

MILLIPEDES FROM SHROPSHIRE: A REPORT ON THE 2007 FIELD MEETING

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INTRODUCTION

Myriapod fossils from Late Silurian rocks in Shropshire (Jeram *et al.*, 1990) have attracted much attention but there has been relatively little work on the modern millipede fauna of the county. There are only 100 millipede records from VC40 included in the data set for the millipede atlas (Lee, 2006). My own visits to Preston Montford between 2004 and the present day have produced another 40 records and a handful of other records are held by CCW in their databases.

THE GROWTH OF THE SHROPSHIRE CHECKLIST

The first modern record for Shropshire appears to be *Julus scandavius* collected from Prees Heath by Hilda Brade in 1916 (Brade & Brade-Birks, 1917). Blower (1972) indicates that by 1972 only one more species, *Polydesmus angustus*, had been added but gives no details and there is no corresponding record in the BMIG dataset. A collection of millipedes made by H. Hooper from Walford in 1974 was identified by Colin Fairhurst and increased the county list to nine species with the addition of *Brachydesmus superus*, *Polydesmus denticulatus*, *Nemasoma varicorne*, *Ophiulus pilosus*, *Cylindroiulus punctatus*, *Brachyiulus pusillus* and *Tachypodoiulus niger*. Four more species were recorded for the first time the following year. In June 1975, Colin Fairhurst, collecting at Adderley, discovered *Proteroiulus fuscus* and *Cylindroiulus britannicus*. Later, in September, Mrs M. Fogan collected a number of millipedes during a visit to Shropshire and passed them to Adrian Rundle for identification. Amongst her specimens were the first county records of *Glomeris marginata* from Comley and of *Nanogona polydesmoides* from Much Wenlock. A set of undated Fairhurst records, including *Cylindroiulus latestriatus*, from Weston-under-Redcastle probably dates from around this time. There was little more activity by myriapologists in the county until the 1980's when Tony Barber collected the first *Blaniulus guttulatus* and Keith Alexander collected the first *Ommatoiulus sabulosus*. The next additions came in 1990 when an unknown collector recorded *Stosatea italica* and *Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus* amongst other species from Preston Montford Field Centre. The Preston Montford record of *Stosatea italica* remains the only one of this species from Shropshire. CCW's Welsh Invertebrate Database holds a record of *Ophiodesmus albonanus* collected from Wenlock Edge in 1994 but again the recorder is not given. The twentieth species, *Macrosternodesmus pallicola*, was added to the county list by Tony Barber in 2001 when he collected the millipede at Bishops Castle.

RECORDS FROM THE 2007 MEEING IN LUDLOW

The BMIG field weekend in April 2007 was based at the Bishop Mascall Centre, Ludlow. Over the weekend thirty seven different locations were visited covering fifteen 10km grid squares from which 21 species of millipede were collected. Details of the sites visited are given in Table 1 and of species collected in Table 2.

The locations with the most diverse millipede fauna were Downton Gorge and Tugford church but even here the species richness reached just 13 taxa. As at Tugford, many of the sites visited were churchyards or other locations where a significant synanthropic element to the fauna would be expected to add to the diversity. Most of the natural and semi-natural sites such as the upland acid moors on Stiperstones and the Long Mynd were very species poor. Downton Gorge was an exception, a semi-natural location with reasonable species richness but it was also the site subject to the greatest recorder effort.

Notable finds from the meeting included Mike Davidson's records of *Cylindroiulus parisiorum* from Ludlow and Stoke Bliss. These are the first and second records for VC 40 and it is remarkable that Mike was the

only person to find the millipede despite the fact that several recorders, myself included, were working with him at Stoke Bliss. Steve Gregory's record of *Brachychaeteuma melanops* from Tugford church was also new to the county although Helen Read did collect a female *Brachychaeteuma* from Stoke Bliss that could have belonged to this species. Specimens of *Melogona scutellaris*, *Polydesmus coriaceus* and *Archiboreoiulus pallidus*, were all collected from several locations by a variety of recorders but, surprisingly, none of these three species had been noted previously from Shropshire.

TABLE 1: Details of sites visited during BMIG Ludlow meeting in 2007

Site no.	Site name	Grid ref.	Site no.	Site name	Grid ref.
1	Ashford Bowdler church	SO5170	20	Ludlow	SO5174
2	Bedstone church	SO3675	21	Ludlow	SO5175
3	Berrington church	SJ5306	22	Ludlow, Whitcliffe	SO5074
4	Brampton Bryan cemetery	SO3772	23	Millichope Park	SO5388
5	Bromfield church	SO4876	24	Much Wenlock church	SJ6200
6	Brown Clee picnic site	SO6087	25	Mynd Scrubs	SO3575
7	Carding Mill Valley	SO4494	26	Nortoncamp Wood	SO4482
8	Caynham church	SO5573	27	Presthope	SO5797
9	Cleobury North church	SO6287	28	Presthope, Knowle Quarry	SO5897
10	Downton Gorge	SO4474	29	Stiperstones, Nipstone Rock	SO3597
11	Easthope Wood	SO5796	30	Stiperstones, The Bog	SO3597
12	Hanley Dingle	SO6866	31	Stoke Bliss	SO6562
13	Hanley William church	SO6766	32	Titley church	SO3360
14	Hughley	SO5697	33	Tugford church	SO5587
15	Kingsland church	SO4461	34	Wenlock Edge, Blakeway Hollow	SO6099
16	Knowle Wood	SO5973	35	Wenlock Edge, Harley Hill	SJ6000
17	Long Mynd, Long Synalds	SO4294	36	Wenlock Edge, Harley Hill	SO6199
18	Long Mynd, nr. Pole Cottage	SO4193	37	Wilderhope Manor	SO5492
19	Ludlow	SO5074			

In addition to the new vice-county records reported above, the 2007 field meeting was successful in improving the recorder coverage of the region. Five new county records resulted although four species on the county list, all widespread nationally, were not recorded on this occasion. Table 3 lists all twenty five of the millipede species now known from Shropshire and the 10km squares from which they have been recorded. Those species collected during the BMIG meeting and the 10km squares from which they were recorded are highlighted.

Fig. 3 in the millipede atlas (Lee, 2006) shows a low species richness for the Welsh border regions in general. Although this may have been considered to be a result of low recording effort in the region, the records from the Ludlow meeting, at least as far as Shropshire is concerned, appear to support the existence of a real trough in millipede diversity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Tony Barber, Glyn Collis, Mike Davidson, Jim Flannagan, Steve Gregory, John Harper, Peter Nicholson, Richard Price, Helen Read, Paul Richards, Mark Telfer and Derek Whiteley for submitting their records. Also thanks to Paul Harding for organising the meeting and for collecting the records together.

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TABLE 2: List of species recorded during BMIG Ludlow meeting in 2007. Table 1 gives site details.

Site number:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
<i>Glomeris marginata</i>					X	X		X		X	X	X				X			X
<i>Nanogona polydesmoides</i>								X				X				X			
<i>Melogona scutellaris</i>					X	X		X		X									X
<i>Brachychaeteuma melanops</i>																			
<i>Brachydesmus superus</i>						X				X		X		X					X
<i>Polydesmus angustus</i>				X	X					X		X					X	X	
<i>Polydesmus coriaceus</i>						X				X			X	X	X				
<i>Macrosternodesmus palicola</i>			X							X			X	X					
<i>Ophiodesmus albonanus</i>			X						X										
<i>Proteroiulus fuscus</i>						X			X	X		X		X					
<i>Blaniulus guttulatus</i>	X	X			X				X	X				X					X
<i>Archiboreoiulus pallidus</i>										X				X					
<i>Julus scandinavicus</i>						X		X											X
<i>Ophiulus pilosus</i>	X		X					X	X	X		X				X			X
<i>Cylindroiulus britannicus</i>					X					X				X		X			X
<i>Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus</i>	X		X		X									X					X
<i>Cylindroiulus parisiorum</i>																			
<i>Cylindroiulus punctatus</i>	X					X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X
<i>Brachyiulus pusillus</i>																			
<i>Ommatoiulus sabulosus</i>			X																
<i>Tachypodoiulus niger</i>			X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X

Site number:	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37
<i>Glomeris marginata</i>			X			X		X	X			X			X	X	X	
<i>Nanogona polydesmoides</i>																		
<i>Melogona scutellaris</i>			X	X										X		X		
<i>Brachychaeteuma melanops</i>														X				
<i>Brachydesmus superus</i>	X	X			X			X						X				X
<i>Polydesmus angustus</i>			X	X		X					X	X						
<i>Polydesmus coriaceus</i>	X							X				X			X			X
<i>Macrosternodesmus palicola</i>	X													X				
<i>Ophiodesmus albonanus</i>	X			X										X				
<i>Proteroiulus fuscus</i>								X			X	X	X	X		X		
<i>Blaniulus guttulatus</i>	X	X		X	X			X				X	X	X	X	X		
<i>Archiboreoiulus pallidus</i>															X	X	X	
<i>Julus scandinavicus</i>														X				
<i>Ophiulus pilosus</i>		X	X	X					X			X		X	X	X	X	
<i>Cylindroiulus britannicus</i>			X									X	X	X	X	X	X	
<i>Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus</i>			X					X						X	X			
<i>Cylindroiulus parisiorum</i>		X										X						
<i>Cylindroiulus punctatus</i>		X		X					X			X	X	X	X		X	X
<i>Brachyiulus pusillus</i>		X																
<i>Ommatoiulus sabulosus</i>									X									
<i>Tachypodoiulus niger</i>	X	X		X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X

TABLE 3: Species list for VC40 (Watsonian Shropshire).

Species	Date of first record	10km squares with records
<i>Glomeris marginata</i>	1975	SO27, 37, 47, 49, 57, 59, 66, 68, 69 , SJ22, 40, 41, 50, 51, 52, 60
<i>Nanogona polydesmoides</i>	1975	SO38, 48, 57, 66 , 69, SJ40, 60
* <i>Melogona scutellaris</i>	2007	SO 47, 57, 58, 68 , SJ22, 60
* <i>Brachychaeteuma melanops</i>	2007	SO 58
<i>Sosatea italica</i>	1990	SJ41
<i>Brachydesmus superus</i>	1974	SO27, 47, 57, 58, 59, 66, 68 , SJ40, 41, 42, 60
<i>Polydesmus angustus</i>	pre 1972	SO 37 , 38, 39, 47, 49, 57, 58, 66 , SJ40, 42, 43, 52, 53, 60, 63
* <i>Polydesmus coriaceus</i>	2007	SO 46, 47, 57, 59, 66, 68, 69
<i>Polydesmus denticulatus</i>	1974	SO38, SJ42, 43
<i>Macrosternodesmus palicola</i>	2001	SO38, 47, 57, 58, 59, 66 , SJ 50
<i>Ophiodesmus albonanus</i>	1994	SO38, 57, 58, 59, 68 , SJ 50
<i>Proteroiulus fuscus</i>	1975	SO 36 , 38, 39, 47, 49, 58, 59, 66, 68 , SJ40, 43, 50, 52, 53, 60 , 63
<i>Blaniulus guttulatus</i>	1983	SO 36, 37, 38, 47, 57, 58, 59, 66, 68, 69 , SJ40, 60
* <i>Archiboreoiulus pallidus</i>	2007	SO 47, 59, 69 , SJ 60
<i>Nemasoma varicorne</i>	1974	SO38, 49, 59, SJ40, 42, 50, 63
<i>Julus scandinavius</i>	1916	SO 49, 57, 58, 68, 77 , SJ40, 42, 43, 53
<i>Ophiulus pilosus</i>	1974	SO39, 47, 57, 58, 66, 68, 69, 77 , SJ40, 42, 43, 50 , 52, 53, 60 , 63
<i>Cylindroiulus britannicus</i>	1975	SO 36, 47, 57, 58, 59, 66, 69 , SJ40, 60 , 63
<i>Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus</i>	1990	SO 47, 57, 58, 59, 69 , SJ41, 50
<i>Cylindroiulus latestriatus</i>	1970s ?	SJ52
* <i>Cylindroiulus parisiorum</i>	2007	SO 57, 66
<i>Cylindroiulus punctatus</i>	1974	SO27, 36, 38, 47, 49, 57, 58, 59, 66, 68, 69 , 79, SJ22, 30, 40, 42, 43, 50, 52, 53, 60, 63
<i>Brachyiulus pusillus</i>	1974	SO 57 , SJ42
<i>Ommatoiulus sabulosus</i>	1985	SO59, SJ40, 43, 50 , 52, 53
<i>Tachypodoiulus niger</i>	1974	SO 36, 38, 39, 47, 48, 49, 57, 58, 59, 66, 68, 69 , SJ22, 40, 41, 42, 43, 50, 52, 60, 63

Species added to county checklist during BMIG Ludlow meeting in 2007 are indicated by an asterisk.

10km squares with records from BMIG meeting are in bold type.