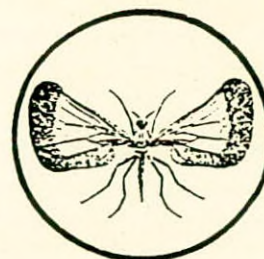


DIPTERA

RECORDING SCHEMES BULLETIN NO 34, SEPTEMBER 1992



ANNUAL MEETING OF THE DIPTERA RECORDING SCHEMES - NOVEMBER 7 1992

Natural History Museum, South Kensington, London

Morning Session - Flett Theatre. The Flett Theatre is in the Earth Science section and the easiest way to it is through the old Geological Museum entrance in Exhibition Road though it can also be reached from the Life Science section of the Natural History Museum.

Chairman - Dr Martin Drake

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|---------------|-----------------|---|
| 11.00 - 11.30 | Alan Stubbs | - Revitalising crane-fly recording |
| 11.30 - 12.00 | Paul Beuk | - A comparison of the Brachycera of Netherlands and Britain |
| 12.00 - 12.25 | Mike Bloxham | - The Sandwell Valley |
| 12.25 - 1.00 | Graham Rotheray | - Search techniques for dead wood Diptera |

Lunch - Pubs, cafés, or bring your own packed lunch.

Afternoon session - Demonstration Room, Palaeontology Department

Identification service. Please bring your awkward specimens for identification by those who know a thing or two about flies, especially the hoverflies listed under the Hoverfly Recording Scheme article.

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 2.00 - 6.00 | Setting up exhibits and informal period |
| 3.00 - 3.30 | Brief discussion session. |
| 3.30 - 3.50 | Crane-fly identification made simple. |
| 4.00 | Quick slide show introducing next summer's Norfolk meeting. |

At 2.30, there will be a quick meeting of the scheme organisers, Dipterist Digest editorial panel and BRC representative to discuss matters arising. The Hoverfly Recording Scheme areas reps also have meeting in the afternoon.

Entrance Fee and Parking. You will have to pay the entrance fee to the Museum (£4 for adults, £2.30 for OAPs and unemployed, £2 for 5-17 year-olds). Because of several recent bomb scares, security is much stricter and no-one will be allowed to park in the Museum grounds. The Museum have made it clear that they can make no exceptions.

Synopsis. Now that the Tipuline atlas has been published, Alan has some hard facts to present about their distribution, biology and which holes need filling. Paul Beuk has collected extensively in the Netherlands and Britain and will present a comparison of the distributions and ecologies of the species, concentrating on the empids but including some of the more popular brachyceran families. This should help to pin-point species that may be overlooked in Britain. Following on from last year's resumé of the flies around Coventry, Mike Bloxham will illustrate the similarities and differences of the nearby Sandwell Valley area. Graham Rotheray will discuss the woody parts of trees as habitats for flies, pointing out that it is the wet microhabitats where most species are found, and he will present case histories of communities in decaying sap, roots and rot holes. Hints on how to find and rear these larvae will enable you to record some of the more elusive species.

Some of the feedback from previous years suggests that the informal discussion session in the afternoon was too drawn-out so although it still has a slot in the programme, it will be brief and discuss only matters that cannot be adequately covered in the bulletin and newsletters. This should leave more time for making contact with other dipterists.

The Dipterist's Supper - Royal Entomological Society's Room, 7 November

Yes, this is the second announcement already, and if you haven't got your ticket yet, you'd better hurry as there aren't many left. As last year, it will be held in the Rooms of the Royal Entomological Society from 6.30 p.m. to start at 7.00 p.m. So don't delay, send today, your £12.00, plus an SAE, if you don't want me to hold it (the ticket), for thee.

David Henshaw, 34 Rounton Road, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 3AR.

DIPTERA DIGEST

DD Nos 11 & 12 will be available by late September. No.11 will be mailed out to all subscribers, together with details of No.12, the Empid & Dolichopodid special which contains a wealth of information including a number of keys and species new to science and to Britain. New and lapsed subscribers should contact Derek Whiteley, 17 Rustlings Road, Sheffield S11 7AA.

FIELD MEETING REPORTS

Stirling, July 1992

Scotland was suffering from a very severe drought when the party arrived and we were informed that there had been no significant rain for many weeks. Consequently, rivers were low and bog pools dry. However, there was no evidence of the effects of drought in terms of the range of interesting species found during the visit, even though numbers of individuals were low.

Seventeen members joined the party at various stages and our numbers were swelled by local devotees. The result was a record year for numbers of species of hoverfly and cranefly recorded (115 and 152 species respectively). For much of the time, conditions were excellent with very little wind and plenty of sunshine during the latter end on the week. This led to many parties ascending the hills to be rewarded with such rarities as *Platycheirus melanopsis* and *Dolichopus maculipennis*.

Over one hundred sites in more than 60 ten kilometre squares were visited. This has made a significant advance in our knowledge of the fauna of the area and has hopefully filled in what was formerly a major gap on the distribution maps. This work has resulted in the assembly of just over 5,000 records so far which have been compiled into a provisional report for the officers of Scottish Natural Heritage. A final report will be assembled and published next year.

Roger Morris

Kenfig Burrows, Glamorganshire, July 1992

This joint Diptera/BEWAS meeting followed another organised by me in June (concentrating on Kenfig and Merthyr Mawr dune systems) and extended coverage to other part of the Glamorganshire coast. Kenfig itself is a remarkable site, its floristically superb character being further enhanced by the presence of brackish marsh at its north end and freshwater marsh, carr and scrub around its famous pool. The combined list for the June and July meetings is likely to exceed 400 species, including many additions to the list produced by the National Museum of Wales in recent years. The brackish marsh supported *Platycheirus immarginatus*, *Stratiomys singularior*, *Oxycera morrissii*, *Melieria cana*, *Eurina lurida*, *Canacea rubricornis*, *Coenosia stigmatella* and *C. albatella*. Foredune species included *Tetanops myopina*, *Dialineura anilis*, *Sarcophaga latifrons* and *Pherbellia knutsoni*, whilst *Pamphoneurus germanica*, *Herina palustris*, *Orellia falcata* and *Dioxyna bidentis* occurred widely throughout the mid dune. The marsh pool produced a superb sciomyzid fauna and a surprising record for *Melangyna guttata*. The meeting's "new to Britain" was *Thereva cinifera*.

The fauna of Merthyr Mawr, whilst generally similar, included some species not encountered at Kenfig, such as *Dichaetophora finlandica*, *Chyliza vittata*, *Thereva fulva* and *Helina abdominalis*. Further good finds were *Dictya umbrarum*, *Parhelophilus consimilis* and *Anthomyza bifasciella* from Crymlyn Bog, *Myopites eximia* from rocky cliffs of the Gower, *Herina paludum* from calcareous grassland of Ogmores Down and numerous records for *Sphenella marginata*. Much material awaits identification and no doubt further surprises remain.

Steve Falk

Cothill Fen, Oxfordshire

One of the unsuccessful aims of this meeting was to locate *Odontomyia argentata*, though there was an abundance of *Parhelophilus frutetorum* basking on sycamore leaves, and several specimens of *Criorhina berberina* and *Orthonevra brevicornis*.

Keith Porter

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Autumn Meeting - South Lake District, 7 - 11 October 1992

The autumn meeting will be based near Bowness, Cumbria. We have the use of a room for a laboratory in English Nature's regional office on the shore of Windermere a couple of miles south of Bowness. Accommodation will be in nearby B&B. I have booked six places and have the contacts for others should they be needed. Within a ten mile radius, the geological formations range from acid shales to limestone and the habitats include woodland, grassland, streams, rivers and seepages on both basic and acid soils. Coastal habitats within easy reach are salt marsh and, a bit further away, dunes. The area is relatively unworked for autumnal flies.

Contact Martin Drake if you would like to attend.

Spring Field Meeting - Whiteford Burrows, Gower Peninsula, 23 - 26 April 1993

The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) in conjunction with the National Trust have kindly offered us free use of their small field station for a 4-day long weekend. The centre has ten bunk beds with gas-powered hot water, lighting and heating. There is no electricity though I shall arrange for a generator to be provided to power microscopes and lamps. The arrangement is based on the understanding that we will concentrate our efforts on the parts of the Gower that are of interest to CCW, and make suggestions on management and conservation policies. This will include surveying the superb limestone cliffs of the South Gower Coast SSSI, dune systems, saltmarshes and woods such as Nicholaston.

The meeting is a joint venture between BWARS and the Diptera Recording Scheme group and I will provisionally assign five places to each discipline. For more information, contact Steve Falk, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Jordan Well, Coventry CV1 5RW.

Main Summer Meeting - East Norfolk, 4 - 11 July 1993

The next summer meeting is based near Norwich. The main attractions are The Broads, pingos and other famous fens but the coast also offers us a range of habitats such as brackish grazing marsh, dunes and the best soft cliffs in East Anglia. For those prepared to go a little further, the Breck and excellent saltmarsh are within reach.

The centre that has been booked is a few miles north of Norwich. It can sleep 36 people but only a few beds are in single and twin rooms. The centre's administration has kindly offered to negotiate with local B&B so some people can be accommodated in more secluded lodgings but eat at the centre. The total cost from Sunday (note) to Sunday will be £118. There is a booking form at the end of the Bulletin. Please send a £10 deposit with your booking, payable to the Horstead Centre.

Weekend Field Meeting, South Cumbria, June 1993

A joint meeting between the British Entomological and Natural History Society, and the Coleopterists has been arranged for the weekend of 25-27 June 1992 (3 nights) at Castle Head Field Centre near Grange Over Sands. The cost will be £58.00 covering three nights in single/shared accommodation, meals and packed lunch, and a lab. Anyone interested in this meeting should book a place with Roger Morris (JNCC, address at end of Bulletin), enclosing a non-returnable deposit of £10.00.

INDOOR MEETINGS

Larger Brachycera Workshop, Liverpool Museum, October 17 1992, Saturday, led by Martin Drake. This is one of a series of workshops organised by Steven Judd, curator of entomology at the museum. In the morning, the collections will be available for perusal from 10.00 - 12.30 am. The workshop itself takes place from 2.00-5.00 pm, when Martin Drake will discuss the biology and identification of the group. There will be plenty of time for discussion.

Contact Steven Judd if you would like to attend or require further details: National Museum & Galleries on Merseyside, William Brown Street, Liverpool L3 8EN, tel. (051) 207 0001.

Hoverfly Workshop 5 - 7 March 1993

Twenty places have been booked at Preston Montford Field Centre near Shrewsbury for a gathering of hoverfly enthusiasts. It is intended that the workshop should act as a forum for exploring a wide range of subjects ranging from larval work and taxonomy to photography. Students of all ability and experience are welcome as all will be catered for.

The cost of the weekend, including two nights full board is expected to be £50. Those wishing to attend the workshop should send a £10 deposit to:

Roger Morris, JNCC, Monkstone House, Peterborough. PE1 1JY.

British Entomological and Natural History Society Annual Exhibition, October 31, Saturday, Imperial College, South Kensington, London (north of Science Museum). Extensive members' exhibits, usually some Diptera.

Amateur Entomologist's Society Annual Exhibition, October 3, Saturday, Kempton Park Racecourse, Staines Road, Sunbury, Middx., outer SW London near end of M3. Equipment, new & second hand books, displays, etc. Usually attended by several dipterists.

Third International Congress of Dipterology

The 3rd ICD is to be held in Guelph, Ontario, Canada, from August 15-19, 1994. Further information may be obtained from:

Dr Steve Marshall, Dept. Environmental Biology, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada, N1G 2W1.

Alternatively, David Henshaw (address under Dipterist Supper above) can answer any queries you may have before you apply. David also expects to receive copies of the Second Announcement for inclusion with the next Bulletin.

NEWS FROM THE SCHEMES

Cranefly Recording Scheme

The Stirling meeting (see report) has added much useful data, as did a continued foray into Ayrshire and Galloway. Suffolk has also yielded useful records including *Molophilus niger* and, in the Breck, *Tipula livida*. *Tipula pediostigma* has been taken in Lincolnshire. The mystery *Dicranomyia* found on the Isle of Wight landslips during the 1980 field meeting is *D. lackschewitzi* identified by Dr Strong on the basis of illustrations sent to him in Czechoslovakia.

The Tipulinae BRC atlas is now published (see publication note below) and will be available at the November meeting for those who can wait. The *Ptychoptera* atlas is being edited and BRC hope this will be in print by next March.

Dixidae Recording Scheme

Dixella graeca has been added to the British list. It looks like *D. filicornis* but is probably a species of woodland rather than marshes.

Hoverfly Recording Scheme

Since our major progress report in the spring, we are pleased to report that a total of nearly 20,000 records from RA33's have been entered and almost all the backlog has now been cleared. That leaves the Gen 7's and Gen13's to do this winter. During the summer, we have also spent much time recording and have been less active on the data entry front. The autumn is approaching, however, and we eagerly await the consignments of RA33's for entry. Please remember the notes in our progress report, following these will make it possible for us to process the data more efficiently and therefore more of the backlog will be cleared.

The points raised at a meeting with Alan Stubbs to discuss future plans included holding a meeting on Dipterist's Day of the area reps to discuss such matters as validation of records and checking determinations, placing more emphasis on migrants, encouraging the garden hoverfly monitoring methods and firmer dating of records.

On the taxonomic front, we need a call-in for difficult *Pipiza* and allies, pairs of *Sphaerophoria* (other than *scripta*) *in cop*, and *Metasyrphus latilunulatus* which Steve Falks would like to see on Dipterist's Day because it may be more than one species. For a revised British Hoverflies, we also need to resolve the taxonomy of male *Pipiza bimaculata/noctiluca* and female *Platycheirus occultus/podagricus* (in examples of *occultus* with very dark hind femora). The question of *Baccha* and *Melangyna labiatarum/compostitarum* may have to remain unresolved.

Priority ecological investigations need to be defined with Graham Rotheray, who plans for the Malloch Society to look at ant associations (eg *Xanthogramma* and *Chrysotoxum*). The more southern dipterists need advice on what they can do. The tree associations of sap run species would be an easy one to pursue.

David Iliff has agreed to take on compiling and editing the Hover fly Newsletter. Send your articles to him at Green Willows, Station Road, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Gloucs., GL52 4HN.

Please note the Hoverfly Workshop being held in March next year (see above).

Stuart Ball & Roger Morris

Larger Brachycera Recording Scheme

The draft text for Alan Stubbs' forthcoming book is now well into the editing stages with the aim of completing it this coming winter if possible. An example chapter will be tabled at the November meeting. If anyone has important ecological, biological or taxonomic observations, please let Martin Drake know by the November Meeting. Further records are always welcome; some revised maps may be included in the book. We are gathering copy for a special Brachycera issue of the Dipterist's Digest. Please send your contributions to Martin Drake.

New data includes *Thereva lunulata* from sandy river banks in eastern-most Perthshire and Ayresshire, *Thereva cinifera* from Kenfig, and *Oxycera pardalina* and *O. pygmaea* from Wharfedale in Yorkshire.

Sepsidae Recording Scheme

Adrian Pont is still happy to receive records. Address: 38 Gatehampton Road, Goring-on-Thames, Reading, Berks RG8 0EP.

Tephritid Recording Scheme

Laurence Clemons is preparing the maps for his preliminary atlas which he plotting by hand. The final date for the submission of records is 1 April 1993 so you have half a year to send in your records. Laurence is willing to look at collections that have not been identified. Address: 14 St John's Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4NE.

LOST DIPTERISTS

Does anyone know the present addresses of the following people who are on the Diptera mailing lists but have moved?

I. Turner, K. Catley, L.H.T. Large, Dr G.J. Holbury, Dr M. Ebejer.

PUBLICATIONS

The Leaf miners of Warwickshire by John Robbins. This publication runs to over 180 pages and is the first fauna of its type, covering the leaf-miners of four large Orders, to be published in Britain. More than 200 Diptera found in VC 38 are mentioned in some detail (half the national fauna) and a further 60 species known elsewhere in the Midlands or unconfirmed in VC 38 are mentioned more briefly. £6.75 (plus £1.50 p&p) from Mrs Pam Copson, Warwickshire Museum, Market Place, Warwick CV34 4SA.

Staffordshire Flies - a provisional list by David W. Emley, 1992, Staffordshire Biological Recording Scheme Publication No.15. This admirable little book of 140 pages follows a tradition of publications on the Diptera of Staffordshire, making it now one of the better covered areas. It lists localities, dates of capture and recorders for each species, a gazetteer of named localities and a map showing the more important of these, and a bibliography of some 40 publications.

£3.00 (plus 50p p&p) from City Museum and Art Gallery, Bethseda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire.

Provisional atlas of the long-palped crane flies (Diptera: Tipulinae) of Britain and Ireland by Alan E Stubbs, 1992, JNCC/ITE. The atlas summarises information on the occurrence in Britain and Ireland of the crane flies in the genera *Ctenophora*, *Dictenidia*, *Dolichopeza*, *Nephrotoma*, *Nigrotipula*, *Prionocera*, *Tanypeza* and *Tipula*. It includes distribution maps and brief accounts of all 87 species. It also includes a history of crane fly recording, notes on the ecology, habitat associations and the status of the fauna, and over 300 titles in the bibliography.

£5.00 (including p&p) from Publication Sales, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Merlewood Research Station, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria LA11 6JU. Note - NOT from Monks Wood; and send payment with your order.

NEWS, REQUESTS

Malloch Society and dead wood Diptera.

The society has received a grant to investigate dead wood Diptera. It is a joint-funded arrangement between Scottish Natural Heritage and WWF over a two year period. The work will be centred on Scottish woodland and the idea is to not only investigate biologies of dead wood flies but to determine priorities for their conservation.

The Verrall-Collin Collection of Diptera

A Pilgrim Trust grant from the Museum and Galleries Commission has been awarded to the Hope Entomological Collection in the University Museum, Oxford, to curate and catalogue the types of Diptera described by Verrall and Collin, thought to be some 800 species, and the work is being undertaken over a ten month period by Adrian Pont. As dipterists will know only too well, G H Verrall (1848-1911) and his nephew J E Collin (1876-1968) led the study of British Diptera for a century and built up the most valuable and comprehensive private collection of Diptera ever made. Their own extensive collecting was supplemented by innumerable small-scale gifts and exchanges and by the purchase of two other important private collections, those of F Kowarz (European Diptera) and J M F Bigot (Exotic Diptera). For a general account of the collection, see Ackland and Taylor, 1972, *Entomologist's mon. Mag.*, 108: 12-15.

Verrall and Collin mounted their Diptera on micropins, through small card discs on the underside of which were written locality and date. This in itself makes the collection a curator's nightmare, but it is compounded by the fact that neither of them saw much point in "types" when it came to their own species, and single types or multiple series are not indicated in any way. The only way to track down type material is to take the descriptions one at a time and search out all specimens with appropriate data in the Main and Duplicate collections, a tedious and time-consuming task.

The objective of this project is to recognise the type material, prepare it in an acceptable fashion (staged on plastozote mounts, with the locality discs facing up), label it appropriately, and store it in unit trays in a separate (temporary) Verrall-Collin type collection. The types will be catalogued on a computer data-base, and a catalogue published.

Many other European dipterists have described species from this collection, from F Loew (1869) down to the present day, or have exchanged syntypes of their own species with Verrall or Collin. Some of these are being curated and catalogued during the present project, but it is impossible to recognise every syntype at this stage: this is a task for specialists with a detailed knowledge of all the literature involved, working over individual families. In 1895, for example, Paul Stein, the leading muscid specialist of the day, described several new species of *Fannia* and mentioned that some of these were also present in Verrall's collection, which he had studied during a visit to England in January 1894. So syntypes of his species have been found lying unrecognised in the Verrall-Collin collection, and even in material that Collin presented to the BMNH after Verrall's death. And Swedish *Spilogona* specimens given to Collin by O Ringdahl also include syntypes. It is only with a close specialist knowledge of the literature that such syntypes can be searched out and recognised, but the present project does not expect to do this across the board with all Diptera.

Curators who think that they may have types in their museums, received with collections from Verrall's or Collin's friends and correspondents, are urged to get in touch with Adrian Pont at the Hope Entomological Collections, University Museum, Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PW (phone 0865 272975, fax 0865 272970): the value of the catalogue to be published at the conclusion of the project will obviously be enhanced if Verrall and Collin syntypes in collection other than their own can also be listed.

Catfield Fen Appeal

Butterfly Conservation (previously the British Butterfly Conservation Society) has launch an appeal to buy Catfield Fen, Norfolk. As well as supporting the Swallowtail Butterfly, this is one of the top Diptera sites in Britain . If you are moved to contribute to the cause of bringing this fen into the ownership of the only British conservation society concerned specifically with insect conservation, please contact Butterfly Conservation, Dedham, Colchester, Essex CO7 6BR.

Phoretic Mites and the a source of material

Following from a request in this bulletin for material, Prof Alex Fain and Dr Malcolm Greenwood have published a short paper on the phoretic mites on flies (Fain & Greenwood, 1991, Notes on a small collection of mites (Acari), phoretic on Diptera, mainly Phoridae, from the British Isles. Entomologie, 61, 193-197). Alex Fain is still interested in receiving phoretic mites on their hosts. His address is Institut Royal des Science Naturelles de Belgique, 29 Rue Vautier, 1040 Bruxelles, Belgium.

Anyone wanting material for their research may find that this bulletin yields results! (See Roger's article below).

Increase your productivity in field recording

At the last two Dipterist's field meetings, I have encouraged participants to retain material from other groups, especially stoneflies, lacewings and click beetles. This is because I know that the scheme organisers of these groups welcome unidentified material. This means that other schemes get coverage for areas that are likely to be under-recorded and leads to useful advances in our knowledge. Like craneflies and fungus gnats, such material can be stored dry, although lacewings and stoneflies are probably better stored in alcohol.

I have extended this philosophy to much of my general collecting and would like to encourage others to do the same. After all, for very little additional effort, our trips into the field can be made even more worthwhile. If you want a list of scheme organisers should write to me at JNCC.

Also, I would be glad to hear of other people's wants. Some years ago, a list of specialists wanting material was produced. I hope to update it soon, so let me know.

Roger Morris, JNCC (address at end of bulletin)

And Now Spontaneous Creation

Have you ever stopped to ask yourself where do flies come from? As evidence that larvae do not exist continues to pour in, the conclusion that flies arise by spontaneous creation gains massive support. This theory was first promoted in the *Dipterist's Handbook* and though yet to receive universal acclaim or acknowledgement by certain authorities in Sweden, significantly no-one has disproved this concept. At least astrophysicists are coming round to a similar way of thinking as regards spontaneous creation of matter so there is optimism that the same holds for biology. Of course, there are magicians like Graham Rotheray who can pluck hoverfly larvae out of the ether found in rot holes, but that does not prove anything. The more general experience is that of Raymond Uffen who has been excavating through soil and turf but still finding practically nothing where *Symphoromyia immaculata* and other flies are abundant as adults. Raymond has been asked to replicate his scientific experiment to qualify as unequivocal negative supporting data for the theory.

There is also the problem as to what do larvae eat. Melin, who found a thousand asilid larvae in Sweden, was unable to resolve this and we have some problem with therevid larvae among others. Raymond recently wanted to know what *Geosargus*, a large terrestrial stratiomyid, ate, since its larvae just sit doing nothing. Stratiomyid larvae have the same problem as *Diplodocus*, *Brontosaurus* and their ilk - a tiny head which stands no hope of feeding a big body. Here we witness the special clause of the theory of spontaneous creation. Even when larvae do exist, they too must have arisen spontaneously and, as proof, they spontaneously disappear again without trace when placed in breeding containers. The alternative theory that *Geosargus* larvae are saprophagous is too far fetched.

The proponent of this theory throws down the gauntlet to those who may scoff. The equivalent of the flat earth supporters have to explain why, when it is possible to see clouds of adult empids, dolis, etcetera, it is a hard dig's work to yield a nil return on larvae. Why are there huge numbers of flies in woods and meadows and yet the leaf litter and soil is barren of larvae despite bold statements in the reference books? Many common flies have never been found as larvae, even spontaneously created ones. Is this great theory, which debunks Darwinism, to go into the next millennium unchallenged?

Alan Stubbs

Editorial note

Please note that Alan Stubbs is no longer the contact point for matters concerning the Bulletin or Field Meetings. Send your administrative enquiries to Martin Drake, and changes of address and interests to Stuart Ball. Alan is still very much in circulation when it comes to biological queries.

Central Panel of Diptera Recording Schemes

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