

**Report from the XVth meeting of BEES
Thursday 30th March 2006
The Gateway Conference Centre, St Andrews, Scotland**



The BEES meeting continued its tour of Britain and travelled to the beautiful university town of St Andrews. Having arrived the day before in glorious (if rather chilly) sunshine the Scottish weather returned to normal on the day of the conference as a drizzly mist descended on us. Apparently, we may have been able to see the famous Old Course from the conference centre. Nonetheless, those who had made the journey were rewarded with a richly entertaining and thought provoking series of presentations and lectures on the theme "BEES and light."



King Drone draws in his audience

Having been welcomed by the Head Drone himself, Hywel Williams, we were given a fantastic history lesson documenting the discovery of the different types of porphyria from Bob Sarkany (*pictured right*). A particular highlight was how through both medical and detective skills Dr Dean discovered a new type of porphyria (variegate) whilst working in South Africa and traced its source back to one marriage of early Dutch settlers. This was a great lesson in to how epidemiology and clinical dermatology are intrinsically linked. The morning continued with what turned out to be the best submitted abstract of the day from Alex Holme giving us the results of the only UK wide study into the epidemiology of EPP. The only sadness for Alex was that his prize was a pot of Scottish, rather than the usual exceptional Welsh honey (anecdotal evidence provided by Hywel).





Alex Holme: Ooh, sweet honey in one hand and the professor in the other. I don't want this moment to end!

After the morning break, Queen Bee for the day, Sue Lewis-Jones introduced our invited speaker Professor Thomas Diepgen (*pictured left*) from Heidelberg (which has an old bridge and a castle) who talked on the prevalence of photodermatoses in Europe. This particularly focused on the Sunall study of the prevalence of PLE across 6 different countries of varying latitude in Europe. This has been the largest study of its type and contradicts the previously accepted wisdom that PLE became more prevalent as one moved to higher latitudes with fewer episodes of sun



exposure. Brian Diffey (*below*) followed by discussing the use of sunscreens and suggested that now that their technical performance is very good at blocking out the sun the companies need to concentrate more on consumer acceptance so that the public will actually use them! He also discussed the increasing phenomenon of cosmetic companies putting sunscreen into most of their products and cautioned this approach – as surely we do not need to use it on these typical Scottish days! Brian Diffey also closed the meeting by suggesting that uv treatment is not nearly as dangerous as we might think, in particular narrow-band uvB.



Also presented at the meeting were systematic reviews from Robert Dawe (*left*) (Narrow-band uvB, broad-band uvB and PUVA for psoriasis – an update) and Tsui Chin Ling (*right*) (Interventions for polymorphic light eruption), plus submitted abstracts from Lorna Mackintosh (Many high dose phototherapy patients are not being reviewed), Ross Hearn (Is there a skin cancer risk with narrow-band uvB phototherapy? – preliminary data from the second phase of the Dundee follow up study) and Robert Dawe again (Prevalences of the chronic idiopathic and metabolic photodermatoses in Scotland).



This really was a fantastic meeting and the BEES should be encouraged to vary the location as it helps spread the message to different parts of the island and provides the opportunity for different departments to bring their expertise to the fore as so brilliantly demonstrated by our Scottish friends.