

Two interesting Longhorn Beetles from Wyre

Anoplodera sexguttata (Fabricius, 1775) and *Asemum striatum* (Linnaeus, 1758)

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The Study Group's 7th May 2011 field meeting was hardly the best day to look for insects with the weather cool and dull but longhorn beetles were much in evidence. The Group visited Pound Green Common following the track towards Hurst Coppice. Recent management work by E-on clearing trees away from the overhead power-line had left many fallen trunks and branches on the ground on which to search for insects.

The first longhorn to be found was *Pyrrhidium sanguineum* (Linnaeus, 1758), Status RDB2 and already recorded several times recently from the forest. Amazingly many specimens of this rare beetle were spotted wandering over the cut oak logs. For such a scarce insect this alone was a good find.

Soon after, a second find was made in the woodland on the edge of Pound Green Common by Rosemary Winnall and Harry Green. A longhorn was spotted on an oak leaf; Rosemary grabbed a quick photograph but it eluded capture so the identification had to wait for later. It proved to be the rare *Anoplodera sexguttata* (six-spotted longhorn beetle) a southern species with very few records for the Midlands, a new species for Wyre. Its status is RDB3 and regarded as a relict old forest species (Alexander 2002). This records appear to be the first for Staffordshire vice county (Worcestershire to most people), the nearest known site being the Forest of Dean. The larvae feeds in oak (*Quercus*) but the adult beetle may only appear for a few weeks or even days each year and although it feeds on flowers during the day its brief appearance means that it is not often seen. (Brock 2011). One to look out for in early May.

Later in the day another uncommon longhorn was found by Denise Bingham. It was resting on a wooden pole supporting an overhead power line in Postensplain Coppice. It was identified as *Asemum striatum* (pine-stump borer) a Scottish highland species that has increased considerably over recent



Anoplodera sexguttata

Rosemary Winnall

years with mature conifer plantations and now found over much of England (with records from Wyre). Its larvae breed for 2-3 years in coniferous trees such as spruce (*Picea*), larch (*Larix*) and pine (*Pinus*) (Hickin 1975). Being a crepuscular or nocturnal species it often goes un-recorded. (Alexander 2002).

This makes the total Wyre Forest Cerambycidae beetle list as 26 species, not bad for a forest in the Midlands. I wonder what species will turn up next?

READING AND REFERENCE

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Asemum striatum

John Bingham