

Agathidium rotundatum Gyllenhal and
A. sphaerulum Reitter (Col.: Anisotomidae)

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Hlisnikovsky (1964), in his recent monograph of the genus *Agathidium*, maintains *rotundatum* and *sphaerulum* (= *reitteri* Ganglbauer) as separate species. He gives the distribution of the former as Norway, Sweden and Finland, the latter as western and central Europe. Several characters are given in the key to separate them, and the antennae, body form and puncturation, and the aedeagus are figured.

Whether these two species really are distinct has been the subject of much dispute in the past, and Munster (1935) has given an illuminating historical review on the subject. Certainly the problem was complicated by Reitter's misinterpretation of Gyllenhal's species, a point clarified by Palm (1946), who proposed the new name *pseudorotundatum* for *rotundatum* sensu Reitter, a central European species. Palm, like Munster, considered *sphaerulum* to be synonymous with *rotundatum* Gyll.

For some time, we have been very doubtful as to whether we really possessed two species in Britain. Joy's characters (1932) of the male left mandible and puncturation of the dorsum do not correlate well, and the two types of left mandible, i.e. enlarged and enlarged with a tooth (or horn), often occur in specimens collected together. According to Hlisnikovsky, both species may have a horn on the male's enlarged left mandible. Regarding puncturation, it seems to us that there is a continuous gradation, not two distinct forms. Added to this, specimens collected by C.J. in coniferous forests in Scotland and Norway (the latter definite *rotundatum*, cf. Hlisnikovsky's data) in precisely identical situations could not be distinguished externally nor by the aedeagus from southern English specimens associated with deciduous woodland.

In an attempt to sort out this *impasse*, we have obtained for study five specimens of both *rotundatum* and *sphaerulum* from Hlisnikovsky's collection in the National Museum of Natural History, Prague. All specimens are sexed, and the males (three of each species) have their aedeagi extracted. Despite the apparently quite definite distinctions given by Hlisnikovsky, we confess that we are unable to find a single character which will constantly separate the two series, other than the different determination and locality labels. We feel justified therefore in treating *sphaerulum* Reitter as being synonymous with *rotundatum* Gyllenhal, the latter name having priority, thus following Munster and Palm.

In Britain, *rotundatum*, like many others of the genus, seems to be mainly a forest species, or at any rate to occur in places where there has been some degree of natural woodland continuity. There are scattered records over most of the country, although the absence of natural woodland is clearly

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a limiting factor. The species seems generally to be scarce outside the Scottish Highlands, and is usually met with or associated with slime fungi on dead wood, or in rotten wood. In the Caledonian pine forest areas it is much more frequent in the experience of C.J., often clustering in numbers on the small, fresh, fawn-coloured slime fungi (*Reticularia*) which occur in groups on the trunks of dead pines, usually where the bark has been at least partially detached.

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References

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COSMOPTERIX SCHMIDIELLA FREY REDISCOVERED AFTER 75 YEARS. — On the afternoon of 3rd June, 1976, I had the good fortune to sweep into my net a fine specimen of this exquisite little moth. Further sweeping and close search produced no others despite warm, sunny and windless conditions. The locality where it was captured is a rough flowery field at Arne, Dorset, with a very rich mixed vegetation including several species of vetch, but I could find none of the recorded food-plant *Vicia sepium* there.

Both E. R. Banks and W. H. B. Fletcher used to get *schmidiella* in the 1880's, and I possess specimens from these men of that date. Banks's locality was at Corfe, Dorset. Fletcher, who first introduced the species to the British List (cf. *Ent. mon. Mag.*, 1886, 23: 111), got his near Angmering, Sussex. In 1901, a single specimen was taken at Shalbourne in Wiltshire, but so far as I am aware the species had not been seen since.

Stainton (*Natural History of the Tineina*, 12: 30-38, plt. 1, figs. 3, 3a, 3b) gives a full life history of the species as well as admirable coloured illustrations of the moth, larva and larval mines. There is also a good coloured figure of the moth together with its ab. *obsoleta* Banks in the "First Supplement to the Lepidoptera of the Isle of Purbeck" by E. R. Banks, published in *Proc. Dorset Nat. Hist. & Antiquarian Field Club*, Volume 10 (1889). — J. M. CHALMERS-HUNT.



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