British Myriapod and Isopod Group

Newsletter

No 39 Autumn 2019

In this Issue:

In our Autumn Newsletter we have the details of the Field Meeting and 2020 AGM in Bridgwater on Friday 17th April 2020. The booking form can be found on page 9 of the Newsletter.

If you know anyone who would like to come but the cost of travel and accommodation has put then off in the past please mention the bursaries for relative newcomers (see below).

We now have a Facebook group called the Isopods and Myriapods of Britain and Ireland where you can post identification request, questions and share events.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this newsletter. I hope you enjoy the latest newsletter and I look forward to receiving more reports and articles. The deadline for article submission for the next newsletter is Monday 3rd February.

Rachel Julie Clark

BMIG Bursaries for AGM and Field Meetings 2020

BMIG is keen to encourage more members to attend our annual field meetings. Last year we introduced the BMIG Bursaries to help contribute towards the costs of travel and accommodation to join us for the unique experience of our annual field meeting. Informal, interactive and instructive, the annual field meeting offers an opportunity to find out more about millipedes, centipedes and woodlice, including identification and field craft, with the experts and other learners.

BMIG wants to encourage relative newcomers to the BMIG species, and also those that record them regularly. But, if the expense of travel and accommodation is putting you off coming to an annual meeting, a BMIG Bursary may be for you.

For further information about BMIG Bursaries and an application form, please contact Paul Harding (pha@ceh.ac.uk). Our next annual field meeting will be in Somerset between the 16th to 19th April 2020. Why not join us?

AGM notice

All BMIG members are invited to attend the 20th AGM of BMIG to be held at Cannington College, Bridgwater on Friday 17th April 2020 at 8pm.

See page 2 for more information

BMIG Field Weekend and AGM 2020

In April 2020 BMIG will be visiting Bridgwater in Somerset, a county we have not visited en masse for over 30 years. We have booked accommodation at the Cannington Campus of Bridgwater and Taunton College, just outside the town. Although field sites have yet to be arranged, Bridgwater is ideally placed for easy access to the coast, the Mendip Hills, Somerset Levels, Polden and Quantock Hills. Further afield lie Exmoor National Park and the Blackdown Hills AONB.

As when we visited South Wales, we hope that one of our continental colleagues will be able to join us and keep us informed of their research. Keep an eye on the website for further news.

Full details of dates and prices can be found on the booking form enclosed with the newsletter and downloadable from the website. Please note that all bookings must be returned to Paul Harding by 31st December 2020. Also, any applications for a bursary should be sent directly to Paul Harding.

AGM notice

All BMIG members are invited to attend the 20th AGM of BMIG to be held at Cannington College, Bridgwater on Friday 17th April 2020 at 8pm

AGM Officer Elections

All existing officers that are coming up to the end of their three year term are eligible for re-election but we encourage any members of the society to get more involved in running the organisation and put themselves forward for election. Also, some officers have resigned during the year so we have a range of roles (see below) that members could volunteer for, some that have never been filled. We ask ideally that any nominations are sent to the Secretary, Helen Read beforehand (see committee contacts pg. 8) but nominations can be made from the floor at the AGM.

Officers to be elected during the AGM are:

1. Secretary
2. Librarian and Collections Manager
3. Field Meeting Co-ordinator – Although a vacant role, we currently have a member handling bookings.
4. Social Media Manager
5. Projects Officer – Another vacant role.
6. Conservation Officer – Although a vacant role, the chair and vice-chair have so far fulfilled the requirements between them. We would welcome someone giving the role their full attention.
7. BENHS representative

Paul Lee

BMIG Facebook group

BMIG now has an official Facebook Group, Isopods and Myriapods of Britain and Ireland - https://www.facebook.com/groups/407075766387553/ - to complement its existing Facebook Page.

The creation of the Isopods of Britain and Ireland group last year by Warren Maguire proved to be a real bonus for the recording of woodlice and waterlice (and also marine isopods), as highlighted in the previous newsletter. During the BMIG committee meeting this Spring it was decided to expand this group, with Warren's agreement, to include Myriapods, and to add a link to the BMIG website. The advantage of a 'group' is that posts with multiple images can be submitted by anyone (not just by BMIG 'admin'). This is ideal for an identification request, where images of individual key features are needed for identification.

Isopods and Myriapods of Britain and Ireland is a 'closed' group, but anyone can ask to become a member and thus be able to view and interact with

Pachymerium ferrugineum on Guernsey

Isopods and Myriapods of Britain and Ireland ›

CLOSED GROUP · 355 MEMBERS

About

This is the Facebook group for the British Myriapod and Isopod Group (BMIG). It is for anyone interested in the study of Isopods (marine, freshwater and terrestrial) and Myriapods (Centipedes and Millipedes) in Britain and Ireland. Post your photos, ID questions, news etc. NOTE: This site is for wild Isopods and Myriapods in Britain and Ireland only, and does not cover breeding and trading of Woodlice, Centipedes or Millipedes. Please read the pinned post before joining in.

Image One : The mobile page of the *Isopods and Myriapods in Britain and Ireland. Facebook* Group © Facebook, 2019

the group's content. The idea is to build a solid core of the most active participants who can make a real contribution to the recording of Isopods and Myriapods in Britain and Ireland. Participants are encouraged to submit records into the BMIG recording schemes. If you are not yet a member, please do consider joining, if only to keep up to date with the latest 'happenings' of the Isopod and Myriapod world, long before they appear in this newsletter!

Steve Gregory

Long form of *Pachymerium ferrugineum* on Guernsey

Pachymerium ferrugineum is one of the most widely distributed centipedes in Europe and occurs as an introduction across much of the planet in a wide variety of habitats. However, it is very rare in Britain and known from just a handful of coastal shingle sites in southern and eastern England. So far British specimens have always been found to have 43 or 45 pairs of legs, and are typically 30-35mm in length. In March Andy Marquis collected an unfamiliar centipede from the upper shoreline at La Croix Bay, Guernsey (Channel Islands). Images of the specimen bore a striking resemblance to *Pachymerium ferrugineum*, but it was considerably longer than known British examples, with 57 leg pairs and a colossal 60mm in length. Andy kindly sent me the specimen for examination and I have no doubt that it is indeed a female *P. ferrugineum*. The following month Andy collected a second specimen, also with 57 leg pairs, from the same site.

A quick trawl of the literature indicates that this species seems to occur in two forms. On the island of Crete a 'short form' with 41-47 leg pairs occurs on the main island, while a 'long form' with 55-59 leg pairs occurs on small satellite islands (Simaiakis & Mylonas, 2003). Interestingly, a similar condition is seen closer to home in north west France, where Iorio & Tiberghien (2007) report 43 and 45 leg pairs for two specimens collected on the mainland and 55 and 57 leg pairs for two specimens on a small off-shore island. Thus, the discovery of a population of the 'long form' with 57 leg pairs on the relatively small island of Guernsey is not unexpected. It may be that these two forms are sibling species (similar to the situation found in *Geophilus carpophagus*, where the 'short form' was described in 2001 as a separate species, *G. easoni*). Unfortunately, it appears that so far no studies have been undertaken on the DNA of the two forms of *P. ferrugineum*, which would help clarify the situation.

The Status of *Schendyla monoeci* in Britain

References

Simaiakis, S. & Mylonas, M. (2003) *Pachymerium ferrugineum* (C.L. Koch, 1835) – *two distinct forms in Crete?* Bull. Brit. Myriapod & Isopod Group, 19:57-61.

Iorio, E. & Tiberghien, G. (2007) *Nouvelles données sur la morphologie et la distribution géographique des Chilopodes du Massif armoricain (Chilopoda)* Bull. Soc. Linn. Bordeaux, 142, (N.S.) n° 35 (1): 75-86.

Steve Gregory

The Status of *Schendyla monoeci* in Britain

Now known as *Schendyla monoeci* (Brölemann, 1904), the only British record ever made of this species was from a greenhouse at Tuckingmill, Cornwall in 1943 of two 14mm females. They seemed to have slight differences from Brölemann`s 1930 description but the collector, F.A.Turk, had no doubt about their identity (Turk, 1944). In his notes, Turk describes it as "14mm long. 53 pefiferous segs. Differs from Brols. description in the following details. Labial hairs 2+6+0 (Brol.2+6+4). One of the terminal legs has a fairly developed claw & the other less so. Concavity of forcipule is slightly crenulate." This last note about the terminal legs is curious and Brölemann (1930) described both the family and this species as without a terminal claw, "la griffe apicale fait totalment défaut, ou est tout au plus représntée par une épine dépourvu de tendon" (family), "dernier article plus long que le precedent et inerme ou épinaux" (species).

There have been no subsequent British records and when Ted Eason wrote Centipedes of the British Isles (1964), he based his description of the species on French specimens and the accounts in the Linnean Society Synopsis and AIDGAP key are based on his account. According to Etienne Iorio's (2014) Catalogue biogeographique et taxonomique, the species does occur in France (trés rare; littoral des Alpes Maritimes), Italy, Moldova, Monaco, Romania & Ukraine.

Amongst Turk material passed to me some time ago and later transferred to Manchester University Museum for curation by Graham Proudlove was a slide, labelled "Brachyschendyla Monoeci Brol. Greenhouse, "Penlo" Tuckingmill, C'wll. 10.x.43". Unfortunately, the condition of the mounting medium, very much darkened, was such that it did not seem possible to confirm the identification but it did not seem to be any of our other known schendylids.

This year, wanting to clarify the situation if I could and not being familiar with *S.monoeci*, I contacted Lucio Bonato at Padova asking if he could look at the slide as he was more familiar with that species. To this he agreed and Graham kindly arranged for it to be sent to him. His opinion, based on better microscopy (and more experience) than my own, was "NOT SCHENDYLIDAE, surely Geophilidae. Maybe subadult *G,seurati* or *G.osquidatum*?" He gave a more detailed description which I hope to publish elsewhere.

G.fucorum (G.fucorum seurati) is widespread on the shore in SW England whilst *G.osquidatum* is a widespread terrestrial species there so the likelihood of it being the latter certainly seems not impossible. There was no other material in the slide or specimen collection that could be located as the other specimen but, since the two were found together it would be reasonable to suggest that it was the same as the one that survived. Given Dr Bonato's comments, given the description by Dr Turk of a terminal claw (which is not found in schendylids) and given the known distribution of the species it seems reasonable to conclude that

Schendyla dentata & Other Small Centipdedes

S.monoeci is probably not a member of the British centipede fauna, conscious, of course, that exotics from well outside their known distribution can sometimes turn up in unlikely places.

I would like to thank both Lucio Bonato & Graham Proudlove for helping to shed more light on this enigmatic specimen and the status of *S.monoeci* here.

Tony Barber

Schendyla dentata & Other Small Centipdedes

Schendyla dentata (Brachyschendyla dentata) was first described from France in the first half of the twentieth century but in the late 1960s it was found in Surrey, initially by Tullgren extraction of soil samples from more or less urban locations in Haslemere and Guildford. Subsequently, records have been made across southern England and Wales with churchyards being described as a good place to look for it (S.Gregory, pers.comm.). It is now also known from Scotland and Ireland as well as The Netherlands, Denmark and Austria.

It is a small (12mm), pale species with distinctive forcipules and 39 leg-pairs. Because of its size and apparently soil dwelling habits it is likely to be often overlooked but correspondingly these same characteristics will tend to facilitate dispersal as will its apparently parthenogenetic habits (no males have been found).

Recently, looking at the seasonal occurrence of centipede species, we found that, when corrected for month length and total numbers of centipede records of most of the most commonly found non-littoral species varied from month to month between, at most, about 4 to about 12 % of their total (the "predicted value", if there were no variation would be 8.33%). This probably reflects the fact that most centipedes mature over several years. The one expected deviation from this pattern, based on earlier findings, was *Lamyctes emarginatus* and this, based on about 600 records varied between 0 and over 26% with a peak between July and September.

Image Two (top): *Schendyla dentata* - forcipules, ventral: note the prominent tooth on the femoroid as well as the one at the base of the poison claw itself (4526)

Image Three (bottom): *Schendyla dentata* - posterior end, ventral: note the very short final article (metatarsus) of the legs (4528)

Both © Steve Gregory

When we looked at *Schendyla dentata* there were only 35 usable total records on file and, like other species with a small number of records we might expect values to fluctuate much more than those species with thousands of records but not in any obvious pattern. It certainly varied, with values between 0 and 31.1 % (December), representing 0 to 6 actual records and a complete absence of records during the summer period, June to September.

Phunny *Philoscia* – the plot deepens

Although there are so few records, this does seem a distinct pattern which, possibly, is caused by downward migration in the soil in the summer or some aspect of the life-cycle. Intuitively, based on limited experience, I have tended to regard this species as a "winter" one with animals being found during quite cold weather. Alternatively, this pattern could be simply an exaggeration because of the small number of records of an apparent slight or more definite "summer dip" in numbers found in the data for other (but seemingly not all) geophilomorphs.

So what is the message?

Clearly the smaller the number of records for a particular species, the greater the likely effect of chance on any pattern but, overall, rough patterns do seem to emerge. In *Henia brevis*, a species with 78 records and often found in apparently similar places to *S.dentata*, there are no records for November to January, a peak in March and above 8% until July. For a species with a large number of records such as *Lithobius forficatus* with more than 9,000, the monthly figures still vary somewhat ((6.4 to 10.9%) while for the gephilomorphs, *Haplophilus subterraneus* (nearly 3,000 records) variation is 4.3 – 11.9% and for *Geophilus truncorum* (nearly 2,800) 5.8-10.7%. All these values, tend to suggest no massive changes in population numbers. Other species show similar patterns although with smaller numbers of records fluctuation can, inevitably, become more obvious.

One would anticipate geophilomorphs, being soil dwelling animals and moving deeper in dry weather, would be less commonly found in the summer (as mentioned above) but clearly the pattern as between species may be more complex than that. *Geophilus flavus* (2,500+ records) has its highest frequency from April to July.

It would be most helpful to have more information about species like *S.dentata* and *H.brevis* which are rather small, pale animals and can either be missed altogether or seen as an immature of another species so the old message about collecting small pale, geophilomorphs, whenever seen, in synanthropic sites, in rock crevices or anywhere else remains and also – do collect in winter! And try soil extraction? Even if you don't find either of these two species, you might find interesting other ones.

Tony Barber

Phunny *Philoscia* – the plot deepens

Our understanding of the distribution and habitat preferences of *Philoscia affinis* in Britain and Ireland is improving rapidly and I make no apologies for yet another note on this species.

Roy Anderson is building a solid foundation in Ireland, where he has found several sites in Co. Down and Co. Antrim (in the north east) and also records *P. affinis* from The Burren, Co. Clare in the west. Roy is finding both *Philoscia* species in Ireland, but describes *P. affinis* as a characteristic woodlouse of rural sites. Warren Maguire (who has yet to find *P. affinis* in south east Scotland) has also collected specimens (the 'Phunny Philoscia' of the heading) at a rural site in Co. Tyrone, far from the coast, with *P. muscorum* occurring in synanthropic sites nearby. Warren's original posting with images of live specimens can be seen at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/407075766387553/permalink/730013294093797/.

Perhaps, the biggest revelation came this spring during BMIG's field meeting to the Galloway coast, south west Scotland, which provided the perfect opportunity to undertake some targeted fieldwork. Male specimens of *P. affinis* were collected from five

rural sites, both coastal habitats and deciduous woodland, but the only confirmed record for *P. muscorum* (i.e. specimen examined) was from Cally Gardens - very much a synanthropic site.

Subsequently, *P. affinis* has been found on the islands of Arran (by Garret Maguire) and Lismore (by Derek Whitely). This latter site is the most northerly observation so far for this species, which until 2017 was only known as far north as Belgium. This lies just north of my own 2007 sighting at Oban, which was discovered retrospectively in 2017 by examination of voucher specimens following the discovery of *P. affinis* in Britain. These are important observations because during BMIG's previous field meetings in western Scotland (Kirkcudbright 1997, Ayr 2006, Oban 2007, Kintyre 2010 and Dundreggan 2011) *P. muscorum* was regularly recorded. However, back then nobody, myself included, bothered to check male *Philoscia* specimens. Simply put, *P. affinis* was considered to be a species of southern Europe and very unlikely to occur in Scotland! Alas, current evidence shows that *P. affinis* is widespread in western Scotland, and it may partially or completely replace *P. muscorum* in rural habitats. Thus, it is highly probable that many of the records of *P. muscorum* from the west coast of Scotland (such as those shown in Woodlice and Waterlice of Britain & Ireland) are erroneous and actually refer to *P. affinis*. Further south, for example in Lancashire, north Wales and south Wales, both species are known to coexist, but even here there is likely to have been many misidentifications.

P. affinis seems to exhibit a typical western 'Atlantic' distribution in the British Isles and may prove to be widespread across Ireland. This contrasts with the more south-eastern 'Continental' bias noted for *P. muscorum*. I suspect that further field work will reveal a distribution pattern similar to that of *Porcellionides cingendus*, but extending further north. But we will see. In the meantime a paper collating British and Irish observations of *P. affinis*, with notes on identification and a provisional distribution map, is being prepared for the Bulletin. I thank all those who have submitted records of *Philoscia affinis* into the Woodlouse Recording Scheme, without which I'd have nothing to report.

Steve Gregory

Stenophiloscia glarearum in Cornwall

The small woodlouse *Stenophiloscia glarearum* is notoriously elusive specialist of coastal shingle. There is a cluster of records from East Anglia (black dots on map below, where the most recent observation is 2001) and an isolated site at Slapton Ley in south Devon (yellow and black dot). At this latter site it was not seen for many decades until its rediscovery there in 2015 and 2016 by John Walters and Mark Telfer. Also in 2016 two new sites were discovered in Dorset by Steve Trewella (pair of yellow dots) suggesting a wider distribution along the south coast. Steve recorded many individuals at both Dorset sites using baited pitfall traps. The

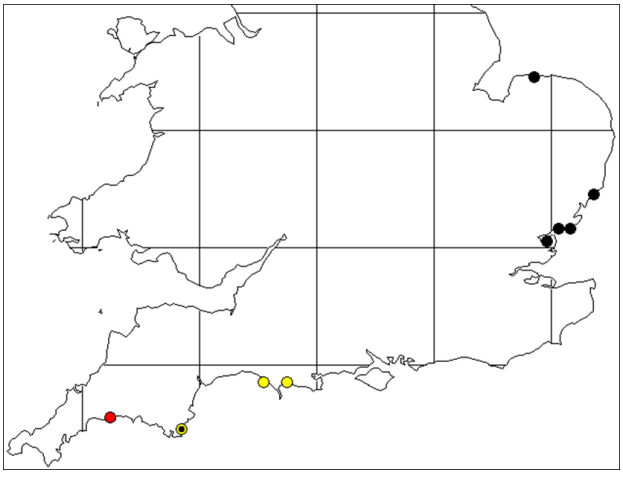

Image Three: Distribution map of *Stenophiloscia glarearum*

original Slapton Ley records were also from pitfall traps.

Committee contacts

This April Tom Hughes visited Looe Beach in Cornwall (SX 25 53, red dot) and found a single specimen of *S. glarearum* under a large flat rock on the upper shore below steep laminated cliffs. Tom commented that he instantly recognised the species in the field and "completely panicked and nearly lost it in the gravel." I think we can all relate to that moment of 'panic' when a critical species is encountered. Nearby he found *Halophiloscia couchii* (which seems to be a regular associate at its known south coast sites), and the inevitable *Ligia oceanica* and *Porcellio scaber*. This nicely extends the known range of this elusive woodlouse further westwards and re-enforces the suspicion that it is likely to prove more widespread around the coastline of at least southern Britain. Tom's original posting, with images of his live specimen, can be seen on the BMIG Facebook Group at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/407075766387553/

Committee contacts

www.bmig.org.uk
facebook.com/BritishMyriapodandIsopodGroup/
twitter.com/britishmigroup
instagram.com/britishmigroup/

For information and membership please contact:
Helen Read, helen@helenread.co.uk (or see Hon. Secretary for address)

For Sales please contact:
Paul Harding, pha@ceh.ac.uk (or see Hon. Treasurer for address)

Chairperson:
Paul Lee, 1 Holly Cottages, Tattingstone, Ipswich IP9 2LZ
arachne2222@aol.com

Vice Chairperson:
Duncan Sivell, NHM, Life Sciences, Cromwell Rd, London, SW7 5BD.
d.sivell@nhm.ac.uk

Hon. Treasurer:
Paul Harding, 60 Boxworth Road, Cambridge CB23 4JQ. 01954 267218
pha@ceh.ac.uk

Hon. Secretary:
Helen Read, 2 Egypt Wood Cottages, Egypt Lane, SL2 3LE
helen@helenread.co.uk

Bulletin Editor:
Helen Read, 2 Egypt Wood Cottages, Egypt Lane, SL2 3LE
helen@helenread.co.uk

Newsletter Editor:
Rachel Clark, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London, SW7 5BD
rachel.clark@nhm.ac.uk

Centipede Recorder:
Tony Barber, 7 Greenfield Drive, Ivybridge, Devon, PL21 0UG.
abarber159@btinternet.com

Millipede Recorder:
Paul Lee, 1 Holly Cottages, Tattingstone, Ipswich IP9 2LZ
arachne2222@aol.com

Non-marine Isopod Recorder:
Steve Gregory, Earth Trust, Abingdon, OX14 4QZ.
stevejgregory@btopenworld.com

Biological Records Centre:
CEH Wallingford, Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford OX10 8BB Tel: 01491 692424 Fax: 01491 692564
brc@ceh.ac.uk

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Field Meeting and AGM Form

BRITISH MYRIAPOD AND ISOPOD GROUP RESIDENTIAL FIELD WEEKEND AND AGM
16th to 19th APRIL 2020

BMIG's annual gathering in 2020 will be based near Bridgwater in Somerset. We have not visited this county for over 30 years. Bridgwater is ideally placed for easy access to the Somerset coast and to areas of varied geology and topography – Mendip Hills, Somerset Levels, Polden and Quantock Hills. Further west is Exmoor National Park and to the south the Blackdown Hills AONB.

We have block-booked two student accommodation units at the Cannington Campus of Bridgwater & Taunton College, offering up to 20 single en-suite rooms, full catering and a meeting room. The Campus is about 5 miles west of Bridgwater and is served by regular buses from the town centre. Bridgwater is on the Bristol Temple Meads to Taunton line with trains approximately every hour. The M5 bypasses Bridgwater, but Junctions 23 (from North) and 24 (from South) are close.

Programme – As usual, permissions will have been arranged for access to several sites. Evening events may include a guest speaker, one or two informal talks, and the AGM. Offers of talks, workshops, etc are welcome – see below.

Bookings will be accepted on the basis of the full 3-day package: 3 x dinner, 3 x bed & breakfast and 2 x packed lunch (not Sunday). Dinner is two courses (main and dessert) and a hot drink. The cost, per person, for the full 3-day package will be £185.00.

To book, please complete the details below and return the booking form to Paul Harding (BMIG), 60 Boxworth Road, Elsworth, Cambridge CB23 4 JQ or by email to pha@ceh.ac.uk

Name.....
Address
.....
.....
.....

Telephone.....Email.....

Dietary requirements.....

I would like to: Give a talk on .....
Lead a workshop on .....

Deposit £50 per person with booking form: cheques payable to BMIG or by bank transfer to British Myriapod and Isopod Group, Sort Code 30-94-75, Account No 00581652.

BMIG Bursary: If you would like to apply for a BMIG bursary, please contact Paul Harding (above) for further details.

It may be possible to accommodate anyone requiring a double room (queen-size bed, in a separate accommodation block), or wishing to book for less than the full 3-day package. Please contact Paul Harding (above) as soon as possible as this will have to be negotiated separately with the College and may be more expensive.

Last date for booking 31st December 2019, but PLEASE BOOK EARLY