

# DIPTERA



## RECORDING SCHEMES BULLETIN NO. 28 AUGUST 1989

The programme for the Annual Meeting is given and bookings for the Dipterists' Supper are invited. Details are provided for the autumn field meeting in West Sussex and note that there is an open house Royal Entomological Society meeting on hoverflies at Nottingham. Various news items are included.

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE DIPTERA RECORDING SCHEMES - 11 NOVEMBER 1989

The British Museum (Natural History) at South Kensington, London, is our venue as usual.

During the day we shall receive 10% discount vouchers covering all sales at the BM(NH) bookshop including Royal Ent. Soc. Handbooks and the complete range of entomological and other natural history books in stock.

We are grateful to the Trustees of the BM(NH) for use of facilities and the above discount.

### NOTE NEW ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

- Those attending the daytime meetings or arriving before 4.30pm but not staying for the Dipterist's Supper are asked to pay the standard admission charges into the Museum (currently £2.50; half price for full time students, the unemployed and O.A.P.s; proof of status required). This obviates the need for advance tickets but it will be helpful if you are able to give advance notice of your attendance by returning the enclosed form. Special arrangements will enable you to leave the Museum at lunch time and to re-enter without further payment.

In relation to the facilities we use, and the bookshop discount, this is remarkable value.

- The cost of the Supper this year will be £6.00 plus admission to the Museum. Tickets should be obtained, in advance, from Brian Pitkin (see further item in Bulletin and booking form). Please do not forget to enclose s.a.e. to reduce administrative time and expense.

### Morning Session - main lecture theatre

- |               |   |  |
|---------------|---|--|
| Chairman      | - | Dave Clements (Conopidae Recording Scheme organiser)           |
| 11.00 - 11.30 | - | Recording flies on the Welsh Wetlands Survey - Peter Holmes    |
| 11.30 - 12.00 | - | Behaviour and ecology of Miltogrammine flies - Dr Jeremy Field |
| 12.00 - 12.30 | - | Conservation of Flies - Steven Falk.                           |
| 12.30 - 1.00  | - | Leaf mining Diptera - Brian Pitkin                             |
| LUNCH         | - | Choice of pubs, cafeterias etc in area, or bring sandwiches    |

**Afternoon Session - demonstration laboratory, Palaeontology Department**

- 2.00 - 2.30 - Informal and setting up exhibits
- 2.30 - 3.00 - Informal, viewing exhibits
- 3.00 - 3.45 - Discussion session (recording schemes and study groups)
- 3.45 - 5.30 - Informal viewing exhibits, help with identifications
- 5.30 - 5.45 - Removal of any remaining exhibits

The lecture programme includes some varied topics. The Welsh Wetland Survey has been sampling from a great range of sites, covering many invertebrate groups. We shall be hearing of the various types of wetland in Wales and the ecological patterns found with hoverflies and other Diptera. A number of dipterists have been identifying material from this survey so here is a chance to see the wider perspective. The theme then turns to some of the flies seen about the burrows of bees and wasps and what they are up to. Our speaker has been carrying out research on the ecology of aculeates, his talk telling us of a study he has been making of the associated Miltogrammine flies. Steven Falk has been in liaison with many dipterists in drawing up a national review of the conservation priorities for Diptera. He will be showing us slides of habitats and flies, with consideration of the habitat management and other conservation perspectives that are important for the future. Our final talk in the morning is by Brian Pitkin who with John Robbins is preparing an illustrated guide to the leaf mines of British Diptera. His presentation should provide a stimulus to go out and look for mines, which are often easier to find and identify than the flies themselves.

As regards lunch, some people prefer to head for pubs and cafes. Those without the patience and stamina for long queues may prefer to bring sandwiches to eat in the Museum.

Following good summer weather, it is to be hoped that there will be plenty of exhibits for the afternoon session. Thus please exhibit if you can so that we can all enjoy seeing your finds. We shall have a discussion session as usual on topical matters. This year Robert Belshaw will run an identification service for problem tachinids and for any reared material in particular; copies of his draft key will be on view. There will be people at hand to advise on specimens of other families, including problem species in most of the recording scheme families.

We hope to see as many of you as possible at this major gathering in the year's calendar. Don't be shy of coming, all are welcome.

**DIPTERISTS' SUPPER - 11 NOVEMBER 1989**

The traditional Dipterists' Supper (a buffet) will follow on from the Annual Meeting, in the Conversazione Room of the British Museum (Natural History). Drinks will be served from 5.45 pm and the supper will be from 6.30 pm to about 10 pm; The Museum's main car park, at the Cromwell Road entrance, will remain open for guests during the evening. The evening gives further opportunity to meet fellow dipterists and to discuss our interests. It is necessary to book in advance for a ticket, with the number restricted to the first 80 to apply. Please reply promptly to

ensure your ticket for the evening; 3 November will be the final date for the issue of tickets. Don't hesitate to join in, it's open to all dipterists no matter how new to the subject you may be.

Enquiries and completed booking forms should be addressed to the dinner organiser:- Brian Pitkin, Department of Entomology, British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD. Cheques payable to Brian Pitkin and a self addressed envelope for reply would be much appreciated.

#### **DIPTERISTS DIGEST**

About 300 copies of number 1 have been sold. Advanced subscriptions for vols 2 and 3 stand at 150. That suggests that many of us still have not taken advantage of the pre-publication offer. It will help enormously if your editor, Derek Whiteley, can have as many advance orders as possible. See the order form in Dipterist's Digest Vol 1., or, even if you lack that, write to him at 730 Ecclesall Road, Sheffield, S11 8TB.

Number 2 should be available at the meeting on 11 November so you can have it hot off the press. Number 3 is well advanced. Number 4 is a special issue with Phil Whither's new key to Psychodidae and this will be ready in November.

Derek Whitley has been looking into high quality laser printer setting, a technique which makes short print runs a viable proposition. He is currently 'quite optimistic' about the way things are going!

#### **FORTHCOMING AUTUMN FIELD MEETING**

**Rogate, West Sussex 11 - 15 October 1989**

As previously announced, the Rogate Field Centre is the venue for the main autumn foray. The centre is run by Kings College, London and has been a very suitable base for spring and summer meetings in earlier years.

Rogate is situated in the SW Weald, a high quality area of the countryside. A good range of habitats is available. Woodland is well represented on Chalk, clays and sands, including seepages, streams and springs, and carr. The Wealden Hangers provide excellent sites, including the famous Selbourne Hangers, and there is also a site which looks like being Hampshire's answer to Chippenham Fen. There are some good heathlands with associated woods and streams as well as ponds and lakes with good margins. These are the sort of habitats that are best for the Autumn Diptera, with craneflies, fungus gnats and some of the acalyptrate families having a peak at this time of year.

The price is £17 per day including packed lunch. The Centre requires a deposit of £8 per day per person, which is calculated on number of nights. The booking is for 10 people and it is hoped that we shall raise a viable party. Even if the flies are not your favourites ones to identify, you will be welcome to help with collecting them (and learning about them if you wish). Appropriately calculated deposits should be sent to Alan Stubbs (address at end of bulletin), cheques payable to Kings College London.

## **SOME FURTHER AUTUMN EVENTS**

### **Nottingham - 15 November 1989**

The East Midlands Region of the Royal Entomological Society have arranged a meeting on hoverflies. It will be at the School of Biological Sciences, Nottingham University, starting at 2.30pm. Car parking space is available.

Speakers include :-

Dr. Graham Rotheray - Larvae as sources of biosystematic data

Dr. Francis Gilbert - Abundance of hoverflies

Derek Whiteley - Using hoverflies as conservation indicators in Sheffield and Derbyshire.

There will also be a video on hoverflies and demonstrations/exhibits.

If you wish to attend please contact the meeting organiser:- Dr. Colin Hartley, Department of Zoology, Nottingham University, Nottingham, NG7 2RD. You do not have to be a member of the Society. The meeting is open to all dipterists and please do not be put off by the academic venue.

### **Liverpool Museum - 7 October 1989**

The programme of Liverpool Entomological Meetings includes an item on Diptera. Roy Crossley is giving a talk entitled 'An introduction to the British Dolichopodidae' together with a practical session.

Meet at the Museum Information Centre, Liverpool Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3 8EN. Admittance is free and there is secure car parking available at the rear of the building. The session on Dolichopodidae runs from 14.00 to 17.00 hrs. The museum's entomological reference collections may be consulted by appointment between 10.00 and 12.30 hrs. Please contact Stephen Judd in advance telephone (051) 207 0001 or write to him at the above address.

## **FIELD MEETING REPORTS**

### **Bideford, Devon 10 - 18 July 1989**

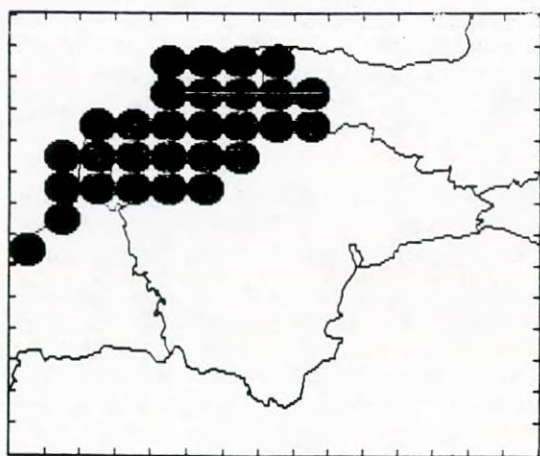
Twenty-six dipterists were resident for all or part of the meeting and two more joined some day trips. This was the largest gathering we have had. It was especially pleasing that a number of people came for the first time, including some with little experience - they all seem enthusiastic about coming again. We were pleased to welcome Paul Beuk from the Netherlands, the first time we have been joined by someone from abroad and it is to be hoped that this international sharing of experience will grow.

The accommodation at Hallsanney Field Centre proved well up to expectation and we soon made ourselves at home with the conversion of two large rooms into instant labs. Most days there were about 5 itineraries to choose from, sometimes more. Previously it has been difficult to keep track of the flurry of site visits but this time there was a new innovation. Stuart Ball brought his computer and daily logged who went where. The final tally came to 115 party site visits to 80 localities situated in 29 10 km squares.

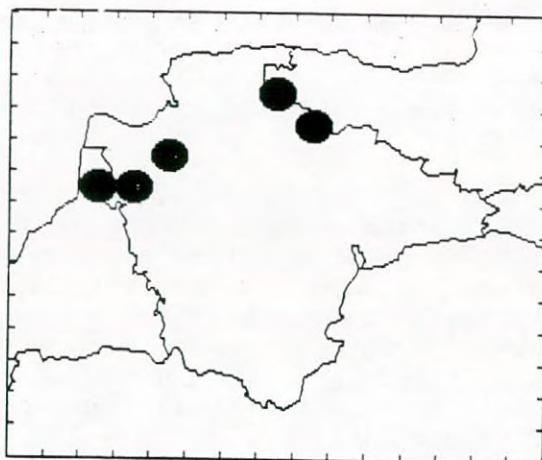
The weather, as usual in Britain, was atypical! An exceptionally mild winter, followed by a hot sun drenched May, was followed by dull cold weather in early June. Our stay caught the end of the cold weather followed by hot sunny days. There was severe drought developing, it being easy to walk across Sphagnum bog in shoes. On dry soils herbaceous plants were locally browning off, wilting and showing other signs of stress. Thus the spring fauna was mainly well and truly over and the bogs, wet moorland and marshes were not seen at their best. We cannot complain though for we managed some very worthwhile results.

The start was spectacular. A new hoverfly to Britain was found by two parties on their first site visit. It was a new Sphaerophoria which has subsequently been identified as S. potentillae, only known from some bogs in NW Germany.

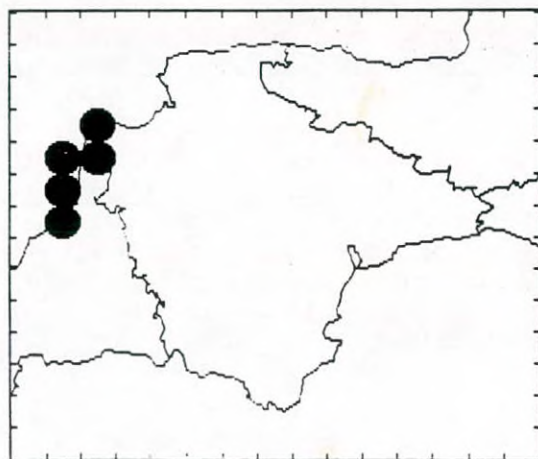
The beginning of the week revealed that we were in a good Microdon mutabilis area, leading to a total of 8 sites in 5 10 km squares. As attention turned away from wet heath and meadows to other habitats, new excitements came to the fore. The sweeping of a Eumerus sabulonum on the coastal cliffs lead to the discovery of 6 sites in 5 10 km squares with strong populations on some sites. Woodland abounded but it became clear that one woodland complex in particular was yielding the best results - here a party spent the last day there with a tally of 67 species of hoverflies (the overall site total was 70) which considering the spring Syrphinae were virtually over was an exceptional result.



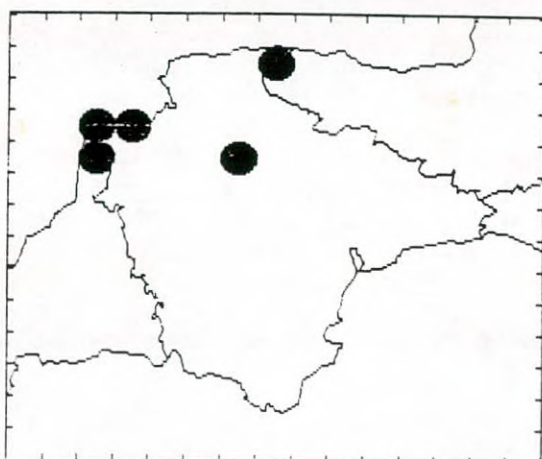
ALL RECORDS



*Microdon mutabilis*



*Eumerus sabulonum*



*Dioctria oelandica*

With daily computer updates, the hoverfly list rose to 106 species plus 46 larger Brachycera species. For these two groups Stuart had fed in 1591 species/site records during the week (and more data has yet to be forwarded). Instant distribution maps were on screen. Species of note included Xanthandrus comtus, Chrysotoxum elegans, Neoascia obliqua, Brachypalpoidea lenta, both Atherix and Stratiomys singularior.

The crane fly list was just over 100, reasonable considering the drought. There were 151 fungus gnats which is probably a summer meeting record. Among the latter were Mycetophila uliginosa (third British record) and various other very scarce species.

The dolies and empids were productive, with some especially interesting ones on Braunton Burrows. The latter site got quite intense treatment but most of the potentially interesting small fry have yet to be identified. Braunton was the best place for sciomyzids with 11 species (on most sites they were well past peak). The pipunculid Tomosvaryella palliditarsis was a particularly useful record.

With such a major start to getting data from this major meeting onto computer, it is a reasonable goal to produce a full compilation. A copy will be available to participants so please send in your data to Stuart Ball (NCC Peterborough) and any problem species can be brought to the November Annual Meeting or referred to Alan Stubbs by other routes.

#### **Pamber Forest LNR, N.Hants - 21 May 1989**

The meeting was arranged to assist a survey of the Diptera fauna of this ancient acidic oak forest being undertaken this year. Eight dipterists attended. The weather was kind, though some elements of the fauna were somewhat suppressed by developing drought conditions, notably the dead wood fauna.

Although only 36 hoverfly species were recorded the tally included some interesting ones. Brachyopa insensilis adults were prominent around oak sap runs and we found what we assumed to be insensilis larvae with some ease. Other hoverflies included Dasysyrphus lunulatus, Platycheirus tarsalis, Trichopsomyia flavitarsis, Sericomyia lappona and Xylota abiens. Other records included the magnificent dead - wood crane fly Ctenophora pectinicornis, the conopid C.vesicularis and some interesting dolies. (N.B. Matthew Oates would appreciate species lists from those who attended this meeting).

#### **Vinnal Moors, Hants - 25 June 1989**

Five dipterists attended the meeting, led by Matthew Oates (since Ian Hudson was unable to be there). We were shown round by Jeff Pain, the warden of this Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust reserve, who is interested in entomology.

These River Itchen fens on the outskirts of Winchester yielded the pipunculid Beckerias pannonicus and the crane fly Molophilus variispinus, both of which have few British records. However, the major find arose on reaching some grazed fields with nice ditches for here the picture-winged empid Syneches muscarius was present in good numbers - a very rare species only previously known from Dorset; the eyes are bright red in life. A fair range of hoverflies and other Diptera were found.

After lunch we took up the offer of visiting two other sites. Itchen Valley Conservation Area at Swathling had yielded 17 stratiomyids in one visit earlier in the year and we managed to add two more on a brief stop. The main objective was The Moors at Bishops Waltham, with springs, alder carr and fen (possibly Hampshire's answer to Chippenham Fen). We saw ditches where Odontomyia argentata was plentiful in May, providing a search image for other sites. A good range of scarce Diptera were found. The County Council have recently acquired the site as a reserve. Matthew Oates is advising the relevant authorities on the conservation of both sites.

A.S.

## RECORDING SCHEMES AND STUDY GROUPS NEWS

### Cranefly Recording Scheme

A Spanish species, Helius hispanicus, has been discovered new to Britain in SE Devon: it has darkened wing tips.

### Dixidae Recording Scheme

The recording scheme organiser, Dr Kathleen Goldie-Smith, has changed her address to:- Wrens Cottage, New England Lane, Playden, Rye, E Sussex, TN31 7NT.

### Mosquito Recording Scheme

British Mosquito Group Newsletter no. 6 includes a review of Anopheles algeriensis (it is breeding in Anglesey), current literature and other items.

### Fungus Gnat Recording Scheme

The British list has jumped to 506 species. Five extras were in samples from the East Anglian fens survey and one more from the Welsh Wetland Survey.

### Larger Brachycera Recording Scheme

BRC hope to have the atlas ready by Dipterist's Day in November.

There are two new strats to Britain. Oxycera leonina, from Norfolk, has a black abdomen with a yellow spot either end. O. varipes, from SE Devon, resembles pygmaea but the hind corners of the thoracic dorsum have a pointed extension to the yellow area.

### Empid and Dolichopodid Study Group

Newsheet no.7 has just been issued to those on the circulation list. If you want to join the circulation list, please contact Roy Crossley (1 The Cloisters, Birker lane, Wilberfoss, York, YO4 5RF).

A meeting on Dolichopodidae at Liverpool Museum on 7 October is mentioned earlier in this Bulletin.

### Hoverfly Recording Scheme

The Bideford meeting report includes some hoverfly results. For recognition of Sphaerophoria potentillae see Martin Speight's key in Dipterists Digest vol 1.

Also at Bideford, a Trichopsomyia causing thought is without spots on tergite 2. The relative length of the third antennal segment and of the basal segment of the hind tarsus are among the characters that seem significant (P Beuk).

Epistrophe nitidicollis needs careful checking. In Surrey E. melanostoma has been found (P Beuk, & R Morris); see British Hoverflies under nitidicollis and also the key in the supplement for extra species.

Whilst drawing attention to extra species, you are reminded also that Orthonevra nobilis includes a further, probably undescribed species.

A male Neocnemodon brevidens has been taken in Berkshire together with a female apparently of this rare species (A.S). A female Neocnemodon key is in preparation.

A further Hoverfly newsletter was circulated by BRC in August (editor Graham Rotheray).

### Pipunculidae Study Group

A study group has been formed and the first newsletter, The Piercer, circulated (Editor Alan Stubbs).

A further new species has been added subsequently. Cephalops chlorionae was found on Phragmites on a coastal cliff at Bournemouth. It was previously only known from Fenno-Scandinavia.

Marc de Meyer has published his Cephalops key (1989, J. Nat.Hist 23:725-765). C. titania and C. oberon are sunk within C. signatus Becker.

### Conopidae Recording Scheme

Newsletter 2 was issued in March. There is a note on Leopoldius and a review of the Belgian fauna, together with a Sicus key as a supplement.

This summer a specimen that keys to Sicus abdominalis has been found at Wicken Fen (plus identification of an old specimen from Surrey); also what just might be a third species (AS).

### OTHER ITEMS

#### Autumn Exhibitions

The Amateur Entomologists Society is meeting at Kempton Park Racecourse (Sunbury, Middlesex), on 7 October 1989; open 11 am - 5 pm. Entomological equipment and books will be on sale.

The British Entomological and Natural History Society has its exhibition at Imperial College London (between the British Museum (Natural History) and the Albert Hall), South Kensington on 28 October 1989, open 10 am - 5 pm. Some dipterists attend this meeting.



## Portugese Diptera

Following from holiday visits to Portugal, Peter Dyte has been looking into Dolichopodidae and Alan Stubbs into S'ratiomyidae, Syrphidae and a few other groups. Has anyone else got material for this poorly recorded country?

AND NOW ..... HAPPY GNAT DAY TO YOU

We can relax. Peter Chandler at last has broken the 500 species barrier for the British fungus gnat list. It's been a nerve racking business though. That great fan fare of Peter's on reaching 499 (see Bulletin 25) was tempting fate for he got stuck for well over a year. Rumour was circulating among the ranks that there really were only 499, the 500th a fantasy of expectation.

Several years ago Peter had the audacity to hint that he should get a prize for reaching the 500 mark. But it is us, his long suffering, long sweeping, long pooting friends with gnat phobia who deserve the prize. Why should we waste our time on what Oldroyd immortalised in the words 'collectors seldom bother much about insects that are .. so uninteresting to look at when you have them' (Natural History of Flies, p 41)? We have endured staying in a field centre so dank that fungi were growing out of the woodwork in doors and fungus gnats were flying around the breakfast table. We have endured long evenings interrupted by grunts because there are not enough fungus gnats being brought in, or too many or because something new has been found by someone else (its rather like understanding Chinese dialect but with experience gnat grunts can be translated). We have taken him where no gnat hunter has dared to tread before, yea even unto the most impenetrable gnat dells and ravines in the cause of science. We have cluttered our pooters with a clouding trash of gnats that results in hours of sorting to re-discover our prized proper flies. And what is our reward - a grunt.

As the 500 mark has drawn nearer, it is said that he has even been finding his own new fungus gnats unaided - even 5 new to Britain single handed in 1987. Have our years of showing him how to find them been paying off at last? However, we remember that one falter in dedication. At Nant-y-Pandy on our North Wales field meeting, re-named Gnat-y-Pandy, Peter was so overwhelmed and saturated by Oldroyd's 'uninteresting flies' that the next day he virtually pleaded to be taken to sites in a gnat-free zone.

But in all seriousness Peter, a land mark indeed. And keep up the momentum, even if all your friends get confused as to whether a grunt means yes, you still want them, or no, you don't, as we pile your delectable beasties upon you.

Central Panel of  
Diptera Recording Scheme Organisers

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