

DIPTERA



RECORDING SCHEMES BULLETIN NO 24, DECEMBER 1987

Dates are announced for several major events in 1988, including the summer field meeting. Among the main news items are the launch of a new journal, Dipterists' Digest, and the conopid scheme has a new organiser.

ANNUAL MEETING AND DIPTERISTS' SUPPER - 12 November 1988

Advance notice is given for these events next year. Whilst apologies are offered for any inconvenience caused by the difficulties over the 1987 date, one outcome of the new administrative arrangements is that it is much easier to make firm advance bookings. Thus the usual facilities are confirmed for the second Saturday in November which we have been trying to achieve as the predictable timing of these events.

Thank you for your forbearance over the ticket arrangements at the last meeting. The system seems to have worked fairly smoothly.

FIELD MEETINGS IN 1988

Galashiels, 9-17 July 1988

Having had two meetings in Wales with a strong emphasis on the west coast, it is time to ring the changes. Where next, preferably almost completely unknown territory for Diptera. Well, Galashiels fills the bill, in the heart of the eastern part of the Southern Uplands of Scotland.

A provisional booking has been made to use the Scottish College of Textiles. We have negotiated use of our own separate accommodation block, with single rooms (a few can be made into double if required) and half board catering provided. A room for a makeshift lab will either be in that block or nearby. Though within the town, the area is said to be quiet. The price for those attending the 8 day period (Saturday evening - Sunday morning departure) will be approximately £106. Twenty places have been reserved. To confirm the booking we need a viable number of people responding by 31 January 1988. Please address bookings to Alan Stubbs (NCC, Northminster House, Peterborough, Cambs PE1 1UA) with a deposit of £1.00, cheques payable to the Scottish College of Textiles.

Galashiels gives access to a wide range of moorland and upland valley habitats. Close by, near Selkirk, there is Whitlaw Mosses NNR with basin mire fen and bog at c1000 ft which has yielded some rare Diptera such as Limonia magnicauda and Scathophaga tinctinervis, so there should be much more to find here and at the various other mosses. The streams and rivers should be well worth exploring, including the River Tweed, and there are worthwhile sites across the spectrum of valley bottom habitats. The march of agriculture and forestry has taken its toll but we are assured of plenty of sites to visit. NCC has a sub-office at Galashiels and we are offered help in targetting in on useful sites. We will not be totally land-locked in the uplands since we can get out to the ravine woodlands south of Edinburgh and it is practical to do day trips to the coast (east this time); there are saltings, dunes, cliff seepages etc (within 1-1½ hours drive). Resident dipterists at Edinburgh predict that there is plenty to occupy us for a week.

The southern uplands are a big white gap in most distribution maps and it is not because insects are lacking. We usually don't know what happens between Rannoch and well down into England. Here is the chance to help conquer that big unknown - and if you are still hazy on identification of flies, don't worry, an extra net helps increase the records and you have the chance to learn the ropes from other keen dipterists.

It is just possible that having got to Scotland, some people may feel attracted towards adding a further week onto the trip either before or after Galashiels. Obviously this will help develop the Scottish picture, or northern England, wherever you decide to go. If there is a wish to join up as a smaller group, or if you want advice on sites for an individual foray, please mention this when booking.

Other 1988 Meetings

Several people have said they will arrange local meetings. Please press ahead, we need local events and not everything can or should be done centrally. Since dipterists are usually thin on the ground, why not contact those in nearby counties to see if a programme of joint reciprocal visits would be a viable proposition to encourage each other along. If you want publicity in the next Bulletin, then text is needed by the end of February 1988.

The Warden of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, Barry Yates, is keen to host a weekend field meeting and can organise accommodation. It is a marvellous area of grazing levels with excellent ditches, and a major coastal shingle site with old gravel pits and various degrees of vegetation cover. It is at the Sussex end of Dungeness and has rare species among the beetles and moths, so ought to yield an interesting Diptera fauna. Can we have a leader for this event please?

There will be an autumn foray as usual. A provisional booking has been made at a field centre near Bideford, North Devon, 12-16 October.

DIPTERISTS' DIGEST - AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY DEREK WHITELEY

The proposal for a journal gained lots of support, enthusiasm and favourable comments from dipterists attending the annual meeting at the British Museum (Nat Hist) on 3 October 1987. I have, therefore, decided to go ahead and produce issue No 1.

Generally, most dipterists are looking for a middle-range well-produced journal at a "bargain-basement" price. Some of the material now appearing in our recording scheme Newsletters is clearly of a more permanent nature and would be appropriate in a journal. However, I feel strongly that any new publication should not replace the existing excellent Newsletters. Hopefully, there will be sufficient copy for both formats to exist side by side, and hopefully some of the Newsletter editors will act as filters.

I am conscious that it is important not to overlap too much with existing established journals. However, there is a clear need for this journal, stemming from the growing activity of those involved with recording schemes. The initial editorial policy will be directed to serving their needs. The style will be one of readability and relevance.

I have some personal funds to underwrite the cost of the first two issues, by which time the journal will be self-funding. I intend to act as

"Production Editor" for the foreseeable future. If the first issue is successful, we can then decide on an editorial panel and a network of referees etc.

Initially the scope of Dipterists' Digest will be:-

- British and Irish Diptera, and observations concerning Europe where relevant to the British fauna.
- Observations of interesting behaviour, ecology.
- New and improved techniques (eg collecting, rearing etc).
- The conservation of flies and their habitats.
- Provisional and interim reports from the Diptera Recording Schemes, including provisional maps.
- Records of new or scarce species for regions, counties, districts etc.
- Local faunal accounts, field meeting results, and 'holiday lists' preferably with good ecological information/interpretation.
- Notes on identification; additions, deletions and amendments to standard key works and checklists.
- News of new publications/references/literature scan.

Initially, I am happy to re-publish some material that has appeared in recent Newsletters, if authors wish to resubmit their work. However, duplication will be avoided in future issues.

Please submit contributions to me as soon as possible, preferably typed double-spaced. 29 February 1988 is the deadline for the first issue:

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

Editor's comment:-

The concept of a journal was raised before, but did not get off the ground. Over the last few years, there has been a considerable increase in the number of people becoming confident in the study of Diptera. A journal, as a fully fledged publication, should act as a major spur in increasing the flow of interesting information and as a catalyst in furthering the growth in involvement in our subject.

However, it is one thing to express enthusiasm for starting a journal, another for it to succeed as a viable venture. In the first place Dipterist's Digest can only exist if dipterists are prepared to find the enthusiasm and time to write about their findings and experience. Secondly, the journal must become financially viable within approximately 2 years - and this depends on sufficient people overcoming inertia and actually subscribing. The Bulletin currently has about 345 on the address list, so there is reliance on a pretty high percentage taking the journal and also the assumption that everyone will take any opportunity that arises to spread the word in Britain and abroad. 300 subscribers, including some libraries etc, would be marginal, but if somehow we can climb to 600 we will be winning. At cf2.00-£2.50 post free for the first issue of 40 pp (A5 format) it has to be a bargain.

Derek Whiteley is to be applauded for his initiative . He has a widely admired track record for the success of Sorby Record (a Sheffield area natural history journal) and will succeed if anyone can. The venture is a risk, and responsibility for success or failure is shared by all of us. The reward for success is high, for we shall have a stimulating journal which will really get our subject moving, and its size and scope will be able to grow accordingly.

A.S.

REPORTS FROM 1987 MEETINGS

Wealden Edge Hangers, Hampshire, 30-31 May 1987

It is becoming apparent that the Wealden Hangers near Petersfield are exceptionally rich in hoverflies. Matthew Oates led a party of 6 dipterists and they literally had a field day as promised:- Microdon devius, Brachypalpus laphiformis, Brachypalpoides lenta, all 4 Criorhina, Cheilosia nigripes and so the list goes on. By all reports there is plenty of scope beyond hoverflies, this occasion having yielded Leptarthrus brevirostris (Asilidae) and Xylophagus ater (Xylophagidae).

Wyre Forest, 6-7 June 1987

Nigel Jones was joined by one other dipterist for the weekend, plus another on the first day. Wyre Forest produced Criorhina asilica, C. floccosa, Brachypalpoides lenta, Didea fasciata, Sericomyia lappona and the conopid Myopa buccata. The search for Chalcosyrphus eunotus led to the discovery of a new site a few miles from Wyre Forest, associated with logs over a small stream. This woodland was dominated by small leaved lime and was particularly rich in hoverflies in a recently coppiced area - Xylota florum, Brachypalpoides lenta, Chrysotoxum cautum and Myopa buccata being among the interesting records.

New Forest Field Meeting, 6-7 June 1987

A good number of the New Forest specialists associated with dead wood were found on this meeting, with the highlight being the discovery of a Mycetophila new to Britain. Several Brachypalpus laphriformis were observed on ancient beech pollards at Eyeworth Wood, and Microdon mutabilis was found in a small boggy hollow at Mark Ash. At the latter site, removal of fallen dead wood must still be considered the major conservation problem for the insect fauna, though many of the characteristic species are still hanging on in low numbers.

Newcastle, Salop, 14-18 October 1987

The autumn foray location was listed as one of several alternatives. Had it been Sussex, we would have met floods and severe gales. Had it been the Lake District, we would have had some impressive rainfall. As it happens, we were not that far from Ludlow, and left on the day that Wales was flooded. Conditions were cool with a fair bit of rain, mainly at night, but also some long periods of sunshine, so we got by pretty well from our farm house location.

Newcastle is virtually on the junction of Shropshire, Herefordshire, Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire - so far from the offices of the conservation organisations that we were deeply in unknown territory for anything it seemed. However, there were certainly some useful sites. The crane fly list was quite reasonable at 49 species. The fungus gnats reached 124 species, quite good considering the weather was largely unsuitable for

finding concentrations of gnats. A useful number of other flies were recorded as well. Nothing new to Britain this time, but some scarce species kept our hopes raised. Though not our most prolific meeting, we did incredibly well considering the weather this autumn, and a largely unknown block of country now has a reasonable autumn faunal list.

NEWS FROM THE SCHEMES

Crane-fly Recording Scheme

Erioptera (Idiocera) bradleyi has been taken near Cardigan (only known from type male). Dicranota gracilis was found on the River Monnow (Herefordshire) and in the same county Limonia frontalis has been taken at a further locality. The Derbyshire list is growing well as a result of samples that have been coming in over the last few years. Among under recorded areas, specimens have been received for the Outer Hebrides and the Channel Isles. The supply of Irish samples is filling out our knowledge with, for instance, Phalacrocer replicata at two sites this year.

Mosquito Recording Scheme

Yes, the FBA Mosquito key really is going to appear this time. It's at the printers and is due approximately early December, price £9.00 (25% reduction for FBA members). Copies may be ordered from the Freshwater Biological Association, Ferry House, Faw Sawrey, Ambleside, Westmorland.

Let's hope this really does give a good boost to the recording scheme. So, winter woollies on, and the field season is underway nice and early. Winter is the time when many mosquitos are readily found as larvae. And, joy of joys, the larvae are often easier to identify than adults. Moreover, mums, wives, girl friends ("come and see my mosquito larvae") etc can join in the fun of rearing out nice mint condition adults for your collection.

Mycetophilid Recording Scheme

The scheme organiser, Peter Chandler, is through his first 1,000 record cards and is already whittling down the reprint from BRC. He's checked through a number of museum collections recently, turning up overlooked additions to the British list.

Larger Brachycera Recording Scheme

The next Newsletter is in preparation. A complete key to Stratiomyidae will be circulated with the Newsletter. There will be maps next year and we hope to be able to give further details in the next Bulletin in March/April.

Hoverfly Recording Scheme

There is an information explosion following what has clearly been a very successful season. Just one hint, Adrian Fowles has done it again - Parasyrphus nigritaris this time, so watch out for Syrphus look-a-likes with a broad black mouth band (facial knob yellow).

The Channel Isles are part of the BRC area, so how about this - a sight record on Jersey for Milesia crabroniformis, a spectacular hornet mimic.

Let's hope many of you are already pen in hand preparing news for the Hoverfly Newsletter and **Dipterists' Digest**, and that your season's records are soon heading for your area representative for the scheme.

Conopid Recording Scheme

Dave Clements has taken over as organiser of this scheme, so all further records, queries and correspondence should be addressed to him (National Trust, Spitalgate Lane, Cirencester, Glos GL7 2DE). Once he's got to grips with the state of the scheme he will no doubt be encouraging us along in this popular group of flies. I think we shall all hold him responsible to encourage good conopid weather as well!

Our thanks are passed to Ken Smith for getting the scheme off the ground - despite the pressure of major commitments. His friendly response to even the humblest enquiries has been greatly appreciated. Ken steps into retirement soon, with sizeable projects still in mind, but his love of conopids is not abandoned - he is still prepared to advise if really awkward taxonomic problems arise.

Sciomyzid Recording Scheme

Apart from Jon Coles' exciting discovery of an Antichaeta new to Britain, there has been good progress also with many substantial batches of records following the production of a preliminary atlas by Stuart Ball and Ian McLean last year. Batches of material from an NCC survey of wetlands in Wales (using water traps and pitfall traps) have had good numbers of Pteromicra angustipennis, suggesting this species is well established there. Numbers of individuals and species of Sciomyzidae were lower than usual in some regularly recorded sites in East Anglia, perhaps due to relatively high water levels reducing the number of "stranded" molluscs.

NEW REFERENCE WORKS

British

News of the FBA mosquito key is given above (see mosquito recording scheme).

The Royal Entomological Society handbook series is now taken over by the British Museum (Natural History) under the series title 'Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects', obtainable from the BM (NH) bookshop or ordered via your local bookshop. Direct postal orders, and RES members discounts, are handled by the Sales Department, British Museum (Natural History) Publications, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD. There is a revised timetable for forthcoming titles:- Sphaeroceridae Vol 10, pt 5e (January), Tephritidae Vol 10, pt 5a (June), Diptera larvae (late 1988), Megaselia, Phoridae (more likely 1989). Prices have yet to be announced.

NCC has published British Red Data Books: 2. Insects, containing nearly 1,800 species in the better studied Orders. 827 species of Diptera are evaluated as being in the Endangered, Vulnerable and Rare categories. There are accounts of 72 Diptera, including for instance 25 hoverflies. The book overall contains 442 pages and aims to draw attention to the conservation needs of Great Britain's insect fauna. This compilation was drawn together by a committee of specialists and advisors over a number of years. Copies may be obtained from the Interpretive Branch, Nature Conservancy Council, Northminster House, Peterborough, Cambs, PE1 1UA, price £10 post free. The National Review of Diptera being undertaken by Steven Falk, in consultation with many of you, will considerably revise and update the Red Data Book entries and give detailed statements on approximately 1,600 species of Diptera across a broader range of status; this review will hopefully be complete and obtainable in 1988.

Diptera in Belgium

It is helpful to be able to refer to the literature for adjacent European countries. Often there are very relevant observations on the ecology of species that occur in Britain, enhancing the understanding of our own fauna. Also it enables us to be more aware of species that may yet be recognised as being present in Britain once we are alerted to the key characters to watch out for.

It is most welcome that there is a recent bibliography of the Diptera of Belgium:- Grootaert, P. & Verbist, P., 1986. Documents de Travail 31: Bibliografic van de Diptera (Insecta) van Belgie, Institute Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique, Bruxelles. The majority of papers would seem to be in French judging by the titles, but there are some in other languages including a few in English.

Note also The hoverflies (Diptera, Syrphidae) of Belgium and their faunistics: frequency, distribution, phenology by L. Verlinden & K. DeCleer, published in 1987 by the Institute Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique. The book can be ordered by a transfer of 250 BF (packaging and postage included) on account no 000-0091681-16 of the "Patrimonium Institut royal des Sciences naturelles de Belgique, rue Vautier 29, B-1040 Bruxelles" mentioning "Hoverflies of Belgium by L. Verlinden". It is in English and impressive with 170 pages, A4 size, containing analysis and maps of the 314 species recorded in Belgium. There is plenty of interesting and intriguing information which is relevant to those concerned with the British fauna. No keys. It is a major piece of work on the interpretation of a national data set, relevant more widely than just for hoverflies.

OTHER ITEMS

A Request for Phoretic Mites

I would be pleased to receive any preserved material of phoretic mites taken from named Diptera, together with information as to the collecting site and season.

An interesting adaptation for dispersal of mites from non-static habitats occurs in the nymphal stages of the life-cycle and, when faced with unfavourable conditions, a phoretic form (deuteronymph) is produced. These immature stages have special glands secreting an anal pedicel by which the mite attaches itself to other arthropods for transportation. If, in the course of sorting collections of Diptera, mites are evident, I would be grateful if these could be sent to:-

M T Greenwood, Department of Human Sciences, University of Technology, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3TU.

Staffordshire Invertebrate Group

This group of enthusiasts is coordinating the collection and collation of data on Staffordshire. There is already a check list of Diptera available from the City Museum and Art Gallery (at Stoke on Trent) for the cost of postage (ordinary letter). One of our number, David Emley, has asked that the news be spread among dipterists. The 'official' address of SIG is c/o Coutts House, Sandon, Staffs.

Tachinid Review

The last Bulletin announced the start of a taxonomic project, financed by the Royal Entomological Society. The Society has had to re-advertise the post, for work on Diptera (Tipulidae or Tachnidae), Coleoptera

(Staphylinidae) or Hymenoptera (Ichneumonidae). Meanwhile, Adrian Pont says that his section is willing to receive pinned material of tachinids, especially bred specimens with host data or new geographic representation, in order to strengthen the collection; an identification service cannot be offered under present circumstances.

The Great Gale

The exceptional storms which crossed England in the early morning of 16 October 1987 produced great devastation to trees from Hampshire to East Anglia in particular. It is proving quite difficult to evaluate the real damage, since some press reports prove to be grossly exaggerated whilst other reports are very true. As regards some of the major dead wood sites for Diptera, the New Forest and Windsor Forest have not unduly suffered (little more than average gale damage) as regards the critical stands of old trees - according to reports from entomologists and NCC staff. However, Ivan Perry says two of the Callicera spinolae sites in East Anglia scarcely have any old trees left standing. Those living in the zone concerned will hopefully have recognised that there is an exceptional opportunity to look for larvae. Where trees will have to be removed anyway, the normal restraint in not tearing rotten wood to bits does not apply. There may be the chance of getting samples from rot holes that were out of reach (Pocota fans to note!) whilst shattered and chopped up trunks may reveal otherwise inaccessible breeding sites. Even if you cannot find larvae, very often larvae are there and can be bred out by keeping rot hole material in a container (keep moist but not sweaty or mouldy). The larger hoverfly larvae may well be deep down at the very bottom (or if rot occurs upwards in a trunk, the very top of a cavity may be productive) or sides of rotting areas and some (Myolepta) like wet rot holes.

More Magic Mountant (DMHF)

For those of you who do not see the Balfour-Browne Club Newsletter - good news! It appears that dimethyl hydrantoin formaldehyde resin (DMHF) is again available. This time from:- The Chemical Intermediates Company Ltd, Barnfields Industrial Estate, Leek, Staffs. The price is £7.50 + vat for 250gm, including postage. 250gm should last a lifetime of genitalia preps so it might be worth sharing an order with a fellow dipterist.

Tony Irwin

A Status Symbol Beyond Compare?

John Badmin recently saw the ultimate car for aspiring dipterists at Copt Heath Golf Club, Solihull - a spanking new green Daimler with the number plate BIB10. Surely this is the only possible 'dip' car number plate, unless members know otherwise?

Diptera of Kuwait

A request has been received asking if anyone can help identify Diptera collected in Kuwait. Families specifically mentioned are:- Asilidae, Bombylidae, Phoridae, Ephydriidae, Pipunculidae, Dolichopodidae, Therevidae, Sphaeroceridae, Sepsidae, Psilidae, Psychodidae, Empididae, Anthomyiidae and Tephritidae. Please contact W Al-Houty, Department of Zoology, University of Kuwait, State of Kuwait, PO Box 5969. She may be known to some of you since she attended one of Henry Disney's courses at Malham.

THE ADDRESS LIST

A revised address list is circulated with this Bulletin. A break down by county (England)/country is included to help you contact each other. The number of contributions to each scheme is given below; in theory the figure for all schemes should be added to the separately listed schemes but that may be over-optimistic with some schemes.

All schemes	49	Hoverflies	164
Bulletin only	54	Larger Brachycera	97
		Mosquitoes	46
		Conopids	43
		Dolids & Empids	41
		Sciomyzids	38
		Craneflies	37
		Tephritids	26
		Sepsids	13
		Dixids	6

AND NOW.....MEDICAL HISTORY IS MADE

The autumn field meeting created a dipterological sensation - the first reported case of a blister from sweeping.

Now there were mitigating circumstances. In the first place, the dipterist pleaded being out of practice because of the poor weather this summer. In the second place, he was launched straight into a six site gnat hunt on day one, without the rigorous warm up training that the field meeting circular should have recommended.

However, others survived unscathed and have done so on previous meetings. There could be another explanation. Take a standard 16 inch diameter net on a five foot pole, then hold the net in one hand by the end of the pole (the end furthest from the net!). With arm outstretched straight, proscribe powerful forehand and backhand strokes through thick rushes, tree foliage, ravine thickets etc for a day, let alone several days, and predict your medical condition. To most of us a blister would be the least of our ailments! Oh, and the dipterist - let's just call him John from Leicestershire.

Central Panel
of Diptera Recording Scheme Organisers

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