



NW European IUSSI Newsletter:  
September 2020

## Tales from the lab: Kate Parr (Uni Liverpool)



As is the case for most other labs, the appearance of COVID has put a real spanner in the works for research with closure of university & labs and cessation of fieldwork. The FunkyAnt Lab (<http://funkyant.weebly.com/>) has been particularly affected because much of our fieldwork is conducted overseas. Trips to Ghana, Malaysia, Gabon and South Africa were abandoned and we must simply wait to see what next year brings.

However, lab PI Kate Parr, and PhD student, Alice Walker, were fortunate to squeeze in a fieldtrip to South Africa just before lockdown in both countries. Using a large-scale manipulative experiment we have been exploring how ants affect community structure and function in a lovely savanna site in the lowveld close to Kruger National Park. Alice was looking at the effects of ants on herbivory levels and the consequences for plants (sadly involved collecting more leaves and soil than ants on this occasion), while Kate, in collaboration with colleagues at the Universities of Oxford, Lancaster and Pretoria, was collecting preliminary plant sample data to determine how ants and termites may affect ecosystem productivity and nutrient cycling. We now have the rather difficult task of getting samples analysed and/or back to the UK with labs and airports closed – so watch this space...

In other news, the group will say goodbye in the coming months to Hannah Griffiths who has secured a lectureship at University of Bristol, while we will be welcoming back ex-lab member, Stephanie Law, next month. Steph will be identifying ants from a Leverhulme-funded community reassembly project in Malaysia.



*1 - Kate and collaborators at savanna suppression experiment site, South Africa*



*2 - Alice Walker conducting herbivory assessments, South Africa*





3 - Impressive *Macrotermes* mounds, South Africa

Wonderful video on ant flight by Dr. Adrian Smith



Dr. Adrian Smith is very active in disseminating science in an engaging way. We recently were sent a link to a video of his, where he shows some fantastic footage of his ant flight recordings. [It's a five minute video](#) that is very much worth watching!

## Reminder: NWE IUSSI Winter Meeting



The first-ever online Winter Meeting of the NW IUSSI will happen on December 16th to 18th. It will bring our social insect community together, with contributed talks, posters and the usual social events (albeit slightly different this year). We are currently looking for keynote speakers, session chairs and logistics runners.

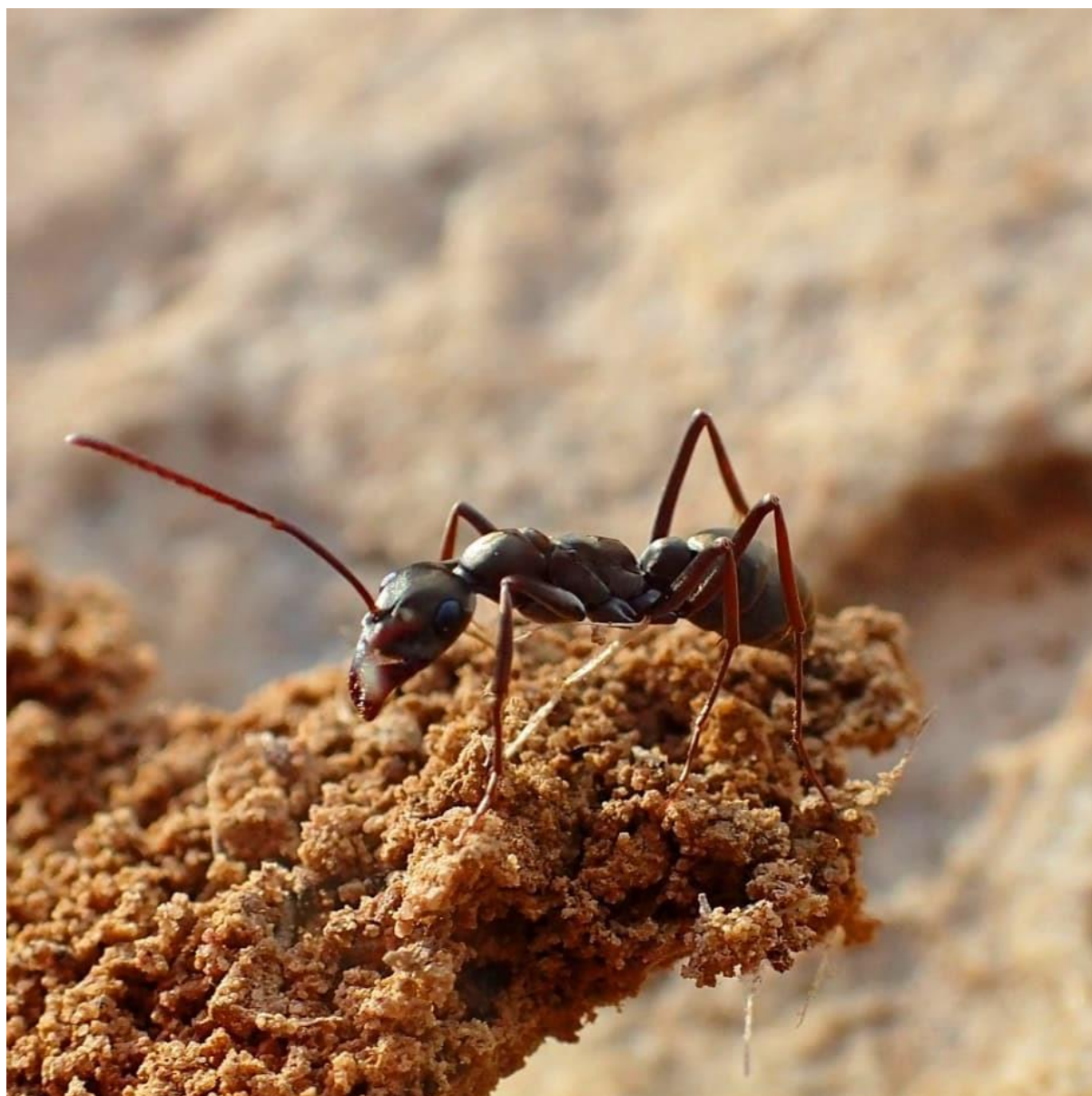
Reach out to us if you have suggestions on how to shape this exciting Winter Meeting!

Meeting Committee members: Anindita Brahma, Elizabeth Bates, Benjamin Schantz-Conlon, Emeline Favreau, Federico Lopez-Osorio, Gabriel Hernandez, Valentin Lecheval.

Thanks,

Emeline on behalf of the committee

Reminder: EU-IUSSI 2020 will be 22nd-25th of August 2021



Dear colleagues and friends,

Given the progression of the coronavirus epidemics (COVID-19), the intensification of confinement measures in many parts of the world, and the lack of visibility about the end of the crisis, it now seems very difficult to maintain the organisation of the EU-IUSSI congress in Toulouse this August. Even after the end of specific confinement actions, probably at different times in different countries, it is likely that travels and human interactions will remain regulated for several months making it difficult to hold any meeting.

After discussing with delegates of all European sections and the International Union, we decided to postpone the congress to 22-25 of August 2021, hoping for better times. Plenary speakers, symposium organizers, and invited symposium speakers will be asked to contribute again, as in the initial plan.



Although many of you already submitted abstracts on the congress web site, normally no payment could have been done at this date. If you think you did so, please contact us ( [marie-angele.albouy@univ-tlse3.fr](mailto:marie-angele.albouy@univ-tlse3.fr) ).

We are sure you will understand this difficult but important decision.

Please take care,

The organizing committee

Mathieu Lihoreau, Raphael Jeanson, Vincent Fourcassié, Marie-Ange Albouy, Aurore Avargues-Weber, Jean-Marc Devaud, Audrey Dussutour, Martin Giurfa, Tamara Gomez-Moracho, Christian Jost, Stéphane Kraus, Jean-Paul Lachaud, Gérard Latil, Coline Monchanin, Pierre Moretto, Guy Theraulaz, Séverine Trannoy and Antoine Wystrach.

## The NWE IUSSI Twitter account



The NW IUSSI Twitter account already has more than 250 followers, which is a great step in order to increase the number of people we reach with news and achievements of our society. The aim is to use this platform to communicate events, recent publications and news from the society to a wider audience.

As this is still the beginning:

1) If you are a Twitter user, please follow us so that we can follow you back. This will allow us to re-post your research/outreach activities as the society. You can also tag us in your posts if you want us to see it our handle is @IUSSI\_NWES

2) Whether you use Twitter or not, please feel free to send us material (such as an event or a recent publication related to social insects) you would like to see posted on Twitter. To do this please email the social media team [iussi.nwes.socialmedia@gmail.com](mailto:iussi.nwes.socialmedia@gmail.com).

## How to become a NWE IUSSI member



Having a subscription to IUSSI is a great way to support the world of social insect research. Membership is cheap (£7.50 for students, £15 for full members). One additional perk of being a member is that it provides large discounts when registering for IUSSI conferences. Registrations can be done here: <http://www.iussi.org/NWEurope/subs.htm>.



## Current job opportunities



**Current vacancies on the section web site:** <http://www.iussi.org/NWEurope/vacancies.htm>:

Do you have Ph.D. or Postdoc positions coming up? Email nbos [at] bio.ku.dk and we will add them to the newsletter. We also run the INSECTSmal mailing list, which distributes information about job and studentship opportunities, meetings, courses, and calls for information about social insects. See more on the section website: <http://www.iussi.org/NWEurope/INSECTSmal.htm> and send any information to be included (or subscription requests) to INSECTS [at] bio.ku.dk.

Looking for pictures!



The pictures in this newsletter were contributed by both Nick Bos, as well as Quentin Willot from Stellenbosch University, who kindly allowed us to choose freely from his portfolio. Have a look at his great work here: <https://www.picuki.com/profile/qwilltn>

If you have pretty pictures to share, please send a link to nbos [at] bio.ku.dk and they might just be used for the next newsletter. Credits will be given of course!

Questions? Contact Us!

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please mail to nbos [at] bio.ku.dk.