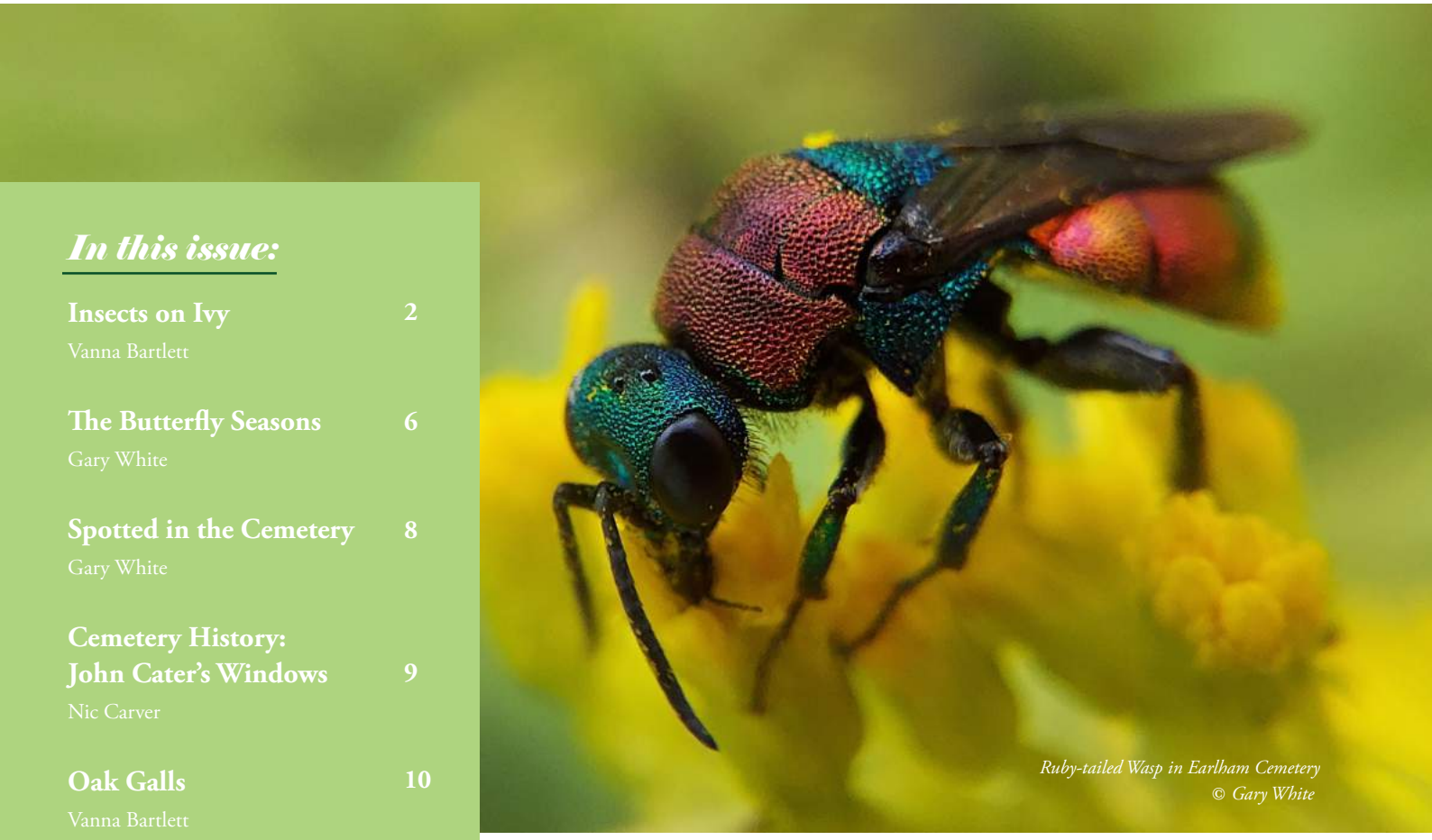
ISSUE
15
October 2020

# *Friends of* Earlham Cemetery



*Ruby-tailed Wasp in Earlham Cemetery*
*© Gary White*

## *In this issue:*



## *Contribute:*

This newsletter is sent out four times a year, in **March, June, September and December.** If you would like to submit an article, photo or sighting to the newsletter, the deadline is a month before an issue is released.

Please send all submissions to **alysia.schuetzle@gmail.com**, with photos at 300 dpi where possible.

You are receiving this newsletter as part of your membership of the Friends of Earlham Cemetery Group. If you wish to cancel your membership, please contact **friendsofearlhamcemetery@yahoo.co.uk**



# *Hello!*

**Welcome to issue fifteen of the newsletter for the *Friends of Earlham Cemetery.* Here are a few words from Vanna about our 2020 program of walks:**

Unfortunately, our full program of monthly walks had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 and it doesn't look likely that any 'normal' events will be able to take place anytime soon. While some organisations are holding pre-booked events, on one of our walks (even with a very small group of say, half a dozen people) it would be difficult to keep to the safe 'social distance' of two metres, especially when trying to show people wildlife as we do on most of our walks. So we are at present unable to say when the monthly walks may resume and what format they may take.

In the meantime, I've put together a couple of short topical pieces for this newsletter that I hope will help you to explore the Cemetery yourself and discover a bit of its wildlife over the next few weeks. Oak galls are very prominent as summer ends and we go towards autumn and the Ivy flowers will now be attracting all sorts of insects including my favourite Ivy Bees (Colletes hederae) so I've given a few pointers as to what to look out for. I hope some of you will be encouraged to go out if you are able and look for some of the many interesting things that are about at this time of year.

*Vanna Bartlett*

# Insects on Ivy

Vanna Bartlett

*Ivy flowers are a welcome late source of pollen and nectar for all sorts of insects, including various bees and butterflies*

*September and October are prime Ivy flower time, with the heady blossom an absolute magnet for all sorts of insects at a time of year when few other wildflowers are in bloom.*

On warm sunny days, a good sheltered patch of ivy flowers will positively hum with activity. Honeybees particularly like Ivy pollen but if you look carefully you should also be able to find plenty of Ivy Bees *Colletes hederae*. These stripy bees have only been in Britain since 2001 and time their emergence to coincide with the Ivy flowers whose pollen the females use exclusively to supply their nest cells with.

*Honeybee - Apis mellifera*

*Ivy bee - Colletes hederae*

Plenty of hoverflies are to be found on Ivy too. Many are black and yellow wasp and bee mimics with perhaps the best look-a-likes being the various *Eristalis* species that really do resemble honeybees.

*The hoverfly Eristalis pertinax is a good honeybee mimic.*

*Helophilius pendulus*

*Syrphus ribesii*

*Myathropa florea*

# Insects on Ivy

Vanna Bartlett

Other flies visit Ivy and in amongst the ubiquitous Blue and Green Bottles you may be lucky enough to find the beautiful *Phasia hemiptera*. This spectacular fly is a parasite on shieldbug nymphs.

*Tachinid fly - Phasia hemiptera*

Another attractive species is *Graphomya maculata* (pictured left).

A rare treat on ivy flowers in the Cemetery is the appearance of a handsome Hornet, the largest of the social wasp species and a truly magnificent creature. Usually I only see their mimic, the hornet hoverfly, *Volucella zonaria*.

*A magnificent Hornet, Vespa crabro*

*Volucella zonaria doing a good impression of a Hornet*

Social wasps take full advantage of this last minute bounty as we move through the autumn, with males feasting on nectar and the workers often hunting for other insects to take back to their nest. The presence of lots of wasps attracts the Conopid fly *Leopoldius signatus* which is a parasitoid of *Vespula germanica* and *Vespula vulgaris*, two of our commoner species of social wasp.

*Left: Common Wasp - Vespula vulgaris*
*Right: Conopid fly - Leopoldius signatus*

# Insects on Ivy

Vanna Bartlett

*Speckled Wood*

Butterflies that hibernate through the winter are often to be found fuelling up at ivy, especially Red Admirals and Commas, although when ivy is first in flower you can sometimes find late lingering Speckled Woods too.

Once the ivy has finished flowering, it is still worth having a look at it on a sunny day as plenty of invertebrates will take cover in it over the winter. A good thicket of ivy will provide shelter from the winter weather for butterflies, hoverflies and ladybirds. In fact many of these creatures are 'winter active', emerging from shelter on sunny days to move about and sometimes feed.

Ladybirds are a case in particular and an ivy-covered gravestone can be a very rewarding place to look for them when the sun is warm, even in the middle of winter.

Because it attracts so many insects, spiders often make their webs in Ivy to cash in on the bonanza of prey. Once the flowers are over, there is the prospect of Ivy berries as winter food for birds. Wood Pigeons seem particularly partial to them but I have often found over-wintering Blackcaps feasting on Ivy berries. And, come spring, a good thick tangle of Ivy provides the perfect cover for Wrens, Robins and Blackbirds to nest in.

*Seven-spot Ladybird*

*Below:*
*Cream Spot Ladybird*

# Insects on Ivy

Vanna Bartlett

*Hairy Shieldbug*

*Box Bug*

With so many insects reliant on Ivy flowers as food at this time of year it is a pity that it seems to get such bad press, with many people seeing it as an evil menace that has to be removed. It is a crying shame that someone has been removing Ivy from old headstones in the Cemetery, often causing damage to the stonework in the process (my own study site for inconspicuous ladybirds has been subject to such vandalism, having had all its Ivy ripped off, depriving the beetles of their home and partially destroying the inscription at the same time).

*Araneus diadematus with a silk-wrapped Honeybee*

*A beautiful Araneus marmoreus*

So if the sun is shining, take some time out to watch a patch of Ivy flowers, enjoy the thronging insects and see how many different species you can spot.

# The Butterfly Seasons

Gary White

*Gary chronicles the butterfly species he spotted this spring and summer.*

*Brown Argus (Aricia agestis)*

*Right: Small Copper (Lycaena phlaeas)*
*Left: Gatekeeper (Pyronia tithonus)*

It has been a good year to see butterflies in the cemetery, and I have managed to spot 22 of the 25 species that have been recorded there. It was also great to observe counts of over 130 individual butterflies on some of the walks around the cemetery during summer days with favourable weather.

The earliest spring butterfly I saw on the wing this year was a Peacock *(Aglais io)* on 1st March. Comma *(Polygonia c-album)* and Red Admiral *(Vanessa atalanta)* joined the list later in the month.

During April the cemetery was our sanctuary and the pleasant spring weather brought out Brimstone *(Gonepteryx rhamni)*, Large White *(Pieris brassicae)*, Small White *(Pieris rapae)*, Speckled Wood *(Pararge aegeria)*, Holly Blue *(Celastrina argiolus)* and Orange-tip *(Anthocharis cardamines)*.

Watching Orange-tips going about their business was one of the highlights of my spring, as I managed to observe them mating and laying their eggs on Garlic Mustard. Getting to watch the resulting caterpillars hatch and grow was also fantastic.

May brought out Common Blue *(Polyommatus icarus)*, Green-veined White *(Pieris napi)* and Small Copper *(Lycaena phlaeas)*, as well as the first records of Brown Argus *(Aricia agestis)* for a couple of years, with up to five seen on one day.

Warmer weather arrived with the peak summer months, and even more butterflies emerged. Often the most abundant in the Cemetery, Meadow Browns *(Maniola jurtina)*, Ringlets *(Aglais io)* were easily spotted, and later in the summer there were plenty of Gatekeepers *(Pyronia tithonus)* too.

I recorded three skipper species this year. These butterflies almost give the appearance of moths as they skip nervously through the air between flowers. Large Skipper *(Ochlodes sylvanus)*, Small Skipper *(Thymelicus sylvestris)* and Essex Skipper *(Thymelicus lineola)* were all seen, and some even landed for long enough to pose for a photo!

# The Butterfly Seasons

Gary White

This leaves the harder to see Purple Hairstreak *(Favonius quercus)* which spends most of its time high in the oaks, occasionally visiting lower branches and flowers. I recorded this species only twice, but this low number of sightings probably suggests I was visiting at inopportune times of the day, rather than the absence of our usual colony of hairstreaks.

Only one sighting of Painted Lady *(Vanessa cardi)* and Small Tortoiseshell *(Aglais urticae)* and unfortunately this theme seems to have been common all over Norfolk, with very low numbers of each species being recorded. Hopefully this is just a low year and numbers will bounce back next summer.

*Above: Comma (Polygonia c-album)*

*Inset: Brimstone (Gonepteryx rhamni)*
*Below: Small Skipper (Thymelicus sylvestris)*

# Spotted (near!) the Cemetery

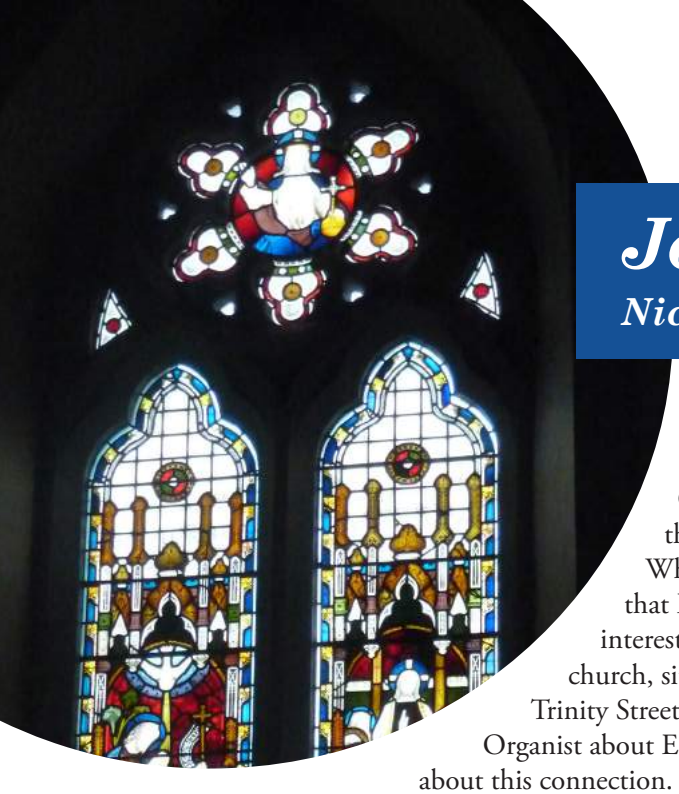
*Gary White*

Dark Crimson Underwings *(Catocala sponsa)* are resident only in Hampshire, where it is thought they breed in the New Forest. In fact, confirmed records of this striking moth in Norfolk have only been listed as recently as 2018.

So, in late July I was very surprised to open my moth trap to - not one - but **two** Dark Crimson Underwings. They were caught in our garden on Helena Road, which backs onto the Cemetery. Interestingly, this is the first record of finding multiple individuals of this rare species in the area.

These are large moths, with an impressive wingspan of 60-74 mm. They are rare nocturnal vagrants to Norfolk, but look out for them in oak woodland, flying between August and September. They look remarkably similar to Light Crimson Underwings, but (as the name suggests) usually have darker forewings. If you can get close enough to a calm individual, the black bands on their red underwings also differ.

*Left: Dark Crimson Underwing, one of two trapped and identified in our garden on Helena Road.*



# John Cater's Windows

*Nic Carver*

Members of this group may know of John Cater, who sold the council the land for the cemetery. What you may not know, is that Earlham Cemetery has an interesting link with Holy Trinity church, situated just a mile away on Trinity Street. In a conversation with the Organist about Earlham Cemetery, he told me about this connection.

Following an order from the Home Secretary stating that all burials should be discontinued in Saxon Churchyards in Norwich from 1st February 1955, local farmer John Cater sold over 34 acres of land at Earlham to Norwich Corporation in 1855 for £5,000 loaned from Gurney's Bank. This loan paid for the purchase of the land and construction work of Chapels and Superintendent's Lodges.

Formerly used to grow a variety of crops including wheat, barley, turnips, potatoes, and hay, just twenty-three acres were utilised at first. Work commenced almost immediately after the sale.

In 1866, after John's death, his widow had two stained glass windows placed in the Holy Trinity church. The two central windows were placed above the Reredos in the Sanctuary. They depict 'The Baptism of Christ' and 'The Last Supper'. Mrs Cater also donated 200 guineas towards the building of the Parochial Hall in Essex Street, opened by the Bishop of Norwich on 4th April 1878.

The windows can still be admired today and are well worth the short walk from the cemetery to Trinity Street. As with all stained glass windows, they are best viewed from the inside looking out. The church is sometimes open during the week, but the current Covid-19 situation makes it a bit hit and miss as to which days and times.


*Detail of the dedication to John Cater underneath the windows in Holy Trinity Church*

# Oak Galls

Vanna Bartlett

*Galls occur on many plants and trees and can be caused by various organisms including mites, midges, flies, wasps and even fungi. Some of the most spectacular are those to be found on oaks.*

*Spangle galls are found on the underside of leaves. These are Common Spangles caused by the gall wasp Neuroterus quercusbaccarum.*

Late summer and autumn is the ideal time to take a look at the various oak trees in the Cemetery and see how many different types of gall you can find. These strange growths appear on the trees as a response to the egg-laying actions of various cynipid wasps and can occur on leaf buds, acorns, leaves and, in spring, on catkins. The gall provides food and shelter for the developing wasp larva. Some galls contain a single larva while others house several.

There are several different species of oak in the Cemetery with the greatest number of galls being found on our two native species, English or Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*). Galls are also found on Turkey Oak and some of the various hybrid oaks.

Many of the gall causing wasps are very similar to look at but each species induces its own particular gall often on a specific species of oak. With a hybrid oak, it is often the presence of a particular gall that gives away the identity of one of the parent trees.

*A single Smooth Spangle (Neuroterus albipes) with three Common Spangles.*

*Artichoke (Andricus foecundatrix)*

*Silk Button Spangle (Neuroterus numismalis)*

*Some galls become quite woody and persist on the tree long after the gall wasps have emerged, like these Ram's-horn (Andricus aries) galls.*

# Oak Galls

Vanna Bartlett

Although the scientific names of many of the gall wasps are seemingly unpronounceable tongue-twisters, many of the actual galls have reassuringly descriptive English names that are easy to remember.

There are many oak trees to be found adjacent to the main roadways in the Cemetery with others alongside the grass paths so it is easy to find a good size tree and inspect the lower leaves and twigs to see what you can find. Some trees seem to attract more gall wasps than others and the number of galls present varies from year to year.

While the galls themselves are often very obvious, the tiny wasps that create them are seldom seen. Most of them are dark brown or black but as you look for galls you may well find small metallic green or blue chalcid wasps loitering about. These wasps are parasitoids, laying their eggs inside the galls so that their larvae can feed on the gall wasp's larva. Other species of wasps, known as inquilines, also lay their eggs in galls but their larvae are 'lodgers', feeding inside the gall alongside their host although as a result the host may well die of starvation.

*The well-known Marble Gall (Andricus kollari) was once used to manufacture ink. Here two are on the same twig as a small Ram's-horn gall.*

*Left: Knopper Gall (Andricus quercuscalicis). These large galls start off green and sticky but later turn brown and become woody. Some years they can be prolific, affecting most of the acorns on a particular tree.*

*Above: Cola Nut (Andricus lignicolus)*
*Left: Andricus inflator galls are usually found on young twigs.*

*Andricus quercuscalicis gall wasp after it emerged from a Knopper gall that I took home to draw. The wasp was returned to the tree from where I collected the gall.*

*Old 'currant' galls on Turkey Oak, caused by Andricus grossulariae.*

# Oak Galls

Vanna Bartlett

Lots of other invertebrates are to be found on oak trees so be prepared to find all sorts of things on your gall spotting forays from ladybirds and other beetles to true bugs and all manner of spiders. Happy hunting!

*The Acorn Weevil Curculio glandium uses her long rostrum to pierce a hole in an acorn into which she then lays her eggs.*

*Above: Ormyrus sp parasitic wasp on Knopper Gall.*

*A Harlequin Ladybird nestled in an acorn cup.*

*Above: The spiky white egg-sacs of Paidiscura pallens are sometimes found, along with the female spider - as seen here - on the underside of oak leaves.*

*Below: The spider Gibbaranea gibbosa.*

*A chalcid wasp investigating Smooth Spangles.*

As a good introduction to galls, I recommend 'Britain's Plant Galls: a Photographic Guide' by Michael Chinery (published by WildGuides) and the fold-out FSC guide to plant galls in Britain. Both are available from NHBS.