THE IDENTITY OF MYRMECOPORA BREVIPES BUTLER
(COL.: STAPHYLINIDAE)

J.A. OWEN

8 Kingsdown Road, Epsom, Surrey KT17 3PU.

MYRMECOPORA BREVIPES was brought forward as a species new to science by Butler (1909). In describing the beetle, Butler compared features of his species with those of M. uvida Erichson. He noted that his species was a little shorter than uvida (i.e. intermediate in length between uvida and sulcata Kiesenwetter) with the “thorax distinctly broader than long”. Butler wrote that, besides the specimens he himself had collected, he had seen specimens of his species taken by Mr de la Garde at Dawlish, Devon.

Assing (1997), in his revision of Western Palaearctic species of Myrmecopora reported that he had been unable to locate a syntype of the species collected by Butler himself in spite of extensive enquiries. Reasoning that de la Garde’s specimens from Dawlish were syntypes, Assing chose one of them from the collection held at Exeter City Museum and Art Gallery as a lectotype for Butler’s species. A possible flaw in Assing’s reasoning might have arisen if de la Garde had collected more than one Myrmecopora species of intermediate size at Dawlish. This, however, seems unlikely for Mr D. Bolton of Exeter City Museum has, at my request, kindly examined the relevant specimens in the Museum’s collection and found that apart from an indeterminate damaged specimen, the other eleven match Assing’s lectotype.

Looking at a number of Myrmecopora specimens of intermediate size collected by the author from Steephill, Isle of Wight and various other sites on the south coast, Assing realised that these were not the same species as de la Garde’s specimens. Among other differences, the pronotum was not significantly broader than long. Assing named the second species oweni. A full description of both species and the means of distinguishing them is given in his paper. A simplified key covering only those species so far recorded from the British Isles is given below.

Preliminary studies indicate that oweni is widespread and locally common along the south-western and southern coasts of England whereas brevipes is much rarer and apparently confined to the south coast of Devon. The separation of brevipes from oweni by Assing means that most British specimens hitherto labelled M. brevipes will have to be relabelled but at least Assing’s brevipes is consistent with the brief description which Butler provided for his species whereas oweni is not.

Acknowledgements
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References

Appendix 1
Simplified key to Myrmecopora species recorded from the British Isles.

1. joints 4 and 5 of antennae clearly elongate ........................................... 2
   joints 4 and 5 of antennae more or less quadrate .................................. 3

2. length 2.4 – 3.4 mm*, pubescence on the inner two thirds of the elytra clearly transverse ................................................................. oweni Assing
   length 2.9 – 3.9 mm. pubescence on the inner two thirds of the elytra mostly oblique ............................................................. uvida Erichson

3. length 2.2 – 3.5 mm. pronotum clearly broader than long; head strongly transverse and strongly punctured .......................... brevipes Butler
   length 2.1 – 2.9 mm pronotum longer than broad; head weakly transverse and weakly punctured ...................... simillima (Wollaston) (= sulcata auct. Brit.)

* Measurements of length are those given by Assing (1997).

The Triangle Heterogenea asella (D.& S.) (Lep:Limacodidae) re-found in Devon
On 26 June 1999, in the woodlands near Great Torrington, during a joint field trip of the Devon Moth Group and the British Entomological and Natural History Society which hoped to discover the extent of the distribution of the Scarce Merveille-du-Jour Moma alpium (Osbeck), Dr B.P. Henwood took a small moth from the trap of B. Deakins, with his permission. The next day, Dr Henwood identified this specimen as The Triangle Heterogenea asella, but as he had never seen the species before he brought it round to me for confirmation. Dr. A. Henderson from Bideford, took a further specimen to light in his part of the woodland on 9 July 1999. The moth is recorded in the Victoria County History of Devon (1906) at Bickleigh Vale, near Plymouth by J. Baseden-Smith and at Plymbridge by F.J. Briggs, with no dates of capture. S.T. Stidston (1952) in his list of “The Lepidoptera of Devon” repeats these records adding that the species is “very rare, the only known records”.—R.F. McCormick, 36 Paradise Road, Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 8NR.

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