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Myrmica schencki, Emery, an ant new to Britain.

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Myrmica schencki, Em.

Myrmica rubra subsp. *scabrinodis* var. *schencki*, Emery, Zool. Jahrb. Syst., **8**, 315 (1895)[1]. *Myrmica scabrinodis schencki*, Emery, Deutsch. Ent. Zeitschr. **1908**, 178[2]. *Myrmica rubra* subsp. *scabrinodis* var. *schencki*, Wheeler, Ants 566 (1910)[3]. *Myrmica schencki*, Bondroit, Ann. Soc. Ent. Belg. **55**, 11 (1911)[4]: 56, 351 (1912)[5]. *Myrmica scabrinodis* subsp. *schencki*, Karawajew, Rev. Russe Ent. **12** 583 (1912)[6]. *Myrmica scabrinodis* race *schencki*, Forel, Mitt. Schweiz Ent. Gesell. **12**, 29 (1915)[7].

☿ *Lighter or darker brownish-red, head and gaster darker: mandibles, antennae and legs lighter. The colour is lighter and more uniform over the whole body, than in* lobicornis.

Head: frontal area longitudinally striate, not shining; *temples* more regularly striate than in *lobicornis; antennae* with scape sharply bent at the base, and furnished above with a strong transverse ridge, which however is both broader and longer than that of *lobicornis*, the scape itself also being longer; *club* of antennæ three-jointed. *Thorax* more regularly striate; *epinotal spines* long and straight, longer than in *lobicornis*, with the space between smooth and shining. *Petiole* and *post-petiole* not so strongly rugose as in *lobicornis*, the former seen in profile does not form such a strong or abrupt angle, and the latter seen from above is rounder. *Long.* 4·5mm.-5mm. (4mm.-5mm. *teste*, Emery).

♀ *Head and gaster blackish-brown, scutum of mesonotum with a black patch anteriorly and two others, one on each side, posteriorly, prae-scutellum, post-scutellum, and metanotum black; mandibles, antennae, rest of body and legs reddish yellow. The whole colouring is lighter than in* lobicornis.

Other characters as in ☿. *Wings* with pterostigma and veins pale brown, not as yellow as in *lobicornis*. *Long.* 6mm.

Described from a number of ☿ ☿ and three ♀ ♀ from Glamorgan. These ☿ ☿ agree closely with specimens I possess from Switzerland and Belgium. I have not seen a British ♂, but in some Swiss specimens in my collection the scape of the antennæ is abruptly bent at the base, as in *lobicornis*, but a slight, but distinct, ridge occurs above at the bend, which is not the case in *lobicornis*.

Original description of *Myrmica schencki*, Emery [*Zool. Jahrb. Syst.*, 8, 315 (1895)]:—

"Diese Form wurde bis jetzt mit *M. lobicornis* Nyl. verwechselt und vermengt. —Der ☿ is von derselben durch längere Dornen des Metanotums verschieden. Der 1. Knoten des Stielchens ist auch oben meist weniger winklig, oder sogar etwas depress und abgerundet. Die Farbe der amerikanischen Exemplare ist meistens ziemlich dunkel, schmutzig braun-roth, Kopf und Hinterleib schwärzlich.—Was aber diese Form von *lobicornis* besonders unterscheiden lässt, sind die Fühler des ♂. Der Schaft ist dick und kurz, kürzer als bei *sabuleti* und selten länger als ¼ der Geissel, bei den meisten, europäischen Exemplaren etwas kürzer, nahe der Basis stumpf geknickt."

Habitat.

According to Emery *Myrmica schencki* occurs in Central Europe in flat and hilly country, extending eastwards to China and Manchuria[2]. It has also been recorded from the Northern States of America[3], Belgium[4], Russia[6], Switzerland[7], and occurs in Wales.

British distribution as at present known:—Glamorgan: Sully (*Hallett*). A colony of this ant was discovered by Mr. H. M. Hallett, at Sully, in Glamorgan, on May 30th, 1915. He, however, took it to be *lobicornis*, and knowing I had plenty of the latter from various parts, he unfortunately did not send me specimens at once, when I might have got it into my book. On July 25th he visited the colony again and captured several winged females, but no males were present.

DECEMBER 15TH, 1915.

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On October 25th he wrote to me to say he was sending "♀ ♀ and ♀ ♀ of the *Myrmica lobicornis*, taken at Sully," and he mentioned that " . . . . the transverse ridge on the antennæ of the ant looks unusually developed." On examining them I at once recognised that they were *Myrmica schencki*, Emery, a form not known to have occurred in Britain before.

Hallett tells me the nest was situated in a bank of stiff marly soil, the entrance being a small round hole, much as is made by the smaller bees (*Halictus*, etc.).

As to whether *schencki* should be regarded as a good species, subspecies, or variety, is really not of much value, as in any case it is a quite distinct form, and all the individuals in the colony are alike.

Emery[2] now considers it to be a subspecies of *scabrinodis*, and Forel[1] is of the same opinion, though he prefers his old name "race" to "subspecies." Forel on the other hand considers *lobicornis* to be a good species, but Emery also treats this as a subspecies of *scabrinodis*. In 1910 Wheeler[3] calls *scabrinodis* a subspecies of *M. rubra*, L., and *schencki* a var. of *scabrinodis*; but in 1911 he writes [*Journ. New York Ent. Soc.*, **19**, 163 (1911)]:—"*Myrmica rubra* or some one of the closely allied species (*scabrinodis*, *levinodis*, *rugulosa*, etc.) which were formerly regarded as mere subspecies."

I prefer to follow this later view. Mr. Hallett is to be congratulated on discovering this interesting ant in Britain.

Notes on the Swiss Rhopalocera. VII.

By the late A. J. FISON.

(Communicated by Miss L. M. FISON.)

Extracts from his letters to, and kindly lent by, the Rev. G. Wheeler.

1. MISCELLANEOUS. 1908.

Grand Hotel des Bains, Bex, May 21st, 1908.

"At Charpigny this year there seem to be more dark *Papilio machaon* than usual . . . . and from the light colour of the anal spot I think all must be ab. *burdigalensis*, Trimoulet. I also took a *Papilio podalirius* with an extra line. Both types are very common at Charpigny this year . . . . The cold, and quite three weeks late, spring has been making up for lost time the last fortnight. I never saw things advance so rapidly. A collector has taken twelve or more *Everes coretas* and *Scolitantides orion* at Branson, and up to date too."

[Dark *P. machaon* were quite moderately common at Charpigny in 1913-14.—L.M.F.]

2. THE SEASON 1908-9.

Bex, May 25th, 1909.

"Last season was not a very good one . . . . In June I went for a fortnight to Champéry. At Bonaveau there were some interesting *Erebia oeme* with very small spots, or almost none; but my best catch was *Parnassius delius*, close above Champéry village, where the stream divides. A series of about twelve or fourteen taken in some forty minutes, contained finer marked females and more variation than one usually gets in these parts. On July 2nd I was at Eclépens, on my way to Yverdon, and left on the 8th. I only saw one black