



International Union for the Study of Social Insects

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Greetings from Berlin where I started my 10 month fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. It is wonderful to be away from all the administrative nonsense that has overtaken academic life at universities world-wide.

SARS-Cov-2 has delayed this newsletter simply because there weren't any meetings or other exciting events to report. And even this newsletter will be very short, comprising an update from Miriam Richards, an even shorter update regarding IUSSI 2022, and a tribute to Christian Peeters.

Many of us had hoped to be in Toulouse last month for the European IUSSI. Fingers crossed the meeting can go ahead as planned next year. The Brazil section also had planned a meeting, which has been postponed. Keep an eye on the website for updates: <http://www.iussi.org/>

The Congress for the European Society of Evolutionary Biology (ESEB), to be held in Prague in August next year (August 22-27) might also be of interest to many: <https://www.eseb2021.cz/>

I hope that life will soon return to normal, or the new normal, for all of you.

Insectes Sociaux, September 2020 update by Miriam Richards, Editor-in-Chief

Greetings everyone!

We are living in strange times, and many IUSSI members are living in fearsome circumstances, especially those living in places where covid-19 is running rampant. It's a difficult time to do research when people are locked out of their labs and away from face-to-face interactions with students and colleagues. I hope you are finding ways of keeping yourselves and your research moving forward.

The pandemic has had some predictable consequences for *Insectes Sociaux*. In the first few months of the pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns, submissions dwindled to a trickle. As a result of this slowdown, publication of Issue #3 of 2020 was postponed a month or so, but will appear soon. Submissions are increasing again, so I am hopeful that Issue #4 will be published as usual.

Another consequence of the pandemic is a slowdown of the review process. Many scientists are apologetically declining because in addition to working from home, they are also caring for small children. Especially with very young children, this is a special challenge, and it is hardly surprising that reviewing manuscripts should be a lower priority than one's own family and work. Several of the editors also have children at home. Everyone is facing extra challenges now, but for some of us, fate has not piled on as heavily. I hope those people will consider saying 'yes' to reviews a little more frequently than usual, as a way of keeping our scientific community moving forward.

A new venture for *Insectes Sociaux*, beginning in 2021, will be the publication of occasional special issues devoted to some particular theme focussed on arthropod social biology. Special issues will be organized by a Guest Editor, with help from Springer editorial staff. Anyone who has an idea for a special issue, please feel free to email me directly (mrichards@brocku.ca). I would love to hear your ideas, even if you do not want to take on the role of Guest Editor.

Hope you all remain healthy and that some of the pandemic challenges of 2020 subside soon.

Cheers,
Miriam

IUSSI2022 Update from our President, Jennifer Fewell

We are moving ahead as planned with the 2022 conference. We optimistically hope to have an on-ground conference in San Diego, July 3-8, 2022, with virtual components integrated into the program. Calls for symposia will be going out in the next month, so start thinking about topics and invited speakers. This conference will include a significant proportion of contributed sessions in addition to symposia.

Vale Christian Peeters

As many of you, I remain in shock after hearing that Christian died suddenly on September 1. Christian was a good friend. Even though we didn't see each other often, living on opposite sides of the planet doesn't help, when we did, we always had great fun; travelling, talking, enjoying good wine and food. The last time I saw Christian was after the IUSSI meeting in Brazil when we spent a few nights on a small wooden boat on the Amazon. Ben (Oldroyd) and I really wanted to do a trip on the Amazon and the boat I had found could fit one more person. The first person who came to mind to ask was Christian. Looking back at the photos we have from that trip, none of them contain people. Just ants, bees, wasps and other critters. I am so glad that many of you do take photos of people as now I can collate some photos to commemorate Christian the way he loved to spend his time: travelling, meeting friends, studying ants and teaching others about them. If there is one consolidation, then it is that Christian really did live his life to the fullest. He will be missed immensely.

The following websites provide a tribute to Christian <http://www.dictionnaire-amoureux-des-fourmis.fr/Noms%20propres/P/Peeters%20Christian/Christian-Peeters.htm> and <http://insectessociaux.wpweb.fr/christian-peeters/>. And here is a documentary Christian appears in: https://youtu.be/DqbOgx_FCBw?t=340

A commemorative piece by his Paris colleagues will be published in *Insectes Sociaux*. Adam L Cronin, Benoit Guenard, Francisco Hita Garcia, Editors of *Asian Myrmecology*, are planning a special issue to commemorate Christian's work.



Christian at a gold town during a visit of the Social Insect Research Group at Arizona State University in 2009. Jürgen Liebig.

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Christian being his happy self – teaching the 2010 Ant Course in Danum Valley (above) and in Mozambique (below) in 2016. Simon Robson.





In the field in 2011 in Fontainebleau (above) and in Madagascar in 2004. Mathieu Mollet.





Namib desert with Serge Aron in 2017. Quentin Willot.





Field trip to Tvärminne after European IUSSI in Finland in 2016. Heike Feldhaar.



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Christian visiting Brazil. Dates unknown. Rodrigo Feitosa.



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Christian sorting ants in lab. Left to right: Nokuthula Mbanyana, Peter Hawkes, Andrew Suarez, Jonathan Fisher, Simon Robson (back) (above) and Christian on helicopter tour of Parque Nacional de Gorongosa, Mozambique (with Jack Longino). 2016. Neil Tsutsui.





Photos taken at the ANet-congress in Bangkok, 2019. Provided by Johan Billen.





Above: Christian with his PhD supervisor, Robin Crewe, in Walvis Bay, Namibia. 2017. Serge Aron.
Below: Taken during the excursion of the 8th Central Europe Workshop of Myrmecology. 30 September 2019, by boat on the Danube river, near to Weltenburg Abbey, from left to right: Bálint Marko, Enikő Csata. Xim Cerdá





And, a nice old one to finish with. From the 1990s. Christian and Ivan do Nascimento, in the state of Sergipe, Brazil, digging a *Dinoponera quadricaps* nest. Two laborers (standing) were hired to help to dig, since these nests can reach three meters deep in dry places of the caatinga. Jacques Delabie.