

Diptera Recording Schemes Bulletin No.8

With autumn approaching fast, this Bulletin gives details of the traditional events and also looks back with some nostalgia at the results of the season. There are also various news items, including one on the hoverfly book's progress. Bookings for the October field meeting are now due.

AUTUMN EVENTSAnnual Meeting of Diptera Recording Schemes: Saturday 10 November, 1979

This meeting returns to its normal date of the second Saturday in November (as announced in Bulletin No.7.). The venue is the British Museum (Natural History) at South Kensington.

This event has drawn between 50 and 80 people in recent years and has become a major meeting point at which amateurs and professionals can get together. The programme is at a non-technical level so don't be shy if you are a beginner or you have not been before - this day is for you and we'll be delighted for you to join in (there is no entrance charge).

- MORNING (Main Lecture Hall; museum warders will provide directions)
- 11.00 am Hoverflies in suction traps and light traps. J. Bowden.
- 11.30 The Hoverfly & Horsefly fauna of a Welsh coniferous woodland. F. Entwistle.
- 12.00 Combined discussion on above papers
- 12.10 The Biology of the Conopidae. K.G.V. Smith
- 12.40 The pairing mechanism in Tipula paludosa. G. Hancock
- 12.45 Field meetings: a look at past meetings and the 1980 programme. Trudy Side and A E Stubbs.
- LUNCH 1.00 - 2.00 (pubs and cafes)
- AFTERNOON (Advise on location from entrance hall warders desk)
- 2.00 pm Exhibits (setting up time) and informal session.
- 2.30 Discussion Point
- (a) Dipterists Handbook: the editors and authors present will develop themes from the Handbook - observations and questions welcome.
- (b) Red Data Book A.E. Stubbs.
- (c) Forthcoming book on hoverflies A.E. Stubbs and S. Falk.
- 4.00 Informal session and Identification Service (see below)
- 5.45 Meeting closes.

The programme should include plenty of interest for everyone. The morning programme in the main lecture hall opens with two talks on current research including the use of traps so we shall hear of hot press results on hoverflies and horseflies. Conopid biology has plenty of fascination and the item on

Tipula is not as boring as it sounds. The field meeting programme exposition aims at giving a picture of the opportunities of next years events.

The lunch break offers the alternative of joining groups at local pubs or cafes, or bring sandwiches to eat in the Museum if you prefer.

The afternoon is informal and includes an audience participation session. The venue in the Museum will be announced at the morning session but anyone arriving in the afternoon can ask for directions at the entrance hall warders desk. It gives a great boost to the occasion if there are plenty of exhibits so please make an effort this year. If you can put on a display on a study you have been undertaking then fine but everyone is also happy of the chance to see the interesting beasties you have been catching in recent years. Illustrations are often also presented - and you will be able to see some of the plates for the new hoverfly book. The discussion point session has some good topics this year - here is your chance to seek information and advice which you were frustrated to find was not in the Dipterists Handbook. The Red Data Book will be a new concept to Dipterists. The hoverfly book is for you, so now's the time to say what you want. The identification service will hopefully be more efficient this year - we suggest you write in (address at end of Bulletin) if you require help with identifications. If we know what sort of material is involved, such as a single baffling cranefly or a beginners box of 50 hoverflies, then it will be possible to ensure that you are able to meet someone who can (at least try) to help. An opportunity to see behind the scenes in the Diptera Section will be provided for newcomers.

Dipterists Dinner

Though a separate event this is timed to run directly on from the Diptera Recording Schemes meeting. The dinner is an informal buffet bar occasion at the Museum. About 50 have attended in previous years and it is hoped even more will be attracted to join in at the modest cost that is now involved. It starts at 6pm and finishes about 9pm so even if you have a train to catch it ought to be possible to attend for an hour or so. No matter how new you are to the study of Diptera, you will be most welcome. This is an informal occasion for everyone whether amateur or professional, to talk with each other in a relaxed atmosphere. The price is about £3.50-£4.00 inclusive of food and drink and advance booking is essential (exact price is not given since Adrian Pont is currently in Canada).

If you have been in previous years, you will receive a separate circular. Should you suspect a postal breakdown, or have not been before, please write to the organiser:- Adrian Pont, British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD.

Autumn Field Meeting - Nympsfield, Gloucestershire 10-14 October

Details of this field meeting were given in Bulletin No 7. As a reminder the base is Woodchester Park Field Centre and you may join in for all or part of the period evening Wednesday October 10th to Sunday 14th.

Nympsfield lies between Dursley and Stroud and thus lies in the heart of the most impressive part of the Cotswolds. There is no shortage of woods and streams which provide good habitat for the autumn peak of craneflies, fungus gnats and other Nematocera. The saltmarsh of the Severn estuary is not far away for addicts of that habitat.

It will be off season for hoverflies and larger Brachycera, but if you wish to learn something about craneflies and fungus gnats or are simply happy to help with collecting in pleasant countryside then why not join in for an autumn break?

The cost is £5.70 per day full board. Bookings are now due, so please write in soon so confirmation of numbers can be made. Write to I F G McLean (Nature Conservancy Council, 19 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PY) enclosing £5 deposit (cheques to his name).

AUTUMN SOCIETY EXHIBITIONS: 1979

A number of dipterists attend the following exhibitions. Peter Chandler and Alan Stubbs will be pleased to meet you there. These exhibitions, in conjunction with the Museum meeting, are often used for relaying boxes of material requiring identification.

Amateur Entomologists Society

Annual Exhibition, Saturday 15 September, Palm Court Hall, Alexandra Palace, Wood Green, London N22 4AY. A small entrance charge will be made to non exhibitors. Members exhibits; equipment and books on sale. Mid morning till about 5pm.

British Entomological and Natural History Society

Annual Exhibition, Saturday 27 October, Chelsea Old Town Hall, Kings Road, Chelsea. Entrance free. Members exhibits. Late morning till about 5pm.

NEWS FROM THE SCHEMES

Cranefly Recording Scheme

A male Limonia (Dicranomyia) with very narrow wings has been found in Huntingdonshire (J.Cole). This species is not on the British list. The scheme organiser is trying to resolve whether this is a described species or not; a rather similar female defied identification a couple of years ago.

Larger Brachycera Scheme

A large Chrysopilus new to Britain has been taken in Yorkshire. This species is far different from the familiar species but, are you sitting comfortably, a worker on the continent is on the point of separating Chrysopilus cristatus into two!

Cambridgeshire has yielded some interesting species - Vanoyia tenuicornis at Wicken Fen and Stratiomys potamida at Chippenham Fen (I.Perry)

Odontomyia ornata has been found in several places on the Somerset Levels and several specimens have been bred out from larvae. (A E Stubbs)

Hoverfly Recording Scheme

The scheme is now gaining momentum and the organisers wish to thank all participants for the thousands of records received; we are sorry it is not possible to thank every individual. This season we would like to concentrate on the tribe Eristalini (Helophilus, Anasimyia, Lejops, Parhelophilus, Mallota, Eristalis, Eristalinus, Myathropa). The object is to produce maps for display at the Dipterist's Day, and all records are welcome. Existing maps show the distribution of collectors nicely!

After last years discussion at the annual meeting, Cheilosia larvae were found in the roots of marsh thistles and cow parsley yielding the first host records of C.fraterna and C.pagana respectively. Please keep searching this autumn. K G V Smith has a paper in press (with Entomologists Record) which lists many plant associations additional to those in the Dipterist's Handbook.

Psilota arthracina has been taken at Chobham Common, Surrey (I. McLean) and Megasyrphus annulipes at Windsor Forest for the first time (P J Chandler)

The British list will be somewhat larger in the test keys which will be available soon (see item on hoverfly book). There are extra Cheilosia; Anasimyia (ex Helophilus) transfuga and A. lunulata have each been split into 2. There is also some generic re-classification affecting certain Xylota and Brachypalpus species.

Sepsidae Recording Scheme

The Royal Entomological Society Handbook by A C Pont is with the printers. Publication is due by the end of the year, possibly even by late October.

Sciomyzidae Recording Scheme

As you may have noticed from the Dipterists Handbook amendments slip, the organiser is now I McLean (Nature Conservancy Council, 19 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PY) with continuing support from J. Bowden. It is hoped to start preparation of the Royal Entomological Society Handbook this winter...

REPORTS ON 1979 FIELD MEETINGS

Rogate field meeting, Sussex: June 1979

A party ranging in size up to 13 including three hymenopterists took advantage of the excellent accommodation, catering and lab facilities of this Kings College London field centre. Tony Irwin was the leader.

As fate would have it the weather was not good which was tantalising since there were plenty of excellent sites. The results go to emphasise what could have been found had the weather been better.

The hoverflies totalled 91 species with a fair number of goodies. Among the Syrphinae, Megasyrphus annulipes and Dasysyrphus lunulatus were likely species for SE England, the former being nationally scarce. Other hoverflies included Brachyopa insensilis, Cheilosia nigripes, C. carbonaria, C. vulpina, Chrysogaster virescens, Criorhina asilica, Microdon eggeri, Sphegina (all 3 species), Volucella inflata, Xylota abiens, X. tarda and Xylotomima lenta.

Larger Brachycera were sparse but there was Atherix ibis and Dioctria oelandica. The most notable craneflies were Tipula marginata & Ctenophora bimaculata. Among other groups were Tetanocera marginella (Sciomyzidae) and both species of Trixia (Tachinidae). No doubt more scarce species will be reported as material is identified.

One of the last flies taken on the meeting, whilst in a wood on the Friday, was a male Nephrocera scutellata, a pipunculid new to Britain. The wing span of 25mm was quite enough of cause two members of the party to get back out of their cars to return to the wood - to no avail! In addition a new species of Agromyza was taken, also the largest in Britain.

Bovey Tracy, Devon, July 1979

Since 20 dipterists attended the recording schemes field meeting in June 1978, there will be some interest in the findings of the two dipterists who joined the week long British Entomological and Natural History Society field meeting.

The grounds of Coleshayes Park (the base) yielded 50 species of hoverflies including a Pocota within the first couple of minutes of collecting after arrival.

In all 80 species of hoverflies were found including Callicera aenea, Xylota florum and Microdon mutabilis. Larger Brachycera included seven species of aquatic stratiomyids - Stratiomys potamida, S. furcata, Oxycera morrissi, O. pulchellum, O. pardalina, O. trilineata and Odontomyia viridula (try beating that in a week or even a year!); also asilids such as Dioctria oelandica. Other interesting species included the crane flies Orimarga virgo, Limonia unicolor, L. goritiensis, Tipula marginata and Ctenophora bimaculata and the tachinid Alophora hemiptera.

Galloway Field Meeting, July 1979

The party of ten were based at the Stranord Field Centre near Newton Stewart, and despite the weather (which obviously followed some of the Rogate group northwards) good results were obtained. The scarce tachinid Alophora hemiptera was found in no less than three localities (including 30 specimens on one patch of flowers), and its congener Alophora obesa was also taken. Another good find was the rare scathophagid Acanthocnema glaucescens (about five previous British records) swept beside a bridge over a stream shaded by alders. Coastal localities were worked intensively because of the less adverse weather than inland, and the varied habitats present resulted in a good total list of the shore fauna. Rocky coast with wrack beds produced Chersodromia spp. (Empididae) and Aphrosylus spp. (Dolichopodidae), while the saltmarshes (particularly Caerlaverock NNR) were excellent hunting grounds for "dollies". The dunes such as Torrs Warren also had a rich fauna with plenty of the small fry. A fair list of hoverflies included Parhelophilus consimilis well outside its previous known areas of distribution and among the scarcer crane flies were Pilaria meridiana and Helius pallirostris.

Yorkshire Regional Field Meeting, 21-22 July 1979

The first weekend meeting for Yorkshire was held at Forge Valley NNR and Thorne Moors, led by Peter Skidmore and Roy Crossley. Visitors from southern parts were very impressed with the abundance of Campsicnemus magius at Thorne Moors, this rarity being the speciality of Roy Crossley. The rapid semaphore signals by the incredibly ornamented front legs of the males were fascinating to watch as they ran across mud at the side of a dyke. Other good finds at Thorne included the "dollies" Campsicnemus alpinus, Teucophorus spinigerellus and Dolichopus lepidus, among the larger Brachycera Oxycera trilineata and the crane fly Tipula nigra.

East Anglian Regional Field Meeting, 23-24 June 1979

Following the previous successful weekend in East Anglia, Tony Irwin volunteered to lead a party into the brecks and broads. Three breckland sites were visited on the Saturday, Brettenham Heath, East Wretham Heath (NNT reserve) and Foulden Common. As usual, East Wretham was a happy hunting ground for those delighting in small acalyptrates, and hoverflies and larger Brachycera weren't neglected. At Foulden the scarce sciomyzid Colobaea bifasciella was a good find. On Sunday, How Hill in the broads was the only locality sampled before the rain came down in torrents. Here the dykes were good for Dolichopodidae, and the party were entertained by the efforts of the leader and another enthusiast to capture the ephydrid Hydrellia albilabris by pooting over Lemna in stagnant water. Results were mixed for flies and dipterists, though overall the intake of water was greater than the intake of flies!

OTHER GROUPS

Mycetophilidae Handbook

Part 1 of the Royal Entomological Society Handbook is in the hands of the editor. A decision is likely soon on its publication time table, but the quickest option could mean this is in print by the end of the year.

This first part by A M Hutson includes all Mycetophilidae except the Mycetophilinae.

HOVERFLY BOOK

It is now possible to announce that the promised new reference work on hoverflies is firmly underway following several years work in sorting out some major taxonomic problem genera. Production is to be through AIDGAP, a Field Studies Council scheme for promoting the publication of aids to gaps in the literature on identification of different groups. The advantages are flexibility to choose format, a test run of keys will be available at an early date and, very important, selling price will be the lowest possible.

Three of the 12 large format colour plates by S Falk have been completed under contract. These will include a total of 200 illustrations of over 160 species. The test run keys by A E Stubbs are in an advanced state, with illustrations interspersed within the body of the keys, and these should be available to all hoverfly scheme participants before next field season. Publication date, with text on species and supplementary black and white illustrations, is scheduled for 1981. Projected publication price is under £5 which for approx 250 pages and 12 colour plates should be a bargain.

At the Annual Meeting in November it is proposed to place on view some of the plates and a draft set of keys. The afternoon session will give a chance for discussion on the content and format of the book - advice on what you, the user, require will be welcome.

ADDRESS LIST SUPPLEMENT

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AND NOW - ITS THE POUTER POOTER

Yes its new. So new that this amazing gadget is not in the Dipterist's Handbook. Tucked away in a not so remote corner of northern England, little did we realise that a revolution in pooter design was sucking and slurping its way through net fulls of flies. But it arrived with a deafening ttthurrpp at Rogate to baffle all onlookers. The opening of the tube is trumpet shaped giving untold advantages that only its inventor, Bill Ely of Rotherham, can appreciate. He enthused about the ease of hoovering up flies without damaging them, though his demonstration of some pooters full(!) left his potential converts unconvinced. However, is this wave of new pooter technology to sweep the land as intense competition heats up for the ultimate, the perfect blow pooter - for blow flies, of course.

PATENT APPLIED FOR

The Central Panel of
Diptera Recording Scheme Organisers

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