

Reports for AGM 2023

4. Secretary's Report - Helen Read

BMIG currently has 535 people listed on the mailing list, an increase of 35 since last year. We use Mail Chimp to distribute the newsletters and to give occasional other notices such as announcing publication of the Bulletin. The autumn 2022 newsletter was opened by 60% of people who received the Mail Chimp announcement and the spring 2023 newsletter was opened by 56%.

Mail Chimp still appears to be an effective way of distributing information and notifications from my point of view, although I receive very little feedback about it, so it is difficult to know what it feels like from a recipients point of view.

I'm grateful to the testers who check that the links in the mailings working before I send the final version out to everybody, some of whom get back to me very quickly, which is greatly appreciated.

5. Treasurers Report - see separate documents

6a. Centipede Recording Scheme Report - Tony Barber

December 2023 finally saw the publication of the Atlas of the Centipedes of Britain and Ireland and many thanks to everyone involved in every stage of its production. Particular thanks for help in the later stages of preparation to the staff of BRC and FSC Publications and to Steve Gregory. Also, to everyone who allowed the use of their photographs.

The atlas was some time in preparation and even after the input of the data (species, location, date, habitat information, etc.) there were issues of duplication, uncertainty, incompleteness, etc. and decisions as to what to include in relation to our more doubtful species. The end of 2018 was chosen as "cut off date" for records, not, I think, had we expected that the time involved in preparing the final version would be so lengthy. As it happened there were some important post-2018 records which it was agreed should also be included such as those for *Lamyctes africanus* and the 1,000m records of *Lithobius curtipes*, etc. There were also nomenclatural issues including the use of *Haplophilus* / *Stigmatogaster* and that of *Geophilus impressus* (= *G.insculptus* = *G.alpinus*) and *Geophilus seurati*.

Having all the data in and, hopefully, most of the bugs apparently sorted a decision was made to process the habitat information in the same way as in the Provisional Atlas of 1988, grouping categories as appropriate and weighting ("standardising") to take some account of the very wide disparities in the numbers of species in a particular category and the large differences in numbers of records from different habitat categories. Clearly the larger the samples, in general, the more meaningful the results but there was also a North-South bias built in from the smaller number of species recorded in northern locations. Having a very helpful data processor (Kath Turvey of BRC) to work with and do most of the calculations and to suggest things & discuss the work with was incredibly helpful – and she was a valuable non-specialist to read my English!

Given the possibility of processing lots of data in various possible ways, we agreed to do the standardisation calculations for almost all of the habitat data and to not use such as seemed least meaningful. It was also agreed to treat the <30 records species and the >29 record species differently in terms of habitat data. In the event, most processed data was included (with caveats) &

hence the rather “chunky” size of the atlas. When the coloured maps and the set-up text started to appear in our exchanges we knew we were nearly there!

Nomenclature

Haplophilus subterraneus and *Haplophilus souletinus* (= *Nesoporogaster souletina*) are now again considered as species of *Stigmatogaster*: *S.subterranea* Shaw, 1794 (not 1789) and *S.souletina* Brölemann, 1907.

Geophilus fucorum seurati is for the present referred to as *Geophilus seurati* Brolemann, 1924

Geophilus insculptus (= *G.alpinus*) is currently referred to as *Geophilus impressus* C.L.Koch, 1847 (Thanks to SJG for spotting this).

Other Work

Centipede data has been included with data from other recording schemes in Robin Boyd’s “Causal inference and large-scale expert validation shed light on the drivers of SDM accuracy and variance” accepted for publication in *Diversity and Distributions*. A short communication by myself on a simple synanthropy scale for centipedes has been submitted to the 2023 BMIG Bulletin.

Robin Hutchinson (BRC) has been sent (and has acknowledged) some notes on nomenclature as per the e-mail of PL of 9th February (UKSI). This included reference to *Stigmatogaster*, *Stigmatogaster subterranea* Shaw, 1894, Leach’s dates for *Geophilus acuminatus*, *Geophilus carpophagus* & *Lithobius variegatus*, the status of *Geophilus carpophagus* sl & ss and *G.easoni*, two forms of *Pachymerium ferrugineum* (two forms), *Geophilus impressus*, *Geophilus seurati*, *Lamyctes africanus*. Also comments on the questionable status of *Schendyla monoeci*, *S.zonalis/carniolensis*, *Lithobius agilis*, *L.erythrocephalus* and *L.piceus britannicus*.

I am continuing to look at some specimens & photographs for identification / verification and am happy to continue doing so either by having them sent directly or via Steve as necessary. iRecord data goes to Steve as it has done in the past and hopefully an iRecord system tailored to the needs of our species and with appropriate habitat categories between BMIG and BRC will be agreed in due course and come into use. The atlas has shown how insight into the ecology of individual species can be gained through appropriately structured habitat data collected in association with mapping distribution.

I will continue to copy Steve in to any centipede records that I establish or verify and other correspondence and liaise with him over the recording scheme.

6b. Millipede Recording Scheme Report - Paul Lee

The discovery of species new to Britain continues even as we attempt to update the synopsis and write new keys! Guernsey is becoming the new South Wales with Andy Marquis discovering our third species of *Brachyiulus*, *B. bagnali*, there. He also found a second site for *Polydesmus taranus*, previously recognised amongst specimens of another recent colonist *P. asthenestatus* in Cornwall. These two flatbacks have been found most recently earlier this year on the Isle of Wight.

I continue to receive a small number of records as spreadsheets each year. Tony Wardaugh sends records regularly from Teeside and North Yorkshire and I have just received a set from Mike Williams based in North Somerset. This spreadsheet data included no unusual records, but I have asked to see a male *Brachyiulus* collected by Mike just in case it is something other than *B. pusillus*. As a separate

record Tony sent me a single gonopod of *P. coriaceus* from a dried specimen he was asked to identify. He asked for confirmation of the identity as he had never seen the species before, rather a surprise until you look at the distribution map for the species. The record is one of the most northerly we have.

A few individual enquiries reach me by email as a result of visits to the BMIG website. A rather blurry photo sent from Cork City obviously shows *Polyxenus lagurus*, one of the easier enquiries to deal with. A photo of a large julid from North Yorkshire was rather more difficult to deal with. The sender was adamant it was 4cm long and she lived so remotely she said there was no way it could be an escaped pet. She had not kept the specimen so I could not say much more but it is rather reminiscent of the large *Cylindroiulus 'caeruleocinctus'* that Steve Gregory finally got hold of a year ago after seeing a photo of it on social media. A third enquiry, also reminiscent of a previous case, referred to millipedes living underwater. The observer claimed to have seen up to a hundred millipedes feeding on vegetation in a newly dug irrigation pond in Kent. He reported they were still present and alive a couple of weeks later. I have asked for photos and specimens but have received nothing to date.

The other main source of enquiries is from students and researchers. One request was from Romy Zeiss a PhD student at the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research (Halle-Jena-Leipzig). In her thesis she is planning to map the distribution of soil biodiversity across Europe and identify priorities/ areas for conservation. She requested access to the BMIG dataset on millipedes for her work. I referred her to BRC but warned that the data is becoming rather out of date. A second request I received was from another PhD student, Lizzie Keen at Newcastle University. She is looking into how invertebrate communities in an ancient woodland near Newcastle are impacted by the presence of Himalayan balsam. She is trying to compare the invertebrate communities in invaded and uninvaded areas through pitfall trapping but was looking for an identification guide to millipedes having been unable to get hold of the synopsis. I suggested that she get hold of the latest edition of *Animals under Logs and Stones* and use the key by Helen Read as a starting point. I also offered to help with difficult specimens.

Ant Maddock contacted me late last year on behalf of the Inter-agency Red List Group. I suspect there was left over money in the budget, but he wrote that the group had identified a need to redo the myriapods and isopods Red List as it was last completed 7 years ago. After making further enquiries I found that the assessment would be applying the same criteria as before but would need to use new data and would need to apply the criteria more rigorously. I explained there is insufficient current data, i.e. post 2016, on which the assessment could be based and have heard no more.

6c. Woodlouse and Waterlouse Recording Scheme Report - Steve Gregory

A second area along the river Avon (the tributary of the river Severn one!), has been found for the riverine woodlouse *Trachelipus rathkii*. The new sites, on the flood plain around Stratford upon Avon in Warwickshire, are considerably further upstream than the previous sites in the Vale of Evesham in Worcestershire. These records were picked up from iNaturalist and identified by Frank Noel and myself (international collaboration!), and thus feeding into BRC's iRecord and (following verification) on into the recording scheme. Despite its (many) limitations iNat does deliver some useful records. *Trachelipus* will probably be found along the entire length of the river Avon (and Severn too?) if someone actually looked?!

As is usual in these 'modern' times, I have received very few records via 'traditional' routes. However, there were many more records received via the online iRec and iNat websites. In 2022 there were 1900 records of woodlouse, waterlouse and marine isopod verified by the two relevant BMIG recording schemes from observations directly submitted to iRec. An additional 2100 verified records were derived from observations that were initially posted on iNat (and subsequently verified for the recording schemes in iRec). There would (potentially) be a lot more records derived directly from iRec, if only people (who are not known to BMIG) would add a habitus photograph of what they had seen (thankfully in iNat the addition of an image is a requirement).

Something to look out for... The tiny ball-rolling *Buchnerillo atlanticus* sp. nov. was first discovered in 2020 at a single site on the Atlantic coast of Asturias, northern Spain. Before its formal description was published specimens of the same species were collected from three estuary sites on the Atlantic coast of northern Brittany. All are 'flooded' rias, such as those seen in south west England, which is of course just a biogeographical stones-throw away. Its small size and elusive habits (it looks like a grain of sand!) means it may have been overlooked on the Atlantic coasts of England.

6d. Intertidal isopod recording scheme report - Warren Maguire

Records continue to come in for the Intertidal Isopod recording scheme, via both iRecord and iNaturalist (which feed into iRecord once they reach 'Research Grade', and Steve Gregory and I bump up IDs on relevant things there to make sure the good records do), and occasional records sent via email/post. Numbers of verified records haven't been very high (over 200 via each platform) and of course most are of obvious/easy species (some other records of common species can't be verified, usually *Sphaeroma/Lekanesphaera* and *Jaera*), but they have been steady. I suspect some intertidal isopod records are sucked up by other recording scheme (e.g. Seasearch and various local schemes), but it would be good to encourage submission of these records to the dedicated recording scheme. Even so, the recording scheme is adding nicely to our knowledge of the distribution of some species, though there are significant gaps on the map, especially around Lincolnshire/Humber, most of Ireland, and Scotland away from the south-east. There hasn't been too much unusual reported, but I was pleased to record *Paragnathia formica* in all three intertidal hectads of the River Tyne (VC67) where they've not been reported before (only a few historical records from the county), and *Idotea chelipes* in two hectads (so far) in north Northumberland (VC68), there only being historical records of this species from the south of the county. Goes to show what you can find when you look!

7. Bulletin Report - Helen Read

A variety of papers have been submitted and are in the referee process. The total number is a little bit low this year but there should still be an interesting range. We are currently awaiting comments from a couple of referees, promised but not received yet. The June publication date is realistic.

8. Newsletter Editors Report - Warren Maguire

Two Newsletters have been produced since the last AGM, one in Autumn 2022 and one in Spring 2023. The autumn one especially was jam-packed full of content, at 17 pages, whilst the spring one was a little less full, but not at all bad, at 10 pages. I've made some changes in format which I think have given the Newsletter a cleaner look. The Newsletters have been shared by Helen Read on Mailchimp and are hosted on our website, as well as being advertised through our social media

channels. I haven't had much feedback on them, but hopefully there's enough variation in content to interest everyone in at least some of it (I try to cover our four main groups in each as well as the other groups when we can). Feedback welcome, as well as suggestions for content. And of course contributions are welcome too; these mostly come from members of the committee, but we're happy to receive relevant pieces from other members and people interested in these groups (just contact me). Just one note on timetables; I usually try to give about 2 months between the call for Newsletter content and it being published, but often I don't get anything until a couple of weeks before (or even closer to the deadline), so if you do have anything for the Newsletter, please send it to me as early as possible (the spring deadline in particular is crucial in order to give a month's notice of the AGM). And don't forget images, which help to brighten things up a lot.

9. Library and collections report

No report submitted.

10. Events and exhibitions update report - Dyfed Lewis

Nothing to report.

11. Social Media Manager Report - Warren Maguire

Not much to report on the social media front. I have continued to manage the Twitter account, which mostly involves retweeting images of finds (mostly those that have tagged the BMIG account, otherwise I may well mis them, though I do pick up various tweets as I go too), sharing bits of news, and answering ID queries (where I can, i.e. isopods and easy centipedes and millipedes). We currently (7th Apr 2023) have 1,622 followers, which isn't bad but I'm sure could be increased. I have also (with Steve Gregory's help) been moderating the Isopods & Myriapods BMIG Facebook Group (I don't manage the BMIG Facebook Page, and am not sure who's in charge of that). It's an excellent, active group with lots of contributions, mostly from Britain/Ireland with occasional posts from NW Europe. Lots of discussion and we make sure to help out with IDs and encourage newcomers and recording, whilst at the same time keeping the hobbyists/collectors and spammers at bay. The group has 1,152 members, which is pretty good (and manageable!).

12. Website manager's report - Steve Gregory

Although initially set up in 2010 under the auspices of BRC, it was not until 2013 that the current BMIG website became fully functional following input from Helen, Paul L and myself (following training provided by BRC). Perhaps a ten year celebration is appropriate?

The right for BMIG to use the domain name bmig.org.uk was renewed in January 2023 (for the princely sum of £7.19 per annum). BMIG also holds the right to use bmig.uk, but as yet this domain address has never been used. I am still open to suggestions for possible applications...

Otherwise, nothing much to report, just the usual on-going updating – adding additional images, newsletters, bulletins articles, etc. This includes uploading pdf files of Paul Richards CD ROM, BMIG Newsletter 46 (Spring 2023), adding species accounts for the millipede *Polydesmus taranus* and the woodlouse *Hyloniscus riparius*, both newly discovered in Britain, and the addition of habitus images of some of the more frequently encountered intertidal isopods.