

CRANEFLY RECORDING SCHEME

Newsletter No 6

Sept 1975

It is regrettable that there has been a long gap since the last Newsletter and that the anticipated atlas and summer field meeting have not materialised. We apologise for this silence but reassure you that a great deal has been going on behind the scenes.

Fourth Annual Meeting of CRS, Saturday 8 November

There will be a meeting at the British Museum (Natural History) at 11 am on 8 November. On the same day there will be an entirely separate venture, a Dipterists' Dinner. Since the CRS scheme started there have been frequent requests for a broader based association of dipterists. The Dinner will involve a wider spectrum of **dipterists** than those interested in craneflies and provides a logical extension of CRS meetings whose function as much as anything is to give an opportunity of meeting people with similar interests.

The CRS meeting will be thrown open to all dipterists. In the morning a wider programme than just craneflies will be arranged and the afternoon will be an informal conversazione with exhibits covering any group of Diptera. By all means bring an exhibit with you. It will be possible to work on the collections in the Diptera Section of the BM and instruction will be provided. The Dinner will be held in the evening.

If you require details of the Dinner, which will be a buffet with economy in mind, then please let Adrian Pont in the BM know that you would like to be sent details when available. Advance booking is essential (but not for the CRS meeting).

May we emphasise that these events are open to all CRS members, whether specialist or beginner.

Field Meetings : Dolgellau 9-13 October 1975

A number of alternatives were considered for a summer meeting but we regret that it was not possible to find a satisfactory field centre for our purposes. If anyone hears of the right combination of facilities, accommodation, location and price please let AES know. The options are greater if you know of someone who would be prepared to act as cook for self catering.

We are, however, arranging a long weekend at Dolgellau, Merionethshire. We have use of a cottage which will act as a base with self catering and will sleep up to 8 on mattresses. If you prefer, there is plenty of accommodation of all types around Dolgellau from bed and breakfast houses upwards, where you can make your own arrangements. There will be a programme of field meetings from Thursday 9 to Monday 13 October inclusive (the cottage opens Wednesday night).

Arrangements have been made to collect on nine National Nature Reserves and other areas will also be visited. This meeting is designed primarily for collecting and recording craneflies and other diptera rather than for formal instruction, but beginners are very welcome on what will inevitably prove an informal social occasion. If you wish to attend, please let Alan Stubbs know whether you wish to stay in the cottage or find your own accommodation and whether you intend to stay for the whole or part of the meeting.

### Tipulinae Distribution Maps

Large amounts of data became available in early spring and delays in dealing with this data has thrown the map production programme out of its time table. However, though the maps have not been available this year, they are now more comprehensive and we hope to have at least some maps available by next field season.

### Another Crane-fly New to Britain

Enveloped material sent in for identification by Mr P J Chandler was found to contain a male Tipula (Lunatipula) dilatata Schummel, taken in Perthshire in early August. This is a rather drab yellowish brown species of the T. lunata group with the genitalia bearing white conical horns projecting posteriorly from the last sternite. Continental material of the female shows a distinctive ovipositor with large dorsally projecting flanges on the base of the last sternite.

### Some New Records

A very large collection made by Mr G Hosic has been identified leading to many useful Scottish records, including valuable additional localities for Tipula limbata, T. juncea and T. gimmerthali.

Walberswick National Nature Reserve in Suffolk has yielded Tipula marginata, Limonia danica, Erioptera bivittata (previously only known from north Kent) and Helius pallirostris amongst a steadily growing list being prepared by AMH and AES. Mr R W J Uffen has recently taken E. bivittata at Harlow, Essex.

In Ireland AES found by the River Blackwater Tipula marginata and Limonia omissinervis. Nephrotoma dorsalis was common in several localities.

Further AES records include a third specimen of the Idiocnophomyia new to science from Windsor Forest, Limonia danica from the Norfolk Broads, Orimarga juvenilis from a bog in Berkshire and Molophilus lackschewitizianus from several clay woodland streams in the Weald.

The organisers would like to thank those who have sent in material during the last year. Though this inevitably relates mostly to common species, the total data gained has been most valuable in building up distribution patterns. The common species are just as important as the rare ones in this respect.

### Ireland

Though Ireland still remains a rather poorly known area, our knowledge of the crane-fly fauna has been steadily improving over the last year or two due to the efforts of Messrs Irwin and Chandler. RIW-V and AES have also made visits and will shortly be preparing an account of the Crane-flies of Ireland for publication so as to provide a reasonable platform from which to extend recording.

### Crane-fly Recording Scheme in Yugoslavia

The Yugoslav Entomological Society has recently written to say that it is undertaking a crane-fly recording scheme in Yugoslavia. Dr Duska Simova-Tosic is the head of a working group for Diptera-Tipulidae.

This is the first country to join us in mapping craneflies and we wish our Yugoslav friends every success. It is to be hoped that other European countries will also take part under the umbrella of the European Invertebrate Survey.

#### News of Other Recording Schemes in Britain

There is now a Dixidae Recording Scheme. This is organised by Dr Disney (Malham Tarn Field Centre, Settle, Yorks) who is author of an excellent identification booklet published by the Freshwater Biological Association (Scientific Publication no 31, 1975). Preliminary distribution maps are included. Dixidae are a small group of gnats which breed in freshwater and superficially look very much like small craneflies. Henry Disney will be very happy to hear from anyone interested in this scheme.

Plans are being laid for a Syrphidae recording scheme. Before this can be openly launched it is essential to simplify identification. A new key is currently being prepared though please don't expect this for a year or two. AES would be glad to hear of, or preferably see, specimens which either defy present keys or aberrant specimens which are likely to cause problems. No he can't identify all the Pipiza either but he's working on it, with Martin Speight.

#### Crane-fly Reference Collections

The British Entomological and Natural History Society collection is building up well, the Tipulinae haying now reached good strength. The collection is accessible at Society meetings (visitors welcome) on the 2 and 4 Thursday of the month at 74 South Audley Street, London W1, when doors open at 6 pm for 6.45 pm meetings.

John Ismay has checked the collections at Norwich Museum and the Tipulinae at Ipswich Museum. Tony Irwin has recently moved to Ipswich Museum.

#### A Bird in the Hand is worth over 20 Dipterists

The Guardian, none less, cites John Coulson and Jennifer Butterfield who found that a red grouse at Moorhouse in the Pennines had 495 Tipula gimmerthali in its stomach. They rightly claim that this is more specimens than entomologists have collected of this rare species (since its discovery in Britain). The explanation is that this crane-fly is highly localised in habitat on basic moorland flushes but in favourable spots it occurs in enormous numbers for a short emergence peak of a few days.

It is worth reflecting that such voracious on the spot predators would seemingly not eliminate the crane-fly population. The much smaller scale predation by the collector must be of negligible effect (where an insect is adapted to high mortality of a short lived, high density adult population).

#### Warning Coloration in Craneflies - or more about craneflies as food

Nephrotoma flavipalpis has wasp like yellow and black markings. RIV-V was asked whether it was genuinely unpalatable or just pretending - assuming it was not actually dangerous. He approached the problem with true scientific dedication by picking up a live specimen and eating it. He assured his co-organisers that it tasted OK but seemed remarkably quick to take another swig of beer. By coincidence, he was observed to look rather ill for a day or two afterwards. On reflection, this was no way for a member of museum staff to treat the only recent voucher specimen for South Kensington.

New Member

Pugh, M N, 53 Shakespeare Drive, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands.

Changes of Address

Irwin, A, Ipswich Museum, High Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 3QH  
Hancock, E G, Bolton Museum, Civic Centre, Bolton, Greater Manchester  
Uffen, R W, 6 The Straddles, Dell Lane, Little Hellingbury, Nr Bishops  
Stortford, Herts CM22 75W.

A E Stubbs  
A M Hutson  
R I Vare-Wright

CRS Enquiries

Dipterists' Dinner Enquiries

A E Stubbs, Nature Conservancy Council,  
19/20 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PY  
A C Pont, Department of Entomology, British  
Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road,  
London SW7 5DB