

## BRITISH ISOPOD STUDY GROUP

## NEWSLETTER 32

OCTOBER 1991

## EDITORIAL

Records have continued to arrive over the Summer, the most interesting being Steve Hopkin's find at St Bees (see Steve's note in this issue). This record now represents the most northerly occurrence of Halophiloscia in the World! It also shows what continued effort at one site can turn up. Perhaps Porcellionides cingendus will also be found at St Bees in future! Jon Daws turned up some interesting finds in the Shetlands including Porcellio spinicornis and an abundance of Haplophthalmus mengei. In addition the new subspecies of Oniscus asellus has now been found on the Isle of Man, by Jim Wright. Why are there still no records of this from Ireland? The description of the new subspecies has had to be put off for a while, since I am at present busy writing a PhD thesis!

Also included in the present newsletter is an article on the terrestrial amphipod Architalitrus, submitted by Jason Weeks. I know this is not a woodlouse (!) but since **ISOPODA** will not appear for a while I decided that it was worth including here.

The Invertebrate Red Data Book has now been published. Copies are available from English Nature, Peterborough, priced at £8.00. Included are two woodlice; Armadillidium pictum (RDB 3) and Metatrichoniscoides celticus (RDB-K: insufficiently known). Despite the recent finds at St Bees and the Giant's Causeway, confirmed males of this last species have still only been reported from Wales. Whether the species is truly an endemic appears doubtful, however, since other areas of the Atlantic coast of Europe remain very incompletely worked.

Details of next year's meeting are enclosed in this newsletter. I will make the 'outlandish prediction' that Armadillidium pictum may turn up! Also Trichoniscoides albidus should be around there somewhere- I took the species on flood plains in Worcestershire last year.

Steve Hopkin writes.....

## ISOPODA

Isopoda has not ceased publication, but has gone into hibernation until next year. In volume 5 Paul Harding and I still plan to change the style/content to increase international coverage and include an annual list of Oniscidea researchers together with their publications. We intended to launch our proposals at the session on terrestrial isopods during the Fourth European Congress of Entomology in Godollo, Hungary, in September. Unfortunately we were unable to attend due to the pressure of work (PTH) and an accident a few days before the meeting (SPH) when I cut my eyelid and had to have it stitched (no I wasn't looking for woodlice at the time!).

Volumes 1 (recently reprinted), 2, 3 and 4 of Isopoda are still available at £3.00 per copy plus postage, as are postcards of Armadillidium pictum and album at 20p each (or 10 for £1.50). There is also a new postcard available of the desert woodlouse Hemilepistus reamuri (same price) which will appear (eventually!) on the cover of Isopoda volume 5. Please make cheques payable to ISOPOD SOCIETY and send orders direct to me (NOT Dave Bilton) at my Reading address.

### Halophiloscia couchi at St. Bees.

Several interesting finds have turned up at St Bees in the past including the northernmost record for Trichoniscoides albidus and a possible Metatrichoniscoides celticus. While on holiday this August in the Lake District, and while the rest of my family were enjoying tea with relatives in the village, I was 'allowed' to go collecting woodlice for a couple of hours. I had looked for Halophiloscia couchi on at least six occasions in previous years (so had I!-Ed.), in the Summer months, but had failed to find it. Imagine my surprise when I saw a specimen of this species under the first stone I turned on the beach! Employing the Halophiloscia collecting technique (squat down and push large handfulls of shingle between the legs rather like a demented gerbil), I managed to catch the animal before it escaped. Another specimen followed after about five minutes, but no more in the next hour of searching.

When I found the first specimen the tide was on the turn, and I would imagine that Halophiloscia had moved up to the surface to avoid interstitial seawater. On previous occasions I had never collected when the tide was so far in. It would certainly be worth searching for the species on shingle beaches of west facing coasts in Scotland and on the Isle of Man.

Species recorded at St. Bees:

Ligia oceanica  
Androniscus dentiger  
Haplophthalamus mengei  
 (Metatrichoniscoides celticus-female only)  
Trichoniscoides albidus  
T.saeroeensis  
Trichoniscus pusillus  
T.pygmaeus  
Halophiloscia couchi  
Oniscus asellus  
Philoscia muscorum  
Armadillidium vulgare  
Cylisticus convexus  
Porcellio scaber

### BISG/BMG FIELD MEETING 1992

Next year's meeting will be held from 23rd to 26th April at Littledean House Hotel, Littledean, Cinderford, Gloucestershire (SO 668136). The hotel specialises in catering for field groups, and has recently been used by the British Mycological Society and the British Arachnological Society. The building is very rambling and somewhat run-down! We will be using twin and single-bedded rooms which have wash-basins and heating. The "laboratory" will be their games room, which has benches around the walls, and electric sockets-it is rather spartan, but adequate for our purposes. The cost is likely to be £25 per head per day. The large car park and garden offer good

hunting grounds. Oh yes, and the hotel is fully licensed! Please complete the enclosed booking form and return it to: **Keith Alexander, The National Trust, Spitalgate Lane, Cirencester, Glos, GL7 2DE. Tel. (0285) 651818.**

Although based in the forest of dean, the intention will be to spread out into the Wye Valley, Gwent and Herefordshire. Armadillidium pulchellum has recently turned up in the area, and may appear again. Apparently it was found in rotting timber in the region.

### **Records of the terrestrial amphipod Architalitrus dorrieni (Hunt) (Amphipoda: Talitridae) at several recently visited sites in SW England.**

Dr. Jason M. Weeks, Institute of Biology, Odense University, Campusvej-55, DK 5230, Odense M, Denmark.

#### Introduction

Few crustacean biologists have worked with terrestrial talitrid amphipods, especially in the northern hemisphere. One reason for this imbalance may be the difficulty in obtaining sufficient numbers of specimens for investigation.

Only one terrestrial talitrid species occurs in Britain, Architalitrus dorrieni, described by Hunt in 1925 as a new species, but subsequently identified as an antipodean immigrant. Richardson (1980) and Moore and Spicer (1986) have given detailed accounts of its biology and reproduction in Britain.

Harding and Sutton (1988) have traced records of its occurrence from over 90 localities in Britain and Ireland. However, as the authors suggest, many of these recordings are obscure, and many sites infrequently visited. This article aims to supplement the limited information available, by giving specific details of the location of several recently visited localities where A. dorrieni may be found in appreciable quantities, thereby facilitating collection by interested workers.

#### Architalitrus dorrieni in SW England

Harding and Sutton (1988) described Budshead Wood, Plymouth, in great detail, preempting repetition here. Suffice to say that during repeated trips by the author during the winter of 1989 and spring 1990, A. dorrieni remained extremely abundant.

Collections were also made from a thriving population in Carbis Bay, Cornwall (SW 528390), from the south side of a narrow, hedge-lined cliff-top footpath, adjacent to a railway line. Despite the narrow width of the path, A. dorrieni was restricted entirely to the damp, more densely vegetated south side of this, which received shade from the opposite hedgerow. Many isopod species were found associated with the talitrids.

Several individuals of A. dorrieni were also collected from the churchyard of St. Euny, Redruth, Cornwall (SW 692414). Although this was generally an impoverished location, several individuals were hand-picked from old leaf litter under sycamore, oak and ash trees, and also from around crumbling headstones.

Trelissick House and Garden, Truro, Cornwall (SW839395), owned by the National Trust, proved to be more rewarding. A. dorrieni was found in numbers amongst leaf litter on the steep slopes of the northern edge of South Wood, where a mixture of oak, sycamore, sweet chestnut and larch are to be found. It would seem likely that the first specimens of this talitrid at Trelissick were introduced with exotic plants laid out during the planting of the walled garden here in 1937-1955.

## Conclusions

It is hoped that these brief descriptions may further aid prospective workers in locating suitable collection sites for A. dorrieni. No doubt other populations exist, possibly in greater abundance than those mentioned. Painstaking searching at other previously recorded sites, however, often failed to reveal a solitary amphipod.

## References

- Harding, P.T. and Sutton, S.L. (1988) The spread of the terrestrial amphipod Architalitrus dorrieni in Britain and Ireland: Watch this niche! Isopoda 2: 7-10.  
 Hunt, O.D. (1925) On the amphipod genus Talitrus with a description of a new species from the Scilly Isles, T. dorrieni n. sp. J. mar. biol. Ass. U.K. 13: 854-869.  
 Moore, P.G. and Spicer, J.I. (1986) On the status of Architalitrus dorrieni (Crustacea: Amphipoda) on the island of Colonsay, Inner Hebrides. J. Nat. Hist. 20: 667-680.  
 Richardson, A.M.M. (1980) Notes on the occurrence of Talitrus dorrieni Hunt (Crustacea Amphipoda: Talitridae) in south-west England. J. Nat. Hist. 14: 751-757.

Record cards,  
articles for next newsletter etc. to:

David Bilton,  
E10 Lab,  
Dept. of Zoology,  
University of Oxford,  
South Parks Road,  
OXFORD OX1 3PS.

Tel. (0856) 271247

Orders for Isopoda and postcards to:

Dr. S. P. Hopkin,  
Dept. of Pure and Applied Zoology,  
University of Reading,  
PO Box 228,  
Reading RG6 2AJ.

Tel. (0734) 875123 ext. 7063

## STOP PRESS

David Bilton will be spending 1992 in Sweden, but intends to continue to run the scheme. His address will be:

Department of Genetics  
Uppsala University  
Box 7003,  
S-750 07 UPPSALA  
Sweden

Completed record cards can be sent to David at that address during 1992, or can be sent direct to BRC where cards will be stored until he returns to Britain. David will be happy to examine specimens for recorders whilst he is in Sweden.

Supplies of records cards can be obtained from:

Biological Records Centre  
Monks Wood Experimental Station  
Abbots Ripton  
Huntingdon  
Cambs PE17 2LS

Telephone: 04873 381  
Fax: 04873 467