

British Myriapod Group

Autumn 95

Newsletter number 23

Editor: Dick Jones

AND STILL THEY COME

This year has seen the addition of not one but three new species to the British list. The first was *Polydesmus vberi* found by David Bolton and Geoff Musker of Exeter Museum in Central Park, Plymouth. It is a white polydesmid and I was able to find it quite easily when I went to look for myself. It comes from the Alpes Maritimes according to Demange.

Those who notice a certain similarity in the specific name of the beast and a well known myriapodologist who lives quite near to the city, may like to know that a white polydesmid was found several years ago, by him, and pronounced an albino *Polydesmus angustus* "by an expert". A condition that I am well familiar with.

The second species is from Ireland which was found by Roy Anderson. This is the species that I mentioned

the last newsletter. Mauriès has pronounced on it and identified it as *Anamastigona pulchellum*. Now we must check all our *Craspedosoma* records where we can in case it occurs on mainland Britain too but it looks like a Chordeumid so it should be fairly easy to distinguish. It comes from central, southern Europe.

For the last species I have to hang my head in shame. Gordon Corbet has found *Melogona voighti* in Scotland. Not only that but he checked over the *Melogona* specimens that have been found there over the past 10 years and there were a couple of *M. voighti*, identified by me as *M. gallicus*. All I can say is that in 1988 when I looked at them I wasn't looking for new species and that, going on the eyes, I made them *gallicus*. It just goes to show that you can't take anything for granted.

There will be descriptions in the next Bulletin.

The putting on to computer of the cards has started. I went to Monkswood and sorted out the first batch. We now have a bank account in the name of the BMG, at Lloyds Bank in King's Lynn. Any two signatures out of four can withdraw, the names being Helen, Tony, Paul and me. It can also be used to deposit any cheques made out to the BMG which we occasionally get. (Any contributions gratefully received of course.)

Can I ask everyone to look in their drawers, cupboards and consciences, get every card you forgot to send in, or visit those nearby places that you always meant to visit before the end of November. NOVEMBER 30TH IS THE DEADLINE. We want to try to get as many records as we can because it will be a long time before we produce another atlas. The hard work will start when all the cards are in and the checking begins. Then I shall come looking for volunteers.

PREPARING FOR THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY, OR NOT, AS THE CASE MAY BE.

My old Amstrad has at last given up the ghost. Not before time I hear you say. It probably has happened at a good time. What I want to do is to get a computer that is large enough to run the Recorder package and then, post atlas, to put all the cards onto computer. The cards will be stored at Monks Wood as usual but when you ring up and say "what has

been found at such and such a place and can I have a print out" it will be, hopefully, easy to produce. This newsletter is being produced on my wife's laptop but there will be plenty of room to produce it in future along with county lists and keeping track of recipients' addresses etc., etc. However, there will be a slight hiccup in the production of county lists etc. until further notice.

The regular millipede list is also on hold but there are a couple of interesting ones that are worth mentioning; *Nopoiulus kochti* from v-c 85 G. B. Corbet and *Cylindroiulus parisorum* and *Enantiulus armatus* from v-c 2 A. N. Keay.

10th International Congress of Myriapodology

Copenhagen.
29th July - 2nd August 1996

The next International Myriapod Congress will be held at Copenhagen University next summer. The first circular will be sent round this autumn to all those on the CIM list. If you are not on this list and would like to receive details please contact:

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Denmark

BMG/BISG FIELD MEETING 1995 THE LAKE DISTRICT

The joint BMG/BISG field meeting was based at Rowrah Hall near Whitehaven from Thursday 20th to Sunday 23rd of April. The final turnout was dominated by the usual hardcore members.

The accommodation proved more than sufficient for our needs: warm beds, hot showers, hot food and lots of comfy chairs around an open fire for us old timers to rest our weary bodies and renew past acquaintances. It was pleasing to see both Douglas "flipping southerners" Richardson and Gordon Blower at the meeting this year. The food brought back memories of school dinners but at least we could help ourselves to seconds (and thirds!). The locals in the local pub were more than friendly and rather disappointed when we insisted on leaving at 1.30am. However Dave Bilton stayed to finish his pint and was not seen again until 3 o'clock! I'm told the unsynchronised snoring of the three recording scheme organisers, Messers Barber and Jones and Dr Bilton, was more than Paul Harding could take and he spent the night in the hallway. Good to see the BMG and BISG maintaining good relations with the BRC!

Despite the usual outlandish predictions by the editor in the last newsletter ("...it will probably rain") the weather was mostly dry and sunny with occasional hail showers. However, in exposed locations, a persistent stiff breeze quickly chilled the extremities. A variety of coastal and inland sites were visited by the various hit-squads. Much to the bemusement of the Hall staff, the garden was ritualistically dismantled at dawn each day in search of those elusive little white jobs. An account of the species recorded should be presented elsewhere.

Our thanks must go to David Bilton for organising a successful meeting and to the staff at Rowrah Hall for tolerating our eccentricities.

Steve Gregory.

MILLIPEDE HUNTING IN TURKEY.

In May of this year I was fortunate to accompany Henrik Enghoff to Turkey for 10 days with the aim of finding some millipedes. We started and finished in Istanbul and covered 2700 km travelling around the western side of the country. Our first major stop was the Ulu Dag mountains south of Bursa the type location of *Cylindroiulus besuchetti*. This was a species I had tried to find in collections when working on *Cylindroiulus* from the Caucasus but had been unable to locate. Although there was an abundance of snow on the ground, small pockets of beech leaves could be found underneath the trees and we were successful in finding reasonable numbers of the millipedes.

The other main interest of the trip was to find some Paectophylline millipedes. These are fairly large Julids which are characterised by very distinct gonopods. Henrik had recently described a new species from Turkey, *Paectophyllum ferrugineum*, and we hoped to find out a bit more about its biology and its relationships with another species, *P. escherichii*. We found both species in a very attractive area of the 'Turkish Lakeland' at Golcuk where a lake nestles high up in the mountains. These millipedes are especially interesting because they are quite brightly coloured, *P. ferrugineum* is red whilst *P. escherichii* is yellow. Around Golcuk we also found some animals which were red dorsally and black below, having looked at them since the male gonopods are like *P. ferrugineum* whilst the female vulvae have a characteristic bump on them like *P. escherichii*. It looks like we will just have to go back again to spend more time looking at the spatial relationships of these beasts.

In addition to these species we found some large brightly coloured flat backed Xystodesmids of the genus *Melaphe* which were dark brown with yellow spots and also some large Callipodids with a characteristic smell of camphor which I could easily become addicted to! Lots of smaller Julids, Polydesmids and Chordeumatids turned up which will need quite a bit of sorting out including several *Megaphyllum*, some of which seem to be new species.

As well as the millipedes we found lots of large *Scolopendra* which came in almost as many different colour varieties as we had collecting localities; several different scorpions including a particularly evil looking black one and some interesting and pretty flowers. I would thoroughly recommend Turkey as a worthwhile place to visit, and the millipedes are interesting too!

Helen Read

Bulletin of the British Myriapod Group.

There has been considerable discussion recently about the format and content of the Bulletin so this note is to let everyone know the procedure from now on.

The editors usually try to produce the Bulletin in time for the field meeting each year just after Easter. The Bulletin primarily accepts articles concerning British species and records. It will also accept articles about British species in other countries and the activities of the Group in other countries if space is available. The content can be original work or reviews about any aspect of Myriapods. Articles can be of varying length but if longer than previously published please contact an editor to check first. The miscellanea section at the end of the Bulletin is intended for short notes which do not warrant a longer article but are still of interest. Notes

can be as short as you like!

Items for inclusion are ideally submitted on paper and on disk preferably using Word or Wordperfect for Windows. Hand written articles are accepted as long as the writing is clear. Contributions should be sent to either editor by 1st January each year. The editors will endeavour to check them, do any typing necessary and as far as possible get one other person to make comments on the content. They will then be returned to the author for the final check before publishing.

It is intended that the format of the Bulletin should remain as that of 1995 for the next few issues. Any changes are likely to be more costly so this will be looked into further before any decisions are made.

We hope that these notes will meet with your approval and we look forward to receiving your contributions for the next Bulletin.

Tony Barber, Helen Read

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<i>Brachydesmus superus</i>	X	X	X	X		X					X					X	X							X	X					
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This are the millipedes that we found in the Lake District. I am afraid that the centipedes have not materialised in time ^{for} going to press.

OBITUARY

Colin Peter Fairhurst 1942 - 1994

To most younger myriapodologists the name Colin Fairhurst may be unfamiliar, but Colin was one of the driving forces behind the setting up and the early years of the British Myriapod Group and the British Myriapod Survey. He carried out research on dune millipedes for his PhD and ran the Millipede Recording Scheme from 1971 to 1983.

Colin was born and brought up in Merseyside and lived all his life in the North-west. In 1964 he began his PhD with Gordon Blower at Manchester University on *Life cycles and activity patterns in schizophylline millipedes* (awarded in 1968). He held various teaching posts at Manchester College of Education, University of Keele and Stockport College of Technology and, from 1974 until shortly before his death, he was Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Biology at Salford University.

His research fields included millipedes (especially their distribution and ecology), tropical disease vectors and their control (mainly *Onchocerciasis* in West Africa), tree diseases, vectors and their control (mainly Dutch elm disease and bark beetles) and environmental survey and education. He produced more than 60 research publications of which 14 concerned Myriapoda.

Colin was a complex personality. He could be generous and arrogant, caring and argumentative, stimulating company and totally overwhelming. He was an inspiring teacher to those who wanted to learn and a charismatic research leader who engendered great loyalty among colleagues and from a succession of research assistants and students. But he was always wary of the motives of others and he rarely forgave apparent disloyalty. Colin was almost certainly tormented by his many talents and his inability to apply himself consistently to any one topic. He achieved a great deal, but always considered that he could and should do more. Colin always arrived with a selection of jokes and amusing stories (some of which were essentially true), a bundle of new ideas and more plans than it would ever be possible to achieve. He usually left one with a list of jobs, a mind that buzzed for hours or days afterwards, a dense cloud of cigarette smoke and not infrequently a hangover and several half-finished cups of milky coffee.

Colin was in declining health for some years due largely to his erratic life-style and, mainly because of his health, he retired early from Salford in the spring of 1994. He died in hospital at Bangor, North Wales on Boxing Day 1994. It was a sad end to a life which appeared to have so much potential, but which was beset with problems which only Colin could resolve. He touched the lives of many with his enthusiasm, vision, scientific integrity and sense of fun. One could never be indifferent to Colin and many (myself included) will remember him with great affection and gratitude.

Paul T Harding

A more detailed obituary by Gordon Blower was published in 1995 (Bulletin of the British Myriapod Group, 11, 5-6) and a bibliography of Colin's publications will appear in volume 12 of the Bulletin.

NOTES FROM SHEFFIELD

After recently discovering *Allajulus nitidus* in a Sheffield garden, I thought that would probably be it for new species – at least for a year. I had not, however, taken into account the enthusiasm of a young lad and his father who had recently attended my millipede identification day school. Within just a few months they had found more *Macroster-nodesmus*, *Melogona* and *Brachy-chaeteuma* than I would have thought possible. If this were not enough they have added a further *Allajulus* record from Derbyshire and found the first *Melogona gallica* for Yorkshire. In an attempt to relocate said species, I found several more at a nearby site which upon mapping turned out to be on the other side of the county boundary new species for Derbyshire too! Another goody to have just (?) turned up is *Lithobius pillicornis* from a waste ground/car park in the centre of Sheffield. It was overlooked at first as a large *L. forficatus*, but upon closer examination three years after collection, one or two (well, at least nine actually ...) obvious features indicated otherwise. They do say ignorance is bliss.

Paul Richards

ADVERT

Coming soon, the latest volume in a special series on the natural history of the Sheffield area. Millipedes, Centipedes and Woodlice of the Sheffield area, by Paul Richards. Priced at around £4.00-£5.00.

CAN YOU LIVE WITHOUT IT?

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NEXT BMG NEWSLETTER.

This will be out in the spring. Material for inclusion should reach R.E.J. by February 14th.

Supplies of record cards and additional copies of the British Myriapod Group Newsletter can be obtained from the Biological Records Centre (BRC). Changes of address should be notified to Dick Jones or BRC. If you no longer wish to receive the BMG Newsletter, please notify BRC in writing.

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