

## Advances in Nematology



Prizewinner, Laura Kruitbos and Maurice Moens.

Once again the Linnean Society was the venue for the annual Advances in Nematology meeting on 11 December 2007. On the day before the meeting Ralf Ehlers (Kiel, Germany), one of the keynote speakers, e-mailed to say he was unable to attend because of flu - a great disappointment for the meeting - "sorry Ralf, we didn't have the opportunity to buy you a pint!" Brian Kerry (Rothamsted) stepped in at short notice to give the morning session's opening talk "Plant-parasitic nematodes as components of the soil ecosystem." Brian described some of the work done as part of the collaborative EU funded EcoTrain project. Using coastal sand dunes in Europe as a model system he highlighted some of the mechanisms and the multitrophic interactions that control population densities of plant parasitic nematodes

in nature. The other guest speaker Florian Grundler did make it from Vienna to present "Sex, sugar and cell walls - the interaction of *Heterodera schachtii* with its hosts." This meeting offers a diversity of presentations ranging across the discipline and 2007 was no exception with presentations on many aspects of nematology. As in previous years we had an excellent response for offered papers with thirteen oral presentations and ten posters. Regrettably two of these speakers could not be present, so substitute talks were given by Keith Davies (Rothamsted) and Ernesto San-Blas (Reading). Keith updated the meeting on the progress and development of an in vitro culturing system for *Pasteuria penetrans* and Ernesto presented work from his recently completed PhD on the behavioural ecology of entomopathogenic nematodes. A short AGM (AAB Nematology Group) was held before lunch and members had an opportunity to thank Roma Gwynn who stood down as Group Convenor, a role she has had for the last six years.

Advances in Nematology encourages student participation and it's often their first formal opportunity to present their research. The AAB do offer travel awards for students wishing to attend. A book prize was awarded again this year for the best oral presentation by a student. This year's winner was Laura Kruitbos (Aberdeen) who presented her work on "Coexistence of *Steinernema carpocapsae* and *Heterorhadtis megidis* in sand and peat." Maurice Moens (Merelbeke, Belgium) presented Laura with a copy of *Plant Nematology* (Perry and Moens, 2006) which had been kindly donated by CABI Publishing. This is the only annual forum in the UK for nematologists working on plant-parasitic, free-living and entomopathogenic nematodes. The friendly atmosphere and the relatively recent introduction of guest speakers from throughout the world has enhanced its appeal to nematologists from Europe and the USA making it a truly international event. The 2008 meeting will take place on 16 December at the same venue - so no excuses and put the date in your diary now!

*Barbara Pembroke, University of Reading*

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## Welcome to New Members

**Elected 11 March 2008**

**Dr Ian Adams**, Molecular Biologist at CSL (Plant Pathogen Assay Development) with special interests in applied mycology and bacteriology and virology.

**Dr Beena R Ajithkumar**, Research Associate working on a European funded project 'Molecular, Environmental and Nutritional evaluation of Bambara groundnut for food production in semi-arid Africa and India'. Main objectives of the project are to study the eco-physiological interactions develop SSR markers, linkage based association analysis. Beena has a special interest in cropping and the environment.

**Mr Bas Allema**, PhD Student working on behaviour ecology of ground beetles in rural landscapes with a special interest biological control.

**Miss Sally-Anne Atkin**, Technical Officer - Pea, Bean, Veg Scientist at PGRO Peterborough with special interests in applied mycology and bacteriology, biological control, cropping and the environment, pesticide application, plant physiology & crop

improvement and virology.

**Mr Paul Bee**, Agricultural Communications Manager at British Sugar with a special interest in cropping and the environment.

**Ms Amy Bilton**, KPT Associate at Newcastle University with special interests in pesticide application, plant physiology & crop improvement, cropping and the environment and biological control.

**Mr Geoffrey Bradshaw**, Technical Director of Ag-Venture in Zimbabwe a company that designs, develops and manufactures crop protection spraying equipment. Special interests include cropping and the environment and biological control.

**Mr Neil Byron**, Senior Scientific Officer with the Pesticides Safety Directorate involved in exposure assessment for operators, bystanders and re-entry with special interests in biological control, cropping and the environment, pesticide application and plant physiology & crop improvement.

**Dr Stephen Coates**, Senior Scientist (biochemistry and molecular biology specialisms) within a plant research company with a special interest in plant physiology & crop improvement.