



# BULLETIN OF THE **Dipterists** FORUM

Affiliated to the British Entomological and Natural History Society

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## DIPTERIST'S ANNUAL MEETING, SATURDAY 1 NOVEMBER 1997, THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, LONDON

### Programme

Chairman: John Dobson

11.00	Martin Drake	Shore flies - small but not boring
11.30	Alan Stubbs	Flies and the Biodiversity Action Plan
12.00	Robin Williams	Photographing flies in Somerset
12.30	Mike Edwards	Flies of lowland heathland
1.00	lunch - bring your own or forage in local pubs or museum restaurant	
2.00	informal exhibits	
2.30	Annual General Meeting	
5.30	end of day	
6.30	Restaurant?	

## The talks

Who said shore flies are dull, black and boring? They have not had a proponent since Tony Irwin campaigned for their recognition, and Martin Drake has now taken up the challenge. The Biodiversity Action Plans sounds dull as shore flies, but at least flies have at last been included, as Alan will discuss, along with ways we can contribute to this programme. Robin Williams will be familiar to BWARS enthusiasts as a photographer of with many years experience in stalking insects to capture on film in the field. This talk will cover a wide range of families that have attracted Robin's attention so will be a good introduction to the big and pretty families in a county containing super habitat, including the Somerset Levels and the Mendips. Mike Edwards is known primarily as a hymenopterist but he has made valuable contributions to the study of flies. He will talk about some of his work involving flies on lowland heathlands, some of it deriving from species recovery work. John Dobson, our chairman for the talks, is the Forum's representative on JCCBI and a long-standing contributor to the dipterists' recording schemes.

The meeting will be in the Palaeontology room. The entry fee will be £3 which you will pay on reaching the Palaeontology room. Please show the receptionist your Dipterists Forum membership card or this Bulletin otherwise you will have to pay the full entry fee to the museum plus the meeting fee!

## Exhibits

We want MORE EXHIBITS. How can we say this louder? Apart from the AGM, the afternoon has been left deliberately free of formal sessions so that there is more time for you to chat and look at the displays. We suggest the following ideas which to show that we are not interested only in the rarest you caught.

- The rarest things you caught (!)
- Flies associated with a particular feature (anyone on this summer field meeting could do something on river margins)
- Some representatives of your favourite family. This could inspire others to have a go once they realise what they've seen in the field but been too reticent to tackle.
- Photographs
- Early stages - perhaps even some live larvae.
- Diagrammes analysing flight period or habitat preference, etc.

To entice you, the Forum is offering a **STORE BOX AS A PRIZE FOR THE BEST EXHIBIT**. The judges hope to be overwhelmed and faced by a difficult choice.

As usual, microscopes will be available together with experienced dipterists who are always willing to help identify awkward specimens.

The nearest tube station is South Kensington. Parking is not available in the museum grounds. Suggested alternatives are Imperial Institute Road (first road north of and parallel to Cromwell Road) and Imperial College car park (between Queen's Gate and Museum Road). Neither is cheap.

## Dipterists Supper

You may wonder where its gone. After many years of hard labour in preparation for the supper, David Henshaw has decided to stand down from this self-imposed task. We will miss Dianne's great cake, as will the visiting dipterists who often inspired the decoration, Adrian at the punch bowl, and the camaraderie that has built up over a quarter of a century of dinners. While the passing (perhaps only temporary) of the supper is a great shame, we must thank David for his enormous contribution to Dipterists Day over the years. The task has been a monumental one that David and Dianne have

undertaken with only a few dedicated voluntary helpers.

In place of the supper, we suggest that a party or parties may like to organise their own dinners at local restaurants, a very poor substitute for the 'real' thing, but this may persuade someone to take up where David has left off.

## DIPTERISTS FORUM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Dipterists Forum will be held at 2.30 pm on Saturday 1 November 1997 at the Natural History Museum, London.

### Agenda

- 1 Secretary's report
- 2 Treasurer's report
- 3 Membership Secretary's report
- 4 Dipterists Digest Editor's report
- 5 Election of officers. The following people have agreed to stand for these posts:

Chairman	Roy Crossely
Secretary	Alan Stubbs
Treasurer	Jon Cole
Membership Secretary	Liz Howe
Meeting secretary (indoor)	vacant
Meeting secretary (field)	vacant <i>Malcolm Smart (1999 onwards)</i>
Bulletin Editor	Martin Drake <i>(until 1998)</i>
Publicity Officer	Patrick Roper
Ordinary members	two vacancies <i>Peter Grainger + John Dobson</i>
- Unelected members:

BENHS representative	Peter Chandler
Dipterists Digest Editor	Peter Chandler
- 6 Any other business

Nominations for the two Meetings Secretary and two Ordinary Member posts need to be received by the Secretary at least four weeks before the AGM and nominees must have agreed to stand before being nominated. Under the Constitution, the following Ordinary Members may stand for their final year of elected stint: Stuart Ball, Steven Falk, Brian Pitkin and Chris Spilling.

Roger Morris is standing down as ordinary member and is handing over his unofficial but essential role of training course organiser to David Heaver. We are extremely grateful for Roger's enthusiasm and major contribution to running Forum activities for several years. These include the now traditional training courses at Preston Montford which he was instrumental in setting up, organising and data-inputting for some of the summer field meetings, and being a key player in setting up the Forum itself. He remains, of course, one of the two organisers of the hoverfly recording scheme.

## FORUM FIELD MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

### Autumn Field Meeting - Staffordshire, 10 - 15 October 1997.

Our traditional autumn foray is being hosted by the North Midlands Crane-fly Group. Normally, such meetings find 50 - 65 species of crane-flies, including many of the special autumn species. It is also

fungus gnat time, with 100+ species as a typical total, plus various other flies such as *Arctophila fulva*. Staffordshire, both western Peak District and lowlands, has not been a home base for any of our field meetings, yet has great potential.

We hope to assemble a good number of crane-fly enthusiasts and Peter Chandler will be expecting us to help him get samples of fungus gnats.

As much as anything, this is a social event before the nets get put away for the winter. The specification of base will depend on how many need accommodation, so please say as soon as possible (by 15 September if possible) if you wish to join this meeting.

The meeting organiser is Rhodri Thomas (The Cottage, Fountain Square, Youlgrave, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1UR; tel 01629 636162), with help from others in the NMCG.

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

Our series of workshops continues with two parallel courses.

#### **1. Introduction to Recording Flies.**

This is designed as a beginners course, concentrating on the flies covered by recording schemes. Hence it will be useful to people who wish to branch out from say hoverflies. In particular we are trying to attract people who are not Forum members and to this end we are targeting publicity outside the society. If the Forum is to flourish, we need to encourage more people to study flies, so, if you have friends or know other people who may be interested, invite them to come.

#### **2. Craneflies**

The earlier workshop was over-subscribed and last year's workshop voted for a return to this theme. The idea is to help those who now have some experience, as well as encourage those who are beginners. The emphasis will be on short-palped craneflies, having previously given more attention to long-palped ones.

We hope to borrow from BENHS their shortly to be acquired gadgetry which puts onto a TV screen the view of specimens down a microscope. Liverpool Museum workshops have revolutionised the approach to instruction in this fashion. If we can do this at Preston Montford, it will be a memorable event.

Bookings to David Heaver (English Nature, Bronsil House, Eastnor, Herefordshire HR8 1EP) as soon as possible please so that we can be sure of sufficient prime accommodation and to confirm lab sizes. The party assembles for evening meal on Friday and disperses about tea time Sunday. The cost, all in, is expected to be c.£75-80 per person (price to be confirmed soon). Preston Montford is in Shropshire, a Field Studies Council centre just west of the Shrewsbury.

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

The meeting is based near Dorchester, the county town in the heart of Dorset. From this highly strategic location, at the hub of the radial road network, we can efficiently reach out across the county and into the fringes of adjacent ones.

The coast is very scenic and varied with cliffs through virtually the full sequence of Jurassic and Cretaceous rocks, including some of the best landslip sites in Britain. Outstanding accretionary coast includes the dunes with natural lakes at Studland and the great shingle beach of which Chesil Beach is

a part. Various saltmarsh is available in Poole Harbour and The Fleet, both of which have special marine lagoon elements such as the crane fly *Geranomyia bezzii*.

The East Dorset heaths and bogs run eastwards from near our doorstep to the classic ones of the Purbeck. High quality Chalk and limestone grassland, though no longer present for endless miles, is still widely available. The seepage valley meadows and woods, with streams, of West Dorset have recently proved to be incredibly rich for flies.

If this is too boring, the New Forest is within range, together with various sites of high quality on the fringes in Wiltshire, Somerset and Devon.

We have timed this meeting to try to catch this exceptionally rich area at peak for number of special species. Ideal accommodation has previously proved elusive in Dorset but this year our venue has agreed to forego the £100 per day charge they used to require for use of a lab room. Our base is at Kingston Maurward, an agricultural college, although calling itself a Conference Centre for present purposes. There will be single room accommodation for most of the party (some students still in residence for exams) and any overflow (late bookings) can find B&B in the neighbourhood. We anticipate a price of a bit under £30 per day including packed lunch. Non residents will be expected to have the evening meal with us, at c.£7.50 to justify their use of the free lab. The Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society has been invited to join us again; in practice their members are usually interested in some of our recording scheme flies anyway.

The conference centre will confirm the room quota and price in early September. We would appreciate prompt booking, indeed this will be essential if you want to bag a residential room. Priority will be for people coming the full period and when the quota is gone (c. 20 places), others will have to make their own accommodation arrangements.

The meeting admin organiser is Liz Howe. Please contact her immediately for details when available since the Spring Bulletin announcement will be only calling in late-comers. She would appreciate a stamped & self address envelope for reply. Mick Parker, who lives in Weymouth and knows the county well, will be sorting out site access in liaison with Alan Stubbs.

## **OTHER EVENTS**

**BENHS Dipterists Forum evening 13 January, Royal Entomological Society Rooms, 41 Queen's Gate, South Kensington, London.**

This is our big opportunity to tell people what we do and our aspirations, and perhaps to garner support. The evening will follow the usual BENHS format of their business followed by our slot which should occupy about 1½h. It's up to us what we do - format, content, media, speakers (perhaps several covering different aspects) - so please let Martin Drake know if you can contribute. Tea is served at 6.00; the meeting starts at 6.30.

**BENHS Annual Exhibition, 25 October 1997, Imperial College, South Kensington, London.**

The meeting is held as usual in the Sherfield Room at Imperial College, from 11.00 to 5.00. Those intending to attend this event, as well as our AGM, are encouraged to bring any exhibit they have prepared to both events.

## **Conference on exposed riverine sediment, 15 - 16 December 1997, Birmingham University**

Exposed riverine sediment is the fancy name for river shoals and shingle banks. As the summer field meeting report amply shows, this habitat is important for insects, especially beetles and flies, but has been rather neglected by conservationists and those responsible for river management. The Environment Agency have set up a long-term study to look in detail at this habitat. A pilot study is taking place this year, to be followed by a major survey over the next year or more. Part of the process is this conference to air what knowledge we have so far. The first day will cover more general issues about river shoals, and the second day will be more about species and ecology, so probably of more interest to dipterists.

The meeting takes place at the University at Edgbaston. Anyone interested please contact Martin Drake in the first instance, as details of the venue have not been fixed.

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

Laurence Clemons will lead this BENHS indoor meeting. Please contact Ian McLean (BENHS Indoor Meetings Secretary) well in advance if you would like to attend, so he can keep tabs on the numbers of participants (109 Miller Way, Brampton, Cambs, PE18 8TZ). The meeting starts at 10.30 and finishes at 4.00.

## **Fourth International Congress of Dipterology**

The second announcement will shortly be made. Anyone interested but who has not got details should contact Oxford International, ICD4, Summertown Pavilion, Middle way, Oxford, OX2 7LG. Note that all Dipterist Forum members will receive the second announcement automatically.

## **JCCBI Conference *How to Give Invertebrates a Higher Profile in Conservation*, Saturday 27 September 1997, Peterborough,**

Central Library, Broadway, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire.

Following the successful conference last year in Peterborough (Unity of Purpose for Invertebrate Conservation: Maintaining the Biodiversity of British Invertebrates), and subsequent moves towards a new UK invertebrate conservation structure, some important issues need to be discussed within a wider forum. This conference has therefore been arranged, with plenty of time allowed for discussion and talks on the following topics:

- the core message
- rivers and streams, urban and post-industrial wasteland, heathland
- role of conservation committees within societies
- emergence of Butterfly Conservation as a professional organisation
- the invertebrate gulf in the conservation movement
- is an invertebrate conservation society necessary?

Anyone interested in attending should contact Alan Stubbs (address at end of Bulletin) by phone or, if in writing, enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return.

## **Reflections on the history of dipterology, 12 May 1998, Royal Entomological Society, 41 Queen's Gate, South Kensington.**

This talk by Adrian Pont is one of the BENHS evening meetings. Tea is served at 6.00 and the talk begins at 6.30. Adrian is well known for his work on the history of dipterists and has given several fascinating talks on this theme over the years.

## SECRETARY'S POST BAG

This item was instituted to bring vital and significant news to members. Hence I can do no better than quote from a letter received in May from our Chairman himself.

'...it's a good job I have taken up this family [Tipulids] and am pleased with what I have found so far this year; hoverflies are very scarce, empids the same and dolies almost non-existent, so bully for Tips.'

Ivan Perry reports that quite a lot of grasslands have been recently ploughed up in the central Highlands, destroying some very useful flowery meadows within habitat mosaics. I have discussed this at a Biodiversity Challenge meeting: it would seem that the problem is an extension of the insoluble one in the Pennines. Many meadows are likely to have been ploughed in the past (but perhaps when treatment would have been less modern) but recent drier summers have enabled farmers to get machinery on to wet field, enabling drainage and ploughing. There may be no particular EC or GB funding.

A response has been sent to publications which suggest that intensive collecting of fungi (for eating) does no harm. Thus a letter has already been published in *British Wildlife*. Also, *Mycetophila fungorum* has written to Badger, the editorial agent of *Natural World* (the magazine of the Wildlife Trusts) on behalf of the 529 fungus gnat species in Britain. *The Mycetologist* has been reminded that there are c. 1000 species of invertebrates in Britain that require fungus fruiting bodies, since the fungus experts are not sure whether collection fungi is a problem.

A letter has been sent to Michael Meacher, Minister of the Environment (on behalf of Biodiversity Challenge) since at a recent conference he invited issues to be drawn to his attention. A salmon fishing group has been persuading land owners to clear all fallen trees and braches from the Wye and its tributaries, including small streams, and to step waterfalls. The Wye is currently being notified as an SSSI but, because the procedures are not complete, there is nothing that can be done, nor has the Environment Agency any relevant powers. The issue is that an ecological niche and its fauna is being removed in entirety from an SSSI in the making. The River Monnow, which has already suffered two partial re-alignments, is a tributary of the Wye and is not included within the SSSI. The Minister has been asked why the Monnow is not being made an SSSI despite it being a top British site for its dipteran fauna. If the somewhat dubious clearance operations extend to other catchments, such as the Severn, RDB1 *Lipsothrix nigristigma* could be exterminated. This is a classic example of how a small vested interest can trigger ecological simplification so fast that the conservation movement is left helpless.

## FORUM NEWS

### Membership matters

You will be pleased to hear that the subscriptions for Dipterists Forum and *Dipterists Digest* will remain the same for 1998, *vis* £5.00 (£6.00 overseas) + £7.00 (£8.00 overseas) respectively. Please fill in the renewal form enclosed with this Bulletin to renew your membership for 1998. Thank you for your patience this year, a young lady called Megan has taken up a great deal of my time!

Liz Howe, Membership Secretary  
address at end of Bulletin

### CCW grant for provision of data from Abergavenny Field Meeting

The Countryside Council for Wales has offered the Dipterists Forum a contract worth £1350 for provision of data stemming from the Abergavenny field meeting, having already put much effort into

arranging site access and, understandably, they want to see results.

Last spring, CCW invited an application for a grant and, as DF secretary, I duly applied. It was unclear whether we would be successful and, since the outlook at the time of the meeting was not encouraging, it seemed best simply to say nothing to those attending the meeting. In early August a firm contract was received and this has been signed by me on behalf of the Forum and those at the meeting.

We must have processed the data in by 31 December 1997. Hence the real dead line needs to be 31 October to allow time for getting the data onto Recorder and the output produced in time.

In effect, CCW is providing carrot and stick in the hope of breaking our historic erratic ability to produce visible output from field meetings. Some exact formula for shelling out this bonus will be adjudicated by the General Committee in late October but will no doubt reflect:

- 1 Some payment to everyone against the cost of attending the field meeting on the basis that all contributed some material to specialists.
- 2 The main payment should be proportional to an individuals contribution to the amount of data provided by the dead line.
- 3 Although a Diptera meeting, CCW is happy to have data on anything else recorded.

Hence all data to Liz Howe as soon as possible, in early and late batches if data best flows that way; 31 October at the latest. Please send any data available NOW.

The Malloch Society has had a series of SNH contracts which it has successfully fulfilled. The Dipterists Forum will have egg on its face if we muff this opportunity, and doors will close on Dipterists Forum getting financial assistance from agencies in the future. Whilst it may remain a rare event to get our wheels oiled in this way, it is a very helpful gesture by CCW and we offer our thanks to them for their initiative.

Alan Stubbs

### **Bulletin Editorial**

I have obtained yet more ISSN for newsletters, as follows. The British Library issued us with a single ISSN to cover the Bulletin and several regular newsletters but now has given us separate ones for these newsletters, reasoning that they have their own title pages. Lots of room for confusion here since I staple everything together.

Conopid Recording Scheme newsletter	ISSN 1369-1090
Anthomyiidae newsletter	ISSN 1369-1104
Picture-winged flies recording scheme	ISSN 1369-1112

Martin Drake

### **BENHS link**

The society has kindly donated a redundant photocopier to the Forum where it will serve the Secretary at Peterborough.

Income and Expenditure Account 1 Jan. - 31 Dec. 1996

	Income	Expenditure
Subscriptions		
Forum 1995	26.00	
1996	905.00	
1997	360.00	
1998	6.00	
	1297.00	
Dipt. Digest 1995	173.00	
1996	1198.00	
1997	446.00	
1998	8.00	
	1825.00	
Bank adjustment for unpaid cheques		24.00
Bank charges for foreign credits		5.00
Donations	5.01	
Dipterists Day door receipts	258.85	
York meeting surplus	68.22	
Dipt. Digest		
Vol.2 2 parts		918.31
Vol.3 1 part		509.41
		1427.72
Bulletins		
Photocopying Nos 40 & 41		425.12
Postage for No. 41		101.23
		526.38
Membership secretary's expenses		43.48
Alliance & Leicester account net interest	57.44	
	<u>£ 3511.52</u>	<u>£ 2026.55</u>

## Approximate liabilities (accounts not received by year end)

Dipt. Day museum room hire	180
Dipt. Digest Vol.3.2 (late issue)	500
Bulletin No. 42	320
	<u>£1000</u>

Balance Sheet 1st Jan. - 31st Dec. 1996

Brought forward		Expenditure	2026.55
Alliance & Leicester	2000.00	Alliance & Leicester	3260.07
Girobank	1504.05	Girobank	1728.95
Total receipts	3511.52	Cash	nil
Cash	nil		
	<u>£7015.57</u>		<u>£7015.57</u>

Surplus of income over expenditure at 31 Dec. 1996 after deduction of approximate liabilities of £1000 £3989.02

Jonathan Cole  
Treasurer

*I have audited these accounts & found them satisfactory.*

*R. H. Ell.*

## MALLOCH SOCIETY NEWS

Results continue to pour in from the Scottish saproxylic project with possibly new species in Dolichopodidae, Lonchaeidae and Pallopteridae emerging from larvae collected in the spring.

In July this year we spent a very wet but enjoyable week on Strathspey. We were searching for *Blera fallax* after finding an empty puparium last year. This intensive effort to find the last of the "big three" Scottish saproxylic hoverflies paid off and we found larvae and puparia! The other two being of course, *Callicera rufa* and *Hammerschmidtia ferruginea* both of which we have worked on in previous years. This autumn we plan to create artificial breeding sites in the hope of encouraging the species, which is undoubtedly the most endangered of the three. Many thanks to Scottish Natural Heritage and Worldwide fund for Nature for continuing to support the Malloch Society.

Graham E Rotheray  
address at end of Bulletin - Malloch Society

## DIPTERISTS DIGEST

### New Editor for Dipterists Digest!

I am standing down as Editor of Dipterists Digest in November. Over the past three years pressure from other priority tasks has made it difficult to give the journal the time it deserves. Work on Diptera has fallen behind and a backlog has built up. Its unfair to my collaborators to allow this to go on and I have therefore decided to cut back on other responsibilities in order to catch up.

The good news is that Peter Chandler has agreed to take over. Peter will be well known to most Forum members as Britain's foremost expert on fungus gnats and for his various BENHS roles. Peter will be putting together a new editorial team to help produce the journal - details later. Meanwhile, we are working to ensure a smooth handover, but please continue to send papers to me until November. Finally, many thanks to my excellent editorial team, especially Derek Whiteley, Alan Stubbs, Roy Crossley, Andy Whittington and Phil Withers.

Graham E Rotheray

### Dipterists Digest - Change of Editor

As indicated in the above note by Graham Rotheray, I have agreed to take on the job of Digest Editor after he steps down in November.

It is intended to continue on the existing basis with two issues of the current number of pages per year and the aim is to achieve publication of the two issues of each volume within the same calendar year as soon as practicable. It is hoped that the existing editorial panel will continue to assist as required and the assistance of other specialists will be sought to referee papers where considered appropriate.

Graham has been carrying out the entire operation from editing to production of camera ready copy for publication. In order to ease the workload, assistance with the non-editorial aspects is desirable. Mike Pugh has agreed to assist with any retyping required and with proof reading. Could anyone else who is willing to help with either of these aspects or has the facility to scan illustrations into text when required, please let me know.

As Graham has stated, you can continue sending contributions to him until November but any future papers or notes offered for publication in the Digest should be sent to me at my home address: 43 Eastfield Road, Burnham, Slough, Berks SL1 7EL. As indicated in the instructions to authors, provision of items on disc in addition to the hard copy is welcomed and authors are requested to do this as a rule

where they have this facility available to them.

It is hoped to maintain the broad range of subjects achieved in recent issues, and the editors of the various Newsletters are urged to pass on any item they consider might be appropriate for inclusion or to encourage their contributors to prepare suitable contributions based on their observations.

Peter Chandler

## REPORTS OF MEETINGS

### Abergavenny Field Meeting - June 1996

Twenty-five dipterists and two hymenopterists enjoyed a week in Monmouthshire based at Ty'r Morwydd (Mulberry House to you saesneg!) Environmental Studies Centre in Abergavenny. The centre caters mainly for 6th form students and the accommodation and meals certainly had that feel although we could not have been made more welcome. All-in-all, a little less salubrious than Queen Margaret's in 1996 but that was exceptional.

The weather during the course of the week proved to be a mixed bag, tending towards the traditional Welsh with cloud, rain and downpours. But there was enough warm, sunny weather to allow some useful collecting. In fact we were very lucky as the following week was a complete washout throughout the UK! Permission had been obtained, mostly through the kind cooperation of local Countryside Council for Wales staff, to about 150 sites in the vice-counties of Monmouthshire, Glamorgan and Brecknock, and to a smaller number over the border in Herefordshire. Participants even strayed further afield into Carmarthenshire and Radnor!

Abergavenny proved to be a useful central location with good arterial roads serving the Valleys and south Wales. It also provided the opportunity to visit a wide range of habitats including saltmarsh, large dune systems such as Kenfig, Whiteford Burrows and Merthyr Mawr NNRs, the Gwent Levels, wetlands such as Crymlyn Bog NNR, Rhosgoch Common NNR and Llangorse Lake, the exposed river sediments of the Monnow and the Usk, the woodlands of the Wye Valley and Moccas Park NNR, and the montane massifs of the Brecon Beacons and Black Mountain (Mynydd Du). It has to be said that the attractive views of these mountain blocks proved to be very resistible to most of us, although the Black Mountains did yield the first record of the wasp *Dolichovespula saxonica* for Wales.

Although much of the material collected remains to be identified, with a full report expected early in the new year (participants please note!), early indications are that the week did pick up many goodies, some predictable and others not so.

Visits to the River Monnow re-confirmed its importance for Diptera and good numbers of the RDB2 soldierfly *Oxycera terminata*, the RDB3 stiletto-fly *Psilocephala rustica* and the snipe-fly *Atherix ibis* were recorded. In addition, the RDB2 syrphid *Chalcosyrphus eunotus*, an un-named *Orthonevra* (known from only two other sites, in Dorset and northern France) and the RDB2 *Chrysopilus erythropthalmus* were taken but, most surprisingly, the RDB1 scathophagid *Cosmetopus dentimanus* was found - a species previously known only from the rivers Test and Itchen in Hampshire. Also on the Monnow were a number of rare craneflies, including RDB *Arctoconopa melampodia*, *Erioptera limbata* and *Rhabdomastix hilaris*, and scarce species such as *Nephrotoma lunulicornis*. On the River Usk the first specimens of the cranefly *Erioptera pusilla* since 1911 was found, and a possibly new species of lauxanid in the *Homoneura subnotata* group. On the River Wye *Dicranomyia omissinervis* occurred. Also on flood plains was the cranefly *Rhipidia ctenophora*, possibly new to Wales, in pollarded willows.

The RDB3 asilid *Pamponerus germanicus* and two notable soldierflies *Stratiomys potamida* and *S.*

*singularior* were recorded at Whiteford Burrows, and a strong colony of the distinctive solitary bee *Eucera longicornis* was found at Pembrey Burrows. The notable ground beetle *Nebria complanata* was found on the strandline at Crymlyn Burrows SSSI. The Gwent Levels, and Magor Marsh in particular, proved to support good numbers of the RDB2 soldierfly *Odontomyia ornata* and of the notable *O. tigrina* (which was also recorded at Rhosgoch Common in Radnorshire). The spectacular musk beetle *Aromia moschata* (a notable longhorn) and good numbers of the notable chloropid *Lipara rufitarsis* were also found at Magor Marsh. Two queen shrill carder bees *Bombus sylvarum* (a BAP “short list” species) were recorded at Margam Moor SSSI, having been previously seen in 1992.

A search for larvae of the robberfly *Asilus crabroniformis* at Brockwell’s Meadow, Magor proved fruitless but good numbers of the tachinid *Phasia pusilla*, a scarce species in Wales, several specimens of the notable beefly *Bombylius canescens*, and the conopid *Thecophora atra* were recorded, as well as three species of robberfly; *Dioctria atricapilla*, *D. rufipes* and *Leptogaster cylindrica*.

Several of the base-rich Wye Valley woodlands were visited and the best known find to date was of the notable syrphid *Rhingia rostrata*. However, the flower-rich meadows adjoining mature conifer plantations on the upland fringes of northern Monmouthshire proved to be rich in syrphids such as the notable *Megasyrphus annulipes* and produced the first Welsh record of the distinctive *Sphegina siberica*, which was quite a lure for many of the party. The uncommon hoverfly *Neocnemodon latitarsis* was present in good numbers on crosswort flowers. At Haugh Wood, the RDB crane-fly *Protogonomyia alboscuteolata* was found at calcareous seepages (known here from a very early record), and *Orimarga virgo* was present on other such seepages in Glamorgan. The crane-fly *Tasiocera minuscula* turned up at Moccas Park, the first positive specimen recorded from Britain.

Overall, more than 154 species of tipulid were recorded during the week, a new record for field meetings despite the weather reducing site coverage and preventing high ground being surveyed. Over 100 species of sawflies were collected, the large number being boosted by the lure of the honey-pot prize. Records are starting to trickle in, confirming the success of the week, with Jon Cole recording the dolichopodid *Sciapus basilicus* new to Britain. Lets hope that further records are of a similar quality, providing a challenge to Dorchester in 1998.

Mike Howe

## NEWS FROM THE SCHEMES

### Chironomid Study Group

The third issue of *The Edwardsian* was issued in spring this year. Like most newsletters, I note that most of it is written by the editor, Patrick Roper. Even if you aren’t interested in chironomids, its worth reading for the witticisms.

### Crane-fly Recording Scheme

The rediscovery of *Erioptera pusilla* at the Abergavenny field meeting reduces the short list of crane-flies unknown since 1960. The only British records were from the Monnow valley (locations unstated) on 17 July 1907, 31 July 1908 and 30 May 1911. Nothing was known of the ecology. Various visits to the River Monnow since 1980 have failed to find the species. The rediscovery on 10 June was on the River Usk south of Great Hardwick, below Abergavenny, at the downstream end of a sand island at the margin of woodland. two males and two females were swept from sparse *Juncus articulatus*, *Phalaris* and osier on muddy sand by the water’s edge.

The North Midlands Crane-fly Group is progressing well and is active in the field. In April a list of

computer records was issued by the Group in conjunction with Sorby Invertebrate Group and Derbyshire Entomological Society. This gives an overview of much of the existing information on which to build. The 41 pages of print-out may well contain between 1600 and 2000 records. Records on BRC cards held by the national recording scheme organiser were incorporated, a useful contribution to getting the national data base onto computer.

Peter Chandler has found *Diazosma hirtipennis* (Trichoceridae) at several sites in the Chilterns this summer.

Alan Stubbs

### Fungus Gnat Recording Scheme

Although additions to the British fungus gnat list have slowed down, they have not dried up completely, despite the continuing effects of drought on their populations.

In Bulletin No 43 (p. 9), the item on the Malloch Society mentioned a species new to science. This was an adult male found under pine bark in May 1996 at a site high in the hills near Newtonmore, by Graham Rotheray and David Robertson. Its characters fit the genus *Grzegorzekia* but it is not closely related to the only known European and British species *G. collaris* (Meigen). I visited the site with its collectors during a trip to Scotland in July 1997 but no further specimens were located.

A large amount of material I examined from four Welsh parklands, resulting from trapping programmes by the Liverpool and Cardiff Museums, included many new Welsh and other interesting records. One male from Powis Castle Park appears to be an undescribed species of *Mycetophila*.

It is intended to describe the above species and to deal with other as yet unpublished additions to the British list in forthcoming publications.

A most unexpected addition to the British fungus gnat fauna (the 530th British species) also turned up during my recent visit to Scotland, namely the second European species of *Symmerus*, *S. nobilis* Lackschewitz, 1937. This occurred in an area of wet woodland by the River Coiltie just below Divach Falls, situated about two miles from Drumnadrochit to the north of Loch Ness so there are still hitherto unknown species to be found in the hinterland of the Loch. Altogether three males were found in successive visits during the same week (21st, 22nd and 24th July), all of them around a pile of rotting logs beside the river. *S. annulatus*, which I had previously recorded in the alderwood on the shore of Loch Ness at Drumnadrochit, was present in the same area. This species is known to develop in decaying wood so a similar larval habitat for *nobilis* is likely.

The genus *Symmerus* is very distinctive and easily recognised using the RES Handbook. The two species are about the same size, but the male of *S. nobilis* is of a brighter appearance as it has the thoracic dorsum yellowish with three fused shining dark brown stripes, while *annulatus* has the thorax more uniformly yellowish brown with two vague widely separated darker stripes sometimes apparent. The genitalia are obviously different and appear noticeably broader to the eye. Females of *Symmerus* are usually much darker in appearance than the male; an almost blackish female was seen alighting on a dead birch branch on the first of these visits but was not captured as its significance was not appreciated until the evening. It is not known whether it was *nobilis* although this seems likely as it appeared darker and longer bodied than is usual in *annulatus*. No further females were seen on the later visits.

This Glen Coiltie site is an alder and ash wood with some birch and oak on the drier slopes; the lower lying parts are always wet and there is a good ungrazed ground flora in both wet and dry areas - bluebells, wood sorrel, violets and celandine covered the ground on a previous May visit, marsh orchids

and valerian were evident on the latest visit. On the opposite bank of the small river is a dense conifer plantation.

I have visited this site on two previous occasions, in May 1994 and October 1995 and it has proved very productive for gnats, a total of 97 species having been recorded, several of them with few Scottish records, among them in May the local wet woodland species *Grzegorzekia collaris* (Meigen), *Allodia neglecta* Edwards and the cup fungus feeder *A. barbata* (Lundström). Also found in May were the "Scottish" species *Gnoriste bilineata* Zetterstedt and *Mycomya griseovittata* (Zetterstedt). On the latest visit *Boletina pectinunguis* Edwards was also found, the first confirmed British record since Edwards found this species at Loch Ericht in 1931; it is otherwise recorded from Sweden, Finland and northern Russia.

Peter Chandler

### Hoverfly Recording Scheme

Martin Speight, in a letter to Alan Stubbs, reports that *Cheilosia ahenea* (ex. *laskai*) has 'turned up in masses' on a machair site in Co. Mayo. Previously it was thought to be confined to the limestones of the Burren. Thus apart from the need to search limestone pavements in NW England, we must add the machair of the Hebrides of west Scotland. *Portevinia maculata* adults are reported from a large stand of *Allium triquetrum* in Ireland so some garden *Allium* species may potentially be used in Britain.

The *Sphegina siberica* found new to Wales on the Abergavenny meeting range from almost entirely yellow to entirely black. The coxal bridge can be closed rather than open. Nearly all specimens had the last two tarsal segments conspicuously black in contrast to the remaining pale tarsal segments which seems a useful field character for recognising black specimens of the species. The male genitalia are definitive. Later in the summer, Ivan Perry spent some time in Scotland where he found *siberica* at several sites in the central Highlands where it was apparently associated with deciduous rather than with coniferous woodland at some sites.

There is jubilation in the Malloch Society (Scottish dipterists) after their finding *Blera fallax* larvae at last, in pine stumps in a special state of rot.

Hoverfly Newsletter no. 24 is distributed with this Bulletin.

Stuart Ball & Roger Morris

### Larger Brachycera Recording Scheme

The latest and hottest news, hotter even than the weather, is John Coldwell finding the first confirmed mainland record of the soldierfly *Oxycera falleni* in the North York Moors. Apart from an unconfirmed records from the Suffolk coast from the last century, this species was recorded previously only from two sites in Ireland over 50 years ago.

Asilids run a good second in red hot news. Steve Falk found a strong population of the robberfly *Machimus* 'species A' in the Breck. This helps confirm that we have something different from the possibly extinct *M. arthriticus*. Also in the Breck, Martin Drake has found pupal exuviae of what must be *Dysmachus trigonus*, a common robberfly whose pupae were unknown.

*Asilus crabroniformis*, one of the few flies on the Biodiversity Action Plan 'short' list of species for action now, is receiving attention. English Nature and Countryside Council for Wales have both set up a small contracts this year to investigate oviposition behaviour and to survey more sites in Wales (and indeed new colonies have been located). Jonty Denton has found exuviae at Thursley Common NNR where there is a good population in an area with lots of rabbits; he surmises that their larvae may well

be feeding on *Typhaeus* (the Minotaur dung beetle). Last year, Peter Skidmore found a small larva in cow dung. Next year, a larger programme will be established to work out exactly what the beast does feed on. The Countryside Council for Wales has published a report written by Mike Howe, *The status of the hornet robberfly Asilus crabroniformis in Gwynedd and monitoring of a population at Pen-y-Bryn, Llanbedr in Merionethshire, 1992-1996*.

A third record of the new robberfly *Leptarthrus vitripennis* has been reported by Andrew Halstead who has one in his collection. It was from a further chalk grassland site in Surrey.

Alan Stubbs found 12 pupal exuviae of *Bombylius major* in flower beds at his home. We have located pupal exuviae of *B. discolor* in the Hope Department museum. We seek help in obtaining pupae of the other two British species for development of a key. Mike Edwards reports lots of *B. minor* in the Studland area of Dorset this summer.

On the River Usk shingles, pupae of *Tabanus cordiger* were found. More significantly one pupa contained numerous tiny pupae of parasitic wasps. These await identification by an expert but such an occurrence appears to be unknown in Europe. Martin Drake has reared parasitic wasps from a larva of *Microchrysa*.

Martin Drake and Alan Stubbs

## REQUESTS

### Help needed in word processing and publishing formats

1. The Larger Brachycera book should be complete on the word processor by Christmas. It will be a huge book of c. 500+ pages, so it is even more important to keep publication and selling costs down. Hence we ask if anyone is prepared to format page and font, etc, leading to camera-ready pages for printing. The model is British Hoverflies. Illustrations in keys will be stuck on to maintain high resolution from originals but the spacing needs to be correct. The option of scanning in diagrammes would be an immense job because there are hundreds of figures, and resolution would be marginally poorer than using originals.

2. The new Dipterist Digest editor, Peter Chandler, needs a small team of assistants who can work process or scan in scripts where need be, and preferably one such person able to produce camera-ready copy.

### AND NOW.....MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

An idyllic scene I suppose. No doubt a Welsh Tourist Board poster. A lady walker (cue - a small rucksack on her back) and her dog (Welsh sheepdog, off lead in probable sheep country) look out over a lake and hillside.

We passed this poster everyday at our Abergavenny field centre, a bit of colour on an otherwise drab landscape as we rushed down to breakfast bleary-eyed (speaking for myself). Surrounded by enticing countryside, maps and SSSI site descriptions, it scarcely occurred to me to look at the poster properly - we could surely find for ourselves better habitat than the rather barren landscape portrayed.

Then, after a few days I noticed that the poster was produced by the Countryside Council for Wales. There was one set of captions in gobbledegook Welsh, (to be politically correct), and another set of captions for the English who needed to be told what they had been missing by staying in England (but

politically polite in omitting to remind the English that they should remain living in England).

Thus I read:-

'A beautiful land washed by clean seas and streams, under a clear sky, supporting its full biodiversity of life.'

This is a Mission Statement from CCW. How intriguing!

- Beautiful. Basically yes, and there are things that could be improved.
- Can land be washed by clean seas, prior to global warming? We'll let that one pass.
- Land washed by clean streams. Fair, if one aims to also reduce invisible pollution in the form of acid rain and agricultural chemical run-off, and control sediment and chemical run-off from forestry.
- Supporting full biodiversity. The poster view is quite a challenge, but the overall aim is fine - full biodiversity includes flies.

But how does CCW propose to provide clear skies? Is it going to seed clouds so that rain falls before reaching Wales? Or perhaps it is going to construct huge cloud deflectors in the Atlantic approaches. Is there a plan for new kinetic energy wind farms, the fans being put into blow mode when clouds are forecast? Biodiversity could include cherubs, working in teams at the four compass points. Perhaps Wales will just let rip with CO<sub>2</sub> levels and hope for the desired result as the most economic way of fulfilling its mission.

And if clear skies could be ensured, would the streams still flow and what would happen to the biodiversity of Wales as total drought takes effect? The Diptera fauna would plummet.

Now I have always held that the organisers of field meetings should be responsible for the weather. In this case Liz and Mike Howe of CCW provided changeable and unreliable weather including a lot of cloud, some sun and some rain. Clearly, as CCW employees they have failed to deliver a key element of the Mission Statement. But, there were clear streams and a lot of biodiversity in flies. Thus do we condemn the Howes for not providing clear skies or congratulate them on having failed in order that typical Welsh climate provided lots of flies?

The annual job appraisal procedures in CCW, including assessment of mission targets met and self examination of causes of failure, must be quite interesting - as viewed at a safe distance from England!.

Alan Stubbs

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