



IUSI North-west European section

International Union for the Study of Social Insects

Spring Newsletter 2014

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Announcements

The **IUSSI NW Europe section 2013 Winter Meeting** was held at Royal Holloway University of London, on 16th to 17th December 2013. The meeting was very well attended and the range of talks was impressive. The winner of the student talk prize (£50 voucher) was Kristof Benaets (KU Leuven), and Victoria Norman (Sussex) won the student poster prize (£25 voucher). Drs Heather Whitney (Bristol) and Nichola Raihani (UCL) gave plenary talks on “Bumblebee detection of novel floral cues” and “Does inequity aversion motivate punishment?”, both of which were extremely well received. The minutes of the Business Meeting are provided in a separate section below.



IUSSI NW Europe section Winter Meeting at Royal Holloway

The **IUSSI NW Europe section 2014 Winter Meeting**

This year's Winter Meeting will be a one-day event, to take place on Monday 15th December 2014 in London at the Natural History Museum. Thanks to our local host Paul Eggleton for arranging this. More details will follow in the Autumn newsletter.

Student Travel Grants

The Section has funding available to partially support the attendance of a limited number students at the International Congress in Cairns, 2014. Funding will be awarded to applicants on a competitive basis. Applicants should complete the Student Support Grant form available at <http://www.iussi.org/NWEurope/studentgrants.htm> and email it to Bill Hughes (william.hughes@sussex.ac.uk) by the deadline of 28th February 2014. Applicants will be notified of the outcome by 24th March. To be eligible:

1. The applicant must be a current student member of the NW European Section of the IUSSI
2. The applicant must be intending to present their work at the 17th Congress of the IUSSI in Cairns. Both oral and poster presentations are eligible. Grants will only be given if the student is the 1st author and presenter of the talk/poster abstract.
3. Individuals currently resident in Australia are ineligible.
4. The work presented must not be or have been the subject of another application to the Section, or to any other Sections of the IUSSI, from the same or another applicant.

Facebook page

Following discussion at the Winter Meeting, the Section now has a Facebook page! Please join or “Like” us at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/571681816242424/>

Other upcoming meetings

IUSSI 2014 (www.iussi2014.com): The Australian Section of the IUSSI invites you to the Union's 17th Congress in Cairns, Australia. Cairns is a medium-sized, tropical city adjacent to the World Heritage listed Queensland Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef. The surrounding area is a naturalist's paradise, replete with social insects of all kinds. Cairns enjoys direct air routes to Australian, New Zealand and Asian hubs, with onward connections to all parts of the world.

The conference will be held in the magnificent Cairns Convention Centre during the period 13-18 July 2014. The Convention Centre is conveniently located in the heart of the city, in easy walking distance to 3-5 star hotels and apartments, backpacker hostels and restaurants to suit all tastes and budgets. The facility itself is state of the art and has won numerous awards. July weather is optimal in Cairns; not too hot, not too cold, and no possibility of cyclones.

ISBE 2014 (<http://www.isbe2014.com>): This year's ISBE (International Society for Behavioural Ecology) meeting will take place in New York City, from 31st July- 5th August 2014. Plenary speakers from the social insect world include Prof. Thomas Seeley and Associate Prof. Elizabeth Tibbetts.

Section Business Meeting Minutes

Annual Winter Meeting 2013, NW European Section of the IUSSI, Royal Holloway University of London, Monday 16th December

Minutes – Business Meeting

Chair: Mark Brown (President), MB

Secretary: Elli Leadbeater, EL; Treasurer: Bill Hughes, WH

1. Treasurer's report.

- The section's major income this year has come from the Central IUSSI grant of \$3104 (which derives from the publication of *Insectes Sociaux*). Other income of £1597 derives from membership fees. In major outgoings, the section has awarded four travel grants totalling £1110 and covered the accommodation costs of student members at the Winter Meeting. We have a balance of £5749.
- In March, we will have the opportunity to apply for up to \$30 000 from the Central IUSSI to provide travel grants for our student members to attend the 2014 IUSSI conference in Cairns. We currently have 68 student members.
- Membership losses: We are currently losing 20-25% of our membership per year. One third of our membership does not pay their fees until late in, or even the end of, the year, suggesting that some of this may derive from members failing to pay unless they attend the winter meeting. It was suggested that adding and incentivizing an option for direct debit payments might alleviate this problem.

Actions:

WH to further investigate options for direct debit membership option

2. Webmaster's report

- Our website had over 8000 visitors this year. The majority of hits were to pages containing information about job vacancies and meetings, and the fewest were to the "Who's Who" section. DN drew attention to the INSECTSmal email list, which is a useful resource for anyone wishing to receive announcements about conferences, vacancies, etc.
- The "Who's Who" section has become less useful, with many contact details now out-of-date. Options for a replacement, in which members could update their own contact details, were debated. In particular, a "google map" style option in which research groups or individuals add themselves to a map of Europe, received a favourable response.
- DN highlighted the possible need for a new logo for the Section. It was suggested that a competition might be a useful means to find a new design.
- DN intends to set up a Facebook page for the section.

Actions:

DN to investigate creation of a research map as suggested

DN to investigate options for a new logo

DN to set up a Facebook page for the section (now actioned)

3. No nominations were put forward for the roles of IUSSI Secretary General or Chief Editor of Insectes Sociaux. It was suggested that the best way to recruit for the latter post would be to advertise widely rather than solely at the Section Business Meetings

Action: MB to feed back to Central IUSSI re: advertising

(now actioned: Central IUSSI were enthusiastic and agreed to potentially go ahead with this idea)

4. IUSSI Cairns: MB highlighted that submission of multiple abstracts (for oral and poster presentations) is now permitted.
5. 2016 European IUSSI meeting: Prof. Lotta Sundstrom's research group kindly offered to potentially host this meeting. Thus, the section will propose to hold the meeting at the University of Helsinki. It was generally agreed that the Section should not bid to host the 2018 World IUSSI meeting, coming so soon after the 2010 Copenhagen congress.

Action: MB to discuss the bid with other European Sections (now actioned: other sections are happy for Helsinki to host the meeting)

6. Section newsletters: It was agreed that the Spring Newsletter will become a basic report of the Winter Meeting and forum for announcements, and the Autumn Newsletter will retain its current format, including lab news.
7. Next Winter Meeting: It was proposed that this should be a one-day meeting, potentially to take place at the Natural History Museum.

Action: MB to put this request to Paul Eggleton (local host) (action completed: NHM will host the meeting)

Travel grant reports

Yi-Huei Chen (York; 5th Central European Workshop of Myrmecology): The 5th Central European Workshop of Myrmecology (CEWM) was held in Innsbruck, Austria in September 2013. I was so glad and lucky to attend my first international conference (just finished my 11-week fieldwork in the

Swiss Alps at the end of August). I would like to thank Dr. Birgit Schlick Steiner, Dr. Wolfgang Arthofer, and Dr. Florian Steiner for hosting this well-organised conference.

This was a three-day conference. The first two days were filled with a number of inspiring talks and posters, and the last day included a Cross-Alpine-Trip. There were two keynote speakers: Dr. Serge Aron talked about the evolution of unorthodox reproductive systems in *Cataglyphis* desert ants; Dr. Bernhard Seifert talked about evolutionary significance of hybridisation in ants. During the talk session, we could choose between two venues with different speakers. Among these, the presentations of Daniela Sorger (trap-jaw ant) and Tomer Czaczkes (route learning on complex trails) were appealing not only because of their brilliant experiments but also their engaging presentation style. I also presented a poster on my work from the first two years of my PhD. On the field trip day, we went to a part of the Alps and spent one hour hiking. Although I had been hiking for almost three months before I went, the spectacular scenery from the hill-top still was astonished me. After having lunch on the grass, we stopped by an exquisite city in Italia. The conference ended cheerfully with a farewell dinner, and... my poster was awarded first prize! Everything was gorgeous, even the weather!

Eva Schultner (Helsinki; 5th Central European Workshop of Myrmecology): Climb every mountain, follow every ant..... and you will arrive in Innsbruck, the capitol of Tirol in the Austrian Alps. It is in this beautiful mountain setting that I participated in the 5th Central European Workshop of Myrmecology in September 2013. Having never attended this meeting, I was admittedly just as intrigued by the idea of an all-ant-audience as I was by spending a few days in one of my favourite countries. It turned out that my expectations were completely justified. Perfect weather, stunning views, excellent food and wine, it was Austria at its best. But that was not all. This small meeting that takes place every two years succeeded at bringing together ant researchers from a huge diversity of fields. In Innsbruck, taxonomists, ecologists, behaviourists and geneticists came together and gave a unique view on the state of the art in myrmecology. This made it a meeting that was especially fruitful for students, providing us the opportunity to interact with researchers from all over Europe in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Impeccably organised by Birgit Schlick-Steiner, Wolfgang Arthofer and Florian Steiner from the Molecular Ecology Group at the University of Innsbruck, this meeting was one of the most enjoyable I have attended so far and in my opinion a must for students of myrmecology. The sound of myrmecology travels to Hungary next, and I'll be sure to follow for the 6th CEWM in two years!

Jana Wolf (Helsinki; EMPSEB): The 19th European Meeting of PhD Students in Evolutionary Biology (EMPSEB) took place from 3rd–8th September 2013 at the University of Exeter in Cornwall, UK. It was an international conference with approximately 80 participants who had the opportunity to present their research projects in front of other doctoral students, as well as several well-known researchers at the field of ecology and evolution. Each day began with a one hour presentation from one of the plenary speakers. I would like to highlight Jarrod Hadfield as an evaluator and plenary speaker, who was able to replace a last minute drop out just 4 days before the meeting! His talk about “Comparative Analyses of Host-Parasite Interactions” was remarkable and he was of great value to the whole meeting.

Every student gave a 15 minute presentation followed by a five minute discussion. Since there were always two talks at the same time and the themes of each set of talks were different, an overlap between two desirable topics was avoided most of the time. Since most of the students were in the first or second year of their PhD this meeting was a good opportunity to practise how to present first results and discuss challenges they encountered during their research so far. Suggestions for improving the project came from other students as well as from the plenary speakers- all in all it was

a stimulating atmosphere to present and discuss your research topics with other scientists. During the several activities, coffee breaks and excursion day we had the opportunity to bond and discuss research topics in a less formal atmosphere than at a big conference. I especially would like to mention the event “for the love of science” where students, post docs and professors were given the opportunity to present their own work to an interested but non-professional audience. The atmosphere was just amazing and this event demonstrated that the public can be involved and excited about science. Furthermore, it inspired me and gave me new ideas for my own task of organising a three day symposium next March in Helsinki.

The conference ended with a wonderful good bye party where a vote for next year’s meeting location was conducted, with the result being that the EMPSEB 2014 will take place in Belgium. I am very grateful that I could attend this conference and I would like to thank the committee of IUSSI NW for giving me the opportunity to visit this meeting! Furthermore, I would like to thank the whole organising team, who obviously invested a lot of time and effort in making this event a big success!

Jenni Paviala (Helsinki; EMPSEB): The 19th EMPSEB was organized from 3rd–8th September, 2013 at the University of Exeter Cornwall Campus in Cornwall. EMPSEB takes place in a different European city each year and is organized by current PhD students in that country.

This year the list of invited speakers was really incredible. To mention few of my favourites, talks given by professor Judith Mank (University College London, UK), professor Laurent Keller (University of Lausanne, Switzerland), Dr. Seirian Sumner (University of Bristol) and Dr. Jarrod Hadfield (University of Oxford), they all were especially amazing.

The major part of the conference was filled with excellent talks of the delegates. Every PhD student gave a 15 minute talk about his/her PhD research topic. There was so many participants that talks had to be divided into two sessions that ran in parallel. Every student got feedback about their talk. Feedback was given by other PhD students but also invited speakers gave very valuable feedback and hints!

In my opinion the best aspect of the conference was that most of the invited speakers stayed there for the whole conference and PhD students had many great opportunities to discuss informally with the speakers. Speakers also wanted to give hints and advices about studying techniques, article reading routines and help students to solve problems they possible might have with their research or PhD studies.

We also had an interactive workshop about open access publishing and popularizing science. Workshop was held at the Eden project. Especially the open access session provoked a lot of interesting discussion. There was also a public engagement event held at the National Maritime Museum in Falmouth. All delegates were invited and it was open for the people from Falmouth. Some of the delegates were presenting their research topic at a poster session and there were scientists from the University of Exeter giving short, fascinating talks on science and evolution aimed at the general public. I was really surprised that the event gathered so many general public members, so it was really a success!

In addition to the formal program, we had a wide variety of free time activities. One day we visited at the Eden project in Cornwall. At Eden Project they have the world's largest rainforest in captivity (green house environment) and also a huge Mediterranean biome. In addition to the workshop, we also had time for wondering around and we were also told about all the exciting things they are organizing there e.g. concerts, education for children and a lot of counselling about sustainability. The place was absolutely beautiful and definitely something you won't see every day! We also had a

trip to a local brewery and we had an opportunity to see how they the beer is made. Also more exotic flavours were available for example chocolate beer.

At the conference I had my first international scientific presentation so it was something quite huge and important to me. My presentation went well even though I was really nervous. I got good feedback and also very useful comments about how I can improve my presenting skills for my next presentation.

To sum everything up, I think this is one of the must conferences for PhD students to attend to. In these events you will possibly get your first networking experience with other PhD students around the Europe but also with more senior scientists who can share very important information with you. This is also one of the friendliest atmospheres to start your scientific presentation career. I don't actually have anything negative to mention about EMPSEB19 conference for me it was an amazing experience!

IUSSI (North-west European Section)

Section website: <http://www.iussi.org/NWEurope>

Membership 2014

1. Please complete your name and contact details:

Title and name

Address

E-mail address

2a. Please tick box if you are a new member

2b. Please tick box if your contact details have changed since last year

Membership fees for 2014	
Ordinary Member	Student Member
£ 15.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	£ 7.50 <input type="checkbox"/>

Payment: Members with a UK bank account are strongly encouraged to pay by standing order; members not wishing to do this should preferably pay by bank transfer, although cheques will still be accepted. Members without a UK bank account should pay by bank transfer or Paypal, ensuring that their payment also covers bank or Paypal fees. All members should include their name as description/reference in their payment.

Bank transfers should be made to:

Account name: Northwest European section IUSSI

Account number: 16100247

Sort code: 602462

IBAN: GB86NWBK60246216100247

Swift/IBAN BIC: NWBKGB2L

Bank Address: NatWest, Main Street, Heslington, York YO10 5ZB

Paypal payments should be made to NWEuropeanSection.iussi@gmail.com

I have paid by:

3a. Direct debit 3b. Standing order

3c. Bank transfer 3d. Paypal

- Please insert the **date** of the transfer/payment here:

3e. I enclose a cheque (GBP) payable to **Northwest European section IUSSI**

Please email completed form to william.hughes@sussex.ac.uk or post with a cheque to Prof. W Hughes, School of Life Sciences, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, BN1 9QG.

Section officers: President: Prof Mark Brown (mark.brown@rhul.ac.uk); Secretary: Dr Elli Leadbeater (elli.leadbeater@rhul.ac.uk); Treasurer: Prof Bill Hughes (william.hughes@sussex.ac.uk)