

History on International Congresses of Entomology by Max Whitten

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August 2010

One Hundred Years of Entomology to Celebrate

The International Congresses of Entomology movement celebrated 100 years on 1 August 2010.

The first International Congress of Entomology was held in Brussels, Belgium between 1–6 August 1910. Over the past 100 years there have been 23 Congresses, with interruptions during World Wars I and II. The next Congress, the XXIV International Congress of Entomology (ICE), will be held in Daegu, South Korea between 19–25 August 2012. That's a record entomologists can be proud of. [Update: ICE 2012 is now over and ICE 2016 will be held in Orlando, Florida USA from September 25-30, 2016.]

Initially, the Congresses were Euro-centred with 8 of the first 9 in Western Europe (see table below). By way of contrast, only 2 of the last 10 Congresses have been in Europe. The first Congress held in the southern hemisphere was in Canberra, Australia 1972. The last three Congresses have been down 'south' – Iguacu, Brazil 2000; Brisbane, Australia 2004; and Durban, South Africa 2008. Four Congresses have been held in North America (Cornell, USA 1928; Montreal, Canada 1958; Washington, USA 1976; and Vancouver, Canada 1988). The South Korean Congress in 2012 brings the number of Congresses in Asia to three (Kyoto, Japan 1980; and Beijing, China 1992).

The spread of Congresses around the globe during the 20th century reflects the globalisation of science and the emergence of intellectual powerhouses in entomology in the New World and Asia. Initially, the Congresses had a strong element of science 'politics' with influential committees working behind the scenes to promote international collaboration and address issues such as rules on nomenclature. Early Congresses, apart from the obvious focus on science, dealt with resolutions promoting global entomology; and the Closing Session in the earlier Congresses was often as important, and as well attended, as the Opening Session.

Recent Congresses, however, have been essentially concerned about entomological science – creation of new knowledge (the many pure/basic/fundamental entomological disciplines), and its application or contribution to innovation (strategic/applied/ economic entomology). Delegates come to learn and to tell others about their research and its implications. Delegates from countries where entomology is a poor relation to other scientific disciplines, or which lack dynamic national entomological societies, stand to gain from meeting and hearing leading entomologists from other countries.

The Opening Ceremonies have become grander affairs with key note addresses and opportunities for political involvement depending on the relationship and dialogue between entomologists and the political masters who control the purse strings in the host country. Whereas the main business of Closing Ceremonies in recent Congresses has been the formal resolution approving the site of the next Congress; and perhaps a final keynote address to the remaining delegates who have retained some residual capacity for absorbing more information.

The ongoing success of the ICE's, spanning the 20th century, is cause for great celebration by the world's entomologists. Without doubt the Daegu Congress will continue the fine tradition of attracting thousands of pure and applied entomologists, covering every aspect of the discipline, and hailing from every corner of the globe.

In Daegu, the opportunity will present itself for old colleagues to share recollections and for new associations to be forged which will ensure the the ICEs will continue to play a key role in promoting the discipline and providing benefits to all fields of human endeavour for generations to come.

A Congress of Entomology in South Korea also offers a fine opportunity to strengthen ties between entomologists from Asian nations where food security and biodiversity conservation are such major challenges.

The Setting for Modern Congresses of Entomology

The highly successful XVIII Congress in Vancouver, 1988, was the last Congress to be managed by an army of volunteers (mainly students and staff from the University of British Columbia) under the able leadership of Secretary General, George Scudder. The Vancouver Congress used lecture theatres provided, mainly gratis, by the host institution. Many delegates to Vancouver will remember the huge central tent which became the heart and soul of the Vancouver Congress!

Since Vancouver, specialised conference facilities have been used, and professional conference managers engaged to facilitate the meetings. This has resulted in an escalation of registration fees. Clearly this trend is here to stay. What remains important, however, is that the scientific programs are developed and managed by dedicated entomologists mainly from the host country. The local Organising Committee draws upon the unpaid help of international colleagues; and is aided by the collective wisdom of the Council for Congresses of Entomology.

Role of "Permanent Committee" and Council

Continuity and success of Congresses had been ensured from 1910 until the 1950's by a "Permanent Committee" comprising eminent entomologists. One entomologist stands out head and shoulders over others in achieving this positive outcome during the first 50 years - Karl Jordan (see below). He organised the first Congress in 1910 and remained a leading figure until the mid 1950's. In 1955, Jordan was made "Honorary Life President" in recognition of 45 years unstinting leadership.

With the retirement of Jordan, the Permanent Committee languished for some ten years. It was replaced by the current Council under the leadership of Doug Waterhouse, assisted by Rajinda Pal. They shaped the Constitution which was adopted in 1984 during the Hamburg, Germany Congress. The Council has served the Congresses well for the past 26 years. Waterhouse's contribution was recognised at the Iguacu Congress in 2000 with his election as Honorary Chairman of Council. Current details of the Council, its constitution and membership can be found on the website for the Daegu Congress. From 1984 until 2004 the role played by Doug Waterhouse in providing continuity for Council was assumed by Max Whitten, Waterhouse's replacement as Chief of CSIRO's Division of Entomology. However, no one comes close to matching the contribution of Jordan; and the challenge is to find a replacement for him to ensure the continuing success of Congresses well into the 21st Century.

The first International Congress of Entomology, Brussels, Belgium 1 – 6 August 1910

The first Congress was inspired by German entomologist, Karl Jordan (1861 – 1959), a very famous lepidopterist whose memory has been immortalised and honoured by the prestigious Jordan Medal. Jordan spent his long professional life working as a curator at Lord Rothschild's personal museum at Tring, UK. Ernst Mayer (1955) described Jordan as "one of the great thinkers of our time". Jordan introduced many concepts pertaining to systematics and evolutionary biology. And this is reflected in the content of the early Congresses. [It was not until the IV Congress in Cornell, Ithaca, USA that applied entomology assumed some prominence under the influence of the distinguished and long lived American entomologist, Leland Howard (1857 – 1950).]

N.D. Riley (1955) asked Jordan what gave him the idea of international congresses. According to Riley, in the words of Jordan "*the idea of the usefulness of an association of some kind aiming at international collaboration amongst entomologists occurred to me in 1904 when I was in the Upper Engadine [Switzerland] with the Hon. Walter Rothschild collecting mainly Lepidoptera*".

Riley continues "*The seed, however, was certainly sown earlier. Around the turn of the century Dr Jordan had found it necessary to visit the Natural History Museums in Dublin, Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Berlin and Stettin and many of the large private collections on the continent. . . He had clearly become impressed with the degree of isolation of scientific men he met during his travels and in particular by the fact that hardly any of them were known personally to each other; the lingua franca and the universality of science that had characterised the middle ages had vanished and . . . scientist tended still to be competitive rather than co-operative and lacked in large measure the personal contacts that bring such rich rewards*". Jordan had been impressed by the Zoological Congresses in Cambridge (1895) and Berlin (1901) in terms of potential and limitations for bringing researchers into contact. He perceived an increasing cleavage between entomologists and zoologists (Riley 1955) and felt the time had come for entomologists to fly by themselves. This gave him the impression, according to Riley, that "if entomologists could get together amongst themselves" the discipline would prosper.

Between 1904 and 1909 a 'standing committee' was formed and it deliberated on what, when and where. Karl Jordan and G Severin (Brussels Museum) were key players in the Executive of this working group. The original plan "*was to form first an international association of entomologists which it was hoped would help to bring entomologists from all parts of the world into closer touch with one another. Secondly, this association when firmly established as to organise from time to time International Congresses following the pattern set by the zoologists.*" (Riley 1955).

What triggered Brussels as the venue, and 1910, was a World Fair in that city the same year. The Fair Committee advised Professor G Severin from the Brussels Museum that it was prepared to extend financial help and facilities of various kinds.

A brief and rather quaint 'anglo-oriented' account of the first Congress appeared in Nature (1910):

"The first International Congress of Entomology was held at Brussels on August 1 - 6. The establishment of the congress was in great measure due to the initiative of Dr. Karl Jordan, of Tring [Lord Walter Rothschild's private museum], whose tact and energy have throughout contributed largely to the success of the undertaking. Having, in the first place, secured the support of leading entomologists in this country and abroad, Dr. Jordan organised, in the course of last year, a series of preliminary meetings in London, which were attended by Dr. Horn, of Berlin, M. Janet, of Paris, Prof. Poulton, F.R.S., of Oxford, and others, under the

chairmanship of Dr. F. A. Dixey, F.R.S., president of the Entomological Society of London. At these meetings it was arranged that the first congress should be held at Brussels in 1910, and local secretaries were appointed to promote the interests of the movement in all countries of the civilised world. So well did these representatives perform their part, that no fewer than 292 entomologists assembled in Brussels for the opening of the congress."

The Congress dealt mainly with taxonomic, evolutionary and general biology topics and set the scene for the Sectional System which has characterised Congresses ever since.

The chief business of the final day, according to the Nature Report, "*consisted in the winding-up address of the president, Prof. Lameere, and the selection of Oxford as the scene of the next International Congress of Entomology, to be held in 1912 with Prof Poulton, FRS as president."*

The Nature article concluded on a parochial note: "*It is satisfactory to be able to record that, of the 292 members, 67 were representatives of the United Kingdom, its colonies and dependencies. The contributions made by our countrymen to the scientific work of the congress may fairly be said to have surpassed in extent and value those of any other nation – a fact which is of good augury for the future of entomologic research within the borders of the British Empire."*

It could be fairly said that German-born Karl Jordan, although he lived his long working life in the UK, retained a healthy international perspective and would not have endorsed the parochial sentiments of the Nature summary.

Indeed, according to Riley, in a "*final characteristic short speech concluding the [second Congress in Oxford 1912] Dr Jordan pointed out that, even if entomologists held differing and sometimes antagonistic theories, they all sought the hidden truths which the study of differences between species both illuminated and obscured, and that the making of friendships, as at Brussels and Oxford, could, and often did, provide agreeable opportunities for reconciling them."* (Riley 1955). I'm sure Jordan would be able to make the same observation with all later Congresses of Entomology.

Some impacts of Congresses of Entomology

Two instances can be cited to illustrate that Congresses of Entomology have had wider impacts. In addition to the two mentioned below, numerous other specialist groups meet either before, during or after International Congresses, taking advantage of like-minded colleagues being gathered at the one time and place.

Establishment of CILB/IOBC

The idea to create an international organisation on biological control

first emerged in 1948 at the VIII International Congress of Entomology in Stockholm, Sweden. During that Congress, 11 specialists on biological control met under the auspices of IUBS (International Union of Biological Sciences) and with financial support from UNESCO. They discussed possibilities to establish an organisation able to coordinate biological control activities on an international basis. Present at this meeting were M. André (France), A.S. Balachowsky (France), Ch. Ferrière (Switzerland), J. Ghesquière (Belgium, Congo), D. Miller (New Zealand); A.J. Nicholson (Australia), S. Novicky (Austria), L.O. Parker (USA), F. Silvestri (Italy); O.H. Träcardh (Sweden) and P. Vayssière (France, Secretary General of IUBS). Initially the organisation was called CILB (Commission Internationale de Lutte Biologique). This name was subsequently changed to IOBC (International Organisation for

Biological Control). A history of this important international group can be found in Boller (2005).

International Congresses of Acarology

According to Flechtmann (2010) the idea for the First International Congress of Acarology "originated one evening during an informal discussion in the library of the Zoological Institute at the University of Vienna in August 1960. This simple beginning during the course of the XIth International Congress of Entomology in Vienna, Austria 1960 initiated the general plans. Subsequent discussions among those acarologists present resulted in the establishment of an organizing committee which was charged to consider the feasibility of an international meeting and to make positive arrangements."

The first International Congress of Acarology was held in Fort Collins, Colorado, USA in September 1963; and the XIII Congress will be held in Recife, Brazil in August 2010. The history of International Congresses of Acarology is beautifully documented on their website. It provides an excellent model for the Council of Congresses of Entomology to follow.

Documenting the History of Congresses of Entomology

Thus, by 1912, the International Congresses of Entomology were well and truly launched following the successful first two Congresses. The history of Congresses until the mid 1950s has been comprehensively and authoritatively recounted by Riley (1955). However, no systematic documentation appears to have been prepared subsequently. **This author is prepared to work to that end and would welcome any information about each Congress especially since the IX Congress in Amsterdam, 1951.** Information could be provided to maxwhi@aapt.net.au

Attempts will be made to document the interesting history of previous Congresses in the form of a series of articles which will be posted to the Daegu Congress website in the lead up to the 2012 Congress. It is envisaged that this living history will be retained on the Council website, or transferred to the websites of future Congresses of Entomology. **Entomologists are invited to make individual contributions on any aspect of previous congresses so that** we preserve and acknowledge the rich history behind the International Congresses of Entomology

References:

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Rothschild, Miriam (1983). *Dear Lord Rothschild: Birds, Butterflies & History.* Hutchinson London. pp 398.

Mayr, Ernst (1982). *The Growth of Biological Thought. Diversity, Evolution and Inheritance*. Harvard University Press: London, 1982.

Table 1. Congresses of Entomology

- I ICE, Brussels, Belgium¹ – 6 August 1910
- II ICE, Oxford University, United Kingdom, 12-17 August 1912
- III ICE, Zurich, Switzerland, 19 – 26 July 1925
- IV ICE, Cornell, USA, August 1928
- V ICE, Paris, France, 15 – 23 July 1932
- VI ICE Madrid, Spain, 6- 12 September 1935
- VII ICE Berlin, Germany, 15 – 20 August 1938
- VIII ICE Stockholm, Sweden, 8 – 15 August 1948
- IX ICE Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 17 – 24 August 1951
- X ICE Montreal, Canada, 17 – 25 August 1958
- XI ICE Vienna, Austria, 17 – 25 August 1960
- XII ICE London, United Kingdom⁶ – 16 July 1964
- XIII ICE Moscow, USSR² – 9 August 1968
- XIV ICE Canberra, Australia, 22 – 30 August 1972
- XV ICE Washington, USA, 11 – 27 August 1976
- XVI ICE Kyoto, Japan, 3 – 9 August 1980
- XVII ICE Hamburg, West Germany, 20 – 26 August 1984
- XVIII ICE Vancouver, Canada, 3- 9 July 1988
- XIX ICE Beijing, China, 28 June – 4 July 1992
- XX ICE Florence, Italy, 25 – 30 August 1996
- XXI ICE Iguacu Falls, Brazil, 20 – 26 August 2000
- XXII ICE Brisbane, Australia, 15 – 21 August 2004
- XXIII ICE Durban, South Africa, 6 – 12 July 2008
- XXIV ICE Daegu, South Korea, 19 – 25 August 2012