

## Introductory Remarks

R. J. V. Joyce and R. C. Rainey

*Phil. Trans. R. Soc. Lond. B* 1990 **328**, 523-524  
doi: 10.1098/rstb.1990.0124

### Email alerting service

Receive free email alerts when new articles cite this article - sign up in the box at the top right-hand corner of the article or click [here](#)

To subscribe to *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. Lond. B* go to: <http://rstb.royalsocietypublishing.org/subscriptions>

## BIOLOGICAL FACTORS

## Introductory remarks

BY R. J. V. JOYCE

*Cranfield Institute of Technology, Bedfordshire MK43 0AL, U.K.**(Formerly Director, DLCO-EA and AARU)*

The Chair for this opening Session should, of course, have been taken by Dr Rainey, but you will be aware that, unhappily, Reg is not well enough to attend. This is very sad as Reg is the instigator and inspirer of this meeting and has spent at least two years in preparing for it with all his accustomed attention to detail. We are grateful to Reg and his co-organizers, Dr K. A. Browning, Dr R. A. Cheke and Miss M. J. Haggis that, despite illness, the meeting is taking place as planned.

It is an honour to have been invited by Reg to chair this session, an honour that I felt able to accept only because it gives me an opportunity to pay a tribute to Reg in the presence of so many of his old friends and colleagues and of so many distinguished scientists.

The meeting itself is a tribute to Reg, integrating, as it does the biological and physical sciences for a better understanding of the phenomenon of migration, Reg's unique contribution. From his student days, Reg was a keen glider – and what activity demands a more intimate knowledge of the atmosphere than gliding? At the outbreak of war, he was a Cotton Entomologist with the old Empire Cotton Growers Corporation at its research station in Barberton. He would have joined the Airforce there as a pilot, but was prevented from doing so because of poor eye-sight. Instead, he joined the Royal South African Airforce as a Meteorologist. In this capacity he served throughout the war with the South African forces in Kenya, Somalia, the western Desert and Italy. His war-time duties carried great responsibilities that involved providing vital information to aircrew embarking on difficult and dangerous missions. It was this experience, perhaps, which shaped his approach to locust research later, Reg always being acutely aware that his research had to be directed primarily to provide information and help to field staff in their job of control. It was also perhaps his war-time experience that generated the respect that he always had for aircrew, as is evidenced by the presence today of many whose primary task has been the practical execution of locust control rather than planning or research.

Reg combines to a remarkable degree single mindedness in his approach to research, with an intellectual integrity that allows him to explore and understand other possible approaches. He is always among the first to see merit in ideas and concepts, the development of which might bring rewards to their originator and to science. Through this he has stimulated and encouraged more research workers, particularly in 'developing countries', than any other research worker I know.

It is a happy coincidence that his book *Migration and meteorology* (Oxford University Press 1989) has just been completed and in time to be displayed at this meeting. I believe that it will

[ 5 ]

be on sale in the New Year. This authoritative account will be of immense value to all workers in this field.

We shall sadly miss Reg at this discussion meeting and I am sure you will all join with me in sending him our greetings and best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Dr Rainey was to have chaired this session and wrote the following opening remarks.

Welcome to all participants and guests. I would like to make just two points.

First, the function of such Society meetings as this is to secure an authoritative exchange of differing opinions on matters of major scientific and practical importance. On Desert Locusts, Skaf directs attention to one such outstanding question – the significance of low-density populations, crucial to the understanding of the species as a whole, as well as of the biological feasibility of the airborne radar system.

I would now only direct attention to the authoritative presentation of both the still conflicting points of view (including my own!) in the Society's *Philosophical Transactions* published record of the previous meeting on Migrant Pests (Gunn & Rainey 1979). They are not to be confused with my own new book *Migration and meteorology* (Oxford University Press 1989), the very first copies of which incredibly appeared only last week – now also on display here.

At the previous meeting it was claimed that 'none of the earlier cases of gregarization appeared indeed to have been *proved* to play a major part in the overall development of the plague, since substantial gregarious populations were already present elsewhere in each of these cases; and gregarization has often occurred without upsurge.' I would now only urge that any more recent evidence to the contrary be placed on record in detail.

My second point is on the intractable problem of dieldrin. On an entirely different environmental point I have recently been unexpectedly impressed by the objectivity of some of the information material now published by non-official organizations such as Friends of the Earth. Might it now be too far fetched to suggest attempting to interest such an organization in dieldrin in the hope of eliciting a similarly entirely independent report on the evidence?

#### *Reference*

Gunn, D. L. & Rainey, R. C. (eds) 1979 *Strategy and tactics of control of migrant pests* (*Phil. Trans. R. Soc. Lond. B* **287**), pp. 245–488. London: The Royal Society.

6 December 1989

R. C. RAINEY, F.R.S.