

## History of the Bulletin

This issue for March 2009 marks the 40th anniversary of the Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society and the 50th anniversary of the first issue of its forerunner, the Bulletin of the Flatford Mill Spider Group.

The Flatford Mill Spider Group was formed following a meeting held at the end of a spider course tutored by G. H. (Ted) Locket at Flatford Mill Field Centre, Suffolk, in September 1958. Ted Locket became the Chairman, and one of the participants on that course, David Mackie, became the group's Secretary. David not only edited the Bulletin, which was issued quarterly, but also typed the stencils, produced it on a duplicator, and distributed it to members. The first issue in January 1959 comprised only one foolscap sheet of paper, but by number 17 in January 1963 it had increased in size to 8 pages and was containing some useful articles.

At a meeting of those present at a spider course held at Preston Montford Field Centre, Shropshire, in June 1963, it was decided to change the name of the group to the British Spider Study Group in 1964, so Bulletin number 21 in January 1964 became the first Bulletin of the British Spider Study Group. Ted Locket became the first President and David Mackie remained as Secretary, Treasurer and Bulletin editor. The Bulletin continued to be produced with stencils on a duplicator, but slowly increased in size to 12 or 14 pages by 1968. The first paper by an overseas author (Jacques Denis) was published in January 1965. John Crocker helped with the production of illustrations by photographic means from April 1964 onwards, and by offset-litho for the first time in July 1967.

At a meeting of the group's committee in March 1968 it was decided to change the name to the British Arachnological Society from the beginning of 1969. The last issue of the Bulletin of the British Spider Study Group was number 40, published in October 1968, and Volume 1, part 1 of the Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society appeared in January 1969. John Crocker became the editor of the new Bulletin, which was produced in a new format by offset-litho printing and saw the introduction of the society's crab spider logo, which was designed by John Crocker. Ted Locket retired as President at the end of 1968, and Eric Duffey became the first President of the British Arachnological Society. David Mackie continued as Secretary and Treasurer until March 1969, when he was succeeded by John Parker. Volume 1 of the Bulletin continued to be published quarterly, and ended with part 8 in October 1970. Volume 2, starting in 1971, saw a considerable improvement in standard of presentation with the introduction of a different typeface and computer typesetting, and other minor changes such as printing the volume numbers on the front cover, contents list on back cover, and the list of officers and council members inside the front cover. At the same time, as the editor had experienced some problems with producing quarterly issues, and to help control costs, the frequency of publication

was reduced to three issues per year, in March, July and November, which has remained the same ever since. Volume 1 had contained some items of society news in addition to arachnological papers, but at the first council meeting in 1971 it was decided to introduce a separate Newsletter for society news and short notes. Consequently, the first Newsletter (with John Parker as editor) was issued in July 1971 to coincide with Volume 2, part 2 of the Bulletin.

John Crocker resigned as editor of the Bulletin with the completion of Volume 2 at the end of 1973. He was succeeded by Eric Duffey for the start of Volume 3, but after editing the first two parts he resigned when he became editor of the much larger journal *Biological Conservation*. Peter Merrett then took over the editorship in July 1974, producing his first issue as editor in November 1974. Coincidentally, this was the first issue to be produced on glossy paper, but that change was initiated by John Crocker, who still continued to liaise with the printers in Loughborough where he lived.

The Bulletin received a considerable boost when the British Arachnological Society (in partnership with the Zoological Society of London) organised the Seventh International Congress of Arachnology at Exeter in 1977, which resulted in increased international awareness of the society and its publications. This is shown by the fact that 92 and 84 pages were published in 1975 and 1976, but 140 and 144 pages in 1977 and 1978, respectively; the Bulletin then remained at about this size until 1985.

The next major change in the Bulletin occurred with Volume 7 in 1986, when the format was changed to the larger A4 size, with a newly designed front cover and new colour covers. The new cover was designed by Peter Merrett, with technical assistance from John Crocker, who was still helping in liaising with the printers. The larger page size allowed more flexibility in the arrangement of figures and tables, and made more efficient use of paper. From the start of Volume 9 in 1992 the printing was switched from Loughborough to Henry Ling in Dorchester, at which point John Crocker ceased his long and invaluable association with the production of the Bulletin. There has been no major change in the Bulletin since then, but it has gradually increased in size, from the 100 A4 pages published in 1992 to 144 pages in 2006. The largest Bulletin ever (76 pages on African *Zelotes*) was published in November 2007, this coincidentally being the 100th issue which Peter Merrett had produced as editor. From the start of the Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society in 1969 to the end of 2008 a total of 805 papers have been published, by 521 authors from 47 countries.

Under the guiding hand of the Treasurer, Rod Allison, a fully searchable CD-ROM containing all of Volumes 1–12 of the Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society (1969–2003) became available for purchase from Secure Data Services in January 2005. This

enabled wider access to this important archive of arachnological literature and allowed the society to dispose of surplus back numbers. Since 2003 Henry Ling, the Bulletin printers, have provided the Society's Distribution Manager with a CD of each Bulletin, so

that it will be relatively easy to produce further compilation CD-ROMs. It is also hoped to make the Bulletin available on-line to members in the near future.

Chris Spilling, President