

ICHNEWS

A newsletter for students of the Ichneumonidae (Hymenoptera)

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EDITORIAL

We are receiving more and more requests for Ichnews from workers who have only a peripheral interest in ichneumonids. Also, a suggestion has been made that we should widen the scope to cover Braconidae. However, because of the need to keep production and distribution costs to a minimum and the practical problems of collecting any sort of "subscription" we feel we must restrict Ichnews to individuals actively researching and publishing on the systematics (in a broad sense) and taxonomy of the Ichneumonidae.

Ichnews should be a forum for the exchange of ideas and a source of news of our colleagues and their work. In exchange for Ichnews we expect you to provide us with the ideas and news and information (including reprints if possible) about your latest publications.

CURRENT NEWS AND NOTES

Congratulations to Gerd Heinrich, who has been awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Maine in recognition of his life-long work on the Ichneumoninae.

Klaus Horstmann has completed the second part of his revision of the western Palaearctic Tersilochinae which should appear later this year. He visited the USA and Canada in 1978 and is now working on a revision of the Nearctic Tersilochinae. Work continues on the smaller genera of Hemitelini (= Phygadeuontini) and some groups of Campopleginae of the western Palaearctic (especially the Atlantic isles, at the moment). Papers on types of Fonscolombe and Hedwig and on Gravenhorst and Holmgren material in Leiden and Paris are in preparation or in press.

Ian Gauld has received a grant from the Royal Society to finance a trip to South East Asia to collect and study Ophioninae. He will leave London in August and plans to visit Borneo, Taiwan, New Guinea, Indonesia, Malaysia and India.

Santosh Gupta (wife of Virendra) is completing her thesis on Oriental Gabuniina.

Mike Fitton visited Lund in August and September 1978 to work on the Thomson collection of Ichneumonidae. He is preparing a catalogue and reclassification of all the 953 species described by Thomson. A second visit to Lund is planned for later this year to continue the work.

Pandharinath Nikam received a Commonwealth Universities Staff Fellowship and since October 1978 has been working at the BMNH, London on Indian ichneumonids. He returns to India in July.

Jacques Aubert visited Stockholm and Lund in May to study types of Holmgren, Thomson and Zetterstedt. He is also close to finishing his revision of Stenomacrus.

Robert Ayerill moved to Alaska in February 1978 to lead the forest entomology and pathology team. He has not had much time to spend on ichneumonids, but has been running a Malaise trap. While his main work is not on taxonomy he hopes he can be of assistance to those who desire to see material from Alaska.

John Short is visiting Europe in 1980 in connection with his work on Mesochorinae.

Frank Lawton is writing an introduction to the British Mesochorinae. His intention is to give a key to the genera and a general account of their biology to encourage non-specialists to take an interest in them.

#### STYLES OF SPECIES DESCRIPTIONS

by W.R.M. Mason

Bill Mason has written the following comments in response to Mattias Idar's questions (see Ichnews 4).

1. A description should be as complete as necessary - answer as precise as question. If a description is too long readers will not use it anyway, but if short may not be sufficiently diagnostic to distinguish between closely related but unknown species. This latter case applies especially to revisions of inadequately known faunas such as those in most tropical regions.
2. Probably neither useful nor practical most of the time.
3. All available specimens should be used for all descriptions but individual descriptions of holotypes are very useful - especially if a species should later turn out to be a mixture of siblings.
4. I do not see much value in this - probably a retrograde step. What happens if a stranger does not know your system, the supply of stencils is exhausted or the author dies?
5. Redescriptions are very necessary for two reasons: First, the original may (usually) be inadequate and second, it is highly desirable to have all species descriptions "parallel" or, at least all similarly described through the same pair of eyes.

I have come to believe that no matter how "thorough" we try to make our descriptions, they will always be partly inadequate for the next generation - for by then it is most probable that new techniques, new philosophies of taxonomy and new characters will be available and what can we do to anticipate it? Only make our descriptions honest and reasonably concise by our own standards and try to disperse our type-material in well cared for collections in the hope that the specimens, the final arbiters, will survive.

Townes' 1970 revision of the lissonotine genera (Mem. Amer. Ent. Inst. 13: 17-45) has not been discovered.

Specific characters in Lissonota of special value are the pectination and length of the tarsal claws, punctation of the speculum, sculpture of the first tergite, arrangement of punctures on the second tergite, presence of hairs on the epipleurum of the third tergite, number of hairs on the sixth tergite of female, coloration of the under side of the abdomen, and details of the ovipositor (whether with a fine median dorsal ridge, whether the upper side is flattened near the tip and with a median ridge, and sometimes other details). There are 143 Nearctic species of Lissonota known, 105 of them new.

The genus Cryptopimpla is likewise difficult to define but in the Holarctic area it is a more natural one than Lissonota. Usually it has the speculum completely punctate and abdominal sterna 2-4 each with a dark transverse band. Used alone, the characters of a short ovipositor and narrow base of the first tergite are not sufficient to define the genus, as a few species of Lissonota (as anomala Holmgren) have these same characters. The moniliform apical segments of the female flagellum is a useful character for Cryptopimpla but not all of the species have it. Seven Nearctic species of Cryptopimpla are known, 4 of them new.

## DIRECTORY

### Deletion

Brock, J. Has given up his interest in Ichneumonidae. His collection, of about 10,000 specimens mainly from Scotland and England, is now in the Ulster Museum. Enquiries about the collection should be addressed to: Robert Nash, Ulster Museum, Botanic Gardens, BELFAST BT9 5AB, Northern Ireland.

### Additions

Kolarov, Janko Angelov. s. Kroumovo, okr. Plovdivski, ul. N. Vaptsarov - 10, BULGARIA. (postgraduate studies on "The specific structure and spreading of the family Ichneumonidae in the Rhodopa mountains").

Lewin, Anders N. Box 127, S-44301 Lerum, SWEDEN. (Check-list of Swedish Ichneumonidae).

Mitchell, Robert T. 4109 Tennyson Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782, U.S.A. (Nearctic Ichneumons).

Rao, S.N. Marathwada University, Dept. of Zoology, Aurangabad, Maharashtra State, INDIA. (Indian Ichneumonidae, especially Ophioninae).

Revol, Jean-Marc. 80 Rue des Ayguinards, F 38240 Meylan, FRANCE. (Biology of Ichneumonidae).

Rotheray, Graham E. 15 Hickman Road, Penarth, South Glamorgan, WALES. (Systematics, ecology and host relations of Diplazontinae).

- Šedivý, Josef. Research Institute of Plant Protection, 161 06 Praha - Ruzyně, 507, CZECHOSLOVAKIA. (Western Palaearctic. Ichneumonidae as parasites of forest pests).
- Shaw, Mark Robert. Dept. of Zoology, University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL, ENGLAND. (Biology and ecology of British/western Palaearctic Ichneumonidae. Taxonomy and biology of European Benjaminia. Studies on parasite complexes of various Lepidoptera.).
- Thirion, Camille. Faculté Sciences Agronomiques, Zoologie Générale et Faunistique, B 5800 Gembloux, BELGIUM. (Ichneumoninae, Diplazontinae. Catalogues and distribution maps for Belgium and surrounding areas.).

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

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