

# Wyre Forest Study Group

## Slug and Land Caddis Day in Hawkbatch

A Joint Meeting with The Conchological Society of  
Great Britain and Ireland, Saturday 12 October 2013

MIKE BLOXHAM



A spell of damp weather had preceded this event and participants turned up anticipating murky conditions. We were lucky when a mild and somewhat humid day provided the encouragingly large party with plenty of most interesting material for study. The Hawkbatch car park (GR SO761776) is ideal in enabling visitors to access a wide range of habitat types in a relatively short time period.

Study commenced in the damp conifer-dominant depression immediately adjoining the car park. This was not a particularly attractive spot but immediately produced records from various orders, suggesting that everyone present was going to get some reward for attendance. The invertebrate interest was instantly apparent when the party discovered a beautiful adult Grey Shoulder-knot moth on a tree trunk. Within moments it was also treated to a most unexpected event when Rosemary Winnall chanced upon a large ichneumon with its ovipositor deep in conifer stump. A photograph was taken and the insect was retained. Unfortunately the tip of the ovipositor was lost as it struggled to be free from the trunk. Later study suggested this was a female *Dolichomitus tuberculatus* and this was confirmed by Gavin Broad. Hosts for this species include the large bark weevil *Hylobius abietis*. In this context the additional discovery of the longhorn beetle *Rhagium bifasciatum* could also have been significant because *Rhagium* species are also potential hosts for this fascinating parasitoid. Discovery of both insects this late in the year was a surprise. A Drinker moth caterpillar was also photographed and then left to continue its young life. Our onward progress was

halted in a woodland ride where some outbreaks of Orange Peel Fungus *Aleuria aurantia* were spotted. The calm weather was ideal for a little experiment. Robin Jones crouched over one of the clumps and delivered a puff of warm moist breath. To the delight of the spectators the fungus responded by delivering a highly visible cloud of spores into the air demonstrating the sensitivity of its dispersal mechanism when ambient conditions are most suitable.

The party moved on and enjoyed a fruitful period in an adjoining compartment of mixed woodland on higher ground. Here it was soon discovering species in some abundance. The nature of the tree cover was such that small areas of entirely coniferous species were enclosed in deciduous areas. A whole series of interfaces were present and given the good conditions for fungi, a fine representative set of species being observed. Most notably we were treated to *Helvella crispa* in abundance. This appears in a variety of pale colour forms and is very easily overlooked at the edges of tracks or paths where it is usually found. It was significant that many of the fungi John noted were sparse in their occurrence, so we must have worked well as a group to maximise discoveries.

The conchologists had also found some unusual species and delight was shown when the first Lemon Slug *Malacolimax tenellus* was observed. This had been a target species for the day. Equally encouraging was the discovery very shortly afterwards of *Limax cinereoniger*. This has various vernacular names but sometimes grows to a considerable size. Later on, Rosemary Hill



noted that it was useful to have found evidence for widespread presence of this pair of ancient semi-natural woodland indicators in this compartment of the Forest. She also pointed out another marker species *Zonitoides excavatus* the Hollowed Glass Snail which is indicative of acid sites.

Given the continuing prevalence of mild conditions we pressed on to examine the Pipeline ride. This is often an excellent feature for many invertebrates. The transition from sunlit grassland through verge and tall herb into forest is seldom unrewarded, Gary Farmer and Rosemary Winnall soon being in action to sample the delights. Within minutes *Pholidoptera griseoaptera* Dark Bush Cricket, *Chorthippus parallelus* Meadow Grasshopper and *Tetrix undulata* the Common Ground Hopper, had been located, the first named being present in some numbers. The Larch Ladybird *Aphidecta oblitterata* was beaten from adjoining conifers.

Time had passed and we returned to the cars via a different path, the conchologists continuing to reinforce their lists. The mixed woodland provided us with some additional fungi as we passed through marginally different species concentrations, but its final offering was a glut of Stinkhorns conspicuous in a carpet of dead pine needles. The surrounding swarms of flies should have been properly sampled by the two dipterists (Mick Blythe and Mike Bloxham), but although a few of the most common flies on the day

are recorded in the report, both recorders were in a relaxed mood on this occasion, content to watch other experts at work!

Our thanks go to all who came together for this most enjoyable event and provided such valuable records. Perhaps the laurels for the day should go to Nicki Farmer for discovering *Sabacon viscayanum* ssp. *ramblaianum* (see page 21). It is also rare and nice for a harvestman to come out on top!

(Ed. Many thanks to John Walters for allowing us to use his delightful sketches of the Lemon Slug from his visit to the Wyre Forest in 2013).

## Checklist of Finds for the Day

Fungi (John Bingham's summary of records): *Aleuria aurantia*, *Amanita citrina* var. *alba*, *Amanita muscaria*, *Ampulloclitocybe clavipes*, *Armillaria mellea*, *Asterophora lycoperdoides*, *Asterophora parasitica*, *Boletus badius*, *Calocera viscosa*, *Cantharellus cibarius*, *Chlorociboria aeruginascens*, *Ciboria batschiana*, *Clavulina cristata*, *Clavulina rugosa*, *Clitocybe diatreta*, *Clitocybe ditopa*, *Clitocybe flaccida*, *Clitocybe foetens*, *Clitocybe nebularis*, *Clitocybe odora*, *Clitocybe phaeophthalama*, *Coriolus versicolor*, *Cudoniella acicularis*, *Cystoderma amianthinum*, *Daedaleopsis confragosa*, *Gymnopilus penetrans*, *Hebeloma mesophaeum*, *Helvella crispa*, *Hemimycena tortuosa*, *Heterobasidion annosum*, *Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca*, *Hypholoma fasciculare*, *Inonotus dryadeus*, *Inonotus radiatus*, *Laccaria amethystina*, *Laccaria laccata*, *Laccaria proxima*, *Lactarius plumbeus*, *Lactarius pyrogalus*, *Lactarius tabidus*, *Lycoperdon nigrescens*,



From left, Nicki and Gary Farmer, Susan Limbrey, Frances Finch, Robin Jones, Mick Blythe, Rosemary Hill, Mike Bloxham, John Cox, Ron Boyce, Roy Finch, Mary Singleton, John Bingham, Hawkbatch 12 October 2013

Rosemary Winnall



*Lycoperdon perlatum*, *Lycoperdon pyriforme*, *Macrolepiota mastoidea*, *Mycena diosma*, *Mycena epipterygia*, *Mycena rosea*, *Paxillus involutus*, *Peniophora quercina*, *Phaeolus schweinitzii*, *Phallus impudicus*, *Piptoporus betulinus*, *Pluteus cervinus*, *Postia caesia*, *Postia stiptica*, *Rhodocollybia butyracea*, *Rhytisma acerinum*, *Russula atropurpurea*, *Russula nigricans*, *Scleroderma verrucosum*, *Stereum rugosum*, *Tephrocybe inolens*, *Trametes hirsuta*, *Trochila ilicina*, *Tubaria conspersa*, *Xerocomus chrysenteron*, *Xerocomus tormintus* and *Xylaria hypoxylon*.

Molluscs (Rosemary Hill and Rosemary Winnall): *Deroceras invadens* (new name for *Deroceras panormitanum*, formerly *D. caruanae*), *Arion ater* agg. (black form with dull foot fringe), *Arion flagellus*, *Lehmannia marginata*, *Zonitoides excavatus*, *Limax maximus*, *Limax cinereoniger*, *Malacolimax tenellus* and *Goniodiscus (Discus) rotundatus*.

Diplopoda (Rosemary Winnall): *Glomeris marginata* Pill Millipede, *Tachypodoiulus niger* Black millipede.

Orthoptera (Gary Farmer and Rosemary Winnall): *Pholidoptera griseoaptera* (Dark Bush Cricket), *Chorthippus parallelus* (Meadow Grasshopper), *Tetrix undulata* (Common Ground Hopper).

Hemiptera (Rosemary Winnall): *Dolycoris baccarum* (Sloe Bug)

Coleoptera (Rosemary Winnall, John Bingham and Mike Bloxham): *Geotrupes stercorosus* (a Dung beetle or Chafer), *Aphidecta oblitterata* (Larch Ladybird), *Rhagium bifasciatum* (a Longhorn beetle) and *Strophosoma melanogrammum* (Nut Leaf Weevil).

Trichoptera (Gary Farmer and Rosemary Winnall): *Enoicyla pusilla* (Land caddis).



*Helvella crispa*

Rosemary Winnall

Lepidoptera (Rosemary Winnall): *Euthrix potatoria* (Drinker) larva, *Lithophane ornitopus* (Grey Shoulder-knot) adult.

Diptera (Mike Bloxham): *Tipula (Savtshenkia) pagana*, a crane fly, *Limonia macrostigma*, a crane fly, *Limonia nubeculosa*, a crane fly, *Macrocera vittata*, a fungus gnat, *Trichocera (Trichocera) annulata*, a winter gnat, *Tephritis formosa*, a gall fly, *Dasineura urticae*, Stinging Nettle Gall Fly, *Pollenia rudis*, a cluster fly.

Hymenoptera (Rosemary Winnall): *Dolichomitus tuberculatus* a pimpline ichneumon wasp.

Opiliones (Rosemary Winnall, Nicki Farmer and conchologists): *Paraligolophus agrestis*, *Mitopus morio*, *Sabacon viscayanum* ssp. *ramblaianum* (New Wyre and County record).

Aranaea (Rosemary Winnall and Mike Bloxham): *Diaea dorsata*, *Cyclosa conica*, *Araneus diadematus*.



John Walters

Leimen Slug  
*Malacolimax tenellus*  
Wyre Forest 24 November 2013