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Beetle News

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Editorial

Richard Wright

Welcome to the second issue of ***Beetle News***. First, I must apologise for the late arrival of this issue, which was planned for the end of June. Unfortunately this coincided with a peak of survey work for myself which left me insufficient time for anything else. The peak season having passed, I have finally found time to complete this issue, which I am sure was worth waiting for.

I must also apologise, for the same reasons, that I have not yet found sufficient time to complete the guide to British Silphidae which was started in Issue 1. I now have this in hand and expect to complete a more detailed guide than was originally planned within the next few weeks. However, I am sure that readers will find the excellent and very well-illustrated guide to British *Onthophagus* in this issue a more than adequate substitute and I would particularly like to thank the authors, Conrad Gillett and Marek Bunalski, for this excellent contribution. Thanks, of course, to all those who have contributed to this issue.

Finally, a note for potential contributors. Most of my time in laying out this newsletter is spent in *removing* the text and image formatting which has been used by authors. I cannot import most existing formatting into the newsletter. Please only use minimal formatting e.g. for bold, italic, new paragraph etc. Images should ideally be sent separately from text and not embedded in the document. jpg is suitable for photographs etc., while a vector format e.g Windows Metafile (wmf) is preferable for diagrams and charts.

I still plan to produce the next issue in early October, and so contributions should be sent by the end of September.

Pachyrhinus lethierryi (Desbrochers) present in Warwickshire (VC 38)

On 25th April 2009, I noticed what I suspected to be a specimen of *Pachyrhinus lethierryi* on the inside of a window in my house in Cheylesmore, Coventry (SP3377). After confirming the identification, I was able to find two additional specimens by beating one of three Thuja (*Thuja occidentalis)* trees in the garden. Further specimens have been noted throughout spring and early summer.

This species is not listed on the NBN gateway website as yet and the only information ready to hand, the paper by Plant, Morris & Heal (2006), details the discovery of this species in England in April 2003. The weevil's known distribution at the time of that publication was very much restricted to the south-east of the country, with records from Hertfordshire, South Essex, Buckinghamshire, East Kent, West Kent, Surrey and Middlesex.

This recent addition to our fauna has evidently spread northwards and westwards since it was first discovered. It would be interesting to hear from anyone else who has found it outside of its previously known range.

Reference

COLIN W. PLANT, M.G.MORRIS and NORMAN HEAL. 2006. *Pachyrhinus lethierryi* Desbrochers, 1875) (Curculionidae) new to Britain and evidently established in south-east England. *The Coleopterist* **15** (2).

Steve Lane

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Pooter for collecting Micro Coleoptera directly into alcohol filled vials

Michael Darby

Micro-coleoptera are difficult to handle without damaging features which are often important for identification. This pooter obviates the need to transfer insects from one container to another when this damage usually occurs and places the insects directly into alcohol for storage (and up-dates the one I described in *Coleopterists Newsletter*, 12, 1983).

The body is cut from a plastic pastette and the tubing is standard telephone wiring with the core removed. Both pastette and vials are available from Alpha laboratories (www.alphalabs.co.uk). Pastette = catalogue no. LW4000, length 156mm. Vial = Microcentrifuge tube, LW2450,1.5ml. They make several types of tube but these are the ones I use. Each of the tubes has a tiny letter on the lid hinge which combined with the different colours makes identifying individual tubes easy. To order assorted colours affix 'AS' to order. Unfortunately both tubes and pasettes can only be ordered in large quantities but are still very cheap.

In order to prevent alcohol entering the suction tube, the end is blocked (I used a broken off tooth pick) and small holes made immediately above this in the side of the tube with a needle. The cut off bulb of the pastette is blocked with the top from a small glass tube into which holes were made to take the tubes. The alcohol used is Iso-propyl, also called 2-Propanol in a 70% solution with distilled water.

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Sitona lineatus (L.) (Curculionidae) at the seaside

Frank Kenington, Bermar, Withernsea Road, Holmpton, Withernsea, East Yorkshire, HU19 2QP

On the evening of April 5th 2007 I received a call from a friend walking his dog on the sea front at Withernsea saying that the railings along the promenade were swarming with weevils. I drove over and saw thousands of *Sitona lineatus*. The railings are steel tubing painted bright red and connected to the posts with cross and tee brackets and the beetles appeared to be most numerous on these nodes where a fair number were engaged in copulation.
The railings contain about 150 sections One photograph shows some 519 insects on one side of a bracket and there would be almost the same number on the back of the bracket and although not as numerous on the rails between posts I estimate the total present might be more than 1,125,000 beetles. The next morning only a few remained in the debris on the steps down to the beach.

A friend told me that *S. lineatus* was reputed to winter in saltmarshes and once when sieving strandline debris on the Humber after a high tide I found this species in considerable numbers. The tide would have washed through the saltmarsh and deposited the debris at the base of the river bank. So possibly the weevils at Withernsea had dispersed from the saltmarshes along the Humber and because of the southern curvature of the estuary an offshore wind could carry them to the Holderness coast around Withernsea but how come so many were present at one site?
A web search at the time did not find other records of aggregations (this is apparently the correct term) of this species. However, a more recent search produced several instances of research showing that male *S. lineatus* produce pheromones which attract both males and females. So possibly aggregations would begin and the largest would probably attract more and more weevils before setting off for the bean fields but in this case they decided to take time off and go to the seaside. Perhaps the initial grouping took place on the Withernsea railings and the rest were drawn in from the surrounding area? Vining peas and broad beans are grown in Holderness. Some insects are known to make use of or be carried on high altitude currents for migration. Was the colour of the railings a factor as almost none were present elsewhere such as the low wall that supported the railings?
Thanks to Peter Cook who discovered the weevils and Bill Dolling who mentioned the wintering habitation.

Margaret M. Blight and Lester J. Wadhams Rothamsted Experimental Station, AL5 2JQ Harpenden, Herts., UK 1986

Abstract The attraction of *S. lineatus* to live baits comprising *S. lineatus* feeding on Vicia faba (L.) was studied in a field experiment in the early spring. There was clear evidence that male S. lineatus produced an aggregation pheromone which attracted approximately equal numbers of both sexes from overwintering sites. No evidence was obtained for the production, in the spring, of any semiochemical by female weevil

An aerial netting study of insects migrating at high altitude over ...Grimsby. Hull, Suffolk and Kent. North Sea.. Year(s). 1999, 2000, 2002 ..... aerial currents. The insect population of the air from ground level to 300 feet. ... insect dispersal: methods and approaches. pp. 24–49 JW Chapman - 2007

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An abundance of *Chrysomela populi* Linnaeus in Warwickshire (VC 38)

The handsome leaf beetle *Chrysomela populi* L. is something of a rarity in Warwickshire, there being only a handful of records from a small number of sites.

The species was absent from the Victoria County History summary, a publication which collated all known records before 1903. The first Warwickshire reports came in 1948 and 1949, when it occurred in abundance at the Ryton, Wappenbury and Bubbenhall Woods complex (SP 37). However, from that period up until 2009, there were only three recorded occurrences of singletons: Clowes Wood NR (SP17) in 1980, Wappenbury Wood NR in 1985 and what was certainly a vagrant at Stonebridge Meadows LNR (SP 37) in 1992.

In May 2009, someone posted a photo of an adult of this species onto the photo sharing website flickr.com. The photo was taken at Ryton Wood NR. I went out to this well-recorded woodland site on 10th June and my attention was immediately drawn to a large, open coppiced area with a significant quantity of young regrowth of aspen, willow, birch and hazel. As soon as I entered the area, I noticed an adult *C. populi* feeding on aspen and over the course of 10 minutes, I counted 17 adults and hundreds of late-instar larvae, all feeding or resting on aspen saplings. A visit to the nearby Wappenbury Wood on 11th June yielded two late-instar larvae, presumably of this species. Selected areas of this wood have also been coppiced recently.

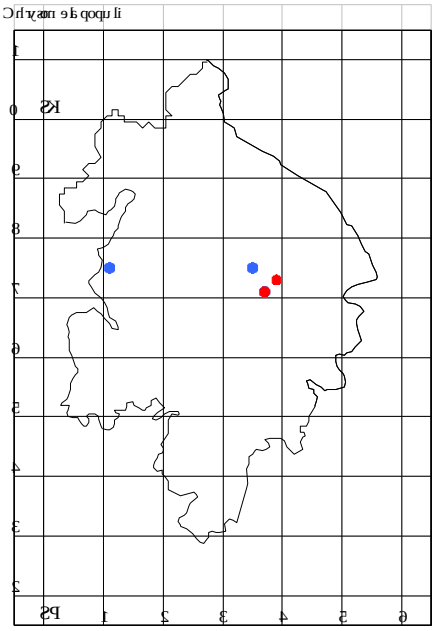
It is tantalising to speculate that the species may have hung on in low numbers at these and adjacent woodland localities until the recent coppicing programme facilitated a population explosion of this magnitude. Coppicing is due to continue at these woods and it will be interesting to see if the species' abundance can be sustained in the coming years or whether its population dynamics will be adversely affected by parasites, predators or disease.

Carlier, a Warwickshire entomologist, documented (unpublished) his observations that population explosions of *Agrilus laticornis* (Illiger), *Luperus longicornis* (Fabricius) and *Chrysomela tremula* Fabricius occurred when clearance of undergrowth of 9 year old 'birch, hazel etc' was carried out at Arnold's Wood, Warwickshire (SP 17) in the early 1920s. He reported that these three species became much more scarce after the third year following clearance.

Chrysomela tremula is now thought to be extinct in the UK, the last record being from Tile Hill Wood, Coventry (SP 27) in 1958. This beetle was historically more widely distributed and more frequently recorded in Warwickshire than *C. populi*. The recent observation at Ryton Wood begs the question “Is *C. tremula* still out there and could coppicing eventually reveal it's continued presence in VC 38?”

Steve Lane

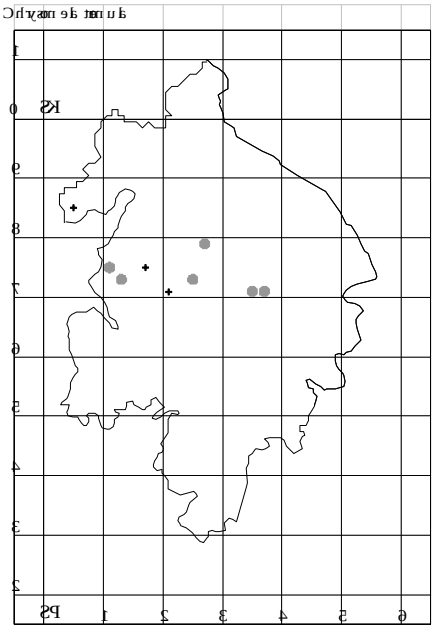
Chrysomela populi



Distribution of *Chrysomela* species in Warwickshire (VC38)

C. populi (left)
C. tremula (right)

Codes:
+ pre-1900
grey dot 1900 -1979
blue dot 1980 - 2000
red dot 2001 - 2009



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Uleiota planata (Linnaeus) in Britain, additional records from Warwickshire.

Keith Alexander (2009) summarised the documented occurrences of *Uleiota planata* (Linnaeus) in Britain. However, his distribution map does not account for the two Warwickshire records of this species, both of which were published in Lane, Wright and Forsythe (2008). The records are of a single specimen in old oaks at Coughton Court NT (SP0860) in summer 2005 (A.P. Foster) and one under bark of a recently felled beech log at Kingston Grange (SP3555) in January 2007 (S.A. Lane).

Uleiota planata

References

ALEXANDER, K.N.A. 2009. The status of *Uleiota planata* (Linnaeus) (Silvanidae) in Britain – long established native or importation? *The Coleopterist* **18** (1).
STEVE LANE, RICHARD WRIGHT and TREVOR FORSYTHE 2008. *Beetles of Warwickshire CD-Rom.* Richard Wright (RWEcology).

Steve Lane

Commonly used chemicals for the Coleopterist and where to find them

Often in older texts the Coleopterist is advised to purchase something from "a dispensing chemist" an example being Gum tragacanth, which from personal experience ends with the chemist looking at you rather gone out! Some chemicals that Coleopterists might need are available readily without the need to mail order from and entomological supplier a table (which will hopefully be a work in progress) is supplied below to help the beginner and expert alike

Table 1- Common chemicals used in Coleopterology and their everyday uses/Sources

Chemical	Source/Everyday use	Notes
Gum tragacanth	Cake decorating supply shops (used as an edible gum)	Available in powdered form
IPA (alcohol)	Electrical components shops (universal cleaning solvent)	
Acetone	Pharmacies (as a household solvent)	Usable as a substitute for Ethyl acetate
Ethyl-Acetate	The active ingredient of some nail varnish removers	The nail varnish remover pads are suitable for use as a non-perishable source of killing fluid (See Chick 2008)
Gum Arabic	See Gum tragacanth	Also art shops. Available in solution with fungicide added

Andrew Chick 50 Thorneywood Road, Long Eaton, Nottingham

Reference

Chick 2008, ***Some novel suggestions for the collection and study of Diptera from carrion*** Bulletin of the dipterists forum 65 p24-26

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Wiltshire Beetles by Michael Darby

This is the first book on this fascinating group of insects in Wiltshire.1,839 species are listed with information on rarity, locations, habitats, dates and names of recorders.

Introductory sections cover the history of beetle collecting from a cleric in the early 19th century to modern day professional entomologists, and include the pioneering work carried out at Marlborough and Dauntsey's schools. Major sites are listed and information provided about changes in the fauna. An important section covers the use of beetles in the assessment of woodland and grassland sites.

Dr Michael Darby has been the County Beetle Recorder for 16 years. He is a council member of the British Entomological and Natural History Society and was formerly on the Council of the Royal Entomological Society. He has published many articles on beetles, and is currently Natural History Editor of *Wiltshire Studies*.

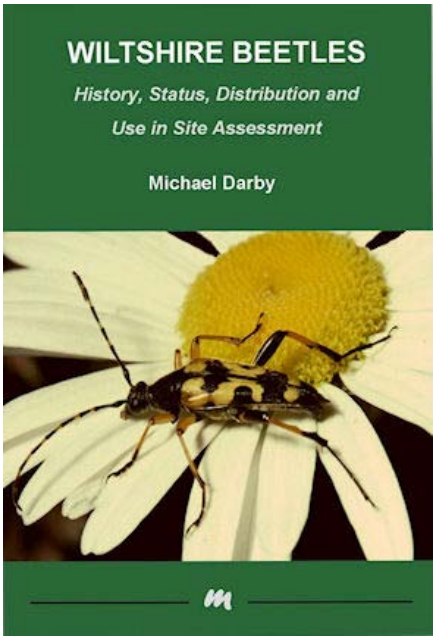
Address to place an order or contact us:

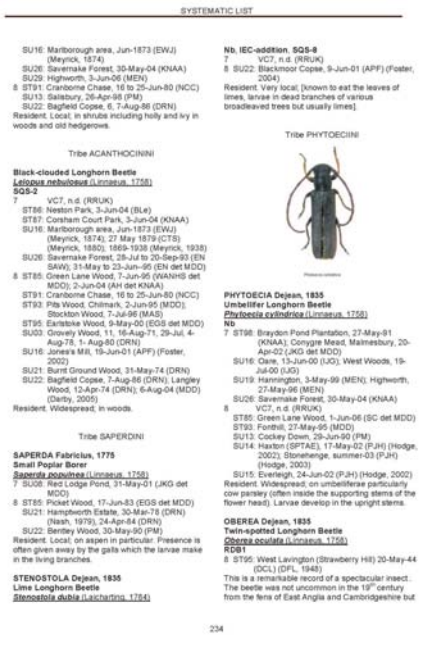
Malthouse Books
The Old Malthouse,
Sutton Mandeville,
SALIBURY
Wilts. SP3 5LZ
admin@malthousebooks.co.uk

Cheques should be made payable to Malthouse Books

(Books will be despatched as soon as they are available)

353 pp. (135 pp. colour)
189 x 246 mm
Softback




SYSTEMATIC LIST

Tribe ACANTHOCININI

Black-clouded Longhorn Beetle
Leiopus nebulosus (Linnaeus, 1758)

Tribe PHYTOECIINI

PHYTOECIA Dejean, 1835
Umbellifer Longhorn Beetle
Phytoecia cylindrica (Linnaeus, 1758)

Tribe SAPERDINI

SAPERDA Fabricius, 1775
Small Poplar Borer
Saperda populnea (Linnaeus, 1758)

STENOSTOLA Dejean, 1835
Lime Longhorn Beetle
Stenostola dubia (Laicharting, 1784)

OBEREA Dejean, 1835
Twin-spotted Longhorn Beetle
Oberea oculata (Linnaeus, 1758)

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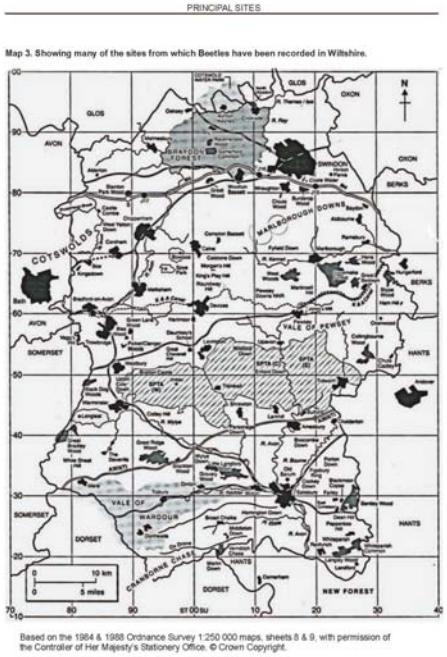
PRINCIPAL SITES

Map 3. Showing many of the sites from which Beetles have been recorded in Wiltshire.

Based on the 1984 & 1988 Ordnance Survey 1:250 000 maps, sheets 8 & 9, with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright.

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Beetles of Warwickshire by Steve Lane, Richard Wright and Trevor Forsythe. CD Rom. 2008.

The publication of ***Wiltshire Beetles*** above, reminds me that many readers of this newsletter may not be aware that last year we published a CD Rom atlas of Warwickshire beetles. This is, of course, still available and is based on about 70, 000 records of more than 2.000 species. Maps at the tetrad (2 km square) level are provided for the great majority of species and all species with a reasonable number of records also have phenology charts showing the number of records made each week. To assist those who are less familiar with beetles, photographs of most of the more distinctive species are also included.

This publication updates and replaces our 2001 ***Atlas of Warwickshire Beetles*** which was based on only about 35,000 records. ***Beetles of Warwickshire*** was produced as a CD Rom primarily for economic reasons as it would have been impossible to produce a printed publication with the same amount of content for a sensible price. It will run on any standard PC.

Beetles of Warwickshire can be obtained only directly from me (address on front page of this newsletter) and costs £11 inclusive of p & p, cheques payable to R J Wright.

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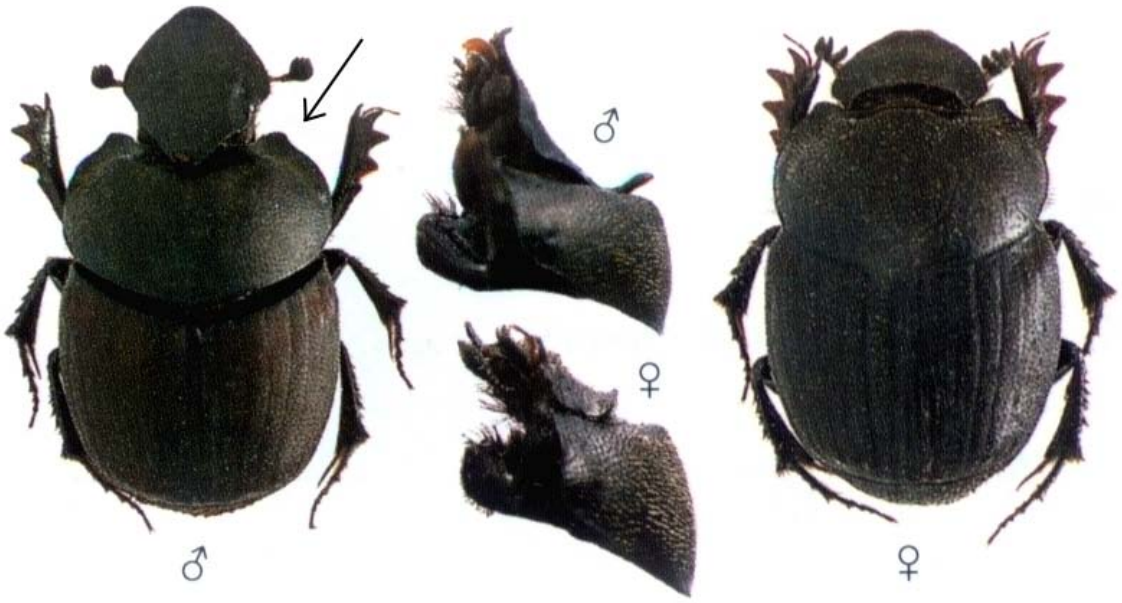
Beginner's Guide
Scarabaeidae: *Onthophagus*

By Conrad P.D.T. Gillett* and Marek Bunalski,
*National Zoological Collections of Suriname, P.O.B. 9212, Paramaribo, Suriname

This is a brief and simple photographic identification guide to the 8 species of *Onthophagus* that have been recorded in Britain. *Onthophagus* are true dung beetles belonging to the subfamily Scarabaeinae which dig tunnels in the soil directly below a dung source, in which they construct one or more brood chambers and provision them with dung. They can be distinguished from the more abundant dung beetles in the genus *Aphodius* (Subfamily Aphodiinae) by their shorter elytra, which leave the pygidium exposed when viewed from above (the pygidium is covered by the elytra in *Aphodius*). *Onthophagus* are bulkier and broader beetles, which are slightly flattened above, whereas most *Aphodius* are narrow and more convex. The males of all but one British *Onthophagus* possess a horn-like process arising from the top of the head. The beetles can be collected during spring and summer in and under all sorts of dung, and in the soil directly beneath, but also occasionally on carrion and rotting mushrooms. They occur in pastures, heathland, hillsides and dunes, and are more common in the south of the country.

Entirely black species

Anterior angles of pronotum wavy, head of male with a single horn. Length 6-11 mm
O. verticicornis (= *O. nutans*) 6-11 mm
Probably extinct, old records from southern England



Anterior angles of pronotum rounded

Length less than 7 mm, upper surface covered in short yellow hairs, head of male without horns
O. joannae 4-6 mm
Local in England, Wales and southern Scotland

(illustrations on follwoing page)

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Length greater than 7 mm, upper surface lacking yellow hairs, head of male with two curved horns, one on each side
O. taurus 8-10 mm
Probably extinct in England, old records from Hampshire

Species with elytra yellow ochre, often with asymmetrical markings

Anterior angles of pronotum wavy, female without a tubercle at front of pronotum

Elytra with many distinct dark markings

(following page)

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Usually larger 7-10 mm, head horn of male angular at base, punctuation on head coarse
O. fracticornis 7-10 mm
Rare in southwestern England and southern Wales, on hillsides

Usually smaller 4-7 mm, head horn of male smoothly contoured at base, punctuation on head irregular
O. similis 4-7 mm
Widespread in England and Wales

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Elytra with few indistinct markings, head and pronotum brighter metallic copper or green
O. coenobita 6-9 mm
Widespread in England and wales

Anterior angles of pronotum rounded, female with tubercle at front of pronotum

Head and pronotum black, smaller, length up to 9 mm
O. nuchicornis 6-9 mm
Very local in southern England and Wales, usually on coastal sand dunes

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Head and pronotum metallic bronze or green, bigger, length up to 11 mm
O. vacca 7-11 mm
Very local in southern England, usually on pastureland