

DIPTERA



RECORDING SCHEMES BULLETIN NO. 25, APRIL 1988

Events for 1988 are announced and we hope that as many of you as possible will be able to join in at least one of them. There is further news of Dipterists' Digest, the first issue being due this autumn. The Dixidae Recording Scheme has a new organiser. Your attention is drawn to some new literature.

The next Bulletin is scheduled for August/September.

ANNUAL MEETING AND DIPTERISTS' SUPPER - 12 November 1988

Previously announced but please make sure the date is in your 1988 diary. Details will be in the next Bulletin.

DIPTERISTS' DIGEST

Following the announcement in the December 1987 D.R.S. Bulletin, a great deal of interest has been expressed by workers in the UK, Ireland and neighbouring European countries, and I have been overwhelmed by correspondence and articles. I am pleased to report that No. 1 is full (and runneth over) and I am already collecting material for No. 2. My apologies for authors who didn't make the first issue. No. 1 is a special bumper edition of over 50 pages. It is now at the printers, and is, therefore well on schedule for the planned launch date of 12 November 1988.

Contents of Dipterists' Digest No. 1 include:-

Syrphidae known from Temperate Western Europe : Potential Additions to the Fauna of Great Britain and Ireland and a Provisional Species List for N. France (Speight)+ Hoverflies in a City Environment : Experiences in Coventry (Wright); Notes on the Hoverflies of the North Merseyside Coastal Dune System (Palmer); Egg Structure in Four Species of Dixella (Goldie-Smith); Diptera of Buckinghamshire Wetlands (Gibbs).

How to Subscribe

Advanced subscriptions will be most welcome. A reduced PRE-PUBLICATION OFFER of £2.50 (£3 overseas/and Institutions) POST FREE is available until 31 October 1988. This offer is available to anyone. Payment in Pounds Sterling please to "D. Whiteley". Please remember to include your address clearly written.

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

FIELD AND OTHER MEETINGS

Yorkshire

The following meetings of the YNU Entomology Section are open to members of the Diptera recording schemes. Advice may be obtained via Bill Ely (Clifton Park Museum, Rotherham, S Yorks; tel. 0709 382121).

- 21.5.88 Langold Holt, Rotherham. Meet at 43/566852 at 11 am. Details from Bill Ely.
- 26.6.88 Pulfin Bog, E. Yorks. Meet at 54/057418 at (?) 10.30 am. Details from Philip Winter (0723 512218).
- 9.7.88 Castle Howard, N. Yorks. Meet at 44/708707 at 10 am. Check with Roger identification.
- 13.8.88 Skipwith Common, Selby. Meet at 44/644374 at 10.30 am. Details from Clifford Smith (0904 25928).
- 3.9.88 Grass Wood, Grassington. Meet at 34/984652 at 11 am. Details from John Pearson (0302 788466).

'Hoverfly events' in Lancashire and Cheshire

Indoor Meeting

Hoverfly Workshop, Liverpool Museum, Saturday 30 April 1988. (1300-1630 hrs).

An opportunity to identify, talk and argue hoverflies for an afternoon! Microscopes, keys, 'experts' and a very comprehensive museum reference collection will all be available for consultation. Numbers will be limited, so for a booking and/or further information please contact Chris Palmer, Liverpool Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool L3 8EN, (051 207 0001 ext. 236).

Field Meeting

Roddlesworth, Nr. Blackburn, Lancashire (SD 670210). Saturday, 16 July 1988. (Joint field meeting with the Lancashire and Cheshire Entomological Society).

Permission has been granted by North West Water to explore this Pennine edge mixed woodland (c.900 ft). First impressions of this site's potential are extremely encouraging! For further details please contact Chris Palmer (address above).

Wealden Edge Hangers, Hampshire - Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 May

Varied old woodland on Chalk and Upper Greensand escarpments in the Selborne area. On the Chalk, largely beech woodland, with pockets of chalk grassland and calcareous springs and streams. On the Greensand, mixed old coppice woodland with large old ash stools, prominent seepage lines where the Greensand meets with Gault Clay. 125 spp. of hoverfly recorded since 1984, with some interesting dead woodland and ancient forest specialists: all 4 Criorhina, all 4 Brachyopa, both Ferdinandea, 5 spp. of Xylota, Mallota and M. devius on the Chalk. Larvae of 2 spp. of Ctenophora cranefly found in rot holes during the autumn. Oxycera pardalina found in several calcareous springs last year. Also, some interesting dollies, conopids, asilids, etc. Last year's meetings turned up a new M. devius site within an hour, and 2 specimens of Cheilosia nigripes.

Excellent DB&B in middle of hanger SSSI, caters for 6; other B&B available in Selborne and extremely basic accommodation offered for 2 by leader. Also people most welcome for the day.

Saturday, 28th: meet in Selborne village car park (at back of Selborne Arms), SU 743335, 10.15 am.

Sunday, 29th: meet at end of No Through Road at top of Ashford Hanger, SU 737270, 10.15 am.

The aim is to visit some new sites with high potential. Full details (habitat information, accommodation list, etc.) from:- Matthew Oates (East Hants Hangers Conservation Project entomologist), 'Tabanids', 5 William Way, Alton, Hants GU34 2UW. Tel. 0420 82716.

Note: This meeting sees the launching of The Hampshire Hoverfly Group (leader, Ian Hudson)

Whippendell Wood - Cassiobury Park, Watford, Herts 4 June 1988

Andrew Godfrey will lead this meeting and offers further details. (Tel. home 01 699 3865, work 01 699 2339). Meet 10 am in car park off Rousebarn Lane, ½ mile south-east of Chandlers Cross, Watford. G.R. TQ/073977.

10 am - 1 pm. - Whippendell Wood is owned by Watford Borough Council and designated as SSSI by the NCC, comprises mixed woodland occupying both sides of a small valley on London Clay. The woodland includes remains of ancient woodland dominated by oak, beech and birch. A few very large, old beech line the south-east border of the wood, and fallen beech here have proved particularly rewarding for dead wood species of Diptera and Coleoptera. The centre of the wood is more open with managed grassland and young birch. This has a distinctive Diptera fauna with grassland species present.

Interesting species taken recently in Whippendell Wood include: Limonia decemmaculata, Limonia inusta, Gnophomyia viridipennis, Ditomyia fasciata, Didea fasciata, Chalcosyrphus nemorum, Volucella inanis, Volucella inflata, Arctophila fulva, (recorded by others) Leucophenga maculata, Stegana nigrithorax, Physiphora alcaeae, Herina sp. (? germationis), Paraclusia tigrina.

2 pm - 5 pm - Cassiobury Park Nature Reserve comprises an area of varied freshwater habitats by the River Gade to the north of Cassiobury Park. The nature reserve includes Typha beds, former watercress beds and alder-sallow woodland. The site is owned by Watford Borough Council and managed by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.

Interesting Diptera include: Tipula nigra, Vanoyia tenuicornis, Oxycera nigricornis, Oxycera rara, Odontomyia tigrina, Stratiomys potamida, Sphegina verecunda, Anasymia contracta, Parhelophilus consimilis, Lonchoptera scutellata, Melieria omissa.

New Forest - 4 and 5 June 1988

Areas of the New Forest are chosen which have plenty of dead wood within ancient forest, the timing being suitable for many of the special hoverflies and other Diptera for which the area is famed. This meeting continues the annual series of forays designed to survey the current value of various parts of the New Forest.

4 June - Stubbs Wood and Frame Wood. Meet at 10.30 am in car park at SU 367025.

5 June - Great Huntley Bank and Gritnam Wood. Meet at 10.30 am in the Warwick Slade car park at SU 270066.

Ian McLean is leading this British Entomological and Natural History Society meeting to which all dipterists are welcome. (For further details contact NCC Peterborough, tel. 0733 40345).

Scottish Entomologists' Meeting, nr Inverness, 17-10 June 1988

This all orders meeting offers residential field centre accommodation at Tarradale House (NH 522487), east of Muir of Ord, N of Inverness. It is an excellent area, indeed a successful dipterists' field meeting was based at Tarradale a few summers ago. Scottish dipterists will be there, indeed the organiser of the meeting is a dipterist. A warm welcome is extended to dipterists from south of Hadrian's Wall, so here is an event to link in with a Scottish holiday.

Details and bookings via David Robertson, 3 Claremont Park, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 7PH.

Sutton Park, Birmingham, 18 June 1988

Don't say this isn't central, only 4 miles from Sphagetti Junction, just north of Birmingham (the big open space between Streetly and Sutton Coalfield). Hopefully this will be a well supported meeting.

Sutton Park provides some 4 square miles of wild land! There are large areas of heathland with damp flushes, bogs and pools; also areas of woodland. It was here at the turn of the century that R. C. Bradley made so many exiting finds, including Didea alneti. The value of the site for Diptera is being re-discovered, and remarkably the habitat for many of Bradley's specialities is still there when so much of the Midlands has been swallowed by agriculture and development. Hoverflies such as Chrysotoxum arcuatum and Chrysogaster macquarti are among the recent finds and the scope to extend the list of hoverflies and other Diptera is enticing.

The leader is Adam Wright who should be contacted for details (Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Jordan Well, Coventry, CU1 5RW; tel 0203 833333).

Rye Harbour LNR, East Sussex - 25-26 June 1988

Following the request for a leader in the last Bulletin, Peter Hodge has volunteered. The meeting will be run jointly with Barry Yates, the warden of the Local Nature Reserve, and he will advise over the options for accommodation should you require it. Peter Hodge would welcome advance notice as far as it is possible if you are coming and to arrange meeting points; alternatively contact Barry Yates if need arises.

This is an important site for coastal shingle habitats and has areas of grazing marsh with good quality ditches. The area is well recognised for the occurrence of rare moths, beetles and other invertebrates so there are high hopes of revealing the presence of interesting Diptera.

Your chief contacts are:- Barry Yates, 2 Watch Cottages, Nook Beach, Winchelsea, E. Sussex TN36 4LU (tel. 0797 223862) and Peter Hodge, 8 Harvard Road, Ringmer, Lewes, E. Sussex BN8 5HJ (tel. 0273 812047).

Chippenham Fen NNR, Cambs - 2 July 1988

This is the best fenland site in Britain for Diptera. Its fame was established by Verrall, Collin and others in the past, and recent studies by this generation of dipterists continue to add new species. Its a super place and here is a chance to go there.

Ian McLean is leading a field meeting of the British Entomological and Natural History Society and it is open to all dipterists. Meet at 10.30 am at reserve huts TL 651692; park beside track to fen at TL 954689. The reserve is one mile west of the village of Chippenham. For further details contact NCC Peterborough, tel 0733 40345).

Galashiels, S. Scotland, 9-17 July 1988

The last Bulletin invited bookings for the main summer field meeting. Eighteen dipterists will be resident and several more from the Edinburgh area anticipate joining in.

Technically bookings are now closed. If anyone else does wish to join in then contact Alan Stubbs (NCC, Peterborough).

Carmarthen - 16-23 July 1988

The Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Scheme is following in the steps of the dipterists by holding a field meeting at Carmarthen. Hymenopterists have several times been invited to our meetings, so they reciprocate the invitation. There will be no Diptera leader (the dates clash with the previously arranged Galashiels meeting) but anyone wishing to take up the offer should contact Ian Morgan (NCC, 16 Barn Road, Carmarthen, Dyfed SA31 1DD, tel Carmarthen 232 772 by 30 April). Ian knows his hoverflies and will give enthusiastic encouragement, though his attention will be somewhat deflected towards aculeates and leading the meeting as a whole.

Bideford, Devon, 12-16 October (Main Autumn Foray)

A booking has been placed with Hallsannery Field Centre, near Bideford, North Devon. This will be our first meeting in North Devon and the road system enables us to readily radiate out; including the fringe of Cornwall. Further details will be given in the summer Bulletin.

RECORDING SCHEMES AND STUDY GROUPS

Crane-fly Recording Scheme

Atlases to Tipilinae and Ptychopteridae are currently being processed for publication by BRC.

The British Entomological and Natural History Society has agreed in principle to publishing two colour plates to the Ctenophora of Europe. Steven Falk and the scheme organiser are collaborating on this.

Dixidae Recording Scheme

It is hoped that provisional maps for the fourteen British species of Dixidae may be produced in the near future, updating those in the FBA key. Thus, please send in your records!

Miss Kathleen Goldie-Smith has taken over from Dr Henry Disney the organisation of the mapping scheme, with Henry to advise, and she will refer all "tricky identifications" to him! She will be pleased to receive records and specimens, especially living larvae which can be bred through, of any age; for identification purposes, preserved larvae should be at least 3rd instar. For the continuation of her detailed study of the eggs, she is particularly interested in living larvae of any species other than Dixella autumnalis, D. aestivalis and D. amphibia. They can be posted first class, overnight, in wet plant material - not in water, and should preferably be preceded by notification of their imminent arrival.

Records and specimens should be addressed to your new scheme organiser:- Dr E K Goldie-Smith, 44-46 Military Road, Rye, E Sussex, TN31 7NY.

Mycetophilidae Recording Scheme

British Fungus Gnat List raised to 499

The 1976 British Check List included 415 species of "fungus gnats" (Exechia seriata (Meigen) and its synonym pallida (Stannius) being listed separately in error to give a total of 416). This list had risen slowly from 402 recognised by Edwards (1925 and 1941) and included in the 1945 Kloet & Hincks Check List (5 of these since deleted).

Intensive collecting, particularly on the Diptera Recording Schemes meetings from 1975 onwards and progressive examination of Museum collections have resulted in a surprising number of additions to the British List. Some are due to investigation of closely related species groups, several are new to science but the majority are well distinguished species previously described from other parts of Europe.

The published British List now stands at 453 but the list used for the Biological Records Centre Recording Card drawn up in 1985 was 471 then known to me. From this total, 323 species were selected for inclusion on the card, as most likely to be recorded and these included 6 species yet to be published as British. This selection has proved relatively successful as few samples have included more than 5 species not on the card.

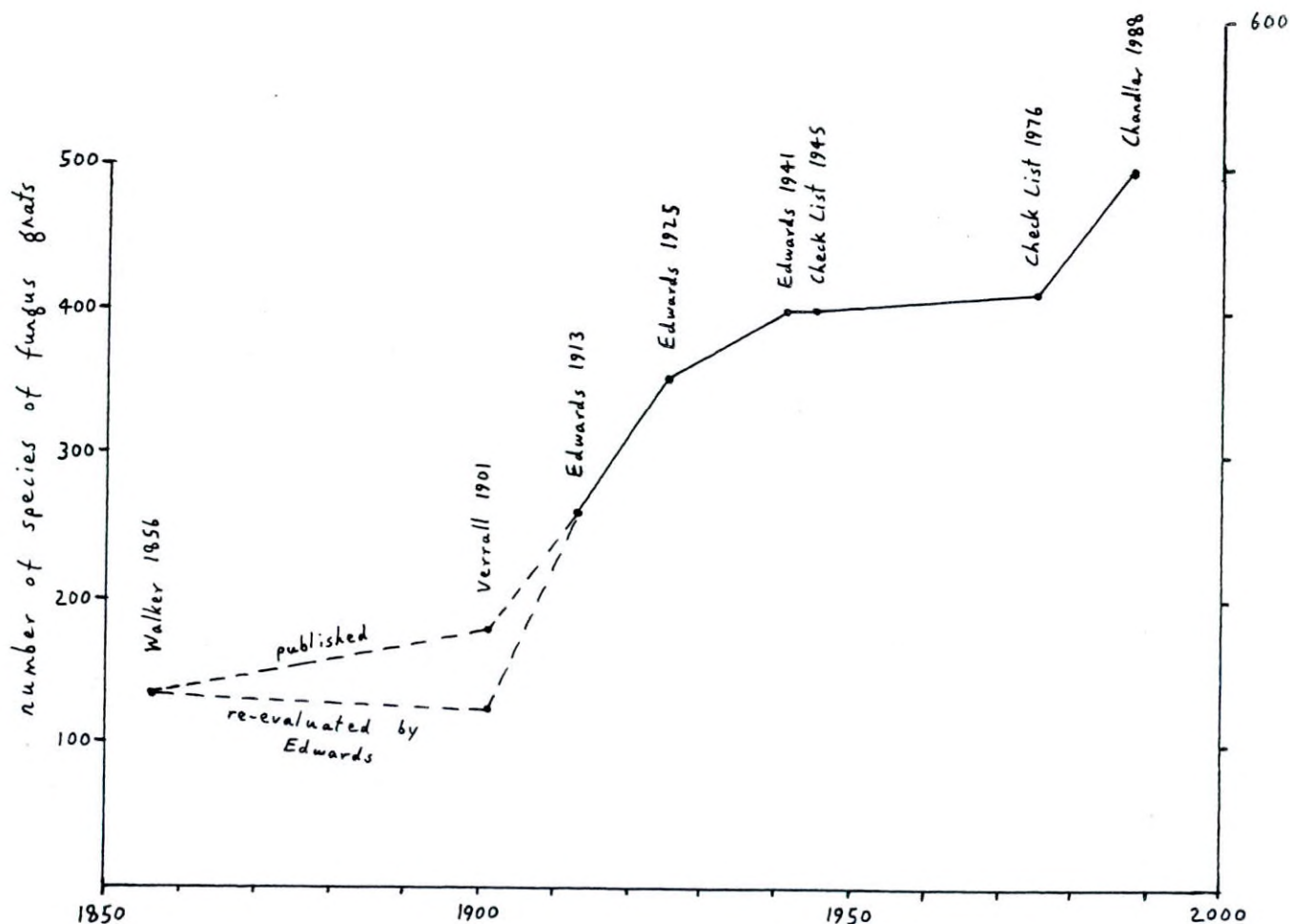
Since the submission of a Check List to BRC, additions to the list have continued apace. Some of these were covered by a paper (Chandler, 1987a) on species additional to Part I of the RES Handbook (Hutson, Ackland & Kidd, 1980) but 4 more additions to Part I are now known to me. Additions to a Mycetophilinae (to be covered by Part II of the Handbook) have accumulated at a faster rate and at least 42 species of this sub-family now await addition to the British List. Ten of these species have already been published from Ireland (Chandler, 1987b) but all also occur in Britain.

Accounts of the 46 additional British species are under preparation. These bring the List to 499, a figure inviting at least one decisive addition. The chances are that 1988 will bring such a notable event.

I have prepared a key to genera of Mycetophilinae and to the species (now increased to 70) of the genus Mycetophila and would be able to provide copies of these to anyone interested.

Peter Chandler

Are we to detect a desperate plea for assistance in finding 'one decisive addition'? Ed.



Based on information provided by Peter Chandler.

Larger Brachycera Recording Scheme

A newsletter is being produced this April. It will be circulated to those on the address list marked 'All' or 'B' - if you want your name to be added, please contact your scheme organiser, Martin Drake. He will also welcome text for a further newsletter in the autumn.

A complete key to Stratiomyidae is now available, and will be circulated with the newsletter. A Rhagionidae key is imminent. The majority of families are now covered by new keys (and draft text).

Dolichopodidae and Empididae Study Group

Another newsletter is out. Roy Crossley and Antony Bainbridge will welcome text for future newsletters.

Hoverfly Recording Scheme

Newsletter No. 7 was issued this April. The newsletter editor, Graham Rotheray, will welcome the continued flow of text for further issues.

With Platycheirus peltatus, you are reminded that there are two species, including species A, in the Hoverfly Book supplement.

A number of people have been reporting success in finding early species of Melangyna and Cheilosia. This early spring, the first reported C. grossa was 9 March in Hampshire (M Oates).

Conopidae Recording Scheme

The first newsletter is imminent, including a revised key to Conopinae. Circulation will be to everyone this time only - henceforth it will be up to you to register with the scheme, if you have not done so already. Contributions of text for further newsletters will be welcomed by the scheme organiser, Dave Clements.

THE LITERATURE

Sphaeroceridae

In January the Sphaeroceridae key became available (Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects, Vol. 10, part 5e). The price is £14.50 (£10.15 to RESL Fellows). There are 175 pages, of which 114 pages are packed with excellent illustrations. There are 114 species covered, some with early stages illustrated. The author, Brian Pitkin of the BM(NH), has produced a superb reference to cover this major gap in current British literature. For anyone who has reached the point of being comfortable some of the families of small flies, Sphaeroceridae are now much more manageable, especially if you are prepared to do genitalia dissections with some of the more tricky ones.

Tephritidae

The next Handbook is on schedule for June as previously announced.

Staffordshire Hoverflies

There is a new atlas of Staffordshire Hoverflies, by David Emley and produced by the Staffordshire Biological Records Centre. The atlas includes 160 species, 13 of which only have pre 1960 records. Actophila fulva and Melangyna arctica seem relatively strongly represented. Copies are obtainable free (on receipt of an A4 size stamped, self addressed envelope) from the Biological Records Centre, City Museum and Art Gallery, Broad Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent.

Key Works Bibliography

The following has reached its fifth edition:- Simms, R.W., Freeman, P. & Hawksworth, D.L. (eds.), 1988. Key works to the fauna and flora of the British Isles and north-western Europe (5th Ed.). Systematics Association, Special Volume 33. Oxford. pp.312. (Diptera pp 130-160).

NEWS ITEMS

Diptera Section BM(NH)

Peter Barnard will shortly be joining the Diptera Section at the British Museum (Natural History) to work on mosquitoes. He is already well known to some of us for his work on Neuroptera and Trichoptera at the Museum.

A new R.E.S. Handbook for the Tachinidae

Work has just restarted on a new R.E.S. Handbook for the Tachinidae, for publication in about 3 years time. The BM(NH) collection, upon which the work will primarily be based, has an inadequate series of the following species. Any specimens of these which could be borrowed will be invaluable in constructing a usable key.

Actia exoleta (Meigen), Gymnosoma nitens (Meigen), Belida angelicae (Meigen), Carcelia intermedia (Herting), Ceranthia lichtwardtiana (Vill.), Eurysthaea scutellaris (R-D), Germaria ruficeps (Fallen), Gonia foersteri (Meigen), Hemimacquartia paradoxa (B&B), Litophasia hyalipennis (Fallen), Phebellia nigripalpis (R-D), Phebellia stulta (Zetterstedt), Siphona mesnili (Andersen).

Any catalogues of tachinid collections held by other individuals or institutions would be useful. These would enable loans, examinations and/or exchanges of material to be arranged at a future date. For the time being it will not be practical to take on the task of identifying unnamed collections.

Assistance is also requested to help expand the host records of the group. Specimens reared from known hosts would be greatly appreciated. All parts of the puparium and the remains of the host should be included along with the locality, date, host plant/habitat and authority for host identification, if available. The adult fly should ideally be kept alive for a day or two to allow its cuticle to harden. Specimens reared from hosts whose identify is uncertain would also be of value, especially if accompanied by the puparium. Identifications will be provided if requested and the specimens returned by any date required. Any fly which has developed as an internal parasite of another insect, excepting the leaf-hoppers and the aculeate Hymenoptera, will almost certainly be a tachinid.

The R.E.S. Handbooks are intended to provide a service for amateur and professional entomologists, and so any comments or suggestions from possible future users of this particular volume are welcomed.

Robert Belshaw (Mr.), Diptera Section, Department of Entomology, British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD.

Pipunculid Keys

It has taken rather longer than expected to produce keys but they are much improved from the draft of a year ago. Thumb nail sketch keys are now available covering the genera Cephalops, Dorylomorpha, Nephrocerus, Pipunculus, Tomosvaryella and Verrallia. The keys allow for headless specimens. The new keys should prove easier and increase confidence for many species, leaving the problem areas fairly contained. New taxa are included. Eudorylas is in preparation (Mark Jervis is to publish a European key to Chalarus). These keys will be sent to those who responded to an earlier note in the Bulletin and those otherwise known to be studying pipunculids. If you suspect you have missed out and want a copy of the keys, please contact Alan Stubbs.

Trypetid mystery solved?

There has been a long standing dilemma over the host plant of Myoleja caesio. Various claims and prediction have been made, such as a leaf miner of Silene dioica or a berry inhabitant of Solanum dulcamara. Now Ian White has come across an East European report that it mines the leaf petioles of Urtica. Nettle is about the last plant that we would search for trypetids, but it is usually plentiful in the wet woodland and carr that the fly favours. So, fearlessly we must face the autumn nettle beds to see if the latest claim is really true.

Field assistant wanted, Summer 1988

I am looking for a field assistant to help with a behavioural study of ground-nesting solitary wasps (Hymenoptera, Sphecidae) and their parasites (sarcophagid flies). The work will involve observing and recording the behaviour of individually marked wasps and parasites in the field, excavating nests, and possibly sorting malaise trap samples. The work requires patience and a genuine interest in insect behaviour.

A field assistant is required for the period 27 June 1988 - 31 August 1988. Accommodation will be provided at Imperial College Field Station at Silwood Park, Ascot, Berks., plus £28 cash per week, funded by the British Ecological Society.

Further details from: Dr J P Field, Dept of Pure & Applied Biology, Imperial College at Silwood Park, Ascot, Berks SL5 7PY. Tel. Ascot (0990) 23911, ext 314 (daytime). I will be out of the country from 20 April - 31 May, so if possible contact me before then, or early in June.

OTHER ITEMS

A challenge for the pooter

A singular fly



THIS BUTTERFLY-sized fly had not been seen since 1941, until five-year-old Jamie Morris of Dunedin in New Zealand found it near his home recently. Trapped and photographed, *Exsul singularis* is now regarded as the rarest fly on Earth.

Its huge black wings heat up in sunlight, allowing it to take to the air. No larva for the fly has ever been found and virtually nothing is known about it other than its size, about 5 centimetres in length.

Morris found the fly near the Homer Tunnel which is situated in the deep south of New Zealand's southernmost island. □

New Scientist
14/11/1988

The above is reproduced with the kind permission of New Scientist.

Car number plates galore

Seemingly the slack season for flies has bizare results, leaving the mind to grapple with great scientific thought - such as more combinations of car number plates suitable for the dipterist. John Cole has come up with these further options.

ACT 1A	DID 1A	LE 1A	VOR 1A
AGR 1A	D1 XA	LER 1A	EMP 1S
BER 1S	ELF 1A	SER 1	HYB OS
DEL 1A	GON 1A	S1 CUS	N1 LEA
DEX 1A	HEB 1A	V1 LLA	

Regrettably his car lacks any such combination. Passengers only now have potential for making even a journey along the A1 full of possibility.

AND NOW THE GREAT WASHING LINE TRICK

There are no doubt all sorts of things one could do with a washing line, everything from a guy rope to prevent the bean poles collapsing, to hoisting a bait trap into the tree canopy. While the neighbours aren't looking, a practice session at wild west style lassoing is about the nearest you will come to acheiving the ridiculous notion that a washing line will catch anything.

Of course, you could just use it as a washing line. This is more complicated than it sounds, for you will need to move your garden to rural Wales and, to be certain of achieving the impossible regularly, change your name by deed pole to Adrian Fowles. You are then all set to go out and see Parasyrphus nigritarsis not just once, but again the next year as well, for a washing line is the sole known Welsh habitat.

Adrian offers one piece of advice which is self evident. It is dar'n difficult to catch a hoverfly sitting on a washing line. All we know is that he used a net and achieved 100% success. This technique obviously deserves to be put on video for posterity.

Right, you now need a larger field bag to carry this new piece of essential equipment. May the countryside be festooned with hoverfly lures, but only on Mondays please!

Central Panel of
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