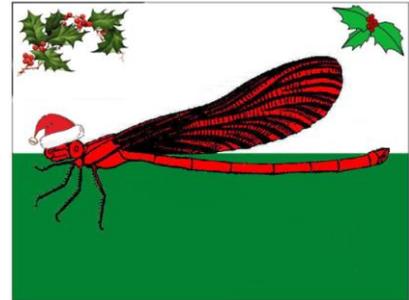


Y Fursen

NORTH WALES DRAGONFLY NEWSLETTER No. 69



26th Dec 2012

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



Hi all,

Although the 2012 flight season started well enough, with some lovely Spring weather bringing on an unprecedented early emergence of *Pyrrhosoma nymphula* (Large Red Damselfly) for North Wales on the 6th April, it has been an exceptionally wet season all told. Still, with the help of an increased number of recorders, the number of records sent in reached an all time high and this has contributed to making Wales the best recorded part of the UK. One notable highlight of 2012 was the discovery of more *Ceriagrion tenellum* (Small Red Damselfly) sites in western Merionethshire and also the serendipitous find of a strong population of that species at a coastal heathland pond at Amlwch, Anglesey. It had been thought that the species was extinct on the island due to the afforestation of its old haunts in the Newborough area, so this site, certainly the most northern in the UK if not Europe and therefore the World, was of special significance (see Newsletter No. 66). The miserably wet summer seems to have accounted for the unusual appearance of *Enallagma cyathigerum* (Common Bluebelly) adults with more black markings than is typical. Ian Standen found the most bizarre individual at a mining reservoir in the Gwydyr Forest in June (see Newsletter No. 63). This *Coenagrion pulchellum* (Variable Bluebelly) look-alike certainly made one wonder about the veracity of other isolated *pulchellum* records for North Wales, for example the one at Bodgynydd in 1974. It was a poor year for picking up migrants though Rhys Jones did well in August to find a male *Sympetrum fonscolombii* (Red-veined Darter) on the Mynydd Gilan ponds along the Llyn.

Season's acknowledgements

I've nearly finished inputting last season's dragonfly records. Many thanks go to those who have sent in their records, or photos for identification, directly to me. These range from single records in ad hoc e-mails to multiple records on spreadsheets. These lovely people are listed below in given name alphabetical order:

Adrienne Stratford, Alan Roberts, Alasdair Thompson, Alice Smith, Allan Dawes, Allan Guilfoyle, Alun Williams, Andrew & Janet Graham, Andy Williams, Angela Gliddon, Anna Williams, Barbara Owsianka, Barrie Potter, Bex Cartwright, Bob Letsche, Brian Burnett, Bryan Formstone, Carl Legg, Carol and Rob Cockbain, Chris Leighton, Clare Faith, David Ackers, David Hill, David Thorpe, Dawn Thomas, Debbie Evans, Dewi Lewis, Dick Eastwood, Duncan Brown, Eifion Griffiths, Frances Cattanach, Geoff Gibbs,

Hugh Knott, Ian Hawkins, Ian Sims, Iola Vanstone, Iolo Williams, Jamie Roberston, Jan Miller, Jenny Thomas, Jim Clark, John Bratton, John Hickerton, John Hicks, John Smith, Julian Thompson, Julie Rose, Keith O'Brien, Les Colley, Les Starling, Mandi & Bill Taylor, Mandy Marsh, Margaret Thomas, Mark Crane, Mark Sheridan, Mike Howe, Mike Nesbitt, Mike Potts, Neil Friswell, Nigel Pitts, Oliver Prys-Jones, Paul Triggs, Paul Williams, Paula Bardell-Hedley, Peter Heywood, Ralph Swindlehurst, Rob Booth, Rhys Jones, Richard Gallon, Rob Sandham, Rod Dunn, Sabine Nouvet, Shirley Roulston, Simon Hughes, Simon Hugheston-Roberts, Stephen & Anne Coker, Stephen Culley, Stewart Johnson, Sue Loose, Tom Wrightson.

New records sent in for 10 km squares (hectads)

Debbie Evans has gone through her extensive field notebooks (full of lists of fungi no doubt) back to 2008 and compiled a marvellous set of odonate records in Excel format. This is a great achievement considering that she doesn't specifically go out to record Odonata species. Her records include two new hectad observations: a single *Sympetrum striolatum* at Tregarth on 20th September 2008 for hectad SH66 and a single *Libellula depressa* at Llyn Dulyn reservoir, Nebo on the 4th June 2011 for hectad SH54.

In defence of collecting insects

Whether you agree with collecting voucher specimens or not, here is an article that perhaps you should read:

<http://leplog.wordpress.com/2012/12/03/in-defense-of-collecting/>

A dragonfly poem by Beryl Partridge (copyright)



D R A G O N F L Y

Silver - like the laughter of the river -

Rippling, darting - leaving rainbows in the rain -

Indigo blue and cobalt, like the sea -

A frisson of movement - then disappears again -

*A floating, vibrating iridescence -
Gossamer light - and pearls of luminous white -
In the damp air a floating light -
That sends fleeting sparks far into the night -
Elusive yet always there - somewhere -
Round a river's bend - at the rainbow's end -
A glimpse - a turn of wonder - a gasp -
Amazingly still - Stunningly fast - where is it now -
Beyond the last rays of the sun -
Before the soft glow in the east - an absence -
A loss - lighting other pathways far from here -
The vivid colours misting beside still waters -
Or hovering to delight another soul -
Seeking solitude yet finding unexpected comfort -
A child's joy - so precious - so tiny -
Little hands, trying to capture that moment,
To remember forever, that time
When fiercely-named, gently created, a flight of
Gossamer wings, lit by a myriad prisms of colour,
captured with wonder, an awaking heart.*



A Brazilian rainforest adventure

Sue Loose, one of our most notable North Walean dragonfly recorders, has gone this month to work on the dragonflies in Brazil's tropical forest (run by REGUA) for three months. REGUA (Reserva Ecológica de Guapiaçu) protects one of the last stands of tropical rainforest left in the severely depleted Atlantic Rainforest, or Mata Atlântica, in

Brazil. This forest stretches from north-east Brazil, south along the Brazilian Atlantic coastline just into coastal Uruguay, and inland into north-east Argentina and eastern Paraguay. Once covering an estimated 1,477,500 km², centuries of deforestation has seen the Atlantic Forest become the second most threatened biome in the world after Madagascar. Today only 7% of the original forest area remains – down to an area of only 100,000 km² - and only an estimated 2% is still primary forest. Despite the loss and habitat fragmentation, this ecoregion is still ranked in the top five of the world's biodiversity hotspots.

I'm sure we wish her the very best in this worthwhile and adventurous enterprise, though from the sounds of it I think she is coping well and I'm pretty sure she will not be missing the weather at home:

'Each day is still a wonder here and I'm loving exploring and finding my way around and seeing the amazing biodiversity. So many species of everything. Some will appeal more to you than others so I'm trying to send a good mixture. If anyone is looking for anything inspiring to do next year, you couldn't do better than to visit REGUA either as a guest or a volunteer. If you have a specialist subject or a project that would work in REGUAS remit they would love to have serious wildlife enthusiasts of all persuasions. So give it a thought or pass it on to someone who might. If Nicholas hadn't talked in Chester I wouldn't be here now and I can't think of anything I would rather be doing! There just aren't enough hours in the day to do and see all the things I want to do.'

Some Madagascar ode photos

Here is a small selection of dragonfly photos I took recently in Madagascar to remind you of their beauty in a season when we don't have our own flitting around. Sadly, the focussing on my brand new Sigma 150 mm macro lens failed on the very first day I was there and I had to rely for the whole 2 weeks on my trusted Panasonic Lumix FZ28. There is no field guide to the 173 species of Malagassy odonates. Many species are endemic to the island - 60% of the 80 Anisopteran species and no less than 94% of the 93 Zygopteran species - so it will take me a while to sort the species out.



Male *Orthetrum* sp. There are many species of this genus in Africa and Madagascar with blue prunoised mature males that it is easier to identify the females or immature males.



Platycnemis sanguinipes, a forest stream species. One of 9 endemic Malagassy *Platycnemis* river damsels related to our own *P. pennipes* (Blue Featherlegs) on the Dee.



A male *Crocothemis divisa*. Breeds in waterbodies of dry rocky terraines in tropical Africa and Malagassy.



A male *Crocothemis erythraea*, an African pond species that also breeds in S. Europe.



A male *Anax tumorifer*, an endemic Malagassy pond species similar to our *A. imperator*.



An as yet unidentified ?cordulid in cop. An endemic Malagassy forest stream species.



A male *Paragomphus* sp. One of 4 endemic species. A forest river gomphid species.



A male endemic *Paragomphus* sp. inhabiting dry regions.



Palpopleura vestita male, a Madagascan endemic 'widow'.



Male of the massive *Thermorthemis madagascariensis*. A common endemic river and pond species and a close relative of our chasers and skimmers.



Female of the above species.



An as yet uncertain endemic *Zygonyx* male. A river cascade or torrent species.

Allan

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