FIRST OCCURRENCES IN BRITAIN OF TWO PLANT BUGS (HEM.-HET.)

By A. A. ALLEN, B.Sc., A.R.C.S.*

I. *Nysius graminicola* Kolen. (Lygaeidae). – Southwood & Leston (1959:85) justly remarked: "It is possible that other *Nysius* species, which could be confused with *N. thymi,* occur in Britain". Later in the same year, G. E. Woodroffe showed that *N. thymi* Wolff (sensu auct. Brit.) included a second species, *N. ericae* Schil. – the smaller, commoner, and more eurytopic of the two. Another in this group of nearly related species is here added to our list, bringing the British members of the genus up to four. For the purposes of our limited fauna, *Nysius graminicola* may be said to furnish a link between *N. ericae* and *thymi* on the one hand, and *N. helveticus* H.-S. on the other; agreeing with the two former in its unkeeled scutellum and more moderately developed antennae, and with the latter in its more slender and elongate build and the lack of definite blackish marks on the corial disc.

As the characters separating these closely allied insects are individually slight and doubtless liable to some variation, it is desirable to find as many as possible that appear usable in practice and consider them in conjunction when attempting a determination. The following comparison, which is with *N. ericae* and *thymi* conjointly unless otherwise specified, is based on my single male of *N. graminicola* and characters given for the species by Stichel (1957):–

General form more elongate and slender, about as *helveticus*.

Antennae distinctly longer, not so long and stout as in *helveticus* but intermediate in length; segments 2 and 3 clear testaceous with base *very* narrowly but definitely blackish (2), or a brown ring just beyond base (3) – these segments in the other species wholly obscure brownish or even (some ♂ *ericae*) blackish; or if lighter (♀ *thymi*) base not definitely darkened.

Legs somewhat more elongate, slenderer than in *thymi*; clear testaceous (though according to Stichel darkened at base and apex), hind femora much less heavily blackened than in most ♂♂ of *ericae* and *thymi*.

Scutellum: ground-colour yellow-brown as in *helveticus*, concolorous with thorax, instead of largely deep black.

Corium lurid-testaceous, semitransparent – in the others opaque, except medially in *helveticus*; as in the latter, veins with at most only a few slight and indefinite dark lines or spots, and none on the two outer long veins; contrasting most with ♂ *ericae* where the marks are often strong (in *thymi* more reduced, cf. Woodroffe's figs. 1, 2). Apical dark mark obviously smaller and less black, clear space between it and the subapical mark on inner margin long (unlike *ericae* or ♀ *thymi*), more like ♂ *thymi* (Woodroffe, fig. la) but still longer. (In *helveticus* this is somewhat as in ♀ *thymi*, fig. 2a.) *Membrane* clear (in ♂ *ericae* alone lightly flecked and basally clouded).

Studland, Dorset, a male found under a heather clump on sand between Little Sea and the dunes, with plenty of *Scolopostethus decoratus* Hahn, the beetle *Aegialia arenaria* F., etc., 5.v.77. It was

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taken for *N. helveticus*, a species I had not met with, attached to heather and of similar general aspect; but on comparing it with specimens in my collection, it was seen not to be that. Mr. W. R. Dolling, at the BMNH, kindly determined the bug as *N. graminicola* and was able to match it very closely with examples in the General Collection there. Stichel records the species from S. France, Spain, Portugal, N. Africa, Italy, and South-central Europe. Like *ericae*, but unlike *thymi* and *helveticus*, it does not seem associated with a particular plant. The presence of such a species at Studland is little surprising since this favoured area is well known as a refuge for insects of Mediterranean type in our fauna.

2. *Campylomma annulicorne** Sign. (Miridae). – This species has already been recorded as new to Britain (Nau, 1979) having been found in three Bedfordshire localities on osier in Sept. 1978. However, two years earlier (July 1976) several specimens – perhaps 4 or 5, possibly more – flew to mercury-vapour light here at Charlton on various dates.

Because in that excessively hot and dry spell insects were at the lamp in great quantity, these were passed at the time as presumably the fairly common *C. verbasci* M.-D. (which occurs in the district) and given but scant attention. It was only later that the conspicuously black first two antennal segments of the males marked them out as being different, and they were eventually named as above by Mr. Dolling. My specimens do not present either the blue-grey tint mentioned by Dr. Nau for the male, nor any chrome-yellow colour on the head; being in fact of much the same pallid olive-whitish-greenish in both sexes as *verbasci*, but without any darker clouding on cuneus or front of head, and a little larger and longer.

Most authors, e.g. Wagner, give *Salix* (unspecified) as the food-plant of this bug, but, interestingly, Dr. Nau found it attached to *S. viminalis*, which so far I have not seen in this district. He also found that it appeared exceedingly local, occurring in one place on a particular osier bush and on no others near at hand, nor on *S. alba, fragilis*, or *caprea* close by. This suggests some very special requirement. My Charlton examples may have come from a considerable distance, as some of the insects accompanying them must certainly have done. There is plenty of *Salix fragilis* in the area, but other willows and sallows are fewer. Probably by now *C. annulicorne* occurs in other counties besides Kent and Beds.

Acknowledgement

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*Hitherto written *annulicornis*, but generic names ending in *omma* "eye', like *soma* "body', etc., are neuter.

References

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ANASIMYIA CONTRACTA TORP & CLAUSSEN, 1980 (DIPTERA: SYRPHIDAE) IN NORTH LANCASHIRE. – The recent note by A. A. Allen (*Ent. Rec.* **95**: 72) reminded me that in my collection is a specimen of *Anasimyia contracta* which is worthy of record. It is a female taken at Leighton Moss, N. Lancashire (VC60/SD48 75) on 25 June 1953. The specimen was, of course, until recently standing as *A. transfuga* (L.). Last year I showed the specimen to Mr. A. E. Stubbs as I believed it to be of the newly-separated species. Mr. Stubbs kindly confirmed my suspicion and mentioned that Leighton Moss considerably extended the known range of the species in England. In his note on the new species (Stubbs, A. E. 1981, *Proc. Trans. Br. Ent. Nat. Soc.*, **14**: 10-11), Mr. Stubbs notes that *Typha latifolia* seems to be a requirement for the occurrence of *A. contracta*. This plant is plentiful at Leighton Moss. On the same day and in the same locality I took a female of *A. transfuga* and a further specimen in the same place on 23 May 1964.

Both species seem to be uncommon in the north of England. The late A. E. Wright of Grange-over-Sands never took either of these species (which he would have recorded as *Helophilus transfugus* L.) though he worked the area diligently for many years and in 1940 produced a splendid list of Syrphids of the area (*N. W. Nat.* **XV**: 242-247). – DR. NEVILLE L. BIRKETT, Kendal Wood, New Hutton.

A HALVED GYNANDROMORPH AGRIUS CONVOLVULI L. (CONVOLVULUS HAWK) ON THE LIZARD, CORNWALL. – On the night of the 25th August 1983, I was fortunate enough to take at m.v. light trap, a halved gynandromorph *Agrius convolvuli* in excellent condition, right side female. A north westerly breeze with a clear moonlit sky prevailed throughout the night. I would be interested to know if any other gynandromorph *convolvuli* have been taken in Britain. – A. F. J. GARDNER, "Jackson's Farmhouse", Charlecote, Nr. Warwick CV35 9EW [We are unaware of any other instance besides the present of gynandromorphism in this species in Britain, though Tutt (*Nat. Hist. Br. Lep.*, **4**: 332-333) details five or six cases of this, apparently all with reference to continental examples. – J.M.C.-H.]