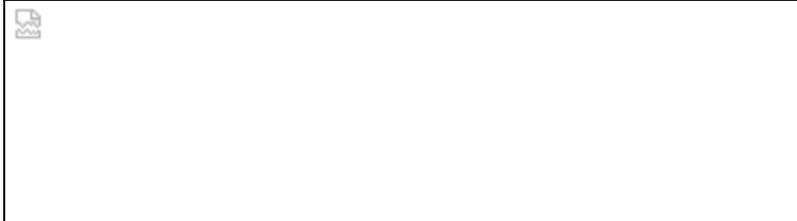


*Issue 2***NEWSLETTER** *February 1997*

*Reporting mire conservation  
across the world. Conserving  
mires, wherever they are. Your  
newsletter, your news, views,  
books, reports and meetings.*



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**Editorial**

The revamped IMCG has begun its work in Vienna. Many thanks to Eva and Michael Steiner for such wonderful and generous hospitality during the Working Group's stay.

The main function of this issue of the newsletter is to let you know what was discussed in Vienna and how the organisation is progressing. You will note that on reading the minutes, there are many action points for the Working Group, proposals for the Decision Making Group and most importantly requests to members asking for help and information - please respond. We cannot become a credible and active organisation unless we demonstrably have an active membership who are prepared to devote time and energy to the IMCG. *Could members please send their responses to Richard Lindsay (address below) by 1<sup>st</sup> April.*

Two particularly important requests are:

1. For those people who gave talks at the Kushiro Symposium, could you send your papers by April 1<sup>st</sup> (**at the latest - late papers will be rejected**) to Richard Lindsay, 79 Baden Powell Drive, Colchester, CO3 4SR, UK (Tel: ++44 976 29 1960, Fax: ++44 1206 765710 or e-mail: [Ralimeg@aol.com](mailto:Ralimeg@aol.com)).
2. We are working towards a real membership list. As part of that process we are keen to ensure that only people who want the newsletter, receive it. Therefore:

**FOR ALL THOSE WHO WANT TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER - YOU MUST SEND A NOTE/FAX /E-MAIL TO MICHAEL STEINER TELLING HIM YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER.**

And since you will be contacting Michael, you are more than welcome to send in any contributions to the newsletter at the same time. The newsletter follows the following guidelines:

1. Working Group agenda
1. Minutes of IMCG meetings
1. Working Group proposals
1. Decision Making Group decisions

1. Liaison
1. Mire protection in a country
1. News
1. Other symposia/meetings etc.
1. Discussion papers for comment
1. Letters and comment

A newsletter can only work if contributions are sent - and lots of them! So now you have the headings, please get writing. Do not worry about getting the English slightly wrong - Rob Stoneman will translate it into better (though not necessarily perfect) English; similarly, if you find it too difficult to write in English, then you could use German or Dutch (Hans Joosten will translate) or French (Phillipe Julve will translate).

Items can be sent to Michael Steiner or Rob Stoneman; and, for inclusion in the next edition, must arrive by the **end of June 1997**.

The main item in this newsletter is the agenda of the February meeting of the Working Group. If you have any additional items you wish to be discussed, please contact Michael Steiner before the **25<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

Michael's address:

Prof. Dr. G.M. Steiner, Dept of Vegetation Ecology & Conservation Ecology, The University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria. Tel. ++43 1 31336 1417. Fax. ++43 1 31336 776 or e-mail at: [gmst@pflaphy.pph.univie.ac.at](mailto:gmst@pflaphy.pph.univie.ac.at)

Rob's address:

**\*Note the e-mail change\***

Rob Stoneman, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Cramond House, Kirk Cramond, Edinburgh, EH4 6NS, Scotland. Tel. ++(0)131 3127765, Fax. ++(0)131 312 8705 or e-mail [106325.3541@compuserve.com](mailto:106325.3541@compuserve.com)

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## **Forthcoming Events**

## **IPS Events**

25 - 30th  
August 1997 *Natural and agricultural ecosystems in  
peatlands and their management.*

St Malo, France

2nd - 7th  
Nov 1997 *Peat in Horticulture - Its Use and  
Sustainability.*

Amsterdam, Netherlands

June 1998 *Restoration Workshop*

Minnesota, USA

7th - 11th  
Sept 1998 *30th Anniversary Jubilee Symposium  
of IPS.*

Jyväskylä, Finland.

6th - 11th  
Aug 2000 *11th International Peat Congress*

Québec City, Canada

Contact IPS for further details at Kuokkalanite 4, FIN 40420, Jyväskylä, Finland. Tel: ++358 41 674 042; Fax: ++358 41 677 405; e-mail [peatsocinternat@peatsoc.pp.fi](mailto:peatsocinternat@peatsoc.pp.fi)

## Other Symposia

*Forest Operations and Environmental Protection on Peatlands.* 26<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> May 1997, Finnish Forest Research Institute, Kannus Research Station, Finland. Contact: Risto Lauhanen, Finnish Forest Institute, PO Box 44, FIN 69101, Kannus, Finland. Tel: ++358 6 871 161, Fax: ++358 6 871 164, e-mail: [risto.lauhanen@metla.fi](mailto:risto.lauhanen@metla.fi).

*Conservation of Floodplains and Mires in Polesia.* 21<sup>st</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> May 1997, Minsk, Belarus. See last newsletter.

*Restoration of Fens*, end May 1997, Central Forest Biosphere Nature Reserve, Tver Oblast, Russia. See last newsletter.

*5th Symposium on the Bio-geochemistry of Wetlands*, 16<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1997, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK. See last newsletter.

## **Working Group Agenda:**

25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>February 1997

Hof Möhr, Schneverdingen, Germany

1. Mechanisms/protocols for the meeting (all)
2. Minutes of previous WG Meeting (RAL)
  - 2.1 Report on Decision-Making Group comments
  - 2.2 Formal adoption of minutes
  - 2.3 Review of Action Points (done/not done)
3. Solovetsky Meeting (Update report from Marina/Tapio?)
4. Estonia/Latvia Symposium '98 (Update report from Mati/Mara?)
5. Valdai Workshop (Update report from HJ)
6. IPS/IMCG Meeting (MS/HJ)
7. Kushiro Resolutions (RL)
8. Kushiro Proceedings (RL/B Warner)

9. IMCG Organisational Structure & Funding

9.1 Possible formal structures (RAL)

9.2 Possible funding sources (all)

9.3 Discussion (all)

10. Projects

10.1 Mire Species List (PJ)

10.2 European Mires Book (RAL)

10.3 Global classification of mires (PJ/HJ)

10.4 China workshop (RAL)

10.5 Record value (HJ)

11. Date and content of next meeting

12. Any Other Business

*If there are any other items which you wish the WG to discuss, contact Michael or Richard by 25<sup>th</sup> February.*

*Minutes*

*1st Working Group Meeting, Vienna Austria*

*13th - 15th December 1996*

**Agenda**

1. Mechanisms for the Meeting - minutes/protocols etc.

2. Minutes/protocols of the IMCG plenary session
  - formal agreement of contents
  - review of action points for discussion

#### *Review of progress*

3. IMCG Resolutions
4. IMCG Proceedings
5. Joint IMCG/IPS meetings
6. Terminology Programme - contact with IPS
7. European Mire Project
8. Mire Species List

#### *Organisation Issues*

9. Organisation Structure - charitable status etc.
10. Funding Issues - sources of funding; fiscal management etc.
11. Membership - definition; fees
12. Organisational Responsibilities for 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Field Symposia

13 Any Other Business

*Present:* Phillippe Julve (PJ), Hans Joosten (HJ), Michael Steiner (GMS), Richard Lindsay (RL) and Rob Stoneman (RS).

*Abbreviations:* Working Group (WG), Decision Making Group (DMG).

*Acknowledgement:* The Working Group is particularly grateful for the generous hospitality of Michael and Eva Steiner who hosted the meeting.

*Agenda:* The meeting followed the agenda set out in the November 1996 IMCG newsletter. No alterations to the agenda were given by IMCG members.

1.

## 2. Mechanism/Protocols for Meeting

1.

2. The WG co-opted RL, for the duration of the meeting, onto the WG and appointed him as chair of the meeting.

3. The WG appointed RS to take and compile minutes.

4. Funding of meetings was moved to item 10.

5. Agenda items 9 -12 (organisational issues) were moved up the agenda to after item 4. (editors note: for the purpose of this newsletter, I'll leave it in the original order).

6. Reporting - In principle, all discussions are open and transparent although certain items may be sent to IMCG sub-groups (project groups, decision making groups etc.) before reporting.

7. Note, WG action points are shown in **bold**, proposals for DMG decision in *italics and bold* and requests to members in *italics*. All are numbered and summaries given at the end.

## 3. The Kushiro Meeting - Minutes

1.

2. The minutes of the Kushiro symposium, published in the last IMCG newsletter, should be considered as draft until they are agreed by the DMG. DMG members must present their comments before April 1<sup>st</sup>. Note, the following amendments:

(i) Item 11: Resolutions - Add before last sentence: "Post-conference note: " and at the end of the sentence "the IMCG national representatives for Canada".

(ii) In forthcoming events - the spell checker changed Hans Joosten to Hans Justin!

(iii) Global Peat Resources - last sentence of part 1 review " It is unlikely that these emissions are countered by the

'cooling effect' of the large extent of boreal peatlands....."

should read the opposite:

"According to the review of Martikainen, the natural boreal peatlands have a "cooling effect" on the atmosphere, even when their emissions of greenhouse gases (methane, nitrous oxide) are taken into account."

(iv) In the same review, note the book costs US\$75.00 + mailing costs (Europe surface mail US\$13, Europe air mail US\$16, overseas surface mail US\$16 and overseas air mail US\$28) - from the IPS, Finland.

3. A review of the main action points (see last newsletter).
  - 1.
  2. European mire book - refer to item 7.
  3. Mire terminology - refer to item 6.
  4. Mire classification - refer to item 13.
  5. Ecological behaviour - refer to item 8.
  6. Record value - **draft discussion paper is being written by HJ (AP1).**
  7. membership - refer to item 11.
  8. IPS/IMCG meeting - refer to item 5.
  9. Solovetsky Islands Meeting - no details forthcoming from Marina Botch as yet. **AP2: GMS to contact Marina.**
  10. Chinese workshop - PJ/RL visited Wetlands International China Programme (WICP) in the summer of 1996 to talk about a GEF (Global Environment Fund) initiative and workshop. The workshop is likely to be a 'training' workshop to prepare for the GEF initiative. **AP3: RL to contact WICP.**
  11. Valdai Workshop - HJ has fixed a date - 27 May to 1 June (inclusive) and will send details to interested parties - *contact HJ (M1).*
  12. Journal and Homepage - The WG is very impressed with the Irish Peatland Conservation Council homepage and would certainly like IMCG to emulate their approaches. **GMS to contact Barry Warner for an update (AP4).** WG noted the Wader Study Group Bulletin as an example for IMCG - a copy is to be sent to Barry Warner. *If anybody has any ideas concerning a homepage or a possible IMCG journal/bulletin - contact Barry Warner (M2).*

**GMS will attempt to put the newsletter on a homepage as a start (AP5).** After a quick peruse of the internet, we found that IMCG initials were being used by the Canadian "International Metals and Chemical Group" which may have implications on how we set up a homepage.

#### 4. A review of IMCG Projects.

*It was proposed (P1) that each IMCG project should have: a project head, a working time - schedule, and a WG member to oversee progress, co-ordinate and stimulate projects.*

On-going or initiating projects (see last newsletter) are progressing as follows:

- 1.
2. Ecological Behaviour - see item 8.
3. Classification - see item 13.
4. Naturalness - HJ has published a discussion paper in the Mires Research Group Newsletter (of the British Ecological Society) - the MRG produce a great newsletter and membership is free and open - contact Dr R Meade, EN, Bullring House (2F), Northgate, Wakefield, W. Yorkshire, WF1 36J, England. *HJ would value your comments - any discussion will be published in the IMCG newsletter (M3).*
5. Record value - see 2.2.5.
6. Sustainable Peat Production - see item 5.
7. Gaps - few formal suggestions as yet although RL has established contact with some southern hemisphere mire ecologists and will continue to pursue these contacts. Nevertheless, the southern hemisphere and equatorial zones are clearly important gaps both in terms of IMCG members and, perhaps, conservation action.
8. Greenhouse Effect. No suggestions as yet; **HJ to contact Harry Vasander (AP6).**
9. Biodiversity Convention - (see 13) - **AP7: RL to contact Yaroslav Movchan who may be able to promote this project.**

#### 4. Resolutions from Kushiro

Nearly all the resolutions have now been sent although some addresses still need to be found (Canada, Ukraine and Rumania).

However, it is clear that the increasingly large post-conference burden of dealing with posing out all of the Resolutions, together with production of the Symposium Proceedings, poses significant ongoing demands on the host nation and can cause delays I

production and distribution. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that there are no formal guidelines provided by IMCG for host organisers to follow. Assuming a funded secretariat (see 10) a new system is proposed. (P2).

- 1.
2. *Resolution guidance and invites sent out one year before the symposium.*
1. *Resolutions sent to WG for English and format alterations before the symposium.*
1. *The WG will liaise with resolution proposers and national representatives (if there are any during symposia).*
1. *All resolutions will be circulated to symposium delegates for 1 - 2 days during the symposium.*
1. *Resolutions are accepted or rejected by acclamation or vote by the symposia.*
1. *Resolutions are sent from the people who signed at the symposium (P2.1) or*
  - *Resolutions sent by the Chair on behalf of the IMCG if  $\alpha$  or the DMG group agree with the resolutions (P2.2).*

This system should ensure no more resolution problems are encountered.

- 1.
2. **Kushiro Proceedings**

While uncertainty surrounds the actual mechanism whereby the proceedings will finally be published, the WG felt that it would be worth exploring a range of possible alternative methods for publication, while at the same time continuing discussions with Kushiro International Wetlands Centre. Possible alternatives include:

- 1.
  2. in an IMCG journal;
  1. in an international journal (possibly Japanese-based);
  1. another organisation's (e.g. Wetlands International) journal.
- Whatever, **RL and HJ (AP8) will investigate and all suggestions/offers are welcome (M4).**

Note that the contributions should be sent to Richard Lindsay, 79 Baden Powell Drive, Colchester, CO3 4SR, England - RL will send reminders if you have not sent yours in. Send by April 1<sup>st</sup> at the absolute latest. **The WG will be approaching referees (AP9).**

- 1.
2. **IPS/IMCG Meeting**

This meeting has been set for 12 -14<sup>th</sup> September 1997 in Papenburg or Oldenburg. 10 participants from each organisation should attend. The agenda is:

- 1.
2. Aims and Structure of IPS and IMCG.
3. Legal conventions and international legislation affecting mires.

4. Global peat and mire resources - distribution and regional variation.
5. Criteria for describing mire diversity.
6. Sustainable use of mires (this clearly excludes peat extraction).
7. Global peat resources for agricultural and industrial use.
8. Peat as a renewable resource: global and local perspectives.
9. Climatic effects of natural and exploited peatlands.
10. Peatland rehabilitation and management.
11. Peat substitutes.

Dr Becker-Platen (IPS Chairman) would like representatives from each organisation to give a short statement as a basis for discussion. The WG noted that IPS or IMCG cannot provide consistent statements representing the views of the whole organisation, as far as making choices (as opposed to facts) are concerned. Rather, it would be more appropriate that representatives from each organisation give a 5 -10 minute personal view of each topic as a basis for discussion. *HJ will be organising this and if you would like to be involved, please contact HJ (M5).* The IPS/IMCG meeting also gives an opportunity for the WG to meet - possibly near Bargerveen.

- 1.
2. **Mire Terminology Project**

IMCG and IPS believe there is a need for a better and more consistent terminology. Therefore, RL has contacted Raimo Soppo (IPS) to explore the possibilities of a collaborative project. The publication would be a series of descriptions which could be used by a wide range of differing sectors and synthesise the different words used. The primary language would be English although it would be vital to include terms in other languages. The IMCG is not primarily interested in the terminology of peat extraction - it is more appropriate for the industry to concentrate on this area.

### 3. **The European Mire Project**

Following more negotiations with John Wiley and Sons, the book will have to be expanded to change the emphasis towards the conservation status of mires in European countries. The following format is now thought appropriate:

- 1.
2. Overview of mire types, classification and distribution.

3. Country summaries.
4. Case-studies - conservation strategies adopted by selected countries.
5. International legislation and conventions.
6. Overviews of particular geographic regions.

Clearly, funding is required for an editor to co-ordinate new chapters and editing. **RL to discuss with Mické Löfroth (AP10).**

- 1.
2. **Mire Species List**

PJ has progressed this project admirably preparing an Excel file of over a 1000 mire species (optimally occurring in mires or often occurring) of the Holarctic region. The list includes occurrence in geographical regions, pH range, nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorus) demand, habitat, phytosociology (or 5 species that occur together), transgressive phytosociology and water-level. The list needs refining with the help of IMCG members - *contact PJ if you can help (M6)* - and will be published under the IMCG banner.

### 3. **Organisational Structure**

- 1.
2. Aims and Strategies

As the basis for discussion by members, the working group and the decision making group, the following aims and strategies were thought up in a brain-storming session. These are provisional and the WG would value members comments, suggestions and alterations (M7).

The aim of IMCG is provisionally proposed as:

*"To stimulate the conservation and understanding of mires around the world".*

-

It is proposed to achieve this aim through the following mechanisms:

- 
- *The creation of a professional and credible international body (see 9.2).*
- *Lobbying.*

- *Developing and evaluating conservation strategies and work.*
- *Exchanging ideas/ experience/ best practise for conservation management.*
- *Integrating mire conservation into new and existing international agreements.*
- *Promoting and evaluating inventories.*
- *Co-ordinating and stimulating co-operation and exchanging knowledge at an international level.*
- *Raising the global awareness of mires - their occurrence, values and character, through the IMCG and other organisations.*
- *Providing international support for local conservation initiatives.*
- *Stimulating support, funding and action for conservation programmes.*
- *Setting the international context for mire conservation programmes.*
- *Evaluating present-day understanding of mires.*
- *Stimulating research.*
- *Improving global communications re. mires.*
- *Co-operating with other organisations to achieve our aim.*

This list is a draft and alterations, comments, additions are needed - please send. **RL will produce a working plan, based on these proposed mechanisms, describing how the IMCG will send take this forward (AP11).**

- 1.
2. Structure

The WG discussed ways to develop and create a professional and credible organisation:

At present, the IMCG has no legal status. This needs to change as presently organisers of symposia are liable and handling funds is awkward. In Britain, IMCG could become:

- 
- *An un-incorporated association* - which is easy to set up, does not need registration although officers are liable for IMCG activities.
- *A Trust* comprising of Trustees, Benefactors and Donors which is not a direct option for the IMCG because the Trust itself only comprises of Trustees whose only function is manage and disburse funds. We could, however, have an associated Trust which assisted IMCG in its work.
- *A Limited Company* - where IMCG can trade, own property, take/defend legal proceedings and officers are not liable and so on. This needs a lawyer to set up and annual reports, financial accounts have to be published. IMCG would receive charitable status exempting it from most tax. This set-up also allows IMCG to employ somebody directly (i.e. the Secretary/Secretariat), whereas un-incorporated organisations cannot directly employ anybody although an un-incorporated organisation could have a self-employed secretariat. A limited company was favoured as most suitable by the WG should IMCG be based in Britain.
- However, IMCG could be based anywhere. In the Netherlands, IMCG could be set up as a Society or a Foundation - the main difference (strategically) is that a foundation has a board which co-opts members according to their wishes. In a society, any person can become a member provided they say they agree to the society's objections. France also offers good flexibility as accounts and annual reports only have to be published should a member ask for them (contrasts to Britain where annual reports and accounts always have to be published).

Clearly, deciding upon a legal status is complex although criteria include: tax status and exemptions, membership control, reporting and accountability, liability, nationality of officers, trading ability, registration procedures and costs etc. The WG decided it would be easiest to contact equivalent organisations (Wader Study Group, European Union of Coastal Conservation, Wetlands International, Eurosite, Birdlife International, European Environmental Bureau, for example). **RL/PJ to ask EHF members for structure details (AP12).**

- 1.
2. A Permanent Secretariat

*It was proposed (P3) that RL forms the permanent secretariat.* This will require funding of ca. £35 000 p.a. (£15000 (3 days a week salary), £5000 (overheads), £10 000 (travel) and £5000 Information technology). Various funding options (WWF, GEF, consultancy work, IUCN, private foundations) were considered. **RL will investigate (AP13).** Southampton University have provisionally offered. RL office accommodation for the secretariat.

Note that the provision of a funded secretariat requires a legal organisational structure (see 9.2).

- 1.
2. **Present Funding Arrangements**

It was recognised that RL, in particular, and other WG members are already spending their own money for IMCG

meetings. Should IMCG receive funding, money directly spent by RL on IMCG business (receipts required) will be back-paid to RL. In the meantime, members are encouraged to donate to IMCG to cover costs of meetings and RL's expenses. ***It is proposed that RL sets up an IMCG bank account. (P4) to take donations and any spare money (not much but RL will investigate (AP14)) relating to past meetings.***

The fee for the European Habitats Forum (£100) is again (2nd year remaining) to be paid by HJ (many thanks) but will be repaid should funding or donations allow. Once membership is formalised (see 11), it is probable that a membership fee will be levied from members.

### 3. Membership

Who becomes a member has, in the past, related to who goes on the bi-annual symposia. Presently the IMCG membership is a) not wide enough, b) geographically clustered and c) very vague - (are we members?). However, to sort the issue out, the organisational structure (see 9.2) needs defining first. *However, it was provisionally considered (M8 - comments requested) that two types of member would be incorporated:*

- 1.
2. *IMCG supporters who: receive the newsletter, can donate, can comment on IMCG issues but do not have voting rights.*
3. *Active members - these can undertake the above but do have voting rights and would form the core of the biennial symposia delegates. Active members may be nominated as national contact points to co-ordinate IMCG activities in their country.*

Members are invited to join by other members provided they provide a letter of motivation - to ensure they are genuinely sympathetic to the aim and strategies of the IMCG and can contribute in a positive way to the work in the field of mire conservation. The letter of motivation should include an overview of their activities and interests regarding mire conservation. A summary would then be published in the newsletter to introduce the new members.

Whilst the process of formalising and legalising the IMCG structure continues (see 9.2), the WG felt that we should work towards a defined membership. *Therefore, if you would like to carry on receiving this newsletter, you must inform RS or GMS (M9). (see 1st page of this newsletter). The membership is also urged to consider what new members should be involved in IMCG especially in parts of the world where IMCG membership lacking (southern hemisphere, tropics). GMS will prepare an updated membership list with an overview of global representation for the WG (AP15).*

- 1.
2. **Organisational Responsibilities for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Symposia**

The previous symposia have all been extremely successful thanks to the dedication of the host organisers. However, the WG proposed (P5) that clear areas of responsibility are given to selected people before the next symposia to ensure smooth and effective (in terms of IMCG aims) symposia. These are:

- 1.
2. *administration of resolutions and declarations (see 3);*
3. *fund-raising - although still the primary responsibility of the organiser, tasks will be co-ordinated by a fund-raising team;*

4. *co-ordination of the symposium conference programme;*

5. *co-ordination of the conference proceedings - outlet, funding, editing etc.*

A preliminary notice of the Estonia/Latvia symposium will be posted in the September newsletter including dates, arrival and departure points, approximate costs etc. The WG will meet in Latvia/Estonia next winter for symposia discussions. Preparatory actions for the WG are:

**AP16: RL to contact Mati Illomets and Mara Pakalne to prepare an update for the February WG meeting.**

**AP17: PJ and RL to look for funding possibilities at the EHF/EC DGXI meeting in Brussels (17/12/96).**

The WG are still unsure of the relationship between the proposed Canadian 2000 symposium and IPS Congress. **AP18: GMS to contact Barry Warner for more detailed discussions at the end of February.**

1.

2. **Any Other Business**

1.

2. Global Classification of Mires

Following on from the Ramsar success last year, we now need a global classification at an appropriate level for the Ramsar Convention and IMCG aims. Accordingly, **RL will talk to Tim Jacobs at IUCN (AP19); and HJ will investigate funding for an international conference on the subject in 1998 (AP20).** *Any ideas send to PJ (M10).*

3. Possible IMCG Comment re. University of Neuchatelle

A proposal to close the institute where Alexandre Buetler has carried out his mire research was brought to the attention of the WG. The WG expressed concern about this, but felt that letters of support for the institute from IMCG members in their personal capacity would be more appropriate than a formal IMCG response. IMCG's role is to alert its membership to such proposals.

4. Date and Place of Next Meeting

The next WG meeting will take place in conjunction with a bog restoration workshop in Schmeverdingen (Lower Saxony, Germany) from 26 February to 1 March 1997. **HJ will contact organisers to check on costs (AP21).**

• **Summary of Action Points**

Code	Person(s)	Action	Subject

AP1	HJ	Paper	Record value of mires
AP2	GMS	Contact M.Botch	Solovetsky Island workshop
AP3	RL	Contact WICP	Chinese workshop
AP4	GMS	Contact B.Warner	Journal and homepage
AP5	GMS	Homepage	Newsletter on the web
AP6	HJ	Contact H.Vasander	Greenhouse effect
AP7	RL	Contact Y.Movchan	Biodiversity Convention
AP8	RL/HJ	Investigation	Kushiro proceedings
AP9	WG	Contact referees	Kushiro proceedings
AP10	RL	Contact M.Lofroth	European mires book
AP11	RL	Paper	IMCG working plan
AP12	RL/PJ	Contact EHF	Management structure
AP13	RL	Investigation	Secretariat funding
AP14	RL	Investigation	Spare funds
AP15	GMS	Paper	Membership

AP16	RL	Contact M.Illomets & M.Pakalne	7 <sup>th</sup> symposium
AP17	PJ/RL	Contact EHF	7 <sup>th</sup> symposium
AP18	GMS	Contact B.Warner	8 <sup>th</sup> symposium
AP19	RL	Contact T.Jacobs	Classification
AP20	HJ	Investigation	Classification conference
AP21	HJ	Contact workshop organisers	Next WG meeting

- 

### Summary of Proposals

Code	Proposal
P1	Organising IMCG projects
P2	Protocol for resolution preparation
P3	Creating a permanent secretariat
P4	Setting up a bank account
P5	Responsibilities for symposium organisation.

•

### Summary of Requests to Members for Particular Actions

Code	Action	Subject
M1	Contact HJ	Valdai Workshop
M2	Contact B.Warner	Homepage or journal
M3	Contact HJ	Naturalness
M4	Contact RL/HJ	Kushiro proceedings
M5	Contact HJ	IMCG/IPS symposium
M6	Contact PJ	Mire species list
M7	Contact RL	Aims and mechanisms of IMCG
M8	Contact RL	Types and criteria for membership
<b>M9</b>	<b>Contact GMS - Everybody must do this.</b>	<b>Receiving the newsletter.</b>
M10	Contact PJ	Classification

## The Ramsar Convention

### Peatland Workshop Proceedings, Brisbane 1996

Early morning of March 18, 1996, found two seriously jet-lagged people stumbling around the vast and impressive Brisbane Conference Centre in Australia, trying to prepare a room for an unknown number of people to talk about peatland conservation issues. Clayton Rubec had just arrived from Canada, and Richard Lindsay had arrived a couple of days earlier from Britain, but because the "*International Workshop on Global Mire and Peatland Conservation*" was to be held on the day before the opening of the 6th Ramsar Conference of Contracting Parties, it was not at all clear how many delegates would be willing to overcome the effects of jet-lag and attend this workshop as well. Maybe there would be just the six speakers, talking to each other? Or maybe the room wouldn't be big enough? (Actually it was vast, so fewer worries there.) In the event, an encouragingly large number of delegates came for all or part of the workshop, which boded well for the next stage.... influencing the Ramsar Conference itself.

The Workshop was the brainchild of Clayton Rubec, who had been busy over the last two years developing the themes of the Trondheim and Edinburgh Declarations into something that could be incorporated into the Ramsar Convention. It is therefore not surprising that the theme of the workshop was "peatlands and their significance for the principles of the Ramsar Convention". The six speakers began with Clayton himself, who opened with a review of the peatland resource. Ed Maltby then talked about peatland values and functions, Olav Nord-Varhaug reviewed the themes of the Trondheim and Edinburgh Declarations, Raimo Soppo looked at peatlands from the perspective of commercial development, Aca Sugandhy provided a view from tropical peatland regions, and finally Richard Lindsay outlined a proposed action plan for peatlands within the context of the Ramsar Convention.

The Proceedings of this Workshop have now been collated by Clayton Rubec and published via the North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Canada). Rather than simply reproducing the papers given by the speakers, the Proceedings give a broader view of the Workshop and its subsequent influence on the Ramsar Conference and the Convention itself.

Clayton's paper looks at the global peatland resource, and then puts the activities of Ramsar on behalf of peatlands around the world into this broad context - with interesting results. Clayton strikingly illustrates the scale to which peatlands have been overlooked even by something as wetland-friendly as the Ramsar Convention. There is then a short paper by Richard Lindsay. It is the text of his "Themes for the Future intervention", delivered during the Ramsar Conference Plenary Session, and introducing Recommendation 6.1 "The Conservation of Peatlands" for consideration and (hopefully) approval by the Contracting Parties. This text was developed from the findings of the Peatland Workshop. Olav Nord-Varhaug, from the Directorate for Nature Management, Norway, then looks at the origins and content of the Trondheim and Edinburgh Declarations, and presents the view of at least one Contracting Party to Ramsar and sponsor of the Peatland Recommendation 6.1. Giving a rather different but no less important perspective, Raimo Soppo, from the IPS, then gives a view of peatland conservation opportunities from partnerships with the IPS and commercial industry. Aca Sugandhy, Assistant Minister for Policy in the Ministry of Environment, Indonesia, then gives a valuable account of peatland conservation in the tropics. He looks at the influences which determine the success of peatland conservation strategies in these regions, and emphasises the importance of tropical regions for global conservation programmes. Clayton Rubec then introduces the agreed text of the Peatland Recommendation 6.1, as finally incorporated into the text of the Ramsar Convention by the Conference of Contracting Parties. Finally, Richard Lindsay considers the opportunities for peatland conservation which exist within the Ramsar Strategic Plan (to which Contracting Parties have formally committed themselves). He presents a draft Action Plan for peatland conservation through Ramsar, based on the themes provided by the Strategic Plan. The Action Plan is designed to provide a number of opportunities for a wide range of organisations and authorities to contribute to improved peatland conservation programmes around the world.

The Proceedings are published in partnership with five other organisations, including the IMCG, so our logo appears on the front cover. It is available, free of charge, from Secretariat, North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Canada) Suite 200, 1750 Courtwood Crescent Ottawa, Ontario Canada K1A 0H3

This is definitely one publication to have on your shelf.....

## News

### Russia warms to increased use of peat fuel.

Saveliev in *Production situation in the Russian peat industry. - reasons for slowdown and prospects* writes of an increase in the use of peat for fuel as a result of increasing gas, coal and timber prices in Russia. It is planned that peat for power plants will rise to 27 million tons by year 2000 - Karelia, Omsk, Novosibirsk and St Petersburg taking the brunt. Compare this to only 3 million tons of fuel peat used in 1994. No slowdown here!

(IPS)

### Peat Surfers

Whilst this editor struggles to bring the Scottish Wildlife Trust into the information age, most of you are more advanced. So peat surfers, have a look at these:

- 1.
2. [www.bgr.de](http://www.bgr.de) (Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources - Germany)
1. [http:// www.peatmoss.com/pm-me3.html](http://www.peatmoss.com/pm-me3.html) (Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association)
1. [www.torvproducenterna.se](http://www.torvproducenterna.se) (The Swedish Peat Producers Association)
1. [www.iufro.boku.ac.at](http://www.iufro.boku.ac.at) (The Union of Forest Research Associations IUFRO)
1. [www.aoife.indigo.ie/~ipcc/](http://www.aoife.indigo.ie/~ipcc/) (Irish Peatland Conservation Council Homepage)
1. [www.svebio.se](http://www.svebio.se) (Swedish Bioenergy Association SVEBIO)
1. [www.aka.fi/silmu/peatl.htm](http://www.aka.fi/silmu/peatl.htm) (SILMU. The Finnish Research Programme on Climate Change. Research area: Peatlands. Mire ecosystems contain large carbon stores.
1. [www.netcallinteractive.ie/holiday/visits/kildare/rathanga/peatland/peat2.htm](http://www.netcallinteractive.ie/holiday/visits/kildare/rathanga/peatland/peat2.htm) (Peatland World - Lullymore - Bog of Allen - Rathangan - Co. Kildare - Ireland)
1. [mentor.eorc.nasda.go.jp/Gallery/Japan/Hokkaido/kushiro\\_02.html](http://mentor.eorc.nasda.go.jp/Gallery/Japan/Hokkaido/kushiro_02.html) (Comparison between SAR image of Kushiro mire and vegetation map from LANDSAT TM data.)
1. [h2osparc.wq.ncsu.edu/info/wetlands/termtab.html](http://h2osparc.wq.ncsu.edu/info/wetlands/termtab.html) (Common names for types of palustrine wetlands)
1. [nigec.ucdavis.edu/publications/annual194/midwestern/project08.html](http://nigec.ucdavis.edu/publications/annual194/midwestern/project08.html) (Midwestern Regional Center Director's Report. J.C. Randolph, Director. An Investigation of the Physical and Biogeochemical Processes Controlling Methane...)

(GMS)

## IMCG Goes Surfing

Once Rob manages to e-mail the newsletters across to Michael, we will set up Web Page. Our address will be:  
[sparc4.pph.univie.ac.at/imcg.htm](mailto:sparc4.pph.univie.ac.at/imcg.htm)

Watch this space.

## Nature Conservation through partnership in the Baltic.

### The EUCC Baltic Expert Meeting

*Conservation strategies for the south and east Baltic coastal wetlands.*

*Summary and conclusions*

Experts from Germany, Denmark, Netherlands, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania discussed the nature conservation problems of Baltic coastal wetlands at the EUCC expert meeting held at Klaipeda, Lithuania. 25 - 28 coasts September 1996. They recommend the following:

The coastal floodplains, fens and bogs of the south and east Baltic region are of crucial importance for the conservation of biological diversity in the Baltic sea area. These habitats are characterised by highly dynamic ecological processes, support numerous plant and animal species, play an important role as resting sites of migratory birds on the palearctic flyway and have other important functions - as sinks for nutrients, climate gases (especially carbon dioxide) and other substances. Accordingly they are important for cleaning coastal waters. Peatlands are highlighted as particularly significant for water quality management and climate regulation. Exploitation via drainage and intensive agriculture, causes these ecosystems to lose these functions and contribute considerably to the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea.

The current status of the coastal wetlands give reasons for deep concern. Summaries follow:

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- In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany), 36,800 out of 43,400 hectares of coastal floodplains and greenlands have been dyked or drained in the last few decades. Most of these areas, about 75 %, are coastal fens, with peat layers of 0.3 up to 12 m.
- The Nemunas delta (Russian and Lithuania) - an outstanding estuary with some of the largest and most valuable floodplains of the Baltic region. Today, dyke construction prevents natural flooding of 50,500ha on the Lithuanian side. The Russian side still supports a large area of unique and valuable alder forest.
- The Latvian coast is characterised by a number of shallow coastal lakes, of which Lake Engure, Lake Pape, and Lake Kanieris are of international importance and coastal meadows which of national importance. These habitats are affected by

urbanisation, nutrient inputs from agricultural and municipal source and land reclamation projects.

- The Estonian coastline has many different habitat types including coastal meadows, alvars, species-rich fens, woodland meadows and floodplains. All have been seriously affected by land reclamation leaving little wetland. The meadows are particularly affected by abandonment and subsequent succession. The loss of these meadows would have a serious impact on Dunlin as they currently host 25% of the Baltic's breeding population.

Nature conservation strategies for coastal floodplains, fens and bogs should be based on the following, world wide accepted principles:

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- Wise use principles, as implemented by the Ramsar-convention (1971). Wise use is defined according to Recommendation 3.3 approved by the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar-Convention in 1987 as the sustainable utilisation of wetlands for benefits of humankind in a way compatible with the maintenance of natural properties of the ecosystems.
- Sustainability principles - defined as that kind of use of natural resources in which the take off from the environment does not exceed natural production or substitution and in which the carrying capacity of the environment for reception of substances is not overcharged.

In this context, nature conservation strategies for coastal floodplains, fens and bogs should also follow Article 8 of the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (1992) and article 4 of the *Framework Convention on Climate Change*, concentrating on: the protection of ecosystems, natural habitats and maintenance of viable populations of species in natural surroundings; the rehabilitation and restoration of degraded ecosystems and recovery of threatened species; compatibility between present uses and the conservation of biological diversity; and the conservation and improvement of sinks and accumulation sites for greenhouse gases.

Taking into account these internationally agreed basic principles and aims, the priority demands for wetland policies in the south and east Baltic region are:

#### 1. Restoration of poldered areas

Agricultural management of poldered areas is not sustainable because of the loss of habitat, irreversible soil degradation and discharge of greenhouse gases. Such management can only be implemented with subsidies as the costs of dyke and ditch maintenance and pumps is higher than the profit on production.

#### 2. Meadow Management

Creation of appropriate conditions for sustainable agricultural management of semi-natural coastal meadows. Traditional land use forms, especially grazing and mowing, have considerably increased habitat and species diversity of the Baltic coastal zone. Today, many rare and threatened species are predominantly linked to these semi-natural habitats. The continuation of traditional agricultural management methods is, therefore, considered essential. Examples in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Nature Conservation are successful examples.

#### 3. Conservation of Coastal Lakes

Drainage and land reclamation projects should not be executed on or near coastal lakes. Areas which were subject to such activities in the past shall be restored wherever possible. Negative impacts to coastal lakes by nutrient inputs from agricultural, municipal and industrial sources shall be avoided or reduced. Also construction activities in the surrounding of coastal lakes may impair their ecological value and therefore shall be avoided.

#### 4. Conservation of Raised Bogs

Raised bogs in the coastal zone area are found in the Peene mouth area(Germany), the Nemunas delta (Lithuania/Kaliningrad

region) and Kemeru area (Latvia). They are especially endangered by drainage and subsequent peat excavation. These activities should be avoided or at least not extended.

### 5. Public Participation

In order to achieve nature conservation aims public acceptance and support is needed. For this reason involvement of, and co-operation with the local population in the development and implementation of nature conservation strategies for coastal wetlands is needed.

## The World Heritage of Kamchatka

Four million ha of Kamchatka was given World Heritage Site status by UNESCO in December 1996. Much of this land is mire. On the west coast, the nature reserve includes a 2000km by 50 km strip of blanket bog along the coast. In the mountainous eastern area, huge percolating mires composed of sedge and hypnaceous mosses, tens of thousands ha in extent, are included alongside ancient lake mires, sloping mires and spring mires. The mires are often mesotrophic or eutrophic because of the frequent tephra layers intermixed with the peat. *Hammarbya paludosa* is particularly abundant. (HJ)

## Natural Regeneration of Finnish Bogs

In the Boreal zone, a spontaneous regeneration of bog vegetation may take place within 30-50 years. Roderfeld, Vasander and Tuittila report in *Telma* (26, 223-235) how peat accumulating vegetation has re-established on Klaukkala Bog which was partly or superficially cutover until 1971. "Prerequisites for regeneration are a sufficiently thick remaining peat layer, a high and stable water level, the presence of an adequate diaspore source, and proper physical and chemical properties of the remaining peat soil." The authors are less optimistic about the regeneration chances of modern milled peat extraction methods. "A regeneration after peat extraction is possible more quickly under Finnish climatic and environmental conditions than in north-western Germany, provided conditions similar to those of Klaukkalan Isosuo are present", they conclude. Given the conditions of the site at Klaukkala, things would also work out much better in Germany, I would guess. (HJ)

## Vanishing Peat in Belarus

Peatland covered 2.4 million ha across 9,192 sites in Belarus. Of this 300,000 ha have been cutover, 1,000,000 ha drained for agriculture with 300,000 ha protected for nature. Present peat extraction accounts for 15-18 million tonnes per year: 10-12million for agriculture, 4-5million for fuel. This rate of extraction is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Prof. Lishtvan, the leading Belarussian peat expert, commented "although peat is regenerating, it cannot be considered as a renewable resource". (*Telma*, 26, 163-170)

## Lower Saxony Continues to Rewet

Over 30,000 ha of Germany's Lower Saxony bogs (16%) are (24,000 ha) or have been subject to peat extraction. All of this should be

renaturated according to the National Mire Conservation Programme (1981, 1986). To date, 6,500 ha of industrially cut-over bog have been regenerated through re-wetting. (*Telma*, 26, 237-246)

## Requests

As chair of IPS Commission VII (Peatland Forestry), Juhani Päivänen is compiling a mailing list for all those interested in peatland forests as a renewable natural resource. Free of charge for IPS members. Promises a annual/bi-annual Newsletter. Contact Juhani, Dept Forest Ecology, Box 24FIN 00014, Helsinki University, Finland. Tel ++358 9 191 7680, Fax ++358 9 191 7605, e-mail juhani.paivanen@helsinki.fi.

## New Books

### Proceedings of the 10<sup>th</sup> International Peat Congress

The congress held at Bremen last summer (May 27<sup>th</sup> - June 2<sup>nd</sup>) has been published in four volumes:

Abstracts US\$20.00

Proceedings US\$40.00

Summary Papers US\$17.00

Late Contributions US\$17.00

plus mailing costs. Order from IPS (see IPS Events above).

## Peatlands in Finland

This book covers:

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- Peatlands as a significant element in Finnish nature.
  
- Peatlands as a valuable ecological resource.

- Peatlands and peat in the Finnish economy.
- Options for managing harvested peatlands.
- Environmental aspects of peatland utilization.

Order from Finnish Peat Society at the IPS address (see IPS events above). Cost: FIM170.00 plus mailing costs.

## **Global Mire and Peatland Conservation Proceedings of an International Workshop**

Now available, free of charge, from Secretariat, North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Canada) Suite 200, 1750 Courtwood Crescent Ottawa, Ontario Canada K1A 0H3

## **Wetlands on CD**

Steve Zoltai writes:

"This fall I received a pamphlet from China, announcing a CD-ROM entitled "Wetlands in China". It describes 220 wetlands in terms of: 1. Basic information; 2. Regional environment; 3. Biodiversity and conservation biology; 4. Wetland conservation and study. It was developed by East China Normal University in Shanghai and costs US\$100.00."

Steve Zoltai also has his pictures on picture CD published by Compics CP. Contact Steve if you are interested.

Compics are also interested in publishing a European Mire CD collection - again, contact Steve if you are interested.

## **The Bogs of Ireland Book Review**

Feehan, J. and O'Donovan, G. (1996) *The Bogs of Ireland. An Introduction to the Natural, Cultural and Industrial Heritage of Irish Peatlands*. The Environmental Institute, University College, Dublin, 518 p, I£48.

This huge book gave me something nice to read over the long Christmas evenings. My overall impression was of an overturned bookcase: a wealth of information spread almost at random - some papers unrecognisably damaged, valueless pamphlets lying around but, in between, beautiful individual volumes that are real collector items. The book is a bad product of this era of word processing. The authors seem to have gathered as many items as possible which relate to bog, in its widest sense (the concepts of bog, mire, and peatland are all mixed up), and then reshuffled them into some broad categories, some edited by one author, others by the other, without either keeping a broad overview. The book is filled with details, of which the sense remains obscure, without distinction in importance and coherence and, too often, collected in chapters without decent structure. The book is slovenly in references and the absence of references in the text is particularly annoying. A list "References and Further Reading" can be found at the end of each chapter, but not all references mentioned in the chapter are listed in the reference list (these references do occur in the list of other chapters...). The collected references, however, provide a good overview on all aspects of Irish mires and peatlands

Chapter 1-4 are concerned with destructive utilisation of bogs.

Chapter 1, "Saving the Turf" covers manual and machine cutting of peat. There is little context or cohesion to the chapter but nice examples are given.

The second chapter, "Reclaiming the Bogs" is also anecdotal and without a historical line or context.

Chapter 3, "Mechanical Harvesting of Peat: The Early Days" strangely starts with the early history of peat extraction. Surprising, since Chapter 1 dealt with mechanical harvesting. An essay on anorganic geochemistry of peat is included - why? Guichardin of 1528 is mentioned as "probably the earliest treatise on the use of peat as a fuel" (p.73) whilst in Chapter 1, three older historical sources on that subject have already been mentioned. Moss litter is wrongly described as being "made up of the moss, *Sphagnum cuspidatum*" (p.80). Several new inventions and companies are mentioned without assessing the importance of these developments - its probably small given the peat industry is littered with new inventions, patents and companies many of little historical importance. The chapter, though, ends with a good overview of Irish peat extraction literature.

Chapter 4 is titled "The Turf Development Board and Bórd na Monáí". On p.122 the Bórd is said to have been founded in 1948 whilst on p.124, the company is said to have originated from the Turf Development Board in 1946 - chronologically the chapter is a mess.

So on to the "Nature of Bogs" - Chapter 5. Here, I felt the authors had not really got at the nature of bogs or, at least, not as I understand it. Wrong information is given a dangerous dimension. Consider: "It might indeed be argued that because actively-growing young bogs are better at fixing atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, consideration should be given to the stripping away of old bogs and restoring the active carbon sink of vigorously regenerating peat areas" (p.154). One might ask what happens to the carbon from those stripped bogs....

I think many mire ecologists would also disagree with these statements "areas of raised bog which have swollen out beyond the boundaries of their original lake basins are called intermediate bogs" (p.158) or "the plant communities of fen are assigned in phyto-sociological terms to the order *Tofieldietalia*" (p.175-176). The use of the term "sapropeh" (p.172) and "ecoprogeous earths" - different terms (I guess from different books) for the same subject - "egytjaí" further illustrates the overturned bookcase feel to the book.

Examples of this type of inconsistency abound. On p.184, it is stated that "much doubt has been cast on the general validity" of the regeneration cycle concept and yet is followed on p.230 by mention of *Eriophorum angustifolium* occupying "a niche in the early pool stage of the regeneration cycle" and (p.291) *Rhynchospora alba* "in the regeneration cycle ... at the stage where the pools have just disappeared". And on p.292 they write of *Sphagnum magellanicum* "follows *Sphagnum cuspidatum* in the hollow to hummock succession". In other parts it is difficult to discern whether the regeneration complex concerns spatial variation or temporal alternation. The chapter ends with a part on "the growth of new bogs". (odd - a paragraph with the same name in Chapter 16 mentions *Sphagnum fuscum* as an important species in Irish peat cuttings!).

Consider another strange statement: "The net production of dry matter by *Sphagnum* is comparable with that of other plant communities: it may be as much as 50% more than grassland under optimal conditions" (p.196). Reading on to p.291, it becomes clear where this odd statement is derived from, "A study of *Sphagnum* productivity in northern England estimated that net production of dry matter .. by *Sphagnum papillosum* was 3t/ha/yr, compared to 2t/ha/yr in adjacent grassland." Illusions about the productivity of bogs are fed further by the remark, "moss peat in Ireland has been known to accumulate at a rate of a meter in twenty years". I would not disagree with the conclusion that "under the right conditions, moss peat could be grown and harvested as a crop, and that its exploitation need not be the depletion of a highly valuable but limited and essentially non-renewable resource." I think, however, that it is better to restrict oneself to realistic production/accumulation values (that are also presented).

Chapters 6-8 deal with "Plant Life on the Bog" divided into "Vascular Plants", "Trees on the Bog" and "Mosses and Liverworts (Bryophytes)". Again, inconsistencies - scientific names of vascular plant taxa are missing (partly resolved through the use of key in the Appendix) whilst scientific names for birds and mammals are included.

Of interest in Chapter 6 is a part on "trampling, overgrazing and erosion" which illustrates the effect of EU landuse policy. It describes how the introduction of EU headage payments for sheep has led to stocking rates of up to 10 times the normal carrying capacity for blanket bog leading to rapid and widespread erosion of peat and vegetation. Since 1995, farmers have been paid £31 per ewe for removing sheep from degraded areas. Quite why this essay is included in this chapter is not clear; hardly any mention is made of plant taxa and their descriptions are without any ecological coherence.

Under the topic "some aquatic plants in bogs" (p.247), we strangely find "edyí" and "doppleriteí". Too little attention is paid to the special amphiatlantic species *Eriocaulon* in Irish bog waters. Chapter 7 contains critical remarks with regard to mire afforestation. In

chapter 8, inconsistent nomenclature is used, e.g. using *S. palustre* and *S. cymbifolia*.

Chapter 9, *ëFungi, lichens and algaeí* on the bog, is interesting because in similar books, little is said about these groups. Again, the concept of bog is extraordinarily wide, including meadows on cutover bog and conifer plantations.

Chapters 10 and 11 on animal life gives a good overview of the biodiversity of Irish bogs (and fens and other types of peatland) although the biodiversity is not evaluated in terms of other biotypes or of other countries. It seems overdone to mention *Dama dama* and *Cervus nippon* as "occasional visitors to bogs" (p.343). Instead, mention the otter.

Chapter 12, *ëWater in Bogsí* is another rather incoherent set of paragraphs rambling from one subject to the next - reciting facts which are often misleading or wrong. Rhyzopods, and taxa like Euglena and Peridinium are wrongly presented as Protozoa (fig 12.9, p.413).

The archive of peat is split into three parts (chapters 13-15): *ëAnnals of the Unwritten Pastí*, *ëChanging Climate, Buried Forests and Drowned Bogsí* and *ëA Treasure of Archaeologyí*. The logic of this split is unclear and errors continue. On p.435, the Grenzhorizont is called "*widespread and synchronous*" contradicted (rightly) later in the chapter.

The last chapter is perhaps the most important: *ëThe Future of the Bogsí*. It deals with conservation policy, present threats to bogs and the future of bogs given "*global climate change*". Two items are of special interest to mire conservationists: the attitudes on which conservation measures are based and the future role of cutover bogs in the landscape.

Conservationists are picked out for criticism: "*If developers have been marrow-minded during this half-century ..., many conservationists have been correspondingly short-sighted, failing to see the whole spectrum of peatland heritage and failing to articulate a policy that was adequately grounded in reality.*" (p.480). "*Conservationists may try to acknowledge the other point of view but cannot easily or comfortably or even sympathetically do so, because the bog is not their livelihood.... The fact that many of those who are most ardently concerned about the conservation of bogs are ëoutsidersí in some sense or other is exploited by some of those who stand to gain most from development: .. increasing the suspicion .. that heritage is for the elite few who have nothing better to do than study flowers and old ruins, and is no concern of ours. It is a suspicion which seriously damages the growth of an awareness that the heritage of the bogs is the heritage of all: and indeed primarily the heritage of those who live and work among them.*" (p.481).

I recognise these experiences, but I think it is wrong to blame the pioneer conservationist. Having grown up with 40% of all bog remnants of the Netherlands within 5km distance, I myself did not notice their value until I had gone to study in the *ëbig cityí*. I returned as a conservationist: a lunatic and a traitor in the eyes of most fellow-villagers. How can something that has always been there be so valuable? How can abundant bogland be rare? Or a normal part of daily life be special? You always need *ëoutsidersí* to provoke paradigmatic shifts in thoughts and attitudes.

That fate is shared both by pioneer bog conservationists and bog *ëdevelopersí*, as my grandfather, who belonged to the latter group, had experienced. Stimulating a heritage consciousness in the local people is an important but difficult strategy for conservation. All *ëheritageí* is to a large extent an artificial construction; what we value will be completely different from the bog world of its daily *ëparticipantsí*.

As one old guy from my Peel area said,

*"Getting up, at three or four o'clock in the morning followed by two hours of walking, as I have been doing for a long time in the Old Peel; that is a long way, and we did not have bicycles in that time. And then working hard the entire day. Hard, I tell you. The 4 litre jar we took never lasted. And in the afternoon we were still thirsty. And when it is getting dark, homeward, another two hours of walking. And then, with evening food in the belly, to bed, behind the wife. And then, in the good days, you could go home with some Guilders on Saturdays. Only the men working in the peat would get American bacon, to keep them on their legs. And, if you then had twelve young ones as I had then, then you would know what the Peel is."*

*ëHeritageí* is a concept that may selectively be used by both bog conservationists and exploiters. The one group values the things the other has destroyed to gain something else. Both the lost bog and the exploitation of it becomes part of our heritage. What we want for the future, however, is a choice, that is not totally constrained by what has happened in the past. The choice should be made through deliberation. In our society, the short term reality of individual socio-economic interests often prevails over society's long term nature conservation interest; a choice which is particularly damaging to bogs since the damage is often irreversible. Weighing the interests of the individual against the interests of nature conservation is not a meaningful exercise since the spatial, temporal and functional scales are not compatible. These deliberations should always take place at a *ëhigherí* level and will, therefore, always involve *ëoutsidersí* from a local point of view.

Despite the increase in public awareness surrounding bogs, large threats remain. The authors point to "*the increase in the number of small turf-cutting machines operated by private developers ... (causing) ... the majority of intact small bogs, which might have seemed safe for posterity twenty years ago, are safe no longer.*" (p.483). The authors plead that "*all peatland development should be preceded by an environmental impact assessment and the submission and approval of a specific and professional plan for rehabilitation.*" (p.485).

Interesting also is their plea for attention to the ecological vitality of cutover bogs as "*networked islands of ecological diversity*", which "*can provide the experience of nature in the Midland landscape of a future time when the reserves will be museums, largely off limit.*" (p.486-487). "*They will not be the same bogs but will be living, ecologically vital and rich, growing alongside the remains of the ancient, mature bogs which will be struggling against*

*climatic change like ancient oaks against the centuries beyond their maturity: revered and cared for but no longer compelled to bear the hope of the future alone." (p.488).*

Small bogs are important as are cutover bogs but the real Irish loss is probably most eloquently expressed by the Father of Irish bog conservation J.J. Moore (1982),

*"When I wandered over the raised bogs of the Midlands as a student in the 1950s, I enjoyed an experience which is impossible to have anymore - the experience of being isolated in a vast brown ocean of bog, extending to the horizon all sides, where the only landmarks were church steeples. One always needed to carry a compass in these vast areas. This experience can no longer be enjoyed since all these larger bogs up to 10km in diameter have now been cut. At present we have no un-drained raised bog left which is no more than 300 ha in extent".*

Ireland defiantly deserves a place on the long list of European countries that have gone too far in peatland exploitation. And yet the end is not in sight. Hopefully, this book may continue towards the end.

For that purpose, a wealth of detail and analysis will not suffice. Stressing the beauty of the bog landscape must be an additional strategy. The cover of the book says, "*Superb colour plates illustrate the flora and fauna in particular*". And yet what I really missed is a good, impressive picture of a bog: an Irish bog.

**Hans Joosten, Greifswald.**

## 8<sup>th</sup> IMCG Symposium

### Solovetskie Islands

This symposium has now been arranged and is to run from 28<sup>th</sup> July to 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1997. Accommodation and meal costs are between US\$22-\$30 per day. Note these islands can be fairly easily accessed by train - arriving at Ken.

Please contact Marina Botch for more details at Komarov Botanical Institute, Popova Str. 2, 197376 St Petersburg, Russia, Tel 7 912 246 7844, Fax 7 812 234 4512, e-mail [birran@glas.apc.org](mailto:birran@glas.apc.org).

Raimo Heikkilä and Tapio Lindholm are organising a pre-symposium excursion to Kuhmo, Finland, on 25 to 27 July, to look at middle boreal aapamires nad eccentric bogs along the Green-Belt at the Russian-Finnish border. Contact Raimo or Tapio for details. Tapio's e-mail address is: [tapio.lindholm@vyh.fi](mailto:tapio.lindholm@vyh.fi) or fax at ++358 9 40300 791.

### European Habitats Forum

### Meeting with EC DGXI

On 17 December 1996, a hastily arranged meeting between the members of the European Habitats Forum and DGXI of the European Commission was held at DGXI's request. Representing DGXI were Bruno Julien, the Head of Unit, Bertrand Delpuech and Olivier Diana, while on the EHF side there were some 12 representatives, including Philippe Julve and Richard Lindsay from IMCG.

B.Delpuech explained that the meeting had been called because DGXI staff were, frankly, very disappointed by the behaviour of NGOs throughout Europe, and DGXI wanted to try to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the relationship between NGOs and DGXI in order to bring about a more effective delivery of the Habitats Directive. As Head of the Unit, Bruno Julien emphasised that he was absolutely committed to putting the Habitats Directive fully in place before he moved on to another department - i.e. within two or three years.

The key issues are outlined below. Richard Lindsay will be producing a more comprehensive account of the meeting in due course. Anyone wishing for details of any topic should contact Richard.

1.

2. **Lobbying** - DGXI feels that NGOs have been particularly poor at lobbying on behalf of the Habitats Directive, compared with the effective lobbying being carried out by hunters, farmers and landowners against the Directive. Accepting that NGOs don't have the money available to these other commercial interests, they nevertheless feel that NGOs have done relatively little to use whatever political influence, as well as local educational possibilities, that NGOs claim to possess. If members live in communities affected by the Directive, why are they not using their grass-roots membership to persuade local politicians, landowners, etc., of the benefits (or at least the lack of perceived problems) which come with the Directive? "Information is the biggest problem," to quote B.Julien. This is what commercial interests appear to be doing throughout Europe. Furthermore, putting pressure on national politicians to encourage the use of Structural Funds and the Agri-Environment Programme to fund the Directive would mean that there was more money available to help implement the Directive effectively.

1. **Projects** - There have been several formal complaints that DGXI has turned down applications for Life Projects. B.Julien emphasised that EVERY application is considered fully, no matter who it is from (including non-EU member countries), and the final decision is DGXI's alone, but the first criterion applied is whether the project can meet its stated objectives. If it is essential for a site to be designated under the Directive before the project can succeed, and, if the national government has not designated the site, the project cannot proceed. If the project fails "because the site has not been designated", DGXI would expect the applicant to use this as a basis for lobbying the government to designate it. Usually such lobbying does not happen - the applicant simply complains to DGXI, who can do nothing about it. It was accepted that some governments select projects to be put forward to DGXI, rather than sending all applications, but this is a national decision, nothing to do with DGXI, and if NGOs object to this, they should lobby to get their government to send all applications to DGXI.

1. **Complaints** - DGXI is legally obliged to investigate and report on every complaint made to the Commission. At present, an incredible amount of staff time is being spent replying to inappropriate complaints about Life Projects and about Habitats Directive implementation. As far as the Projects are concerned, most of these complaints are based on a misunderstanding of the process, or are made to DGXI when in fact they should be directed at the national government. In terms of implementation of the Directive, again, many complaints are more appropriately directed at a national government rather than DGXI. However, where a site is thought to be missing from a national list, DGXI can only respond if adequate information is also supplied because at the moment DGXI is completely reliant on the information provided by the national governments (which of course tend to support the decisions made by those governments). A complaint about a site MUST be backed up with adequate scientific information, which rarely happens at present.

1. **Workshops** - A number of workshops are to be held during 1997 and 1998. These will look at the national lists of sites in each of the bio-geographical regions of the EU, and will make an assessment about the adequacy (or inadequacy) of the proposed lists. There is to be a workshop for the Boreal Region in June, in Sweden, and it was suggested by DGXI that IMCG might be an appropriate representative of the EHF for that meeting because mires will be a major feature of the discussion. There will also be meetings for the Macaronesian, Alpine, Mediterranean, Atlantic and Continental Regions during the year. (It would be worth making sure that IMCG members have made clear to relevant EHF representatives for these meetings what their thoughts are about national lists for mires in your own countries.) Clearly, we will need to consider who might attend the Boreal Workshop.

The discussion was frank but very friendly, and there was a real feeling that DGXI was keen to work much more closely with NGOs, through the EHF, in order to ensure that the Habitats Directive was implemented as effectively as possible. We will keep you posted on developments, but in the meantime, start lobbying your local conservation groups and your politicians.....

## Who's Who in IMCG

If you were not included in IMCG's Who's Who in the last newsletter - send a short paragraph through to the editor.

**Tapio Lindholm** Born in Finland 1953. Graduated from Helsinki University, Department of Botany. PhD in 1990 on the ecology of some dwarf shrubs and *Sphagnum* on raised bogs in Finland. Worked 1981-1984 as lecturer and researcher in Helsinki university studying the ecology of mires and mineral soil forests, 1985-1989 Finnish Association for Nature Protection editing the magazine of nature and nature protection. 1989 onwards: Finnish Environment Institute Head of the Conservation and Management of Natural Biotopes Unit. Main activities - organise the inventory of old pristine forests for nature conservation (1989-1996), develop and study the restoration of drained mires and various studies of forests and mires. Also active role in developing the nature conservation co-operation between Finland and Russia, especially the Russian Karelia. Docent of Botany in Helsinki University.

## IMCG Work Programme 1997/1998

### Introduction

This programme is based on a synthesis of tasks identified and discussed at various IMCG Symposia, and in the Working Group Meeting held in December 1996. It assumes that there will be one person, the current chairman (Richard Lindsay), working two or three days a week as the IMCG Secretariat, that the Working Group and Decision-Making Group members are responsible, as appropriate, for certain tasks, and that identified Project Leaders are responsible for managing specific projects.

The activities of the Work Programme, as outlined, fall into four broad subject areas:

- 
- IMCG administration
  
- Lobbying
  
- Scientific awareness

- Communication and co-operation

There are, however, inevitable overlaps between these topics, as indeed there should be if the activities of the IMCG are to be an integrated programme of work. The specific activities (or Work Programme) described below, are linked to particular individuals or groups of individuals where specific responsibility has been discussed and provisionally or formally agreed.

Abbreviations:

AG - Andreas Grunig

AM - ?

BW - Barry Warner

CR - Clayton Rubec

DMG - Decision Making Group

GEF - Global Environment Fund

HJ - Hans Joosten

KIWC - Kushiro International Wetlands Centre.

MB - Marina Botch

MI - Mati Illomets

ML - Micke Lofroth

MP - Mara Pakalne

PJ - Phillippe Julve

RAL - Richard Lindsay

TL - Tapio Lindholm

WG - Working Group

XMM Xian Min Meng

1.

## 2. **IMCG Administration**

Although in due course this element of the work should become relatively routine, while IMCG is still establishing itself as a formal organisation it is inevitable that a significant amount of the Secretariat and Working Group's activities must focus on administrative issues. These involve:

1. Discussions with appropriate organisations about their organisational and financial structures (**RAL** and **WG**-by May 197);
2. Discussion, agreement and preparation of appropriate organisational structure (**RAL**, **WG**, **DMG**-by Oct 197);
3. Discussions with banks about establishing appropriate banking arrangements (**RAL**-by August 197);

4. Establishment and approval of formal IMCG structure (IMCG-August 197 or Latvia/Estonia 198?);
5. Establishment of Secretariat office (**RAL, WG**-ongoing, but final locality by Nov 197?);
6. Establishment of start-up funding for IMCG Secretariat (**RAL, WG**-by Dec 197);
7. Meetings with appropriate organisations to discuss and promote IMCG's functions, objectives and services (**RAL, WG, DMG**-ongoing);
8. Establish organisational details and costs for 8<sup>th</sup> IMCG Symposium, Russia, 1997 (**MB, TL**-bt April 197);
9. Prepare papers (admin., scientific and resolutions) for 8<sup>th</sup> IMCG symposium, Russia (**MB, TL, RAL, WG, IMCG members**-by June 197);
10. Establish Estonia/Latvia symposium committee, providing guidance and support to Symposium Organisers (**RAL, WG**-by Sept 197);
11. Establish funding for 9<sup>th</sup> IMCG Symposium, Estonia/Latvia (**MI, MP, RAL, WG**-by Dec 197);
12. Prepare papers (admin., scientific and resolutions) for 9<sup>th</sup> IMCG Symposium, Estonia/Latvia (**MI, MP, RAL, WG, IMCG members**-by June 1998).

### 3. Lobbying

Although inevitably overlapping to some degree with *Communication and Co-operation*, there are particular tasks to be undertaken which are designed to produce significant progress for mire conservation on specific issues:

- 1.
2. Complete distribution of 196 Declarations (**KIWC, RAL**-by end Feb 197);
3. Responding to and following up replies from 196 (and earlier) Resolutions and Declarations (**RAL, relevant IMCG members**-ongoing);

4. Follow-up to Brisbane Workshop and Ramsar Conference-establish next phase of appropriate actions for IMCG (**RAL, CR, WG**-by Sept 197);
5. Establish appropriate action programme for IMCG with respect to Pan-European Strategy and Biodiversity Convention (**RAL, WG, AM, DMG**-by Oct 197).

#### 4. Scientific Awareness

A number of specific tasks have been identified which are designed to help increase the general (or specific IMCG) degree of scientific understanding and awareness about mire systems and their conservation needs:

- 1.
  2. List of Mire Plants, (Project Leader: Philippe Julve);
    - 1.
    2. Prepare a list of species and attributes to be recorded (**PJ**-completed);
  3. Distribute list to appropriate specialists (**PJ, RAL, WG**-by Feb 197);
  4. Complete details for areas personally responsible (**appropriate IMCG members**-by April 197, if possible);
  5. Collate responses and produce final list, with review of results (**PJ**-by May IPS Symposium, or by August 197 IMCG Symposium?);
- 
3. *8<sup>th</sup> IMCG Symposium, Russia* (project Leader: *Marina Botch*)
    - 1.
    2. Hosting 8<sup>th</sup> IMCG Symposium (**MB, TL**-end July 197);
  3. Attending 8<sup>th</sup> IMCG Symposium (**IMCG members**-end July 197);
- 
4. *9<sup>th</sup> IMCG Symposium, Estonia & Latvia* (Project Leaders: *Mati Ilomets* and *Mara Pakalne*)
    - 1.
    2. Hosting 9<sup>th</sup> IMCG Symposium (**MI, MP**-summer 198);

3. Attending 9<sup>th</sup> IMCG Symposium (**IMCG members**-summer 198);

5. *European Mires Book* (Project Leaders: *Michael Lofroth* and *Richard Lindsay*)

- 1.
2. Discussions with John Wiley & Sons re: publishing (**RAL, ML, WG**-ongoing);
3. Discussions with other possible funding sources-e.g. Wetlands International, DGXL (**RAL, WG**-by August 197);
4. Preparation of additional chapters about national conservation strategies (**appropriate IMCG members**-by April 197);
5. If funding found, editing of existing text (**un-named editor**-by Nov 198);

6. *Importance of Peat archive* (Project Leader: *Hans Joosten*)

- 1.
2. Develop a work programme and Project Team (**HJ**-by Aug. 197);

7. *GEF Peatlands in China Workshop* (Project Leaders: *Xian Min Meng* and *Richard Lindsay*)

- 1.
2. Make proposals for a workshop in China, related to ongoing plans for GEF-funded programme (**RAL**-by Feb 197);
3. Explore practicalities of holding GEF workshop in China, in terms of links to GEF programme, access, accommodation, etc. (**XMM, RAL**-by Aug. 197);

8. *Peatlands and Naturalness* (Project Leader: *Hans Joosten*)

- 1.
2. IMCG members respond to HJ's article about naturalness in Mires Research Group Newsletter. (see WG Minutes Dec., 196)(**IMCG members**- by June 197);

9. HJ to collate responses and review in newsletter (**HJ**-by Sept. 197).

## 5. Communication and Co-operation

Much of what IMCG does is communication or co-operation one form or another, but a number of specific actions can be identified in the Work Programme:

- 1.
2. IMCG Newsletter (Project Leader-Rob Stoneman)
  - 1.
  2. Production of material for 4 newsletters a year (**IMCG members**- deadlines set by **RS**);
  3. Collation, editing, and production of newsletters (**RS**-ongoing);
  4. Publication of newsletters (**AG**-ongoing);
3. *Proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> IMCG Symposium, 1996* (Project Leader: *Richard Lindsay*)
  - 1.
  2. Production of texts for Proceedings (**appropriate IMCG members**-by March 197);
  3. Establishment of referee list (**RAL, WG**-by March 197);
  4. Establishing final publishing vehicle for Proceedings (**RAL, WG, DMG, KIWC**-by May 197);
  5. Sending out texts to referees (**RAL**-by April 197);
  6. Collating referee comments and editing papers as appropriate (**RAL, appropriate IMCG members**-by Sept 197);
  7. Editing complete Proceedings and collation into final publication format (**RAL/editor, WG**-by Nov. 197);
  8. Publication of Proceedings (**publisher**-by Dec. 197);

4. *IMCG Bulletin* (Project Leader: *Barry Warner*)

- 1.
2. Investigations into possible production of IMCG Bulletin (**BW**-by May 197);
3. Proposal to, and discussion with, WG and DMG to establish appropriate format/status of Bulletin (**BW, WG, DMG**-by Sept. 197);

5. *Meetings with various bodies*

- 1.
2. *IPS-Sept. 197*

- 
- agenda agreed with IPS Secretariat (**WG, RAL**-completed);
- IMCG discussion prior to IPS meeting (**IMCG members**);
- discussions with IPS (**IMCG members attending**);

- 1.

2. *EHF meetings*

- attend EHF meetings as appropriate (**PJ, RAL**);
- prepare reports of EHF meetings for newsletter (**PJ, RAL**);
- ensure IMCG newsletters distributed to EHF members (**PJ, RAL**);
- distribute EHF newsletters to IMCG members (**RS, AG**);

- 1.

2. *DGXI Habitats Directive Workshop*

IMCG delegateto attend "Boreal Region" Workshop (2-May 197).

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