

Global urban pest experts meet in UK

1 Great science from the formal presentations...



Dr Matt Bertone from the USA



Dr Partho Dhang, based in the Philippines



Laura Critina Multini from Brazil



From the UK our own, Clive Boase

There is no other event in the world that can match the International Conference on Urban Pests (ICUP) for its strength and depth of urban pest management expertise. Held every three years, the 2017 event came to Birmingham, UK from 9 to 12 July.

The 250 delegates and speakers were from as far away as Australia, Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Iran, Japan, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, the Philippines and the USA, as well as many European countries. The UK was well represented with the British numbers swelled on day two when a special one-day workshop for practical pest managers was held alongside the main event.

Insects, and how to combat the threat they pose dominated the programme. The opening session, introduced by Dr Matt Davies, chair of the ICUP 2017 organising committee, included global issues such as climate change and the unintended consequences of regulation, as well as more local topics such as how the UK is detecting and dealing with invasive mosquito species.

Rodents and other vertebrate pests were not forgotten with nine sessions devoted to these, rather more than at previous ICUP conferences but, not enough according to some delegates, who felt that four-footed pests were under represented.

Rokill's Brian Duffin was a first-time delegate: "I really had no idea what to expect. The facilities at Aston University were fantastic, as was the food, but it was being able to discuss pest control methods and theory with the experts in their field that I enjoyed most. It was enlightening to speak with people from all over the globe and uplifting to find that they were as enthusiastic as I was. It was certainly an experience I would recommend to others in a technical role."

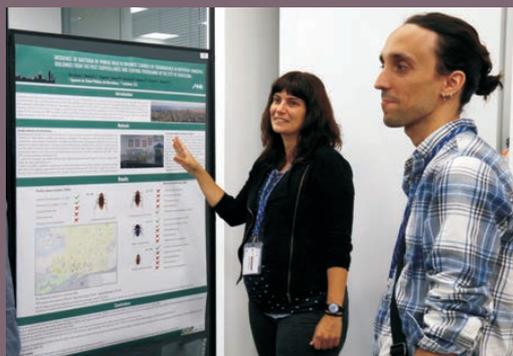
The one-day workshop drew a reasonable crowd, but it was a shame that more companies didn't take the opportunity to meet this global group of experts. Danny Lyons and his brother came all the way from Elgin in Scotland: "We were worried we would be rather out of place in amongst the industry leaders. In reality the people were great. Our networking has now reached Holland; aiding a situation my father in law's friend is having with black rats."

Chris Davies from Cleankill was also a workshop delegate: "The talks were kept short, which kept up a good momentum of

2 ...and from the popular poster sessions



Danny Lyons came to the one-day workshop and learned a lot from meeting experts like Dr Sara Burt



3 An engaged audience full of questions



Organising committee chair, Dr Matt Davies had a novel way of making sure everyone heard the call to resume sessions after coffee breaks etc – a football rattle!

4 Plenty of opportunity for networking



Tom Holmes of Pelsis with GEA's Tommaso Brogna from Italy



From Italy, Marco Pellizzari, left, with the UK's David Loughlin



Bill Robinson, ICUP executive committee member, left, with Dawn Bolton, Agrisense and Gerald Danao from the Abu Dhabi municipality



Rokkill's Brian Duffin with Imogen Levensen of Tufnell Park Pest Control



From left Fred Hurstel, PestWest, Rami Alama, Boecker and Rupert Broome, Killgerm



Rentokil were well represented. Pictured are: Savvas Othon, Matt Green and Mike Wood

changing topics throughout the day. Highlights for me included John Simmons of Acheta talking about widespread behavioural avoidance of baits and traps by a proportion of the mouse population and also the US perspective on bed bugs as they seem to have problems on a scale that is far worse than in the UK."

Whilst the scientific presentations provide the focus of ICUP events, the discussions over coffee and lunch prove equally important with a global exchange of opinions and friendships struck. From an organisational point of view this was a generally excellent event. OK, the directional signing to the various rooms could have been better and the casual format rather than a 'sit down' conference dinner, wasn't to everyone's taste.

The event was brought to a close by Dr Bill Robinson who, jointly with Clive Boase, has masterminded these events since their inception in 1993. Bill announced that the tenth ICUP will be held in Spain at a similar time of the year in 2020.

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6 Wherever they are pest professionals find pests!

It wasn't long after ICUP delegates arrived at the Birmingham



Botanic gardens that 'pests' were found. Left, Dr Reiner Pospischil shows off one of the Australian cockroaches happily living in the gardens. Below, this wood mouse was clearly not afraid of visitors to its botanic garden home



5 Not forgetting some time to have fun at the Botanical gardens



A London bus ferried delegates to the conference dinner



Brandenburg's Matthew Kays gets the drinks in



BPCA's Dee Ward-Thompson and Kevin Higgins tuck into fish & chips