



# Beetle News



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**Editor:** Richard Wright, 70, Norman road, Rugby, CV21 1DN Email: richardwrightuk@yahoo.co.uk

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## Editorial

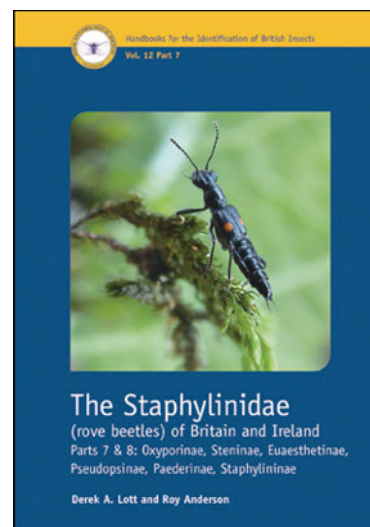
Richard Wright

Thanks to all contributors to this issue. For a while it looked like there would not be enough material to justify producing a June issue, but fortunately several contributors came up with interesting articles “just in time”. Again, I would encourage those less experienced coleopterists who feel that they may have something which might be of interest to others to consider submitting an article here. By no means all those who have contributed to Beetle News in its first three years would consider themselves experts, but nevertheless they have made valuable observations and records of interest to many.

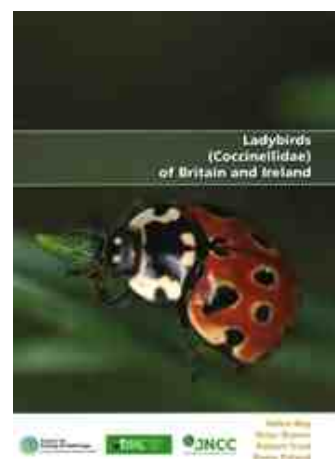
## Mark Telfer's web site - update

In previous issues, I have mentioned Mark Telfer's very useful web site which includes a wealth of useful information. Mark has drawn my attention to some recent additions to the site. Of particular value are some keys to British Ciidae (<http://markgtelfer.co.uk/beetles/ciidae/>). This family has caused difficulties for many of us over the years and these keys will be very useful in the interim while we await a complete account of the British species.

Mark has also posted a blog about beetling on Lundy Island recently (<http://markgtelfer.co.uk/2011/05/15/lundy-invertebrates/>). Lundy Island is known for the endemic plant Lundy Cabbage *Coincya wrightii* and its associated beetles.



New publications reviewed here.



## The occurrence of three different *Cionus* sp. weevils on the flowering shrub *Phygelia* in a Gloucestershire garden

John Widgery

Whilst searching for invertebrates in my garden on 8 June 2010, I noticed some damage on the leaves of a mature plant of *Phygelia* in a flower border and upon examination found this was apparently due to some tiny, dark, larvae principally on the growing shoots. A closer look also revealed the presence of adult weevils some of which were taken for more detailed scrutiny. Using the keys in 'True Weevils (Part 1): Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects, Vol 5, Part 17b' (M.G. Morris, 2002) I was surprised to find that there were three different species of *Cionus* involved. Morris states that whilst food plants of the genus *Cionus* are species of

*Scrophularia* and *Verbascum*, introduced *Scrophulariaceae* (eg. *Phygelius* and *Buddlejaceae*) are also hosts but it was unexpected to find multiple species present. I carried out a further search the following day to try to estimate how many adults of each there were and estimated the following:-

*C. scrophulariae* - c.10

*C. tuberculosus* - c.6

*C. alauda* - 1

They were not easy to find and numbers may be underestimated and no account has been taken of the many larvae, assumed to be *Cionus* sp., which were present which could not be identified to species level.

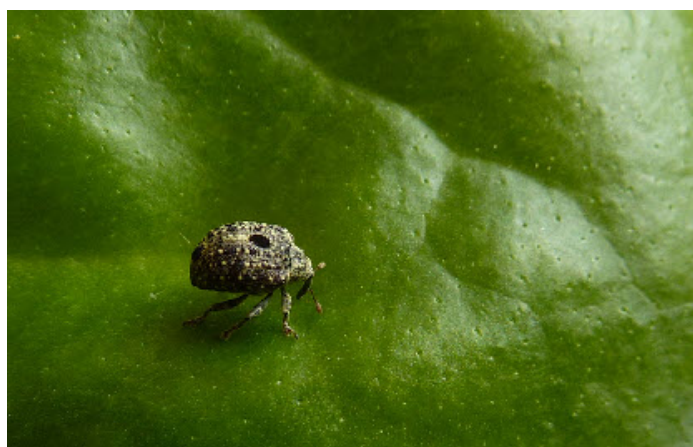
Photographs of each species and the larvae are shown below



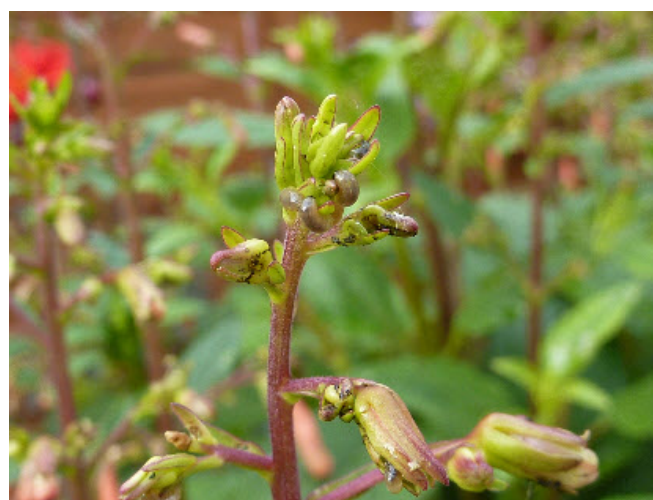
*Cionus scrophulariae*



*Cionus alauda*



*Cionus tuberculosus*



*Cionus* species larvae



***Mogulones asperifoliarum* (Gyllenhal)  
(Coleoptera: Curculionidae) associated with  
Green Alkanet *Pentaglottis sempervirens*.**

Jonty Denton<sup>1</sup> & Scotty Dodd<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>31 Thorn Lane, Four Marks, Hants, GU34 5BX

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pine Cottages, Harpers Road, Ash, Surrey, GU12 6BZ

We took over a dozen adult *M.asperifoliarum* from stands of green alkanet *P.sempervirens* (Boraginaceae) on 30.v.2011 in the Dunford area, Surrey (TQ0261).

Morris (2008) lists various Boraginaceae, adding doubtless on other hosts, but does not include *P.sempervirens*. *P.sempervirens* is also omitted from the respective host plant lists of European authors Hoffman (1954) and

Collonelli (2004) and therefore appears to be a new host plant record.

# References

Colonnelli, E. (2004). *Catalogue of Ceutorhynchinae of the world with key to genera*. Barcelona: Balmes. Argania editio, Balmes.

Hoffmann, A (1954). *Coléoptères Curculionides (Partie II). Faune de France* 59. Paris: Librairie de la Faculté des Sciences.

Morris, M.G. (2008). *True Weevils (Part II). (Coleoptera: Curculionidae, Ceutorhynchinae)*. Handbooks for the identification of British Insects Vol. 5, Part 17c. London: Royal Entomological Society.

## ***Paracorymbia fulva* in Leicestershire – Part 2**

Graham Calow

I wrote a short article that appeared in Beetle News Vol. 3:1 March 2011 about a chance find that I made in 2009 when I photographed the longhorn beetle *Paracorymbia fulva* in my home village of Sapcote in Leicestershire, in fact there were at least two specimens present that day. I am not a beetle expert and had no idea at the time that this was a rare species in the Midlands, or that this would prove to be the first record of this species in VC55 (Leicestershire and Rutland), so whilst I took some good digital images, I overlooked the need to take a voucher specimen.

Over the intervening two years I have visited the site of that first find several times in the hope of spotting this species there again, but without success, but then, on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2011, whilst walking a field margin about half a mile from the original site, I found another specimen, a single individual on Hogweed. This time I have managed to correct my original oversight, and have collected a VC 55 voucher specimen.

It seems possible that this species, which is usually considered to be restricted mainly to southern coastal areas, may have formed a small colony in our Leicestershire village, which couldn't really be much further from the coast. Sapcote is very close to the Warwickshire border, so it must also be quite probable that the species may turn up in that county as well.

## **Another garden food plant for *Cassida viridis***

Richard Wright

In Beetle News 2:2 in an article entitled **Some phytophagous beetles recorded from garden plants** I reported *Cassida viridis* adults and larvae abundant on two garden plants *Melissa officinalis* (Lemon Balm) and *Calamintha nepeta*. This year the populations on these two plants are still thriving with an abundance of the beetle. However, for the first time they seem to have spread onto a further plant species from the same family (Lamiaceae) a sage *Salvia verticillata*. Both adults and larvae have been found on this plant with extensive evidence of feeding.

Although the *Salvia* has been in the garden for several years, I have never before noticed the beetle on it. One possibility is that the population densities on the other plants have become so high that some of the beetles have been forced to seek out a perhaps less favoured food plant. I did considerably reduce the number of the Lemon Balm over the winter period, thus reducing the availability. of this food plant.



Larva of *Cassida viridis* and evidence of feeding on *Salvia verticillata*



***Helophorus dorsalis* – A Mystery Solved**

Steve Lane

This enigmatic species was recorded historically in Warwickshire, when Blatch collected a specimen from a mossy bank at Rotten Row near Knowle in 1889. Since then up until the present year, there were no further records and I was puzzled as to why this beetle had not turned up in over 20 years of personal beetling experience.

Earlier this year, whilst conducting the first phase of a contract on the Leicestershire Museum Collection at Barrow, I had the privilege to see a series of this species and was instantly struck by how significantly different it appeared to all of the other British *Helophorus*.

Inspired and curious, I put a request out on the beetles-britishisles group to simply ask where and how one goes about finding this thing. John Bratton and Robert Angus both responded with interesting tips. John's response in particular was so enlightening that it is worth reproducing it here.

“Puddles in footprints in rides in old woodland, on clay soils. Just stir the water a little and the *H. dorsalis* will float to the surface with their white patches looking like a couple of headlights”.

So where were the old woodland sites on clay soils in Warwickshire? On Richard Wright's recommendation, I went to Snitterfield Bushes NR (SP 26) near Stratford. It was March 24<sup>th</sup> and despite the unseasonal lack of rainfall, there was a lot of *Helophorus* activity in the few permanent and semi-permanent pools and ditches at the edge of the woodland rides and glades.

***Stenolophus teutonius* in Warwickshire**

Steve Lane

*Stenolophus teutonius* is an unmistakable, boldly-coloured ground beetle that frequents open water-edge habitats such as those surrounding quarry pools.

On April 24<sup>th</sup> 2011, I encountered this species in two areas of Salford Priors Gravel Pits in south-west Warwickshire (SP 0752 and SP 0853). One specimen was swept from a stand of *Phragmites* growing in shallow water, whilst another two specimens were discovered running on mud at the edge of a stream through more-or-less open sandy ground.

I contacted Mark Telfer who informed me that this species is on the move and is colonising new sites north of its previously known distribution. It was of little surprise therefore to find a further example in Warwickshire, this time, in a pitfall trap on a shingle bar in the mid-reaches of the River Avon at Stoneleigh Abbey (SP 3171) on June 7<sup>th</sup> 2011.

After three hours of puddling every water source encountered and after checking and chucking hundreds of *obscurus*, I finally came up trumps with two specimens of *dorsalis*, both puddled from a very clayey narrow shallow ditch feeding into a newly-created shallow pool. John was right; the 'headlights' were an absolute give-away in the field and the contrast between these light patches and the darker medial area of the elytra made *dorsalis* instantly recognisable. Basically, I knew I had found the beast without the aid of a hand lens or a microscope.

Further forays into Warwickshire woodland sites resulted in further discoveries of the species; some immediate, some taking a little more effort. Again, John's words of wisdom rang true as all other catches have been secured by puddling small water-filled footprints, tyre tracks and ruts on mud footpaths and rides in woodland on clay soils.

The additional records come from Oversley Wood (SP15) on May 11<sup>th</sup>, Morton Spirt and Weethley Wood complex (SP05) on June 16<sup>th</sup> and from Austy Wood (SP 16) on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

Most recently, in June of this year, Tony Allen joined me at the Weethley Wood area and we found numbers of the beetle with little effort only minutes after stepping out of our cars. I seriously doubt that we would have had any success had we investigated larger water bodies at the site.

So if you want to find *Helophorus dorsalis*, the advice is simple. Woodland, clay soils and small puddles and the prize is all yours!



*Stenolophus teutonius*  
Richard Wright

***Chrysomela sanguinolenta* at Poppit Sands, Pembs**

David Search

Coleoptera recorder for Pembrokeshire

The area of Poppit Sands (SSSI) near Cardigan represents the last known records in Wales of the leaf beetle *Chrysomela sanguinolenta* (Chrysomelidae). The beetle has been recorded from three other Welsh localities prior to 1979. These were from around the Gower peninsular although two are pre 1900 (Cox 2007). *Chrysomela sanguinolenta* was first found at Poppit Sands in 1996 and apparently existed over much of the dunes.

Much of the dunes are dominated by Marram grass, *Ammophila arenaria*. But encroachment by gorse, *Ulex*



species into the fore-dunes does not help the spread of the beetle's food plant Common toadflax, *Linaria vulgaris* (Cox 2007). Abundance of this plant is poor in places. According to Cox (2007), pupation

occurs in an earthen cell so summer tourists may add further pressure on this Notable A status beetle. The beetle has been found at a number of sites in England and is certainly not restricted to sandy locations.

Records since 1979 have been hard to come by. A single adult was found in 2005 together with a single pupa and

few larvae. A survey conducted three years ago (Bratton 2008) did not find any proof that the beetle had not become extinct. However, a single adult found in 2010 and again



this month (June 2011) plus a few larvae confirm that this distinctive beetle survives at Poppit. With so few records it is difficult to know when a peak is reached although Cox (2007) states that the beetle occurs from March to

October. These more recent records however, show different locations than those prior to 2008. But previous studies have suggested that the beetle is a poor flyer; therefore reducing its ability to disperse.

## References:

Bratton, J.H.. (2008) *Monitoring invertebrates on SSSIs: Chrysomela sanguinolenta on Poppit Sands, Pembs*. CCW Contract Science Report No: 850, Countryside Council for Wales, Bangor.

Cox, M.L. (2007) *Atlas of the seed and leaf beetles of Britain and Ireland (Coleoptera: Bruchidae, Chrysomelidae, Megalopodidae and Orsodacnidae)*. Newbury, Pisces Publications.

**Review by Richard Wright****Ladybirds (Coccinellidae) of Britain and Ireland**

Helen Roy, Peter Brown, Robert Frost, Remy Poland

ISBN 9781906698201

Published by the Field Studies Council on behalf of the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology's Biological Records Centre.

204 pp, 194 colour photos, 50 distribution maps.

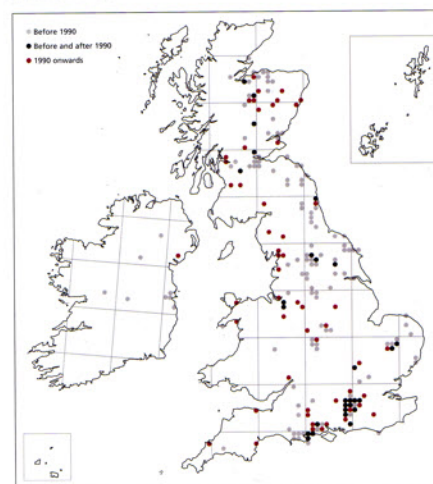
£19.50, plus P&P

This publication is one which all coleopterists, whatever their level of experience, will wish to have in their library. It is much more than a distribution atlas, though it does of course include maps for all 47 species. Each species' account includes sections on identification, ecology and UK distribution and status, together with phenograms showing the distribution of records through the year.. Photographs of each species are of adults and, in many cases, larvae and/or pupae. Apart from the species' accounts there is also information on various aspects of ecology, surveying and recording, occasional species and potential new arrivals, and a detailed account of natural enemies of ladybirds. All in all, a very detailed account which contains much of interest to both the experienced coleopterist and the keen naturalist who wishes to find out more about these most popular of beetles.

*Myzia oblongoguttata* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Striped ladybird)

Synonyms: *Mysis oblongoguttata*  
*Neomysis oblongoguttata*  
*Paramysis oblongoguttata*

Number of records 397  
Number of 10km squares 202



Map 10. Distribution (10km) of striped ladybird

There is very little that can be critically commented upon. As with all such atlases, geographical coverage is inevitably uneven, especially for the smaller species. In some cases the maps, as shown above, would appear to show a decline with relatively few recent records compared to those up to 1990. However, the UK Distribution Trend (1990 - 2010) is given as "Stable". This apparently is based on the concept of a "well-recorded one-km grid cell) which no doubt has been



determined to be ecologically and statistically valid, but nevertheless one still finds that species which appear from the maps to have declined are described as "Stable" which some might find confusing.

One slight criticism can be directed towards some of the photos. While many are excellent, others are perhaps not up to the standard of much modern insect photography in terms of sharpness and the presence of disconcerting flash reflections. A particular problem occurs with some of the small species which have clearly been photographed with a ring flash, resulting in white arcs which might appear to be part of the pattern. For example, in the pictures opposite

*Clitostethus arcuatus* (above) does really have pale arcuate markings, seen clearly here, while *Scymnus nigrinus* (below) does not. For beginners, this might well cause confusion since many of the smaller species show similar artefacts.

These are, however, very minor points and the book can be thoroughly recommended. Quite rightly, it is dedicated to the late Professor Mike Majerus who, far more than anyone else, encouraged the scientific study of ladybirds both by professionals and by keen amateurs, particularly through his two books in the New Naturalist and Naturalists' Handbooks series. This book is a worthy addition to the body of work on the family.



## Review by Richard Wright

***The Staphylinidae (rove beetles) of Britain and Ireland. Parts 7 & 8: Oxyporinae, Steninae, Euaesthetinae, Pseudopsinae, Paederinae, Staphylininae*** by Derek Lott and Roy Anderson. Handbooks for Identification of British Insects Vol 12 : 7

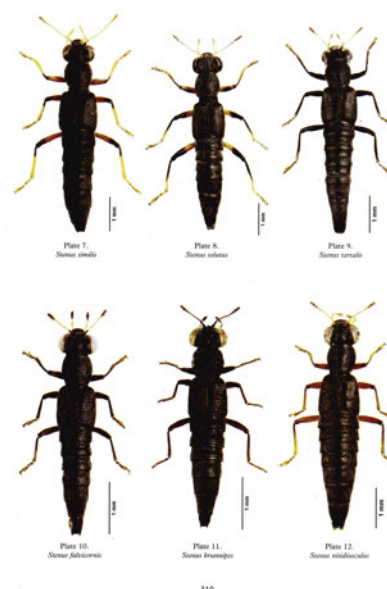
340 pages, 190 colour photos, 429 line drawings.  
£49 plus P & P, from Field Studies Council

It is rare that one comes across a publication which is almost beyond criticism. Yet here is such a work. The authors have covered three of the large subfamilies of Staphylinidae and three smaller ones with such thoroughness and detail that all previous works are rendered redundant. While all recent volumes of the Handbooks have been excellent and a big improvement on earlier ones, this one sets new standards. The simple figures above tell part of the story. At 340 pages it is much larger than any previous volume, reflecting the amount of information included. Apart from completely new keys, for each species a full description is supplied, with diagrams of male genitalia for most species. The descriptions are far more detailed than in any previous Handbook. Many coleopterists have tended to avoid the Staphylinidae, particularly those in subfamilies with no complete key works since Joy. With the level of detail provided here, errors of identification should be reduced to an absolute minimum. 190 species are illustrated by colour photos of museum specimens (example page shown opposite) which should be of particular use to relative beginners in giving an idea of the "jizz" of particular species, though they can obviously be used for specific identification in only a limited number of cases as many species are so superficially similar. Perhaps my only slight criticism is that the number of photos might have been reduced somewhat with a corresponding reduction in price, but I find myself in a small minority in this opinion. To those accustomed to low-priced mass

produced field guides, £49 might seem expensive, but in terms of the quantity and quality of information included it is an absolute bargain. It will be the definitive work on these subfamilies for many years to come and will probably never be surpassed.

Derek Lott's achievement in completing this mammoth task is even more remarkable considering he was battling with cancer throughout. Tragically, Derek died very shortly after the book was published. He was one of the leading coleopterists of his generation and obviously had a particularly strong enthusiasm for the Staphylinidae. This work, together with his earlier Handbook on the Oxyporinae and other small subfamilies, has placed the identification of a large proportion of the family on a much firmer foundation. Perhaps the best tribute to Derek would be a greatly increased interest in the recording and study of this, by far the largest family of British beetles. It is also to be hoped that others will be found to take up the challenge of completing Derek's work by producing further volumes covering the remaining subfamilies.

DEREK A. LOTT AND ROY ANDERSON



## Beginner's Guide : The British species of Erotylidae and Tetratomidae

It may seem strange to provide a guide to two families of beetles which are not closely related. However, from the purely practical perspective it makes sense as members of these families are both found in similar situations, specifically on or in tree fungi. In addition, the two families may easily be confused by the beginner owing to superficial similarities. The key provided is based largely on colour and the majority of the species can easily be recognised with practice.

1. Antennae without a club. Shape and colour as shown.

### *Hallomenus binotatus* (Tetratomidae)

Although this species is very different from other members of the family, it can easily be confused with some Melandryidae, particularly *Orchesia*, but can be distinguished by the short tibial spur which is less than half the length of the first tarsal segment..



Antennae with a 3 or 4-segmented club  
Shape less elongate.

2

2. Elytra with a pattern as shown

### *Tetratoma ancora*

This species is distinct in coloration from the others considered here but beware of some Mycetophagidae, found in similar situations, which also have patterned elytra. Scarce.



With a pale spot on each elytron behind the shoulder (Erotylidae)

3

Elytra uniformly dark coloured

5

3. Sides of elytra rounded

### *Tritoma bipustulata*

Quite scarce



Elytra much more parallel-sided

4

4. Pronotum largely rufous

### *Dacne bipustulata*

Common



Pronotum dark  
*Dacne rufifrons*  
Quite common



5. Pronotum dark, same colour as elytra

### *Tetratoma desmaresti*

Scarce



Pronotum rufous

6

6. Antennal club of 4 segments  
Elytra with scattered punctures, without punctate striae.

### *Tetratoma fungorum*

Common



Antennal club of 3 segments

Elytra with punctate striae

### *Triplax* (Erotylidae)

7

7. Elytra metallic blue or green

### *Triplax aenea*

Common



Elytra blackish

8

8. Abdomen orange. Larger, 5 - 6.5 mm.

Antennae dark

### *Triplax russica*

Quite common.



Abdomen dark. Smaller 3 - 4.2 mm.

Basal antennal segments rufous.

### *Triplax scutellaris*

(Scarce, recorded only from a small area of north-east England)

As noted earlier, all of these species are associated with tree fungi. It is likely that each species has a limited range of hosts, but some fungi genera involved include *Pleurotus*, *Inonotus*, *Laetiporus*, *Piptoporus*, *Fomes*, *Phlebia* and *Stereum*. Specimens can often be obtained by breaking up and sieving the fungus, while some can easily be reared by collecting fungi containing larvae. A good deal could be added to our knowledge by someone willing to undertake an extensive programme of rearing. Other families often found in the same circumstances are Ciidae, Melandryidae, Mycetophagidae and Staphylinidae, but these should not be easily confused with those covered here.