

British Myriapod & Isopod Group

20th AGM

To be held on:

Saturday 5th December 2020 at 2pm via Zoom

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the 19th AGM held on 26 April 2019 at Newton Stewart
3. Matters arising
4. Secretary's Report. Helen Read
5. Treasurer's Report Paul Harding
6. Recording Scheme Reports Steve Gregory, Paul Lee, Tony Barber
7. Librarian & Collection Manager's Report
8. Election of Officers
9. Intertidal Isopod Recording scheme Warren Maguire
10. Future meetings
11. Any other business

4. BMIG Secretary's Report

We currently have 403 members which is almost the same as last year. During the year we moved over to use MailChimp to maintain our mailing list, though this process the mailing list was cleaned and out of date contact details removed. Now new members join up directly via an electronic form on the website which updates the MailChimp database automatically. This results in less work in maintaining the mailing list but does mean that the direct contact welcoming new members no longer happens. Newsletters are now posted on the website and a mailing sent out from MailChimp to notify members. We now also have the capacity send extra mailings to members too. The new system seems to have worked well and we are grateful to the staff at BRC for facilitating that for us and helping with some of the technology.

Our field meeting and AGM, due to be held in Somerset just after Easter was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic so we have not physically met this year at all. A virtual committee meeting has been held and this seemed to work quite well so we are planning a few more virtual events in the future.

The Bulletin was published in the spring and the editors have sufficient copy either received or promised for a 2021 edition, but more articles are always welcome. Deadline to send articles in is 1 February 2021.

The Facebook pages are very active and Warren Maguire has recently revised the Twitter account so hopefully that will become more lively over the next few months.

Keith Lugg has moved north and will no longer be living close enough to Dinton Pastures to be able to look after the collection and library on a regular basis but Steve Gregory and Dafydd Lewis have agreed to help out for the moment in the absence of a new collections manager/librarian.

Helen Read, October 2020

5. BMIG Treasurer's Report for 2019

Annual Statement of Accounts

The majority of income and expenditure in 2019 related to the annual field meeting in 2019, deposits for the 2020 meeting, Ebook sales and royalties, and income from the Publishers' Licensing Service (PLS, see below). Two regular outgoings are an annual subscription to Buglife (£2.00/year) and the website domain name fee (£10/year). BMIG commissioned the design and production of a display banner and information leaflets and we are grateful to Dafydd Lewis for organising this. Paul Lee organised the purchase of a portable projector screen.

The Statement of Accounts for 2019, as circulated to the Committee, has not yet been externally examined. This Statement of Accounts shows an excess income over expenditure of £1735.31, which is due to the initial PLS income that included several years of income which had been accruing without our knowledge. The end of year Balance was £6932.51 consisting of £6928.40 in the TSB Current Account, and £4.11 petty cash.

BMIG is financially sound and has few regular outgoings. The annual field meeting, our major financial commitment, usually breaks even or is within £100 of either profit or loss. As ever, I

would encourage the Committee to consider opportunities for appropriate use of up to 50% of our current balance.

BMIG Bursaries

BMIG Bursaries had been announced in connection with the publicity for the 2019 Annual Meeting. Two applications were made regarding the 2019 meeting and both were successful. Calum Urquhart was allocated £100 and he took an active part in the meeting in Scotland. The other successful applicant, Garrett Maguire, eventually was unable to attend the 2019 meeting and asked for the bursary to be held over for the 2020 meeting, which was agreed by the Officers.

The bursary payment for Calum does not show specifically in the accounts because his bill for the 2019 field meeting was reduced by £100 and this amount was paid centrally by BMIG with the final invoice. Thus the overall account for the Scotland 2019 field meeting appears to amount to a loss of £130, but this includes the bursary payment of £100; however, there was a small deficit (£30) on the meeting.

Publishers' Licensing Service (PLS)

PLS collects and distributes to publishers income derived from users of ISBN and ISSN publications, such as libraries, academic institutions and commercial users. BMIG is registered with PLS to receive such income through their agency. When payments to publishers are made PLS deducts a small percentage admin fee for their services.

The BMIG portfolio registered with PLS includes BMIG Bulletin and its predecessor, BMG Bulletin, (including the on-line BMIG Bulletin) and, retrospectively, Isopoda. The BMIG Newsletter and its predecessors are not currently an ISSN publication and therefore do not contribute to income.

The accumulated income for BMIG Bulletin and BMG Bulletin being held by PLS was paid out to BMIG in January 2019 – a nett total of £1505.17. The more normal annual payment, in March 2019, was £265.96 (nett).

Paul Harding, BMIG Treasurer, 1 March 2020

BMIG Treasurer's interim report to September 2020

Our current balance in the TSB current account and as petty cash is nearly £7000.

BMIG has received three payments from PLS (in February, March and September 2020) amounting to £332.18.

One cheque, for the BMIG domain name, has not yet been presented for payment. The recipient, Craig Slawson (for Salticus Web-Hosting), died suddenly in March 2020 soon after the cheque had been sent. The status of the BMIG domain name is currently unclear.

In early March, when the prospect of a Covid-19 epidemic looked certain but UK Government was still hawking, I took the decision to cancel our booking with Bridgwater and Taunton College for the 2020 field meeting. This was partly because we were expecting Liz Hornung to attend from Hungary (as our guest) and Willson Gaul to attend from Ireland (in receipt of a BMIG Bursary), both of whom needed to cancel their international flights. Because of the developing Covid-19 situation, I was able to get the College to reduce our cancellation charge to the amount of our initial deposit (£163.50), which had been paid in August 2019.

Following the cancellation of the 2020 annual field meeting due to Covid-19, all those that had booked and paid a deposit were offered a refund. Three requested a refund and these were sent. However nine of those that had booked instructed me to keep the deposit against an expectation that the meeting would be organised for another date in 2020, or possibly in Spring 2021. The total of the deposits currently being held is £635. As the possibility of a field meeting in Spring 2021 now looks increasing unlikely, the Committee is asked to decide if we should offer, again, to refund these deposits.

Paul Harding, BMIG Treasurer, 22 September 2020

6. BMIG Recording Scheme Reports

6a. BMIG: Woodlouse and Waterlouse Recording Scheme

Perhaps the biggest shock to the recording scheme is the revelation the genus *Ligia* is not a true woodlouse (i.e. suborder Oniscidea), but appears to be more closely related to marine isopods of suborders Valvifera and Sphaeromatidae. This is the finding of genetic analysis undertaken by Dimitriou, Taiti & Sfenthourakis (2019). Thus, by implication our familiar Sea Slater, *Ligia oceanica*, should be no longer considered a terrestrial 'woodlouse', but a marine isopod. Luckily there are plans to resurrect the long defunct Marine Isopod Recording Scheme (see item 9, below) and *Ligia* will be included within both schemes!

The woodlouse highlights of the BMIG field weekend in Dumfries and Galloway in spring 2019 were *Armadillidium pulchellum* at Mullock Bay and *Armadillidium album* at Ringdoo Point. However, perhaps the most significant discovery was that of *Philoscia affinis* in almost every woodland and coastal site surveyed. In fact confirmed *P. muscorum* (based on examination of a male specimen) was only reported from a single site, the ornamental Cally Gardens. This puts serious doubts on the reliability of the many *P. muscorum* records made during BMIG's previous field meetings in western Scotland (Kirkcudbrightshire, Ayrshire, Argyllshire and Kintyre), which all predate the discovery of *P. affinis* in Britain. In fact the one single tube of voucher specimens available for examination from these four field weekends (collected 'near Oban' in 2010) has proved to be *P. affinis*!

Porcellionides sexfasciatus is confirmed new to Britain from Eden Project Mediterranean Biome. Specimens were first seen and photographed by Keith Lugg in 2018, but its identity was not confirmed until the collection of additional specimens by KL, Steve Gregory and James Harding-Morris this March. During the same visit a specimen of *Lucasius pallidus* (recorded in 2010) and a possible female *Miktoniscus linearis* (last recorded at Kew Gardens in 1908) were also collected.

I have received very few records via 'traditional' routes. However, in the last 12 months about 1600 records for 28 species have been submitted to iRecord and verified. The bulk of the records are of species that can be found in gardens, no doubt bolstered by 'post-lockdown' garden surveys, and those species that can be readily verified from an image. On several occasions this summer Jane Thomas has found *Trichoniscoides albidus* in her garden near York, which lies close to the River Ouse, at the north west limit of this species UK range.

Another record entered into iRecord of *Armadillidium depressum* (albeit mis-identified of *A. vulgare*) from inside a house in Dumfries and Galloway is the first Scottish record for that species.

It has been slowly expanding its range northwards for a number of years so perhaps not unexpected. This is one of many records for this particular species that have been gleaned from iRecord. In many cases records were incorrectly identified by the recorder and re-determined by myself from the supporting images. There are considerably more records than this which remain un-verified due to recorders of unknown ability posting records without supporting images.

Steve Gregory, September 2020

6b. BMIG: Millipede Recording Scheme Report 2020

In early spring 2019 Nicola Garnham collected bags of leaf litter from several sites on the Lancashire / Cumbria border. From this litter she sorted a number of female *Melogona* amongst which Steve Gregory identified both *M. gallica* and *M. scutellaris*. Steve also identified what seemed to be *M. voigtii*, a species hitherto unknown from England. In late autumn Nicola returned to collect more leaf litter and from this Steve identified a male *M. voigtii* and a further female specimen thus confirming the addition to the English fauna.

The diplopodological highlight of the AGM weekend in Dumfries and Galloway last year was the finding of *Thalassiosobates littoralis* at Mulloch Bay. Interestingly, this elusive millipede was last recorded from the area when BMIG visited in 1997. Unfortunately, other species that we hoped to add to the regional species lists - *Chordeuma proximum*, *Chordeuma sylvestre*, *Melogona voigtii* and *Leptoiulus belgicus* - were not recorded, or at least if they were the information has not yet reached the scheme organiser.

Many records are now reaching me via iRecord or through email and social media. Some may sit unnoticed in iRecord as I don't routinely check for new additions. Steve Gregory is very good at bringing important records from iRecord to my attention and things that have been submitted through other media. Records he has sent my way include *Chordeuma sylvestre* and *Ophiulus germanicus* collected by Willson Gaul from Dublin and *O. germanicus* collected by Roy Anderson from Belfast and from the Channel Islands by Andy Marquis. Steve also spots records that are incorrect and sometimes this produces an interesting find such as the photo of an animal from a garden in Basingstoke that was posted as *Tachypodoiulus niger*. This was clearly *Leptoiulus belgicus*, a new species for Hampshire. Steve also added *L. belgicus* to the Oxfordshire list when he collected it in a woodland near Whitchurch and the millipede does seem to be spreading slowly from its previous strongholds in southwest England and south Wales.

Submissions, either on iRecord or by email, that include images of the gonopods of a male are always most welcome as these give the best chance of identification. Thomas Hughes collected a *Brachychaeteuma* in Bangor that he identified as *B. bagnalli* but Steve Gregory was not so certain and advised him to forward the image. The photo showed gonopods very similar to the variant collected by Tony Barber from Meathop Wood during the 1983 meeting in Lancashire. Gordon Blower had concluded there was no point assigning that specimen to either species until further evidence was available and the position is still no clearer. I advised Thomas to dissect a second specimen he had collected and to publish the gonopod images of both.

Mike Davidson has sent a number of records by email including male *Propolydesmus testaceus* from a Glasgow garden. The photos of the gonopods that were attached to the message clearly

confirmed the species. Although synanthropic records are known from northern European, this is the mostly northerly British record by a long way. Scotland has produced a couple of other most northerly records this year with Steve Gregory passing on Mark Fordyce's report of *Geoglomeris subterranea* from north of Aberdeen and Richard Lyszkowski sending a photo of *Oxidus gracilis* in his garden in Bridge of Allan. The latter was surviving outdoor despite cold overnight temperatures.

Mike also sent images of a *Cylindroiulus* specimen from Glasgow but this time not even the gonopod images have helped with identification. Helen Read is working on this one but it looks very likely that it will prove to be yet another 'new to Britain'.

Even without images of gonopods, *Chondrodesmus cf riparius* is readily identified from a photo and another email record of this species has been submitted. The millipede was in the pot of an indoor palm purchased in Aberystwyth but now residing in Codsall, Staffordshire.

Some records are still submitted by more traditional methods, usually spreadsheets. I received the usual batch of records from northeast England submitted by Tony Wardaugh but these contained nothing unexpected. A new contributor, Ishpi Blatchley, a lichenologist from Bromley, has sent me a spreadsheet of records of *Polyxenus lagurus* made whilst recording lichens. Also, following a brief trip to Scotland from Germany, Karin Voigtländer sent me a list of records that included a possible juvenile *Craspedosoma rawlinsii*. At my suggestion Karin is now checking this specimen for the possibility of *Nanogona polydesmoides*.

Paul Lee, September 2020

6c. BMIG: Centipede Recorder's Report

1. Progress with Atlas

Work on the Centipede Atlas for Britain and Ireland continues in conjunction with BRC, based on the use of data with end-date of 31.12.18. No new species are reported but the "long form" of *Pachymerium ferrugineum* is noted and included for the Channel Islands.

Much recent progress has involved tidying up of issues revealed during processing and in trying to merge in as much as reasonably possible of RA14 (old card) data. This has included trying to sort out records with strange or no "start dates" consequential on data entry issues and of possible duplicates under different site names as revealed by hectad by hectad comparison.

Photographs of living animals from Britain or elsewhere have been obtained for most of our species, in a few cases of only preserved ones and for some (*A.peregrinus*, *N.turki*, *G.pusillifrater*) none at all. Thanks are due to all who gave permissions and to JPR & SJG for their help in obtaining images. Good pictures of live *Henia brevis* and *Schendyla dentata* would still be most welcome.

2. Post-2018 Records

Some records continue to come in to the recorder either as a result of specimens or of usable pictures sent in and, in due course, are forwarded to BRC. Clearly for much of 2020 these are limited.

Species records are also coming in via iRecord and Facebook. I am not, at present, attempting to collate these although in the case of iRecord they will be, presumably, held by BRC and are being verified by SJG.

3. Future Recording

The issue of the format of future centipede records needs to be considered, presumably along with that of our other groups. The RA14/58/85 record cards or their corresponding spreadsheet versions gathered much information, not all, in the eventuality necessarily usable. iRecord data is more limited in scope and seems to me to lose some potentially useful information in their habitat categories. Whatever system is used, hopefully containing some habitat information, will need verified records to be stored in it in a co-ordinated way.

I think that the sort of recording being considered for spider iRecord, suitably modified to fit “our” animals and made relatively straightforward and easy to use could be the basis for a way forward that gathers usable information on habits & habitats.

It is also appropriate for BMIG to consider who will take over the Centipede Recording Scheme in the longer term. I am happy to continue to offer my expertise, such as it is, to external contacts, both British/Irish and overseas, to work on the Bulletin and to identify specimens after the completion/publication of the Atlas.

Tony Barber

9. Proposed Intertidal Marine Isopod Recording Scheme

When the Isopod Recording Scheme was set up in 1968, it initially included marine as well as freshwater and terrestrial isopods. In 1970, the Marine Recording Scheme (as detailed in Holdich & Lincoln, 1974) separated from the Non-marine Isopod Recording Scheme and operated for a number of years under the direction of David Holdich and Roger Lincoln. However, due to a lack of records and difficulty verifying the records of other observers (David Holdich, p.c.), the scheme petered out and has not been revived since, though David Holdich and others have continued to gather records for marine species and many of these have fed into the NBN database.

The marine isopods constitute an important group of organisms that are under-recorded. Their study has much to tell us about the health and diversity of marine environments and the effects of climate change. Whilst study of the sub-littoral species necessarily remains a specialist pursuit, many of the intertidal species (around 70 in total) may be encountered by field-recorders, and their identification is greatly aided by the publication of *British Marine Isopods* (Naylor, 1972) and especially its updated edition *Intertidal Marine Isopods* (Naylor & Brandt, 2015). Identification of the intertidal isopods is of a difficulty similar to that of woodlice, centipedes and millipedes, and most species can be readily identified by a suitably informed field-worker, though some require examination under higher magnification. Good quality photographs/micrographs of the whole animal and of key characteristics are in most cases sufficient to confirm identification, and this is one advantage that we have today over the original Marine Isopod Recording Scheme, where verification of records proved troublesome. Assuming that recorders know what is required for identification of each species, there is no reason why iRecord could not be used as a platform for gathering records of these species alongside more traditional methods. Indeed there is already a

good number of records of marine isopods on iRecord (though nowhere near as many as for woodlice) awaiting verification, and it can be expected that many more records would be submitted via this portal if a recording scheme for them were to be advertised.

Given that it already oversees recording schemes for freshwater and terrestrial isopods, as well as for centipedes and millipedes, the BMIG is ideally suited to overseeing a new intertidal marine isopod recording scheme. This would be a natural extension, especially since the Non-marine Isopod Recording Scheme already includes aquatic species outwith Oniscidea (the Asellids). The recent exclusion of *Ligia oceanica* from Oniscidea on genetic grounds and its placement closer to the sub-orders Valvifera and Sphaeromatidae (Dimitriou, Taiti & Sfenthourakis, 2019) further blurs the boundaries. The difficulties in recording sub-littoral species and the artificial separation of these from the intertidal species remain, but in practical terms the intertidal species are a fairly well defined group whereas the sub-littoral species remain beyond the reach of most observers and must necessarily be treated differently (as indicated by the restriction of coverage in Naylor and Brandt, 2015 to intertidal species).

Although I have not had any formal training in the identification of marine (or other) isopods, I have been studying and recording them for the last several years, especially in south-east Scotland but also elsewhere in Britain and Ireland. I have become familiar with many species, including less common and more difficult ones, and have familiarised myself with the literature (including more recent accounts than those summarised in Naylor & Brandt) on their identification. I have received help and advice in doing so from various sources, including from a number of national marine isopod experts, among them David Holdich, Tammy Horton and Adam Jenkins, all of whom have been supportive of my endeavours.

Work on compiling a list of intertidal marine isopods with details on identification and distribution using the model provided by the BMIG website is at an advanced stage, though not yet complete (<http://www.bmig.org.uk/checklist/marine-isopods-checklist>). I have been added as a verifier for isopod records (including marine species) on iRecord by Martin Harvey. I am confident that I can identify any intertidal isopods that I encounter, and can verify records of sufficient quality and detail (e.g. if they include photographs/micrographs of key ID features). In difficult cases, I have various contacts for further assistance. Martin Harvey has indicated that records verified via iRecord could easily form the basis of a recording scheme to feed into national databases such as NBN. If such a scheme were set up, advertising of it through various wildlife groups should encourage submission of many more records to iRecord. I am more than happy to manage such a scheme and to verify records via iRecord or other sources.

Warren Maguire, 28/09/2020