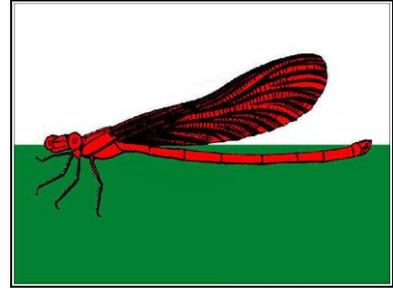


Y Fursen

**North Wales
Dragonfly
Newsletter
No. 101**

19th June 2023



**Odonata news and events from across the vice counties of
Anglesey, Merionethshire, Caernarvonshire, Denbighshire and Flintshire**



Hi all,

Clubtails seen along the Afon Ogwen floodplain!

There is exciting news on the odonate front! Mike McCarthy has reported seeing at least 3 adult gomphids along an “oxbow” of the Afon Ogwen [[SH612672](#)] near Tregarth, downriver of Bethesda. I went out yesterday, a very dull one with a stratus-filled sky, and within 3 hours had clear sightings of 3 gomphid adults along what proved to be a small unnamed tributary crossing the floodplain of the Ogwen, but couldn't manage a photo. I also looked in vain for exuvia. The adults were yellowish with black markings and are very probably *Gomphus vulgatissimus*, the Common Clubtail. Two of the sightings were likely to be males rapidly flying along the banks of the stream looking for females and the other of an adult flying up from wet vegetation. The tiny stream has pooled sections up to 3 m wide.

The species was previously only known to breed in North Wales from the Afon Dee and tributaries in the Wrexham area where it breeds in their muddy slow-flowing sections. The weir at Chester fortuitously also prevents any tidal influence upriver. I had searched other rivers around North Wales and come to the conclusion that there were only short stretches between their tidally influenced lower sections and their fast-flowing upper sections that were too energetic for the species to breed.

However, the Afon Ogwen may prove an exception as there are good stretches of the river that have low gradients down from Nant Ffrancon although even those have clear water and stony bottoms. We don't know yet if the gomphid is breeding along the main river or its tributaries but it has to be breeding locally as the river is a long way from the Dee system.

The species is an early one in flight, being on the wing from May through to July, which unfortunately leaves only a brief period this year to find out anything about its distribution in the Ogwen system. So, if there is anyone living close by who could pay site visits soon to the more gently flowing stretches of the Ogwen that would be marvellous. Also, searches of other river systems between the Ogwen and Dee could prove rewarding.

Let's hope we get further news soon.

Allan

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