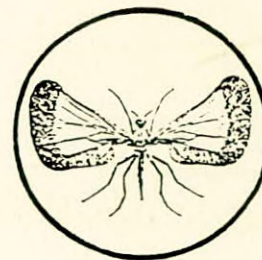


# DIPTERA



RECORDING SCHEMES BULLETIN NO 33, JANUARY 1992

## EDITORIAL

For some, life begins at 51. And life does not include the administrative burden associated with goading and encouraging the amateur dipterist community. Consequently, Alan Stubbs was delighted that someone else offered to take over this role so that he can become an amateur himself. Although he retains control of the crane-fly recording scheme after 20 years, he has transferred to colleagues the production of this bulletin and organisation of the main field meetings and the annual "Dipterists's Day". Alan performed these tasks almost single-handed since 1976, producing 32 bulletins, running a similar number of field meetings and 16 events at London. Alan used his enormous energy to harness and develop the previously uncoordinated efforts of fly devotees and he has undoubtedly been a major driving force behind the rise to prominence of the natural history of Diptera and their use as a tool in the conservation assessment of sites. But far from disappearing from the Diptera scene, he hopes to devote even more time to this endeavour.

Keeping up the momentum of the Diptera Recording Scheme movement has required a fair amount of logistical support. After discussion at the last meeting in London on 2 November 1991, it was decided that Alan's role should be taken over by colleagues within English Nature and the Joint Committee for Nature Conservation as these organisations can legitimately supply the necessary support (phones, typing, contact with nature conservation organisations and land owners). Consequently, Martin Drake will in future edit this bulletin and organise the main summer and autumn meetings in England, and Stuart Ball and Roger Morris will organise meetings in Scotland and Wales. It is hoped that, without treading on anyone's toes, this support will be extended to other groups involved in recording invertebrates.

This bulletin has always been signed by the Central Panel of Diptera Scheme Organisers even if in practice the effort of running the "movement" seemed to be largely that of one man. The Panel consists of the organisers of recording schemes and, in the early days, of district representatives. The functions of the Panel were outlined in Diptera Recording Schemes Bulletin No 1 (1976). Briefly, these were to encourage interest in many aspects of dipteran biology and to foster local effort and arrange local events. I would like to see these functions revived so the onus of running the movement is more widely spread. The bulletin and several scheme and study group newsletters have been typed and circulated by NCC and it is pleasing to confirm that English Nature and JNCC will continue to help in this way. But in essence, the bulletin is only the tip of the iceberg in a coordinating role since the wide array of schemes, study groups and newsletters illustrate that many people are contributing to the objective of increasing our knowledge of the British fauna. The main way of furthering help and encouragement to the many dispersed amateur dipterists is through developing regional or local recording effort, as has been done in some areas with the hoverfly scheme, and organising events where people can meet. That self-help needs to be generated at a local level.

MD



## **FORTHCOMING FIELD MEETINGS**

### **Stirling, 13 - 20 June 1992**

Stirling is a strategic base with a good road system giving access to a wide range of localities in the central lowlands and southern Central Highlands. The area is poorly recorded yet is within range of classic ecological sites. Just up the road, a valley at Bridge of Allen has proved very rich in the past and to the west there is Flanders Moss NNR, a major raised bog. Further west there is the scenic country of the Trossacks and Loch Lomond (with a NNR in the SE corner). We are in range of the Killin District where Coe did well in the past, including base-rich mountains such as Ben Lawes NNR. As well as several unexplored valleys in the uplands to the north, it is also practical to get to the classic areas around Pitlochry and Rannoch and, further east, to the low country including Loch Leven with its noted specialists. The nearest coast has at least one seepage leading on to saltmarsh. If the weather is poor in the mountains, there are plenty of streams and wooded valleys to occupy us in the central lowlands. The timing of the meeting is likely to prove ideal for many groups, including hoverflies.

We will be based at the University of Stirling where we have booked a whole self-catering accommodation block sleeping 24 people in single rooms. As the entire block is booked, the cost per person will depend on how many attend, but will be £60 - 70 for eight days for accommodation and use of a laboratory if 15 people turn up. Food will be extra.

Please send your bookings with a £10 deposit to **Roger Morris**, JNCC (see full address at end of bulletin).

### **Kingussie, Aviemore, late April - early May 1992**

The **Malloch Society** of Scottish dipterists will be investigating the Spey river gravels, ostensibly for dipteran larvae, though all are welcome to search for their own speciality. Their annual indoor meeting and dinner will be held in March. The exact dates for all meetings have not been settled yet. Details from **Graham Rotheray**, Royal Museum of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1JE.

### **Witley Common, Surrey, Saturday 16 May 1992**

This is a combined BENHS - Diptera study group meeting. Witley Common SSSI and National Trust reserve is a botanically rich and varied area 2 miles SW of Godalming, of oak, birch and pine woodland, acid heathland with flushes, and open areas and coppices. It is hoped that entomological recording can be coordinated with current research into the history of the management and botany of the site. Moth trapping in the evening. Meet at 11.00 am at The Witley Centre. Approach via entrance in Gasden Lane between A3 and A286 at SU 934408. Contact John Dobson, 0428 682443 (home) or 048 641 3221 (weekday).

### **Cothill Fen, Oxon, mid - late May 1992**

Cothill Fen is an exceptional stratiomyid site in summer but what flies early in the season is not well known. The exact date and details of where to meet have not been finalised; contact either of the meeting's organisers, **Keith Porter**, English Nature, Foxhold House, Crookham Common, Newbury, Berks RG15 8EL, Tel. 0635 268881, or **John Ismay**, Tel. 0865 739795 (home) or 0865 272950 (work).



### **Bubney Moor, Denbighshire, May 30 1992**

Join the **North Wales Invertebrate Group** on a Saturday visit to this new nature reserve, 2 miles west of Whitchurch on the north side of A525, running along the west side of the Red Brook on the Wales/England border. Meet at 11 am. Park at SJ 504415 by access gate and bollards. This 20 acre site contains alder carr, marsh, woodland and clearings. It is totally unknown entomologically and could be good for syrphids. Contact **M. Joan Morgan** for further information, Tel. 0248 600308.

### **South Warwickshire 6 June 1992**

Steven Falk is leading a Saturday meeting to two county trust sites, Oxhouse Farm and Snitterfield Bushes, in this entomologically unexplored part of Warwickshire. Contact Steve for details at Herbert Museum, Jordan Well, Coventry CV1 5QP, Tel 0203 833333.

### **Kenfig Dunes, Dyfed, July 11 - 18 1992**

The Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Scheme is basing its summer meeting at this classic dune system. There is primitive accommodation for 6-8 people (floor boards, no cooking facilities) plus local B&B. There is a laboratory. Contact **Steve Falk** for details, at Herbert Museum, Jordan Well, Coventry CV1 5QP, Tel. 0203 833333.

### **Talley Lakes, Carmarthenshire, August 1 1992**

The **Dyfed Invertebrate Group** is holding a meeting to investigate two glacially formed lakes with marginal fen and carr. Meet at 10.30 am at SN 629339. For details of other meetings of the DIG, contact **Ian Morgan** at Countryside Council for Wales, First Floor, 16 Barn Road, Carmarthen, Dyfed SA31 1DD. Tel. 0267 232772.

### **Gloucestershire Invertebrate Group Meetings**

The GIG holds monthly field meeting from May to October. Further details of all meetings can be got from **Keith Alexander**, The National Trust, 33 Sheep Street, Cirencester, Glos GL7 1QW, Tel 0285 651818. There are three firm dates so far:

May 10 Forest of Dean  
June 13 Cerney Wick, fritillary meadows  
Sept 13 Wyre Forest.

### **Yorkshire Naturalists Union Meetings**

Sunday 21 June: High Batts Nature Reserve near Ripon. Meet at car park SE/301764, 11 am.  
  
Sunday 12 July: Hetchell Wood near Wetherby. Meet at Reserve entrance SE/380422, 11 am.  
  
Saturday 22 August: Derwent Ings NNR. Meet at Bubwith Bridge SE/707364, 11 am.

Further details from W E Ely, Clifton Park Museum, Clifton Lane, Rotherham, S Yorks, S65 2AA.

All these meetings are of potential interest to visiting dipterists, and if anyone was interested Roy Crossley would be happy to arrange for the



Derwent Ings meeting to become a weekend affair and lead the dipterists. August is not the best time of year, but Derwent Ings NNR is an extensive complex and there is a great deal of country to explore, so there should be something to interest most people, and new recording will be very welcome.

### **British Entomological & Natural History Society Meetings**

Roger Morris has selected these meetings from a fuller programme as being most suitable for dipterists. Not all details have been settled for these meetings. If you are interested in attending meetings for which details are incomplete contact Roger Morris (JNCC, address at end of bulletin).

- April 18: Coate Water Country Park, Swindon, Wilts. Leader: Ray Gabriel. Joint meeting with Wiltsire Invertebrate Group. A mosaic of habitats ranging from damp woodland and pastures to dry sandpits and quarries. This site has already yielded a good many interesting records, especially amongst the Hymenoptera and promises to be a good locality for students of many groups.
- June 6: Richmond Park, Surrey: Steven Miles. Awaiting confirmation.
- June 13: Great Bookham Common, Surrey: Ian Menzies and John Owen.
- June 27: Clymping Gap, W Sussex: Leader Roger Morris. Meet 10.30 am TQ028012. For moth trapping meet at 20.30 hrs. This site comprises a mixture of sand dunes and vegetated shingle. As the only site of its kind on a long stretch of coast, it is of considerable importance. There are good possibilities of recording many of the classic sand dune species.
- July 4: Dry Sandford Pit, Oxon. Leaders Simon Grove and Ray Gabriel. A classic site for wetland diptera and also known to support an interesting aculeate assemblage. Note, that there is a May meeting here (Cothill is next door).
- July 11: Box Hill, Surrey: Leaders Roger Morris and David Lees. TQ177529 above Juniper Hall. Soem of the best chalk downland in Surrey. Also includes excellent beech hangers and is known to supoort an interesting assemblage of invertebrates. Meet 10.30 am.
- July 18: Whixall Moss, Shropshire: Leader Ian Reed. Meet at SJ505366. This National Nature Reserve presents great possibiities for students of all orders and is an excellent opportunity to see the fauna of a peat bog.
- August 8: Foulden Common, Norfolk: Leader Ian McLean.

### **DIPTERIST'S DIGEST UPDATE**

- No.11 Derek Whiteley is putting the finishing touches to this issue which is now full.
- No.12 The Dolichopid & Empidid Special Edition is being set ready for printing. There have been some slight delays but an early spring publication date is likely. Details will be posted to all D D regulars. Other interested dipterists should contact Derek Whiteley.



No.13 Phil Withers is guest-editing this issue. Some space is still available.

No.14 onwards. Graham Rotheray is taking over as Chief Editor of Dipterists Digest. From now on all material for publication should be submitted to Graham.

In addition Phil Withers is working on a series of monographic special issues on 'behaviour' 'rearing from selected media' 'Nematocera' and 'immature stages of flies' and is soliciting papers. Contact Phil directly if you have potential papers.

Graham Rotheray reports that work is proceeding well on the colour guide to hoverfly larvae. Derek Whiteley will provide advanced notice as publication date approaches. This will be sometime in 1992 but we cannot be more precise at present.

To summarise:-

Graham Rotheray  
Royal Museum of Scotland  
Chambers Street  
Edinburgh EH1 1JF

Editor (all copy for standard issues)

Derek Whiteley  
17 Rustlings Road  
Sheffield S11 7AA

Subscriptions, Orders, Marketing

Phil Withers  
Lotissement 6  
Le Pinet  
69380  
Charnay  
France

Special Issues:-  
Behaviour  
Rearing  
Nematocera  
Immatures

I am sure that the new division of labour will lead to even swifter, more frequent, and a higher standard of publication. The future of Dipterists Digest looks very promising.

Derek Whiteley

#### DIPTERIST DAY

The annual meeting of the Diptera recording schemes will be held at the Natural History Museum, London, on 7 November 1992. Details of the day's events will be given in the late summer bulletin.

#### NEWS FROM THE SCHEMES AND STUDY GROUPS

##### Cranefly Recording Scheme

BRC are still hoping to produce the Tipuline Atlas this spring. The opportunity will be taken to bring the check list up to date.

##### Conopid Recording Scheme - \*\* Change of Address \*\*

All correspondents should please note that the conopid scheme organiser's address has changed once again. The new address is:

David Clements, 1 Quarry Close, Stratton, Cirencester, Glos GL7 2JN.



A newsletter (No. 4) was circulated in November, and included preliminary results of an investigation into the members of the Myopa testacea group in Britain, with especial reference to Myopa extricata, a much-confused species. The newsletter contains an illustrated article which should assist in separating this from closely related species such as M testacea. In addition, another record of Leopoldius breviostris is reported, bringing the number of British records for this elusive species to twelve.

It is hoped that provisional distribution maps for selected species can be produced during 1992. Newsletter No. 5 is being prepared for circulation in the spring.

#### **Empid and Dolichopodid Study Group**

Roy Crossley will edit the next issue of the Newsheet but has not received any copy so far. Please send articles to Roy at 1 The Cloisters, Birker Lane, Wilberfoss, York YO4 5RF.

#### **Fungus Gnat Recording Scheme**

Thanks to the great success of the wetland surveys of the former Nature Conservancy Council, in Wales, Oxfordshire and East Anglia, and the co-operation of numerous other collectors, the British List of fungus gnats continues to rise. The latest addition was Mycomya denmax Vaisanen, found at Tokavaig Wood in the Isle of Skye by Alan Stubbs during the 1991 summer Field Meeting. This brings the British List to 523.

Seven additional Zygomyia and Sceptonia were published in 1991 (Br. J. Ent. Nat. Hist., 4: 143-155). Papers on further additions to Part 1 of the Handbook (9 species) and to Phronia and Trichonta (12 species) have been submitted for publication and the remaining 28 additions (mostly Exechiini, apart from on Dynatosoma and the species confused with Mycetophila fungorum) are being written up now.

The manuscript keys produced a few years ago to Mycetophila and to general of Mycetophilinae are still available. Manuscript keys to all British species of Phronia and Trichonta could also be produced.

#### **Hoverfly Recording Scheme**

Because Graham Rotheray has taken on the editorship of Diptera Digest, he has resigned his job of editing the Hoverfly Newsletter. A new editor is therefore being sought.

During the autumn of 1991, work commenced on checking the 56,000 records received from BRC in machine-readable form. So far, nearly all the data from RA33 cards has been checked, amounting to about 35,000 records. No progress has been made on checking data from Gen. 7 record cards but computerising further data on RA33 cards has commenced. To date some 1,500 new records have been added.

So far, the trawl of machine-readable data has yielded some 10,000 records for N W England from Darwen Sumner and a promise of data from Mike Pugh. We would be delighted to hear from other recorders whose data is computerised and who would be willing to forward data. Please get in contact before sending data.

We would also be delighted to receive completed RA33 cards but would also like to reiterate the points made at last autumn's Dipterist's Day.



1. Data should be accompanied by a minimum of a four-figure grid reference (ie for a 1 km square).
2. Use a new card for each visit to a site and ensure that as full a date as possible is given. Those recorders doing records for their gardens may choose to give records for two week periods but please make sure that the date range is given in each case.
3. Notes on habitat, altitude and any other biological information would be appreciated.

The point of the guidelines given above is to steer recorders towards data assembly that can be used for a variety of activities and not just for production of dot maps. A good example of useful data is using date of capture/recording to identify the variation in flight period according to latitude.

S G Ball & R K Morris  
JNCC (address at end of bulletin)

Alan Stubbs took Sphegina (Asiosphegina) siberica in Scotland last year. Its face is black and the lower parts of the sides of the thorax are shining and free of dusting.

Chris Haes can claim the first hoverfly of the year. He sent a male Syrphus torvus taken in his garden in Cornwall, 5 January. It was in good condition and is not interpreted as a hibernator.

#### **Larger Brachycera Recording Scheme**

The Provisional Atlas of the Larger Brachycera (Diptera) of Britain and Ireland has been published and is available from the Biological Records Centre, Monks Wood Experimental Station, Abbots Ripton, Cambs PE17 2LS, price £5. It gives a brief account of the distribution, habitat preference and flight period for each species and distribution maps for sixty-one species. The unmapped species were either so scarce as not to warrant a map or their pattern of distribution was similar to that of one of the species for which a map is given. The distribution by vice county is tabulated for all species. It is hoped that the atlas will stimulate more recording so that existing maps can be updated and original ones drawn for the many species for which no map is given in the Atlas. These will appear in the newsletters.

#### **Pipunculid Study Group**

The next issue of The Piercer is due soon.

#### **Sciomyzidae Recording Scheme**

Andy Foster has joined Ian McLean in running this scheme. Although primarily as coleopterist, Andy rose to prominence in sciomyzid circles by adding two new species to the British list (see the last two Diptera bulletins). Ian will continue to receive records and Andy will contribute to the Newsletter. Andy's address is The National Trust, Spitalgate Lane, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 2DE, where he works for the Trust's Biological Survey.



## **NEWS ITEMS AND REQUESTS**

### **Field Meeting Records**

One of the justifications for using NCC staff time to run field meetings is that the records obtained will be fed back into the conservation process of site evaluation and management. The information is wanted at two levels: in its raw form, English Nature and JNCC staff can use it to refine our knowledge of biologies, and when interpreted in a report that says what's good about a site, non-entomologists in NCC (*sensu latu*) and other conservation bodies can understand it. Many of those who attend the field meetings would also like a report. The consequences of not producing the goods are that the NCC regional staff get fed up helping with access permissions for no return, you get fed up sending records to a black hole, and we don't get the information. So we (Alan Stubbs, Martin Drake and Stuart Ball) are making a BIG effort to write up the following reports. If you have not submitted your records, please could we have them in return for a free copy of a report for each meeting you attended.

The order of priority for the reports is:

Bideford (summer meeting)

Galasheils

Skye & Muir of Ord

Bangor

and the last four years' autumn meetings (Derbyshire, N York Moors, Rogate and Bideford).

### **Yorkshire Tabanids**

Andrew Grayson is collecting records of tabanids in Yorkshire (vice counties 61 - 65) and plans to produce an atlas for the county for this group. He would be grateful for anyone's records. If you have sent them to BRC (or Martin Drake) for the Larger Brachycera scheme, there is no need to duplicate your effort because these have been passed on. Andrew's address is 39 Piercy End, Kirkbymoorside, York YO6 6DR.

### **Oxfordshire Stratiomyids**

Keith Porter is collating records for the modern county of Oxfordshire and would welcome any records not already sent to a records centre or the Larger Brachycera scheme. The modern county is covered by VC 22 and 23. Keith's address is given above in the notice of the Cothill Fen meeting.

### **Essex Atlas Update**

Collin Plant has produced an update of his The Larger Brachycera of Essex. It is free, but please send a stamped addressed envelope that is at least 13" x 9". Write to Colin at the Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, Stratford, London E15 4LZ.

### **Backnumber Diptera**

There are a few backnumbers of the bulletin available. Contact Martin Drake if you are interested.

### **Larger Brachycera meeting at Liverpool**

Liverpool Museum is running a one day indoor meeting entitled 'An introduction to the biology, distribution and identification of the British



larger Brachycera' on 17 October 1992, run by Martin Drake. The meeting is one of a series on entomological subjects organised by Stephen Judd from whom details can be obtained; address Liverpool Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool L3 8EN.

#### **Ephydridae wanted**

David Denman is preparing a key to British Notiphila SP (Ephydrids) and would like to receive unwanted specimens (either alcohol or pinned). The address is 7 Craig Street, Peterborough PE1 2EJ. Postage will be refunded.

#### **Change of address:**

Phil Withers - Lotissement 6, Le Pinet, 69380, Charnay, FRANCE

Dave Clements - 1 Quarry Close, Stratton, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 2JN.

#### **LITERATURE**

A review of the scarce and threatened flies of Great Britain (part 1) by Steven Falk, Research and survey in nature conservation no. 39, Nature Conservancy Council, 1991, pp 194.

This is the first of two volumes. It comprises introductory information defining statuses, sources and treatment of information received, and a brief bibliography. The bulk of the volume is data sheets for rare and scarce species in fifteen families (all ten larger Brachycera families, tipulids, syrphids, conopids, tephritids and sciomyzids). Brief information is given under the headings of distribution, habitat, ecology, status, threat and management. The other important section of the volume three appendices giving the status of all rare and nationally scarce flies, not just those selected for detailed treatment. Some of these statuses are not the same as those published in the recent Red Data Book (Shirt, D B, ed. 1987, British Red Data Books 2. Insects, Nature Conservancy Council). Copies may be brought from JNCC (address at end of bulletin).

#### **AND NOW ..... SHOCK HORROR FOR FUNGUS GNATS**

Yes, what could be the worst possible news for fungus gnats? That's right, fungi are becoming extinct!

This is serious stuff. The national press are grappling with the black prospect for toadstool gathering gourmets coming to terms with even common fungi dying out. And prophets of doom claim that forests may not survive without the symbiotic benefits of fungi.

Will Britain survive, indeed will Europe and the world, as the terror firma equivalent of the destruction of the ozone layer menace unseen. In Holland in recent years 10% of the common species of fungi have disappeared (91 of 944) and another 182 species are on the verge of extinction. Needless to say, the alleged culprit for all such wordly ills is acid rain. But then again increasingly intensive land use and some rather curious weather cycles of late may have something to answer for.



So what is our resident Mycetophile doing about this? Does the press realise how many gnats are at stake and how the average catch per site at field meetings is in decline? Will Anneka Rice lend him a helicopter for a last mad dash against the clock to get the British list to 600 before it is too late? Watch this space.

Central Panel of Diptera Recording Schemes

Co-ordinator:

Martin Drake  
English Nature  
Northminster House  
Peterborough PE1 1UA  
Tel: (0733) 340345

Change of address and interests:

Stuart Ball  
Joint Committee for Nature Conservation  
Monkstone House  
City Road  
Peterborough PE1 1JY  
Tel: (0733) 62626