

THE FORMICIDAE OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDS.

BY HORACE DONISTHORPE, F.Z.S., F.R.E.S., ETC.

DR. O. W. RICHARDS, having spent three weeks on the Island of Jersey in 1946 (July 31–August 17), asked me to identify the ants he captured during his stay there. In publishing the list of the species he took it seems to me to be an opportunity to review what is known up to date concerning the *Formicidae* of the Channel Islands as a whole.

It would appear that very few entomologists have collected ants on these Islands, and very little has been written on the subject. Saunders, in 1902 and 1903, published lists of the Aculeate Hymenoptera of Jersey, and he wrote: "It is an interesting fact, and one that shows how much more closely the fauna of Jersey approximates to that of the Continent than do those of the other islands, that in Guernsey and Alderney only one species is recorded which is not also found in Britain, whereas in Jersey fifteen such species have occurred . . ." He wrote of the ants: "The commonest ants in the south of the Island are *Formica rufa* and *fusca*, and *Lasius niger*. . . . *Lasius flavus* curiously enough has not turned up in Jersey although Luff records it as 'common in Guernsey'."

In the following list those species not found in Britain are marked with an asterisk.

Myrmica rubra L. (*ruginodis* Nyl.).—St. Aubins, Jersey (Saunders).

M. scabrinodis Nyl.—Jersey, Guernsey and Alderney, abundant (Luff); St. Aubins, Jersey (Saunders); La Scarpe, Jersey, on overhanging clay sea-cliff, La Coupe (5.viii), and running on sand dunes, Gorey (8.viii) (Richards).

M. sabuleti Mein.—Quenevais, Jersey (18.viii), on sand dunes (Richards).

Monomorium pharaonis L.—Common in some houses in St. Peter Port, Guernsey (Luff).

Leptothorax tuberculatus F.—"Two specimens taken on April 4 at the Gouffre," Guernsey (Luff); on overhanging clay sea-cliff, La Coupe (5.viii), Jersey (Richards).

L. nylanderii Först.—Two ♀♀ taken in *Convolvulus* flowers near St. Aubins, Jersey (Saunders). Saunders also gives Guernsey.

**L. unifasciatus* Latr.—On ivy on stone wall (10.viii), Archirondel, Jersey (Richards).

Tetramorium caespitum L.—Common on the coast, Guernsey (Luff); not uncommon on the cliffs, Alderney (Luff); Don Bridge

and St. Owen's Bay, Jersey (Saunders); Archirondel, Jersey (7.viii and 13.viii), on gravel just behind beach, La Coupe, Jersey (5.viii) on overhanging clay sea-cliff, Grève de Lecq, Jersey (21.viii), running on sand, Quenevais, Jersey (18.viii), running on sand dunes (Richards).

Iridomyrmex humilis Mayr.—Guernsey, June, 1919 (J. R. le B. Tomlin), "The Argentine Ant." This introduced species is a great pest. It has spread rapidly in the last 30 years or so.

Tapinoma erraticum Latr.—Not uncommon on the cliffs, Guernsey (Luff); St. Brelades on the sides of the hill above the Bay, Jersey (Saunders); Archirondel, Jersey, on gravel just behind beach (12.viii) (Richards); Bonne Nuit (17.viii), small round nest in *Molinia* tussock, on slope with *Molinia coerulea*, *Ulex gallii*, *Erica cinerea* and *Calluna vulgaris* (Richards).

**T. nigerrimum* Nyl.—Large nest under stone on blown sand just inland of beach, Grève de Lecq, Jersey (21.viii) (Richards). This is a most interesting addition to the ants of the Channel Islands. Emery gives the distribution as Mediterranean and Central Asian. It occurs in North Africa as well as in the south of France, Italy, etc. I have found it at Bordigera and in Sicily, where it was abundant. The ant constructs mound nests, as well as nesting under stones, etc.

Acanthomyops (Donisthorpea) niger L.—Jersey, common (Saunders); Archirondel (2.viii), nest under stone, Jersey (Richards).

A. (D.) alienus Först.—Alderney, common, especially on the cliffs (Luff); Guernsey, abundant in gardens everywhere (Luff); La Coupe, Jersey (5.viii), on overhanging clay sea-cliff and Gorey (8 and 15.viii), Jersey, running on sand dunes (Richards).

**A. (D.) emarginatus* Oliv.—Jersey—"an interesting form [of *niger*] with pale red thorax occurs at St. Owen's Bay, and elsewhere, resembling, if not identical with, the race *emarginatus* of the Continent" (Saunders). This was of course *A. (D.) emarginatus* Oliv.; Archirondel, Jersey (7 and 13.viii), on leaves of ivy on stone wall, and on gravel just behind beach; La Coupe, Jersey (5.viii), on overhanging clay sea-cliff; and Faldonet, Jersey (5.viii), on leaves of hedge (Richards).

This species I have also found commonly in Italy and Sicily on stone and brick walls, where it nests in the interstices.

Acanthomyops (Chtonolasius) flavus F.—Common under stones, especially on the sandy north portion of the island, Guernsey (Luff); common under stones near coast, Alderney (Luff); Archirondel (7.viii), nest under stones on gravel just behind beach, Jersey (Richards).

A. (Dendrolasius) fuliginosus Latr.—Guernsey, common (Luff); Faldonet, Jersey (7.viii), many workers running up and down

oak trunks, amongst them numerous *Scatopse transversalis* Lw. I have frequently taken this little fly in company with the above ant in Britain. It is probably the *Scatopse* species which Wasmann said was commonly and regularly to be found with *fuliginosus* in Dutch Limburg.

Formica rufa L.—Channel Islands (Ansted). Common near Greenville Station, Jersey, but I could not find the nest (Saunders).

F. pratensis Retz.—Abundant especially on the southern cliff coast, Guernsey (Luff). [As *Formica rufa*, race *congerens*. *F. congerens* Nylander, 1846 = *F. pratensis* Retzius, 1783.] St. Catherine's, Jersey, running on ground in old quarry (1.viii); and large mound nest on sunny rocky slope with gorse (4.viii) (Richards). Bonne Nuit, Jersey, mound nest in *Molinia* (17.viii) (Richards).

**F. truncicola* Nyl.—Winged ♀, running on ground in old quarry, with bracken and *Dactylis glomerata* (4.viii); and one winged ♀ running on sand dunes (18.viii) Quenevais (Richards).

F. fusca L.—Not uncommon, Alderney; common, Guernsey; Jersey, common (Luff); common in south of the Island, Jersey (Saunders); Archirondel, Jersey (31.vii), on flowers of wild carrot; Bonne Nuit, Jersey (17.viii), in nests of earth built up in *Molinia* tussock (Richards).

LITERATURE CONSULTED.

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 SAUNDERS, E. (1902), "Hymenoptera Aculeata of Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and St. Briac (Brittany)," *Ent. Mo. Mag.*, 38 : 140-46.
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EARLY EMERGENCE OF *SELENIA BILUNARIA*.—Last autumn I had in my possession 52 pupae of *S. bilunaria*, 27 moths emerging in September as a third brood, the remainder going over. During the short mild spell in January a moth emerged from one of the latter, the wings of which failed to develop. The pupae were kept in a cool cellar.—A. A. W. BUCKSTONE; 69, Gibbon Road, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey, April 4, 1946.

ABRAXAS GROSSULARIATA IN JANUARY.—A specimen of *A. grossulariata* was taken from the front garden on 8.i.1947. Unfortunately the insect was crippled. The left upper-wing was perfect and the outer black spots were nicely radiated.—P. P. MILMAN; 19, St. Michael's Road, Paignton, S. Devon.