



Newsletter 1

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Welcome to the new Sawfly Study Group newsletter. Your name has been passed on to me as someone who was either involved with the group when it was last active in the 1980s, or who has shown an interest in recording and sharing information on sawflies since then. I hope that you enjoy the newsletter and support it with you own contributions in the future.

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ABOUT THE SAWFLY STUDY GROUP

The Sawfly Study Group was initiated by David Sheppard in 1987 as a means of facilitating the exchange of ideas and information about these insects between enthusiasts, in particular those in Great Britain. Throughout the remainder of the decade it was successful in meeting this aim, and produced a series of informative newsletters in conjunction with a national recording scheme. A recent well-attended 'sawfly workshop' at the headquarters of the British Entomological and Natural History Society indicated there was sufficient interest to justify its revival.

The aims of the group remain much the same now as they were then. Its success depends wholly on the submission of notes and information by its members. Although it is not intended to fulfil the role of a scientific journal it will hopefully provide an ideal forum for the dissemination of information and a useful introduction for those beginning to take an interest in sawflies.

I would be very pleased to receive notes (however brief) on just about any relevant subject, these might include:

- Interesting finds and faunistic lists
- Biological observations
- Notes on immature stages and rearing
- Information relating to museum and private collections
- Accounts of collecting trips and localities
- Details of research projects
- Taxonomic contributions

I hope in particular that the newsletter can be used to address and resolve queries submitted by readers, and as a forum for requests for material and data. It could also be an ideal vehicle for testing draft keys and would perhaps be useful for drawing attention to publications that others may not be aware of.

In the future we aim to resume the mapping of species distributions and ideally determine the conservation statuses of some of our species. To this end requests for records of particular 'target species' will appear in subsequent newsletters.

I intend to mail future newsletters at irregular intervals, when sufficient contributions have been received.

PLEASE PROVIDE SOME FEEDBACK

As it has been a while since the group was last active there are a number of matters that I would really appreciate your opinions on:

- Most importantly, do you want to receive this newsletter? I would be happy to take anyone off the circulation list. If you know of anyone else who would be interested please pass on their details.
- Would you be happy for your contact details to be printed on a circulation list in subsequent issues? (I would also like to include biographical details of those who wish to submit them).
- I would like to make this newsletter available electronically. I would be grateful if you would provide an email address if you are able to receive it this way.
- Is the proposed content of the newsletter relevant and of interest? What else would you like to see in it?

Please feel free to contact me with any other queries or suggestions.

- Last year, Ian F. Smith established a web group for the exchange of sawfly information. He has kindly allowed the group to be associated with this newsletter - details are given below:

AN ONLINE DISCUSSION GROUP

Ian Smith

For quick exchange of information, identification requests and opinion there is an associated online discussion group called **SAWFLY – THE SYMPHYTA FORUM**

Photographs and files can be uploaded by members to allow their viewing by others, without the risks of virus transfer associated with email attachments. This feature has been especially popular for the posting of pictures of Symphyta larvae for possible identification.

You can view the home page at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sawfly/>
To join, send a blank email to sawfly-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Membership can be set to receive emails individually, as a daily digest, or to read messages online without receiving emails. Monthly messages over winter have varied between 9 and 28. Membership can easily be terminated at any time, by the sending of a blank email.

If any difficulty is experienced in the joining process, please email the List owner; email details are at the foot of the home page.

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE BRITISH SAWFLY LIST

Guy Knight

The best available identification guides to the British sawflies remain R. B. Benson's Royal Entomological Society Handbooks (Benson, 1951, 1952, 1958), alongside the more recent revision of 'Section A', which deals with the non-Tenthredinidae (Quinlan & Gould, 1981). Although still invaluable, these are now badly out-dated. Fortunately, the handbooks are currently under revision by David Sheppard. In the mean time I thought it would be useful to provide here a summary of additional species found in Britain since these books were produced.

I have not included changes that have resulted from nomenclatural advances. A new British Hymenoptera checklist is imminent in which David Sheppard has tackled this subject. This checklist will introduce numerous changes at the specific, generic and higher taxonomic levels. It

will also highlight deletions of species which must now be considered extinct in Britain, and those which have been 'sunk' as synonyms.

Information on British sawflies not in the RES handbooks, originally given in the excellent user-friendly Aidgap key to sawfly genera (Wright, 1990), has been duplicated here and updated where necessary. I have found David Sheppard's unpublished manuscripts 'Introduction to the Sawflies' and 'A Working Checklist of British Sawflies', as well as A. D. Liston's 'Compendium of European Sawflies' (Liston, 1995) absolutely invaluable in producing this summary. More recent discoveries (to various levels of detail) are also covered, and, where possible, literature references to separating additions from similar British species are included. As may be expected, many belong to poorly recorded or 'difficult' genera (particularly *Pristiphora*, *Pontania*, *Amauronematus* and *Pachynematus*), although, perhaps more surprisingly, a few are fairly conspicuous insects. As indicated in the text, some records raise questions that I am incapable of resolving. Undoubtedly there will be mistakes, and I will have also missed a few species. I would be very pleased to include any additional information or corrections in subsequent newsletters.

ARGIDAE

Vikberg (2004) recently re-examined material under *Aprosthemella melanurum* (Klug) in the collections of the Natural History Museum, London. As a result of this *Aprosthemella tardum* (Klug) and *Aprosthemella fuscicornis* (Thomson) have been added to the British list. All three species are very rare insects, which are quite difficult to separate. Vikberg includes a key to five European species and demonstrates an interesting seasonal dimorphism in the genus.

Halstead (2004) presents a full account of the Berberis Sawfly *Arge berberidis* Schrank in Britain. Although it may have been present since 2000 or earlier, it was first reliably recorded in Britain from Essex in 2002. It has so far been found in seven counties in south-east England. The species resembles *Arge nigripes* (Retzius in Degeer) and feeds on *Berberis*, especially *B. thunbergii*, and *Mahonia*, on which it can cause serious defoliation.

TENTHREDINIDAE

Allantinae

Emphytus (or *Allantus*) *laticinctus* Serville has recently been found in at two coastal sites in south-west Wales (Knight, 2006-in press). I am perhaps wrong in calling this species *Emphytus*, I have done this in accordance with Lacourt (1989), who presents a convincing argument for the separate treatment of the genera *Allantus* and *Emphytus*. Both sexes are recognisable by the bicoloured stigma of the forewing and smooth, polished mesopleurae (on sides of thorax). Below are photographs of the female (which has a red-girdled abdomen), male (which has a black abdomen), and the larva, found feeding on Burnet Rose. The dark dorsal and lateral stripes of the older larvae are quite distinctive within the genus.



Emphytus laticinctus ♀



Emphytus laticinctus ♂



Emphytus laticinctus mature larva

The Aspen-feeding 'slug-sawfly' *Caliroa tremulae* Chevin has been distinguished from *Caliroa varipes* (Klug), with which it was previously confused in this country. Liston (1993a) reports this distinction. The adult can be separated from *Caliroa varipes* (Klug) by the junction of vein 2r in the

forewing being situated nearer the apex than the middle of cell 2RS, and the middle tibiae being almost entirely white on the outer sides. The slug-like larva has a completely dark head in contrast to the light brownish head of *Caliroa varipes*, a species which grazes the epidermis of leaves of oak, willows and birch.

Blennocampinae

The rose-feeding *Monardis plana* (Klug) has recently been discovered in south Wales by David Gibbs (Gibbs, in press 2006).

The elm leaf-miners keying to *Fenusa ulmi* (Sundevall) in Benson (1952) are treated as three species in the genus *Kaliopenusa* by Liston (1993b). Of these *Kaliopenusa altenhoferi* Liston and *Kaliopenusa ulmi* (Sundevall) are recorded from Britain. The latter has recently been recorded from Ireland for the first time as *Kaliopenusa pusilla* (Serville) [sic] (Knight, 2004).

Heterarthrus healyi (Altenhofer & Zombori), a Field Maple leaf-miner, has been split from *Heterarthrus aceris* (Kaltenbach), which also attacks Field Maple, but is more typical of Sycamore. The adult's head is much more weakly contracted behind the eyes (almost parallel), and the apical five joints of the antennae clear yellow (the apical two or three are reddish-brown in *aceris*). The larval blister-mines are relatively small.

The black form of *Eutomostethus ephippium* (Panzer) has been described as a separate species *Eutomostethus nigricans* Blank & Taeger (Blank & Taeger, 1998).

Nematinae

Only one species of *Amauronematus* has been added since Benson (1958), this is *Amauronematus godmani* Benson, (Benson, 1959) (a species with an 'alpine-British' distribution, only known in the UK from Scotland). *Amauronematus kamchaticha* Malaise, which is referred to in Wright (1990), is in fact a synonym of *Amauronematus* (or *Pontopristera*) *amentorum* (Förster).

Nematus scotonotus Förster can be identified using Benson (1961) where, as in Fitton *et al.* (1978), it is treated as *Nematus polygoni* Benson. No British specimens can be traced. Any *Nematus* larvae found feeding on *Polygonum bistorta* would therefore be of great interest (although the plant is also a host to a few quite unrelated sawfly species). The larva is purportedly green with a darker dorsal stripe, the head having a dark vertical stripe, and dark stripe over each eye.

Pachynematus is another problematic genus. *Pachynematus virginalis* Liston (1980) is only known from the ♂ holotype taken in Edinburgh (Liston, 1995). The extension to the eighth tergite illustrated by Liston (1980) is quite distinctive. *Pachynematus parvilabris* (Thomson) was introduced to the British list as *Pachynematus glabriceps* Lindqvist by Benson (1964). *Pristicampus arcticus* (Lindqvist), has had a complicated taxonomic history (Liston, 1982a). It was introduced to the British list by Benson (1961b) as *Pachynematus arcticus*, after the aberrant holotype was originally erroneously described as a species of *Mesoneura*. It can be identified using Benson (1961) and Liston (1982a), and is only known from Scotland. *Pachynematus torridonensis* Liston (1980a), given as an addition in Wright (1990), was re-identified as *Pachynematus moerens* (Förster).

Nine species of *Salix*-galling sawflies of the genus *Pontania* were added to the British list by Liston (1995). Five of these appear in Sheppard's current draft British checklist: *Pontania herbaceae* (Cameron), *Pontania lapponica* Malaise (Scotland only), *Pontania samolad* Malaise (Scotland only), *Pontania aestiva* (Thomson) (Scotland only), *Pontania arbusculae* (Benson) (Scotland only). A further three; *Pontania gallarum* (Hartig), *Pontania bella* (Zaddach) and *Pontania myrsiniticola* Kopelke would appear to be currently regarded as junior synonyms of *Pontania pedunculii* (Hartig).

Generally, identification of *Pristiphora* spp. is problematic at best, and the available keys are sometimes practically unworkable. Ten species appear to have been discovered new to Britain since Benson (1958), these are: *Pristiphora decepiens* (Enslin), (Liston, 1981a), (Beneš &

Křístek, 1976); *Pristiphora pseudodecapiens* Beneš & Křístek, (Beneš & Křístek, 1976); *Pristiphora micronematica* Malaise, (Liston, 1982b); *Pristiphora variipes* (Lindqvist), (Liston, 1981b) - as *Pristiphora lanifica* (Zaddach), (Liston, 1993c) - as *Pristiphora sermola* Liston, (Scotland only); *Pristiphora coactula* (Ruthe), (Benson, 1959), (Scotland only); *?Pristiphora karvoneni* (Lindqvist), (Liston, 1983b), [?Liston (1995) retracts record]; *Pristiphora funerula* (O. Costa), [(in Ireland) (O'Connor & Liston, 1994) - as *Pristiphora freisei* (Konow)], (Liston, 1995); *Pristiphora leucopus* (Hellén) (Gearson in prep 2006); *Pristiphora luteipes* Lindqvist, (Liston, 1995), (?Ireland only); *?Pristiphora subopaca* Lindqvist, (Lindqvist, 1955) [record retracted as a misidentification by Lindqvist (Gearson, pers. comm.)].

Endophytus anemones (Hering), which mines the leaves of Wood Anemone, was added to the British list by Benson (1961) (despite the lack of authenticated material). It has not been found here since.

Tenthredininae

Two species of *Macrophya* are listed in Wright (1990) as additions to our fauna. Of these only *Macrophya alboannulata* Costa (Liston, 1983a) is valid. It can be separated from *Macrophya albicincta* (Schrank) by its almost completely white hind trochanters, white trochantelli, and, in the male, almost completely white labrum. *Macrophya parvula* Konow was identified as British from a specimen collected by V. H. Chambers (Liston, 1987). It has since emerged this was an aberrant *Macrophya punctumalbum* (L.).

PAMPHILIIDAE

Cephalcia arvensis Panzer was cautiously recorded as British by Shinohara (2002) on the strength of a single specimen in the L. A. Carr collection in Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Due to uncertainty over the provenance of this specimen (Shaw, 2003), any further British specimens of *Cephalcia* spp. with an extensively pale underside to the abdomen and antennal scape would be of great interest, especially if associated with spruce. Uncertainty also surrounds records of *Pamphilius albopictus* (Thomson), *Pamphilius nemorum* (Gmelin), *Sirex atricornis* Kjellander (SIRICIDAE) and *Calameuta haemorrhoidalis* (Fab.) (CEPHIDAE) Liston (1995), none of which appears in the current draft checklist.

XIPHYDRIIDAE

Xiphydria longicollis (Geoffroy), which differs from *Xiphydria camelus* (L.) in its relatively long second antennal segments, conspicuous tufts of long hair on the male sternites and predominantly black legs of the female, was added by Shaw & Liston (1987). The specimens in question emerged from logs of Field Maple.

I hope that this summary and the references below will be helpful to readers in trying to deal with those specimens which turn up from time to time that just will not key out. It seems extremely likely that many more species in Britain remain to be discovered. As well as those in taxonomically difficult groups, or those which occur in poorly worked habitats or regions, (many of which may have been here for a long time), new species are also likely to arrive as accidental imports or through the natural expansion of their ranges. The fact that the group has been relatively poorly recorded in recent years suggests that the prospect of such exciting discoveries is relatively great.

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FINDING THE POPLAR SAWFLY

Andrew Halstead

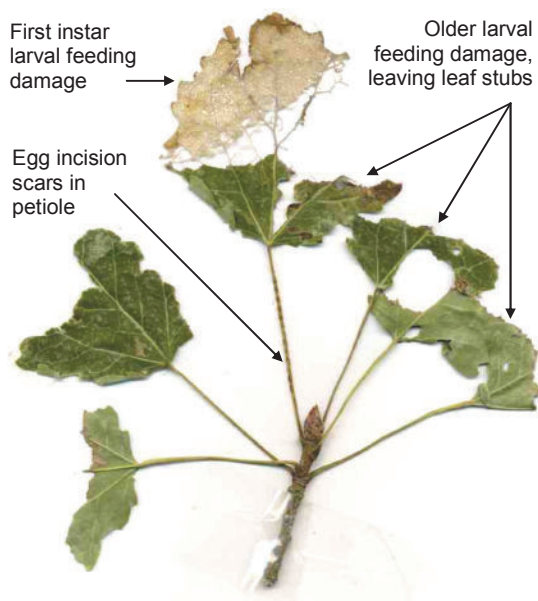
RHS Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB

The Poplar sawfly, *Trichiocampus grandis* (Lepeletier) (formerly *T. viminalis*) is a species that I have failed to find as an adult insect, despite having swept many poplars and aspens over the past 25 years that I have been interested in sawflies. The nearest I got to this species was sweeping three late instar larvae from an aspen on Horsell Common, near Woking, Surrey [SU987601] on 12.viii.2000. As is not unusual with sawfly larvae, I failed to rear them through to the adult stage.

My luck changed last year when on 20.viii.2005 I discovered an aspen tree growing in a garden at Brookwood, Surrey [SU949570]. This was extensively infested with larvae that ranged from early to late instars. The larvae are very distinctive, both in terms of colour and their style of feeding. When fully grown, the larvae are 20mm long and have black heads. The body colour is whitish green with an orange band covering the thorax and the pre-anal segment of the abdomen. Each segment has a large round black spot on either side of the upper body. The prepupal larva is pale orange all over.

My attempt to rear adults from these larvae was more successful, as two females unexpectedly emerged on 10.ix.2005. Normally larvae completing their feeding in August-September would be

expected to overwinter in cocoons spun in crevices in the bark. Benson, in his 1958 RES key, indicates that adults can be found from May to August in two or more broods. He also describes the poplar sawfly as occurring “throughout Britain N to Inverness, locally abundant; also in Ireland”. Is that a true description of its distribution and abundance today, or have I been unlucky in not finding it until recently?



Feeding and oviposition damage to aspen caused by the poplar sawfly.

It may well be more common than my records of larvae and adults have so far indicated. Having had an opportunity to see the type of damage caused by the larvae, I started looking at poplar and aspen trees to see if I could find more examples of the larvae’s characteristic feeding signs. I was successful at the following sites:-

Wisley Common, Surrey, TQ069588, on aspen, 26.ix.2005

RHS Garden, Wisley, Surrey, TQ062590, on *Populus × canadensis*, 27.ix.2005.

The larvae had gone from these plants by September and so identification of the sawfly was based on the appearance of the damaged leaves and the presence of egg scars. The eggs are deposited in a row in the leaf petiole, creating a line of elongate raised oviposition scars. The leaf bearing the eggs is also likely to show signs of feeding by the first instar larvae.

They graze away the lower leaf surface at the tip end, causing the damaged tissues to dry up. The later larval instars eat the whole leaf in a distinctive manner. The larvae feed gregariously but not by clinging to the edge of the leaf as most sawfly larvae do. Poplar sawfly larvae lie side by side on the underside of the leaf and start feeding at the tip end of the leaf. They gradually eat their way backwards but stop when their rear ends reach the basal edge of the leaf. At that point they migrate to another leaf and repeat the process. In August-September it is worth looking for shoot tips that have a cluster of leaves that have been eaten down to a basal strip. The presence of egg scars on one or more of the leaves will confirm that this is Poplar sawfly damage, even when there are no larvae to be seen.

BLASTICOTOMA FILICETI KLUG IN NORTH WALES Guy Knight & Mike Howe

Almost nine years ago a single female of the fern stem-boring sawfly *Blasticotoma filiceti* Klug (Blasticotomidae) was taken at Cors Graianog, an acidic basin mire on the boundary of the Llŷn Peninsula and Snowdonia in Caernarvonshire, north Wales (Key, 1997, *Entomologist’s Record*, 110, 34).



Cors Graianog, Caernarvonshire

This sawfly is very rarely found, and in Britain had previously been recorded from only four English sites, three of which are ornamental gardens (Royal Horticultural Society Garden, Wisley, Surrey; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; and the grounds of Sizergh Castle, Westmorland). A further record from Goldsitch Moss, Staffordshire led Benson (1953, *Entomologist’s mon. Mag*, 89, 304) to regard the species as indigenous rather than an accidental introduction. At the remote north Wales site there is little doubt that the species is anything other than native. Unfortunately, Goldsitch Moss now appears to have been lost to development (M. R. Shaw pers. comm.), and evidence of the species has not been seen at Wisley Garden since 1982 (A. J. Halstead pers. comm.).

Since the discovery of the insect at the north Wales site a few attempts have been made to search for further evidence of it there, without success. On the 19th August 2005, Dr Mike Howe (Invertebrate Ecologist, Countryside Council for Wales) and I visited the site with this aim.



Foam produced by the larva of *B. filiceti*

Adults of *Blasticotoma* are rather inactive and especially difficult to find, apparently preferring rainy conditions (Liston, 1995, *A Compendium of European Sawflies*, Chalastos Forestry). Larvae, however, are very easily detected by the presence of conspicuous balls of foam on the stems of the ferns in which they develop. During a four-hour search of the site we found 14 such foam balls, between 1 and 3 on each of 8 plants. All were on Lady Fern *Athyrium filix-femina*. Three additional species of fern (Hard Fern *Blechnum spicant*, Royal Fern *Osmunda regalis* and Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*), present in smaller numbers, were searched, but no evidence of larvae was found. The foam balls found (illustrated) were between 20 and 30mm in diameter and were generally positioned towards the base of the plant, one, however, was right at the top of a frond. The foam has a sticky consistency, unlike the watery cuckoo spit produced by froghopper nymphs. The leaves of mined stems were generally slightly brownish at the edges. It was impossible to determine any clear pattern in the distribution of affected plants; some were isolated in exposed situations, others in more sheltered parts of the site where ferns were especially numerous.

Distributional records (Schedl, 1974, *Zeitschrift der Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, 25, 114-117) seem to suggest this insect is rarely found in numbers at any of the sites throughout its range, so perhaps this population is especially important. The wide scatter of records in Britain could indicate that *Blasticotoma filiceti* awaits discovery elsewhere. A careful search of fern-rich areas, particularly during late July-August, for larval foam-balls would seem the best method to adopt.

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MEMBER PROFILES

As indicated in the introduction, I am keen to include submissions from members that include biographical information and details of research interests. To 'get the ball rolling' here's some information about myself:

Guy Knight - I have had a strong interest in Hymenoptera since childhood. Aided greatly by the Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society this interest was originally targeted towards the aculeates. I started collecting sawflies in earnest about ten years ago, and am continually striving to get to grips with the group. I studied entomology at Imperial College, London, and I am currently employed as curator of the insect collections of National Museums Liverpool. My current sawfly projects include reinstating a national sawfly recording scheme in collaboration with David Sheppard, the Biological Records Centre and this study group. I am also working on a checklist of sawflies recorded from Wales, and would be extremely grateful of any information readers could provide to aid me in this.