

***Lestiphorus bicinctus* (Rossi, 1794) and *Nysson trimaculatus* (Rossi, 1790) (Hymenoptera: Crabronidae) at Martley, Worcestershire.**

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While recently undertaking general maintenance and housekeeping of my computer files I came across a couple of images of a digger wasp I had completely forgotten about. I can only assume I quickly looked at them, decided I couldn't identify the wasp straight away, and filed them away for later inspection! The two images were taken at St Peters Churchyard, Martley (SO756598) during my lunch break on 07.09.2017 (01 & 02).

The wasp is *Lestiphorus bicinctus* in the family Crabronidae with a conservation classification of Nationally Notable B. The NBN Atlas has 113 records with the majority being from the southern and eastern counties of England. There is one recent Worcestershire record; one was found at Malvern by Richard Comont on 29.06.2019. Unless there are further as yet unpublished records the Malvern record and my 2017 Martley record are the only two known from the county.



01. *Lestiphorus bicinctus* (female) at St Peters Churchyard, Martley, on 07.09.2017. Kevin McGee.



02. *Lestiphorus bicinctus* (female) at St Peters Churchyard, Martley, on 07.09.2017. Kevin McGee.

The keys still used to identify solitary wasps remain those produced by Yeo & Corbet in 1983, although my copy is an edition revised in 1995. Note that *L. bicinctus* is named as *Gorytes bicinctus* in Yeo & Corbet but has since been re-named. One of the more easily seen diagnostic features is the much reduced and narrow first abdominal segment in comparison to the second (see 01). *L. bicinctus* is described as rare and elusive in Surrey (Baldock, 2010) where it preys on leaf-hoppers and frog-hoppers in areas with dry loose soils

to supply as food within the nest burrow. It is interesting to note that five of the eighteen Surrey records during the survey period were from private suburban gardens (Baldock, 2010). I have a record from a Hertfordshire suburban garden (09.09.2012) and the 2019 Malvern record is from an area containing established suburban gardens. It could be argued that regularly tended churchyards such as that in Martley provide similar habitats to large gardens. The NBN Atlas shows a single record of *L. bicinctus* just outside the northern boundary of Worcestershire in Edgbaston, Birmingham where one was found by Andy Slater on 29.07.2019, again, from a suburban setting.

The cleptoparasite of *L. bicinctus* is *Nysson trimaculatus*. This is also an uncommon species with a classification of Nationally Notable B. There are scattered records in Worcestershire on the NBN Atlas website, although my records for it at Martley do not appear. I have three Worcestershire records, all from the churchyard at Martley; 21.07.2016, 02.08.2019 (see 03), and 12.08.2019.



03. *Nysson trimaculatus* (female) at St Peters Churchyard, Martley, on 02.08.2019. Kevin McGee.

It is well worth checking for either of these elusive species if your garden contains areas of loose sandy soil suitable for nesting, and native plants and shrubs suitable for frog-hoppers and leaf-hoppers.

References.

- Baldock, D.W. 2010. *Wasps of Surrey*. Surrey Wildlife Trust, Woking, Surrey.
 NBN Atlas *Species search* [on-line] <http://www.nbnatlas.org/> [Accessed 03.09.2022]
 Yeo, P.F. & Corbet, S.A. 1995) *Solitary Wasps* (2nd edition). Naturalists' Handbooks 3. The Richmond Publishing Co. Ltd.

Images

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