

MOLLUSCAN FORUM 2008

CONFERENCE REPORT

This annual meeting is designed to bring together young malacologists. It is informal and, though nobody says so openly, old and experienced professionals are sort of forbidden to present anything, though they can (and are welcome to) participate in the discussions. The Forum is organised by The Malaco-

logical Society of London and The Natural History Museum, London.

This year's Forum was held on the 20th of November, in the Palaeontology Demonstration Room. The Organising Committee included Prof. GEORGES DUSSART, Dr. DINAZARDE RAHEEM and Dr. MANUEL



Fig. 1. Young malacologists during an informal discussion. Photo B. M. POKRYSZKO

MALACOLOGICAL SEMINARS. The 23 participants came from the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland, Iceland, Germany, The Czech Republic, Hungary, Portugal, Thailand and Malaysia – quite a range for a meeting with only 23 people. These were active participants – authors of presentations. Passive participants (“adults” who were allowed to discuss but not to present) were quite a few, I have counted seven.

There were 15 oral presentations and eight posters. Because the participants were young, from various countries and numerous enough to constitute a statistically representative sample, I have tried to categorise the presentations like I do for the reports from the Polish Malacological Seminars (where the age structure of the population is quite different and thus the mean age much greater), and compare the topical structure of the two meetings to see if malacology will change much in the next few years. The comparison is presented in the Table.

Surprisingly, the land:water ratio at the two meetings was similar: 0.92:1 at the Forum and 0.91:1 at the 2008 Seminar, and the snail:bivalve ratio was 2.43:1 for the Forum (1.54:1 at the 2008 Seminar but 2.38:1 in at the 2006 Seminar). Equally surprisingly, in the Table the percentages for the two meetings are not much different. Most differences seem to be accidental, considering the small number of the 2008 Forum presentations (23) and the disproportionately greater number of the Seminar presentations for 2006–2008 (175). The proportion of life history papers is significantly greater during the Seminars, and the proportion of systematic/phylogenetic presentations is much smaller. The young people are coming back to systematics!

As usual, the Forum was followed by a wine reception.

| No. | Discipline | Percentage of papers/posters | |
|-----|--|------------------------------|--------------------|
| | | Molluscan Forum 2008 | Seminars 2006–2008 |
| 1 | Ecology | 24% | 31% |
| 2 | Life histories | 4% | 13% |
| 3 | Conservation | 12% | 7% |
| 4 | Fossil molluscs | 0% | 9% |
| 5 | Applied malacology | 12% | 6% |
| 6 | Parasitology | 0% | 7% |
| 7 | Faunistics | 0% | 5% |
| 8 | Methodology | 16% | 3% |
| 9 | Physiology | 0% | 2% |
| 10 | Structure (histology, cytology, shell) | 4% | 1% |
| 11 | Variation | 0% | 3% |
| 12 | Systematics/phylogeny | 16% | 5% |
| 13 | Molecular genetics | 12% | 3% |
| 14 | Collections | 0% | 2% |
| 15 | Others (general, behaviour, archaeology) | 0% | 5% |

The Forum meetings are usually held in November. Those of you who are not too old should visit the Malacological Society’s website to look for information on the next meeting. If you apply early enough, you may get a small grant to participate.

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