



BULLETIN OF THE
Dipterists
Forum



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

This year will see some substantial changes in the ways in which some Recording Scheme Organisers archive and exchange records. Whilst all 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 next issue

Cnepidae, Leucophaeidae and Otitidae

Mr D K Clements
7 Vista Rise, Radyr Cheyne, Llandaff, Cardiff CF5 2SD

david.clements1@tesco.net

Culicidae - Mosquitoes

Prof. K Snow

Dept. Environmental Sciences University of East London Romford Road London E15 4LZ

k.r.snow@uel.ac.uk

Dividae - Monisus midges

Acting scheme organiser

Dr R H L Disney

University department of Zoology, Downing Street Cambridge CB2 3EJ

Drosophilidae - Fruit Flies

Dr B Pitkin

Dept of Entomology, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road London SW7 5BD

Sepsidae

vacant

Tachinid

Chris Raper

22 Beech Road, Purley-on-Thames, Reading, Berks RG8 8DS

chris.raper@hartslock.org.uk

Matthew Smith

24 Allnatt Avenue, Winnersh, Berks RG41 5AU

MatSmith1@compuserve.com

Larger Brachycera

Simon Hayhow

15 Brookfield Road, Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire FY5 4DR

simon.hayhow@btinternet.com

Mycetophilidae and allies - Fungus gnats

Mr Peter J Chandler (see Dipterists Digest)

Tipulidae & Ptychopteridae - Cranefly

Mr A E Stubbs

181 Broadway Peterborough PE1 4DS

co-organiser: John Kramer

31 Ash Tree Road

Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5TE

Sciomyzidae - Snail Killing Flies

Dr I F G McLean

109 Miller Way, Brampton, Huntingdon, Cambs

PE28 4TZ

ian_mclean@jncc.gov.uk

ianmclean@waitrose.com

Mr A.P. Foster

23 The Dawneys, Crudwell, Malmesbury, Wiltshire

SN16 9HE

Darwyn Sumner

Hoverflies

Dr S G Ball

255 Eastfield Road Peterborough PE1 4BH

stuart.ball@dsl.pipex.com

Mr R K A Morris

roger.morris@english-nature.org.uk

Newsletter editor -

David Iliff

Green Willows, Station Road, Woodmancote,

Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 4HW

Topitid Flies

Mr Laurence Clemons

14 St John's Avenue

Sittingbourne

Kent ME10 4NE

Stilt & Stalk Fly

Darwyn Sumner

122, Link Road, Anstey, Charnwood, Leicestershire

LE7 7BX. 0116 212 5075

Darwyn.sumner@ntlworld.com

Anthomyiidae

Mr Michael Ackland

4 The Moors Kidlington Oxfordshire OX5 2AJ

mackland@btinternet.com

Empid & Dolichopodid

Dr Adrian Plant

Curator of Diptera

Department of Biodiversity and Systematic

Biology

National Museum & Galleries of Wales

Cathays Park, CARDIFF

CF10 3NP

Tel. 02920 573 259

Adrian.Plant@nmgw.ac.uk

Chironomidae

Dr P.P. Roper

South View Sedlescombe Battle East Sussex TN33

OPE

Pipunculidae

Mr A E Stubbs (see Tipulids)

Mr Michael Ackland (see Anthomyiidae)

Simuliidae

Dr R. Crosskey

c/o Dept of Entomology Natural History Museum
Cromwell Road London SW7 5BD

David Heaver

5 Albert Road, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2DN

Dr. R.K.A.Morris

7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 1QE

roger.morris@english-nature.org.uk

Summer 2003:

Ivan Perry

27 Mill Road, Lode, Cambridge, CB5 9EN.

Tel: 01223 812438

Autumn 2003, Summer 2004:

Peter Chandler

Mr M. Parker

9 East Wyld Road, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 0RP

jmparker_87@hotmail.com

Malcolm Smart

'Southcliffe', Pattingham Road, Perton, Wolver-

hampton WV6 7HD. Tel: 01902 700228.

malcolm@smart-home.freeseve.co.uk

Peter Chandler

606B Berryfield Lane, Melksham, Wilts SN12 6EL

01225-708339

chandgnats@aol.com

Darwyn Sumner

122, Link Road, Anstey, Charnwood, Leicestershire

LE7 7BX. 0116 212 5075

Darwyn.sumner@ntlworld.com

Ken Merrifield

kemerrifield@yahoo.co.uk

vacant

John Kramer

31 Ash Tree Road, Oadby, Leicester, Leicestershire,

LE2 5TE.

jk@chezejog.demon.co.uk

Stuart Ball

255 Eastfield Road Peterborough PE1 4BH

stuart.ball@dsl.pipex.com

chris.raper@hartslock.org.uk

Website www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/

Would the individuals listed above please

check that I have all their details correct and contact me if there is anything they wish to be added or amended.



BULLETIN OF THE **Dipterists** Forum

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Bulletin Editor Darwyn Sumner

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Chris Spilling, Alan Stubbs

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Dip. Digest Editor	Peter Chandler
co-opted	Alan Stubbs
JCCBI representative	John Dobson

Recording Scheme Organisers

Crane fly	Alan Stubbs
Fungus Gnats	Peter Chandler
Hoverflies	S. Ball & R. Morris
Larger Brachycera	Simon Hayhow
Tephritid	Laurence Clemons
Sciomyzid	Ian McLean
Conopid	David Clements
Empid & Dollies	Adrian Plant
Anthomyiid	Michael Ackland
Dixidae	R.H.L. Disney
Culicidae	K. Snow
Sepsidae	vacant
Tachinid	Chris Raper
Stilt & Stalk	Darwyn Sumner

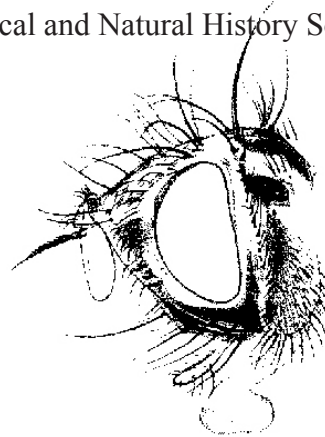
Website

www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/

Forum

www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/index.php

Articles submitted should be in the form of a word-processed file on disk or E-mail Darwyn.sumner@ntlworld.com Please submit in native format and Rich Text Format (.rtf). An accompanying print-out would also be useful. Line artworks are encouraged. Darwyn Sumner: 122, Link Road, Anstey, Charnwood, Leicestershire LE7 7BX. 0116 212 5075



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Forum News

Editorial

Darwyn Sumner

John Dobson, our JCCBI representative telephoned me recently, asking to be brought up to date with a status report of the various recording schemes. Trevor James of NBN wanted the same sort of information (see his note on the questionnaire). There's good news and bad news. I was disappointed to learn, somewhat belatedly, of the demise of the Sepsidae recording scheme although, as I suggested on the Dipterists Forum Forum (that's Ken Merrifield's name for the discussion group on our website), records can continue to be collected, we're just short of an expert willing to help out. I rather like the Sepsidae and would be an enthusiast were it not for the fact that every one I collect turns out to be the same species. Another disappointment arises from our failure to secure some of the funding that Defra had available, although the message we got back is fairly optimistic as regards future attempts. Now that we've gone through the process once it seems likely that a co-ordinated effort might be more successful next year. Disappointments too for the people who didn't get their pet species through to the BAP list but congratulations to Barbara Schulten who applied the criteria very correctly.

Marris House Nets

Bob George has finally managed to sell his business and Marris house nets are now available again from:-

B&S Entomological Services, 37 Derrycarne Road, Portadown, Co. Armagh, BT62 1PT, N. Ireland, UK, Tel: +44 (0)77 6738 6751 or +44 (0)28 3833 6922, Fax: +44 (0)28 3833 6922, email: enquiries@entomology.org.uk,

Web: <http://www.entomology.org.uk/>

Ken Merrifield

OS Maps

The NBN Trust is currently carrying out some research as to whether Recorder 2002 and Recorder 6 users would be interested in the OS 1:25,000 product for use within Recorder. The idea would be to initially provide these along the same lines as the 1:50,000.

It would be appreciated if you would visit the NBN Communications site and complete a very short questionnaire. www.nbn.org.uk/OSform.

The form requests you supply a name and email address. I have included this so that I can contact you for further details if necessary. If you do not wish to be contacted please use the email address nocontact@nbn.org.uk

Jo Purdy, Company Secretary

MapMate users may also like to comment (ed.)



Opportunities in Scotland

Scottish National Heritage's Alan McKirdy was speaking at the NBN's National Schemes and Societies Steering group meeting in February and outlined the situation regarding SNH's obligations in respect of the 1,500 or so Scottish SSSIs. Apparently they have to carry out condition monitoring on them all on a 6 year rotating basis. The work is normally carried out by contract workers, presumably each with their own ranges of skills in terms of ability to incorporate different taxa in their surveys. More recently, SNH have begun to also draw upon the services of the voluntary sector in an ad hoc sort of way, using, for example, services offered by BSBI. SNH are interested, however, in putting these sort of arrangements on a more formal basis. The importance of Diptera in the context of conservation in Scotland was made very clear by Cosgrove & Amphlett's "*The Biodiversity and Management of Aspen woodlands*". Perhaps the Scottish Dipterists might find that opportunities are opening up to further this kind of excellent work on Scotland's SSSIs.

The Dipterists Forum Network

Tying together a few observations from items in this Bulletin it looks as though an opportunity exists for funding capacity building amongst Dipterists Forum recorders in respect of the provision and use of Biological Recording Applications which permit data to be shared widely. MapMate users are familiar with such techniques and data-sharing groups exist across the country. Perhaps our bid to Defra could include the provision of such applications to recorders and support in the form of training.

News from the schemes

The big news this time is that a second scheme now has all its records published on the NBN Gateway. Nothing like as big as the Hoverfly dataset but at least the publication of the Stilt & Stalk flies dataset shows that it doesn't need the happy coincidence of Stuart Ball's work and hobby to achieve this. It is interesting to have an absolute figure of dipterists for whom this is a meaningless achievement (50% without internet access - according to "Membership Matters"). Steve Cham (Odonata scheme) and I have argued over this figure - he maintains that most of his members have internet access whilst I have a figure of 25% in the general public from surveys in computer magazines.

So which scheme will be next? Craneflies would be a favourite, with the publication of the book coinciding with the publication of the datasets on the NBN Gateway in the same way that Cynthia Davies et. al. of CEH(BRC) published the "Freshwater fishes in Britain". Next could well be the Larger Brachycera and Simon Hayhow reports promising progress with records. Perhaps there are others, I'll be happy to provide technical assistance regarding NBN Gateway publication to any scheme organiser who thinks they have national datasets worth publishing. There are huge advantages in publishing just the atlases in this way, the maps can be incorporated into the Dipterists Forum web site on your own pages (where you can also provide your own text and pictures), they can be updated any time you wish (thus getting around the usual "provisional" problems of atlases - people wait to see these before sending in their records) and they reach an international audience without printing and distribution costs.

Cranefly Recording Scheme

John Kramer reports on progress with this scheme in his Secretary's Report for the AGM

John Kramer

Empid Recording Scheme

Adrian Plant submitted an article on Potential Additions to British Empididae (see Fly Sheets)

Adrian Plant

Sepsidae Recording Scheme

It is some years now since the Sepsidae Recording Scheme was wound up, by agreement between myself and Alan Stubbs. Could you please remove it from the opening pages of the Bulletin, as its appearance could be misleading - I am no longer storing or even receiving records.

see Book review p13 Bulletin # 55

Adrian Pont

Stilt & Stalk Fly Recording Scheme

(NERIOIDEA: Pseudopomyzidae, Micropezidae. DIOPSOIDEA: Tanypezidae, Strongylophthalmyiidae, Megamerinidae & Psilidae) Neria femoralis didn't make it to the BAP list, I guess because we don't know enough about its distribution or biology. My focus this year will be on trying to pick up a little more detail about the habitats, behaviour and biology of a handful of species. The more common Neria are to be found amongst the patches of creeping buttercup which



inhabit the permanently wet, semi-open situations in deciduous woodlands. Slinging the net around these patches will sometimes get results but sit and watch for a little while; they'll come out from nearby vegetation and pose well enough to grab photographs. Dipterists Forum members who attended the Suffolk field week in 2003 will now be relieved to learn that I've finally broken my duck on *Micropeza lateralis* ("Why can't you find it?". "It was here in scores last year.", "Why are you crawling about under that Broom thicket?") which I took in Sherwood Forest last year. I make no excuses for my rotten descriptions, the phrase "large greasy orange beasts" was enough to prompt someone to use the *Psila* keys on their material and record a few of these beasts.

Not quite ready as I wrote this item but I'm assured that the entire dataset for the Stilt & Stalk Flies will be available on the NBN Gateway by the time this Bulletin is published. Do try to fill in a few gaps this year.

Darwyn Sumner

Hoverfly Recording Scheme

Newsletter # 39 included with this Bulletin

David Iliffe

Forum News

Larger Brachycera Recording Scheme

Newsletter # 24 included with this Bulletin

Simon Hayhow

Tachinid Flies Recording Scheme

Newsletter # 1 included with this Bulletin

Chris Raper & Matt Smith

Environmental Information Regulations

There has been an immense amount of debate on this matter, the potential impact of the regulations on both Local Records Centres and National Recording Schemes is immense in that they seem to place legal obligations upon the collectors and collators of biodiversity information.

The regulations have been in place for some time but Defra recently updated them. The updates arise from the need to conform to similar European Legislation which, as Keith Porter of EN points out, is based on the European understanding that the vast majority of biodiversity information is collected by museum curators. When the updates were passed for consideration to Defra, the UK's culture of amateur recording seems not to have been taken into consideration and Defra's own consultation procedure was not followed. For example they included the Taxi Drivers Association in the formal process but not the NBN, NFBR or many of the dozens of recording schemes which they represent.

The regulations are in place but the finer points are still being debated by our representatives at a high level with Defra. Bill Butcher of Somerset is representing NFBR and Trevor James and Sir John Burnett the NBN.

Sir John's latest communication to Recording Schemes was as follows:

Environmental Information Regulations – Meeting with Defra

A meeting took place on December 8th between representatives of Defra and the NBN Trust. The Trust was represented by me, Dr Munford, Trevor James, Oliver Grafton and Bill Butcher, who was also able to represent the views of the NFBR and Local Records Centres. The atmosphere was both friendly and constructive.

The Trust's representatives outlined the problems which had arisen from their legal advice on the interpretation of the draft Code of Practice to the new EIR and also described the concerns which had arisen in the whole recording community. For their part, Defra's representatives gave an assurance that in drafting the new EIR it had not been the intention of either Defra or the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to change the position materially from that under the existing EIR 1992. Certainly, there was no intention to constrain or reduce in any way the activities of voluntary recorders and societies or reduce their valuable contributions to publicly available knowledge concerning British biodiversity.

A full discussion took place of the problems, real and apparent, that interpretation of the draft EIR and especially the draft Code of Practice and Guidance has created for the Trust, LRCs and voluntary recording organizations. ***As a consequence the NBN Trust has been asked to submit appropriate amendments/alterations to the draft Guidance to alleviate the widespread concerns in the recording community.***

The Trust has undertaken to do this as rapidly as possible commensurate with ensuring that recognized adverse issues will be adequately resolved. Defra has undertaken to review this submission sympathetically and obtain the advice of the ICO and its clearance. If need be, further exchanges will take place to resolve any outstanding issues. Discussion will almost certainly extend into the New Year ***but this does not pose a problem since the Code of Practice is regarded by Defra and the ICO as a 'living' document that can undergo interpretative change continuously as 'case law' on these matters develops.***

The Trust is, therefore, cautiously optimistic that an outcome satisfactory to the whole recording community will be achieved. Further progress will be reported as it occurs.

John Burnett, Chairman NBN Trust, 10th December 2004

Darwyn Sumner

Societies & Schemes Questionnaire

An attempt was made in September to update current information on the activities of all recording schemes and societies. A questionnaire was circulated, asking for updated information on databases in use, on current plans for development; and also attempting to gain some idea how and at what level schemes and societies were able to engage with the Gateway, and whether the societies wanted further help. However, the response has been very poor, which is of some concern. A possible reason is that it almost coincided, unfortunately, with the request from

Defra/NBNT for project bids, and has been lost in subsequent activity.

Whatever the reason, we still need to ensure that up-to-date information on current work and future plans in schemes is not lost, and that the NBN continues to be seen as an opportunity.

Trevor James (November 2004)

Defra funding

Following my attendance at the NBN's National Schemes and Societies Steering group at which Jim Munford announced the possibility of Defra funding for recording schemes projects, I initiated a flurry of emails amongst Dipterists Forum scheme organisers and committee in an attempt to put together a coordinated bid within the very short time scale available. This resulted in a considerable amount of effort from several individuals, my apologies to Roger Morris for really pressuring him about this but he came up with a very well-structured plan which cost him a good deal of time. Trouble was, Trevor James also sent the announcement individually to Dipterists Forum Scheme organisers and scuppered our chances of a coordinated Dipterists Forum response. It's a little galling to find that the NBN committee subsequently rejected our bid, suggesting a "clearly formulated single Project plan for the Dipterists Forum" but time was extremely short and everyone attempted all methods to achieve the best range of bids. I believe that as a result of our efforts that all the important issues were dragged into the open and the exercise will prove to have been most useful in that we will be better placed to make a bid for the next year (which is what Roger advised me would have been the best way forward). Here's Trevor James' letter outlining the conclusions of the NBN committee's suggestions as to how our future bid might be successful in meeting Defra's targets in order to secure some of their cash for our projects (addressed to our Secretary):

I am tasked by the NBN Trust to make contact with organisations that have submitted project bids and outlines to the NBN Trust under the contract with Defra.

You and others in the Dipterists Forum submitted a number of project outlines and plans:

- 1. Computerisation of Dipterists Forum field meeting data*
- 2. Computerisation of museum collections data*
- 3. Computerisation of remaining data from Alan Stubbs manuscript notebooks and records.*
- 4. Atlas of Craneflies*
- 5. Digitisation of Larger Brachycera Recording Scheme data*

The committee that examined these asked us to get back to you to see how a more clearly formulated single Project plan for the Dipterists Forum might be put together with a view to funding in 2005-6.

Of the proposals listed, the Atlas of Craneflies would not fall to Defra/NBN Trust funding, because it is wholly within the work programme of the Biological Records Centre. You will need to discuss this direct with Mark Hill and his team here. Much of the work, of course, has already been carried out.

With the other proposals, each of these has merits in different ways. However, in order for you to get funding, we need a clearly-formulated Project Plan which can meet Defra's funding criteria. These are essentially that any project has to include at least some focus on Biodiversity Action Plan targets for scarce or rare species (at UK and local level); data relevant to priority habitats in the UK BAP; data relating to the spread of alien species. Projects also are favoured if they seek to develop the capacity of the Dipterists Forum to collect and manage data, and to submit data through the NBN Gateway on a sustainable basis, particularly data with precise information.

The Forum therefore needs to focus on a) high quality data (e.g. the Field Meeting data and Alan Stubbs' data jointly?); b) data-sets which have identifiable BAP/Scarce species; c) data management operations which can act as a pilot for further development within the Forum in a programmed way.

It occurs to me, therefore that we could bring together the computerisation of the Field Meetings data (if they contain scarce species and detailed habitat information), along with a clearly defined tranche of data from Alan Stubbs or similar sources; and integrate this with the proposals put forward separately by Simon Hayhow for the Larger Brachycera. I would also think the Forum could consider how work with the Larger Brachycera could be used to set up a template for further scheme data to be developed and made available.

Can I leave you to consider this with Simon and others in the Forum, with a view to integrating these Projects in this way for later submission?

I will copy this to Simon Hayhow for information, as he submitted one of the Projects, and to Darwyn Sumner whom I also know was involved.

If you would like to discuss this with me, or possibly arrange a meeting to see how this could be taken forward, please let me know.

Trevor James
Darwyn Sumner

Forum News

Membership Matters

Members are reminded that Subscription Rates from the 1st January 2005, are now as follows:

Home : Dipterists Forum £6 per annum and Dipterists Digest £9 per annum

Overseas : Dipterists Forum £7 per annum and Dipterists Digest £10 per annum

The numbers of Members & Subscribers at the end of 2004 are as follows :

Dipterists Forum Members 281 as on 31st December 2004

Dipterists Digest Subscribers 267 as on 31st December 2004

This list is still current, awaiting membership renewals for this year. There are seven additional members who started on or since the 1st January 2005

To avoid delay in receiving the Dipterists Forum Bulletin and/or the Dipterists Digest, it would be appreciated if Members & Subscribers could pay their fees, as soon as possible, It would be more efficient and cost effective if we could get as many of the current membership on the initial mailing slot.

E-mail Addresses

As it stands I have about 150 e-mail addresses, (which is about half the membership). If any member does not think that I have their e-mail address, or have recently changed their e-mail address and would like to send me their e-mail address I would appreciate it.

An important note for those of you who pay by Bankers Order :

So far, I have been notified that over one hundred members have amended their Bankers Orders to the new rates, those who have not yet changed their bankers orders can send the difference to me by cheque, payable to the "Dipterists Forum" at the address below can pay me in person if they wish, I plan to be at all the main entomological events this Summer & Autumn.

I wish all the Members & Subscribers all the very best for 2005 - Good luck to you all and I hope to see as many of you as possible at the usual Entomological events, until then, Good Bug Hunting!!,

9 East Wyld Road, Weymouth, DORSET. DT4 0RP. Tel : 01305 788380

Mick Parker, Membership Secretary jmparker_87@hotmail.com

Obituary

Dame Miriam Rothschild

Sadly Dame Miriam Rothschild, lifelong invertebrate specialist and supporter of nature conservation passed away in January aged 96. Obituaries at:-

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/01/24/db2401.xml&sSheet=/portal/2005/01/24/ixportal.html>

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,60-1450821,00.html>

Matt Shardlow

Correspondence

Guernsey notes

The manager of the Local Records Centre in Guernsey, Charles David, manages to get onto mainland UK from time to time. I met him at an event of the National Federation for Biological Recording where he was keen to discuss diptera matters. As a result he sent me an article on *Cyrtosia marginata* Perris (Diptera: Mythicomyiidae). It's difficult to know how best to circulate this article since its already been published, perhaps its an ideal candidate for our website. In the meantime, if you're considering a visit to Guernsey, you would do well to contact Charles at cdavid@guernsey.net

Charles offers: *I might put something together for Dipterist's Forum. How about a bit about non-British or rare in England species that are common here?*

Charles David cdavid@guernsey.net

English Nature and the Environmental Information Regulations

(Note that this response dates from November 2004. The situation has moved on somewhat since this correspondence but I have included it since Keith provides useful information about the background for the legislation and expresses support for Dipterists Forum and the organisations who represent and support us. Many thanks to Roger Morris who acted promptly when contacted regarding the EIR review process and managed to engage senior figures in EN on behalf of volunteer recorders in the country. Ed.)

The recent consultations on the new Environmental Information Regulations have been conducted by Hester Tidcombe hester.tidcombe@defra.gsi.gov.uk, Sustainable Development Unit of DEFRA not English Nature. We see the National Biodiversity Network Trust as being the body directly representing the interests of biological recorders.

Up until the recent legal advice received by the NBN Trust, which I've yet to see a copy, it was the generally understood that the regulations were intended to address information that was funded or linked to governments, it was very doubtful whether it covered volunteer recording groups or scheme organisers like yourself. We do however understand your concern that a private individual, gathering records for their own self-interest, could be compelled to release this information. The consequences of such an outcome would have a profound effect on nature conservation in the United Kingdom. English Nature has been talking to DEFRA about this, but came to the conclusion that this wasn't an issue. This section has been included in the regulation because in Europe most biological recording is government sponsored via departments and academic institutions. We believe that the legislation was never designed to capture volunteer recording groups or scheme organisers like yourself. Britain is unique in Europe in that the majority of its biological recording is done by volunteers. This is the advice that we are giving DEFRA.

Since the NBN Trust legal advice has become available, DEFRA have received numerous queries about this and are in the process of developing guidance, in which we hope to have an input. I must point out that the NBNT legal advice is the only advice that we know of which supports this extremely broad definition, and we should be careful about accepting it. However, I confirm that we are taking this seriously and fully understand the consequences of not having volunteer biological recorders.

This is potentially of grave concern for biological recording and can assure you that we are providing advice to DEFRA to remove any threat to the achievement of the objectives of the NBN. The next stage will be when we see the further guidance produced by DEFRA. We anticipate that this will clarify the situation and allow us to continue developing the unique system of volunteer led biological recording in the United Kingdom.

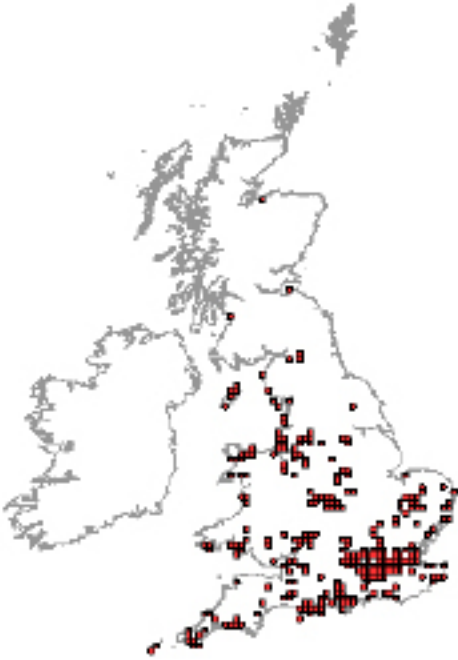
Keith Porter, Sites and Surveillance Team, Peterborough

Notice board

Sweep Net

NBN Gateway - a review

Whilst a large number of Diptera records have been placed on the NBN Gateway (Hoverflies, Stilt & Stalk flies, Field Weeks), this website is receiving very little comprehension from Dipterists at the moment. Time for a review, therefore, of the kind of services it provides now and the ways in which it can be of value for us in the future.



may be incorporated into the Dipterists Forum website. I hope to persuade him to look into this possibility for the Stilt & Stalk Fly data.

Dipterists Forum - status & statistics

I'm assured by the NBN's Gateway Liaison Officer - Andy Brewer, that the Diptera datasets I submitted some time ago will soon be available for viewing on the NBN Gateway.

At the time of writing we still only have the 1999 Field Week records for the North West of England available (for the 9 months they have been available the number of hits are: 149 downloads, 296 uses in the interactive maps, 197 in the simpler grid maps, 426 uses in 10Km square reports and 1210 uses in site reports) and the Hoverfly Recording Scheme (Stuart has the access figures for these). The ones that are due to appear soon are the two field weeks in Devon & Cornwall and the Stilt & Stalk Fly records.

The Conservation angle

With 17 million records and the power to handle much more, the Gateway has required a lot of development, support and investment from several large players in the conservation game. English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage and Countryside Council for Wales are all signed up to (and financially support) the project as do the Biological Records Centre in CEH, Defra, NBN Trust, the Wildlife Trusts and a host of other organisations. As stakeholders they are all anxious to ensure that this project delivers the kind of services they need to carry out their duties in respect of conservation and public access. This is one of the principles that currently underpins the ways in which they spend their money (e.g. our Defra bid, secondary websites which use the data to assist either National Recording Schemes or Local Authority websites which deliver biodiversity information to the general public)

Supporting Dipterists Forum activities

The Warehouse concept

If you do take a look at this information on the NBN Gateway, don't get too concerned about the (dare I say it) lack of slickness in the way it is presented. You can still pull out a distribution map of any Hoverfly species, though (the distribution map of *Chrysotoxum festivum* took me 45 seconds to grab from the Gateway for example.) It might help if you look upon it as a warehouse and associated "logistics" and if you're uncomfortable with the navigation, bear in mind that there are other ways to improve the presentation of the datasets.

Using the data on other Websites

The idea of some National Recording Schemes is to siphon off selected portions of this huge amount of data and use these sub-sets to create "live" distribution maps on their own websites. Butterfly Conservation are using the data in this way, the Dragonfly Recording Scheme maintain all their records on the site and the Bat Conservation Trust are fully committed to the use of the Gateway as a means of plotting bat distribution and monitoring changes.

Stuart Ball has suggested that such live maps

Given the commitment of the Agencies outlined above, the delivery of Diptera datasets to the NBN Gateway actually resolves some of the problems which have beset the Field Week organisers for some time. **Undertakings from Field Week organisers to provide species lists in return for permission to visit sites are fulfilled once the records are on the NBN Gateway.** Organisers of Field Meetings in 1999, 2000 & 2001 should refer to the list in Bulletin #57 (p8) and breathe a sigh of relief: their obligations to landowners have been fulfilled. We have the resources available to us to provide this service (and the possibility of Defra funding to improve it); Field Week organisers could simply offer this as an outcome and avoid making promises about printed reports and lists.

Site reports

The full datasets for the Field Weeks have been in the possession of the Devon & Cornwall Local Records Centres for some time despite concerns expressed which might suggest otherwise. These Local Records Centres are partnership organisations geared up to collect, collate, manage and disseminate such data in a local context to support conservation in their areas. Dipterists Forum is not geared up to replicate this service, nor should it; we haven't the resources to spend time on printing out lists to be stored in dusty English Nature cabinets or in responding to site enquiries, except perhaps within our own membership (the Dipterists Forum Network). Individual members may avail themselves of the means to generate site lists etc., the facilities exist through the data-sharing mechanisms in the Recorder and MapMate applications (not Biobase any more, the developer is emigrating to Canada)

Full printed reports like the superb Abergavenny one in 1997 can now be dealt with as separate projects. We could consider combining several Field Weeks into a single report (e.g, 1987 to 1996) once the data has been collated.

I fully appreciate that the above turns the traditional approach on its head. The idea of "report first, computerisation second" will have to give way to "computerisation first, report second" if we are to make any progress in a culture which actually provides useful resources for mobilising datasets (e.g. free copies of recording software, vouchers for training and technical support might conceivably be made available to all Field Week attendees).

I would be grateful for information regarding the computerisation of the Field Week records from the past 3 years: Inverness 2002, Suffolk 2003 & Wiltshire 2004 (I've already completed the part of the work involving the definition of the locations in GIS - also available to anyone with Recorder) so that I can add these to the job list of datasets to be uploaded to the NBN Gateway. I'll be happy to help ensure this task is carried out if the records are given to me in a suitable format.

**Representative to the NBN's National Schemes & Societies Steering Group
Darwyn Sumner**

The new look Dipterists Forum website

There's a lot more on our site now, do take a look. Our Website manager (a post which was formally voted upon at a previous AGM but unaccountably dropped from the 2004 AGM), Stuart Ball has provided yet another facility, as Ken Merrifield calls it:

The Dipterists Forum Forum

at <http://www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/forum/> where you can enter into discussions about various topics. It has only got 12 registered users at the moment (this cannot be the full list of dipterists with internet access). Please use it, I was rather hoping that some of the prompts I'd placed on the site might result in a few more articles for the Bulletin and perhaps get some responses for a volunteer or two to take up the Sepsidae Recording Scheme again.

If you want a more exotic flavour to your fora (forums?), Paul Beuk has a European (or should that be Worldwide) site:

Diptera.info

At <http://www.diptera.info/> this attracts a wide audience. For an interesting hunt try searching the Forum Posts for *Coenomyia ferruginea*. Does it smell or doesn't it? Is it in Belgium or isn't it? Where do you put specimens of it in your collection, since it's a non-British Family? (somewhere near the Asilidae I think). This and many other questions may be posted and even answered.

Darwyn Sumner

Meetings

Reports

Annual Meeting 2004

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Dipterists' Forum held display in the Palaeontology Demonstration Room at the Natural History Museum, London, at 2.45 pm on Saturday November 27, 2004.

Chair: Stuart Ball. About 48 members were present.

1. Apologies were received from Malcolm Smart, Darwyn Sumner and Simon Hayhow.

2. Minutes and Matters arising.

The minutes of the AGM held at the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, on Saturday November 1, 2003 were accepted by the meeting as a correct record.

Matters arising:

a) Adoption of a Logo:

The Chairman recalled the history of the present logo, outlined in the Spring Bulletin 2004. The current logo had been designed by Patrick Roper though never formally adopted by the Forum. Since then, there had been a request for a review by some members and a ballot would formally constitutionalise its use. Counting was carried out by the Secretary and overseen by the Chairman.

[Please refer to the numbered logos on page 9 of the Autumn 2004 Bulletin, No. 58].

Just 5 postal votes were received by the Secretary, from Jill Mears, David Skingsley, Malcolm Smart, Darwyn Sumner and Jean Turner. The total votes recorded for each logo were as follows:

logo 1 = 4 (2 postal), logo 3 = 7 (1postal) , logo 4 = 3 (2 postal), logo 6 = 5, logo 7= 24, logo 8 = 1 (!)

Logo 7 is therefore adopted by a large majority of those voting. Stuart made it clear, in response to a comment from the floor, that, where necessary, lettering would be used as now, and appropriate to the context of the logo, be that on the Bulletin, a letter head, or on the cover of a report.

b) Adoption of a Policy on the Conservation of Diptera

David Heaver described the need for a Forum policy, so that our representatives on committees could all speak with one voice on this topic and reflect accurately the views of members. He asked for comments on the proposed Dipterists Forum Policy on the Conservation of Diptera, which was on display in the Palaeo Demo Room. A revised version, in response to comments received, would be published in the next Bulletin so that comments could be received by absent members. Alan Stubbs commented that there was already a code for collecting, set out by the Invertebrate Link, and that this should form the basis of any policy.

c) Proposal that the Dipterists Forum formally affiliate to the National Biodiversity Network

In the absence of Darwyn Sumner to speak to this proposal, the Secretary said that we received many benefits from the NBN and the cost of £25 had been approved by our treasurer as possible from our resources. The motion was seconded by Roger Morris and passed unanimously.

d) Report from the NBN's National Schemes & Societies Steering Group

Since Darwyn Sumner, who was to speak on this topic, was unavoidably absent, the item was passed over.



3. Secretary's Report

The Committee met in March, June and October during 2004 and many of our discussions have been on topics that are not new. The activities of the Forum have been well documented in our excellent Bulletin, and other Officers will describe their own concerns, but perhaps I could highlight one or two issues.

Publications

Dipterists Digest and our Bulletin are flourishing, however, our problems with the four parts of the National Reviews of Scarce and Threatened Species continue, and despite some progress they have still to be published. You will all be aware from previous AGMs, that since they were submitted in 1994-5 their publication has been beset by problems. The authors and the Committee of the Dipterists' Forum have appealed in June 1999 & Feb 2003 to Derek Steer the Director of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, to prioritise this work, but so far, after nearly ten years, the work still remains unpublished. Since this work has relevance to the selection of, and work on, scarce and threatened Diptera, it is important that it be published as soon as possible and we are continuing, by all reasonable means at our disposal, to do what we can to solve this problem.

The problems relating to Data handling and Reporting back to agencies and land owners after field meetings has been another stimulus for much debate. In order to cover our possible requirements, field meetings' organisers have requested permission to access sites from agencies such as English Nature, the National Trust, the local Wildlife Trusts and local landowners. As a condition for access, these agencies have requested a report of our work. There have been large numbers of sites to cover, and it has taken a long time for participants to submit records. As a consequence there has been a delay of many years in sending out species lists. This has caused some discontent, which could affect our future work on sites, and is therefore a matter of importance that we solve this problem. The delays have occurred, due primarily to the late submission of records rather than to the slow transference of data to the Recorder, or other database.

To try and expedite this process Stuart Ball has offered to co-ordinate feedback and to accept hand-written species lists, or photocopies from field notebooks. All data submitted to Stuart before the end of the April following the meeting will be processed and put onto the Gateway. Any data that arrives late will join the queue and be processed later. Our Field Meetings Officer, Roger Morris has offered to use this data to report back to the relevant agencies and landowners.

Our data counts in a number of ways, and clearly they shed light on the ecology and status of the species recorded. This is helped by producing Atlases which map the distribution of Diptera.

An important development this year is an invitation to contribute to the Invertebrate Biodiversity Prioritisation which has been received from Buglife, the Invertebrate Conservation Trust, with a view to presenting a list of proposed BAP species to Defra by early 2005. In response to this initiative, the Committee has created a post of BAP Species Officer, and Barbara Schulten is filling that post for us.

Darwyn Sumner has continued to represent Dipterists on the National Societies and Recording Schemes Steering Group, to link voluntary societies with the NBN and thus with the Gateway. Access to good biological data is important to everyone concerned with the planning processes and land management. The draft Code of Practice for the Environmental Information Regulations, which sets out conditions for access to environmental data is currently generating concern in some quarters, however, consultation continues.

Our records may well also have an impact on the allocation of Agricultural grants under the new system of Single Farm Payment Scheme. This part of the CAP reform will be introduced in 2005 and, under the present plan, be phased in over the next eight years. The presence on land of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation scores points, and points can generate income.

The Recording Schemes

The Hoverfly Recording Scheme, our most advanced Scheme, continues to develop, and a Website for the scheme has recently been proposed.

In preparation for the 'British Craneflies' book, work continues with the Crane-fly Atlas. To support this work a Defra Joint Voluntary Associations grant was applied for in mid September through the NBN Trust, but this was unsuccessful. The JVA committee stated that the work on the Atlas would not fall to funding because it is wholly within the work programme of the Biological Records Centre, and that much of the work has already been carried out. It was recommended that the Crane-fly Recording Scheme discuss the project directly with Mark Hill (Head of BRC) and his team at the NBN. Mark has been very helpful in entering data from record cards, and I have been in contact with him to continue this transfer of data from RA11 record cards into the Recorder 2002 database.

Meetings

This topic is on the Agenda under AOB and will be further discussed then.

Following on from the publication of *British Soldierflies*, Simon Hayhow has had discussions with Mark Hill at the BRC regarding assistance in publishing the *Brachycera Atlas* and has received a very positive response. More discussion is necessary on details, but the outlook is positive.

Activity from Other Schemes includes the publication by Laurence Clemons of his provisional Atlas of about 14,000 records of 77 species of the Tephritidae (Version 2) , in the Spring 2004 Bulletin. This is sure to be a stimulus to further work with this group.

Publicity Recruitment and Support

This still remains a problem and we are still lacking a publicity officer, so if any member would like to volunteer, they can be co-opted to the committee in a trice!

The Website (<http://www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/>) continues to be developed by our web manager, Stuart Ball, and is a very useful publicity and recruiting aid.

We all need to be aware of this aspect of recruitment and take opportunities where we can. It may be that through our local clubs, societies and schools we can enthuse the next generation of Dipterists. The 'Watch Scheme' for children is very successful, but there seems to be a big gap between 'Watch' and the local Natural History or Entomological Societies. In a similar way we are also perhaps neglecting to link the networks of local Societies with our National Dipterists' Forum.

Roger Morris and Stuart Ball presented their thoughts about workshops for adults in the latest Autumn edition of the Bulletin. One source of new members is from BENHS and the AES, and recruitment by our Membership Secretary, Mick Parker and his team at the AES on 2 Oct was very successful. Besides the Six new members, seven application forms and 20 copies of *Dipterists Digest* were also taken away.

Future Plans include the Spring Workshop, which will be on Craneflies and led by Alan Stubbs. An additional Spring Weekend Field Meeting has been proposed for Northamptonshire and the Summer Field Meeting is to be held in Durham. We hope to hold the AGM in 2005 at Liverpool Museum, though arrangements here are at an early stage. All in all we have plenty of enjoyable and worthwhile activities to choose from next year.

4. Treasurer's Report - Jon Cole

Jon Cole introduced his audited Balance Sheet for the last financial year. In response to a question from the floor Jon explained the difficulties caused by late payment of subscription on interpretation of the Balance Sheet.

5. Membership Secretary's Report - Mick Parker

Mick Parker said that there were currently 278 fully paid up members and 262 subscriptions to *Dipterists Digest*. There followed a discussion on the difficulties of payment of subscriptions by overseas members. A £10 fee is charged by banks, per transaction, which certainly does not help overseas recruitment. Of 23 overseas members, 10 are in the Euro zone.

6. Dipterists Digest Editor's Report - Peter Chandler

There had been a delay until early in 2004 but the second edition for 2004, and the third edition of the Digest to be published this year, would go to the printers in December and put us back on schedule.

Thanks were conveyed to Stuart Ball for compiling a Catalogue and Index covering the first series and Vols 1-10 of the second series. Another innovation this year was the use of colour plates. The Committee had approved expenditure on four colour plates in one number of the *Dipterists Digest* each year, at an extra cost of about £220 per 500 copies. Peter asked that any authors wishing to use coloured plates should notify him well in advance, for planning purposes.

Although there were already several papers for Vol 12 No.1, there is always a demand for short notes, so please send in what you can.

Finally, thanks were conveyed to the referees, and to Mike Pugh for all his work in proof-reading the copy for three issues during 2004.

7. Report from the Field Meetings Secretary - Roger Morris

Field meetings for 2005 are planned in Northamptonshire at the end of May, the Durham Area from 2-9 July, and in Northamptonshire or Preston Montford in the Autumn. Would members wishing to attend please let RM know in good time, so that accommodation can be booked for the May and

July meetings. Members making a late decision to attend will need to arrange their own accommodation.

Other possibilities for future field meetings were outlined, with some of the associated problems.

It may also be possible to book weekend field meeting at relatively short notice. Any members who are interested in participating in these events should send their contact details to Roger and he will get in touch with them.

8. Report from the BAP Species Officer - Barbara Schulten

Barbara introduced her power-point presentation by talking about the purpose and the history of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Through Defra, the BAP provides funding for surveys, monitoring and habitat management. A working group of the UK Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group (BRIG) has been given the task of reviewing the current lists of BAP species during 2005/6. The chain of communication to this group is from the Dipterists Forum Recording Schemes and Study Groups, through the Dipterist Forum BAP Species Officer, to Buglife.

The current BAP lists 391 species, 44% (174) of which are invertebrates. Only 0.3% of UK Diptera (21) are BAP species, as compared to 34.8% of UK mammals, so perhaps the Diptera are under-represented.

Submissions may be made under four different headings:

- as a BAP species.
- in a Grouped Species Action Plan e.g. dead wood species.
- added to a Habitat Action Plan, e.g. soft rock cliffs.
- data-deficient species since other specialists may be able to fill in knowledge gaps, and these species may qualify in a later review.

It is likely that only a few species will be added to the BAP Species list and good evidence will be necessary to support all of the submissions made. Any proposed BAP species should ideally be species with a high conservation status. Any Action Plan should describe how the chosen species could be brought back from the brink of extinction by conservation action informed by research into their ecology, or research into aspects of their habitat management plan.

A detailed paper, including a useful form, has been produced by Buglife and amended by Barbara to help everyone in making an application. This has been distributed to all Recording Scheme and Study Group organisers and other experts, and is available from Barbara at (schultmay@onetel.com) .

The deadline date for submissions to Barbara is Saturday January 15, 2005.

9. Election of Officers

The Officers and General Committee proposed for election this year, are as follows:

Chairman	Malcolm Smart
Secretary	John Kramer
Treasurer	Jon Cole
Membership Secretary	Mick Parker
Field Meetings Secretary	Roger Morris
Indoor Meetings Secretary	David Heaver
Bulletin Editor	Darwyn Sumner
Publicity Officer	Vacant
Ordinary Members	Stuart Ball, John Ismay, Barbara Schulten , Alan Stubbs.

The officers and members were elected unanimously.

10. Any Other Business

a) Joint Venture Agreement NBN Trust/ DEFRA funding applications

A discussion took place about the criteria for selection of suitable projects and advice from Trevor James, for future bids, was read out as follows:

‘In order to get this DEFRA funding (and in addition to other stipulated criteria) a Project Plan is necessary with at least some focus on Biodiversity Action Plan Targets for scarce or rare species at UK and local levels, or data relevant to priority habitats in the UK BAP’.

It would seem that neither the obtaining of non-BAP data, nor its transference into an electronic format, work which is prior to, and essential for the objective selection of BAP species, qualifies for JVA funding at present.

AES said that there was a need to think how we might achieve our objectives, and this may be by applying for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to employ people. This could be done through Buglife as the DF is not set up as an employer of staff.

b) Environmental Information Regulations 2005, and Draft Code of Practice.

The recent appearance of this topic on the NBN website had caused a flurry of concerned emails. One worry was that laws concerning free and unconditional access to data at LRCs and on the Gateway could be extended to individuals. Another concern was that people could obtain this work free and then sell it on at a price as if they had themselves carried out the field work. It was pointed out that this CoP was the DEFRA interpretation of EU rules, and it is still in a draft form. Now that amateur and professional field-workers were being consulted these problems may be removed. However, many of the issues surrounding the use and misuse of data remain to be resolved.

Dipterists' Day Lectures

David Notton, Collection Manager, Diptera, at the Natural History Museum, welcomed the members and, after a short introduction, the programme got underway.

Inner City Flies

Mike Bloxham

Following publication of plans to restructure Birmingham's Eastside, an opportunity arose to survey the greenspace in the area to assess invertebrate biodiversity. Undertaken by a Birmingham University team, with two assistants from the Wildlife Trust for Birmingham & the Black Country, ambitions for the project were fairly modest. Firstly, work on site was possible only during a period over some four weeks in April and May. Secondly, there were methodological difficulties stemming from the great diversity of site types with regard to size, management practice and topography.

The talk outlined these problems and then followed the project as it unfolded, concentrating on Diptera. One of the sites (Ashted Circus) contained mown grassy areas with small inserts of mostly native young trees, surrounded by a wall of concrete, at the centre of one of Birmingham's busiest road junctions. The survey here revealed a number of interesting entomological phenomena including a large population of the crane fly *Tipula lunata* and several specimens of the local sapromyzid *Aulogastromyia anisodactyla*. Neither could be found anywhere else during the survey. Had they originated from elsewhere? The island had been one of the targets of Birmingham's 1982 operation 'Green up' campaign and research showed that topsoil from an unknown location had been added together with a variety of saplings. The latter had been brought into city sites from several identified sources in and around Birmingham and also from the Netherlands. It is possible that the species concerned were unintentionally introduced as a result of these activities.

Work on a large wasteland site revealed five tephritid species and a sizeable *Paragus haemorrhous* population. These tiny hoverflies might well have survived on sandy cleared areas of city development since early days when parts of Birmingham consisted of heathland.

One of the sites bordering a canal yielded a *Limnophora olympiae* from a lock gate, but the depth of the water coupled with occasional pollutants and removal of almost all emergent vegetation did not favour Diptera one might normally expect in such situations. The potential of the canal as a corridor for flies was also diminished by its regular disappearance into extensive tunnels between sites.

Very small areas of untouched deciduous woodland – surviving between railway embankments, canals and works buildings- retained distinctive sets of common craneflies. They also yielded two small tachinids, *Cinochira atra* and *Phania funesta*. Hemiptera recorded as hosts of the former were found on site. The prospect for successful host

Meetings

studies on these insects here is increased by their confinement to such small areas of habitat.

The presence of a variety of ferns, including the ubiquitous bracken, was a feature of one of the larger sites. Three *Chirosia* species (including *Chirosia histicina*) were discovered there and may well also have survived as relict populations from pre-Birmingham times.

A city cemetery converted to an open mown amenity area looked unpromising, but some large hybrid black poplars with their callosities and rot holes had potential for Diptera, a search producing *Lonchaea palposa* specimens from one trunk.

The talk concluded with some statistics of findings for each subsite and attempted some overview of the study. Diptera found included both universal hemisynanthropic species such as *Sepsis cynipsea* and *Scathophaga stercoraria* and also probable 'survival' groups that had found specific evolving city habitats remained to their liking. Ranks of city species may well have been augmented over time by populations of 'tourists' (more powerful flies capable of exploring habitats over quite a wide area) and smaller wind- borne species. Introductions via human projects were likely to be a regular factor and their potential impact on city invertebrate ecology provided a fascinating area for research.

The Future Plans for the Diptera Section and Entomology Department of the Natural History Museum

David Notton (Collection Manager-Diptera)

David first introduced himself and also the Curator of the Diptera Section, Nigel Wyatt, before describing the facilities available in the Department. He then outlined the development plans for Phase 2 of the Darwin Centre and some of the implications for Dipterists. The purposes of the changes are to improve the conditions for the collections, the facilities for workers and the access for the public.

David then read a statement to the meeting from the Keeper of Entomology, Quentin Wheeler. The Entomological Library would be closed from January 2005 until September 2005 and moved to the store at Wandsworth - after the move it will be possible to visit Wandsworth to examine books in the library or to examine them in the 'Origins' section of the NHM, providing they are ordered in advance. A new central library is planned to rehouse the entomology books on the South Kensington site after 2008.

After the talk, questions were asked:

a) regarding the quality of microscopes for use of visiting workers in the Entomology Department. A request for graticule eye-pieces was also made.

[I think this was a general request directed as much to other sections in the department. I can only speak for the Diptera section: we care about the quality of our visitor microscopes, our current visitor scope is quite a good model (Zeiss Stemi) and in my experience hasn't given rise to any complaints on that account. Unfortunately it was dropped recently and is being repaired, meanwhile we have borrowed a Leica for visitor use which is also quite good. In addition we lend visitors our own microscopes if extra ones are needed. I have recently acquired a compound microscope for viewing microscope slides which we didn't have before. We currently share a measuring eyepiece with the med & vet lab, but are trying to obtain another since we will be separated from them after the decant D.N.]

b) The future location of the Entomology Library was also raised. A new central library including entomology books is planned to re-house the Entomology Library on the South Kensington site after 2008. The comment was made that this issue is close to all of us, and may well be something that we will want to discuss at future meetings.

c) Regarding the question about whether there had been enough publicity in the entomological press about the forthcoming developments of the Entomology Department and DC2, David has approached the DC2 team and they have taken on board the idea: Nigel Fergusson states that the team are currently planning an article which is likely to include what is happening with the decant/research future of the department. It's not clear which journal it will appear in yet, but watch this space.

Buglife and the Conservation of Flies

Alan Stubbs

Alan said that the aims of the Dipterists Forum are to encourage the study of Diptera and their conservation, but Buglife reverses these aims and has the conservation of invertebrates as its primary aim. The Dipterist Forum, along with about 19 other organisations, is affiliated to Buglife and, since the Agencies have their own agendas, the voice of this Independent Non-Governmental Organisation is very important.

In its short life Buglife has acted on a number of issues and projects. One such is the Aucheninnes Moss in Galloway, which was to have been used as a refuse tip. This site is an active raised bog and the only home in Scotland of the Bog Bush-cricket and the Sorrel Pygmy Moth. Two BAP species of butterfly also live there. SNH concluded that the site was not worthy of conservation, but Buglife is contesting this decision. Brown-field sites which include the M11 corridor, and Canvey Island, are also being defended. These support pioneer communities which once occupied fallow ground in the days when farmers practised rotation

of crops. Canvey Island provides a habitat for 30 Red Data Book species. As a result of campaigning it is now planned that two thirds of the Northwick Road site will remain as a protected wildlife area with the remaining third being developed into environmentally friendly workshops and offices.

Buglife has also had an input into the DEFRA draft Code of Practice to prevent the spread of ragwort. This weed, toxic to horses, grows in over-grazed paddocks as well as set-aside and other disturbed ground.

However, ragwort also provides a habitat, or part habitat, for many invertebrates and is important source of nectar and pollen for some species. In putting the case for the invertebrates, Buglife tries to find a compromise position.

The declining bumblebee population has also prompted activity and Buglife have been scoping a lottery bid to involve people in mapping bumblebees.

Other projects have involved supporting work on habitats such as soft rock cliffs, and on Species Action Plans. It is now difficult to get quality sites re-scheduled and it helps if such sites can become part of a BAP. The over-abstraction of water is another cause taken up by Buglife with the Environment Agency.

The National Environmental Research Council are at last beginning to take an interest in invertebrate conservation and, by working through Buglife it will be possible to cause government agencies to do more for the cause of conservation.

Deep Focus - Processing images taken through a low powered microscope to enhance the depth of field

Stuart Ball

Using a Power-point presentation, Stuart described the problem of producing a digital image of a three-dimensional object through a low powered microscope. A stereo-microscope has a very small depth of field, so only a small part of the image of a subject as thick as a whole insect will be in focus at any one time. The digital solution is to take a sequence of photos at different focal planes and then, using a computer program which he has developed, to combine the best-focused parts of this image-set to give a single mosaic image which is in focus throughout.

The first step is to take the sequence of pictures. In order to do this it is best to mount the digital camera onto a vertical camera tube and to use an aperture ring, if available, to gain as much depth of field as possible. However, it is also possible to mount the camera onto one of the ordinary eyepieces, if your microscope does not have a purpose built photo-tube, but this will have the effect of causing each successive image in the sequence to be shifted sideways because the shots are taken slightly obliquely. Trial-and-error is used to determine how many shots are necessary to encompass the complete sequence of focal planes. To control the adjustment of focus, a large, circular, cardboard disc calibrated in 5 degree sections, can be stuck to the adjustment knob of the microscope. The knob can then be rotated through a chosen arc past a fixed point (eg a pencil stuck vertically to the microscope's base with Blue-Tac) prior to taking each photograph in the sequence. Some form of cable release or electronic shutter release should ideally be used to make the exposures in order to avoid camera-shake

The next step is to "register the images" - i.e. make sure the image is in exactly the same place in each successive frame. If the camera was mounted on an eyepiece, the images will be shifted sideways a little in each successive frame and the magnification will inevitably differ slightly between each image because the distance to the subject was changed each time the focus was adjusted. One program analyses the images and compensates for lateral shifts and magnification changes by automatically cropping and resizing the images as necessary.

The final program works by selecting only the best-focused parts of each image in the sequence. It does this by

considering a small “window” centred about each successive pixel and calculating some measure of focus for each image at this point. Although there are several such measures available, the easiest to understand is the “pixel variance”. Where the subject is in focus, the variation in brightness between nearby pixels will be maximal because details, like hairs or the facets of an eye, cause large changes in brightness at their edges. In less focussed images, these details become blurred and the difference in brightness between nearby pixels is consequently reduced. The pixel from the image which is best focussed at each point is used in the resulting composite image. Because each image probably has several million pixels, and there may be ten or a dozen images in the set, these calculations have to be done many millions of times - requiring a great deal of processing power!

Once the composite image has been produced it can then be re-sized, sharpened and have its colour-balance adjusted as necessary using an image-editing package.

This was an excellent exposition of an important technique which will greatly facilitate the production of illustrations for the identification of Diptera and of all small invertebrates.

John Kramer

Forthcoming

Spring Workshop 2005

Preston Montford 18-20 March 2005

Craneflies (Alan Stubbs)

After last year’s marathon effort, we are returning to simpler arrangements. According to my reckoning Alan last did a crane-fly workshop in 1998 and, although the book is still a little way off, there are keys aplenty to test.

The dates for Preston Montford are 18-20 March 2005 and the prices, raised to cover PM’s inflation needs, stand at ?95 for a shared room and ?120 for single occupancy, both all in.

Given the popularity of the 2004 event I took the trouble of enquiring just how many bedrooms there are in the Darwin building and it stands at 17. Depending, therefore, on the uptake and spread of single to shared occupancy, I may consider capping the single

room option. This is to allow as many Forum members to attend as possible. So, if you really need one, get in early. Also, be aware that from late January to late February I will be avoiding landmines in the formerly war-ravaged nations of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, and so will be even slower in cashing your cheques than I usually am!

Cheques, as ever, payable to Dipterists Forum:Workshops and sent to me at: 5 Albert Road, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2DN. If you want e-mail confirmation of your place, mail to david_h@tiscali.co.uk

If you have never been, I have a small number of PM fliers which I can send you. If you have never been, come.

Many thanks to my regulars for your continued support and I look forward to seeing you at Preston Montford.

David Heaver



Spring Weekend Field Meeting

Northamptonshire Limestone 4 to 5 June 2005

Levels of interest expressed have been good and I will be arranging accommodation in the near future. I will be in contact with members who have expressed interest to confirm arrangements depending upon accommodation availability. Meanwhile, members wishing to participate should keep an eye on the DF website for details of the meeting. Those without access to the Web should contact me directly.

Roger Morris

Joint Field Meeting with BENHS

Aston Rowant NNR 11 June 2005

This is to announce that we have organised a one day field meeting at Aston Rowant NNR on 11th June 2005. English Nature kindly gave us permission for a joint meeting. The meeting will start at 10:30 am and we will meet in the car park for the northern section of the Reserve sign-posted off the A40 (SU733966). Members who come from further away should leave the M40 at junction 6 and turn right. At the first junction beyond the M40 you turn right again onto the A40. After a few miles you see a sign for Aston Rowant NNR. After a few hundred meters you see another sign to turn right again. The car park is at the end of this road.

The meeting will take place in the northern part of Aston Rowant NNR. Most of this part is chalk grassland, a habitat characteristic of the southern Chilterns. It also includes some small wooded areas and scrub with juniper, yews, bramble and hawthorn. Some rare plants can be found including some orchids and the butterflies recorded from there include the Silver-spotted skipper and the Chalkhill Blue. The site is good for Diptera requiring very short chalk grassland and is very flower rich.

If you would like further information please contact us via e-mail: schultmay@onetel.com

We hope to see some of you there.

John Ismay and Barbara Schulten

Summer Field Meeting - Durham

Saturday to Saturday 2nd - 9th July 2005

So far, around twenty members have expressed interest in this meeting, so we look to be on course for a successful meeting. Members who have yet to register an interest are encouraged to do so as soon as possible. To recap, the meeting will be based at St Johns College, Durham. The arrangements include basic rooms, breakfast and an evening meal. Packed lunches are possible, but there have been suggestions that we could do these more cheaply ourselves.

I am advised that costs are as follows (inclusive of VAT – which I've calculated and included):

Rooms (single – not en-suite)	£25.00
Evening Meal (per day)	£10.60
Packed Lunch	£5.29

In addition, we have room hire charges of £300 for the week, split between however many there are participating. Overall, working on BB & Evening Meal, the costs are in the region of £260 assuming 20 participants, dropping to £255 if we get 30 participants. In this calculation I have excluded the costs of packed lunches which some may wish to go for. Bearing in mind we usually go for a restaurant meal on one evening the cost should drop to around £245 assuming just 6 nights evening meals.

Durham is ideally situated for a wide range of habitats including gems such as Upper Teesdale, and the wonderful Durham coast with the Denes (wooded valleys dissecting the coast). There are some fabulous cliffs with boulder clays overlying Magnesian Limestone – I can thoroughly recommend these; the vegetation is fabulous and looks exciting for Diptera.

Roger Morris

Autumn Field Meeting

Northamptonshire 19 to 23 October 2005

It is proposed to run this meeting in the same area of Northamptonshire as the spring meeting. Members wishing to participate should advise me by July in order that accommodation can be arranged.

Roger Morris

Annual Meeting

Preston Montford 20 to 21 November 2005

Recent two-day meetings in Edinburgh and Cardiff have been very successful, giving the opportunity for members to stay close to the venue and to enjoy a Dipterists Supper as we formerly enjoyed in London. A great advantage of these venues has been the chance to spend time on the Sunday, either examining material in the collections, or socially. Some members have for some time discussed the possibility of running the AGM at a residential centre, and which has been taken by various other societies and recording schemes.

Preston Montford has been home to our training weekends each March for ten years, and has hosted courses Stuart Ball & I have run for some years. We are always been made most welcome and have enjoyed many happy times there. It therefore seemed logical to see whether we could run the AGM there. Sue Townsend, the Centre Director was delighted to hear from us and said that Preston Montford would love to host DF. Apparently the catering staff would be keen to do a special meal for us (essentially I think we would have the centre to ourselves for the weekend).

The Agenda has yet to be set, but we think there is scope to do a great deal more than we normally manage, with space allocated for tailored events. Possibilities include workshops for the recording schemes, planning outputs for the Hoverfly and Larger Brachycera Schemes, assistance with tricky identifications, and of course a residential Dipterists Supper, free of the hassle of finding ones way home or finding a restaurant large enough to cater for the numbers we attract.

For members who have not visited Preston Montford before, the accommodation is excellent; single rooms are possible (with a supplement). The catering is excellent, including a splendid selection of cakes for afternoon tea. Those who feel so inclined can arrive on the Friday night. Costs have yet to be finalised, and will depend upon the adopted menu for the meal and whether members stay for one or two nights.

Expressions of interest please to:

_____ **Roger Morris 7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincs PE9 1QE. roger.morris@english-nature.org.uk**

Malham Tarn Estate

22 to 24 July

Yorkshire Naturalists' Union has organised a residential weekend at the National Trust's Malham Tarn Estate and have negotiated access to this huge estate. Much loved by Harry Britten and Alan Brindle this area sorely needs an update of its Diptera fauna. Contact the Field Study Council at the Malham Tarn Field Centre on 01729 830331



And now ...

.....Kidding about at the BENHS

Nick Moyes of the Local Records Centre in Derbyshire and myself are committee members on the National Federation for Biological Recording. On a few occasions during the year we meet up with other members in the Medical Research Council's rooms in London. I wear my Dipterists Forum hat there as well as my Local Records Centre one (I can speak through either). It is our custom at the end of the meeting to stroll together along Euston Road back to our trains. This time was different, Nick told me he knew of a meeting on glow-worms at the Natural History Museum. Couldn't quite get the details together as they were stuffed into his bag somewhere but we knew the general direction so I decided to join him and off we set to South Kensington. The full story gradually emerged; it wasn't at the museum but somewhere nearby and before I knew it I was directing him to the Royal Entomological Societies rooms on Queen's Gate. He's a botanist you see, and not familiar with the places we entomologists haunt.

Imagine my surprise when we arrived to find the place filled with familiar faces, a goodly proportion of the people in the room were my friends from Dipterists Forum. I was at a BENHS meeting for the first time in my life!

To many Dipterists Forum people this sort of venue is old hat but as a geographically challenged sort of chap I've had little involvement with BENHS at all so the welcome I received from Peter Chandler, Ken Merrifield, Mike Wilson, Andrew Halstead and others put me at my ease in the grand and unfamiliar surroundings. Until one of the traditional ceremonies of the BENHS began to be enacted that is. Applications for membership were read out and then one person who had applied and was attending for the first time was invited to the front to be witnessed signing the membership book. Then Mike and Andrew, both of them on the podium as they are key committee members gestured for me to do the same. Both gentlemen with a terrific sense of humour I wasn't sure this was the form for a guest and affiliate but fortunately Peter tipped me a nod and a smile and I declined politely. Thereafter the meeting proceeded most entertainingly. Later Ken Merrifield explained "I think



it is only relevant if you are a member. I assume you are referring to the BENHS 'Obligations Book' that members sign to agree to the rules of the Society, one of the few remaining relics of its Quaint Old Natural History Society origin (together with the post of Lanternist)." As my father used to say "You can't kid an old kidder"

Contributors

Please note the following deadlines for the next two bulletins:

Autumn bulletin

Aims to be on your doorstep in late September, contributions by the end of July. Printed in time for the Autumn field meeting and the AGM. Would contributors please note that it takes a **minimum** of 4 weeks to compile, edit, reproduce, collate and distribute each issue.

Spring bulletin

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

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

Please let me know if you are about to contribute a Newsletter or other separate as I need to include it on the "Fly sheets" list on the Contents page.

I am missing several contributions which used to be a regular feature in the Bulletin and much enjoyed by the readership. No "Inqui-lines" on the Honey-pot challenge for some time, no report of the Autumn Field meeting, no big items of general interest, no two-line reports on many of the schemes, no Buglife summary, no Conservation summary, no illustrations and most missed of all, no "And now ..." from Alan Stubbs.

Please give some thought to the above for the next issue (amplified on the Dipterists Forum Forum), leaving me to fill in the gaps just introduces delays.