



Skimmer

2016





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Cover photo:

Large Red Damselfly, North Cave Wetlands – Paul Ashton

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Notes from the Chair

So here we are on the cusp of a new season, and like me you will no doubt be eager to get out there, feel the warmth of the sun on your back, and spot some dragonflies.

It is always great to see the photos and reports on Facebook of your dragonfly encounters, but a special thank you, on behalf of all the Yorkshire BDS recorders, goes to those of you who also send in records of your sightings.

The launch of the BDS iRecord platform has been a great success, with a high percentage of records submitted directly in to the iRecord database for verification. For those of you who have yet to try iRecord, I would strongly recommend it. It is a great place to keep all your records for all taxa, not just dragonflies, while doing your bit for citizen science! What's more, there is now an app, so you can record using your smart phone.

I don't want to rattle on about recording too much, but thought at this point it was worth mentioning the Freshwater Habitats Trust, and their pond recording scheme. For any of you that would like to learn more about aquatic fauna and flora, this is a great opportunity, while contributing to our understanding of what is going on in Yorkshire's ponds.

You will note from this copy of Skimmer we have a new name, 'Yorkshire Dragonfly Group' and a logo! The name is not quite the mouthful of our previous title, and it is what some members have been calling us for years anyway! The change in name was agreed at the last AGM. Our thanks go to YDG member Samantha Batty for coming up with the logo design.

The last AGM agreed, for the first time as far as I am aware, to an increase in subscription rates. Rising costs particularly in administration and the publication of Skimmer made it unavoidable. I hope however you consider membership to continue to be good value. We have certainly seen a big improvement in the quality of this publication. Always remember Skimmer is for you, our members, and needs contributions from you to make it a success, so please do think about writing an article for next year. It could be on your favourite site, your own observations or just based around some of your favourite photos.



(So) I think all that is now left for me to say is have a great summer out there, I for one am hoping it's a good one.

Keith Gittens



Field Trips and Events – 2015 Summary

Skerne Wetlands Sunday, 14th June

This was a joint venture with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT), to visit and look for dragonfly species at this new reserve. Eighteen people attended, despite this being a dismal day weather wise, with cold conditions and fine drizzle making things almost impossible. Jon Traill from YWT gave an explanation of the site and its future development. The site was previously a 70-acre commercial fish farm, with around sixty separate ponds on the site. At the time of the visit the main stock ponds at either side of the river had been made in to two large wetland habitats by breaching the banks in between. These wetlands will be topped up during the winter months, when there is sufficient water flowing along the river. There are still lots of smaller ponds on the site, with several ditches, which will provide ideal habitat for a range of species. Unfortunately, on the day we only managed to find two species, by carefully searching for resting individuals in the long wet grasses. These were Azure Damselfly and Blue-tailed Damselfly. One benefit of the conditions was that they could be picked up and shown to the group in hand, enabling some key features to be pointed out. It was also possible to see some of the different colour forms of the Blue-tailed Damselflies. Jon explained that they had also recently purchased the adjacent fish farm complex, which would then extend the reach of the reserve along the River Hull Headwaters, joining up with Snakeholm Pastures at Wansford, another YWT reserve. There is currently no public access to the site. This is due to the linear nature of the site and the lack of parking facilities, currently only space for a couple of cars, which will hopefully be improved in the future.

Paul Ashton

Walton Colliery Nature Park (SE365174) Sunday 28th June 2015

Following the success of the field trip last year, I arranged another to Walton Colliery Nature Park to see if we could find any of the species that had failed to put in an appearance, but which I suspected as being on-site. Eleven Yorkshire Branch and BDS members along with some Friends of Walton Colliery Nature Park turned up on a rather gloomy day and once again, we were lead around the site by Andrew McGuinness, who is one of the Countryside Officers for Wakefield Council.

Like last year, the weather was far from ideal, being overcast and breezy, but I was hopeful that we would be able to find some dragonflies to hone attendees' identification skills on. At first, things did not look too promising, but I remembered that we did not encounter anything during the beginning section of the walk last year. I left the main path and ventured into an area of long grass, which was in the lee of the wind and found a few Common Blue and Blue-tailed Damselflies, for everyone to look at or photograph. About half way into the walk, things were not looking good as we were still spotting just the two species and I was beginning to think that there were no Azure Damselflies on site. We had failed to find any last year too. I then spotted a blue damselfly in a patch of stinging nettles, but couldn't focus my binoculars on the relevant identification characteristics, as it kept moving round the stalk every time I moved for a better view. I waded in and managed to pot the individual in a specimen tube and, to my relief, identified it as a male Azure Damselfly. This took the site



total up to 11 species. Shortly after showing everyone how to distinguish between the two blue species on site, a cry went up from one of the group that they had a dragonfly perched on the floor. It took flight as I wandered over, however one of the others had managed to get a photo showing it to be a Four-spotted Chaser, therefore becoming species number 12 for the Nature Park. Further Common Blue and Blue-tailed damselflies were seen but the sightings were sparse at best, due to the weather conditions,



Four-spotted Chaser

and I was giving up hope of adding to the tally as we had now reached the three quarters waymark of the walk. I decided to investigate a particularly sheltered area close to some trees and was delighted to find a male Broad-bodied Chaser resting low to the ground. I called everyone over and several managed to get photos before it took flight over our heads and away. This sighting increased the species count for the site up to 13 and I had now found all of the species I had expected to be present in the area. As we neared the end of the walk, Andrew informed me that he and his team had undertaken some remedial work to clear a ditch, which had looked promising but a bit overgrown last year. I was hopeful for more dragonflies, as it was in a fairly sheltered area but like last year, only a couple of Large Red Damselflies were found. Perhaps next year it will be a more prolific spot, now that the dragonflies can access and patrol the water more easily.

So we ended the day with only six species but had added half of them to the site list, which I think was an excellent result given the weather.

Tom Hubball

Royal Entomological Society Insect Festival 2015 Sunday 5th July 2015



Branch stalwart Jill Lucas and I attended the RES Insect Festival, which was held in York Museum's Hospitium and gardens on Sunday 5th July. The weather was fine for most of the day, until a heavy shower late in the afternoon made everyone run for cover. Organisers for the RES, stated that it was the most successful Festival yet, with more people attending than ever before. According to their figures, approximately 1700 people turned up throughout the day. Unfortunately, as our display was on the first floor and the lift was out of action, I reckoned that just over half ventured upstairs. However, we managed to sign up one new member for the BDS on the day, spoke to several Yorkshire Branch members and handed out quite a few Yorkshire Branch application forms, which should



hopefully lead to an increase in our group's membership.

As well as promoting the BDS and dragonflies in general, we advised people on creating garden ponds, pointed out local dragonfly hotspots and offered tips on how to photograph dragonflies. We talked to older children about the life cycle of dragonflies and had a selection of exuviae for them to look at and handle. It always amazes me how relatively few adults are brave enough to hold exuviae, whilst the kids don't usually bat an eyelid. Younger children had dragonfly pictures to colour in and quite a few took prints home to work on at their leisure. All in all, it was a successful day and I'm already looking forward to the next one in 2017.

Tom Hubball

Gilling Lakes, Ampleforth Sunday, 26th July

Cleveland Naturalists Field Club / Yorkshire Dragonfly Group Joint Field Meeting

Eight CNFC and three YDG members attended the meeting. The weather overall was mixed. The morning had started misty though by the 10.30 start the mist had lifted. Things improved during the morning with weak sun and good sunshine by the time the main lake was reached at lunchtime. There were thus excellent conditions for seeing the target species, Large Red-eyed Damselfly. Other species noted were Common Blue, Azure, Blue-tailed and Emerald Damselflies; also Brown Hawker and Black-tailed Skimmer. Unfortunately, rain arrived at around 2pm but the window of good weather allowed a good selection of Odonata to be seen.

Bill Hall

Yorkshire Dragonfly Group on-line

Check out the website for the latest news, first sightings of the year, field trip diary, contact details, dragonfly locations to visit and how to submit your records.

Lost a previous issue of Skimmer! Latest editions available for download, please contact John Hume for password.

www.yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk



www.facebook.com/groups/yorkshiredragonflies/



[@BDSYorkshire](https://twitter.com/BDSYorkshire)



www.flickr.com/groups/yorkshiredragonflies/



www.yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk/?feed=rss2



Events and Field Trips 2016

Please note: Check our website for more information and updates on planned field trips, only a selection with brief information are detailed below.

You may be at risk from Lyme Disease when you visit the countryside. Lyme Disease is a relatively uncommon infection in the UK but it has recently started to occur more frequently. It is caused by a bacterium carried by ticks. People who walk in the countryside, especially those walking through grass, rough vegetation or wild areas such as heathland, are more at risk. For more information, visit the Lyme Disease Action website. www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk/

Young persons under the age of 18 are welcome to attend all meetings. However, as the Yorkshire Dragonfly Group has no member registered under the Children's Act, their parent or guardian must accompany them. The leader of an event should also be consulted in advance if children wish to attend.

Sunday 12th June 2016 -Pocklington Canal

Leader/Contact – Martin Roberts 01904 761918 Mob: 07742 585082
email vc61@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk

Meet at 10:30am at Hagg Bridge (SE 717451) There is parking for 6-8 cars in a lay-by immediately to the East of the bridge, with rather restricted space for 1 or 2 cars to the West of the bridge.



Hagg Bridge, Pocklington Canal – Paul Ashton



Saturday 25th June 2016 - Leeds Bird Fair

9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Rodley Nature Reserve, Moss Bridge Road, Leeds LS13 1HP

Help is needed to man the BDS stall. Please contact Keith Gittens to volunteer.

More information can be found on the Rodley Nature Reserve Website.

www.rodleynaturereserve.org

Sunday 26th June 2016 - Scampston Hall Bug Hunt

Scampston Hall, near Malton (YO17 8NG). Scampston Hall and The Walled Garden at Scampston are situated on the north side of the A64 Leeds/Scarborough road, approximately 5 miles from Malton and just to the east of the village of Rillington.

The Yorkshire Dragonfly Group will have a stall at this event. Again we would welcome volunteers to help out. Please contact Keith Gittens to volunteer.

More information on Scampston Hall can be found on their website.

www.scampston.co.uk/

Sunday 24th July 2016 – Grindleton Fell, Lancashire

Leader/Contact - Tom Hubball 01535 678334 after 6pm or

email vc64dragonfly@virginmedia.com

Aim – Thirteen species of dragonfly have been recorded from this south-westerly VC64 site in recent years. If there is enough time a visit to Cross of Greet, 8.5 miles to the north, to look for Golden-ringed Dragonfly will also be undertaken.

Meet – 10.30am at the southern edge of Grindleton Fell plantation. Turn north in Grindleton on the minor road adjoining the Duke of York hotel (signed Slaidburn). After one mile turn left on an unsigned road off a right hand bend. Grindleton Fell comes quickly into view on the right. Park sensibly along to roadside, approx. BB7 4QT - (SD746475).

Requirements – Bring packed lunch, binoculars and wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

Saturday 13th August 2016 – Strensall Common

Leader/Contact – Bill Hall 01642 823170 or 07753663589

Meet at 10:30am in car park on Lords Moor Lane by the cattle grid. GR SE648611

A walk with a focus on dragonflies.

Sunday 14th August 2016 - Sutton Bank Visitor Centre

Minibeast Madness! Sutton Bank Visitor Centre 11am - 4pm

Again the YDG will have a stall. Again please contact Keith in order to help out.

www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/visiting/whats-on/nym-events/minibeast-madness!

Sunday 21st August 2016 - Scampston Hall

10.30am. Location as above. Meet in the car park. A follow up to the Hall's Big Bug Hunt held on 26th June 2016 (See above).

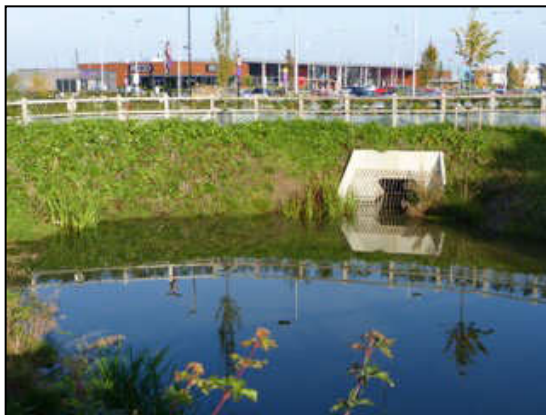
Leader/Contact - John Hume 01723 376615



Shopping for Dragonflies

Martin Roberts

‘Retail therapy’ and watching Dragonflies are not normally considered compatible activities, but at the Vangarde shopping centre on the outskirts of York you can indulge in both. Vangarde is adjacent to the Park and Ride car park on the NE edge of York and is the newer section of the Monks Cross shopping centre, containing only three stores (John Lewis, Next and Marks & Spencer) and several restaurants. Vangarde was built during 2013 and started trading at Easter 2014.



While I was traveling on the P&R bus into York in early summer 2015, I noticed several interesting-looking ponds, so I returned a few days later and discovered a chain of ten interconnected ponds of varying size and shape, forming an arc around the Southern side of the car park. These are the rainwater balancing ponds for the site.

All the Vangarde ponds are well fenced and there are numerous ‘Deep Water - Keep Out’ signs scattered liberally around. Although reasonable viewing of some ponds is possible from the car park, or the wide roadside verges, you are mostly some distance from the water’s edge. However, there are two well-constructed public viewpoints, both resembling the bows of a ship, which give good views. One is located at the NE end near Rodgers furniture store, and the other at the SW end opposite Marks & Spencer. Both are only a two-minute walk across the car park and well worth a visit when shopping calls.

Intrigued, I contacted the site security office and was able to negotiate personal access into the fenced-off areas, though I had to give a written undertaking that I would not hold the site owners liable for my safety etc etc. In





total I made four visits in 2015 and although not all were in ideal weather conditions for seeing Odonata, I recorded four species of Damselfly and six (possibly seven) species of Dragonfly:

Damselflies: Common blue, Azure, Blue-tailed, Emerald
Dragonflies: Four-spotted chaser, Black-tailed skimmer, Broad bodied chaser, Emperor, Brown hawkler, Common darter (plus possible Ruddy darter)

Apart from Emperor and Brown Hawker, all the confirmed species were also seen 'in cop' and/or ovipositing. Interestingly, no Large Red Damselflies were seen but this species has a two-year life cycle so I will watch with interest next year.

So, nothing out of the norm, but a good range of species for ponds which are barely three years old. Most of the ponds are becoming well vegetated with a range of common aquatic and riparian plants, though it is possible that clearance may be carried out in future to maintain the primary function of the ponds. There has been extensive planting of shrubs around the ponds and I expect that some ponds may in time disappear from casual view.

As balancing ponds, they can be subject to rapid and quite large fluctuations of water level after rain, especially the more westerly ponds, and this could have significant effects on Odonata, especially if it occurs during adult emergence.

Apart from the new ponds around the car park, there are several other ponds nearby, notably a group of small, more natural-looking ponds just to the West of the road into the P&R site (SE624543). There is no specific access point to these ponds, but neither is there anything preventing access, albeit with a bit of a scramble.



Note that attempting to reach a nearby older large concrete-sided pond (SE62273 54243) is not recommended due to the proliferation of 'No entry' signs, plus the fact that I have seen few Odonata there.



There are also two more easily accessible balancing ponds to the East of the ring-road behind the ASDA store (SE629548), and a further pond slightly to the North of these (SE630553), all three of which are occasionally lightly used by anglers. Finally, there is an ornamental pond in front of an office block, opposite the Pear Tree Farm pub/restaurant (SE625553). In order not to attract undue attention I tend to visit this last pond on Sunday mornings, so I have so far avoided the embarrassment of an audience on the two occasions that I have lost my footing and got wet there. The whole area around Vangarde and the P&R terminus is apparently a Great Crested Newt site, though I have not seen any yet.



The Ordnance Survey online mapping website now shows the Vangarde centre and most of the ponds, though the very smallest balancing ponds are not shown. Unfortunately, the aerial photograph view has not been updated at the time of writing.
<https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/osmaps>

So, a chance view from the bus window last spring led me to discover an unsuspected wetland area with good dragonfly-watching opportunities and which will hopefully gain more species with time. I will certainly visit Vangarde again in 2016 and I hope some of you will take a break from shopping to explore the area too.

I am not employed by Vangarde. Other shopping centres are available.

UPDATE:

As of March 2016, extensive groundworks are in progress to extend the Park and Ride car park to the Southwest. The effect this will have on access to the small pond which lies right alongside the car park fence at SE62300 54294 is currently unclear but the contractors have told me that pond should be unaffected. If so, access for dragonfly watching may even be improved.





Dragonflies on a Brittany Canal

Richard Shillaker

A week-long late summer (end of August – early September) holiday in Brittany gave some opportunities to seek out dragonflies on a local canal. We were staying at a cottage in the village of Tréverien, which is some 15 miles south of St Malo. Running through the village is the 52-mile long Canal d'Ille-et-Rance, which links St Malo and Rennes. The weather was not ideal for dragonfly watching and only a limited number were seen during walks along the canal from Tréverien, Évrans and beside the series of locks near Hédé.

The canal had plenty of bordering emergent vegetation and along much of the canal there were areas of thick pondweed; indeed, we saw a weed cutting boat and support dingy busy at work creating a great heap of weed on the bank.

Dragonflies are called Libellules in France, although I like the Breton name Nadoz Aer (Air Needle). The following dragonflies were identified along the canal:

- Banded Demoiselle (*Calopteryx splendens*)
- White-legged Damselfly (*Platycnemis pennipes*)
- Southern Damselfly (*Coenagrion mercuriale*)
- Common Blue Damselfly (*Enallagma cyathigerum*)
- Blue-tailed Damselfly (*Ischnura elegans*)
- Red-eyed Damselfly (*Erythromma najas*)
- Southern Hawker (*Aeshna cyanea*)

I was pleased to find White-legged Damselfly and Southern Damselfly, species not present in Yorkshire, but was surprised at the notable scarcity of true dragonflies (Anisoptera) and especially at not seeing any Darters.

Some of these species were also seen on two lakes at Tréverien, together with a possible female Beautiful Demoiselle (there was a fast flowing small river close to the lakes). However, a visit to the lakes at Combours was disappointing with only a Blue-tailed Damselfly identified.

My Odonata tally for the holiday was very poor compared with the 23 species of damselflies and 35 species of dragonflies recorded in the Brittany/Loire-Atlantique region over the period 1980-2000 (Tillier *et al* 2001). Tillier's distribution maps include 3 species of damselfly and 11 species of dragonfly that are 'currently' not regarded as resident, migrant or vagrant species in Britain and Ireland according to the latest BDS checklist. Of these 'Non-British species' the following three seem to be quite widespread in Brittany:

- Small Emerald Damselfly (*Lestes virens*)
- Goblet-marked Damselfly (*Erythromma lindenii*)
- Western Clubtail (*Gomphus pulchellus*)



Both the Goblet-marked Damselfly and the Western Clubtail are reported to frequent slow flowing rivers and canals; the Small Emerald is more a species of wet heathland and boggy places. All three species are regarded by Smallshire and Swash (2010) as potential vagrants /colonists of Britain.

Of particular interest is the presence in Brittany of the Orange-spotted Emerald (*Oxygastra curtisii*), a former British breeding species. This species had a very limited distribution in Britain having been recorded mainly along the Moors River in Dorset; the last British record was from Hampshire in 1963 (Chelmick 2009). In Brittany, it has a rather scattered distribution and is more frequent in the south of the region; this is to be expected for a riverine species which is more common in southern Europe.

There is a separate photographic blog of Breton dragonflies see <http://ghisnature.over-blog.com/the-dragonflies-of-brittany>. This blog seems to refer specifically to one Breton Department, Iille-et-Villaine (Tréverien is in this Department). Interestingly, there are photographs of the Lilypad Whiteface (*Leucorrhinia caudalis*). The distinctive white pterostigma on the upper surface of the wings of a mature male is clearly visible. This is another 'non-British species' but it was not known to Tillier in Brittany when he completed his survey work there in 2000 (Tillier *pers comm*). The species is also not reported in a more recent provisional atlas of Odonata in Brittany see http://www.bretagne-vivante.org/images/stories/expertises/atlas/odonates/cartes/odonates_sept2009.pdf. However, this atlas mostly contains records from one southern Brittany Department with no records at all for Lille-et-Villaine. It is also notable that Askew (2004) regards the Lilypad Whiteface as a west Siberian species extending mainly to eastern and central Europe.

Other sightings on my holiday included a Map Butterfly, a species of Clouded Yellow Butterfly, the distinctive red and black striped Shield Bug *Graphosoma italicum*, a Speckled Bush-cricket and a possible Asiatic Hornet (there was a nest of this species on display at a nearby visitor information centre). Also noteworthy were the extensive patches of Frogbit in flower around the edge of the Tréverien lakes.

A return visit to Tréverien is planned for this summer when hopefully the weather will be more conducive to dragonfly spotting, and more species will be seen.

References

- Askew R (2004) The Dragonflies of Europe (revised edition). Harley Books.
Chelmick D (2009) Species Review 2: the Orange-spotted Emerald Dragonfly *Oxygastra curtisii* (Dale 1834) J.Br.Dragonfly Society, vol 25, 76-93.
Smallshire D and Swash A (2010) Britain's Dragonflies, A field guide to the damselflies and dragonflies of Britain and Ireland. WILDGuides.
Tillier P, Greff N and Manach A (2001) Cartographie des Odonates de Bretagne et de Loire-Atlantique (1980-2000) Rapport non publié, 31pp.

Additional note: the following is a useful guide for birdwatching in Brittany, and hence to locations of natural history interest:

Coghlan S (2003) A Birdwatching Guide to Brittany. Arlequin Press.



VC61 South-east Yorkshire Report

Paul Ashton

As Vice-county recorder it's always rewarding to receive records of new species for the area. This year Barry Warrington managed to find a migrant species lurking in his Hessle garden, in the shape of a **Vagrant Emperor**. In the wider context of Yorkshire, I believe this represents the 3rd record for the whole County. What an amazing find!

Adding another feather to Barry's cap, he also found the first **Red-veined Darters** of the year in the dunes at the tip of Spurn Point. Subsequently several more were reported from their more usual haunt of Clubley's scrape, where females were observed ovipositing. In addition to Spurn, several were found further along the coast at Filey Dams Nature Reserve, on East Lea Pond.

Other notable news involved **Banded Demoiselles**, several individuals being found on the River Hull at Tickton on several dates. There have been many records of singletons from various points along the River Hull prior to these records, though this appears to suggest that they are now becoming established here.

Common Hawkers are a scarce dragonfly in South-east Yorkshire, confined to the West of the Yorkshire Wolds. There were very few records received this year for this species, all confined to one site. Whether this is a sign of decline or under recording only time will tell. 2015 was my final year as VC61 recorder after serving 11 years. Many thanks to all who have supported me during this time, after all, it's your records that have made the difference. Thank you to all who have adopted iRecord for submitting their records, this will certainly make the Vice-County Recorders role easier going forward. Martin Roberts will be taking over for 2016, so please support him as he steps up to the challenge.



Vagrant Emperor – Barry Warrington



VC62 & 65 North-west & North-east Yorkshire Report

Keith Gittens

With night temperatures staying in single figure well in to May, it was a slow start to the year. However, newly discovered sites in 2014 for both species of **Red-eyed Damselfly**, created an air of anticipation to the start of the 2015 season. It was extremely pleasing therefore to find both species were again present, with evidence of breeding and emergence. One of my regular haunts for recording and an excellent site is Strensall Common, the numerous ponds and ditches holding a wide variety of species. A recently dug pond, shallow in nature, always held the promise of adding an extra species to the list and I was not to be disappointed, with **Black-tailed Skimmer** being recorded for the first time. This takes the species list to 19 of which 17 show evidence of breeding.

While numbers stayed low for some species, right the way through the year, there were good reports of emergence for **Southern Hawker** from a couple of garden ponds, with numbers of exuvia counted well in to double figures. The mild late summer and autumn also meant that records continued well in to late October for some hawkers and darters.

Finally, a plea goes out once again for anyone living in, or visiting, the northern part of the Yorkshire Dales, to look out for suitable dragonfly sites and send in some records.

VC63 South-west Yorkshire Report

Alistair McLean

2015 has proven to be an interesting year for dragonfly spotting. Attempts to determine whether the **Hairy Dragonfly** *Brachytron pratense* is expanding its range South or East of Potteric Carr (SE5900) have so far proven fruitless, although doubtless we will continue to search next year.

The **Banded Demoiselle** *Calopteryx splendens*, has been gradually expanding its range through the county for some years. Normally a lowland species, it is becoming more common to find this species at higher altitudes. This year, it was spotted on Burbage Moor (Derek Whiteley), just over the Derbyshire border (apologies to the Derbyshire recorder) at an altitude of over 400m. Perhaps more surprisingly, its close relative, the **Beautiful Demoiselle** *Calopteryx virgo* was spotted for the first time in at least 50 years in VC63 this year (Don Andrew) at Brockadale.

Similarly, the **Red-eyed Damselfly** *Erythromma najas* has become more widespread across the county over the last 10 years. It now appears to be consolidating its position and has become quite numerous in areas it's known to frequent.

Finally, it would seem that the many years of comparatively simple identification of the **Emerald Damselfly** (*Lestes sponsa*) are finally coming to an end in VC63. There is evidence that the **Scarce Emerald Damselfly** (*Lestes dryas*) is beginning to move into the area. The difference between the two species is almost impossible to detect unless it's in the hand. If the second segment of the abdomen is completely blue, you have *L. sponsa*. If some of this segment is metallic green, you have *L. dryas*. Don't forget to check those abdomens!



VC64 Mid-west Yorkshire Report

Tom Hubball

2015 was another poor year for dragonflies in VC64, with just 586 records received as I write this in mid-February. This is half of those received in 2012 and several hundred down from average number I usually receive. **Common Hawker**, **Broad-bodied Chaser** and most of the usually recorded damselfly species, appear to have been the hardest hit by the weather over the past few years.

However, there was better news for *Cordulegaster boltonii*. Although there was only a handful of records, they were from five different areas spread right across the vice-county. Timble Ings and Cross of Greet provided the bulk of the records as usual, but one from Badgers Gate, Beamsley near Ilkley was a nice find. There was also a photograph of a **Keeled Skimmer** from Rodley Nature Reserve on 1st July, which was totally unexpected.

Apart from regular recording by Swillington Ings bird Group of the St Aidan's area between Woodlesford and Allerton Bywater, I have received no other records from the south-eastern part of VC64 despite my request last year. Therefore, could any members who live in or visit the area between Leeds, Cawood, Selby and Goole make a concerted effort to send me their records.

Finally, I would like to express a big thank you to all individuals and organisations who provided me with records, especially David Alred who is the Recorder for Wharfedale Naturalists, Gordon Rickers from Swillington Ings Bird Group and Peter Mill at Rodley Nature Reserve.

Here's to a better 2016.

Vice-county recorders

VC61 - Martin Roberts	vc61@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk	01904 761918
VC62 - Keith Gittens	vc62@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk	01347 868606
VC63 - Alistair McLean	vc63@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk	01142 782648
VC64 - Tom Hubball	vc64@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk	01535 678334
VC65 - Keith Gittens	vc65@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk	01347 868606

Please submit your records to the relevant recorder as soon as possible. Ideally all records for the current years should reach the recorders by the end of December for onward transfer to the British Dragonfly Society.

We recommend using iRecord, an on-line recording application developed by the Biological Records Centre. www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/



Demoiselles in poetry

Richard Shillaker found this poem by Wilfrid Gibson (1878 -1962) which refers to demoiselles on a World War One battlefield. Apparently it is not known if the poet had any particular interest in dragonflies. However according to his grand-daughter he was certainly interested in the natural world, starting with long walks on the moors of his native Northumberland. In the Second World War, when he was living in the south of England, his practice of taking binoculars on his walks led to local suspicions that he was a spy!

The Dancers

All day beneath the hurtling shells,
Before my burning eyes
Hover the dainty demoiselles –
The peacock dragonflies

Unceasingly they dart and glance
Above the stagnant stream . . .
And I am fighting here in France
As in a senseless dream –

A dream of shattering black shells
That hurtle overhead,
And dainty dancing demoiselles
Above the dreamless dead.

Wilfrid Gibson

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Request from the Editor

This magazine is produced for the members, containing articles by the members. Please consider writing just one article during the year for inclusion in the next edition. If the subject interests you, it will be of interest to other members of the group. Many thanks to all those who have contributed to this issue. Hope you've enjoyed the read. Paul Ashton.



Vagrant Emperor, Hessle – Barry Warrington



Red-veined Darter, Spurn – Barry Warrington



Broad-bodied Chaser – Stuart Roebuck



Four-spotted Chaser – Stuart Roebuck



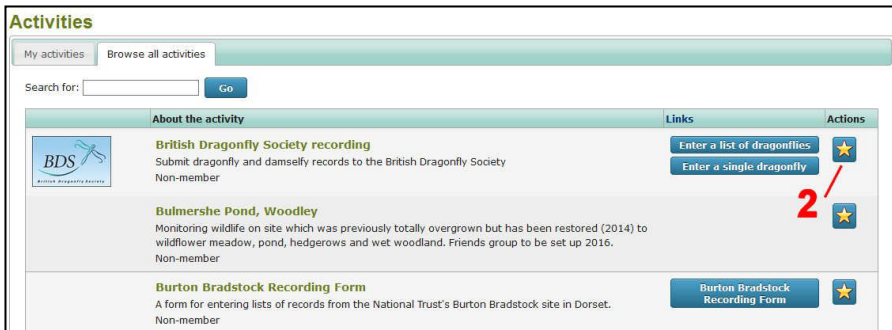
A guide to on-line recording using iRecord

Paul Ashton

The British Dragonfly Society is now using the Biological Records Centre iRecord as the standard recording tool for collating records. All records will now go directly to the Dragonfly Recording Network via this method. Vice-county Recorders are all signed up to validate your records using iRecord.

Once you have signed up and created an account you will want to enter some records. There are several options available under the Record menu.

Enter a casual record for one off observations. **Enter a list of records** for a specific site. **Enter records at several places** (within a larger site) and **Activities** (1) at the bottom of the menu list. Activities (1) is the option you need to choose to set up Dragonfly Recording. The first time you view this page it will default to the **Browse all activities** tab. Once you have selected some activities it will default to the **My activities** tab. Look for the BDS logo to find the Dragonfly Recording Activity. You need to select the yellow star (2) to become a member of this activity.



Once you have become a member this activity will show on the **My activities** tab. To enter dragonfly records, select the **Enter a list of dragonflies** (3).





In the Enter records screen you need to enter a date. This can be done via the calendar that pops up when you select the field, or manually, which you may have to do for older records prior to 2006. In the species field (4), a drop down box will start to show species options as you type, whether this be scientific name or common name. Once the species you require appears, select its name. You can then add counts from the drop down boxes for the various life stages. Finally, a button will appear at the end of the row allowing you add photos. Once you have entered one species, an additional blank row will appear to add the next species.

Enter a list of dragonflies (for a site on a date)

What Did You See? Where Was It?

The records you enter using this form will be added to the **British Dragonfly Society** recording group.

Date:

Recorder Name:

Enter the recorder's name, if different.

Please enter all the species you saw at one site on a single day and any other information about them. Then move to the **Where was it?** tab before submitting your records.

Species	Ad	Co	Ov	La	Ex	Em	Comment	Add photos
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Select a species first"/>

Use * as a wildcard when searching for species names. If you have sensitive records to input please use the **Enter a casual record** form.

Recorded all species?: ☐

Please tick this box if you recorded all dragonfly and damselfly species seen at the site.

After entering the list of species you will need to select the **Where Was It?** tab to enter the location. Firstly, enter a site name in the Location Field (5). If it is a location you have used before, it will appear as an option in a drop down box and when selected will automatically add the grid reference. If this is the first time for this location, you will need to either a) find it on the map to the right. When you click on the map it will add a grid reference in field (6). Or b) if you already know the grid reference, you can type it straight in to this box, rather than finding it on the map. Once this has been done a **Remember Site** button will appear next to the Location field, select this if you will want to use the site again, next time it will then appear in the drop down list as you type. [don't worry if you make a mistake with your

Enter a list of dragonflies (for a site on a date)

What Did You See? Where Was It?

Location:

Provide the name of the site. Do not enter a postal address as the information you provide will be visible to others.

Site type:

What type of site was it?

Other Site Type:

If you selected other site type, then please tell us about the site.

Enter a spatial reference:

Or search for a place on the map:

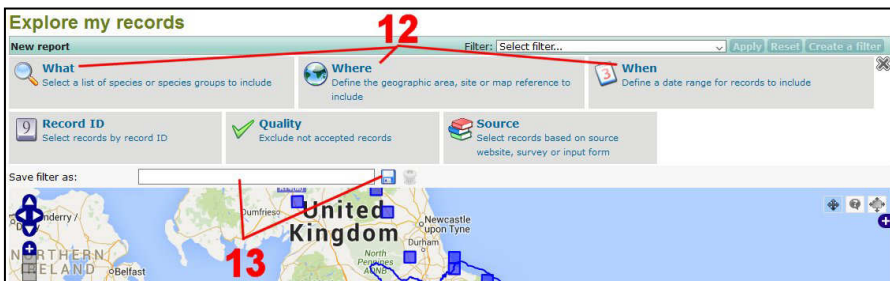
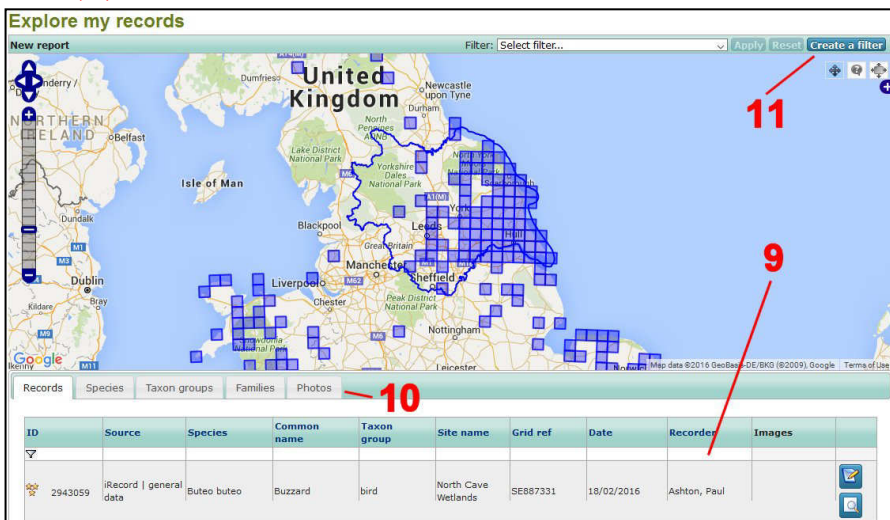
Or simply click on your rough position on the map.

Overall comment:



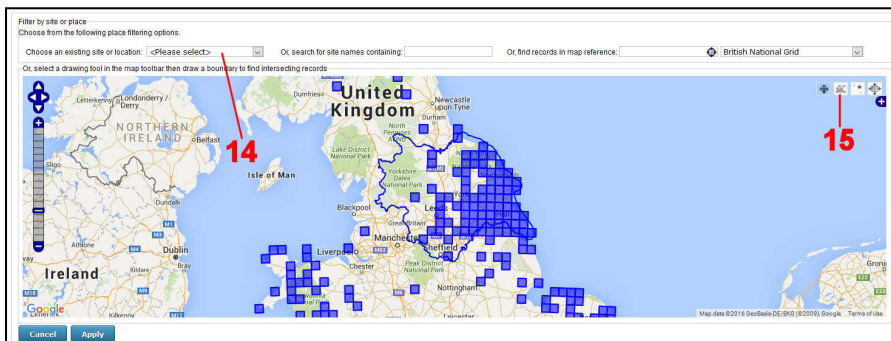
site, you can edit it later see (20)]. In order to help find a location a little easier on the map, you can enter the name of a town or village in field (7) and click search. This will center the map on your search criteria, hopefully making it easier to then find your location on the map. Finally select the **Submit** button at the bottom left of the page to submit your records.

Once you have some records you will want to view them. You do this via the Explore Menu by selecting My Records (8). Once on the Explore My Records page you can use the basic filter (9) to drill down in to your records. Note that this filter will only filter the records on the Records tab, it will not work on the other tabs (10). There is a more advanced filter option that will work across all the tabs, to use this select the **Create a Filter** button (11).





The three key options you will need to use are What, Where and When (12). Select them one at a time by clicking on their title, make sure that at each stage you use the apply button to action that part of the filter. If you would like to use the filter created on a regular basis you can enter a name for this filter and save it (13). Once saved, your filter will appear in the **Select filter** drop down box, all you need to do is select the one required and click on the Apply button. In the **Where** option you will find a drop down box which will help you select your sites (14). Another option is to select the tool to the top right of the map (15). This can be used to draw a box around an area on the map, all records within this area will then be selected.









Once you have applied your filters you can then use the map to display records for a given square by selecting it, or even a number of squares by dragging a larger box over the map. To do this you need to select the query box at the top right of the map (16). You can also use this method on the other tabs i.e. Species etc.

Explore my records

Active filter: My Dragonfly Records Filter: [My Dragonfly Records] Apply Reset Modify filter

Records Species Taxon groups Families Photos

ID	Source	Species	Common name	Taxon group	Site name	Grid ref	Date	Recorder	Images
2915187	iRecord general data	Aeshna cyanea	Southern Hawker	insect - dragonfly (Odonata)	St Aiden Close, Market Weighton	SE882411	31/08/2014	Ashton, Paul	  
2914721	iRecord general data	Coenagrion puella	Azure Damselfly	insect - dragonfly (Odonata)	Market Weighton, Sancton Road Pond	SE885411	15/07/2011	Ashton, Paul	  



On the species tab (17) it is also possible to select a species. This will then be highlighted in yellow and all squares on the map where this species has been recorded will turn red.

Explore my records

Active filter: My Dragonfly Records Filter: My Dragonfly Records Apply Reset Modify filter

Records Species Taxon groups Families Photos

Preferred name	Common name	Taxon group	Taxonomy	First record date	Last record date	Records
Aeshna caerulea	Azure Hawker	insect - dragonfly (Odonata)	Animalia :: Odonata :: Aeshnidae	2006-06-07	2010-06-10	5
Aeshna cyanea	Southern Hawker	insect - dragonfly (Odonata)	Animalia :: Odonata :: Aeshnidae	2001-08-29	2015-09-27	94
Aeshna grandis	Brown Hawker	insect - dragonfly (Odonata)	Animalia :: Odonata :: Aeshnidae	1999-07-11	2015-09-18	208

Click the row to highlight the record on the map.

As mentioned earlier, it is possible to edit and view site details via the **My Sites** option from the Explore menu (18). Once in the My Site Details screen you can explore your site by selecting the **Explore** button. Or you can edit your site details by selecting the **Edit** button (19).

Home Record Explore Summarise Verify

Explore my records

Active filter: My Dragonfly Records

- My records
- All records
- My sites
- My photo
- My sites
- Species maps
- Recorder league
- My notifications

Site Name	No. of Records	No. of Taxa	No. of Taxon Groups	Actions
North Cave				
North Cave Wetlands	5741	268	15	edit
North Cave Wetlands, Butterfly Walk	239	45	9	edit
North Cave Wetlands, Carp Lake	246	52	9	edit
North Cave Wetlands, Dragonfly Ponds	230	45	8	edit
North Cave Wetlands, Dryham Ings (West)	187	27	4	edit
North Cave Wetlands, Far Lake	262	37	4	edit
North Cave Wetlands, Main and Village Lake	4285	218	12	edit



If you have some larger sites you may find it beneficial to draw a bounding box around the whole site (20). When entering records, the whole site will show on the screen and you can select grid references within it. This becomes more useful when using the **Enter Records at Several Places** option from the **Record** menu.

My Site Details

Place

Site name: North Cave Wetlands

Grid Ref: SE882330 British National Grid

Select the first tool in the map toolbar to enable clicking on the map to set the grid reference of the site. You can then use the second button in the toolbar to draw a site boundary or the third tool to draw a linear site, clicking on each corner of the shape and double clicking to finish. Click on the fourth tool then select an existing polygon or linear site to precisely edit the site's shape.

Comment:

File upload

Add photo

Search for Place on Map: Search

Move the map to the vicinity of your site by searching for a nearby town or village.

20

Once you have entered your records they will automatically be picked up by the relevant Vice-county recorders, you don't need to do anything else. Once your records have been verified, or queried, you will receive a notification. You can receive notifications in several ways, the options being found in the My Account area. A link will also appear on the iRecord Home page showing when you have notifications to view. Hopefully all your records will be verified, once verified they will have a green tick on the left hand side of the row containing the record. You can use iRecord for all your recording purposes, many other groups are already receiving and verifying records via this avenue including Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society, Ladybird Recording Scheme, Grasshopper Recording Scheme and many others. Some groups however are not signed up. It is possible to download your records in to an excel spreadsheet that could then be sent off to such groups. My tip would be to create a filter first in the My Records option, then select the taxon group, where you can select vice-counties if required) and then date (set date range to year that you want to submit. Once you go into the Download screen, there is an option to download records using one of your filters. This is a lot easier than trying to navigate to other options available from iRecord. The **How Do I ...?** Menu option has further information about using iRecord, I hope the above adds more to support you with getting the most out of it. The **Forum** is also worth viewing, as some of your queries might have already been asked and addressed by someone else.

www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/



Sri Lanka

Chris Abbott

We have recently returned from a 2-week culture and wildlife holiday on the stunningly beautiful island of Sri Lanka. This must be one of the best wildlife destinations in the world. It offers great birdwatching including 33 endemics, whale watching, safari type national parks and great insects, reptiles and plants. The island has several different habitat types in a small area and a varied climate, with two monsoons affecting separate parts of the island.

We organised a tour direct with Jetwing Eco and got reasonable flights with Qatar Airways, from Manchester via Doha. Jetwing tailored the tour to our requirements.

Jetwing Eco have played a key part in developing wildlife tourism in Sri Lanka and ran tours for BDS with Quest for Nature in 2008 and 2009. We had a naturalist driver guide for the tour called Lakshman, who was good company, knowledgeable on birds and the history of Sri Lanka.

There are 124 known species of dragonflies including, 56 endemics, with some recently discovered and awaiting formal description. There are good numbers of dragonflies year round, but we were too early for the endemic forest damselfly species, which peak in April and May in the rainforest.

This is a brief summary of the places we visited and photos of some of the 30 species identified. I did not spend a great deal of time on dragonfly searching and a more focused trip would easily find many more species.

After a night at a hotel near Colombo airport, we travelled to Sigiriya in the “Cultural Triangle” for three nights. Sigiriya is famous for a large stone outcrop known as Lion Rock. On top are the remains of an ancient palace. At the base of the rock there are water gardens and moats. There is also a large tank nearby. Tanks are ancient manmade lakes which are all over Sri Lanka. Most are well vegetated and contain many dragonfly species. Species seen included Yellow Waxtail, Orange-faced Sprite, Wandering Wisp, Crimson Dropwing, Dancing Dropwing, Orange-winged Groundling, Variegated Flutterer and Asian Pintail.



Sigiriya Tank and Lion Rock



Orange-winged Groundling male



Crimson Dropwing



We travelled on to the old capital Kandy for one night, and then on to Nuwara Eliya in the highlands. We visited the famous Horton Plains National Park and did the six mile walk to Worlds End through grasslands and cloud forest. We saw Triangle Skimmer and the endemic Mountain Reedling.



Triangle Skimmer

From the hill country we moved to the south coast to Yala, to do some jeep safaris. No dragonflies recorded in Yala, as we were not allowed out of the jeep due to the danger of elephants, bears and leopards. Many birds seen and several close encounters with elephants, one too close as it came into the side of the jeep, then searched the inside of the jeep with its trunk trying to locate our breakfast bag!

The nearby tanks around Tissamaharama were very good. In a brief visit I found several common species, plus the rarest dragonfly of the trip and certainly the one with the best name, Transvestite Clubtail, so called because of the male's superior appendage resembles the female's ovipositor in lateral view.



Transvestite Clubtail female

We travelled on to the lowland rainforest of Sinharaja. This is pristine jungle famous for mixed flocks of birds, including most of the endemics, but it is also very important for dragonflies. Several species were seen including Oriental Greenwing, Black-tipped Flashwing, Blue Percher, Spine-tufted Skimmer, Indigo Dropwing, Pied Parasol, Asian Skimmer and Marsh Skimmer.



Blue Percher



Next stop was Talangama on the outskirts of Columbo. This is an excellent area with tanks, paddyfields and streams. Many species were seen including Spine-legged Redbolt, Wandering Wisp, Marsh Dancer, Pink Skimmer, Green Skimmer, Orange-winged Groundling, Oriental Scarlet and Rapacious Flangetail.



Spine-legged Redbolt female



Green Skimmer



Rapacious Flangetail



Yellow Waxtail

After one night at Villa Talangama, (highly recommended), we spent a night at a hotel near the airport before flying home. For more information about Sri Lanka's Dragonflies I would recommend the book *Dragonfly Fauna of Sri Lanka* by Matjaz Bedjanic et al. which is a free download through publishers Pensoft.



Species list for Yorkshire

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status in Yorkshire
<i>Calopteryx virgo</i>	Beautiful Demoiselle	Restricted Range
<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	Banded Demoiselle	Widespread
<i>Lestes sponsa</i>	Emerald Damselfly	Widespread
<i>Lestes dryas</i>	Scarce Emerald Damselfly	Ex-resident
<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>	Large Red Damselfly	Widespread
<i>Erythromma najas</i>	Red-eyed Damselfly	Restricted Range
<i>Erythromma viridulum</i>	Small Red-eyed Damselfly	Restricted Range
<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	Azure Damselfly	Widespread
<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	Common Blue Damselfly	Widespread
<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	Blue-tailed Damselfly	Widespread
<i>Ceriatrigon tenellum</i>	Small Red Damselfly	Vagrant
<i>Coenagrion pulchellum</i>	Variable Damselfly	Restricted Range
<i>Aeshna juncea</i>	Common Hawker	Widespread
<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	Migrant Hawker	Widespread
<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>	Southern Hawker	Widespread
<i>Aeshna grandis</i>	Brown Hawker	Widespread
<i>Aeshna isosceles</i>	Norfolk Hawker	Vagrant
<i>Anax imperator</i>	Emperor Dragonfly	Widespread
<i>Anax parthenope</i>	Lesser Emperor	Migrant
<i>Hemianax ephippiger</i>	Vagrant Emperor	Vagrant
<i>Brachytron pratense</i>	Hairy Dragonfly	Restricted Range
<i>Cordulegaster boltonii</i>	Golden-ringed Dragonfly	Restricted Range
<i>Cordulia aenea</i>	Downy Emerald	Vagrant
<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	Four-spotted Chaser	Widespread
<i>Libellula fulva</i>	Scarce Chaser	Ex-resident
<i>Libellula depressa</i>	Broad-bodied Chaser	Widespread
<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	Black-tailed Skimmer	Widespread
<i>Orthetrum coerulescens</i>	Keeled Skimmer	Restricted Range
<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	Common Darter	Widespread
<i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>	Red-veined Darter	Migrant
<i>Sympetrum flaveolum</i>	Yellow-winged Darter	Migrant
<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>	Ruddy Darter	Widespread
<i>Sympetrum danae</i>	Black Darter	Widespread
<i>Sympetrum vulgatum</i>	Vagrant Darter	Vagrant
<i>Leucorrhinia dubia</i>	White-faced Darter	Ex-resident