MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY

2000

5 July  Special interest group – Aphids
Convenor: Dr Robert Storer, Langmead Ferns Ltd.
*Aphids in vegetable crops: consumer hunger or aphidologists delight?* (Evening Lecture) Dr M. Tatchell, HRI, Wellesbourne

20-26 Aug. 21st International Congress of Entomology
Iguassu, Brazil

14-15 Sept. Entomology 2000. Liverpool Hope University College
Convenor: Mr J. Delf and Dr M. Speed,
Liverpool Hope University College

4 Oct.  Special Interest Group – Ecology
Convenor: Dr. M. Fellowes, Imperial College at Silwood Park.
Title to be announced
(Evening Lecture) Dr M. Siva-Jothy, University of Shefied

25-27 Oct.  Insect Information: from Limacus to the Internet
Convenor: Ms Berit Pedersen, RES Queen’s Gate

1 Nov  Special Interest Group – Medical & Veterinary
Convenor: Dr Martin Hall, Natural History Museum, London
*Host-parasite coevolution and coevolution: lessons from lice* (Evening Lecture) Dr K. Page, University of Glasgow

6 Dec  Special Interest Group – Insect Conservation
Convenor: Dr A.J.A. Stewart, University of Sussex
Evening Speaker and Title to be advised

THE ROYAL ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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Insect Collecting in the Tropics
Insects on Stamps
Scottish Biting Midges

For more on the activities of the Society see:
http://www.royentsoc.demon.co.uk
Major repairs to the foundations of 41 Queen’s Gate with associated refurbishment for change of use of the basement rooms, costing £43,000.

Yet in spite of this huge total of £404,000 expenditure, our liquid assets have risen to £388,000 (i.e. 6 fold) during Greg’s stewardship. Truly a remarkable legacy!

He who writes the Agenda and Minutes has all sorts of possibilities for pointing the Officers and Council in the right direction! A classic example was Greg’s campaign to avoid getting into the “direct debit” business until he was convinced of the merits. This “matter arising” tended not to arise on subsequent agendas until somebody noticed and, only temporarily, the matter resurfaced. Greg was wont to point out that nearly all (out of only very few) replies to a questionnaire on direct debit had been against introducing it – the real message of course was that “only very few” were organised enough to remember to pay their subs!

Greg, of course, must have had the best attendance record of any of us at the monthly ordinary meetings. I’m sure he must often have wondered about the irrelevancies of the world outside that excite entomologists. The two papers he seems to remember best are one (that distressed him greatly) reporting the use of DNA manipulation to produce a mosquito with a bent wing that could not fly, and another by no less than an FRS which failed to convince this particular numerically-trained business manager that the points on a slide were indeed a statistically acceptable fit to the linear regression the FRS was proposing. At his second evening meeting, held in the days of the long black benches, he noticed that space was getting short and so asked one Fellow (the Baron de Worms) to “move up a bit”. After the meeting, he was tapped on the shoulder by another Fellow of long standing with the words “A bit of advice old chap, it is not good form to ask the Baron to move”. How this reminded Greg of entering the Officers’ Mess as a raw subaltern. Immediately he felt at home at 41 Queen’s Gate.

Greg’s out-of-hours interests have always included horses and tennis. He claims the most frequent event of his life has been falling off a horse and he remains an active race-goer. Thus he is equally at home at Sandhurst and Sandown! His tennis has not only been as a high-standard player, but also as a coach. Here, his kindness to barristers in giving free lessons to their children has often been repaid by free legal advice to the Society.

He is well-known among and consulted by his peers for his in-depth understanding of charity and revenue legislation and is now, in retirement, helping charities on a voluntary basis.

I wonder what Greg would regard as the most memorable event of his Registrarial career – I would guess it might well be the visit of our Patron, Her Majesty the Queen, in 1984 at the Zoological Society on the occasion of the 150th Anniversary of the award of our Society’s Royal Charter.

I found it a real pleasure working with Greg, first as the Society’s President and then for the last ten years as the Honorary Treasurer. I learnt a lot from him as well as learning respect for him but, above all, I have gained a valued and lifelong friend.

Helmut van Emmel

Obituary

WILLIAM D. HAMILTON, 1936–2000

Remembered by his last Brazilian student – Sérgio P. Ribeiro, Grupo de Estudos Interdisciplinares da UFMG, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. C.P. 486 – CEP 30.161-970, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil

William D. Hamilton had a long and exciting history of research in Brazil. His first contact with Brazilian territory was during the 1967 Serro do Cachimbo Expedition. This expedition to the North of Mato Grosso State followed the construction of a new road, with the aim of studying aspects of the natural history of that empty territory. Nearly 10 years later, between June 1975 and February 1976, he lived in Brazil to study the behaviour and natural history of wasps associated with Ficus species. Finally, in the early Nineties, invited by Dr Márcio Ayres from the Goeldi Institute, Pará, Bill was involved in a large initiative to boost scientific research and conservation of a great protected area in the Amazon, the Mamirauá project. He visited and studied Mamirauá until his death.

My first contact with Bill was in Brazil in 1990. He went to Minas Gerais State, looking for a certain species of Scarabaeidae in the Atlantic forest. I was doing my Masters in the Federal University of Minas Gerais, in Belo Horizonte City. At that time Dr Anthony Rylands invited me to help Bill in his trip to the Caratinga Biological Reserve. A few months later, in mid November, Bill phoned Rylands enquiring if he could contact and so invite me for his next expedition to Mamirauá, in January 1991. I accepted, and then found myself on an amazing trip to the Amazon with Bill and Steve Harris, his PhD student at that time. In this obituary I describe the man behind the scientist, observed through the eyes of a student. It is my viewpoint of his way of thinking, how he dealt with natural history, and his behaviour in the tropical forest. It is meant to be a close (although an incomplete and humble) look at the man from my privileged position as a student and friend.

During our expeditions together, Bill presented himself as having a very peculiar persona. He had an extraordinary amount of energy while working in the forest, which pushed him into extreme situations. An impressive example of this energy was his performance when our boat almost sank in a large channel of the Jaguar River. We just had time to drive the boat on to the riverbank, where we spent 12 hours bailing water from the deck and trying to plug the leak. At one point, Bill jumped into the dirty water with a bed sheet in an attempt to block the hole in the bottom of the boat. While he was under the water another boat with an American scientist from the New York Botanical Gardens and a Brazilian scientist from Instituto de Pesquisas da Amazônia, approached us. At that time I did not speak English (Bill used to speak fluent Portuguese), and so I tried to explain our situation to a person who turned out to be a very selfish Brazilian.
As he did not realise how important my boat mate was, he decided not to delay the trip of his foreign counterpart and left us behind, with no help. During this conversation Bill stayed under water for much longer than expected. Later he learned about the incident with the other boat, and was so upset that he almost turned the story into a note to *Nature* about the lack of solidarity among scientists in the Amazon basin (the note was avoided at the last moment due to an apology from the American botanist, who did not speak Portuguese, and so did not follow the conversation with his partner).

The expedition spent nine days in the Manirau floating house, whereupon Bill and Steve flew to Roraima, while I remained studying bats. On their return we spent two days travelling in the complex set of channels that form the source of the Amazon. We remained there for six days, later returning to Manirau and then back to Tefé and Manaus. This expedition captured Bill's amazing skills as a naturalist. I was invited to taste all kinds of fruit, and also strange things like the flowers of *Solanum ocellatum* (HelianTHEN), which turned my tongue senseless due to its high concentration of alkaloids. Self-inspired by a little-known article he had written several years before (Evolution and diversity under bark, in *Mound, L.A., Walford, N.*, "Diversity of insect fauna", 1978), Bill used to 'attack' and destroy large areas of tree trunk and bark searching carefully for beetles. In the field, he was not a quantitative ecologist, but rather a naturalist, looking for evidence to support his theoretical models. During this trip he did not collect anything, but searched, observed, and scrutinised all imaginable bits of the forest. This revealed just how much he knew about the tropics! Again as his pupil, he tirelessly fed and stimulated my own interest in fascinating isolated natural events: *Salix hamboldtiana*, the only tropical species of this temperate tree genus; the amazing specimen of one of the largest species of moth of the world, *Thysania agrippina*, dead on a corner in the streets of Tefé; the difference between the larger and darker *Crotophaga major* compared with the *Crotophaga ani*, more commonly found in Minas Gerais, my home State in Brazil; the beautiful nests of *Atticea* ants and how they are made; flowered *Tabebuia capitata*; the importance of seeing the rare black-furred monkey in an area without malaria (supporting his joint hypothesis with Dr M. Ayres that the red-furred monkey evolved to advertise resistance to the disease).

During this trip, we talked about the evolution of the life history of *Tabebuia* trees. A few months later, the ideas we shared were revisited after the discovery of one species which forms large monocultural stands in the wetlands of the Brazilian Pantanal, *T. aurata*, was the same as he saw growing in the campus of Bagalore University, India. The latter tree grows so large that the branches break down under their own weight. The possibility of a high growth rate associated with the lack of herbivory and diseases sound to him as a basis for a good PhD thesis. He contacted Prof. Valerie K. Brown about the story, who ended up as my PhD supervisor in Silwood Park. Therefore, a few years after that expedition, I found myself in contact with a different Bill. This time speaking in English, I was reintroduced to a spirited, though shy, man. As a person usually deeply involved with his own thoughts, he often did not have a great relationship with all students. However, this was never the case with those from Brazil.

His good feelings for Brazilian scientists may have given him the patience to deal with the xenophobic attitude of the present government against international collaboration in science. He was prevented from visiting the Manirau Reserve in 1998. Here, he wished to collect blood samples for a study on parasites, which was part of his current research on the evolution of sex and disease. Regardless of the bureaucratic difficulties imposed on his research, less than one year later he received a medal from the Ministry of Science and Technology of Brazil, in honour to his services to the Brazilian scientific community and to the progress of knowledge of Brazil's nature and ecosystems. Bill Hamilton not only knew more about the Brazilian landscape and natural history than many Brazilian ecologists, but had a great will to share his knowledge and teach Brazilians about the tropics, evolution and disease.

Bill and his partner Luisa treated me as a friend. We used to discuss my thesis while drinking sherry just before dinner in his lovely house in Wytham village. During these meals he charmed his guests with anecdotes about the tropics and the odd, but extremely funny, experiences that had filled his life. The presence of Luisa made me another Bill, a caring man, in love with her. It was Luisa who told me by phone of his death after an expedition to Congo, and how she had advised him of the fact that his nine lives, as he liked to joke, might have already gone during past trips. Sadly she was right. Even though he was a very fit and healthy man, his fearless attitude in front of danger, along with his will to discover and scrutinise nature, may have contributed to his death.

William D. Hamilton was born August 1st 1936, and died on 7th March 2000, after five weeks of intensive care in London. His illness was a consequence of complications associated with malaria.

### Entomologists Past

**J.W.S. Macfie M.A. D.Sc. M.B. Ch. B.**

**D.S. KETTLE. Department of Entomology, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland 4072 Australia**

When I was recently examining a PhD thesis on *Culicoides*, I noted with interest that the number of the species cited had been originally described by Macfie, and it occurred to me that I was probably the only living Ceratopogonist who had actually known and worked with Macfie. Since he died in 1949 no one under the age of 65 will have had the opportunity to have worked with him, and I thought it might be of interest to record my impressions of Macfie.

In January 1940 I joined the Royal Army Medical Corps of the British Army. Like all new recruits I was interviewed by a Lieutenant Colonel Davies, the training officer. He said that I was the first University graduate that he had had before him. The problem was what to do with the graduate in zoology and botany in wartime. He recommended that I be trained as a medical laboratory technician and that he would keep my qualifications in mind. I didn’t think anything further about his comment but indeed Colonel Davies...