

This is one of the easiest species to recognise in Britain. The slender antennal scape bears a small upright process which appears as a small tooth in profile; the body colour is similar to that of *sulcimodis* with the dark head and gaster contrasting with the paler thorax. There is considerable variation in sculpture, spine length and size of antennal tooth even in Britain. The variation in this species over Europe as a whole is more remarkable. In general British examples have a smaller antennal process than seems to be usual among continental material seen. Some Norwegian examples kindly sent by Dr. Holger Holgersen have, by contrast, an outstanding development of the tooth which appears as a wide saucer-like flange larger than that of typical *schrencki*.

*Myrmica schrencki* Emery, 1895.

This interesting species is the least common of the British *Myrmica*. Its known distribution in Britain is unlike that of any other ant. It was discovered in one locality in Glamorganshire in 1915 by H. M. Hallett (Donisthorpe, 1927) and it was subsequently found in Ireland in 1926 by A. W. Stelfox (1927). Later discoveries by Stelfox and others (O'Rourke, 1950) have shown it to be widely, though sparsely, distributed there in the SE., and SW., where it has now been taken from about 15 localities mostly in single nests or as individual examples. This species was taken in England for the first time in 1946 by H. E. Hammond and K. G. V. Smith, who collected a single worker from the Shropshire side of the Wyre Forest. Further examples were not found in subsequent visits by the writer and others until April, 1957, when a nest was discovered in the railway cutting not far from the Bridgenorth-Bewdley road in the Worcestershire part of the forest. This nest was revisited in July and a few *alatae* collected. It has since been discovered in two more localities—a single nest at Barnack in the Soke of Peterborough and a group of a dozen or more nests in a sheltered sand bank by the side of a railway cutting at Wilsford, S. Lincs. Its present known distribution therefore extends in a narrow belt from the East Midlands to the extreme west of Ireland and forms a complete contrast to the north-south distribution of *lobicornis*.

*M. schrencki* is widely distributed through central Europe in lowland areas and on the lower slopes of mountains. It is scarce in S. Scandinavia and, with the exception of *M. rugulosa*, does not extend so far north as the other N. European members of the genus. It is a monogynous species and nests most frequently in the ground in sandy places and not typically under stones as does *sabuleti*. In Ireland O'Rourke (1950) has found it nesting in peat as well as in sandy places and it is not apparently limited to any particular type of habitat there, although it has been found most frequently near the coast.

British examples of this species conform well with those seen from France and Switzerland and, in NW. Europe at least, it is a distinctive and easily recognized species, distinguished by its very narrow frons, large upright process on the scape and very shallow meso-epinotal impression in the worker caste. In S. Europe the species is more variable and in the worker caste sometimes hard to distinguish from the larger forms of *lobicornis*. Males of the two species are, however, quite unmistakable and more unlike than other pairs of similar species already discussed.