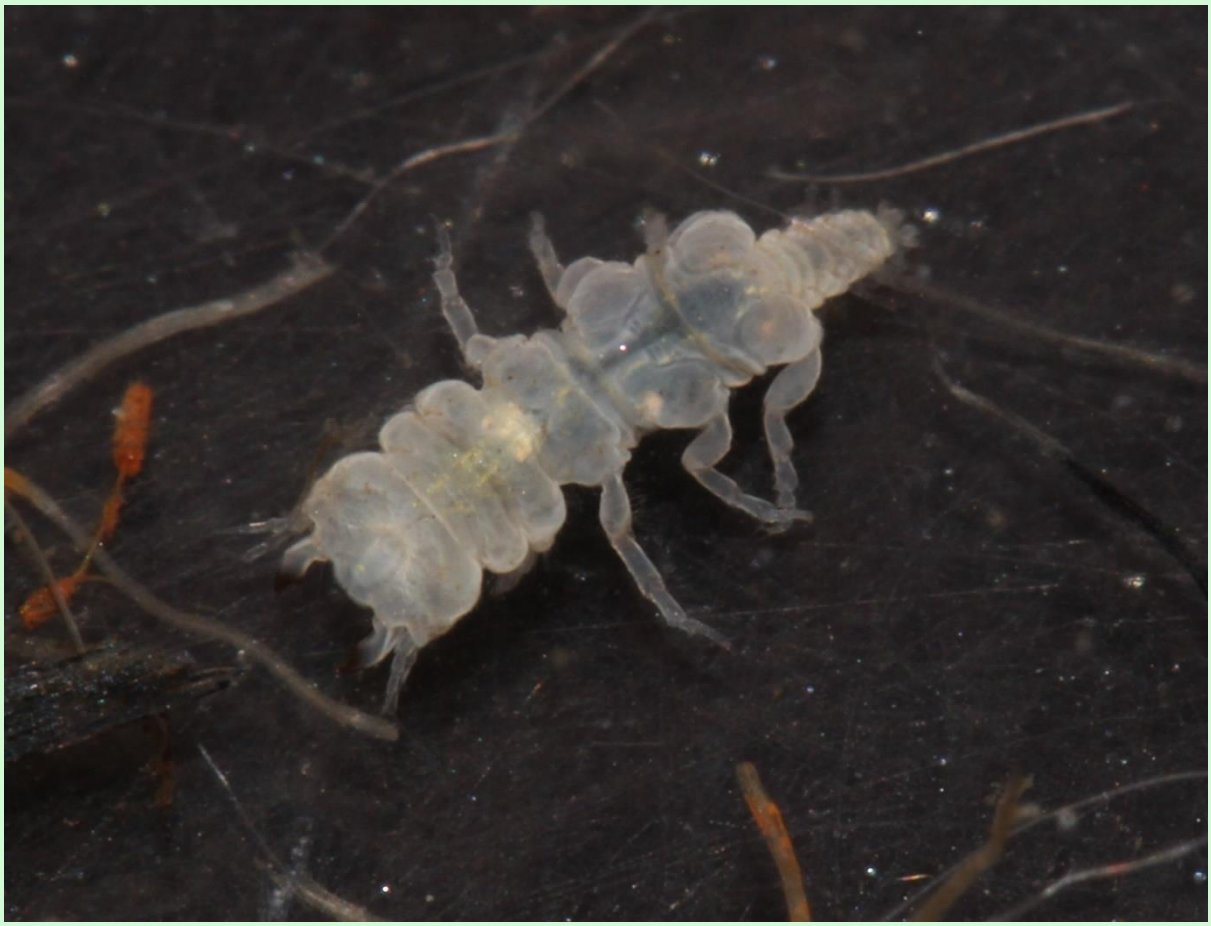
British Myriapod and Isopod Group

Newsletter

No. 48, Spring 2024



British Myriapod and Isopod Group – *discovering millipedes, centipedes, woodlice and other isopods in Britain and Ireland*

The British Myriapod and Isopod Group (BMIG) aims to improve awareness and knowledge of centipedes, millipedes and other Myriapoda, woodlice, waterlice and intertidal Isopoda and related species in Britain and Ireland.

In this issue:

Cover photo: Male *Paragnathia formica*, River Tyne, April 2022 (photo © Warren Maguire).

BMIG AGM 2024

The BMIG AGM will be held during the field meeting at Plas Tan y Bwlch, North Wales, on Friday 5 April. An agenda will be produced closer to the meeting.

The election of officers

BMIG officers are elected on three-year cycle, though this is not prescriptive and any post can be filled or vacated as circumstances dictate. The positions due for election this year, and the current holders of those positions, are listed below:

Treasurer	Paul Harding
Bulletin Editor	Helen Read
Field Meeting Coordinator	Kevin Clements
Website Manager	Steve Gregory
Training Officer	Paul Richards
Conservation Officer	Duncan Sivell

In addition a further two officer posts remain vacant and we would welcome volunteers to fill these positions.

Projects Officer

Librarian and Collections Manager

Nominations can be made prior to the AGM or taken from the floor during the meeting.

All BMIG members are welcome to attend the AGM. Please note, however, this is an in-person meeting that will not have online participation. If there are particular issues you would like to raise or think should be discussed at the AGM please make the Chair or Secretary aware of these in advance.

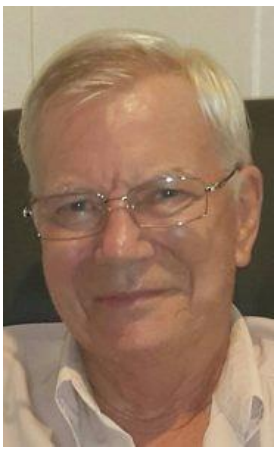
Duncan Sivell (Chair)

d.sivell@nhm.ac.uk

Stephen Lawrence Sutton (1938 – 2023)

Stephen Sutton has died after a short illness, aged 85, at his home in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. BMIG offers its sincere condolences to his family in the UK and Sabah.

Stephen led the study of woodlice in Britain and Ireland from the 1960s to the 1980s. He set up the Isopod Survey Scheme (ISS) in 1968 and the British Isopoda Study Group (BISG) in 1969. BISG merged with the British Myriapod Group in 2000 to form the British Myriapod and Isopod Group.



Following research for a DPhil at Oxford on the population dynamics of *Philoscia muscorum* and *Trichoniscus pusillus*, Stephen was appointed as Lecturer in Zoology at the University of Leeds in 1966. Here he established a small postgraduate research team working mainly on Isopods. Between 1968 and 1990 Stephen published more than 20 papers and books on Isopods, often jointly with former research students. The first complete results of ISS were brought together in Harding & Sutton (1985). His unique source book, *Woodlice* (Sutton, 1972), included an off-printed key to species which was useful in promoting ISS to potential recorders.

Yorkshire became Stephen's home, or UK base, for more than 40 years and he was active with the Yorkshire Naturalists Union for many years. He had a real talent for involving other people in his interests, building great loyalties among his friends and many who worked with him. He was always good and stimulating company! From the 1970s Stephen's interests and career moved gradually into

tropical ecology and later in particular to the Lepidoptera of Borneo. He moved to live permanently in Sabah in the 1990s.

A more complete Obituary covering mainly his work on Isopods will be published in the *Bulletin*. Other Obituaries are expected elsewhere which will deal mainly with his various interests in Lepidoptera, tropical ecology and tropical forest conservation.

References

Harding, P.T., & Sutton, S.L. (1985) *Woodlice in Britain and Ireland: distribution and habitat*. Huntingdon: Institute of Terrestrial Ecology.

Sutton, S.L. (1972) *Invertebrate Types: Woodlice*. London, Ginn.

Paul T. Harding

Some winter recording highlights

December and January saw a rather mad frenzy of recording activity on both the BMIG Isopods & Myriapods of Britain & Ireland online group and also in terms of records submitted to the BMIG recording schemes via iRecord. Duerden Cormack, among his many records, has found new sites for the 'alluvial' woodlice *Trichoniscoides albidus* and *Trachelipus rathkii* in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. He has also found *Geophilus osquidatum* in a churchyard (also in Huntingdonshire) a long way beyond its south-western stronghold. Also of note is his discovery of the notoriously elusive *Schedyla dentata* in scrub in Bedfordshire, joining a rather exclusive club of people who have seen it (possibly less than 10 people in the UK!).

Sue Harvey has been very busy on the Isle of Man with several new sites for the woodlouse *Philoscia affinis* and the millipede *Ophyiulus germanicus* (which is proving to be very widespread across the island). She has also found three widely separated sites for *Polydesmus asthenestatus*. Interestingly, these three species have recently proved to be widely distributed in Northern Ireland, just across the Irish Sea, but not yet on the English side. Finley Hutchinson has also been very active, mainly in the deep south-west. Among his highlights are *Anamastigona pulchella* from both Cornwall (Falmouth) and Devon (Plymouth). At the latter site *Polydesmus barberii* and *Cylindroiulus apenninorum* were also recorded. He has also recorded *Eurygeophilus pinguis* and *Schendyla peyerimhoffi* from the Falmouth area. During a flying visit James Harding-Morris picked up specimens of *Anthogona britannica* from Slapton Ley. This endemic species is only known from south Devon and this seems to be the first observation since the 1990s. Andy Marquis found a Polyzonniidan in a cemetery (near a garden centre) on Guernsey which seems to be a species of *Hirudisoma* (a southern European genus). At the same site he recorded both *P. asthenestatus* and *P. taranus*. Christian Owen (often with Liam Olds) has been busy in The Valleys of south Wales, where (among the usual south Wales specialities) he has also found both *P. asthenestatus* and *P. taranus* (see Christian's note elsewhere in this newsletter). Christian has also recorded *Cylindroiulus sagittarius* from a second valley (just west of the well documented Sirhowy Valley). Maico Weites found both of our known UK paradoxosomatid millipedes, *Stostatea italica* and *Oxidus gracilis*, occurring together outdoors in chilly late December in a garden in Bristol city centre. Also present were *Choneiulus palmatus*, *Cylindroiulus vulnerarius* and female *Trichoniscoides sarsi* agg. Maico did succeed in finding male *Trichoniscoides sarsi* seg. at another site (with images of male pleopods provided) beside the tidal Avon in in Gloucestershire; the second confirmed record from south-west England.

Not to be outdone I managed to find two of our most elusive geophilomorphs, *Schendyla dentata* and *Henia brevis*, at the same site on the same day in

Oxford city whilst searching with Helen Read for *A. pulchella* (successfully) and *P. asthenestatus* and/or *P. taranus* (unsuccessfully). In my opinion mid-winter corresponds with the relative ease of finding my favoured elusive soil dwelling species (mostly little white jobs!) that can be found lurking beneath partly embedded rocks and dead wood. In addition, of the species mentioned above the millipedes *Anamastigona pulchella* and *Anthogona britannica* (and indeed all 19 of our known Chordeumatidan millipedes) are only mature and active in the winter months. The same is true of *Polydesmus barberii*, *P. asthenestatus* and *P. taranus*, and possibly also of *Ophyiulus germanicus* (more records needed to confirm!). And the elusive trichoniscids *Trichoniscoides albidus* and *T. sarsi* and the centipede *S. dentata* are much easier to find in winter (they become even more ridiculously elusive in the summer!). If you don't undertake fieldwork in the depths of winter you may never find these species.

Steve Gregory

Scutigera makes BBC news!

This January Richard Jones (a University of Leicester academic) found the House Centipede *Scutigera coleoptrata* in his Nottinghamshire home, and emailed me images for confirmation. From the information I had at hand (Tony's Centipede Atlas and online NBN, etc.) this seemed to be the first reported record for the county. I forwarded the record details to Trevor Pendleton who collates species records of all invertebrate taxa for the county (and so much more – see www.eakringbirds.com).

The story got picked up by the local BBC news with the unfortunate 'scare-mongering' headline of 'rare and venomous centipede discovered in Nottinghamshire'. All centipedes are venomous. So what? So are aculeate bees and wasps, and a vast array of other harmless invertebrates! However, the main gist of the story was that this is a very rare centipede, but it's on the increase, and a plea was put out for anyone finding a *Scutigera* in their house to report the sighting. As a result Trevor was alerted to an earlier record from 2015 supported by an image, and a third Nottinghamshire sighting from 2010. Trevor's *Scutigera* ramblings (his word, not mine) can be heard at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jiBgN-ygalE.

Subsequently, about half dozen records have filtered into the centipede recording scheme, either via email or through iRecord. These were mostly 'down south', but included sightings from Liverpool and Hathersage, Derbyshire. Andy Marquis tells me that the BBC report also stirred up a few extra records on Guernsey, where the species is well known and long established. I guess a bit of media coverage doesn't do any harm... The BBC article can be viewed at

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-68055122.

Steve Gregory

Arenophilus peregrinus found in France!

The geophilid centipede *Arenophilus peregrinus* was described new to science by Dick Jones in 1989 from specimens he collected from the Isles of Scilly. Subsequently it was found at two sites on the Cornish mainland in 1998 (on the coast) and 2007 (inland). *Arenophilus* is primarily a North American genus and it was initially suggested that the species may have been unintentionally introduced into south west England. However, that theory was blown apart by John Lewis's discovery of a specimen in northern Portugal (during BMIG's 2004 field meeting based in Galicia, north-west

Spain). This substantially increased the known global range of this rare centipede and suggested a wider 'Atlantic' distribution.

In 2022 *A. peregrinus* was discovered at Noirmoutier-en-l'Île on the Atlantic coast of north-west France (Desmots & Racine, 2023). This begins to fill the substantial gap between the three known sites in England and the single site in Portugal and supports the idea that it has a strict Atlantic distribution. Therefore, it should be also expected to be found in western Spain. However, this has proved to be an elusive species. In the four decades since it initial discovery this centipede has now been recorded from five sites on the entire planet! More sites undoubtedly await discovery, both on the coast and inland. North-west France is relatively well recorded relative to others parts of the country (with the notable exception of the Pyrenees!) and much of Spain remains poorly worked.

The paper (in French) reporting this significant discovery can be downloaded from the Gretia website:
http://gretia.org/index.php/publications/invertebres-armoricains-les-cahiers-du-gretia

References

Didier DESMOTS & Antoine RACINE (2023) *Arenophilus peregrinus* Jones, 1989 sur l'île de Noirmoutier (Vendee), une nouvelle espece de chilopode pour la faune de France (Geophilomorpha Geophilidae). *Invertebres Armoricains* **25**: 7-11.

Steve Gregory

Symphyla back in fashion?

The usual suspects of Christian Owen and Finley Hutchinson, no doubt inspired by the activities of Dawid Martyniuk, have dipped their toes into the muddy waters of symphyla identification. Back when I started looking at myriapods (when some of the above weren't even born!) the advice was 'don't go there', despite a useful introduction provided by Hopkin & Roberts (1988). The reason being that our five species of *Scutigerella* (Family Scutigerellidae) seem to be quite variable in morphological characters and difficult to assign to species. Being the larger species (albeit just 3 to 8 mm in body length) and readily found under stones and dead wood means, unfortunately, that these are the species most commonly encountered during casual surveys. Interestingly, they seem to group into distinct 'species' when genetically bar-coded, but this doesn't seem to correspond to the current morphologically defined species (Jörg Spelda, pers comm). Perhaps there is scope for creating a *Scutigerella immaculata* agg.?

In contrast Family Scolopendrellidae (six species) seem to be relatively straight forward to identify, albeit requiring high magnification to see relevant morphological characters (in this sense, rather like the pauropods). These are the smaller species (1.2 to 2.5 mm in length) and typically elusive so unlikely to be encountered unless specifically searched for.

In light of this renewed interest the symphyla section of the BMIG website has been updated: see https://bmig.org.uk/page/symphylan-checklist. Species nomenclature now follows MilliBase (2017) ~ https://millibase.org. Our two species of *Symphyllelopsis* have been transferred to genus *Scolopendrellopsis* and *Symphylella hintoni* Edwards, 1959 is a synonym of *Symphylella elongata* Scheller, 1952. A species account for *Symphyllelopsis subnuda* has been added (with thanks to Christian Owen). As with the pauropod web pages, this is work in progress.

References

Hopkin, S.P. & Roberts, A.W. (1988) Symphyla – the least studied of the most interesting soil animals. *Bulletin of the British Myriapod Group* **5**: 28-34.

Steve Gregory

Gribbles

In January, after a strandline search at Calshot, in Hampshire, I brought home eight small samples of wood that were full of Gribble holes – known as Gribble wood. My expectations were low, as I'd read that Gribbles (*Limnoria*) are quite hard to find. However, to my joy I realised that one of the samples was almost overflowing with Gribbles!

Gribbles! (photo by Helen Boyce).

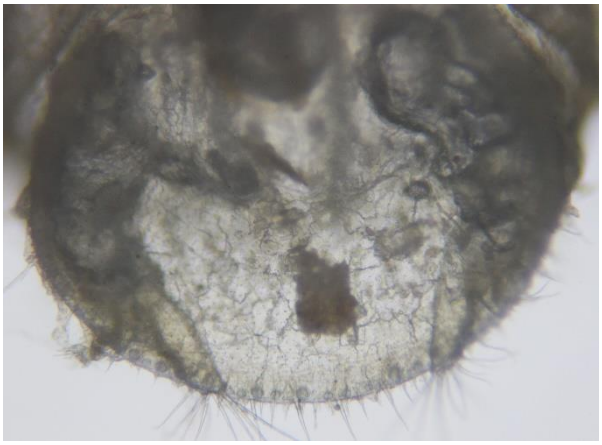
Limnoria are small but distinctive wood-boring marine isopods (up to 3-4mm) that feed on submerged wood. They bore into the surface layers of wood and their 1-2mm diameter tunnels may be several centimetres long and the burrow's roof is punctured with a series of smaller ventilation holes. Attacked wood can become spongy and friable – but as the burrows are below the surface, the wood can sometimes look intact from the outside.

There are three species of Gribbles that have been recorded in Britain and they can be distinguished by raised areas on the fifth pleonite and on the pleotelson, the rear, disc-shaped segment. For defense, gribbles can jam themselves within their burrows and block the tunnel with these rear disc-shaped segments, so conveniently most of the Gribbles had their pleotelson facing out.

Limnoria tripunctata (photo by Helen Boyce).

As I peered down my microscope at the rear-end of the Gribbles in front of me, I realised that these were the least common species, *Limnoria tripunctata*. I could clearly make out the main distinguishing feature: the three tubercles on the pleotelson. On some samples I could also see the two tubercles on the fifth pleonite, and the few longer hairs around the outside of the pleotelson, the other distinguishing features.

I sent samples to Warren Maguire, and he confirmed that they are indeed *L. tripunctata*.



Pleotelson with tubercles on margin (photo by Warren Maguire).

This is the first confirmed record of *L. tripunctata* since the new intertidal marine isopod recording scheme was set up in 2020, and there are almost no records of the species on the NBN Atlas. Apparently, they can be locally common in timbers near power-station discharges (presumably due to the output of

heated water). *L. tripunctata* was first found in England in 1954, in Southampton Water. Interestingly, *L. tripunctata* are unusually tolerant of – and even thrive on – wood treated with creosote, due to a symbiosis with creosote-degrading bacteria!

This is a very under recorded species, so if you are walking along a beach in the south(-west), keep an eye out for Gribble wood!

Helen Boyce

'Inland' Marine Isopods

Maybe when you hear the term 'marine isopods' you might think of sandy beaches, rocky headlands, seaweed-covered reefs, or even the deep sea, places that may be far from where you live. But isopods occur in all kinds of marine environments, including the upper tidal reaches of rivers often far 'inland' from the 'coast'. For example, the River Forth is tidal to Stirling, the Ouse to not far off York, the Great Ouse to mid-Cambridgeshire, the Thames to Twickenham, the Parrett to the depths of Somerset, the Severn to Gloucester, the Dee to Chester, the Foyle to Strabane, and, the winner by a long, long way, the Trent almost to Newark (some 70 km upstream from the Humber Estuary and a similar distance across Lincolnshire to the Wash!). Some of our marine isopod species are specialists of this kind of low-salinity, muddy environment, but there are very few records of them, so why not have a look? (Do take care if you do though, as river banks and mud are treacherous places!)

That's exactly what I decided to do one weekend in early April 2022 whilst visiting my in-laws on Tyneside. With the tides on the coast not looking particularly promising, and looking at a map of the area for likely wildlifing spots, I noticed that the River Tyne is tidal up to (and indeed beyond) Newburn, not far from where I was staying, some 25 km upstream from Tynemouth. So, early in the day, I set off for the area, more in hope than expectation, to see if I could find some marine isopods. The Tyne is quite peaceful at this spot, passing sluggishly through old industrial land and new business park developments, my only company being a couple of curious Mute Swans and some rowing teams stirring the sluggish brown waters of the river. The river edge has been shored up with a bank of stones, and a mass of reeds, branches, plastic bottles and other debris marks the upper tidal limit on it. Where the stone bank meets the river mud there's a thin strip of *Aster tripolium* (Sea Aster), which provides somewhere to tread between the steep rocks and the treacherous river ooze when the tide is low enough.

Lekanesphaera rugicauda (photo by Warren Maguire).

It only took me a few minutes to find my first marine isopod, under a bit of wood lying on the river mud – several *Lekanesphaera rugicauda*, a common estuarine and saltmarsh specialist. These turned out to be abundant along the river edge under bits of wood, stones and tyres and buried in the mud at the bottom of the stone bank. I was also on the look out for diminutuve *Jaera* isopods, several species of which are found in low salinity environments. The difficultly was finding suitable habitat for them, as they like to huddle under damp stones on harder surfaces rather than those buried in mud. I eventually found a single female individual under a bit of broken clay pipe at a little freshwater outflow but alas no males to allow specific identification (a return visit to the site in August

2022 produced several males, which turned out to be *J. ischiosetosa*). In my search for *Jaera*, I also washed some of the loose, algae-covered stones at the bottom of the bank, examining the sievings in a tray of water. Although this didn't produce any *Jaera*, a small amphipod-like creature zipping about caught my attention, and I was very chuffed to discover that it wasn't an amphipod but an isopod – a juvenile of one of the gnathiid species. I presumed this was *Paragnathia formica*, which is known to inhabit such environments, though I knew of no records of the species from the Tyne (there are old records from the Wansbeck further up the Northumberland coast, however). So I set about 'howking' in the mud around the stones at the bottom of the bank and soon uncovered several *P. formica* galleries, filled with bulbous females guarded by big-mandibled males. What a great find of a species I'd not seen on the east coast before, possibly near the northern edge of its distribution on this side of Britain (I've found no trace of it in south-east Scotland so far).

Paragnathia formica juvenile (photo by Warren Maguire).

It had turned out, then, to be a very worthwhile visit to the upper tidal reaches of the Tyne. Other species of interest included *Strigamia maritima* (under a brick at the upper tidal line) and *Bembidion maritimum* (running about amongst the Sea Aster), at the northern edge of its east coast range. No sign of *Ligia oceanica* unfortunately, maybe just that little bit too far upstream for it, though I found it at Elswick, a few kilometres downstream, in February 2023, along with lots of *Lekanesphaera rugicauda*, a huddle of *Lekanesphaera hookeri*, and some more *Paragnathia formica*.

Paragnathia formica females in gallery (photo by Warren Maguire).

So it's definitely worth having a look for isopods in these unusual 'inland' marine habitats as you never know what you might find. It'd be great to know more about the distributions of *Paragnathia formica*, *Lekanesphaera*, *Jaera* and other isopods in such places around the country. Perhaps we ought to hold a competition for the 'furthest inland' marine isopod record!

Warren Maguire

Five millipedes new to Wales

The five species, detailed below, have now taken the millipede count for Wales to **59** species – **57** outdoor and **2** indoor from heated greenhouses etc.

***Haplopodoiulus spathifer*: SN82423236**

I was undertaking an invertebrate survey for a Stephen Ruttle at one of his properties near Llandovery, West Wales – known as the Graig. Stephen regularly invites naturalists to the site to help build a species inventory to aid his management of the area for wildlife. The Graig is a site I have visited on a number of occasions, and one I look forward to as it always turns up something

interesting. On one such visit back on 27th May 2021, I decided to check a small 'valley' located on the edge of the property – an extension of the garden (SN82423236). This area is quite steep with a small stream running down through, the banks of which are planted with a variety of ornamental and native trees and shrubs. Here, some leaf-litter was sieved from under one of the planted *Rhododendron* spp. into a tray, and I was instantly greeted with a mix of immature and adult millipedes, all of which turned out to be *Haplopodoiulus spathifer*. Further visits to the site have shown them to be fairly frequent within the 'garden' setting. It is highly likely that the millipede was introduced here from the planting of the various ornamentals by Stephen, which some would have come from the London area.

***Ophyiulus germanicus*: SN704138**

Liam Olds and I were commissioned by Carmarthenshire County Council to undertake an entomological survey of Ynysdawella LNR, Brynamman, West Wales (SN704138). During the survey large numbers of *Ophyiulus germanicus* were encountered over much of the site, with surprisingly high numbers found along the banks of the River Amman (a tributary of the River Loughor), and along the drier areas of the river bed. The site is mainly secondary oak (*Quercus*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) woodland and unimproved marshy grassland. Much of the habitats occur on former farmland and colliery spoil. Mature woodland runs alongside the River Amman, which forms the southern boundary of the site – the area located toward the southeast section is mostly Ancient Semi Natural Woodland. Adults were encountered from May through to September.

***Polydesmus barberii*: ST0580**

I was commissioned to undertake an invertebrate survey of a former Limestone Quarry near Llantrisant, South Wales (ST0580). On one site visit in July 2023, an all-white adult female *Polydesmus* was encountered under a large stone toward the southern end of the quarry, an area with a mix of bare ground and ruderal vegetation which flows into Bramble (*Rubus*) and *Buddleja* scrub, with a plantation woodland located above. *Polydesmus barberii* was the first species that came to mind on seeing this millipede in the field, as it just looked so different to the usual pale, often immature *Polydesmus* spp. I've encountered in the past. My thoughts were later confirmed under the microscope (also confirmed from images by Steve Gregory) on female genitalia. The specimen was a beautiful white, with the tips of the antenna tinged a shade of pink. Curiously, the ends of each lobe of the paranota had a subtle tinge of yellow – a beautiful creature. Sadly, I neglected the living specimen, and it died and shrivelled up in a pot before I managed to take any images. Further visits to the site and surrounding area have failed to locate more specimens.

***Polydesmus asthenestatus*: ST15067185**

On 24th November 2023, Liam Olds and I had a little field outing to Dinas Powys Woods near Cardiff, South Wales. A short walk from the carpark took us to a grove of Purple Beech trees (ST15067185). Here, we were immediately greeted with an odd looking, brown, larger than usual *Brachydesmus*, which was curled up under a small snapped branch. We both instantly thought, have we finally found *Polydesmus asthenestatus*? So, Liam grabbed a couple of images before I potted it for further inspection when back home. Further searching of the area proved unproductive for more of the same. Luckily, what we potted was a male, and a very good match for *P. asthenestatus*. The site is close to a very large 'greenhouse', known as Rosebank Nurseries; the business is a wholesale Cash and Carry that supplies a wide range of plants. Hopefully further visits to the site will produce more specimens, and possibly gain access to this nursery.

***Polydesmus taranus*: ST139939**

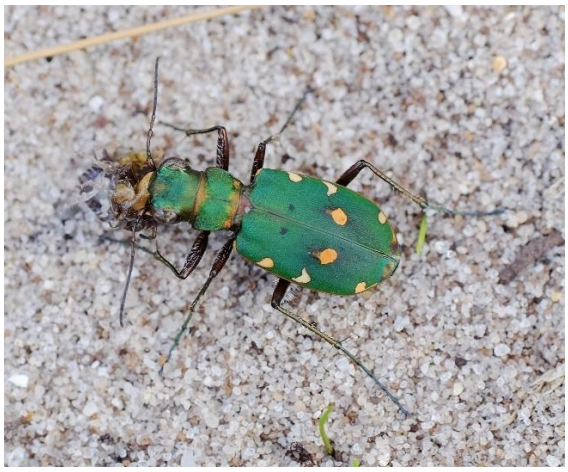
On 23rd December 2023, I visited a small woodland in Ystrad Mynach, South Wales (ST139940). The site is immediately above a garden centre –

Woodfields Nursery, and for the most part fenced off and inaccessible due to it being private. There is however, a small accessible section toward the northern end of the wood with a public footpath running through the middle. Turning logs and stones along this footpath produced large numbers of small 'flatback' millipedes. I initially thought they were most likely going to be *P. asthenestatus*, as they looked very similar to the one Liam Olds and I found just a month before – so I potted a few to double check under the microscope. I quickly got to work on my specimens when home, with my suspicions of *P. asthenestatus* being confirmed by two adult males, and surprisingly a male of another 'flatback' millipede – *Polydesmus taranus*. A repeat visit to the site the next day (24th December 2023) showed both species to be very common here. Additionally, more adults of both species were collected on 30th December 2023 from the side of a lane several hundred yards south of these woods (ST14039339). Of note, the smaller paler adults collected from both areas around Ystrad Mynach were all *P. asthenestatus*, while the slightly larger, more darker adults were a mix of females (either species?), and male *P. taranus*.

Christian Owen

Woodlouse eating Tigers - in Britain!

My father-in-law is a keen naturalist and wildlife photographer and is rarely seen without a camera in hand. During a recent visit to Dunwich nature reserve, he was lucky enough to capture a fantastic bit of predation ecology: a green tiger beetle *Cicindela camprestris* devouring a common rough woodlouse, *Porcellio scaber*. Woodlice are common prey for lots of invertebrate predators, with some having evolved a taste exclusively for these terrestrial crustaceans. In the British Isles we have only two obligate woodlouse eaters, and both belong to the spider genus *Dysdera*, which have enlarged fangs for crushing and manipulating woodlice. Further afield we see other obligate woodlouse eaters; such as scorpions of the genus *Euscorpius*, land planarians (flatworm) of the genus *Luteostriata*, and ants of the genus *Leptogenys* all exhibit this predatory choice. It is actually a rather rare strategy to evolve woodlice as a sole dietary choice, and often they are consumed by other invertebrates as part of a varied (and healthy) diet.



Green Tiger Beetle eating Porcellio scaber *(photo by James Northfield).*

In this instance, tiger beetles are opportunistic hunters and will predate any invertebrates that they are strong enough to overpower. They have been observed eating Arachnida, Coleoptera, Hymenoptera, Lepidoptera larvae in addition to small crustaceans (woodlice) and very rarely vegetative material (Rewicz & Jaskula, 2018 and references therein). I did some digging, but have been unable to find any publications commenting on the frequency of woodlouse capture by *C. campestris* or what percentage they contribute towards their diet. Either way, it is still very interesting to see this behaviour being captured on camera, and a nice photograph it is too!

References

Rewicz, T & Jaskula, B. (2018). Catch fast and kill quickly: do tiger beetles use the same strategies when hunting different types of prey? *PeerJ*. **6**. e5971.

Thomas Hughes

Meggy-Monny-Legs and Jack o' the Knives

Unlike woodlice with their plethora of vernacular (English) names, traditional names for centipedes (and millipedes) seem to be much more limited. The AIDGAP key to British centipedes (2008) does have a list of suggested English names for individual species but these almost all of recent invention.

Of course, despite the name, centipedes never have a hundred feet unless one counts in the forcipules which, in developmental terms, are modified legs. The widespread *Strigamia maritima* for instance with 47-51 leg bearing segments (LBS) could have 98 legs (49 LBS) or 102 (51 LBS) but, because centipedes always have odd numbers of LBS, not a hundred (50 LBS) unless you count in the poison claws or it's something abnormal. In fact, Chris Kettle found a male *Strigamia maritima* with 48 LBS on the coast at Whitburn near Sunderland, an intercalary segment having been transformed into a leg bearing one. This was reported in both the *Warrington Guardian* (1999) and *Fragmenta Faunistica* (2000), the latter being in the *Proceedings of the 11th International Myriapod Congress*.

In French centipedes seem to be generally subsumed in mille-pattes as in J. M. Demange's (1981) book *Les Mille-pattes Myriapoda but sometimes as centipèdes*. R. Perrier's (1954) *Faune de la France* volume remarks that chilopods are the "plus typiques" millepattes, "les Centipèdes des auteurs anglais". The are called in German Hundertfußer (i.e. hundred feet) but in Dutch duizendpoten (duizend = thousand) whilst Dutch millipedes are miljoenpoten.

Three of our four orders of centipede have English names; Geophilomorpha are earth centipedes, wireworms or glow-worms, the latter referring to the bioluminescence sometimes seen in them. Of course, these second and third names are also used for certain insects – and I have before now had a report of a glow-worm (centipede) being found during a glow-worm (beetle) survey. Lithobiomorpha are referred to as stone centipedes and *Scutigera* as a house centipede. What we don't seem to have is a convenient English name for our scolopendromorph species. On a global level, Scolopendromorpha could be called "giant centipedes" because of *Scolopendra* and its allies but this does hardly refer to our *Cryptops*, even at 50 mm for *C. anomalans*.

When it comes to traditional names for our species, individually or by type, apart from our house centipede, there appear to be few. However, I have come across references in two books, coincidentally, with the same names recently:

***Fauna Brittannica* (2002) Stefan Buczaki, London, Hamlyn**

Jenny-hun'r-legs, Lad of the knives (Scotland), Martin of the knives (Scotland), Meggy-monny-legs (N.England), Red fox (Scotland), Thrush lice (N.England)

***Bugs Brittannica* (2010) Peter Marren & Richard Mabey, London, Chatto & Windus**

Forty-feeter (Orkney), Forty-legs (E. England), Jecky forty feet (Scotland), Jenny-hunder-feet (or legs) (Scotland), Jock wi'the mony-feet (Scotland), Lad o'the knives, Maggie hunderlegs (Orkney), Maggie monny-feet, Martin o'the knives, Meg-monny-legs (N. England), Red fox. There is also an illustration of "Jack-o' the knives, the large foxy- red centipede Lithobius variegatus"

Not surprisingly maggie-many-feet (and variants such as meg-of-the-mony-feet, etc.) are recorded from Ulster (J. M. Kirk, 1999, *The Dialect Vocabulary of Ulster*, C. I. Macafee, 1996, *Concise Ulster Dictionary*). The latter also tells us that the plural is meg-munny-feets and that a "coffin nailer" is either a Devil's coach horse or a centipede

It can be seen how the many legs give rise to local names (even if not accurately counted) whilst the legs of *Lithobius* can be seen as "knives". Red fox clearly applies to colour – and presumably running

like a fox – perhaps *Lithobius forficatus* or maybe *Cryptops*.

P. A. Latreille (1804) referred to *Scolopendra forficata* (*Lithobius forficatus*) as "scolopendre à trente pattes" (i.e. centipede with thirty feet) which seemed rather appropriate and (1806) Scolopendra forchue, Scolopendra forchu of Risso, 1826 similarly. Fourchue translates as "forked", presumably referring to the appearance of its last leg pair. In a little modern (2012) book *Aragnées, Scorpions et Mille-pattes de France et d'ailleurs* by Dominique Martiré that same species is called Lithobie à pinces and *Cryptops hortensis* named as Cryptops des Jardins (i.e. garden cryptops). An online translation gives pinces = pliers, tongs or nippers.

Do the old names still get used? Are there many others out there, half-forgotten, ones that, maybe, you remember? I can recall a member of the public calling *Stigmatogaster* "wireworms" at an open day in Plymouth but I have not come across many others and there does not seem to be such a vast number as there are for granfer-grigs and pea-bugs. Almost certainly such local names are dying out.

Do see if you can find us other names (if possible, where from, whether place or literature) and please e-mail them in (or maybe send to the BMIG Facebook page) and we'll try to put them in the next BMIG Newsletter.

Ps. If you read the article about Elford Leach in the last Bulletin, you may see that he suggested the name *Scolopendra hortensis* for the species he found around Exeter and which we now call *Cryptops hortensis*. *Scolopendra* = centipede, *hortensis* = garden/of the garden. This name was formally published by Donovan in 1810. Should we perhaps call it, in English, 'garden centipede' as that's where it is often found & it has no 'real' English name?

Tony Barber

Centipede Atlas: Leach's species names

In the Atlas of the Centipedes of Britain and Ireland published in December (Barber, 2022) the species names and dates assigned to species first described by W. E. Leach were those believed to be correct at the time. However, some of the dates of publication were subsequently found to be incorrect and revised ones were reported in the latest BMIG *Bulletin* (Barber & Read 2023).

The correct publication date for Leach's Edinburgh Encyclopedia description of *Lithobius variegatus* is 1814 rather than 1813 and those for *Strigamia acuminata* and *Geophilus carpophagus* in *Transactions of the Linnean Society* 1816 rather than 1814.

The date 1817 for *Strigamia maritima* and *Cryptops savignyii* (now treated as a synonym of *Cryptops anomalans* Newport, 1844) in *Zoological Miscellany* appears to be correct.

By the time that these revised dates were available the Atlas had already been published. A table of these names (including the correct 1817 ones, is given here:

Atlas Page	Species name in Atlas (Barber, 2022)	Corrected species name (Barber & Read, 2023)
78	*Strigamia acuminata* (Leach, 1814)	*Strigamia acuminata* (Leach, 1816)
88	*Strigamia maritima* (Leach, 1817)	*Strigamia maritima* (Leach, 1817)
103	*Geophilus carpophagus* Leach, 1814 ss	*Geophilus carpophagus* Leach, 1816 ss
159	*Cryptops savignii* Leach, 1817 (= *C. anomalans* Newport, 1844)	*Cryptops savignii* Leach, 1817 (= *C. anomalans* Newport, 1844)
245	*Lithobius variegatus* Leach, 1813	*Lithobius variegatus* Leach, 1814

It may also be noted that the genera *Cryptops*, *Geophilus* and *Lithobius* are attributed to Leach, 1814 whilst the family Geophilidae is Leach, 1816.

References

Barber, A. D. (2022) *Atlas of the centipedes of Britain and Ireland*. Telford, FSC Publications.

Barber, A. D, & Read, H. J. (2023) William Elford Leach and his myriapod studies. *Bulletin of the British Myriapod and Isopod Group* **35**: 29-42.

Tony Barber

W. E. Leach portrait

When Helen Read and I wrote the paper on William Elford Leach (1790-1836) for the 2023 *Bulletin*, we were unable to include a portrait of this important early nineteenth century zoologist. This was based on comments in his (and his brother's) biography *Rifle Green by Nature* published by the Ray Society and obviously carefully researched. There is apparently not one in the National Portrait Gallery. One of the most likely sources, the Plymouth Athenaeum, of which he was a founder member, has been contacted but they lost all their collections due to enemy action during the Second World War.

If, by a rare and unlikely chance, anyone comes across a picture of him, I would be most grateful to know and, if possible, get a copy of such an image.

Tony Barber

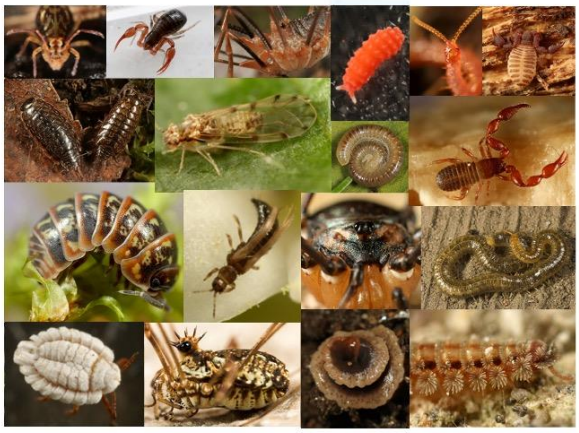
FSC: Introduction to lesser known soil invertebrates

The Field Studies Council are running a day-school entitled "Introduction to lesser known soil invertebrates" at beautiful Haddon Hall, near Bakewell in Derbyshire on Saturday 21st September, 2024. The tutor is Paul Richards.

The morphology and life histories of many invertebrate species of the soil and litter layer (and beyond) will be introduced.

The key identification characteristics of a selection of invertebrate groups will be described through extensive use of images of local species. Experience of field techniques will be provided in the surrounding Haddon medieval parkland. The species to be discussed will include woodlice, harvestmen, bark flies, scale insects, false scorpions, flatworms, springtails, millipedes and centipedes.

Time won't allow for detailed description of all the possible species, but participants should become familiar with many of the locally common or distinctive 'cryptozoa' (the hidden animals). It will provide a good introduction on how to find and collect them and offer guidance on how to identify and record them. Hopefully inspiring people to expand their natural history horizons and take a closer look at some groups of amazing, but often overlooked animals.



Book online with the Field Studies Council:

https://www.field-studies-council.org/courses-and-experiences/static-courses/introduction-to-lesser-known-soil-invertebrates/

According to the FSC, you can use the code 'Local20' to get a 20% discount.

Paul Richards

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