

DIPTERA



RECORDING SCHEMES BULLETIN NO 26, SEPTEMBER 1988

The programme for the Annual Meeting is given and bookings for the Dipterists Supper are invited. Details are provided for the autumn field meeting in Devon. The launch of Dipterist's Digest is on 12 November in London - so don't miss the occasion.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE DIPTERA RECORDING SCHEMES - 12 NOVEMBER 1988

The British Museum (Natural History) at South Kensington, London, is our venue as usual. The entry arrangements are the same as those for last year. We are again grateful to the Trustees of the BM(NH) for use of facilities at a nominal charge.

There will be a charge of £1 admission for everyone attending part or all of the day's activities:

- For those attending the daytime meetings but not staying for the Dipterists' Supper. Tickets must be obtained in advance from Adrian Pont, so please send £1 plus s.a.e. as soon as you know that you will be attending. If you arrive without a ticket, you will have to pay the regular public admission fee of £2.50 (and will also have to pay it again to return to the Museum if you leave for lunch).
- For those attending the daytime meetings and/or the Dipterists' Supper. The cost of the Supper this year will be £7, and this will include an admission ticket to the Museum that will cover the day's events. Tickets are obtainable, as usual, from Adrian Pont. Please do not forget to enclose s.a.e. to reduce administrative time and expense.

Morning Session - main lecture theatre

Chairman - Roy Crossley (Dolichopodidae and Empididae Study Group).

11.00-11.30 Forensic Entomology. Y Z Erzinclioglu (Zac).

11.30-12.00 Flies in Close-up. Dr Stuart Ball.

12.00-12.30 Syrphinae larvae and their relationships. Dr Graham Rotheray.

12.30-1.00 Perspectives on the Larger Brachycera. Alan Stubbs.

LUNCH - Choice of pubs, cafeterias etc in area, or bring sandwiches.

Afternoon Session - demonstration laboratory, Palaeontology Department

2.00-2.30 Informal and setting up exhibits.

2.30-2.35 Launch of Dipterist's Digest.

2.35-3.00 Informal, viewing exhibits.

3.00-4.00 Discussion session.

- a. recording schemes and study groups.
- b. field meetings, past and future (with slides).
- c. Super Midge 1 - the video.

4.00-5.30 Informal, viewing exhibits.

5.30-5.45 Removal of any remaining exhibits.

The lecture programme offers a range of themes. The importance of flies in forensic work has developed rapidly in recent years and is a subject we ought to hear about - the talk by Zac has been acclaimed for its serious yet humorous presentation. Stuart Ball has built up a very useful range of close up photos of flies and their habitats, including both common and rare species. This presentation should help those new to flies and give an insight to all of us as to what those rare species we normally only see on pins look like in real life. Graham Rotheray has given us two fascinating talks on hoverflies at past meetings and this time he brings us right into the front line of new insight about the way the various aphid feeding genera relate to one another. Some memorable close up photography of larvae is no doubt in store for us. To finish the programme, the Larger Brachycera come to the fore in a year when BRC are on the point of producing an atlas based on the data you have submitted - and your scheme organiser, Martin Drake has been very busy tidying up the loose ends. Alan Stubbs has been preparing a book on this group of flies. The talk will consider the advances in understanding of distribution, ecology and field craft.

The afternoon session is informal and gives plenty of time for meeting each other. Exhibits stimulate interest and make a talking point - so please let's have plenty of exhibits this year (If you can supply a note on your exhibit, this gives material for Bulletins/Newsletters etc.). BRC will bring along Larger Brachycera maps, in advance of publication. It is optional to join in the discussion session, one theme of which is on field meetings - by popular request (ie several people with nostalgia) there will be slides on some of our past meetings, and the hope of attracting more people to join in over future years. We also have a presentation by Kathleen Goldie-Smith on meniscus midges - some of us have read the FBA publication by Henry Disney, some of us have even seen a meniscus midge AND some of us have heard of the wonders of these flies whilst on the Galashiels field meeting - thus we proudly announce the London Premier of 'Super Midge 1', a unique video on the life history of Dixidae.

So, we hope to see a full house on 12 November. It is the meeting point of the year for all dipterists with an interest in the study and recording of flies. Don't be apprehensive if you have not been before - it is a day for beginner and old hand alike.

DIPTERISTS' SUPPER - 12 NOVEMBER 1988

The traditional Dipterists' Supper (a buffet) will follow on from the Annual Meeting, in the Conversazione Room of the British Museum (Natural History). Drinks will be served from 5.45 pm and the supper will be from 6.30 pm to about 10 pm. The Museum's main car park, at the Cromwell Road entrance, will remain open for guests during the evening. The evening gives further opportunity to meet fellow dipterists and to discuss our interests. It is necessary to book in advance for a ticket, with the number restricted to the first 80 to apply. Please reply promptly to ensure your ticket for the evening; 4 November will be the final date for the issue of tickets. Don't hesitate to join in, it's open to all dipterists no matter how new to the subject you may be.

Enquiries and bookings should be addressed to the dinner organiser:- Adrian Pont, Department of Entomology, British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD. Cheques (£7/ticket including museum entry) payable to Adrian Pont and a self addressed envelope for reply would be much appreciated.

DIPTERIST'S DIGEST

Yes, you no doubt intended to order the first issue of this new journal, but have you actually done so? A few of those at Galashiels had been forgetful. It helps greatly with cash flow etc if you can order in advance - and, as announced in Bulletin No 25 (which gave a list of the main contents) a reduced PRE-PUBLICATION OFFER of £2.50 (£3 overseas/ and Institutions) POST FREE is available until 31 October 1988. This offer is available to anyone. Payment in Pounds Sterling please to "D Whiteley", 730 Ecclesall Road, Sheffield S11 8TB; Tel: Sheffield 668487. Please remember to include your address clearly written.

The response so far has been encouraging and gives confidence that the journal stands a good chance of being viable. Already text is in hand for issue 2 but keep those pens going.

Remember, the big day for the launch is 12 November 1988 at the London meeting.

AUTUMN FIELD MEETING

Bideford, Devon, 12-16 October 1988

As previously announced we have a booking at the Hallsannery Field Centre, near Bideford, North Devon. The centre stands in its own grounds and is an adapted mansion - reminiscent of some of our memorable venues in the past.

This centre has been used by several other entomological parties who have come back with enthusiastic reports about the accommodation and meals are acclaimed as excellent. We have a concessionary rate of £17/day full board, with use of work room etc. It has a bar for those whose metabolism requires such sustenance.

A radiating road system gives access to a wide range of sites. The scenic Devon coast has plenty of options from dunes to various types of cliff habitat. At this time of year woodland is the most sought habitat and there is plenty of choice, with rivers and streams. North Devon is little explored for Diptera but there is little doubt that the area has very high potential.

The autumn foray is particularly orientated to craneflies and fungus gnats, with additional recording of various acalyptrate families and other flies that are available at this season. Even if it's not the best season for your particular favourite flies, you are more than welcome to join what is as much a social gathering as a recording session. Help and advice is at hand if you are trying to learn your way into a group of flies.

We are treating this meeting as a reconnaissance for the 1989 summer meeting, so exploring for useful sites is all part of the occasion.

Please address bookings to Alan Stubbs (address at end of Bulletin), with £5 deposit payable to Hallsannery Field Centre by 30 September 1988.

FIELD MEETINGS 1989

Bideford, N Devon, 10-18 June 1989

Advance notice is given of a booking at the Hallsannery Field Centre. The cost half board will be £15.50 for sharing a room (3 or more), a bit more for single or double rooms. Further details will be in the next Bulletin or if you cannot wait (!) ask Alan Stubbs.

Other meetings

We hope to have a programme of local meetings, so may we have leaders for such events step forward please.

NEWS FROM THE SCHEMES

Cranefly Recording Scheme

It has been a good year for Ctenophora records, with several new localities for C. flaveolata (including North Devon, J Lamerton). C. ornata has been reared from wet 'porridge' woodmould in a beech (ecology previously vague) (Prof J Owen).

Erioptera bradleyi was found on two coastal cliffs near Scarborough and also near Bridlington and Arctoconopa melanpodia on the cliffs near Lyme Regis in Dorset. Gonomyia alboscuteolata was found (in 1987) in Wyre Forest (C Plant).

Dixidae Recording Scheme

Kathleen Goldie-Smith is getting well into her role as scheme organiser and is welcoming further records and material. The Dixella obscura at the Galashiels meeting caused some excitement.

Mosquito Recording Scheme

British Mosquito Group Newsletter No 5 includes a report on progress with mapping mosquitoes. There is a map for Culiseta annulatus and a tabulation of number of records and vice counties for each species. Seven species have no recent records submitted.

Larger Brachycera Recording Scheme

BRC are on the point of running off maps based on your data. Martin Drake has been screening the computer print outs of data to see if there are any queries arising. He has prepared the text for all species, to accompany an atlas of about 50 species. The maps will be on view at the Autumn meeting; the atlas should be available this autumn/winter.

The unchallengeable strat record of the year is Odontomyia hydroleon from Yorkshire (J Mousley). Odontomyia ornata has been discovered in Suffolk (M Drake). The success with Oxycera dives is mentioned in the Galashiels meeting report. Thereva plebeja has been found near Peterborough (J Bratton) and also on the Isle of Wight - these are the first authentic recent specimens seen by Alan Stubbs.

Dolichopodidae and Empidae Study Group

Since the publication of Newsheet No 5 in March, no further items have been submitted. However, it is hoped that sufficient material will be forthcoming to support another edition early next year, so copy please to the editors by the end of January 1989.

A number of errors crept into the last Newsheet for which we apologise. Mostly they were minor, but the more serious ones affected the sense of the notes and these will be corrected in the next issues.

Roy Crossley, 46 St David's Road, Otley, West Yorkshire, LS21 2AW.

Hoverfly Recording Scheme

It seems that two sites have lists up around the 150 species mark:- Botley Wood, Hants (Ian Hudson) and Wychwood NNR, Oxon (Keith Porter). The longest published list is for Bookham Common, Surrey (L Parmenter) at approx 126 species. Any further challenges?

Dyfed Invertebrate Group Newsletter no 9 (Editor Adrian Fowles) includes many exciting records including Rhingia rostrata, Xanthandrus comtus in Carmarthenshire (by Ian Morgan) and Parhelophilus consimilis in Ceredigion (Cardiganshire).

Adrian Fowles has yet more Metasyrphus nigratarsis on his washing line - there is only one male at a time, but as fast he takes one off, another appears like magic - I wonder how much he would sell that washing line for (those on sale in Peterborough don't work!).

The relatively good spring weather helped with records for some of the scarce species, but the poor July has been disappointing. Hopefully the exhibits at the November meeting will reveal a good number of successes. Also notes will be gladly received by Graham Rotheray for the Hoverfly Newsletter.

Sciomyzid Recording Scheme

Another Antichaeta obliviosa has been found, at a new site a few miles from the original wood near Huntingdon.

FIELD MEETING REPORTS

East Hampshire Hangers 28-29 May 1988

9 devotees participated in this weekend event. The Saturday concentrated on underworked sites adjacent to Selborne, with considerable success. A 4 hour session in old beech woodland and scrub on Selborne Common produced a tally of 40 species of hoverfly, including a new colony of Cheilisia nigripes and more standard Hampshire fare such as Volucella inflata and all four Criorhina. The old beech pollards provided the ultimate daddy-long-legs experience - in the form of a Ctenophora flaveolata ♀ - and lesser mortals such as C. pectinicornis and Xylophagus ater. A wander down the partly-wooded stream valley below Selborne turned up Ptychoptera longicauda and larvae of the strats Oxycera morrisii, O. nigricornis & O. pardalina.

The weather left much to be desired on the Sunday, though luckily the Diptera did not. We went panning for entomological gold in the Chalk spring and stream system at Ashford Hangers, Petersfield, and sieved out a larva of O. analis - along with further O. nigricornis & O. pardalina, and a mysterious tabanid larva. The sun did manage a few brief appearances and various flies of note showed with it, most notably several specimens of Cheilisia nigripes, 2 Microdon devius and a single Euthycera fumigata. M Oates.

Whippendell Wood-Cassiobury Park 4 June 1988

About one hour's collecting proved possible after which heavy rain resulted in the meeting being disbanded. A search on and around beech logs produced Limonia decemmaculata and Leucophenga maculata. A rare beetle, Tomoxia biguttata was also recorded. Two preliminary visits in May to Whippendell Wood and woods nearby produced Euthyneura gyllenhali, Oedalea apicalis, Heleodromia immaculata, Agathomyia viduella, Brachyopa scutellaris, B. pilosa and Criorhina asilica. A Godfrey.

Galashiels 9-17 July 1988

Eighteen dipterists attended all or part of the meeting. Having set out with cautious expectations in such a little known area, this venue in south-east Scotland proved a very good one for Diptera. In fact rarely have we had so many high quality sites on our doorstep.

As starters we found the rare soldier fly Oxycera dives and the hoverfly Parhelophilus consimilis. That raised the hopes for the rest of the week and indeed we found further sites for these species, as well as the hoverflies Eristalis abusivus and Lejogaster splendida (inland records), E. rupium, Tropidia scita, Criorhina berberina, Xylota coeruleiventris, X. sylvarum (in several places, good for Scotland) and Neoscia geniculata. Other soldier flies included Oxycera pygmaea (coastal cliffs), O. pardalina (in numbers at some sites) and Oplodontha viridula (good for Scotland). In most families studied there were successes:- the crane flies Orimargo virgo and Erioptera bradleyi, dolichopodids such as Dolichopus phaeopus, Syntormon filiger and Argyra auricollis and the scathophagids Gymnomera tarsea and Pogonota barbata. River shingle produced the empid Tachydromia halidayi and both species of Wiedemannia.

The weather had been rather mixed and there is little doubt that we should have had a bonanza given more warm dry weather. Not only was site quality high but there was far more calcareous influence than had been anticipated. This area, far from being an uninteresting inconvenience 'on the way to Aviemore' is of very high potential.

Would participants at this meeting please let Alan Stubbs have a list of records this winter so that a fuller account can be prepared (possibly for Dipterist's Digest).

A TALE OF TWO COLLECTIONS

E C M Assis Fonseca Collection

The name of Fonseca will be familiar to all Dipterists as the author of the "Handbooks" to Muscidae and Dolichopodidae, and of keys to the Drosophilidae and Tachinidae. Fon has been an active and energetic figure in British Dipterology for as long as most of us can remember, and has only recently had to give up attendance at the annual Dipterist's meeting and supper.

Fon began his entomological activities in the 1920s, collecting butterflies in Brazil. In about 1937 he began collecting British Diptera, and over the years was associated with Audcent, Cowley, Parmenter, Colyer, Hammond, and particularly J E Collin. Over the last half century he has built up one of the most comprehensive, and certainly the most beautifully prepared, collections of British Diptera.

Now approaching the age of 90, Fon has presented his collection to the British Museum (Natural History). It consists of over 100 storeboxes and 56,000 Diptera, all from the UK except for one box of Portuguese flies. There is one box of Bibionidae and Scatopsidae, but the rest of the collection is of Brachycera and Cyclorrhapha. It is particularly strong on Calyptrates. As soon as practical the collection will be incorporated into the Museum's British Collection, where it will be available for reference and study, and, by arrangement, for the utilisation of the distribution data.

The BMNH is immensely grateful to Fon for his generosity, and will ensure that the collection is cared for and used in an appropriate fashion.

Adrian C Pont

The Peter Crow Collection

Peter Crow had very large collections, including Lepidoptera, and from our point of view his Diptera collected in North Wales were of importance. He had published some very useful records but the true scope of his findings are unknown.

Peter lived alone and it seems his will failed to make clear provision for his collection, passing the buck to a relative who had no direct interest in entomology. Fortunately that relation took the matter seriously and the cabinet collection of Diptera has gone to Liverpool Museum and the Lepidoptera to Kelvin Grove Museum, Glasgow (notebooks are currently with Joan Morgan). However, part of his collection (and equipment) finished up in a skip - we know that because it transpires that two local people each retrieved about 15 store boxes of insects, feeling that a better fate was called for (this was as many boxes as they could cope with). We still don't know what else was in the skip. The circumstances are obscure but it is possible that the store boxes were in a different room, perhaps a cupboard, and were not recognised as being important. The retrieved store boxes are now with Joan Morgan who has the task of finding out exactly what is and is not there - a fair quantity of Diptera are included. The difficulty in tracing who was the executor, problems of communication between entomologists (some knew what was happening, others needed to know and would have helped promptly) all lost invaluable time.

The extraordinary twist is that Peter felt so deeply about doing something for the future of entomology that the residue of his estate after other bequests is left to two national entomological societies. But his lack of clear directions led to a substantial part of his collection being destined to be burnt to ashes, a matter only partly salvaged by sheer chance. Alan Stubbs.

Comment

Even if it had not occurred to you before, your own collection may well be considered as valuable by future generations since it contains vouchers for your records.

Hence the following advice is offered.

- a. Pass on your collection once you feel unable to curate it. Collections quickly deteriorate if neglected.
- b. Ensure that all boxes, cupboards etc containing your collection, and notebooks, are clearly marked so that whoever clears your effects can easily recognise items relating to your collection. Make sure that an entomological friend close to the family knows the lay-out.
- c. If you have a will, make sure that the fate of your collections/notebooks etc is specified. If you feel undecided, then name at least two entomologists you trust who have authority to advise the executor of the estate. The latter course is essential if you have no next of kin or if your only relatives could all go under the same 'bus'.
- d. If you have no will (a weak position), then ensure that your immediate relatives know what to do or who to turn to. (Note that relatives with no concern for entomology have in many instances taken precipitate action and thrown out even the collections and notebooks of leading specialists.)

- e. The safest custodians of collections are those with foreseen continuity of entomological curators. The national museums and a number of provincial and county/local museums meet the criterion, plus a few University Museums (eg Oxford, Cambridge and Manchester). Be very cautious of museums without entomologists or with only temporary posts; university teaching collections are very prone to untimely fate.
- f. The early grapevine communication needs improving, a matter that needs to encompass entomological ranks as a whole. Inform either the editor of this Bulletin, the BM(NH) Diptera Section or BRC over the fate of collections.
- f. Note that books/keys etc are important effects; traders are often criticised for giving a pittance and many books become beyond the reach of the next generation (financially or physically). It is best to try to make provision to pass these on (a fair sum can still be sought by relatives if required).

THE LITERATURE

Tephritidae

The Tephritid key (Handbook for the Identification of British Insects, Vol 10, part 5(a)) has finished page proofs. The author, Dr Ian White, and all concerned hope that it will be available in time for the November meeting. If so, efforts will be made to ensure that the BM(NH) bookshop has siege supplies. Price currently unknown.

OTHER ITEMS

Autumn Exhibitions

The Amateur Entomologists Society is meeting at a new and larger venue, Kempton Park Racecourse (Sunbury, Middlesex), on 22 October 1988; open 11 am - 5 pm. Entomological equipment and books will be on sale.

The British Entomological and Natural History Society has its exhibition at Imperial College London (between the British Museum (Natural History) and the Albert Hall), South Kensington, on 19 November 1988, open 10 am - 5 pm. Some dipterists attend this meeting.

Any volunteers?

The three year project surveying Welsh wetlands, organised by NCC, has been producing very encouraging results mainly by use of pitfall traps and water traps. Samples relate to vegetation type and management regime so that ecological as well as distribution data is growing fast. The survey team is sorting material to group and identify various invertebrate groups themselves. There are about 40 specialists identifying particular groups, making this the most comprehensive invertebrate survey seen in Britain. In 1987 36 sites in Dyfed were sampled; 1988 sees north Wales as the target area. A newsletter provides feedback, including provisional results.

Inevitably there are some groups where volunteers have not stepped forwards, but in fact there are only 4 major Diptera families (that are plentiful on the survey) not yet receiving identification, all sorted in their own tubes in alcohol:- Chironomidae, Cecidomyiidae, Drosophilidae and Sphaeroceridae. Whilst the first two are probably a lost cause, it is just possible that volunteers may be interesting in the acalyptrates. In

particular, the new Sphaerocerid key makes this family practical, especially with alcohol material, and the survey material gives the opportunity to really get into the family.

If you are interested, please contact Peter Holmes, Nature Conservancy Council, Plas Gogerddan, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3EE.

AND NOW CENTRE OF UNIVERSE MOVING, IT'S OFFICIAL

For years those of us who are mere southerners have been weaned as to where the centre of the Universe lies. It's uncanny, but the brain does adopt facts as true and immutable. By sheer force of exposition and unquestionable certainty, one knows that Otley in Yorkshire is that centre.

Hence, imagine the shattering news that Roy Crossley is moving from Otley to near York. The first person who told me said 'you realise that the centre of the Universe is moving'. Yes, that really put into words the significance of the event, one that even the astronomers had not allowed for.

Was the whole Earth to be rent apart and thrown into a new orbit? Well possibly not. That shift is occurring more subtly. During a whole week at Galashiels, not a single mention of the superbness of Otley but a new vocabulary has begun to assert itself - Askham Bog, Derwent Ings and other places near York. Whether the brain can really cope with such reprogramming, time will tell.

The big relief is to know that Yorkshire is still the centre of the Universe. This at least is one fact that even all Yorkshire entomologists agree on!

Central Panel
of Diptera Recording Scheme Organisers

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