

Invertebrate Notes from North Worcestershire.

John & Denise Bingham

Macrodema micropterum (Curtis, 1836) Hemiptera. Recorded in Worcestershire.

On the 26th March 2018 Denise and I found several 3mm long Hemiptera ground bugs under heather *Calluna vulgaris* on a sandy part of the Rifle Range Reserve, Kidderminster. They were identified as *Macrodema micropterum*, a heathland species with occasional records scattered over most of England (01).

It has been recorded from just two sites in the county; the first record in 1932 by S.E. Wace Carlier on Hartlebury Common with the most recent records from Kevin McGee in 2004 at Hartlebury and 2015 on the Devil's Spittleful, sites about 0.5 km from our own record. Perhaps overlooked it may be present in a few more locations around Kidderminster or areas with heather on sandy soils.



01. *Macrodema micropterum* Rifle Range Reserve. John Bingham

Formica fusca (Linnaeus, 1758.) Formicinae, Hymenoptera. Nest in *Lycoperdon utriformis*. John Bingham.

Formica fusca is a common ant locally and not noteworthy but I was surprised whilst looking for beetles to find a nest of several hundred ants inside the sterile base of *Lycoperdon utriforme*, the Mosaic Puffball. Several dozen puffballs were present on top of a vegetated spoil heap (from heathland restoration works) on the Devil's Spittleful NR, Kidderminster. More typically the species nest under stones and in tree stumps, I cannot recall seeing them in a fungal substrate before. Also, the fungus beetles *Pocadius adustus* or *P. ferrugineus* were present in other puffballs, larvae were collected to breed out a fresh specimen for positive identification between the two species.

Norellia spinipes (Meigen, 1826) Scathophagidae, Diptera. (02) Betts Reserve, Far Forest. John Bingham

This small but quite attractive species is a dung-fly but looks more like a stilt-fly. Several were found on the Betts Reserve at Far Forest on 7th April 2018 on Ramson *Allium ursinum* leaves. Its larvae mine daffodil *Narcissus* sp. leaves and pupate at the base, sometimes causing damage to the bulbs. It was thought to be quite uncommon but recent appeals from by Malcolm Smart to look for it has resulted in many more records. Nigel Jones has found it in several sites in Shropshire, so provided there are daffodils, like on the Betts NR, it may well be discovered. It can be found most of the summer but early spring is best.



02. *Norellia spinipes* Betts Reserve, Wyre Forest. John Bingham.

Phytoecia cylindrica (Linnaeus, 1758), Cerambycidae, Coleoptera. Umbellifer Longhorn Beetle.

This longhorn beetle has been present in south/mid Worcestershire for many years but without any records in the north. We finally managed to find three individuals in several locations on 5th May 2018 along the lane at Blackstone near to the Devil's Spittleful NR. A few records are now appearing in South Shropshire and South Staffordshire. In the *Worcestershire Record* April 2018 Wendy Carter reported a trend for northern expansion (Carter 2018). I think we can say it's happened, no doubt the River Severn valley corridor will be a key route.

Solva marginata (Meigen, 1820), Drab Wood-Soliderfly, Xylomyidae, Diptera and ***Gnophomyia viridipennis*** (Gimmerthal), Limoniidae, Diptera in Wyre Forest. John Bingham.

On 17th June 2018 whilst looking around a open site to the east of the main area of Wyre Forest I noticed several black Craneflies attracted to the cut ends of a tree. They were using a recently felled hybrid Poplar *Populus* sp. trunk located near Dowles Brook, just into Shropshire Vice County. I collected one and later identified it as *Gnophomyia viridipennis*, (03) a specialist on *Populus* and *Salix* sp. Also present were some small flies that I had seen elsewhere and easily identified as *Solva marginata*, (04) another specialist on *Populus* and *Salix* sp. Both species are Nationally Scarce. In all three female *Solva* and five *Gnophomyia* were note using the fallen tree.

Solva has only one known site in Worcestershire in 1996 with four records made at Bredon Hill collectively by Peter Skidmore, Paul Whitehead and Peter Holmes. In Shropshire Nigel Jones has recently found several sites around Shrewsbury suggesting the species is overlooked. *Gnophomyia* is a southern species but follows the River Severn wetland corridor well into Shropshire where there are a scattering of recent records. (Boardman 2016). Any recently felled *Populus* or *Salix* sp. might well be worth spending 10 minutes looking at in late spring as both these species may be more common than records suggest.



03. *Gnophomyia viridipennis* Dowles Manor, Wyre Forest. John Bingham.



04. *Solva marginata* Dowles Manor, Wyre Forest. John Bingham.

***Panorpa communis* Linnaeus, 1758. Panorpidae, Mecoptera. Feeding on a dead Mole, *Talpa europaea* Linnaeus, 1758.**

On 18th June 2018 in Eymore Wood near Shatterford I found a Scorpion-fly (assumed to be *P. communis* female) feeding on a recently dead mole (05). The mole carcass had the usual assortment of flies but the Scorpion-fly was feeding directly in the mouth, no doubt after moisture and other fluids. Perhaps not that unusual behavior but not something I had not witnessed before, in all my previous observations they have been feeding on various dead insects or droppings.



05. *Panorpa communis* feeding on Mole, Eymore. John Bingham.

***Synanthedon myopaeiformis* Borkhausen 1789, Sesiidae, Lepidoptera. Red-belted Clearwing. Taken by a Bee.**

In June 2018 Denise was recording numbers of Red-belted Clearwing moths using a lure in our garden when a leafcutter bee, *Megachile centuncularis*, swooped in and took a clearwing moth in flight. The bee was nesting nearby and obviously saw the moth as prey to stock its nest site.

***Hyptiotes paradoxus* (C.L.Koch, 1834) (Araneae: Uloboridae), Triangle Spider in Worcestershire.**

On a rather rainy Wyre Forest Study Group meeting in New Parks, Wyre Forest on 22nd September 2018 the party stopped for lunch under a Yew tree for shelter. Denise Bingham decided to tap a few lower branches of the tree for any insects and amongst those found was a male *Hyptiotes paradoxus* spider. We believe this may be the first Worcestershire record, although the spider has been recorded several times before in Wyre all of the previous sites were on the Shropshire side of the forest.

Acknowledgements

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References

Boardman, P. 2016. *Shropshire Craneflies*. Field Studies Council, Preston Montford.

Carter, W. 2018. An Umbellifer Longhorn Beetle *Phytoecia cylindrica* spring? *Worcestershire Record* 44:23

Images

- 01. *Macrodemia micropterum* Rifle Range Reserve. John Bingham.
- 02. *Norellia spinipes* Betts Reserve, Wyre Forest. John Bingham.
- 03. *Gnophomyia viridipennis* Dowles Manor, Wyre Forest. John Bingham.
- 04. *Solva marginata* Dowles Manor, Wyre Forest. John Bingham.
- 05. *Panorpa communis* feeding on Mole, Eymore. John Bingham.