



Wyre Forest Study Group

A NEW BRITISH ISLES HYMENOPTERA RECORD FROM A LOCAL MOTH TRAP

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***Eudelus mediovittatus* (Schmiedeknecht): an enigmatic ichneumonid wasp in Worcestershire**

A little while ago, Mike Bloxham passed some specimens of Ichneumonidae to me for identification. Amongst these were two males and a female of a species of the subfamily Cryptinae that I could not place to genus. These were light-trapped by Jeff Rush at Shrawley (SO805663/5) on 11 September 2003. The Cryptinae is a rather large subfamily, with 486 species currently on the British and Irish list (Broad, 2005). Rather a lot of these are small and obscure with identification to species often being difficult or impossible. Even so, genera are usually recognisable. Admitting defeat, I sent them off to the European expert on the group, Martin Schwarz, of Linz, Austria. He immediately recognised the specimens as *Eudelus mediovittatus* (Schmiedeknecht). The difficulty in placing these specimens to genus is reflected in the species' peripatetic classification history.

Fitton *et al.* (1978) listed *Hemiteles mediovittatus* Schmiedeknecht as a species of *Encrateola*. Horstmann (1983) transferred it to *Acrolyta* and Schwarz and Shaw (2000), with some misgivings, transferred it to *Eudelus*. Basically this species is a misfit in any of these genera and will not key out

satisfactorily in the only available key to genera of cryptines (Townes, 1969). Probably a new genus will be erected at some point. Schwarz and Shaw (2000) did not find any specimens of *E. mediovittatus* in the extensive material of the National Museums of Scotland (Edinburgh) and there are none in the Natural History Museum collections either. These are, therefore, the first British specimens that I know of with any kind of data.

I am gathering light trap material from various sources so hopefully more specimens of *E. mediovittatus* will turn up. We know nothing of its biology, as is the case with so many parasitoid wasps. Other members of the subtribe Acrolytina, to which it belongs, are pseudo-hyperparasitoids. That is, they attack the cocoons of other parasitoids (Ichneumonidae and Braconidae) after these primary parasitoids have finished off their hosts. Martin has retained one male specimen for his collection and the remaining male and female will be deposited in the NHM. I am grateful to Mike for showing me these specimens and allowing them to be retained in other collections, and to Jeff Rush for collecting them in the first place.

References

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