



NEWSLETTER 42

January 2010

Old (really old!) records of beetles!

While trawling through journals hunting for VC55 records of Trichoptera (caddis flies) I came across a list of beetles recorded at Brooksby during investigations of insect remains in ancient river channels filled with organic silt. "*Insect remains, chiefly of Coleoptera, are extraordinarily abundant in any freshwater sediment that has remained water-logged since its deposition*" (Coope, 2006) with the best examples being recovered from organic silts or fine sands rather than peats. Such assemblages provide valuable information on local environments and climates.

The point of interest is that the assemblage reported for Brooksby is old – really old! The organic silts investigated came from the Palaeolithic era when early human occupation of England was starting. Essentially this is the start of human technology with stone implements being developed – about 250,000-500,000 years ago! The species recorded from Brooksby are shown below many of which will be found in VC55 to this day!

Carabiodae	Staphylinidae	Hydraenidae
<i>Trechus secalis</i>	<i>Olophrum consimile</i>	<i>Hydraena</i> sp
<i>Trechus rivularis</i>	<i>Eucnecosum brachypterum</i>	<i>Helophorus grandis</i>
<i>Bembidion varium</i>	<i>Trogophloeus</i> sp	<i>Helophorus</i> sp
<i>Bembidion tetracolum</i>	<i>Platystethus nodifrons</i>	
<i>Bembidion schueppeli</i>	<i>Bledius</i> sp	Hydrophilidae
<i>Patrobis assimilis</i>	<i>Stenus</i> sp	<i>Cercyon tristis</i>
<i>Pterostichus oblongopunctatus</i>		<i>Enochrus</i> sp

Byrrhidae	Dryopidae	Curculionidae
<i>Simplocoria semistriata</i>	<i>Oulimnius tuberculatus</i>	<i>Apion</i> sp
	<i>Oulimnius trogolodytes</i>	<i>Rhynchaenus foliorum</i>
	Dytiscidae	
	Unidentified	

Ray Morris

Ref: Coope, GR (2006). *Insect fauna associated with Palaeolithic industries from five sites of pre-Anglian age in central England*. Quaternary Science Reviews, **25**, 1738-1754

Starting out on caddis flies

Having volunteered to act as VC55 coordinator for caddis records I have started attempting to (a) gather together any records I can find, (b) collect any adults that come to my garden light trap and run into when wandering around the home patch and (c) trying very hard to get some identification skills!

It seems that many caddis fly records come from freshwater surveys where identification of the larvae has been used as a means of assessing water quality. There are relatively few adult caddis records as these are perceived as not indicating breeding but movement. However, the identification of adult caddis does allow dot generation on maps particularly for those species which may breed in small pools or streams that would not necessarily attract the recorder's attention. Moth trappers are familiar with the annual autumnal influx of adult caddis to lights but can also see some species much earlier in the year. In addition, on a good day some species will swarm over water although most adult caddis are night-fliers.

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Identification of adult caddis is, at first glance, quite daunting. There is currently no modern key available although one is supposed to be in preparation. A recent attempt to get naturalists interested in adult caddis was a FSC guide to families based on spur formulae of the insect's legs. However, this is not totally reliable and a more concerted approach seems to be in order. Two keys exist that are still available (with a bit of hunting around) - Mosely's (1939) *The British Caddis Flies (Trichoptera) – A Collector's Handbook* and Macan's (1973) *A Key to the Adults of the British Trichoptera* - it is useful to have both as they approach identification in different ways. Just as the FSC publication uses spur formulae, Macan uses this to get started. In contrast, Mosely starts with the number of segments on the maxillary palps - in either case, a good microscope is a boon as genitalia need to be examined at some point!

A simple one to identify for the beginner is *Limnephilus lunatus* (see below)– as its name suggests, there is an obvious lunar shape on the edge of the forewing with only one other species that could be confused with it (fortunately limited to Scotland). If you are a fly-fisherman then you will be familiar with this species – it's known as the Cinnamon Sedge and is very common. Indeed at my garden light (since I have been able to recognise it) I have had it through the summer and into late autumn - probably breeds in the Ashby Canal which is just down the hill!

I am happy to receive a moderate number of adult caddis, if nothing else but to increase the county collection, but also to try and identify them. Naturally, full details of location etc are necessary! Ian Wallace at Liverpool Museum has kindly agreed to confirm identifications!

Ray Morris

Change of Editor

This is the last Newsletter I will edit as I am handing over the job to Stephen Woodward. His contact details are given in the Leicestershire Entomological Society box in this newsletter. Please send your copy to him in the future. As I have said, on many occasions, the newsletter is only as good as the copy it receives so keep on sending your news, observations etc. Thanks to all those who have contributed to the newsletter during my time as editor.

Frank Clark

Correction

In Newsletter 41 the item entitled 'Short-winged Coneheads (*Conocephalus dorsalis*) in the Soar Valley' was by Howard Bradshaw and not Harold Bradshaw. Apologies (Ed.)

Frank Clark



Limnephilus lunatus (Photograph Ray Morris)

Indoor Meetings Programme October 2009 - February 2010

All meetings are held at Holly Hayes, 216 Birstall Road, Birstall, Leicestershire LE4 4DG. Arrive at 7:00 pm for pre-meeting refreshments. Evening session starts at 7:30 pm in the lecture room.

Thursday 21 January 2010 - Mimicry in the Coleoptera

Tony Drane an environmental ecologist and Coleopterist of some longstanding gives a powerpoint presentation into the mimicry of African beetles. He may even bring some specimens along. Some of you may know Tony as he is a very good friend of Derek Lott and has accompanied Derek in his pursuit of beetles in Leicestershire.

Thursday 18 February 2010 - 'Members Evening'

Please bring along any specimens, exhibits, digital or conventional slides to share with us all.

Thursday 18 March 2010 - There will be a meeting but the speaker and subject is yet to be announced or confirmed in the January Newsletter.

Looking for information?

The following are willing to act as an initial point of contact for providing advice and information to members. As you will see, this list is far from complete - If you think you can help, please let us know.

Lepidoptera:- Adrian Russell, 15 St Swithin's Road, Leicester LE5 2GE.
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Biological Recording:- Sue Timms Holly Hayes, 216 Birstall Road, Birstall, Leicestershire LE4 4DG. Tel: 0116 267 0018. Email: stimms@leics.gov.uk

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