

Suffolk, TM462732, 1–15.vi.1988, 15–29.vi.1988, 1–15.vi.1989, 1–15.vi.1990, 15.vi–1.vii.1990). Andrew Foster has also taken *H. ruficeps* at the margin of a *Sphagnum*-free drainage ditch in grazing levels at Sizewell, East Suffolk, TM467643, 5.vii.1989.

It is far from clear what environmental constraints determine the occurrence of *H. ruficeps*. The records above clearly show that they do not include water pH or the presence of *Sphagnum* or other mosses. Nor is it apparently unduly restricted by poor mobility, as might be considered likely for an habitually wingless species: the clay and gravel workings in which it has been recorded near Peterborough are of recent origin. Its scarcer congener *H. pusillus*, despite being winged, seems far more tightly confined to old wetland sites. However, even allowing for the fact that it is small and easily overlooked, *H. ruficeps* is clearly decidedly local in non-acid localities. Moreover, it appears to be similarly local in acid waters with *Sphagnum*: it may occur in large numbers when found, but the majority of sites investigated in most areas, in my experience apparently do not support the species.

Thanks go to Andrew Foster and Deborah Proctor for their records of *H. ruficeps*, and to Andrew Foster also for extracting the information from their database and for permitting me to use his record of *H. ruficeps* from Sizewell.—P. KIRBY, 21 Grafton Avenue, Netherton, Peterborough PE3 9PD.

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The specialist Hemiptera associated with mistletoe—Concerns about a supposed decline in mistletoe (*Viscum album*) led to a new national survey over the winters of 1995/6 and 1996/7 (Briggs, 1995; 1997). As an adjunct to this survey it was decided to look for the insects specifically associated with mistletoe.

Mistletoe is host to three specialist herbivores; *Psylla visci* Curtis (Hem.: Psyllidae), *Orthops viscicola* (Puton) (Hem.: Miridae) and *Celypha woodiana* Barrett (Lep.: Tortricidae, Olethreutinae). The predatory species *Anthocoris visci* Douglas (Hem.: Cimicidae) is also restricted to mistletoe, apparently feeding exclusively on

Psylla visci. *A. visci* was classified as a nationally notable species by Kirby (1992). This work concentrated on the Hemiptera, for which there are very few recent records (Bernard Nau, 1996 *pers. comm.*), because they seem to have similar life cycles, and can all be sampled in the same way.

Mistletoe was sampled on 31.viii./1.ix.1996 at three locations where access to mistletoe was relatively simple, using a beating tray and a sweepnet. Estimates of the abundance of the species were recorded, and shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The abundance of the specialist Hemiptera. Present < 5, Occasional 5–50, Frequent > 50

| Location | Painswick Gloucester | Kemerton Worcester | The Ladin Hereford |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| National grid ref. | SO 8609 | SO 9436 | SO 6635 |
| Habitat | Garden | Orchard | Orchard |
| Host | apple | apple, balsam poplar | apple |
| mistletoe abundance | 1 tree | > 25 trees | > 35 trees |
| <i>Psylla visci</i> | Present | Frequent | Frequent |
| <i>Orthops viscicola</i> | Occasional | Frequent | Frequent |
| <i>Anthocoris visci</i> | Absent | Present | Present |

As expected the predatory species was the least abundant, and not recorded from the smallest sample site. It is not clear if this absence was because the populations of prey species were too small to allow *A. visci* to persist, or a reflection of the chances of dispersal to a small habitat patch.

Most of the previous records for the mistletoe insects are from apple so it may be worth noting that all three Hemiptera were recorded from mistletoe growing on balsam poplar at Kemerton. Since there are also recent records from poplar and field maple (Nau, 1985), it seems likely that the preponderance of apple records reflected the accessibility of orchard mistletoe to entomologists (though see Le Quesne, 1954). The problem of access to mistletoe is also the most likely reason for the paucity of recent records.

This very limited survey showed that the insects associated with mistletoe are relatively easy to find, albeit where mistletoe is most common and abundant. The other recent records from Bedfordshire (Nau, 1985) and Warwickshire (Price, 1987), where mistletoe is much less widespread, may indicate that similar attention in other areas would produce more records.

We are grateful to the landowners who allowed us to sample mistletoe, and Jackie Denman of 'The Big Apple' who helped to arrange this. Thanks are due to Bernard Nau for his help over the recent records.— JOHN HOLLIER, 42 Rue Virginio Melnati, 1217 Meyrin, Switzerland, JONATHAN BRIGGS, 2 Ledgemoor, Watledge, Nailsworth, Gloucester GL6 0AU.

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Notes on the occurrence of the planthoppers *Reptalus panzeri* (L  w) (Hemiptera: Cixiidae) and *Asiraca clavicornis* (Fab.) (Hemiptera: Delphacidae)—The characteristic planthoppers *Reptalus panzeri* (L  w) (= *Oliarus panzeri*) and *Asiraca clavicornis* (Fab.) are considered by many hemipterists to be very uncommon. In the national review by Kirby (1992), both are listed as being nationally scarce (notable B). Each is reported to be associated with rough grassland, especially dry open areas or where patches of bare soil are present. Both entries in the review are based upon very limited lists of recent records. However, local survey work has shown that both species are widespread and sometimes very abundant in south London. *Reptalus panzeri* also occurs periodically but widely elsewhere in south-east England. The following records have been made in the last few years.

REPTALUS PANZERI

Beckenham Place Park, TQ385706, VC16, West Kent, 27.vii.1995, one by sweeping rough grass at the edge of a small wooded area and next to a sports field. The rough verge-like strip along the edge of the wood was a south-east-facing bank with varied grass and herb species. The park comprises a mixture of ancient woodland, old hedgerows and modern utilitarian recreational playing fields. RAJ.

Dulwich Park, TQ339736, VC17 Surrey, 8.vii.1996, one photographed sitting on a rhododendron leaf in an ornamental garden. This is a most unlikely locality; the rhododendron bushes make up part of an extensive series of ornamental beds surrounded by closely mown grass. There is, however, something special about the site since it supports large colonies of the now scarce rhododendron lacebug *Stephanitis rhododendri* (Horvath), and the elusive rhododendron leafhopper *Placotettix taeniatifrons* (Kirsch.). RAJ.

Crystal Palace, TQ339709, VC17, Surrey, 24 & 25.vii.1996, 5.viii.1996, very many found by sweeping the rough grass and herbage on the derelict top and south-east-facing slopes where the Crystal Palace building itself had once stood. On 25.vii.1996, several hundred specimens were seen and it was the commonest insect at this typically ruderal site. RAJ.

Pebsham near Bexhill-on-Sea, TQ766093, VC14, East Sussex, 6.viii.1996, 7.vii.1997, 11.vii.1997, several swept off creeping thistle in a meadow containing a south-facing slope. PJH.

Rocks Farm, Westfield, near River Brede, TQ8117, VC14, East Sussex, 7.viii.1996, one swept in marshy area, possibly off creeping thistle. PJH.

Par Brook, Billingshurst, TQ081249, VC13, West Sussex, 18.vi.1997, a few swept off streamside vegetation in clayey meadow. PJH.

Windsor Great Park, SU975734, VC22, Berkshire, 24.vi.1997, 19.viii.1998, several swept off grass at edge of woodland in deer park. PJH.

Woodlands Farm (Shooters Hill), near Bexley, TQ449768, VC16, West Kent, 20.vii.1998, 3.viii.1998, many by sweeping in open meadows, once arable, but disused fallow for about 10 years. The fields have apparently been mown once or twice and



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