



# 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

Once again, I have only been able to produce two issues this year. This is due to a combination of a very busy summer period and a lack of articles earlier in the year.

However, a good number of articles have been submitted recently, enough to make a good-sized issue. Thanks as usual to all contributors. It is particularly rewarding to receive material from new contributors. There are also some excellent photographs with several of the articles.

I must apologise to those who have been waiting for the **Introductory photoguide to British beetles** which I promised in the last issue. Again, pressure of work through the busy summer period prevented me from continuing with this for several months. I have now resumed work on the project and hope to have it ready before the end of the year.

Following discussions, the naming of the Beetle News files is changing from this issue. This is to ensure that they appear e.g in Windows Explorer in the correct order, i.e with Vol 1.1 first etc, while also making them more visible to internet search engines e.g Google.. To avoid confusion, readers might be advised to rename their copies following this system. Alternatively, I will be able to supply by email attachment (quite large) a zip file with all parts to date renamed with the same system. A similar zip file will also be available for download from the AES web site.

## New Glow-worm Book

A new book, *Glowing, Glowing, Gone? The Plight of the Glow-worm in Essex*, written by Tim Gardiner has recently been published by the British Naturalists' Association (BNA). It presents the results of standardised survey work in Essex, thought to be one of the first serious attempts in Europe to combine analysis of the distribution of glow-worms throughout a geographical area, with long-term monitoring of abundance to determine whether they are declining across a range of sites. The book is written with both amateur naturalist and professional ecologist in mind and is a fairly easy read. The book is A5 format and is 80 pages long with colour photographs.

More information including a review can be obtained from the BNA website at <http://www.bna-naturalists.org/publications.htm>

Tim Gardiner

## Beetles on iSpot

Martin Harvey

iSpot ([www.ispot.org.uk](http://www.ispot.org.uk)) encourages people to learn about wildlife identification, by enabling novices and experts to meet online. It is developed by The Open University as part of the OPAL project, and was launched in mid-2009.

Since the launch over 16,000 people have joined iSpot, sharing nearly 90,000 observations of wildlife and helping each other to sort out which species is which. Advice on identification comes from the involvement of many experts and representatives, including from museums, recording schemes and societies (see [www.ispot.org.uk/representatives](http://www.ispot.org.uk/representatives)), whose help is greatly appreciated.

One of the strengths of OPAL and iSpot has been the focus on taking natural history and environmental science to groups of people who may not previously have had the chance to participate in such activities. For iSpot, much of this work has been delivered by our team of Biodiversity Mentors, funded through OPAL in each of ten English regions, and by an Open University grant in Ireland, Wales and Scotland. They have been introducing iSpot and related wildlife activities to audiences from a very diverse set of backgrounds, many of whom have been thrilled to receive feedback on their observations from the other users on iSpot.

Among the experts active on iSpot are several experienced coleopterists. So far (for Britain), around 3,700 observations of roughly 400 species of beetle have been posted on iSpot. Given iSpot's aim of encouraging 'beginners' to develop their interest in wildlife observation, the top ten most frequently posted species are probably not all that surprising, being mostly large, well-marked species that make themselves obvious to the casual observer: Harlequin, Seven-spot, 14-spot, 2-spot and 10-spot ladybirds, plus the soldier beetle *Rhagonycha fulva*, the flower beetle *Oedemera nobilis*, the Dock leaf-beetle *Gastrophysa viridula*, the Cockchafer *Melolontha melolontha* and the Cardinal Beetle *Pyrochroa serraticornis*.

The Harlequin Ladybird is in fact the most commonly observed species of any sort posted on iSpot, presumably a result of it being widespread and making itself obvious to humans, while not being all that easy for beginners to identify (and not yet included in very many field guides).

Another feature of iSpot is a set of online keys ([www.ispot.org.uk/keys](http://www.ispot.org.uk/keys)), which includes a key to ladybirds. This online system is available for use by anyone who has the data needed to distinguish a set of species, and can set this out in the required spreadsheet format – the system then automatically converts it to a working online key.

Although iSpot is not targeted at rare and unusual species, rather at encouraging people to take an interest in the wildlife they see around them, there have been many discoveries of species in places where they hadn't previously been recorded, and among the less common species posted on the site are several observations of oil beetles (some of which Darren Mann tells me are new 10km square records for the Buglife's national survey), and species such as the leaf beetle *Cryptocephalus sexpunctatus* ([www.ispot.org.uk/node/144487](http://www.ispot.org.uk/node/144487)) and the Noble Chafer ([www.ispot.org.uk/node/170243](http://www.ispot.org.uk/node/170243)). Of course, not all photos of beetles can be identified to species level, and one of iSpot's aims is to help people learn when they need to take specimens, and encourage them to join the relevant entomological society to take their interest further.

We now have a data download system in place to allow the export of iSpot observation data for particular taxonomic groups into a spreadsheet format. We are starting to pass data on to those recording schemes that wish to receive it (including some of the beetle schemes). Although iSpot is intended to help people learn how to identify wildlife rather than as an online recording system, we are keen to make the iSpot data available where relevant. Recording schemes receiving the iSpot data will have to make decisions about how much of it can be fully verified and imported into their main datasets, but we hope the spreadsheet export format will make this relatively easy to do, with hyperlinks back to the original observations in iSpot so that unusual records can be checked.

If you have any questions about how you can make use of iSpot to help encourage novice coleopterists, about working with the online keys, or about representing a recording scheme on iSpot and receiving data for your scheme, please contact Martin Harvey at the Open University ([m.c.harvey@open.ac.uk](mailto:m.c.harvey@open.ac.uk)).

**Joy's Greatest Couplets 1: couplet 14/15, page 386.**

This is the first of what could become a lengthy series if it finds favour. Its purpose is to clarify the more opaque parts of Joy's (1932) *Practical Handbook*, particularly for families where no Royal Entomological Society *Handbook* or other up-to-date British work has been published.

Couplet 14/15 on page 386 is classic Joy:

- 14 Thorax more transverse, and with hind angles less obtuse *Cassida vittata* Vill.  
 15 Thorax less transverse, and with hind angles more obtuse *Cassida nobilis* L.

To be fair to Joy, he did illustrate both pronota. However, to my eye the illustrations exaggerate the difference in shape such that a specimen of *C. nobilis* falls between Joy's drawings. So long as your specimen is not irrevocably glued down, a much better distinction between these species is provided by Warchalowski (2003):

Femora entirely yellow or only darkened at the basis. Frontal furrows fine. *Cassida vittata*

Femora blackish in basal half. Frontal furrows straight and deep. *Cassida nobilis*

All these aspects are illustrated below. The obvious differences in the width and colour of the metallic stripes are presumably not constant, or they would have been used in keys.

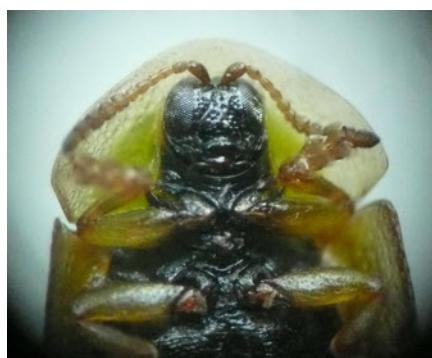
Various foodplants have been given for these species. In captivity I find adults of both species feed on sea beet *Beta vulgaris* ssp. *maritima*, and along the Menai Strait both species occur where this plant grows though I have not seen them feeding in the wild.

#### References

Joy, N.H. 1932. *A practical handbook of British beetles*. London, H.F. & G. Witherby.

Warchalowski, A. 2003. *Chrysomelidae. The leaf beetles of Europe and the Mediterranean area*. Warsaw, Natura optima dux Foundation.

John H. Bratton, 18 New Street, Menai Bridge, Anglesey, LL59 5HN.  
 jhnbratton@yahoo.co.uk



*C. vittata*

*C. nobilis*

## Soldier beetles (Cantharidae) in the Speyside area of the Scottish Highlands, July 2012

A week spent with the Dipterists Forum, from 21st to 28<sup>th</sup> July, produced an abundance of soldier beetles. We were based at the Lagganlia Outdoor Pursuits Centre at Feshiebridge, half way between the villages of Aviemore and Kingussie, in the renowned 'Coleopterist's heaven' of the Spey Valley. Although 2012 has proved to be a poor year for many insects, *Malthodes* in particular were to be found in great abundance. At most pine forest and birch wood sites it was difficult not to find *Malthodes mysticus* in each sweep of the net! An appeal for the dipterists to bring back any soldier beetles which they encountered resulted in *M. mysticus* being found across eleven 10km squares - and everybody becoming fed up with it appearing in their nets!

At a few sites there were other species present amongst the *M. mysticus*. *M. fuscus* was readily spotted as it is distinctly smaller than *M. mysticus*, but it took perseverance to find the few *M. flavoguttatus* and *M. guttifer* also present. Luckily male beetles were very much commoner than females in the net samples - noticeable by their longer antennae. *M. flavoguttatus* was mainly found along riverside woodlands, in areas with luxuriant ground vegetation. *Malthinus* was represented

by just a single specimen of *M. flaveolus* found by James McGill.

*Rhagonycha fulva* was plentiful locally early in the week but had largely disappeared by mid-week - remarkably only found in two 10km squares in contrast with the eleven for *M. mysticus*. *Podabrus alpinus* was the best find amongst the larger soldiers, with single specimens found by two recorders in the pine woods around the Lagganlia centre - one with black elytra and one with yellow. Larger soldiers were mainly found in low numbers only - *C. cryptica*, *C. nigricans*, *R. lignosa*, *R. limbata* and a single *R. testacea*.

A total of 13 species of soldier beetles from the week, with about 40 10km square records, made it a fruitful visit. About half of the 10km square records were new squares for the recording scheme. Species known from the area but not found on this occasion are largely active earlier in the season, but it was disappointing nor to find the high summer wetland species of *C. figurata*, *C. pallida* and *C. nigra*, which had presumably finished early this year. The failure to find any *Malthodes dispar* was also disappointing as there is just a single 10km square locally.

Keith N.A. Alexander, 59 Sweetbrier Lane, Heavitree, Exeter EX1 3AQ

## A Few Interesting Records from Scotland.

Below are a few interesting beetle sightings that I have recorded in Scotland in 2012.

While searching one of only a few examples of dead wood in a disused industrial site I came across two pupae. I took the afore-mentioned pupae home and after a few days they both pupated as the Elaterid, *Denticollis linearis* (Linnaeus, 1758). Though *Denticollis linearis* is common in England and Wales it is scarce in Scotland. I found the pupae in the village of Bowling, near Glasgow, NS437736 on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2012.

The second of my interesting findings is the Staphylinid, *Scaphidium quadrimaculatum* (Olivier, 1790). This was also found in dead wood at the same site as mentioned above on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2012. Though this beetle is fairly widespread in England and Wales it has been determined as "a very rare and localised species in Scotland" by Alex Ramsey who wrote an article on said beetle that was published in the Coleopterist, Vol. 8 Part 2, pg 91.

The third and last beetle I am going to mention is the most interesting; *Oncomera femoralis* (Olivier, 1803). This beetle was found, of all places, on the window sill of my house in June 2012. It is possible it has ventured over from a woodland that is only some 30 metres from my house. I had also 'sugared' the side of my shed a few nights previously so this may have been a factor for its

appearance on my window sill. I have since searched said woodland for the beetle but to no avail. *O. femoralis* is a Notable B species and this record is the first published record of this beetle for Scotland in nearly eighty years. This was verified by Graham Rotheray the Curator of Insects at the National Museums Collection Centre in Edinburgh on checking the Scottish Insect Records Index (SIRI).

The other record was published in the Annals of Scottish Natural History in 1935, pg 98. The recorder was A.R. Waterston and he found it in 1934 at Abbey Craig, Stirling.

I would like to thank the following for their help in supplying information on the above-mentioned beetles: Alex Ramsey, Graham Rotheray, Richard Sutcliffe, Richard Weddle and Mark Telfer.

## References

Hyman, P.S. (revised Parsons, M.S.). 1992. A review of the scarce and threatened Coleoptera of Great Britain. Part 1. UK Nature Conservation. No. 3. Peterborough: Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Chris Sullivan  
christophersullivan@blueyonder.co.uk



## Notable Coleoptera recently recorded in Hertfordshire.

The following account documents localised scarce or rare Coleoptera recorded in Hertfordshire, VC 20, during 2011 and 2012. All of the species which are listed alphabetically by family have previously been recorded from VC 20.

### ANTHRIBIDAE

***Platyrhinus resinosus*** (Scopoli). Nb. One on the stump of a dead beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) in woods near Therfield Heath (TL333396) on 13.iv.2012. One nearby on a branch of dead ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) on 23.vii.2012.



*Platyrhinus resinosus*. Therfield Heath. 23. vii.2012. © K.McGee.

### BUPRESTIDAE

***Agrilus angustulus*** (Illiger). Nb. Frequently recorded from Northaw Great Wood (TL286041) and Broxbourne Wood (TL325069). Specimens were found on foliage of oak (*Quercus* sp.) and log-piles. Earliest date 10.v.2011 and latest date 25.vii.2012.

***Agrilus biguttatus*** (Fabricius). Na. One on a stump of oak (*Quercus* sp.) at Bencroft Wood (TL329063) on 2.vi.2011 and on 10.vi.2012.



*Agrilus biguttatus*. Bencroft Wood. 10.vi.2012. © K.McGee.

***Agrilus viridis*** (Linnaeus). Na. Frequently recorded from Northaw Great Wood (TL286041) and Broxbourne Wood (TL325069). Specimens were found on log-piles and the foliage of oak (*Quercus* sp.). Earliest date 6.v.2011 and latest date 17.vii.2012.

### CERAMBYCIDAE

***Anaglyptus mysticus*** (Linnaeus). Nb. One in dead log of birch (*Betula* sp.) at Bencroft Wood (TL329063) on 27.iii.2011. Single specimens along a bridleway near Brookmans Park (TL267056) between 5.v.2012 and 1.vi.2012.

***Mesosa nebulosa*** (Fabricius). RDB3. One on a log of birch (*Betula* sp.) at Bencroft Wood (TL329063) on 25.vi.2012 in an area where recent thinning and coppicing of birch and hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) had been undertaken.



*Mesosa nebulosa*. Bencroft Wood. 25.vi.2012. © K.McGee.

***Obrium brunneum*** (Fabricius). Na. Ten on flowers of Rough Chervil (*Chaerophyllum temulum*) at Broxbourne Wood (TL325069) on 14.vi.2011. Two pairs *in copula*.

***Poecilium alni*** (Linnaeus). Nb. Two pairs *in copula* on wind-thrown logs of oak (*Quercus* sp.) at Northaw Great Wood (TL286041) on 10.v.2011 and 16.v.2011. One on a log of sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) at the same site on 3.vi.2011.

***Phytoecia cylindrica*** (Linnaeus). Nb. One on foliage of Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) along a bridleway near Brookmans Park (TL267056) on 19.iv.2011. Two on low vegetation near Therfield Heath (TL333396) on 28.v.2012.

***Stictoleptura rubra*** (Linnaeus). RDBK. One female and three males on flowers of Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) at Broxbourne Wood (TL325069) on 4.vii.2011. Frequently seen at Broxbourne Wood between 5.vii.2012 and 23.viii.2012 with a maximum of five at flowers of angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*) on 11.viii.2012.



*Stictoleptura rubra* (female). Broxbourne Wood. 4.vii.2011. © K.McGee.

***Stictoleptura scutellata*** (Fabricius). Na. Singly on log of birch (*Betula* sp.) at Bencroft Wood (TL329063) on 2.vi.2011 and 17.vii.2012. Singly at Broxbourne Wood (TL325069) on 4.vii.2012 and 17.vii.2012. One on a log-pile at Northaw Great Wood (TL286041) on 26.vi.2012. One on foliage of ivy (*Hedera helix*) along a bridleway near Brookmans Park (TL267056) on 22.vii.2012.



*Stictoleptura scutellata*. Northaw Great Wood. 26.vi.2012. © K.McGee.

## CHRYSEMELIDAE

***Chrysolina oricalcia*** (Müller). Nb. One on flowers of Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) along a bridleway near Brookmans Park (TL267056) on 13.v.2011. One on Upright Hedge Parsley (*Torilis japonica*) at Broxbourne Wood (TL325069) on 5.vii.2012.

***Timarcha goettingensis*** (Linnaeus). At Therfield Heath (TL333396) ten on low vegetation on 13.iv.2012 with two pairs *in copula* and a fully grown larva on 28.v.2012.



*Timarcha goettingensis*. Therfield Heath. 13.iv.2012. © K.McGee.

## CLERIDAE

***Tillus elongatus*** (Linnaeus). Nb. One female exploring exit holes of wood-boring beetles on a dead branch of hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) at Broxbourne Wood (TL325069) on 24.vii.2012.

## MELANDRYIDAE

***Melandrya caraboides*** Linnaeus. Nb. On 2.vi.2011 one on foliage of hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) near Brookmans Park (TL267056) and one on a recently coppiced hornbeam stump at Bencroft Wood (TL329063).

## MORDELLIDAE

***Tomoxia bucephala*** Costa. Na. Singly on logs of Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and oak (*Quercus* sp.) at Northaw Great Wood (TL286041) between 3.vi.2011 and 20.vi.2011.

***Variimorda villosa*** (Schrank). Nb. Several on flowers of Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) near Therfield Heath (TL333396) on 28.vi.2012.



**PYROCHROIDAE**

*Pyrochroa coccinea* (Linnaeus). Nb. Frequent at Northaw Great Wood (TL286041), Bencroft Wood (TL329063) and Broxbourne Wood (TL325069) between 10.v.2011 and 14.vi.2012. Approximately ten were on the trunk of a fallen oak (*Quercus* sp.) at Northaw Great Wood on 16.v.2011.

**RHYNCHITIDAE**

*Lasiorrhynchites cavifrons* (Gyllenhal). Nb. One on foliage of oak (*Quercus* sp.) at Northaw Great Wood (TL286041) on 25.v.2012. One on oak foliage at Bencroft Wood (TL329063) on 10.vi.2012.

**SCARABAEIDAE**

*Cetonia aurata* (Linnaeus). At Broxbourne Wood (TL325069) one on flowers of Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) on 15.vii.2012 and another on flowers of Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) at the same locality on 17.vii.2012 and on 23.viii.2012



*Cetonia aurata*. Broxbourne Wood. 23.viii.2012. © K.McGee.

*Omaloplia ruricola* (Fabricius). Nb. Approximately 125 at Therfield Heath (TL333396) on 19.vi.2012. This was a synchronised emergence which peaked between 11.30 hrs and 1400 hrs with both sexes in flight and several pairs *in copula* on low vegetation and on the ground. By 1500 hrs this activity had ceased and significantly fewer specimens were evident. A small proportion were melanic, determined by Mr. P. F. Whitehead from digital images as *Omaloplia ruricola* ab. *atratus* Geoffroy. The weather was warm and sunny with a temperature of 22° C and a south-easterly breeze. At the same site there were three on 28.vi.2012 and two on 23.vii.2012.



*Omaloplia ruricola*. Therfield Heath. 19.vi.2012. © K.McGee.



*Omaloplia ruricola* ab. *atratus* Geoffroy. Therfield Heath. 19.vi.2012. © K.McGee.

*Onthophagus joannae* Goljan. Ten at Therfield Heath (TL333396) on 19.vi.2012 apparently as a synchronised emergence. Three at the same site on 28.vi.2012.



*Onthophagus joannae*. Therfield Heath. 28.vi.2012. © K.McGee.

**SILPHIDAE**

*Dendroxena quadrimaculata* (Scopoli). Nb. Two on foliage of oak (*Quercus* sp.) at Northaw Great Wood (TL286041) on 6.v.2011.

**TENEBRIONIDAE**

*Diaperis boleti* (Linnaeus). RDB2. One on the underside of a bracket fungus, *Piptoporus betulinus*, (Hyman & Parsons, 1992) attached to a dead birch (*Betula* sp.) at Northaw Great Wood (TL286041) on 16.v.2011.



*Diaperis boleti*. Northaw Great Wood. 16.v.2011. © K.McGee.

**COLYDIIDAE**

*Colydium elongatum* (Fabricius). RDB3. Two on logs of birch (*Betula* sp.) at Northaw Great Wood (TL286041) on 14.vi.2012 and 20.vi.2012.



*Colydium elongatum*. Northaw Great Wood. 14.vi.2012. © K.McGee.

Kevin McGee

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The author wishes to thank Mr. P. F. Whitehead for naming the melanic form of *Omaloplia ruricola* and for revising some aspects of nomenclature.

**REFERENCES**

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## Are beetles and other invertebrates being neglected in pond surveys?

Richard Wright

Over the years I have undertaken numerous invertebrate surveys of ponds, some for general interest but increasingly on paid contract. It is a source of continual irritation that invertebrates in general, and beetles in particular, are often given short shrift in pond and other freshwater surveys.

Increasingly the methods of PSYM (Predictive SYstem for Multimetrics) are being adopted as the "standard". This method is used by Pond Conservation and data collected by this method is added to their national database. Yet it only requires identification of invertebrates to family level! It is impossible to conceive of any other area where this would be considered adequate. Imagine a bird survey where the surveyor reported finding finches, thrushes, crows and warblers, without knowing the species! For PSYM plants are identified to species level. For invertebrates the old and outdated BMWP score is used, where each family is given a score according to its supposed water quality requirements, and the ASPT (Average Score Per Taxon) is then calculated. Yet any detailed survey shows that the BMWP and ASPT score bear little relation to the true value of a pond for invertebrates. I recently surveyed a series of ponds on a single site. One pond contained 14 species of beetle,

another just 4. Yet on the BMWP/ASPT criteria they scored equally.

There is a method of assessing water bodies based on the beetle species (Foster & Eyre, 1992) although this requires updating in view of changes in our knowledge of species abundances. Using this method, the two ponds mentioned above had Species Quality Scores (SQS) of 41 and 4 respectively, a true reflection of their actual value for invertebrates. We all know that some members of the same beetle family can survive in the most disgustingly stinky ponds while others require pristine conditions, yet the BMWP/ASPT will give both the same score.

To be fair, Pond Conservation also has another system, the National Pond Survey, which does require identification to species level, but I suspect that, as this requires the collection of so much physical and other data, it is much more rarely used.

We should all resist the idea that, just because it requires skill and expertise to identify invertebrate species, they therefore should play second fiddle to plants and newts .....

Richard Wright

**Reference:**

Foster, G.N. & Eyre, M.D. 1992. Classification and ranking of water beetle communities. UK Nature Conservation. No.1 JNCC



## Michael Darby Exhibition

This is the poster for Michael Darby's exhibition opening next month. The Young Gallery is above the library in Salisbury Market Place and any readers of Beetle News who may wish to visit it will be very welcome. Entrance is free. The main purpose of the exhibition is to raise the profile of beetles in the public's perception and to that end the 24 images are accompanied by a series of text panels explaining why beetles are important. MalthouseBooks, which are sponsoring the exhibition, hope that it will travel after it closes in Salisbury and would be pleased to hear from any organisation or institution interested to take it (your local library or museum?). Some of the images are large, the stag beetle for example is 8 feet long, and some over 6 feet high, so that a minimum of 120 feet of wall space is required to house it. There is no catalogue but copies of the images are for sale, and posters and Private View cards can be supplied.

All enquiries to  
**admin@malthousebooks.co.uk**



## The weevil *Diaprepes abbreviata* (Curculionidae) in Peterborough

In May 1994 I was presented with a large and rather garish weevil found by Avril Lavender in a Thomas Cook office in central Peterborough, TL192985. It had been caught on one of the exotic ornamental plants where she worked. I am grateful to Adrian Fowles for identifying it as *Diaprepes abbreviata* L., a native of the Caribbean. Weissling, Pena, Giblin-Davis & Knapp, University of Florida website ([http://entnemdept.ifas.ufl.edu/creatures/citrus/diaprepes\\_root\\_weevil.htm](http://entnemdept.ifas.ufl.edu/creatures/citrus/diaprepes_root_weevil.htm)), explain that the black elytra are covered by white, red, orange or yellow scales but these rub off along longitudinal ridges producing black stripes. The adults vary from 0.95 to 1.90 cm in length. The same website describes this species as a serious pest of citrus orchards in Florida, infesting over 100,000 acres where larval damage to roots costs 70 million dollars annually.

Adults are reckoned to fly no more than 300 metres and long distance dispersal is in contaminated soil, including container-grown plants. This is possibly how it arrived in the Thomas Cook office.

A further 19 species of *Diaprepes* occur in the Caribbean. Prof. Michael E. Rogers, Citrus Research and Education Center, University of Florida, has kindly confirmed that the Peterborough specimen looks identical to *D. abbreviata* but he was unable to confirm it is this species because none of the others have been found in Florida. I am also grateful to Max Barclay who has checked the Natural History Museum's specimens of this genus and confirmed that the Peterborough specimen best matches *abbreviata*; and to Ilija Vukomanovic for photographing the specimen.

John Bratton, 18 New Street, Menai Bridge, Anglesey, LL59 5HN



## Observations of *Cylindera germanica* on the Jurassic Coast

Frank Ashwood

This year I began collecting carabid beetles, and decided to take the opportunity to expand my collection whilst on holiday this July in Dorset. After a couple of days of walking around the Jurassic Coast, I had very little to show for my efforts and was beginning to lose hope as well as the patience of my companions. On the penultimate day of the trip our group visited a small seaside town in South-East Devon (VC3) and it was there that we caught a glimpse of some Cliff Tiger Beetles, however in the bright sunlight their vivid red and blue colourings threw me initially (until then, my only knowledge was that Luff (2007) described *Cylindera germanica* as “dark green”). I estimated seeing at least 12 individuals that day, generally associated only with mudslides that possessed some dead vegetation and which were close to groundwater emerging from the cliff face [See Image 1]. After some nimble footwork I managed to gather a couple of specimens in a jar for identification. It seems the *Cylindera germanica* weren't too distracted by their temporary accommodation, as on a number of occasions I looked into the jar to find an overly-amorous male mating with a female with his jaws gripped tightly around her pronotum to prevent her escaping. I also had to intervene when one of the tiger beetles decided to attempt to eat a *Bembidion saxatile* that I'd collected in the same area. All of this excitement helped me convert one of my non-entomologist

friends into an avid beetle-hunter for the rest of the day.

I must admit I was tempted to take a couple of specimens home to improve what at that stage was an incomprehensive and very monochrome carabid collection. But this was weighed up against the risk of impacting a population of beetles that are a priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 since they occupy only a few (five or less) sites in the UK. Despite not being considered as under short-term threat of extinction, this species occupies fragile habitats that are under long-term threat from poor coastal management and the potential impacts of climate change. However, I am happy to say there is a dense population of these beetles in the area I visited, and hopefully through being continuously recognised as a principle conservation priority we will not lose the remaining populations of this beautiful and charismatic beetle.

### References

Luff, M. L. (2007). *The Carabidae (ground beetles) of Britain and Ireland*. Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects 4(2).

UK Priority Species data collation (2010). *UK priority species pages – Cylindera germanica* (Version 2). [Available online: [http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/\\_speciespages/217.pdf](http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/_speciespages/217.pdf) ]



Image 1: Typical mud slope occupied by *Cylindera germanica*



Image 2: Two specimens of *Cylindera germanica* in my Carabidae collection



***Chrysolina americana* (L.) (Col. Chrysomelidae), established outdoors in Barrow.**

Jim Thomas

Bridge House, Borwick, Carnforth, Lancashire, LA6 1JU.

The Rosemary Beetle *Chrysolina americana* (L.) is a Mediterranean species that has been introduced with plants to many countries in Europe and North Africa, was first recorded in Britain in Surrey in 1963 (Johnson 1963) and has slowly spread throughout the country. By 2007 it was known to occur in scattered localities in southern England, Wales and southeast Scotland (Cox 2007). Comparison between the distribution map provided by Cox in 2007 with the current map available on NBN Gateway shows just how far the species has spread in the last few years.

The adult beetles are very attractive, dark green with metallic red areas on their pronotum and elytra. Recorded food plants are all members of the Lamiaceae including rosemary, lavender, sage and thyme. The adult beetles are very similar to our native *C. cerealis* the Rainbow Leaf Beetle, a RDB 1 species, which is only known from montane grassland in Snowdonia where it feeds on wild thyme.

The species was added to the list of Cumbrian beetles on the basis of a specimen found on a potted plant of rosemary in a Carlisle store in July 2008 (Read and Hewitt 2011).

On 8.iv.2011, I came across a specimen on cultivated lavender in the park known as Channelside Haven in Barrow (GR: SD 1897 6885). Further searching yielded two more examples but then I realised that there was also a large number of rosemary plants in the park. A search lasting some 45 minutes revealed a total of five specimens of the beetle on lavender and three more on rosemary. Near the Dock Museum there was a small hill covered in lavender where I very quickly discovered three more adult beetles (GR: SD 1903 6909). The plants, on which the

insects were found, were obviously quite old, had been extensively pruned and not recently brought in from elsewhere.

On 3.x.2012, during a brief period of warm sunshine, I revisited the area and discovered several specimens in each of the sites described above and also found several more specimens of the beetle in the gardens around the Dock Museum. The gardens contain quite large amounts of both lavender and rosemary and it appears that there is a well-established outdoor breeding population of the species in this part of Barrow. It would be interesting to know if other isolated populations occur in gardens elsewhere in the northwest of England.

**References.**

COX, M.L. 2007. *Atlas of the seed and leaf beetles of Britain and Ireland*. Newbury: Pisces publications.

JOHNSON, C. 1963. *Chrysolina Americana* (L.) (Col., Chrysomelidae) in Britain. *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine*, **99**: 228-229.

**Book Review**

Foster, G.N. & Friday, L.E. 2011. *Key to adults of the water beetles of Britain and Ireland* (Part 1). Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects Vol 4 Part 5 (1)

Undoubtedly the publication of Laurie Friday's 1988 Aidgap guide to water beetles contributed greatly to an increased interest in this group of insects by providing relatively straightforward keys at a reasonable price. However, time has shown that in some cases the relative simplicity of the keys could cause problems. In addition, knowledge of many species has increased greatly over recent years and there have been numerous changes in nomenclature and classification. The publication of this, the first part of a revision and great expansion of Friday's work is therefore extremely welcome.

This volume covers the aquatic Adephaga, the Polyphaga will be covered in the second part. Like all recent RES Handbooks, much more detailed information is provided than in earlier volumes. It is well illustrated, including diagrams of all genitalia where relevant. Of particular value to the relative beginner will be the inclusion of colour plates of every species. Detailed information is also included of distribution and habitat.

There is little more to be said except that this is required reading for anyone with an interest in water beetles. The price of £24, though much higher than the old AIDGAP book, is not unreasonable by today's standards. I eagerly await the second part!

Richard Wright

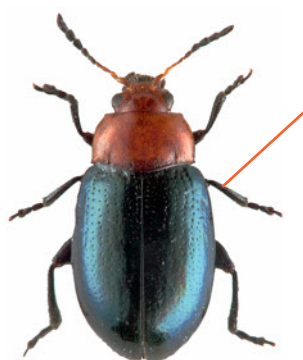
**Beginner's Guide:****Beetles on Common Mallow *Malva sylvestris***

Confronted with over 4,000 species of British beetle, the beginner would be well advised to restrict the possibilities whenever possible. One way to do this is to collect from specific plants. Several of the Naturalists' Handbooks are useful in this respect, particularly those dealing with insects on thistles, nettles, docks and cabbage and oilseed rape. Over the next few issues of Beetle News I propose to deal with several more plants and their associated beetles.

Common Mallow is a distinctive plant, found widely throughout most of lowland Britain. Usually quite tall, it

is easily sampled by sweeping or by tapping over a net or tray. Six species of beetle have mallow as their larval food plant and are therefore commonly found on the plant as adults. With the exception perhaps of the two species of *Aspidapion*, all can be fairly easily recognised in the field. Rather than a key, I have therefore provided photographs with notes.

Some of these species can also be found on other members of the Malvaceae. Care should be taken, however, with *Aspidapion soror* (very similar to *A. radiolus*) an apparently scarce species found on Marshmallow *Althaea officinalis* in coastal areas, while *Rhopalapion longirostre* is found on Hollyhock, perhaps presently restricted to south-east England and London.

**Chrysomelidae *Podagrica* species***P. fuscicornis**P. fuscipes*

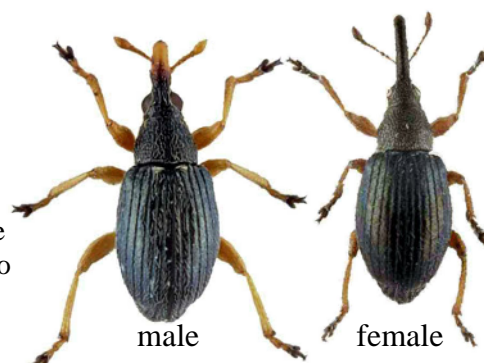
These two flea beetles are easily recognised, and distinguished by their leg colour, black in *P. fuscipes* and reddish in *P. fuscicornis*. Beginners, however, should note that there are other leaf beetles with similar colouration, particularly *Gastrophysa polygoni* and *Derocrepis rufipes* and so these species should only be identified when you are sure they have been collected from mallow.

Both species were largely confined to south-east England but are now spreading much more widely.

**Apionidae***Malvapion malvae*

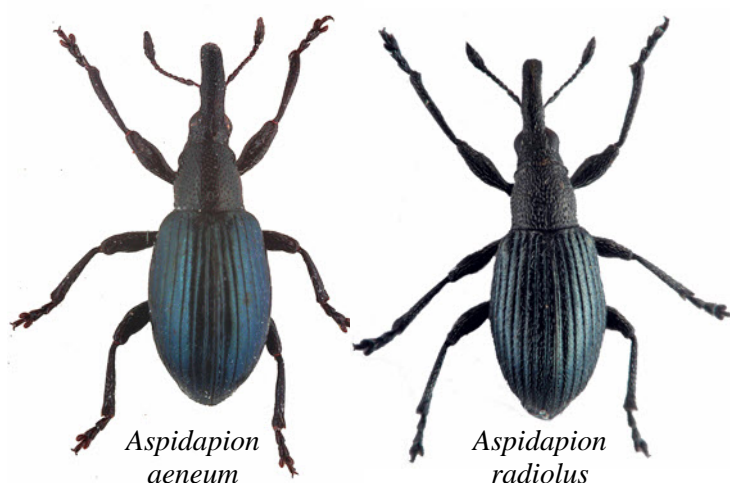
*Malvapion malvae* is a distinctive species which cannot easily be mistaken for any other.

*Pseudapion rufirostre* is distinctive among mallow species, but could be mistaken for others with yellow legs. They are much more pubescent than species of *Protapion*. The two species of *Kalcapion* are similar, but are confined to mercury *Mercurialis* species and are therefore unlikely to occur in the vicinity of mallow.

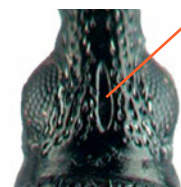


male

female

*Pseudapion rufirostre**Aspidapion aeneum**Aspidapion radiolus*

The two species of *Aspidapion* are rather similar in appearance, black with bluish elytra. *A. aeneum* is distinguished by the deep furrow between its eyes, absent in *A. radiolus*, but which is difficult to see without at least a lens.

*A. aeneum* head*A. radiolus* head

In *A. aeneum* the elytral intervals are wider and the striae finer than in *A. radiolus*. This gives *A. aeneum* a "smoother" appearance and the two species can easily be distinguished, even with the naked eye, if they are seen side by side e.g. in the net.