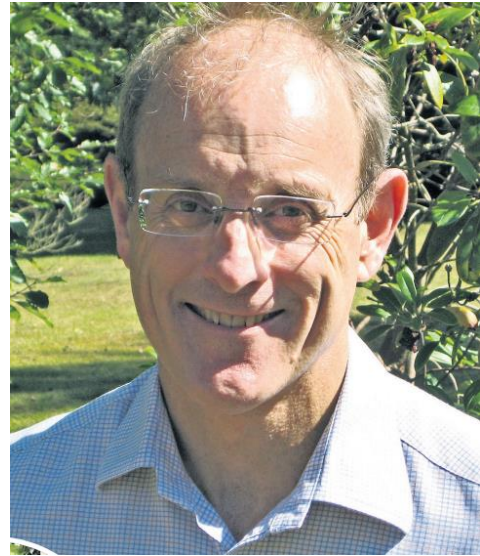


## *Obituary*

**Dr. John D. Mumford**  
**1953 – 2022**

**Editorial Advisor, *Insect Environment***  
**Professor of Natural Resource Management in the**  
**Centre for Environmental Policy (CEP)**  
**Former Director, Centre for Environmental Policy**  
**(CEP)**



**John Mumford**

I first met Dr. Mumford- John to us- and his wife Megan in South Africa in May 2002. We were gathering for the International Fruit fly meet at Stellenbosch<sup>1</sup>. John and Megan had arrived two days ahead and I was to reach the next day. On arrival at the hotel, he sent a message through Late Dr. John Stonehouse that we all would go on a trip to the mountains to see South Africa's most famous flower King Protea (the largest species of Protea and the tag of the South African cricket team).

John hired a self-driven car and took us all to see the amazing giant blooms of Protea, widespread on the mountain top. He was always fascinated by Nature and he wanted us to be the same! This is my first memory of John's loving, caring, friendly and at the same time professional approach to people and science.

That evening, we drove down the mountains, to an Italian restaurant, where John hosted us pizzas and of course with lots of South African wine and dessert thrown in. The conversation on the table veered around John's travel anecdotes, all mixed with science and way forward for IMFFI (Integrated Management of Fruit flies in India) programme. John as the Manager of the Fruit fly program in India, together with Directors from ICAR – first Dr. R N Pal and then Dr. G. Kaloo, and Late Dr. Stonehouse and I, met a couple of times to plan out the IPM programmes for fruit flies in India. It is here, I appreciated John's well studied knowledge of geo-zonation and crop

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<sup>1</sup> The Sixth International Symposium on Fruit Flies of Economic Importance, reported on in Proceedings by Brian Barnes. The next symposium in this collaborative consortium, the 12<sup>th</sup>, will be held 2026 in Morocco.

diversity of India. He chose nine centers across India where a series of eco-friendly fruit fly management treatments would be studied against *Bactrocera* complex in fruits and vegetables.

John's ability to plan research, with a sense of rationale and justification impressed me. The proposal and multi centers were approved by ICAR. John was spearheading the project from UK. I was relating with him the progress of the project, and Stonehouse, who used to visit each centre on longer camping in India, also sought his advice and suggestions on weekly basis.

Next we met at the mid-course workshop for fruit fly identification and progress evaluation in 2004 in Kovalam, Kerala. All of the fruit fly workers came and John insisted that Senior Research Fellow's and students should join in. He stressed that this way students would also imbibe a sense of understanding and commitment to work. This was indeed an eye opener to all of us. Yes, he fostered a great team one-ness in all of us towards achieving the goal. The Kovalam workshop, was a major boost; he offered several tips in finishing off the IPM investigations. Our next meet was in 2005, a review workshop in Goa, with the same participants who had met at Kovalam. The IPM was finalized based on the multi-location results. The whole programme from 2001-2005 was scientifically managed from all dimensions and the recommendations for fruit fly management in mango, guava, cucurbits were forwarded to ICAR for approval and implementation.



**IMFFI participants with Prof. J.D. Mumford at Goa (October 2005)**

John's professional and genial mannerism impressed all of us scientists. He mixed well with all, and he and Stonehouse became role models to many in teamwork in science.

I was one of the major beneficiaries of his partnership in India. It was he who mentored me in fruit fly management at Imperial College London and sponsored a training in fruit fly identification with Dr. Ian White at the British Museum in 2004. It was he and Stonehouse who recommended and sponsored my name and paid for the Fellowship of the Royal Entomological Society, London. Way back in 2005 it was indeed an uncommon honour! At that time the RES office was just opposite his Imperial College Office in main city London and I could visit the RES library several times

Meanwhile the output of the IMFFI programme was that IPM using para-pheromone traps caught like wildfire across India (and even fetched us the Department of Biotechnology award for commercialization in 2014).



### **The India – UK team that worked with Dr John Mumford on IPM in fruit fly, 2001-2005**

We did celebrate the IMFFI success over a dinner at a Japanese restaurant in Salvador, Brazil in 2006 at the 7<sup>th</sup> International fruit fly symposium. For the first time I tasted Japanese sushi- a rice fish preparation! Dr Jiji was also with us then. John as usual kept the table alive with his usual anecdotes and excellent insights into entomology, phytosanitary issues, pest risk, etc. (All memories now!)

By 2012-2013, the fruit fly trap spread across India to >40% of the area. When I next met John at Bangkok in 2014 again for a fruit fly symposium (the 9<sup>th</sup>), he said he was elated at the success of the fruit fly programme, and that he wanted to come to India and see it personally. Thus, John came over to India in 2015. We took him to a few trap manufacturers and farmers' fields. He was delighted in seeing the effort of a team work in 2001-2005, paying rich dividends. He spent a week in India. He and I then met ICAR officials in Delhi and that is the last I saw him physically.

I did work on a project on insect shipment ([World Organisation of Animal Health special edition](#)) associating with him in a small way between 2020-2021. Our meetings were over Zoom, and it was great pleasure to be teamed with him and Dr Megan. Fruit fly research and insect shipment all translated in many useful papers (>50).

He was a great supporter of *Insect Environment* and we were privileged to have him as our Senior Advisor.

So, it was a real shocker when we heard the news that he was suddenly called to his Eternal Home on 29<sup>th</sup> December 2022, after Christmas. The entire team of fruit fly workers and IE's Editorial team have expressed shock and have asked me, through this obituary to convey condolences to Megan and their son William.

**John, we miss you!**

**Dr. Abraham Verghese**

### **From the family**

Born in Australia, John Mumford immigrated to Indiana, USA with his family when he was seven. After spending his teenage years in Massachusetts, where his father taught restorative dentistry, John's training in entomology began at Purdue University at the level of undergraduate. He completed a PhD at Imperial College through the prestigious Marshall Scholar programme (1975-78), before working at Lincoln University, New Zealand, and then taking up a post back at Imperial College where he worked for over 40 years as an academic and researcher. While always working on a global level, John established his home in Windsor, UK, to be close to the Silwood Park campus yet able to go to the South Kensington, London campus on a regular basis. John lived his life fully up to his unexpected death, at home in Windsor, from an acute pulmonary embolism. He was weeks short of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and but a few months away from his planned retirement from

the teaching side of his career. He had spent recent holidays restoring a family home by the Massachusetts seaside as a base for the next phase of life that would have included writing, consulting and relaxation.



**John Mumford and Will Mumford (son) peering into the honey extractor after harvesting**

John did not divide work from friendships; he lived with consistent integrity, remarkable insight and humour in both realms. John and I met, in fact, at a fruit fly meeting for the Western Hemisphere and three years later were married. I, and later our son too, enjoyed the great pleasure of sharing many years with John and often many travels as well, although unfortunately never to India. Many of John's numerous students and colleagues kept in touch, seeking his advice, his reaffirming interest and encouragement well past their shared tasks. It is now time for each of us to take up his nurturing role, while at the same time holding each other to the highest standard, in order to reach the best scientific conclusions and advice to make the world a better place. John was so pleased that his contributions made a difference to the everyday life of Indian farmers. We hope that having known John Mumford will inspire you, as it sustains us through the sadness of his early departure.

**Sincerely,**

**Dr. Megan Quinlan (Mrs Mumford) and Will Mumford**