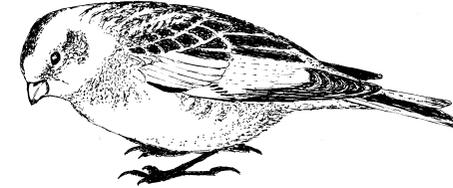

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Snow Bunting

(David Clarke)

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From the Editor

Material for the present issue includes articles that were submitted for the previous volume and a steady stream of contributions means that a minor backlog in publication seems set to continue. Whilst this may be frustrating for some contributors it is also a healthy sign for this journal! It is also good to welcome a new contributor, Robin Sellers, in this issue and I hope this will encourage yet more in the future.

Society News

Changes at the AGM included the election of a new President, Jeremy Roberts, replacing myself. Jeremy is well known to Society members, an expert naturalist, speaker and writer on many topics, especially botanical. It is good to know the Society is in such safe hands and we wish him well in his new role.

On a personal note, I would like to thank again the various Council members and officers of the Society for their support to me during my lengthy stay as President – and also for the very attractive original painting of the White-faced Darter dragonfly by Richard Lewington which became my ‘retirement’ present.

The programme for the coming season is as usual printed on the rear cover of this issue.

On a sad note, the Society has lost two of its four Life members in recent months – John Parker and Henry Ruddick. Appreciations appear at the end of this issue.

David Clarke

Recommended reading...

The Society has promoted interest in sedges over the past few seasons through workshops, and there have also been other day courses – our current President has been especially active in this work. The resultant booklet which he developed, *An Introduction to the Sedges of Cumbria* (2005) by F. J. Roberts, is available from the Secretary, £1.50 post free.

Another welcome development is the revised national publication on this group from B.S.B.I.*, which now features all the sedges, not just the genus *Carex*. It is good to note that there has been much local input and that local botanists Mike Porter and Mike Foley are amongst its co-authors.

* *Sedges of the British Isles* (2007) by A.C. Jermy, D.A. Simpson, M.J.Y. Foley & M.S. Porter [ISBN-13:9780901158352]

Editor

Recent Records

These notes cover the period from October 2007 until end of March 2008. They are drawn from the record cards handed in during that period, some information submitted to Tullie House and some of my own observations.

Insect records were obviously scarce but my garden moth trap produced a few interesting ones. A **Blair's Shoulder-knot** in 2006 was a new species for me and one in September 2007 was followed by three more in October. A **Figure of Eight** on 20th October was the first for several years, and another new species was a **White Speck** on 2nd November with the (now annual) **Sprawler** on the following night. (In the last issue I described a **Dewick's Plusia** caught in my garden trap as being only the second Cumbrian record: I have since discovered that thirty-one of these moths were found in Britain in 2007 and that ours was somewhat anomalous in that all the others had been reported from southern coastal counties.) Some very early butterflies in 2008 included a **Red Admiral** at Dalston (January 1st, D. Hickson) and a **Small White** at Burgh-by-Sands (13th January, S. & R. Gomm); **Peacock** and **Small Tortoiseshell** put in February appearances, and **Brimstone** reports from south Cumbria included 6th February at Witherslack (per I. Brodie). **Snow Fleas** (*Boreus hyemalis*) were seen variously on snow in the fells – three on 6th January on Fairfield, three on Dollywagon Pike on 12th January and one on Birk Fell, Ullswater on 24th March (all S. Hewitt).

A summary of bird records begins with a **Little Egret** at Port Carlisle on 21st December (P. Quinn). A high count of **Whooper Swans** near Kirkbride was 130+ on 29th November (F. Mawby) and a **Peregrine** was seen over Carlisle on the same day (it pays to look upwards sometimes!). There were two sightings of **Hen Harriers** on the Solway plain in October and December but, more unusually, a **Marsh Harrier** at Wedholme Flow on 14th October (F. Mawby). Notable waders were **Jack Snipe** in October and November in the Solway area and a more unusual one at Warwick Bridge on 22nd December (R & C. Shaw). **Green Sandpipers** wintered again by the R.Petteril near Carleton (C & A. Robinson) and there was one near Burgh by Sands on 11th December (R. Gomm). October 3rd was a late date for young **Swallows** to fledge at Thursby (N. Comish) and another late record was a **Wheatear** at Grune Point on 14th October (J. Hamer). **Blackcaps** were at Norfolk Road, Carlisle and Burgh-by-Sands in November and December and a Lithuanian-ringed **Starling** was found in a Thursby garden on 30th December (N. Comish). Six **Reed Buntings** visited a Heads Nook garden in December and through to January 2008 (A. Armsby) and 12 **Snow Buntings** were spotted in the rather different environment of Blencathra on 14th November (J. Hamer). The trend for lowland **Ravens** continued with 2 at Rockcliffe on 2nd December (R. Hodgson).

Highlights at Talkin Tarn were up to 4 **Gadwall** between late October and early

December and up to 42 **Goosander** from late November into early 2008 (there were hardly any during the corresponding period in 2006/7). On the down side there were very few Wigeon – probably due to the large scale removal of ‘water weed’ following complaints from the rowers.

Late winter records include a **Water Rail** at Burgh-by-Sands 12th February (R. Gomm); a **Long-tailed Duck** was present on the lower Eden for many weeks and seen at Rockcliffe on 4th March (J. Strutt). Less usual visitors included a **Ross’s Goose**, with Barnacle Geese, near Saltcoats 1st/2nd March (F. Mawby), two **Purple Sandpipers** – even more unusually, inland – at Kirkandrews-on-Eden, 2nd March (A. & C. Robinson), and a somewhat elusive **Rough-legged Buzzard** in the Tindale/Denton Fell area, also in early March (J. Miles).

In the warmest February (nationally) on record, **Frogs** began spawning in Eden valley gardens at Penrith and Cumwhitton from 22nd (S. Hewitt/D. Clarke) and at the end of this period a **Green Woodpecker** was calling in Swindale on 1st March (S. Hewitt). Some wild and wintry weather (including snow) followed in late March and may well have delayed some early migrants. **Chiffchaff** song was heard on 30th March at Fishgarth Wood (D. Clarke) and at Carlisle the next day (D. Iveson); early **Wheatears** included one at Rockcliffe Marsh 30th March (P. Wilson), and a least 10 **Sand Martins** were over the Eden at Warwick Bridge on 31st March (D. Clarke).

Geoff Naylor

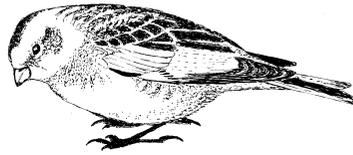
Notes and Records

Some uncommon ‘winter’ fungi from a fellside woodland in the Eden valley

Plicatura crispa (Pers.) Rea

This small fungus superficially resembles the gilled brackets, such as *Crepidotus* spp., but is distinctive for rather crimped folds on the spore-bearing surface, which do somewhat resemble gills, especially towards the cap edges. Its slightly stalked brackets are typically about 1 cm or less across, the upper-sides being zoned, and rather tawny-coloured, fading to whitish, often lobed, edges. The species was listed as Rare in the British Mycological Society’s Red List (1st edition), though is

Snow Bunting (David Clarke)



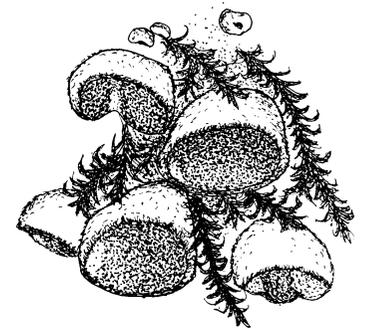
not included in the version now in preparation. It is northern in distribution, with most records being from Scotland, with scattered records from northern England, mainly east of the Pennines.

This species was not uncommon in the sheltered damp woodland along the Raven Beck at Outhwaite (NY64) near Renwick, growing on deciduous trees such as Hazel and birches, on both fallen and standing timber. One standing birch in particular had a spectacular tiered cluster of many hundreds of brackets ascending the main trunk from about a metre above ground level. The dates ranged from 10th December to 6th January 2008. In the 1990s, Geoff Naylor recorded this species from several woodlands in the north of the county. Six of his seven sites were within 10 km of Brampton, the other being Finglandrigg NNR (NY25), on dates ranging mainly from October to February. There is also a British Mycological Society record from Swindale Woods near Brough (NY81), 21st September 1986.

Chromocyphella muscicola (Fr.) Donk

Little clusters of this species were on moss (*Amblystegium* sp.) on the bark of a few (living) Bird Cherry trees (*Prunus padus*) at the Raven Beck location on the above-mentioned dates. Although tiny (c. 2-3 mm across), its paper-thin whitish shell-like fruit bodies contrasted strongly with dark bark and moss. The upper surface is minutely felted, the spore-bearing surface being smooth and often tinged pinkish brown. Very early stage fruit bodies of *Plicatura* (on wood) were not dissimilar in appearance at first glance!

Peter Wilberforce (former CNHS member, now living near Oban) kindly identified my specimens and Kerry Robinson confirmed this. Despite long and extensive field experience, only one of them had encountered this species, and then only once before, so it may well be genuinely scarce. Its UK records are widely scattered and many are very westerly and/or coastal. Despite this it seems to occur in a wide range of habitats on a wide range of mosses on various substrates – mainly, but not exclusively, on trees. The only two records listed by the BMS from northern England are over a century old, neither being from Cumbria. (The species is not in the BMS Red Lists mentioned above.)



Chromocyphella muscicola

Plicatura is not included in many popular field guides, but *is* to be found in Bon (1987)

– under the generic name *Plicaturopsis*. *Chromocyphella* is not included in books I have encountered. There is a photograph in Lucas (2006) who (referring to the New Forest) suggests mid-January as a time to start looking for this species. A sketch from my own photographs shows its general appearance.

In addition to the above, on 6th January 2008 I noted a large fruit-body of the ‘jelly-fungus’ *Tremella foliacea* on *Stereum*-infected Hazel, and the yellow-gilled bracket *Panellus serotinus* – which was present at several locations at this site. Both are widespread but relatively infrequent in the county.

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 Lucas, A. (2006) Some winter rarities. *Field Mycologist* 7 (3): 85-88.

David Clarke, Burnfoot, Cumwhitton, Brampton, Cumbria CA8 9EX

The lichen *Peltigera polydactylon* (Neck.) Hoffm.: new records from north Cumbria and the Borders

Peltigera polydactylon is one of the large relatively fast-growing foliose ‘dog-lichens’. It is closely similar to some very widespread species, in particular the similar-looking *P. hymenina* (formerly known as *P. lactucifolia*) which occurs in damp mossy places, on rocks, tree bases and even in garden lawns. *P. polydactylon* is often misidentified for this species, making its true status in Britain difficult to assess. It is much the fussier and more local species of the two, having most current reliable UK records from Scotland. The main distinguishing features from *P. hymenina* relate to the dense network of broad, dark, heavily anastomosing veins throughout the underside and the long, rather wiry, root-like rhizinae which bind a thin layer of mineral ‘soil’ to the underside. Its most typical habitat is on mossy basic rocks near streams, although it is apparently more catholic in some Highland sites.

I found it present in limited amounts on water-worn, mossy south-facing limestone outcrops and large boulders close to the edge of the River Liddel at Penton Bridge on March 16th 2008 at NY432.774. Most patches were within a metre or so of river flood level. Fruiting apothecia were scarce, though the largest patch (about 80 cm x 40 cm) had many. At the time there were no confirmed Cumbria records and this was on the ‘wrong’ side of the river, in Dumfriesshire, for which it also appears to be unrecorded. However, on 27th March, a search on the Cumbria side

of the Liddel a couple of hundred metres downstream from the first find – at Blae Pot (NY431.771) – revealed scattered colonies of the species in very similar microhabitat to the bank opposite. This therefore may be the first record for Cumbria. (Other species of the genus also present here were *Peltigera praetextata*, a widespread species of mossy/shady rocks, together with the old-woodland species *P. horizontalis*). To these may be added one further site: I found *P. polydactylon* present in very similar habitat on the tops of massive mossy boulders beside the Cumbria bank of the River Irthing in the Gilsland gorge (NY635.681) on 6th April.

I am grateful to Brian Coppins of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, for confirming the identity of my first specimen of *P. polydactylon*, and to Mark Seaward of the British Lichen Society for information on records held by BLS.

David Clarke, Burnfoot, Cumwhitton, Brampton, Cumbria, CA8 9EX

A further record of the Nettle Ground-bug (*Heterogaster urticae* (Fabricus)) from Cumbria

Heterogaster urticae was first recorded as new to Cumbria and v.c. 70 by Hewitt (1998) when one individual was swept from nettles on a shingle bank by the River Caldew at Cummersdale on 7th July 1998. I can now add one more record of the bug from the county and v.c. 69. Several nymphs of *H. urticae* were tapped from a small stand of Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) growing by the side of the Cumbria Coastal Way footpath, near to Roosecote Power Station, Barrow-in-Furness (SD220.685) on 7th September 2007.

Reference

- Hewitt, S. (1998) The Nettle Ground-bug (*Heterogaster urticae* (Fabricius)) new to Cumbria. *Carlisle Naturalist* 6 (2): 37.

R.W. John Read, 43 Holly Terrace, Hensingham, Whitehaven, CA28 8RF

Another record of the ladybird beetle *Scymnus schmidtii* Fursch from Cumbria

Scymnus schmidtii has recently been recorded as new to Cumbria (Thomas, 2007). I can now add one more record of the beetle from the county and v.c. 69. On the 21st April 1995 while on a visit to Sandscale Haws Nature Reserve, I found three male specimens of this minute ladybird beetle. They were crawling on an exposed

area of open sand and close to some low, sparsely vegetated dunes at grid reference SD19.75. *S. schmidti* is currently graded Notable B by Hyman (1992).

With the discovery of *S. schmidti* in Cumbria this now brings the total number of species in the genus that have been recorded from the county to nine; the other eight being *S. auritus*, *S. femoralis*, *S. frontalis*, *S. haemorrhoidalis*, *S. limbatus*, *S. nigrinus*, *S. suturalis* and *S. redenbacheri*.

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- Hyman, P. S. (revised Parsons, M. S.) (1992) *A review of the scarce and threatened Coleoptera of Great Britain. Part 1. UK Nature Conservation: 3*. Peterborough: Joint Nature Conservation Committee.
- Thomas, J. (2007) The ladybird beetle *Scymnus schmidti* Fursch (Coleoptera, Coccinellidae) in Cumbria. *Carlisle Naturalist* **15** (1): 13-14.

R.W. John Read, 43 Holly Terrace, Hensingham, Whitehaven, CA28 8RF

A record of the harvestman *Dicranopalpus ramosus* (Simon) from West Cumbria

On 19th September 2007 I discovered two adults of this quite large and distinctive harvestman in my back garden in Hensingham (NX986.168). The two individuals were beaten from a large flowering *Weigela* bush growing in a sheltered north-facing position next to a stone wall.

Examining the specimens more closely with the aid of a hand-lens, I was able to see quite clearly the long and very conspicuous forked pedipalps which are one of the main characteristics of this species. While kept in temporary captivity the specimens were observed to adopt their rather unusual resting position, which involves holding all eight legs at right angles to the body.

According to Hillyard (2005) *D. ramosus* is mainly a synanthropic species and has a marked preference for gardens and hedges, and occurs particularly on Holm Oak and conifers. Since it was first discovered in Britain on the south coast at Bournemouth in 1957, the species has spread rapidly northwards, and was discovered in Cumbria for the first time in 2002 (Robinson 2002), It has now been recorded from a number of localities in the county. The records can be viewed by parish on The Virtual Fauna of Lakeland web-site:

www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk

References

- Hillyard, P.D. (2005) *Harvestmen (Synopsis of the British Fauna, No. 4)*. London: The Linnean Society of London.
- Robinson, N. (2002) The Harvestman *Dicranopalpus ramosus* has arrived in Cumbria – from Bournemouth. *Carlisle Naturalist* **10** (2): 30.

R. W. John Read, 43 Holly Terrace, Hensingham, Whitehaven, CA28 8RF

The Orange Footman moth (*Eilema sororcula* (Hufnagel, 1766)) new to Cumbria, and further records of this group

I caught an example of this species at light in High Stand Plantation, Armathwaite (NY44) on 19th May 2007. Heath & Emmet (1979) report it 'locally in oak and beech woodland' south of a line from the Wash to Pembrokeshire. This at first made me question my identification. However this was the right time of year, and too early for other footman species. The moth has been photographed and retained as a voucher specimen at Tullie House Museum. Steve Palmer, via the Cumbria Moth email group, informed me that Orange Footman was found new to Lancashire on the 23rd May 2007 near Wigan, and that this was also a very unexpected addition to *their* county list.

On the night of 25th July 2007, also in High Stand using a Robinson trap, I caught two specimens of the Buff Footman (*Eilema deplana*) – and there were other records of this species in Cumbria at this time. (The northernmost occurrences mapped in 'H & E' were from mid Lancashire).

To complete the footman 'hat-trick', I captured a single Red-necked Footman (*Atolmis rubricollis*) in High Stand on the night of 3rd July 2006, having previously had two specimens of this species on the night of 18th June 2003. This is yet another species that has spread northwards in recent years.

Reference

- Heath, J. & Emmet, A. M. (1979) *The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain & Ireland*, vol. 9. London: Curwen Books.

Richard Little, 'Haresfield', Cumwhinton, Carlisle CA4 8ER

The leaf beetle *Eptrix pubescens* (Koch) and the weevil *Mecinus pascuorum* (Gyllenhal) new to Cumbria

Two phytophagous beetles were found new to Cumbria around the old disused iron ore mine-workings along the coastal area just south of Askham in Furness (SD20.76) on 9th June 2007.

I swept one individual of *Eptrix pubescens* from mixed herbage along a sandy path running through an area of mixed scrub near The Lotts. This small brownish-black jumping leaf beetle feeds on various nightshades (Solanaceae), and in particular Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*). The adult beetles feed on leaves of Bittersweet plants, where they make characteristic small round holes, while the larvae feed on the root systems. According to a recent distribution map (Cox, 2007), *E. pubescens* has been recorded mainly from southern England, and in western Britain has only been recorded as far north as Anglesey.

Also by sweeping, I took two adults of the weevil *Mecinus pascuorum* from low, mixed herbage in a small open sandy area and near to a low spoil bank close to the upper shore. This small and rather attractive red and grey-coloured weevil is associated with various species of plantain, especially Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). *H. pascuorum* is quite common and widespread in southern England and the Midlands, but tends to be rarer and more localised further north.

Reference

Cox, M. L. (2007) *Atlas of Seed and Leaf Beetles of Britain and Ireland*. Newbury: Pisces Publications.

R.W. John Read, 43 Holly Terrace, Hensingham, Whitehaven, CA28 8RF

The squash-bug *Coriomeris denticulatus* (Scopoli) (Hemiptera: Coreidae), a species and a family new to Cumbria

Wendy Nelson (Grange NHS) collected a bug on the calcareous grassland on the top of Humphrey Head (SD 389.743) on 20th May 2007 which Jennifer Newton had provisionally identified as *Coriomeris denticulatus*. Later in the year I was asked to confirm this identification. The specimen was slightly damaged and very dry but was undoubtedly the species suggested, and an interesting find. It matched perfectly the description in current identification works such as those of Southwood & Leston (1959), Nau (2004) and Evans & Edmondson (2005).

Coriomeris denticulatus, known as the Denticulate Squash-bug, is to be found in dry situations on poor soils such as chalk cuttings, sand and gravel pits and

calcareous grassland, exactly the type of locality found just between the cliffs of Humphrey Head and the grazed grassland on the more level ground. Recorded host plants for the species include Black Medick (*Medicago lupulina*), clovers (*Trifolium* spp.) and melilots (*Melilotus* spp.). Several species of clover occur on the headland, Black Medick can be found at the foot of the cliff, and melilots have been found on the railway embankment near Holme Island.

The bug has a rather southern range in Britain. Bernard Nau, Organiser of the Terrestrial Heteroptera Recording Scheme, informs me that he has no records that add to the summary of its distribution given by Southwood & Leston (*op. cit.*): 'it has been recorded in Yorks and most counties south of a line from Lincs. to Pembroke.' (The six specimens in the Tullie House collection all come from the southern England.)

This, therefore, begs the usual question as to whether new records such as this represent an advance northwards, due perhaps to global warming, or whether the species has always occurred in a locality and has just been overlooked. The Cumbrian record for *Coriomeris* is approximately 185 km north of the limit quoted above, and there are no known sightings anywhere between the two – as might have been expected over that distance, and in almost fifty years, if there was a northward spread in progress.

Humphrey Head has been well worked by naturalists, and many visiting and local entomologists have worked the relatively small area in question over the years. Crowson (1971) produced a note on notable coleoptera from the headland; Allen *et al.* (2003) mention the Sulphur Beetle (*Cteniopus sulphureus*) as having its only known Cumbrian locality on Humphrey Head. It seems unlikely that an insect of such distinctive appearance and about 8 mm in length would easily be missed. However, I am told by its finder that had the insect remained still and not been running about it would have been extremely well camouflaged amongst the sparse grey brown leaf litter around the vegetation. It may of course simply be present in very low numbers. As the species is capable of flight, the possibility that this is a vagrant occurrence cannot be dismissed.

It would appear that several of the ten British species of squashbug are extending their range, not necessarily northwards, though so far none have been recorded in Cumbria. Thus this record represents the addition of not just a new species but also a whole new family, Coreidae, to the list of Cumbrian insects. A careful search of other similar areas of calcareous grassland on the limestone scars around the head of Morecambe Bay may be worthwhile and bring to light other examples of the bug.

My thanks are due to Wendy Nelson for showing me the specimen, and to Jennifer Newton for its original determination.

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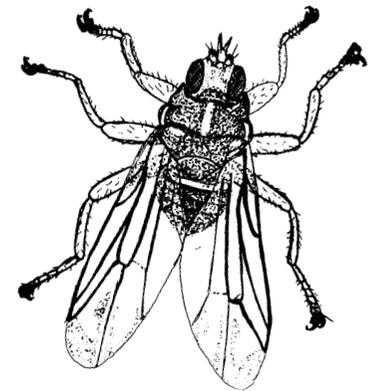
Jim Thomas, Bridge House, Borwick, Carnforth, Lancashire LA6 1JU

Some records of the Finch Louse-fly (*Ornithomya fringillina* Curtis) and the Common Louse-fly (*O. avicularia* (L.)) from West Cumbria

Robin M. Sellers, Crag House, Ellerslie Park, Gosforth, Cumbria CA20 1BL

Louse-flies are medium to large sized insects that live ecto-parasitically on birds and mammals. They have a characteristic, dorso-ventrally flattened appearance, with tough leathery bodies and strong legs with long, curved claws with which to grip their hosts. They subsist entirely on a diet of blood that they obtain from their hosts. Unusually for Diptera, the larval stages develop within the female's body and are only extruded when fully grown, after which they promptly pupate. They are classified into three families, the Hippoboscidae which live on birds and mammals, and the Streblidae and Nycteribiidae which are confined to bats. Only the Hippoboscidae and the Nycteribiidae are represented in Britain, and then only by a small number of species in each case. Some species have lost the power of flight, and not surprisingly these tend to be host specific, with life-cycles connected with the hosts' nests (in birds) or breeding places (for instance caves in the case of bats). Other species retain the power of flight and some fly strongly. In general the latter are not host specific, but may be restricted to certain types of host, for instance according to their size, or sharing the same habitat.

In the ordinary course of events few people are likely to come into contact with louse-flies. Bird-ringers are perhaps the group most likely to encounter them, for they are readily found on small birds in the summer months. They have a disconcerting habit of quitting the host in favour of the ringers' clothing during ringing operations. They will bite humans but apparently do no harm, though the sensation of having a louse-fly about one's person is very unpleasant. Since coming to live in Cumbria in 1999 I have kept a log of the louse-flies found, and the following notes are a summary of the information obtained. Identifications are based on the details in Hutson (1984). All records refer to Gosforth, Cumbria (NY0703) and were obtained between July 1999 and August 2007.



Ornithomya avicularia (Stephen Hewitt)

Common Louse-fly *Ornithomya avicularia* (L.)

45 records: obtained between 16th June and 16th September, the majority being in July and August (see Table 1). Hosts included the following, listed approximately in order of increasing size with the numbers of flies per host in parentheses: Great Spotted Woodpecker (6), Dunnock (2), Robin (3), Blackbird (7), Song Thrush (1), Blue Tit (1), Great Tit (6), Chaffinch (17), Greenfinch (13). Most were taken on birds of the year, but 14 were from adult birds (1 Robin, 1 Song Thrush, 8 Chaffinches, 4 Greenfinches). However, too much should not be read into this, for newly fledged birds are much easier to catch than adults in the summer months, this being the time when the latter are undergoing their annual wing moult and become very skulking and difficult to catch.

Finch Louse-fly *Ornithomya fringillina* Curtis

32 records: obtained between 4th July and 16th October, the majority again in July and August (see also Table 1). Hosts included the following: Dunnock (4), Robin (12), Blackcap (1), Blue Tit (12), Great Tit (9), Coal Tit (2), Nuthatch (1), Chaffinch (2) and, Greenfinch (4). Again most records were from birds of the year, but there were five from adults, a Blue Tit, 3 Great Tits, a Nuthatch, and a Greenfinch. The Coal Tit was not included in Hill's (1962) list of hosts for this species.

Table: Timing of capture of Louse-flies

Louse-fly	Number	Month of capture				
		June	July	August	September	October
<i>O. avicularia</i>	56	7	24	18	7	0
<i>O. fringillina</i>	47	0	14	22	9	2

These are two of the three common, winged forms found in Britain (the third is the Grouse Louse-fly *O. chloropus*). According to the distribution maps shown in Hill (1962), *O. avicularia* is fairly widespread in England, Wales and Ireland, but is absent in Scotland – in other words reaches the northern limit of its distribution in Cumbria. *O. fringillina* is shown as being confined to England, occurring no further north than Lancashire and Yorkshire; the present results extend the known range northwards. The stronghold of *O. chloropus* in Britain is Scotland, but its range extends south into England and it is known from Cumbria. *O. fringillina* is the smallest of the three, and is typically found on small passerines up to about

30 g in weight, that is up to the size of a Greenfinch. Hill (1962) describes its hosts as 'hedgerow birds', though 'garden birds' might be just as accurate. *O. avicularia*, on the other hand, is a much larger insect, being found on birds varying in size from Chaffinch to Rook, that is from about 20 g up at least 600 g. I have collected them from birds as small as the Blue Tit (c.12 g) in Gloucestershire (Sellers 1984). *O. chloropus* seems to be associated primarily with birds from more open habitats, such as moorland.

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The Banded Demoiselle (*Calopteryx splendens* (Harris)) in Cumbria: notes on range changes 2000-2007

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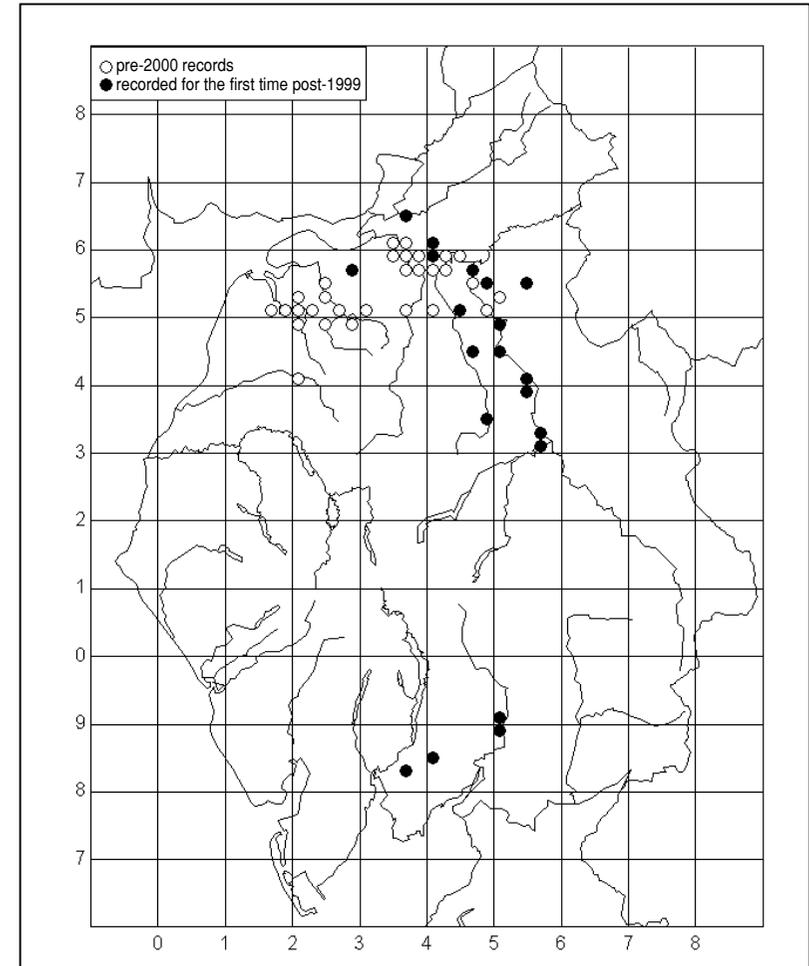
There have been established outpost populations of this species on the Solway Plain in Cumbria since at least 1936, mainly on the River Waver. It was also present on the Eden below Carlisle in the 1940s, but seemed to have declined there by c. 1970 (Clarke, 1999). The north-western limits of its mainland UK range had otherwise been well to the south, in the Preston area. The species is generally found not far from vegetated banks of slow-moving rivers and streams – its main breeding habitat.

From c.1996 there were signs of expansion/recolonisation of the Eden. Subsequent monitoring of this process shows that it has continued to the present year, so far without signs of abating. The total number of tetrads (2 km x 2 km) of the National Grid from which the species had been recorded in Cumbria up to 1996 was 10 – including 5 for the first time in that year. By 1999, partly as a result of a more systematic survey of the Solway Plain rivers over the previous two seasons, this number increased to 22. Up to and including the present season (2007), the number of recorded tetrads for the county is now 43 (see map). Not all tetrads recorded necessarily contain established populations, or even suitable breeding habitats.

The increased recording effort has coincided with a genuine range expansion/dispersal of this species. This appears to have two main components: firstly, a steady upstream colonisation of the River Eden system, and secondly, the appearance for the first time of this species in south Cumbria, for which there are no records before 2006. Both components feature some occurrences out-with suitable breeding habitat, and are presumed to be dispersive in nature.

The Eden expansion

In 1999, the breeding site furthest upstream was at Brockleworth (NY49.50), some 17 km from the lowest colonies. Since that year numbers have continued to build up slowly, the species often utilising quite short stretches suitable bankside. This has included the tributary stream, the Brunstock Beck, which enters the river at Carlisle. In 2007 there appeared to be a small breeding colony at Lazonby Bridge (NY55.40). A few individuals were recorded even further upstream at Langwathby (NY56.33), about 45 km from the river-mouth, where there is a stretch of east-facing marginal Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*).



The post-1999 expansion of *Calopteryx splendens* in Cumbria

The process of 'colonisation' has meant that the species has had to by-pass gorge-like and fast-running sections of the river to find suitable reaches further upstream. Suitable breeding habitats always include emergent/marginal canary-grass or bur-reed (*Sparganium*) beds, sometimes with floating water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus*) or pondweed (*Potamogeton*) – even sites about 20 m long being sufficient for breeding. Some sites have sandstone river beds with minimal accumulations of sediment; many are more or less west-facing.

There have been a number of 'casual' records (i.e. usually single individuals away from suitable breeding habitat), mainly, but not exclusively, on rivers linked to the Eden. These have included the Caldew, Lyne, Petteril in 2007, and the Gelt in 2004. In terms of direct distance from a known/potential source population, the Geltsdale individual must have travelled at least 8 km. However, one noted in 2007 from Plumpton on the Petteril (an apparently un-occupied watercourse) could have travelled much further had it followed that river upstream from its confluence with the Eden near Carlisle.

Of less certain status was a group of about 10 individuals on the River Eamont, close to its confluence with the Eden in the mid Eden valley, some 4 km upstream of Langwathby in 2006. This occurred late in the hot July, in which many other dragonfly 'movements' were noted. The species is otherwise totally unknown from this relatively fast-flowing river, which requires further investigation.

South Cumbria

The first indications of incursions into this part of the county came towards the end of the extremely warm July of 2006, when a small party of this species was present for a few days on the River Kent within the town limits of Kendal from July 26th. The river here is not obviously suitable for the species. Single males were also noted in the generally poor summer of 2007, again on the Kent (8th August) but further downstream than in 2006, and at two widely separate locations further to the south and west. The two latter were on the River Winster near Helton Tarn (SD41.85) on 26th May, and on a tarn inflow near Seatle Plantation (SD36.83) on 30th July. The Helton Tarn occurrence is remarkably early in the flight period and would normally suggest nearby origin: however, 2007 brought some very early emergence dates and the individual could easily have been a fortnight old. Despite searches on the Winster no further trace there of the species has been found. All south Cumbria records are well confirmed – an important consideration when the Beautiful Demoiselle is the more usual *Calopteryx* species in these areas.

Discussion

The trends in Cumbria seem to be mirrored by what is happening elsewhere in the north of England, and even in south-west Scotland. In the latter area, the species was found 'new' in 2004 near Dalbeattie, in an area more or less opposite the Cumbria Solway Plain sites. Records from Lancashire show that expansion is going on there too, and this area seems the most logical source for individuals moving into southern Cumbria. The nearest locations appear to be on the Fylde

peninsula on the river Wyre near Garstang (some 25 km south of Cumbria).

The fine July of 2006 may well have provided the latest boost to dispersal, if not to range expansion, and it may also be no coincidence that the new records from north Cumbria in 1996 followed the fine summer season of 1995. Increasing average temperatures over a much longer period may be equally important however.

Most records of 'casual' individuals so far have been of males – possibly just because this sex is the more conspicuous in both colour and behaviour.

It will be fascinating to see whether more permanent colonies become established both in the north and south of the county in the next few years.

Acknowledgements

In addition to my own records, the following have greatly added to the documentation of these events: Ash Bennett, Ian Brodie, Glen Bryson, Tamsin Douglas, Nick Franklin, Steve Garner, Fred Gould, Steve Hewitt, Robin Hodgson, Dorothy Iveson, Ian Kay, Paul Kennedy, Richard Little, John Martin, Barry Marrs, Frank Mawby, John Miles, Geoff Naylor, Tristan Reid, Mo Richards, Jeremy Roberts, Neil and Judith Robinson, David Scott.

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Some beetles (Coleoptera) and bugs (Hemiptera) on Arnside Knott

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Over the years Arnside Knott has acted as a Mecca for naturalists, whatever their specialist interest. This little Carboniferous Limestone hill is renowned for some of the uncommon species of plant and animal that occur there. For example, the Teesdale Violet (*Viola rupestris*) grows on the Knott at the lowest of its four known British localities; Chaffweed (*Anagallis minima*) is one of Britain's smallest plants and occurs by a small spring on Heathwaite Fell on the slopes of the Knott; the very much larger Deadly Nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*) is nationally quite scarce but is regularly reported from and around the Knott; the Dark-red Helleborine (*Epipactis atrorubens*), which prefers open limestone soils, is yet another of the local specialities.

The Knott is one of the two English sites (both in Cumbria), for the Scotch Argus butterfly (*Erebia aethiops*) and provides its most southerly British colony; the Northern Brown Argus (*Aricia artaxerxes*) feeds as a larva on Common Rock-rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*) and is also towards the southern limit of its range at Arnside; the High Brown Fritillary (*Argynnis adippe*) and the Pearl-bordered Fritillary (*Boloria euphrosyne*) still survive in limestone habitats around Morecambe Bay, such as the Knott, and nearby Gait Barrows. Of the moths, the pretty Least Minor (*Photedes captiuncula*) deserves a mention, if only because of its habit of flying in the daytime: it is widespread in the limestone areas of northern England. The Red Wood Ant (*Formica rufa*) reaches its northernmost limit here – although it was formerly more widespread in south Cumbria.

While the plants and insects mentioned above are representative of the more local species to be found on and around the Knott, the site supports a considerable number of commoner species. Over the years the members of the Arnside Natural History Society have been collecting local records and have a list of about three hundred species of plant from the Heathwaite/Arnside Knott area, an impressive annual list of butterflies, and an ever-increasing list of moths.

By contrast, bugs and beetles seem to be poorly recorded, with only fourteen species of beetle listed for the parish of Arnside on the Virtual Fauna of Lakeland website [www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk] and none added since 1997. On the afternoon of Saturday 2nd June 2007 several friends and I took a route from Far Arnside to the summit of the Knott through Heathwaite, returning via New Barns and the cliff top path to Hollins Farm. Our main objective was to try to find the Scarce Seven-spot Ladybird (*Coccinella magnifica*), a beetle that is closely

associated with the Red Wood Ant, but which has only once been recorded in Cumbria, in the Grange-over-Sands area in 1990 (Hewitt, 2004). Whilst carrying out the search we started to create a more representative list of species for the area, the highlights of which are noted below.

The remains of several Cockchafers (*Melolontha melolontha*) were around a campsite toilet block, no doubt originally drawn there by lights. As we set off, I noticed the bright red cardinal beetle *Pyrochroa serraticornis* on one of the vehicles. This is the species with a red head and is less common in my experience than the slightly larger *P. coccinea*, which has a black head and also occurs around Arnside. Atty (1983) states that *P. coccinea* prefers thick woodland whilst *P. serraticornis* is more common in hedges and smaller woodlands. The larvae of both species are very distinctive and are to be found under bark where they feed on other insects. The Wasp Beetle (*Clytus arietis*), a longhorn beetle that mimics wasps in colouring and behaviour, was seen on the trunk of an Ash in the hedge. Also on the hedges around the fields were examples of the Hawthorn Shield-bug (*Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale*), the click beetle *Athous haemorrhoidalis* and the carabid beetle *Dromius quadrimaculatus* – usually found in just such situations on the branches of deciduous trees. Four specimens of the yellow and black Fourteen-spot Ladybird (*Propylea 14-punctata*) were seen on Ivy. On the flowers of dog roses in the hedge were several specimens of the weevil *Phyllobius roboretanus* and the soldier beetle *Cantharis nigricans* – both common species in the area.

As we followed the path through Heathwaite – an area of rough grazing dotted with Hazel, oaks and other shrubs and trees – we found several more species of beetle. These included the leaf beetle *Luperus flavipes* – a Notable/Nb species with few Cumbrian records, the Orange Ladybird (*Halysia 16-guttata*), the Two-spot Ladybird (*Adalia 2-punctata*), the Ten-spot Ladybird (*A. 10-punctata*) and the longhorn beetle *Rhagium mordax*, all of which were beaten from the trees and bushes. *Halysia* is a mildew-feeder that was virtually unknown in the county before 1990 but has recently become more widespread, especially on Sycamore. *Hoplia philanthus*, a rather uncommon small brown chafer beetle similar in size to the Bracken Clock (*Phyllopertha horticola*) was noted on Hazel. (A couple of specimens of *Phyllopertha* were noted on the more open slopes towards the summit of the Knott.) *Hoplia* seems to have a very scattered distribution, occurring occasionally on other local sites such as Gait Barrows and Trowbarrow just to the south of the Arnside area, as well as other coastal localities further north in Cumbria. Several examples of the common soldier beetle *Malthodes marginatus* were seen on the blossom of Elder bushes, whilst the equally common and widespread Seven-spot Ladybird (*Coccinella 7-punctata*) was beaten from a Juniper bush. I have found numerous adults and nymphs of the Juniper Shield-bug

(*Cyphostethus tristriatus*) on the bushes on the Knott in the past but could locate none on this occasion.

In the more open area towards the top of the hill we swept a specimen of the rather handsome small leaf beetle *Cryptocephalus moreaei*. This is shiny black with yellow marks on its elytra. It is a rather local species, known to feed on *Hypericum*. Several examples of the Green Shield-bug (*Palomena prasina*) were found by sweeping. As is mentioned by Hewitt (2006), this species is a fairly recent arrival in the north-west. It is now quite common and generally found on deciduous trees and bushes, spending the winter as an adult on evergreens such as Juniper and Yew.

Beating oak yielded a specimen of the tiny weevil *Balanobius pyrrhoceras*, a species that is black with white scale-like pubescence. It is generally associated with oaks. I also came across another weevil *Euophryum confine*, an elongate insect about 3 mm in length. This species was unknown in Britain until 1937 – originating from New Zealand – but can now be found both indoors and outside (Morris 2002). David Atty has several indoor records for the species from 1972 to 2004 and suggests that this may be the first outdoor record from v.c. 69. As we descended the steep path towards the road on the north side of the Knott, we found several more Green Shield-bugs on the stunted Ashes that survive there despite the strong winds and the depredations of the sheep and the deer. On Hazel and Sycamore were examples of the small black leaf beetle *Cryptocephalus labiatus*, further examples of the Orange Ladybird and the bright orange soldier beetle *Rhagonycha fulva* that is so common on flowers.

As we walked along the cliff top path we came across numerous Red Wood Ant nests but, alas, no examples of the Scarce Seven-spot Ladybird. We did, however, come across several specimens of the rather local, unusual and brightly coloured leaf beetle *Clytra quadripunctata* which is also associated with the ant nests. The adult beetle lays its eggs on the top of an ant nest, where they are mixed in with the nest material. The emerging larvae burrow into the nest, cover themselves with debris and excrement and feed on scraps in the galleries within the nest. We have observed this distinctive beetle on Arnside Knott regularly over the years and it was also found in Ashness Woods in 2003 by David Atty, associated with the Hairy Wood Ant (*Formica lugubris*). Under stones and logs close to the nests was the woodlouse *Platyarthrus hoffmannseggi*, a small white species that is also closely associated with the nests of ants of various species. Hopkin (1991) states that this ‘becomes more scattered north of a line through Liverpool and Hull’ though I have found it in my garden in Borwick and in other localities in the area. It is believed to feed on pellets regurgitated by its hosts.

By beating some of the stunted oaks that fringe the path we found adults of three more species of longhorn beetle – insects that generally develop as larvae within tree trunks and branches. These were the large yellow and black *Strangalia maculata* and two smaller species – *Pogonocherus hispidulus* and *Leiopus nebulosus*. The two last-mentioned are known to breed in comparatively thin branches of deciduous trees. *Pogonocherus* is generally regarded as a southern species though I have several records for north Lancashire and south Cumbria, and there are also scattered records from the north of the county. *Leiopus* is also regarded as a rather local species though there are records from sites such as Loughrigg, Rusland, Roudsea and Tilberthwaite, suggesting that it has a very widespread distribution throughout the county.

Another very attractive insect that we encountered was the red and black *Cryptocephalus bipunctatus*, a leaf beetle that is much larger than the previously mentioned members of the same genus and is listed as Notable/Nb (Shirt, 1987). The species occurs sparingly throughout south Cumbria, usually on birches. We also added to our list the click beetle *Agriotes pallidulus* and the weevil *Phyllobius pyri*, neither of which is particularly uncommon in our area. One of the more interesting finds was the soldier beetle *Cantharis lateralis*, a rare species with few Cumbrian records. Equally interesting to see, though far more common, was the membracid bug *Centrotus cornutus*. Membracids are most commonly found in the tropics and have projections on the pronotum that give them a superficial resemblance to thorns on the trees and bushes that they inhabit. A larva of the Purple Hairstreak (*Neozephyrus quercus*), a species restricted to oaks, had been beaten from the lower branches of these trees during a visit in June 2006. Another easily recognisable insect was the Green Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela campestris*) that we saw hunting along the path in one of the more open areas. It is a fairly widespread species but its rapid flight pattern and fast running mean that it is always interesting to watch. Throughout the afternoon we came across examples of several more generally common or widespread species. These included the weevil *Polydrosus cervinus*, the click beetle *Athous haemorrhoidalis*, the soldier beetle *Rhagonycha limbata* and the Orchid Beetle (*Dascillus cervinus*). This last is a rather nondescript brown beetle some 10 mm in length, whose larvae burrow into the soil and feed on plant roots.

Although we did not find the principal object of our search (which surely must occur at one of the sites inhabited by *Formica rufa* in the north-west), we had at least recorded several insects of considerable interest. A start had thus been made on building up the records for the many species of bugs and beetles that are known to occur in this fascinating area.

Thanks are due to Mike Morris, to Ann Kitchen of Arnside NHS, to David Atty who checked the text of this article for me and who provided valuable comments on the distribution within Cumbria of some of the species mentioned and to Steve Hewitt for his support.

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Estimating the age of mounds of the Yellow Meadow Ant (*Lasius flavus* L.)

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The mounds of fine soil created by Yellow Meadow Ants are a familiar sight on undisturbed grasslands. They frequently support vegetation different from that round about, notably plants of light dry soils such as Sheep's Fescue and Thyme. The ants themselves are never seen, except when there is a mating emergence of winged males and females, or when one pokes into the surface of the mound and sees small numbers of workers. They feed entirely underground by a maze of tunnels extending to a radius of about 1.5 m, in which they prey upon, or milk, aphids, particularly those on the roots of grasses. From these tunnels they are constantly bringing up fine particles of soil which are deposited on the surface of the mound, mainly at night and under damp conditions. The function of the mound is, like the much larger mounds made by wood ants, to provide favourable temperatures for raising their brood. As the mounds grow they often develop an east-west alignment, with a steeper face on the south-east side which catches the morning sun (Brian, 1977). The colonies are, however, very easily suppressed if they become shaded by scrub, bracken or just rank herbaceous vegetation, hence they benefit from grazing of the land, and might better be called 'pasture ants'. When showing people these mounds I have often been asked how old they are, and previously I really had no idea.

Recently I have tried out a method used by Dr T.J. King on grasslands in Wiltshire (King, 1981) which is based on the results of observation of large numbers of nests on Porton Down and other sites which indicated the ants added about one litre of soil to the surface each year. The method involves measuring the height and diameter of the mound at the four points of the compass, to obtain the mean height and radius. The formula for calculating the volume of a segment of a sphere is then applied, to obtain the volume in litres, which is deemed to be the equivalent of age in years. King's figures were based on the average value for the five largest mounds he could find out of as many as one thousand on a site.

The sites which King studied in Wiltshire were abandoned arable land that had reverted to pasture and been colonised by the Meadow Ants. The dates of abandonment, which provided a date before mounds could have existed, were known in enough cases to enable the calculated figures to be assessed against known dates. This showed very good conformity up to 169 years, but he recognised that the mounds do not go on growing forever and that there comes a

point beyond which the effect of soil being brought up is nullified by compaction and possibly erosion of the mound. Over these long periods the ants must have reared repeated generations of queens, to keep the colony going.

The situation in Cumbria is of course very different from that in Wiltshire. The common sight of old plough rigs shows where former arable land has reverted to pasture, but Meadow Ant mounds do not generally occur in this situation. They are most commonly found on rough grazings with such irregular terrain that they could never have been ploughed, or even harrowed. Therefore no 'start date' can be postulated: the ants have probably been there since time immemorial. One can reasonably expect, then, that there should be some very old nests.

In August 2007 I tried out the method on two Cumbria Wildlife Trust Reserves. The samples were taken by picking out what looked like the five largest mounds in the area under consideration. The results that I obtained, in litres, were:

Latterbarrow (SD439.828): 154, 282, 166, 140, 100.

Barkbooth Lot (SD416.907): 81, 54, 175, 62, 136.

Latterbarrow is limestone grassland threatened by scrub invasion. Much work has been done recently to remove scrub. The mounds, however, were in an area that must have escaped invasion. The average of the results is 168.4, but it is clear that there is one nest that is much larger, and presumably older, than the rest and is beyond the range of age estimation. The average of the 'middle' values is 153.3, which suggests that the 'large' mounds are about 150 years old, with some younger, as one would expect. Both these calculations suggest an age of 'about 150' years.

Barkbooth Lot is acid/neutral grassland, a great deal of which is covered by bracken. The mounds that were measured are on a ridge that is free of cover. All the nests are within the range of estimation and give an average of 101.6, suggesting an age of 'about 100' years, but again, there are some nests much older than others.

The method clearly has serious limitations: the rate at which soil is brought to the surface must vary with the age of the mound, and many of the mounds are irregular shapes which do not fit comfortably into the ideal of a segment of a sphere. Nevertheless, this method does at least enable one to make a rough estimate of the age of mounds. If anyone is interested in trying it out on other sites

I will be pleased to provide more details of how we carried out the measurements.

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The 'Frog Rush' *Juncus ambiguus* (Guss.) on the Solway

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On 26th July 2007 Mike Porter, Tristan Reid and I met at Campfield Marsh on the Solway shore, just west of the old railway viaduct, to look at the sedges in the saltmarsh pools.

It was good to find both *Blysmus* sedges, with the Flat-sedge (*B. compressus*) being quite frequent both here, and also – as MP pointed out – by the car-park just west of Bowness-on-Solway village itself, although we found the Saltmarsh Flat-sedge (*B. rufus*) only in small quantity in one water-filled ditch.

Whilst working eastwards towards the viaduct, my eye was caught by some 'Toad Rush' plants looking rather different from the usual abundant *Juncus bufonius*. Similar plants proved to be frequent in several places over a few hundred metres close to the coast road, where the vegetation was kept open by cattle-trampling, leaving areas of clayey and silty mud. An area of water-seepage and springs just west of the viaduct also provided some areas of mud for the plant.

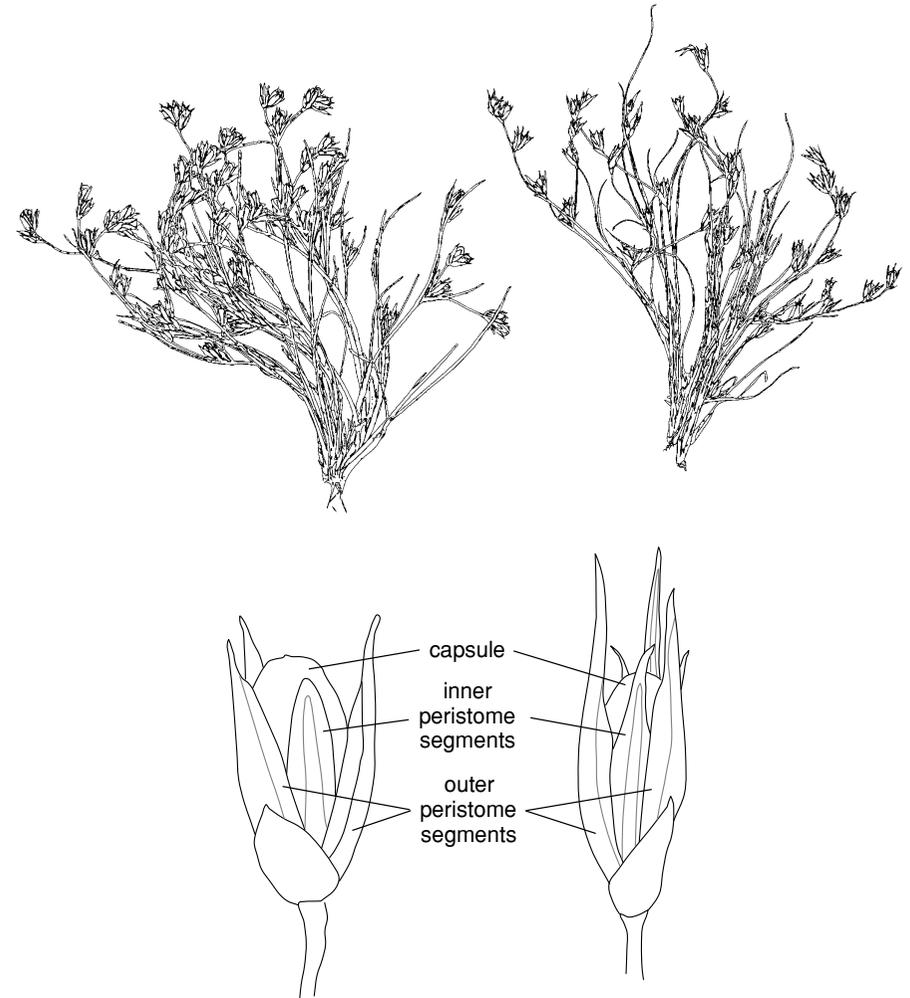
The most striking feature was the large truncate capsule, which in many flowers projected beyond the three inner peristome segments (in a rush flower, the equivalents of petals), whilst with a lens it was obvious that the inner segments themselves were often blunt, with tissuey rounded tips. These characters are features of a segregate from *J. bufonius sensu stricto*, referred to as *J. ambiguus* Guss., which has a largely coastal distribution, although it apparently can also occur inland in calcareous or saline habitats (Preston *et al.*, 2002). Stace (1991) uses the name 'Frog Rush' for this plant.

Specimens were submitted to Dr T.A. Cope, the B.S.B.I. referee for this complex, who kindly confirmed them as *J. ambiguus*, although he did point out that the name *J. ranarius* Nees ex. Song. & Perrier should be used in future. At least the name *ranarius* – derived from *Rana*, a frog, is more memorable!

According to *A Flora of Cumbria* (Halliday, 1997) the species has been recorded in several sites in south Cumbria (Muncaster, Drigg, Askam-in-Furness, Arnside, Sandscale, and Grange-over-Sands), but none further north in the county. Since the *New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora* (Preston *et al.*, 2002) shows it as present in two hectads on the Scottish shore of the Solway, it is no great surprise that it should occur also on the Cumbrian side.

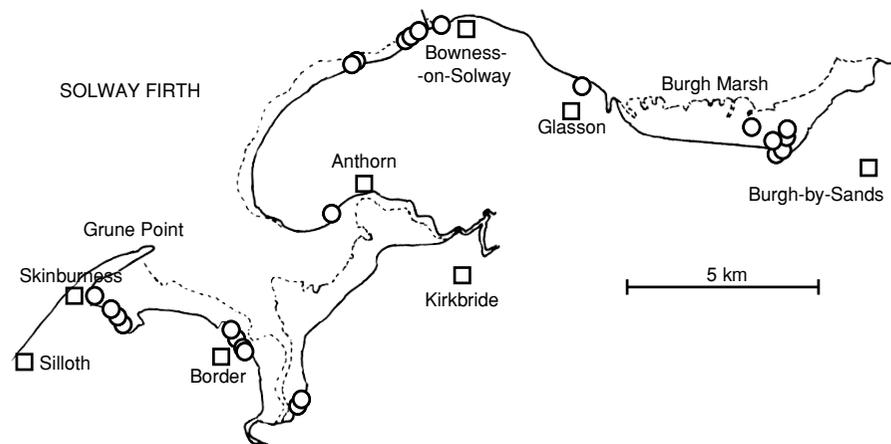
In September and October, opportunities arose for further searches for the species. Along the saltmarsh edge of Skinburness Marsh between Sea Dyke End and Skinburness village, forms of 'Toad Rush' were very frequent by the coast road in

the usual habitats of open, disturbed damp soil. It was interesting to note that plants at the upper levels, by the road, had characters of *J. bufonius sensu stricto*, in the acute-angled tips of the inner perianth segments, these being consistently longer than the capsules, which were rounded, or bluntly pointed. In most plants, the flowers were carried singly along the stem. At lower levels, however, close to



Juncus ambiguus (left); *J. bufonius* (right)

Upper: whole plants; lower: single florets showing ripe capsule and peristome segments
(Drawings prepared from specimens.)



Known distribution of Frog Rush *Juncus ambiguus* (circles) on Cumbrian Solway coast

the brackish pools, were plants agreeing with the *J. ambiguus* found earlier at Campfield Marsh. Indeed, some of these showed well another character of *J. ambiguus*: a tendency for the flowers to make small clusters at intervals along the stem, rather than occurring singly.

A further search along the Inner Solway at intervals from North Plain Farm at the west end of Campfield Marsh to the eastern edges of Burgh Marsh near Dykesfield revealed new stations for *J. ambiguus* at almost every suitable spot from the road-edge pasture far out onto the marsh, down the marsh profile until the vegetation took on a decidedly salt-tolerant aspect, in which the plant was not found.

On Border Marsh, the upper grazing marsh drops abruptly to the saltmarsh at a well-defined 'edge'. *J. ambiguus* was frequent as far as I searched just below the 'edge' where cattle and vehicles follow a track and create the appropriate open muddy spots wherever creeks run out onto the lower marsh levels. North of Raby Cote on the upper Waver estuary the plant grew on the roadside, which at this point is often inundated, and several saltmarsh plants were associates. By far the most favoured situations in all these sites were cattle-trampled depressions where open patches of drying silt were present on the sides of low hummocks between wet mud. It was very obvious that the greatest likelihood of the plant being present was where the traffic of cattle or wheeled vehicles had been most intense: for instance close to slab bridges across the creeks, and places where cattle had broken down the sides of deeper ditches in order to cross. Further out onto the

saltmarsh the plant grew along tracks where there were damper areas of wheel-ruts or hoof-hollows.

The most frequent associate in all sites was the Lesser Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia marina*), apparently having similar requirements, and – being more conspicuous – its presence in an open site in the upper marsh was a good indicator of the likely presence of the Frog Rush. However, the Sea-spurrey has a rather wider ecological amplitude, occurring also in wetter and more saline hollows, and able to tolerate more competition. Marsh Foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*) was also often a companion, although where this species, or other grasses, had developed a thicker sward, the rush appeared to be crowded out.

The degree of moisture seemed to be significant. The species was absent both in spots where the substrate was dry, as on the tops of mounds of drying mud, and in the wetter hollows where plants such as Celery-leaved Buttercup (*Ranunculus sceleratus*) occurred.

In most sites, the typical colony consisted of just a few plants. Good patches, with dozens or hundreds of plants, were in front of North Plain Farm west of Bowness-on-Solway, where the rush grew in a track leading down the shore (on a slope so relatively steep that the lowest plants grew with 20 m or so of the open estuarial mud), and by the car-park just west of the village, where a series of tiny 'bays' with shingle beds are being eroded out of silty fore-shore. This last site is the only one where the plant was found in what might be regarded as a 'natural' habitat, one not dependent upon human activities for its continuance. Here, the plant grows with more halophyte associates, such as Sea Milkwort (*Glaux maritima*), Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*), Parsley Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe lachenalii*), Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*), and Sea Arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*).

The map shows that the plant is widespread along this stretch of coast, but since my searches have so far been restricted to accessible sites near roads, it no doubt awaits discovery in the intervening, less-accessible, stretches, and beyond, for instance on Rockcliffe Marsh and the tidal Eden and Esk. It remains to be seen whether it occurs along the more exposed coastline between its newly-found sites described here, and those previously known in the southern Cumbrian estuaries.

Plants were in all stages of growth, both in July when first found and into October. In a suitable season, germination seems to occur over a long period, and in vigorous plants, at least, stems which have shed seed wither, and become displaced by a succession of new shoots from the base. Thus the relevant features of the plant can be seen over long periods. For the characters to be seen, the plant needs to have well-grown capsules, but the peristome segments should be fresh and not drying: in older states, and in dried and pressed specimens, the sides of the

segments tend to curl inwards, and thus look superficially more acute-tipped, and less convincing. There is often a good deal of variation visible in a single plant, with some segments being mucronate – in other words, blunt but coming to a tiny point at the apex – whilst others are rounded.

Given the extent of perceived variation, I collected samples from plants scattered over a wide area of Burgh Marsh, and took the liberty of trying Dr Cope's patience with a further selection of twenty specimens which – although generally agreeing with *J. ambiguus* – seemed to less 'clear-cut' examples. Dr Cope kindly named these for me, all but one being referable to *Juncus ambiguus*, the single exception being *J. bufonius*. This confirmation was a satisfying confidence-boost, since it implied that whilst on the one hand the plant could often be quite confidently identified by its overall appearance, an individual could show some 'allowable' variability in the fine detail. Looking again with fresh eyes at the exception I did feel that it was indeed clearly referable to *J. bufonius*. It also helped to confirm my impression that there was a good ecological and spatial separation between these two similar species, the generally commoner *J. bufonius* 'petering out' almost completely as a salt influence made its appearance down the marsh, as evidenced by the halophyte associates, and *J. ambiguus* reaching a very sharp 'cut-off' at the upper levels of the marsh,

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Thomas Henry Ruddick (1931-2008)

Henry Ruddick died on 8th January following a long illness. Born at Carlisle in 1931, he was an enthusiastic supporter of CNHS and joined the Society in 1947. He was made a Life Member in 1997.

Throughout his life, Henry was a committed naturalist, with a great love of wild places, plants and animals. His country upbringing gave him many opportunities to discover the natural world and he lived at Scaleby for many years. With Scaleby Moss almost literally on his doorstep, he devoted much energy to recording the birds and other wildlife of this important site and left a useful manuscript of his work. His passion for nature combined with an equal enthusiasm for writing about it and he is particularly remembered for many contributions to the local press, including *The Gazette* under his adopted pen-name of 'Jock Mallard'. The latter perhaps reflected his deep love of Scotland, especially Tiree and the Hebrides, which he visited many times. He was also a keen supporter of Tullie House Museum. Sadly, Henry succumbed to long-term illness whilst in his late 60s – which forced him to withdraw from Society activities. We will add a suitable title to the Society's library in his name. It is good to hear that donations collected at his funeral are to be used by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds at their Geltsdale Reserve to fund a publicly viewable bird-feeding station at the new centre at Stagsike, Tindale.

David Clarke

John Roland Parker FZS (1912-2007)

John Parker died on Christmas Eve 2007 near the end of his ninety-fifth year, following a long period of deteriorating health. Despite this he remained active to the last. He was made a Life Member of this Society in 1981, having first joined in 1931!

He was a kindly man, and always ready to offer advice and help – especially with the not always easy task of identifying spiders. My own memories of him go back to my early years at Tullie House in the 1970s. I well remember the day when to my surprise and delight he produced a live, and very lively, example of the magnificent Raft Spider (*Dolomedes fimbriatus*) – then quite new to me. Happily there was a large stone sink in the museum workroom at that time and this

provided an ideal escape-proof arena in which to observe and photograph it on some Sphagnum moss! This was the start of my own interest in this group, and of his help with identification of some interesting local finds.

Although a professional manager in the hotel industry for much of his life, John managed to combine this with a very successful contribution to the study of spiders at a national level. He was a founder member of the British Arachnological Society [BAS], and for many years its Secretary and editor of its Newsletter. He wrote many papers and notes for the BAS and, often with his wife Nan, undertook many surveys of the spiders of important habitats. In 1992, he edited the first English translation from the Latin of Lister's *English Spiders* (1678) – the earliest known scientific work on spiders. His life and work on the study of spiders is summarised in the two articles he wrote for this journal in 2005.

Having been born in Carlisle and lived for much of the later period of his life in north Cumbria, his knowledge of the local spider fauna was considerable. His 1996 article in this journal, and his contribution to Derek Ratcliffe's *Lakeland* (2002), remain useful guides to the more notable elements of county's spider list.

Nature conservation was amongst John's many wider interests. Forever a joiner of causes dear to his heart, he became a founder member of the then Lake District Naturalists' Trust (now Cumbria Wildlife Trust) in 1962, and sometime warden of their Reserves at Biglands Bog, and Bowness-on-Solway Gravel Pits. He was also an honorary warden of the Glasson Moss National Nature Reserve for ten years.

John was virtually the last surviving link with some of the earliest years of the Society's history, and his loss is doubly sad for that reason.

David Clarke

The Carlisle Naturalist

Editor: David Clarke

Editorial Panel: Roy Atkins, David Clarke, Stephen Hewitt, Geoff Naylor, Jeremy Roberts

Layout & DTP: Jeremy Roberts

Artwork: David Clarke, Stephen Hewitt, Jeremy Roberts

All material for publication should be sent to David Clarke, Tullie House Museum, Castle St., Carlisle CA3 8TP. Copy deadline for the next issue is:

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Information for Authors

The *Carlisle Naturalist* publishes material on all aspects of the natural history of Cumbria. General articles, results of personal research, news items, records and letters of relevance to Cumbrian naturalists are welcomed. Material accepted for publication must not be submitted in a similar form to any other journal.

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.

Authors of papers two or more pages in length will be provided with 10 reprints. Papers may be submitted to a referee.

Opinions expressed in the *Carlisle Naturalist* are not necessarily shared by the Council of Carlisle Natural History Society or the Editorial Panel.

Standard abbreviations used in this issue:

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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Membership **application forms** are available from the Secretary, Stephen Hewitt, address above.

Summer Field Meetings & Workshops 2008 (All dates are Saturdays)

26th April: (Workshop) Identifying Woodlice

Leader: Dr Andrew Ramsey. Meet Tullie House 10 am. Field trip in the afternoon. Lunch not provided. Please book in advance with the Tullie House Box Office (01228 618700)

10th May: Siddick Pond and Solway Coast

Leader: Frank Mawby and Tim Laurence. Depart at 9.30am. Meet Siddick Pond (NY001300) at 10.30am

31st May: Mabie Forest / Solway Coast including Rough Island

Leader: Geoff Naylor. Depart at 9.30am

7th June: Teesdale flowers

Leader: Jeremy Roberts. Depart at 9.30am. Meet by road at Harwood Beck (NY847309) at 10.30am

21st June: Mabie Forest / Colvend: Butterflies & Dragonflies

Leader: David Clarke (07767 888619). Depart at 9.30am

19th July: Scaleby Moss: Dragonflies and Water Beetles

Leader: David Clarke (07767 888619). Depart: 10.30. Meet at layby on A689 near M6 junction 40 (NY400601)

22nd August: Moth evening at Finglandrigg wood

Leaders: Mike Clementson & Richard Little. Depart 8.00pm. Meet at entrance to Finglandrigg Reserve (NY283571) at 8.30pm

27th September: (Workshop) Wood-decaying Fungi

Leader: Paul Nichols. Meet Tullie House 10 am. Field trip in the afternoon. Lunch not provided. Please book in advance with the Tullie House Box Office (01228 618700)

11th October: Red Deer at Martindale

Leader: Geoff Horne. Meet at Carlisle College 12.30pm, or meet Martindale Old Church (NY434184) 1.30pm