

DIPTERA



RECORDING SCHEMES BULLETIN NO. 27, FEBRUARY 1989

Dates are given for field meetings and the Annual Meeting, together with items of news.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE DIPTERA RECORDING SCHEMES - 11 NOVEMBER 1989

The usual facilities are booked at the British Museum (Natural History) for Saturday 11 November. Put this date in your diary now.

FUTURE FIELD MEETINGS

Bideford, North Devon 10-18 June 1989

The last Bulletin gave advance notice but we now have the advantage of a reconnaissance from the autumn meeting (reported in this Bulletin). Hallsannery Field Centre is an old mansion set in its own grounds and by next summer will also have a new annex. It is very suitable for us and the food is excellent. Views overlook the Torridge River valley below, here estuarine.

There are very good quality sites. Braunton Burrows NNR is a very large dune system. There are some useful saltmarshes, including potentially valuable freshwater seepages onto saltmarsh near the field centre. A special feature of North Devon is its Culm meadows which were initially unknown for Diptera. Our autumn reconnaissance revealed these to be of considerable potential, ranging from wet heath to mildly base rich. They are the final remnants of unimproved fields and commons. Boggy seepages and valley bog are on several magnificent sites. Valley woodland with streams occurs in abundance. The cliffed coastal belt was not explored much in the autumn but should provide some interesting sites.

Mid June is normally very productive in many families of Diptera and we should be able to literally put North Devon on the map. The autumn meeting was one of the most successful so far, which is hopefully a good indication of the potential of the area.

In order to gain sole use of the field centre we have to gather a party of at least 20 people. Thus it will be reassuring if there is a good response for bookings (11 people have booked so far). As on some past meetings the aculeate Hymenoptera recorders have been invited to join us on this occasion under the leadership of Steven Falk (probably only a very few extra people, apart from dipterists with broad interests).

These meetings provide the opportunity to gain in field craft and in identification through spending a week among experienced dipterists. Don't be daunted if you feel new to such company. The aim is not only to record flies but also to assist newcomers to find their feet and so grow in experience (today's newcomers are tomorrows experienced recorders). The atmosphere is informal and friendly. In advance of the meeting there will be a list of those attending since sometimes there are people living close enough to each other to share transport getting to the venue. There is a rail service to Barnstable, with a bus link to Bideford and the National Bus Company runs to Bideford.

The meeting leader will be Alan Stubbs, to whom bookings should be sent (address at end of Bulletin). Bookings should be accompanied by a deposit of £5, cheques payable to Hallsannery Field Centre. The booking runs from evening of Saturday 12 June to morning of Sunday 18 June. Half board costs per night are £15.50 (room with 3 or more), £16.50 (2 per room) or £17.50 (single room). By current standards these costs are modest and give us high standard accommodation. Please book by the end of March if possible; late bookings can be accepted only if space is still available.

Pamber Forest LNR, NE Hampshire 21 May 1989

This large ancient oak wood near Aldermaston is one of the best entomological woodlands in north Hampshire and it adjoins Silchester Common with heathland. There are streams and wet areas. The various habitats should be productive in hoverflies (and a search is intended for larvae of Cheilosia semifasciata since Sedum telephinum is locally plentiful) and the Hampshire Hoverfly Group is hoping to gain a good list. Most families of Diptera ought to be productive.

The location is within range of good numbers of recorders (eg in Hants, Berks and Oxon). Please meet at 10.30 am at the bottom of Imp Stone Lane, Pamber Heath (SU617622). Matthew Oates is leading the meeting (5 William Way, Alton, Hants GU34 2UW; Telephone 0420 82716).

Winnall Moors, Hampshire 25 June 1989

This is a Hants and IOW Naturalists Trust reserve situated on the river Itchen just north of Winchester. The reserve comprises 62 acres of abandoned water meadows and fresh water marsh. Habitats range from the open water of the river and drainage ditches, through the reed beds and freshwater marsh to damp and drier unimproved grassland.

It is hoped this meeting will attract a good number of people interested in recording syrphids for the Hampshire Hoverfly Group but the site should prove rich in a wide range of Diptera and everyone is welcome, whatever their interest. Meet 10.30 am at the Durngate entrance to the reserve at SU 487297 (turn off road opposite Willow Tree Pub). Would anyone interested please contact Ian Hudson in advance. (Tel: 0705-502020).

Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire 8 July 1989

The National Trust runs this renowned entomological site as a nature reserve. Over the years extensive lists of insects have been compiled. The Diptera list stands at about 700 but is by no means complete, with additions made often even in popular families and many families are still underworked.

A few examples from the list include Anasimyia interpuncta, Lejogaster splendida, Orthonevra geniculata, Lamprochromus elegans, Stratiomys potamida, Cephalops curtifrons, Pteromicra pectorosa and Tanypeza longimana.

The leader is Ivan Perry who has been building up the list for the fen (27 Mill Road, Lode, Cambridge CB5 9EN; tel: 0223 61111 (work) or 0223 812438 (home)). Meet at 10 a at the car park at the end of the signposted lane from the village of Wicken (TL562705). Late arrivals will be waited for by the leader if they give advance advice of their attendance. If there is sufficient advance interest, arrangements will be made to visit a further

site or two on the Sunday since there are other high grade sites quite close by such as on the edge of the Breck.

Sutton Park, West Midlands 22 July 1989

This venue was well attended last year so Adam Wright has offered to lead another meeting. He offers a gentle reminder that records for the previous visit will be welcomed.

An objective is to try to find Didia alneti for which there is an historic record that is attributed to an area beside one of the ponds. It is hoped to extend the hoverfly list, the time of year being particularly underworked. The site should prove worthwhile for most families of Diptera.

Bulletin 25 gives a description, but briefly the site is only a few miles from Spagetti Junction (M5/M6) and provides 2 square miles of wildness with bogs, ponds, grasslands and woods. Details of the meeting arrangements can be obtained from Adam Wright (Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Jordan Well, Coventry CV1 5RW: tel: 0203 833333).

Thorndon Park, Essex 22 July 1989

It is hoped that this ancient woodland and deer park will be a suitable venue for those in NE London and Essex. Meet at 10.30 am at the car park at TQ607914, entering the park via the gates at Lion Lodge. Pass the cottage on the right and meet at the first car park by the visitors centre. Colin Plant is leading a British Entomological and Natural History Society meeting and invites dipterists as a whole to join in. Among other interests he is organising mapping of hoverflies in the London area. He may be contacted on the telephone 01 470 4525 (work) or at 14 West Road, Bishops Stortford, Herts CM23 2QP, Tel: 0279 507697 (home).

Yorkshire and Humberside

The Entomological Section of the Yorkshire Naturalists Union will welcome dipterists to join its meetings. The following are suitable.

Risby Warren and Twigmoor, near Scunthorpe 20 May 1989 (Roger Key). Heath, woods and lakes. Because of access arrangements, contact leader at NCC Peterborough or Bill Ely first.

Allerthorpe Common, near York 5 August 1989 (Roy Crossley). Wet and dry heathland, with pools, woodland.

Ravenscar, near Whitby 23 September 1989 (John Pearson). Plant galls (a chance to gain experience) and a chance to study the Diptera more generally on coastal cliffs with wooded cliff terrace marsh and pools.

For further advice contact Bill Ely (Clifton Park Museum, Rotherham, S Yorkshire. Tel: 0709 382121), and/or for Allerthorpe Roy Crossley (1 The Cloisters, Birker Lane, Wilberfoss, York YO4 5RF. Tel: 075 95 8809).

Rogate, West Sussex 11-15 October 1989

The main autumn foray will be based at Rogate Field Centre. We had two good previous meetings here, in the spring and summer some years ago but

the autumn period remains unrecorded. This is a good base for an excellent range of habitats in the SW Weald. The August Bulletin will give details.

Scotland, Spring/Summer 1989

A dipterists field meeting will be arranged but details of venue and date have still to be finalised. Graham Rotheray has said he will act as the link man for anyone who wants to be kept in touch with arrangements.

Loch Lomond 1-5 September 1989

The 9th Scottish Entomologist's Field Meeting will be based at Rowardennan Field Station. Dipterists are welcome, indeed one of our number, Geoff Hancock, is organising the event and may be contacted for details. The cost is £14.95 per person per night including meals; the deposit is £15 non-returnable after the end of June. Geoff Hancock's address is:- Art Gallery & Museum, Kelvingrove, Glasgow. Scotland G3 8AG.

Other field meetings

Hopefully more meetings will be forthcoming. Please send details to Graham Rotheray and Martin Drake so that the Hoverfly and Larger Brachycera newsletters can spread the information in a few months time. Meetings can of course be drummed up simply by contacting other dipterists within range.

REPORTS FROM 1988 FIELD MEETINGS

Bideford, North Devon, 12-18 October 1988

A party including 8 dipterists assembled for the main autumn meeting, based at the Hallsannery Field Centre which proved ideal.

The first full day we split into three groups with separate itineraries, yielding 48 species of craneflies, 128 species of fungus gnats and 4 sites for the scarce hoverfly Arctophila fulva. The meeting as a whole resulted in samples from 31 10km squares, with incentive to explore ahead of the 1989 summer field meeting. We gained records for 60 species of cranefly and 164 fungus gnats, the latter being an all time field meeting record. A number of rare species were found, including the hoverfly Xanthandrus comtus. A feature of various heaths and meadows was the presence of the plant Serratula tinctoria and we managed to find trypetid puparia in the seedheads - presumably Urophora spoliata (or Orellia vectensis). It was also the most productive autumn meeting for Dixidae.

DIPTERISTS' DIGEST

Issue No 1 is now available at £3 including postage.

Issue No 2. Further to my announcement at Dipterist's Day there is still room for a number of short articles (for example one or two paragraphs) which can be used as "space fillers" at proof stage. Field observations on habitat, ecology and behaviour; new British or county records etc are appropriate and are very welcome. Please send these in as soon as possible.

Issue No 3. Copy date is still a long way off (ca. October 1989) so do not submit any papers that require urgent publication.

Although Nos 2 and 3 are "safe", financially we still do not have quite enough support to maintain viability at the current standard for the long term. If you have not yet ordered No 1, you are missing a treat. Small batches are available at trade terms (for example for resale to local entomological/natural history societies).

Finally, many thanks to everyone who has supported the venture so far.

Derek Whiteley, 730 Ecclesall Road, Sheffield S11 8TB; Tel: Sheffield 668487.

Editorial Note

May I reflect the widespread reaction that issue 1 is a superb launch for the journal. The layout, clarity of print, high standard of editing etc are all that even the most optimistic of us could have hoped for. Speaking of other contributions, the articles are well worth reading and for anyone interested in hoverflies, the major lead paper by Martin Speight is an excellent authoritative eye opener as to what occurs just across the English Channel that we should be looking out for in Britain.

The editor Derek Whiteley has done his job extremely well. He deserves your support, indeed the journal will only become established as a viable entity if as many of you as possible subscribe to the journal and also help spread the word further afield.

It looks as though the flow of worthwhile papers is continuing, but that effort must not relax if quality is to be maintained. The first issue is heavily weighted to hoverflies, and the journal contents must remain relevant to major subscriber interests, but its up to authors to offer a mix of topics to keep the journal lively and relevant to a wide range of dipterists.

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NEWS FROM THE RECORDING SCHEMES AND STUDY GROUPS

Craneflies

This year BRC are hoping to publish the atlases to Tipulinae and Ptychopteridae.

A great deal of useful data has been added over the last year. Some samples by Martin Drake from one Dorset site visit included 62 species (with 11 species of Molophilus) among other exceptionally high totals on other sites; two sites had Erioptera limbata.

Dixidae

The scheme is updating maps for inclusion in a publication. Records are still welcomed by the scheme organiser, Kathleen Goldie-Smith.

Larger Brachycera

The provisional atlas is in the final stages of editing. There will be statements on all species and maps for about 50 species.

A newsletter is being prepared. Items of text should be sent to the scheme organiser, Martin Drake.

Empid and Dolichopodid Study Group

Newsheet 6 has been circulated with this Bulletin to those registered with the group. The contents are very useful to those interested in these families.

Hoverflies

A newsletter is likely to be available by May. Please keep Graham Rotheray, the editor, supplied with text.

The Local Adviser for Lancs/Cheshire is now Darwen Sumner (54 Blackshaw Lane, Royston, Oldham OL2 6NR (Chris Palmer is now with Hampshire County Museum Service at Winchester, Hants)). Dave Clements, Local Adviser for SW Midlands has changed his address (see Conopid scheme).

Keep up the recording. Surely on the law of averages we must have good summer weather this year!

Conopidae

The scheme organiser, Dave Clements, has changed his address to 9 Cecily Hill, Cirencester, Glos GL7 2EF.

REQUESTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions Box

At the last Dipterists' meeting a suggestions box was put out. You may wonder what transpired.

So close to the American Presidential elections, there was a vote for Bush. Apart from that there was a despondent note from a teacher asking why the main field meetings were always in term time.

In fact the first long field meeting, in 1973 and several since, have been in late July or August. However, at least in England and Wales, this is often a time when catches are low, especially in a drought year. The more attractive districts have to be avoided because of tourists clogging up roads and car parks. For some regulars, their family holiday is in school holidays, the Dipterists' week being an extra that must be well separated from times when the family demands priority. On the plus side it opens up venues, such as the residential girls school at Ashford, Kent that we used out of term in 1981. The dates have usually been within the preferred dates of those who regularly attend field meetings, often coinciding with the earliest time in July that University people can get away.

The regular field meeting gang will be at Bideford, on this occasion in June. We shall then choose the next time and place but are happy to hear from those who for whatever reason cannot be there.

We did try running 2 summer field meetings a year, as in 1981 (Middleton-in-Teesdale, June; Ashford, late July). This created 2 small meetings. Another year everyone opted for the one meetings, causing the other to fail. We can try again if you wish and if there are sufficient people

wanting a meeting in late July/August in 1989 in addition to Bideford, something might be possible.

As a suggestion of my own, is there any demand for weekend residential workshops. Some highly successful hoverfly workshops have been organised by various people at a 'local' level and please expand this sort of initiative as opportunity arises. The topic of 'national' workshops would depend on what sufficient people ask for - hoverflies (introductory or advanced?), certain other groups of flies, introduction to Diptera in general, study of biology/life histories, conservation/habitat management for flies, or a mixture of some of these. A field centre or similar venue off season is in mind.

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EUROPEAN STATUS OF BRITISH SPECIES

The status of many British species has been defined, as far as current knowledge allows, for the Insect Red Data Book and for the National Review of Diptera. 'Notable' species are considered likely to occur in no more than 100 10km squares, and an additional category of local species is also being used. Regional status is also relevant (as those in Yorkshire are quick to remind one). This hierarchy of status is very useful in evaluating the significance of faunal lists from sites. The National Review will hopefully be available later this year.

A missing link in this process is European status. The Palaearctic checklist helps as regards crude country distribution, where relevant volumes have been published, though abundance/rarity is another matter. If one were able to say that (on current knowledge) the British occurrence was a significant part of the European status, then this would add a strong element of noteworthiness to such species.

Examples would include:-

- a. Only known from Great Britain (or British Isles) = endemic (eg Tipula holoptera).
- b. Only known from eastern side of Europe = endemic West Europe. Best examples are those where distribution is very restricted or where Britain is likely to have at least 25% of good populations. (eg ? Tipula yerburyi).
- c. Disjunct European distribution, British populations far isolated, especially where only in limited areas of the continent. Alpine examples may be relevant, though not necessarily alpine in Britain. (eg Oxycera dives).
- d. Widespread in Europe but nonetheless restricted, rare or scarce over much of range. British populations therefore significant, especially if European endemics. (eg Prionocera subserricornis, Nemotelus notatus).
- e. Holarctic species, yet in Europe only known from Britain ± a very small part of continental Europe. (eg Polietes hirticura, which is common in W & N Britain).

Suggested candidates would be welcome from anyone with specialist knowledge of various families. The results should be of wide, and sometimes surprising, interest.

Alan Stubbs

New Tachinid Keys

The initial draft key is well advanced though there is still a great deal to do on illustrations. A 'bring and identify' stall will be offered at the next Annual Meeting.

Specimens are still needed of the following, should anyone be able to loan specimens.

<u>Actia exoleta</u> (Meigen)	<u>Asiphona verralli</u> (Wainwright)
<u>Carcelia intermedia</u> (Herting)	<u>Ceranthia lichtwardtiana</u> (Vill.)
<u>Ceromya monstrosicornis</u> (Stein)	<u>Ceromya silacea</u> (Meigen)
<u>Clemelis pullata</u> (Meigen)	<u>Cleonice callida</u> (Meigen)
<u>Estheria bohemani</u> Rondani	<u>Freraea gagatea</u> Robineau-Desvoidy
<u>Gonia foersteri</u> Meigen	<u>Hemimacquartia paradoxa</u> Br. & Berg.
<u>Litophasia hyalipennis</u> (Fallen)	<u>Medina separata</u> (Meigen)
<u>Periscepsia prunaria</u> Rondani	<u>Siphona mesnili</u> Andersen
<u>Subclytia rotundiventris</u> (Fallen)	<u>Xylotachina diluta</u> (Meigen)

If you can respond, please contact Robert Belshaw, British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD.

Platycheirus peltatus group

The last Hoverfly Newsletter included a note and diagrams for the separation of peltatus and species A. Now that a season has passed for recorders to ascertain which species occur in their district, as well as on more distant journeys, it would be of great interest to see what the distribution maps look like. Please send records based on males to Alan Stubbs.

Note that in Ireland Martin Speight has a further peltatus group species new to science, named amplus (1988, Ir. Nat. J. 22: 518-521). This has the mid tibia much more simple on the ventral surface but half way down it has long hairs on the post lateral surface (hairs as long as width of tibia but curved towards apex). It was found in poor fen.

Pipunculids

The draft keys seem to have stimulated quite a bit of interest. A frequent query, and one I ask of myself, is what is the status and ecology of Nephrocerus flavicornis - must be because it is a particularly big species. Some associations are with oak, yet Chippenham Fen is far from being an ancient oak wood. Some records are already with Steven Falk but if there are any further records or any further ecological ideas then please let me know so that I can provide an overview (possibly in Dipterists' Digest).

Alan Stubbs

Any volunteers for further material?

The last Bulletin asked if there were any volunteers to identify certain families of Diptera from the Welsh Wetland Survey. It is pleasing to

report that there were indeed takers for Chironomidae, Drosophilidae and Sphaeroceridae (leaving only Cecidomyiidae unclaimed!). Since there is interest in this type of material, it is worth mentioning further survey material.

A three year project on the East Anglian fens is underway, looking at a wide range of conservation sites and investigating the invertebrate fauna of vegetation communities and their management. The Diptera are for the most part being sorted to families; so far it is largely the case that only the recording scheme and study group families are spoken for as regards identification (except Culicidae). Andy Foster and Deborah Procter are running this survey based at NCC's Norwich office (60 Bracondale, Norwich, NR1 2BE. Telephone 0603 620558). This is almost certainly the only large scale survey that NCC will run concurrently with the Welsh Wetland Survey.

The England Field Unit of the Nature Conservancy Council has a small complement of entomologists who undertake surveys on nature reserves, SSSIs and other sites in England. Many of these sites comprise special or important habitat types and include some of our most important wildlife sites. The surveys are carried out using pitfall traps, water traps, Malaise traps as well as collecting with a sweep net. Many of these sites have proved rich in Diptera and most reveal a number of rarities present. Identification of samples including Diptera is mostly done 'in house' but due to lack of expertise or time a number of families cannot be covered. We would be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to receive samples. All we ask for is a list of species present. The families are mainly the tricky ones. However, if you feel you would like to take any, we will be glad to send the specimens on - they will only go back into storage otherwise. Material is available for the following families: Psychodidae, Chironomidae, Ceratopogonidae, Scatopsidae, Phoridae, Chloropidae, Agromyzidae, Sphaeroceridae and all Calyptrate families except Scatophagidae.

If you think you would like to determine material from any of these groups let us know (including combined enquiries with the East Anglian Fens) - Dr Martin Drake/Andrew Godfrey, England Field Unit, Nature Conservancy Council, Northminster House, Peterborough, Cambs PE1 1UA.

Malaise trap samples on offer : correspondence circle proposed

I AM NOT A DIPTERIST, though I have welcomed your friendship in correspondence and at Diptera Days, BUT I do get thousands of Diptera in my Malaise Trap gatherings and I cannot bring myself to throw them away. As I sort through a catch (up to 10,000 insects of which approximately 70% are Diptera) I separate out all the Orders and several Diptera families (more or less completely) eg Mycetophilidae, Phoridae, Psychodidae, Dolichopodidae, Lonchopteridae, Tipulidae, Sepsidae, Micropezidae, Syrphidae ... the rest, which I rudely call my Diptera-grot, are all tubed together in 70% alcohol. I suggest that we might establish a correspondence circle of dipterists who would, in turn, receive my 'grot', sort through and remove for keeps such families as each wants and then pass on to the next on the mailing list. My hope is that I shall receive,

eventually, identification lists, conversely circle members would have material from sites which they otherwise would be unlikely to visit and my carte blanche permission to publish from that material as they wish. Would those interested in joining please contact me stating which families they would be interested in removing.

R S George, 54 Richmond Park Avenue, Queen's Park, Bournemouth, BH8 9DR.
Tel: 0202/515238.

NEWS ITEMS

British Museum (Natural History) Diptera Section

Adrian Pont is leaving the BM in March where he has been Head of the Diptera Section. He will be doing translating as a living but is anticipating that he will have more time for looking at flies, especially muscids.

We owe a great debt to Adrian. The atmosphere in the Section has always been friendly and helpful towards professionals and amateurs alike. He has been our link man behind the scenes for booking facilities for the Annual Meeting at the BM and ensured that everything runs smoothly on the day. If you wonder why you don't see him on the day, it is because he has been leading a self-sacrificing group in preparing the Dipterists' Dinner. Adrian started the Dinner with the unstinting support of colleagues, and has run these highly successful events for over 10 years. Where else will you find a group of professionals doing such a thing for a gathering which can be more than half amateurs - not many places. As a result many of us look to the BM and its staff with great appreciation, and Adrian would say he started the Dinners as a thank you for the help and friendship the staff on the Section receive from outside. Adrian will be the other side of the counter at the next Dinner. What can we say but thank you Adrian for all you have done.

Peter Barnard has already taken over as Head of Section. Peter is well known to some of us as a friendly entomologist who has previously been in charge of caddis flies and lacewings at the BM. He has been thrown in at the deep end on mosquitos.

Brian Pitkin has found himself holding the baby as regards the Annual Meeting and Dipterists' Supper arrangements!

Ken Smith retires on 10 March. He has been very helpful to many of us over the years and has made a valuable contribution to entomology in many ways. As regard the recording schemes, he launched the conopid scheme and has advised on our problems on various families, including another of his favourite families, the empids. His key to Diptera larvae is complete and on course for publication later this year. His many friends wish him well.

The Second International Congress of Dipterology

The Congress is to take place at Bratislava, Czechoslovakia on 27 August to 1 September 1990. The proposed programme includes 18 sections (themes) and 14 workshops (taxonomic). Pre-registration forms are sought by 28 February 1989 to be on the mailing list for further details. David Henshaw (34 Rounton Road, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 3AR) has offered to give advice on this event.

Warble flies

An envelope date stamped Exeter, November 1988, has a GPO stamped message 'War on Warbles - Dress Cattle Now'.

Chinese Hoverflies

The Annual Meeting in November had a exhibit of Chinese hoverflies. Well, it was bound to happen sooner or later, and very nice beasties they were too. Well done Rupert Hastings for keeping us up with the latest fad.

The future of collections

Notes in a recent DRS Bulletin have again raised the old problem about the long term security of private insect collections and their disposal (to the dustbin, to a museum or elsewhere!).

The Biology Curators Group (BCG) is very concerned about the well-being of collections, both in and out of museums. BCG Committee operates a watchdog on "collections at risk" and takes appropriate action to ensure that threatened collections are assigned to a relevant museum with adequate care and attention. We have had some recent successes, but no doubt many others slip through the net.

Whilst the British Museum (Natural History) is the usual institution for the deposition of nationally important collections, dipterists might consider a local or county museum to be more appropriate for a collection with local or county orientated material. To assist all naturalists from all disciplines, BCG has recently published a list of 'accredited' natural history museums (leaflet enclosed). Those carrying a star are particularly recommended as having one or more biologists in permanent full time curatorial posts.

This list is constantly being updated. We have also just published a leaflet on the 'disposal of collections' (for want of a better title) again available free.

Derek Whiteley, Secretary, Biological Curators Group

OBITUARIES

Sir Christopher Andrewes

TV news announced the death of Sir Christopher in late December. He reached the age of 92 and his most active years as an amateur dipterist seem to have been in the 1940's to early 1970's.

A few years ago I eventually persuaded him to donate his Diptera collection to the BM(NH), rather than to Devizes Museum when at the time the entire Wiltshire Museum's service lacked an entomologist who would be experienced in maintaining the collection. He was a very good field collector (including other groups such as aculeates and psyllids) with a species rich collection of most families of Diptera from such areas as Wiltshire and the Scottish Highlands, with many rarities.

He avidly filled in record cards. Unfortunately his identifications tend to need checking but at least the vouchers for many records are in a safe

place. BRC asked me to hold the single species record cards for Diptera (which are at NCC Peterborough in large boxes) and I also hold the New Forest card index which the late Len Parmenter began with Sir Christopher and which the latter continued for a while when Parmenter died.

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Fred Stubbs

Those interested in galls will be well aware that Fred Stubbs, Yorkshire based, was a leading force in promoting awareness of this much neglected subject. The formation of the British Gall Society in 1985 and the keys to British Plant Galls in 1986 owe much to his enthusiasm. He died in early January 1989 and an obituary appeared in 'The Guardian' on 11 January.

AND NOW ... FIDO POWER

At last we are unfolding the secrets behind the uncanny success of Professor John Owen. Even among the ranks of coleopterists, to which he belongs, he is difficult enough to keep pace with. But he has also been upstaging the dipterists with a constant stream of innocent enquiries to the effect 'is this of interest' - usually larvae or bred adult flies that dipterists, to their shame and embarrassment, have not found.

One of the latest such exhibits was a bred Thereva lunulata from a larva in the banks of a northern river. Immediately a feeling of awe surrounds the sheer diligence involved in this success. But, no, it is all so simply done. Just sit on the river bank with another coleopterist, Martin Luff, and wait for the other fellow's dog to start digging. Its rather like fishing, you have to be prepared to drop lunch immediately there is a strike, pushing the dog aside the moment a larva appears.

Now I've heard of truffle hounds but not therevid hounds. I wonder if we could borrow this unique dog for our field meetings, or more particularly it should be cloned so that all dipterists can share this unfair advantage the coleopterists have acquired.

Central Panel of Diptera Recording Scheme Organisers

Co-ordinator:

Alan Stubbs
Nature Conservancy Council
Northminster House
Peterborough
Cambs PE1 1UA
Tel: 0733 40345

Hallsannery
Bid. 72135.