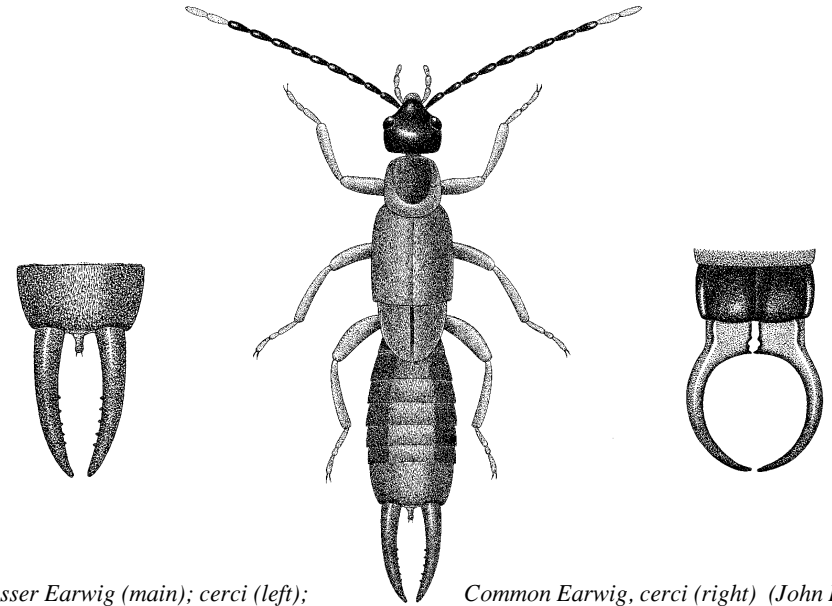

The CARLISLE NATURALIST

Volume 15 Number 1

Spring 2007

Published twice-yearly (Spring/Autumn) by Carlisle Natural History Society



Lesser Earwig (main); cerci (left); Common Earwig, cerci (right) (John Read)

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From the Editor

The current volume hopefully re-establishes the usual Spring/Autumn publication schedule. As it falls hard on the heels of the delayed 2006 issues, it is somewhat slimmer than is often the case – but hopefully of no less interest for that.

David Clarke

Society news

Following the AGM, the Society is pleased to welcome Council Member Anne Abbs as Treasurer. Anne is a busy 'Vet' but hopes she is able to fit in with most of our meetings. Dorothy Iveson has retired from the post after more than ten years efficiently managing our finances. We thank her most sincerely. Steve Hewitt is resuming the role of Secretary, but is keen that others will help in developing the programme using their particular knowledge or contacts. Frank Mawby was elected to join the Council in place of Bob Wright who sadly has had to resign due to other pressures on his time. Marie Saag and Geoff Naylor continue in their respective roles of Assistant Secretary and Recorder.

The programme for the coming season is printed on the back cover of this issue. Please note changed details to the Field Meeting on 5th May, and the addition of a Spiders Workshop in-mid September. There will not be a further mailing until quite near that time, so prior booking is advised.

Museum news

Recent additions to the collections include some 200 specimens of solitary bees and wasps collected and given by Dr Michael Archer of York. Most specimens are from Cumbrian localities, with one or two non-Cumbria species included to enhance our reference collection. Peter Harris has donated a few specimens of mosses from Cumbria, including the nationally scarce *Rhytidium rugosum* from the Pennines above Dufton and from Clawthorpe Quarry, Burton-in-Kendal; also the nationally scarce liverwort *Calypogeia azurea* from Mardale Ill Bell.

Meanwhile, we have acquired a new cabinet to house a developing collection of fungi, where we are principally acquiring material from the high fells at present.

Stephen Hewitt

3rd February, North Solway and Loch Ken

Leader: Geoff Horne

We set off from Carlisle with the sun breaking up the fog. However we hadn't travelled far north when we ran into fog again and visibility was very poor. Stops at Annan and Newby proved pointless because of the thick fog, so it was decided to head for Crocketford and Auchenreoch. Luckily there was a clear spell and we were able to see over the loch. Two (Australian!) Black Swans were present with Tufted Duck, Goldeneye and Goosander. Mute Swans, Cormorants, Herons and Teal were the other birds seen on and around the loch.

Fog drifted in while we were there so we moved on to Loch Ken where we were rewarded with beautiful blue sky and excellent views over the water. There were Greylag geese, a large number of Wigeon and a good number of Pintail and Teal. More Wigeon came whistling in, in flocks, as we watched. We had very good views of all the birds. Distant views of two Great Crested Grebes showed them 'head-wagging' in courtship display. Three Red Kites appeared over the hill in the direction of the feeding station along with a Raven. Greenland White-fronted Geese were noted in the usual area at the end of the loch and good views were had, though distant, using the telescopes. There was also a flock of Canada Geese lower down in a hollow, not easy to see, and two large flocks of Pink-footed Geese were grazing in fields in the Glenlochar area. Two Brown Hares were seen near the loch.

We moved on to the Red Kite feeding station and everyone had excellent views of the birds sitting in the trees and soaring overhead with the clear light showing up the colours and plumage patterns beautifully. There was quite a lot of calling between the birds. Ravens were present, but neither species came down when food was thrown out.

It was decided to return to the coast on the way home hopefully to pick up Whooper Swans, Barnacle Geese and shore birds, as well as finches and other hedgerow birds. However as we dropped down to the main road the fog was back, denser than ever, so we were forced to call it a day. Buzzards and Kestrels were seen at various points throughout the trip, as were Oyster-catchers and Lapwings. Many of the birds normally seen on this popular trip were missed due to the weather conditions, but we made the most of the clear spells and the day turned out better than at first anticipated.

Dorothy Iveson

Recent Reports

This report mainly covers the period from early January to early April 2007 and is sourced principally from record cards submitted by members as well as verbal reports from Society meetings. As usual, some records may require authentication. A few records from other sources (literature) have been included for their unusual interest or importance. Because of the period under review, birds form the bulk of these records.

A relatively quiet period for wildfowl with an almost complete absence of **Goosanders** at Talkin Tarn where there can be a winter flock of 100 or more. A **Smew** was seen at Tindale Tarn and a **Ring-necked Duck** at Grasmere, the latter from 17th-24th January. Also of interest was a group of 18 **Little Grebes** on Bassenthwaite Lake (GH) and a drake **Scaup** (normally a sea duck) at Carr Beds, Rockcliffe (DAI).

Amongst raptors, **Hen Harriers** were seen on the Solway plain at Silloth on 28th January, Burgh Marsh on 2nd January (both RH) and at Bowness Common (F&SM), also on 2nd January. A **Red Kite** was seen over the A69 west of Brampton on 20th February (*per* JM).

Red Grouse and **Willow Tit** at Finglandrigg on 4th February (F&SM) were good records with **Barn Owls** sighted several times by several people in the same general area.

Waders of note were a **Jack Snipe** in Geltsdale on 25th January (JH), and another at Glasson Moss on 7th February (FM). Up to 3 wintering **Green Sandpipers** by the R. Petteril just south of Carlisle were very interesting. They were seen from 1st January to at least 14th March (C&AR).

Ravens have previously been reported with increasing frequency in lowland habitats and this period was no exception, with records from Anthorn (R&SG), Dalston (GH), Irthington (KC) and Milton (GRN). Breeding indications in the lower Eden valley continue (DJC).

Tree Sparrows are still scarce but 21 were seen at Foulbridge, Wreay on 28th January (RPD) and 2 in a garden at Port Carlisle on the same day (PQ). Other finches of note were garden-feeding **Goldfinches** (up to 14) and **Yellowhammers** (up to 21!) in Dalston in January (GH). The only report of **Brambling** was of a flock of 20-30 at Bewcastle on 5th March (R&SG).

Over-wintering warblers were represented by the usual **Blackcaps** in January and February, at Dalston and in the Carlisle suburbs. A **Chiffchaff** at Grinsdale on 11th February was too early for a migrant (R&SG); migrant **Chiffchaffs** were first

encountered at Wetheral (FJR) and Finglandrigg (per FM) on 13th March with one at Lanercost the next day (GRN). The next summer visitors to arrive were **Sand Martins** with the first report so far on 29th March at Talkin Tarn (GRN *et al*). An **Osprey** was circling with Buzzards over the Eden in the Brockleworth area, 7th April (DJC).

Amphibians

The earliest reports of **Frog** spawn were on 20th February at Cumwhitton (DJC) and Penrith (SMH) with others during the following few days. During the same period, road-casualty **Toads** were seen near Brampton station (GRN).

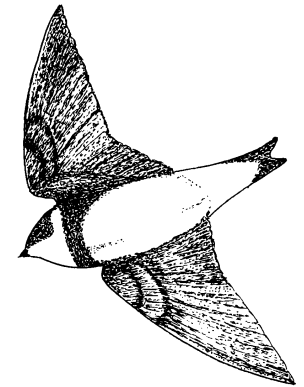
Insects

An unusual migrant moth – the **Silver-striped Hawk-moth** – was reported in the journal *Atropos* as having been recorded in Carlisle on 7th December 2006. This and the **Hummingbird Hawk-moth** had been widely reported in the UK in the 2006 summer. Examples of the latter species noted on 26th November at Dalston (GH), and on 18th February at Keswick (TS), are first records of the attempted over-wintering of this species in the north of the county. There were a few early butterflies, the first being a **Red Admiral** at Dalston on 29th January (IA). This is also of interest as a rare example of over-wintering in this species. More ‘normal’ were a **Peacock** at Kirkoswald the following day (MC) followed by a number of reports of **Small Tortoiseshell**, the earliest from Levens in south Cumbria on 7th February (IOB), and at Caldbeck in the north on 10th (NC).

Solitary bees and the bright green predatory **Tiger Beetle** were very active and numerous in sunshine on sandy ground at Coombs Wood on 27th March (DJC). Despite cool easterlies, bright sunshine brought out one or two **Peacocks** and a **Comma** at Fishgarth Wood on 1st April (DJC).

Sand Martin

(David Clarke)



Plants

DJC reports the scarce **Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem** (*Gagea lutea*) in full flower at Fishgarth Wood on 25th March, though much reduced in the size and number of its riverside colonies – perhaps an outcome of January 2005 flood? **Purple Saxifrage** (*Saxifraga oppositifolia*) was in early bud on crags on Fairfield on the same day (SMH).

Contributors

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Geoff Naylor

Notes & Records

Autumn Hawkbit (*Leontodon autumnalis* ssp. *pratensis* (Hornem.) Gremli.) in the northern Pennines

The montane Autumn Hawkbit *Leontodon autumnalis* ssp. *pratensis* does not appear to have been found in Cumbria until now. Halliday (1997) stated that there were no records of this subspecies in Cumbria (v.c.s 69 & 70) and it is not given in the Census Catalogue (Stace *et al.* 2003) for these vice-counties. On 4th July 2004 I noted a few plants of this subspecies with unopened flower heads on the south-west side of Little Fell on the Warcop Range at grid ref. NY783212 in a grassy flush at 680 m. a.s.l. and on 15th July several flowering heads were in a flushed grassy slope on the east side of Little Dun Fell at grid ref. NY7132733343 at 670 m a.s.l. – within the Moorhouse National Nature Reserve. Both these fells are in Westmorland (v.c. 69) and support some of our rarest flowering plants and bryophytes. This subspecies is best distinguished from the common lowland ssp. *autumnalis* by the dense covering of conspicuous dark hairs which cover the involucre of floral bracts and extending onto the upper part of the flower stem. The number of heads produced is variable.

For many years I have been aware of the subspecies and have checked *Leontodon autumnalis* in the fells for this floral character. I have only seen plants on these two occasions which I considered to belong to this subspecies and therefore

believe it is an uncommon taxon in the northern fells of England, although easy to overlook. A similar picture probably applies to the Southern Uplands of Scotland where I have only seen this subspecies twice in herb-rich flushed slopes in the upper Ettrick Valley, Selkirkshire (v.c. 79) at 520 m a.s.l.

The taxonomy of the very variable *Leontodon autumnalis* has very recently been subjected to much scrutiny and change by Sell & Murrell (2006). It has now been given separate generic status under *Scorzoneroides* and is divided into 14 varieties, as opposed to subspecies, based mainly on leaf shape and the type of hairs on the involucre bracts. The northern Pennine plants now come under *S. autumnalis* var. *pratensis* (Hornem.) P.D. Sell and are widespread in continental Europe. The solitary-flowered variety (also with dark involucre hairs) which was included within subspecies *pratensis*, and found only in the Scottish Highlands in Britain and Ireland, is now named *S. autumnalis* var. *alpina* (Gaudin.) P.D. Sell. However, in order to avoid confusion, it seemed appropriate to use the older and more familiar nomenclature to describe the plants in this note.

Sell and Murrell's new treatment of *Leontodon autumnalis* will almost certainly rekindle interest in its many varieties and their distribution. I have seen plants on tracks and roadsides in and around the town of Akureyri in northern Iceland with multiple flowering heads which are much more densely covered with long black hairs than any I have seen in Britain. I was interested to see in the herbarium of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, similar hairy plants collected in the early to mid-nineteenth century from Shetland and the Moray Firth coast. From the description in Sell & Murrell, they could be considered the var. *nigrolanata* (Fr.) P.D. Sell, which occurs in north-west Europe and to which these Scottish and Icelandic plants presumably belong.

It is certainly worth checking *L. autumnalis* in the fells to see if the ssp. *pratensis* is indeed rare or overlooked, and obtaining Sell and Murrell's key to all the British varieties to find out which occur in Cumbria.

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A new site for the lady's-mantle *Alchemilla glomerulans*

The arctic-alpine lady's-mantle *Alchemilla glomerulans* Buser has until recently been regarded as a very rare and local plant in Cumbria, with a single site near the River Tees (Halliday, 1997). Its main English distribution is in Upper Teesdale in Co. Durham (Graham, 1988), but with a few sites in the Yorkshire Dales (Abbott, 2005), and one in Northumberland (Swan, 1993). In an English context, it can be regarded as one of 'The Teesdale Rarities'.

Recent explorations have revealed that the plant occurs in very small quantity in high-level flushed grasslands on the Cross Fell range (Roberts, 2003; 2004), and also in unimproved hayfields at Hole House Farm near Garrigill, similar to some of its typical habitats in Teesdale (Graham 1988).

On 20th May 2006 LR and Marie Saag found two large patches of very luxuriant *Alchemilla glomerulans* on a roadside verge on the narrow lane dropping from the A686 east of Hartside summit, eastwards to the village of Leadgate, near Alston, in v.c. 70. Further investigation by the authors revealed several more colonies in the verges on both sides of the lane, with at least eight patches, mostly 1-3 metres across, but with one up 6 metres across, scattered along about 400 metres of the verges. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the known patches as circles.

The verges of the lane are 4-5 metres wide for several hundred metres from the junction with the A686, and are very floriferous, and currently ungrazed. The patches found so far are all in 1-km-square NY6943, and lie around the 400 metre contour. It is very likely that more patches await discovery in the area.

Alchemilla glomerulans occurs here with three other *Alchemillas*. *A. glabra*, a very typical of damp turf in the Pennines, is dominant along several stretches in

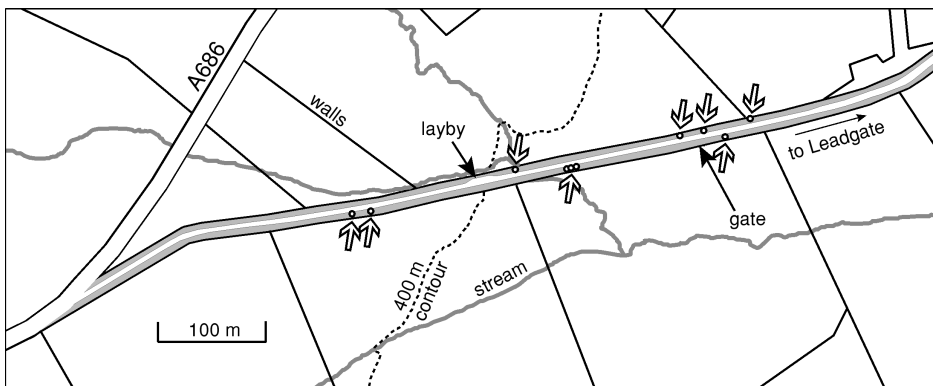
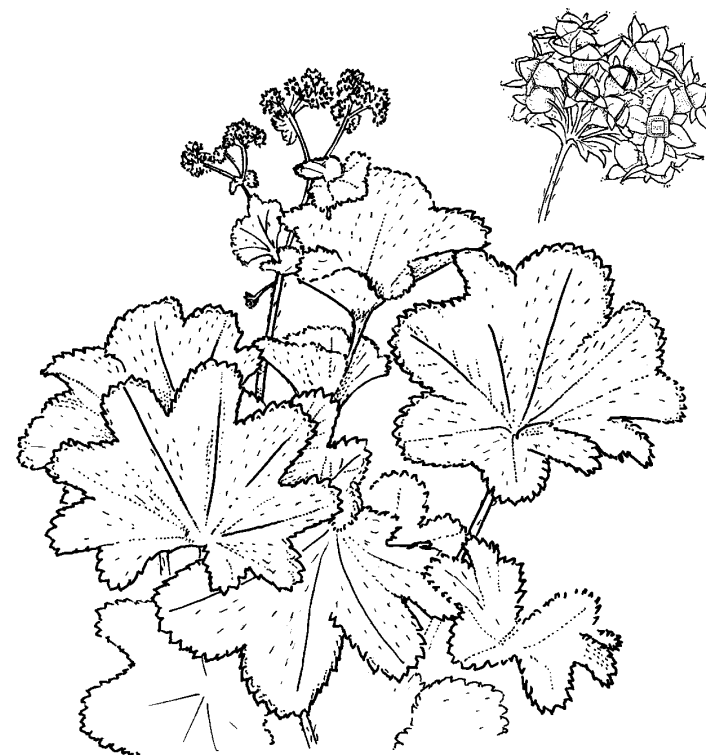


Figure 1: *Alchemilla glomerulans* (patches arrowed)



Alchemilla glomerulans

(map and illustration: Jeremy Roberts)

large and vigorous patches. These two species tend to look hairless at first glance, any hairs being extremely fine, and lying either appressed to the surfaces or standing out at a shallow angle. In *A. glabra* the hairs are very sparse and may be difficult to see, even with a lens; they occur mostly on the leaf-veins and -stalks, with few or none on the leaf surfaces. In *A. glomerulans* they are sparsely distributed all over the plant, and can often be seen most clearly when light can be shone across a leaf-surface, so illuminating the hairs. There are also subtle differences in the leaf-edge teeth being coarser than in *A. glabra*, the leaf-lobes more round, and the leaf having typically a more strongly-folded surface (which causes the leaf to develop 'pleats' when pressed). The specific epithet refers to the small globular clusters of flowers, which are tighter than in its relatives.

The other two species are thankfully less easily confused. *A. xanthochlora* often becomes a rather gross and coarse plant in lush roadside vegetation. The yellow-green leaves are hairless above, but the undersurfaces and leaf-stalks are conspicuously hairy. Flowering stems are hairy below, but become hairless

towards the tip and within the flower-clusters. *A. filicaulis* subsp. *vestita* is a smaller plant, which tends to occur here, as elsewhere, in rather less rank and drier vegetation. The plant is duller or even blueish-green, and has abundant hairs which project visibly all over the plant.

Other typical associates are Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Water Avens (*Geum rivale*), Melancholy Thistle (*Cirsium heterophyllum*), Wood Crane's-bill (*Geranium sylvaticum*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), Sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*), Colt's-foot (*Tussilago farfara*), Rough Hawkbit (*Leontodon hispidus*), and Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*).

Alchemilla glomerulans also occurs on roadsides and tracksides in Teesdale and the Yorkshire Dales, although it may have declined in this habitat with nutrient-enrichment from traffic-splashing and spread from agricultural land nearby. John Raven (Raven & Walters, 1956) makes an interesting point of distinction between the typical habitats of this species in Scotland and England: '... Whilst in the Scottish Highlands this lady's-mantle is strictly a plant of the high cliffs, only rarely descending much below 2,000 feet and then washed down by rivers, in Upper Teesdale it occurs in several places sitting prosaically with all the other Alchemillas on the grass verge by the main road.'

Since then it has been found in similar Upper Teesdale-like habitats in Selkirkshire (v.c. 79) in south-east Scotland (Corner 1969). Although lost from the sites described, it is still extant in at least three other separate localities, one of which is beside a public footpath.

The new finds constitute the most characteristic and vigorous yet known of this rare plant in Cumbria, and perhaps rival the best remaining in Teesdale.

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The Scarlet Elf-cup (*Sarcoscypha coccinea* (Jacq.: Fr.) Lambotte) and earthstar fungi (*Geastrum* sp.) at Fishgarth Wood, Armathwaite

Scattered cups of the Scarlet Elf-cup *Sarcoscypha coccinea* in deciduous woodland at Fishgarth Wood (c. NY4950) are a regular feature of winter fungi at this site from December until March – especially where new growths of Ash are replacing dead and decaying Wych Elm. The fruit-bodies grow on half-buried Elm branches and twigs amongst leaf-litter on the clayey soil on a steep slope below an old sandstone quarry. (Also present on the woodland floor hereabouts are abundant growths of the 'shield-lichen' *Peltigera praetextata*, which occur on moss-covered quarry waste). As *S. coccinea* has only recently been found to be the rarer of a closely similar species-pair, I took the opportunity to get the true identity of the Fishgarth material checked by Dr B. Spooner of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Some modern field guides (e.g. Phillips, 2006) refer to the 'Scarlet Elf-cup' as *S. austriaca* – since this is now known to be the commoner of the species-pair. Unfortunately, the critical differences between the two are in microscopic details of the spore-bearing surface, and in the spores themselves (Butterfill & Spooner, 1995). There are some (overlapping) differences in ecology. The Fishgarth material has been confirmed as the rarer one of the two – the true *S. coccinea*.

At the same location on 21st January 2007, I came across the remains of two fruiting bodies of an earthstar (*Geastrum* sp.). As it was long past the normal fruiting season, the fleshier layers were no longer present, leaving only the very durable outer 'skin' – split into the typical star shape, and surmounted by the still intact spore sac. It seemed most probable that the species concerned was the 'Collared Earthstar' *G. triplex* – also known from woodland sites in the area at Armathwaite and near Cotehill. However, Dr Spooner has pointed out that there are some indications that the species could be the 'Flask Earthstar' *G. lageniforme* – but this is a rare and mainly southerly species with no records from Cumbria. Fresh material in the autumn would be needed to check this. Either way, this is the first occasion as far as I am aware that any species of this distinctive genus of fungi has been noted from Fishgarth Wood.

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The Lesser Earwig (*Labia minor* Linnaeus) (Dermaptera, Labiidae) in West Cumbria

On 7th August 2006 while searching for beetles in an old manure heap next to a derelict barn by the ruins of Weddicar Hall, Keekle (NY013172), I discovered one male adult of this diminutive earwig. The specimen was found under a small piece of damp dung lying on a patch of straw near to the top of the heap. As the insect was so small I thought at first it was a juvenile Common Earwig (*Forficula auricularia*). However, on closer examination with a hand lens I could clearly see the almost straight-sided cerci or forceps which is an important diagnostic character, and one that helps to separate this species from *F. auricularia*. Also, the inside edges of the forceps in *L. minor* bear minute teeth whereas in *F. auricularia* the inner edges are completely smooth.

I visited the Weddicar Hall site again on 14th August and managed to find a further 15 examples of this earwig. On this occasion both males and females were discovered in the manure heap, and the majority were found by turning over large pieces of damp compacted dung, and under small heaps of old straw.

According to the distribution map in Marshall and Haes (1988), *L. minor* is widely distributed in Britain and has been recorded from England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The species has previously been recorded from Cumbria, but there appears to be no recent records of its occurrence in the county. There are 8 specimens from v.c. 70 in the collections of Tullie House Museum, Carlisle, and listed on the Virtual Fauna of Lakeland website at www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk. These are all from north Cumbria and were collected in the period 1900 to 1945.

L. minor is associated mainly with dung-heaps, but it also inhabits compost heaps and rubbish tips. The earwig appears to favour the lowest and more mature part of the dung heap where the temperature ranges from 18-25°C (Marshall and Haes *loc. cit.*), and this is an important factor for the development of the early stages. The females of *L. minor* show maternal care for their eggs and remain with them until they hatch. They also stay with the young nymphs for up to two weeks until they eventually disperse. The heat generated within the dung heap provides the

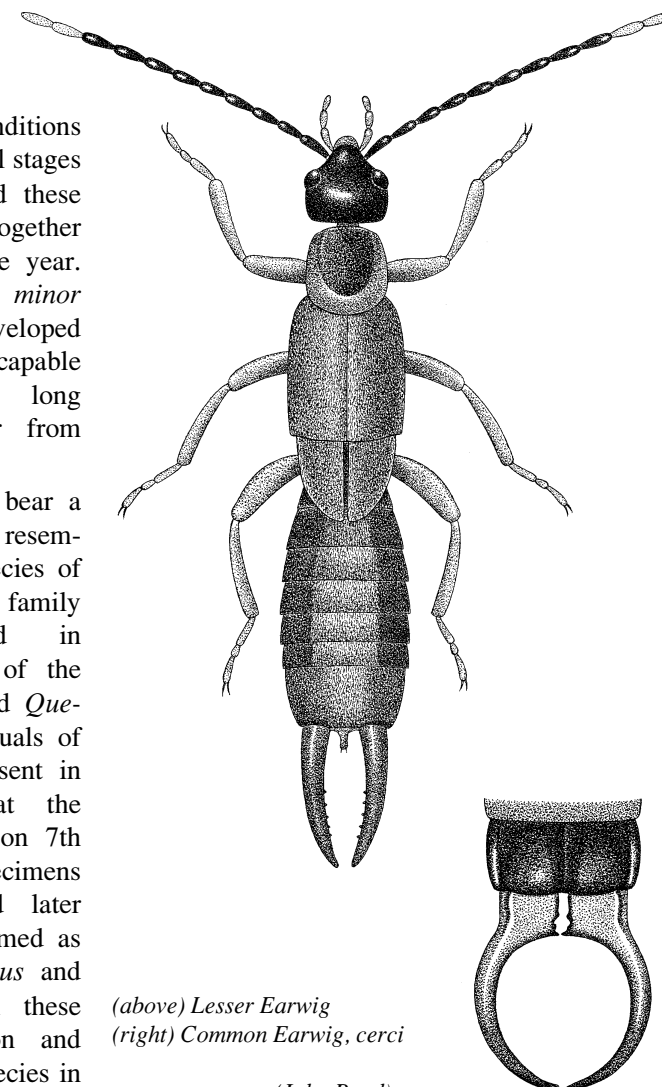
right temperature conditions for development of all stages of the life-cycle and these can all occur together throughout the whole year. The adults of *L. minor* possess fully developed wings and they are capable of flying quite long distances, often far from their usual habitats.

Adults of *L. minor* bear a somewhat superficial resemblance to certain species of rove beetles of the family Staphylinidae, and in particular members of the genus *Philonthus* and *Quedius*. Several individuals of *Philonthus* were present in the dung heap at the Weddicar Hall site on 7th August. A few specimens were collected and later identified and confirmed as *Philonthus rectangulus* and *P. umbratilis*. Both these beetles are common and widely distributed species in Britain.

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(above) Lesser Earwig
 (right) Common Earwig, cerci

(John Read)

Further records of the Thick-legged Flower-beetle *Oedemera femoralis* (Olivier) (Coleoptera: Oedemeridae) in north-west England

Whilst beating holly in Eaves Wood (SD4676) on 9th November 2006 to collect data for Ladybird and Shieldbug atlases, I obtained two specimens of a brown beetle some 20 mm in length. Subsequent examination revealed them to be a male and female of *Oedemera femoralis* (Olivier) (Duff 2005), a species previously unknown to me. To my surprise, some four days later, on 13th November, I beat two more males of the same species, one each from Holly and Yew, alongside the path that leads to Trowbarrow Quarry (SD4875). Both these localities are in Lancashire. The distinctive shape and size of the beetle make it difficult to overlook even though they were all very still on the beating tray with legs and antennae held against the body in what I assumed to be an over-wintering posture.

The only distribution or habitat information on the species given by Buck (1954) in the R.E.S. Handbook on the group states 'Southern England to Lancashire and Westmorland. On ivy and willows'. In Sharpe's list of the Coleoptera of Lancashire and Cheshire (1908) there is a record for the species (then known as *Oncomera femorata* (Fabricius)) having been 'taken at light when sugaring for moths by Mr F. Orde, at Silverdale'. I traced this record back to a note in the *Entomologists Monthly Magazine* of January 1871 by a Frank Orde Ruspini which gave the date of his capture as September 1870. The style of his note is interesting: 'When sugaring last September at Silverdale, near Lancaster, I took several specimens of both sexes of the above named beetle, which were attracted by the repast. As this appears to be a new locality for the insect, possibly its capture there will interest Coleopterists' (Ruspini, 1871). He probably never thought that his brief comments would be read with interest almost one hundred and forty years later!

In addition there is a record on a card index at Manchester Museum of a specimen taken at Grange-over-Sands by A.E. Wright on 20th April 1924. At that time this area was in the county of Lancashire. Don Stenhouse informs me that he can find no recent records for either Cheshire or Lancashire and assumes it to be rare in both these counties. (All the other specimens in the Manchester Museum collection are from much further south, the most northerly being from Llanymynech Hill in Powys).

Coincidentally, John Read (Read, 2006) gave details of seven specimens of this beetle from the Birkett collection recently acquired by Tullie House Museum. The data labels show that four of these were from south Westmorland. It was suggested that these were the first records of the species for Cumbria (Read 2006) but, in fact that of A.E. Wright pre-dates them. *O. femoralis* is graded as a

Nationally Scarce (Nb) species and is regarded as widespread but very local in Britain (Hyman and Parsons 1992).

Little appears to be known about the ecology of the beetle. The Birkett records support its association with willow in the early part of the year whilst my records suggest that the species over winters as an adult in the foliage of suitable evergreen trees and bushes.

Thanks are due to Don Stenhouse and Dmitri Logunov of the Manchester Museum and Steve Judd of the Liverpool Museum for their assistance in providing the data upon which this note is based.

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The ladybird-beetle *Scymnus schmidtii* Fursch (Coleoptera, Coccinellidae) in Cumbria

Scymnus schmidtii is a small member of the ladybird family (Coccinellidae), on average just under 2.5 mm in length. It is black in colour but with pale tibiae.

There is a specimen in the F.H. Day collection in the Tullie House Museum that was collected by Day at Silloth on 16th April 1900. It was originally probably identified as *S. frontalis* by him and included in his local lists under that name. Subsequently R.D. Pope examined this specimen and re-identified it as *S. schmidtii*. It is the only record of the species in Cumbria on the maps for *Scymnus* and allied species produced by Pope in 1973. The provisional distribution map for

S. schmidti shows that it has a very sparse distribution in northern Britain. Its stronghold is obviously in the south-eastern counties of England with isolated records from Anglesey in Wales and from Kirkcudbrightshire and Argyllshire in Scotland. The more northern records are all coastal, as is the case with so many species that reach the northern limit of their distribution in or near our area. It is Nationally Scarce (Notable Nb).

There do not appear to have been any further records of the species in Cumbria since 1900. On 22nd August 2006 I obtained a small black beetle that I recognised as *Scymnus* whilst sweeping the dune grassland just south of the road that leads to Drigg Road End (SD 04963 98176). My friend Stan Bowstead kindly confirmed the identity of the beetle as *S. schmidti* and this would appear to be the first recent record of the species in the county.

Pope's notes on distribution (Pope, 1977) suggest that the beetle is to be found in warm, dry situations from March to December. It is interesting to read his comment that Horace Donisthorpe had noted in his diaries that he took the beetle by sweeping on sand dunes in Windsor Forest. Apparently nothing is recorded of its life history and early stages.

Thanks are due to Steve Hewitt and Stan Bowstead for their assistance in the preparation of this note.

Reference

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The rare soldier-beetle *Cantharis fusca* L., new to Cumbria

Cantharis fusca is one of the UK's rarest soldier-beetles, with status now rated RDB3. Up to 1945 it was very localised but widespread in England north to Lancashire and Yorkshire (with one record from dunes near Edinburgh in 1903), but since 1980 it has appeared to be confined to the south coast and Somerset, apart from two occurrences at Ripon, Yorkshire, in 1992-3. Keith Alexander (2003) attributes its dramatic decline to the disappearance of unimproved hay meadows. At 13 mm long and with black elytra (and so strictly a 'sailor beetle' not a red 'soldier'), it is unlikely to have been overlooked by Day and others in Cumberland, even though superficially resembling *C. rustica* in the field.

On the lower, north-facing slopes of Ling Fell (NY175293), at around 600 ft a.s.l., is a small area of private amenity woodland, informally named Edwards' Wood. It was planted up about 1990 with oaks, bird-cherry and a few larches. There are also many hawthorns, some birch and ash saplings and masses of gorse around the edges. The area is walled off and surrounded on three sides by treeless sheep-pasture on the fell; below it are richer pastures with more trees and sheep, but no hay meadows, traditional or otherwise.

In this woodland on 6th June 2006 I found a female *C. fusca* on a tiny larch. It was a hot day (72° F. here later) and the beetle was very active. Later visits to the area produced no more examples, though the species seems to be over by 22nd June elsewhere. Six other species of soldier-beetle, all common, were there on various dates. Also, on 6th June, an uncommon weevil, *Magdalis ruficornis* L., was found on a young oak, on 9th June my first ever *Hylastinus obscurus* Marsh on gorse, and on 9th September a dozen *Scymnus suturalis* Thun., a tiny ladybird relative, on yarrow but near larches. An interesting site to have practically on one's doorstep!

Reference

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Trichiusa immigrata Lohse and other noteworthy beetles recently found in Cumbria

On 2nd February 2007 I found a tiny, 2 mm long, black rove-beetle in the large old grassheap in Embleton Churchyard (NY162294). It did not look right for an *Autalia* or *Cordalia* but when it curved its abdomen over its back I remembered that was said to be a characteristic of *Trichiusa immigrata*, and so it proved to be. This European species was first recorded in Britain in 1992, in rotten potatoes in Kent (Heal, 1993), and has since spread rapidly in suitable habitats – grassheaps, compost and dung-heaps. It has now been reported, sometimes in numbers (27 in one compost bin), from southern, south-western and midland counties as far north as Leicestershire. It had reached east Yorkshire in 1996, with 11 more localities in south Yorkshire by 2002, and somehow got to Raasay, off Skye, by September 2003!

Nudobius lentus Gr. is a predatory rove-beetle, handsome in black with bright red elytra, formerly confined to pine bark in the east Highlands of Scotland. Around

1948 it was somehow introduced to the south of England and has spread widely since, occasionally to other trees. I had seen it in Gloucestershire under pine bark in 1964, but was pleasantly surprised to find four in a cut Scots Pine log at the south-west end of Thirlmere (NY3213) on 31st August 2005; there were more in the area later, on 2nd September 2005 and 10th August 2006. These are the first record for v.c. 70 Cumberland, but there is an unpublished record for v.c. 69 – one in a pine stump at Nichols Moss on 29th May 1971 by J. Thomas.

Two other rove-beetles (Staphylinidae) new to Cumbria were found at Newton, Reigny Moss in v.c. 70 (NY4731) recently: the fen species *Philonthus fumarius* Gr. in rotten wood by a ditch on 20th September 2005; and the small and recently recognised (1953) northern species *Stenus umbratilis* Casey, a dead male in a *Typha* stem on 6th April 2006. Also at Newton Reigny on 6th April 2006 was the hydrophilid water-beetle *Anacaena lutescens* Ste. – three in a shallow pool with some vegetation. This was recorded, as new to v.c. 69 at Burns Beck Moss, by Liverpool Museum in 2001. Newton Reigny might be a first site in v.c. 70, but as the species was only split from *A. limbata* F. in 1986 I suspect some, or most, of the latter ('not uncommon' in F.H. Day's lists) were really *lutescens*.

Ampedus pomorum Hbst. is a large click-beetle with red elytra. Though rated nationally only Nb there are few records for central England and rather more from Ireland and northern Scotland. The only records for Cumbria were four specimens under birch bark on Nichols, Meathop and Rusland Mosses in v.c. 69 in 1971, all by J. Thomas. In Rydal Park (NY3706, v.c. 69) on 27th June 2006 I found three together under the loose bark of a small fallen oak bough. Also in the Park, under bark of oak boughs, were numbers of the curious flat circular peltid beetle *Thymalus limbatus* F., on 27th June and 9th November 2006. There are seven previous records of this species in Cumbria, all in v.c. 69, from 1989 to 1998.

Dacne rufifrons Hbst. is a small (2 mm) erotylid fungus-feeder, black with some reddish marks. On 31st October 2006 three (one immature, still mostly testaceous in colour) emerged from a clump of *Pleurotus* fungi gathered in Beckhouse (NY163292) earlier that week. Later, on 18th December 2006, one adult and three immatures were found in the same clump. This is the first record for Cumbria; it has apparently not been found previously north of Yorkshire. Its less uncommon congener, *Dacne bipustulata* F., has been seen only once in Cumbria – in a Dryad's Saddle bracket-fungus (*Polyporus squamosus*) at Durdar in June 1954 by F.H. Day. That species, however, does occur further north, in Lanarkshire (1963) and Northumberland (1992). One other beetle emerged from the *Pleurotus*, the predatory rove-beetle *Gabrius piliger* Muls., last recorded in Cumberland a century ago by Britten.

Enicmus rugosus Hbst. (Lathridiidae) is a small fungus-feeder, rated RDB2 but lately demoted to Nb. Two examples were found in the birch fungus *Lenzites betulina* in carr at Newton Reigny Moss on 20th September 2005. This is the first record for Cumbria. (Britten's '*rugosus*' in 1905 was the newly recognised species *fungicola* Th.)

Rabocerus gabrieli Gerh. (Salpingidae) is another scarce (Nb) dead-wood bark beetle, also found by Britten in 1902 and 1907 at Great Salkeld (and with two recent records in v.c. 69). One was on a dead bough of a Scots Pine by Thirlmere (NY3213) on 30th August 2005.

Barypeithes sulcifrons Boh. is a scarce (Nb) broad-nosed weevil usually found near the coast. John Read recorded it first in Cumberland, at three sites along the west coast in 1978, 1980 and 1982. Two under a plank on the sandy bank of the tidal River Leven near Haverthwaite (SD3384) on a cold misty day, 22nd April 2006, are the first record for v.c. 69.

Ceuthorrhynchus mixtus Muls., a tiny round weevil, was once regarded as a very rare species of southern England and associated with nettles. It seems to have become much commoner (merely Nb) by the 1990s, with records for Wales and up to Yorkshire. John Read again found it first in Cumbria, at Ellerbeck Wood in December 1984. I swept three examples off Climbing Corydalis (*Ceratocarpus claviculata*), now recognised along with Fumitory as its true food plant, in Chapel Wood, Wythop (NY198293) on 26th June 2006.

Trypodendron signatum F. is a black and yellow ambrosia-bark-beetle, mostly found on oak. Downgraded from RDB3 to Nb, though the sole record for Cumberland was mine by Derwentwater in 1985, and with two at Roudsea Wood, v.c. 69, in 1964 and 1971. A female was flying near old oaks at Rydal (NY360064) on 5th May 2006.

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Book Review

Galloway and the Borders by Derek Ratcliffe; HarperCollins *New Naturalist*. ISBN 978-0-00-717401-0

The 101st publication in the collectable *New Naturalist* series focuses on the area of Scotland south of the Southern Uplands Fault that runs northeast from the northern tip of the Rhinns of Galloway to Dunbar on the east coast. Written by the late Derek Ratcliffe, it represents the first comprehensive publication about the region's natural history.

The publication beautifully describes the many and varied habitats found throughout the region, perhaps giving greater weight to the author's favourite haunts in the heart of Galloway. Chapters are presented on each broad habitat – coast, wetlands, grasslands, woodlands, and the uplands – and each provides detailed information on the flora and fauna found therein. The text is supported by photographs of the region's species and special places, many from the author's own unique archive.

The book is far more than a description of species and habitats. It succeeds in placing extensively researched historical context to the information provided and links this factual knowledge to the changing land use and conservation policies that have influenced them. The author's knowledge and experience of these, derived from his many years working at the sharp end of nature conservation, is apparent and helps us all remember how far conservation has come over the past few decades. The chapter on the progressive discovery and cataloguing of the region's natural history by naturalists reminds us all that it is the knowledge, enthusiasm and hard work of amateur naturalists that have contributed much to our collective knowledge, and rightly acknowledges a number of those who continue this work today.

The reader is left in no doubt of the author's views about the changes that have taken place in the region over the last fifty years, particularly that caused by afforestation which he noted 'has overstepped the boundaries of acceptability by a fairly wide margin'. I understand from others who knew him well that Derek's views are expressed with far more circumspection, though with no less eloquence and passion, than he may have done on a walk with companions in the Galloway hills. The photographs showing the landscape impacts of commercial afforestation vividly demonstrate these changes.

The book is not without some minor faults. Whilst the coverage of birds and plants is quite comprehensive, similar detail is lacking in some of the other species

groups, although this partly reflects our lack of knowledge of many of these taxonomic groups. Some of the figures quoted are a little out of date and could have been updated from more recent sources. Perhaps if I worked in the Borders I would reflect that the eastern part of the area receives less attention than it deserves.

These minor issues aside, the book provides a well-written, interesting, informative account of the region's natural history. As with the best in the *New Naturalist* series, the author's passion and knowledge are conveyed in an eminently readable prose. I can think of few naturalists who would not find something new or interesting amongst the text, and the book's greatest achievement is bringing together in one publication a wealth of information about an area which is often overlooked. Perhaps it will encourage others, both locals and visitors, to explore the region and uncover more gems hidden in Galloway and the Borders.

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[Derek Ratcliffe was one of the twentieth century's leading scientific naturalists and conservationists. He was a life-member of this Society and our own tribute to him appeared in the *Carlisle Naturalist* **13** (2) p. 28. His pioneering work on the exploration of Galloway and the Borders began early in his life and remains one of his lasting contributions. The text of this book was his last work, completed only a short time before his sudden death on 23rd May 2005. *Ed.*]

The Carlisle Naturalist

Editor: David Clarke

Editorial Panel: Roy Atkins, David Clarke, Stephen Hewitt, Geoff Naylor,
Jeremy Roberts

Layout & DTP: Jeremy Roberts

Artwork: David Clarke, John Read, Jeremy Roberts

Material for publication may be emailed to the editor at:

DavidC@carlisle-city.gov.uk

However, please also send hard copy to:

David Clarke, Tullie House Museum, Castle St., Carlisle CA3 8TP

so that original formatting can be confirmed and any problems of reading other software avoided.

Copy deadline for the next issue is: **mid-September 2007**

Information for Authors

The *Carlisle Naturalist* publishes material on all aspects of the natural history of Cumbria. General articles, results of personal research, news items, records and letters of relevance to Cumbrian naturalists are welcomed. Material accepted for publication must not be submitted in a similar form to any other journal.

Material should be clearly legible – ideally type-written double-spaced on one side of white A4 paper, or submitted on CD/DVD in rich text or plain text format and accompanied by a paper copy. Only species and genera should be underlined. Authority names should be given in full. Illustrations should be in black ink; they must be originals and not photocopies. Whilst every care will be taken of original artwork, the editor can not be held responsible for any loss or damage. References should be given in full at the end of the article or note.

Authors of papers two or more pages in length will be provided with 10 reprints. Papers may be submitted to a referee.

Opinions expressed in the *Carlisle Naturalist* are not necessarily shared by the Council of Carlisle Natural History Society or the Editorial Panel.

Standard abbreviations used in this issue: v.c.: vice-county.

For conservation status definitions (e.g. Nationally Scarce, etc) consult:
www.jncc.gov.uk/species/Species_Status_Assessment/hierarchyoflists.htm

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Membership **application forms** are available from the Secretary, Stephen Hewitt, address above, or contact Stephen or David Clarke at Tullie House, tel. 01228-534781, or e-mail to: nature@tulliehouse.co.uk

Field Meetings & Workshops 2007

5th May: *Thirlmere: upland birds*

Leader: Geoff Horne. Dep: 9.30am; meet Great Wood, Keswick, NY272.215
[NB: note change from earlier venue], 10.30am.

9th June: *Sandscale Haws NR, Askam-in-Furness – sand dune flora and fauna*

Leader at site: Pete Burton. Dep: 9am; pay car park at venue: SD200.756, 11.15am.

23rd June: *Rockcliffe Marsh NR – saltmarsh birds and plants*

Leader: Mike Carrier. Dep: 10.00am. Numbers limited, phone 07767-888-619 after 15th June to confirm interest.

14th July: *Smardale & Waitby Greenriggs – orchids and other flora of limestone*

Leader: Geoff Naylor. Dep: 9.30am.

28th July: *Stable Hervey Moss, Coniston - dragonflies and other insects*

Leader: David Clarke. Dep: 9.30am. Venue rendezvous SD281.915 – bridge over Black Beck, 11.00am - phone 07767-888-619 if going direct.

15th September: *Spiders Workshop*

Leaders: Dave Blackledge and Jennifer Newton. 10am at Tullie House, followed by an afternoon field visit to the Solway mosses. Lunch not provided. Numbers limited, please book via Tullie House Box Office: 01228-534664. (Free to CNHS members.)

27th October: *Waxcaps and other fungi on Latrigg*

Leader: Stephen Hewitt, dep: 9.30am.