

Earlham Cemetery, Norwich - Insects of Note

Insects of note known to be currently resident in the Cemetery
or recorded in the recent past.

Last updated 28th March 2024.

Compiled by Stuart Paston, who is the recorder unless otherwise stated.

COLEOPTERA

Rhizophagus parallelcollis Graveyard Beetle.

Found by Vanna Bartlett in January 2023, the first on a gravestone and then several more under logs. Very few Norfolk records - previously seen in Earlham Cemetery in 1904. The beetles feed on decaying organic matter and have an association with graves.

[Metoecus paradoxus](#) Wasp Nest Beetle.

This arrestingly odd looking beetle is widely distributed nationally but very local. One was found settled on a birch trunk beside the cycle way north of the burial chapel on the afternoon of 20 Sept 2007. This species has been previously recorded in west Norwich by Tony Irwin but is usually infrequently encountered. Larvae live in nests of the wasp *Vespula vulgaris* after initially locating the adult wasp when it visits a tree in spring in order to collect bark for nest construction. Eggs of the beetle are laid on trunks of old trees in autumn.

DIPTERA

[Agathomyia falleni](#) Platypezidae (Flat-footed Flies)

A female of this species was discovered on a horse chestnut trunk in the avenue close to the main Bowthorpe Road entrance TG210089 on 6 October 2013. Where life histories are known all Platypezids are fungus feeders and *falleni* is known to breed in *Bjerkandera adusta*. This was identified at the site on 28 October 2013.

This species is restricted to south east England including East Anglia but there have been no previous records from Norfolk (Peter Chandler pers.comm).

[Amobia signata](#) Flesh fly

An individual of this local fly was found on field maple foliage east of the burial chapel in June 2004. The larvae are cleptoparasites in the nests of a very wide range of solitary bees and wasps. Determination by Tony Irwin.

Anthomyia monilis Anthomyiid fly

This fly is locally common in the UK but has been rarely recorded in Norfolk. A female was found on a south facing embankment alongside the disused RC burial chapel on 4 August 2008. Determination by Tony Irwin. Nest holes of solitary wasps

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(see *Astata boops* below) were present at the site but would appear to have no significance in relation to this fly's occurrence.

Its breeding habits seem to be unknown but other members of the genus are associated with bird nests or vertebrate faeces and decomposing fungi.

[Brachyopa insensilis](#) Hoverfly

Widespread in UK but sparsely recorded away from south east and parts of eastern England.

An awareness that this species is particularly associated with horse chestnut in suburban situations led the author to investigate suitable habitat in the Cemetery in May 2009 and he was rewarded with the discovery of a male hovering in front of a sap run on a horse chestnut trunk in the avenue close to the main Bowthorpe Road entrance TG211089. The species has been observed here subsequently but searches elsewhere in the Cemetery and in other places in Norwich have failed to produce further records. The Cemetery is therefore the only Norfolk site for this species to date. Larvae develop in sap runs and a wide range of deciduous trees are used but it is the frequent use of horse chestnut that has proved particularly productive in enabling dipterists to discover new sites for the species in recent years.

[Chetostoma curvinerve](#) Fruit fly

This Red Data Book species was recorded in the Cemetery on a number of dates between January and March 2004. The site was a shrubbery close to the burial chapel where, for the most part, an individual remained on one particular growth of ivy. It has not been recorded since but this is in keeping with this rather enigmatic insect whose life history is unknown although it is thought the larvae develop in berries.

Apart from the Cemetery the only other Norfolk records for this species are from the author's garden close to the Cemetery, and Cringleford Woods, where it was discovered in 2003 by Tony Irwin. Elsewhere it has been recorded as far north as Yorkshire but most records are from Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Sussex and Surrey. The bulk of sightings are from mid January to mid May with a peak in March and it has frequently been found in gardens as well as wooded areas.

[Criorhina berberina](#) Hoverfly

This bumblebee mimic is a fairly common species but its occurrence in the Cemetery is still of note as it indicates the site's potential to support hoverflies that depend on decaying wood. A male of this species was observed briefly visiting flowers of *Euonymus japonicus* just west of the Cemetery office TG211086 in early August 2009.

[Criorhina ranunculi](#) Hoverfly

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A male red-tailed form of this species was discovered resting on foliage beside the rotten base of a horse chestnut in the avenue close to the main Bowthorpe Road gate TG211089 in April 2009..The larvae develop in the decaying roots of trees. The comments for *berberina* apply to this species too.

[Leopoldius signatus](#) Thick Headed Fly

This Nationally Scarce Conopid fly is usually found in late summer and autumn about ivy blossom. The larva are endoparasitoids of *Vespula* wasps.

I have recorded this species about ivy at several widely separated sites in the Cemetery in Sep 2004, Oct 2005 and Sep 2007.

HEMIPTERA

[Ledra aurita](#) Eared Leafhopper

Recorders: Vanna and Jeremy Bartlett.

On 18 August 2012 an individual of this very large and distinctive leafhopper was discovered by Vanna and Jeremy Bartlett on the back window of their property which adjoins the Cemetery's eastern boundary TG215091.

This is a local species in southern Britain with few Norfolk records. It can be found on lichen-covered trees, especially oaks.

A nymph of this species was seen on a grave stone several times in 2021, including 23 November and 5 and 9 December 2021.

The specimen below was recorded in a garden on Stannard Road, Norwich, in August 2013.



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HYMENOPTERA

[Andrena hattorfiana](#) Scabious Mining Bee

First seen by the author in 2004. Numbers peaked in 2006 and 2007 but the bee has since declined and may be extinct in the Cemetery itself.

The bee is still present in the area and visits Field Scabious in a garden adjacent to Earlham Cemetery.

See the [Bees of Earlham Cemetery](#) gallery on our website for up to date information.



[Astata boops](#)

This is a common wasp over much of its range which extends as far north as Norfolk but it is typically found on sandy sites such as heaths and dunes.

However in early August 2008 individuals of this species were present about a south facing embankment flanking the roadway alongside the disused RC burial chapel. Females were seen carrying shieldbug nymphs to nest holes.

[Bombus ruderarius](#) Red-Shanked Carder Bumblebee

This is a scarce and declining species with rather few recent Norfolk records. One of these concerned the discovery of a dead queen in the Cemetery on 16 March 2009, a very early date for this species to be active. It was found on the pathway close to the main Bowthorpe Road entrance.

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No further evidence of the species in the Cemetery has been forthcoming; the only other recent Norwich record relates to a colony at Thorpe St Andrews Business Park where it was found between 2000 and 2006 by David Richmond. It is thought this colony may have fallen victim to the intensification of development in the area.

B. ruderarius is found in a wide range of open flower-rich habitats, nesting generally in tall tussocky grassland often close to trees or scrub.

Cimbex femoratus Birch Sawfly



Recorders: Vanna and Jeremy Bartlett (2006), Stuart Paston (2007).

This large sawfly is infrequently seen as an adult but on 23 May 2006 an individual (photograph above) flew into the back garden of Jeremy and Vanna Bartlett's property which adjoins the Cemetery's eastern boundary (TG215091).

In the following year, on 17 June, the author found two larvae feeding on the leaves of a small birch growing close to a path edge south west of the Crematorium TG211086.

This particular tree was cut down during maintenance and there have been no further observations in the Cemetery. However birch is plentiful in some areas.

Parna apicalis Sawfly

A mine of this sawfly was discovered on a lime *Tilia europaea* TG213089 on 9 May 2009. This represented the first Norfolk record of a species only recognised as occurring in Britain in 2007. An attempt to rear was unsuccessful but the mine is distinctive.

Listrodomus nycthemerus Parasitic Wasp

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The occurrence of this small colourful wasp in the Cemetery is of note because it specialises in parasitizing the larvae of the Holly Blue butterfly which breeds here.

The females prowl about flower heads of the butterfly's food plants seeking out larvae on which to lay eggs; a female was captured from flowers of *Euonymus japonicus* in the north eastern corner of the Cemetery on 29 August 2004. Holly blue butterflies have been seen ovipositing on this shrub on occasions.

[Tiphia femorata](#) Beetle Killing Wasp

This wasp, which is at the northern edge of its UK range in Norfolk, frequents open sunny, often disturbed, sites such as dunes, heaths and undercliffs.

However on the afternoon of 11 August 2008 these little wasps were present, in abundance, investigating the sward at the western end of the Memorial Garden.

This species doesn't make a nest, the female burrowing into soil to locate and paralyse host chafer and dung beetle larvae on which she lays her egg.

Tony Irwin also found these wasps in his west Norwich garden around the same time so it would seem that 2008 was a year of superabundance for the species leading to widespread dispersal from its core habitats.

LEPIDOPTERA

[Acrocercops brongniardella](#) Brown Oak Slender

This moth is very local nationally, and local within Norfolk. It frequents open woodland where oak occurs and its presence at a site is often revealed by the discovery of the large distinctive silvery mines that the larvae form on oak leaves. Several mines were noticed on foliage of an immature oak growing beside a grass path TG212088 in the Cemetery in late May 2009.

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[Cauchas fibulella](#) Little Long-horn

This tiny longhorn moth, a local species in Norfolk, is widespread in open grassy areas east of the burial chapel wherever the main food plant germander speedwell is present in quantity. Typical places to find it are at the margins of grass pathways flanked by long grassland where it flies about the food plant in sunshine. It was first recorded by the author in May 2004 and is clearly well established.

[Chrysoclista linneella](#) Lime Cosmet

An individual of this scarce and distinctive little moth was found on a runner bean plant on 17 July 2011 by Thea Nicholls and Sandy Lockwood in their garden which adjoins the Cemetery's eastern boundary.

The moth is associated with lime, the larvae feeding beneath the bark. This tree is well represented in the Cemetery especially in the eastern part and there can be no doubt that the moth originated from a population here.

Aside from this and previous Norwich area records it has only been found at a site in North Norfolk in 2011.

[Prochoreutis myllerana](#) Small Twitcher

On the afternoon of 4 Sept 2007 the author encountered a moth flying about the pond edge in the Memorial Garden which, when it briefly settled, was identified as a species of *Prochoreutis* associated with skullcap which occurs beside the northern perimeter of the pond. However since it was not captured it was impossible to determine the species involved and no evidence of larvae could be subsequently found despite frequent checks of the foodplant.

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However on the afternoon of 1 Sept 2013 the author noticed a small moth resembling a *Prochoreutis* species on skullcap foliage at the same location and was able to catch it for examination. Consultation of Sterling & Parsons Micromoth guide enabled it to be confidently determined as [*P. myllerana*](#) - the most likely of the two *Prochoreutis* species to occur here based on location and habitat. It is widespread but local in the UK.

[*Synanthedon vespiformis*](#) Yellow-legged Clearwing

On the afternoon of 23 May 2004, a fine, warm day, the author came across a female of this Nationally Scarce species visiting a stump of Pedunculate Oak beside a grass pathway north of the disused RC burial chapel TG211087. It was captured for identification, photographed and released.

Pedunculate Oak is the most frequently used food plant with eggs being laid on recently cut stumps or in wounds on the trunk. The occurrence of the moth here would indicate the stump was suitable for breeding at the time. Other tree species used include Holm Oak, Sweet Chestnut and Birch, all present in the Cemetery.

NEUROPTERA

[*Nothochrysa capitata*](#) Lacewing

An individual of this rather uncommon species was observed on a trunk of whitebeam in the north eastern part of the Cemetery on 30 May 2005. The literature refers to an association with Pine which occurs in this area and elsewhere in the Cemetery.



Created February 2013.

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Scabious Mining Bee & Eared Leafhopper photographs copyright Jeremy Bartlett 2013.
Brown Oak Slender photograph copyright Stuart Paston 2013.

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