

TED EASON, GORDON BLOWER & THE C.I.M.: SOME PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

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INTRODUCTION

In conversation with John Lewis and Helen Read during a trip to the South African Congress of Myriapodology, I was persuaded to prepare a lecture devoted to historical aspects of the CIM and the role Gordon Blower and Ted Eason played in its development for the special day conference at Manchester.

This was my initial intention but the contribution evolved into personal recollections of some of the human and scientific features of two very fascinating characters that I was pleased and honoured to meet.

WHAT IS THE CIM?

Created at Paris in 1968, the Centre International de Myriapodologie brings together myriapodologists of the whole world. The secretariat of the CIM is located in the "Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris" (MNHN). Its mission is to rapidly inform myriapodologists - and other zoologists and biologists - of works which are in progress or published in all the fields of myriapodology (Myriapoda & Onychophora), from the macromolecular level to the study of ecosystems and autecology.

Each year, members of the CIM receive a questionnaire asking them to provide a list of papers published during the year, as well as research work in progress or projected. It also asks for information of general interest to researchers whose work involves Myriapoda or Onychophora. The CIM Bulletin is sent to every member in April-May, sometimes a little later, depending on any special events during the year. The information is also available on the web-site of the CIM, hosted at the MNHN Paris on <http://www.mnhn.fr/assoc/myriapoda/INDEX.HTM>

Apart from its wider role in providing information and communication, the CIM helps in the formal co-organization of the international congresses of myriapodology which takes place every three years. The first of these was in Paris in 1968. The Board is assisted by an International Committee, including founding members of the CIM, organizers of international congresses and several members appointed by the plenary international sessions of myriapodologists. This Committee included Gordon Blower from the very beginning (Appendix 1).

THE CIM: A THIRTY-FIVE YEAR OLD HISTORY

The present CIM is the result of a thirty-five year history. Immediately after its original creation at Paris in it evolved rapidly to a European and International level and international congresses were regularly organized throughout the world. However this efficient but informal organization needed to have stronger structures and rules. The constitution of a formal international society was agreed at Copenhagen in 1996 during the 10th ICM. In 1999 at Bialowieza (Poland) it was formally constituted as an International Society with a board and statutes. The proposed Constitution and By-Laws were submitted to the members, discussed and definitively adopted in 2002 during the 12th ICM at Mtuzini (South-Africa).

Jean-Paul Mauriès was the first President during the transitory period 1999-2002 (Figure 1). Since 2002, the President of the



Figure 1. Jean-Paul Mauriès: Founding member and former President of the CIM. Barbizon (Fontainebleau Forest), 9th ICM excursion 1993. Photograph by Zoltán Korsós.

CIM has been our colleague John Lewis (Figure 2) and a Council and Board have been constituted during the general assembly held at Mtuzini in August 2002. The Council & Board (see Appendix 2) reflect very well the international nature of our society. In 2005, during our next International Congress and General Assembly in Bergen, a new Council will be elected. Since the very beginning of the story, some 720 people from 63 countries have been active members of the CIM. In 2003, we have more than 200 members and we hope a new generation will soon be appearing.

FOUNDERS AND PIONEERS

The main organizers of the founding meeting in Paris (which took place at the same time as the first International Congress of Arachnology) were the young Jean-Marie Demange (Figure 3) and Jean-Paul Mauriès. They were the ‘CIM fathers and godfathers’. The idea was originally strongly supported by Otto Kraus (Figure 4), who contributed to the creation of the CIDA as well. They were immediately joined by Gordon Blower, present at Paris, who offered to organize the second international congress of Myriapodology at Manchester in 1972 when it became evident that it was not possible to hold it in Czechoslovakia..

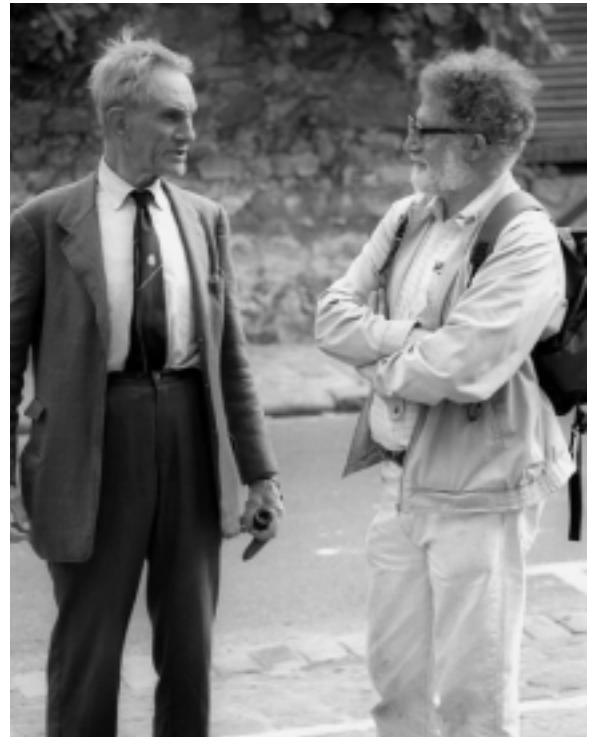


Figure 2. John G. E. Lewis, President of the CIM (right) with E. H. Eason (left). Barbizon (Fontainebleau Forest), 9th ICM excursion 1993. Photograph by Zoltán Korsós.



Figure 3. Jean-Marie Demange: Founding member of the CIM. 1st ICM, Paris 1968. Photograph CIM.

To my eyes, these four will be remembered as the ‘musketeers of the CIM’. Can’t we recognize Kraus as smart Athos, Mauriès as jovial Porthos, Demange as elegant Aramis and, the last but not the least, Blower as adventurous D’Artagnan.

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

During the beginning of my work on the population ecology and systematics of soil myriapods, my very first encounter with Gordon Blower’s work was his book ‘*Estimating the size of animal populations*’ published in collaboration with Cook and Bishop (Blower, Cook & Bishop 1981) and one major paper dealing with forest millipede populations and life-cycles, ‘The Millipedes of a Cheshire Wood’ (Blower 1970). Later on, I had the opportunity to deeply appreciate the amazing quality of his *Millipedes* (Synopses of the British Fauna, 35) published in 1985, a completely updated revision of Blower 1958.

In 1981, I was lucky to contribute to the 5th International Congress of Myriapodology held in USA at Radford, Virginia. For the first time, I met Prof., Dr or Mr J. Gordon Blower (then president of the congress) himself. Emotion and shy hesitation: I was prepared to meet a walking textbook and a soil animal life-history legend. Actually, I met a very nice man and I rapidly discovered his so captivating talk and likeable personality, hair in the wind and special cross of



Figure 4. Otto Kraus: Founding member of the CIM. 1st ICM, Paris 1968. Photograph CIM.

the legs. During the Radford Congress, Gordon kindly took a picture of an American Spirobolid creeping on my arm, he sent to me just after the meeting (Figure 5).

GORDON & TED’S CONGRESSES

Ted and Gordon contributed their presence, papers and discussions to most of the international congresses of myriapodology from 1968 to 1993. Often both were present; sometimes, one was missing.

Attendance of Gordon and Ted at the International Congresses of Myriapodology

- 1968 (Paris, France) GORDON & TED
- 1972 (Manchester, UK) GORDON & TED [organization]
- 1975 (Hamburg, Germany) GORDON, Ted missing
- 1978 (Gargnano, Italy) GORDON & TED
- 1981 (Radford, Virginia, U.S.A.) GORDON & TED
- 1984 (Amsterdam, The Netherlands) GORDON & TED
- 1987 (Vittorio Veneto, Italy) TED, Gordon missing
- 1990 (Innsbruck, Austria) GORDON & TED
- 1993 (Paris, France) TED, Gordon missing
- 1996 (Copenhagen, Denmark) —
- 1999 (Bialowieza, Poland) —
- 2002 (Mtuzini, South Africa) VIRTUAL PRESENCE



Figure 5. Jean-Jacques Geoffroy and an American spirobolid. Radford, Virginia, 5th ICM 1981. Photograph by J. Gordon Blower.

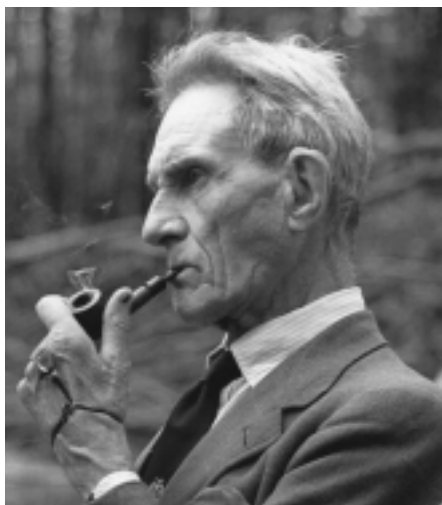


Figure 6. Ted Eason: Lord of the Pipe. Fontainebleau Forest, 9th ICM excursion 1993. Photograph by Zoltán Korsós.

The last contribution by Gordon was at Innsbruck in 1990. The last contribution by Ted was in Paris 1993 but their influence was strongly felt during the recent congress at Mtuzini.

One of the greatest regrets of my life was not to have had the opportunity to welcome Gordon Blower to Paris during the 9th International Congress I helped to organize in 1993 in collaboration with Jean-Paul Mauriès and Monique Nguyen Duy-Jacquemin. Fortunately, Ted was present (Figure 6). By this time, I had learned enough of how to interpret his delicious words mumbled through the pipe and the contribution of the Eason family during the congress excursion was significant. We decided to have a trip in the Fontainebleau Forest, one of the major natural sites in the Paris area, and a good place for myriapod investigations.

Ted was accompanied by his daughter and his grandson, a very active and lively youngster. I remember the efforts of myriapodologist friends to convince the boy that his grandfather was an important man, highly respected by many scientists in the world. During the walk in the forest and rocky sites, we had a stop near the famous and beautiful ‘pigeon pond’. While I was occupied with people wanting to collect animals in the soil, the young one decided to fall in the dark waters of the pond. Nevertheless, as organizer, I was not supposed to let any young English gentlemen drown. We rapidly dried off, thanks to the sunny weather. Ted Eason stoically mumbled some comments in his pipe and the walk went on.

We suddenly realized at this moment that the tribe Zapparoli had totally disappeared among the rocky pathways with two members of the staff who were supposed to know the way perfectly. The presence of Marzio Zapparoli at the Manchester meeting in 2003 let us know that this tragedy too had a happy ending. This was my last adventure with Ted Eason and I am very grateful for those delicious moments of real life.

THE NETHERLANDS MEETING

Amsterdam, The Netherlands, April 1984: 6th International Congress of Myriapodology. This was my Second International Congress of Myriapodology after introductions during the North American Congress in Virginia and, for the second time, I was ready to meet Mr Gordon Blower. Pleasure and leisure time for conversation. After two minutes, we were debating the position and status of *Geoglomeris subterranea* vs *Stygioglomeris crinita* and *Geoglomeris jurassica*, a point still argued today between myriapodologists and, I hope, approaching a final solution. Two days later, we had a secret meeting together in the cafeteria, making very secret plans to very secretly escape from the congress session and go to downtown, looking very secretly for flowers and gifts for the Congress organizers and staff. While walking along the streets, side by side, I wondered ‘Why me? - Gosh, do you realize what’s happening to you?’ It was too late, fortunately, to get free from the delicious trap Gordon Blower had let me fall in. Clever man! Certainly at this very moment, I decided to become deeply involved in the CIM scientific and social organization. A new vocation was born.

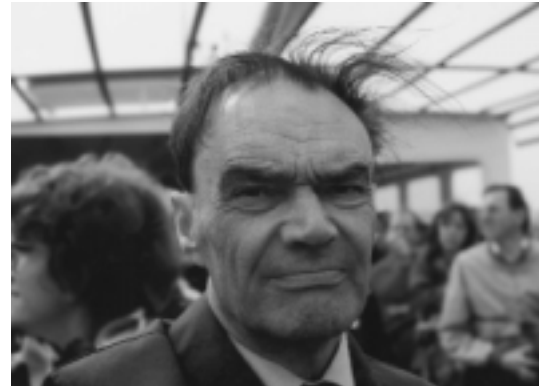


Figure 7. J. Gordon Blower: A portrait. 6th ICM Boat trip, Amsterdam 1984. Photo by Jean-Jacques Geoffroy.

On a boat, during the Congress trip, I took one of my favourite pictures, a portrait of Gordon Blower’s face, still in a prominent place in my photograph album (Figure 7).

FRIENDLY COMMUNICATION

I met Gordon again at Innsbruck during the 8th International Congress and we used to communicate over the years by letter. As you may know, my English is something very approximate, but to read a letter written in French by Gordon Blower was really an amazing adventure very close to surrealism. He always made the effort to write to his colleagues in France in his incredible and wonderful French, another kind aspect of his character. He used to send us very pleasant postcards such as an incredibly kind myriapod waiting for busy Father Christmas.

Every personal document received either from Gordon Blower or Ted Eason is preserved in the CIM library.

But now it’s time to say Good Bye, Mister Blower. We wish you a very nice last trip to Causey Pike in the Lake District.

“Fare thee well, Ted & Gordon, CIM will remember you for ever.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to sincerely acknowledge Helen Read’s kind help during my stay in England at Reaseheath College and Manchester. I am very grateful to John Lewis and Tony Barber for attention to the English manuscript and to Zoltán Korsós for some of the photographs. Many thanks to my friends Monique Nguyen Duy-Jacquemin and Jean-Paul Mauriès for many and constructive discussions dealing the functioning of CIM.

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APPENDIX 1

ORGANISING COMMITTEE FOR INTERNATIONAL CONGRESSES

J.M. DEMANGE (Paris, France); J.P. MAURIES (Paris, France); O. KRAUS (Hamburg, Germany); † J.G. BLOWER (Levens, UK); R.L. HOFFMAN (Martinsville, Virginia, U.S.A.); C.A.W. JEEKEL (Oisterwijk, The Netherlands); A. MINELLI (Padova, Italy); H. ENGHOFF (Copenhagen, Denmark); E. MEYER (Innsbruck, Austria); M. NGUYEN DUY-JACQUEMIN (Paris, France); J.J. GEOFFROY (Brunoy, France); J. WYTWER (Warsawa, Poland); M. HAMER (Petermaritzburg, South Africa).

APPENDIX 2

C.I.M. OFFICERS, COUNCIL & BOARD

John Lewis (UK) - President

Michelle Hamer (South-Africa)- Vice-President

Jean-Jacques Geoffroy (France)- Secretary

Monique Nguyen Duy-Jacquemin (France)- Treasurer

Henrik Enghoff (Denmark), Zoltán Korsós (Hungary), Bjarne Meidell (Norway), Luis Pereira (Argentina) Helen Read (UK), Rowland Shelley (USA), Karel Tajovsky (Czech Republic)