

Tribute to the founder of IGSM

R. Polhill

Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AE, U.K.

On behalf of all the members of IGSM, I should like to record our very great appreciation to Professor Jacques Vassal for setting up our Group and managing it so effectively for the remarkably long period of nineteen years. His interesting account of the work of the Group is given below. It reminds me of the many benefits I have had from the organisation, as well as the great success and pleasure of the several meetings I have attended over the years.

Bulletin No. 1 starts as follows. "This is the first Bulletin of the International Group for the Study of Mimosoideae. We hope that it will come up to your expectations. It is your Bulletin and it can only be in the future what you wish it to become." These simple sentences express very well the spirit of IGSM as a wholly democratic, participative, friendly and proactive working group. The objectives were to exchange information and stimulate research on an important group of plants for which much exciting new information was beginning to emerge, not least from the work of Jacques and his associates. The concepts of IGSM were forerunners of "Bean Bag", the network of the International Legume Conferences and ILDIS. It still holds a unique position within these additional frameworks.

The Bulletin has a very special place in the spectrum from casual newsletters to formal journals of institutes and learned societies. It is a perfectly proper place for the publication of original papers, refereed when appropriate, and yet informal enough to take short articles, observations and requests that find no place these days in institutional publications. The first issue, dated October 1973, has a List of Members, Publications, Publications in Preparation - Projects and a Request section. These essential features have been continued, with great expansion of the section for original articles and recent literature. The most important success is that the Bulletin has come out regularly once a year over the whole nineteen-year period. It takes a great deal of time to elicit materials to include, to edit them and see them through the press. Jacques has had the added problem of raising funds by subscription to pay for the printing and that has been no easy task.

The seven meetings of the group have all been very successful. Those in Australia and Mexico provided a wonderful opportunity to go out and see some good mimosoids in the field, get to know people better and plan projects informally. By attaching the meetings to larger gatherings the Group has become well known and has drawn in a good number of new members. Over the last twenty years it has become increasingly difficult to attract resources for fundamental research and the Group has been successful in adapting to changing circumstances. The work at Toulouse now ranges from gum production in Senegal to molecular systematics. As Jacques says in his report, it is most satisfactory to pass on the management to Leon Brimer¹ who has such a broad understanding of the properties and uses of mimosoids, as well as a strong sympathy with the aims of IGSM. In welcoming Leon we thank Jacques for his many years service and look forward to his continued role as father of the Group.

¹ Eds Note: This role has now been assumed by Stephen Harris (Secretary) and Richard Cowan and Bruce Maslin (joint Editors).