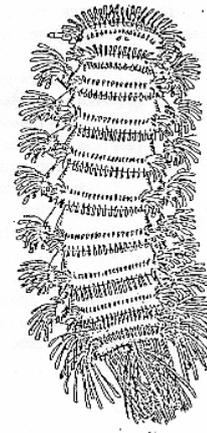




British Myriapod and Isopod Group



Spring 2007

Newsletter number 14

Editor: Paul Lee

Steve Hopkin 1956-2006

Last May, Steve was tragically killed in a car accident. Chairman of the British Myriapod and Isopod Group at the time, his name will be well known to all those who read this newsletter. As well as his scientific papers on the ecotoxicology of invertebrates he wrote the AIDGAP key to woodlice that so many readers will have used and was senior author of the book, *Biology of Millipedes*. In addition he had recently written a couple of articles for British Wildlife, bringing the delights of our groups to a wider readership. He was also a talented photographer, especially of invertebrates, and some of his pictures are included in the Millipede Atlas just published. In recent years Steve had been working on Collembolan systematics. In addition to trying to sort out some complicated problems, and going through the collection in the Natural History Museum in great detail, he was also writing an AIDGAP key (which should be published soon) to enable more people to start recording this group. His website includes maps that were produced as part of this work and he was hoping that some members of BMIG might start recording springtails too.

Steve and his wife had recently moved to Cornwall and his enthusiasm for the area was evident when he attended the BMIG field meeting in Spring 2006. He will be greatly missed by members of the group, both for his scientific work and for his humour and approachability. Members of the group extend our sympathies to his family. An extended obituary and a full list of Steve's publications will be published in the Bulletin.

Helen Read, 2 Egypt Wood Cottages, Egypt Lane, Farnham Common, Bucks. SL2 3LE

BMIG business

At one time the spring issue of the newsletter carried predictions of species that were likely to be discovered during the forthcoming annual meeting. In light of the totally unexpected finds of recent years, I don't intend to gaze into the crystal ball for our visit to the Bishop Mascall Centre, Ludlow this year. However, a brief glance at the maps in the new millipede atlas shows that the collection of even some of the commoner species will result in new Shropshire records. Eighteen members, including grizzled old veterans and fresh faced newcomers, have booked so far

so yet again it promises to be a lively and productive weekend. Paul Harding has been working hard on a programme that includes an introduction to the area by Tom Wall of Natural England on Thursday evening. On the following morning, Tom will lead a group to Downton Gorge NNR and then, in addition to the AGM, there will be talks from members in the evening. Saturday and Sunday will provide further opportunities for fieldwork and there will be at least one identification workshop on Saturday evening.

Paul Lee, Oakdene, The Heath, Tattingstone, Ipswich IP9 2LX

A New Woodlice Atlas – Your records please!

Paul Harding and I are working on a 'second edition' of *Woodlice in Britain and Ireland* (Harding & Sutton, 1985). The current work is badly out of date and completely unobtainable. Since its publication in 1985 the known distribution of many species has changed significantly, several new species have been added to the checklist and species nomenclature has been revised. In addition, we now have a better understanding of the ecological requirements of most species and of their occurrence across continental Europe, allowing comparisons to be made between our fauna and that of the mainland. Thus, I would urge, even plead, with anyone who has woodlouse records to send them to me as soon as possible and definitely **before October 2007**. I am happy to accept records in any format (including the traditional 'back of an envelope'), but records in an electronic format would save me time better spent on preparing the text! We hope to have the draft text prepared by December 2007 with completion by spring 2008. This is a very tight schedule and a one off opportunity. Please don't miss this chance to get your dots on the map! Please submit your records before October!

Steve Gregory, Northmoor Trust, Hill Farm, Little Wittenham OX14 4QZ

Millipede Atlas

The special offer for BMIG members on the Millipede Atlas has now ended. If you want a copy of this magnificent publication, and of course you do, you will now have to pay the full price either directly from Pensoft or through one of the larger online booksellers. I have received many positive comments on the atlas from a wide range of readers including several lapsed millipede recorders. Already the

maps have stimulated a number of them to submit further records. The distribution maps and supporting data (but not the data analysis and interpretation) is now available on the NBN Gateway. Unfortunately, a couple of errors have come to light post publication. Firstly, the photograph of *Macrosternodesmus palicola* is on page 96 and that of *Ophiodesmus albonanus* is on page 94. Somehow, they ended up being switched but all you eagle-eyed recorders will already have spotted that. Secondly, the Oxfordshire records for *Melogona scutellaris* and a record from each of Warwickshire and Berkshire seem to have been duplicated as *M. gallica* records. Therefore, the dots for squares SP20, SP31, SP32, Sp34, SP41, SU38, SU68, SU69 and SU78 need to be removed from the *M. gallica* map. Please let me know of any further problems you spot.

Paul Lee, Oakdene, The Heath, Tattingstone, Ipswich IP9 2LX

An aberrant strongly xanthochroistic *Philoscia muscorum* (Scopoli, 1763) (Isopoda, Philosciidae)

On 13th November 2006 I observed a distinctive *Philoscia muscorum* amongst herbaceous plants in a garden at Broadway, Worcestershire (VC37 SP13), on the low footslope of the Cotswold Hills. All of the appendages were pure white except for the left uropod which was grey. The dorsal surface was clear pale sulphur yellow. Only the head and the first and last pereonites showed other colour and these were mottled with grey. However, the pereonite marblings were randomised, patchy, and asymmetrical, and most of the last pereonite was also sulphur yellow. This was a very striking morph of which I have seen no others and wholly different to the well-understood 'yellow form' (Sutton 1972, plate 6).

Old, well-developed gardens at Broadway (SP13) support some interesting invertebrate synanthropes, or climatic refugees, including *Armadillidium depressum* Brandt, 1833, *Armadillidium nasatum* Budde-Lund, 1855 (Isopoda, Armadilliidae), *Geophilus carpophagus* Leach, 1814 (Chilopoda, Geophilidae), *Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus* (Wood, 1864) (Diplopoda, Julidae), *Blaps mucronata* Latreille, 1804 (Coleoptera, Tenebrionidae), and in recent times, *Limax maculatus* (Kaleniczenko, 1851) (Pulmonata, Limacidae) and *Hygromia cinctella* (Draparnaud, 1801) (Pulmonata, Helicidae).

Reference

Sutton, S.L., 1972. *Woodlice*. Pergamon Press. pp.1-144.

PF Whitehead, Moor Leys, Little Comberton, Pershore, WR10 3EH

Plea for *Haplophthalmus*, *Trichoniscoides* and *Trichoniscus* specimens

Whilst looking at the draft distribution maps it is apparent that there are plenty of records for *Haplophthalmus 'mengii'* from Scotland, including Shetland, and western Ireland. However, none of the records north of Edinburgh and few in Ireland are based on males. Similarly, none of the *Trichoniscoides 'sarsi'* records for Ireland appear to be based on examination of male specimens. Since only males can be identified to species these records can only be mapped for the species 'aggregate'. This seems a terrible shame as someone has made the effort to collect specimens and submit a record. So please, if anyone has specimens of

these genera from anywhere north of Edinburgh, Ireland or anywhere else in Britain I will be very happy to look at them.

Also, in light of the recent split of *Trichoniscus pusillus* into *T. pusillus* and *T. provisorius* it would be good to have some recent records for these two taxa (previously treated as sub-species). Males tend to be smaller and darker so please pop these into a tube and send them to me. There are likely to be plenty in pitfall trap samples. Any specimens gratefully received ASAP. Many thanks!

Steve Gregory, Northmoor Trust, Hill Farm, Little Wittenham OX14 4QZ

Centipedes from the Eden Project

A number of myriapods were collected in the Moist Tropics Biome at Cornwall's Eden project in 2005. Amongst these were four exotic centipedes, three of which were new to the British Isles.

The following two species of Mecistocephalidae were determined by Lucio Bonato. *Mecistocephalus cf guildingii* (Newport) is a relatively large species (42mm) and, like other mecistocephalids, has a distinctively long head shield, about twice as long as wide and markedly narrower than the trapezoidal tergite of the first trunk segment. It is fairly stout, being about 26 times as long as broad, has 49 trunk segments and is bright yellow with the head end red brown. The poison claw has no basal node but the femoroid, tibia and tarsus each have a distal median tooth. It appears to be a species from the Atlantic coast of the tropical Americas and there is a description, under the name *M. maxillaris* in Brolemann (1930) (L.Bonato, pers.comm) Two specimens were collected.

Tygarrup cf javanicus (Attems), previously recorded by Adrian Rundle from Kew, is a much smaller animal (up to 14 mm) and with 45 trunk segments, pale yellow in colour with a darker anterior end. Extremely abundant and found by both hand sorting and extraction but, interestingly, all the specimens appeared to be female.

Several specimens of a *Cryptops* species were collected and these have now been determined by John Lewis as *Cryptops doriae* Pocock and are the subject of a planned article in the next Bulletin of the BMIG.

Several specimens of a small, blind lithobiomorph, *Lamyctes caeculus* (Brolemann), were collected. It is markedly light brown in colour and up to 5mm long; it had not previously been found in Britain, although there are records from indoor locations elsewhere in Europe. It has now also been collected in the glasshouse at the National Botanic Garden of Wales. A recent article by Verena Stagl and Marzio Zapparolli has pointed out that this is the correct name of the species which has often been called *Lamyctes* or *Lamyctinus coeculus*.

There are also exotic millipedes present including *Paraspirobolus lucifugus*. Indeed, it seems that most of the invertebrates found in the biome are exotics rather than native species which have come in from outside.

Tony Barber, Rathgar, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0BD

***Armadillidium pulchellum* (Zenker) new to East Anglia**

On 23rd September 2006, I joined Martin Collier and Bryan Sage in searching for the rare ground beetle *Amara nitida* at Swanton Novers Wood NNR, Norfolk. Earlier in the year Bryan had discovered a single individual of this exceptionally elusive species, the first record for East Anglia, in a heathy clearing in the wood. Our search for the beetle was unsuccessful but, while lifting up heather *Calluna vulgaris* (L.) Hull plants to examine the litter beneath (at TG01463128, VC 28, West Norfolk), I spotted a small and attractively patterned pill-woodlouse. I immediately thought it was either *Armadillidium pictum* or *A. pulchellum*, neither of which I had seen before. I also thought that both were exceedingly unlikely on range.

The specimen was identified, using Hopkin (1991), as *A. pulchellum*, and confirmed by Steve Gregory. This is the first record for East Anglia and is a distant outlier from the predominantly northern and western distribution of this species in Britain, the nearest records being from the Derbyshire Peak District about 200 km WNW (Harding & Sutton, 1985; NBN Gateway, www.searchnbn.net). There are two outlying 10-km squares in south-east England. One is for TQ1852 originating from the Invertebrate Site Register and with no further details: this requires confirmation. The other is for Bramshill Plantation, Hampshire (SU766613) where S. Hopkin recorded the species on 24th June and 22nd August 1985.

The habitat at Swanton Novers Wood is atypical for *A. pulchellum*, normally found in short turf grassland. It is worth noting that the habitat at Bramshill Plantation was also atypical: dead conifer wood in a conifer plantation. It may be that *A. pulchellum* could be found more widely in southern and eastern England by investigating different habitats. However, it may be that Swanton Novers Wood holds a truly isolated population of *A. pulchellum* (and of *Amara nitida*), as the site is important and unique for both its flora and fauna (Sage, 2006). It is an ancient woodland and wood-pasture straddling the boundary between glacial sands and gravels to the north and calcareous boulder clays to the south.

References

- Hopkin, S. (1991) A key to the woodlice of Britain and Ireland. *Field Studies*, **7**, 599 - 650.
Harding, P.T. and Sutton, S.L. (1985) *Woodlice in Britain and Ireland: distribution and habitat*. Huntingdon: Institute of Terrestrial Ecology.
Sage, B. (2006) Swanton Novers Wood NNR, Norfolk, and its Coleoptera. *Transactions of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society*, **39**, 10 - 56.

Mark G. Telfer, 10 Northall Road, Eaton Bray, Dunstable LU6 2DQ

Some woodlice recorded from Hungary by BMG

Back in 1994 the British Myriapod Group (now BMIG) held a field meeting in south-western Hungary. Despite large tracts of extant semi-natural habitat, including forested mountains, and an interesting mix of climatic influences, this region was relatively under-recorded. This winter, with assistance of colleagues in Hungary, I finally put names to

the last of the 'tricky' woodlice. Of the 27 species collected half are familiar British species.

Armadillidium vulgare was by far the most common species found in most habitats. Similarly, *Platyarthrus hoffmannseggii* and *Trachelipus rathkii* were also very common. These are species with wide habitat tolerances, found widely across Europe. The Trachelipodidae, a family typical of eastern Europe, were also well represented. In addition to *T. rathkii* (which favours damper grassland), *T. nodulosus* (in drier open habitats) and *T. ratzeburgii* (in dense woodland) were also frequent. The final Trachelipodid, *Porcellium collicola*, was also widely recorded. The Agnarid, *Protracheoniscus politus*, rather reminiscent of a smooth mottled *Porcellio*, was the second most commonly recorded species. Together these make up the top seven species collected.

The heavily forested hills supported a distinctive woodlouse community. In drier areas *Lepidoniscus minutus* (a close relative of *Philoscia*), *Trichoniscus noricus* (a central European member of the *T. pusillus* aggregate), and the rare *T. steinboeckii* were widely sieved from leaf litter. The latter is an Austrian Alpine species only recently discovered in Hungary. In the male the swollen, deeply grooved last legs are quite striking. In wet areas another rare Trichoniscid, *Hyloniscus vividus*, was also collected. This large species is known from just south west Hungary and adjacent Serbia and Hercegovina. Here it was associated with *Ligidium germanicum*, which differs from the familiar *L. hypnorum* in the relative lengths of its uropods, and the 'British rarity' *Haplophthalmus montivagus*.

Away from the hills different species were found. Male *Trichoniscus provisorius* was collected once. At other sites only females (which may be the true *T. pusillus*) were found. The common European woodlice *Haplophthalmus danicus* and *Hyloniscus riparius* were both frequent in wet habitats. In contrast *Ligidium hypnorum* and *Haplophthalmus mengii* were found just once, in an alder carr. It is perhaps fortunate that all *Haplophthalmus* collected were the usual British species, as this is a tricky genus! The final moisture loving species is the central European pill-bug *Armadillidium zenckeri*, found at two sites.

A number of woodlice were found in synanthropic habitats. The ubiquitous western European species *Porcellio scaber* and *Oniscus asellus* proved scarce so far east. In fact *O. asellus* is considered a national rarity in Hungary and was found just once! *Porcellionides pruinosus* was found under stones at several locations, but surprisingly not from manure heaps (its favoured habitat in Britain). *Porcellio spinicornis* was found under the bark of an apple tree, whilst *Cylisticus convexus* and *Androniscus roseus* were found under rubble. The latter central European species differs from the familiar *A. dentiger* by having two rows of tubercles on each pereon segment (*A. dentiger* has three). In Pécs city centre *Armadillidium nasatum* was collected, which at the time was new to Hungary.

This field trip has proved to be a very constructive collaboration between British and Hungarian researchers and has fulfilled the original aims of the work, which was to improve the understanding of the invertebrate fauna of this region. I hope to publish the results in the near future.
Steve Gregory, Northmoor Trust, Hill Farm, Little Wittenham OX14 4QZ

Bulletin of the British Myriapod & Isopod Group Vol. 21

Volume 21 includes papers on *Geophilus carpophagus* (sl), *Asellus communis*, *Polyxenus lagurus*, *Adenomeris gibbosa*, Channel Islands myriapods, records from Hungary 1994, BMIG meeting records and an index to volumes 1-21. If you normally receive a copy of the Bulletin but have not yet received volume 21, or if you would like to subscribe, please contact Tony Barber (tbarber@pcfe.ac.uk). The price for individual UK members is £12.75 for this issue and this is a reflection of the cost of production. If you have received a copy and not yet paid for it, could you please do so (except for authors of papers). The editors are also keen to receive papers for volume 22.

The Biology of Centipedes by JGE Lewis

This book has been long out of print in hardback but has now been reprinted by CUP in paperback; priced £43.

International Congress of Myriapodology 2008

Dear colleagues, we have the pleasure to announce the 14th International Congress of Myriapodology 2008. The 14th Congress will be held in Görlitz (Germany) from 21 to 25 July 2008. We will attempt to keep the registration fee as small as possible and will offer scholarships and other support. Accommodation in different price ranges will be available (very inexpensive for students). Congress proceedings will be published in our scientific journal *Peckiana*. More detailed information will be available in June 2007.

If you are interested in participation please contact the Organizing Committee by
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Mrs. Katrin Adam, Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde, Görlitz
Landesmuseum des Freistaates Sachsen

The Proceedings of the Colloquium of European Myriapodologist 2004

The Proceedings are now published in *Peckiana* 4 (2005), 211 pp. You can purchase it for the preferential price of 12€
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In the journals

The following four papers will be of interest to BMIG members:

Edgecombe, G. and Giribet, G. 2007. Evolutionary biology of centipedes. *Annual Review of Entomology* 52:151-170.
The authors review new insights into the anatomy, systematics, and biogeography of centipedes. The importance of combined morphological and molecular

analyses data are recognised. The role of gene expression studies and phylogenetics in evolutionary developmental biology in centipedes are discussed.

Sierwald, P. and Bond, J. 2007. Current status of the Myriapod class Diplopoda (Millipedes): Taxonomic diversity and phylogeny. *Annual Review of Entomology* 52:401-420.

The authors briefly review the natural history of millipedes before tackling taxonomy. In considering the position of diplopods within the Myriapoda and of orders within the Diplopoda, a combination of morphological criteria and molecular analysis is presented.

Autumn meeting 2007, Oban area, Argyll.

The meeting WILL be going ahead, probably during the week beginning the 29th September 2007 but confirmation is awaited from the owners of the accommodation. If you are interested in the meeting, but have not already contacted Glyn, please do so to be kept informed.

Glyn Collis, Seasgair, Ascog, Isle of Bute, PA20 9ET.
Tel: 01700 504429 E-mail: g.m.collis@warwick.ac.uk

Myriapod and Isopod course

A one day workshop on "Woodlice, Centipedes and Millipedes" aimed at enthusiastic adult beginners is being held at Hill End Field Study Centre in Oxfordshire on 17th April 2007. To book or for further details contact:
Hill End, Eynsham Rd, Farmoor, OX2 9NJ. Tel: 01865 863510

NEXT NEWSLETTER: Autumn 2007

Please send your contributions to reach the editor by 30 September 2007

Supplies of record cards and additional copies of the British Myriapod and Isopod Group Newsletter can be obtained from the Biological Records Centre.

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