



ColSoc field meeting report

Earsham Estate, Norfolk - 3rd September 2022



Fig. 1: Earsham Estate field meeting attendees, left to right: Beulah Garner, Andrew Duff, Tony Allen, Charlie Barnes, Zoe Crighton, Kevin Rowley, Martin Fowlie, Steve Lane and Martin Collier. Photo by Nick Meade.

Field Meeting Leaders: Martin Collier (Norfolk beetle recorder) and Andrew Duff (ColSoc Field Meetings Officer).

This meeting was very much an exploratory exercise because virtually no beetle records existed for the site before this year. The estate is situated in the south-east of the county, close to the boundary with Suffolk, near Bungay, and covers about 10 km². Essentially a tenanted farming estate, much of the area is arable farmland and grazing pasture but there are also large blocks of deciduous and mixed woodland (including two woodyards), veteran parkland trees, grazing marshes, many ponds, sand and gravel pits and unimproved meadows. The estate owner, Nicholas (Nick) Meade, was keen to discover as much as possible about the flora and fauna on his estate, such that it could be managed in ways that maximized the biodiversity and conserved important habitats. Nick was so keen for this meeting to be a success that he even put out carrion and rotting fruit piles in various locations, to attract

beetles for us to find! Since May 2022, when Nick had agreed to holding this meeting on his estate, MC has been running a small number of flight interception vane traps in some of the veteran trees and, along with some more general field work, this has resulted in a site list of just over 200 species which includes some beetles of both local and national interest, including *Oedostethus quadripustulatus*, *Procræus tibialis*, *Notolaemus unifasciatus*, *Tomoxia bucephala*, *Ptinus palliatus* and *Neobisnius procerulus*.

The meeting started at Earsham Hall (not part of the estate so thanks to the owners, Rupert and Annabel Stretton-Derham) at 10.30 am, with ten people attending (including leaders and owner) as follows: Tony Allen, Charlie Barnes, Martin Collier, Zoe Crighton, Andrew Duff, Martin Fowlie, Beulah Garner, Steve Lane, Nick Meade and Kevin Rowley. After the usual introductions and health & safety advice, people were free to explore the area using the very detailed series of maps kindly provided by Nick. These maps showed all major habitat types, down to individual veteran tree level. After a day of recording, everybody met up again at 4.00 pm at the Hall to close the meeting. The weather was hot and sunny and East Anglia had already been suffering drought conditions for several weeks, so expectations for long species lists were not high. Beetles were indeed quite hard to find, with sweeping and beating the parched vegetation being particularly non-productive, but working other micro-habitats such as carrion, pond drawdown zones and timber stacks was generally much more profitable, although still somewhat hit and miss. The final tally for the day was 190 species, which was actually higher than the leaders thought likely, given the drought conditions and time of year. The full dataset will be uploaded to iRecord in due course and species of note included: *Xyleborus monographus* (M. Collier & S. Lane) - a recent arrival in Norfolk, with Earsham being the only known site at present (also found in vane traps earlier in the year); *Cryptolestes duplicatus* (M. Collier & S. Lane) - another recent arrival, so far recorded from only one other county site; *Dienerella clathrata* (C. Barnes) – recorded from only two other county sites; *Brachyusa concolor* (M. Collier) – recorded from only two other county sites; *Scopaeus laevigatus* (S. Lane) - first county record; *Colydium elongatum* (M. Collier) – only the third record and second county site.

The leaders are most grateful to Nick Meade for allowing ColSoc to hold this field meeting on his estate and we are pleased to advise members that another meeting is already being planned at this site for May 2023.