



IUSSI North-west European section

International Union for the Study of Social Insects

Spring Newsletter 2016

New officers

As the new secretary of the section, I want to first thank Mark Brown, Elli Leadbeater and William Hughes who are stepping down from their offices for their three years of excellent service. The new officers for 2016-2018 are introduced below, and we hope that we can carry out taking care of the society with the same success as our predecessors!

Heikki Helanterä

President



Prof. Paul Eggleton

I've worked at the Natural history Museum in London since before the dawn of time (well, 1985) and hope to be carted out of there in a box. I work mostly on termite ecology in tropical rain forests but also do some research on the ecology of ants (and secretly think they are much prettier than termites). I run the Soil Biodiversity Group in the museum and we do sometimes stoop to studying solitary invertebrates, particularly beetles and earthworms. My research at the moment is mostly about poisoning termites and ants and then seeing what happens.

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Secretary



Dr. Heikki Helanterä

I am a research fellow at the University of Helsinki, and thus represent the Nordic social insect research community in the section. My research covers many different aspects of social evolution, from theoretical and conceptual work, through behavioural and chemical ecology to genomics and transcriptomics. My empirical work mainly deals with *Formica* ants, but there have been occasional ventures into bees, wasps and other ants.

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Contact him about: Newsletter, meetings, general information

Treasurer



Dr. Elizabeth Duncan

In October 2015 I moved from New Zealand to the University of Leeds as a Lecturer to establish my own laboratory focussed on understanding how control of worker reproduction functions, how it evolved and what it can tell us about the evolution of eusociality. In New Zealand most of my work on eusociality involved honeybees, but here in the UK want to expand my research to include other social and solitary bees. I also have a second area of research looking at the molecular mechanisms of phenotypic plasticity and the evolution of developmental pathways in insects.

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Contact her about: Membership, student grants

Webmaster

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Dr. David Nash

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Contact him about: Website queries or suggestions

Announcements

2016 European Congress in Helsinki

The meeting hosted by Professor Lotta Sundström on behalf of our section, will take place from the 8th August (arrival and registration) to the 11th August 2016. There are three excellent plenary speakers, Michel Chapuisat (University of Lausanne), Ashleigh Griffin (University of Oxford) and Elli Leadbeater (Royal Holloway University London), and a very diverse list of symposia lined up.

The registration opens 1st Feb so make sure that you book your place in the lovely city of Helsinki in time, and tell your students, group members and colleagues to do the same! Check out www.iussi2016.com, and spread the word!

A word from the treasurer

Our new treasurer Elizabeth Duncan reminds all members to be active in recruiting new members, and especially all group leaders to make sure that their students and other junior colleagues join the society. The money we get from the International Unions depends on the membership, so this is very important. Also, of course only students who are members are eligible for travel grants. The membership form can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Travel grants

There will be travel grants for students attending the meeting in Helsinki, the call will be opened during February.

Winter meeting

The winter meeting of 2016 will take place as a one day meeting in December. Paul Eggleton has offered to host the meeting at the Natural History Museum in London. If anybody else is keen to organise this, please contact the section officers and we can discuss.

Other upcoming meetings

More upcoming meetings are advertised on the section's webpage (www.iussi.org/NWEurope/meetings.htm)

ISBE: <http://www.isbe2016.com>. The biennial ISBE meeting will take place 28th of July -3rd August 2016, at the University of Exeter, UK. This meeting has traditionally had a lot of interesting social behaviour presented, and invited speakers of particular interest to our society include Naomi Pierce from Harvard who is giving one of the plenaries, and Richard Dawkins who is headlining the opening ceremony.

2015 Winter Meeting Report

The winter meeting of 2015 was organised by Prof. Seirian Sumner and her group at the University of Bristol. I'm sure all the participants agree with me that this was an excellent meeting both scientifically and socially, and join me in thanking Seirian, and Patrick Kennedy and Daisy Taylor who made sure everything worked smoothly in Seirian's absence, for a wonderful meeting!

We had the pleasure of hearing two excellent plenaries from Prof. Jane Memmott on conservation ecology of pollinators, and Prof. Nigel Franks on his new exciting study system of "mint sauce worms". Also the quality of contributed presentations was extremely high, and I don't envy the jury who had to choose the best student talk and poster from such an excellent crop. The deserving winners were Christopher Pull (IST Vienna) for his talk on "Detection and destruction of sick individuals in ant colonies", and Sarah Walkington (CEH and RHUL) for her poster on "The Microbial Communities of Different Castes within *B. terrestris*". In addition to the scientific prizes, there was also a photo competition, the winner of which was Victoria Norman (Sussex) for a picture of a *Camponotus* from Brazil. Runner up was Siiri Fuchs (Helsinki) with a picture of a *Formica fusca* queen

As a new feature of Winter meetings, also workshops on Emerging challenges for social insect biologists were included, based on topics contributed by the participants. Six workshops on a wide variety of topics, all with lively and critical discussion were run, and the plan is to write these into an article looking towards the future of our field during the spring. The workshops were a definite success, so perhaps they should be incorporated in some form into the two-day winter meetings in the future as well!

The Business meeting of the section concluded the winter meeting. In addition to electing the new officers and thanking the retiring ones, and an update on the Helsinki meeting (see above), points of mention include:

Treasurer's report: the finances of the section are healthy. Last year there was no money coming in from the International Union, but also no travel grants were paid out. The membership maintained the course of slow increase, with 175 members at the end of the year.

A bid from Manchester Central and Marketing Manchester to organise the 2022 International IUSSI meeting at Manchester was discussed and turned down.

IUSSI (North-west European Section)

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

Membership 2016

1. Please complete your name and contact details if you are a new member or if your details have changed from last year:

Title and name

.....

E-mail address

.....

Address

.....

.....

Membership fees for 2015 – due by 31 st January	
Ordinary Member	Student Member
£ 15.00	£ 7.50
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I have paid by:

2a. Standing Order

2b. Bank transfer

2c. Paypal

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

2d. Cheque (GBP)

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

Cheques should be made payable to **Northwest European section IUSSI**

Please email Liz Duncan (e.j.duncan@leeds.ac.uk) with the completed form or a brief email to notify her of how you have paid, or post the form with a cheque to Dr Elizabeth Duncan, School of Biology, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT.

Section officers: President: Dr Paul Eggleton (p.eggleton@nhm.ac.uk); Secretary: Dr Heikki Helanterä (heikki.helantera@helsinki.fi); Treasurer: Dr Elizabeth Duncan (e.j.duncan@leeds.ac.uk).