

Report of 2008 London BCG Meeting

Ed BAKER¹

¹*Editor, Cockroach Studies, Department of Entomology, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD*

The April 2008 BCG meeting was an outstanding success, with over 20 members attending, many for the first time.

The meeting opened with an informal gathering, with members discussing all manner of topics amongst themselves. Wandering around I overheard various snippets regarding collecting trips, the sharing of rearing advice for tricky species, and who has what species in culture, amongst many others.

Introductions aside the meeting began in earnest with George's talk on his collecting trips to Madagascar. This was full of new and interesting observations, including the habitat and distribution of various species of Hissing Cockroach. George mentioned that these inhabit the dry forest areas, and are not found in the rainforest on the Eastern side of the island. The highlight of the last trip was the discovery of a new genus of Hissing Cockroach, a particularly strong and feisty species. George had bought along a live specimen of this species that actively defended itself while Ingo was trying to photograph it, causing him to bleed.

The second presentation was a video clip of Adrian's recent TV appear on the BBC. Adrian visits a pest control convention every year and tries to convince the attendees that cockroaches are more interesting than they thought.

I gave a presentation on the new BCG website, showing what content was online already. There were a number of suggestions from the members present that will hopefully be making their *début* on the site soon (so keep checking back).

The final talk was by Phil Bragg who gave an illustrated account of cockroaches that he has seen whilst collecting stick insects in Borneo. Many of Phil's photographs are already available in the Image Gallery on the website, and he has promised more will be available soon!

Lunch gave everybody the chance to talk about what they had seen, and browse the various specimens on display. George had prepared a drawer of specimens from the museum collection, and showed people the new genus

of cockroach he had found in Madagascar. Several members had interesting species to show.

The livestock exchange saw a brisk trade of insects, with a number of species changing hands. I for one came home with rather more species (and individuals) than I had planned!



Front row, L-R: Lee Davies, David Nicholson, Rachel McLeod, George Beccaloni, Judith Marshall, Ingo Fritzsche, Joss McLeod

Back row, L-R: Allan Harman, Mary Salton, Darren Mann, Adrian Durkin, Gavin Ridley, Chris Raeburn, Ed Baker, Phil Bragg, Martin Stiewe

Many thanks to George, Adrian and Phil for putting together their talks/presentations, to George and Judith for organising the meeting, to Allan Harman for carrying the Madagascar map board from the Entomology Department and back, and to everybody who came for making the meeting such a success.

Natural History Museum Online Collections Index

George BECCALONI¹

¹ *Department of Entomology, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD*

The Natural History Museum's collection of cockroaches is probably the largest and most type-rich collection of Blattodea in the world. It contains an estimated 26,300 specimens belonging to 1226 valid species (26.7% of all described species), including 611 primary and 1400 secondary type specimens. These are housed in 256 drawers, and there are also a relatively few specimens in spirit. In 1996 a computerised catalogue of the species and types was started by Judith Marshall (the curator of the collection at that time) and this was completed by her a few years later. George Beccaloni (the current curator) then comprehensively updated the taxonomy and higher classification of the species using his online catalogue of world cockroaches (the Blattodea Species File: <http://blattodea.speciesfile.org>) and in 2009 he oversaw the migration of the data into the NHM's new collections management system, KE EMu. A major advantage of this new system is that most of the information from the Index is available online at <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/research-curation/collections/departmental-collections/entomology-collections/search>. This is the first time that people outside the Museum are able to find out for themselves what species and types the Museum actually has.

Entomology collection database

Index Lot search **Specimen search**

Enter your search criteria into the form below and select search.

Taxon:

Type status:

Primary type no.:

Distribution:

Kind of material:

Kind of media:

Sex:

Stage:

British:

Records per page:

Toolbox ■ **Print version** ■ **Email a friend**