

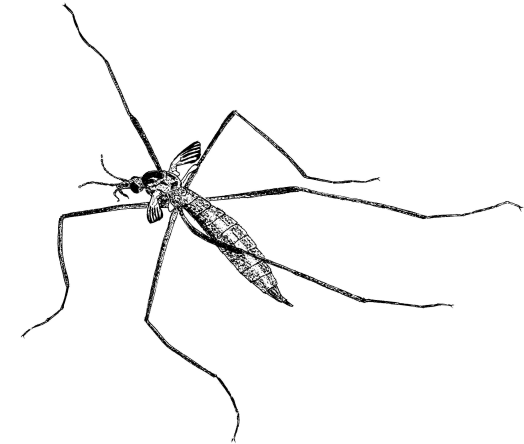
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The flightless female of the crane fly Tipula gimmerthali (p. 45)

(Stephen Hewitt)

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From the Editor

We are sad to have lost Richard Little, a long-standing and active member, following his long illness: an appreciation is included on p. 55.

Contributions for the current issue came in later than usual though in the end their interest is worth the wait, with a number of exciting new records for the county. The Editor would however still welcome items from a wider range of naturalists, and it would be especially good to include more on fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds or mammals than we currently manage to achieve.

Completely new for this issue, and something of an experiment, is the centre section of coloured photographs. The purpose of this is purely to enhance particular notes or articles where images relating to their subject matter are not easily accessible elsewhere, and all are cross-referenced accordingly. We will take the opportunity at the next AGM to gauge how well this is received – together with the associated cost increase which will be essential if this is to become a permanent feature.

David Clarke

CNHS website now live

The Society's website is now live and can be visited at www.carlisenats.org.uk. We are very grateful to Tristan Reid who has built the site for the Society. The website is designed to be much more than a simple notice board and we hope that it will become a major forum for members of the Society and others who are interested in the natural history of Cumbria. We aim to develop the site further in response to feedback so please use it and let us have your views.

Additions to the Library

Bird Study Vol. 12 pt. 4 (1965) – Vol. 30 pt. 3 (1983), incomplete run, given by Geoff Horne.

Bird Study Vol. 32 pts. 1-3 (1985), given by Arnold Strand.

Ringing & Migration (1975–1981), given by Geoff Horne.

Scottish Birds Vols. 9 (1977) – 19 (1998), part run given by Geoff Horne to fill gaps in Library.

Scottish Birds Vols. 9 (1977) – 28 (2008), part run given by Arnold Strand to fill gaps in Library.

Scottish Bird Reports 1978, 1979, 1993, 1994, given by Geoff Horne

Scottish Bird Reports 1982, 1991, 1992, 1995–1998, 2001, given by Arnold Strand.

Waterbirds in the UK 2004/5, 2005/6 and 2006/7, given by Arnold Strand.

Atlantic Seabirds Vol. 1 Nos. 1+2 (1999) and Vol. 2 No. 1 (2000), given by Arnold Strand.

Seabird Reports [by Seabird Group] 5-16 (1976-94) and 18 (1996), given by Arnold Strand.

Wader Study Group Bulletin 61 (Apr 1991) and 64 *The migration of Knotts*, given by A. Strand.

Birding World 1989-2007, an incomplete run given by Arnold Strand.

Recent publications

A Cumbrian Wildlife Garden

Based on Richard Little's observations in his garden at Cumwhinton over many years, this account was only just completed at the time of his death in September. Line illustrations have provided by well-known Cumbrian wildlife artist Christine Isherwood. Published by Bookcase, Carlisle and priced £10, it is available from the publisher and through Tullie House bookshop.

Birds & Wildlife in Cumbria 2008

The issue covering county wildlife reports for 2008 is now available from the Secretary at a Members' discounted price of £6.

These notes refer to the period from early April to mid-November 2009. Many sightings are referred to in reports of Field Meetings, but more cards would be appreciated to enable this section to be more informative. Records can now be sent in to the Society's website: www.carlisenats.co.uk

Firstly and mostly from my own notes, in addition to the regular breeding **Mallard** at Talkin Tarn, **Moorhen**, **Coot** and **Tufted Duck** all bred but with few young reaching maturity. Also, for the first time in at least 40 years, if not within living memory, **Mute Swans** nested. Unfortunately only two eggs hatched and one cygnet was lost soon afterwards. The other survived. A **Goshawk** appeared at Talkin Tarn on 11th March, **Crossbills** were an unusual sighting on 7th April, a **Cormorant** there on 31st July was un-seasonal, and two **Black-necked Grebes** on 21st August did not stay long enough to be seen by others.

A notable feature of spring was the scarcity, or even absence, of some summer visitors from some of their regular haunts. These included **Wood Warbler**, **Tree Pipit**, **Cuckoo** and **Yellow Wagtail**. **Pied Flycatchers** were also rather scarce and about three weeks late to arrive. By contrast there was an early **Swallow** at Heads Nook on 30th March; Stephen Hewitt noted a fairly early **Swift** at Penrith on 27th April.

A **Little Egret** was at Port Carlisle on 4th April (Dorothy Iveson). A **Hobby** chasing hirundines at Fingland on 29th June (Colin Auld) was one of several such sightings in the Solway area between late June and mid September, suggesting at least one summering bird. A **Red-necked Phalarope** at Sunbiggin Tarn on 7th June was a surprising find (Jeremy Roberts). A rare inland **Little Tern** visited Tindale Tarn on 29th June (John Miles). A **Red Kite** was seen over Hayton on 8th April (John Hamer). One keen fell walker (Stephen Hewitt) was lucky enough to find small numbers of **Dotterel** on four occasions between late April and mid May. He also submitted an impressive number of **Ring Ouzel** records, eight all told, between 10th May and 26th June. Six were from Lake District sites, including a pair with young in the Honister area on 23rd May. Both records from the Pennines in June had either young birds seen or adults carrying food. Also from the Pennines, Stephen saw five **Blackcock** at lek on the western slope of Knock Fell on 17th May. Turning to autumn, a juvenile **Red-necked Grebe** was at Rockcliffe on 12th September and a juvenile **Black Tern** at Longtown Market pools on the same day (Nick Franklin); John Hamer noted 150+ returning **Barnacle Geese** passing over Hayton on 30th September. More recently, there was a **Jack Snipe** at Little Fell on 4th October (Jeremy Roberts) and a male **Hen Harrier** at Talkin Fell on 11th October (John Hamer). A **Long-billed Dowitcher** had been on the Solway for a few days before Nick Franklin photographed it at Port Carlisle on 15th November (Plate 1). This appears to be only the fifth

Cumbrian example.

The Lepidoptera scene was dominated by large numbers of **Painted Ladies**, whose offspring began to appear in late June. The **Marsh Fritillary** reintroduction scheme resulted in over 100 being recorded at Finglandrigg with counts of 100, 50 and 6 at the other three sites. **White-letter Hairstreak** was reported at two sites in south Cumbria for the third year running (Ian Brodie & Steve Doyle).

An early **Comma** was seen in a Carlisle garden on 1st April (Dorothy Iveson) and **Small Skippers** were seen at Hale Moss and Arnside Knott in July (Ian Brodie) and at a completely new site at Coombs Wood, Armathwaite (Jeremy Roberts). The late Richard Little had some interesting garden sightings at Cumwhinton including several **Holly Blues** in April. Much more unusual were a **Green Hairstreak** on 30th May and a **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** on 11th July. **Speckled Woods** continued to be seen in the north of the county, examples being at Cliburn Moss on 3rd June (Stephen Hewitt) and Bowness Reserve on 6th August (Russell & Sara Gomm). Moths of note from Stephen Hewitt were an **Eyed Hawk-moth** noted at Drigg on 12th June and **Northern Grass-veneer** (*Catoptria furcatellus*) near the summit of Great Dodd on 24th June: this Nationally Scarce moth is restricted to mountains, where it occurs above 400m altitude (Plate 3). Presumed migrant **Hummingbird Hawk-moths** were seen by a few, including twice in David Clarke's Cumwhitton garden – on 25th July and 7th August. In the same garden, one or two lingering migrant **Silver Y Moths** along with a **Comma** and **Red Admirals** missed being November records by one day! Of other insects, Colin Auld found the larva of a **Glow-worm** at Cliburn Moss on 27th May; Stephen Hewitt then located three females on 22nd June, one having three males in attendance. The wet summer was not good for dragonfly interest. However, there were several coastal records of **Migrant Hawkets**, including 6 at Siddick Pond and one at Crosscanonby on 7th August (John Callion).

Stephen Hewitt's fungus finds included **Fly Agaric** growing in an unusual association with Creeping Willow in a slack on Drigg Dunes on 26th September. On 18th October two fruit-bodies of the **Big Blue Pinkgill** (*Entoloma bloxamii*) were growing in limestone grassland on Tailbridge Fell (Plate 2). This appears to be only the second Cumbrian record of this UK BAP fungus. The **Pink Waxcap** (*Hygrocybe calyptriformis*), a Cumbria BAP species, was fruiting at its known location on The Greens in Geltsdale on 31st October and at a new site on Nateby Common on 28th October, together with many other species of waxcap and grassland fungi.

Geoff Naylor

23rd May: Miltonrigg Wood – Spring Birdsong

Leader: Geoff Naylor

Ten members joined Geoff Naylor in the village of Milton to walk to Miltonrigg Wood to enjoy and learn to recognise the spring birdsong. The first of the day was a Dunnock, heard from amongst the hedgerows, shortly followed by songs of Chaffinch, Song Thrush, Wren, Collared Dove and Willow Warbler. A Buzzard was spotted overhead, being mobbed by a Carrion Crow, after which we added Pied Flycatcher to the growing list of bird songs. Geoff drew our attention to a handsome specimen of Hoof Fungus (*Fomes fomentarius*) growing on a birch tree beside the path.

Along the way, the plants seen included Pink Purslane (*Claytonia sibirica*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) and Tormential (*Potentilla erecta*). At this point Geoff asked us to hunt around for Bird's-nest Orchid (*Neottia nidus-avis*) under the birch. They were just in flower and the first two we found proved to be a photo-opportunity. As often happens once we had our 'eye in' for these well-camouflaged brown orchids, we came across quite a few more along the path edges. We also saw the dead heads of last year's blooms. At the junction of two paths we came across a Lemon-scented Fern (*Oreopteris limbosperma*) recognised by the tapering base of the frond and the sori around the edges of the pinnules.

We followed the main path around the wood, circumventing the wet bits and admiring the moss-covered logs and flowering Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) that decorated the ground. A Green-veined White was one of the few butterflies to be seen. Broad-leaved Helleborines (*Epipactis helleborine*) were starting to grow up in places along the track side. As we approached the pond Geoff asked us to look out for damselflies and dragonflies. Diligent work by Russell Gomm and Anne Abbs led to us seeing two Large Red Damselflies which had recently emerged and were still pale in colour.

After leaving the pond area Geoff pointed out Climbing Corydalis (*Ceratocarpus claviculata*), Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*) and, growing on oak, the fungus *Daedalea quercina*, with its unusual maze-like pattern of gills. The sharp, loud 'cheek' of a Great-spotted Woodpecker was heard, Coal Tit and Robin were seen and heard and a Blue Tit was watched flying out of its nesting hole. A scrubby area of birch proved a good source of birdsong, with Spotted Flycatcher heard together with clear notes of the Blackcap. The rather similar song of a Garden Warbler song went on and on, ending with an alarm call. A Chiffchaff was then heard and a Great Tit seen as we turned back towards Milton. Water Avens (*Geum rivale*) and Common Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*) were added to our plant list. The drone of a nearby tractor was making it

difficult to pick out any further birdsong, so we headed homewards.

Marie Saag

13th June: Sunbiggin Tarn and Tarn Sike

Leader: Jeremy Roberts

This well-attended meeting began with a real surprise when, from where the cars were parked, a Marsh Harrier appeared over the reed bed on the south side of the tarn. Also around the tarn were singing Sedge Warbler and Reed Bunting, and on the water were Mute Swans with cygnets, Tufted Duck and the occasional Gadwall.

Before lunch we walked over a scrubby limestone area then descended to part of the marsh associated with Tarn Sike. After lunch we joined the sike where it flows under the road and explored the main marsh as far as a point where the sike widens to form a muddy pool. We then followed it back to the tarn.

As recorder for the day, I made a list of no fewer than 87 plants (and there were many more not discussed). These included five species of orchid, twenty-five sedges and five ferns. Fragrant (*Gymnadenia* sp.) and Early Marsh (*Dactylorhiza incarnata*) were probably the pick of the orchids, with a confusing selection of probable Early Marsh-Northern Marsh hybrids (= *D. × latirella*). The most spectacular of the flowers was Bird's-eye Primrose (*Primula farinosa*), which carpeted the ground on the slopes above the marsh and was also quite common everywhere else. Other flowering plant interest arose from the comparison of Lousewort (*Pedicularis sylvatica*) and Marsh Lousewort/Red Rattle (*P. palustris*). Northern Bedstraw (*Galium boreale*) was the most unusual of a quartet of bedstraws. Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) was common but with few still flowering and Hoary Plantain (*Plantago media*) was just coming into flower at the roadside. A rarer plant growing at the margins of the muddy pool was the lowly Mudwort (*Limosella aquatica*), a tiny crucifer with minute white flowers. It is known at one only other site in Cumbria.

Of the sedges, the more unusual were Broad-leaved Cottongrass (*Eriophorum latifolium*), Lesser Tussock Sedge (*Carex diandra*), Broad Blysmus/Flat Sedge (*Blysmus compressus*), with Fen Sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) at the edge of the tarn (unusual at this altitude – c. 250 metres a.s.l.). Moonwort (*Botrychium lunaria*) and Adder's-tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*) were interesting and unusual ferns.

In the marshy areas, additional birds were Snipe, Redshank, Curlew and a family of Red Grouse chicks. Small Heath, Painted Lady and a few 'whites' – probably Green-veined – were the only butterflies, and Common Heath, Cinnabar and Northern Eggar the only moths. Other species of note were Water Scorpion,

Golden-ringed Dragonfly (1 dead, 1 flying) and particularly interesting were the native White-clawed Crayfish, some of which were found dead but several live ones were also seen. Finally, the rather scarce lichen *Peltigera leucophlebia* was found in a very dry state on a limestone outcrop – a very small scrap spotted by the eagle eyes of Stuart Colgate. It characteristically turned bright green when watered, a seemingly miraculous return to life.

Geoff Naylor

11th July 2009: Bowness Gravel Pits – Water Beetles Leader: Steven Routledge

On a sunny morning local water beetle expert Steven Routledge led this trip to Bowness Gravel Pits, which are recognised as a good site for this group of insects. The flooded gravel pits are a Cumbria Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve and we were joined by Mike Critchley, the honorary Reserve Manager.

Steven wasted no time in getting into the water with his pond-net to 'dip' for aquatic beasties. One of the first to come out was the spectacularly large (30 mm long) Great Diving Beetle – *Dytiscus marginatus*, with a yellow margin all around its pronotum (the dorsal plate covering the thorax). This first example was a male, with smooth elytra and pads clearly visible on its front tarsi, but we later saw females which have longitudinally-grooved elytra and lack the pads on the fore tarsi. Other water beetles in the net were the black, mud-dwelling *Ilybius ater*, the brown *Colymbetes fuscus*, and *Agabus bipustulatus* which produces a blue secretion on handling. Other memorable species were the 5 mm long *Hygrotus impressopunctatus* with its yellow thorax and grooved elytra, the Cherrystone Beetle (*Hyphydrus ovatus*) which gets its English name from its globular shape and orange colour and the 4 mm long *Enochrus coarctatus* with a black line on the elytral suture. A beautiful iridescent beetle was identified by Steven as the Water-lily Reed Beetle (*Donacia crassipes*). The scavenger water beetles *Helophorus* sp. were distinctive in their shape and crawling habit. Three species of different sizes were identified: *H. minutus*, *H. brevipalpis* and *H. grandis*. An increasingly bewildering number of aquatic beetles were steadily encountered as Steven led us from one pool to the next. Each pool seemed to contain a few unique species dependant on the particular conditions provided by that pond, as well as the more ubiquitous, generalist species.

The highlight of the water beetles known at Bowness Gravel Pits is the Red Data Book, Nationally Rare, Lesser Diving Beetle (*Acilius canaliculatus*) and we were delighted when Steven found several examples of this species in one of the pools. Lesser Diving Beetles are around 16 mm long, rather pear-shaped and with a transverse black band on the pronotum. The more widespread *A. sulcatus* was also

present for comparison and Steven pointed out the differences between the species, most obvious of which is the black base of the hind femora in *A. sulcatus* compared to the uniformly pale hind femora of *A. canaliculatus*.

The full list of the 34 water beetle species identified is:

Acilius canaliculatus, *A. sulcatus*, *Agabus bipustulatus*, *A. sturmi*, *Anacaena globulus*, *A. limbata*, *Coelostoma orbiculare*, *Colymbetes fuscus*, *Donacia crassipes*, *Dytiscus marginatus*, *Enochrus coarctatus*, *Graptodytes pictus*, *Haliphys lineatocollis*, *H. ruficollis* agg., *Helophorus brevipalpis*, *H. grandis*, *H. minutus*, *Hydrobius fuscipes*, *Hydroporus erythrocephalus*, *H. gyllenhalii*, *H. memnonius*, *H. palustris*, *H. planus*, *H. striola*, *H. tristis*, *Hygrotus inaequalis*, *H. impressopunctatus*, *Hyphydrus ovatus*, *Ilybius ater*, *I. fuliginosus*, *I. montanus*, *I. quadriguttatus*, *Limnebius truncatellus*, *Octhebius minimus*.

Other aquatic invertebrates included the Ramshorn Snail (*Planorbis planorbis*), Common Water Boatman (*Notonecta glauca*), nymphs of dragonflies (damselfly species and Four-spotted Chaser) and damselflies. Larvae of Great Crested Newts were encountered in one pool, readily identified by the dark blotches on their tails. Floating Club-rush (*Eleogiton fluitans*) was also pointed out by Jeremy Roberts, here at one of its very few locations in the north of the county. The Yellow Swamp Brittle-gill (*Russula claroflava*) toadstool was identified by Geoff Naylor.

Adult Large Red, Common Blue, Blue-tailed, Emerald and Azure Damselflies were on the wing together with Common Darter, one Common Hawker and several Southern Hawker dragonflies. Leaf-cutter bees were actively gnawing discs out of leaves by one pool with which to construct their nest chambers. Butterflies noted included Large White, Green-veined White, Ringlet (67 counted), Meadow Brown, Large Skipper, Red Admiral and Small Tortoiseshell. Common Green Grasshoppers (*Omocestus viridulus*) were calling and a Willow Tit was also heard by some members.

After a picnic lunch Jeremy Roberts led us over the saltmarsh just west of Bowness Viaduct where he had found Frog Rush (*Juncus ambiguus*) new to the Cumbrian Solway in 2007 (*Carlisle Naturalist* **16** (1), pp. 26-30). A few plants of this species were found but in nothing like the numbers that Jeremy had noted in 2007, possibly because the patches of bare ground that this plant colonises had since become more vegetated. We were also shown the sedge-relative Flat-sedge (*Blysmus compressus*) which, within Cumbria, is very largely restricted to flushed ground on the limestone country of the upper Eden Valley, but with a few outlying sites and this very curious population on Bowness Marsh – first reported by Derek Ratcliffe in 1957. Another notable species identified here by Jeremy was Beaked Tasselweed (*Ruppia maritima*) which appears to be a new tetrad record for this

scarce coastal species known from only a couple of other locations on the Cumbrian Solway. Other species encountered included Brookweed (*Samolus valerandi*), Sea Milkwort (*Glaux maritima*), Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*), Sea Arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*), Sea Rush (*Juncus maritimus*), Saltmarsh Rush (*J. gerardii*), Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*), False Fox-sedge (*Carex otrubae*), Distant Sedge (*C. distans*), Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*) and the very similar, but much scarcer, Slender Spike-rush (*E. uniglumis*) – again representing a new tetrad record for the latter species.

Stephen Hewitt

1st August: Hoverflies Workshop

Leader: Stephen Hewitt

Twelve people attended this workshop which began with an introduction to the tribes and subfamilies of hoverflies, and the main features used to identify the various species were explained in detail. Stephen also gave a brief illustrated account of the biology and ecology of various species and the varied habitats in which the adults and larvae of hoverflies can be found. To get us started, he provided us all with an excellent and very informative illustrated key which had been adapted from the second edition of *British Hoverflies* by Stubbs and Falk (2002), which is now the standard work. There are over 250 species of hoverflies in Britain and the family to which they belong (Syrphidae) is very diverse, with different species exhibiting a wide range of size, colour, markings and form. There are a number of bee- and wasp-mimics.

We next moved on to identification and learned about the more important characters used to separate the various species. With the aid of a microscope-mounted camera connected to a TV monitor, Stephen was able to point out many of these features on a number of preserved specimens. The various structures discussed included wing venation, antennae, legs and the presence or absence of hairs on the humeri (small areas of the thorax immediately behind the head). He also demonstrated how to determine the sex of a hoverfly, which can be important to establish when using the identification keys.

A number of specially selected specimens were passed around the table for us to examine and identify using magnifying lenses and the identification key. An impressively large number of cabinet drawers containing many mounted specimens of hoverflies from the Museum's collections had been laid out on tables. This was a very useful display and gave us a good opportunity to get acquainted with the range of hoverfly forms and the various species that Stephen had previously discussed.

After lunch we all re-grouped at the Bowness-on-Solway Nature Reserve to look

for hoverflies, and put our newly acquired knowledge into practice. As soon as we arrived at the Reserve, Stephen was hard at work, ably assisted by Dorothy Iveson, searching for material for us to identify. A number of specimens were collected by sweep-netting mixed herbage and by carefully tubing of individuals nectaring on the heads of various flowers. Despite somewhat dull and cool weather in the afternoon, we managed to observe and successfully identify 16 species of hoverfly: these were *Cheilosia illustrata*, *Episyrphus balteatus*, *Eristalis intricarius*, *E. horticola*, *E. tenax*, *Helophilus hybridus*, *H. pendulus*, *H. trivittatus*, *Melanostoma scalare*, *Platycheirus granditarsa*, *Rhingia campestris*, *Sericomyia silentis*, *Syrphus ribesii*, *S. vitripennis*, *Syrpitta pipiens* and *Volucella bombylans*.

While walking around the reserve we observed a variety of other insects too. Butterflies seen were Small Copper, Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Green-veined White, Peacock, Ringlet, Wall, and Large White. Several ladybirds were swept up along with the hoverflies and three species were recorded: Seven-spot, Fourteen-spot, Twenty-four-spot and also one specimen of the very small *Rhyzobius litura*, which is completely orange and has no spots. Dragonflies noted were Emerald Damselfly, Four-spotted Chaser, Common Darter and Southern Hawker.

John Read

21st August: Talkin Tarn – moth night

Leader: Mike Clementson

A prolonged spell of changeable weather with torrential showers and an uncertain forecast may have had a bearing on the low turnout for this meeting, with just four members attending. The evening however started fine and clear. This was itself problematic since the cool, clear conditions meant that initially few moths were on the wing. A bank of cloud was at first welcomed as it brought a noticeable rise in temperature and a resulting flurry of moth activity, with a dozen or so species being attracted to the light. However, just as things were warming up, physically and metaphorically, the welcome cloud blotted its copybook (and ours) by releasing a deluge which brought the evening to a rapid close as we raced to pack away the equipment in the wet dark.

The moths attracted before rain stopped play were: Common Carpet, Small Phoenix, Common Marbled Carpet, Brimstone Moth, Flame Shoulder, Large Yellow Underwing, Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing, Barred Chestnut, Small Square-spot, Flounced Rustic, Silver Y.

Stephen Hewitt

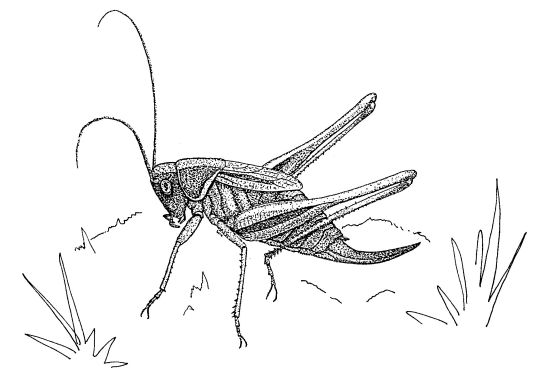
5th September: Grasshoppers and crickets workshop Leader: Russell Gomm

Nine would-be 'Cricketers' assembled at Tullie House for the workshop. Russell provided an overview of the taxonomic groups and then focussed on the limited number of Cumbrian species. Live specimens of a number of these species were examined with salient identification features expertly pointed out by Russell.

Despite morning rain which continued over the lunch interval, afternoon 'play' was able to commence on time at Glasson Moss where a number of the live specimens were safely released. Despite cool and dull conditions, the group searched for insects in suitable habitat and located Field Grasshoppers (*Chorthippus brunneus*) and Common Groundhopper (*Tetrix undulata*). Other wildlife observed on the Reserve included Black Darter (*Sympetrum danae*) and Common Hawker (*Aeshna juncea*) dragonflies. A mottled-winged crane fly hanging about peaty pools on the track was later identified by Steve Hewitt as *Idioptera pulchella*, a Nationally Scarce bog species. The approach of autumn was apparent from the fine specimen of the Tawny Grisette fungus (*Amanita fulva*) spotted near the entrance.

The group then moved on to the nearby Wedholme Flow Nature Reserve, which also forms part of Natural England's South Solway Mosses complex. Once again Field Grasshoppers were located along with Common Green Grasshopper (*Omocestus viridulus*) and Meadow Grasshoppers (*Corthippus parallelus*), which had not been seen previously. Wedholme was chosen by Russell as a site to visit as it is the only Solway moss known to hold the Bog Bush Cricket (*Metrioptera brachyptera*). After a dedicated search by the team, and in particular by our leader using a bat detector to pick up the otherwise barely audible stridulations of the males, the species was located and subsequently examined closely by the group.

A number of other notable insects were located and observed by the group. These included Green Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela campestris*) and the Willow Leaf Beetle (*Lochmaea caprea*). The hoverflies *Helophilus pendulus* and *Platycheirus granditarsus* were



Bog Bush-cricket

(Stephen Hewitt)

netted along with a Mantis Fly (*Ochthera mantis*), which is a decidedly local wetland species named after its mantis-like front legs. Other insects among the heather and scrub included the Seven-spot Ladybird, Spiked Shieldbug (*Picromerus bidens*) and the wonderfully named Heath Assassin Bug (*Coranus subapterus*) which is rarely recorded in Cumbria. A range of shieldbugs were swept off birch trees at the edge of the open bog. These were Birch Shieldbug (*Elasmotethus interstinctus*), Parent Bug (*Elasmucha grisea*), Hawthorn Shieldbug (*Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale*) and Bronze Shieldbug (*Troilus luridus*). The uncommon plantbugs *Pantilus tunicatus* and *Kleidocerys resedae* were also numerous on these birch trees, although *P. tunicatus* is more usually associated with alder.

There was plenty of evidence of spider activity with the large and obvious *Metellina segmentata*, the Cross Spider (*Araneus diadematus*) and its heathland cousin *A. quadratus* being observed closely.

The focus of the day was obviously not on birds and plants. However, fine specimens Common Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*), Cut-leaved Cranesbill (*Geranium dissectum*) and Bog Rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) were enjoyed. Bird life was rather sparse although a Peregrine, a noisy flock of Greylag Geese, some Snipe and a Pied Wagtail were seen well by most on Wedholme Flow.

The weather stayed dry for the afternoon and the group was able to 'declare' before 'bad light' stopped play.

Mike Abbs

17th October 2009: Roudsea Wood Fungus Foray

Leader: Paul Nichol

Twenty-two members and friends met at Roudsea Wood NNR, near Haverthwaite on Morecambe Bay, on a crisp and delightfully sunny day following a locally frosty start. In spite of some recent rain, the autumn had been generally dry, and fungi were sparse. There were few 'troops' of any species, and we found few examples of only a small selection of usually abundant genera such as *Russula* and *Lactarius*.

Nevertheless, with many pairs of eyes looking, there were enough specimens brought in to Paul Nichol to keep him busy. He was able to demonstrate most of the typical and expected groups, and also follow up his recent talk to the society by explaining the importance of fungi in their many and varied roles in woodland ecosystems, as saprophytic 'moulderers' and hence recyclers of leaf-litter and dead wood; symbiotic subterranean tree-feeders through their 'mycorrhizae' (tree-roots associations); parasites; and food for a whole range of vertebrates and

invertebrates, and other fungi.

Roudsea Wood has varied soils and associated woodland types due to the underlying ridges of slate and limestone, with the undulating topography providing all aspects and all degrees of moisture from dry to marsh, bog, and standing water.

The fungi recorded are listed below, and we are grateful to Paul for his identifications of many of the less-distinctive species.

David Clarke showed the group a fine colony of the striking bright green dog-lichen *Peltigera leucophlebia*, making spreading patches over limestone outcrops by the boardwalk near the tarn (see article in this issue). David explained that lichens are also fungi, but this time in a very different guise, growing symbiotically and intimately with an algal partner.

Besides fungi, we also saw a few vascular plants rarely or never seen in the north of the county, such as Black Bryony (*Tamus communis*), Common Gromwell (*Lithospermum officinale*), Spindle Tree (*Euonymus europaeus*) in splendid fruit, and a fine plant of Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*).

A few butterflies were flying in the bright conditions. Speckled Woods were 'on their last wings', as the adults do not overwinter. A single Comma and several Red Admirals were feeding up before hibernation. A Southern Hawker dragonfly and a few Common Darters were near the tarn.

Birds were rather sparse, with only Marsh Tits being conspicuous, and other small birds such as Goldcrests, Treecreepers, Nuthatches and other tits mostly gathered into a few foraging flocks.

Fungi

Oak woodland on slate

Amanita fulva (Tawny Grisette); *Armillaria* cf. *mellea* (Honey Fungus); *Bjerkandera adusta*; *Chlorociboria aeruginascens* (Green Wood-cup); *Claviceps purpurea* (Ergot; on the grass Wood False-brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum*); *Cortinarius hemitrichus*; *Crepidotus* cf. *variabilis*; *Daedaleopsis confragosa* (Blushing Bracket); *Hymenochaete rubiginosa*; *Hypholoma fasciculare* (Sulphur Tuft); *Hypoxylon multiforme*; *Inocybe* sp.; *Lactarius quietus* (Oak Milk-cap); *Lycogala terrestre* (slime-mould); *Marasmius androsaceus* (Horse-hair Fungus); *Mycena galericulata* (Bonnet mycena); *M. oortiana*; *M. polygramma*; *M. vitilis*; *Phallus impudicus* (Stinkhorn); *Phellinus ferruginosus*; *Phlebia radiata*; *Pholiota tuberculosa*; *Piptoporus betulinus* (Birch Bracket); *Pluteus cervinus*; *Psathyrella hydrophyllus*; *Russula*

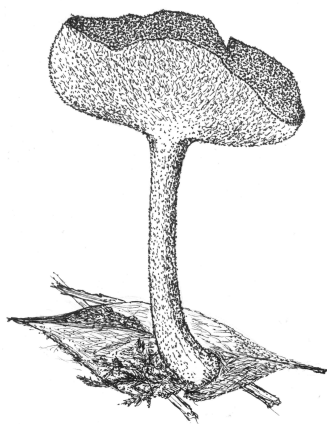
ochroleuca; *Scleroderma citrinum* (Common Earth-ball); *Stereum hirsutum*; *S. rugosum*; *Trametes versicolor* (Many-zoned Polypore; Turkey-tail); *Tuberia* sp.

Hazel coppice, etc, on limestone

Clitocybe nebularis; *Fomes fomentarius* (Hoof Fungus); *Galerina marginata*; *Hebeloma crustuliniforme* (Poison Pie); *Helvella macropus*; *Laccaria laccata* (The Deceiver); *Lactarius torminosus* (Woolly Milk-cap); *Leccinum scabrum* (Brown Birch Bolete); *Tricholoma* cf. *sulphurescens*; *T. pseudoalbum*; *Xylaria hypoxylon* (Candle Snuff).

With grateful thanks to Paul for his patient expositions and for sharing his expertise with us.

Jeremy Roberts



Helvella macropus (David Clarke)

Late nesting Swifts at Lanercost

My house, a semi-detached Victorian farm-worker's cottage, is typical of the many that were built on country estates across Cumbria in the nineteenth century. The building's design and construction has meant that, since moving in nearly ten years ago, we have shared it with, amongst others, Bats, Starlings, a Stoat in ermine and a growing colony of House Sparrows. That list was added to this year when a couple of pairs of Swifts nested for the first time under (or more correctly inside) the decorative bargeboards that overhang the gable end of the cottage.

I had first seen them in June of the previous year prospecting for somewhere suitable to nest. They would swoop up to the boards at speed and then turn away at the very last moment. The resident Sparrows seemed unimpressed with this and I assumed that their spirited defence of their home was the reason the Swifts didn't hang around too long. This year, however, the Swifts returned (again in June) and either they found a vacant site or they successfully ousted the Sparrows, for this time they stayed to breed. Throughout July they would career round and round the house at dusk before finally swooping up and vanishing into their nests. To witness their 'screaming parties' close up (so close that you can hear the 'G' forces that make their wings quiver like arrows) was exhilarating.

By mid-August I expected them to disappear like the colony along the road at the old Priory, but they didn't. All through that month I would see them at dusk returning to their nests to roost. We went away for a week's holiday at the beginning of September and on our return on the 6th they were still there. What's more, I could sometimes hear a bird (a young bird?) in the nest. A quiet scream but definitely a Swift's scream. They stayed the following week and I began to worry that they would never leave. On the Saturday (12th September) I took advantage of a rare dry day to paint the first floor windows, a job I'd put off because of the Swifts. (One of the windows is about four metres from the nest site). No sooner had I climbed the ladder than two Swifts appeared from nowhere and flew back and forth around me screaming loudly. I hadn't seen them during the daytime for weeks (they only seemed to return to the nest site at dusk) so their sudden re-appearance was a shock. That was to be the last time I saw them.

Whilst I have no proof that they successfully raised any young, I did find a partially damaged Swift's egg below the nest (which Stephen Hewitt kindly confirmed by checking the Tullie House collections). However, I think that the reason the birds stayed so late in the year was that they did indeed have young. If that was the case, the question then is why did they nest so late in the year? One possible explanation is that the birds were 'refugees' from the nearby Dacre Hall, a historic building which was re-roofed in early 2008. It is possible that the birds

that I first saw prospecting last year had been made homeless and that they returned again to their traditional nest site in 2009 only to find that the 'improvements' to the building were permanent. Having flown several thousand miles to breed, perhaps they took the decision to start afresh in my house even though they had lost a month of precious time.

Whilst all that is speculation, it has brought home to me the pressures that these iconic birds face as more and more old buildings across the country are renovated. The local planning authority, Carlisle City Council, has policies designed to protect biodiversity from harmful development. For example, any development should not disturb nesting birds during the breeding season. However, for specialist migratory birds, such as Swifts, that rely almost exclusively on buildings to nest in, there seems to be little that is being done *locally* to ensure that any repairs and improvements that we might make outside of the nesting season do not inadvertently build them out of their homes when they return to this country to breed. Experience elsewhere has demonstrated that it is relatively easy to accommodate Swifts when buildings are being renovated and even when new ones are being built. We need to learn from others so that these wonderful birds can continue to share our immediate environment and bring a little wild nature to our everyday lives.

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Pugsley's Marsh-orchid (*Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides*), new to Cumbria

On 5th June 2009, whilst walking near the headwaters of a small stream in upper Lunedale, I happened to spot some deep purple-flowered marsh-orchids on a sloping bank of calcareous drift.

There were eight flowering plants over a distance of 1.5 metres along the bank, some in early flower and others still in bud.

The plants were small, hardly 10-12 cm tall, each carrying only a few flowers (6-12 per stem). The rather open inflorescence with large deep red-purple flowers, a long lip with three lobes more-or-less well-developed, and the strikingly narrow leaves with a few dark blotches, all pointed to the identification of these plants as the plant currently known as Pugsley's Marsh-orchid (*Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides*), which I knew to be unrecorded in Cumbria (Plate 5).

I had had previous experience of this plant in Anglesey (where I had been 'shown the sites' by the late R.H. Roberts in June 1979), in Wharfedale in the Yorkshire Dales (v.c. 64), and in Ireland. The plants in the newly-found colony reminded me of the Wharfedale plants in particular, being small and delicate, with a few-

flowered inflorescence.

Photos were e-mailed to Dr Michael Foley, whose interest was sufficiently aroused for him to visit the site on 14th June. He concurred with my initial somewhat tentative identification.

A careful search of the area revealed just three more similar plants nearly four hundred metres distant on a similar bank. In calcareous marshes nearby were colonies of Northern Marsh-orchid (*D. purpurella*), and at a greater distance a very few Early Marsh-orchids (*D. incarnata*). Fragrant Orchids close-by were still emerging.

The typical habitats of this species elsewhere are calcareous mires. The sites of these plants then were to some extent anomalous, being on sloping banks. A very typical associate in most UK sites is the Brown Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*). This plant was indeed present in small quantity in close proximity, with other extremely localised plants of calcareous mires, such as Bird's-eye Primrose (*Primula farinosa*), Variegated Horsetail (*Equisetum variegatum*), and others such as Marsh Horsetail (*Equisetum palustre*), Butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*), Grass-of-Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) and Saw-wort (*Serratula tinctoria*) indicative of at least intermittent seepage. However, other close associates were typical plants of drier turf such as Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), White Clover (*Trifolium repens*) and Sheep's-fescue (*Festuca ovina*).

There was considerable variation between the plants, even in such a small colony, particularly with regard to the flower. The lip of the flower varied between being equally three-lobed at the apex, and having a narrow and protruding central lobe between two wide and spreading side-lobes. Markings varied from fine spotting to strong loop-markings. Such variation is apparently typical of the species. Such variation may indicate past hybridisation events.

There was one orchid within a few metres of the first colony which defied identification, being probably a hybrid of this species, although the identification of the other putative parent was not obvious. A nearby colony of the Northern Marsh-orchid, about forty metres distant, had some typical plants for that species, but there were a few others which had some characters of Pugsley's Marsh-orchid, and which could arguably be considered as showing introgression in the direction of the latter species. More work is needed!

This orchid has been regarded for many years as being conspecific with the European *Dactylorhiza traunsteineri*, Narrow-leaved Marsh-orchid, but recent molecular studies suggest that British populations have a different (albeit similar) origin, and could be regarded as an endemic species, for which the correct name is

that given above.

This is the second marsh-orchid to be added to the Cumbrian list in recent years, the Southern Marsh-orchid (*Dactylorhiza praetermissa*) being found in 2004 (Gendle, 2007), with two further sites located since then. This species has been actively colonising northwards in recent years, but it cannot be known if the Pugsley's Marsh-orchid is a relatively recent long-distance disperser, or a member of the select band of rare relict species known in that general area, overlooked until now.

I have been deliberately imprecise with the location of this find for two reasons. Firstly, the banks on which the orchids grow are extremely fragile, especially in wet conditions, and might soon collapse if the site became much-visited. Secondly, there are access considerations which must take priority.

Reference

Gendle, A. (2008) Southern Marsh-orchids (*Dactylorhiza praetermissa* (Druce) Soo) in Cumbria. *The Carlisle Naturalist*, **15** (2): 33-4.

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Two more sites in north Cumbria for Green-flowered Helleborine (*Epipactis phyllanthos*)

Last year, I detailed (Roberts, 2008) the identification in August 2008 of a colony of helleborines near Brampton as Green-flowered Helleborine (*Epipactis phyllanthos*), the first for the north of the county. The species was otherwise known near Hexham, in Northumberland, about 30 kilometres to the east, and on sand-dunes at Sandscale in the southwest of Cumbria, about 100 kilometres south.

I also mentioned that – remarkably – two other colonies of helleborines had been found in the same summer, both apparently referable to this species. All plants were in fruit when seen, leaving the identification tentative until the floral characters were available.

Both colonies were visited whilst in flower in July 2009, when their identification could be confirmed as Green-flowered Helleborine.

One colony by the River Eden near Lacy's Caves, originally located the previous year by Ron Groom, was found to contain 27 plants on 20th July, scattered over rather bare ground under a variety of deciduous trees above the riverbank.

A curious development was that a rotten trunk, probably of Wild Cherry (*Prunus*

avium) had collapsed since the previous season across a bare patch which had no helleborines in 2008. This year, six mature flowering helleborines had emerged along 2.5 metres of one side of the log, all within 10 centimetres of the log, and three actually pushing up from below it! Since it is certain that no helleborines were visible in this exact area last year, the fall of the log had in some unknown way stimulated the emergence of these plants which must (of necessity, given the known developmental time-scale of these plants) have been present underground in the previous year as un-emerged near-mature or mature plants.

The second colony, in High Stand Plantation, near Cotehill, found in 2008 by my wife Margaret, had 41 plants on 18th July, coincidentally the same number as last year, but whilst some plants appeared to be the same individuals as last year, others were found in 'new' areas, whilst others had not appeared at all this year (Plate 6). Further searching in the vicinity revealed some new small colonies, totalling nine plants, including two growing 250 metres away by one of the main forestry tracks, strongly suggesting that other colonies await discovery in other less-frequented parts of the wood.

A check at the original site for Green-flowered Helleborine near Brampton on 5th August revealed 19 plants (30 in 2008), whilst on the same day in Miltonrigg Wood I could find only 19 Broad-leaved Helleborines (*E. helleborine*) in the populations described by Geoff Naylor (Naylor, 2008), which had totalled over 70 last year.

The vigour of plants of both species was much reduced from last year's exceptional growth, many plants being stunted and with only 2-4 flowers.

It was a striking feature of all three of these colonies that there was almost no evidence of young non-flowering plants above ground: plants seem to emerge fully developed and flowering. Does this mean that this species can develop to maturity underground over several, or many, years, nurtured solely by its fungal partner, and without photosynthesis?

References

- Naylor, G.R. (2008) Broad-leaved Helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine* (L.) Crantz) in Miltonrigg Wood. *The Carlisle Naturalist*, **16** (2): 44-5.
 Roberts, F.J. (2008) Green-flowered Helleborine (*Epipactis phyllanthos* G.E. Sm.) in north Cumbria. *The Carlisle Naturalist*, **16** (2): 45-8.

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Species of darkling-beetle (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae) occurring at Drigg, including *Cylindronotus pallidus* (Curtis) new to Cumbria

My interest in the darkling-beetles of coastal areas has continued since collecting on the dunes between Liverpool and Southport and carrying out a small survey of the shingle bar between Slapton Ley and the sea in the 1960s, during which time I encountered five species of this interesting family of beetles.

The Tenebrionidae or darkling-beetles are a very large family with over 15,000 species known to occur in the world. They exhibit a greater diversity of form than any other family of beetle and are especially common in the drier regions of the world such as the Namib and Gobi deserts (Brendell, 1975). Many species are totally black whilst others are predominantly yellow or sand-coloured. Those dwelling in the hot deserts spend much of the day deep in the sand or under stones out of the sun's heat and often have incredibly long legs that lift their bodies clear of the heat of the ground and also allow them to run quickly to escape their predators.

Perhaps not surprisingly, only some thirty species of the family are recorded from the British Isles and only about half of these are indigenous. The British species fall into two environmentally-based groups: those dependent to a greater or lesser extent upon human influence, and those living in a more natural environment. It is the latter group that contains the six psammophilous species, found generally on coastal dunes and beaches and occasionally in inland sandy areas. It includes totally black as well as more or less sand-coloured species.

On the dunes at Drigg I have recorded four of these species. Two are very common and black in colour and occur throughout the dune system, at the roots of plants and on the loose sand and can be found throughout the year. These are *Phylan gibbus* (Fabricius), about 8 mm in length and the smaller *Melanimon tibialis* (Fabricius), which is about 4 mm in length. Both species are widely distributed and described as 'local but not uncommon' (Brendell, 1975).

The other two species are generally yellow in colour and far less frequently recorded. These are *Phaleria cadaverina* (Fabricius) and *Cylindronotus pallidus* (Curtis). *Phaleria* is described as 'locally common' whilst *Cylindronotus* is regarded as 'very local, but not uncommon where it occurs' (Fowler 1891). Both species have occurred on occasion at Drigg in large numbers on the Marram dunes to the north of the estuary and along the western edge of the dune system but were generally extremely difficult to find. *Phaleria* is between 5 and 7 millimetres in length and usually has a variable-sized dark patch on its elytra. *Cylindronotus* is much larger, being up to 10 mm in length and does not have dark patches on its elytra.

A single specimen of *Phaleria* was found in May 2005 and several were seen in April 2006 whilst very large numbers were noted in June 2005. It is probable that the adult beetles have a very short life and that it would be very easy to overlook the species in an area where in reality it is quite common.

Similarly, several specimens of *Cylindronotus pallidus* were noted in April 2006 but large numbers, many of which were dead and being blown about in the dune hollows, were seen in September 2004 and 2007. (This beetle is described as rare in an unpublished survey of the Freshfield dunes carried out by J.H. Flint when he found a dead specimen on the mobile dunes in April 1960. The writer found three specimens under a log on the mobile dunes at Freshfield in November 1965 and a dead specimen on the mobile dunes in September 1966).

John Read informs me that *Cylindronotus pallidus* has not previously been recorded from Cumbria, so that those seen on 9th September 2004 represent a new county record (SD 07.95). Of the other two species of coastal tenebrionid, *Opatrum sabulosum* (L.) is recorded from Cumbria but I have not seen it at Drigg. *Crypticus quisquilius* (L.) is a species of southern and eastern coasts: perhaps global warming will see it invade the northwest!

Thanks are due to John Read for assistance in the preparation of this note.

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The crane fly *Ctenophora flaveolata* (Fabricius) new to Cumbria

On 25th April 2009 Mo Richards came across a spectacular black and yellow crane fly by the tarn in Tongue Intake Plantation, Little Langdale (NY3202). The insect, which was some 30 mm long, was in the leaf-litter and Mo judged from its shiny wings that it had only recently emerged. She picked it up on a twig and it walked onto the trunk of a tree where she photographed it (Plate 4) and later emailed the picture to Tullie House.

At the Museum, Mo's photos clearly showed the black and yellow-banded abdomen, black coxae and dark sub-apical ring on the hind femora that enabled us to identify the species as *Ctenophora flaveolata* – a species not previously

recorded in Cumbria. The photo also shows the 'milky' wings and soft, distended abdomen, indicating that the fly had only recently emerged and had probably not flown far, if at all when Mo found it. This Red Data Book species is considered Vulnerable (RDB2) in the UK. There are widely scattered records of it in southern England with a few isolated reports further north, in Yorkshire and mid Wales (Falk, 1991). The species is thought to be in declining, with only a dozen or so sites known to be occupied in the last 50 years.

C. flaveolata is a woodland crane-fly requiring ancient broadleaved woodland, especially Beech, though possibly also oak in the north and west parts of its range (Falk, *op. cit.*). In common with other members of the sub-family, the larvae of *C. flaveolata* develop in dead wood. Old trees and stumps of particularly large girth are thought to be required by this species. Adults have been reported from April to June and are said to visit blossom such as hawthorn, which may be an important element of the species' habitat.

Beech trees are plentiful in Tongue Intake Plantation and there are some fine old Beech specimens with plenty of dead wood both standing and fallen and one massive, rotted stump. A search for larvae in the heart-rot and wood mould of this stump failed to yield any *Ctenophora* larvae.

C. flaveolata is a spectacular addition to the Cumbrian fauna. With recognition of the value of dead wood to wildlife, and increasingly widespread management to encourage this habitat, it is possible that this crane-fly has been able to spread into the county in recent years. However, I think it more likely that it is a relict of the ancient woodland fauna of Cumbria that has survived hitherto unnoticed in the county.

Reference

Falk, S.J. (1991) A review of the scarce and threatened flies of Great Britain (Part 1). *Research and survey in nature conservation*, No. 39. JNCC, Peterborough.

Stephen Hewitt, Tullie House Museum

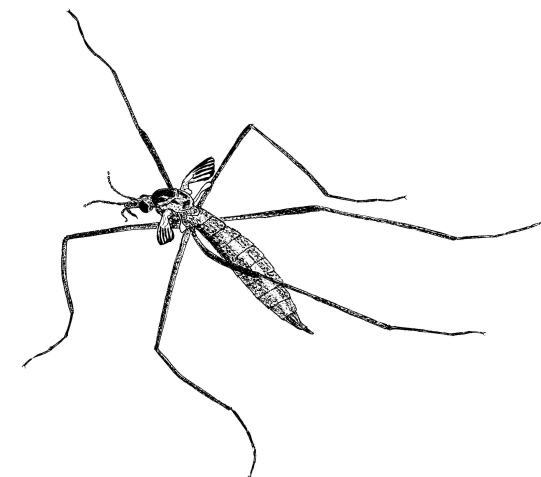
The crane-fly *Tipula gimmerthali* Lackschewitz new to the Lake District, with some additional records for the north Pennines

On 4th October Jeremy Roberts and I were on Little Fell (NY7821), where Jeremy was surveying populations of Marsh Saxifrage (*Saxifraga hirculus*) as part of a wider survey for Natural England. Whilst searching a mossy flush for the plant we noticed large numbers of crane-flies, the females of which had remarkably reduced wings, rendering them flightless. The males were fully winged. Intrigued by this

distinctive feature of the females and their apparent restriction to this special flush habitat, I collected a couple of examples of each sex to take home. I later identified these specimens as *Tipula gimmerthali*, a Nationally Rare (RDB3) species found mainly on the Scottish mountains (Falk, 1991). The only previously published English location for this species is in the north Pennines on Moor House NNR, where it has apparently not been reported since 1979. This montane insect is reported to be restricted to base-rich flushes above 300 metres a.s.l. and adults occur during October – possibly accounting in part for the paucity of records for the species.

Spurred on by this information, I visited the well-known Marsh Saxifrage site at Knock Ore Gill on 11th October and then walked south over Knock Fell and Dufton Fell. Short-winged female crane-flies were noted and sampled, together with associated males, at base-rich flushes and also on turf in limestone pits and sinkholes. Later examination revealed two species had been collected: *T. gimmerthali* was recorded from base-rich flushes at Knock Ore Gill (NY7130) and Dufton Fell (NY7529), whilst *T. pagana* males and females were collected from turf in limestone pits and sinkholes on west Knock Fell (NY7230) and Dufton Fell (NY7430). *T. pagana* males were also frequently encountered on intervening blanket bog across the area. *T. pagana* is a widespread grassland species found throughout the UK. Its larvae are reported to live in moss.

T. gimmerthali and *T. pagana* are best separated on microscopic characters of the genitalia. However there are some field characters which, with familiarity, can be a useful guide to identification: whilst the females of both these species have



Tipula gimmerthali (Stephen Hewitt)

vestigial wings, those of *T. gimmerthali* appear generally even more stunted than in *T. pagana*, with the more closely approximated veins in the less-expanded wings of female *T. gimmerthali* making them appear darker as well. *T. gimmerthali* females appear to be generally larger than those of *T. pagana* and, perhaps most obviously, both sexes of *T. gimmerthali* usually have obvious dark markings on the top of the thorax which are generally less prominent in *T. pagana*.

Encouraged by these finds in the Pennines, I wondered if *T. gimmerthali* might also be found in the Lakeland fells. On 13th October I visited Brown Cove on Helvellyn where some of the finest base-rich crags and flushes in the Lake District are found. *T. pagana* was again common and widespread and I was pleased to also find numbers of *T. gimmerthali* on the mossy cascades of the beck below the Brown Cove Tarn (NY3316), in the flushes at the base of Catstyecam on the south side of the tarn (NY3315) and most frequently on and around the mossy stream and flushes draining from the base-rich crags and mine dumps at the head of the cove (NY3215).

Meanwhile, continuing his *S. hirculus* survey, Jeremy collected further examples of *T. gimmerthali* from base-rich springs and flushes at NY7132 on east Great Dun Fell and NY7130 on west Knock Fell on 12th October. He also obtained voucher specimens of this species from a base-rich flush on the Bullman Hills (NY7038) on 15th October.

Later in the month I briefly searched for the species in flushes around Sunbiggin Tarn and Tarn Sike (NY6707) on 23rd October but found only *T. pagana*, in abundance. Finally, on 28th October I visited a *S. hirculus* site on Great Shunner Fell (NY8497), to which Jeremy had given me directions. No crane flies of any species were noticed on this occasion and it seems the season for these species, at least at altitude, was over.

These records establish that *T. gimmerthali* is widely scattered but very localised in the north Pennines and support its stated requirement for high quality base-rich flushes. The discovery of the species in Brown Cove represents a significant extension of its known range in England.

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Stephen Hewitt, Tullie House Museum

Keeled Skimmers at Glasson Moss NNR

Before 2005, Keeled Skimmers were not known in Cumbria north of their regular site near Grange-in-Borrowdale (NY21). In that year I found them, for the first time but evidently well-established, on runnels just below Carrock Fell (NY33) – see *Carlisle Naturalist* 13:2, p.9. The species is a specialist in slow-moving boggy runnels and in Cumbria at least is never associated with static water. The finding of two males of the species on a dragonfly walk at Glasson Moss led by Mike and Anne Abbs on Saturday 25th July this year was completely unexpected and by far the most northerly record for the county. The insects were evidently showing interest in water trickling over the firebreak at the corner of a pool not far from the Kirkbride–Bowness road. Photographs were obtained, including a fine one by Darren Robson taken on 27th.

As there is little flowing water at Glasson Moss, it is perhaps doubtful whether the species could establish there, but this is at least further indication of its relative mobility and therefore of the potential for range extension. Given the amount of apparently suitable habitat at moderate altitudes in Cumbria, the species might well be expected to colonise sites above its present altitudinal limits of *c.* 250 metres a.s.l. – as well as just spreading further afield.

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Notes on the ‘dog-lichens’ *Peltigera britannica* (Gyeln.) Holt.-Hartw. & Tønsberg and *Peltigera leucophlebia* (Nyl.) Gyeln. in Cumbria, including first records for *P. britannica*

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This article reviews the Cumbrian status of the two closely related foliose lichens Peltigera leucophlebia and P. britannica, based on records accumulated through the Society. It shows that P. leucophlebia is relatively widespread, though not usually abundant, in suitable habitats and that P. britannica also occurs, though much more rarely, having been hitherto unreported, partly through historical confusions over the identity of these species. Their known distributions are mapped and habitat preferences discussed.

Both species are characterised by their large, ‘leafy’ thalli, bright apple- or emerald-green when wet and always peppered with dark cephalodia (containing cyanobacteria) on the upper surface. When dry, the green fades to a light blue grey – making the thalli far less conspicuous. The more widespread species of *Peltigera* are at most dull olive-green when wet, becoming grey or brownish when dry; the only other green species in Cumbria is *P. venosa*, which is small, and very rare; it attaches to the substrate at a single point, does not bear cephalodia and is usually fertile.

As Plate 8 shows, the cephalodia of *P. britannica* are raised, and often of variable size and tending to be in lines or groups. Brownish-white scars, seen especially at the RHS of the image, show where these have become detached. In *P. leucophlebia* the cephalodia are more uniformly scattered, do not have ‘stalks’ and do not often become detached (and hence scars are not generally present). Its underside has many root-like rhizinae and well-marked dark veins, in contrast to *P. britannica* which has few rhizinae and few, if any, obvious distinct veins.

P. britannica was only recognised as a species in 1983. Before then the use of a confusing welter of name combinations and of named ‘forms’, including *P. aphthosa* and *P. aphthosa* var. *leucophlebia* in British literature, at least hinted at the existence of more than one species. It has now been shown that the true *P. aphthosa* (which occurs widely in northern Europe and America) does not occur in the UK and that we have a pair of species consisting of the one now named *P. leucophlebia* together with the newly separated *P. britannica*. The latest British lichen ‘Flora’ (Smith, *et al.*, 2009), somewhat enigmatically states that the relationship between these two species and *P. aphthosa sensu stricto* ‘still requires further study’.

The recent recognition of *P. britannica* has meant that historical data (effectively pre-c. 1990) have to be re-evaluated, necessitating field investigation where herbarium material is unavailable. In practice the situation is not quite so extreme since differences in habitat preference can often give useful indications: *P. leucophlebia* is most often associated with relatively base-rich situations and *P. britannica* seems to avoid them. However, in some geological formations, such differences in rock chemistry can occur in very close proximity – which makes the situation in some parts of Cumbria worth careful checking.

P. britannica

The last-mentioned fact led to the first revelations of *P. britannica* Cumbria. Having become aware that the two species can sometimes occur relatively close together prompted further consideration of one site in particular – Wolf Crag, with its interplay of acidic and basic conditions. My suspicions were aroused about some unusually large, exposed (and relatively inaccessible) patches of ‘*P. leucophlebia*’ – the somewhat anomalous aspect of which had not fully registered during my previous visit in 2005. Revisiting the site in April 2009 duly revealed that what I had looked at, but not ‘seen’, was *Peltigera britannica*. The original material was re-found at c. NY355.222, together with some additional and more accessible patches a little further west. This was a timely lesson in the consequences of identification by *presumption* that the commonest of a group of similar species is the one actually present.

The ‘original’ large patch was on a steeply inclined rock face, well exposed to the north-east aspect. Another colony was growing over non-calcareous mosses such as *Thuidium tamariscinum*. Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) was also present, as was Alpine Lady’s-mantle (*Alchemilla alpina*) which, though often indicating slightly basic substrates, has wide tolerances. *Peltigera leucophlebia* is also present at Wolf Crag but occurs in less exposed situations, *e.g.* near the foot of some crags, alongside obviously basiphile species such as the moss *Neckera crispa*.

To help follow through with checking the Cumbria situation, Jeremy Roberts kindly provided a small selection of herbarium material he had collected in the early 1980s (*i.e.* before the ‘split’ was well known). One specimen in particular caught my eye as potential *britannica* (it had been named ‘*aphthosa*’ at the time by Ivan Day, a knowledgeable expert). This prompted a joint visit to the find-spot, high up in Hind Gill, Borrowdale in June 2009. Here, we found an unexpectedly large amount of *P. britannica*, mainly on vertical rocks (acidic, as indicated by other vegetation), especially near to the main waterfalls. No sign of it was seen

below 450 metres, but thereafter it was present from c. NY241.112 up to the highest waterfall at about 530 metres – always facing more or less south west and frequently well-exposed to the elements. Here there was an intimate mix of geological conditions: the gill is on a fault line, and there is much rotten rock and fault breccia. Plate 7 shows a typical colony. (*P. leucophlebia* was not seen anywhere here, despite the presence of calcicole mosses and flowering plants in many places). Similarities of this site to that of Wolf Crag included altitude and the presence of Borrowdale Volcanic Series rocks.

Subsequently, I found a small patch of *P. britannica* in good condition on a north east-facing vertical crag at c. NY456.203 at about 430 metres in Swarthbeck Gill, near Howtown on 25th August. This too was in an apparently acidic situation, with Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*) close to the lichen. Only the presence of small amounts of *Alchemilla alpina* gave any hint of possibly richer conditions.

The fact that all three locations so far are at above 400 metres and on vertical mossy rocks in rather exposed situations is interesting, but time will reveal how consistent this combination of microhabitat conditions really is for the species. The records appear to constitute the first and second for v.c. 70 and the first for v.c. 69. How much more of *P. britannica* remains to be found is still hard to predict – and on the face of it there would appear to be ample suitable habitat at the ‘right’ altitude in the Lake District especially.

These appear to be the only recent records for England. Map 1 shows the current 10 km squares. Two pre-existing much earlier records (one supported by herbarium material) – are from the Middleton-in-Teesdale and Ingleborough areas of Durham and Yorkshire respectively. Curiously, these are both predominantly, though not exclusively, in limestone country. Otherwise, the species has scattered records from Wales and the south-west. It is rather more widespread in Scotland.

P. leucophlebia

Habitats: As mentioned above, base-rich sites are seemingly required by this species. Typically they are mossy/rocky slopes and ledges, but the species can also be found in more or less level limestone turf. Elsewhere, but so far not in Cumbria, the species is known from coastal grassland. Many sites are somewhat shaded, either by trees, or in ravines, sink-holes or grikes in limestone, or just by being north-west to east-facing, largely shielded from direct sunlight. A characteristic situation is a niche created by turf overhanging outcropping mossy rocks. When present in more exposed situations (e.g. in open turf on limestones in some Pennine and upper Eden locations), the species is often half-buried amongst

grasses and mosses, and thus in a relatively moist micro-climate. (Commoner *Peltigera* species behave similarly, and some even tolerate mowing in garden lawns). The altitudinal range in the county varies from near sea-level (as at Roudsea NNR, SD38), to up to about 760 metres (as at Knock Ore Gill, NY63). Unlike some commoner species, *P. leucophlebia* seems not to use made-made structures such as dry-stone walls, even when these are of limestone. Very exceptionally the species occurs on bark: the 1990 CNHS Field Meeting to Borrowdale (led by Ivan Day) noted it on mossy bark at base of an Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) near Seathwaite (NY21). It was still flourishing there in July 2009, with the moss *Neckera crispa* alongside it.

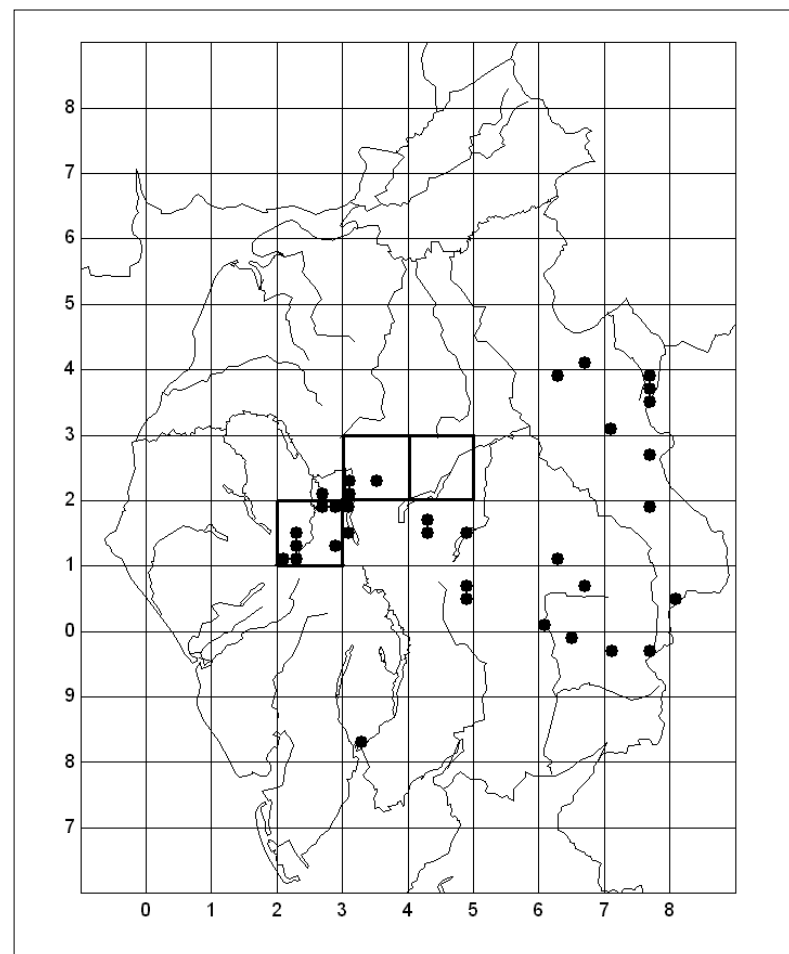
Geological influences: The geology of sites not on the limestones of the Pennines, upper Eden valley or Morecambe Bay is usually consistent with some degree of base-richness, though as previously indicated this may be very local. In the Lake District, the andesitic lavas and tuffs of the Borrowdale Volcanic Series are often relatively base-rich. Gills, especially where following fault-lines, frequently contain patches of calcite-bearing outcrop. Some sites, as in Mardale and Martindale, are associated with basic igneous intrusions (of dolerite). The Silurian Greywackes of the Howgill fells are also clearly somewhat basic in places, with various sites near the Carlin Beck (SD69). Seepage trains over otherwise fairly acidic rocks can sometimes be sufficient – as on low rocks on the east side of the Vale of St John (NY32), or at High Scawdel (NY21), Borrowdale.

Abundance: Colony sizes vary greatly, and many are roughly hand-sized patches; sometimes there are very tiny amounts or more extensive sheets. On dry, level sun-exposed limestone turf – as near Crosby Gill – it is can be present only as scattered thalli. It is usually in the more humid, shaded (though not sunless) situations that the species forms its bigger colonies – as for example in the low level limestone woods at Roudsea. However, the species is not a constant component of apparently suitable places, and is always of limited occurrence.

Associated species: Whether or not in limestone country, associated plant species are usually indicators that the base-status of rock or soil over which the lichen grows has alkaline tendencies. It is always attached to surrounding mosses and creeping plants. The superficially similar calcicolous lichen *Solorina saccata* is often found close to it in limestone areas, but grows in more direct contact with rock surfaces. The mosses *Ctenidium molluscum*, *Tortella tortuosa* and *Neckera crispa* are typical calcicole associates, and amongst flowering plants Wild Thyme

(*Thymus polytrichus*) is also very frequent. Other calcicole moss associates on limestone have included *Ditrichum gracile* and, more rarely, *Rhytidium rugosum*. In the hills, Mossy Saxifrage (*Saxifraga hypnoides*) has a distribution that closely mirrors that of the lichen. Some of the limestone sites of *P. leucophlebia* have the added attractions of some of the more 'glamorous' flowers of the county, especially in the Pennines, where the lichen occasionally occurs in close proximity to Bird's-eye Primrose (*Primula farinosa*), Teesdale Violet (*Viola rupestris*) or Spring Gentian (*Gentiana verna*).

Distribution in Cumbria: Older records are subject to the taxonomic issue mentioned above. *The Flora of Westmorland* (Wilson, 1938), unusually for most county floras, includes lichens. Wilson himself recorded many lichens, and included records by the lichenologist J. W. Martindale, who was active in the Kendal area in the 1880s. Cited under *Peltigera apthosa*, Wilson lists the species from sites in three of the six river catchment-based botanical areas he devised, and gives its status as 'rather rare' – referring of course to Westmorland as a whole. A somewhat conflicting view is offered by Rawes (1981) in a checklist for the Moorhouse NNR in the north Pennines (the bulk of which is in Westmorland). He quotes *P. apthosa* [sic] as being 'common on base-rich soils in grassland and rock crevices'. The difference in geographical scale apart, the contradiction between these two assessments is probably more apparent than real – and perhaps indicates that Wilson's information from the high Pennines was limited. It is likely that all these records actually refer to *P. leucophlebia*. There are no equivalent published lichen lists for the old county of Cumberland. Observations since the 1980s, mainly by Jeremy Roberts and myself, together with a few earlier ones from the personal archive of the late Derek Ratcliffe c. 1950-80, have substantially added to the picture. Most of these records are new to national recording schemes (Map 1); the species is present in at least eighteen 10 km grid squares (thirty-four 2 × 2 km tetrads). The clustering of tetrads in the Borrowdale/Thirlmere area may be partly an artefact of recording activity, but could also reflect the UK importance of this area for moisture-loving 'lower plants' – especially bryophytes and ferns – as emphasised by Ratcliffe (2002, pp 180-4). It does also indicate the potential for Lake District sites, and shows that even relatively conspicuous and readily identifiable lichens are likely to be under-recorded. For that reason alone, the apparent absence of this (or the preceding) species in the west and south west of the county may not reflect reality, and the potential for further records more generally must be considerable.



Map 1: *Peltigera britannica* and *P. leucophlebia* in Cumbria.
 Solid dots: *P. leucophlebia* post-1950 (2 × 2 km tetrads);
 bolded 10 km squares: *P. britannica*, 2009 only. (© CNHS).

Concluding comments

Peltigera britannica does not produce spore-bearing apothecia in Britain and *P. leucophlebia* does so but rarely, suggesting that this part of their range has a less than optimal climate. *P. britannica* has a very westerly/oceanic distribution in both north-west Europe and North America; *P. leucophlebia* is also a northerly species, though with a rather wider range of climatic tolerance.

Although existing colonies can expand laterally by simple growth of thalli where there is not too much competition from surrounding vegetation, their potential for spread beyond current sites is presumably mainly by means of detached fragments becoming re-established. Under some circumstances, cephalodia of *P. britannica* can develop into cyanobacteria-based thalli, differing in colour and appearance to the normal green form. They are bluish-brown and may later capture green algae and then start to produce typical green thalli (for illustration see Brodo *et al.*, 2001, p. 506). There is no indication as yet that this happens in Cumbria. Unlike some other lichens with cyanobacterial partners (such as *Lobaria* spp.), the *Peltigera* species, including *P. leucophlebia*, appear not to have suffered catastrophic decline since the Industrial Revolution. Presumably this reflects a lower sensitivity to air pollution.

All new records have been submitted to the BLS mapping scheme and those of *P. britannica* appear in the BLS *Bulletin* **105**, Autumn 2009. Voucher specimens are deposited at Tullie House Museum.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to Jeremy Roberts for access to his field records and specimens; Mark Seward of BLS kindly provided a plot of *P. britannica* records, and Rod Corner confirmed the Wolf Crag record, identified moss specimens and gave helpful suggestions. Peter Harris was also helpful with moss identifications.

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Richard Barnard Little 1936-2009

Richard Little was a member of our Society for nearly thirty years. He was always an active and enthusiastic naturalist, pursuing his special interests until his death on 29th September, following a long illness.

Born in Beverley, Yorkshire, he came to Cumbria (home of his first wife Liz) after working in Zambia. He gained a post at Inglewood Junior School, Harraby where he remained until retirement. There he was able to impart his interests, with great enthusiasm, to his many pupils, even involving them in the setting up of 'mini reserves' on waste land near the school. This later led to a Carlisle-based Urban Wildlife Group in association with the Cumbria Wildlife Trust and to his initiatives in the establishment of the CWT Quarry Banks Nature Reserve alongside the railway in Cumwhinton, for which he also became warden.

Richard was a familiar and genial figure at Society meetings. His frequent participation in Members' Nights revealed his interest in butterflies and moths, and in his favourite local site, High Stand Plantation, where in earlier years he had meticulously monitored and recorded many bird nest-boxes.

His moth-trapping activities took him far and wide in Cumbria and beyond. Before Liz died, they travelled extensively to undertake voluntary recording for various conservation organisations, helping to build up evidence of wildlife diversity – in particular for the RSPB in their Speyside Reserves.

His enthusiasm for Lepidoptera prompted trips to all quarters of the UK to catch up with species not to be found in the county. A kindred spirit, Mike Clementson, frequently accompanied him in moth-trapping vigils in later years, the long nights at often remote sites being relieved by another of Richard's enthusiasms – home-brewing. This however did not prevent them recording many interesting species – including, famously, the nationally scarce Barred Tooth-stripe moth under the noses of an august gathering of other hopefuls at a Yorkshire locality.

Richard's devotion to garden wildlife manifested itself most strongly at his home at Cumwhinton, the subject of his regular writings for the *Cumberland News* for some fourteen years. Encouraged by Jeremy Roberts, he and his second wife Elaine had just completed the final editing of a compilation of these in the weeks before he died: the book has now appeared in print under the title *A Cumbrian Wildlife Garden*.

Richard was a 'joiner', and a supporter of many organisations. With the Carlisle & District Ramblers he explored most of the Cumbrian fells; he was a member of many conservation bodies, from the RSPB and Butterfly Conservation nationally, to the Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Cumbria Bird Club and our own Society more locally. All of them will be the poorer for his absence.

David Clarke

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Material should be clearly legible – ideally type-written double-spaced on one side of white A4 paper, with species and genera names underlined. Files in rich text format or Microsoft Word may be e-mailed to DavidC@carlisle-city.gov.uk, or submitted on CD/DVD accompanied by a paper copy. Authority names should be given in full. Illustrations should be in black ink; they must be originals and not photocopies. Whilst every care will be taken of original artwork, the editor can not be held responsible for any loss or damage. References should be given in full at the end of the article or note.

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Standard abbreviations used in this issue:

NNR: National Nature Reserve; v.c.: vice-county; B.S.B.I.: Botanical Society of the British Isles.

For Conservation status definitions (e.g. Nationally Scarce, etc) consult: www.jncc.gov.uk/species/Species_Status_Assessment/hierarchyoflists.htm

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Winter Programme 2009/10

(Wednesdays, except where stated)

7th October: ‘Fungi’ An illustrated talk by Paul Nichol

10th October (Saturday): Field meeting, Red Deer rut, Martindale Leader: Geoff Horne. Meet Martindale Old Church (NY434184) 1.30 pm.

17th October (Saturday): Fungus foray, Roudsea Wood Leader Paul Nichol.

21st October: ‘Natural history of the Borrowdale Oakwoods’ An illustrated talk by Maurice Pankhurst, National Trust

4th November: Members’ Night Contributions from the membership

18th November: ‘My Solway year – at work and play’ Dr Brian Irving, Solway AONB

2nd December: ‘The current state of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel in the UK and the Ark Project’ An illustrated talk by Dr Roger Sweeting, Freshwater Biol. Assoc.

16th December: ‘Some other raptors – recollections of 40 years with raptors other than Peregrines’ An illustrated talk by Geoff Horne

6th January: ‘Bird Migration on the Great Eastern Flyway’ Illustrated talk by Mike McKavert. Joint with Cumbria Bird Club

20th January: ‘Quaternary landscape changes in the Falkland Islands’ Illustrated talk by Dr Peter Wilson, Univ. of Ulster. Joint meeting with Cumberland Geological Society (N.B. start at 7.30 pm)

3rd February: ‘Returning the Red Kite to North East England - The inside story of the Northern Kites Project’ An illustrated talk by Keith Bowey

6th February (Saturday): Field Meeting. Loch Ken, Galloway (‘Wild Goose Chase’) Leader: Geoff Horne Depart 9.00 am.

17th February: ‘From contamination to conservation: the aftermath of lead mining in the North Pennines’ An illustrated talk by Dr Janet Simpkin, Newcastle University

3rd March: AGM & Members’ Night AGM followed by contributions from the membership