

EHBEA 2012 Newsletter

Dear EHBEA members,

Unbelievably - it seems to me - my three-year term as President is already coming to an end, so this will be my final President's report. Time has flown, which, according to the well-known saying, must mean that I have been having fun. Indeed I have! So many thanks to the EHBEA committee members, conference organisers and indeed to EHBEA members in general, for making this such a well supported and enjoyable role.

Thus it is time to elect a new President, to whom I will hand over at the Steering Committee meeting in August 2013, after a 6-month shadowing period beginning at the conference in Amsterdam in March 2013. We encourage nominations of senior academics based anywhere in Europe and willing to lead EHBEA according to its mission of promoting plurality and rigour in the human evolutionary behavioural sciences. At the same time we will say thanks and farewell to Shakti Lamba, who is stepping down as secretary. My particular thanks to Shakti for her excellent work for EHBEA – and congratulations and good luck to her in her new job as lecturer at Exeter University. Many thanks and congratulations also to Elisabeth Oberzaucher, who is stepping down as outreach officer, having recently been appointed to the time consuming role of Editor in Chief of the Human Ethology Bulletin. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will see the calls for nominations for President, Secretary and Outreach Officer. If you want to discuss these roles, potential nominations or the process, please feel free to contact me and/or Shakti.

EHBEA continues to thrive. The conference in Durham this year was a tremendous success, thanks to the efficient organizing team of Jeremy Kendal, Rachel Kendal, Jamie Tehrani and Lynda Boothroyd. The evening entertainment, Baba Brinkman's 'Rap Guide to Evolution', was truly unforgettable (at least, I don't think Hannah Kokko will forget it in a hurry!). Many thanks to our main sponsors, The British Academy, Wenner Gren and the Galton Institute. Take a look at some conference photos [here](#). Partly as a result of the success of the conference, EHBEA funds are in a healthy state, to the extent that Steering Committee is now able to make funds available for small research projects (and see Section 1.5 of this newsletter for details and how to apply). Recall that this comes on top of the increased funding on workshops and student travel bursaries. So EHBEA is playing an increasing part in supporting research and in particular early career researchers.

We are greatly looking forward to the Amsterdam conference, which again has a programme of World class plenary speakers in the shape of Bram Buunk, Simon Gaechter, Kristen Hawkes, Joe Henrich, and Celia Heyes (as well as the perennial excitement of the New Investigator Award and plenary). As usual, the plenaries will cover a wide range of topics, including evolutionary social psychology, theories of cooperation, human life history evolution, cultural transmission, and cognitive evolution. The scientific programme together with the setting in one of Europe's most attractive, historically important and cosmopolitan cities, promises to make for another hugely enjoyable conference. We look forward to seeing you there.

My previous two reports emphasized how evolutionary approaches to human behavior have grown and taken root in university departments of Psychology, Anthropology and others, and how they are also having an impact way beyond the corridors of the academy. The success of EHBEA both reflects and encourages this growth. There is huge public interest in what we do, which we must foster in an intelligent and responsible way. Increasingly, and rightly in my view, scientists are expected to consider how their work may enrich and benefit society in a whole host of ways, and EHBEA has an important role in promoting the research that we do and ensuring that it is properly understood. EHBEA members have recently been involved in editing and contributing to a number of special journal issues. Also, you may have noticed on our website that we have recently agreed a contract with Springer to produce a new book series on 'Advances in the Evolutionary Analysis of Behaviour', to be edited by Rebecca Sear. Please contact Rebecca (rebecca.sear@lshstm.ac.uk) to submit a book proposal and see Section 1.6 of this newsletter for more information.

As ever, please do let me or other committee members know if you have any feedback or suggestions about the things that EHBEA is doing or the way it is run. This is **your** association and we want you to be a very active part of it.

Professor Rob Barton
EHBEA President
Durham, October 23rd, 2012

1. News and Announcements

1.1 EHBEA Committee

The following changes have been made to the EHBEA committee:

Vice President - Dr. Gillian Brown, University of St. Andrews (*replacing Dr. Rebecca Sear, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine*)

Publicity Officer – Sandra Virgo, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (*replacing Anna Rotkrich, Population Research Institute, Väestöliitto*)

Many thanks to outgoing committee members for their substantial contributions to EHBEA and a warm welcome to the new committee members.

1.2 New developments within EHBEA

Since its inception in 2008, EHBEA has grown into a highly successful society. The EHBEA steering committee has thus taken the opportunity to evaluate what the Association provides to its members, and we are implementing two changes. Firstly, we are introducing the new Student Research Grant scheme (see further details on page 3, Section 1.5; deadline 15th December), which will run alongside the current Workshop funding scheme. Secondly, we are revising the membership scheme by clarifying the student membership category, adding a new Associate membership category, and moving the date of annual membership renewal to 1st October. We hope that all of these changes will enhance membership for all, and we thank you for your continued support during the transition.

1.3 Changes to Membership and renewal reminder

The Student membership category will now be available to both full-time and part-time students, and a new Associate membership category has been created. Associate members (e.g. journalists, lay members) will retain all of the benefits of Full members at the same membership rate, except for being eligible to hold office (further details are available on the EHBEA website). We will run all annual memberships from 1st October (rather than 1st January) to ensure that students, in particular, receive the full benefits of annual membership and to aid our annual accounting. For current members who joined since January 2012, membership will run through to 31st December 2012 as normal, and all new and renewed memberships will then run to 30th September 2013 (or 2014 for 2-year memberships, and 2015 for 3-year memberships). We appreciate your cooperation during this one-off change.

1.4 Changes to Workshop Grants Scheme

Instead of funding two workshops each year up to a maximum upper limit of Euros 1000 per workshop, EHBEA will now fund one workshop up to a maximum limit of Euros 1000 per workshop each year, effective immediately. Instead of two annual deadlines for applications we will now have one deadline for applications, which will be December 15th each year. Students organising workshops are also encouraged to apply for the workshop grants.

1.5 *NEW* Student Research Grants Scheme

EHBEA is pleased to announce a new Student Research Grant competition that will run annually. The aim is to provide student members of the Association with funds to conduct a specific research project that complements the academic aims of the Association.

Two grants will be made each year. The maximum award per grant is 500 Euros. Funds could be requested for participant payments, travel to field sites, or other research costs. Grant applications will be assessed on the basis of scientific quality, feasibility and quality of the applicant. In addition to completing the application form, applicants must ask a suitable referee to provide a Letter of Support before the application deadline.

The grant application **deadline is 5pm (GMT) on 15th December** each year. The first round of applications will open this year i.e. 2012. A completed Application Form (available on the EHBEA website from November 1st, 2012), plus a Letter of Support, should be emailed to the EHBEA secretary (ehbea.secretary@googlemail.com). Applicants must be pursuing post-graduate research degrees and be members of EHBEA in order to be eligible to apply

Please contact the EHBEA secretary in advance, if you have any questions.

1.6 *NEW* EHBEA Book Series

EHBEA has just established a new book series on 'Advances in the Evolutionary Analysis of Human Behaviour', published by Springer. This series aims to publish books, both edited volumes and single author, which fit EHBEA's ethos of integration, plurality and rigour in the human evolutionary behavioural sciences. We encourage all EHBEA members to consider submitting a book proposal for this series. The first book will be an edited volume which arose from an EHBEA funded workshop: Applied Evolutionary Anthropology, edited by Mhairi Gibson and David Lawson. Please contact the Series Editor, Rebecca Sear (rebecca.sear@lshtm.ac.uk), for more information or to submit a proposal.

2. EHBEA 2013 Conference

We are pleased to announce the **8th European Human Behaviour and Evolution Association Conference** which will be held at [VU University Amsterdam](http://www.vu.nl), The Netherlands from **Sunday 24th to Wednesday 27th March 2013**. Abstract submission will open on November 15th 2012. The deadline for abstract submissions is the **31st of December 2012**.

The conference website is now live at www.ehbea2013.com

Plenary speakers:

[Bram Buunk](#) (University of Groningen and Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences)

[Celia Heyes](#) (All Souls College, University of Oxford)

[Simon Gächter](#) (Dept. of Economics, University of Nottingham & Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences Visiting professor, VU University Amsterdam)

[Kristen Hawkes](#) (Dept. of Anthropology, University of Utah)

[Joe Henrich](#) (Dept. of Psychology and Dept. of Economics, University of British Columbia)

Organizing Committee:

[Mark van Vugt](#), [Thomas Pollet](#), [Josh Tybur](#) & [Fleur Thomése](#)

Other attractions:

Conference dinner in Amsterdam.

Boat cruise on canals

Everything Amsterdam has to offer:

www.iamsterdam.com

3. EHBEA 2013 New Investigator Award

The EHBEA Steering Committee is calling for nominations for the 2013 EHBEA New Investigator Award.

The prize will be an expenses-paid plenary slot at the EHBEA 2013 annual conference in Amsterdam, The Netherlands (March 24th to 27th). All EHBEA members are invited to nominate one or more candidates. Further details and a nomination form are attached with this newsletter. The deadline for nominations is the **15th of December 2012**.

4. EHBEA 2013-2016 Committee Elections

The EHBEA Steering Committee is calling for nominations for the following committee positions for the 2013-2016 period (responsibilities to be taken up immediately following the 2013 conference):

1. **President** * (currently Rob Barton, Durham University).
2. **Secretary** * (currently Shakti Lamba, University of Exeter).
3. **Outreach Officer** (currently Elisabeth Oberzaucher, University of Vienna)

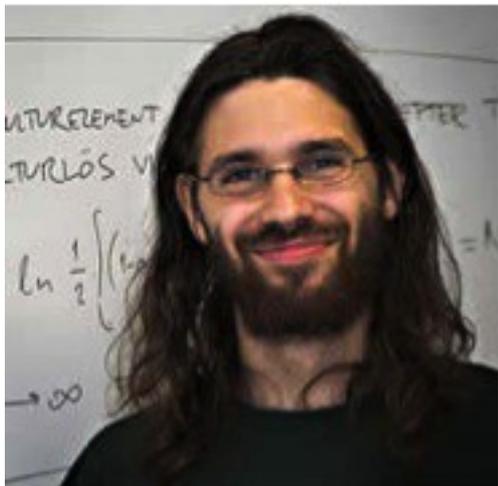
* *Steering Committee Position*

Please find attached a nomination form (which also includes further details on eligibility and the responsibilities of each position). The deadline for nominations is **5pm on Friday, the 30th of November 2012**.

Members will then be invited to vote for nominated candidates and committee positions will be finalised by the **31st of January 2013**. Current holders of open positions may be re-elected.

5. EHBEA 2012 New Investigator Award Winner

Dr. Pontus Strimling



Pontus Strimling is a researcher at Centre for Studies of Cultural Evolution at Stockholm University, Sweden. He gained his PhD. in Mathematics in 2008 at Mälardalens högskola.

His research deals with how cultural traits change over time, particularly how norms are created, sustained and transformed. Throughout his career he has worked with a range of interdisciplinary collaborators across the field of cultural evolution and he has published in Anthropology, Biology, Psychology, Mathematics and Economics. His goal is to further the understanding of cultural evolution to the point where it can be used to predict and transform the outcome of real world cultural change. To this end he uses

formal models to understand and illustrate how cultural processes function. These models are informed by data gathered from experiments, ensuring that the models reflect a more accurate representation of reality. His work ranges from basic research on the effects of repeated learning to applied research on why norms of corruption are effectively stable.

Selected publications:

K. Eriksson and P. Strimling (2010). The devil is in the details: Incorrect intuitions in optimal search, *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 75, 338-347

P. Strimling, M. Enquist and K. Eriksson (2009). Repeated learning makes cultural evolution unique, *PNAS*

P. Strimling, J. Sjöstrand, M. Enquist and K. Eriksson (2009). Accumulation of independent cultural traits, *Theoretical Population Biology* 76(2): 77-83.

K. Eriksson, and P. Strimling (2009). Biases for acquiring information individually rather than socially, *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology* 7(4): 309-329.

6. EHBEA 2012 Best Student Presentation

Lara Wood (Durham University)

Lara A. Wood, Rachel L. Kendal & Emma G. Flynn ‘Copy me or copy you’

Lara Wood studied psychology at Sussex for her undergraduate degree before completing her masters in developmental psychology at Durham. Lara is currently a PhD student at Durham University. Her research focuses on social learning strategies in children and chimpanzees. Lara's Master's dissertation was on model-based biases in five-year-old children, culminating in a recent publication in *Evolution and Human Behavior*. More recently, Lara has investigated the role of prior experience upon children's copying of subsequent social information. In 2011 Lara spent a year at the KCCMR facility in Texas conducting a project looking at model-based biases of proficiency in chimpanzees.

Wood, L., Kendal, R. & Flynn, E. (submitted) Copy Me or Copy You? The effect of prior experience on social learning. *Cognition*

Wood, L., Kendal, R. & Flynn, E. 2012. [Context-dependent model-based biases in cultural transmission: Children's imitation is affected by model age over model knowledgeable state.](#) *Evolution and Human Behavior* 33(4): 387-394.

7. EHBEA 2012 Best Poster Award

Emily Emmot (University College London)

Emily Emmot & Ruth Mace ‘Why do fathers invest? Testing the effects of paternal investment on multiple child outcomes.’

Emily Emmott is in the midst of her PhD in Evolutionary Anthropology at University College London (UCL), where she carries out her exciting research on the effects of allomaternal care on child development in modern Britain. She completed her BSc in Human Sciences at UCL in 2009 with her dissertation, “Is consanguinity an adaptive strategy? The costs and benefits of marrying your cousin”. She then went on to complete her MSc in Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology at Oxford in 2010 with her thesis, “Marital stability in modern market economies: An evolutionary approach”. Her academic interests lie in kin and non-kin cooperation for child rearing within a human behavioural ecology framework.

Emmott, E.H. & Mace, R. (in prep) Paternal investment is beneficial for multiple child outcomes, but is more important for sons than daughters.

Emmott, E.H. & Mace, R. (submitted) Socioeconomic status is multidimensional where different aspects are important for different child outcomes.

8. EHBEA CONFERENCE 25-28 March 2012

Report by Matthew Thomas, University College London

The 7th European Human Behaviour and Evolution Association Conference was held between Sunday 25th and Wednesday 28th March 2012 at Durham University. Once again, the conference mixed talks and posters across the full range of cultural evolution, evolutionary psychology and human behavioural ecology. Seven plenaries, 42 presentations and over 80 posters provided food for thought, while local beer and rap music gave delegates some well-deserved downtime.

The conference would not have been possible without the skill and dedication of Lynda Boothroyd, Jeremy Kendal, Rachel Kendal and Jamie Tehrani who formed the local organising committee. Special thanks go to the British Academy, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the Galton Institute, Oxford University Press, Princeton University Press and Durham University's Department of Anthropology for their generous financial support.

Day 1

The welcome address, including a short historical and cultural tour of the city of Durham, was followed by the public plenary talk. Leslie Aiello presented a retrospective of her renowned Expensive Tissue Hypothesis, which placed energetic trade-offs at the centre of human evolution, and discussed the validity of the Hypothesis as it stands today.

The evening was rounded off by a wine and buffet reception in nearby Grey College where delegates relaxed and mingled in preparation for the coming three days of science.

Day 2

The first full day of the conference began with Monique Borgerhoff Mulder's plenary examining the ways in which the Pimbwe, a Bantu forager-horticulturalist population in Tanzania, respond to inequality. The morning session continued with Daniel Haun presenting evidence for how human children and chimpanzees copy new skills from the majority in their groups, whereas orang-utans do not. David Coall rounded off the session by talking about how stressful events in childhood are associated with earlier reproduction while later stress can delay reproduction.

After a coffee break, Alexandra Alvergne presented a life history perspective on how the adoption of contraceptives is aimed at optimising offspring survivorship. Following the theme of reproduction, Mhari Gibson discussed trends in education, marriage practices, risk avoidance and the demographic transition among the Arsi Oromo. Matthew Gasperetti gave an account of his research into the origins of agriculture in the southern Levant and, just before lunch, Douglas Mastin found that kinship structures can substantially change language-learning models in a Mozambican population.

The second plenary of the day was given by Ian Penton-Voak, who spoke about biases in the social perception of attractiveness, personality, behavioural intentions and emotions in faces. Continuing the afternoon session was V. Coetzee demonstrating the changes in attractiveness and weight preferences among African participants. S.C. Roberts led us into a coffee break with a talk on oral contraceptive use and its effect on sexual satisfaction.

The language evolution session was addressed by Bart de Boer, Bill Thompson and Hannah Cornish discussing human protolanguage, the impossibility of linguistic nativism and the evolution of hierarchical structure in languages. The parallel demography and fertility session, featuring Aida Nitsch, Heidi Colleran and Kei Willführ, looked at alloparenting, migration and mortality in two historical populations as well as fertility behaviour among rural Polish populations.

The sessions ended with a funding workshop run by Leslie Aiello from the Wenner Gren Institute and Dajana Dzanovic from Durham Res. Office. The evening culminated in a river cruise around Durham.

Day 3

Leading the plenaries for the third day was Simon Kirby's call for language structure and transmission to be explained by cultural rather than biological evolution. Continuing with linguistics, Fiona Jordan looked at how meaning changes across languages and over time. The morning was wrapped up with Jonathan Wells presenting evidence that, contrary to evolutionary theory, being born after a brother was beneficial for females in an Indian cohort.

Following coffee, Kristin Snopkowski tested five models of the demographic transition, showing that knowledge of and access to contraceptives, alongside parental investment, resulted in reduced fertility. Keith Jensen had the audience in stitches with a hilarious talk about the limits of helpful behaviour in chimpanzees. Corey Fincher looked at the links between parasite stress, religiosity and the strength of family ties, while Mark James Adams led us into lunch with a discussion on the genetic correlates between fitness and personality.

Hanna Kokko's plenary looked at sex roles and sex differences in paternal care, persuading the audience that humans are in fact like birds. Following this revelation, K. Smith implied that language transmission may not be enough to produce predictability in variation. Finally, Keelin Murray suggested that observers in a society can access potential partners by listening to their music.

One strand of the parallel session featured talks about sociality covering alloparenting, sexual dimorphism and partner choice (Antti Tanskanen, Jonathan Wells and Jamie Lawson). Tom Currie, Tom Dickins and Michael Dunn took us on a journey from epigenetics, through language to political complexity in the cultural evolution session.

Debate during the poster session was encouraged by a selection of locally-brewed ales. Baba Brinkman outlined his rap guide to evolution for an audience of initially-bemused academics, leading us in the historically if not grammatically correct chant, "I'm a African."

Day 4

The final day began with a plenary from Andrew Whiten who reviewed his studies on apes, monkeys and children looking at conformity effects and culture. Kari Schroeder continued the theme by looking at proximate hormonal mechanisms for normative behaviour. The morning was capped with Arnaud Tognetti using a public goods game to investigate sexual and social selection on cooperative behaviour.

Lewis Dean used experimental techniques to delve into the processes underlying cumulative culture in humans versus chimpanzees and capuchins. Segueing from the cute videos, Gilbert Roberts removed the social dilemma from public goods games by introducing punishment. Peter Richerson then outlined a model of technology evolution in hunter-gatherer and agricultural societies. The morning was finished with Lara Wood's research into how children solve tasks by filtering out irrelevant actions when copying behaviour.

The New Investigator Award winner, Pontus Strimling, took us through his mathematical challenges to the core models of cultural evolution. Simon Powers discussed the roles of anti-social and pro-social punishment in cooperation for group-structured populations. Anna Goodman ended this session with support for the hypothesis that modern low fertility is a strategy for raising socioeconomically competitive offspring.

One half of the parallel sessions covered comparative perspectives on cognition, with Claudio Tennie, Nicolas Cladière and William Hoppitt discussing their research on apes and monkeys. The other session delved into new frontiers in evolutionary psychology where Markus Rantala, T. David-Barrett and Edward Morrison looked at attractiveness and relationships.

The conference dinner took place in the resplendent Durham Castle, followed by drinks in the cellar bar where prizes were awarded. The Best Student Talk was won by Lara Wood for her presentation, “Copy me or copy you?” and Best Poster went to Emily Emmott’s “How much do fathers matter? Paternal investment effects on height in a Bristol cohort study.”

9. Workshop reports

EHBEA funded two workshops this year. Reports written by the organisers are provided below.

9.1 Diversity and Integration in Scottish Psychology and Evolution Research

Held on 7th February 2012 at the University of Stirling, UK.

Organised by Christine Caldwell*, Anthony Little* & Craig Roberts*

*University of Sterling

This one-day meeting was held with the support of the University of Stirling and the European Human Behaviour and Evolution Association. The primary aim of the meeting was to encourage discussion between members of several prominent Scottish research groups in the human evolutionary behavioural sciences. We intended to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and expertise, particularly at postgraduate level, with the goal of facilitating mutually beneficial collaborative links across the research groups. Ten speakers gave presentations for an audience of 60 delegates. The speakers represented a total of six different academic departments in Scotland, as well as one English institution (Professor Robin Dunbar from the University of Oxford was invited as an external guest speaker).

The day began with a plenary lecture by Professor Dunbar, who discussed human social networks, and the importance of social support. Postgraduate speaker Mari McLeod of the University of Abertay stayed with this theme, talking about her research on the effects of social exclusion on young children within small groups. Completing the morning session, Kristen Knowles, a Stirling PhD student, presented her research involving the experimental manipulation of voice pitch, and its effect on memorability.

Professor Ben Jones of the University of Aberdeen opened the afternoon session by talking about his recent work on the effect of “eavesdropping” on encounters between other individuals on the perception of dominance, which took inspiration from studies of quail to generate hypotheses about human social responses. Postgraduate student Bill Thompson, of the University of Edinburgh, took us away from participant testing with a talk about his work modelling language evolution, which indicated that capacities for cultural transmission weaken selection for hard-wired learning biases. Another Edinburgh PhD student, Mark Adams, presented his research on personality and genetics. Dr Corey Fincher, a postdoctoral researcher from the University of Aberdeen, closed the early afternoon session with a presentation reviewing his studies on the relationship between parasite stress and international relations, which have shown that measures of in-group versus out-group social interaction can be predicted from exposure to pathogens in human populations.

Following a short break for some coffee and cake, Dr Thom Scott-Phillips of the University of Edinburgh addressed the question of the uniqueness of human language as a communication system: the combinatorial properties of human language are certainly unusual within animal communication systems, but not, it would seem, completely unique. In the penultimate talk of the meeting, St Andrews postgraduate Milena Dzhelyova presented her facial attractiveness research on the halo effect. The final presentation was given by Dr Lars Penke of the University of Edinburgh, who discussed the evolutionary genetics of individual differences.

The meeting certainly met its aims in terms of capturing the diversity of research in the human evolutionary behavioural sciences. The range of approaches represented across the Scottish research groups is striking (topics including cultural evolution, individual differences, sexual

selection, behavioural genetics, and language evolution, and methods including laboratory experiments, real world data collection, and modelling), and this was captured in our line-up of speakers. Consequently it is fair to say that most delegates left the meeting having been exposed to something that was relatively new to them. The meeting appeared to have been generally very well received, and many were eager to know whether similar meetings would be held in the future. We do anticipate organising similar events, and we have set up a mailing list for those who would like to be kept informed about future meetings.

People can sign up to the mailing list at:

<http://lists.stir.ac.uk/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/SPERN>

Further information, including photographs of the meeting, can be found at:

<http://www.alittlelab.stir.ac.uk/sites/spern/index.htm>

9.2 The Nordic Evolutionary Psychology Meeting 2012

Held from 13th-14th September, 2012 at the University of Turku, Finland.

Organised by Markus J Rantala (University of Turku)

The purpose of the meeting was to bring together researchers and students of diverse backgrounds united by an interest in explaining behavior in the light of evolution as well as increase the awareness about evolutionary psychology in general. As such, the meeting was free of charge for all participants. The meeting had over 100 registered participants from several countries representing the fields of psychology, biology and philosophy. The speakers included many of Finland's most prominent figures in evolutionary psychology research as well as highly distinguished keynotes.

The first day of the meeting focused on research on animal behavior, including a keynote lecture from Professor Klaus Zuberbühler about communication and social cognition of non-human primates. The second day was more focused on humans and included keynotes from Professor Robin Dunbar on Facebook and cognitive constraints of human sociality and from Professor David Perrett on human facial attractiveness. There were also 10 posters from promising young researchers interested in evolution and behavior on display during the meeting.

We have already received very positive feedback about the meeting and are investigating the possibility of making it an annual or bi-annual event. Clearly there is a lot of interest in evolutionary psychology among students in Finland and more possibilities for networking are welcome among researchers in the field. The meeting would not have been possible without financial support from EHBEA.