



International Union for the Study of Social Insects

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The IUSSI highlight of 2014 was no doubt the XVIIth International Congress held in Cairns Australia. But then I would say that, wouldn't I, so I will leave it at that.

Apart from enjoying a wonderful week talking about social insects in a beautiful setting, the IUSSI decided on the location of the next venue (Brazil) and elected a new Editor-in-Chief of *Insectes Sociaux* and a new Secretary-General.

Johan Billen stepped down after having served the longest term since the establishment of *Insectes Sociaux*. Johan dedicated 24 years of his life to our journal. He has played an immensely important role as Editor-in-Chief as will become clear when we have a look at the brief history of the journal, which Johan was so kind to send to me.

Insectes Sociaux was established in 1954. The journal did not have an Editor at the time, nor were manuscripts sent out for review. Instead a manuscript was sent to one of the members of the 'redaction committee' (translated from French: *Comité de rédaction*) who would pass it on to the Secretary. The Secretary would then decide on the relevance of figures and tables and check the corrected page proofs prior to publication. It took 4 volumes before it became compulsory that manuscripts were read by a reviewer. This meant that a manuscript would be read by one of the committee members, who could invite a 'reader'. Only in 1974 did the Secretary turn into Editor. From now on manuscripts were addressed to the Editor who would invite two reviewers. In 1983 the Editor was assisted by two assistant-Editors, and this changed to associate Editors in 1996, a terminology still in use today.

When Johan took over in 1991 he was the first non-French Editor-in-Chief. Johan took over the reins at a time the journal also changed publisher, from Masson Publishers to Birkhäuser. Under Johan's watch, *Insectes Sociaux* published 1356 articles. In the 37 years before that, 874 articles were published in the journal shared amongst 4 Secretaries/Editor-in-Chiefs. Although Johan was ably assisted by two associate Editors, he dealt with most if not all manuscripts on ants. Given that there are more ant species than any other social insect, this must mean his 'normal' editorial workload on top of being Editor-in-Chief was enormous. In addition, he would also have the final say after the associate editors had made their recommendations. I remember being rather unhappy about a rejection, and I wrote a lengthy email to Johan. He wrote a short, but nice, email back. Unfortunately I no longer have the message, but the gist of it was that he understood my frustration, wasn't going to change his mind but hoped that getting it off my chest had been of help. It did help and I appreciated his response.

Thank you Johan, for everything you have done for the IUSSI in general and the journal in particular. No doubt you quite enjoy having more time for other activities, but I strongly suspect you also miss *Insectes Sociaux*..... And welcome to Mike Breed who has been so brave to take up the challenge to fill Johan's shoes.

Mike has asked me to urge our members to sign up for ToC alerts via the following link:

<http://www.springer.com/life+sciences/entomology/journal/40?overlay=true>

Our Secretary-General of the last 8 years, Joan Herbers, also stepped down during the conference in Cairns this year. The IUSSI has seen many changes during her two terms. When Joan took over, the IUSSI more or less did not exist officially. The original paperwork, lodged in France, turned out to be unfindable. Thanks to Joan's organisational talent, she turned the IUSSI into a registered society with a constitution and bylaws. Having a more formal organisation became especially important when the IUSSI started to receive significant funds from Springer, who now publishes *Insectes Sociaux*. Joan and Johan did a tremendous job negotiating the contract with Springer that has allowed the IUSSI to start supporting its students to attend conferences. I felt honoured when Joan asked me prior to the meeting in Cairns if I would be interested in taking over her role. She has also been a fantastic mentor to me the last few months as I am quickly learning the ropes. Thank you Joan, for your foresight and dedication to the IUSSI.

What remains is to present you with the Secretary-Generals' annual report covering the period January 1 – November 25, 2014. This report will also be published in *Insectes Sociaux*.

In 2014 the Union distributed \$130,000 to sections for student and postdoc travel to attend IUSSI2014 in Cairns, Australia. In addition, \$20,764.75 was used to pay registration and accommodation for individuals from countries without an IUSSI section. In addition, the Union paid for the dinner during the International Committee meeting (\$2,331.59) and the Hamilton Award (\$1,000 plus \$124,80 for the plaque; Mary-Jane West-Eberhard returned the \$1,000 to the Union).

During the meeting in Cairns, the Brazilian and Indian sections were officially endorsed. The Union therefore now recognizes ten sections: Australasian, Bolivarian, Brazilian, Central European, French-speaking, Indian, Italian, Japanese, North American and North-Western European.

Financial Statement for the period January 1, 2014 – November 25, 2014 (all in US\$).

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Beginning balance | | \$139,216.61 |
| Income | | |
| | Springer payments | \$51,287.93 |
| | Interest | \$337.79 |
| | Total income | \$51,625.72 |
| | | |
| Expenses | | |
| | Congress | \$2,456.39 |
| | Grants to sections | \$130,000 |
| | Grants to individuals | \$20,764.75 |
| | Honoraria for review articles | \$3,206.86 |
| | Best paper award | \$1,000.00 |
| | Office expenses | \$184.95 |
| | Professional fees | \$250.00 |
| | Government fees | \$100.00 |
| | Bank fees | \$1,368.21 |
| | Total expenses | \$159,331.16 |
| | | |
| Ending balance | | \$31,511.17 |

The Financial Subcommittee (Joan Herbers, Mark Brown and Heike Feldhaar), in consultation with myself, has decided that the IUSSI will not be offering travel grants in 2015. This decision was made based on our relatively low ending balance due to the generous support to students and others to attend IUSSI2014. In addition, at this stage we are uncertain about the exact income we can expect from Springer next year. The support we receive from Springer depends on the number of pages *Insectes Sociaux* publishes. Unfortunately this number has gone down over the last few years. Thus, remember *Insectes Sociaux* when considering a journal for your next paper. Hopefully we will be able to offer travel grants again in 2016.

I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a good start to 2015.



Handwritten signature of Madeleine Bekman.