



# BULLETIN OF THE **Dipterists** FORUM

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## FORUM FIELD MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

### Preston Montford Workshops: 6-8 March 1998

Places are still available for the workshop on 'Introduction to Recording Flies' but there are only one or two places left for the crane fly workshop. Anyone wishing to take part should contact David Heaver at English Nature, Bonsil House, Eastnor, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 1EP (tel 01531 638500). David would like to settle the bill with the field centre, so could those who have paid their deposit send the remaining £45 to him, and those who have not paid anything send the entire £75, please. Cheques made payable to 'David Heaver Dipterists Forum'.

## **Dorchester Summer Field Meeting: 27 June to 4 July 1998**

Places are now fully booked at the Kingston Maurward Centre near Dorchester. Any other interested dipterists (or hymenopterists, etc) should contact Liz Howe for details of local B&Bs. See the last Bulletin for the anticipated excitement.

## **OTHER EVENTS**

**Tephritid Workshop**, 21 February 1998, BENHS, Dinton Pastures, Reading.

Laurence Clemons will lead this BENHS indoor meeting, 10.30 - 4.00. Please contact Ian McLean (BENHS Indoor Meetings Secretary) well in advance if you would like to attend (109 Miller Way, Brampton, Cambs, PE18 8TZ).

**'Reflections on the history of dipterology' - talk by Adrian Pont**

See the last Bulletin. 6.30pm 12 May 1998, Royal Entomological Society Rooms, 41 Queen's Gate, South Kensington.

## **Fourth International Congress of Dipterology, Oxford, UK. 6-13 September 1998**

For those who are unable to attend the entire Congress, a special day rate of UK£70 is being offered. This includes admission to the day's Congress events (lectures and posters), morning and afternoon coffee, lunch, and a copy of the Congress abstracts.

If you wish to take advantage of this offer, please contact the Congress Secretariat: Oxford International ICD4, Summertown Pavilion, Middle Way, Oxford OX2 7LG (phone 01865 511550; fax 01865 511570; Email [icd4@oxfordint.co.uk](mailto:icd4@oxfordint.co.uk)). Also be sure to state which session(s) you wish to attend. The Congress programme will not be finalised until well after the deadline for submission of abstracts (31 March 1998), but you will be informed in good time of the day on which the section/workshop for your group will take place. A list of subject-based sections and taxon-based workshops is given in the Second Announcement, which was distributed with the last Bulletin.

If you have any queries or require further information, please contact the Congress Secretariat (Oxford International) or the Congress Secretary, Dr A. C. Pont, University Museum, Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PW.

## **AGM and indoor meeting, 13 - 15 November, 1998**

The National Museum of Wales at Cardiff offered to host the next annual indoor meeting and AGM. The suggestion was put to the meeting at the last Dipterists' Day and was accepted. The change marks part of the gradual dissolution of the old order but we expect no diminution of the camaraderie and enthusiasm that has existed for so long among dipterists.

While Dr Mike Wilson of Cardiff Museum is our contact, David Clements has offered to field enquiries. The arrangements will follow a different format from past meetings. Saturday (14 November) will be the main focus, with talks and exhibits as usual. This will be followed by a dinner. However, members can arrive on the Friday evening and also stay for workshops or other events on the Sunday, leaving after lunch or later. We are looking for ideas for the workshops and talks, so please let David or Alan Stubbs have these. Overnight accommodation will be in local B&B. More details will appear in the August

Bulletin.

The Forum and its predecessor (the Diptera Recording Schemes) wishes to express sincere thanks to the Natural History Museum at London for hosting the annual meeting for the past 22 years. Our thanks go especially to Brian Pitkin for holding the fort for the last few years as other stalwarts of the old Diptera section left. We may be back, of course.

### **Symposium on Saproxyllic Habitat Conservation, 19-21 May 1998**

A symposium organised by the Veteran Trees Initiative will be held on 19-21 May 1998 at Hereford. A major objective is to set an agenda for parkland conservation in England and to direct implementation of the Lowland Parkland and Wood Pasture Habitat Action Plan. Details from Jeanette Hall, English Nature, Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA.

### **FORUM NEWS**

#### **Membership matters**

Thank you to all who have renewed their subscriptions to the Forum and Digest already. About 175 of you have sent in your cheques and I await the other 100 or so with eager anticipation. We are still attracting new members to both parts of the Forum, many of whom must be due to your contacts with other Dipterists, so thank you again and best wishes for 1998.

Liz Howe, Membership Secretary

#### **Bulletin Editorial**

Deadline for newsletters and material for the August Bulletin - 24 July.

At the AGM, I announced my intention to stand down as Bulletin editor at the end of this year. The committee is looking for another scribe who is willing to be nominated for election at this year's AGM. Would anyone interested in taking up this job contact me or Alan Stubbs. Under the present arrangement, English Nature does the photocopying at cost price, Alan and I stuff the envelopes, and BRC, just down the road, mails them out. If it helps to encourage a recruit, this tail end of the process can stay as it is since it is cost-effective.

Martin Drake

### **MALLOCH SOCIETY NEWS**

The 1997 AGM was held at the Scottish Field Studies Association Centre at Kindrogan, Perthshire on 29 November. We had rather longer than usual for the afternoon talks because the whole session was given over to discussing the results of the saproxyllic project. In particular we considered how best to publish the results, we worked out what gaps remain to be filled and we planned fieldwork for 1998.

At the dinner in the evening, Sabine Bressin was given the DOTY award (Dipterist of the Year) by last year's winner, Geoff Hancock. 1998 should be another active year for the Malloch Society with fieldwork on *Blera fallax* and in various Scottish woodlands looking for particular saproxyllics such as *Sphagina sibirica*. More publications should appear and it is our 10th anniversary which happily coincides with the Dipterological Congress in Oxford. With thanks to Scottish Natural Heritage for continuing to support us financially.

Graham E Rotheray

## DIPTERISTS DIGEST

The name of the journal remains the same despite a strong showing in favour of the inclusion of an apostrophe.

As promised the two issues produced by Graham Rotheray at the end of 1997 included all items accepted for publication by the end of October. Consequently items submitted since are being considered for inclusion in the first issue of the 1998 volume.

Papers and notes are coming in at a steady rate and if this continues (several other items have been promised) it should be possible to get publication back on schedule this year. Aspiring authors are requested to get their contributions in as soon as possible if they wish to make it to the first of this year's issues.

Peter Chandler

## REPORTS OF MEETINGS

### Dipterists Forum AGM, 1997

The annual dipterists meeting and AGM held at the Natural History Museum last November was attended by about 70 people, noticeably down on previous meetings. Despite the lower attendance, there were many more exhibits than in recent years. Perhaps the carrot of a prize for the best exhibit made the difference, but whatever the reason, we thank all who made the extra effort. The prize, a store box, was won by Jon Cole for his exhibit of flies and ecological notes taken during the Welsh field meeting, and for another exhibit of lonchaeids reared from dead wood. Peter Chandler made notes of the exhibits, the first time this has been done, and intends to publish these so the records do not get lost. This may encourage members to bring exhibits along next time.

As well as discussing the change of venue for the next indoor meeting (as mentioned above), the other item of note was the meeting's rejection of the Chairman's attempt to correct the solecism in our society's name and journal by inserting the possessive apostrophe (I hope Roy approves of the plethora of apotrophes in this sentence). In the tradition of taxonomy, the meeting decided that stability was more important than grammatical rectitude; "Dipterists' Forum" will always be a junior synonym.

Your officers and committee members have changed only slightly from last year, in line with the constitution that allowed for this initial stability whilst the new Forum settled down. The role call is:

Roy Crossley	Chairman
Alan Stubbs	Secretary
Jon Cole	Treasurer
Liz Howe	Membership Secretary
Meeting secretary (field)	still vacant
Meeting secretary (indoor)	still vacant
Martin Drake	Bulletin Editor
Patrick Roper	Publicity Officer
Stuart Ball, Steve Falk, Peter Grainger, Brian Pitkin, Malcolm Smart, Chris Spilling	Ordinary members
Peter Chandler	BENHS representative
Peter Chandler	Dipterists Digest Editor
John Dobson	JCCBI representative

In the absence of official post holders, we are grateful to David Heaver for stepping in to keep this year's Preston Montford training course going, to Alan Stubbs, Mick Parker and Mike & Liz Howe for organising the Dorset summer meeting, and to David Clements for helping with the next annual indoor meeting.

## NEWS FROM THE SCHEMES

### Anthomyiidae Study Group

See newsletter

Mike Ackland

### Conopid Recording Scheme

Relatively few new records for conopids were submitted in 1997, reflecting a poor year for this group. Certainly the commoner species such as *Sicus ferrugineus*, *Conops quadrifasciatus* and *C. flavipes* all seemed less in evidence during the summer. On the other hand, old faithfuls like Mick Parker and Andy Halstead managed to pull a few conopids out of the hat, the former with his seemingly annual crop of *Myopa extricata* records from Dorset. A useful bundle of slightly older records from Jon Cole included *M. polystigma* and *M. strandi* (both darned rare) from Thetford Heath in Suffolk in 1995, and *strandii* again from Bedfordshire in 1996.

Attention has been drawn to the possible occurrence of *Conops vitellinus* in Britain (see *Dipterists Digest* 3: 49-53) but continued surveillance has so far failed to find any. Readers should note that the column headings for Table 1 (p.50) of the above paper were accidentally transposed: the left-hand column in fact refers to *quadrifasciatus*, the right-hand to *vitellinus*. Work is progressing towards the production of a world checklist and bibliography of Conopidae, with about 90% of the world fauna listed to date. A newsletter will be issued when I have enough material to make it worthwhile, but in the meantime my thanks to all contributors of records and good luck for 1998.

David Clements

### Cranefly Recording Scheme

Test keys for the subfamily Limoniinae (Coe's tribe Limoniini) are circulated with this Bulletin. The keys include two of Coe's named varieties that have been raised to species rank and ten species, some unnamed, added since the 1951 Handbook. The only new generation test keys now missing are for Eriopterinae (Coe is quite good on these) and Trichoceridae. Comments have recently been received on the keys circulated earlier. Further advice on problems and solutions are always welcome.

Thank you to those who have sent in record cards - please keep them coming.

You are reminded earlier in the Bulletin of the Preston Montford workshop on craneflies, concentrating on short-palped species, to be held in March,

Alan Stubbs

### Empid and Dolichopodid Study Group

Roy Crossley would very much like to produce another newsletter but has received too little material to warrant doing so. If we don't want this useful contribution to languish, can Roy be sent some articles?

Roy Crossley, 1 The Cloisters, Birker Lane, Wilberfoss, Yorks YO4 5RF

## Fungus Gnat Recording Scheme

Following the discovery of *Symmerus nobilis* new to Britain reported in the August 1997 Bulletin, two more additions to the British list have resulted from recording in 1997. Both are again additions to the existing RES Handbook.

The first is *Sciophila baltica* Zaitzev, of which one male was among material I collected as part of a survey of the National Trust's Ashridge Estate on the Herts./Bucks. border. It was found on 17 June 1997 at The Coombe, an area of old pasture woodland with many mature and decaying beeches. This was not determined until it was dissected in November. However, the genitalia are very distinctive with a keyhole-like form to the gonocoxites which are only partly covered in dorsal view by a rather small 9th tergite, which has a rounded apical margin bearing three long setae. It was easily recognised following dissection as I had identified specimens from Switzerland earlier in the year. Previously it was found on one of the Danish Baltic islands (hence the name) and in Azerbaijan where cocoons were found in a web on rotten wood, suggesting a lignicolous fungus as the foodplant.

The second was among material collected in Scotland by Ivan Perry, a male of *Boletina populina* Polevoi from the Pass of Killiecrankie on 25 June 1997. This species was described fairly recently from Karelia and is one of several species closely related to *B. sciarina*, which are only separable on small differences in the male genitalia. Closer examination of specimens of this group collected in Britain is evidently necessary.

Ivan continued his successful run of fungus gnat collecting in Scotland, as he also obtained the second British example of *Mycomya denmax*, which was added to the British list from a single male collected on Skye by Alan Stubbs. Ivan's specimen was from Glen Lochay, Perthshire on 26 June 1997.

Peter Chandler

## Hoverfly Recording Scheme

See newsletter.

Stuart Ball & Roger Morris

## Larger Brachycera Recording Scheme

You may remember in previous newsletters that we advertised a possibly undescribed species of *Machimus* that resembles *M. arthriticus*. The proximity of the records for both species, all from a fairly limited area of the Breck, did rather suggest that this was unlikely. Malcolm Smart has now examined all material of *Machimus arthriticus* that can be traced, and concludes that it is an exceptionally variable species.

Mike Edwards reported that he had a large specimen of *Laphria marginata* that looked different from his smaller specimens. This has caused Malcolm Smart and Alan Stubbs to examine museum series. A provisional analysis of NHM material is provided in the Larger Brachycera Newsletter.

The Brachycera book is now with the BENHS editors. Publication in time for the dipterological congress seems possible.

Martin Drake and Alan Stubbs

## Picture-winged Flies Recording Scheme

This new scheme has taken off successfully, with some good batches of records from the likes of Jon Cole, Andy Halstead, David Gibbs, Chris Palmer and Laurence Clemons.

Work with Bernhard Merz last year established that the species long referred to as *Herina lugubris* in Britain is in fact *H. longistylata*, a species described from Italy in 1992 (see *Dipterists Digest* 4: 65-67). No specimens of the true *lugubris* have been found so far from Britain, but it is likely that both occur: they fly together and in similar habitats on the near continent, so recorders need to be aware and vigilant. The paper in *DD* illustrates the differences.

*New Scientist* (no less) recently carried an interesting note (17/1/1998 2117: 21) on the discovery of a new species of *Palloptera* in the gardens of the Scottish Natural Heritage offices at Battleby. Iain MacGowan and Graham Rotheray will be describing this clear-winged species, larvae of which were found beneath the bark of rotting lime timber, in the *Journal of British Entomology & Natural History* later this year. In the meantime, a paper on the British *Herina* species is in preparation, again with Bernhard Merz, and should be ready for publication in the spring.

David Clements

### **Tephritidae Recording Scheme**

See newsletter

Laurence Clemons

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **Contributions to a Manual of Palaearctic Diptera (editors L. Papp and B. Darvas)**

After many difficulties and delays, volume 2 of this work has just been published. It contains chapters on the families of the old Nematocera and Brachycera, including identification keys to all the Palaearctic genera of the families covered. Where specialists could not be found or were unable to meet the publisher's deadline, families have had to be omitted, but these are remarkably few in number.

It is expected that volume 3 (*Cyclorrhapha*) will be published late in 1998, and a final volume in 1999: this will contain manuscripts submitted for the originally planned volumes 1 and 4, and also family chapters submitted after the deadlines set for volumes 2 and 3.

Volume 2 costs £128 (postage included) and, as with the rest of the series, can be obtained from E. W. Classey, P.O. Box 93, Faringdon SN7 7DR (phone 01367 244700, fax 01367 244800).

Adrian Pont

### **Litteratura Taxonomica Dipteroorum, by N. L. Evenhuis. 2 volumes, Backhuys, Leiden, 1997.**

Neal does it again! Hot on the heels of his review and bibliography of fossil Diptera comes this magnificent bibliography of the books and prints of Diptera taxonomy, from 1758 to 1930 inclusive. In addition to listing all works with their publication dates, subsequent editions and related information, Neal has also included information on the authors such as sources of biographical information, location of types and personal collections, and lists of patronymic genera, embellishing all this with portraits and autographs. It is an outstanding work, and an essential item for every serious Diptera taxonomist and systematist.

Also obtainable from E. W. Classey, P.O. Box 93, Faringdon SN7 7DR (phone 01367 244700, fax 01367 244800), price £120 (postage included).

Adrian Pont

## **Invertebrates of exposed riverine sediments**, by M D Eyre & D A Lott, 1997.

As mentioned in the last Bulletin, the Environment Agency has been taking steps to investigate the 'terrestrial' invertebrate fauna associated with river gravels. This report by Mick Eyre and Derek Lott collates current knowledge and can be obtained from the Foundation for Water Research, Allen House, The Listons, Liston Road, Marlow, Bucks SL7 1FD (Environment Agency Technical Report W11). The report includes, among other things, a reasonable first attempt at a list of rare and scarce Diptera of this habitat, together with a grading of the fidelity to exposed riverine sediments and the substrate preference of each species. Many more species of flies occur in this habitat and the significance of sand banks to Diptera needs further emphasis. The authors are well known coleopterists, and this accounts for the treatment of beetles being better than that for flies (although, to be fair, it is beetles that have raised the profile of this habitat more than any other group). The report includes measures for sympathetic habitat management.

The Environment Agency started a small survey last year and this continues this year. A variety of sampling methods are used, including some that catch flies.

Martin Drake

## **A revised bibliography of the mosquitoes of the British Isles**, K R Snow, A T Rees & J A H Brooks, 1997

This appears as an Occasional Publication of the British Mosquito Group, published by University of East London Press. This edition updates the 1993 bibliography and now includes 550 references. It is available from Keith Snow, Department of Environmental Sciences & Mathematics, University of East London, Romford Road, London E15 4LZ, price £3 (includes p&p), cheques payable to University of East London.

## **NEWS**

### **Honey Pot Challenge II**

The 1996 Dipterists' Week at Escrick, Yorks saw the inauguration of the honey pot challenge as a means of persuading dipterists to collect sawflies for recording purposes. Like the Radio 4 game 'Mornington Crescent' the rules are never fully explained but it goes something like this. Whatever your entomological interests, gather up any sawflies (Hymenoptera: Symphyta) you see during the week when visiting sites and bring them back to me for identification. Each species recorded on a site counts for one point with bonus points being awarded for the scarcer species. Most records are based on adults but recognisable larvae or signs of feeding damage are also acceptable. The magnificence of the prize for the person with the greatest score at the end of the week - a jar of honey - resulted in 95 species being recorded at the Escrick meeting.

The honey was again on offer at Abergavenny and once again it succeed in converting both dipterists and aculeate hymenopterists into avid sawfly hunters. A total of 112 species were recorded, 38 of which would have gone unrecorded without all those extra pairs of eyes and hands. Sawflies were recorded on 103 sites with a total of about 500 records during the week. Nineteen of the entomologists attending brought home at least one species. Site of the week was Blaen y Cwm at Mynydd du Forest, Brecknockshire (SO 25 28) with 38 species. This site was also a hot spot for hoverflies and the sawfly list was helped by the fact that at least three parties visited the site during the week. Among the more local species recorded at various sites were *Cephalcia lariciphila*, *Trichiosoma sorbi*, *Hartigia xanthostoma*, *Sterictiphora geminata*, *Selandria sixii*, *Tenthredo maculata*, *T. olivacea*, *T. velox*, *Croesus*

*varus* and *Nematus frenalis*.

As the week progressed, tension mounted as the keener participants vied to add a few more points to their scores. Some specimens brought in were decidedly second-hand, having been snatched from spiders' larders! On the final evening the points were tallied and the results announced. In fifth place, with a honourable 45 points, was the previous year's winner Alan Stubbs. Fourth with 48 points was Andy Davidson and in equal second place were Mike Edwards and Roger Morris on 50 points. Winner of the honey pot challenge with 58 points was Bill Hardwick. The 1998 meeting will be based at Dorchester, Dorset - the honey pot will be there!

Andrew Halstead

### **Dipterists Starter Pack**

This is with BRC/JNCC for editing and will be published in next few months. All members of the Forum will receive a free copy.

### **List of Saproxyllic Invertebrates, including fungi of dead wood**

Keith Alexander has an impressive annotated list which is well advanced. Peter Chandler has done wonders getting the Diptera list complete, and a few other Dipterists have helped. If you have any rearing records or other vital information that may be new, please advise Keith Alexander (National Trust, 33 Sheep Street, Cirencester GL7 1QW). This list is important in advancing the conservation initiatives for saproxyllic fauna.

### **National Reviews of Scarce and Threatened Diptera**

Four parts, successors to Steve Falk's first review published in 1991, have been held up by severe shortage of staff at JNCC. A publications officer will shortly be appointed and this should help the backlog. Roy Crossley's Empidoidea review is likely to be published within a few months, and the publications officer will set to work on the three remaining volumes, although no publication date can be promised.

### **Head of Entomology Department**

The newly appointed Head of Department of Entomology at the Natural History Museum is Dr Richard Vane-Wright who starts later this month. Although he is better known for his work on butterflies, Richard was one of the co-organisers of the crane-fly recording scheme when it started in 1973.

### **New Check List of Diptera of the British Isles**

The manuscript of the new check list was submitted at the end of October 1997 to the Royal Entomological Society for publication and is now going through the editorial process. An A4 size publication, with species lists in two column format, now seems the most likely option. It is hoped that publication this summer will be possible.

Some final corrections and additions will still be made before the check list goes for typesetting and it is intended that all changes and additions published or notified to the end of 1997 will be included.

Since family parts were seen by specialists participating in the preparation of the list, many changes have been incorporated. This is partly due to the need to take new publications into account, in view of the long period over which preparation of the list has proceeded. The introduction has also been expanded

to more fully explain the nomenclatural decisions that have had to be made.

So that nobody who has contributed will be surprised by any subsequent changes made to their parts, copies of these and of the introduction, will be sent to all contributors during February and any comments or corrections they wish to make, requested to be returned by the end of that month.

It is certain that not everyone will be happy with every part of the list, but it is recognised that all check lists represent the state of knowledge at one point in time and will be out of date as soon as they are published. A list is also dependent on the different views and emphases placed by its authors and cannot be expected to be entirely consistent with contemporary lists of other geographical areas.

There has been considerable activity on the preparation of national lists in Europe in recent years, stemming from the publication of the Palaearctic Catalogue. Finnish, Belgian, Polish and Italian lists have already appeared. Swiss and German lists are scheduled for publication later this year. The former Czechoslovakia, being a centre of dipterological activity in Europe, produced its national list in 1987 but knowledge of their fauna has increased so rapidly that a second edition has already been prepared. This, the "Check List of Diptera (Insecta) of the Czech and Slovak Republics" (1997, Charles University Press) has just been published and not unexpectedly shows differences, some at the family level, from the British list, although fewer than there would have been without the specialist input that both lists have received. The Swiss list, due out in March, has been compared in detail with the British list and differences reconciled wherever practicable. This has also been possible in some families with the German list.

It is hoped that the inclusion in the British list of references to all changes and explanatory notes to all controversial points, will enable its use alongside these other national lists to be effective.

Peter Chandler

### **Mosquito changes**

The last and final edition of the *British Mosquito Bulletin* was issued last year. It has been resurrected under the new title of the *European Mosquito Newsletter*, edited by Keith Snow, Christine Dahl and Clement Ramsdale. As the title suggests, the new newsletter has a wider geographic coverage than its predecessor. There will be two issues per year and the cost is £5 (including p&p), paid to University of East London. Anyone interested in receiving *European Mosquito Newsletter*, the first of which is ready for distribution, should write to Keith Snow, Department of Environmental Sciences & Mathematics, University of East London, Romford Road, London E15 4LZ.

### **REQUESTS**

#### **Dixidae and Thaumaleidae**

I am preparing a second edition of my Key to British Dixidae (1975, *F. B. A. Sci. Publ.* 31). It has been agreed that I will also include the three British species of Thaumaleidae.

I would welcome any suggested improvements to the dixid keys in the first edition. I would also welcome references (or offprints) of ecological papers with quantitative data or novel biological data on British Dixidae or Thaumaleidae.

There being more than 60 species of Thaumaleidae in Europe, I would welcome specimens of as many adults as possible in order to check that none of the European species have been overlooked in Britain.

In addition I would welcome samples of any larvae whose species identification has been determined by rearing or whose larval skin has been found still attached to a pupa from which the adult has been hatched. In particular I require authenticated larvae (or larval skins) of *T. truncata*. Specimens preserved in alcohol (70-80%) are preferred.

Henry Disney, University Department of Zoology, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3EJ

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