

IUSSI, BRITISH SECTION

(International Union for the Study of Social Insects)

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Officers of the British Section of the IUSSI

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Important Information for Forthcoming Meetings

BRITISH SECTION SPRING MEETING, BURREN, IRELAND

John Breen is in the process of organising a spring field meeting in Co. Clare, Ireland. Please see below for information and options – note that John needs final commitments in a week's time.

“Hi everybody: Sorry for being so slow in getting back to you. I certainly got enough expressions of interest to say we will go ahead. I expect to provide mini-bus transport for the days of the visit. You will be responsible for your own accommodation and food (and drink!) costs. The new venue makes a visit to the Aran Islands (special bumblebee) very easy (subject to weather).

Venue

However most of those who replied seemed to ask for B&B type accommodation, and not hostel, and, were either easy on the choice of dates, or, would prefer an earlier date. My original venue was mainly hostel type accommodation and NO B&Bs! Proposed solution: we will go to a different village, Doolin where there is both hostel and B&B accommodation.

Dates

The dates offered had to take my own university commitments into account. Some people asked for earlier dates. **SO I will offer an extra choice of dates:**

Choice 1: Tuesday 6th June and leaving Friday 9th June

Choice 2: Friday 9th June and leaving Monday 12th June.

(Choice of 12-16 June is deleted since many could not make it.)

Decision will be made within ONE week. If you are easy on the date, please say so.

You can begin to check flights. Please use Shannon airport (20 km from Limerick). If you arrive to Dublin, I can offer advice, but allow a half day to arrive in Limerick.

The main airlines servicing Shannon are Ryanair, Aerlingus and one London flight by Easyjet.

Please reply to johnbreen2@gmail.com” John Breen

1) Early registration has now opened for this meeting and the due date for early registration is March 31st. Students = \$275, Non-students = \$375. Late or on-site registration = \$450. Tours and banquet (\$100) will be an additional cost.

2) Due to a number of requests for the opportunity to make oral presentations rather than posters, the Organizing Committee has now provided for sessions of contributed papers, with a length of 15 minutes set for presentation and questions. They still encourage poster presentations, because the oral sessions will have a limited number of openings.

If you wish to present an oral contributed paper, you must:

1. Notify Anita M. Collins, Congress Secretary at collinsa@ba.ars.usda.gov that you wish to do an oral presentation, and include the title.

2. Submit an abstract AS A POSTER not as an invited speaker, before the deadline, March 31, 2006.

The Organizing Committee will see that you are scheduled for a contributed paper session, and the abstract will also be listed that way. Again they ask you to choose a Symposium topic to affiliate with, to facilitate organizing the sessions.

3) **Hamilton Award 2006 - Call for Nominees**

The Hamilton Award is a quadriennial award, which will be given by the International Union for the Study of Social Insects (IUSSI) to a senior scientist in recognition of his/her accomplishments in the area of social insect research. The first award will be given at the 2006 International Congress held in Washington, D.C. The award will consist of a plaque and a monetary award of USD \$1000.

Eligibility: The award will be given to a distinguished senior scientist for outstanding achievements in the area of social insect biology.

Nominations: Nominations may be made by any member of IUSSI. Nominations should include a biographical sketch of the nominee, a brief description of the work of the nominee and the names and addresses of three members of IUSSI supporting the nomination. The nomination should be electronically submitted by **March 15, 2006** to:

Prof. Wolfgang H. Kirchner, Secretary General of IUSSI, University of Bochum, Germany

Email: Wolfgang.H.Kirchner@rub.de

Our president, Lotta Sundstrom, has suggested that the British section might choose to nominate one candidate. If people would like to do this, I am happy to receive suggestions (until March 7th to mabrown@tcd.ie) and then run a vote for a candidate. Alternatively, if people want to do this individually, they should feel free.

Book review

“Ants of Surrey” by John Pontin, Surrey Wildlife Trust, ISBN 0 9526065 9 3 (£14)

This book is the latest in the Surrey Wildlife Atlas Series, and is by our very own John Pontin. The book starts with an introduction to the biology and ecology of ants in general. This is followed by a description of habitats, before a simple and clear key for identifying Surrey ants, as well as a guide to collecting and mounting specimens. The meat of the book is a series of species Atlas', showing the distribution of each species in Surrey. Each map is accompanied by an informative, engaging discussion of the data, based on John's extensive and unique experience. The book ends with a discussion of the main patterns seen in the distribution maps, and a call from the heart for sensible and knowledge-driven conservation. In addition, the book contains a series of beautiful colour plates of ants, their associates, and the habitats in which they live. “Ants of Surrey” is a fantastic example of the kind of local natural history guide that should be (and seems to be becoming) more frequent, and it benefits hugely from John's broad and deep knowledge of ants, as well as his smooth and clear writing style. I would recommend it to students of ants, invertebrate conservation, and those interested in natural history in general.

Job Vacancies

PhD FELLOWSHIPS IN SOCIAL EVOLUTION, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

The Centre for Social Evolution (CSE) at the University of Copenhagen has 2-3 vacancies for Ph.D. fellowships to study aspects of social evolution in insect societies, starting the 1st of June 2006 or as soon as possible thereafter.

CSE has six major research programs, which focus on mating system evolution, chemical communication, social parasitism, disease, invasive ants and the evolution of symbiotic interactions. Any of these topics is eligible and interdisciplinary combinations are encouraged. See <http://www.bi.ku.dk/CSE/> for further details on CSE's research, on staff and postdoctoral and Ph.D. fellows involved, and for relevant publications.

Depending on the topic concerned, successful candidates will be supervised by one or several of the senior staff of CSE: Jacobus J. Boomsma, Patrizia D'Ettorre, David R. Nash and Jes. S. Pedersen. Collaborative work with CSE's partner group at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University of Copenhagen directed by J. Eilenberg is also a possibility.

Candidates should possess a M.Sc. or equivalent degree in evolutionary biology, population biology, animal behaviour or a related field and should have demonstrated excellence in terms of one or several publications. Experience with DNA techniques, immunity assays, modelling or GC/MS will be an advantage.

Candidates who would like to be considered for one of these posts are invited to send a CV, pdfs of published or accepted manuscripts and a one-page declaration of interest, outlining what kind of questions they would like to address and how their educational background and expertise would enable them to embark on this work in a focused and productive way, preferably by e-mail to:

Mai Valentin Nielsen, Secretary, Centre for Social Evolution, Department of Population Biology, Institute of Biology, Universitetsparken 15, DK-2100 Copenhagen, Denmark, e-mail: MVNielsen@bi.ku.dk

For informal inquiries please contact CSE's director, Professor Jacobus J. Boomsma (JJBoomsma@bi.ku.dk).

The deadline for receipt of documents is 24 March 2006. Declarations of interest and CV's will be reviewed by a committee of senior members of CSE by mid April to identify candidates that will be invited for interview and to submit a full Ph.D. proposal.

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP IN PHYLOGENETICS OF AN ANT SPECIES COMPLEX, FRANCE

A position is available to explore phylogenetic relationships and phylogeography in a species complex of Ponerine ants, in collaboration with Chantal Poteaux and Dominique Fresneau (U. of Paris 13) at the Laboratory of Experimental and Comparative Ethology (LEEC, in the close vicinity of Paris, France). The applicant is expected to: 1) Determine genetic variation to reconstruct the phylogeny of Ponerine ants, with particular attention to the tribe Pachycondyla. 2) Elucidate fine-scale relationships within a species complex including several closely related ant species, using molecular methods (nuclear and mitochondrial DNA sequences analysis). Candidates should have experience in phylogenetics and/or population genetics.

Prospective applicants should, in the first instance, send a curriculum vitae including a brief statement of previous research experience, and the names and e-mail addresses of 2 referees by e-mail to Chantal Poteaux (poteaux@leec.univ-paris13.fr) before March 15th 2006. In a second time, the team and the selected applicant will apply jointly for a grant from the Fyssen Foundation. Salary will be of approximately 2000 euros per month. Study grants are intended to help young research scientists under 35 years of age.

For details about the host lab, please see: <http://www-leec.univ-paris13.fr/> and about the Fyssen Foundation: <http://www.fondation-fyssen.org/bourseUS.html>