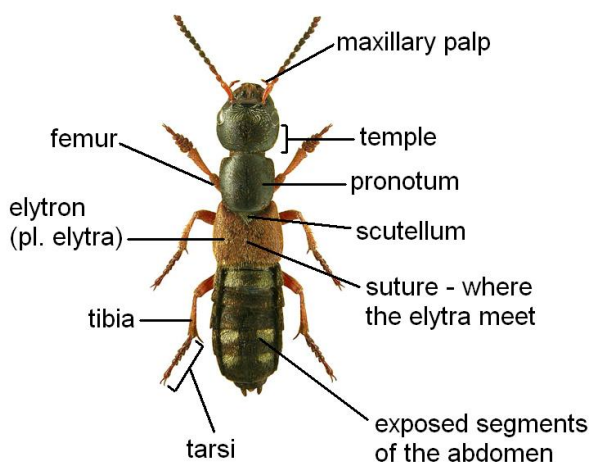


Key to the British genera of subfamily Staphylininae

Parts translated from the German key by Arved Lompe, which is based on the keys by Lohse, Ganglbauer and Reitter and parts adapted from Joy (1932)

References

Lompe (2013) published at <http://www.coleo-net.de/coleo/texte/staphylininae.htm#Xantholinini>
Joy N.H. (1932) A Practical Handbook of British Beetles, published by H. F. & G. Witherby



Checklist of genera

From the Checklist of Beetles of the British Isles, 2012 edition, edited by A. G. Duff. (available from www.coleopterist.org.uk/checklist.htm).

Tribe STAPHYLININI Latreille, 1802

Subtribe PHILONTHINA Kirby, 1837
BISNIUS Stephens, 1829
CAFIUS Stephens, 1829
ERICHSONIUS Fauvel, 1874
GABRIUS Stephens, 1829
GABRONTHUS Tottenham, 1955
NEOBISNIUS Ganglbauer, 1895
PHILONTHUS Stephens, 1829
RABIGUS Mulsant & Rey, 1876
REMUS Holme, 1837

Subtribe QUEDIINA Kraatz, 1857
ACYLOPHORUS Nordmann, 1837
ASTRAPAEUS Gravenhorst, 1802
EURYPORUS Erichson, 1839
HETEROTHOPS Stephens, 1829
QUEDIUS Stephens, 1829
VELLEIUS Leach, 1819

Subtribe STAPHYLININA Latreille, 1802

CREOPHILUS Leach, 1819
DINOTHENARUS Thomson, C.G., 1858
EMUS Leach, 1819
OCYPUS Leach, 1819
ONTHOLESTES Ganglbauer, 1895
PLATYDRACUS Thomson, C.G., 1858
STAPHYLINUS Linnaeus, 1758
TASGIUS Stephens, 1829 451

Tribe XANTHOLININI Erichson, 1839

GAUROPTERUS Thomson, C.G., 1860
GYROHYPNUS Leach, 1819
HYPNOGYRA Casey, 1906
LEPTACINUS Erichson, 1839
MEGALINUS Mulsant & Rey, 1877
NUDOBIUS Thomson, C.G., 1860
PHACOPHALLUS Coiffait, 1956
XANTHOLINUS Dejean, 1821

Tribe OTHIINI Thomson, C.G., 1859

ATRECUS Jacquelin du Val, 1856
OTHIUS Stephens, 1829

Image Credits

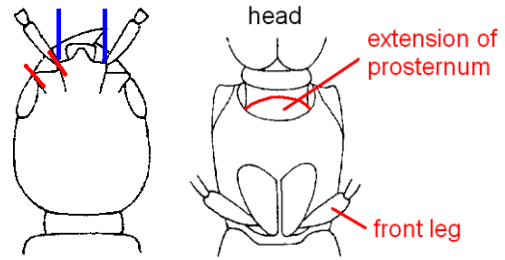
The photographs in this key are reproduced from the Iconographia Coleopterorum Poloniae, with permission kindly granted by Lech Borowiec. The line drawings are from the second volume of Joy (1932)



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Key to tribes

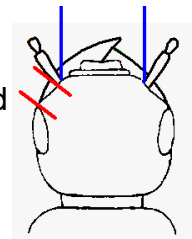
- 1 The antennae are closer together at their base, usually not much further apart from one another than from the eyes and very often significantly closer (usually closer than the length of the first segment). First segment of the hind tarsi scarcely longer than the second segment. Prosternum with an extension at the front under the neck. ...[2](#)
Aedeagus either with two parameres or none.



Bases of the antennae much closer to the eyes than they are to each other (usually significantly wider apart than the length of the first segment of the antennae). Hind tarsi usually with an elongated first segment.

..... **Tribe Staphylinini**

Aedeagus almost always with a single paramere.



- 2¹ Elytra overlapping one another at the suture, the suture therefore curved. Head distinctly narrowed at the base; neck less than half the width of the head.
..... [Tribe Xantholinini](#)



Elytra meeting one another on the middle line without an overlap. Head weakly tapering at the base; neck at least half the width of the head.
..... [Tribe Othiini](#)

Tribe Staphylinini

- 1 The sides of the pronotum are tightly folded under and lie on the sides of the prosternum; they are not therefore visible from the side only from below. Pronotum with a few scattered large punctures, never more than 3 on each side of the disc, these all being on the front half. Exposed part of the abdomen tapering considerably in some species. Subtribe Quediina.2

The sides of the pronotum (epipleura) are visible in side view, at least in the back half. The sides of the head below the eyes do not have a marked side border. Pronotum punctured throughout, or nearly so, OR with a row of at least four large punctures on each side of the disc; if this is the case then the posterior one is placed in the posterior half of the pronotum. Exposed part of the abdomen parallel-sided or tapering slightly.6



2¹ Segment 1 of antennae very long, nearly as long as the next four segments.

..... Genus ***Acylophorus***

One species, ***Acylophorus glaberrimus***, a very rare species in *Sphagnum* at the edge of ponds. Black with the base of segment six of abdomen and tarsi reddish; head much narrower than pronotum. Length 6-7 mm.



Segment 1 of antennae moderate in length, not more than twice as long as segment 2.

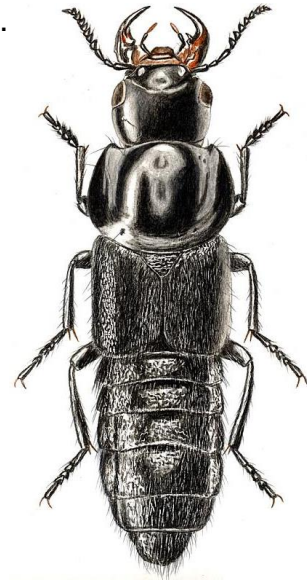
[3](#)

3² Segments 1 and 2 of front tarsi elongate in both sexes.
..... ***Euryporus picipes***



Segments 1 and 2 of front tarsi broader than long in both sexes.4

- 4³ Antennae strongly serrate.
..... ***Velleius dilatatus***
Serrate means forming teeth on one side



- Antennae filiform.⁵
Filiform means the segments of the antennae are evenly curved and give the antennae a more even outline

- 5⁴ Scutellum punctured and short hairy. Eyes occupying about half the side of the head. Last segment of palp much shorter and narrower than the second to last segment.
..... Genus ***Heterothops***



Scutellum without hair, OR if with punctures and hair, then eyes occupying about two thirds the side of the head and last segment of palp at least as long as and nearly as broad as the second to last one.
..... Genus ***Quedius***

Astrapaesus ulmi has been recently been added to the British list



6¹ EITHER species less than 6.5 mm. long with prostrate hairs on the head and pronotum OR species with a smooth head and pronotum, on which the only hairs present arise from often numerous pore-punctures. Subtribe Philonthina. ... 7

Body over 9 mm. long. Head and pronotum covered with hairs which curve backwards or rest on the surface and are often rather indistinct. If head and pronotum completely hairless (genus *Creophilus*), then the antennae are short, scarcely longer than the head and have a club of with 5-6 segments which are broader than long. Subtribe Staphylinina. 14



- 7⁶ Second segment of the antennae thickened, as broad as the first segment and considerably wider than the third segment.
..... Genus ***Erichsonius***
3 species in Britain



Second segment of the antennae clearly narrower than the first segment and not broader than the third segment. [8](#)

8⁷ Head and pronotum hairy. Pronotum with numerous coarse punctures on each side of the smooth middle area. Length 4.5 mm.9

Head and pronotum not hairy with only the normal bristles. Pronotum without numerous punctures on each side or if in doubt, species over 6 mm. in length.10



- 9⁸ Upper surface shining. First segment of the hind tarsi not longer than the last segment.

..... Genus ***Neobisnius***

4 British species



Upper surface dull. First segment of the hind tarsi longer than the last segment.

..... ***Remus sericeus***

10⁸ Exposed segments of the abdomen with patchy hairs. Pronotum with deep punctures. Temples densely hairy.
..... Genus ***Cafius***

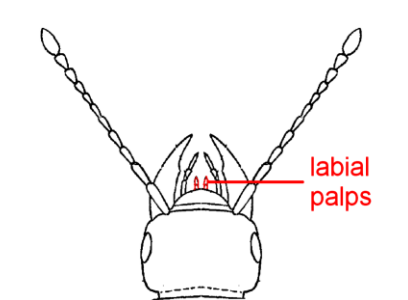
Under decaying seaweed on the coast. Sides of pronotum strongly tapering towards the base and wavy in outline in the middle if viewed obliquely from the side. Head as broad as pronotum in females and broader in males; head and pronotum black and shining; elytra dull; legs red to dark brown;

Exposed segments of the abdomen with regular hairs. Punctures on the pronotum not deepened.[11](#)



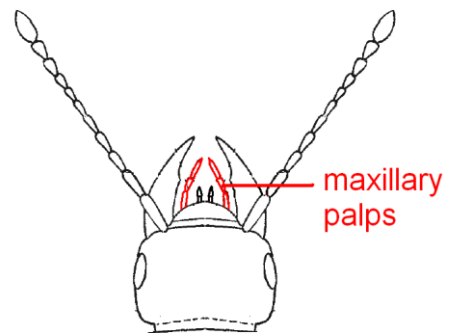
11¹⁰ Last segment of the labial palps not or only slightly narrower than the second to last segment.¹²

Last segment of the labial palps much narrower than the second to last segment.¹³



- 12¹¹ Last segment of the maxillary palps longer than the second to last segment. ...
..... Genus ***Philonthus*** and ***Bisnius***

Last segment of the maxillary palps conically tapered and not longer than the second to last segment. Length 4.5-6 mm. with six punctures in the rows on the pronotum. Pronotum brightly coloured.
..... ***Rabigus pullus***



- 13¹¹ Aedeagus not rotated in the abdomen, the paramere therefore lying on the ventral side. Front tarsi in males unremarkable. Pronotum with 5-6 punctures in the dorsal rows. If with 5 punctures in the rows then combination of antennal characters and size not as below.
..... Genus ***Gabrius***

Aedeagus rotated 90° in the abdomen so that the paramere lies on the left side. Front tarsi broadened in males. Pronotum with 5 punctures in the dorsal rows. Sixth segment of the antennae as long as or somewhat longer than broad, the second to last segment at most slightly broader than long. Small species, 3-4.5 mm.
..... ***Gabronthus thermarum***



- 14⁶ Head bare except for the area behind the eyes. Pronotum bare except narrowly on the side margins and without punctures on top. Antennae short with the last five segments broader than long and forming a club.

..... ***Creophilus maxillosus***

Elytra covered with short dense hair forming a broad irregular transverse grey band across them; exposed part of abdomen also with thick variegated grey hair (in one form the hairs are golden. A common species on carrion; length 14-20 mm.



- Head and pronotum punctured and hairy.¹⁵
View from the side – the hairs are often clearer on the head.

15¹⁴Antennae short with the five segments before the last segment about twice as broad as long and forming an indistinct club. Head, pronotum and exposed abdominal segments 4-6 densely and coarsely pale-yellow hairy.

..... ***Emus hirtus***

Southern and Eastern England; very rare in fresh horse dung in May; 18-26 mm.



Antennae longer and more slender, the apical segments not forming a club. ...¹⁶

16¹⁵ Front angles of the pronotum sharply pointed.
..... Genus ***Ontholestes***



Front angles of the pronotum right-angled, obtusely angled or rounded.¹⁷

- 17¹⁶Head six-sided with the temples slightly broadening towards the back. Head and pronotum densely covered with rounded punctures. Eyes small. Exposed segments of the abdomen with small patches of pale hair or stripes.
..... ***Platydracus stercorarius***



Head oval, rounded or roundly four-sided.¹⁸

18¹⁷ Background colour of the head and pronotum reddish brown or the head with long upright golden-yellow shaggy hairs; the hairs on the head are noticeably paler than those on the pronotum. Length 11-16 mm.

..... ***Dinothenarus pubescens***

Rare species



Head and pronotum similarly hairy with prostrate hairs. Background colour very dark brown to black.¹⁹

- 19¹⁸ Exposed segments of the abdomen with a patch of golden-yellow hairs on each side at the base. Elytra reddish.
..... Genus ***Staphylinus***



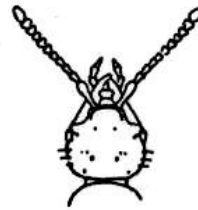
Exposed segments of the abdomen without patches of yellow hairs on the sides, but sometimes with a yellow patch of hairs in the middle of the front margin. Elytra usually darker.
..... Genus ***Ocypus*** and ***Tasgius***

Tribe Othiini

- 1 Head with mandibles characteristically shaped, slanting forwards at an angle, forming a triangle. Elytra almost without punctures. Head black, pronotum reddish and elytra black generally with the shoulders reddish-brown. Antennae and legs brownish-yellow. Pronotum with one puncture at each side of the disc. Exposed segments of the abdomen reddish-brown with most of segments 4-5 dark-brown to black. Length 5.5-7.0 mm.

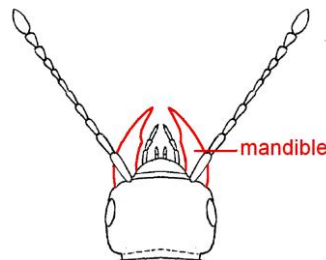
..... ***Atrecus affinis***

A common species, in rotten wood



Mandibles shorter and broader, more curved at the front of the head. Elytra distinctly punctured. Exposed segments of the abdomen more or less uniform in colour, although segment 6 sometimes lighter.

..... Genus ***Othius***



Tribe Xantholinini

Key to most British species

- 1 Pronotum without punctures on the disc, with a longitudinal groove close to the side margin. Scutellum strongly punctured. Shining black species, except for the elytra which are bright reddish-brown. Tarsi and sometimes the apex of the antennae reddish-brown. Head very strongly punctured in longitudinal rows. Elytra scarcely as long as the thorax with 2 rows of shallow punctures. Length 9-12 mm.

..... ***Gauropterus fulgidus***

Generally distributed but local; in vegetable refuse etc.



Pronotum with punctures on each side of the disc, not grooved near the side margin; scutellum without, or with a few fine punctures.2

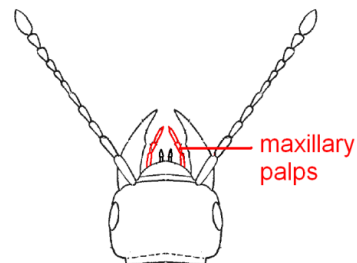
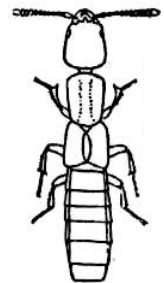
- 2¹ Head with four longitudinal impressions in front, and last segment of maxillary palps much narrower than penultimate.

.....3



Head with two longitudinal impressions in front, and the last segment of the maxillary palps quite, or nearly, as broad as the penultimate.4

(I have found this extremely difficult to see. One can get this far with insects in fluid, but these impressions are very weak and can easily be confused with reflections from the antennae on the top of the head. The insect must be dry and viewed from a number of angles with respect to the light source. Light from in front of head seems best - the two impressions originate from the base of the antennae.)



- 3² Head closely and very strongly punctured. Pronotum with a row of 5-6 large punctures on each side of the disc. Length 4.5-6 mm. Elytra yellowish-brown to dark brown. Legs orange-brown with the femora sometimes darker.

..... Genus ***Phacophallus***

Two species occur. *P. parumpunctatus* is illustrated. *P. pallidipennis* has the pronotum reddish brown contrasting with the dark head. The elytra are more extensively pale with the extreme base and area around the scutellum and suture darker. *P. pallidipennis* has a weak microscopic sculpture, whereas *P. parumpunctatus* has none. Found in garden rubbish.

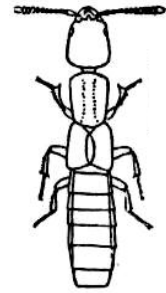


Head moderately strongly punctured. Pronotum with a row of more than six smaller punctures on each side of the disc. Length 3-5 mm.

..... Genus ***Leptacinus***

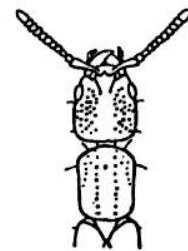


- 4² Head with hind margin obtusely angled with neck and hind angles more rounded. Head with scattered punctures. Pronotum with a row of 10-15 punctures on each side of disc along with some scattered punctures lateral to the row each side; elytra randomly punctured; antennae red to dark brownish-red, legs reddish yellow.



.....5

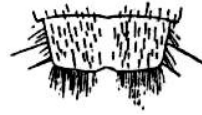
- Head with hind margin right-angled with neck, and hind angles less rounded. Pronotum black.8



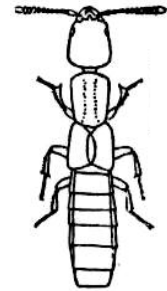
- 5⁴ Head slightly less elongate. Pronotum less contracted to base, with the front angles not quite so distinct. Male with a small notch in middle of hind margin of upper side of exposed segment 6 of abdomen; exposed segments strongly short-hairy. Pronotum dark brownish-red, with a slight bronze reflection. Elytra reddish-red. Exposed segments of abdomen dark brownish-red. Pronotum without a cross-reticulate microscopic sculpture. Length 6.5-8 mm.

..... ***Xantholinus laevigatus***

Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Scotland. Very local. Listed by Joy as *cribripennis*.



Head slightly more elongate, and pronotum more tapered towards the base. Male with segment 6 of the abdomen without a notch. ...⁶



- 6⁵ Pronotum and elytra reddish-orange to dark brownish-red, without a bronze reflection. Exposed segments of abdomen dark brownish-black. Segment 3 of antennae equal to, or slightly longer than, segment 2. Length 8-11 mm.

..... ***Xantholinus tricolor***

Common and widely distributed. Now split into *tricolor* with a more northerly distribution and *X. jarrigei* which appears to be more southern. *X. jarrigei* has a brighter and more contrasting coloration, slightly larger size (10-13 mm., *tricolor* 9-10 mm.)



Pronotum and elytra black to dark brown, with a bronze reflection. Exposed segments of the abdomen black. Segment 3 of antennae equal to, or slightly shorter than, segment 2. Length 6.5-8 mm.⁷

- 76 Pronotum with a microscopic cross-reticulation (just visible with x20). Elytra somewhat dull, the punctures not so scattered and somewhat organised into lines; colour on an average lighter, aedeagus characteristic (as shown).

..... ***Xantholinus linearis***

A **common** species.



Pronotum without cross-reticulation. Elytra somewhat shining, the punctures more randomly scattered. Colour on average darker. Aedeagus more bulbous (as shown).

..... ***Xantholinus longiventris***

A rare species. A third species, *X gallicus*, is very similar to these two.



8⁴ Elytra bright red to reddish-yellow. Head diffusely punctured. Pronotum with a row of 7-9 punctures on each side of disc.9

Elytra not bright red. Head closely punctured. Pronotum with 2 or 3 rows of punctures on each side.11



- 9⁸ Head not so diffusely punctured. Legs orange-brown. Elytra randomly punctured. Length 6-7.5 mm.
..... ***Nudobius lentus***

Widely scattered from Scotland to the south coast, very local; under fir bark.



Head very diffusely punctured. Legs dark brownish-red to black.¹⁰

10⁹ Elytra with 3 regular longitudinal rows of punctures, scarcely punctured in between. Length 5.5-6.5 mm. Elytra often with a black mark near scutellum.

..... ***Hypnogyra angularis***

England northwards to Derbyshire; rare; associated with birds' nests in trees. Joy has this as *glaber* Nor.

Elytra confusedly punctured. Length 10-13 mm.

..... ***Megalinus glabratus***

A **common** species



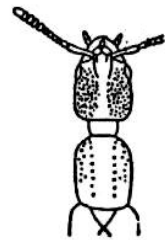
11⁸ Elytra, antennae and legs black. Head with punctures larger and eyes occupying more of the side. Pronotum with 4 or 5 punctures on each side of disc. Length 5.5-7.5 mm.

..... ***Gyrohypnus punctulatus*** (right) and
Gyrohypnus fracticornis (left)

These species differ in minute characters of the head and the male genitalia. Most specimens labelled *punctulatus* in collections are actually *fracticornis* which is the commoner species.



Elytra dark brown to dark-reddish; segments 2-11 of antennae reddish, legs dirty yellow. Head with punctures smaller, and eyes occupying less of side of head. Length 4.5-7 mm.¹²



12¹¹ Pronotum with 7-9 punctures on each side of disc.

..... ***Gyrophypnus angustatus***

A **common** species. Joy included *scoticus* as a variety but this has been raised to species status as ***Gyrophypnus scoticus*** (right hand illustration). It is smaller and more linear with the head and pronotum very closely cross-strigose giving them a duller appearance. Recorded from Scotland.



Pronotum with 4-5 punctures on each side of disc.

..... ***Gyrophypnus atratus***

England northwards to Lancashire. Very local; associated with nests of *Formica rufa*.