

# PSAMMONALIA

The Newsletter of the  
International Association of Meiobenthologists

Number 133, May 2002.



## Greetings From London!

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## International Association of Meiobenthologists

### PSAMMONALIA

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## EDITORIAL

I can tell that summer is almost upon us because the rain pouring down on London is getting a little warmer. So it must be time for another issue of your favourite newsletter. My first duty is to thank our colleague **Yoshihisa Shiriyama**, better known as Shira to his many friends, for the enormous effort he put into the Society during his term as Chairperson. I hope we in the London team do half as well as our colleagues in Japan.

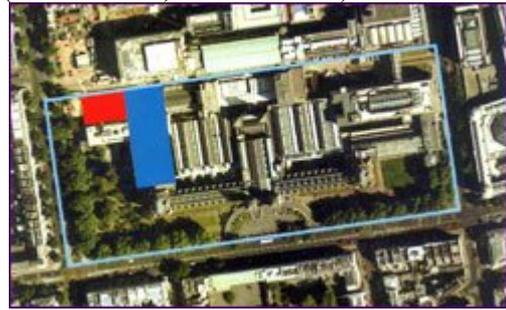
My next task is to scold the membership for the lack of material we have received, with the honourable exception of our South African colleagues, only the Board of Correspondents has sent any material for inclusion. It is not fair to leave everything to them, efficient though they are. If you want to make your colleagues aware of your papers, please, please send the references to the editorial team. And while you are about it how about some news from your laboratory!

The Society is in my opinion at something of a crossroads. Its great value has been to facilitate communication between meiofaunologists and also to encourage an appreciation of meiofaunal studies in the greater community. The former task is still useful, the latter is critical. There are fewer active marine nematologists now than ten years ago. The question is how can we change to better satisfy these twin roles. In particular, how do we exploit the communication power of information technology and the internet. In the coming year I shall be flying some flags of my own but we want to hear your views.

### **Darwin Centre**

Phase one (in red) of the new Darwin Centre at The Natural History Museum, London, has been completed and the Zoology Department, including the marine nematode and copepod researchers and curators, has moved in with its 28 million specimens. The building is an exciting new venture for The Museum as for the first time the public will have access to the national collection and scientists. Her Majesty, The Queen will officially open the building later in the year. Members of the Society will use the demonstration features in this building to explain and promote meiofauna studies to the wider public. More information can be obtained from the Museum's website: <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/darwincentre/index.html>

Plan of the site showing new development (Phase 1 in red, Phase 2 in blue)



The Darwin Centre under construction



The central atrium



**John Lamshead**

## WEB NEWS

As members may or may not be aware, the IAM website has undergone some major transformations during the past academic year. IAM is now the proud owner of the domain name meiofauna.org and our website can be linked to via:

<http://www.meiofauna.org>

Individuals entering the old address:

<http://www.mtsu.edu/meio> automatically will be routed to the new address. As part of the changeover to the new address the entire website was ported to the Department of Marine Science's UNIX server at Coastal Carolina University. If anyone has difficulty in accessing the site or discovers broken or dead-end links or any other glitches please inform the Webmaster.

The establishment of our own domain name should increase the society's profile on the web. We will be registering the site name with major search engines and information services. During the past year the meiofauna website averaged 7 visits per day and 2 pages per visit. It is not unreasonable to expect a doubling or tripling of these numbers with the increased exposure afforded by registration of our own DSN.

In an effort to provide some lucky member(s) world-renowned Web recognition, IAM is conducting a "Best Caption" contest for select images from ELIMCO, this past summer's conference in Boston. You can link to the images from the IAM Home Page and provide your pithy captions by just selecting the line under each image. All entries will be compiled and the "best" 2-5 captions per image posted for members to vote for their favorite later this summer.

IAM also is conducting a search for the next society logo as part of our move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Any and all potential artists are encouraged to submit their rendering of a new logo image that both encompasses the IAM spirit and the rapidly changing digital century in which we now find ourselves. Entries should be submitted in digital form to the Webmaster ([kwalt@coastal.edu](mailto:kwalt@coastal.edu)). The membership will have a chance to vote on the top entries later in the year.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### E-mail Distribution List

At the time of production, we do not have an up-to-date list of IAM members' distribution preferences for Psammonalia. If, therefore, you receive a paper copy and only want an electronic copy in future, please let us know by contacting us on the Psammonalia e-mail address (See "Contacting Psammonalia" later in this issue).

**Tim Ferrero.**

### Meetings

#### **8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Copepoda, Keelung, Taiwan. 21<sup>st</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> July 2002**

It is my great pleasure to invite all members of the World Association of Copepodologists and everyone with an interest in copepods to join us at the Eighth International Conference on copepoda. These Conferences are held every three years and are the most important global gathering for all students of copepods.

Our international conferences have become a tradition in the WAC. Each conference gives you the chance to meet fellow researchers, to talk with students and with experts, to borrow material, and to plan collaborations. Each one is unique, bursting with the individuality and culture of the host nation, and I look forwards with eager anticipation to the mix of experiences that will be Taiwan 2002. I am lucky enough (and old enough) to have attended all the previous copepod conferences and I have wonderful memories of them all. It is such good fun to get to know your fellow copepod specialists - my best memories are associated with meeting the real people. The contacts you make will be of lasting value. We plan to bring you the best in copepod science but we can also guarantee that you will meet interesting people, bursting with enthusiasm for their subject and wanting to talk copepods. So, make a date in your diary - I hope to see you in Taiwan.

For more information please go to:  
<http://8thcoc.ntou.edu.tw/index.htm>

Geoff Boxshall  
President,  
World Association of Copepodologists.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> European Crustacean Conference, Lodz, Poland. 22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> July 2002**

Dear Colleagues,  
Please find enclosed further information on the coming Fourth European CRUSTACEAN CONFERENCE, to be held in Lodz, Poland, from 22 to 26 July 2002. This Conference will also host the 2002 annual meeting of The Crustacean Society. Until now we have received some 160 responses from about 20 countries all over the world. The dominating topics of the contributed papers and posters are ecology, systematics, evolution, biodiversity, morphology and larval biology. To establish final set of sections we will wait until spring 2002 when the next announcement will be prepared. Following the decision of the Australian ICC 5 board and after the discussion with past and present TCS presidents, we have resigned from the publishing the ECC 4 Proceedings. Instead, we wish to encourage all colleagues presenting their lectures and posters in Lodz to submit their papers to the highly respected journals like Journal of Crustacean Biology or Crustaceana, for instance. At the same time we intend to publish a book of abstracts so you are requested to hold firmly the deadline for sending these abstracts. Please, follow strictly the given instructions. After preliminary calculations we are able to include the get-together (icebreaker) party, all lunches, conference dinner and mid-conference excursion into the registration fee. Also we are ready to reduce this registration fee for the limited number of students. The organising committee will select a group of those young people, who will present the opinion of their supervisors and a very short scientific curriculum vitae (list of publications, topic of M.Sc or D.Sc dissertations etc.). We hope that you will be satisfied with the visit to Poland - a country that geographically and historically talking can be recognised as the heart of the Europe.

For more information please go to:  
<http://www.biol.uni.lodz.pl/ecc4/welcome.htm>

### **37<sup>th</sup> European Marine Biology Symposium, Reykjavik, Iceland. 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> August 2002**

The meeting is organised around the theme "Migrations and dispersal of marine organisms". There is also an open session, dealing with a variety of subjects. We have now a full oral programme. There is still a place for additional posters. Those willing to present a poster should contact the secretariat as soon as possible.

For more information please go to:  
<http://www.37embs.is/first.htm>

### **A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A NEMATODE HUNTER IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**Martin G.J. Hendricks**

Department of Zoology, University of the Western Cape, Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535, Republic of South Africa.

The study of free-living marine nematodes along the Southern African coast is largely neglected. The first species descriptions were reported from collections made in Luderitz Bay, Namibia, by Von Linstow (1908) and Steiner (1918). Between 1960 and 1990, the only marine nematode contributions of note were those by Inglis, Coles, Furstenburg and Vincx. A number of ecological studies in particular those by McLachlan *et al* highlighted the importance of nematodes in meiofaunal assemblages. However, in all those and other studies nematodes were all lumped together and not described.

Towards the end of 1998 a research initiative was launched to increase the understanding of marine nematode diversity in South Africa. Saldanha Bay, along the west coast of South Africa, is influenced by anthropogenic effects such as a raft mussel – culture industry, fish processing factories, an iron ore loading jetty and urban development. I decided to investigate the effect of mussel rafts on nematode communities in Saldanha Bay.

Apart from my undergraduate knowledge of parasitic nematodes and some free-living terrestrial taxa, I knew nothing of the marine variety. I was subsequently packed off to London in 1999 where Nicola Mitchell, Tim Ferrero, John Lamshead, Fred Wanless, Adam Cook and Caroline Brown all contributed to open my eyes to a wonderful new world of squiggly worms. I spent six months at the Natural History Museum,

London, and upon returning to South Africa I was able to set up a completely new laboratory. This initial visit to NHM was followed by two shorter visits in 2000 and 2001. These visits coincided with the Darwin Initiative Workshops held in Plymouth- but that is another story.

My supervisor at the University of the Western Cape is Prof. Mark Gibbons while Dr. Lamshead is the other supervisor. I am registered as a part-time Ph.D. student since I hold a fulltime post as Chief Scientific Officer in the Zoology Department at UWC. I realized from the onset that the project would require careful planning and sheer hard work (sticking the nose to the grindstone) and I would hate to have my supervisors breathing down my neck if I procrastinate. I therefore wish to share a typical unedited day in my life with you.

It is Monday morning and at:

**06:00 – 07:00:** Rise and sort out family matters. Although the University is only 9 km away from home I leave at 07:00 in order to avoid the traffic congestion. Start working on nematodes immediately. I am drawing nematodes from a sandy sample and the exercise continues until 08:45.

**09:00 – 09:30:** Convene a weekly laboratory meeting with academic support staff.

**09:30 – 10:00:** Organise a series of practical classes with Dr Lorna Holtman (lecturer)

**10:00 – 12:00:** Perform a variety of functions including meeting students and testing apparatus for sample analysis of Robben Island Pipeline Survey, urgent meeting with technical workshop on alarm system for controlled environments rooms, sort out slides for first year meiosis practical and check a student contribution before submission to the University's weekly paper.

**12:00:** I do not feel well- influenza – and decide to have lunch a bit earlier than usual and then return to nematode laboratory to continue with the drawings started in the morning.

**14:00 – 15:00:** Conduct Health and Safety inspection with Rashieda Toefy (Senior Scientific Officer) and write the report for H&S subcommittee meeting.

**15:00 – 16:00:** Sort out my e-mails for the first time; react to some, delete most and is immediately called to advise Samantha Hopkins (M.Sc. student) in the histology laboratory on some of her staining techniques pertaining to the skin diseases of West African frogs.

**16:00:** Time to continue with my nematode project. Today is a struggle because of the effects of influenza, but I still manage to work until 20:30. (Normally I work until 21:30 at

least three times a week and never leave campus earlier than 18:00 on other days). During the period I took a short break to watch the International Space Station with Mark Shuttleworth, South Africa's first cosmonaut, pass by.

At home I have supper and still need to read the minutes and proceedings of a South African Network for Coastal and Oceanographic Research meeting to be held the following day.

The thousands of nematodes keep me on my toes and I know that I will complete the study in the shortest possible time – mature student or not.

## NEW MEMBERS

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### Research interests:

Current Ph.D. research (October 1998 - April 2003): Structural and functional biodiversity of copepod communities on the Belgian Continental Shelf (North Sea)

In my current research harpacticoid copepods are studied in order to define the different harpacticoid communities on the Belgian Continental Shelf and to investigate which factors influence the structural and functional biodiversity of these communities.

Defining structural biodiversity comprises the study of the spatial variation on and between selected sandbanks in relation to sediment characteristics. As the intensity of sand extraction on the Kwintebank is very high, the possible impact of this human-induced disturbance is also investigated.

An aspect of the study of functional biodiversity is to determine the impact of the *Phaeocystis pouchetii* bloom in spring on harpacticoid communities. Therefore, the benthic community is followed before, during and after the input of phytodetritus in three stations, differing in the intensity of organic enrichment.

The relation between abiotic variables (sediment composition, nutrients, pigments, organic C) and harpacticoid communities will be studied in an annual monitoring campaign in autumn.

All these data will make it possible to identify ecological indicator species or communities. The results will be incorporated into a GIS, which surveys user functions, physical and biological variables of the southern North Sea, as a policy instrument to indicate vulnerable and valuable areas and to support the sustainable management of the North Sea.

**Lisa Hack**

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**Research Interests:**

My research interests are focused mainly in toxicology and genetic based studies, with a keen interest in taxonomy / phylogeny of meiofauna species, particularly nematodes and marine harpacticoid copepods. My current research involves identifying the effects of physical disturbance on the distribution / abundance and life - history parameters of sediment dwelling marine harpacticoid copepods.

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**Research Interests:**

My main job commitments at The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) are the collection, processing and analysis of the National Marine Monitoring Program (NMMP) benthic infaunal samples from around the UK.

I have also just embarked upon a part time Ph.D. titled " Applications of benthic ecology in the assessment of anthropogenic impacts in the marine environment." The main aim of my Ph.D. and my main research interest is the use of certain infaunal community (macro and meio) attributes as possible indicators of disturbance within muddy marine sediments.

## Contacting Psammonalia:

To make sending us any news, articles or pictures easier, we have decided to set up a dedicated e-mail address for all correspondence:

**psammon@nhm.ac.uk**

this address is now working and we look forward to hearing from you. Of course, you can still write to us at the Natural History Museum – the address is on the front page.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you are not a paid up member of the IAM, this is likely to be the last copy of Psammonalia you will receive. We are currently updating the membership list!

**Tim Ferrero**

### Editorial Board

John Lamshead (President)

Tim Ferrero (Executive Editor)

Nicola Mitchell (Production Editor).

*This Newsletter is not part of the scientific literature for taxonomic purposes.*

## RECENT LITERATURE

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