

‘Entry level’ and ‘intermediate’ books on insects

There is no point in trying to get a comprehensive list of British insect books together. So many of them are highly technical or complex, enough to baffle even the relative expert. As someone develops an interest in particular groups, they will come across further references to increasingly obscure and arcane papers published in scientific journals; they may also decide to invest in expensive modern monographs or even more expensive antiquarian books.

So here is a list of books that I think might be useful to the *novice* British entomologist. It is, I admit, a personal list, and it’s just a taster.

General

Chinery, M. 1986. *Collins guide to the insects of Britain and Western Europe*. HarperCollins. Entry level. Lots of excellent illustrations.

Barnard, P.C. 2011. *The Royal Entomological Society Book of British insects*. Wiley-Blackwell. Intermediate/ advanced. Order-by-order break-down with extensive further references to identification guides and other scientific publications.

Ephemeroptera, mayflies

Harker, J. 1989. *Mayflies*. Naturalists’ Handbooks 13. Richmond Publishing. Intermediate. Concise, but contains illustrated identification keys and some colour pictures.

Odonata, dragonflies

Brooks, S.J. 1997. *Field guide to the dragonflies and damselflies of Great Britain and Ireland*. British Wildlife Publishing. Entry level/ intermediate. Excellent identification and field guide.

Orthoptera, grasshoppers, crickets etc

Marshall, J.A. & Haes, E.C.M. 1990. *Grasshoppers and allied insects of Great Britain and Ireland*. Harley Books. Intermediate/ advanced. Illustrated monograph.

Marshall, J.A. & Ovenden, D. 1999. *Guide to British grasshoppers and allied insects*. Field Studies Council. Entry level. Folded laminated field identification sheet, concise, but nice pictures.

Hemiptera, plant bugs, plant hoppers, aphids etc

Dolling, W.R. 1991. *The Hemiptera*. Oxford University Press. Intermediate/ advanced. Family-by-family breakdown, lots of biology and ecology.

Hawkins, R.D. 2003. *Shieldbugs of Surrey*. Surrey Wildlife Trust. Intermediate. Colour photos and identification key to several UK families of bugs.

Nau, B. 2004. *Guide to shieldbugs of the British Isles*. Field Studies Council. Entry Level. Folded laminated field identification sheet, concise, but nice pictures.

Southwood, T.R.E. & Leston, D. 1959. *Land and water bugs of the British Isles*. Warne. Entry level/ intermediate. Long out of print and hugely expensive second-hand, but available as CDROM from Pisces Publications.

Unwin, D. 2001. *A key to families of British bugs*. Field Studies Council. Entry level. Illustrated identification guide, but only to family level.

Coleoptera, beetles

- Cooter, J. & Barclay, M. 2006. *A coleopterist's handbook*. 4th edition. Amateur Entomologists' Society. Entry level/ intermediate. General family-by-family introduction, some colour plates.
- Forsythe, T. 2000. *Ground beetles*. Naturalists' Handbooks 8. Richmond Publishing. Intermediate. Concise, but contains illustrated identification keys and some colour pictures.
- Friday, L.E. 1988. *Key to the adults of British water beetles*. Field Studies Council. Intermediate. Illustrated identification keys.
- Joy, N.H. 1932. *A practical handbook of British beetles*. 2 vols, Witherby. Intermediate/ advanced. Long out of print, facsimile reprints published 1976, currently available on CDRom, from Pisces Publications. Original and reprint now very expensive secondhand. Frustratingly brief, and many of the keys use difficult comparative characters.
- Harde, K.W. & Hammond, P.M. 1984. *A field guide in colour to beetles*. Octopus, reprinted Blitz Editions. Entry level. Lots of excellent colour pictures.
- Linssen, E.F. 1959. *Beetles of the British Isles*. 2 vols. Warne. Entry level. Long out of print and very expensive second hand, but many colour plates.
- Majerus, M.E.N. & Kearns, P. 1989. *Ladybirds*. Naturalists' Handbooks 10. Richmond Publishing. Entry level/ intermediate. Illustrated identification keys, colour plates and much ecological information. New edition being written and in press at the moment.
- Morris, M.G. 1991. *Weevils*. Naturalists' Handbooks 16. Richmond Publishing. Entry level/ intermediate. Concise, but contains illustrated identification keys to many common species, and some colour pictures.
- Unwin, D.M. 1984. *A key to the families of British beetles (and Strepsiptera)*. Field Studies Council. Entry level. Illustrated identification guide, but only to family level.

Diptera, flies

- Chandler, P. 2010. *A dipterist's handbook*. Amateur Entomologists' Society. Entry level/ intermediate, family-by-family introduction.
- Colyer, C.N. & Hammond, C.O. 1951. *Flies of the British Isles*. Warne. Second edition 1968. Entry level. Long out of print, but available secondhand, family-by-family introduction, many figures and colour pictures.
- Gilbert, F. 1986. *Hoverflies*. Naturalists' Handbooks 5. Cambridge University Press. Entry level/ intermediate. Concise, but contains illustrated identification keys to many common species and some colour pictures.
- Snow, K.R. 1990. *Mosquitoes*. Naturalists' Handbooks 14. Richmond Publishing. Entry level/ intermediate. Concise, but contains illustrated identification keys and some colour pictures.
- Stubbs, A.E. & Drake, M. 2001. *British soldierflies and their allies*. British Entomological and Natural History Society. Intermediate to advanced, but many colour plates and well-illustrated identification keys to these large and attractive flies.
- Stubbs, A.E. & Falk, S. 2002. *British hoverflies, an illustrated identification guide*. British Entomological and Natural History Society. Intermediate to advanced, but many colour plates and well-illustrated identification keys to these large and attractive flies.

Unwin, D.M. 1981. *A key to the families of British Diptera*. Field Studies Council. Reprinted 1984. Intermediate, but well illustrated identification key.

Hymenoptera, bees, wasps, ants, sawflies, parasitica etc

Edwards, M. & Jenner, M. 2009. *Field guide to the bumblebees of Great Britain and Ireland*. Ocelli Publishing. Entry level. Simple pictorial guide.

Gauld, I.D. & Bolton, B. eds. 1988. *The Hymenoptera*. British Museum (Natural History) and Oxford University Press. Intermediate /advanced. Family-by-family breakdown, much on biology and ecology.

Skinner, G.J. & Allen, G.W. 1996. *Ants*. Naturalists Handbooks 24, Richmond Publishing. Entry level/ intermediate. Concise, but contains illustrated identification keys and some colour pictures.

Willmer, P. 1985. *Bees, ants and wasps: a key to genera of the British aculeates*. Field Studies Council. Entry level/ intermediate, very useful key to UK genera.

Wright, A. 1990. *British sawflies (Hymenoptera: Symphyta) a key to adults of the genera occurring in Britain*. Field Studies Council. Entry level/ intermediate, user-friendly illustrated identification key.

Yeo, P.F. & Corbet, S.A. 1995. *Solitary wasps*. Naturalists Handbooks 3, Richmond Publishing. Entry level/ intermediate. Concise, but contains illustrated identification keys to many common species and some colour pictures.

Lepidoptera, butterflies and moths

Manley, C. 2009. *British moths and butterflies: a photographic guide*. A & C Black. Entry level. Excellent colour photos of most UK species, from life.

Porter, J. 1997. *The colour identification guide to caterpillars of the British Isles*. Viking. Entry level/ intermediate. Colour photos of most UK caterpillars.

Skinner, B. 2009. *Colour identification guide to moths of the British Isles*. Apollo Books. Entry level/ intermediate. Complete and authoritative, colour plates are photos of set museum specimens.

Sterling, P. & Parsons, M. 2012. *Field guide to the micro moths of Great Britain and Ireland*. British Wildlife Publishing. Entry level/ intermediate, colour plates are watercolours of moths from life.

Waring, P. & Townsend, M. 2009. *Field guide to the moths of Great Britain and Ireland*. British Wildlife Publishing. Entry level/ intermediate, complete and authoritative, colour plates are watercolours of moths from life.

Mecoptera, Megaloptera, Neuroptera, Raphidioptera, lacewings and allies

Plant, C.W. 1997. *A key to the adults of British lacewings and their allies*. Field Studies Council. Entry level/ intermediate. User-friendly illustrated identification keys.

Trichoptera, caddis flies

Barnard, P.C. & Rose, E. 2008. *Guide to the adult caddisflies or sedge flies (Trichoptera)*. Field Studies Council. Entry level/ intermediate. User-friendly illustrated identification keys.