

GENERIC NAMES, &c., OF THE BRITISH FORMICIDAE.

By HORACE DONISTHORPE, F.Z.S., F.R.E.S., etc.
(Department of Entomology, British Museum (Nat. Hist.)).

We have before us "The Generic Names of British Insects. Part 5. The generic names of the British *Hymenoptera Aculeata*, with a check list of British species," published by the Royal Entomological Society of London, 14th August 1937.

The part dealing with the *Formicidae* is, of course, that which most concerns us personally, and about which we propose to offer the following remarks.

We differ from the author on various points, which are more or less a matter of opinion, and these will be dealt with in due order. There are, however, some actual errors in dates, quotations, etc., and it seems necessary to point these out, as the paper in question carries the authority of the Committee on Generic Nomenclature of the Royal Entomological Society of London.

When we were writing the first edition of *British Ants* (1915), we actually personally verified all the bibliographic references cited in that work, but there was not the evidence on the dates of publication of some works dealing with Hymenoptera, etc., which has since been brought forward—mostly due to the painstaking researches of F. J. Griffin.

For example, under *Ponera* (pp. 99 and 123 in the paper under discussion) the date of the type species, *Formica coarctata*, Latr., is given as 1801, whereas Dalla Torre (1893), Emery (1911) and Donisthorpe (1915) all give 1802. The first date, however, is correct.

Latreille described his *Formica coarctata* in "*Bull. Soc. philom. Paris*, 3, No. 57, p. 63. Frimaire an 10 de la République." The year ten of the first French Republic ran from 22nd September 1801 to 21st September 1802. Frimaire was the third month of the Calendar, from 21st November to 20th December; therefore the date is 1801.*

Again the type of *Solenopsis*, West., *Atta geminata* is given (p. 124) as 1805; Dalla Torre, Emery, and Sherborn give 1804. Griffin, however, has shown that the date of Fabricius, *Systema Piezatorum*, is 1805 (see in *Trans. R. Ent. Soc. Lond.*, 1935, p. 144). The date of Latreille's *Hist. Nat. Crust. Ins.*, 13, Paris, An xiii, is not so certain. Our author gives it as September 1804, whereas Dalla Torre, Emery and Donisthorpe give it as 1805. The copy of this work, both at the B.M. and the R. Ent. Soc. Lond., is marked "1805" in pencil. All we know is that it came out during Ann. xiii, which ran from 22nd September 1804-21st September 1805.

We do not agree with the reasons given to show that the type of *Ponera* was fixed by Westwood, nor do we understand the statement that Wheeler (1912) avoided the difficulty by treating Latreille's work, September 1804 [1805?] as fixing types. Donisthorpe, however (1915), stated the matter very clearly—"In 1810 Latreille [*Cons. Gén. Crust. Ins.*, 311, No. 443, 437 (1810)] cited *Formica crassinoda*, (Latr.) F., as the type of *Ponera*, but he had already in 1805 [1804?] [*H.N. Crust.*

*For the benefit of future students we append a list with dates of the years and months of the first French Republic.

Ins., 13, 257-8, No. 365 (1805)] cited *contracta* as type." We still consider that in the 1805 (1804?) publication Latreille does fix the type; though he does not actually use the word type.

With regard to Wheeler, we cannot trace any 1912 paper on the subject. In 1911 [*Ann. N. York Acad. Sci.*, 21, 157-75 (1911)] he published an excellent and much needed paper on the type species of the genera and sub-genera of *Formicidae*. He stated that he had verified all the references except for a few from obscure and antiquated sources, for which he had to rely on Dalla Torre's *Catalogus Hymenopterum*. Unfortunately *Ponera* was one of these; for which Dalla Torre gives "*Latreille Hist. Nat. Crust. and Insect.*, iv, 1802, p. 128." Both the title and the date are incorrect; it should be *Gen. Crust. Ins.*, 4, 1809, p. 128. Emery [*Genera Insectorum*, 118, 88 (1911)] gives this quotation correctly, but he gave the 1805 (1804?) publication for *Ponera*, when, of course, it should be *Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat.*, 24, 178-9 (1804), as given by Donisthorpe (1915), Sherborn (1927), and our author (1937).

For 1913 [*Ann. N. York Acad. Sci.*, 23, 77-83 (1913)] Wheeler published some corrections and additions to his former list; we do not, however, find that he mentions anywhere that the Latreille's 1805 (1804?) publication fixed types. He simply gives *coarctata*, Latr., as the type of *Ponera* without any date.

The quotation for Mayr's *Formicoxenus* (p. 123) is incorrect, both as to date (this no doubt was a slip of the pen, or a printer's error; although Mayr actually continued to write on ants up to 1906!), and title of publication. It should be Mayr, 1855 (not 1885), *Verh. Zool. bot. Ver.* (not *Ges.*) Wien. It was not until 1858 that the title "*Kaiserlich-Koenigliche Zoologisch-Botanische Verein*" (1851), was changed to *Gesellschaft*.

This misquotation occurs again (p. 124) with *Monomorium*, Mayr, *Leptothorax*, Mayr, *Strongylognathus*, Mayr, and *Tetramorium*, Mayr.

The date given for *Solenopsis*, Westwood (pp. 100, 124) is incorrect; it should be 1841 (not 1840), *Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist.*, 6, 86. We do not agree that "the occasion is hardly one in which it is worth making an exception" (p. 124) when retaining the subgenus *Mychothorax*, Ruzsky, 1905. In this subgenus the antennae are 11-jointed, whereas in *Leptothorax* proper they are all 12-jointed. Wheeler, who had given *Formica acervorum*, F., as type of *Leptothorax* in his 1911 paper, accepted Emery's suggestion of *L. clypeatus*, Mayr (the latter was the first species described by Mayr for the group with 12-jointed antennae) in his 1913 paper. Donisthorpe also followed Emery.

(To be continued.)

NOTES ON LOCAL GRASSHOPPERS FROM SOUTH BENFLEET, ESSEX.

By R. W. ATTWOOD.

During a short visit to South Benfleet, Essex, in August a careful search was made for the local Grasshoppers, *Metrioptera roeselii*, *Conocephalus dorsalis*, and, on the suggestion of Dr Burr, the newly-discovered British species *Conocephalus fuscus*.