



NEWSLETTER

Number 30

Spring 2015

AGM notice

All BMIG members are invited to attend the AGM to be held at 7pm on Friday, 10th April 2014. The venue will be the Lowport Centre, Linlithgow, West Lothian.

The present committee welcomes nominations for officers (see below) from any BMIG member. Ideally nominations would be communicated to the secretary beforehand but they can also be made from the floor at the AGM.

Editorial

Welcome to this bumper issue and what I intend to be my final newsletter as editor after 17 years in the job. Part of the reason this issue is so full, and also linked to my decision to stand down at this moment in time, is the planned changes to the organisation of BMIG and the new opportunities it provides; I for one hope to take advantage of some of these opportunities. This issue isn't all about BMIG though, there are plenty of notes about the animals we study including millipedes infected by fungi, a new species of woodlouse for that most well worked of counties, Yorkshire and a new book on French centipedes. And if all that wasn't enough volume 27 of the Bulletin should be available as you read this. See below for a taste of the contents.

When the BMIG committee last met in November 2014 a major agenda item was discussion about the future direction of the Group. The outcomes of the discussion were used to define a new mission statement and to identify the Officer roles needed to deliver the mission statement. The roles identified were:

1. *Chairman*
2. *Vice Chairman*
3. *Secretary*
4. *Treasurer*
5. *Centipede Recording Scheme Organiser*
6. *Millipede Recording Scheme Organiser*
7. *Woodlouse and Waterlouse Recording Scheme Organiser*
8. *Bulletin Chief Editor*
9. *Librarian and Collections Manager*
10. *Field Meeting Co-ordinator* (Booking venue, finding sites, organising speakers and workshops, collating records, producing report, feedback to site owners and managers, taking bookings, making sure events are listed by BENHS for insurance purposes, see below)
11. *Newsletter Editor*

12. *Website Manager*

13. *Social Media Manager* (facebook/twitter etc.).

14. *Resources Officer* (This new role relates to providing materials for identification but is about signposting existing resources rather than writing new ones. Experts will produce the main keys, so production of material is not part of this role (unless the person particularly wants to). There is a need to make sure key information is available and accessible and to show where and how it can be accessed e.g. where local collections are held and who to contact for access to them. The information could be provided as a page on the website and so the Resources Officer would need to work with the Website Manager. The role could be linked to the Librarian and Collections Manager or could be taken on by someone in conjunction with the "information officer" aspect of the Secretary's role. Election to this office could be a valuable addition to a CV for a member.)

15. *Training Officer* (There are currently occasional FSC courses, BENHS workshops and Sorby workshops dealing with myriapods and isopods but BMIG would like to consider offering a series of coordinated courses, perhaps a series of courses at different levels including providing modules for university courses. The Training Officer would assist in the development of a course or courses that could be offered around the country and would be responsible for finding places to run courses and co-ordinating the running of them. This is another role that could provide a valuable addition to a CV.)

16. *Projects Officer* (The Projects Officer would organize small projects such as the *Polyzonium* survey we ran during the 2011 meeting in Kent. The Projects Officer might have their own ideas for projects but also could draw on ideas from BMIG members and elsewhere. Projects could be designed for individuals to take on or could be meeting focused and may possibly involve citizen science. Where relevant the Project Officer might need to seek funding to support a project. Again this role would make a very valuable addition to someone's CV.)

17. *Exhibitions and Events Co-ordinator* (The Co-ordinator would be involved in planning and organising publicity materials and active promotion of BMIG via exhibitions and displays at events. The Co-ordinator would need to identify suitable events and check what each requires including manpower and financial resources. Attendance at one event each year might be a realistic target. Having identified an event the Co-ordinator could advertise (e.g. through the

newsletter, website and social media) to get members to come along and engage face to face with other BMIG and promote BMIG to other attendees.)

18. *Conservation Officer* (This role involves liaison with conservation bodies like Buglife and statutory agencies such as Natural England and attendance at meetings of Invertebrate Link. There should be close links between this role and that of the Project Officer.)

19. *BENHS representative* (As BMIG is a BENHS affiliated society we need someone in this role. There are several meetings per year to attend some of which are in London and some are at the BENHS at Dinton Pastures near Reading. As the BMIG library and collections are held at Dinton Pastures, acting as BENHS representative could fit with the role of Librarian and Collections Manager.)

Proposals to adopt the mission statement and to incorporate these Officer roles into BMIG By-laws will be made at the AGM on 10th April (see below).

BMIG needs you!

As well as delivering the mission statement your committee are keen that identifying this wide range of roles will encourage more of our members to become actively involved in running BMIG. Many of these roles do not require expertise in or indeed any knowledge of myriapod and isopod ecology and identification (although by definition members are assumed to have an interest) and many of the skills they require are not well represented amongst the current committee. If you think you might be interested in one of these roles please do not hesitate to put yourself forward even if someone is already filling it. The Secretary and Newsletter Editor will be resigning at the AGM and several other current officers have indicated that they will willingly resign if a suitable candidate comes forward to replace them. So please consider giving something back to BMIG. It need not be a major commitment and some of the roles, including that of Secretary, are suitable for sharing by two or three members. If you are interested in any of these Officer roles and wish to find out more about them or even just put yourself forward for election (you don't need to be at the AGM yourself) then please contact Paul Lee (arachne2222@aol.com) or Helen Read (helen@helen-read.co.uk) as soon as possible.

As you will have read above I intend this to be my last issue as editor of the BMIG newsletter I have been editing the BMIG newsletter since Autumn 2000 and the BMG newsletter since Autumn 1998 before that. It is high time someone else came along with some fresh ideas and took on the editorship so look out for new developments over the next few issues. Whoever takes over as editor and whatever the format of the next issue, the editor is going to need lots of copy. As always, all contributions for the Autumn issue are welcome but as we won't know who the new editor is until the AGM please continue to send them to me, ideally electronically to arachne2222@aol.com or alternatively by post to:

Paul Lee, Little Orchard, Capel Road, Bentley. Ipswich IP9 2DW

Spring field meeting in Linlithgow

This year's field meeting will be based at the Lowport Centre in Linlithgow, west of Edinburgh, from Thursday 9th to Sunday 12th April. This venue gives us access to the Lothians, a region of varied geology and habitats. People should arrive before 6 pm on Thursday for the evening meal, unless you are attending the committee meeting which starts earlier at 4 pm. There will be plenty of parking space at the centre and the train station is just across the road for anyone coming by public transport.

In the evenings there will be talks about the Lothian region, millipedes of the Fife coast, a talk on centipedes as well as various updates from members and scheme organisers, and the BMIG AGM will be held on Friday evening. During this field meeting we'd also like to compare and review collecting techniques, so if you have any special fieldcraft tips or tricks bring those along with you. Collecting permissions will be arranged for a number of sites across the region and the meeting will include a visit to the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh where we will be allowed into some of the working glasshouses as well as having access to the public areas.

If anyone wishes to attend the meeting but has not signed up as yet, please send me a booking form as soon as possible. As usual this meeting is open to non-residents as well. A final programme of talks and events will be posted on the BMIG website and e-mailed out to attendees closer to the event.

Duncan Sivell (d.sivell@nhm.ac.uk)

AGM proposals

The Committee of the British Myriapod and Isopod Group has put forward for consideration by the AGM the two proposals detailed below. A vote on the proposals will be held at the 15th AGM of the British Myriapod and Isopod Group at 7pm on Friday 10th April 2014 at the Lowport Centre, Linlithgow, West Lothian.

1. It is proposed that the mission statement of BMIG should be:

The British Myriapod and Isopod Group (BMIG) collates information about millipedes, centipedes, woodlice and similar species occurring in Britain and Ireland. Through its recording schemes, BMIG works with amateurs and professionals to ensure that reliable information about the species, and their habitats, is collected and made available. BMIG aims to enable accurate identifications, to publish maps, to carry out research, and to encourage interest in these groups and their conservation through its website, newsletter, journal and field meetings open to anyone.

2. It is proposed that the By-laws be amended to replace the section headed '**Committee**':

1. The elected officers shall comprise the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Librarian, Recording Scheme Organisers (if not otherwise elected) and up to five other elected or co-opted members.

2. Officers and Committee shall be elected at the annual general meeting.

3. A quorum of the Committee shall comprise not less than one third of those entitled to be present and vote.

4. The Committee may set up sub-committees for specific purposes but their recommendations can only be implemented through the Committee.

5. The Secretary, Treasurer, Librarian and Recording Scheme Organisers shall report their work to the annual general meeting each year.

with:

1. *The elected officers shall comprise the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Recording Scheme Organisers, Librarian and Collections Manager, Newsletter Editor, Bulletin Chief Editor, Field Meeting Co-ordinator, Website Manager, Social Media Manager, Resources Officer, Training Officer, Projects Officer, Exhibition and Events Co-ordinator, Conservation Officer and BENHS representative. Officers shall be elected at the annual general meeting for a three year term of office. If an officer's role is unfilled at the annual general meeting then the committee may co-opt a member to that role until the next annual general meeting.*

2. *The Committee shall comprise the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Recording Scheme Organisers, Librarian and Collections Manager, Bulletin Chief Editor, Field Meeting Co-ordinator and up to five other co-opted members from the elected officers. All individuals elected or co-opted to the Committee shall be entitled to vote.*

3. *A quorum of the Committee shall comprise not less than one third of those entitled to be present and vote.*

4. *The Committee may set up sub-committees and co-opt members without office for specific purposes but their recommendations can only be implemented through the Committee.*

5. *The Secretary, Treasurer and Recording Scheme Organisers shall report their work to the annual general meeting each year.*

Amendments to By-laws can only be voted on by those present at an AGM but if you can't be there and have opinions for or against the proposals please contact the chairman Paul Lee (arachne2222@aol.com) with your views.

Look out for ectoparasitic fungi on millipedes

When you collect millipedes, you also collect their parasites. Here in Copenhagen we have become interested in Laboulbeniales on millipedes. Laboulbeniales are a group of

tiny ectoparasitic fungi living on various insects, millipedes, and mites. Those on millipedes are very poorly known, and we have already found several undescribed species. In northern Europe, just a few species are known so far. *Rickia laboulbenioides* De Kesel, described as late as 2013, parasitizes several species of *Cylindroiulus*. On <http://www.bioimages.org.uk/html/r151100.htm> there are several fine pictures of this fungus on *Cylindroiulus punctatus*, albeit under the name *Rickia dendroiuli* (*R. laboulbenioides* had not been described when the pictures were posted). As far as we know this is the only identified record of Laboulbeniales on millipedes from Britain, but in BMG Newsletter no. 11 (Sept. 1989) Tony Irwin reported the fungi from *Cylindroiulus britannicus* collected by the Welsh Peatland Invertebrate Survey.

Rickia uncigeri is quite widespread on *Unciger foetidus* (Germany, Poland, Denmark and Sweden so far), and a new species of *Troglomyces* was recently discovered on *Archiboreoiulus pallidus* from several countries, although the few examined British *A. pallidus* did not have the fungus. Further south in Europe additional species have been found on other julid genera (*Ophiulus*, *Leptoiulus*, *Brachyiulus*, *Pachyiulus*, *Troglouiulus*, *Typhloiulus*, *Serboiulus*); different species grow on several species of Blaniulidae, Callipodida and possibly on a glomerid. In the tropics there are many more, including an undescribed species first found on giant African millipedes (*Archispirostreptus gigas*) kept in terraria.

The fungi are mostly found on body parts that come into contact during copulation (including the gonopods themselves) but sometimes spread to cover a large part of the millipede's body. We are interested in seeing as many Laboulbeniales from millipedes as possible. The fungi themselves are usually hyaline and difficult to see, but their point of attachment is blackish and easy to spot. We hope to hear from you!

Henrik Enghoff (henghoff@snm.ku.dk) & Sofia Reboleira (sreboleira@snm.ku.dk), Natural History Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen

***Trachelipus rathkei* found in Yorkshire.**

The woodlouse *Trachelipus rathkei* has been found along about a half kilometre length of one bank of the River Don near the village of Arksey, north of Doncaster in South Yorkshire. It was first recorded on 8th September 2012 when about a dozen specimens were located beneath pieces of drift wood and other flood debris lying on the stepped, grassy flood banks at SE602075. A few days later (13th September 2012) a second visit to the River Don at SE592060 produced a few more specimens. Further trips to find *T. rathkei* along other stretches of this river, either side of this half kilometre length, have proved fruitless.

Along this stretch of the River Don there is a wide, rough cattle-grazed strip of land, giving way to large tracts of arable farmland. To the west stands an enormous thirty metre high pulverised fuel ash tip, a pronounced synanthropic landscape with lots of opportunity for

T. rathkei to have been introduced accidentally either with waste or on machinery.

This discovery was a "chance find" since the initial encounter with *T. rathkei* happened whilst out walking the dog. The habitat along the River Don is very similar to those where *T. rathkei* has been recorded in Suffolk and Leicestershire.

Steve Gregory kindly validated all of the specimens collected.

Jon Daws (jon.daws1962@icloud.com)

Bulletin of the British Myriapod and Isopod Group Volume 27 (2014)

The latest volume of the Bulletin has been published. Copies will be sent to all usual subscribers during March, with an invoice. Anyone wishing to order additional copies, or to subscribe for the first time should email Paul Harding pha@ceh.ac.uk

Contents include:

Woodlice (Isopoda: Oniscidea) from the Eden Project, Cornwall, with descriptions of species new to Britain and poorly known British species;

Some observations on the ecology of *Leptoiulus belgicus* (Latzel) (Diplopoda, Julidae);

On the status of *Cryptops savignyi* Leach, 1817 and *Cryptops anomalans* Newport, 1844, (Chilopoda:

Scolopendromorpha: Cryptopidae);

Geophilomorpha of Europe: some synonymies and name changes;

Obituaries of Eric Philp, J. Cloudsley-Thompson, D.T.

Richardson, Richard L. Hoffman, Michael R. Warburg, Carol C. Prunescu and Chong-zhou Zhang.

A call for help in resolving the phylogeny of the pill-millipedes (Diplopoda, Glomerida)

The pill-millipedes of the order Glomerida (Myriapoda, Diplopoda) are small, enigmatic animals, occurring in the holarctic ecozone, which can roll up in a perfectly closed ball when threatened. After a plethora of articles, describing species, discussing taxon defining characters at different levels and discussing biology, were published between the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, the pill-millipedes have received little research interest in recent years. In particular, the relationships between the genera have not been thoroughly studied and are therefore still unclear. The commonly accepted phylogeny for the order is typological and mainly based on a single character (as opposed to a phylogenetic analysis based on multiple characters), the male telopods. To take the first steps towards establishing a new phylogeny, we conducted an initial study (my Masters thesis) based on genetic characters, two nuclear and two mitochondrial markers (which have been successfully applied in various arthropod groups on similar levels). Our results suggest that none of the currently recognized groups above genus level represent monophyletic units (manuscript in preparation). However, our data does not provide enough resolution to establish a

well-founded and robust 'new' phylogeny. To resolve these problems, we wish to conduct a phylogenetic analysis based on next-generation transcriptome sequencing (RNAseq), as well as modern morphological techniques utilizing scanning electron microscopy (SEM). Transcriptome sequencing has been applied to resolve elusive phylogenetic relationships and deep splits in other arthropod groups by allowing for a comparison of hundreds or even thousands of sequences. However, as the method is based on the sequencing of messenger RNA (mRNA) which, compared to genomic DNA, is unstable and degenerates quickly if not correctly conserved, we need to acquire fresh tissue samples. Two European genera of particular interest are *Geoglomeris* and *Adenomeris* from the sub-family Doderinae, which contains morphologically aberrant genera from North America, Europe and Asia. Both genera are resolved at a basal position, separately from all other Doderinae, in our analyses. In the British Isles, these are represented by the species *Geoglomeris subterranea* Verhoeff, 1908 and *Adenomeris gibbosa* Mauriès, 1960. Both are very small and can be extremely hard to find, but since they have been collected in Britain and Ireland on several quite recent occasions, we are hoping to get some help from BMIG members in attaining samples. For *Geoglomeris* we have tried European sites identified by Desmond Kime in Luxemburg and Belgium, but hours of searches and weeks of Berlese sampling only yielded a single specimen. For our experiments to have a high chance of success, we need multiple (as many as possible) living specimens. If you want to contribute to our project and have the opportunity to collect, or know of sites where either species can be reliably collected, we would be very happy to hear from you!

Specimens need to be sent live in a moist but ventilated container. We can provide tubes and reimburse postage costs but even if you do not require tubes it would be best to contact us first for further details and to ensure we are expecting your samples. Although neither species has legal protection, in Britain *Geoglomeris* is considered Nationally Scarce and *Adenomeris* is Nationally Rare. It is important that all specimens are collected with the landowner's permission and the appropriate permits are obtained from statutory agencies if collecting on SSSIs.

Jan Philip Oeyen (janphilipoyen@gmail.com), Leibniz Graduate School for Genomic Biodiversity Research, Zoological Research Museum Alexander Koenig and the University of Bonn

A fourth site for *Haplopodoiulus spathifer* in Britain

An apparently well-established population of *Haplopodoiulus spathifer* occurs in the Wildlife Garden of the Natural History Museum, London (TQ265790), which is the fourth site in Britain where this millipede has been recorded. This species was first collected in Britain at Kew Gardens (TQ186763) in 1976 and was subsequently found at Bedgebury in Kent (TQ722336) in 1987 and at Wakehurst Place in Sussex (TQ337311) in 1990 (Corbet & Jones 1996). At the Natural History Museum *H.spathifer* is common in the leaf litter of the Wildlife Garden, which is dominated by London plane (*Platanus x hispanica*). This pattern of local abundance seems to mirror the situation at the other three sites where *H.spathifer* is known (Corbet & Jones 1996).

Haplopodoiulus spathifer appears to have been first recorded at the Natural History Museum on 27 June 2008 as part of a “cryptics” survey. I have not found the full details of this original record, but the presence of this species in the Wildlife Garden was easy to confirm. On 15 May 2013 I collected several millipedes that keyed to *Haplopodoiulus spathifer* using Lee (2007). The gonopods of male specimens were then compared against the figures in Corbet & Jones (1996) to confirm the identification. Due to its large size, its preference for leaf litter and the fact that it occurs in good numbers, *H. spathifer* is an easy species to find. This millipede also has a tendency to writhe its body when disturbed, which makes it even more obvious when searching through leaf litter.

This population of *H. spathifer* probably became established at the Natural History Museum after 2003 as it is not mentioned in a Wildlife Garden inventory that lists eight other millipede species present at that time (Leigh & Ware 2003). Kew Gardens is presumed to be the site of entry into Britain as this was where *H. spathifer* was first recorded and the other two sites where it was subsequently found also happen to have links with Kew (Corbet & Jones, 1996). Having spoken with staff at the Wildlife Garden it seems possible that *H. spathifer* was introduced to the Natural History Museum by people or vehicles travelling to and from Kew. The two institutes have not exchanged horticultural material in recent years, which might be the expected route of colonisation, but they do attract the same visitors and there are professional links between the institutes as well.

The millipede list for the Wildlife Garden, including *H. spathifer*, now stands at fourteen species. Further details of this myriapod fauna will appear in an article being prepared for the London Naturalist.

References:

Corbet, G.B. & Jones, R.E. (1996) *Haplopodoiulus spathifer* (Brölemann, 1897) in southeast England: a millipede new to the British Isles. *Bulletin of the British Myriapod Group*, **12**:13-15.

Lee, P. (2007) *Provisional Keys to British Millipedes (Millipede key version 3.0)*. (Unpublished)

Leigh, C. & Ware, C. (2003) The development of the flora, fauna and environment of the Wildlife Garden at the Natural History Museum, London. *The London Naturalist*, **82**:75-134.

Duncan Sivell (d.sivell@nhm.ac.uk)

Social myriapod – the BMIG Facebook page

Alongside the BMIG website, we also now have a Facebook presence. See:

<https://www.facebook.com/BritishMyriapodandIsopodGroup>

Within 2 weeks of its launch there were 98 people ‘liking’ this page. If you’re a Facebook user, go and have a look and Like and Share with your friends as the easiest way to spread the word about BMIG, our events, and our beasties in general. It displays some basic information about who we are and what we do and has images of many British species. By posting to the BMIG timeline you can tell people about species you’ve found or interesting (real or web) sites

you’ve visited. It’s also a good place to raise questions about problem IDs that can quickly be answered by a large audience of experts. Because Facebook is international, there are already many people looking at the site from across Europe, as they see their UK ‘friends’ liking images and commenting. It’s a great way to connect BMIG members with their overseas counterparts and be part of a wider Myriapod & Isopod network. The website will remain the central port of call for information, but Facebook can provide a convenient means of communicating with other members.

As well as a place for showing images and chatting, the site has already been used to announce, hot off the press, news of not one, but two new species discoveries to Britain. So without waiting for publication of the Bulletin or another scientific journal, the BMIG membership is instantly on the alert for these new creatures. Obviously, this does not replace the serious scientific matter of proper recording, taxonomy and establishing the distributions and ecologies of these animals, but it quickly flags up something to be on the lookout for, for which there is so far probably no available literature. No doubt there will be errors and occasional inaccuracies creeping in, but the beauty is that these can also be instantly corrected.

Whatever your view is of Faceache and social media in general, there’s no doubt that the BMIG Facebook page will allow a fast and efficient way for us to stick our heads above the leaf litter and be seen by a wider, and probably younger, audience. If you are dubious and don’t wish to get drawn into a world of holiday selfies, food photos and cute cat videos, it is possible to sign up for a Facebook account and refuse all friend requests! You can just ‘like’ BMIG and quietly watch without ever commenting, sharing or uploading. Hopefully, just seeing the activity of get other enthusiasts will inspire a renewed enthusiasm to get out and turn a few logs.

To take it to its extreme, potentially it would now be possible, to see an unknown woodlouse, photograph it with your phone (using a clip-on macro lens hopefully), upload it to facebook and have it roughly identified by a recorder, while you are still sitting on the log you turned! I must try that sometime. Check out <https://www.facebook.com/BritishMyriapodandIsopodGroup> to see if I did.....

Paul Richards (millipederecords@sorby.org.uk)

Catalogue biogéographique et taxonomique des chilopodes (Chilopoda) de la France métropolitaine. Biogeographic and taxonomic catalogue of the centipedes (Chilopoda) of Metropolitan France.

Étienne Iorio. *Mémoires de la Société Linnéenne de Bordeaux*. Tome 15 – 2014. €25.

For the older generation of British myriapodologists, Brolemann’s volume on *Chilopodes* in the *Faune de France* series was a standard reference and even after the publication of Eason’s *Centipedes of the British Isles* in 1964 remained a standby reference for problem species and for unfamiliar species possibly new to Britain. Over the last

few years Étienne Iorio has produced a series of papers relating to French centipedes (including his key to French Lithobiomorpha); the present volume is, in many ways, the culmination of that work, including in its 372 pages a summary of knowledge of species from mainland France and Corsica.

Following an introduction, the book includes notes on European centipedes (généralités, écologie et éthologie), references for identification, list of authors of records by département, species list, principal publications for adjacent areas, a catalogue of species, a “bilan des connaissances au niveau national” and a bibliography. For each species in the catalogue there is (usually) a note, comments on general distribution, distribution in France, ecology and list of départements from which it has been recorded (including authorities).

With its larger size, diversity of habitats and climate, France has a much greater number of species than Britain & Ireland. Listed (including subspecies) are one scutigermorph, two hemicopid lithobiomorphs, 66 lithobiids, two scolopendrids, eight cryptopids and 68 geophilomorphs (the latter in six families).

With several colour plates, species maps by départements and its mass of information, a book to dip into and learn more about our own species and others that might occur here, a book to refer to when faced with a difficult identification, a source of references and, of course, a book to use for identification if you ever collect in France yourself – and, perhaps, even, an opportunity to improve your knowledge of French!

Tony Barber (abarber159@btinternet.com)

Mémoires de la Société Linnéenne de Bordeaux

It is intended to publish an extended review of the centipede volume in the next BMIG Bulletin. As stated above, the cost is €25 (about £18.50) plus postage. Keith Lugg is planning to place a bulk order for copies of this volume and the very recently published volume 16 on woodlice in the same series (€13 plus postage) as they appear not to be readily available in the UK. The exact cost will depend on the size of the order so if you are interested in one or both volumes do contact Keith at KeithLugg@aol.com.

Bioblitz in Cornwall

To anyone in the Falmouth area on Saturday 30th May 2015:

The students of the Penryn (Tremough) University Campus are organising a Bioblitz, an outdoor family event, the fourth of its kind. The site is one from which *Haplophilus souletinus* is recorded.

If you are interested in taking part please contact Tony Barber by emailing abarber159@btinternet.com

A millipede population explosion

My neighbours first noticed the millipede “explosion” on 18th October 2014 and it continued for over a month. It wasn't affected by the onset of cold, wet weather. Six cottages/houses along Oakley Road, Mottisfont have been

plagued by the millipedes. These are in a very rural setting with large gardens and gravel paths backing on to a large arable field. Mottisfont is in a chalk river valley (the River Test) but the houses are on a gravel river terrace so the soils are gravelly. The millipedes seem to be curled up within the gravel/soil/vegetation during the day, but emerge after dark. They then crawl into the houses through cracks under/around doors, possibly attracted by the light. They didn't invade our cottage until 10 days or so after our neighbours, probably because we have four bantams and a hen in the garden. When they did arrive, I found approximately 100 of them advancing across the kitchen, dining room and hallway, having come in under the front and side doors. The vast majority are the tiny ones (*Brachyiulus pusillus* – Ed.), with the odd big one (*Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus* – Ed.). If the landing light is on they will climb up the stairs towards it. Our neighbours have been much worse affected. They have swept up bucket loads every morning. After dark there are carpets 2-3 centimetres deep on their patios and paths and they cover cars/vans. So, in terms of numbers – who knows how many there are! How many millipedes fit into a bucket? There must be millions of them overall. It really is a biblical plague!

Karin Taylor, Head of Land Use Planning, NT, Kemble Drive, Swindon

(Karin sent me a sample of 23 millipedes via Andy Foster, Biological Survey Team Leader for NT. It included one adult *Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus* and 22 adult *Brachyiulus pusillus*, 5 males and 17 females – Ed.)

Another invasion of millipedes

Last night (16th November 2014) I had an invasion of millipedes and it aroused my curiosity. We came to Wester Ross 30 years ago from Manchester and the differing ‘insect’ life is of interest. Originally I do not remember seeing any millipedes, as I noted a single one in our local plant seller's greenhouse about 20 years ago. Now there are some found under any item turned over in my flatworm searches, and the hens do NOT eat them. Odd ones have been found indoors before, (the cat just stares at them!) but last night's invasion was something else. They were coming into the sitting room under the door into the plant room/conservatory and when the door was opened, they were coming (or going) under the outside door. I must have killed about 100 and my finger now has a brown stain. The most interesting thing is the smell. It is reminiscent of antiseptic or cold treatments, and I see from Wikipedia that they are used for various treatments in different countries.

Beryl Leslie. 40 Big Sand, Gairloch

(Beryl sent me a sample of 16 millipedes from her ‘swarm’. It included one adult male and one adult female *Cylindroiulus latestriatus* but was mostly female *Ophiulus pilosus* (14) with one male and one juvenile specimen – Ed.)

In the journals

Decker, P., Reip, H.S. & Voigtländer, K. (2014) Millipedes and centipedes in German greenhouses (Myriapoda: Diplopoda, Chilopoda). *Biodiversity Data Journal* 2: e1066. doi: 10.3897/BDJ.2.e1066.

This is a must read paper for anyone interested in the glasshouse fauna of Britain and Ireland. It refers to many species already reported here and provides an indication of what we might expect to find in future. A review is given of all the literature records for German greenhouses together with additional records for 29 such sites. Species lists comprise 35 millipedes and 18 centipedes found in 46 greenhouses investigated throughout Germany. Species already recorded from Britain include *Rhinotus purpureus* (Pocock, 1894), *Cryptops doriae* Pocock, 1891, *Lamyctes coeculus* (Brölemann, 1889) and *Tygarrup javanicus* (Attems, 1907); species to look forward to include *Anadenobolus monilicornis* (Porat, 1876), *Epinannolene* spp., *Mesoiulus gridellii* Strasser, 1934 and *Leptogoniulus sorornus* (Butler, 1876). The authors report that the millipedes *Oxidus gracilis* (C. L. Koch, 1847) and *Amphitomeus attemsi* (Schubart, 1934) and the centipedes *Lithobius forficatus* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Cryptops hortensis* (Donovan, 1810) are the species most frequently found in greenhouses. The greenhouse fauna of Great Britain is held up as a reasonably well studied example but the absence of a comprehensive overview is highlighted – a challenge awaiting a BMIG member if ever there was one and a clear opportunity to get published in the Bulletin (but do speak to the Bulletin editor first).

Tajovský, K., Mock, A. & Papáč, V. (2014) The genus *Hylebainosoma* Verhoeff, 1899 (Diplopoda, Chordeumatida, Haaseidae): Redescription of *Hylebainosoma tatanum*, description of a new troglobiont species and notes to the *Hylebainosoma-Romanosoma* species group. *Zootaxa*, **3764** (5): 501-523.

Although the species discussed here are generally Eastern European, the paper provides some background relevant to the recent discovery of *Hylebainosoma nontronensis* in South Wales. *H. nontronensis* is unknown in the eastern stronghold of the genus and the authors describe its discovery at the type locality in the foothills of the Massif Central, France as ‘surprising’. However, they are of the opinion that, based on morphological comparisons, *H. nontronensis* has been placed in the correct genus; this despite the uncertainty of Mauriès & Kime themselves when describing the new species.

Bidegaray-Batista, L., Taiti, S. López, H., Ribera, C. & Arnedo, M.A. (2015) Endemism and evolution in the littoral woodlouse *Halophiloscia* Verhoeff, 1908 (Crustacea, Isopoda, Oniscidea) from the Canary Islands: implications for conservation policies. *Insect Conservation and Diversity*, **8**(1): 17-30.

The authors have used genetic analysis to investigate the colonisation events leading to the diversity of *Halophiloscia* species found in the Canary Isles. They conclude that the four species present result from three different older, natural conservation events followed by the recent introduction of

Halophiloscia couchii. They go on to suggest that the high conservation status given to the endemic *H. canariensis* is not justified but that the low genetic variability found in *H. microphthalmia*, which has in the past been considered a subspecies of *H. couchii*, warrants a higher conservation status than it is currently given.

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