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## 17TH EUROPEAN COLLOQUIUM OF ARACHNOLOGY

Edinburgh 14–18 July 1997

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## PREFACE

The 17th European Colloquium of Arachnology was held at Pollock Halls, University of Edinburgh, from 14-18 July 1997, under the joint auspices of the British Arachnological Society and the Société Européenne d'Arachnologie.

116 participants and 11 accompanying persons from 20 countries attended the Colloquium, including some from as far away as the USA and Australia.

The opening ceremony took place on Monday, 14 July, with speeches of welcome from Professor David Saunders, Head of the Institute of Cell, Animal and Population Biology, University of Edinburgh; Dr Alain Canard, President of the Société Européenne d'Arachnologie; and Dr Paul Selden, President of the British Arachnological Society.

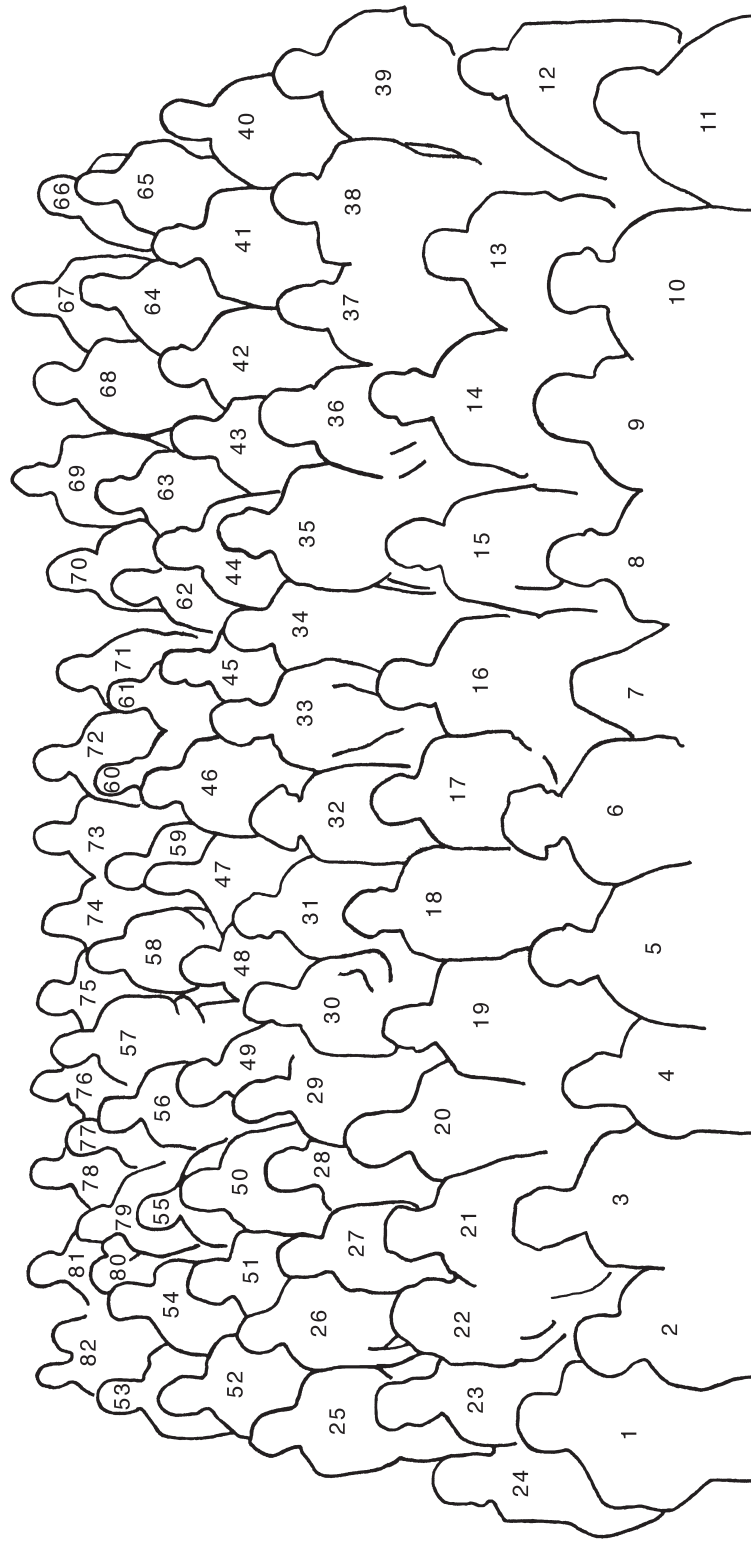
The scientific programme comprised four full days of papers on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and a half-day session on Wednesday morning followed by an excursion to the John Muir Country Park, near Dunbar, in the afternoon. Poster sessions were also held on two evenings. Fifty-eight papers and 33 posters were presented at the Colloquium, 46 of which are included in these *Proceedings*. The General Assembly of the Société Européenne d'Arachnologie was chaired by the President, Dr Alain Canard. A post-Colloquium excursion was held on Saturday, 19 July, to the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park, near Aberfoyle, and the Glenturret Distillery, near Crieff. I wish to record our thanks to Olympus Optical Co. (UK) Ltd and Carl Zeiss Ltd for helping to sponsor the Colloquium, and the staff of Pollock Halls for their co-operation in providing the facilities.

I should also like to express my thanks to all the members of the Organizing Committee and other volunteers who assisted in various ways at the Colloquium, especially to Dr Paul Selden, Mr Rod Allison, Mr Rowley Snazell and Mr Jim Stewart; to Mrs Jackie Dalingwater for her help with editing the Proceedings; and to numerous colleagues who reviewed manuscripts.

Finally, I am most grateful to all the speakers and chairmen of sessions, for their contributions to a most successful and enjoyable Colloquium.

*Peter Merrett*





**1** Otto Kraus **2** Margaret Kraus **3** John Stanney **4** Geoff Oxford **5** Paul Selden **6** David Nellist **7** Helen Read **8** Shaun Hexter **9** Christine Zschokke **10** Samuel Zschokke **11** Gunar Alroth **12** Barbara Knoflach-Thaler **13** John Parker **14** Doug Marriott **15** Peter Merritt **16** Rajko Dimitrijević **17** Pierre-Alain Fürst **18** Gilles Blandenier **19** Patric Marc **20** Torbjörn Kronesstedt **21** Søren Langemark **22** Elke Jantscher **23** Elaine Snazell **24** Rana El-Hennawy **25** Hisham El-Hennawy **26** Günter Schmidt **27** Val Davies **28** Carola Meierrose **29** James Bell **30** Iain Downie **31** Stuart A'Hara **32** Alicja Stankiewicz **33** Paweł Szymkowiak **34** Christa Deeleman-Reinhold **35** Marek Żabka **36** Tracey Churchill **37** Jacqueline Heurtault **38** Vladimir Ovtsharenko **39** Jim Stewart **40** John Dalingwater **41** Alain Canard **42** Tomasz Prószyński **43** Izabela Hajdamowicz **44** Uwe Riecken **45** Steffan Malt **46** Pavel Kasal **47** Jason Dunlop **48** Marie Herberstein **49** Jacqueline Kovoor **50** Arturo Muñoz-Cuevas **51** Astrid Heiling **52** Lars Jonsson **53** Peter Koomen **54** Ole Gudik-Sorensen **55** John Murphy **56** Rod Allison **57** Benjamin Gantenbein **58** Jean-Pierre Maelfait **59** Alan Scott **60** Sabine Merken **61** Janusz Kupryjanowicz **62** Maciej Bartos **63** Piotr Jastrębski **64** Paul Yoward **65** Jim Wright **66** Matt Braunwalder **67** Detlev Cordes **68** Vito Zingerle **69** Vygandas Relys **70** Jutta Barthel **71** Teresa Cantarella **72** Vlastimil Růžička **73** Stanislav Pekar **74** Ingrid Schoeffthaler **75** Herman Schoeffthaler **76** Karl Treiblmayr **77** Tim Benton **78** Aart Noordam **79** Rowley Snazell **80** Rosemary Gillespie and Mel **81** Konrad Thaler **82** George Roderick and William

## The spider in Scottish legend

*“The most celebrated spider known to history”*

Sir Winston Churchill: History of the English-Speaking Peoples

During the Scottish War of Independence, Robert Bruce was crowned king of Scotland at Scone in the spring of 1305. Following the coronation, Robert and his followers were attacked by the English; many were caught and put to death, but Robert escaped and was hounded throughout the highlands and islands until the autumn of 1306 when he found temporary relief from pursuit on Rathlin Island, off the northern coast of Ireland. Records of Robert the Bruce’s whereabouts during the winter of 1306–7 are scarce, but legend has it that during his stay on the island he occupied a cave for a time. One day, he noticed a spider trying to affix a line to the ceiling of the cave in order to make a web. Six times the spider tried unsuccessfully before eventually managing the task.

The Bruce took heart at the spider’s persistence, and vowed to recover from this deepest setback in his campaign and to persevere for victory over the English. Bruce left Rathlin in the spring of 1307 with a small band of followers, and sailed to the isle of Arran, where he collected together an army of 300 and commenced his comeback with a surprise attack on the mainland garrison of Turnberry Castle. His good fortune continued and, one by one, the castles of Edward II of England fell to the Scottish rebel force, culminating in the victorious Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. As a result of these events, the Treaty of Northampton was concluded with England’s Edward III in 1328, and Scotland gained formal recognition of her independence.

The cave in this story is probably an old sea cave in basalt, formed during the Pleistocene, but now above sea level, and backing the raised beach typical of this region. A number of spider species inhabit such caves, notably tetragnathids. *Meta menardi* is common in the dark, inner parts of caves, whilst nearer the entrance *Metellina merianae* or *Zygiella x-notata* might be found. If Robert the Bruce watched the spider by natural light, then the spider he saw might have been *Metellina merianae*; this dark spider is common in old basaltic sea caves around the Scottish and Irish coastlines and islands.

Paul Selden

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