

Conservatory Insects.

Rosemary Winnall

In April 2021 my husband and I moved to a property on the edge of Bewdley town close to the river. The house had a small conservatory (measuring 3m x 4m) on the southwest side of the house with double doors opening to the southeast. We spent much of the summer using this space, enjoying the open views and warmth, although it got too hot at times, and on 18th July when the garden temperature reached 31.5°C a temperature of 40°C was recorded inside.



01. The wooden conservatory. Rosemary Winnall.

But the wooden conservatory frame wasn't in the best condition (01). It needed painting and had warped leaving small gaps where the glass didn't fit properly. So we decided to replace the wood with a metal frame and the glass with argon-filled 28mm double-glazing which was designed to cut down the glare, reduce heat build-up in summer and minimise heat loss in winter. This was completed on 28th July 2021; the size and shape were identical to the original conservatory, but the roof glass looked blue when viewed obliquely (02).



02. The new argon-filled blue glass roof. Rosemary Winnall.

During the following week of dry warm weather I began to notice insects inside the conservatory and many were getting trapped up in

the roof apex. I needed to wield my long-handled sweep net in order to catch and release them. I soon realised that where the roof and walls joined there was a narrow ledge and if I wasn't quick enough with the net some were dying up on that shelf. So began two months of collecting which included clambering along over the table and seating with pooter, tube and soft forceps. I moved my microscope and insect keys into the conservatory and this became my lab for the rest of the summer, and I had an ideal occupation during the Covid pandemic travel and social restrictions. During August and September 2021 I caught and tubed these insects, photographing them from various angles, before releasing live ones into the garden and retaining the dead ones. I identified as many as possible and submitted my records with photographs onto iRecord (although not all groups are verified at present but may be in the future). I wrote this up for the *Wyre Forest Study Group REVIEW 2021*.

I continued recording in 2022, checking insects from April onwards, through the spring and summer and adding another 45 species to my list. Table 1 shows those I was able to identify, although it gives no indication of the numbers involved. Many I couldn't identify and I have saved Sarcophagids, Dolichopodidae, Phorids, grass flies, parasitoids, spider-hunting wasps, and sawflies for another occasion. Mick Blythe encouraged me in this project and generously provided me with some of his keys for the harder groups of flies. I am promised hours of fun when I find the time!



03. Migrant Dragonfly *Aeshna mixta*. Rosemary Winnall.

The butterflies and bumble bees that flew in were easy to catch and identify, but there were a few surprises such as the Migrant Dragonfly *Aeshna mixta* (03) and an active Field Grasshopper *Chorthippus brunneus* seven foot up on the high ledge. Most of the catch were flies and small bees and wasps, a few of which I had not previously recorded. There were very few bugs, although the Andromeda Lacebug *Stephanitis takeyai* (04) was of interest as it is a recent immigrant from Japan to the UK where it feeds on *Rhododendron*, *Azalea* and *Pieris*.



04. Andromeda Lacebug *Stephanitis takeyai*. Rosemary Winnall.



07. *Melitta leporina* Rosemary Winnall.



05. Tachinid *Cistogaster globosa*. Rosemary Winnall.

In 2022 I recorded many nymphs on my garden *Pieris*. The tachinid *Cistogaster globosa* (05) (kindly identified by Chris Raper) was of note as this species has been moving westwards and this provided another record in the west of England, extending its known range. The Red-tipped Clearwing *Synanthedon formicaeformis* (06) was not a first for the garden as males had come to a pheromone lure but the two female *Melitta leporina* (07) bees were good to see, and I was pleased to photograph its cuckoo *Nomada flavopicta* in the garden the following week.

This exercise enabled me to take a close look at some of the picture-winged flies (08), admire some soldier flies (09), and struggle with the small hoverflies (10). Roger Morris's very prompt verifications of all my hoverflies on iRecord provided great encouragement.



08. Picture-winged fly *Rhagoletis alternata*. Rosemary Winnall.



06. Red-tipped Clearwing *Synanthedon formicaeformis*. Rosemary Winnall.



09. Soldierfly *Pachygaster leachii*. Rosemary Winnall.



10. Hoverfly *Meligramma trianguliferum*. Rosemary Winnall.

After a few weeks, I realised that I wasn't the only creature collecting these insects. Several spiders had moved in including the Garden Spider *Araneus diadematus* and the Zebra Jumping Spider *Salticus scenicus* and I would often find little wrapped parcels left on the ledge like early Christmas presents. Common Wasps *Vespula vulgaris* were visiting, capturing live insects and flying back out (when they could find the door) and up to their nest in the house soffits. I discovered that if I left out pinned specimens I might return

to find some of them headless, and I eventually saw a wasp trying to pull one of the dead flies off its pin! I very soon learned to keep them covered. I was never sure whether the several visiting Robber Flies were hunting or just lost.

I found an interesting variety of species during these two years and enjoyed the opportunity to examine many closely to admire their anatomy and colouration. It also made me consider habitats within 200m of our new home. There are flower-rich gardens (some long-established), the River Severn with its riverside vegetation, unimproved meadow, a small churchyard, a stream, several ponds, an arable field, high hedges and native deciduous woodland. This must be an area with high biodiversity, and there will be plenty more to discover.

I am writing this to alert others to the possibility that this blue glass might be attracting insects to their doom. Although the conservatory may be acting as an interception trap, I rescued no insects from the old wooden conservatory with the plain glass between May and July 2021, even though we were using the room so much with the outer doors open. Could this new glass be deceiving flying insects into thinking it is a garden pond or giant blue flower to be investigated? Is this a threat to our already diminished insect populations, and has anyone else experienced a similar concern?

SO78917506 Species recorded in conservatory Rosemary Winnall Bewdley town

TAXON	Latin name			2021	2022
Coleoptera	<i>Adalia bipunctata</i>	2 Spot Ladybird			Aug-22
Coleoptera	<i>Amphimallon solstitiale</i>	Summer Chafer			Jul-22
Coleoptera	<i>Anaglyptus mysticus</i>	a long-horned beetle			May-22
Coleoptera	<i>Bruchus rufimanus</i>	Broadbean Weevil		Sep-21	
Coleoptera	<i>Harmonia axyridis</i>	Harlequin Ladybird			Apr-22
Diptera - a dolyopid	<i>Poecilobothrus nobilitatus</i>		male		Jun-22
Diptera - blowfly	<i>Lucilia sp.</i>			Sep-21	Aug-22
Diptera - cranefly	<i>Nephrotoma cornicina</i>		female	Aug-21	
Diptera - cranefly	<i>Tipula paludosa</i>		female	Sep-21	
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Baccha elongata</i>		female	Aug-21	
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Dasysyrphus albostrigatus</i>		female	Aug-21	
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Epistrophe eligans</i>		female		Apr-22
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Episyrphus balteatus</i>		male	Aug-21	
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Eristalis pertinax</i>		male, female	Sep-21	May-22
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Eumerus sp.</i>		female	Aug-21	Jul-22
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Eupeodes latifasciatus</i>		female, male	Aug/Sep 21	
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Eupeodes luniger</i>		females, male	Aug-21	Jun-22
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Ferdinandea cuprea</i>		female	Aug-21	
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Helophilus pendulus</i>		female	Sep-21	
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Melanostoma mellinum</i>		female, male	Aug-21	Jul-22
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Meligramma trianguliferum</i>		female, male	Aug-21	
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Meliscaeva auricollis</i>		female	Aug-21	
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Meliscaeva cinctella</i>		male, female	Aug-21	
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Merodon equestris</i>		female		Jun-22
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Myathropa florea</i>		female		May-22
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Platycheirus albimanus</i>		female	Sep-21	Aug-22
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Platycheirus clypeatus agg.</i>		female	Aug-21	
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Rhingia campestris</i>		male	Aug-21	
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Sphaerophoria sp.</i>		female	Aug-21	
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Syrirta pipiens</i>		male, female		May-22
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Syrphus ribesii</i>		female	Sep-21	Jun-22
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Volucella inanis</i>		male	Aug-21	
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Volucella pellucens</i>		female	Aug-21	
Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Xanthogramma pedissequum</i>		male	Aug-21	

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Diptera - hoverfly	<i>Xylota segnis</i>		female	Aug-21	May-22
Diptera - pallopterid	<i>Mesembrina meridiana</i>			Aug-21	
Diptera - pallopterid	<i>Palloptera umbellatarum</i>			Aug-21	
Diptera - pallopterid	<i>Palloptera ustulata</i> agg			Aug-21	
Diptera - robber fly	<i>Machimus atricapillus</i>	a robber fly	male	Aug-21	
Diptera - soldier fly	<i>Beris vallata</i>	Common Orange Legionnaire	female		Jul-22
Diptera - soldier fly	<i>Chloromyia formosa</i>	Broad Centurion	female		Jul-22
Diptera - soldier fly	<i>Chorisops tibialis</i>	Dull Spur-spined Legionnaire	male	Aug-21	Jul-22
Diptera - soldier fly	<i>Microchrysa polita</i>	Black-horned Gem	female	Aug-21	Jun-22
Diptera - soldier fly	<i>Pachygaster atra</i>	Dark-winged Black	female		Jul-22
Diptera - soldier fly	<i>Pachygaster leachii</i>	Yellow-legged Black	female x2	Aug-21	Jul-22
Diptera - soldier fly	<i>Sargus bipunctatus</i>	Twin-spot Centurion	female	Sep-21	Sep-22
Diptera - soldier fly	<i>Sargus flavipes</i>	Yellow-legged Centurion		Sep-21	
Diptera - stiletto fly	<i>Thereva nobilitata</i>	Common Stiletto	female	Aug-21	
Diptera - tabanid	<i>Tabanus bromius</i>	a horsefly	female		Jul-22
Diptera - tachinid	<i>Cistogaster globosa</i>				Jul-22
Diptera - tachinid	<i>Tachina fera</i>	a tachinid fly		Sep-21	
Diptera - tephritid	<i>Anomoia permunda</i>	a picture-winged fly		Aug/Sep 21	Jul-22
Diptera - tephritid	<i>Rhagoletis alternata</i>	a picture-winged fly			Jul-22
Diptera - tephritid	<i>Tephritis neesii</i>	Ox-eye daisy Fly			Jul-22
Diptera - tephritid	<i>Tephritis vespertina</i>	a picture-winged fly		Aug-21	
Diptera - tephritid	<i>Trypeta zoe</i>		female		Jun-22
Hemiptera - mirid	<i>Liocoris tripustulatus</i>	a mirid bug		Aug-21	
Hemiptera - mirid	<i>Plagiognathus arbustorum</i>	a mirid bug		Aug-21	
Hemiptera - shieldbug	<i>Palomena prasina</i>	Common Green Shieldbug			May-22
Hemiptera - tingid	<i>Stephanitis takeyai</i>	Andromena lacebug		Sep-21	
Hymenoptera - ant	<i>Formica fusca</i>	queen	female		Aug-22
Hymenoptera - ant	<i>Lasius flavus</i>	Yellow Meadow Ant	queen	Aug-21	
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Andrena chrysoceles</i>	Hawthorn Mining Bee	female		Aug-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Andrena haemorrhoa</i>	Early Mining Bee	female		May-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Andrena minutula</i>	Common Mini-miner	female		Sep-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Andrena wilkella</i>	Wilke's Mining Bee	female		Jun-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Apis mellifera</i>	Honey Bee	worker	Aug-21	May-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Bombus hortorum</i>	Garden Bumblebee	male, worker	Aug-21	Apr-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Bombus hypnorum</i>	Tree Bumblebee	worker	Aug-21	Apr-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Bombus lapidarius</i>	Red-tailed Bumblebee	worker, queen	Aug-21	Jul-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Bombus pascuorum</i>	Common Carder Bumblebee	worker	Aug-21	Aug-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Bombus terrestris/lucorum</i>	a bumblebee	worker	Aug-21	Apr-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Halictus rubicundis</i>	Orange-legged Furrow Bee		Sep-21	Jul-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Hylaeus brevicornis</i>	Short-horned Yellow-face Bee	female		Aug-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Hylaeus communis</i>	Common Yellow-face Bee	male, female	Aug-21	Jul-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Lasioglossum calceatum</i>	Common Furrow Bee		Sep-21	
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Lasioglossum leucopus</i>	White-footed Furrow Bee	male		Aug-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Lasioglossum morio</i>	Brassy Mining Bee	female, male	Aug-21	Aug-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Megachile ceticularis</i>	Patchwork Leafcutter Bee	female		Jul-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Megachile willughbiella</i>	Willughby's Leafcutter Bee	female	Sep-21	
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Melitta leporina</i>		female		Jul-22
Hymenoptera - bee	<i>Osmia bicornis</i>	Red Mason Bee	female		May-22
Hymenoptera - wasp	<i>Ectemnius cephalotes</i>		female		Aug-22
Hymenoptera - wasp	<i>Gasteruption jaculator</i>		female		Jul-22
Hymenoptera - wasp	<i>Lindenus albilabris</i>		male, female	Aug-21	Aug-22
Hymenoptera - wasp	<i>Mellinus arvensis</i>	Field Digger-wasp	female	Aug-21	
Hymenoptera - wasp	<i>Pimpla rufipes</i>		male	Aug-21	Jul-22
Hymenoptera - wasp	<i>Rhopalum coarctatum</i>		male	Aug-21	
Hymenoptera - wasp	<i>Trypoxylon clavicerum</i>			Aug-21	
Hymenoptera - wasp	<i>Vespula germanica</i>	a social wasp	worker	Aug-21	
Hymenoptera - wasp	<i>Vespula vulgaris</i>	a social wasp	worker	Aug-21	Jul-22
Lepidoptera - butterfly	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	Holly Blue		Aug-21	

Lepidoptera - butterfly	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	Small White		Aug-21	
Lepidoptera - moth	<i>Tinea bisselliella</i>	Common Clothes moth			Jun-22
Lepidoptera - moth	<i>Endrosis sarcitrella</i>	White-shouldered House moth			Jul-22
Lepidoptera - moth	<i>Synanthedon formicaeformis</i>	Red-tipped Clearwing			Jul-22
Lepidoptera - moth	<i>Agriphila geniculea</i>	a pyralid			Sep-22
Lepidoptera - moth	<i>Falcaria lacertinaria</i>	Scalloped hook-tip			Jul-22
Lepidoptera - moth	<i>Glyphipterix simpliciella</i>	a micromoth			Aug-22
Odonata	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	Migrant Hawker	male	Aug-21	
Odonata	<i>Pyrroshoma nymphula</i>	Large Red Damselfly	female		Apr-22
Orthoptera	<i>Chorthippus brunneus</i>	Field Grasshopper		Aug-21	

Table 1. Species recorded in Bewdley conservatory. All records - Rosemary Winnall.

Images

01. The wooden conservatory. Rosemary Winnall.
02. The new argon-filled blue glass roof. Rosemary Winnall.
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