



WWBIC Bulletin No. 20

Nov 2013

Welcome to WWBIC newsletter number 20. Thank you to everyone that has contributed.



Interesting stuff

Diptera species new to Wales!

While visiting West Wales Darwyn Sumner (ALERC & Dipterists Forum) found a species first for Wales. *Phytomyza orobanchia*, a Nationally Scarce Dipteran from the Agromyzidae Family recorded at Freshwater East, SS0159897858 on 21/06/2013. Peter Chandler said about the photo Darwyn sent him, "It runs to it in Spencer's handbook, and is said to have an elongate third antennal segment (longer than most agromyzids). Alan [Stubbs] reared it from Orobanche at Leckford in the 1970s. I think the specimens were given to NHM . . . I haven't found this species since. Spencer (1972) also recorded it from Ivinghoe and it appears from the draft review that it has since been found in Kent and Surrey. Apparently new to Wales!!"



© Darwyn Sumner, *Phytomyza orobanchia*

Cardiganshire – a new lichen species

The Cardiganshire lichen and lichenicolous fungus list edges ever upwards and now stands at 973 with the discovery at Hafod last month of *Clauzadea metzleri*, a Nationally Scarce lecideine crustose saxicole restricted to pure limestone, a wholly unexpected find as the v.c- lacks natural hard limestone. The lichen occurred on the damp side of an ornamental block of oolitic Cotswold (Jurassic) limestone atop a stone gatepost pillar by the riverside cottage. The stone possibly dates back to c. late 18th century when the now demolished mansion (also containing Cotswold blocks) was built. How it arrived at Hafod is quite mysterious. If it did not journey directly on the stone, like some exoplanetary lifeform, either as a microscopic hypha or hitchhiking propagule, then an ascospore must have fallen from the sky and landed, incredibly, just in the right place. 'Connectivity' has become such a buzzword in the strange pseudoscientific world of government biodiversity policy that moments like this demonstrate how little we know about the complexities of connectivity between habitats with respect to such small and widely dispersing organisms.

Steve Chambers

Pembrokeshire Recording Fungus Network Update



© David Harries,
Campanella caesia

Sand dunes in Pembrokeshire continue to merit close attention with records for two red data list species in the last month.

The first find cropped up on the fore-dunes at Freshwater West when a collection of small, white, shell-like fruit-bodies was observed near the base of dead Marram Grass stems. This was the first County record for *Campanella caesia*.

Not to be outdone, the other end of the County provided another red data list record towards the end of October. This time the species was one of the tiny Bird's Nest Fungi - *Cyathus stercoreus* - which turned up at Poppit Sands. *C. stercoreus* is usually associated with buried rabbit dung alongside Marram Grass.



© Mike Crutchley, *Cyathus stercoreus*



© David Harries, *Cyathus olla*

In addition to *C. stercoreus*, there were numerous examples of a more common species, *C. olla*. This latter species is not confined to dunes, and may also turn up on woody debris and compost.

Photos (bar = 10mm.)

David Harries

Ceredigion odonata

© Tony Allenby, *Aeshna grandis*



Tony Allenby's sighting of two Brown Hawkers *Aeshna grandis* at RSPB Ynys Hir Reserve on 19th August 2013 is a first for the county. No proof of breeding, obviously blown over on warm easterly winds.

© Meg & David Kirby, Vagrant Emperor

Meg and David Kirby found a migrant female Vagrant Emperor this morning 13th November. They collected it, let



it dry out and warm up in their conservatory and released it. Vagrant Emperors are of African/Asian origin and migrate at night.

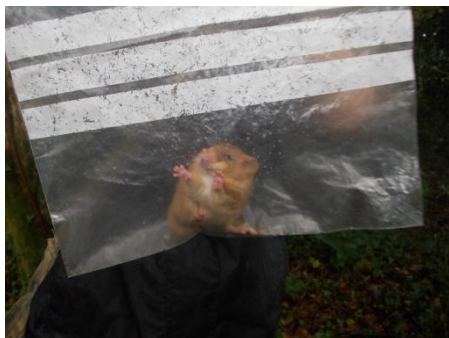
There have been a few recorded in UK and Eire this autumn.

There is a good article on the BDS website <http://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk/content/vagrant-emperors-autumn-2013>

Lin Gander

Dormouse monitoring at Rhos Cefn Bryn, 2013 report

Due to exceptionally wet weather in 2012 only four adult males, four adult females, one juvenile male and two juvenile females were recorded as part of the National Dormouse Monitoring Programme (NDMP) at Rhos Cefn Bryn. In June a failed brood of four young greys were found dead in a drain pipe nest box.



©Richard Pond, Hazel dormouse

I undertook the first dormouse monitoring of 2013 on 9th of March during a mild spell. There were unoccupied wood mouse nests and evidence of possible dormouse hibernation emergence activity in one nest box. Temperatures then plummeted until the end of April and I believe this proved to be a serious set-back for the local dormouse population. The early mild period in March encouraged dormouse hibernation emergence, only to go back into deep torpor when the temperatures fell. [Read more](#)

Richard Pond

Fairy Fun Time in the Garden

When a strapping lad turned up to the waxcap foray in a pink tutu and fairy wings, I knew our marketing strategy had worked. The second Wales Fungus Day (now part of UK Fungus Day) held at the National Botanic Garden of Wales attracted a motley crew of young and old dressed as fairies and elves, no doubt attracted by the offer of free entry as by the chance to dress up for fun.

Despite persistent rain, 360 people turned up for an event packed day. The first walk augered well – over 40 people joined David Mitchel for a Wonderful World of Waxcaps walk, which not only entertained but uncovered several new fungi records for the site. [Read more](#)



©Carl Stringer, David Mitchel

New species recorded at the National Botanic Gardens of Wales by David Mitchel during Wales Fungus Day include a first for Wales, *Stropharia rugosoannulata* (King Stropharia). Other species recorded at the Gardens for the first time are, *Tricholoma scalpturatum* (The Yellowing Knight), *Volvariella gloiocephala* (Stubble Rosegill) and *Amanita rubescens* var. *rubescens* (The Blusher).

Bruce Langridge

Important advice for dog owners

Please read the following article from Nathan Walton, Wildlife Trust Officer for Pembrokeshire, concerning dog fouling. [Read more](#)

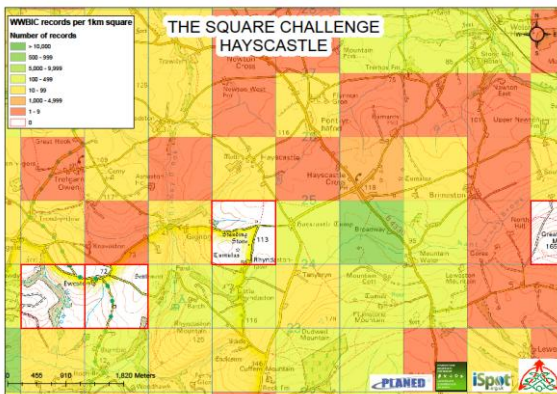
Projects

The Square Challenge

Earlier this year Clare Flynn, iSpot mentor for Wales, approached WWBIC with her own idea for a recorder “square bashing” project. Building on her work with community groups in the iSpot role, her idea is not only to get people to target under-recorded areas, but also to engage more people in recording and to support them with help and training in wildlife identification.

The project has already begun in Pembrokeshire with the help of PLANED and the Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership who suggested Haystack Environmental Society as a group who might like to pilot the idea. We took the idea to them and the response was enthusiastic. The official launch was on their “Feed the Birds Day” on the 26th October although people had already begun to accumulate a substantial list of records well before then.

The enthusiasm of the group has taken us a little by surprise. From our initial idea of focusing in on a single 1km square, they have taken on a 6 x 6km grid which includes some zero and low record count squares. A guide has been written up to help the participants in the project and WWBIC created a large format map of the area for their community centre to help them visualise the target area and WWBIC’s current record holdings.



© Colin Russell

Clare Flynn at 'Feed the Birds Day'



We are looking forward to receiving the records from the group, seeing how the map has changed and now that the project is up and running we hope to attract other groups and to move into Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion. If you know of a group who might be interested, please get in touch.

The Fascinating Fungi of Pembrokeshire

Some of you will have seen news of the exhibition of fungi photographs which was displayed in Narberth museum during September.



© Colin Russell, Fungi Exhibition at Narberth Museum

This new venture has been a collaboration between Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording Network and WWBIC. PFRN contributed images and designed posters and WWBIC arranged for these to be printed on board and hung in the exhibition space at Narberth Museum and to promote UK Fungus day. The images, ranging from A1 to A4 size are stunning and include a combination of standard, macro and microphotography, the latter courtesy of Mike Crutchley.

The exhibition has since gone on to the National Botanic Gardens of Wales where it has been viewed by an even greater number of people.

We hope that this resource will be used again and again and we'd like to do something similar with other groups in West Wales.

Colin Russell

Data

There are **1,056,799** species records in our Recorder 6 database.
The number of records in the GIS reporting species layer is: **990,788**

Since the last newsletter we have received the following datasets: Carmarthenshire birds 2008 – 2012; VC46 moths incl.2012; Ty Canol data; records from Just Mammals and several other datasets. Madeline has collected boxes of paper records from Cors Caron and Cors Rheidol for computerisation.

Feedback

WWBIC Board of Directors

WWBIC are pleased to welcome a new member to the Board of Directors, Huw Jones BSc., MPhil, MCIWEM.

Huw lives in Carmarthenshire and has recently retired from Welsh Government where he has held various posts as a science advisor and most recently as the head of the Animal Welfare team dealing with EU negotiations. Huw lists amongst his competencies, policy analysis and development, human and financial management and communications. We are sure he will prove to be an asset to our small team and we look forward to working with him.

Colin Russell

WWBIC 2013 Recording Days



© Kate Smith, Emperor moth larva

Three WWBIC recording days took place over the summer, one in each county of our region. The first, on July 3rd was at Sunny Hill Farm, Jeffreyston, by kind permission of owners Sue Williams, Paul Williams and Dave Radford, and organised by Jane Hodges. Sunny Hill, set in a secluded valley on the edge of the National Park, has been in the owners' family since 1949. It is a traditional farm comprising of small fields and mature hedge banks and in the past was a low intensity dairy farm. The day was well attended and a rich diversity of

species were recorded, including the notable plant species *Juncus x diffusus* (a hybrid rush), *Rorippa microphyllum* (Narrow-fruited water-cress) and *Ranunculus lingua* (Greater spearwort). Invertebrates recorded included *Misumena vatia* (Goldenrod crab spider), *Saturnia pavonia* (Emperor moth) larva and *Machimus cingulatus* (Brown Heath Robberfly) amongst others.

The second recording day took place on July 26th at Bryngwyn, Llansadwrn by kind permission of Drs Chris and Peter Havelock. Bryngwyn is an isolated, 20 acre small holding approximately 900ft above sea level with fantastic views of the Brecon Beacons. It hasn't been grazed for a number of years and as a result comprises of areas of bracken and scrub. During the day Theresa Greenaway recorded 43 lichen species, the first of which was *Usnea articulata*, here described by Theresa, "this distinctive lichen was hanging in festoons on hawthorn and oak trees just off the main track near the house at Bryngwyn. It is ranked as 'Vulnerable' on the Welsh Red Data List (Woods, 2010) and is also on Section 42 of the NERC Act." Two other lichen species of conservation interest recorded were *Schismatomma cretaceum* and *Dimerella lutea*. Other highlights included *Dryopteris carthusiana* (Narrow buckler fern), *Epipactis helleborine* (Broad-leaved Helleborine) and *Bombus hypnorum* (Tree bumblebee).



© Kate Smith, *Usnea articulata*



© Kate Smith, *Bromus secalinus*

The third recording day was held on 1st August at Dolgoch, Brongest by kind permission of Mr Nick Fordham. Dolgoch is a 250 acre organic dairy farm set in the Afon Mendeni valley with the Afon Ceri running along its periphery and has areas of ancient woodland. Highlights recorded on the day were *Bromus secalinus* (Rye brome), *Panicum miliaceum* (Common millet) and *Avena sterilis subsp. ludoviciana* (Winter wild-oat), all recorded on the dung heap! Lichens of interest in a county-context included *Sphinctrina turbinata*, notable due to the low number of records for the county and *Punctelia reddenda*, a good indicator of ancient and old-growth woodland. Twelve butterfly species were recorded and one *Cordulegaster boltonii* (Golden-ringed dragonfly) on Afon Ceri.

WWBIC Free Training Days

Funding from Wales Biodiversity Partnership made it possible for us to hold more training events this year. The first was herptile identification led by Peter Hill on 22nd of May at Stackpole. The second was fern identification led by Richard Pryce on a very warm 13th of July at Glynhir. Next we had a sunny butterfly identification training at Carmel NNR led by Deborah Sazer on August 7th and dragonfly identification led by Wendy Harris on 17th August. We hope to hold some more training in the coming months.

Kate Smith

Forthcoming events

30th Pembrokeshire Bird Conference

Saturday 23rd November 2013

Pembrokeshire College, Haverfordwest

[More information](#)

WWBIC Recorders Forum

Saturday 15th February 2014

Harlow Room, Welsh Wildlife Centre, Cilgerran

Invitation emails will be sent out in January, if you don't receive an email and wish to attend please contact the WWBIC office.

MaMoNet Hedgehog and Harvest Mouse Seminar

Saturday 15th February 2014

Aberystwyth Arts Centre

[More information](#)

Thank you

Thanks to the land owners of this summer's recording days, we were treated exceptionally well this year and were catered for at every venue, particularly at Bryngwyn where we were provided with a delicious lunch.

Thanks to those who made the fungi exhibition possible, David and Mike (PFRN), staff at Narberth museum and Bruce at NBGW.

If you have any comments or feedback regarding this newsletter please email: kate@westwalesbiodiversity.org.uk or phone the WWBIC office on 01994 241468



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West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre