cicadas, leafhoppers, tree-hoppers, planthoppers and spittlebugs) abound in every bagful of sucked sample. Getting my head around these bugs has not been easy, and has also involved expenditure on big German books, as these insects seem to be more "popular" on the continent than in the UK.

The Cicadellidae (Leafhoppers) are quite a challenging group, but with some persistence, I finally managed to identify many of them with a decreasing amount of pain. One of the species I came across a number of times was *Mocydiopsis attenuata*. At least, I think they were *M. attenuata*, but all the specimens I found were female. Although there are only three UK species of *Mocydiopsis* they are not easy to identify, and the females really cannot be safely identified to species level. And there is the problem - without male genitalia to dissect out, you can kiss many possible records goodbye. Finally, at Warren Hills in November, in amongst more than a dozen females I finally found a male. From then on it was "easy" due to the characteristic aedeagus.

Alan Stewart (Auchenorrhyncha Recording Scheme Organiser) was able to confirm this for me from the male aedeagus. Dave Budworth tells me there is only one record of *M. attenuata* from Nottinghamshire, from the acid heathland of Budby South Forest, and there is one previous VC55 record in the ORCA



Fig. 1: Leafhopper *Mocydiopsis attenuata* (male), 4 mm long.



Fig. 2: *Mocydiopsis attenuata* aedeagus (the insect equivalent of a penis).

database (from a post-industrial site in Ashby de la Zouch), but my experience suggests this species is not particularly rare in VC55. At least, the females are not uncommon, but that's the problem - the males are rare as hen's teeth. I believe that explains why we have so few records for what seems to be to be a relatively common species.

Alan Cann

Moths and other creatures from a Broughton Astley garden

Despite a very slow start to the 2021 mothing year, things picked up quite well and my new garden in Broughton Astley (SP5293) produced more life firsts and some old favourites. The star of the show, caught on 19 July 2021, was Peach Blossom *Thyatira batis*, a moth my dad and I have been hoping to catch ever since we started recording moths. It has only taken 29 years of waiting, but well worth it!



Peach Blossom



Dark Marbled Carpet

Another one I have really wanted to see is Dark Marbled Carpet *Dysstroma citrata*. Every year I avidly check each Common Marbled Carpet *Dysstroma truncata* just hoping one may be a little different, and suddenly, there it was! In fact, there were two, so that's another species ticked off the life list.

Some other new ones to me included the micros *Calamotropha paludella*, *Callisto denticulella* and *Calybites phasianipennella* and the macros Tree-Lichen Beauty *Cryphia algae*, Treble-Lines *Charanyca trigrammica* and Round-Winged Muslin *Thumatha senex*.

*Calamotropha paludella**Callisto denticulella*

It was also nice to see some old favourites that I have not recorded for a few years; including Powdered Quaker *Orthosia gracilis*, Twin-Spotted Quaker *Anorthoa munda*, Broad-Barred White *Hecatera bicolorata*, Brown-Line Bright-Eye *Mythimna conigera*, Champion *Sideridis rivularis*, Drinker *Euthrix potatoria* both male & female, Oak Nycteoline *Nyctola revayana* and Sallow Kitten *Furcula furcula* which was very well camouflaged against the garage wall.



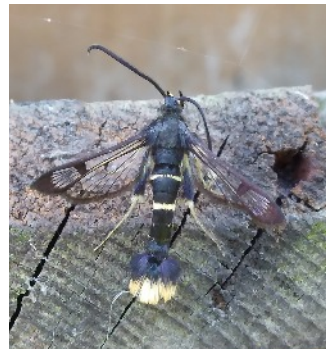
Powdered Quaker



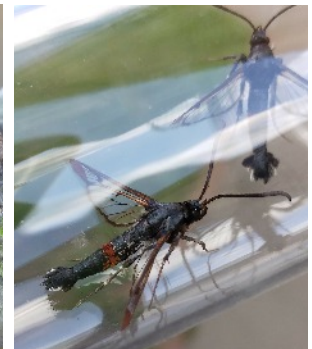
Broad-Barred White

Still on the theme of moths, quite a few people have had great success with pheromone lures recently so I purchased a trap and a few Clearwing lures to have a go myself. On 9 July at 9 am I hung the trap in the garden loaded with the lure for the Red-Belted Clearwing *Synanthedon myopaeformis*. It was a moderately sunny day with a slight breeze. I did not expect anything as I had always come to think of Clearwings as very elusive and almost impossible to locate unless you were right in amongst their habitat; however, I was proved very wrong! By 11 am there were four Red-Belted Clearwings in the trap! I was astonished!

With this success, on 14 July I deployed the other two lures I had purchased. Within 20 minutes I had attracted an Orange-Tailed Clearwing *Synanthedon andrenaeformis* and in about an hour had two Red-Tipped Clearwings *Synanthedon formicaeformis* come to the other lure. Needless to say, I'll certainly be purchasing more lures to try in 2022!



Orange-Tailed Clearwing



Red-Tipped Clearwing

While mainly focusing on moths, one or two other creatures occasionally catch my attention so I thought I'd share a few from this year.

A nice selection of ladybirds including 10-Spot *Adalia decempunctata* on 30 May, Orange *Halyzia sedecimguttata* on 1 July, Cream-Spot *Calvia quattuordecimguttata* on 27 July and Pine *Exochomus quadripustulatus* on 31 July.

Adam Poole

***Eupachygaster tarsalis* - New soldierfly for VC55**

The Pachygastrinae of the Stratiomyidae (soldierflies) is a small group of five species in four genera. They are small dumpy-looking flies that can be recognised as soldierflies by the distinctive small discal cell in the wing. The separation of the five species is straightforward. If the wings are clear look at the femora colour - if yellow then it is *P. leachii* (regularly seen in VC55); if black then it is either *Neopachygaster meromelas* or *Zabrachia tenella* (both of which have not been recorded in VC55). If the wing has a darkened base then the shape of the scutellum will separate *P. atra* (regularly recorded in VC55) from *Eupachygaster tarsalis* not seen in VC55 until this year!

A Rothamsted light trap runs every night of the year at the Allerton Project in Loddington, East Leicestershire. In line with other such traps nationwide, macromoths are collected and submitted to the Centre for Hydrology, for identification and addition to the extensive database they have. The remainder of a catch is checked over for anything unusual and then passed to me to look for adult caddis. During a check of the trap material from the night of 25-26 July 2021, John Szczur who maintains the trap, recorded a male and two female *P. atra* and three male and one female *P. leachii*. Unexpectedly he then found the first VC55 record for *E. tarsalis* noting that he was aware of a record over the border in Northamptonshire.



Soldierfly *Eupachygaster tarsalis*. Photo: John Szczur.

It turns out that nationally this is probably an easily overlooked species with a scattered distribution primarily in the southern half of Britain. The need to check the scutellum shape to separate *P. atra* and *E. tarsalis* is indicative of the need to be careful when identifying similar-looking species. Perhaps more records of this new species may then emerge!

Ray Morris



Soldierfly *Eupachygaster tarsalis*. Photo: John Szczur.

White sorting trays available at Dunelm

These are useful for sorting though leaf litter or tipping out the contents of the pond dipping net. A local source is Dunelm. The product name is Wham Studio utility basket and they come in various sizes. The one illustrated measuring 350 x 256 x 81 mm costs £2.75. They seem quite rigid but not brittle, so hopefully they will survive field use.

<https://www.dunelm.com/product/wham-studio-plastic-storage-basket-501-1000152832>



Steve Woodward

A Rare Springtail?

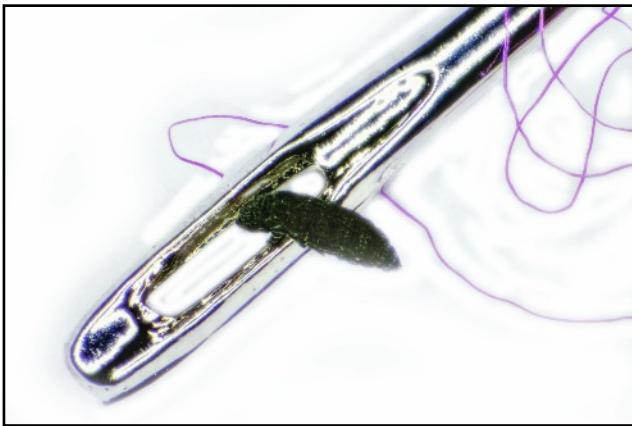


Fig. 1. Springtail on sewing needle, the fibre is a polyester filament.

The Collembola (Springtails) are divided into three main orders:

- Entomobryomorpha - long-bodied springtails with well-developed furculae (forked springs).
- Poduromorpha - the "foot tails" with short, flat, furculae.
- Symphypleona - globular springtails with fused abdomens.

In the field, the Poduromorpha tend to be far less visible than the other two orders. They are slow-moving and small - sometimes very small (Fig. 1). Although a few are brightly coloured, many are dark (appearing black and difficult to spot against soil) and the majority are very pale. Unlike the Entomobryomorpha and the Symphypleona they have few distinguishing features and are mostly impossible to identify without high powered microscopy. Shockingly, for such a common group of organisms - present in every handful of damp organic matter including moss, leaf litter and soil - they are almost universally ignored. Because of the difficulties of identification, I have been as guilty of this as everyone else and it took lockdown to force me to change my ways.

In February 2021 Graham Calow sent me some specimens of a group of springtails he had found grazing on a patch of damp lichen on a church wall. He had provisionally identified these as *Hypogastrura viatica*, thought to be one of the commonest species in this genus. On looking at them, my first thought was "small black springtail" - about 1 mm long. After a few habitus photos (Fig. 2) I was forced to put them under



Fig. 2. *Hypogastrura* grazing on lichen.



Fig. 3. *Hypogastrura manubrialis* tibiotsarsus 3, one clavate tenant seta.

the microscope - their small size demanding use of a compound rather than a stereo microscope. Their very short anal spines plus four-lobed post-antennal organ confirmed them as *Hypogastrura*, at which point things became more difficult. More than 20 British species have been described in this genus, most of which are not valid as they are synonyms, misidentifications or based on a single historic specimen. In the 2007 AIDGAP key (Hopkin, S.P. (2007) *A key to the Collembola (springtails) of Britain and Ireland*. FSC publications), Steve Hopkin recognized nine UK species, three relatively common and the others rare.

The next stage in identification involved my least favourite part of entomology, chaetotaxy - the arrangement of bristles on various parts of the anatomy. After a good deal of bad language and many mugs of tea I was able to confirm that these specimens had a single clavate (club-shaped) seta on each tibiotarsus (bear in mind that the whole animal is only 1 mm long!) (Fig. 3 - tibiotarsus 3). This eliminated two of the "common" species (*H. purpurascens* and *H. viatica*), but four of the nine species in the genus have a similar setal arrangement, so I needed to guard against the Sapcote effect - the unexpected presence of rare fauna. Fortunately Steve Hopkin gives excellent drawings of the mucros, claws and empodia for each species. The distinctive elongated empodium was all that was needed to prove that the Sapcote springtails were *Hypogastrura manubrialis* (Figure 4).

We have one previous VC55 record for this species, made by Helen Ikin at Grace Dieu in 2012 and confirmed by the National Recorder Peter Shaw. It is clear that this species has an ecclesiastical bent. The foot tails are a pain in the backside, but they do deserve far more attention than they receive.



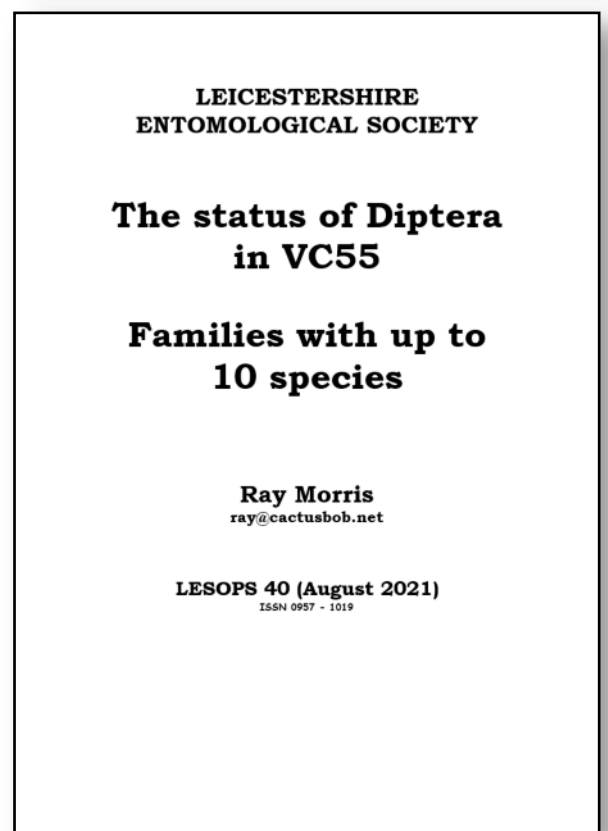
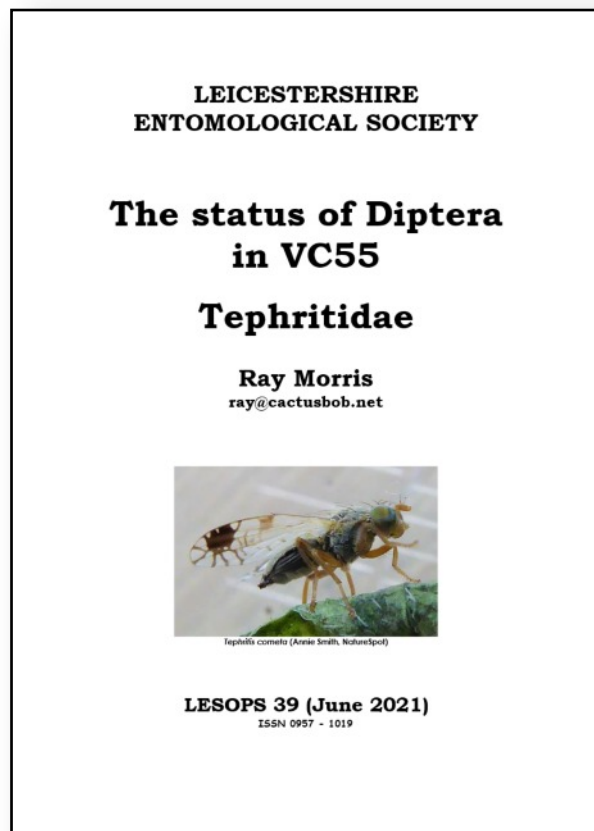
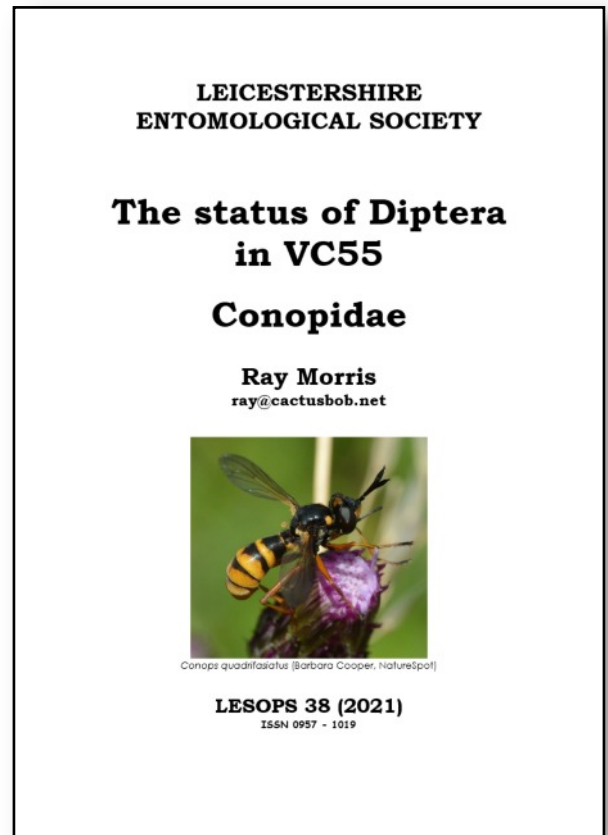
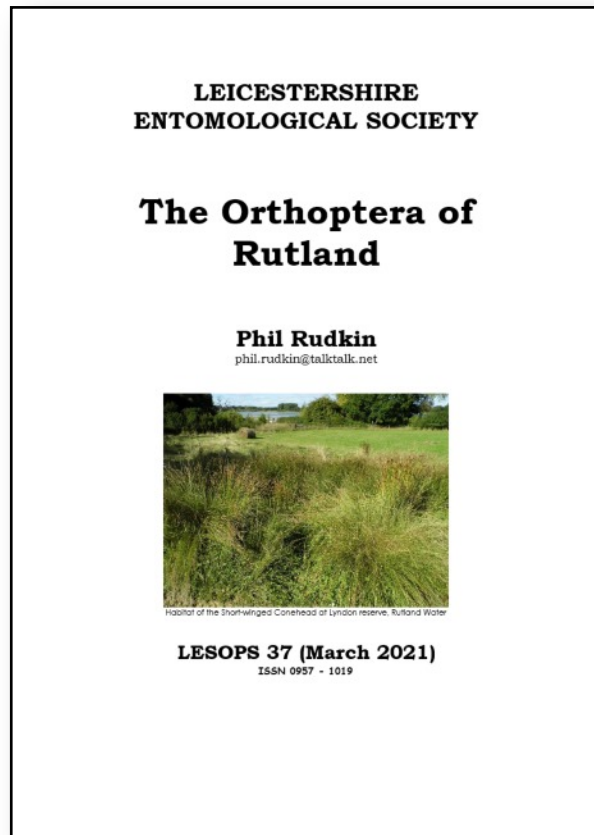
Fig. 4. *Hypogastrura manubrialis*, distinctive elongated empodium.

Alan Cann

Recent LES Occasional Publications

These are available from:

<https://www.naturespot.org.uk/content/leicestershire-entomological-society>



Peckleton Church BioBlitz

Saturday 17 July saw the inaugural BioBlitz of Peckleton Church grounds (SK470008), organised by Kate Strong, local resident and enthusiastic leader of Peckleton's *Living Churchyard* project, a national scheme to turn church grounds and cemeteries into sanctuaries in which nature can flourish. As one participating Diocese states on its website, "in some parts of the country they are the only protected eco-systems in their area where remnants of the local flora and fauna can survive".

The Church of St Mary Magdalene dates from the 14th century and lies south of Peckleton village, surrounded by agricultural land and the former Tooley Park Estate buildings. The grounds cover just under one acre (excluding the footprint of the church) and until quite recently the grass had been closely mown on an all too regular basis. Prior to the BioBlitz, Steve Woodward and Dave Nicholls had alerted Kate Strong and Chris Whitby (Churchwarden) to the potential biodiversity value of the unimproved species-rich grassland.

The Peckleton project was officially launched on 10 July when locals were invited to read (and hopefully heed) various informative displays highlighting the importance of everything from the lichens on the headstones and the slugs in the drainage gullies to the bats in the belfry. Kate produced a map showing the different zones of short, medium and long grass, flower meadow and trees, log and leaf piles, with details of the reduced mowing and strimming regime.

Upon arrival I was greeted by a fluttering host of Harebells (superior to Wordsworth's daffodils!). Swathes of tall grass (Fig. 1) were punctuated by blazing orange Fox-and-cubs *Pilosella aurantiaca*, with Heath Bedstraw, Common Bird's-foot-trefoil and Common Knapweed somewhat less conspicuous.

Despite a temperature of 26°C and rising, it did not take long for enthusiastic participants, numbering about twenty, to start spotting and potting insects and



Fig. 1. Sue Timms searching the unmown grassland.



Fig. 2. Red-barred Tortrix *Ditula angustiorana*.

other invertebrates for identification by Ray Morris, Sue Timms and me.

As expected, grasshoppers were abundant, springing away when disturbed, but a few succumbed to the specimen pots and sweep nets. The shorter grass revealed numerous Field Grasshopper *Chorthippus brunneus* adults, plus some late instar nymphs, already sporting the strongly angled thoracic markings and hairy underside which are key to identification. The longer, coarser grasses revealed adult Meadow Grasshoppers *Chorthippus parallelus* which I identified retrospectively.

Assorted moths and butterflies made brief appearances, including Straw Grass-veneer *Agriphila straminella* and Garden Grass-veneer *Chrysoteuchia culmella*, the latter characteristically resting head-down on grass stalks and looking quite glossy in the sunshine.

Two Red-barred Tortrix moths *Ditula angustiorana*, (Fig. 2) unwillingly potted-up, were given time to calm

Fig. 3. Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris*.

Fig. 4. Swollen-thighed Beetle.

Fig. 5. Ground beetle *Leistus ferrugineus*.

down in my cool bag. The larvae are polyphagous on many plants including yew, and I have recently read in CABI's *Invasive Species Compendium* that the larvae pose a threat to Rhododendron (which is fine by me, having spent time wresting them out of LRWT reserves).

A typical form of the Six-spot Burnet *Zygaena filipendulae* was caught by a resident who had never seen one before and my first thought was 'thank goodness it's not an impossible-to-identify-in-the-field Five-spot'. The larvae feed on Birds-foot Trefoil and adults can frequently be found in flowery grasslands.

A Meadow Brown butterfly *Maniola jurtina* fluttered through, as did an elusive 'White' (*Pieris* spp.) that I am sure picked up speed as the sweep net drew near. A solitary Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris* rested long enough to show the orange underside of the antennae (Fig. 3), separating it from the otherwise similar Essex Skipper.

The more obvious beetle species included 7-Spot ladybirds *Coccinella septempunctata* and several Common Red Soldier Beetles *Rhagonycha fulva*, which unlike many other 'common' species, certainly deserves its prefix. One of its vernacular and wholly inaccurate names is the 'bloodsucker beetle' - and the other name you'll have to look up for yourself. The adults feed on aphids as well as pollen and nectar.

A female Swollen-thighed Beetle *Oedemera nobilis* (Fig. 4) was found resting on a grass stalk and despite lacking the swollen femora of the male, the bright iridescent green and tapered and gaping elytra made for easy identification.

Two potentially confusing ladybirds arrived on the 'specimen table' at the same time. Luckily, we had the typical form of the 2-Spot Ladybird *Adalia bipunctata* with red ground colour and black spots, but there are

different colour forms with varying patterns and numbers of spots. Our 10-Spot Ladybird *Adalia decempunctata* was a melanic form with large yellowish spots. This also has variable colour forms and spot pattern, and according to *UK Beetle Recording*, may have up to 15 spots. However, the leg colour is a key feature; the 2-Spot has black, and the 10-Spot has brown.

Next, a pair of very shiny dark orange ground beetles were brought for inspection. Just under 1 cm long and with a distinctively rounded pronotum, Graham Finch later confirmed as *Leistus ferrugineus* (Fig. 5), a nocturnal species that can be disturbed from grass tussocks, leaf litter and from under logs during the day. Adults and larvae feed on springtails and adults have uniquely shaped mouthparts for this purpose.

Instantly recognisable were a Marmalade Hoverfly *Episyrphus balteatus* and a male Long Hoverfly *Sphaerophoria scripta* which obligingly closed its wings to reveal an abdomen protruding well beyond. Then, a small, dark and slightly metallic fly with a short abdomen had me at a loss. Later that day, having consulted *Britain's Hoverflies* (Ball and Morris, 2013) I narrowed it down to 'tricky hoverfly that requires more investigation'. Brian Wetton, a local hoverfly specialist, subsequently confirmed *Chrysogaster*

Fig. 6. Hoverfly *Chrysogaster cemicolus*.



Fig. 7. A mirid bug *Plagiognathus arbustorum*.



Fig. 8. A mirid bug *Stenotus binotatus*.



Fig. 9. Nymph of a Hairy Shieldbug *Dolycoris baccarum*.

cemiteriorum (Fig. 6), a species of woodland margins and wet meadows. Adults visit umbellifers and other plants from late spring to late summer. Like other *Chrysogaster* species, the larvae are aquatic, living in mud and decaying vegetation at the edges of ponds and ditches.

Bugs were quite bountiful, particularly representatives of the Miridae family, including the small but extremely common *Plagiognathus arbustorum* (Fig. 7), with dark margins of the hind femora aiding quick identification in the field. A bug of grassy habitats, *Stenotus binotatus* (Fig. 8) was also caught. This is somewhat variable but fairly distinctive once you get to know it; males are generally yellow with extensive dark markings and females tend to be greenish-yellow with fewer and fainter markings, and both sexes become darker as they age.

Shortly after rescuing a mid-instar nymph of a Hairy Shieldbug *Dolycoris baccarum* (Fig. 9) from someone's sandwich box, I was brought an unmistakable bug with a robust oval body, black forewings, and a second antennal segment swollen towards the apex. This was *Capsus ater*, and unlike many other Miridae, tends to feed low down on grass stems rather than the heads or flowering spikes.

The Common Flower Bug *Anthocoris nemorum*, turned up in several locations. Sometimes known as a 'Pirate Bug' (for some unfathomable reason), it is only 4 mm long and can move quite fast so I suspect it is often overlooked.



Fig. 10. Potato Capsid *Closterotomus norwegicus*.

One individual requiring closer study was *Stenodema laevigata* - an elongated and long-legged species of grassland habitats. Adults vary from buff to green and the detail of the hind legs needs to be seen as it lacks the femoral spurs of two very similar species, *S. calcarata* and *S. trispinosa*.

Lastly, I explained to a visitor that the Potato Capsid *Closterotomus norwegicus* (Fig. 10) is unlikely to damage his spuds because it feeds on nettles, composites and clovers. This is a common and widespread bug, quite variable in appearance. Separation from similar species requires observation of the tibial spines and relative lengths of the antennal segments.

With mid-afternoon and increasing temperatures, participants started to drift away. I also headed home to sort through my notes and photos - and to double-check I hadn't made any embarrassing ID mistakes that would have me thrown out of the LES.

My overall impression was that Peckleton Church grounds is evidence of how a sympathetic maintenance regime can result in a hexapod habitat of great potential. The continuing efforts of Kate Strong and her cohorts will protect and enhance this site for the benefit of all creatures great and small.

Other recent records from Peckleton Churchyard can be seen via NatureSpot's 'Wild Places' page at:

https://www.naturespot.org.uk/peckleton_churchyard

Kate Nightingale

Finding the Willow Emerald Damselfly in Winter

Other than an odd unseasonal larval record, invariably discovered whilst renovating a garden pool, dragonfly record has always been a late-spring to autumn pastime in VC55; with the arrival of the Willow Emerald Damselfly, however, all this has changed! In terms of British Odonata, the Willow Emerald is unique in that it lays its eggs directly into the thin branches of trees overhanging water, mainly in September. Galls or swellings develop around the eggs, from which larvae hatch the following spring, to fall into the water below and develop within three months to adult emergence. Mark Tyrrell, the Northants Dragonfly Recorder, has told me previously that his preferred method of proving the presence of Willow Emerald at a site is to look for evidence in the form of ovipositing scars during the winter months. In the winter, when the trees in which the adult female has laid her eggs the previous autumn are devoid of leaves, the tell-tale scars can be obvious, once one knows where and precisely what they are looking for.

On 12 March 2021 I made my first attempt at finding ovipositing scars during the winter months, at a known site for this species, Melton Mowbray Country Park. Within an hour I had hit the jackpot, though only found two sets of scars during a full two hours searching. Regardless of numbers I was delighted to prove that the technique works and I am keen to pass on my findings to other potential observers.

Although literature suggests that several species of tree are utilised for egg-laying, I have only ever seen scars in willow, so would advise searching willows as the first preference. Willow Emeralds need to lay eggs into branches permanently overhanging water, so if searching in winter remember that water levels can change due to flooding and don't waste time on branches which may be above dry ground in the warmer months. A pair of close-focusing binoculars is essential and the attached images illustrate the habitat in which I found ovipositing scars at Melton.

In terms of the specific type of branches on which to search, my limited experience suggests between 1 and 2 m above water level is the prime zone in which to focus efforts, on stems around the thickness of a pencil or a little broader; this growth appears to be two years



Above: Willow Emerald habitat with thin twigs of willow overhanging the water. Below: close-up of a twig showing a row of galls

old, still being fresh and smooth-stemmed. The angle to the water's surface does not seem to be an issue and I have found scars on near-horizontal and near-vertical stems. The scars themselves appear as pin-hole puncture marks surrounded by swellings or galls, running in linear or slightly spiraling rows with wounds a couple of millimetres apart and over a length varying from approximately three to ten centimetres (see attached images). I have never found clusters of scars in close proximity, but in isolated patches, so diligent scanning of suitable branches from differing perspectives is the key, though it is worth noting that my experience is still very limited!

Hopefully these notes will encourage other observers to commence their dragonfly recording early this year and it would be fantastic to add some new sites for this recently-arrived species before any adults are seen. I am sure that any suitable habitat to the east of Leicester could potentially support Willow Emerald already and I would encourage observers to grab their binoculars and make an early start to the 2021 dragonfly recordings season. Needless to say, if you find any evidence please let me know.

Ian Merrill

The White-point moth

Mythimna albipuncta in VC55

For many years this species was described as being an immigrant and transitory resident (Skinner, 1984) in the British Isles, though by 2009 it was also described as being resident in Sussex, Kent, Surrey, Berkshire, Hertfordshire and Suffolk (Skinner, 2009). By 2017 its range as a resident had extended into central southern England, north at least to Oxfordshire, and to the south-east Midlands (Waring & Townsend, 2017)

Up until the end of 2020 there have been 12 records of this species in VC55 (Table 1), all of which were presumed to be migrants:

Date	Location	Qty	Recorder
26-Sep-98	Barrowden garden	1	Ron Follows
03-Sep-06	Lyddington garden	1	Derek Lee
10-Sep-08	Lyddington garden	1	Derek Lee
02-Oct-15	Barrowden garden	1	Ron Follows
27-Aug-18	Rutland Water NR	1	Ron Follows
07-Nov-18	Morcott garden	1	Dave Cole
24-Sep-19	Braunstone garden	1	Len Holton
29-Jul-20	Luffenham Heath Golf Course	1	Ron Follows
20-Aug-20	Barrowden garden	2	Ron Follows
03-Sep-20	Rutland Water NR	1	Ron Follows
14-Sep-20	Luffenham Heath Golf Course	2	Ron Follows
19-Sep-20	Newton Harcourt garden	1	David Scott

Table 1. VC55 records to 2020.

However, the picture changed in August of 2021, with a flurry of records from a number of new areas of VC55 in the second half of the month.

Social media greatly aided the recording of this species, with the first few sightings being reported on the Butterflies and Moths of Leicestershire & Rutland Facebook group (www.facebook.com/groups/1509011432652736/).

This also allowed photographs to be posted that helped in the separation of this species from the similar Clay *Mythimna farrago*, which is a common resident in VC55. The shape of the white discal spot in the White-point (dot like) is often cited as one of the main differences, though this can be misleading in worn example of the Clay (that usually has a comma like white spot). The shorter/broader wing shape in White-point is perhaps a more reliable indicator and in fresh examples the overall wing markings are subtly different. Many moth recorders



Fig. 1. White-point.

are aware of the tuft on black hairs on the underside of the abdomen, but this feature is also shared by the White-point. A typical, clearly marked White-point appears in Fig. 1.

As records of this species continued to be received, with records of more than just singletons in Rutland (where first brood examples had been recorded earlier in the year), there can now be little doubt that this species is now resident in VC55. I also heard from moth recorders in Northants & Cambs that they were now often taking this in numbers, e.g. 40+ in a Peterborough garden one night this year. To date, the 2021 records of White-point are shown in Table 2 and mapped in Fig. 2.

It is also worth highlighting another difference between this species and the Clay: The phenology of the species is quite different with the White-point being

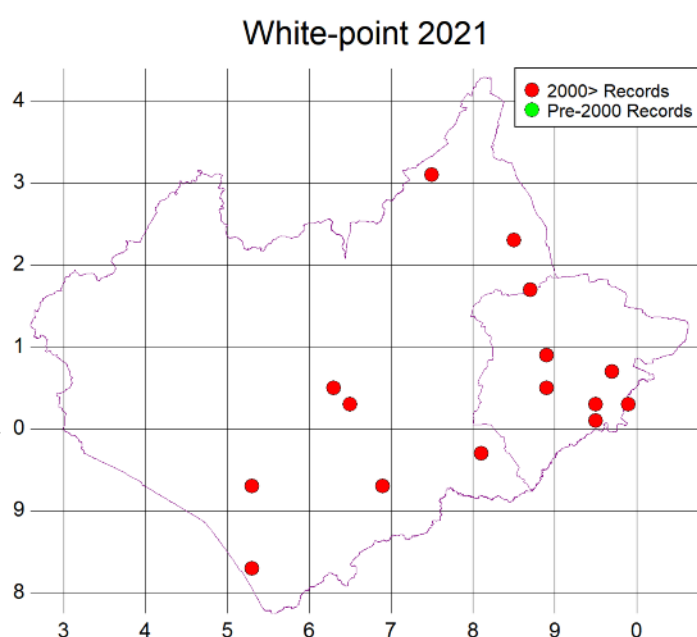


Fig. 2. White-point distribution by tetrads, 2021.

Date	Location	Qty	Recorder
05-Jun-21	Rutland Water NR	1	Ron Follows
16-Jun-21	Barrowden garden	1	Ron Follows
18-Aug-21	Luffenham Heath Golf Course	3	Ron Follows
19-Aug-21	Geeston garden	1	Rob Cooke
25-Aug-21	Wymondham	1	Adrian Russell & John Tinning
25-Aug-21	Barrowden garden	2	Ron Follows
26-Aug-21	Horninghold garden	1	Will Kirby
27-Aug-21	Rutland Water NR	1	Ron Follows
28-Aug-21	Rutland Water, Lyndon NR	1	Paul Bennett & Martin Grimes
28-Aug-21	Geeston garden	1	Rob Cooke
29-Aug-21	Kibworth Beauchamp garden	1	Stuart Lyon
29-Aug-21	Harby garden	1	Pete Leonard
30-Aug-21	Horninghold garden	1	Will Kirby
31-Aug-21	Evington garden	1	Adrian Russell
01-Sep-21	Shacklewell Spinney	1	Paul Bennett & Martin Grimes
02-Sep-21	Geeston garden	2	Rob Cooke
02-Sep-21	Horninghold garden	1	Will Kirby
02-Sep-21	Luffenham Heath Golf Course	10	Ron Follows
06-Sep-21	Cottesbach garden	2	Gavin Bennett
07-Sep-21	Evington garden	1	Adrian Russell
07-Sep-21	Evington garden	1	Andy Mackay
07-Sep-21	Broughton Astley garden	1	Adam Poole
09-Sep-21	Barrowden garden	3	Ron Follows
10-Sep-21	Coston	1	Pete Leonard
10-Sep-21	Barrowden garden	8	Ron Follows
10-Sep-21	Barrowden garden	2	Ron Follows

double-brooded flying from May to September and beyond (the second brood being supplemented by migrants) in two overlapping broods. On the other hand, the Clay is single-brooded and as the chart of VC55 records below shows, it is rarely seen beyond mid-August (Fig. 3). Therefore, VC55 moth recorders should pay particular attention to Clay-like moths caught after mid-August and may now also need to look out for first Brood White-points amongst the Clays caught in their traps next summer.

References:

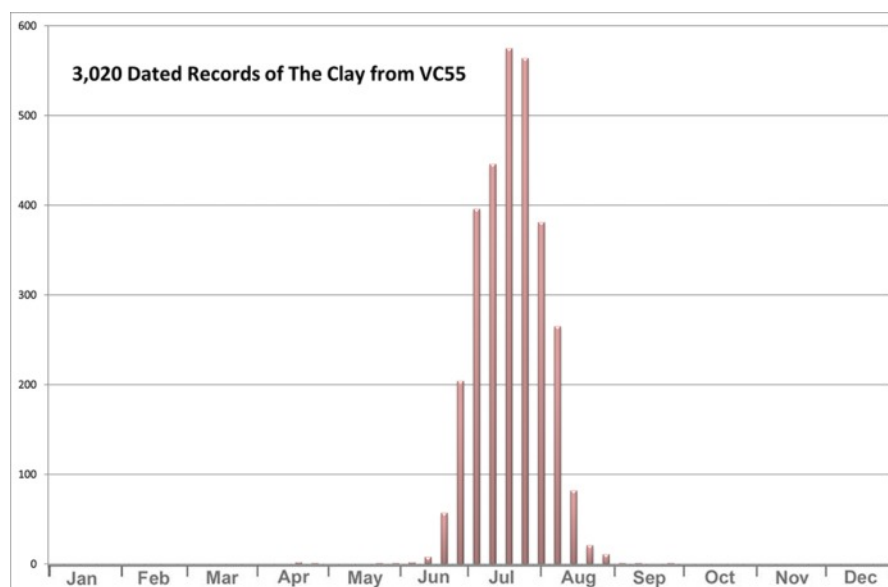
Skinner, B., 1984. *Colour Identification Guide to Moths of the British Isles*. Viking.

Skinner, B., 2009. *Colour Identification Guide to Moths of the British Isles*. Apollo Books.

Waring, P. & Townsend, M., 2017. *Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland*, 3rd edition. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Left: Table 2. VC55 records for 2021.

Below: Fig. 3. Phenology of The Clay *Mythimna farrago*.



Adrian Russell

Flies worth watching for

The recording of flies in VC55 has gathered pace once again after the spurt experienced in the late twentieth century when local entomologists such as Neil Frankum, John Mousley and John Kramer turned their attention to them. In more recent times several contributors to NatureSpot have found flies that have been rarely recorded in the counties due to a lack of interest, poor keys and perceived difficulty of identification. However, things are improving with usable identification aids being available as well as the ability to refer, via the internet, to recognised national experts. On occasions images are sent to me to verify identification and I have, where able (I am on a steep learning curve!), to confirm the records. Dave Nichols has sent me excellent images in the last few days, from two families: Tachinidae and Muscidae. A third fly, of the Calliphoridae, needs confirmation by the national expert but hopefully will prove to be a "real goodie"!

Siphona geniculata (front cover) is a tachinid that has been recorded ten times in VC55 and, with the exception of a record from the Mountsorrel-Buddon area, has only been found in the south of Leicestershire in the Misterton-Lutterworth area and Shawell to the south of Lutterworth. Dave found this in at a nursery at Enderby in September.

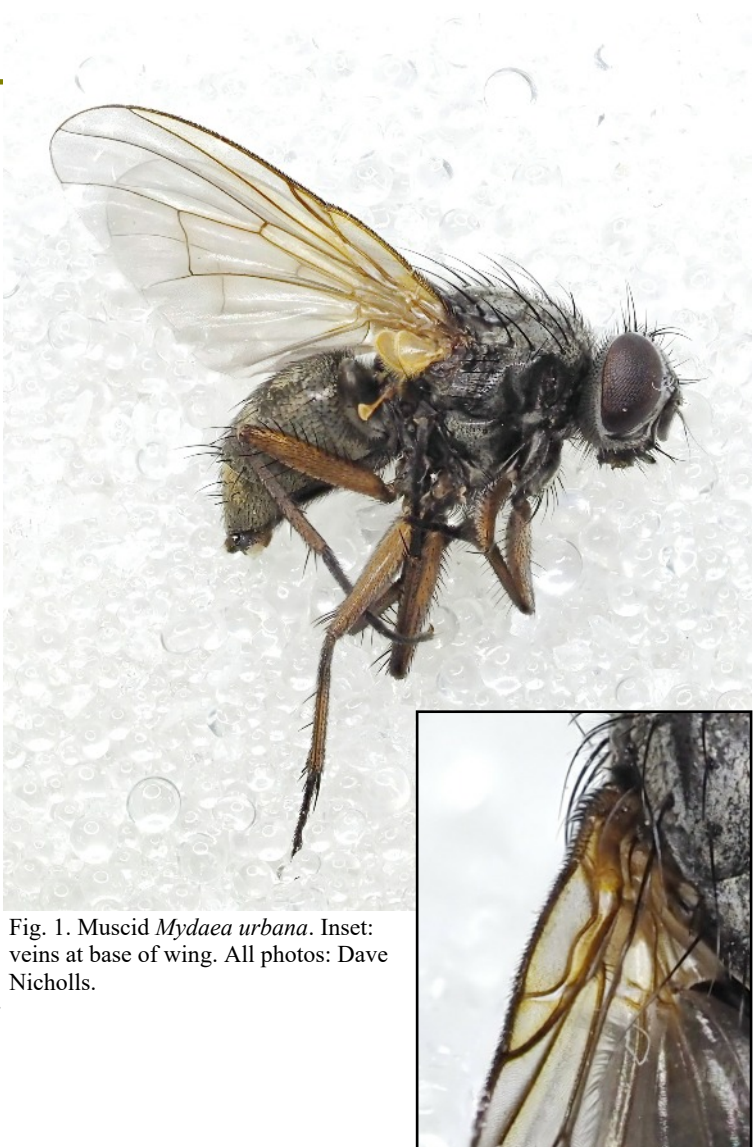


Fig. 1. Muscid *Mydaea urbana*. Inset: veins at base of wing. All photos: Dave Nicholls.

Mydaea urbana (Fig 1) was found by Dave at Ratby in September. It is the third VC55 record. The previous records came from the near Swithland Reservoir by Andy Godfrey in 2012 while members of the Dipterists Forum, on one of their weekend-away trips, located it at Cloud Wood NR in 2015. The "wavy" vein in the wing (Fig. 2) seems to be diagnostic.

Lastly, and awaiting final confirmation, is *Bellardia polita*, a member of the Calliphoridae (Fig. 3) found at Bardon Hill in August. The fly seem to have the veins making up the r4&5 cell uniting before the wing edge to form a short petiole. If this is confirmed (by genitalia) then this record would seem to be a first for VC55 and a first for Britain. Keep your fingers crossed!



Fig. 3. Putative *Bellardia polita*, a member of the Calliphoridae.

Ray Morris

Book review



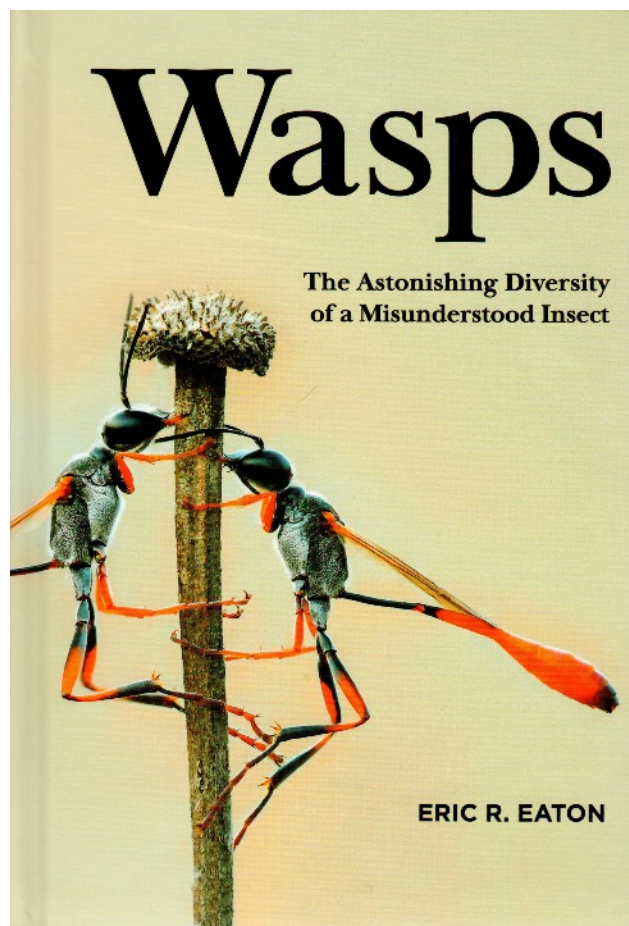
“Wasps are everywhere, but there is no need to panic. They are here to help.”

So says the author on page 100 of this American book from Princeton University Press. As the book’s cover explains, it deals not just with the yellow and black vespids that pester us during picnics, but with the full range of wasp families within the order Hymenoptera. The geographical coverage is global and there are plenty of European and familiar examples.

This is not an identification guide, nor a scientific text book, but an introduction to wasps in a relaxed, and sometimes humorous “popular science” style. The chapters include: *Evolution, Anatomy, Metamorphosis, Beauty, Ecology, Diversity, Behavior (sic), Wasp Mimics, Enemies of Wasps, Wasps and People*. Each chapter comprises a series of topics each occupying a pair of facing pages. As this hardback book is not too heavy, it is ideal for bed-time reading!

In the *Diversity* chapter, I learned that the smallest wasps (“fairyflies” in the family Mymaridae) are 0.14 mm long, which is shorter than the single-celled animal *Paramecium*. Alan Cann take note (see p. 6)!

The topics are profusely illustrated with excellent colour photographs and paintings - the blurb on the back cover describes them as eye-popping, and I would not disagree.



The final chapter is *A Wasp Family Album*, in which a good selection of the 83 families are profiled, with hints on recognition, distribution, habitat, importance (to human economic endeavours), and a photograph of a typical example.

A large proportion of wasps are parasitic on other invertebrates, giving rise to some complex life-histories and ingenious strategies for finding a host. Many examples are clearly explained in this book, which I can highly recommend to LES members.

Eaton, E. R. 2021. *Wasps. The Astonishing Diversity of a Misunderstood Insect*. Princeton University Press. 978-0-691-21142-8. £18.20 from Amazon.

Steve Woodward

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.

Psocoptera:- Helen Ikin, see Chilopoda.

Thysanoptera: - Ivan Pedley, see Arachnids - Mites.

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

2021-2022 Indoor Meetings Programme

Following on from a canvas of our members, about two-thirds have indicated that they would be reticent at attending indoor meetings this coming session. This has partly been due to personal vulnerabilities, the size of the venue and the possibility of another surge in Covid-19 infections as immunity levels ease.

Accordingly there will be no indoor meetings!

However, we will attempt to arrange on-line presentations under the auspices of NatureSpot (thank you Alan Cann!) and suggestions/offers for topics will be most welcome. Please let me know of any ideas as soon as possible.

Ray Morris

ray@cactusbob.net

Ray Morris, LES Chair
