

REPORT ON THE 2002 BMIG MEETING IN DERBYSHIRE AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Paul Richards

Natural History Section, Sheffield Galleries & Museums Trust, Leader House, Surrey St., Sheffield, S1 2LH.
Email: paul.richards@sheffieldgalleries .org.uk

INTRODUCTION

Members of the British Myriapod Group and British Isopod Study Group have recorded in Derbyshire on an *ad hoc* basis on a number of occasions as part of family holidays and climbing trips to the Peak District. Records also resulted from Gordon Blower's students and visitors from Manchester University. South Yorkshire has benefited from being part of Doug Richardson's county survey for the Yorkshire Naturalist's Union, producing the first county atlases in 1990 (Richardson, 1990). Based in Sheffield, the Sorby Natural History Society are sandwiched between both areas and produced several reports of local species, culminating in the comprehensive survey of Myriapods and isopods in 1995 (Richards, 1995). Despite this recording activity, there are still many areas requiring more thorough investigation.

This was therefore the first formal BMIG field meeting in Derbyshire and was held in the less well recorded region beyond the Sorby mapping area, at the Youth Hostel in Youlgreave, near Bakewell in April 2002. This report is based on records contributed by A. D. Barber, G. Collis, S. Gregory, P. Lee, A. McLean, S. Price, P. Richards, D. Scott-Langley and D. Whiteley

RESULTS OF THE FIELD MEETING, APRIL 2002

The meeting was attended by BMIG and Sorby members, incorporating the usual site recording visits and evening talks, which included an introduction to Millipede identification for the non-myriapodologists and local visitors. Delegates were based within easy reach of the beautiful carboniferous limestone dales of the white peak, which unsurprisingly received the most attention from collectors. The upland acid gritstone of the dark peak was only visited by 5 collectors. Access had kindly been granted to both Haddon Hall and Chatsworth House gardens, which were both delightful venues and turned up some of the most interesting records. The weather was very mild and sunny which made for a particularly pleasant weekend of collecting.

In total, 253 millipede, 155 centipede and 218 woodlouse records (plus over a hundred other invertebrate records) were submitted, representing at least twice these amounts of specimens examined. These contributed data for eight of the surrounding 10 Km grid squares. It is worth noting that even in a very well recorded area, this amounts to something in the region of a 15% increase in high quality species data added to the local knowledge. When submitted to Derbyshire Biological Records Centre these will constitute a 1000% increase in data for these groups!

The three tables summarise the recording effort, the figures representing the number of people submitting a record for each species at each locality.

MILLIPEDES

With 253 submitted records of 22 species, the millipedes were the most frequently recorded group. Few surprises emerged, but the data is a very welcome addition to the local mapping scheme.

Two new sites were identified for *Allajulus nitidus*. This is considered to be rare locally, with only two other records from the Sorby mapping area (A group of 15 10Km squares north-east of SK1070).

Archiboreoilus pallidus was previously un-recorded from the white peak despite Blower's suggestion that it has a preference for calcareous soils (Blower 1985). This anomaly was rectified with four of the six new records coming from limestone dales.

Unfortunately all eight specimens of *Brachychaeteuma* examined were either immature or female but are assumed to be *bradeae/bagnalli* agg. based on previous records. Assumptions cannot be made about their identity as both species are known in the vicinity. Confirmation would have added three new sites, including two new 10km squares.

Cylindroiulus latestriatus cropped up once just to remind us that we do, sadly, have to still do those genitalia preps on *C. britannicus*! Previous records had been from a bracket fungus and limestone grassland, distinctly different from the dead wood and leaf litter habitat of *C. britannicus*.

It is interesting to note that only one out of eight sites for *Macrosternodesmus palicola* was from an ostensibly 'natural' site, the majority being disturbed, synanthropic sites. Although it is quite well recorded in the Sheffield area (66% of 10km squares) every previously known site for this species is associated with human activity. *Ophiodesmus albonanus* seems to be genuinely scarcer in this region and, as is often the case, only occurred with *M. palicola*.

Polydesmus angustus occurred very commonly, with *Polydesmus coriaceus (gallicus)* occurring only at Haddon Hall. Local distribution maps show the latter species to be very synanthropic and only occurs in the area to the south of Sheffield when associated with human activity.

CENTIPEDES

Although surveys have previously provided good coverage of records for centipedes, they are still far from accurately mapped in some areas. Seventeen species of the 21 known locally were recorded during the weekend.

The commonest species was *Brachygeophilus truncorum* from 24 sites. This is one species which is under-recorded in Derbyshire but well mapped in South Yorkshire. Local mapping schemes use a 1Km square basis and these records have added 19 new dots!

Much attention was paid to searching out *Geophilus easoni/carpophagus* particularly in the upland areas of moorland. All proved to be *G. easoni* and indeed subsequent checking of local voucher collections has confirmed that *G. carpophagus* is actually un-recorded in the Sheffield area.

The two *Geophilus electricus* records represent a first for Derbyshire. The credit for the first going to Paul Lee in Lathkill Dale, two days before Steve Gregory unearthed it by Cromford Canal. The widespread but uncommon occurrence of this species reflects its subterranean habits, however, locally this discovery also demonstrates the paucity of centipede records.

Lithobius borealis was surprisingly only recorded in the Sheffield area in March 1998 from Bretton Clough (with *Armadillidium pictum*, Richards & Thomas 1998). The two new records are from remarkably similar steep sided ancient woodlands on landslip of shale grit and sandstone. This high altitude (250m/833ft), rocky, acid environment is consistent with the characteristic habitat for this species (Barber & Keay 1988).

The four new records for *Lithobius macilentus* further emphasise the localised 'clumps' of occurrence typical of parthenogenetic species. Previous 'hot spots' were in SK58, SK49 and SK39. The limestone area of SK17 has now been extended into SK16. Rather like the distribution of *Lithobius variegatus* on a national scale, it

would be fascinating to try to plot the exact boundaries of each of these clumps of *L. macilentus* occurrence, or indeed, to introduce a Dutch male specimen to one population!

It is disappointing that no further localities were found for *Lithobius muticus*. It would appear to be restricted to the areas of Litton Slack and Miller's Dale (SK1673) within Derbyshire. Two other localities occur in the Sheffield area (SK39 & SK58). This again proposes future field work to establish the extent of this northern population.

WOODLICE

Among the excellent haul of 118 woodlouse records were probably the most locally significant finds. The Derbyshire Dales are quite well recorded for woodlice, but slight extensions of distribution were made for several of the limestone specialities such as *Armadillidium pulchellum*, *Androniscus dentiger*, *Porcellio spinicornis* and *Trichoniscus pygmaeus*.

A new addition to the local fauna is *Trichoniscoides sarsi/helveticus*. Steve Gregory and John Harper found both males and females, under stones by a ditch and at the edge of a lawn at Haddon hall. The base of the old hall walls themselves proved very productive for several Trichoniscoid species. No *Trichoniscoides* species have been recorded within the Sorby mapping area. This location falls just outside that boundary, but the discovery still constitutes a new species for the county.

In 1998 the RDB3 woodlouse *Armadillidium pictum* was found in good numbers in trees at Stoke Ford (Richards & Thomas 1998). During this field meeting a number of BMIG members visited the site and confirmed the continuing population in a number of similar tree-bole sites. Elsewhere the species cropped up for the first time in shady grassland and mossy rock habitats in no less than 3 new 10 KM squares. This does beg the question as to whether recent recording has now identified *A. pictum* as having populations in more 10km squares than the Red data book requisite for designation as RDB3 (ie. 15).

A single compost heap at Chatsworth House produced two further new county records in *Porcellionides pruinosus* and *Porcellio dilatatus*. This clearly shows that of the few people studying isopods in Derbyshire over the years, none of them have ventured into farmyards! Further investigation in such locations may yet turn up *Porcellio laevis*, which is also unknown in this area.

PAUROPODS

Yes, there was one! *Pauropus lanceolatus* was recorded by David Scott-Langley at Chatsworth (SK264705) on 5th April. The specimen was determined by Ulf Scheller. This is almost certainly a new county record for an entire Class of arthropods as far as local databases show.

MILLIPEDES	Abney Clough	Barnford Moor	Birchen Edge	Bradford Dale	Breiton Clough	Brook Bottom, Tideswell	Bucka Hill	Chatsworth House		Chee Dale	Cressbrook Dale	Cromford Canal	Frith Wood, Litton	Haddon Hall	Haddon Hall, Manager's Garden	Harlington Station	Hay Wood, Nether Padley	Ladybower Wood		Lathkill Dale		Miller's Dale	Monks Dale	Priddock Wood	Priestcliffe Lees	Robin Hood	Rose End Meadows	Stoke Ford, Breiton Clough	Topley Pike	Wye Dale	Total
Species \ Grid ref.	SK17	SK28	SK27	SK26	SK27	SK17	SK27	SK27	SK26	SK17	SK17	SK35	SK17	SK26	SK26	SK16	SK27	SK18	SK28	SK16	SK26	SK17	SK17	SK28	SK17	SK27	SK25	SK27	SK17	SK17	
<i>Allajs nitidus</i>																1									1						2
<i>Archiboreoiulus pallidus</i>						1		1	1					1	1						1		2								8
<i>Blaniulus guttulatus</i>								3	1					3		1				2	2		2								14
<i>Boreoiulus tenuis</i>				1			1	1	1												2									1	7
<i>Brachdesmus superus</i>														1																	1
<i>Brachychaeteuma sp.</i>																1							2				1				4
<i>Brachydesmus superus</i>														1		1							2				1				5
<i>Cylindroiulus britannicus</i>								1	1	2	1			6						1	1		1				1		1	1	17
<i>Cylindroiulus latestriatus</i>																				1											1
<i>Cylindroiulus punctatus</i>		1			1	1		2	1	3		1		4		1	3	1	2	2	1		1	2	1		1	1	1	1	31
<i>Glomeris marginata</i>	1			1	1	1	1	1		4						1	2			2		2	5		1		1	1	1	1	28
<i>Julus scandinavicus</i>	1						2							1			1							2			1	1			9
<i>Macrostemodesmus palicola</i>				1			1	1	1					3						1											8
<i>Melogona scutellare</i>				1								1	1	3							1		2		1						10
<i>Nanogona Polydesmoides</i>										2						1									1		1				5
<i>Ommatoiulus sabulosus</i>													1							1					1						3
<i>Ophiodesmus albonanus</i>				2					1					6																	9
<i>Ophiulus pilosus</i>				1				2	1	5	1			5		1				1			1								18
<i>Polydesmus angustus</i>	1		2		1		1	1		2			1				1		1	1	2		1	1	1		1		1		19
<i>Polydesmus coriaceus</i>														6	1																7
<i>Proteroiulus fuscus</i>							1							4			3		1	1	1			2				1		14	
<i>Tachypodoiulus niger</i>	1		2	1		1	1	3		6		1	1	4		1	1			2			3	2		1	1		1	1	33
Total	4	1	4	8	3	4	8	16	8	24	2	3	4	48	2	9	11	1	4	15	11	2	22	9	7	1	9	4	5	4	253

Table 1. Records of millepedes from the 2002 Derbyshire field meeting (showing number of records submitted)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks go to : All BMIG and Sorby Natural History Society members who have submitted their records or specimens; Debbie Oly at Youlgreave Youth Hostel for her excellent food, hospitality and patience; Steve Price and Derek Whiteley for arranging access to Derbyshire Wildlife Trust sites and NNRs: Kelham Island Brewery at the Fat Cat in Sheffield for preparing the barrel of beer! Special thanks to staff at Haddon and Chatsworth for their help and hospitality.

REFERENCES

Blower, J.G. (1985) *Millipedes*. Synopses of the British Fauna No. 35. Field Studies Council, Shrewsbury.

Richards, J. P. (1995) *Millipedes, Centipedes and Woodlice of the Sheffield Area*. Sorby Record Special Series No 10. SNHS/Sheffield City Museum.

Richards J. P. & Thomas, R. (1998) Woodlice and Centipedes New to the Region. *Sorby Record* **34**: 78.

Richardson, D. T. (1990) Yorkshire Millipedes. *Bulletin of the British Myriapod Group* **7**: 5-28.

Richardson, D. T. (1993) Yorkshire Centipedes. *Bulletin of the British Myriapod Group* **9**:5-19.