

## SHORT COMMUNICATION

**Climbing ability of *Platynus assimilis* (Coleoptera: Carabidae)** – On a recent trip to York, at around 6pm on Saturday 15 May, I climbed the steps to the front gate of Clifford’s Tower, the former keep of York Castle, in the centre of the city. The weather was warm and sunny, with a light breeze, and temperatures of 19°C according to forecasts. While there, I noticed a large beetle moving quickly around the base of the tower, on the limestone blocks out of which it is constructed. The beetle began to climb directly up the wall and continued to do so, without stopping, until it reached the top of the 15m-tall structure (Fig. 1). I recorded the time taken to ascend as 155 seconds (which gives a speed of 0.096 m/s, or 0.21 mph). I noted as it passed that the beetle was a carabid, but was unsure which species. Despite the common name “ground beetles” there are several British carabid genera which are primarily or exclusively arboreal, such as *Dromius* and *Calosoma* (Luff, 2007). Both genera are winged and hunt invertebrates on trees, especially in the crevices created by bark (Luff, 2007). Consulting some experts later on the internet (see Weir, 2022), a consensus emerged that it was likely *Platynus assimilis* (Paykull), a woodland species (Luff, 2007; Brock, 2021). Although not typically considered to be arboreal, *P. assimilis* seems to straddle the terrestrial and canopy environments. Arndt (2005) and Arndt and Hielscher (2007) found that *P. assimilis* was one of the few species



Fig. 1. (a) Carabid beetle, thought to be *Platynus assimilis*, almost half-way to completing the ascent of the 15m-tall front of Clifford’s Tower, York. (b) Close-up of specimen.

which occurred at both ground level and higher up in the canopy, in surveys across central European woodlands. The steep, completely 90 degree angle and smooth surface of the wall, combined with the light air movements and the beetle's not insubstantial weight, suggest some reasonable climbing ability – and the speed with which it made the ascent does indicate a comfort in this type of situation. Clearly, from the beetle's perspective, there is little difference between a building and a tree as component parts of its environment. – JAMIE C. WEIR, [REDACTED]

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#### REFERENCES

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#### BOOK REVIEW

**Cow patty critters: An introduction to the ecology, biology and identification of insects in cattle dung on Canadian pastures** by Kevin D. Floate. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2023. 218 pp. Available free as a downloadable pdf. A59-90-2022E.pdf

This was originally prepared as a book with a draft ISSN number, but is now available as a free pdf. Written in two parts, this guide introduces the reader to the insects in cattle dung on pastures across Canada. Part I focuses on general aspects of insect diversity and ecology. Part II is intended to help the reader identify insects. It provides information on the biology and morphology of different insect groups and is supplemented with colour photographs. Although the species mentioned in this guide are specific for Canada, most of them also occur in the United States with a significant proportion occurring in Europe. References are provided to taxonomic keys to aid in species identification. The guide concludes with an extensive list of references that allows the reader to explore topics in more depth and discover sources of information that might otherwise be overlooked.

