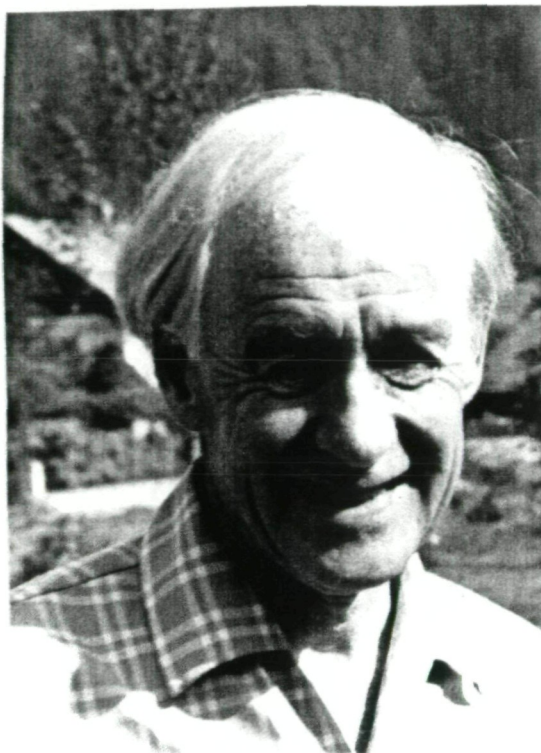


BRAUERIA (Lunz am See, Austria) 33:5-6 (2006)

Michael Ian Crichton (1913 – 2006)



Dr (Michael) Ian Crichton was born in Birmingham on 24 October 1913. He took his first degree at Edinburgh University and then spent a year as a temporary lecturer at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. At that time his interests were mainly in marine zoology, and he returned to England in 1938 to become assistant lecturer in the Zoology Department at Reading University, where he was to spend the rest of his professional career. In 1940 he volunteered for the Royal Air Force, and in September 1943 the Stirling bomber in which he was navigator was shot down over Berlin. Crichton was one of only three of the seven crew who successfully parachuted to safety. However, he broke his leg on landing and after two days in hiding decided to give himself up. He was detained in Stalag Luft III, but was too unfit to take part in the so-called Great Escape in March 1944, which was probably fortunate for him in view of the tragic outcome of that event.

He had plenty of time to study at the camp and became interested in entomology, even giving lectures on agricultural zoology to some fellow prisoners, helped by the good library in the camp. Liberation came in May 1945 and Crichton returned home to his wife Ruth. They had married in 1943, but Ruth had not heard from him for nearly six months before their reunion. He returned to Reading and continued teaching in the Zoology Department until his retirement as Senior Lecturer in 1979.

Ian Crichton became interested in the anatomy of adult Trichoptera in about 1950, when he began a correspondence with D.E. Kimmins at the British Museum (Natural History) which was to last until Kimmins' retirement in 1970. At the same time he

began to run a mercury-vapour light trap near Millbarn Pond in the grounds of Oakfield, south-west of Reading, regularly from 1953-55, and also in 1957 and 1959. He continued to use this site for occasional collecting for many years afterwards.

Meanwhile his anatomical studies concentrated on adult mouthparts, culminating in his classic 1957 paper, and during this work he invented a device to gently compress live insects so that extruded parts could be examined *in vivo*. Many years later he returned to the study of mouthparts, updating his work with the use of the scanning electron microscope.

The light-trap studies led to a long-term interest in flight-periods, distribution patterns, and especially the life-histories of limnephilids. He became involved in the Rothamsted Insect Survey and identified caddis from traps all over the UK for many years, aided by his assistant Dorothy Fisher. The resultant papers formed an important series on the life-histories of the British species. He also ran a Rothamsted trap in his own garden continuously from 1964 to 1984. This was at The Red House in Mortimer, near Reading, a house he and Ruth had bought in 1957 and in which he would spend the next 49 years. Despite having no fresh water close by, he recorded over 50 species of caddis flies in his garden.

Among the PhD students that he supervised were Hilmy M. Hanna, an Egyptian who studied caddis life histories and larval case-building while in the UK (1954-56); A.M. (Tony) Gower who studied the effects of *Limnephilus lunatus* and *Drusus annulatus* on watercress beds (1961-63); and my own work on reproduction and the adult diapause (1971-74).

Following the success of the 1st Trichoptera Symposium in Lunz am See in 1974, Ian immediately offered to host the 2nd Symposium at Reading in 1977, and this was also a great success. He continued to actively participate in all the subsequent symposia until the 7th. He had intended to attend the 8th Symposium in Minneapolis in 1995, but Ruth had fallen and broken her leg so he stayed to look after her. At the same time Ian accepted that, being nearly 82, his attendance at overseas meetings had come to an end.

Following his retirement Ian and his wife were very involved in local politics and in the parish council. Ruth died in 2001 (they had been married for 58 years) and their contribution to the local community was honoured by the naming of Crichton Court, a new residential development in Mortimer, in 2004.

Ian was a generous correspondent, well-known internationally and universally liked. Among the many tributes to him that I have received from colleagues around the world are phrases like "a really charming person", "a wonderful, warm gentleman", "his friendly and active presence at meetings", "remembered with gratitude and very warm feelings", "he has made considerable contributions to Trichopterology". Ian was always willing to assist colleagues with correcting the English in their manuscripts, and he performed a similar task for *Braueria* for many years.

He was an unassuming and gentle man, always friendly and helpful. But his quiet exterior concealed a formidable intellect; no detail escaped his notice and he was quick to expose inaccuracies or imprecise thinking. His slight figure also hid a very tough constitution; having survived meningitis in 1942

and tuberculosis in 1978, he remained healthy and mentally alert right up his death.

Having decided that he could no longer easily live at The Red House on his own, he moved to a nursing home near Cambridge in April 2006, to be closer to members of his family. On 5 May 2006 he died peacefully in his sleep. He had three children, twelve grandchildren and one great-grandchild, whom he first saw only a month before he died. His cremation took place on 11 May 2006 at Cambridge, with a memorial service on 24 May at St Mary's Church, Mortimer.

Ian Crichton's other entomological interests are not described here, but will be covered in other obituaries.

Peter Barnard

M. I. Crichton's papers on Trichoptera

(the Proceedings of the International Symposia on Trichoptera are abbreviated to PROTTRI)

CRICHTON, M.I., B.R. BAKER & H.M. HANNA. 1956. Records of Trichoptera from the Reading area. *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine* 92: 31-35.

CRICHTON, M.I. 1956. An insect compressor. *Journal of the Royal Microscopical Society* 75: 266-267.

CRICHTON, M.I. 1957. The structure and function of the mouth parts of adult caddis flies (Trichoptera). *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society (B)* 241: 45-91.

CRICHTON, M.I., B.R. BAKER & H.M. HANNA. 1957. Further records of Trichoptera from the Reading area. *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine* 93: 241-243

CRICHTON, M.I. 1959. Attacks by birds on caddis flies. *Bird Study* 6: 22-25.

CRICHTON, M.I. & B.R. BAKER. 1959. Records of Trichoptera from the Reading area, 1957-1958. *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine* 95: 85-87.

CRICHTON, M.I. . 1960. A study of captures of Trichoptera in a light trap near Reading, Berkshire. *Transactions of the Royal Entomological Society of London* 112: 319-344.

CRICHTON, M.I. . 1961. Observations on the longevity and dispersal of adult Limnephilidae (Trichoptera). *Proceedings XI Congress of Entomology* 1: 366-371.

CRICHTON, M.I. . 1965. Observations on captures of Trichoptera in suction- and light-traps near Reading, Berkshire. *Proceedings of the Royal Entomological Society of London (A)* 40: 101-108.

CRICHTON, M.I. 1968. Caddis flies. *The Entomologist* 101:169-170.

CRICHTON, M.I. . 1971. A study of caddis flies (Trichoptera) of the family Limnephilidae, based on the Rothamsted Insect Survey, 1964-68. *Journal of Zoology, London* 163: 533-563.

CRICHTON, M.I. . 1974. Book review of *Trichoptera (Köcherfliegen)* by H. Malicky. *Entomologist's Gazette* 25: 92.

CRICHTON, M.I. . 1976. The interpretation of light trap catches of Trichoptera from the Rothamsted Insect Survey. *PROTTRI* 1: 147-158.

CRICHTON, M.I. ., D. FISHER & I.P. WOIWOD. 1978. Life histories and distribution of British Trichoptera, excluding Limnephilidae and Hydroptilidae, based on the Rothamsted Insect Survey. *Holarctic Ecology* 1: 31-45.

CRICHTON, M.I. .& D.B. FISHER. 1981. Further observations on limnephilid life histories, based on the Rothamsted Insect Survey. *PROTTRI* 3: 47-55.

CRICHTON, M.I. .& D.B. FISHER. 1982. Records of caddis flies (Trichoptera) from Rothamsted light traps at Field Centres. *Field Studies* 5: 569-579.

CRICHTON, M.I. . 1984. Trichoptera from a Rothamsted light trap in Mortimer, Berkshire, 1965-1982. *PROTTRI* 4: 99-103.

CRICHTON, M.I. . 1984. Book review of *Atlas of European Trichoptera* by H. Malicky. *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine* 120: 166.

CRICHTON, M.I. . 1986. Caddis flies (Trichoptera). *Reading Naturalist* 38: 23-25.

CRICHTON, M.I. . 1987. A study of egg masses of *Glyptotaelius pellucidus* (Retzius) (Trichoptera: Limnephilidae). *PROTTRI* 5: 165-169.

CRICHTON, M.I. . 1988. Final observations on British Limnephilidae (Trichoptera) from the Rothamsted Insect Survey, 1964-84. *Rivista di Idrobiologia* 27: 211-229.

CRICHTON, M.I. . 1991. A scanning electron microscope study of the mouth parts of adult *Phryganea grandis* (L.) (Trichoptera). *PROTTRI* 6: 329-333.

CRICHTON, M.I. . 1992. A scanning electron microscope study of the mouth parts of some adult Limnephilidae (Trichoptera). *PROTTRI* 7: 45-48.

CRICHTON, M.I. . 1997. Caddis larvae as a pest of watercress. *Braueria* 24: 9-10.

ZOBODAT - www.zobodat.at

Zoologisch-Botanische Datenbank/Zoological-Botanical Database

Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

Zeitschrift/Journal: [Braueria](#)

Jahr/Year: 2006

Band/Volume: [33](#)

Autor(en)/Author(s): Banard Peter

Artikel/Article: [Michael Ian Crichton \(1913 - 2006\) 5-6](#)