

Parasitoid wasps in *Achillea ptarmica* galls

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In *Hebridean Naturalist* 20, we reported observations on the galls of *Rhopalomyia ptarmicae* on sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*) from Smerclate (Neill *et al.* 2020). As well as the fly that causes the gall itself, BN managed to collect some chalcid wasps (in the family Chalcidoidea). Chalcids are tiny wasps, many with parasitoid lifestyles (parasitoids are like parasites except that they kill their hosts), although some feed on plant tissue inside galls (non-parasites making use of a gall they did not initiate are called inquilines).

Thanks to two experts these have been identified. Figs. 7 & 8 in Neill *et al.* (2020) are of *Aprostocetus ptarmicae* Graham 1987, identified by Andrew Polaszek of the Natural History Museum London. Specimens have been deposited in the National Museums of Scotland (NMS) as NMS-10007215. *A. ptarmicae* was only described in 1987 (Graham 1987, p346) from material from southern Britain, and seems to be a specialist parasite of *R. ptarmicae*, though it has also been recorded parasitizing *R. baccharum* in Spain (Askew *et al.* 2001). In addition to the UK it is known from Austria (Doğanlar 1992), Germany, Netherlands, Russia and Spain (Noyes 2019).

The metallic chalcid in Fig. 9 of Neill *et al.* (2020) is *Torymus chloromerus* (Walker 1833), identified by Richard Robinson Askew, who is now retired but was at Manchester University. These specimens have been deposited as NMS-10007224. *T. chloromerus* is a generalist parasitoid, and has been recorded from many different galls, and widely across Europe (Graham & Gijswijt 1998). It probably represents a species complex (Graham & Gijswijt 1998, Vikberg 2014). This seems to be the first record of *T. chloromerus* from galls of *R. ptarmicae*, and indeed from *Achillea* spp. (Noyes 2019).

The *Rhopalomyia ptarmicae* specimens have also been deposited in NMS as NMS-10007206.

These observations provide valuable information on the community of insects in galls of *R. ptarmicae* – a very satisfactory outcome for an investigation prompted by a query on the facebook page.

We are very grateful to Andrew Polaszek and Richard Robinson Askew for their determinations, and to Ashleigh Whiffin, Assistant Curator of Entomology at NMS.

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