There is an unusual treatment of the cynipid gall causers on oaks, in that there is no indication of which generation is being illustrated. This may cause confusion in the minds of newcomers to the study of galls when confronted with two or more very different galls with the same species name.

Where Robert has followed the tradition of previous workers in this field, such as Houard and Buhr, is in the numbering of each figure, prefixed in this case with ‘M’. By this means he provides us with another catalogue.

A couple of minor quibbles. First, no indication of scale or size (with a few exceptions) of galls is given. Although it is explained why in the Introduction, I would still have preferred this information to have been included. Second, the quest for simplicity has resulted in the omission of both the common names of well-known galls and the families of the gall causers. Thus all dipteran causers are called ‘flies’ with no distinction between the cecidomyid midges and such as the tephritid picture-wing flies.

No matter, Robert’s eloquence is in his drawings and this volume makes a worthy addition to any cecidologist’s library. I have no hesitation in recommending it, even if you live nowhere near Norfolk.

To finish as I started, not a paraphrase but a direct quote from Oscar Wilde; ‘The truth is rarely pure and never simple.’ In this book Robert Maidstone demonstrates that this is certainly the case with the pocks, bumps and lumps we call galls.

* Hancy, R. (undated) The Study of Plant Galls in Norfolk. The Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists’ Society, occasional publication no. 5.

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**Sorosphaerula veronicae** in the Outer Hebrides

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A spring visit to North Tolsta, Lewis (vc110) to look at the sand dune flora led to a certain amount of hands and knees work looking at tiny plants, and when
there is such a detailed inspection there is always the chance that a gall will turn up too. There was plenty of *Erophila verna*, which in other places in the Outer Hebrides hosts a weevil gall, *Ceutorhyncus hirtulus*, but it wasn’t in evidence here. There were interesting little *Veronica* plants, however, and while some were clearly *V. arvensis*, others looked possibly different so I collected a specimen. It turned out to also be *V. arvensis*, but had a gall – collected entirely by accident! It keyed out to *Sorosphaerula veronicae* (J. Schröter) Neuhauser & Kirchmair, 2011, a fungus-like organism now classified with the protozoa. In this specimen it formed a swelling in the stem, solid inside and smooth on the outside, though it may also create swellings in leaf veins and roots (Redfern, Shirley & Bloxham 2011). It was previously very rare, but there have been several records since 1999, including one other record on *V. arvensis*. Whether this is a change in distribution or, perhaps more likely, an increased awareness is not known. Nonetheless, it is interesting to have a record from the north to supplement previous southern finds.

**Reference**


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Figure 1: *Sorosphaerula veronicae* gall (arrowed) on *Veronica arvensis*, Sidhean Mor, Lewis, vc110, NB540485, 13 May 2021. Photo: Paul A. Smith.