BULLETIN OF THE Dipterists Forum

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Pipunculid	David Gibbs

Contributions to this Bulletin

Please note the following deadlines for the next two bulletins:

Spring bulletin

Aims to be on your doorstep in the first two weeks of March, contributions by the end of December, this is printed in February in time for the March workshop meeting.

Autumn bulletin

Aims to be on your doorstep in late September, contributions by the end of June. Printed around the time of the Autumn field meeting and in time to provide details of the Annual Meeting.

Would contributors please note that it takes a **minimum** of 4 weeks to compile, edit, reproduce, collate and distribute each issue.

Minor amendments or insertions may be negotiated during the 2 weeks following these deadlines but major items must be in by the deadline.

Website

www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/

Forum

www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/index.php

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Articles submitted should be in the form of a word-processed file on disk (3.5", CD or USB Flash) or via E-mail which should have the phrase "DF Bulletin" in the Subject line; Email text alone will not be accepted. Do not use "all capitals", underlining, blank lines between paragraphs or double spaces. Scientific names should be italicised throughout and emboldened only at the start of a paragraph, place names should have a grid reference. Please submit in native format and Rich Text Format (.rtf). An accompanying print-out would also be useful. Line artworks are encouraged, colour pictures and illustrations are welcome, they will be printed in black and white (uncorrected) and so it would be wise to see what a B&W photocopy looks like first. The Bulletin will also be made available in colour pdf via our website. Please note the width of the borders used in Dipterists Bulletin, for conformity with style would newsletter compilers please try to match this format.

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Cranefly Recording Scheme Newsletter

Fungus Gnats Recording Scheme

Hoverfly Newsletter

Larger Brachycera Recording Scheme

Forum news

Editorial

Slovakian death metal band

It's a very "human being" activity, editing some sort of publication such as this Bulletin. Not the sort of thing one would entrust to an automated system. Consider: few things are more satisfying to the committed naturalist than the handling of a real three-dimensional book. A piece of work that has been carefully thought through and constructed, something that draws upon the skills of a long tradition of compilation so as to present the subject matter in a readable manner which caters to a wide range of potential readers and stimulates them to take an active interest in the subject. Classics such as the Warne series, John Clegg's "Pond Life" and the two BENHS Diptera books that have been on all our shelves for a long time now.

Why are such books even remotely related to our sphere of interest so immensely rare ? The latest well-produced books that are of temptation to naturalists do not include any on the subject of Diptera and lavishly illustrated books that provide actual pictures of actual flies are a great rarity.

Are such books a possibility in this day and age? Is it at all likely that we shall ever rush to buy the three volume colour illustrated series on world Asilidae or have the delight of finding British Tachinidae with every species in colour in our Christmas stocking. Will Ian Johnson (Pemberley Books) ever walk away from one of his book sales a rich man and leave all us dipterists with empty pockets?

Or are we forever stuck with trawling through the junk yard[1] of the internet to find abandoned or costly snippets of information.

Some automated internet publishing systems are constructed completely without checks on validation such that errors are copied and recopied from website to website like Chinese whispers or some sort of twisted evolution in which ease of copying is a far greater selective pressure than validity, until scientific accuracy and factual observations become buried amongst fantasy. Such publishing systems are currently one of the biggest challenge to scientific progress that we face in this day and age. The reason being that policy-makers treat such distributed information as factual. For example sites such as ZipCodeZoo list all taxa within a group no matter how long ago such taxa were sunk into synonymy (e.g. *Tylus* is listed within Micropezidae despite the fact that it became a Myriapod a century ago), such sites are used to calculate biodiversity statistics and these statistics are then used to inform international conservation policies.

(1) http://zipcodezoo.com/Key/Micropezidae_Family.asp#_note-McAlpine1998 "Phantasma is a Slovakian death metal band"

Photography titles for Dipterists

I keep bumping into Danny Green, European Wildlife Photographer of the year. He happens to live in Loughborough and he also holds the title of International Bird Photographer of the year.

It occurs to me that here's an opportunity for us less-skilled photographers to earn ourselves some kind of a title. Pick a Diptera group obscure enough and the competition in your chosen area becomes smaller and your chances of obtaining a title rather good. Not much chance with hoverflies, though, plenty of good competition. How about Sciomyzidae? "International Sciomyzid Photographer of the Year" has a nice sound to it. But just take a look at Rafael Estevez's picture of *Pherbina* on the Diptera.info website (http://www.diptera.info/forum/viewthread.php?forum_id=5&thread_id=8702) and your dreams of this title instantly evaporate. Good quality pictures are needed to meet the challenges of Dipterists Forum's rapidly modernising approach to publishing and this Bulletin, now published in full colour pdf on its website needs your efforts too.

Darwyn Sumner

News from the schemes

Questions of how best to help the Recording Schemes and Study Groups have been occupying much of the Dipterists Forum committee's thoughts over recent months. The publication of this Bulletin marks a potential turning point in the fortunes of these groups. They now have a new outlet for debate on a radically redesigned Dipterists Forum website thanks to considerable efforts by Stuart Ball. The format of our website is now much changed and is in the form of a "discussion forum" (the Dipterists Forum Forum!), a format which has proved extremely popular and successful for the debates about Recorder and Checklist issues (NBN Forum at http://forums.nbn.org.uk/index.php). Stuart's arrangement is rather neatly done with a batch of general topics followed by a separate section for each of the Recording Schemes and Study Groups - each moderated by the Scheme or Study Group organiser. This becomes a website for regular visits rather than a "now and then to see if there's anything new" approach; once debates and discussions get started there can be something new on some topic or other pretty well every day.

It rather relies on the Recording Schemes and Study Group organisers to kick-start their topics. I placed an introduction to the Stilt & Stalk scheme straight away and within a fortnight there were over 80 viewings of one little contribution at a time when only 38 members were registered with the site:

http://www.dipteristsforum.org.uk

Darwyn Sumner

Conopid Recording Scheme

David contacted me in January. He's rather busy and told me he would do his best to send a little something when he gets time. Unfortunately he wasn't able to do so in time for this Bulletin but rest assured that the Conopid scheme is alive and we shall see David's distribution maps in due course.

David Clements

Cranefly Recording Scheme

Cranefly News # 16 is included in this Bulletin. The contents include thoughts about craneflies and climate change, notes on the biogeography of some craneflies, a report from the Beinn Eighe Field trip, and information about the Catalogue of the Craneflies of the World (CoCoW).

John Kramer

Fungus gnat Recording Scheme

Peter's Newsletter is appended towards the end of this Bulletin.

Peter Chandler

Hoverfly Recording Scheme

Newsletter # 44 included with this Bulletin

David Iliff

Larger Brachycera Recording Scheme

Newsletter # 27 included with this Bulletin

Simon Hayhow

Sepsid Recording Scheme

Since taking over the Scheme last year, I have received records from Richard Underwood and Martin Drake which has added just over 2,800 records to my database – many thanks to both of you. If anyone has any more records please send them to me, and, if you are out recording during the rapidly approaching new season please don't forget to record some sepsids too.

Steve Crellin
Shearwater, The Dhoor, Andreas Road, Lezayre, Ramsey, Isle of Man, IM7 4EB, steve_crellin1@hotmail.co.uk

Stilt & Stalk Fly Recording Scheme

There's now a discussion group for this scheme (and all the others) on the the new Dipterists Forum website. I've started the SSF discussions with a short introduction and a checklist linked to UK distribution maps. After a few checks on some of the incoming data from the last couple of years, the dataset published on the NBN Gateway is about to be updated. For those who find the Gateway a little tricky to use I'm pleased to tell you that the discussion group on the Dipterists Forum (http://www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/df/f20-Stilt-Stalk-flies.html) now makes viewing these maps supremely straightforward. Please take the time to register on this site, it's a superb means of exchanging comments and exchanging little snippets of information.

Darwyn Sumner

Other news

Keys on the Dipterists Forum website

As promised, I have uploaded the draft family key onto the Dipterists Forum web-site as PDF files. It is in three parts and they are quite large because of the illustrations:

- http://www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/documents/Families_part1_figs_glossary.pdf (1.58 mb)
- http://www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/documents/Families_part2_key.pdf (3.42 mb)
- http://www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/documents/Families_part3_descriptions.pdf (8.26 mb)

You should be able to open them by clicking on the links above. You should only need your normal browser and the free Adobe Acrobat reader installed on your computer. If you haven't got Acrobat, you can get it at http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

If anyone has the time, I would appreciate it if you could glance through the family descriptions and check/improve the identifications attributed to the illustrations. I need to get copies made tomorrow or Friday for the course at the weekend, so there is not much time! But clearly they can be worked on before March.

Stuart Ball

An early start

Whilst visiting the Hillier Gardens near Romsey Hampshire on Sunday 27th January I noted several *Eupeodes luniger* feeding around *Daphne bholua* flowers. Weather was sunny but cool after an early frost. Numbers of *Melanostoma mellinum* were also present.

Chris Spilling

Notice board

Biodiversity Action Plans

Update

In the last Bulletin I mentioned that the list of BAP species had been decided upon, but still needed to be signed by the ministers. This has happened in the meantime and the new list can be found or downloaded from the BAP webpage (www.ukbap.org.uk). Also, some of the results of the review of the targets for the existing BAP species, which was conducted parallel to the BAP Review I have reported on so far, can be found on the BARS webpage (http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk). Currently, the actions for all BAP species are being drawn up and decided upon and I hope to have more news in the next Bulletin.

Barbara Ismay

Adopt a species

You might recall that I appealed for volunteers to come forward for this scheme in the last Bulletin. I repeat a summary of this call below in case you missed it last time. Please also note my change of email address.

Summary

Do you feel that we should stop talking and rather start to help our threatened species? If yes, then please get in contact – you might be able to help!

If you feel that you would like to work on one or a group of BAP species or RDB species, please contact me. You could adopt a species or a group of species and thus resolve some of the open questions about these species. Some possible tasks you could do and a list of BAP species and their crude distribution were mentioned in the last bulletin. Should you have missed this, please get in touch with me and I will forward this information to you.

Some BAP species are already being worked on and have lead partners coordinating the work. This project is not intended to duplicate on-going work, but to find people willing to take on additional tasks, to continue previous work or to work together with the lead partner. Also, as the co-ordinator of this project I will bother you from time to time to remind you to share your progress or problems encountered with more dipterists, so please let me know if you take up a species or group of species.

You could work on a BAP species, but also on species that have a conservation status. Please contact me and I will forward all the information on the BAP species that I have gathered or inform you where you can get hold of it (if it's a report). However, I might have to refer you to other dipterists for information on RDB species.

Please don't hesitate, our species need you and you don't need to be an expert on them. Others are there to help!

Barbara Ismay

News from 'Adopt a Species'

I would like to thank all of you who already adopted a species. Currently nine of our 35 BAP species have been adopted and below you can find information supplied by several 'adopters' on 'their' species. Thank you very much for these contributions and good luck with your quests. Some more will follow in the next Bulletin. So far *Salticella fasciata, Dorycera graminum, Empis limata, Odontomyia hydroleon, Blera fallax, Hammerschmidtia ferruginea, Clusiodes geomyzinus, Lonchaea regnari,* and *Rhamphomyia hirtula* have been adopted.

Please help our threatened species by getting involved in their active conservation and adopt a species. I hope to hear from you soon.

Barbara Ismay

News from the adopters

Salticella fasciata - Sand Dune snail-killing fly

Known in the UK from what I surmise to be just two loci. On the South Wales coast records are centred on the Kenfig dunes with records extending westward to Tenby. On the East coast its stronghold is the north west tip of West Norfolk, extending in both directions along that coast and across the Wash to Gibraltar Point.

With the exception of a recent strong colony of at least 15 individuals at Holme Dunes (West Norfolk) in October 2007 all records are quite old. Its habitat is very straightforward, it inhabits the sparsely populated fore dunes which do not become inundated at high tide and which therefore have strong colonies of land snails of the Family Helicidae. No snails, no *Salticella*. Whilst adapted for such exposed conditions by a marked hairiness, strong legs and a habit of clinging to larger fixed objects (snail shells, flotsam & jetsam), it seems clear that this species is blown along the coastline occasionally as some of the records are from less than optimal habitats. Loss of suitable habitat may result from the construction of sea defenses and other developments in the vicinity, excessive disturbance of fore dunes by holidaymakers and sea inundation sufficient to destroy land snail colonies. Scarce hosts have been cited in the past as reasons for its scarcity but I would suggest that the scarcity of the particular habitat is sufficient to account for the few records and that it may well be more general in its choice of host. Land snails from the Holme Dunes site were identified (by Judy Webb) as *Cernuella virgata* (very widely distributed) but only Sarcophagidae have so far emerged from the handful collected at the site.

Like several species of Sciomyzidae which also inhabit sand dunes (e.g. *Dichetophora obliterata* & *Pherbellia cinerella* were observed in more sheltered dune situations on my October 2007 visit), *Salticella fasciata* has a long season. Presumably their activity is related to the activity of the host snails. In an environment where host populations are relatively small and of a high mortality, evolutionary pressures would favour those individuals which oviposited on the last active snails in each season, that is before the snails aestivate.

The suggested course of action is to determine the locations and extent of the appropriate habitat in the most likely dune systems (Kenfig and West Norfolk) using a combination of modern aerial photography (Google Earth) and field visits in early summer and (particularly) autumn. This same methodology could perhaps identify other areas around the country with potential (and actual) colonies. Any observations would be gratefully received, either through the Sciomyzidae Recording Scheme forum on the Dipterists Forum website or directly to myself.

Darwyn Sumner

Empis limata – The Borders Dance-Fly (Empididae)

Empis limata Collin is a small (3.5 mm) black empidid known only from the Welsh / English borders of VC 35, 36 & VC 33. There are 12 post 1980 records in 3 10Km squares & 2 pre-1980 records from 2 separate 10Km squares. Essentially, the species is confined to the region of periglacial sand deposits around the Monnow & Usk valleys. Although until recently thought to be a British endemic it has now been con-

firmed from the Mara Basin of Romania and there is an unconfirmed record from Hungary.

We know little about its habits and most of the following is conjectured from scanty capture data and comparative structure – function relationships with other *Empis* spp. There is no real evidence for association with the rivers themselves and we might expect it in other places well back from the river if 'suitable' habitat is available. They likely need a mosaic of habitats which could be different for display, immatures, feeding etc. The immatures will be terrestrial:- presumably in periglacial sands. Availability of appropriate swarm sites is likely to be very important for this species. It probably forms epigamic swarms and morphology suggests that when female:male numerical ratios are high, these could involve role-reversed mate selection with females swarming, probably in edge shade situations, and males entering swarms with prey. Edge shade situation could include river marginal shrubs, hedgerows and old woodland (judged from the data). Flower visiting has been noted and hot weather activity is suggested. Recent records are all in a two week period in late June and early July suggesting a short adult emergence period but there are historical records as late as 12 August.

Any course of action needs to first assess its distribution in the Usk & Monnow, paying particular attention to swarm sites and searching for any flower use. Once swarm sites have been identified, commonalities might emerge. Swarms will have to be watched to find out who is leading in the display and if prey swapping happens. The prey can easily be identified which should give indications of the hunting range of whichever sex is presenting the prey (are they hunting over the river, in shade or the fields for example). Mating almost certainly occurs in the air and mated pairs will need to be followed back to a ground resting site which will probably be close to eventual oviposition sites. Having done this we will have a much better idea of mosaic usage and then be able to investigate similar sites in more detail and get a better idea of the species' true status.

Adrian Plant

The following five species have been adopted by the Malloch Society

They kindly granted permission to reproduce part of their texts from their webpages. I have only included the latest news, so you might want to check their webpages for additional information (www.mallochsociety.org.uk).

Blera fallax – The Pine Hoverfly

SNH Species Action Framework: Pine Hoverfly Management Actions and Acheivements, October 2007 . In July 2007, after formalising an agreement with the four partners and SNH, the Malloch Society, appointed a Project Officer to implement first year's actions in the agreed action plan to conserve the Pine Hoverfly, *Blera fallax.* In July survey began to assess the presence and location of *Blera fallax* at all sites in Strathspey. All known breeding sites were surveyed by September and *Blera fallax* larvae were found inhabiting the artificial holes created in pine stumps. The progression and survival of these early stages will be monitored, and further searches of all potential sites in Strathspey will continue.

Thorough examination of the holes and pots will be undertaken in October to assess the potential to remove some individuals for rearing in a controlled environment. This will enable: secured survival for these individuals; observations on their behaviour over the winter period; and the creation of a potential translocation population for transfer to historical breeding sites in Strathspey.

In order to increase the amount of breeding habitat at known locations as well as to prepare new localities, 31 breeding sites have been created by cutting holes in pine stumps and placing out pots and filling with pine chips. Partnership working continue to develop with the site owners and managers, RSPB, SNH and FC, advice is being provided on habitat management for *Blera fallax* as required.

Hammerschmidtia ferruginea – Aspen Hoverfly

Conservation status:

- endangered UK status confirmed
- restricted to just 12 localities in north-east Scotland
- few of these localities are protected
- breeds in wet decay under the bark of recently fallen trees and branches of aspen, *Populus tremula*
- this breeding site is temporary and disappears in 1-3 years as the fallen aspen tree or branch ages, so regular input is required to ensure survival
- the amount of fallen aspen wood entering the system has decreased since the 1990s which threatens survival
- fallen aspen is the breeding site of 15 other red-listed Diptera, making it one of the richest *saproxylic* Diptera communities in the UK.

Actions being taken to ensure the survival of *Hammerschmidtia ferruginea*:

- working in partnership with owners of core aspen localities
- annual monitoring of the quality and quantity of fallen aspen at all core localities
- encouraging recovery of aspen woods by fencing and removal of rabbits
- covering selected pieces of fallen wood with wire netting to prevent grazing animals eating the bark
- where this does not threaten existing aspen woodland and there is a clear need, cutting down selected trees to increase the amount of breeding resource.

Summary of 2006 survey work

- All key sites visited for the first time since 2000
- Individual management reports are completed or are being completed for key sites – these to be passed to owners
- The amount of suitable trees available for *Hammerschmidtia* larvae is higher than we have recorded
- Estimated of larval numbers are the highest we have recorded – almost 4x the 2000 figure
- The current amount of fresh dead wood in the system is high – but action is needed to ensure that best use is made of it for *Hammerschmidtia*
- At present only a small % of the population is in logs created by active management
- With a small amount of cutting this year there is the potential for further population growth in the next 4-5 year period

The trapping / mark / release study is already producing a significant amount of new information on the autecology of this species which in future can be incorporated into management actions.

Estimated *Hammerschmidtia* population size in Scotland between 2000 and 2006

year	sites	suitable trees	est. population
2000	7	27	295
2003	6	28	525
2005	6	15	325
2006	8	28	1115

Key reference:

Rotheray, G.E. and MacGowan, I. 2000. Status and breeding sites of three presumed endangered Scottish *saproxylic syrphids* (Diptera, Syrphidae). *Journal of Insect Conservation* 4, 215-223.

Clusoides geomyzinus - Pine Heart-Wood Fly

This species has shown a marked decline during 20th century with only two known recent records from Strathspey. it is closely associated with Caledonian pinewoods and old pine plantations, where the larvae are believed to develop in decaying pine stumps.

Contrary to a common assumption many native pinewoods are not optimal for saproxylic insect populations - there is often not enough natural input of dead wood and cutting and felling have virtually ceased. Many populations occur in plantations outwith protected areas. *C. geomyzinus* is a flagship species for conifer stumps where a range of other rare invertebrates and lichens are found. Again these mainly occur in plantations but are often destroyed by forestry machinery or are treated with antifungal agents. We consider that after a period of research management actions could be identified.

Survey is needed to find any new sites, monitoring is needed to understand the status of the species at existing sites, research to understand the autecology and to develop any possible management treatments. This data is needed to allow reporting against success criteria.

Rhamphomyia hirtula - Mountain Dance-Fly

Rhamphomyia hirtula - the mountain dance-fly - is only found on the highest of the Scottish mountains. It is one of **the most vulnerable species** in the British Isles with respect to the potential effects of climatic change, in particular to any rise in annual temperatures. Mountain insects, with their annual life cycles and ability to move to higher altitudes relatively quickly, are likely to be one of the most sensitive indicators of change in upland habitats. This species also has the potential to act as a flagship species for monitoring climate change due to the fact that there is detailed baseline data on distribution and altitude range available from work carried out in the Scottish Highlands during the 1990s.

The adult is a typical dance-fly, almost entirely grey in body colour with long legs and long, narrow wings. males have a club ended abdomen whilst females have a slender tipped abdomen

Biodiversity Action Plan proposals include survey, which is needed to find any new sites, monitoring is needed to understand the status of the species at existing sites and determine if there has been any change in altitudonal distribution during the past 15 years. This data is needed to allow reporting against success criteria.

Species Data :

Flight period - mid June to mid July

Altitudinal range - 800 - 1100m

Known British specimens - about 40

Number of 10Km square records - 6

Vice counties - Argyll, S. Aberdeen, Banff, Easterness, Forfar.

Lonchaea ragnari - The large birch lance-fly

This species is considered as a flagship for saproxylic insects which occur in ancient boreal birch woodland. Most woodland types have Species Action Plan species - for example inclusion of the aspen hoverfly has done a huge amount to focus attention on the importance of boreal aspen stands. Mature or over mature birch woods in the Scottish highlands are a neglected resource and are in need of futher attention, protection and management. This species is important both in UK and European terms.

It might be possible to tell how much birch woodland there is in Scotland but there are no estimates of the area of “high quality” old birch stands. There are many saproxylic insects primarily associated with ancient boreal birch woodland and these will benefit from an increased focus on this habitat type. Several rare or restricted species of beetle, flies and moth also utilise these ancient birches.

Work required:

- determining the location of key populations in Scotland.
- Research into the autecology and life history of this species.

- Knowledge about the insect's life history and requirements needs to be translated into management advice and action.
- Survey is needed to establish the extent and condition of these ancient birchwoods and to find any new sites for *Lonchaea ragnari*, monitoring is needed to understand the status of the species at existing sites. This data is needed to allow reporting against success criteria.

Iain MacGowan, Malloch Society,
c/o Iain MacGowan, Scottish Natural Heritage, Battleby, Redgorton, Perth PH1 3EW, Scotland; e-mail: Iain.macgowan@snh.gov.uk

If after reading all this you feel that we should stop talking and rather start to help our threatened species, then please get in contact – you might be able to help!

Barbara Ismay

Budget cuts threaten biodiversity

The following self-explanatory protest letter was published in the *Guardian* on Thursday January 17, 2008 (http://www.guardian.co.uk/letters/story/0,,2241916,00.html) under the signatories of eight of Britain's most influential wildlife conservation organisations.

> *It is barely a year since the government established Natural England as "a powerful new champion of nature". This commitment has quickly evaporated. Defra now seeks cuts of over 15% to Natural England's core budget, threatening the loss of up to 150 highly experienced staff or major cuts to core conservation programmes. Even more cuts are planned for 2009-10. Our country has suffered relentless biodiversity loss over recent decades, The government has promised both the EU and its own electorate that this will be halted and reversed by 2010. It will not be possible to meet this goal and do other vital work mitigating climate change, if it cuts its frontline delivery agency.*
>
> *Our groups have pledged hundreds of thousands of hours of volunteer labour and millions of pounds to help the government meet this biodiversity target. To have the rug pulled from under us at this late stage would be the bitterest of setbacks. We urge the government to reverse these damaging cuts and to honour its commitment to conserving the natural world and the UK's wildlife.*
>
> **Dr Martin Warren, Chief executive, Butterfly Conservation**
> **Amy Coyte, Chief executive, Bat Conservation Trust**
> **Matt Shardlow, Director, Buglife**
> **Dr Tony Gent, Chief executive, Herpetological Conservation Trust**
> **Victoria Chester, Chief executive, Plantlife**
> **Dr Mark Avery, Director of conservation, RSPB**
> **Stephanie Hilborne, Chief executive, The Wildlife Trusts**
> **Glyn Davies, Director of programmes, WWF-UK**

Budget cuts of the kind which are described above have a 2-pronged effect on nature conservation in Britain. On the one hand, the loss of experienced technical staff in a government conservation body limits the ability of that body to monitor biodiversity and to plan, initiate and evaluate activities to maintain it. Replacement of such staff at short notice is likely to be well-nigh impossible. On the other hand, the reduced budget means that significantly less money is available to sponsor those activities which are planned. Such activities are to a large extent performed by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as those signatory to the letter above.

Government sponsorship via the statutory conservation bodies such as Natural England are not the only source of income for the conservation NGOs, they also receive income from private membership subscriptions, bequests, donations and grants for funding specific projects from the Heritage Lottery Fund. However, in the current economic climate with its threat of recession, and with heavy demands for financial support arising from the impending London Olympics, significantly less money can be expected to be available to support causes such as wildlife conservation projects than in the past.

So the financial outlook for wildlife conservation and maintenance of biodiversity in the short term appears grim. To obtain some understanding of the way in which the current funding situation is effecting

the operations of a typical NGO, Buglife (The Invertebrate Conservation Trust) was asked to explain its role in biodiversity conservation and how it is coping with funding ongoing projects. Their reply is set out in the following article.

Malcolm Smart, Vice Chairman

Dipterists Forum (DF) is a member of Buglife, meaning that DF is a stakeholder in that organisation with AGM voting rights. We have worked together with Buglife on a number of BAP themes, including the special species of BAP Priority Habitats and the selection of the recent tranche of BAP Priority Species. Various DF members have been participating in Buglife projects on BAP Species Action Plans and on the fly faunas of Exposed Riverine Sediments (ERS) and Ditches of Grazing levels.

How the budget situation effects Buglife and the delivery of invertebrate conservation

Conservation delivery is via government (and its agencies) and the non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Buglife, and indeed the Dipterists Forum count as NGOs. The agencies administer statutory functions and the NGOs are free of government constraints. That has been a complementary partnership all along, and enshrined in the government Biodiversity Action Plan.

In better financial times, the agencies had various budgets to fund or contract projects by NGOs and others, and in total that included an impressive array of invertebrate work. The agencies for Wales, Scotland, and now England embrace what used to be Countryside Commission roles in the wider countryside, including public amenity. In Wales and England farm payments for sympathetic land management are included. There are pros and cons to embracing these wider remits, but there can be big problems when policies and budgets are tied in to broader country or national government demands. Natural England and The Countryside Council for Wales in particular have very tight budgetary limitations, now resulting in little or no scope to fund outside work. In subjects such as invertebrates, where internal expertise is sparse, the budget restraints hit particularly hard.

So how do NGOs tap into other funding sources? It depends on objectives. There are numerous charities but nearly all are 'people' focused (health, the poor, children and the aged etc). A small proportion of them regard environment or environmental education as within their realm. A wildlife trust may find funding for nature reserve management (planting trees, or kids bashing down bushes) and for education (nature trails, visitor centres). Buglife is off-centre (not birds or mammals) and very few trusts support the more serious end of conservation. We could possibly find plenty of funding for introducing primary school kids to invertebrates (secondary schools too preoccupied with curricula), but that does not address the urgent issues relating to halting the decline of invertebrates.

The Heritage Lottery Fund has been a major source of funding for the conservation movement, especially for land purchase and the management of reserves. Again, most funding streams are geared solely to people, and the environmental examples mentioned are also people orientated. Thus funding bids have to be carefully designed around involving lots of people, with the risk of deflecting from the best scientific outcome. But the deflection of £2-3 billion to the London Olympics has massive consequences for all charities, decreasing the odds for a successful bid, and especially for the sort of work that Buglife regards as truly worthwhile.

There are other factors. The trend has been towards matching funding, typically 10-50%. That means a successful bid for any source of funding is just a start to the problems. The race is then on to squeezing blood out of stones before a dead-line for deployment of the original sum. In practice one has to have lots of balls in the air at once. And planning becomes more difficult when bid decisions are postponed yet again 'until the next panel meeting'. Industry and commercial sources take years to tap into (they already back longer established organisations) or their pound of flesh demanded in return carries unacceptable conditions/ethical conundrums.

Buglife was established to fill a big gap in conservation NGOs. The first staff were appointed in early 2002. By last December it had 10 staff, including one based in its Scottish Office in Stirling. The first five years were make or break, since the new boy on the NGO block had to establish its credentials. By that measure,

hitting the ground running to rise to the BAP challenge has been a success.

The immediate project was to review the special invertebrate faunal and its management needs for the BAP Priority Habitats. That was via Defra 50% funding. That is so often the rub since to find matching funds to close the gap can be ghastly (and not fully achieved in that project), but it was a one-off opportunity Buglife had to take to get street credibility. More recently Buglife managed a project on the revision of BAP Priority Species, with Dipterists Forum taking a major role on the flies. Buglife's 'All of a Buzz' project in the Thames Gateway is partly English Nature funded, a last ditch stand to save the special brownfield faunas in the face of government policy to selectively build on brownfield land: and now there are 2 categories of brownfield accorded BAP Priority Habitat Status, all be it that Natural England has no formal policy for this habitat. Other habitat based projects have included ones on the faunas of soft rock cliffs, exposed riverine sediments and aggregate quarrying. Buglife achieved the impossible by getting a sheep-dip chemical withdrawn for sale, having assembled evidence that 1000 miles of river per year were being stripped of invertebrate life. Buglife interceded on the Clean Neighbourhoods Bill, as the only organisation that spotted that if anyone could complain about nuisance insects coming from businesses, that applied to farmland and land being managed for conservation (practically all wildlife NGOs run as businesses). What started as an innocuous horse welfare bill turned out to be a camouflaged campaign to eradicate ragwort, which Buglife pointed out was the sole foodplant for 30 species of invertebrates, including some flies, let alone the value of it's flowers for pollen and nectar. Defra guidelines take that into account.

SNH has contracted the Initiative for Scottish Invertebrates to draw up a priory programme for Scottish invertebrates; the project is run by Buglife in conjunction with the Initiative for Scottish Invertebrates (ISI). Buglife also appointed a water projects officer last year to increase the focus in that area.

However, with a heavy dependence on the flow of new project funds, we enter an uncertain phase. Continuous growth cannot be expected as the norm, but it will be essential to build-up reliable funding streams that see us through the hard times as well as the good. As is apparent above, a very rough patch in funding lies ahead and that includes the curse of gaining matching funding in time. The formula requires a meaningful element of predictable income on which to plan.

It would not have been possible to launch Buglife as a fully functioning organisation without starter core funding. That came with two initial legacies, and two others since, amounting in total to over £350,000 (making government contribution to 'partnership' look very uneven). The level of support has since decreased, making it necessary for Buglife to look for further sources of funding.

This is where a large number of subscriptions come in handy: from Friends (= individuals) or Members (= societies, at a minimal sub). After 6 years, Buglife only has about 740 Friends (and that is after a lot of effort trying different methods of approach). Curiously, about half the Friends are ladies of Saga age, yet ladies interested in invertebrates are hugely out-numbered by men. Names identifiable as entomologists or other invertebrate adherents are only about 10% of the total.

Some NGOs spend much of their membership subscription on glossy magazines. Buglife uses E-mail newsletters (with colour pictures) or black and white paper copy so that subscription income can be used where it is needed.

Please reflect on the above. You may not agree with every nuance. However, the underlying question is whether there is a need for a strong Buglife to carry thorough the NGO commitment towards BAP invertebrates, in association with akin NGOs. And, of course, it is more than BAP, as the legislative and policy examples above indicate. Buglife needs more entomologists (and others) to join as a Friend. Agencies cannot row the boat alone, funding is getting ever tighter, and the NGOs have to weather through and try to keep the invertebrate agenda in prominence and take the actions required.

The Buglife website (http://www.buglife.org.uk/) Buglife, 179A, Peterborough PE1 4DS.

Alan Stubbs, Buglife Chairman

Inquiry on systematics & taxonomy

Matt Shardlow circulated the following invitation to submit evidence to the follow-up inquiry on systematics and taxonomy. Unfortunately the closing date was too short for the Bulletin to act as a vehicle for informing members in time but it has been widely circulated by email and I trust the following is still of interest to members. Mike Wilson of Cardiff Museum responded to my circulation, telling me that it was the first time he had received full details. Other known respondents to the inquiry are Paul Harding on behalf of the National Federation for Biological Recording (specifically to parts of questions 2, 7 & 8), Trevor James on behalf of the National Biodiversity Network and John Newbould for the Yorkshire Naturalists Union. If Dipterists Forum has missed an opportunity for its own specific response I think we can be reasonable certain that appropriate comments have been made by others.

The second part of the following notice, detailing methods by which evidence should be submitted, has been omitted.

Darwyn Sumner

House of Lords Science and Technology Committee

Call for evidence: Systematics and taxonomy

The House of Lords Science and Technology Committee, chaired by Lord Sutherland of Houndwood, is announcing a follow-up inquiry on systematic biology research and taxonomy. The inquiry will provide an assessment on the state of the field five years after the Committee's last report ('*What on earth? The threat to the science underpinning conservation*') in the context of new scientific, technological and policy developments.

The Committee invites evidence on the following questions. Witnesses are encouraged to focus on those issues of which they have particular knowledge or experience - submissions are not required to cover all questions.

The state of systematics and taxonomy research

1 What is the state of systematics research and taxonomy in the UK? What are the current research priorities? What are the barriers, if any, to delivering these priorities?

2 What is the role of systematics and taxonomy and, in particular, in what way do they contribute to research areas such as biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services and climate change? How important is this contribution and how is it recognised in the funding process? How is systematics integrated in other areas of research?

3 Does the way in which systematics research is organised and co-ordinated best meet the needs of the user community? What progress has been made in setting up a body to lead on this? What contribution do the leading systematics research institutions make both nationally and internationally?

4 What level of funding would be needed to meet the need for taxonomic information now and in the future? Who should be providing this funding?

5 How does funding in other countries compare? Could there be more international collaboration? If so, what form should this collaboration take and how might it be achieved?

6 What impact have developments in DNA sequencing, genomics and other new technologies had on systematics research? In what way has systematics embraced new technologies and how can these research areas interact successfully and efficiently?

Data collection, management, maintenance and dissemination

7 Does the way in which taxonomic data is collected, managed and maintained best meet the needs of the user community? What is the state of local and national recording schemes?

8 What is the role of the major regional museums and collections? How are taxonomic collections curated and funded?

9 What progress has been made in developing a web-based taxonomy? How do such initiatives fit

in with meeting demand for systematics and taxonomy information? How do UK-led initiatives fit in with international initiatives and is there sufficient collaboration?

10 What needs to be done to ensure that web-based taxonomy information is of high quality, reliable and user-friendly?

11 How does the taxonomic community engage with the non-taxonomic community? What role do field studies play?

Skills base

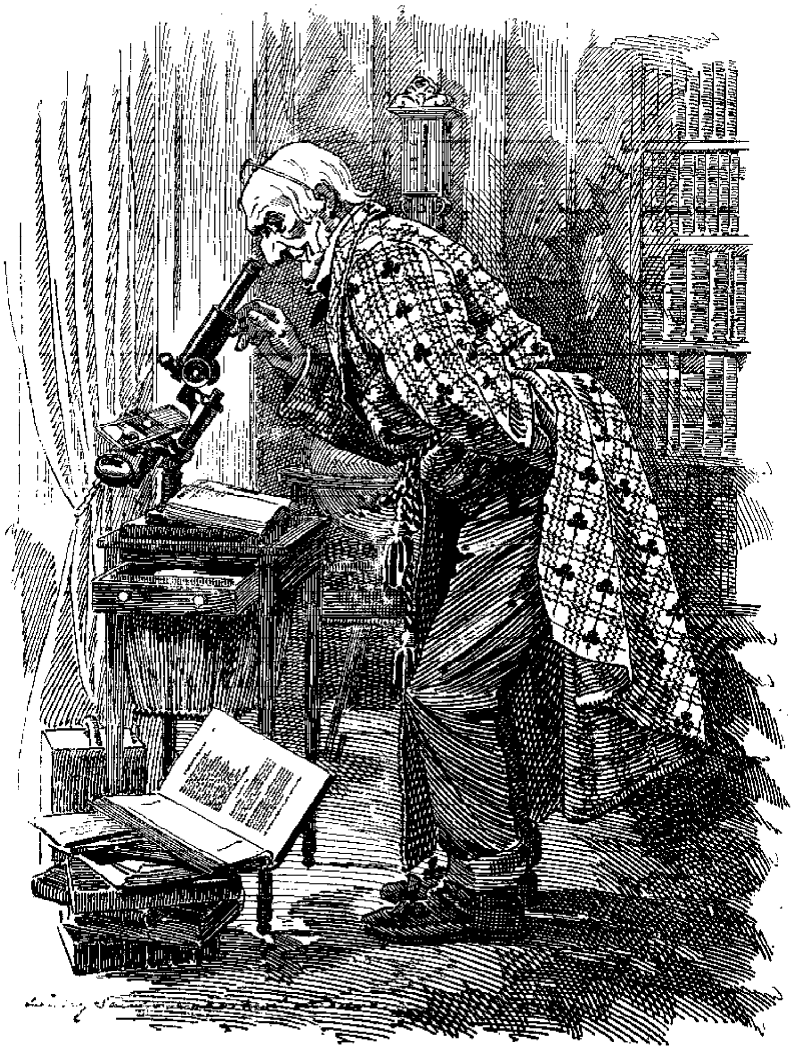
12 What are the numbers and ages of trained taxonomists working in UK universities and other organisations?

13 What is the state of training and education in systematics and taxonomy? Are there any gaps in capacity? Is the number of taxonomists in post, and those that are being trained, sufficient to meet current and future needs across all taxonomic subject areas?

For further information on the inquiry please contact Cathleen Schulte, Committee Specialist, either by telephone: 020 7219 2491 or email: schultec@parliament.uk

You Say Potato, I Say *Solanum tuberosum*, Lets Call the Whole Thing Off

How refreshing to find that English names are coming to rescue dipterology from the scientific nomenclature and clarity of understanding which so undermines the subject. One only has to look at recent trends in medical terminology to realize that use of Latin threatens to lend death from microbial pathogens an undeserved seriousness, thus detracting from its trivial nature. Consider how the familiar Gut-dwelling Crap-guzzling Weebeasty (*E. coli*) or Deficient Healthcare Weebeasty (*C. difficile*) are now taken seriously whereas before they received Latin names, nobody knew or cared about them? Let's rid dipterology of all trace of elitist reason & science lest we fall into the same trap & impair our ability to become nomenclaturally confused or sit on committees discussing Biodiversity Inaction Plans (BIPs) while species go extinct. We all call a *Chrysanthemum* a *Chrysanthemum* so why invent a senseless scientific name for it eh?



I fully commend the need for rules governing how we use English names but also insist that we simultaneously employ multilingual synonyms in Welsh, Gaelic, Manx and Cornish as stipulated by the ICZN (International Code for Zoological Nonsense). The Code requires that dipterists not using multilingual labels have their genitalia removed and placed in vials alongside the specimen. It is, for instance, quite unacceptable that the Borders Dancefly (*Empis limata)* – which probably has the majority of its population in Wales, should not also be known by its Welsh equivalent- *Pryf Dawns y Terfyn*. Many feel that the code does not go far enough on this sensitive issue and that the vernacular should be a hybrid nomenclature of both the English & Welsh constructed by alternating the letters of the two languages:- thus *E. limata* would become *Bporrydfedrasn Dsayntceerfflyyn*. This has the dual advantage of removing the confusion surrounding the arcane *Empis limata* at the same time as creating a vernacular which is easy to pronounce by both English & Welsh speakers. Those with strong regional affinities may not be aware that regional dialects are also accommodated in the Code, thus a Londoner for example, is fully permitted

to employ Cockney rhyming slang:-e.g. *Yellow Splinter – Chinaman's Sphincter* for *Lipsothrix nervosa*.

The ICZN demands that for English and other vernacular names to be valid, they must have been published in a proper journal (e.g. *Journal of Improbable Research* or the *Sun* newspaper) and incidentally prohibits the use of the word 'fly' as this is preoccupied by 'river fly', a term used for what elitist egg-head boffins call Ephemeroptera and Plecoptera (Uglice, 2001). The Code usefully embraces developments in molecular taxonomy and in a recent opinion, allows a gene sequence to be used as a synonym of the English name:- thus the Common Beer-swilling Fruitfly (*Drosophila melanogaster*) may also be known as CAGGATCCCTGAT …….CGTTA etc., (pure poetry! doesn't it just roll off the tongue?). This rule has the added benefit that for its 180mb genome, the 37,500 pages of text required to write its name will ensure that *quasi*-taxonomists will never have to do any serious work again or take any real conservation decisions before the entire world forest resource is destroyed and all insects are extinct. Upyres & Yutosher (2007) have proposed an interesting extension of this ruling whereby English literary and artistic expression as well as succinctness could be greatly improved, without any loss in taxonomic inaccuracy, by spurious and random addition of extra alphabetical characters to the genetic code.

The ICZN requires diligent political correctness and disallows names such as the Black-rimmed Hunchback (*Ogcodes pallipes*) which is clearly racist, homophobic and discriminatory against the physically disadvantaged. Indeed, such names are readily avoided by applying the Code's ARSES system of acronyms (Watt & Thymevaister, 2008); for example, the unnecessarily pornographic and militaristic Long-horned Soldier (*Vanomyia tenuicornis*) and the Pygmy Soldier (*Oxycera pygmaea*), which deprecates those of diminutive stature, could usefully be replaced by acronyms such as LO-SOD and PYS respectively and would retain a more meaningful rapport with the sort of *quasi*-taxonomist that might use them.

Finally, it is often claimed that we should use English names as they are more likely to be utilized by Journalists. Perhaps, but as I have already illustrated, even scientific names can be taken seriously when associated with serious issues:- something we must avoid at all cost if we are to achieve anything unproductive like furthering BIPs or accelerating the current Mass Extinction Event. Given that journalists will say anything as long as they gain financially and that the message serves the vested political interest of their employers (Scumbag et al., 1996), we must be scrupulous in trivializing any material we supply them with and ensure that it is as inaccurate and irresponsibly interpreted as we can make it. If we keep them occupied with trivia there is far less chance that they will see biodiversity as a significant issue and we can continue to dumb-down the significance of our science while presiding over ecological collapse without ever having to move out of Committee.

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Uglice, B (2001) An arbitrary and utterly puerile name change inspired by conversations with fairies at the bottom of my garden. *Flat Earth Society Journal 12: 23-12342.*

Watt, A. & Thymevaister, U. R. (2008). Inside ARSES (**A R**elatively **S**imple **E**ntomological **S**ystematics):- understanding the new approach to deriving entomological acronyms through intensive proctiger auto-examination. *Annals of Anal Retentivity; (Part B; Stuff & Nonsense)*, in press.

Adrian Rant

Adrian Rant is an elitist egg-head boffin and entom…… somebody interested in creepy-crawly thingies based in Wales.

International Simuliidae Symposium

The Third International Simuliidae Symposium will be held from 9th to 12th September 2008 in Vilnius, Lithuania. For further information, please see the Symposium website (http://entomologai.gamtoj.com/simuliidae2008/) or contact the Symposium secretary, Dr Rasa Bernotiene (rasa.bernotiene@biopolis.lt).

Adrian Pont

Buglife news

Diptera of Exposed Riverine Sediment

Some additional links are now available on our website for reports and papers connected with the Diptera of Exposed Riverine Sediment Project

Firstly Andy Godfrey's report on his work on *Rhabdomastix laeta* is linked. Andy Godfrey during his research on BAP cranefly *Rhabdomastix laeta* found that many original *R. laeta* records were for the wrong species! Consequently most of the previous records for *R. laeta* were actually for *R. japonica*. However, a true *R. laeta* record was found on a sandy Devon river in 2004, this was record was reconfirmed by this survey. For more information on this research see the link below to the report and appendices.

Also copies of Martins papers in the Dipterist Forum on three new fly species to Britain: *Rhaphium suave*, *Hilara tenella* and *Hilara aartseni*, which were found during the research. These are now available on the website:

http://www.buglife.org.uk/conservation/currentprojects/projectsfliesofsandyexposedriverinesediments.htm

If anyone wants a paper copy of Andy's report please let me know; any further queries or comments please get in touch.

Vicky Kindemba (Wilkins) - Freshwater Officer Buglife - The Invertebrate Conservation Trust

Membership matters

The Numbers of Members & Subscribers on the 31st December 2007 is as follows :

Dipterists Forum Members 307 Subscribers 294

This list is still current, awaiting membership renewals for this year.

The Breakdown of these figures is as follows :

There are 261 UK based Members & Subscribers to both Dipterists forum & Dipterists Digest

There are 20 Overseas Members & Subscribers to both Dipterists forum & Dipterists Digest

Some 25 UK Members and 1 Oversea Member are Dipterists forum Only = 26

And some 3 UK and 10 Overseas are Subscribers to the Dipterists Digest Only (13)

(This amounts to a total of 320 individuals)

We have had some **26 Members join during 2007**. However, some 11 individuals have left the Forum, although I expect a few of those to eventually return. This has resulted in a net gain of some 15 Members.

There are an additional 13 individuals whose Membership started on the 1st Jan 2008 and at the time of writing (23rd January 2008) another 5 Members have joined. There are a still a small number of members & subscribers who continue to pay at the old rate, I would be grateful, if those who have yet to top up their membership fees could please do so or pay me in person if you wish, I plan to be at all the main entomo-

logical events this autumn. (see Forthcoming Meetings for Mick's notice about the AES meeting)

There will also be a Dipterists Forum stall at the Amateur Entomologists Exhibition on Saturday October 18th October 2008, at Kempton Park Racecourse, Starting at 11.00am.

More details are available from the AES Website http://www.amentsoc.org/exhibition.htm

This will be manned by various Committee members, and advice on a wide range of issues including all membership issues can possibly be resolved there. Back issues of the Dipterists Digest will also be on sale, all members & potential members are welcome to introduce themselves.

Mick Parker

Members email addresses

Dipterists Forum maintains a list of the email addresses of members as part of the contact information we hold. At present, we have an email address for just over half of the membership, although there is a strong chance that some of these are out of date! These are used from time to time to circulate urgent notices, such as reminders about meetings or matters relating to the business of the Forum. We would like to use this mechanism rather more in future to keep you informed and up to date about what the Forum is up to.

Whether or not you think we already know your email address, could you please send an email to our Membership Secretary, Mick Parker: jmparker_87@hotmail.com so that he can check the list and make sure your entry is correct and current. It doesn't actually need to say anything apart from who you are if that is not already obvious from the address itself.

Go on, do it now before you forget.

Stuart Ball & Mick Parker

Mick tells us that he has records of 189 members with email and 150 without and Stuart says that according to the Office for National Statistics, 61% of Households in the UK had Internet access by the end of 2007(Ed)

Vacancies on the Committee

The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and other elected Officers with specific responsibilities (detailed below) require annual nomination and election. The constitution (7c) requires nominations 120 days in advance of the AGM. Ordinary elected Committee Members serve for two years, half of the team standing down each year (7f).

Please send your proposals for any of these posts, with a seconder, to the Secretary before July 31st 2008.

Chair	Stuart Ball (Proposed)
Vice Chair	John Ismay
Secretary	**John Kramer**
Treasurer	Vacancy
Membership Secretary	**Mick Parker**
Field Meetings Secretary	**Roger Morris**
Indoor Meetings Secretary	**David Heaver**
Bulletin Editor	**Darwyn Sumner**
Publicity Officer	**Judy Webb**
Website Manager	**Stuart Ball**
Conservation/BAP Officer	**Barbara Ismay**
Committee Members	**1. Chris Spilling**
	2. Peter Boardman (Posts 1 & 2 elected 2007)
	3. Alan Stubbs
	4. Malcolm Smart (Proposed)

Posts 3 and 4 will stand for election at the 2008 AGM (to be held at the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. Saturday Nov 22, 2008)

John Kramer

Review

Microscopy

Lighting

It seems that my do-it-yourself item on microscope illuminators using white light-emitting diodes (LEDs) was quite timely. The manufacturers of microscope lighting have been giving this matter some thought as well. Whilst investigating a microscope purchase for Leicestershire County Council's museum service I happened across a couple of sources for LED lighting systems. First of all was a rather smart-looking piece of kit from one of the "big four", Olympus, who now produce a series known as VisiLED.

The principle of these lighting systems is very simple and they have considerable advantages over the goosenecked cold light systems:

• the power demand is extremely low so the control unit is small, releasing acres of bench space,

• the weight of the lights themselves is so small that they can be mounted onto your microscope's objective (which must be circular and less than 61mm in diameter so sadly not for Watson users but does have the bonus that it could be strapped around a camera lens for non-flash macrophotography),

• there is no risk of knocking the lights out of alignment as occurs with goosenecks,

• there is no need to be continually adjusting the position of the lighting source as one racks the focus up and down because the light moves with the microscope's objective.

- different quadrants of the circular bank of LEDs can be turned on and off - thus achieving "modelling" and avoiding the flat lighting disliked by photographers,
- good colour temperature, at 6400K this is much whiter than other lighting systems,
- the LEDs last for tens of thousands of hours.

Finally the price of such systems can be very reasonable. Sean Woodward of Wolf Laboratories Ltd (Tel 01759 301142 Fax 01759 301143 Email : sean.woodward@wolflabs.co.uk Web : www.wolflabs.co.uk On Line Shop : www.big-bad-wolf.co.uk) helpfully provided me with a list of their LED Ring Illuminators (choose from 48, 64 or 144 LEDs). The only word of caution is that the output is relatively low compared with cold light systems so you may be disappointed with units having a low number of LEDs. Check the internet too for similar models - you may find some bargains.

I'm delighted with my 144 LED unit, now my sole lighting system, and anticipate much interest at the Dipterist Forum workshops and Field Weeks.

Darwyn Sumner

Technique

Some novel suggestions for the collection and study of Diptera from carrion

Abstract

Many Diptera make use of carrion as a suitable food source and habitat for their larvae. Much like dung carrion is a transient habitat, and collecting opportunities can appear at rather the most surprising times in both rural and urban areas. Larval rearing is relatively easy and informative and can provide many adult specimens. This paper aims to provide a few new suggestions to collecting and studying carrion frequenting diptera as well as highlighting a few of the problems.

Report

There are two main ways of studying carrion frequenting Diptera, the first is by attracting Diptera using a carrion bait, and the second is by finding carrion in the field, both situations provide interesting challenges, a few suggestions for carrion bait studies can be found in Dear (1978), Erzinclioglu (1996) and Smith (1986), however it is worth mentioning that Diptera is not the only thing that is attracted to carrion, as well as Coleoptera and Hymenoptera, vertebrate scavengers such as foxes, and sometimes humans will remove unprotected carrion, the best way around this is to fashion a scavenger proof cage, a simple way of doing this is to attach a shopping basket to steel mesh using jubilee clips and pad locks (Figure 1), this can then be attached to the ground using tent pegs, the benefit of this is it also helps to prevent *Nicrophorus* beetles (Coleoptera, Silphidae) from burying the carrion as was reported by Terrell-Nield and MacDonald (1997), it is also wise to paint such a cage in matt black, as bright colours can attract unwanted visitors. During the summer of 2006 anti scavenger cages were tested in a small patch of woodland in suburban Nottingham, in total 16 rats were used as bait for carrion feeding invertebrates, 8 were protected by chicken wire attached to the ground with tent pegs, and 8 were in the anti scavenger cages shown in figure 1, the first of the chicken wire protected rats was removed by vertebrate scavengers on the eighth day of the experiment with the remaining rats being removed on the ninth day, the anti scavenger cages withstood vertebrate scavengers for over 24days despite repeated digging attempts by vertebrates it is worth noting that one of the cages was pried open with some form of tool by local vandals hence the recommendation that cages be painted to look as inconspicuous as possible, it is worth noting that with the high temperatures of 2006 and the small size of the rats the cage made the difference between first and second wave succession (typified by *Calliphora* spp and *Lucilia* spp respectively) and forth wave succession (Typified by *Fannia* spp) and as previously stated the unvandalised cages where still is a condition to protect the carrion indefinitely

Figure 1- A simple anti scavenger cage for carrion studies

For collection in the field it first must be realised that it is very hard, if even possible to predict where and when one will stumble across carrion. So a few points must be considered:

A kit should be compact, (even more so than standard Field kit) to allow for it to be carried at all times, a spring frame aerial net is prefect for carrion flies and takes up little space. For collecting larvae from carrion a teaspoon that is bent at right angles is a useful addition. A wide mouth jar of about 10cm in height and 5cm in width serves a multitude of purposes when combined with the right equipment. For example it can be effortlessly turned into a kill-jar by the addition of a nail varnish remover pad (with either acetone or ethyl acetate as the active ingredient), the key part of this is that the nail varnish remover pad is sealed in an individual package, meaning the killing agent is non-perishable. Larvae can be brought home for rearing in the wide mouth jar, the best way to do this is in a similar manor to the methods described in Haskell (1990), in that larvae is provided with a food source in a pouch fashioned from tin foil, this is then placed on a bed of vermiculite (which can be placed in the kit bag in grip seal bag) or soil from the area where the carrion is found, the jar can then have a piece of muslin placed over the top of it, which is held in place with a elastic band. An ideal food source is cat food which can be purchased in individual sachets, meaning the food can be left in a kit back and is non-perishable. Larvae collected in such a manor

will use the vermiculite/soil substrate as a pupation medium. A trowel can be used to search for pupa in the ground surrounding carrion. Killing larvae for study is done by immersion in hot water (Brindle and Smith, 1978) a good tool to do this is a tea infuser; this allows for immersion and extraction of the larvae with ease, the “tong” type work very well, however all types would appear to work. A quick note on hot water for larval fixation, while it is advisable to carry a thermos of hot water, as this kit is designed to be “non-perishable” and as such always at the ready, a thermos might be the only part that is not practical, Goff (2001) suggests that many cafes and fast food restaurants will sell a cup of hot water to the entomologist in need.

A Couple of pairs of protective gloves and a dust mask are a good idea to include as carrion can contain dangerous bacteria and fungi, on this note it is worth reiterating Irwin (1978) that conventional pooters are not recommended for carrion, a mechanical pooter or a blow pooter are suggested. Also handy is a bottle of alcohol to use not only as a preservative but also to wash down tools. As always a selection of specimen jars is handy to have, as are a pair of forceps, scissors and an artist paint brush. A final note on collecting equipment deals with the smell that is associated with carrion, one very useful item is medicated vapour rub, a small amount placed under the nose prior to collecting makes the task much more pleasant.

The identification of carrion frequenting Diptera presents new challenges, the Dipterous fauna varies as the carrion ages, and accounts of the succession of diptera can be found in Dear (1978), the succession of invertebrates on carrion can be found in Smith (1973). Identification of Larvae found on Carrion can present a number of Difficulties, Firstly the literature on larval identification if such literature exists for the group in question is fragmented among books and journal articles, and may need compiling. Byrd and Castner (2001) recommend rearing larvae to adulthood for identification purposes with a sample of larvae preserved in spirit. Of the major groups of primary colonisers Muscidae is the only family to be given a complete treatment (Skidmore, 1985), fragmentary keys to Calliphoridae can be found in Smith (1973 and 1986) and Erzinclioglu (1985, 1987, 1988, 1996 and 1997). Further references to larval keys to different families where they existed at time of publication can be found in Smith (1986).

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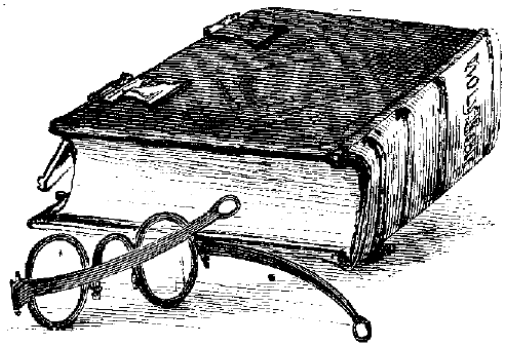
Publications

Running a Biological Recording Scheme or Survey

A handbook to help scheme or society administrators

Trevor James, NBN Development Officer for National Societies & Recording Schemes, September 2007



Wicken Fen: Recording and Research 2007

The National Trust has issued a newsletter: Wicken Fen: Recording and Research 2007.

7956 species are now recorded across all animal & non-animal taxa, of which 1891 are flies (Ivan Perry is a major contributor).

Meetings

Reports

Workshop 2007

Preston Montford - March 16 - 18

A highly successful meeting, Alan Stubbs and Darwyn Sumner made presentations of Sciomyzidae and Stuart Ball Scathophagidae. Identification workshops using keys prepared by Stuart & Darwyn kept participants very busy throughout the weekend. Inevitably, for me, there's a greater level of expertise amongst the participants for the subject matter I'm presenting, I'm particularly grateful to Peter Chandler who spotted a few blunders on my part and loaned me a few reference specimens for my collection. The outcomes from such workshops can be quite complex. I have many couplets to revise in my Sciomyzid keys but Stuart did his amendments fairly rapidly and has published them on the Dipterists Forum website.

Darwyn Sumner

Field Meetings in 2007

There were three meetings held in 2007. In many ways this was probably the most successful year for DF field meetings in many years. The numbers of members attending were as good as we have ever had. A total of 31 members and friends attended, many of whom managed all three meetings. It would be nice to think that we could maintain this level of activity but the indications for 2008 are that we will not see as many as previously on some trips.

Location & Date	Residential members	Day-visitors
Norfolk (May 19-20)	19	
Aberystwyth (14-20 July)	27	
Loughborough (17-21 October)	9	4

The **Norfolk Pingoes** meeting was delightfully described by **Judy Webb** in our last Bulletin and **Karen Clarke** kindly provided a novice's view of the **Summer meeting**. These meetings really are an excellent way for the novice Dipterist to learn and enjoy our hobby. The one thing we cannot guarantee is the weather, and that was very much the case at **Aberystwyth** – we arrived in pouring rain. Poor Mike Howe commented that his contractors had barely managed to do any field work as Wales had been engulfed in rain for most of the spring and summer. I think he commented that one had stuck his phone out of the car window so that Mike could listen to the rain!

We timed our visit to coincide with a few partially dry days and probably did quite well. I don't think we have any new to Britain, but the data are gradually trickling in and doubtless there will be some good records to report in due course. For me, highlights included the dunes at Popit Sands where I took *Poecilobothrus principalis*, and Gwbert Cliffs where Stuart, Alan & I investigated the remnants of cliff seepages and finally gained a nearly respectable assemblage of Strats. Cors Caron NNR was another worthwhile venue – Ivan Perry took a couple of *Dolichopus nitidus* and the following day the Peterborough mafia also paid the site a visit – I managed to secure two pairs of *D. nitidus.* I'm still working my way through material taken in Wales but think that the final list I produce will be quite respectable given the conditions and the fact that we lost two days or so to rain.

Aberystwyth was not event-free. One member, who shall be nameless, went exploring and ended up in Cardiff! That same member was observed by another group chasing some hapless horses in a field – we discovered why when he returned with some excellent specimens of *Gasterophilus intestinalis* and tales of how they were to be found (you could be arrested for this I expect).

Malcolm Smart was forced to leave us when one of his dogs had a torrential nosebleed and required

several trips to the vet (they were at his nearby holiday cottage). To cap it all, our return journey on the following Friday coincided with the torrential rainstorm that flooded much of the west-midlands. The Peterborough Mafia got through – but it was far from fun. Peter Chandler was decidedly less fortunate and had to abandon his car which required major repairs subsequently. Lets hope Cairngorm is better – I've booked good weather and hope I was first in the queue.

Our final trip of the year was to **Loughborough** (or Luge-boruge in Australian). A total of 13 members and friends was a very respectable turn-out and we enjoyed several days of late autumn sunshine and early morning mists. Last year we had a fantastic time in the rain in Radnorshire because the fungi were excellent. This year fungi were much harder to find, but we still managed to have a good trip. Loughborough has few redeeming qualities, however, apart from one or two excellent Indian restaurants. I will do better next autumn.

The field meetings programme is intended to give members an opportunity to visit new places at various times of year. In the last three years we have visited nine very different places and all have been highly enjoyable with group dynamics working well with a friendly atmosphere – they have much to offer the novice as Karen Clarke has indicated – why not give us a try?

I am taking bookings for all three of this year's meetings but must warn that Cairngorm is popular and I have just one room left (we might get a couple more if one or two members were happy to double up).

Roger Morris

Summer Field Meeting 2007

Aberystwyth 14th-20th July

Not quite a wash out!

As Andrew Halstead commented to me of the Aberystwyth summer field meeting *'It was raining heavily when I arrived and left. I seem to remember there was quite a bit of rain in the middle as well! Aber will not go down in the annals of the DF as a great place for insects. The sawflies were few in number and diversity, with no notable species recorded - although, as with the flies, some worthy records were made of some of the more common species.'*

This seems to sum up the view of several people who attended. The week is especially memorable as many of us were travelling home on Friday 20th July when 4 inches of rain fell and floods were so bad that people who had chosen the M5 were stranded in their cars overnight. It was certainly the most frightening drive home through the numerous floods past Gloucester I have ever had, but at least I got home the same day. Spare a thought for Peter Chandler, who was stuck in a flood not far from Swindon and as a result had to abandon his car for the night and subsequently needed a new engine.

So are there any good points to report to lift us out of our memories of doom and gloom from that week? I think there are.

As always, despite the rain, valuable numbers of records were added to the data for the hoverfly, cranefly and fungus gnat recording schemes. I particularly like collecting flies for these schemes where ever I go because I feel current data on distribution of flies is so important. If I cannot contribute by identifying species (because I am still very much a learner) at least I can contribute to the group effort by finding things. Also I am always astonished at the speed with which a pile of flies from a family sorted on to paper and placed in front of the expert is transformed into an accurate list of names – for speed of such transformation it is usually neck and neck between Alan Stubbs for craneflies and Peter Chandler for fungus gnats.

I remember a brilliant sunny day on Cors Caron bog when sweeping stands of pink Common Valerian I was almost as distracted by the wonderful scent it gave off as I was by the persistent local Tabanids – beautiful iridescent, green-eyed, *Chrysops relictus* buzzing me and sidling up to land on my person and net every moment I ceased frantic motion.

The sun was also out for Ynyslas Sand Dunes, where I enjoyed seeing flowers of Marsh Helleborines, ***Epipactis palustris*** in the slacks, found interesting galls on the Rest Harrow flowers and benefitted from Ivan Perry showed me exactly the right technique for catching the small spotted- wing Heleomyzid, ***Trixoscelis obscurella,*** by 'tickling' the net along the underside of marram tussocks on the fore dunes. Unfortunately I totally missed the Uiliid ***Tetanops myopinus*** which Ivan caught easily at this site.

Visiting upland oak and birch moss-covered woodlands near Dolgellau and the slopes of Cader Idris was one of the best days –particularly Coed y Gribin and the Gwynant River RSPB reserve. A memorable moment was being buzzed by a very large **Horntail** (***Urocerus gigas)*** hornet-mimic sawfly, whilst having coffee outside the Gwernan Lake Hotel. OK, so it does not belong to the Diptera, but it was a spectacular insect and my first encounter! It is worth mentioning that entomologists interested in other orders do like to come along to the DF field meetings, and we regularly have people attending to collect mainly coleoptera and hymenoptera as well as spiders. This is definitely not an exclusive club.

Earlier July rain meant unusually good amounts of fungi – boletes were up in the grounds of the university under the trees and I recorded early ***Russulas*** and frequently found the red staining Blusher (***Amanita rubescens***) in the sites visited. Other group members brought fungi back from sites when it was too rainy to sweep and I soon had a bench in the lab well stocked with pots of fungi set up to rear fungus gnats and other flies. From Myndd Marsh, Chris Spilling brought me back the biggest (and well maggotted) specimen of a **Bay Bolete** (***Boletus badius)*** I have ever seen – it needed a bucket instead of a normal rearing pot. Yes it later produced veritable clouds of fungus gnats, Muscids and Fanniids that await identification.

From a few others who have been more industrious than I at identification, I have received the following notes on species of interest.

Andrew Halstead noted tephritid ***Noeeta pupillata,*** which was found in good numbers along a flower-rich track by the railway line near Dovey Junction. For the non-Diptera, also seen there was the **bee chafer beetle, *Trichius fasciatus*.** He also swept a **5-spot ladybird, *Coccinella 5-punctata*** from river shingle vegetation at Grogwynion Nature Reserve, near Llanafan, just before the rain set in again.

Apart from the species already mentioned, Ivan Perry found the Anthomyid ***Delia penicillosa*** at Ynyslas Dunes. Ynys Hir RSPB Reserve produced the Dolichopod Hercostomus ***fulvicordis.*** From Cors Caron bog he had ***Dolichopus nitidus, Fannia tuberculata*** and the Tachinid ***Drino lota.*** From Rhos Llawr Cwrt he had ***Drino lota*** again and another Tachinid, ***Lophosia fasciata***. Mike Howe comments that both ***Fannia tuberculata*** and ***Drino lota*** are new to Wales.

The highlight of Mick Parker's records was the hoverfly ***Xylota xanthocnema*** from the RSPB reserve at Ynys-hir, and Andrew Grayson had the Acrocerid ***Paracrocera orbiculus*** from Cors Caron NNR. Peter Chandler reports the fungus gnat total for Aberystwyth was 124, with 4 Nationally Scarce (***Keroplatus testaceus, Rymosia spinipes, Macrocera fascipennis*** and ***Ectrepesthoneura colyeri***) and 1 Near Threatened (a single female of ***Neoempheria bimaculata***).

Mike Howe reports that the Athericid ***Ibisia marginata*** was taken at several sites and he had the Therevid ***Spiriverpa lunulata*** at Grogwynion, a known site. Mike is collecting together all the records from this week. He has had rather few in so far and would be keen to receive lists from those who are still working

at your identifications. I'm probably the worst culprit here, but I hope to have a list to him before the new season begins. If you attended the week, I urge you to send results to Mike - a reminder of his email is M.Howe@ccw.gov.uk. The best format is in an Excel spreadsheet, but if you can't manage that, any format will do.

Thanks are due to Roger Morris and Mike Howe for all the hard work they did in the organisation of this field week. A success in spite of the rain.

Judy Webb

Autumn Field Meeting 2007

Charnwood Forest

17-21 Oct 2007

This was based in Loughborough, Leicestershire, in bed and breakfast accommodation with evening meals out in the town. We were very lucky to have a landlady in who was happy to let us use her breakfast room in the evenings for fly sorting and pinning.

It was also helpful to have local information on good sites from Darwyn Sumner and Richard Illiffe of the Leicestershire Fungus Group. We were extremely fortunate to have dry, sunny, good collecting weather for all four days.

We first went to **Charnwood Lodge,** Leicestershire's premier reserve because of size and variety of habitat (rock outcrops, heathland, broadleaved and conifer woods, pool, grazed grassland, and un-improved meadow grassland). The broad-leaved woods and the un-improved grassland areas were good for fungi. The acid low-nutrient grassland at Charnwood Lodge was grazed by some impressive ancient breed of longhorn cattle (really long horns) and the short turf sported brilliant red and yellow **wax caps (*Hygrocybe*** species) looking like boiled sweets dropped in the grass. Near them were numerous little yellow tongue

fungi of the **fairy clubs** (***Clavulinopsis*** sp) both of these unfortunately too small to be worth collecting for the rearing of Diptera. Bigger, fleshier caps are preferred and group members found plenty for me.

The prize for sheer volume of dipteran life produced went to large cap of the **Cep *Boletus edulis,*** achieved by Roger Morris at Charnwood Lodge. I took only half of it home for rearing and after a good fungus gnat flush of the common ***Mycetophila fungorum***, large numbers of the hoverfly ***Cheilosia scutellata*** made their appearance in November. This species is a specialist bolete breeder and I had been hoping to find it after my success breeding it out of Devil's Bolete at home in Oxfordshire.

Other good sites I visited included **Ulverscroft Reserve** which was rather open birch and oak wood with acid grassland, **Jubilee Wood, Dimminsdale NR, Cloud Wood** and **Sheet Hedges wood.** I particularly liked the last site because of its ancient oak coppice stools. I'm a fan of ancient trees where ever I go and it was therefore particularly pleasing to find a very large diameter veteran hollow crab apple near the car park at Dimminsdale NR. This was measured, photographed and its position recorded by Keith Alexander for the Ancient Tree Forum register. Cloud Wood was very different to the other sites as it was on limestone with a different flora to the previous more acid sites. A re-visit to Cloud Wood in spring or summer to see the orchids in flower is definitely on my wish list. These trips are not all about going for the maximum number of flies caught (at least not for me). **Groby Pool** is a good site reputed to have rare sciomyzids, but we had rather a short time there at the end of a full day and I don't know if any were caught.

Martinshaw Wood (a Woodland Trust site) is a large woodland cut through by the M1 motorway. The east side (across the motorway bridge) is the largest area and more varied for fungi with oak, beech and conifer plantations. I think I had the most variety of fungi from here, but the sheets of the attractive lilac-purple little **Amethyst Deceiver** in **Jubilee wood** were most impressive. **Fly Agarics** (***Amanita muscaria)*** with their spectacular bright red caps dotted by white spots were everywhere and good fungus gnat rearings achieved from them. Incidentally, from a dipterological point of view, did you know that Fly Agarics are so called because they contain narcotic compounds (**ibotenic acid** and **muscazone**) and were traditionally used as an insecticide in central and eastern Europe? The caps were cut up and soaked in a saucer of milk, which both attracted and stupefied flies entering the house. Fly Agarics are, of course, poisonous to people, though some have tried eating them believing that the narcotics (hallucinogens) contained will give them a 'recreational drug' experience (historically it is thought to have been used as such by the Laps, Vikings and the Shaman priests of Siberia).

Over the four days the very good total of 73 species of fungi were identified (thanks to all group members for searching out specimens whilst sweeping) and I'm grateful to Peter Chandler for identifications of 11 species of fungus gnats which emerged from the caps I set up at home for rearing. Peter reports the total number of fungus gnats swept for the weekend was 82, but no notables.

Between the efforts of Peter Chandler and Malcolm Smart, the Charnwood catch brings the total Platypezids recorded to 7 species. This includes the second British male of ***Agathomyia lundbecki*** from Out Wood (NT area) (there are several records of females). ***A. cinerea*** was recorded from 2 sites – this is still quite local, again most records being of females as these were. The tachinids ***Phasia barbifrons*** and ***Paracraspedothrix montivaga*** were useful records. Matt Smith of the tachinid recording scheme notes that ***P. barbifrons*** was already known to have reached the north Midlands.

No doubt there will be more news on fly identifications from this trip when other members have had more time to work through their catches. If you might be interested in learning to identify fungi as well as flies, why not come along to the next autumn field meeting? I would be delighted to share my obsession.

Thanks are due to Darwyn and Joyce Sumner for the sociable evening with drinks and nibbles (which were substantially more than nibbles!) at their home.

Finally thanks to Roger Morris for again arranging a very successful and enjoyable trip and a reminder to all who attended that Darwyn Sumner has volunteered to deal with all the records generated so get your lists in as soon as maybe!

Judy Webb

Annual Meeting

DIPTERISTS' WEEKEND – AT THE HUNTERIAN MUSEUM (ZOOLOGY), GLASGOW UNIVERSITY ON 24TH AND 25TH NOVEMBER 2007

The Museum in the Zoology Department was open to members on the Friday afternoon preceeding the meeting and a few people availed themselves of the opportunity to view the collections.

The Museum opened again at 10.00am on Saturday morning and about 30 members gathered to talk over tea and biscuits. The morning talks got underway at about 10.30am in the lecture theatre when our host, **Geoff Hancock**, gave a talk on the History and Contents of the Hunterian Museum. The Museum was founded by William Hunter in 1807, and so goes back to the very earliest days of insect collecting when handmade pins were used, and even, in extremis, plant spines for tropical collections. Geoff paid especial attention to the Scottish collectors of Craneflies (Tipulidae), from James Joseph Francis Xavier King (1855-1933) and Robert Henderson (1864-1940) right up to the present day.

Steve Hewitt from Carlisle Museum, then gave a well illustrated power-point presentation on Riverine Flies. This was based on his very thorough study of river systems in the Lake District. He focussed on the Genus *Lipsothrix*, with details of methods of collecting and habitat preferences. Flies of silty, shingle, and sandy habitats such as shingle slopes, back-water channels and sandbanks were then illustrated, giving us a very thorough insight into this environment.

After coffee, the morning programme finished with talks by **David Horsfield** on Saproxylic Calyptrata, **Craig Macadam** on 'Invertebrate Conservation in Scotland' and **Ian McGowan** on 'The Conservation of Lonchaeid Flies'.

After lunch at a local pub, about 25 members gathered again at 3.00pm for the business part of the meeting, the minutes of which are printed below.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Dipterists' Forum held at the Hunterian Museum (Zoology), Glasgow University, at 3.00pm on Saturday 24th November 2007.

Chair: John Ismay. About 25 members were present.

After thanking our host, Geoff Hancock for his work and hospitality on our behalf, the Chairman opened the meeting.

1. Apologies were received from Malcolm Smart, Mick Parker and Barbara Ismay

2. Minutes and Matters arising.

The minutes of the AGM held at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, at 3.00pm on Saturday 25th November 2006 and published in the Autumn Bulletin were accepted unanimously by the meeting as a correct record.

3. Secretary's Report - John Kramer

During the past year, Forum meetings have included our Spring workshop (16-18 March 2007) at Preston Montford, this year on Sciomyzidae, led by Alan Stubbs and Darwyn Summner, and Scathophagidae, led by Stuart Ball. The Spring Field Meeting on 19th -20 May explored the Norfolk Pingos, and the Summer Field Meeting (14 – 20 July) was based at the University College of North Wales, Aberystwyth Campus. The Autumn Field Meeting from 17-21 October was based at Loughborough and explored the Charnwood Forest area of Leicestershire.

The Committee met this year in March, and July, and as usual, some of the topics discussed will be raised in the reports of the other Officers.

RECRUITMENT TO THE FORUM AND TO THE COMMITTEE

Our publicity Officer, Judy Webb, has continued to do an excellent job in highlighting the Forum's activities and you may have seen adverts in various journals. Members, too, can perhaps play a part

in enthusing, recruiting and bringing new members to field meetings.

Recruitment to the Committee is still a problem. Peter Boardman has been proposed by myself and seconded by Alan Stubbs, for one vacancy on the Committee but another vacancy for an 'Ordinary Member' still remains. Volunteers would be welcomed.

Our Treasurer, Jon Cole is retiring after 12 years of very valuable service to the Forum. If anyone wishes to volunteer for this post, their offer would be warmly received.

We will also have a vacancy for our next President to be elected at the 2008 AGM.

THE SPRING WORKSHOP

At our March Committee Meeting it was agreed to accept the offer of Sue Townsend, Head of the Preston Montford FSC, to handle the bookings for the workshop. An unintended and undesirable consequence of this has been an increase in the cost of the 2008 workshop to non members. Since this might be enough to deter any young prospective member, it is causing us to reconsider our booking procedure.

PUBLICATIONS

The Dipterists' Digest and the Bulletin maintain their excellent standards, but another year has gone by without any other major publication by the Forum. A Publications Sub-Committee (Peter Chandler, Alan Stubbs, Darwyn Sumner) has been set up charged with reviewing the scope for a revision of *The Dipterist's Handbook*, (published in 1978 by the AES) within the wider context of a broader DF publications strategy. A recent report from this group recommended the production of a revised version of the Handbook, and reminded us that the DF exists to encourage and facilitate the study of flies, also recommending that we need to be proactive in encouraging the availability of up-to-date, user-friendly keys.

This sub-committee has listed and prioritised the families of Diptera where work on keys is needed and it may well be that small teams can be formed from the DF members to work on these families. It was pointed out that this may generate its own energy and enthusiasm but it must be realistically paced.

The development of the DF website, and other internet sites, also has raised the question of what should be published as hard paper copy and what only on the web. The DF web site may be a good place to host draft keys, and news from the Recording Groups. The NBN Gateway may be the best place for Distribution Atlases of families, where updates are necessary after every season. There is therefore plenty to occupy us in the future.

With two of the Reviews of Scarce and threatened Species published, no progress has been made this year regarding the third Review on the Acalyptrates, and the Calyptrate Review.

THE BAP AND CONSERVATION ISSUES

Thanks especially to the work of Barbara, 38 BAP Diptera have now been selected, and these were listed in the last edition of the Bulletin. This list can also provide the Recording Groups with some interesting focus. Any ecological information relating to Diptera is helpful to site managers and will help to balance tendencies to manage habitats simply for the conservation of birds or wild flowers.

RECORDING SCHEMES

At the last AGM there was a request from Adrian Plant that the 14 Recording Scheme and Study Group organisers send in to the Bulletin Editor regular reports of progress and information from their groups. Darwyn reminded us that the Forum had been formed to encourage and to integrate the activities of these Recording Groups, and he said that records in the Bulletin of activities by the Groups, with a few notable exceptions, have dwindled to a fraction of what they were 12 years ago.

It must be said that progress with this fundamental aspect of our activity has been slow. Strong links between the Bulletin Editor and most of the Recording and Study Group Organisers have not yet been established, and this remains something else that we need to work on. The notable exception is the excellent Hoverfly Recording Scheme, which is an example to us all!

It may be that websites for the different Recording and Study Groups may produce the focus and activity necessary to maintain the momentum in this important area of the Forum's activities.

Simon Hayhow hopes to bring out the Larger Brachycera Atlas before retiring from his post as Organiser, and it is hoped that, thanks to David Clements, a 'Picture-winged fly' and a Conopid Atlas are also imminent. As for the Fungus Gnats' Recording Scheme, work started at the NBN to enter about 150-200,000 records from Peter Chandler's record cards, an estimated six months work, so that distribution maps will also be available for this group on the Gateway. Some 70,000 records have so far been entered and provisional maps are available for inspection at the meeting.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Spring Workshops will be held from 7-9 March 2008 at **Preston Montford** Field Study Centre, Shropshire. One will be on **Tachinid Flies**, and led by Chris Raper and Matt Smith, and the other, run in parallel by members of the Forum,, is entitled '**An Introduction to Diptera'**, The Spring Field Meeting will be held in **Swaledale** from 24th to 26th May 2008. The Summer Field Meeting will be held at **Glenmore Lodge**, in the Cairngorm Area from 28th June to 5th July, while the location for the October meeting has yet to be confirmed.

4. Treasurer's Report - Jon Cole

Jon drew the attention of the meeting to the Statement of the Account of Income and Expenditure for 2006, published in the Autumn Bulletin, and it was accepted unanimously. He drew attention to the JNCC grant paid through the Forum account to the Hoverfly Recording Scheme for an update of the statuses of the rare and threatened hoverflies. SB and RM explained that this money had been used to collect more distribution data for the Scheme.

Jon then told the meeting of his retirement from the post of Treasurer, after 12 years in office and, saying that no special financial acumen was necessary, encouraged members to volunteer and to apply for the job.

John Ismay, on behalf of the whole Dipterists Forum, warmly thanked Jon for all his work as Treasurer for the Forum, since its inception in 1996.

5. Membership Secretary's Report - Mick Parker

In the absence of Mick, the Chairman read out the following report on his behalf:

The current membership and subscriptions as follows:

Paid-up Members - 269

Non paid-up members - 42

Subscribers to DD - 256

Non-paid-up DD subscribers - 41

There were 20 new members, five of whom had joined as a result of the new publicity leaflets. There were also 19 new subscribers to the DD.

A vote of thanks was carried unanimously to Mick, and to Judy for their efforts in successfully recruiting new members.

6. Dipterists Digest Editor's Report – Peter Chandler

The position is the same as last year in that I have produced two issues, but there is still an overlap, as they were the second part for 2006 and the first for this year. It was hoped to catch up sooner and get both 2007 issues out this year but that wasn't possible due to a lot more work being required than usual on the first part of volume 14. There is sufficient material for a second 2007 issue and publication early in the new year should be possible. Future catch up will still be dependent on articles being submitted in sufficient quantity.

We changed to the new printers Henry Ling last year and the first issue printed by them used camera-ready copy, as had been supplied to Quacks. We then agreed to supply text as pdfs, which was done with

both issues printed this year. There were problems producing a pdf they could use for the first of these and it was necessary to provide the latest issue as an A5 pdf, in the size it is printed. So that they could be linked to the text in the pdf it was requested that illustrations be converted to EPS files. This was done for the colour and black and white plates and some other figures. In order to facilitate editing of future issues the instructions to authors have been amended and contributors should read these before submission.

Various problems arose during the preparation of the text along these lines, mostly due to software and the printers recommended that we invest in software compatible to achieving what they require; this is still under consideration. The printers also had problems with the plates in achieving the required colour balance but this was eventually done using a gloss paper, although the results for the other colour figures were quite good using the same paper as the text.

With the latest issue we departed from the usual cover picture in having one that relates to an article, but doesn't also appear in the text. Other vaguely relevant illustrations will be considered to adorn the cover for future issues.

I also suffered a computer breakdown in September, just as I was saving the text of the latest issue and I am grateful to Ken Merrifield for successfully retrieving this, avoiding the need to repeat the final editing. I also thank Mike Pugh for proof reading and all authors for continuing to maintain the standard of their contributions.

7. Conservation & BAP Species Officer's Report – Barbara Ismay

In Barbara's absence, the Chairman read out the following:

I am very sorry that I cannot be here in Glasgow today due to family reasons and hope that you are having a good and successful meeting. This is to update you on the BAP process and ask for your help.

I would like to thank all of you for your help with the BAP process. The final BAP list is now signed by the ministers, so it has been adopted by all four UK countries. It can be downloaded from the UK BAP webpage. In total 35 species of Diptera are included, while four were deleted from the list. The deleted species are *Spiriverpa lunulata, Bombylius discolor, Rhabdomastix laeta* and *Tipula serrulifera*. Further work is needed before the official actions to conserve our species can start. This involves more paper work including finalising the actions needed and also finding lead partners. At the moment it is uncertain whether we will have Species Action Plans for all BAP species, in particular single species plans.

This paper work might take rather a long time. Hence, we as dipterists should now move on and start conserving the species we are concerned about. So, if you feel strongly about this, please respond to my appeal and 'Adopt a species'. If you feel that you would like to work on one or a group of BAP species or RDB species, please contact me, either by e-mail (schultmay@insectsrus.co.uk) or by telephone (01844-201433). You could adopt a species or a group of species and thus resolve some of the open questions about these species. I will co-ordinate this scheme and bother you from time to time to remind you to share your progress, or the problems that you encountered with other dipterists. But please contact me first as other people might like to work on the same species / group of species and you could form a team or divide tasks between you. For details of this scheme please read my note in the last Bulletin.

Do you feel that we should stop talking and rather start to help our threatened species? If yes, then please get in contact – you might be able to help! Please don't hesitate, our species need you and you don't need to be an expert on them. Others are there to help!

I hope you will enjoy the remainder of the meeting and that I hear from you or see many of you at the Workshop in Preston Montford.

8. Publicity Officer's Report – Judy Webb

Judy drew the attention of the meeting to the beautifully produced Publicity Leaflet and invited members to take them for distribution. She said that our activities had now been advertised in Antenna, the journal British Wildlife and the BENHS Journal. Also we now had a reciprocal advertising agreement with the AES which hopefully would help recruitment. The introductory courses run by Roger and Stuart had also been good for recruitment as 5 from 12 people on their last course signed up for membership.

The Chairman thanked all the Officers involved in the essential job of recruiting new members, and retaining them, for all their efforts.

9. Election of Officers:

The Officers and General Committee were elected en bloc, as follows:

Secretary	John Kramer
Treasurer	Vacancy
Membership Secretary	Mick Parker
Field Meetings Secretary	Roger Morris
Indoor Meetings Secretary	David Heaver
Bulletin Editor	Darwyn Sumner
Publicity Officer	Judy Webb
Website Manager	Stuart Ball
Conservation/BAP Officer	Barbara Ismay
Committee Members	1. Chris Spilling
	2. Peter Boardman
	3. Vacancy

Any Other Business.

There being no other business, the Annual General Meeting closed at 3.31pm

As is our custom, a Dipterists' Supper was held in the evening at a local restaurant.

On Sunday, 25 November. a few members again assembled to make use of the collections, library and other collections, thus rounding off a very enjoyable and worthwhile weekend.

John Kramer (Secretary)

Dipterists Day experiences

The Annual General Meeting of the UK Dipterists Forum and Dipterists Day was held in Scotland in the Hunterian Museum (Zoology), University of Glasgow, on Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th November 2007. The programme of talks included contributions from Geoff Hancock (Curator of Entomology at the Museum) David Horsfield, Steve Hewitt, Craig MacAdam and Iain MacGowan.

It was my first visit to Glasgow in a social context and I was very impressed by the architecture and in particular by the Hunterian Museum (main section and the Zoology section). I could have done with a whole day just to see the museum fully and to explore the city a bit. However the Dipterists Day was well worth this sacrifice. All the talks were very interesting and well illustrated. A vast amount of information was presented, of which I can only present some of the main points in the summary below, which reflects my own special interests.

More experienced Dipterists may know a lot of what follows already, but if, like me you are a relative beginner in Dipterology and interested in achieving records by rearing from dead wood, rot holes, fungi, decaying matter in general and larval searches, then, well - you just should have been there! I joined the Dipterists Forum in 2002 and I direct readers to the Bulletin No. 55 of spring 2002, where the articles by Mike Bloxham and Simon Damant really started my interest in such things as they discussed the recording of species of ***Brachopa, Pocata, Callicera, Mallota, Myolepta*** and ***Myathropa*** which are all saproxylic insects needing rot holes and/or sap runs.

Iain MacGowan explained that rot holes and dead wood can be a very scarce resource in some sites that are occupied by scarce to rare saproxylic Diptera in Scotland. Experiments have been carried out in creating more breeding opportunities by cutting rot holes in pine trees – a position just below a Y shaped division of the main trunk is excellent for directing a flow of rain water to fill the rot hole naturally. This has been shown to be of benefit to such species as ***Callicera rufa.*** Artificial rot holes created for this species

are still producing larvae 15 years later. The tree is not killed by this intervention and rot hole creation can be likened to the installation of nest boxes to encourage the breeding of particular bird species.

Another rot hole creation opportunity is presented by the stump remaining from a felled tree. A chainsaw can be used to cut a few square holes in the top surface of the stump. These can be filled with wood chips and retain rain water. The wood chips provide a good large surface area for bacteria to grow on. Fly larvae can then graze on these bacteria and presumably the resultant protozoa. An even more inventive scheme involves the use of plastic buckets filled with wood chips and rain water. These can be sunk to the lip in soil in a woodland area occupied by the diptera of interest. Small drain holes drilled around the rim of each bucket prevent overflowing and a slice of wood placed over the top of the bucket prevents flushing out of the bacteria and dipteran larvae by heavy rainfall. The bucket system has been shown to be useful to the breeding of species in the genera ***Myathropa, Xylota, Sphegina, Callicera*** and ***Myolepta*** as well as Nematocera and fungus gnats.

Part of this study involves the monitoring of bacterial numbers in the artificial rot holes using agar strips. It was noticed that heavy rainfall presented a particular hazard to rot hole residents, as dead larvae were encountered after such an event. The theory to explain this is that the larvae may have starved because the rain washed out much of the bacteria.

Other than the specific rot hole microhabitat, type of deadwood is important for different types of fly, for example Clusiidae larvae develop deep in the centre of old, well-rotted dead wood, as do Rhagionids and Tipulids. Fresh deadwood, with the bark still quite tight on, is attractive for the rotting layer just under the bark which was presumably the phloem (bast) in the living tree. This zone is utilized by voracious predators such as ***Xylophagus*** as well as species in the genera ***Pachygaster***, ***Medetera, Palloptera*** and ***Brachyopa.*** Lonchaeids are completely restricted to this zone. I have actually had a small success my self in rearing ***Lonchaea*** sp (lance flies) and the wood soldier fly ***Solva marginata*** from this decaying layer under the bark of dead poplar logs. Within 3 years the bark starts to fall away, the under bark layer dries and becomes unsuitable for breeding of such species.

The unpredictable nature of natural dead wood production (due to random gales) may be a problem for the continuation of some important Diptera populations, thus some intervention has been tried when dead-wood is scarce. Standing dead wood trees, or fallen snagged trees, have been felled on to damp soil to provide better breeding sites. Such trees, if left to stand, would dry out too much to be suitable for Diptera. In the case of a fallen tree which is still alive, the fresh 'dead under bark layer' so important to Lonchaeids can be continually supplied by cutting of a fresh section of trunk or branch every year for several years. Of course, dead wood may also be imported to breeding areas from other sites.

Saproxylic calyptrate Diptera were further discussed by David Horsfield who specialises in rearing members of the Fanniidae, Muscidae and Anthomyiidae from material from rot holes, sap runs and rotting wood in general, but including fungi and material under mossy layers on logs. He has reared over 30 species of calyptrate flies in the genera ***Fannia, Piezura, Hydrophoria, Phaonia, Helina*** and ***Mydaea*** from such situations. An important observation seems to be that the stage of wood decay and the water content seems to be much more important to the successful breeding than the tree species involved. Although some are specific to particular wood types, most can use a range. I was very interested to see how his rearing methods differed from my own for fungi (described in the Bulletin Nos 62/3). I will be trying out his alternative method of putting the rotting wood in a bowl covered with perforated cling film, or dead wood in a half plastic bottle with water in the bottom and a large plastic bag placed over the mouth of the bottle. Flapping the long bag over to one side allows emerging adult flies to accumulate in the bag without falling back into the rearing material and rotting. Use of plastic bags as covering prevents the rearing material drying out so much as my curtain net methods.

Steve Hewitt gave a talk on various riverine flies. Some of these are deadwood breeders, for example the ***Lipsothrix*** craneflies; these need well saturated (but not completely submerged) wood for food. Thus they need coarse woody debris in streams, backwater channels or carr. Pupation may be triggered by falling water levels in the spring. Their characteristic empty pupal skins may be seen protruding from the

dead wood and are much worth collecting, as identification to species may be possible from the pupal features using keys devised by Andy Godfrey. ***L. remota*** is the common species and ***L errans, L. nervosa, L. nobilis/nigristima*** and ***L ecucullata*** are the rarer species. Surveying for these rare species by collection of pupal skins is in many cases much easier than trying to catch the adults. Geoff Hancock has been studying the microstructure of the pupal horns by scanning electron microscope. This shows the microstructure on the internal and external surfaces of the pupal horns clearly varies between the ***Lipsothrix*** species and this provides a valuable tool for identification. Geoff's interesting SEM photographs were on display in the museum for us to study.

Other riverine flies that have been studied include the rare hoverfly ***Parasyrphus nigritarsis,*** which has larvae using as food the larvae of the green dock beetle and the alder beetle, both of which might be expected along a river corridor. Flies breeding in the exposed river sediments include the therevid ***Spiriverpa lunulata*** and several rare species in the genus ***Tachydromia*** (which are predatory and spend their time running over the sand and shingle) as well as species in the cranefly genera ***Rhabdomastix, Dicranota, Nephrotoma, Hexatoma*** and ***Hoplolabis.*** The river Eden and its catchment have been shown to be good sites for such flies. Searching for larvae has been a very effective survey method for the therevids ***Spiriverpa lunulata*** and ***Cliorisma rustica*** and skills have been developed in knowing exactly the right place near a river to look for such larvae. For example, ***Cliorisma*** larvae may be found in fine sand deposited on level land at the top of the river bank when it has been in high flood and not down on the shingle at the water's edge. They will not be found in cattle trampled areas; needing open, coarse, free-draining sand which might even be well vegetated later in the season by such plants such as Butterbur or Indian Balsam.

The behaviour of ***Spiriverpa lunulata*** is interesting in that the adults have been found 'lekking' some distance from the river channel up on an esker ridge structure.

Craig MacAdam gave an interesting talk based on his work as part time conservation officer for Buglife in Scotland on behalf of ISI (the Initiative for Scottish Invertebrates). Amongst other rare invertebrates he mentioned the work for the very rare flies: ***Blera fallax, Hammerschmidtia ferruginea, Clusiodes geomyzinus, Lonchaea ragnari, Rhamphomyia hirtula, Platycheirus melanopsis*** and ***Pipiza luteitarsis.***

If you are further interested in Scottish saproxylic Diptera, I note that Graham Rotheray wrote an excellent small article on 'Bringing back ***Blera*** and ***Hammerschmidtia'*** in the Bulletin No. 55 of spring 2003 and I recommend looking at the website of the Malloch Society www.mallochsociety.org.uk where some interesting publications on saproxylic and montane Diptera in Scotland are available as downloads. Also there are very useful lists of references to their published works on flies from many habitats. During this summer's DF field meeting in the Cairngorm area, I look forward very much to seeing more of the Scottish Dipterists and to seeing some of the rare flies special to Scotland, particularly in the Abernethy forest.

The day's talks were followed by an excellent Dipterists Supper at a superior Indian restaurant in town. Thanks are due to Geoff Hancock and the members of the Malloch Society for their contribution to this very successful meeting.

Judy Webb

Autumn Course 2007

Introductory Fly Course - October

The introductory fly course for Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs, Northants and Peterborough happened this weekend. At one stage they apparently had 15 booked, it was down to 13 by the end of last week and 12 actually turned up - some from as far afield as Sandy and Luton. This was just right for us (12 is our preferred number for these sort of things) and we managed to sign 5 of them up for the Forum!

It was based at the Trusts field station at Ring Haw (next to Old Sulehay for those who have been there). This is a brick built hut, presumably quarry offices originally, that has been done up very nicely. It makes a good classroom for this number of people.

We spent much of Friday putting together our packs of specimens - a plastic lunchbox containing a set of specimens for each student so that they all had the same thing (see the "Student at work" photo, left). Eventually included 27 specimens through an awful lot of hard work by Roger in collecting and pinning all this material.

We also had a collection covering representatives of 73 of the 103 British families in 2 store boxes - see "Studying the collection" photo, below.

I got copies of the three handouts (links to PDFs circulated last week) colour photocopied at work (I'm not sure JNCC know they are supporting us in this way - but I'm sure they would be happy ...) Anyway it all worked out pretty well and there weren't any significant glitches in the key that came up and people seemed to cope with it OK. i.e. all the specimens we provided seemed to run to the right answers with no forcing from us!

Both days: 10am to 4:30pm.

Sat: 10-11 Introductions, General talk on what makes it a Dipteron and special features of flies, general chat about avialable keys, general books, etc.

11 - 1pm: Higher classification. Went through first couple of specimens (Tipulid & Calliphorid) with the whole group then they tried to run other specimens to main groups (i.e. Nematocera, "primitive Brachycera", Aschiza, Calyptrate, Acalyptrate). Most people got through pretty much all the specimens.

Then the pattern was a series of sessions in which we went through the key with the whole group on the first couple of specimens and then had them have a go

at the next block for themselves. It panned out as Nematocera then "primitive Brachycera" Sat afternoon, Aschiza then Calyptrates Sun morning and Acalyptrates Sun afternoon.

Finished up with last half hour on Sunday on collecting and recording. We had about the right number of specimens, pretty much everybody got through about no 25 or so in the two days. Having everybody working on the same, numbered, specimens makes things a lot easier to control. We need to set up something like this for our future hoverfly courses!

Having the more wide ranging collection, so we could pull out specimens to show the other side of couplets, was also a great help and we encouraged people to look at distinctive things we didn't include in the individual boxes (like a Phorids and Pipunculids).

2 tutors to 12 students is about right providing that nobody really useless turns up. If we get a bad one (and we have had a few over the years ...) then they can more or less monopolise one tutor. It takes quite a long time setting up specimens for people, sketching them to explain the features, etc. The trick is to give enough individual attention without it preventing the whole group moving forward at a pace that keeps the majority happy!

I set up my microscope with digital camera and ran the output through a video capture device onto the LCD projector. This effectively gives a video-microscope - although the resolution of the resulting picture is not as good as I would like (since it is only showing the view you get on the camera's LCD viewfinder). This is a great boon when trying to lead the whole group through a key and show them the features. A proper microscope projection system is something we really need for these kind of sessions!

We think that this formula worked well. The participants seemed to enjoy it and a number seemed enthused to do more (at least enough to join DF anyway). Only time will tell if anybody actually sticks with it and does something with flies.

It really requires microscopes and lights that are good enough to work at fairly solidly for two days without too much discomfort and can resolve things like costal breaks. The binocular microscopes that the Trust provides do an adequate job, but the desk lamps get very hot - so something better is needed here! The type of desk lamp with small (10w or 20w) halogen bulbs might be better.

This is a long time working at microscopes for people who aren't used to it. Breaking it up a bit, perhaps with demo of curation (pinning and mounting, genitalia preps) would be good. It would also be good to include more biology - possibly PowerPoints at the end of each major section going through the families and their biology - although this would take a significant amount of extra time.

Stuart Ball

Forthcoming
Identification Workshops for 2008

Preston Montford Field Studies Centre

Introduction to Diptera

Friday 7th - Sunday 9th March 2008

Do you know anybody who might benefit from some help in starting with the Diptera? If so, why not pass the details of the following on to them?

In 2008 the Dipterists Forum will be running an introductory course on the **Identification of Fly Families - 'Beginning with Diptera'** to assist people interested in studying and recording flies to get over the daunting stage of starting with a new group.

The course will be taught over a weekend at Preston Montford Field Studies Centre by enthusiastic expert tutors from the Dipterists Forum – Stuart Ball and Roger Morris. The course ran last year for a wildlife group and was extremely successful. Each attendee gets a lot of individual help and will work using a microscope on their own set of specially prepared flies which are examples of all the dipteran families. A set of keys with colour illustrations has been specially produced for this course and these in themselves have been much sought after! Each attendee leaves with their own set of valuable keys plus advice on how to collect and pin flies for identification and for voucher specimens.

Organiser: David Heaver, notes by Judy Webb

Advanced Workshop on Tachinids and Rhinophorids

Friday 7th – Sunday 9th March 2008

Chris Raper & Matt Smith, Tachinid Recording Scheme

This is for those with some knowledge of the Diptera, but who want to tackle those bristly parasite flies. It runs in parallel with the beginner's course and will be taught by Matt Smith and Chris Raper who also

organise the recording scheme for Tachinidae. You will get latest key updates from the experts and a lot of help with those specimens you have put aside for a quiet winter day!

Preston Montford is an ideal venue because of the excellent laboratory facilities including microscopes, comfortable accommodation, good food and very friendly staff.

Course Fees: £185 for non-Dipterists Forum members (this price includes a year's subscription to the Dipterists Forum). The discounted rate of £140 single room, £120 two sharing is available to people who are already Dipterists Forum members. Non residential rates may be available to people who live within travelling distance.

For more details and bookings, contact: **Preston Montford Field Centre,** Montford Bridge, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY4 1DX, **Tel:** 0845 330 7378, **Fax:** 01743 851066

Email: enquiries.pm@field-studies-council.org **Website**: www.field-studies-council.org/prestonmontford

Organiser: David Heaver, notes by Judy Webb

Field Meetings 2008-2009

The programme of field meetings is gradually progressing and there are bookings and tentative ideas for meetings until 2010. Bookings are sought for all meetings as far ahead as Summer 2008.

Roger Morris

Spring 2008

Swaledale, 24-25 (26) May 2008

Severe problems have been encountered with this venue. It was pointed out that this is a Bank Holiday weekend and that all accommodation in the area would be extremely difficult. Please contact Roger Morris to determine alternative arrangements (N.B. discussions have suggested alternative dates - the previous weekend) Ed.

This is an excellent opportunity to visit the Swaledale area and associated MoD land. Habitats include limestone grasslands and woodland, together with the Swale itself. Accommodation will be in guest houses in Richmond. The meeting coincides with the Whitsuntide Bank Holiday and as a result it will be possible to extend the meeting to a third day (if people so wish). However, this may also mean there will be competition for accommodation so **early booking is needed**. Expressions of interest urgently needed plus a deposit of £20.00 please.

Roger Morris

(25th Meeting of the German Study Group Diptera)

20 to 22 June 2008, in Dorf Wehlen, Elbe Sandstone Mountains (Saxony)

The next meeting of the Study Group Diptera (AK Diptera) will take place from 20 to 22 June, 2008 in Dorf Wehlen, Elbe Sandstone Mountains (Saxony). Organisers are Björn Rulik, Christian Kehlmaier (both Zoological Museum, Dresden) and Frank Menzel (Deutsches Entomologisches Institut, Müncheberg). The conference will be held on 20 June 2008 in the conference room of the Inn "Zur Eiche". Conference participants will be accommodated at the Inn "Zur Eiche" and the nearby pension "Prietzel" (2 minutes by foot).

An excursion will take place on the 21st June around the Table Mountains "Bärenstein" and "Rauenstein". The area offers different types of forest and open areas with peripheral structures, natural brook etc. A shuttle service will bring the conference participants from the meeting place to the excursion area and back. At the end of the excursion, there will be the possibility to climb the "Rauenstein" (about 304 m above sea level) with lovely views over the Elbe Valley.

All interested Dipterists are cordially invited.

Further details can be found (in English) on the web, the link is: http://www.ak-diptera.de/einladung/einladung2008_eng.php

Unfortunately, this meeting is one week before the Dipterists Forum meeting in Scotland, so we will not be able to participate. However, if you feel you would like to come to both or are in Germany anyway around that time, we can recommend this meeting. When we participated some years ago, we enjoyed it immensely. Should you have any further queries, please contact us or the organisers:

John and Barbara Ismay, schultmay@insectsrus.co.uk

Summer Field Week 2008

Glenmore Lodge, Cairngorm, 28 June To 5 July 2008

This is a major opportunity to visit the classic Scottish sites. Glenmore Lodge is a comfortable outward bound centre located close to Loch Morlich on the Cairngorm road. Accommodation is in single and twin rooms (not en-suite). Revised prices look to be in the order of £35.oo for shared room and £45.00 for single room. The costs will include accommodation and meals. Twenty seven rooms have been reserved and firm bookings have been made for 26 rooms – **there is just one free room!** A deposit of £35.00 (payable to Roger Morris) is sought – first-come first-served.

Autumn 2008

11-15 October

The initial idea was to book the field centre at Abergevenney but changes to the AES exhibition date mean that we have had to bring the timing forward to run from Saturday to Wednesday. A venue has yet to be arranged but is likely to be in south Wales. Expressions of interest to:

Roger Morris

Amateur Entomologists Exhibition 2008

Saturday 18th October

There will be a Dipterists Forum stall at the Amateur Entomologists Exhibition on Saturday October 18th October 2008, at Kempton Park Racecourse, Starting at 11.00am.

More details are available from the AES Website http://www.amentsoc.org/exhibition.htm

This will be manned by various Committee members, and advice on a wide range of issues including all membership issues can possibly be resolved there. Back issues of the Dipterists Digest will also be on sale, all members & potential members are welcome to introduce themselves.

Mick Parker

Annual Meeting 2008

Saturday Nov 22, 2008

to be held at the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.

John Kramer

Spring 2009

TO BE CONFIRMED

Roger Morris

Summer Field Week 2009

Swansea – dates to be confirmed

This is a tentative venue, subject to confirmation with Halls of Residence in Swansea. The location gives excellent access to The Gower, the major dune system at Kenfig and to parts of eastern Pembrokeshire.

Bookings and further information: Roger Morris, **7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincs. PE9 1QE. roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com**

And now...

... a leaping we will go

Has it struck you as odd that we refer to a Leap Year when in fact it is only a Leap Day?

That would simplify all the fuss about the Olympics. It could all be over in a day, 29 February. Why should it be necessary to designate a fortnight for a race that takes nine point something seconds, and even the marathon only takes about 2 hours. Nip over to the swimming pool and the hundred metre dashes are over in under a minute. You see, a bit of planning, and all events can be fitted into the day quite easily.

Mind, one of my gripes is the choice of events. Did the Greeks have synchronised swimming or badminton? No. Why not the sack race? In primary school I was unbeatable in my class and, who knows, I could have become Olympic Gold Medallist. All that British talent wasted.

In any case, human performances are puny compared with the invertebrates. Mind, the flies do not come out well on jumping and sprinting events, nor swimming and diving, so no medals here. There would have to be Olympic flying events. No point in having a hovering competition because that would be too boring. But high speed flying through an array of obstacles is a challenge that some of the calyperates would excel at; judges would have to film in slow motion and the TV re-runs would be far more spectacular that those Winter Olympic giant slalom ski runs.

Other possibilities are to compete in locating a piece of smelly fish skin, or the indoor event of finding an opened bottle of wine. And as regard categories, in the *Syrphus* event, would it be permissible to have hairy-eyed flies competing against bare-eyed ones? Cheats could shave their eyes. But how would one ensure that there have not been illegal sips of performance enhancing substances, such a nectar laced with factor x. And with *Drosophila* in particular, there would endless disputes over genetic manipulation.

The most intriguing aspect of fly events is how to award those on the podium. A bunch of flowers would be well appreciated. However, a lump of metal hung round the neck would be very uncomfortable and result in the victor's lap of the stadium, or jam jar, becoming a rather awkward slow walk. That would not stop the crowd buzzing with excitement and acclaim. Olympic Anthem - The Ugly Maggot, of course.

That would be passing fame, so how should a more permanent accolade be made. The ultimate destiny - to be stuck on a pin, together with medal, and put in the Cabinet Draw of Olympic Fame in the Natural History Museum. In the forthcoming new Darwin block, the public will be able to view through port-holes to see scientists curating this precious collection, and the Queen may come to look with admiration during the ceremonial opening.

It is amazing how dull days in mid-winter allow the mind to focus on philosophy. I suspect the winter weather in ancient Greece was dull and cold in the mountains, which is how they came to think up the daft notion of the Olympics in the first place. My meditations follow a long tradition.

Alan Stubbs

Dipterists Forum
Recording Scheme Organisers

Please notify Dr Mark Hill of changes:
BRC (CEH) Monks Wood, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE28 2LS (Tel. 01487 772413) brc@ceh.ac.uk

Recording Schemes

Whilst all schemes will readily accept records in written form the following symbols are used to indicate some of the known (or surmised) methods by which Scheme Organisers may currently receive records electronically:

Recorder
MapMate
Microsoft Access
Spreadsheet (Excel)

Square brackets indicate that the organiser can handle records in the format indicated.

Potential recorders really need to know your preferred recording format so please inform the Bulletin Editor in time for an update of this guide in the future issues

Conopidae, Lonchopteridae, Ulidiidae & Pallopteridae

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7 Vista Rise, Radyr Cheyne, Llandaff, Cardiff CF5 2SD

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Culicidae - Mosquitoes

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Dixidae - Meniscus midges

Acting scheme organiser

Dr R H L Disney

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Drosophilidae - Fruit Flies

Dr B Pitkin

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Mycetophilidae and allies - Fungus gnats

Mr Peter J Chandler (see Dipterists Digest)

Hoverflies

[ ][ ][ ]

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Tipuloidea & Ptychopteridae - Cranefly

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[ ][ ]

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Darwyn Sumner

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Stilt & Stalk Fly

[ ][ ][ ]

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Tachinid

[3.3][ ][ ][ ]

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Tephritid Flies

3.x [ ][ ]

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Bulletin of the Dipterists Forum

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Empid & Dolichopodid

[ ]

Dr Adrian Plant

Curator of Diptera

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National Museum & Galleries of Wales

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Chironomidae

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South View Sedlescombe Battle East Sussex TN33 0PE

Pipunculidae

Mr A E Stubbs (see Tipulids)

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