

CHARLES RAWCLIFFE'S DISCOVERY OF THE ALIEN WOODLOUSE *STYLONISCUS MAURITIENSIS* (BARNARD 1936)Glyn M. Collis¹ & Paul T. Harding²¹ 'Seasgair', Ascog, Isle of Bute, PA20 9ET, UK. E-mail: g.m.collis@warwick.ac.uk² c/o Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Monks Wood, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, PE28 2LS, UK. E-mail: phs@ceh.ac.uk

The last formally published species list of alien woodlice of Britain and Ireland was in the Synopsis by Oliver and Meechan (1993). Before that, the same species were listed by Harding and Sutton (1985). Between these two dates, an additional species was discovered by Charles Rawcliffe, and written up in the Newsletter of the British Isopod Study Group (Rawcliffe, 1987). However, the discovery appears to have slipped from the collective consciousness of many isopodologists in the UK, only coming to our attention because of a distribution map on the National Biodiversity Network Gateway <http://www.searchnbn.net/>. Because it is likely that very few copies of the Newsletter exist today, we were motivated to write this note so that the presence of this species in the UK is better known. The late Steve Hopkin certainly knew of the discovery but his well-known AIDGAP key covers only the 37 species known to be native or naturalised in Britain and Ireland (Hopkin 1991).

In his original note reporting the discovery Charles Rawcliffe quoted from a letter from Tony Barber dated 21/12/85: "Any chance of records from glasshouses and botanic gardens?" Charles lived (and still lives) quite close to Edinburgh Botanic Garden so it is no surprise that he requested permission to collect in the Tropical Houses where he found two specimens of what turned out to be *Styloniscus mauritiensis*. The specimens were sent to Steve Hopkin, together with details entered on Non-marine Isopod Recording Scheme recording cards. We have identified those record cards, which are now at the Biological Records Centre at Monks Wood.

Annotations on the cards by Steve Hopkin indicate that the first specimen, collected on 7th August 1986, was sent for identification to Franco Ferrara, a leading expert on tropical woodlice, based in Florence. It was presumably Ferrara who provided the Taiti & Ferrara (1983) reference cited in Rawcliffe's note, indicating that *S. mauritiensis* was previously known from Mauritius and Hawaii. Further specimens, collected on 11th November 1986, were identified by Steve Hopkin himself and a note on the card indicates that he retained the specimens.

In the Locality box on the cards, as well as "Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh", it is indicated that the specimens were found in peat in pots holding *Lycopodium* sp, which is a club-moss, identified on the second card as "*Lycopodium pinifolium* cuttings" and "plant from Indonesia". On the first card, Rawcliffe had added "Glasshouse No. 20 Tropical (26°C)" and "per favour of Gardener". He later wrote "I can add from memory that it was a Malaysian student working in the hothouse who drew my attention to the beasties in the pot" (*in litt* to GMC, 19.03.2007).

Finally, in his Newsletter note of 1987, Rawcliffe also mentions finding another alien species in the hothouses of the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens. This too was sent to Ferrara but, as far as we are aware, it remains an unidentified Philoscid. Ferrara is quoted as being unable to assign it to a known Philoscid genus many of which, he noted, are poorly described. Moreover he was unable to recognise the species even though it had distinctive male characters, especially a process on the merus of pereopod 7 similar to that of *Philoscia muscorum*. Ferrara added "Since we do not know which part of the world it comes from, we dare not describe it as a new species."

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