

Dragonfly News 166

The Magazine of the British Dragonfly Society
Autumn 2014
www.british-dragonflies.org.uk

How many Willow Emeralds are ovipositing?



**Meet the new
BDS Chairman,
David Chelmick**



Dragonfly hunting....in Sweden?



Andy Holt's unique larval portraits



How tatty can a dragonfly be and still fly?



Dragonfly News 66

The Magazine of the British Dragonfly Society

Published twice a year, in April and October, *Dragonfly News* covers all aspects of the British Dragonfly Society's field, recording, monitoring, research, conservation and social activities, as well as information from the wider dragonfly, natural history and conservation world. The emphasis is on dragonflies recorded in the UK.

The British Dragonfly Society aims to promote and encourage the study, conservation and understanding of dragonflies and their natural habitats, especially in the UK, and to raise public awareness of dragonflies.

Dragonfly News is edited & designed by:

Mark Tyrrell, 8 Warwick Close, Raunds,
Northants., NN9 6JH Tel. [REDACTED]

e-mail: [REDACTED]

Deadlines for inclusion of copy:

Spring 31 January

Autumn 31 July

Advertising Rates:

£15 for small-ad (text only); £40 for quarter-page; £60 for half-page; £100 for full-page.

© British Dragonfly Society 2014

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the permission of the British Dragonfly Society or the copyright owner.

The views expressed by the contributors to *Dragonfly News* are not necessarily those of the Editor or the British Dragonfly Society.

BDS Subscriptions (annual)

Ordinary membership	£20
Ordinary – Overseas	£25
Benefactor (minimum)	£40
Life Member Benefactor	£20
Library	£35
Corporate	£100

Subscriptions are due on 1 April each year.

Please Gift Aid your subscription, if possible.

All subscriptions & membership enquiries to:

BDS Membership, Lynn Curry, 23 Bowker Way,
Whittlesey, Peterborough, PE7 1PY

Registered Charity Number: 800196

web site: www.british-dragonflies.org.uk

ISSN: 1752-2633

Dragonfly News is printed by Artisan Litho using vegetable oil based inks on paper from well managed, sustainable sources, certified to Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards.

<http://www.artisanlitho.co.uk>

The plastic envelope used to deliver *Dragonfly News* can be recycled with shopping bags at larger retailers.

* An asterisk indicates a change since the last issue

Trustees & Officers of the BDS

Chairman: David Chelmick

Vice-Chairman: Vacant

Secretary: Henry Curry, 23 Bowker Way, Whittlesey,
Peterborough, PE7 1PY. Tel. [REDACTED]

Treasurer: Brian Walker, 49 Roman Way, Wantage,
Oxfordshire, OX12 9YF. Tel. [REDACTED]

Trustees: David Goddard, Stuart Irons, Mick Parfitt.

Journal Editor: Peter Mill, 8 Cookridge Grove, LEEDS,
LS16 7LH. [REDACTED]

Shop Manager: Lynn Curry, 23 Bowker Way, Whittlesey,
Peterborough, PE7 1PY Tel. [REDACTED]

Dragonfly Conservation Group (DCG)

Convenor: Dave Smallshire, 8, Twindle Beer, Chudleigh, Newton
Abbot, Devon, TQ13 0JP. Tel. [REDACTED]

Members: Mike Averill, Steve Brooks, Steve Cham, David
Chelmick, Claire Install, Stephen Prentice, Adrian Parr,
Val Perrin, Ian Smith, Pam Taylor.

Corresponding Members: Tim Beynon, Norman Moore,
Charlotte Smith

Project Officers

Field Meetings Organiser: Mike Averill, 49 James Road,
Kidderminster, Worcs. DY10 2TR

Migrant Dragonfly Project: Adrian Parr, 10 Orchard Way, Barrow,
Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP29
5BX.

Conservation Officer: Claire Install, c/o Natural England (West
Midlands), Parkside Court, Hall Park Way,
Telford, TF3 4LR. Tel. 0300 060 2338

*Records Officer:

Stephen Prentice, c/o Natural England
(West Midlands), Parkside Court, Hall Park
Way, Telford, TF3 4LR. Tel. 0300 060 0647

BDS Web Master:

David Hepper, 12 Three Stiles Road,
FARNHAM, Surrey, GU9 7DE. *Tel. [REDACTED]
David.Hepper@Local-Software.
co.uk



Follow us:



@BDSdragonflies



British Dragonfly Society

flickr British Dragonfly Society Pool

Corporate Members

NATUREGUIDES 



Contents

Features

09 A new section to Dragonfly News highlights major sightings and news from across the country.



- 14** Favourite Days *Craig Emms*
- 16** Beaten but not out *Mark Tyrrell*
- 22** Up close and personal *Eddie Nurcombe*
- 24** Dragon watching...in Sweden? *David Chandlers*
- 26** Willow Emeralds on the River Yare *Jon Mee*
- 27** So much for territoriality *Mark Tyrrell*



14 With the help of a stranger on an empty Scottish Road, Craig Emms recounts the search for the elusive Azure Hawker.



22 Edward Nurcombe describes how he achieves his stunning ultra close-up shots.

Regulars

- 02** Trigger's Broom
- 03** From the Conservation Officer
- 05** InBox
- 07** Field Meetings & Other Events
- 09** From across the UK (NEW!)
- 11** Hot Spots (NEW!)
- 12** First Dates for 2014
- 13** Migrant Dragonflies
- 18** Notes & Observations
- 30** Members' Gallery
- 32** Reviews
- 34** Atlas of Dragonflies in Britain & Ireland
- 36** 31st Annual Meeting Program.



Trigger's Broom



David Chelmick

We all know the story. Trigger was a road sweeper, he'd used the same broom for twenty years. Fourteen heads and nine different handles! The broom is the BDS and the Trustees are the heads and handles. Meet the latest broom handle!

If you are reading this you probably have an interest in dragonflies. If you are reading this you probably think that you don't know enough about dragonflies to be a trustee and in that assumption you would be entirely wrong. We are currently running the BDS with heads and handles that are wearing out fast. We do not have a Vice President and there is a vacancy for a Trustee. Trustees are appointed for a four year period and on 1 January 2016 all the principal Trustees will have finished their terms and if we do not find effective replacements our broom will no longer exist, which means no BDS.

Let's face it, we don't really care if you don't know the difference between a dragonfly and dungfly; what we do care about is the proper and professional management of the BDS. If you care about the natural world and wetland conservation in particular and you have skills in business, finance, fund raising or law then please get in touch and we can see how you could help the BDS. Even if you don't have these skills, we are still looking for enthusiastic volunteers with a passion for dragonflies, to help guide the Society in the future. Without your help Trigger's broom will be no more and a major force in invertebrate recording and wetland conservation will be lost.

Meet the Trustees

Our Society is run by enthusiastic volunteers with a passion for dragonflies, but who are the people behind the BDS? Here are profiles of the new President and the Hon. Secretary.

President - David Chelmick FRES



I went as a voluntary warden to Arne nature reserve in the 1970s; I met Bryan Pickess, who introduced me to dragonflies; he changed my life. I became Sussex then National Recorder until family took over and sent me into the dragonfly wilderness. In the mid 1990s I came in from the cold; I visited Cameroon as the larval man for the Cameroon Dragonfly Project with Graham Vick. This was followed by trips to Brazil and South Africa, where we studied the elusive *Syncordulia* genus close relatives of the Orange Spotted Emerald *Oxygastra curtisii* which has always been an obsession.

Currently, my dragonfly passions are the Thames Estuary, Spain, and the Middle East. I also help run WEDG which is a group promoting dragonfly recording in the Weald (www.wealdendragonflygroup.weebly.com). In advancing years I have become addicted to damselflies and in particular the family Lestidae and now the genus *Ischnura*. A fairly eclectic range of interests I think you will agree.

If you want to know more visit my website www.macromia.com. You can also find me on Facebook.

Hon. Secretary - Henry Curry

As a child I was fascinated by insects and natural history. Though my career took me into electronic engineering and telecommunications, I retained my interest in entomology, taking a mixed science degree with the Open University followed by an uncompleted MSc at Birkbeck Polytechnic. A keen interest in photography led me to look more closely at dragonflies, and I am proud to have been involved in the Dragonfly Sanctuary, the Dragonfly Museum and the Dragonfly Project at Wicken Fen prior to joining the Board of Trustees of the BDS in 2006. I have been observing and studying dragonflies for over 20 years and my wife Lynn and I enjoy travelling to see and photograph them all over UK and abroad.



From the Conservation Officer



Claire Install

Wow, 2014 has been busy! It is the start of August, so we are still in the middle of the flight season and I am looking forward to the Birdfair in a couple of weeks. So far 2014 has been a good year weather-wise for dragonflies, which is great because I have been out and about a lot recently for both conservation and outreach purposes.

I have given lots of habitat advice this year which has ranged from people wanting advice on digging new ponds, people wanting to improve / increase the size of existing ponds to visiting a few great sites with site managers and VCRs and suggesting continuation of good management / improvements that may make the sites even better for dragonflies. This is all work that I enjoy, because at the heart of it are people who care about wildlife and in particular dragonflies and want to help them.

At the start of June, I met up with our Northamptonshire VCR (and Dragonfly News Editor), Mark Tyrrell, at the only site in Northamptonshire for the Downy Emerald. The site was Yardley Chase which is an ancient woodland managed by the Forestry Commission, access is by permit only. There are a series of ponds surrounding 14 WWII bunkers, each surrounded by trees. Mark and I were reviewing the current rotational management of the ponds where trees are removed from directly next to the water. We visited several ponds in varying states of succession and the management appears to be working well for the Downy Emerald with sightings of the species at all ponds visited and exuviae collected at one. This dispels previous concerns that clearance of some of the trees next to the water and vegetative matter within the water may deter Downy Emeralds. We also had good sightings of a few other species

with Hairy Dragonflies and Four-spotted Chasers whizzing around.

There was a medium sized area of *Typha latifolia* (reedmace) in one of the ponds and we recommended that this is cleared as it is likely to spread rapidly and fill all of the open water on the pool where it is growing. Mark will continue to keep thorough records of adult abundance and exuviae across the cleared ponds and takes visual records of the changes of habitat at each pond over a number of years. This will monitor any decline in populations and provide a record (and comparison between sites) of how habitat may have changed on a visual level.

I met up with Nathan Walton (Wildlife Trusts of South and West Wales) and Stephen and Anne Coker (Pembrokeshire VCRs) at a couple of Key Sites in Pembrokeshire. These were Dowrog Common and Llangloffan Fen NNR. These are both great sites but are quite different.

Dowrog is classed as our number 1 key site in Wales and is notified as a SSSI and forms part of the north-west Pembrokeshire Commons cSAC. The site consists of an area of fen mosaic in both wet and dry heaths with ponds. Dowrog means 'watery place, marsh' from dyfr(i)og 'watery'. It is a great site for wildflowers and dragonflies, with a species list of 23, including the Hairy Dragonfly, Small Red Damselfly and Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly.

We visited three of eight ponds that were dug by ARC in 2013. These were looking very nice and vegetating well with one of the ponds more vegetated than the other two (probably due to it being a site of a former pond rather than a completely new site). There were a good number of dragonflies and damselflies at the ponds including an abundance of emerging Common Darters. These new ponds will be monitored by the Freshwater Habitats Trust. We also viewed a more established pond that is excellent for Odonata and benefits from annual grazing although cattle were yet to be put on this area of the common when the visit was made. We agreed with Nathan that it would be a good idea to try and de-silt the old leat that passes through the common, this will provide more slow flowing open water for Odonata. This will increase habitat diversity and in turn add to the species

richness of the reserve. Further work will be undertaken in years to come to open up areas that are filling with vegetation and so continue to provide valuable habitat for Odonata and other associated species.

Llangloffan Fen is further down our list of key sites in Wales and Nathan was keen to hear how it may be improved to encourage more Odonata. The reserve comprises the western end of one of the largest remaining floodplain or valley mires in Wales, supporting a complex of tall fen, fen meadow, wet heath and carr communities and associated species. The site is 60 metres above sea level and once drained westwards to the sea at Aber Mawr. It was later modified by glacial melt water and ultimately blocked by glacial deposits thereby reversing the flow. This left a small central watercourse meandering through flat waterlogged ground, which supports high densities of Trout, particularly fry; in addition Bullhead, River Lamprey, and Brook Lamprey are all features of the cSAC and have been recorded here. The site is also used by Otters, Water Voles, Grass Snakes and Amphibians.

We suggested the shallow scrape at the western side of the site could be extended, and in the area of semi-improved grassland there is scope for new ponds to be created. At present there are five ponds on the reserve in good condition with another two that have silted up and need some work. We also suggested that the level of a section of bank next to the stream that passes through the reserve could be lowered to allow water to flow better into a channel dug in 2008. There are issues with carrying out this work; it would require land drainage consent because the flow of the stream would be affected. Also care would need to be taken and any work should be carefully planned to avoid silting up the stream this is to ensure that the gravel bed that is used by spawning fish is maintained.

As part of our grant work with Natural Resources Wales, I have held three training courses with Allan Brandon, our North Wales VCR. These have included a presentation on the lifecycle, ID tips and recording dragonflies followed by identification in the field. These were held at Teifi Marshes in Pembrokeshire, Pencychnant Conservation Centre (with



a site visit to Gwern Engen bog lake) near Conwy, North Wales and Dinefwr National Nature Reserve in Llandeilo. We were unlucky with the weather for the course at Teifi but had stunning weather for the final two courses at Pensychnant and Dinefwr. We had good feedback from all of the courses and everyone left with smiles. Personally, I really enjoyed all of the courses and would like to thank Allan for his time and enthusiasm for all of the courses over the past couple of years.

On top of all of this, I have managed to secure funding to carry out some practical habitat improvement work this winter for the Southern Damselfly on the Preseli SAC as part of my ongoing work there. We are working really well with the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, Natural Resources Wales and the local BAP partnership, so fingers crossed for more to report to you soon.

And finally....you may recall the article about the launch of Dragonfly Beer in DN65. Last summer, I met Graeme Denton and Colin Bowler from 'From The Notebook Ltd.' at Pershore Plum Festival. They were selling butterfly beers and launching their Brown Hairstreak beer with 10p per bottle sold going to Butterfly Conservation. I had a chat with them and asked if they would be interested in producing some dragonfly beers. A few discussions with BDS Trustees and meetings later and we now have Golden-ringed Dragonfly Golden Ale (with 10p per bottle sold donated to the BDS)! This was ready in time for our Dragonfly Day at Wicken Fen in June. Naturally, I have undertaken some quality control testing and can confirm that it is a great tasting beer, it is quite light with a lovely hoppy aftertaste. I fully recommend that you sample some – cheers! **DN**

The Conservation Officer post is sponsored by:



Top: Nick Haigh, Countryside Ranger at Beacon Fell Country Park standing next to an interpretation board with photos and text supplied by the BDS. Middle left: Attendees on the Dinefwr course. Middle right: Attendees on the Pensychnant course. Bottom: My first Downy Emerald in flight shot, Yardley Chase.

InBox

The Editor welcomes your letters and e-mails.



The first Cynthia Longfield Certificate



Tim Gosling (centre) with his Cynthia Longfield Certificate presented to him by Lynn Curry at the Dragonfly Centre at Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire. Picture by Paul Craske.

On Saturday 5 May a team of enthusiastic volunteers held their annual meeting to open the Dragonfly Centre for the 2014 season at Wicken Fen. This 'training' event allows new volunteers to get to know the Centre, the team, and the many things necessary to run this busy and popular location. But this year there was a very special item on the agenda. Tim Gosling, who has faithfully presented himself for duty during the whole of last season, was presented with the Society's very first Cynthia Longfield Certificate by BDS Membership Officer Lynn Curry. Said Lynn, "Tim has been a regular stalwart of the Centre throughout 2013. He has been here to welcome members of the public, answer their queries, and talk enthusiastically about dragonflies. This award is richly deserved!" The new certificate is awarded annually to a BDS member who has made a significant contribution in educating the general public about

dragonflies.

The award of the certificate for 2014 will be made early next year - do you have anyone in mind who deserves this? Contact a Trustee and let them know your thoughts.

If you'd like to help run the Centre, please contact Clem Tacconi, on

Inverted Emergence

Back at Ashton Water Dragonfly Sanctuary in 1990 we noted a significant number of inverted emergences of Blue-tailed Damselflies, and BDS member Clem Tacconi spotted the same activity on the little demonstration pond outside the Dragonfly Centre at Wicken in 2012.

This shot is part of a sequence I took at Ashton Water in 1990, and, aided by Kari de Koenigswarter and Peter Mayhew, subsequently wrote a paper about Inverted Emergence which was published in the BDS Journal, I think in 1992.

Has any one else, I wonder, noted this elsewhere? Without looking back at the paper, I think not far off half the elegans exuviae we found at Ashton in 1990 were inverted. It's a mystery. Why on earth do they do this?

Ruary



WildGuides competition [DN65]



The winner of Britain's Dragonflies, 3rd Edition, chosen at random from all correct entries was Trevor Goodfellow.

The Editor

Volunteers Needed!

The Society runs on people. That bland statement may seem obvious, but we really need the membership to make sure we have people stepping up to take on roles in the Society, otherwise we will neither move on to improve nor, ultimately, even survive as we are now. We especially need :

- i) Volunteers to run the Dragonfly Centre at Wicken Fen – our asset, we must use it.
 - ii) Vice County Recorders – to carry on the fantastic work achieved so far.
 - iii) Walk leaders – to maintain a rich programme of Field Trips.
 - iv) Officers - to take on all the tasks involved in running the Society.
 - v) Trustees – to govern the Society.
- Can you help ? Please contact the Secretary.

The Trustees



Pseudopupils in Odonata. [JBDS vol 28 No.1 2012]

Further to Geoffrey Hall's paper in the Journal, I have compiled various facial close-ups of ovipositing dragonflies and wonder whether it is possible to differentiate specimens using the patterns of pseudo-pupils. The upper rows show Southern Hawkers but the bottom pair are Emperors.

Neil Galton



Wanted ! New Trustees

Over the years, and with some gentle persuasion and cajoling, we have been able to recruit sufficient Trustees who have given their time, enthusiasm and expertise to help steer the Society and make us the thriving organisation we are today. However, the requirements of managing this sizeable charity have changed in recent years as the world around us and our growing commitments have changed. As a result, we not only require new trustees with general skills to meet our normal turnover, but we also want to see more specialist skills to match the demands we now face. So I would like to appeal to you to come forward, or to identify others who you think may like to accept this rewarding challenge, as we need people to guide and grow the Society.

Essential – general requirements of a good Trustee: 1) Able to attend a minimum of two Board of Trustees' meetings per year; 2) Able to take an active part in the day-to-day business of the Society, usually via e-mail communication; 3) Be keen to act with the interests of the Society at heart at all times; 4) Take on actions as agreed by the Board

Desirable – additional skills which would assist the Board: 1) Publicity; 2) Members' Day organisation; 3) Website management; 4) Financial / Treasurer; 5) Fundraising abilities / experience; 6) Legal and Human Resources.

If you are keen to volunteer now, or would just like a chat to know more, please contact me.

Henry Curry, Honorary Secretary Tel: [REDACTED]

FIELD MEETINGS & OTHER EVENTS

Reports compiled by Mike Averill

Each year the Society runs field meetings around the British Isles. These are advertised in the Spring issue of Dragonfly News and most reports appear in the Autumn issue. If you would like to run a meeting in your area please contact Mike for guidelines.

Stover Country Park and Little Bradley Ponds, Devon; 25 May 2014; Dave Smallshire:

The first BDS Devon Group meeting of the year coincided with the first cancellation of the Devon County Show because of heavy rain - typical! So it wasn't too surprising that only five people turned up, including 6-month-old Ivy, who seemed to have a great time. The morning at Stover wasn't too bad, with even brief sunny spells when a few Four-spotted Chasers and a Red-eyed Damselfly flew around. Otherwise, the common damselflies were seen, including some emerging, as were 3 more Four-spots. Over lunch a newly-arrived copy of the Atlas was available for perusal, including a first glimpse for one of the editors! The rain increased at Little Bradley Ponds after lunch, so we called it a day after seeing only a few common damselflies.

Countess Wear and Exminster Marshes, Devon; 15 June 2014; Dave Smallshire:

An amazing 25 people arrived for the morning walk along the Exeter Canal, run in conjunction with Exeter City Council. Although it was cloudy at first, the temperature was about 20C and damselflies were quite active. We found the common species of damselflies in the herbage bordering the canal, including Banded Demoiselles, plus a few White-legged Damselflies and several Red-eyed out on floating vegetation. We also had fleeting glimpses of Emperor and Hairy Dragonflies. Most of us went on to look

at the fishing ponds by the Double Locks, where both the sun and dragonflies duly appeared. First a female Broad-bodied Chaser and then an Emperor on territory gave some nice fly-pasts. As it did so it was investigated by several Black-tailed Skimmers, which also chased a Hairy Dragonfly and several Red-eyed Damselflies. A tantalising fly-by glimpse of a bright red darter, presumably Red-veined, was frustrating. Then it was time to head back, via a fleeting Beautiful Demoiselle and another Broad-bodied Chaser.

After lunch we headed out in sunshine across Exminster Marshes, where the first ditch was seething with Azure and Blue-tailed Damselflies. We had lots of Hairy Dragonfly sightings, including some settled, before finding our target along the main drain through the marshes: Scarce Chaser. We found at least five males and two females, including one pair mating. So a very successful day in all - it just shows what a difference a warm sunny day can make!

Upton Fen, Pam Taylor; 5 July 2014

Despite persistent rain overnight that continued into the morning, fifteen hardy souls still arrived to join me for my trip around the soggy fen. Thankfully the rain had stopped by 10am, so we set off towards an area of turf ponds cut into the peat over a series of years. Here we were able to examine both male and female Common Blue Damselflies, including both colour-forms of the latter. Also present were several Emerald Damselflies, together with a few Blue-tailed and Azure ones.

A little further on the Black-tailed Skimmers and Four-spotted Chasers were very flighty, but we did manage to

see the finer details of both male and female Ruddy Darters in the hand. With our tally now standing at seven species, we moved through a short stretch of wet woodland and out onto an open fen once more. Here we suddenly had to seek shelter from a sharp shower, but undeterred we were soon watching a Brown Hawker in flight and our final species of damselfly for the day, the aptly named Variable.

Moving further across the fen as the weather warmed we started to encounter more and more dragonflies, but no new species. One dyke in particular provided us with most of the five different colour forms of female Blue-tailed Damselfly, plus lots of Azure and Variable Damselflies.

Just before a heavy and prolonged downpour, we caught sight of a large dragonfly that was almost certainly a Norfolk Hawker. Sadly the rain drove it down into the reeds on the far side of a dyke and we didn't see it again.

Our final stop, at a large pond, gave us our tenth species, though it was only in the form of an exuvia. It was Southern Hawker, but despite searching, we failed to find any adults.

Meeth Devon Wildlife Trust Reserve, Devon; 27 July 2014; Dave Smallshire:

This joint BDS/Devonshire Association meeting was attended by 17 people, including three from DWT (two trainees). The recent very hot, humid conditions had abated overnight and we had a much more comfortable walk around the flooded clay pits and old settling lagoons. The highlights



were at least 15 Small Red Damselflies: some small, acidic lagoons form the only known site in North Devon for the species. Eleven other species were seen, including huge numbers of Common Blue Damselflies and both skimmers, plus exuviae of Migrant Hawker. Sadly, no Scarce Blue-tailed Damselflies could be found at this former stronghold, although since the pits flooded the amount of suitable habitat has been severely reduced. Of special note among 16 species of butterflies were good numbers of second brood Wood Whites: Meeth is clearly an exceptionally good site for this highly localised species.



Naturetrek

Dragonfly tours with Naturetrek, 2015

As usual, Naturetrek are advertising a range of tours focused on dragonflies. The dates of next year's tours are:

Sardinia's Dragonflies: 3-10 June
Dragonflies of La Brenne & Vienne, France: 18-25 June
Bulgaria's Dragonflies: 23 June-1 July
Dragonflies and Birds of the Camargue, France: 8-15 July

For further information, contact Naturetrek (tel. [redacted] or check the website (www.naturetrek.co.uk), where trip reports can be downloaded.

Safeguarding Our Dragonflies & Damselflies ☐ A Lasting Legacy

A legacy to the British Dragonfly Society will provide a lasting gift. Dragonflies and damselflies are beautiful insects. They are spectacular creatures that have inhabited Earth for over 300 million years. With your support, by remembering the British Dragonfly Society in your will, we can safeguard our dragonflies and damselflies to provide a lasting legacy that will ensure future generations enjoy these fascinating insects.

Gifts, in wills, make a positive difference. Legacy gifts enable The British Dragonfly Society to:

Conserve dragonflies and their wetland habitats.

Conserve Nationally-Important species.

Record and monitor the distribution and populations of dragonflies.

Encourage the scientific study and research of dragonflies.

Undertake education projects.

Please consider leaving something to the BDS when you write or update your will.

If you are able to do this then please accept our thanks.

You may like to use the following wording to include this legacy:

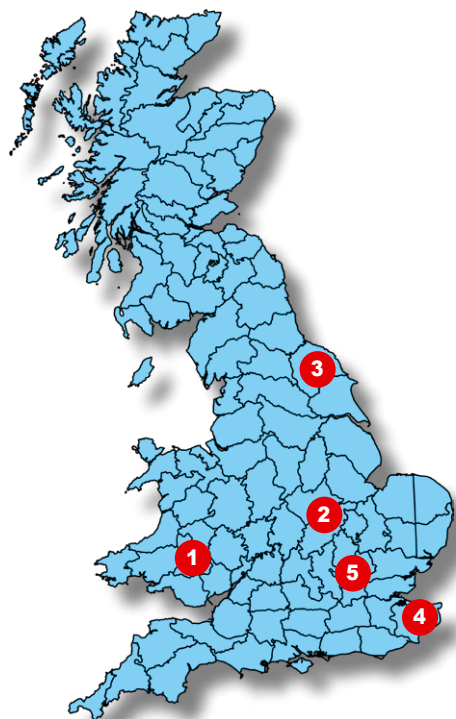
"I give the sum of £..... to the British Dragonfly Society (Registered Charity No. 800196), 23 Bowker Way, Whittlesey, Peterborough, PE7 1PY, for its general purposes."

Henry Curry

Notice is hereby given that the 27th Annual General Meeting of the British Dragonfly Society will be held on 15 November 2014 at the WWT London Wetlands Centre. See page 36 for more details.

From Across the UK

A summary of interesting and important news from Vice Counties across the region.



1 A Hairy time in Breconshire.

On the sunny morning of 17 June, I left the small car park below Llangasty Church before walking westward to the third field. This is a large lovely meadow bright with buttercups and spotted orchids, lightly grazed by a few cattle. It slopes gently down through a boggy area of rushes, meadowsweet and yellow flag to a strip of tall alders and willows which border the lake shore and its fringe of reeds and water lilies. As I was sorting out the many Variable and Common Blue Damselflies I noticed flying past what appeared to be a hawk. Thinking about the dragonflies which I usually see here, I thought it was too small for Southern Hawker and too early for Migrant. Fortunately I was able to track it through binoculars and follow up with a few photographs when it landed. After two shots it took off and flew away high over the tree tops. But my pictures showed the green thorax and complex pattern of black and blue on the side of the

abdomen of a male Hairy Dragonfly. After a while without a further sighting I explored the next meadow before returning. In that time I made seven more sightings and obtained two better photos. I never saw more than one insect at a time but as the sightings were spread in time and across a large part of the field I judged that probably more than one was present. Back home I found in the new Atlas of Dragonflies a pale triangle denoting that Hairy Dragonfly had been recorded in this square, SO12, before 1991 but not since. There were no recent records for Breconshire VC42 but it is present in Gwent some 20 kilometres to the south. On 23 May 1959, D.Kyle recorded this dragonfly by the Llangasty car park, and the species was also noted again in July 1964. As a past Chairman of Brecknock Wildlife Trust I have been reading back issues of the Trust's magazine to write and speak about its 50 year history. I recognised that the recorder was Dr. David Kyle, the Trust's first Chairman. In the first issue of the newsletter for May 1964 he listed Breconshire Dragonflies, twelve from Cynthia Longfield's book of 1949 and seven more of his own, including Hairy Dragonfly. In the Autumn issue of 1977 was a list of 17 species in the Kyle



collection donated after his death to the National Museum of Wales. A trip to Cardiff looks likely, but first I shall take some more trips to the Lake. So 50 years after it was last recorded there, Hairy Dragonfly has been seen again at Llangorse Lake.

Keith Noble

2 When dragonflies are like buses.

Over the last few years, the eastwards advancement of the Beautiful Demoiselle in Northamptonshire has been tracked by a number of recorders, including Mark Tyrrell, Darryl Sutcliffe, David Warner and Nigel Muddiman among others. In 2012 and 2013, records suggested that this Demoiselle was also moving northwards with regular sightings on the northern stretches of the Brampton Valley Way, which are narrow, shallow and fast flowing, mirroring the habitat for this species further west in Northamptonshire. We knew its proximity to neighbouring Leicester meant that it wouldn't be long before the final jump was made to the River Welland which forms the County boundary between Northamptonshire and Leicestershire.

On 11th June 2014 I received an email from the Mark Tyrrell, Northamptonshire Dragonfly Recorder, to say that Alison Lowe had recorded a male Beautiful Demoiselle in her wildlife garden, close to the River Welland in the vicinity of Husbands Bosworth. Aware that Beautiful Demoiselle had been spreading towards the VC55 boundary for a number of years, I had already spent a number of previous summers searching seemingly suitable stretches of both the River Avon and Welland, but always to no avail.

Beautiful Demoiselle has a predominantly southern and western distribution within the UK, with a





requirement for fast-flowing, sandy or gravelly bottomed watercourses in which to breed. In Northamptonshire it occupies suitable stretches of the Nene, Cherwell and Tove, plus their tributaries, in places less than 10km from the VC55 boundary. A study of Google Maps revealed some potentially suitable locations on the VC55 border, but it still came as quite a shock when on the afternoon of 25 June 2014 the very first site on the upper Welland which I visited produced a single male Beautiful Demoiselle!

The exact location of the sighting was a rather unremarkable-looking stretch of gravel-bottomed stream passing through grazing pasture, close to the village of Theddingworth. Only a single male was noted, but it was clearly holding territory rather than passing through, most likely a vanguard of the continuing northward push of this species. A foreign holiday prevented a revisit to the site until 26th July 2014, when sadly only a handful of Banded Demoiselles were found. In the meantime, however, Matthew Billings had also been searching likely spots and on 6th July 2014 he had found another male Beautiful Demoiselle on the River Avon in the vicinity of Stanford Hall.

Judging by the recent northward spread of the species in the East Midlands, Beautiful Demoiselle is likely to become a permanent feature on suitable water bodies in the south of VC55 in the near future. Anyone interested in adding to the current understanding of the species' distribution should concentrate on shallow, fast-flowing sections of rivers and streams, between late May and the end of July.

Still revelling in the excitement of a new addition to the County list of Odonata, at the beginning of August 2014 I was forwarded an extremely interesting email from Chris Park, Conservation Officer for the Nene Parks Trust in Peterborough. Chris is very familiar with Scarce Chaser, which is now an abundant resident in the Nene Valley, and was therefore confident of his identification of no less than three

individuals of this species which he saw in the east of VC55 early in 2014. At the time, however, Chris did not realise that they were the first three records for Leicestershire!

The records actually came from three rather well-dispersed sites, in the form of the Rutland Water on 2 July 2014, the River Gwash at Belmesthorpe Road on 15 July 2014 and the River Welland at Tinwell Meadows on 18th July; all records were of males.

Scarce Chaser has expanded its range rapidly through Northamptonshire, moving 50 km westwards along the River Nene between 2005 and 2013. The move from the River Nene in Northamptonshire to the River Welland is a relatively short hop, although extensive surveys of the lower reaches of the Welland on the VC55 boundary in 2010 failed to produce any Scarce Chaser records. It must therefore be assumed that the species moved onto the River Welland over the last four years.

And so we waited eight years for a new VC55 colonist from the south, the last one was Small Red-eyed Damselfly, and then two come along at once!

Ian Merrill

3 Red-eyed in VC62.

North East Yorkshire has had both species of Red-eyed Damselfly recorded this year. *Erythromma najas* has been recorded for the first time in VC62, at two sites north of York. Numbers indicate that they are established at these sites and push the northern boundary for this species around 20 miles north of its previously known limit. *E. viridulum* has been re-discovered in VC62 at a site near Scarborough, these could be recent immigrants as they have also been noted at new sites a little further south in VC61.



E. viridulum was only discovered a few

years ago at this site and I believed had since died out. It will be interesting to see if it survives longer this time and whether either species will make further gains in North Yorkshire.

Keith Gittens

The Kent Hawker.

4 The Norfolk Hawker has been recorded in Kent during the last 4 seasons, with the first records in 2011. Ovipositing was noted in 2013 and we were excitedly expecting proof of breeding next year, however on 3 July we discovered a single exuvia, on phragmites, in a dyke at Westbere Lakes. Importantly, this dykes contains no Water Soldier.

Many adults were recorded at Westbere this year so it looks like a strong population could well be present here, so we may well find further exuviae at other sites in the coming years.

Recent winds have been easterly rather than northerly so we wonder whether these adults originate from Continental European ancestors, where of course this species is not associated with Water Soldier



Male Norfolk Hawer at Westbere Lakes.
Picture by Marc Heath (<http://marcheath.blogspot.co.uk>)

Gill Brook

5 Hertfordshire's First Willow Emerald

I've been going to Amwell throughout the summer months with a recently acquired interest in dragonflies, damselflies and bugs in general. I've had some good sightings and captured most of the dragons and damsels, only missing out on the early year ones due to my timings. We can be thankful of this sighting due to HMWT Amwell warden, Jenny Sherwen keeping the Hollycross lake area open beyond the 1 Sept closure date. I've been visiting Amwell about 3 times a week in afternoons, so have put in plenty of hours, getting to know the area and photographing many different species.

I'd done my usual round trip when I sat to review some photos of Migrant Hawkers I'd just taken. As I looked up at another Migrant Hawker a damselfly caught my attention. It was aggressive and chasing off other damsels and even larger Migrant Hawkers. It looked to me like an Emerald so I fired off plenty of shots. I then went back to show to my good friend Ron Cousins who immediately thought it was a Willow Emerald. He took screen shots and emailed them to Barry Reed who confirmed our thoughts.

It's possible that the warm easterlies we had experienced recently could have pushed them over from Essex. We went back to Hollycross where I had found it in the hope of seeing it again but the sun had moved away from the spot and with it hope of a viewing.

Without Ron and Barry's confirmation and help I'd have assumed it was an Emerald until I'd got home to upload



pictures and review my guidebooks. I emailed Roy Woodward the County recorder as soon as I got home and he again confirmed. Roy confirmed that it was the first confirmed recording since a slightly dubious 1899 specimen was "incorrectly labelled".

Darren Bast

Autumn 2014

Hot Spots

In this new section for Dragonfly News, readers are invited to share details of publicly accessible sites in their area that are important, locally or regionally, for particular species or that offer good viewing opportunities. These sites are not necessarily the same as Hot Spots or Key Sites as defined by the BDS.

If you have an important site, please send details including a habitat shot to the Editor.

Northamptonshire (VC32) Vice County Recorder, Mark Tyrrell, describes a site of regional importance for Scarce Chaser.

The River Nene at Wadenhoe Mill.

Key Species: Scarce Chaser



The Site: Scarce Chaser has undergone a remarkable range expansion in the midlands, and was first recorded on the Nene in 2003. Since then it has been recorded continuously from Peterborough to Stanwick. This is probably the most publicly accessible stretch of the River Nene to see the Scarce Chaser in high numbers. The main section of the river is navigable and is joined by a natural backwater and on both sections numbers of adults can exceed 100 at peak season. Beware of nettles along the river bank, but there are many open sections (mostly made by me!) that give good viewing access to the river.

Getting there: Take the A605 between Thrapston and Peterborough. At a small roundabout, just outside Thrapston follow the signs to Lilford. At Lilford, follow signs to Wadenhoe and then continue left down to the Mill. There is a small free public carpark opposite the Mill at approximately TL013824.

When to visit: The peak season for Scarce Chaser is mid to end of June. A visit in late May, early June may show the immature adults, however a quick walk over the footbridge to Achurch is better as the woodland rides provide excellent habitat for the maturing adults.

Also good for: This is a great spot for Red Kites. The river is also excellent for Banded Demoiselles, with many hundreds from end of May to early July. Expect to see Hairy Dragonfly, Large Red Damselfly, Common Blue Damselfly, Blue-tailed Damselfly, Red-eyed Damselfly and Emperor alongside the Scarce Chasers.



First Dates for 2014

Adrian Parr rounds up the first recorded dates for each of the common UK species.

Winter 2013/14 was in general rather mild, and was followed by a good spring and early summer. Monthly mean 'Central England Temperatures' were thus above the corresponding long term average for each month from December 2013 right through until at least July 2014. The result of all this was an early start to dragonfly flight seasons – though perhaps not quite as dramatically so as during the very advanced years of 2007 and, especially, 2011. Large Red Damselfly first started appearing on 29 March, and by the end of April some 15 species had been noted on the wing (c.f. 20 species during 2011); these included an exceptionally early Common Darter, which was photographed for confirmation. Relatively early emergences continued throughout the subsequent months, though few later records stand out as being exceptional. Willow Emerald Damselfly did, however, set a new emergence record and two 'probable' Migrant Hawkers were reported from East Anglia in mid-June, though these uncharacteristically early records could perhaps refer to immigrants from southern Europe. It will be of considerable interest to observe any effects of early emergence dates on the corresponding last dates recorded later in the year. [DN](#)

Revised last dates for 2013

SPECIES	LAST DATE	PLACE	Observer
Large Red Damselfly	02 Sept. 2013	Berkshire	J. Ward-Smith
Four-spotted Chaser	22 Sept. 2013	Oxfordshire	D. Hastings

First dates for 2014

SPECIES	FIRST DATE	PLACE	Observer
Banded Demoiselle	27 April 2014	Northamptonshire	J. Showers
Beautiful Demoiselle	03 April 2014	Dorset (but VC11)	P. Donaldson
Scarce Emerald Damselfly	10 June 2014	Kent	J. & G. Brook
Emerald Damselfly	17 May 2014	Somerset	S. Balcombe
Willow Emerald Damselfly	26 June 2014	Essex	J. Torino
Azure Damselfly	15 April 2014	East Sussex	S. Smith
Variable Damselfly	16 April 2014	Cambridgeshire	I. Dawson
Red-eyed Damselfly	25 April 2014	West Sussex	T. Hanson
Small Red-eyed Damselfly	12 June 2014	Suffolk	A. Easton
Large Red Damselfly	29 March 2014	Suffolk	C. Gilbert
Common Blue Damselfly	27 April 2014	Cheshire/Lancs.	R. McHale/C. Adams
Blue-tailed Damselfly	16 April 2014	East Sussex	T. Hanson
Scarce Blue-tailed Damsel.	16 May 2014	Gloucestershire	Anon
Small Red Damselfly	25 May 2014	Surrey	P. Ritchie
White-legged Damselfly	05 May 2014	Kent	T. Dove
Southern Hawker	21 May 2014	Kent	J. & G. Brook
Brown Hawker	08 June 2014	East Yorkshire	Yorkshire BDS
Norfolk Hawker	14 May 2014	Suffolk	per J. Harrold
Migrant Hawker	29 June 2014*	Kent/Shropshire	M. Heath/P. Ritchie/P. Law
Emperor Dragonfly	14 May 2014	Devon	D. Smallshire
Hairy Dragonfly	13 April 2014	East Sussex	P. Bonham
Common Club-tail	30 April 2014	Berkshire	C. Webster
Golden-ringed Dragonfly	19 May 2014	Dorset (but VC11)	P. Ritchie
Downy Emerald	21 April 2014	Dorset	I. Kirk
Brilliant Emerald	19 May 2014	Surrey	R. O'Mahony
White-faced Darter	28 April 2014	Shropshire	B. Smith
Broad-bodied Chaser	11 April 2014	Devon	D. Mead
Scarce Chaser	07 May 2014	Kent	M. Hindle
Four-spotted Chaser	18 April 2014	Cambridgeshire	W. Appels
Black-tailed Skimmer	16 May 2014	Suffolk	J. Harrold
Keeled Skimmer	11 May 2014	Norfolk	F. Ingall
Black Darter	22 June 2014	Shropshire	S. Loose
Ruddy Darter	05 June 2014	Isle of Wight	P. Hunt
Common Darter	27 April 2014	Cheshire	R. McHale

* See also discussion the in text



Migrant Dragonflies

Adrian Parr reports on the activities of migrant dragonflies from spring to summer 2014.

The 2014 UK dragonfly season started very early, with the discovery of medium/large dragonflies near Faringdon (Oxfordshire) on 27 February, at East Gilling (North Yorkshire) on 3 March and near Swindon (Wiltshire) on 7 March. Although no definite identifications could be made, the unusually early dates suggest these dragonflies were all probably immigrant Vagrant Emperors, a species which has occurred here during winter on several occasions in the past. Such individuals almost certainly come from northern Africa.

Following an uneventful April, late spring then saw yet further migrants appear, particularly Red-veined Darters. Mid-May produced two reports of 'probables' (no other male darters are normally red at this time of year), but in early June reports started to accelerate and by late July there had been sightings from at least 30 sites as far north as Hightown in Merseyside and Flamborough in East Yorkshire. Over recent years, significant numbers of Red-veined Darter have now been turning up pretty much annually. Unlike in 2013, when at least one teneral was recorded, there was little concrete evidence for locally-bred individuals occurring during the early part of the season, though records continued at Dozmary Pool in Cornwall - a site where the species has now been seen each year for well over a decade. Given that Cornwall is a favoured county for immigrant Red-veined Darters, the precise status of the species at Dozmary is however still a little uncertain.

The other principal migrant species to appear in early summer was the Lesser Emperor. Following a very poor showing in 2013, when the species had its quietest season for almost 15 years, it was pleasing to note a recovery in the numbers reported this year - with

roughly 20 sightings at the time of writing. It is, however, difficult to put a precise figure on the number of records, since a significant number refer to individuals reported anonymously, and without further detail, via internet forums and wildlife news pagers. Where it has been possible to follow these reports up, all have proved genuine, but there is no guarantee that this is always the case. It is perhaps a shame that Lesser Emperors have now maybe lost some of their novelty, so that sightings are sometimes reported in a rather low-key manner. Whatever the exact situation, it is clear that Cornwall and, in particular, Norfolk held large numbers of individuals during June. Amongst other sightings there were also records from New Hythe Lakes in Kent, where a local breeding colony may exist since exuviae were discovered there a few years ago.

While the good numbers of Red-veined Darter and Lesser Emperor are encouraging to see, there were few reports of other migrant species during the spring and early summer. News relating to our new colonist species was similarly somewhat mixed. Willow Emerald Damselfly clearly continues to do well, and despite being a late-flying species, by the end of July it had already been reported from many sites. Similarly the Southern Emerald Damselfly appears to still be doing well, with fresh records from its site at Cliffe Marshes in Kent, and with a single male seen elsewhere in the county near Reculver (whether this individual is a new immigrant or locally-bred still remains unclear). By contrast, news relating to the Dainty Damselfly is less encouraging; although exuviae were discovered at two of the regular sites, no adults were noted. Both ponds concerned now look unfavourable for the species, having lost pretty much all of their submerged vegetation (possibly due to the effects of the 2013/14 winter, with its flooding and surge tides?). Hopefully emerging individuals will have dispersed and found more suitable habitat nearby. News relating to the Southern Migrant Hawker is also somewhat mixed, with at present (late July) only three individuals having been reported - singles from the regular sites at Wat Tyler Country Park and Hadleigh Country Park, and with a third individual at Chafford Gorges, a new

site for the species also in the greater Thames Estuary area of Essex. With most records during 2013 having come during August there is, however, still time for many further individuals to be reported.

It will be interesting to see what the second half of the 2014 flight season has in store, but certainly the first half has been quite an eventful one for migrant and new colonist species alike. **DN**





With the help of a stranger on an empty Scottish Road, *Craig Emms* recounts the search for the Azure Hawker while HM The Queen celebrated her Jubilee in 2012.

Working as an ecologist is not always, as you can imagine, a bed of roses. One downside is that during the 'busy season' from April to September, I'm inundated with survey work and much too busy to be able to take any time off to go dragonfly watching. It can be frustrating at times to see on the BDS website that rarities have turned up, or that so-and-so species is having a really good year at a site that I just know I won't have the time to visit.

Therefore, when it was announced in early 2012 that an extra Bank Holiday was to be given at the beginning of June to celebrate the Queens Diamond

Jubilee, I eagerly sat down with my partner Linda Barnett and planned a trip that we had been talking about for ages. The trip that we wanted to make over that long weekend would involve a drive of almost 550 miles northward to the Scottish Highlands to seek out the Holy Grail of British dragonflies; the Azure Hawker.

But what of the timing? Would we stand a chance of spotting this elusive and beautiful dragonfly at the beginning of June, right at the start of its flight period? And what if the weather was awful and it rained? This is Scotland we're talking about after all! Despite

these worries we decided to go for it anyway. It turned out when we travelled northwards on Friday 1 June, the weather, which was pretty dire in eastern England, brightened considerably until the sun was shining and it was warm.

The next day our first field trip was to one of the best-known spots for Azure Hawkers; the Bridge of Grundy. Dragonflies and damselflies were abundant around the bog pools, with huge numbers of Large Red Damselflies, Four-spotted Chasers and White-faced Darters, with occasional Golden-ringed Dragonflies, Common Hawkers and even a couple of sightings of that other

northern speciality; the Northern Emerald, but alas, no Azure Hawkers.

On our second day of fieldwork we decided to travel along the length of Loch Maree and to search out what we hoped were suitable places for the elusive beast, beginning with a walk through the magnificent scenery of Benn Eighe National Nature Reserve. Again, Four-spotted Chasers turned out to be abundant and we had yet more sightings of Northern Emerald. It was another long day of sunshine and warm temperatures, but there was still no sign of the Azure Hawker anywhere.

At our hotel that evening we heard on the news that the Queen's celebrations in London had been marred by appalling weather conditions, which at least consoled us a little as Scotland was experiencing the best weather so far that year.

Day 3 dawned cloudy and overcast. This was to be our last day of fieldwork and our last chance to find an Azure Hawker. We searched out more likely spots, following shallow flushes as they meandered onto the heather-covered hillsides, walking gingerly around more bog pools and generally keeping our eyes peeled. But gradually the clouds grew thicker and the sky darkened, until we had just about given up all hope. Then a miracle happened.

As we walked along the roadside, nets in hand, a car pulled up and a young lady we'd never seen before asked us if we were looking for Bumblebees. No, not this time, came our reply – we're looking for dragonflies. At which point she told us that she had just seen four male Azure Hawkers a few miles down the road at Talladale! She proceeded to give us instructions on how to find the site and then left. We never did learn her name, but thank you, whoever you are!

As we parked up at the base of the long hillside at Talladale the first spots of rain began to fall. We left the car, for the first time on this trip wearing our jackets, and proceeded to work our way up the track, but to be honest we didn't hold out much hope as the weather was still deteriorating.

About twenty minutes later, after searching every single bare rock face and fallen tree trunk on that long slope, of which there were hundreds, we finally spotted a dragonfly perched on a rock. Could this be an Azure at last? We



approached that rock with all the stealth of commandos on a raid across the channel but there was no need because dragonfly didn't want to move even when we peered at it from just a few inches away.

There it was in all its glory, a male Azure Hawker!

We took some photos and looked at it admiringly for a few minutes, and then the heavens opened and the rain poured down, but still the dragonfly didn't move, except to give a shake of its wings.

We returned to our hotel as pleased as punch with our find, and all thanks to a brief and chance encounter with a friendly stranger on an empty Scottish road. We drove home to England the next

day with smiles on our faces.

We had found the Holy Grail!! **DN**

Opposite page: "The Holy Grail", a male Azure Hawker.

Above: Female Northern Emerald.

Bottom: Praenubila form Four-spotted Chaser.



Beaten but not out

Dragonflies lead a dangerous life and the constant battling over territories, rustling through reeds to find females and to oviposit in a safe spot take their toll on their delicate bodies. It is generally thought that their lives end when they can no longer fly to find food. Here are a batch of shots showing just how battered dragonflies can be, whilst still being able to fly. Thanks to all photographers who responded to the thread on the BDS Flickr pool.

1



2



3





1 Hairy Dragonfly
By Erland R. Nielsen, Sweden, 7 June.

2 Norfolk Hawker
By Richard Knisely-Harpole,
Strumpshaw Fen.

3 Emperor
By Janice Robertson, Milton Keynes, 21
July.

4 Broad-bodied Chaser
By Mark Tyrrell, Northamptonshire, 24
June.

5 Four-spotted Chaser
By Guy Pilkington, 25 July

6 Black-tailed Skimmer
By Mike Averill, 28 July.



Notes & Observations

Compiled by Mark Tyrrell



While watching the Norfolk Hawkers at Paxton Pits, Cambs on 2 July 2014, I noticed this Common Blue Damselfly that looks like he may have bitten off more than he could chew. It made me wonder how long a meal this size would last before he needed to eat again?

Freddie Ingall

After 10 months living as a nymph in a tank in our conservatory, on 1 May 2014 a perfect adult Four-spotted Chaser awaited us when we returned home. As the weather was cool and the Chaser seemed content to sit perched on a stick in the conservatory, we left it overnight in the conservatory and then the following morning opened all of the doors and windows to see if it would leave of its own volition.

In the early afternoon it had made a flight but failed to locate the exit, so I gently coaxed it onto my finger and took it out into the garden. After placing it on a leaf overlooking our garden pond the chaser immediately adopted this unusual pose. It remained in this position for about 20 minutes, after which it took off and disappeared over the hedge.

I've never seen a chaser adopt a pose like this. While it was inside, it had perched in the familiar pose of a chaser with its abdomen straight out behind it, so I don't think there was any deformity. I don't know whether it was caused by the chaser acclimatising to a slightly lower temperature outside (12-14 degrees, overcast) or whether the orientation towards an obscured sun was deliberate, but whatever the cause it provided me with a wonderful opportunity to photograph the beautiful markings and anatomy on the underside of the abdomen. Has anyone else seen this sort of behaviour in the chasers?

Andy Holt





Several Emperors emerged from my small garden pond on 21 May 2014. This individual emerged on a marsh marigold pondside plant and I notice that it had become infested with ants. Soon after this photo was taken, it fell into the water and never recovered.

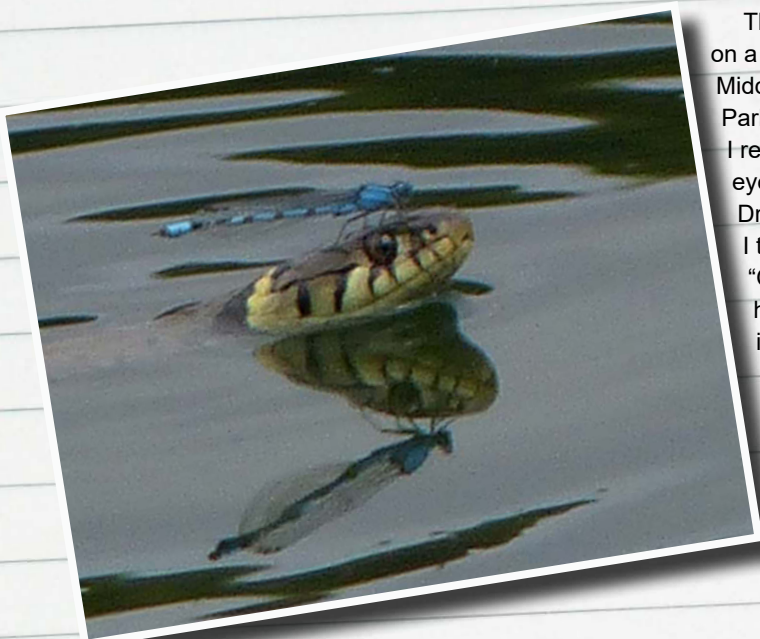
Would the ants have caused distress to the dragonfly resulting in its demise, or did they somehow kill it with their bites or stings before it had a chance to complete emergence?

Peter Hunt

While out recording the numerous ponds at the rare breeds centre near Woodchurch in Kent, I spotted this Hairy Dragonfly attacking a female Broad-bodied Chaser as she was ovipositing. A few minutes later, after much struggling she managed to escape.

Gill Brook





This shot was taken by Darren Bast on a dragonfly walk I led for the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust at Panshanger Park, Hertford, on 2 August 2014.

I recall seeing a photo of a Red-eyed Damselfly 'terrapin surfing' in Dragonfly News a few years ago, but I think this Common Blue Damselfly "Grass snake" surfing takes it to a higher level. It makes you wonder if the snake knew he was being exploited in this way?

Roy Woodward.

Whilst on a visit to Woodwalton Fen NR on 1 June I observed a pair of Chasers in tandem, but when they landed the female seemed very agitated and would not settle, whereas the male seemed quite calm. I was so keen to get a picture and video of the antics of the female that it was only when I got home and looked more closely on a larger screen that I realised the reason for the strange behaviour. The male, a Scarce Chaser had clasped a female Four-spotted Chaser. This female seemed aware of the anomaly and was not keen to participate! They finally flew off, the female still struggling furiously, a few moments later.



Henry Curry



I usually make a couple of visits each year to record & photograph the Black Darters on Dersingham Bog, near Kings Lynn, Norfolk. On this particular visit, on 31 July, 2014, around 20 single males were noted along with three ovipositing pairs, and I was delighted with the photographic opportunities. However it wasn't until I started to process the images that I noticed one of the tandem pair females had a huge problem. It had lost a segment or two, exposing a clusters of eggs.

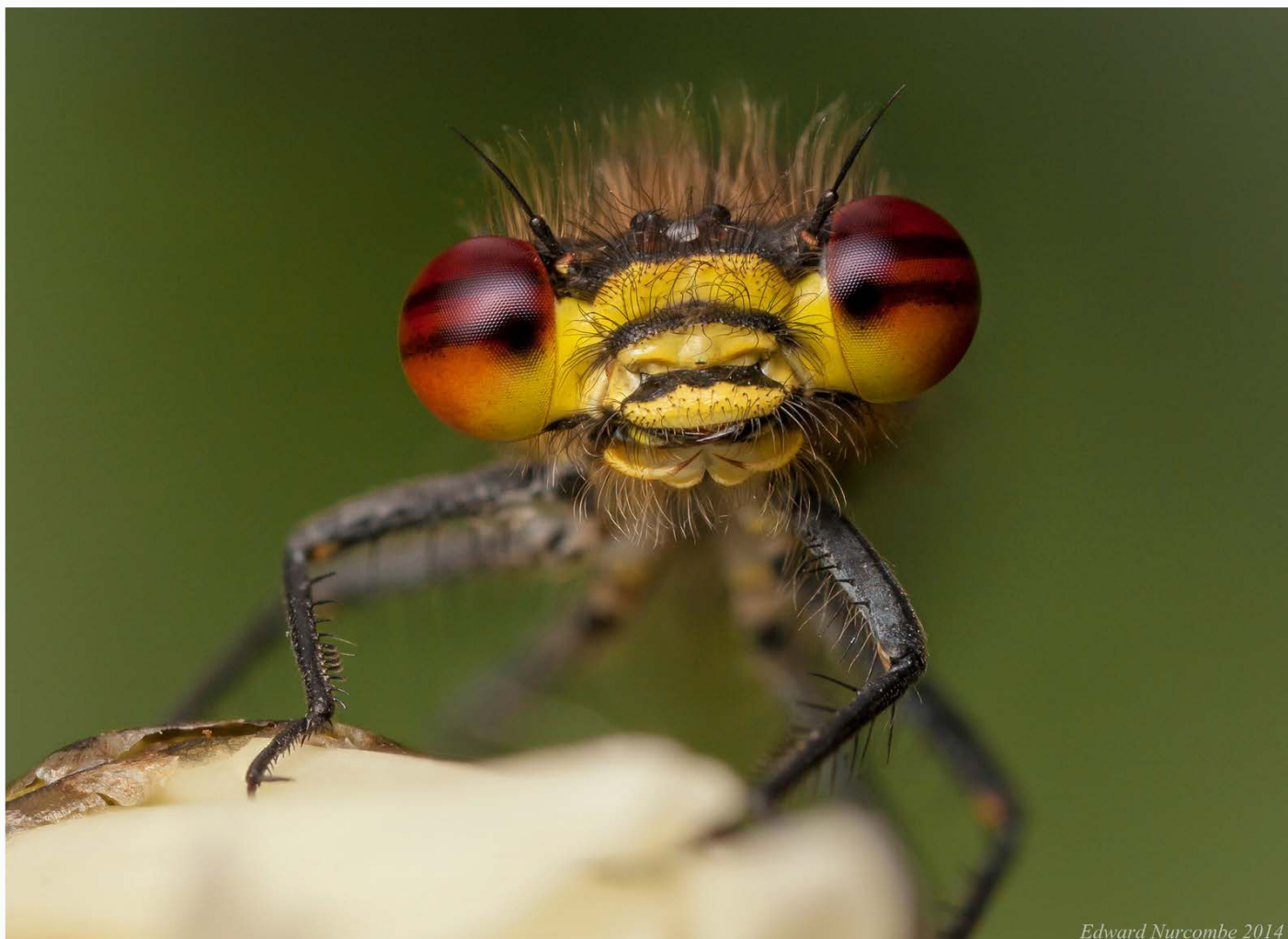
The female was still attempting to form the wheel, and I remember watching several attempts from a short distance, but (and now I realise why) sadly her abdomen was always lowered after a short while. The male took flight on a sudden stiff breeze taking the female with it, and I carried on watching some others. Clearly she wasn't aware that she had lost the end of her abdomen!

Jon Mee

I was looking for Purple Emperors at Bookham Common, when I saw a few large dragonflies flying. Suddenly, two seemed to clash and they flew away together. I had seen a pair of Emperors flying in tandem a few days earlier and knew this was different. They flew to a nearby tree, which I could reach. It was a strange sight - an Emperor was in a head-to-head face-on position with a Migrant Hawker (I think!). It was unclear which was eating which for a moment (bar the fact that the Emperor was in normal resting position with wings out, while the Hawker was pinned). Both heads were moving as if one was eating the other. The Emperor ate its way through the whole length of the Hawker; I could see its jaws and the fatty interior of the victim. It ate all but the end of the abdomen and wings and flew off carrying what was left. I was able to get very close with my compact camera as it was preoccupied, for 15 minutes.

David Hasell

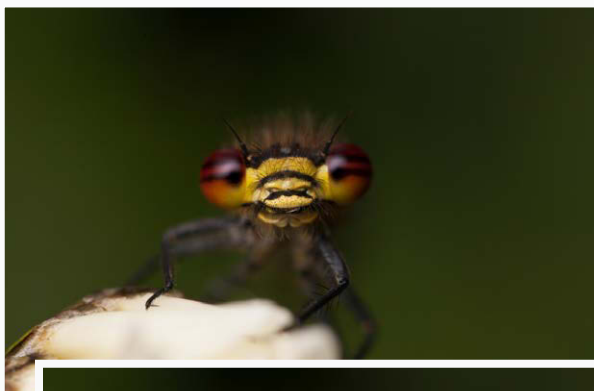




Up Close and Personal

Eddie “the bug man” Nurcombe has been impressing the BDS Flickr Group with his ultra-detailed close-up portraits, so how does he create these stunning images?

Edward Nurcombe



Digital technology has developed to make photography much easier and quicker, and has now arguably allowed photographers the ability to take higher quality images than in the days of film. However until recently it hadn't managed to solve one of the biggest challenges in macro-photography - that of getting enough depth of field to obtain sufficient sharpness in the final image. Depth-of field is the amount of the image that is sharp in the final picture and is governed by many factors. The

lens f-stop is the principle method of controlling depth-of-field. Using a setting of f16 for example will give much more than f2.8. As the photographer moves closer to the subject, depth of field decreases and many images can be spoilt by areas of the subject being out-of-focus. There is a problem with using small lens apertures, however, with light diffraction causing a softening of the image and the lower light levels arriving at the camera's sensor requiring a longer shutter speed, which can lead to subject movement blur, or the use of a higher sensitivity setting which again can reduce quality through image noise. Also, as depth-of-field increases, backgrounds can become too intrusive, taking attention away from the main subject.

But now, a software solution called "focus stacking" has allowed photographers to increase apparent depth-of-field by combining many images with narrow depth-of-field into one final image showing immense levels of detail unobtainable using conventional techniques. Individual images are stacked into layers, where the software masks out the blurred parts of the image in each layer and blends the sharp areas into the final picture.

I have developed my technique through trial and error, but even now it requires great planning and patience and the success rate is still low. When the results work though I think the effort is very worthwhile as the image quality achieved can be quite stunning.

To focus stack Damselflies you first have to locate your subject. I tend to look for them on reed stems early in the morning or late in the evening, when they are more likely to be inactive due to the cooler temperatures. It is important to respect your subject and its environment, but Damselflies can be gently coaxed onto other plant stems that offer better photogenic potential. Backgrounds can be added to prevent flash fall off, in this case a fallen leaf. The equipment I use is a Canon 5D MKII camera, with a Canon MP-E 65mm Macro lens. This is a specialist macro lens that can produce images at life-size up to 5x lifesize magnification.

To light the damselflies, I use a Canon 430 EXII Flash and a

Lumiquest Diffuser to soften the light which can be quite harsh this close-up. Many photographers bolt their camera to a tripod and use specialist focus rails that move the camera fixed amounts for each shot, but I prefer the hand-held approach. For Damselflies, I find that setting the MP-E lens at about x3 magnification gives a good result. I focus on the front of the clypeus take the first shot, move the camera forward a fraction and take the second shot, I then carry on this process until I have moved past the eyes, always keeping the camera level. The camera is set on manual, I used an aperture of f8, ISO 400, shutter speed 1/160 and diffused flash set to E TTL, for this stack of the Large Red Damselfly, I took a total of 12 images. It is important that the images you take cover all slices from front to back, because if you miss one, the final image will look odd because these parts will be masked out and will not be present in the final picture. I then imported the 12 images into the software. I use Zerene Stacker, but other programs are available including Adobe PhotoShop, CombinZem, Helicon Focus 6 and many more. The software aligns and stack the images. I then make the required edits, adjustments and crop, the result is a sharper and more detailed focused image than can be achieved with a single exposure.

This technique is tricky to master, requires solid photographuc technique but generates distinctive and eye-catching images that cannot be produced by any other means. **DN**

To see more of Eddie's images, visit his Flickr photostream
[https://www.flickr.com/photos/odonatamanEd](https://www.flickr.com/photos/odonataman....Ed)

Above: Images 1, 4, 6 and 9 from the 12 taken to create the focus stack shown on the opposite page.



Dragon watching...in Sweden?



While Sweden may not be everyone's first choice for a dragonfly holiday, as David Chandlers found out, it has more species than the UK.

If you're thinking of spending a few days looking at dragonflies on mainland Europe, Sweden is probably not the first country that comes to mind. But there are some good reasons to head to Sweden as I found out when I spent a few days there in early July.

Given Sweden's high latitude, one might expect it to be relatively impoverished on the dragonfly front – after all, the objects of our passion are primarily tropical beasts. But with over 60 species on the Swedish dragonfly list, there are more there than back home. I spent three days and an evening in eastern central Sweden, a part of the country that abuts the southern end of the Taiga forest. In Swedish thinking, the northern two-thirds of the country are the north, so central Sweden is not as far north as you might think – it's on a level with northern Scotland. The weather wasn't always ideal and June had been the coldest and wettest in 10 years, but I still had some special dragonfly encounters. So, what are those good reasons to head to Sweden? Here are six...

Reason number one: White-faced Darters

In the UK, a White-faced Darter makes a day special. We have one species of White-faced Darter. Sweden is home to all five European Whitefaces, and I saw three of them. A wonderfully sunny boat trip on the Arboga canal, which feels more like a river, was a highlight of the trip, with Dainty White-face *Leucorrhinia caudalis* and Large White-face *L. pectoralis* heading the cast. I had great views, and some great photo opportunities, including Dainty White-faced Darter *in cop*. With its bulbous, part pruinose abdomen, white appendages and white pterostigmata, this is a handsome dragon. We saw 'our' White-faced Darter elsewhere, but failed to find Northern White-faced Darter *L. rubicunda*, or Eastern White-faced Darter *L. alibifrons*, despite walking in the water, in the rain, searching for the latter at the edge of a lake at Ojesjon.

Reason number two: Northern Damselflies

I didn't see a single Azure Damselfly, though Variable, Red-eyed and White-



legged seemed common. By Northern damselflies, I don't just mean Northern Damselfly. A rainy morning at Fragg turned up a few sheltering damsels. This is wonderful, wild habitat, a lake surrounded by squelchy *Sphagnum*. We found a single Northern Damselfly, and even better, two Arctic Bluets *Coenagrion johanssoni*, a *Coenagrion* at the southern end of its Swedish range. As you might expect, this is a species whose range extends north of the arctic circle. A distant hawk was probably a Subarctic Hawker *Aeshna subarctica*.

Reason number three: Emeralds

I did see Common Emerald and Scarce Emerald Damselflies, but it's the *Cordulia* and *Somatochlora* dragons that are the reason to go. It was a bit early for Northern Emerald, but Downy, Brilliant and Yellow-spotted *Somatochlora flavomaculata* were all possibilities. You have to go much further north for Treeline Emerald *S. sahlbergi*. We saw plenty of Emerald dragonflies, but I must admit I struggled with their ID. My guide identified the ones we saw as Brilliant Emeralds, and one of them landed on the back of my shirt, but of course, I couldn't see it!

Reason number four: Pygmy Damselfly *Nehalennia speciosa*.

For me, this small damselfly, Europe's tiniest, is a big attraction. It's only 24-26 mm long, has a blue bow mark between the eyes and according to Dijkstra and Lewington is 'one of Europe's most endangered species'. It was thought

to be extinct in Sweden until it was rediscovered in 2006. Its size and habitat choice make it a creature that could be easily overlooked. We headed for Sala, where, helpfully, a basic boardwalk allows easy access to the bog and the Pygmy Damselflies – I saw several. A big little highlight!

Reason number five: The ones I missed...

I would have liked to have clinched Subarctic Hawker, not to mention Azure, Green *A. viridis* and Baltic Hawker *A. serrata*. Despite looking, we didn't see Two-spotted Dragonfly *Epiptera bimaculata*.

Reason number six: The other wildlife

Along the way I saw Great Grey Owl, Pygmy Owl, Black Woodpecker, Crane, White-tailed Eagle, Honey Buzzard, Osprey, Wryneck and Red-backed Shrike, and heard Corncrake and Quail. Beaver and Moose were the mammal highlights and the butterflies included Large Heath, Cranberry Blue, Moorland Clouded Yellow, Marsh Fritillary, False Heath Fritillary, Scarce Fritillary and the very handsome Poplar Admiral.

And I haven't mentioned the Golden-ringed Dragonfly that flew under a bridge, just beneath my dangling feet, or Scarce Chaser, Black Darter, Moustached Darter *Sympetrum vulgatum* and Yellow-winged Darter, all of which I did see. So, all in all, there are plenty of reasons to go back!

Getting there

I flew with SAS from Heathrow to Stockholm Arlanda. I booked my ticket a long time in advance and it cost £135.80. Alternatively, you could fly with Ryanair to Västerås.

My guide

I was led by Daniel Green, from BirdSafari Sweden, who will lead individuals or groups on tours looking for dragonflies, butterflies and birds, or any combination thereof. See www.birdsafarisweden.com.

If anyone would like to accompany me on a return visit in 2015, contact me at [redacted] **DN**



Opposite: Dainty White-faced Darter *Leucorrhinia caudalis* and Red-eyed Damselfly.

Top left: Female and Male Dainty White-faced Darter.

**Bottom left: The Arboga Canal
Top right: Pygmy Damselfly or Sedgling *Nehalennia speciosa*.**

Bottom right: Arctic Damselfly *Coenagrion johanssoni*.



Willow Emerald Damselflies on the River Yare

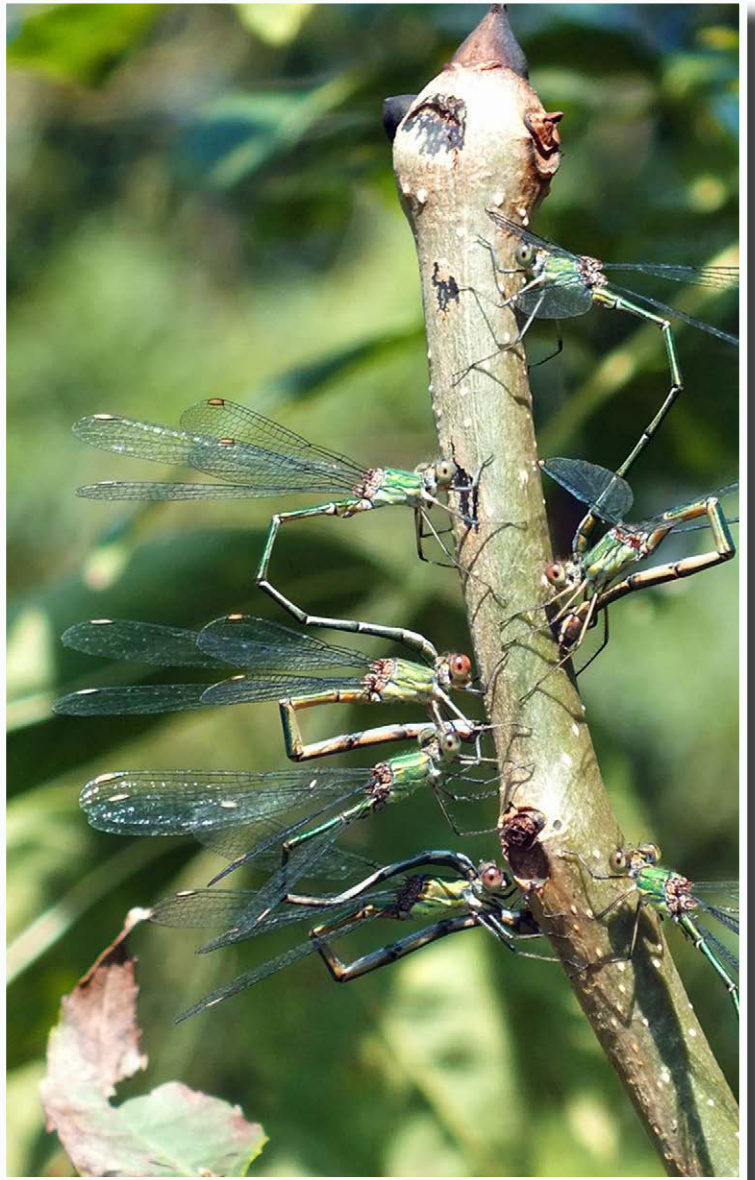
Jon Mee witnessed an amazing mass ovipositing event on trees overhanging the River Yare, in Cringleford, Norwich.

I have walked this small section of the Yare, every weekday lunchtime for the past eleven years. It wasn't however, until 6 August 2013, that I found the first Willow Emerald Damselflies. Throughout August there were up to 26 individuals present most days, and on 4 September the first ovipositing pairs were seen, one to four pairs ovipositing together in the young Ash trees overhanging the river throughout the month. A few were still present including, one ovipositing pair, up to 30 October.

So I was very much looking forward to 2014, and after searching daily during July, the first freshly emerged Willow Emeralds were found on the 18th in the riverside vegetation, during a particularly hot spell of weather. Twenty were noted on this day but then numbers fluctuated daily, sometimes they were very difficult to locate. The maximum recorded during August was twenty six. The first tandem pairs were noted on 20 August in the Ash and Willow trees as well as the riverside vegetation, and they were spreading out further along the river than I had previously seen, no ovipositing seen at this stage though.

The last days of August were quiet, the weather had not been good with little sunshine, but then something quite unexpected happened on 2 September, the midday sun was hot and the river was buzzing again. It became very clear from the start of my river walk that Willow Emeralds were out in force and during the next half an hour whilst walking, and without any hard searching, I had the incredible total of sixty two tandem pairs of Willow Emerald. This exceeded all expectations but the most extraordinary sight, was to find up to nine ovipositing pairs in close clusters on leafless Ash branches as the photographs show. It's also interesting to note that the same small Ash trees as last year are still favourite for ovipositing females.

As I write this on 4 September, I have just returned from the walk again, it's dry, bright but overcast and I have not found a single Emerald! [DN](#)



So much for territoriality



Some dragonflies are territorial and some are not, but occasionally those that are behave in strange ways as Mark Tyrrell explains.

As an enthusiastic dragonfly photographer I am grateful that many species exhibit territorial behaviour as one of their strategies for finding a suitable female, because this helps me get a good collection of photos. Adults that land at a regular territorial perch provide the perfect opportunity, however, I find it more rewarding to seek out and capture specific elements of behaviour, be it normal or unusual. I am still very much focused on getting that perfect in-flight shot and have learnt a good deal about territoriality from trying to capture in-flight shots.

Photographers' dream species, like the Four-spotted Chaser and Broad-bodied Chaser frequently return to the same perch after bouts of short flights. In the case of the latter, I often get frustrated waiting for the Chaser to return only to watch him do yet another sweep of the pond searching for a female that may have appeared during the 15

seconds since his last sweep, only then to land on a different perch just out of reach of my camera. Watching two or more Broad-bodied Chasers zipping through the air matching each other move-for-move is something quite special (especially considering the relative bulk of this species!). It seems impossible to record and I am not even sure that the renowned film maker Georg Ruppell could capture this in slo-mo.

I do find some behaviour is confusing though. How come that in most territorial species, females only return to the water to mate or oviposit, where the aggressive behaviour of the males means that they are forceably grabbed as soon as they appear? Yet in the Demoiselles, females co-exist with males on the river margin at all times and the males completely ignore them until they cross a territory, when it's a different story of course. I find the sight of half a dozen blue males daintily chasing a green female across the water



quite comical.

Some of my favourite territorial shots are of male Banded Demoiselles and Scarce Chasers on the River Nene. They are both very numerous on the best stretches and territorial clashes between con-specific males are a common sight. In May this year, I watched one particular male Demoiselle find a prime location on a bent-over reed in the middle of the water, close to some good submerged substrate, ideal for ovipositing females. He was constantly harassed by other males, many of them using their wing spots as a warning or threat display. He victoriously defended his territory many times, even vacating it for an occasional scrap, although I didn't see whether he successfully found a mate. Despite the high numbers of these Demoiselles, I very rarely see mating. I think that in over 12 years of active recording I have witnessed mating less than 10 times.

Both Demoiselle and Chasers exist at high densities on appropriate sections of the Nene, with many hundred even thousands of Demoiselles and about 10 Chasers per 100m at the peak of their seasons, so competition for the best territories is intense and males don't stay still for long. Clashes between neighbouring males are a frequent occurrence, so how come males will occasionally tolerate each other and perch on the same reed? Is this an acceptance that there are too many adults for the space available and that territories need to be shared? I have recorded this in both species on several occasions.

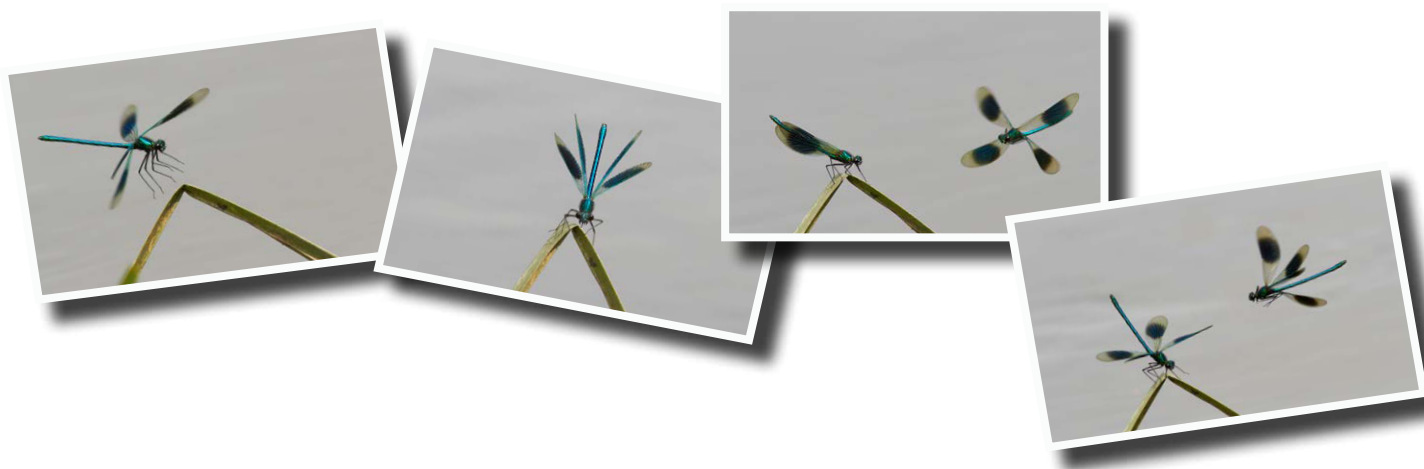
On the Nene last year, I watched a male Banded Demoiselle attack and dislodge a Scarce Chaser to get a prime spot. Now of the two, I would not bet on the Demoiselle being victorious, but he was and the Chaser quickly made his escape. Chasers will quite readily see off rival males and will even attack larger species, but this one didn't put up any fight against what was arguably an inferior rival.

Of course, this behaviour is not limited to these two species. I have seen Red-eyed Damselflies use any floating item as a territory. I have witnessed a male establish territory on a swan's feather, a petal and a twig. I have even seen a Common Blue Damselfly establish territory on a Red-eyed Damselfly!

I will continue observing this fascinating aspect of dragonfly behaviour,



and who knows maybe I'll answer my own questions in the next few years. **DN**



Above: A male Banded Demoiselle successfully defends his territory.
Opposite top: Two male Banded Demoiselles share a territorial reed.
Opposite middle: A male Scarce Chaser hovering over his territory.
Opposite bottom: A Common Blue Damselfly takes up territory on a male Red-eyed Damselfly.

Atropos

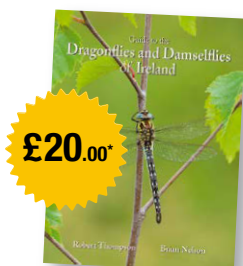
The journal for butterfly, moth and dragonfly enthusiasts

£34

Now 4 bumper issues a year!

Take out a new subscription before 31 December 2014 (quote BDS1) and receive a FREE binder

Order online and purchase the latest books for insect enthusiasts at **www.atroposbooks.co.uk**



The Boat House, Church Cove, Lizard, Cornwall, TR12 7PH

Tel Email

*Please note, prices do not include postage.

ATROPOS



members' gallery

Andy Holt is an award winning videographer, whose film "Dragonfly" recently won Best Documentary at the BIAFF which is the main UK amateur film festival.

Andy's gallery contains some spectacular larval shots, shot in a very distinctive style.


1) How quickly they grow up! One minute you can't even see them without a magnifying glass and next thing you know they're eyeing up tadpoles.

2) Quite a contrast to the hawker nymphs, skimmers, chasers and darters are far more compact and spider like. They tend to do most of their foraging in the sediment.

Once again this little chap comes to you courtesy of Helen's phenomenal pond dipping skills!

These top down shots are taken with the nymph in water, I use a petri dish suspended above a translucent perspex sheet with just enough water to fully submerge the nymph. I source the water from a bore hole at a local fishing pool, so it's nice and clear, but free from any nasty chemicals that would

harm the nymph if tap water was used.

3) A field studio shot of an Emperor nymph. I've always liked these high key shots. I have a small starter aquarium which I surrounded with transparent white perspex, then added some back and fill manual flash to achieve the desired lighting. 

2cm

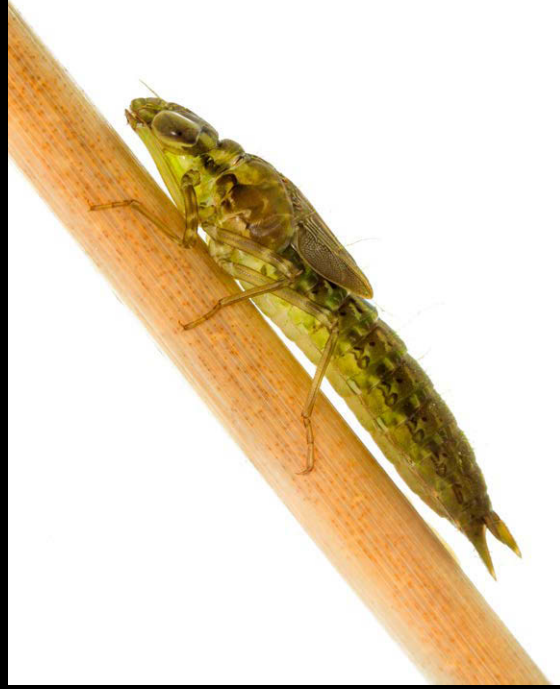


30th May

2



3

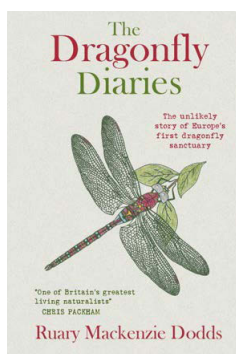


1



2nd July

Reviews



The Dragonfly Diaries by Ruary Mackenzie Dodds

Published by Saraband

Price: RRP £12.99

ISBN: 9781908643551

Review by Stuart Irons

This is a fabulous read, written with all the energy, enthusiasm, expertise and humour that you would expect from Ruary. It describes his previous life in London, working as a language tutor for foreign business executives and how this 'normal' lifestyle changed into the pursuit of one seemingly hair-brained scheme after another following a chance encounter with a dragonfly.

As the title implies this is a personal account of the rise and evolution of a place and a group of people dedicated to the promotion of dragonflies. The main theme running through the book is, of course, dragonflies and it provides a very accessible introduction for beginners. Friends who have read the book come away knowing much more about dragonflies than they did previously, without even realising they were learning about our favourite insects. In addition we get a glimpse into the lives of many people who get caught up in the story including Dame Miriam Rothschild, our former President, and HRH Prince Charles, often with hilarious consequences. My favourite tale involves a dragonfly pond, a rubber dingy and HRH's security team.

Perhaps at this point I should declare my vested interest because it is also the story of my life with dragonflies. It was Ruary who first fired my love for the most spectacular group of animals on the planet. I always had a general interest in

wildlife and dabbled with many groups. However it was Ruary's passion and knowledge that showed me the beauty and excitement of dragonflies. From our first meeting my life was changed. Not everything in the book is exactly as I remember it but that is to be expected as this is a very personal account of a rapidly changing story over a period of over thirty years.

This book is more than the story of Ashton Dragonfly Sanctuary and all its subsequent reincarnations; it is also the story of how a seemingly insignificant, chance encounter can have profound consequences, it is about recognising an opportunity and seizing it with both hands. The book describes how Ruary's life took a very sudden, unexpected and momentous departure from all his previous experiences. The Diaries tell how this one event changed not just his life but many lives. It is also the story of how a group of volunteers from all walks of life and with an assorted range of interests can achieve the seemingly impossible. But ultimately the story proves that nothing lasts forever, that change happens and in order to survive we must adapt and move on.

Essentially the book is about dragonflies, Ruary is the lead character with his family and the volunteers playing vital supporting roles in the story but at another level it is also a philosophy for life. **DN**

**Available now from the BDS Shop,
price £12.95 + £2 p&p.**



The Dragonflies of Northamptonshire, Second Edition.

by Mark Tyrrell

The Northants Dragonfly
Group, 8 Warwick Close,
Raunds, Northants, NN9 6JH.
80 pp; paperback.
Price £14.95 inc p&p.

Review by Tony Jones

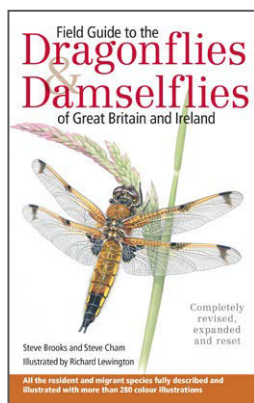
When the Northants Dragonfly Group published the first edition of this atlas in 2006, it was the result of the first in-depth study of dragonflies and damselflies in Northamptonshire. Now, seven years later the author has completed a second edition completely updating the atlas with new photographs, text and up-to-date distribution maps.

Owners of the 2006 edition will have been delighted by the quality of the photographs, and this second edition takes them even further with a stunning collection of images. Each species account is accompanied by at least three high quality colour photographs detailing both sexes and mating in many cases. One of my personal criticisms of the first atlas was that the distribution maps were very large, detracting from the space available for the depth of discussion and the photographs. This has been corrected in this second edition, making it a much more widely acceptable guide, less technical and more readable.

This atlas will appeal to Odonatologists throughout the Country and not just those with an interest in Northamptonshire. The sheer quality of the images and use of colour throughout also make it a useful guide for those with a more general interest. **DN**

(Available from Mark Tyrrell at the address on the inside cover).





Field Guide to the Dragonflies & Damselflies of Great Britain and Ireland.

by Steve Brooks and Steve Cham.

British Wildlife Publishing
192 pp; paperback.

Price £18.95 or £15.95 if pre-ordered from British Wildlife Publishing. To be published in October 2014.

Review by Mark Tyrrell

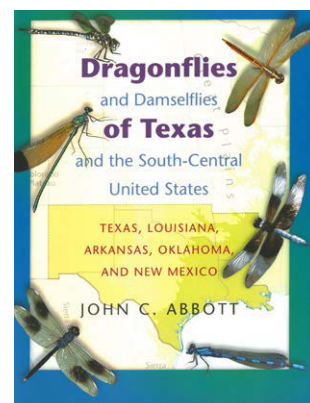
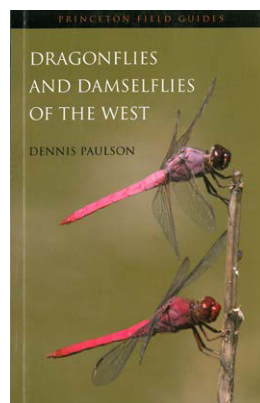
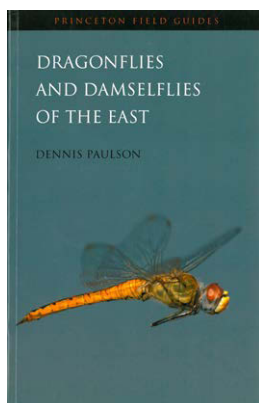
The 1999 edition of this popular field guide was the first entry in my odonata library, and it is still the first book I turn to for information. This is the third subsequent revision and is the best yet. The authors have thoroughly revised the guide with new text and photographs, particularly evident in the earlier sections, which neatly combine high quality photographs with line drawings and full colour illustrations.

The most obvious changes are in the sections covering biology, life history and habitats. Less immediately obvious are the updates to the species sections which have been revised in light of the latest knowledge and include up-to-date distribution maps.

One of the highlights of this book is the stunning illustrations by Richard Lewington. Where necessary these have been supplemented with new drawings, such as the thoracic images of the Lestidae, which are critical to ID'ing these species in the field.

It is so much more than a field guide and if you only have one book on UK dragonflies, then this is the one. It is the must-have book for all keen odonatologists. **DN**

This book will be available from the BDS Shop once published.



Dragonflies and Damselflies of the East. By Dennis Paulson. Paperback, 2012, £19.95, ISBN: 9780691122830. 544 pp. 675 color photos, 333 maps.

Dragonflies and Damselflies of the West. By Dennis Paulson. Paperback, 2009, £19.95, ISBN: 9780691122816. 536 pp., 863 color photographs, 348 maps.

Dragonflies and Damselflies of Texas and the South-Central United States. By John C. Abbott. Paperback, 2005, £30.95, ISBN:

9780691113647. 360 pp, 384 color photographs, 263 maps.

Princeton University Press, 6 Oxford Street, Woodstock, Oxon, OX20 1TW
<http://press.princeton.edu>

Review by Mark Tyrrell

The recent merger of Princeton University Press and WildGuides has perhaps made it easier to get hold of some of the more obscure books from America. These three guides dropped through my "mailbox" alongside a review copy of Britain's Dragonflies, 3rd edition and certainly warrant greater awareness among Dragonfly News readers and BDS members in the UK.

The first two are clearly companion guides to dragonflies and damselflies of the east and west coast of the USA, although the distribution maps also cover central USA too so could be considered a near complete coverage of the continent.

If we in the UK think there are issues surrounding the relevance of our generic names, they pale into insignificance when you have 35 Bluets (east coast) to deal with, with names ranging from the beautiful Rainbow Bluet *Enallagma antennatum*, via Big Bluet *Enallagma durum* to the Golden Bluet *Enallagma sulcatum* which isn't even blue! How about the Flag-tailed Spinyleg *Dromogomphus spoliatus* or the 52 species of Club-tails including the fantastically named Moustached Clubtail *Gomphus adelphus*?

The USA most certainly is an odonatologist's dream and these three highly authoritative guides beautifully capture the variety of species in their respective areas. The quality of the photography is superb and the books are interspersed with line drawings illustrating key morphological characteristics - important when there are so many superficially similar species.

Each species is covered in good detail considering the sheer number, with habitat information, a distribution map of the regional type and flight periods. The opening sections cover dragonfly biology and anatomy. The only area not covered in detail is habitats, which to a "foreigner" would be useful to understand how these differ from those we are more familiar with.

I am very unlikely to go to the USA dragonfly spotting, but reading these three guides has certainly opened my eyes to the number, beauty and complexity of species present across the pond. Should I ever be lucky enough to make such a trip, they would be the perfect accompaniment, although a little on the heavy side!. I will certainly enjoy dipping into these in the future to marvel at the amazing odonata of the USA.

These are the definitive guides to the dragonflies and damselflies of the USA and make a great addition to the bookshelves of all UK odonatologists wishing to understand more about species away from their home country, as well as naturalists based in the USA who are lucky enough to have such a stunning variety on their doorstep. Highly recommended. **DN**



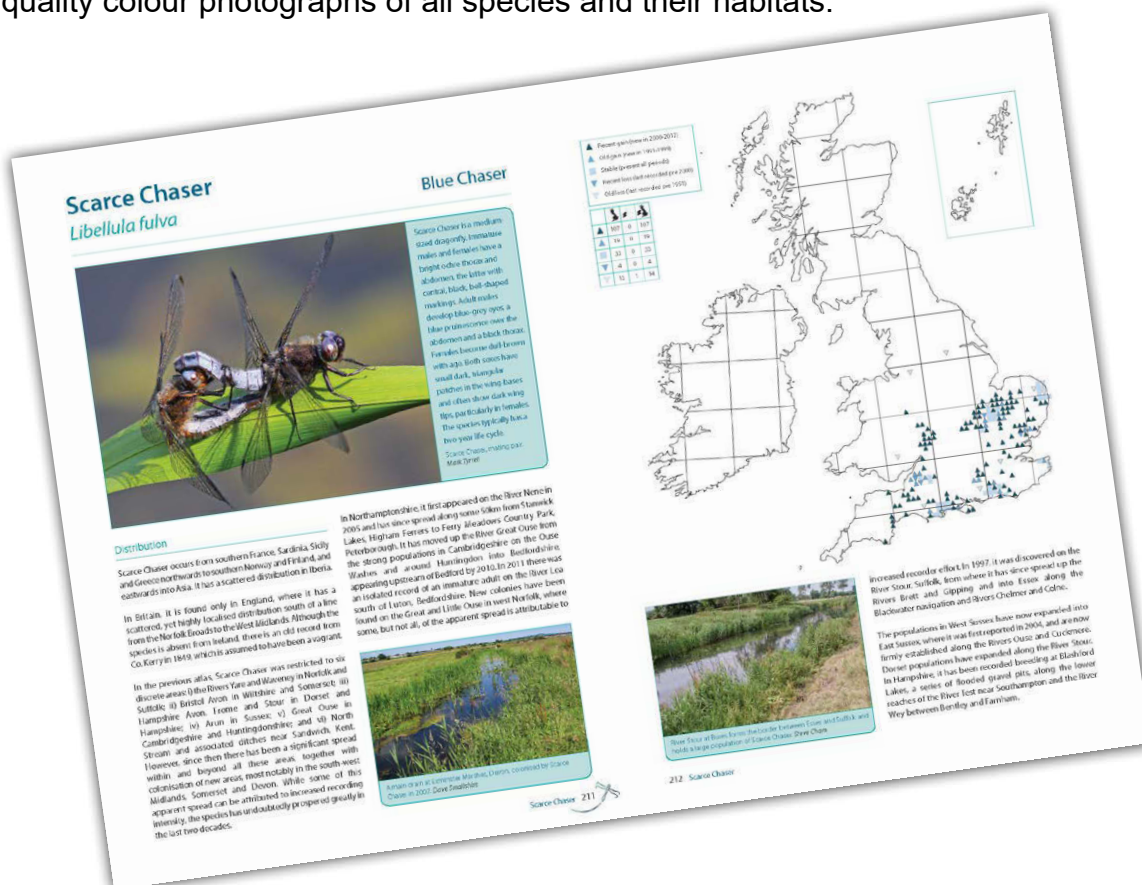
Atlas of Dragonflies in Britain and Ireland

The long awaited new Atlas of Dragonflies in Britain and Ireland, edited by Steve Cham, Brian Nelson, Steve Prentice, Adrian Parr, Dave Smallshire and Pam Taylor, was published in May 2014. This full colour, hardback 280 page book from the British Dragonfly Society maps the distribution of all 56 species of damselfly and dragonfly in Britain and Ireland.

It can be purchased for £32 + p & p from the BDS Shop (see back page), the FSC website and all good bookshops.

The atlas represents five years' work by our volunteers and partner organisations and summarises the distribution of over a million dragonfly records. It includes:

- Species accounts, including maps, for all 56 resident and immigrant species recorded in Britain and Ireland;
- Four pages devoted to each resident species;
- Sections on habitats, conservation, distribution changes and phenology;
- High quality colour photographs of all species and their habitats.



Atlas of Dragonflies in Britain and Ireland

Edited by Steve Cham, Brian Nelson, Adrian
Parr, Steve Prentice, Dave Smallshire and
Pam Taylor



BDS Members Day
31st Annual Meeting on Saturday 15 November 2014
WWT London Wetland Centre

- 9.45** Coffee
- 10.00** Introduction & general announcements *David Chelmick*
- 10.05** Welcome to the London Wetlands Centre *Paul Stevens*
- 10.15** The European Atlas *Vincent Kalkman*
- 11.05** Producing the Atlas of Dragonflies of Britain and Ireland
Steve Cham
- 11.45** The History of the Dragonfly Project *Ruary Mackenzie Dodds*
- 11.20** DragonflyWatch, the future of recording
Dave Smallshire, DCG Convenor
- 11.40** Sexual conflict in dragonflies- pacemaker of evolution
Prof. Georg R  ppell & Dr Dagmar Hilfert-R  ppell
- 12.20** AGM
- 13.00** Lunch
- 14.00** Introduction to the afternoon session *David Chelmick*
- 14.05** Photographing and studying dragonfly larvae
Christophe Brochard
- 14.55** Wealdon Dragonflies *John Luck*
- 15.20** Blue-tails - why bother with sex? *Dave Chelmick*
- 16.00** Raffle and final announcements
- 16.15** Close of meeting

- *A donation is politely requested to help cover costs. We suggest a minimum of £5 from BDS Members / £10 from non-members.*
- *Please bring a packed lunch. Tea and coffee will be available before the meeting and at lunchtime.*

WWT London Wetland Centre
Queen Elizabeth's Walk, Barnes, London, SW13 9WT.
T: 020 8409 4400, F: 020 8409 4401
E: 

WWT London Wetland Centre is situated close to central London, on the banks of the River Thames in Barnes. It is easily accessible by private and public transport, just a 10 minute bus ride from Hammersmith Tube station and close to both Barnes and Barnes Bridge stations. There is ample free parking for visitors arriving by car, although where possible we would encourage our visitors to use more environmentally friendly forms of transport. The centre is located just off the main A306 which runs from the South Circular at Roehampton (with easy access to the A3) to Hammersmith (just minutes from the A4/M4). Once in Barnes you can follow the brown tourist signs to the centre. The centre is situated outside the London Congestion Charging Zone.
<http://www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/london>

Checklist of the Damselflies & Dragonflies of Britain & Ireland

Last Revision: Spring 2014. (Note that the Dragonfly Conservation Group will be discussing the criteria for Category A and whether other species should be included there.)

Table 1. Category A: resident and/or migrant species recorded since 1970

This category comprises species with well-established breeding populations and migrant species that have been recorded regularly since 1970, the latter often attempting to establish temporary breeding populations.

ZYGOPTERA	Damselflies	ANISOPTERA (cont'd)	Dragonflies (cont'd)
Lestidae	Emerald Damselflies	<i>Anax imperator</i>	Emperor Dragonfly
<i>Lestes dryas</i>	Scarce Emerald Damselfly	<i>Anax parthenope</i>	Lesser Emperor
<i>Lestes sponsa</i>	Emerald Damselfly	<i>Brachytron pratense</i>	Hairy Dragonfly
<i>Lestes viridis</i>	Willow Emerald Damselfly	Gomphidae	
Calopterygidae		<i>Gomphus vulgatissimus</i>	Common Club-tail
<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	Banded Demoiselle	Cordulegastridae	
<i>Calopteryx virgo</i>	Beautiful Demoiselle	<i>Cordulegaster boltonii</i>	Golden-ringed Dragonfly
Platycnemididae		Corduliidae	Emeralds
<i>Platycnemis pennipes</i>	White-legged Damselfly	<i>Cordulia aenea</i>	Downy Emerald
Coenagrionidae		<i>Somatochlora arctica</i>	Northern Emerald
<i>Ceragrion tenellum</i>	Small Red Damselfly	<i>Somatochlora metallica</i>	Brilliant Emerald
<i>Coenagrion hastulatum</i>	Northern Damselfly	Libellulidae	Darters, Chasers, Skimmers
<i>Coenagrion lunulatum</i>	Irish Damselfly	<i>Leucorrhinia dubia</i>	White-faced Darter
<i>Coenagrion mercuriale</i>	Southern Damselfly	<i>Libellula depressa</i>	Broad-bodied Chaser
<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	Azure Damselfly	<i>Libellula fulva</i>	Scarce Chaser
<i>Coenagrion pulchellum</i>	Variable Damselfly	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	Four-spotted Chaser
<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	Common Blue Damselfly	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	Black-tailed Skimmer
<i>Erythromma najas</i>	Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Orthetrum coerulescens</i>	Kelled Skimmer
<i>Erythromma viridulum</i>	Small Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Sympetrum danae</i>	Black Darter
<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Sympetrum flaveolum</i>	Yellow-winged Darter
<i>Ischnura pumilio</i>	Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>	Red-veined Darter
<i>Pyrrosoma nymphula</i>	Large Red Damselfly	<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>	Ruddy Darter
ANISOPTERA	Dragonflies	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i> *	Common Darter
Aeshnidae	Hawkers		
<i>Aeshna caerulea</i>	Azure Hawker		
<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>	Southern Hawker		
<i>Aeshna grandis</i>	Brown Hawker		
<i>Aeshna juncea</i>	Common Hawker		
<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	Migrant Hawker		
<i>Anaciaeschna isocles</i>	Norfolk Hawker		

* - includes dark specimens in the north-west, formerly treated as a separate species *Sympetrum nigrescens* **Highland Darter**

Table 2. Category B: vagrant species

Since 1998 records of these species have been assessed by the Odonata Records Committee.

ZYGOPTERA	Damselflies	ANISOPTERA (cont'd)	Dragonflies (cont'd)
Lestidae	Emerald Damselflies	Gomphidae	
<i>Lestes barbarus</i> **	Southern Emerald Damselfly	<i>Gomphus flavipes</i>	Yellow-legged Club-tail
<i>Sympecma fusca</i>	Winter Damselfly	Libellulidae	Darters, Chasers, Skimmers
Coenagrionidae		<i>Crocothemis erythraea</i> †	Scarlet Darter
<i>Coenagrion scitulum</i> **	Dainty Damselfly	<i>Leucorrhinia pectoralis</i>	Large White-faced Darter
ANISOPTERA	Dragonflies	<i>Pantala flavescens</i>	Wandering Glider
Aeshnidae	Hawkers	<i>Sympetrum pedemontanum</i>	Banded Darter
<i>Aeshna affinis</i>	Southern Migrant Hawker	<i>Sympetrum vulgatum</i>	Vagrant Darter
<i>Anax ephippiger</i>	Vagrant Emperor		
<i>Anax junius</i>	Green Darter		

** - has bred. † - has bred in the Channel Islands.

Table 3. Category C: former breeding species not recorded since 1970

Any further records of these species will be assessed by the Odonata Records Committee.

ZYGOPTERA	Damselflies	ANISOPTERA	Dragonflies
Coenagrionidae		Corduliidae	Emeralds
<i>Coenagrion armatum</i>	Norfolk Damselfly	<i>Oxygastra curtisii</i>	Orange-spotted Emerald

Guidelines for Contributors

All material should be sent to the Editor at the address on the inside front cover. If in doubt, please contact the Editor to discuss potential contributions and to advise on presentation and format. By contributing to **Dragonfly News** you give permission for the work to be used in other ways with the same attribution including reproduction on the BDS web site. All contributions on any aspect of the British and Irish dragonfly fauna are welcome for consideration at any time. Contributions on continental European and other species are also considered for inclusion. Contributions by naturalists based in Britain or Ireland travelling overseas are also welcome.

Articles requesting information or providing news of forthcoming events are welcome. The editor is happy to receive material by email or CD, preferably in MS WORD (DOC file extension, not DOCX) or txt format. Typed material requiring rekeying is less welcome (unless very short!) but will still be considered. The Editor reserves the right to make changes without prior reference to the author. Please provide contact details with anything you send and note the copy deadlines printed on inside front cover if you want something to appear in a particular issue. Photographs should be high quality jpg format with the quality setting at its highest, please do not embed in a document as this compromises quality. If e-mailing via AOL, please compress (zip) the image first.



When ordering please include your name, address and telephone number. Postage prices are indicated, but if you are ordering more than one item the highest postage price only (within reason) should be paid. Please allow at least 28 days for delivery. Cheques should be made payable to: British Dragonfly Society.

Clothing	Colour	size	price	p&p
BDS logo T-shirt	grey, royal blue, emerald green	Small	£7.00	£2.00
BDS logo T-shirt	grey	Medium	£7.00	£2.00
T-shirt with 3 coloured logo	Natural	S,M,L,XL,XXL	£7.00	£2.00
Ruddy Darter T-shirt	White	S,M,L,XL,XXL	£10.00	£2.00
Golden Ringed Dragonfly T-shirt	Natural	XXL	£10.00	£2.00
Polo shirt	Bottle Green	S,M,L,XL,XXL	£12.50	£2.00
Rugby Shirt	Blue	S,M,L,XL,XXL	£18.00	£2.00
Hooded Sweatshirt	Navy Blue	S,M,L,XL,XXL	£15.00	£2.50
BDS logoed Sweatshirt	Grey with black logo	Large	£13.75	£2.50
BDS logoed Sweatshirt	Grey with embroidered logo	S,M,L,XL,XXL	£13.75	£2.50
Ruddy Darter Sweatshirt	Green	S,M,XL,XXL	£15.00	£2.50
Golden Ringed Dragonfly Sweatshirt	Beige	XL,XXL	£15.00	£2.50
Base ball Cap	Natural		£6.50	£1.50
Bush Hat	Sand or Olive Green		£9.50	£2.00



Books & DVDs	Price	p&p
Field Guide to the larva and exuviae of British Dragonflies	£10.00	£2.00
Dragonflies by Peter Miller	£12.00	£1.50
Field Guide to the Dragonflies of Britain and Europe	£21.95	£2.50
Dragonflies of Hampshire	£10.00	£0.00
The Dragonflies of Europe (revised edition 2004)	£25.00	£2.50
Dragonflies by Philip Corbet and Stephen Brooks	£20.00	£3.00
Dragonflies and Damselflies of Hertfordshire	£10.00	£2.00
The Dragonflies of Essex	£15.00	£2.50
Dragonflight by Marianne Taylor	£14.00	£2.00
Dragonfly by David Chandler and Steve Cham	£12.00	£2.50
The Dragonflies of Great Britain ID cards	£4.00	£0.75
The Dragonfly Diaries by Ruary Mackenzie-Dodds	£12.95	£2.00
Britains Dragonflies by Dave Smallshire and Andy Swash (3rd Edition)	£17.95	£2.00
A Biology of Dragonflies (1983 re-print) by Philip S Corbet	£10.00	FREE
DVD Sexual Conflict in Dragonflies by Georg Ruppell	£5.00	£1.50
Atlas of Dragonflies in Britain and Ireland	£32.00	£3.00
DVD British Dragonflies	£18.50	£1.50
DVD British Damselflies	£18.50	£1.50
Both DVDs	£35.00	£2.00

Misc	Price	p&p
BDS Mugs, Black Darter, Migrant Hawker, Scarce Chaser, Golden Ringed Dragonfly	£4.00 (each)	£2.00
Set of all 4 BDS Mugs	£12.00	£5.00
Damselfly Mug	£4.00	£2.00
Set of 6 Damselfly Mugs	£20.0	£5.00
Dunoon Secret Garden Mug	£10.00	£2.00
Dunoon Dovedale Mug	£10.00	£2.00
Dunoon Folklore Mug	£10.00	£2.00
Dunoon Small Dovedale Mug	£8.00	£2.00
BDS Key Ring	£1.50	£0.75
BDS Car Sticker	£1.00	£0.50
BDS Logo Pin Badge	£2.00	£0.75

