

S k i m m e r

Yorkshire Branch of The British Dragonfly Society



S. danae Courtesy of Brian Lucas

Yorkshire Branch Magazine

2005

Next indoor meeting

The date of the next indoor meeting is
October 15th, 2.00p.m.,
Cliffe Castle, Keighley

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Editorial

Members of the Yorkshire branch are actively involved in detailed mapping of odonates in West Yorkshire. It is hoped that this will be completed by 2006, when they will turn their attention to the other Yorkshire regions – North and South and the East Riding. Peter Mill has been actively involved in creating new dragonfly habitat at the Rodley Nature Reserve in Leeds (see below) and it was agreed at the indoor meeting in March that the management of this area of the reserve would be taken on by some of the branch members. A successful BDS stand was organised for the Science Fair in ‘The Light’ in Leeds city centre in March. The Fair was run by the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society and was held to mark Science Week.

March - Indoor Meeting

Minutes

5th March 2005, 2.00pm at The Holy Name of Jesus Church Hall, Ireland Wood, Leeds

Members Present:

Peter Mill, David Miller (Secretary), Jill and Brian Lucas, Tom Hubball, Steve Warrillow and Peter Larner (Acting Chairman)

Apologies for Absence:

Sue Warrillow (Treasurer), Mike Densley

Minutes of the Last Meeting:

Read and approved

Treasurers Report:

Bank balance stands at £350. It was decided that the £1.00 levy per person at each indoor meeting levy would remain for the cost of hire

Skimmer:

David Miller requested articles for the next Skimmer because at present he had one from Jill and Brian. Other members volunteered to supply a number of articles and First and Last Dates. The decision was taken to combine the newsletter and Skimmer to save on time and money.

Records:

So far most that had come in for the Atlas were from Jill and Brian, and it was requested that anyone who had any records should come forward. Various suggestions were made about approaching organisations such as Yorkshire Water and English Nature. At this point Jill read out a letter from British Waterways from Karen Butterworth (Ecologist)

“I acknowledge your letter (from Jill) and it is a large job to collate Odonata records for Yorkshire, so will be back and in touch when we have ascertained useful information.”

Atlas:

Peter showed some examples of the maps that will be used in the Atlas ie. *A. grandis*, *P. nymphula* and *C. splendens*. They looked good. However he did point out that there were many gaps in the recording as pointed out above, those recorded so far were mostly from Jill and Brian and hence very focused around Huddersfield. Peter explained the key used to denote possible recording etc.

The group decided to arrange new sites to visit in order to cover areas missing records at present. Also individual members volunteered to visit sites on their own, nearer to where they lived.

On page 9 of Skimmer you will find a copy of the record sheet used for the atlas.

If any one would like to make any records please do so, and send them to Peter Mill, preferably by email (gmill@supanet.com). Paper records can be sent to him at 8 Cookridge Grove, Leeds LS16 7LH

Outdoor Meetings:

May 7th 10.00am

Judy's Wood, Halifax

Directions: Take the A641 to Norwood Green, Wyke, turn off for Station Road and the Reserve is on the right, indicated by a Sign Board. Also see <http://www.judywoods.org.uk> for a map

This is the first trip to this site to ascertain what might be there.

June 4th 10.00am

Park at Woodlesford Lock, Swillington, Oulton

Again this is the first trip to this site to ascertain what might be there

Grid Ref: 366293 for meeting

July 9th 10.00am

Normanton, Stanley Ferry.

Meeting point to confirm

For further details call David 01226 709153 nearer the date.

First trip to a site to ascertain what might be there

August 6th 10.00am

Park at Woodlesford Lock, Swillington, Oulton

Return trip to this site to find (hopefully) more species

Grid Ref: 366293 for meeting

September 3rd 10.00am

Meeting to be confirmed

For further details call David 01226 709153 nearer the date.

Indoor Meeting:

The next indoor meeting will be on the 15th October 2005 at Cliffe Castle, Keighley, for an informal look round the Odonata collection from 10.00am and the indoor meeting at 2.00pm with a £1 refreshments fee.

AOB:

Rodley Nature Reserve. Peter Mill, who running this new and exciting project asked if the branch would be interested in taking on the management of the ponds. Although there was not a resounding yes, some individuals approached him about helping out when required.

Website:

This will be updated with 2005 skimmer, first and last dates and this years' outdoor and indoor meetings.

Many thanks to Peter Mill for organising the venue and refreshments

Review of the Field Meetings of 2004

Jill Lucas

It was decided that the group's field meetings in 2004 would be concentrated on areas about which little was known.

The season started on May 1st. with a pond dipping session at the Bradford Ornithological group's Stockbridge Reserve near Keighley. Eight of us assembled on a somewhat dull but fine day. We were met by the volunteer warden who told us a little about the reserve. There is one largish body of water with smaller pools and a ditch. A good area we thought. However, it proved disappointing as we only managed to dredge up four species, all damselfly, which were a single larva of Azure Damselfly - *C. puella*, 2 larvae of the Common Blue damselfly - *E. cyathigerum*, and eighteen larvae of the Blue-tailed Damselfly - *I. elegans*. One female Large Red Damselfly - *P. nymphula* was observed resting on vegetation.

We were not much luckier on our second trip which was to the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Reserve at Bretton Park. This is a satellite College to the University of Leeds and also home to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. It is set in parkland, has two lakes and a Camellia House. Six people attended this meeting, although two were never seen as they had gone to the wrong car parks and this despite an accurate grid reference. Nice one Pat and Ken!. The Canada Geese which are such a feature of Bretton had done their best (or worst) on one of the lakes and on the surrounding bank side vegetation. We recorded one male Banded Demoiselle - *Coenagrion splendens*, two male Azures and too many Common and Blue-tailed Damselflies to count.

Temple Newsam in July was a big let down Odonata wise. The grounds are too manicured and the pools too ornamental or too overgrown with virtually no open water. Really what one would expect of a council owned public park. We did expect to see some common insects but there was nothing at all. In keeping with this groups' ability to go off at a tangent, a quite lively discussion followed by a few telephone calls ensued about the variety of oak trees that had been planted. It was finally decided that they were a mixture of native oaks, their hybrid, American Red, Turkey and Pin.

Poor Sue had to manage Mann Dam and Oakwell Hall on her own. For various reasons no one else put in an appearance. There was nothing at Mann Dam, which was disappointing, but she managed to record three male Common Darters - *S. striolatum* and one Brown Hawker - *A. grandis*. Well done Sue for your persistence.

It had been suggested by a non-participating member of the group that an area of the Calder Valley could prove profitable. Objectives were Black Darter - *S. danae* and Golden-ringed - *C. boltonii*. We were pleased to welcome two members who had not previously attended any meetings. There was some discussion as to whether the area suggested was actually in Yorkshire or Lancashire. Reference to the only available map was not very helpful. The area was upland moor with reservoirs and is very popular with walkers. We recorded large numbers of Black Darters many tenerals and quite a few emergents. Hawkers were seen including Common and Brown - *A. juncea* and *A. grandis*, but sadly no Golden-ringed. Brian, on checking the map when we arrived home, discovered that we had in fact been in Lancashire all day. Thanks Sue and Paul!

Spurn, to me at least was a major failure. It was my third trip to Spurn, my third attempt to see the Red-veined Darter - *S. fonscolombii* and the third year that I did not see it. We knew it was there because Steve had spoken to the warden on the Tuesday prior to our visit and he had seen it. We saw quite a number of the Emperor dragonfly - *Anax imperator* but little else. It was also disappointing for our two visitors from Worcestershire, although they did enjoy the walk round the point and the 'cuppa' in the Bluebell Cafe afterwards.

Although we did not see much it was a worthwhile exercise as we now know some places where not to go in future years.

Dragonfly Ponds at Rodley

Peter Mill

Rodley Nature Reserve is located adjacent to the river Aire on the site of a former sewage treatment works at Rodley, about 5 miles northwest of the centre of Leeds. It was officially opened to the public in 2000. It is operated entirely by volunteers and is open at weekends and on Wednesdays. The wetland habitat created was designed very much with birds in mind but towards the end of 2003 a decision was made to develop an area specifically to encourage dragonflies and damselflies.

Phase 1 of the dragonfly project involves the installation of four new ponds and the modification of an existing pond to make it suitable for school project work (including decking on two sides). Each of the four new ponds will be planted out with different species of native plant, partly to see if choice of oviposition sites by dragonflies is in any way related to the plant species present. Furthermore, two of the ponds will have adjacent marshy areas. We have had practical help from a group of Rangers and volunteers from ASDA, Halifax Bank (HBOS) and DEFRA, the last two organised through the local branch of the BTCV.

Work on the new ponds started in April 2004 and each has a surface area of 80-100 m². All of the ponds require lining. So far two of the new ponds have been excavated, shaped, lined and filled with water. The ponds were backfilled with a layer of soil brought in from outside the reserve (York) because the soil on site is too nutrient rich for the purpose. The water was pumped from a ditch in the adjacent wet grassland area through a filter specifically bought for the purpose. The other two ponds have been excavated. Some planting out can be achieved by translocation of plants already on the reserve; others will have to wait until they become commercially available in March/April. Pathways between the ponds are being prepared to enable public access, and seating will be provided adjacent to each pond. Information boards will be provided for dragonflies and for aquatic plants.

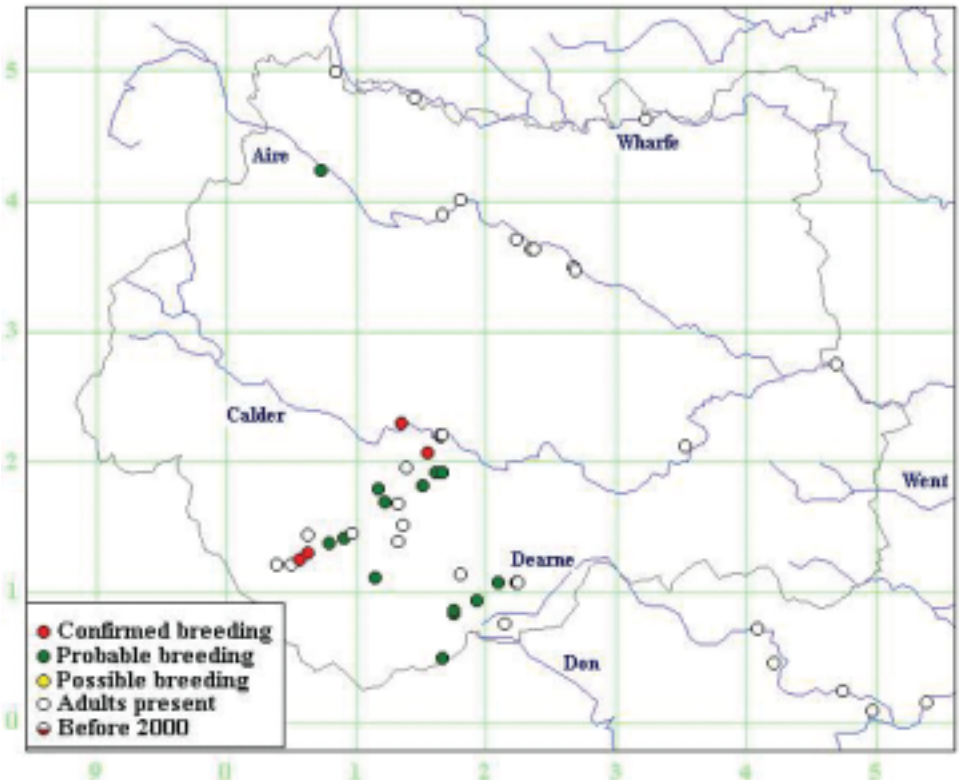
Funding of £10,700 has been raised so far towards an estimated total of about £11,500 required for the completion of phase 1; including some starter funding from the Rodley Nature Reserve Trust itself. The Trust is extremely grateful for grants towards this project from the British Dragonfly Society, the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, Green Leeds and the Community Chest (Leeds).

Atlas for West Yorkshire

The members of the Yorkshire Branch of the British Dragonfly Society intend to produce detailed dragonfly distribution maps for Yorkshire. However, due to the large size of the county and the relatively small number of active recorders in Yorkshire, we have decided to deal with each region in turn, starting with West Yorkshire. Thus this coming season we will concentrate our efforts accordingly, although we hope that recorders in the other regions will keep sending in their records so that we have a good base for the future.

The Yorkshire Recorder, Chris Seargent, has resigned and so records should for the time being, be sent to Peter Mill, who will forward them to David Clarke for transmission to the National Database. If possible records should be submitted as an email attachment; otherwise paper copy will be fine. See opposite for format is:

Contact: Peter Mill, 8 Cookridge Grove, Leeds LS16 7LH or email: gpmill@supanet.com



The Dragons and Damsels of Stockbridge

Tom Hubball

Stockbridge Nature Reserve is owned and run by Bradford Ornithological Group. It is situated between the River Aire and the Leeds – Liverpool Canal at Stockbridge, near Keighley. Unfortunately, the site is not open to the general public although all members of B.O.G. may use it without restriction.

One of the B.O.G. members, Richard Hockin undertook the first survey of the species using the Reserve in 1999 and in 2000 made the important discovery that Banded Demoiselle (*Calopteryx splendens*) was present. In 1999 Richard had recorded it at Keighley Golf Club, about half a mile upstream and this appears to be the first record of it in the Aire Valley, north west of Bradford, although it had been present on the Wharfe for some years.

In Richard's first survey, only Common Blue Damselfly (*Enallagma cyathigera*), Blue-tailed Damselfly (*Ischnura elegans*), Common Darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*) and Brown Hawker (*Aeshna grandis*) were noted. The following year the Banded Demoiselles, mentioned above, and Azure Damselfly (*Coenagrion puella*) were added. In 2001, Large Red Damselfly (*Pyrrosoma nymphula*) appeared in the adjacent school's very small and shallow concrete pond and also on the Reserve itself. Apart from the demoiselles though, all the other species were probably on the Reserve since its inception in the early nineties. For two years the list remained static until 2003 when another two species were added to the list. By now I had taken over recording of the fauna on the Reserve and I had seen a blue dragonfly and contacted the local branch of the British Dragonfly Society to ask if someone could come and identify the species for me. Steve Warrillow turned up on an inauspicious cloudy day and to both our surprise we not only saw a Southern Hawker (*Aeshna cyanea*) patrolling up and down the scrape but also witnessed a Common Hawker (*Aeshna juncea*) carrying prey. As these were the only two dragonflies seen that day, it really was a truly remarkable sight. We arranged for the Yorkshire branch of the BDS to undertake a survey of the scrape and ponds for dragonfly and damselfly larvae in early 2004 but the results were rather disappointing. Only a small number of Blue-tailed Damselfly larvae were found. I subsequently joined the BDS in order to learn more about Odonata in general and also as a way of meeting like minded enthusiasts on the Societies field trips. The latest addition to the Reserve list was a lone female Broad-bodied Chaser (*Libellula depressa*), which was seen in the summer and it is hoped that with better weather this year more species may find their way onto the Reserve. I also hope that one day a more successful search for larvae can be undertaken at the Reserve.

First and last dates for Odonata in Yorkshire 2004

| Species | First | Place | last | Place |
|--------------------------|--------|---------------------------|--------|-------------------|
| <i>C. splendens</i> | 6-Jun | Stockbridge | 3-Sep | Fairburn Ings |
| <i>P. nymphula</i> | 25-Apr | Fairburn Ings | 14-Aug | Deanhead Moss |
| <i>C. puella</i> | 13-May | Fairburn Ings | 7-Aug | Fairburn Ings |
| <i>I. elegans</i> | 5-May | Meltham Mills | 22-Aug | Stockbridge |
| <i>E. cyathigerum</i> | 2-May | Meltham Mills | 3-Sep | Stockbridge |
| <i>L. quadrimaculata</i> | 14-May | Fairburn Ings | 2-Aug | Stockbridge |
| <i>L. depressa</i> | 6-Jun | Cromwell Bottom. Tip Pond | 15-Jun | Fairburn Ings |
| <i>S. striolatum</i> | 30-May | Stockbridge | 28-Oct | Fairburn Ings |
| <i>S. sanguineum</i> | 6-Jul | Cromwell Bottom | 24-Sep | Fairburn Ings |
| <i>S. danae</i> | 22-Jul | Deanhead Moss | 16-Sep | Meltham Mills |
| <i>L. sponsa</i> | 19-Jun | Fairburn Ings | 24-Sep | Lower Holme House |
| <i>A. grandis</i> | 12-Jun | Fairburn Ings | 26-Sep | Stockbridge |
| <i>A. mixta</i> | 27-Jul | Fairburn Ings | 28-Oct | Fairburn Ings |
| <i>A. juncea</i> | 6-Jul | Cromwell Bottom | 26-Sep | Stockbridge |
| <i>A. cyanea</i> | 21-Aug | Fairburn Ings | 8-Sep | Fairburn Ings |
| <i>A. imperator</i> | 24-May | Fairburn Ings | 17-Aug | Fairburn Ings |
| <i>O. cancellatum</i> | 12-Jun | Fairburn Ings | 17-Aug | Fairburn Ings |

Thanks to all those who contributed their records.

Species list for Yorkshire

Species marked with * are believed to be extinct in Yorkshire

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Calopteryx virgo</i> | Beautiful Demoiselle |
| <i>Calopteryx splendens</i> | Banded Demoiselle |
| <i>Lestes sponsa</i> | Emerald Damselfly |
| <i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i> | Large Red Damselfly |
| <i>Ceragrion tenellum</i> | Small Red Damselfly |
| <i>Erythromma najas</i> | Red-eyed Damselfly |
| <i>Ischnura elegans</i> | Blue tailed Damselfly |
| <i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i> | Common Blue Damselfly |
| <i>Coenagrion puella</i> | Azure Damselfly |
| <i>Brachytron pratense</i> | Hairy Dragonfly |
| <i>Aeshna juncea</i> | Common Hawker |
| <i>Aeshna mixta</i> | Migrant Hawker |
| <i>Aeshna cyanea</i> | Southern Hawker |
| <i>Aeshna grandis</i> | Brown Hawker |
| <i>Anax imperator</i> | Emperor Dragonfly |
| <i>Anax parthenope</i> | Lesser Emperor |
| <i>Cordulegaster boltonii</i> | Golden-ringed Dragonfly |
| <i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i> | Four-spotted Chaser |
| <i>Libellula fulva*</i> | Scarce Chaser |
| <i>Libellula depressa</i> | Broad-bodied Chaser |
| <i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i> | Black-tailed Skimmer |
| <i>Orthetrum coerulescens</i> | Keeled Skimmer |
| <i>Sympetrum striolatum</i> | Common Darter |
| <i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i> | Ruddy Darter |
| <i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i> | Red-veined Darter |
| <i>Sympetrum flaveolum</i> | Yellow-winged Darter |
| <i>Sympetrum danae</i> | Black Darter |
| <i>Leucorrhinia dubia*</i> | White-faced Darter |

New species recorded in 2003

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Aeshna isosceles</i> | Norfolk Hawker |
| <i>Cordulia aenea</i> | Downy Emerald |