

change as little as possible and my ambitions are relatively straightforward: to still be around when No. 100 is reached and to have persuaded every member of the Society to contribute something, however brief, to the Newsletter by the time we celebrate its century. I hope that you will help me to achieve both of my desires.

Department of Environmental Biology, Williamson Building, The University, MANCHESTER, M13 9PL

Publish It to All the Nations

by Paul A. Selden

Life sometimes seems to be a series of punctuated equilibria: generally it runs along fairly steadily, but occasionally there are periods or days so crowded with competing events that one is spoilt for choice. Monday June 22nd was such a day: John Dalingwater and I had to decline several invitations in Manchester to attend two interesting and contrasting meetings in London.

The morning and afternoon were occupied by a seminar on electronic publishing at the Royal Society. In fact, the content of the meeting went beyond its title, for it covered not only electronic publishing *sensu stricto* — desktop publishing, and typesetting direct from hard discs — but also the transmission of selected journals worldwide on compact disc in the Adonis Project, electronic mail, electronic conferences, and electronic retrieval systems. It was enlightening to learn of the present state of the art, but intriguing that Dr Eugene Garfield (President of one of the world's major information retrieval companies for the past 25 years) should throw a well-aimed and thoughtful dash of cold water onto predictions for the future of electronic systems in publishing. He suggested that the capability of new systems is not the limiting factor, but rather their acceptability by the majority. 'What happened to the paperless office; what happened to the cashless society?' he mused.

In any normal English midsummer we might well have spent a pleasant hour or so in St James' Park before going on to our evening appointment. This year in England, 'flaming June' had a special new meaning, so instead we sheltered from the rain in 'the biggest record shop in Britain' at Piccadilly Circus.

The evening reception in the impressive library of the Linnean Society in their rooms in Burlington House was to celebrate the completion of Dr Michael Roberts' masterly *Spiders of Great Britain and Ireland* with the publication of Volume 2; it was also the author's forty-third birthday. A number of well-known members of our Society were able to attend including Eric Classey, John Cloudsley-Thompson, John and Frances Murphy and David Nellist, as well as the publishers Basil and Annette Harley and, of course, Mike and Debbie Roberts themselves. Representatives from the world of book-selling and publishing and some well-known naturalists and biologists were also present, including Paul Harding of the Biological Records Centre. Mr Basil Harley paid tribute to Mike's skill and dedication in completing such a remarkable set of books, mentioned that the previously-published volumes (1 & 3) had sold well world-wide, and said that his company was committed to keeping all three volumes in print for many years to come. He praised Debbie for her patient support, especially during the completion of Volume 2, and paid a very special tribute to Mike's

mother, who had inspired and encouraged her son's artistic efforts and who, happily, was present along with others of Mike's close relatives. Mike thanked Mr and Mrs Harley for their confidence in him and for their great help and support in the years it had taken to complete the work. He then blew out the candles on his birthday cake, splendidly and colourfully decorated with a *Diaea dorsata* (in icing!). The evening flowed rapidly on in an atmosphere of increasing conviviality, so it was with great reluctance that we had to tear ourselves away and rush to catch (only just) our last train northwards.

Department of Extra-Mural Studies, The University, MANCHESTER, M13 9PL

Zygiella stroemi (Thorell) on Oak

by Clive Hamblen

Zygiella stroemi is considered to be a rare spider in Britain, although sometimes common locally (Jones, 1981). The species has generally been found on the trunks of pines in woods but has also been found in abundance on a hut. (For some habitat records from mainland Europe, see Duffey (1953)). By 1985, there were about ten known sites for the species in Britain.

I found *Z. stroemi* in five new sites during 1986. The records are: Little Wittenham Nature Reserve, Berkshire (SU 573928, 27 May); Bucklebury Common, Berkshire (SU 575697, June); Brasenose Wood N.R. (SP 560050, 24 May)—new to Oxfordshire; Blenheim Palace Park, Oxfordshire (SP 437167, July and August); and Savernake Forest N.R. (SU 2167, 23 August)—new to Wiltshire.

I believe this spider is likely to be much more widespread than currently thought, as I have found the species on the trunks of oak (*Quercus robur*) at all these sites. At Blenheim I also found a few on horse chestnut, sycamore and even on a very old beech tree, with a large population on nearby conifers (Atlantic blue cedars—there were over a hundred webs on very large trees).

The habitat in these sites is interesting. Large populations were found at Blenheim and Brasenose. The former site is part of an S.S.S.I. with ancient woodland, very old oaks and extensive parkland, and the latter is also an ancient woodland S.S.S.I. which has a long history of coppice-management and has areas of recent coppice-with-standards in several different age classes. In both sites there are many trees with tall, exposed trunks: these are scattered in the parkland at Blenheim, and include some of the oak 'standards' and trees along the rides in Brasenose. The few specimens found at Little Wittenham were in woodland meadow areas, and at Savernake they were found along a road in the wood—again, in these cases, relatively large areas of the tree trunks were exposed to direct sunlight. It is likely that the species has some preference for trunks which provide a certain (dry?) microclimate, and/or which receive a good supply of food. Indeed, J. Newing and I have found a statistically significant bias in the number of webs towards the southern half of tree trunks.

The texture of the tree trunk is very important to *Z. stroemi*. The species has been noted to use deeply-fissured pine trunks (Jones, 1981), and the same applies to its choice of oaks and other broadleaves: as Jones found,