

## Obituary: Ulf Scheller 1925-2021



**Ulf Scheller** (Image Zoltan Korsos)

Ulf Scheller – an outstanding world specialist of Pauropoda and Symphyla – died June 25 2021 at an age of 95 years. After many years of contribution to myriapodology he became an Honorary member of CIM in 2002.

Ulf studied zoology and botany at the University of Lund. After graduating with a master's degree he became a teacher, first in Karlskrona and from 1956 at the private boarding-school Lundsberg in Värmland. Here he stayed until he retired in 1990. Besides this full time work as a teacher he succeeded to do a lot of scientific work which resulted in more than a hundred published papers dealing with Pauropods and Symphyls. He also got a doctors degree in 1970 based on his work *The Pauropoda of Ceylon*.

On holidays and when he could take leave of absence from the school, he travelled a lot and visited several European countries, Africa and America to collect “his animals”.

He also visited many museums to study their collections. Especially he cooperated with the Natural History Museum in Genève which he visited several times.

After retirement he moved to a house at the countryside in Western Sweden not far from the town Lidköping. Then he had more time for scientific work but also a house and a garden to take care of.

From the beginning he studied both Symphyls and Pauropods, but soon he found that there was more than enough to do with the Pauropods and concentrated his work on this group. For many years he was the only world specialist of Pauropoda and got material from all over the world to study. This resulted in a lot of publications and descriptions of several hundred new species.

A great deal of the material he studied was sent back to a museum in the country where the animals were collected. A lot of material is also kept at the museum in Genève. All material he had in his own collection at home is now housed at the Gothenburg Natural History Museum. This material includes a lot of types, both holotypes and paratypes.

It is a remarkable life work done by a private researcher in a small room in his own house, without the facilities of a museum or a scientific institution for help. No laboratory assistant, no secretary, no help with copying, illustration or other technical service. Having no laboratory resources it was not surprising that he never took the step into the molecular biology for the study of his animals. Nor did he have resources to work with SEM pictures. He had instead developed a very effective method to study the specimens and make exact measurements and very precise drawings of the systematic characters needed for describing species. The animals were not mounted but placed in alcohol on a glass slide under a moveable cover glass so it could be turned around and studied from all sides. This time-consuming work resulted in publications with very good descriptions and redescriptions of species.

The myriapod community has lost a valuable member. Very few of the about 175 registered CIM members work with Pauropoda or Symphyla. It will be difficult to fill the empty space after Ulf Scheller.

Göran Andersson

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## Ulf Scheller and pauropods recorded in Britain

A. D. Barber

Although the first description of a pauropod was from London by Sir John Lubbock in 1866, apart from Richard Bagnall who published a series of papers on them in the earlier part of the following century and the listing in S.G. Brade-Birks' 1939 sources for description paper, few workers worked on this group of myriapods in Britain up to the 1970s when Ulf Scheller started to look at our fauna. Paul Remy had published two short papers in 1956 and 1961 and F.A. Turk reported on cave records in 1967. An article reprinted from the *Museums Journal* of 1919 by "W.R.B" described methods of collecting pauropods and symphylans which the author had collected freely at Hastings. Aside from such descriptions and lists of species, S.M. Manton had included the group in her series of papers on arthropod locomotory mechanisms.

Ulf Scheller read a paper on pauropods from arable soil in Great Britain identified by him from samples sent to him from by H.J. Gough and C.A. Edwards at the 1972 Myriapod Congress in Manchester (Scheller, 1974). He recorded four species new to British arable soils, three of which were new to Britain. The paper is also of some interest in the discussion that followed it which included reference as to how to find these animals. 1982 saw the publication of F.R. Moore's account of the Pauropoda of a coal shale heap in Lancashire where *Allopauropus danicus* and *Pauropus lanceolatus* were recorded. That same year P.G. Oliver and A.F. Amsden published an article about pauropods in *Nature in Wales* and reported on the finding of *Allopauropus gracilis*. In both cases, the pauropods were identified or confirmed by Dr Scheller.

In 1986 Gordon Blower reported what was named at the time as *Gravieripus cordatus*, subsequently described as *Trachypauropus britannicus*, a new species from the Windermere area, identification and description by Dr Scheller (1990). The following year (1991) Gordon published a report on the myriapoda of Lancashire and Cheshire with a list of pauropods and names of the authors of the records. The 1990 Scheller paper sorted out a number of dubious names and reported four species new to Britain making a total of twenty-three altogether.

To try to stimulate interest in the group, the BMG Bulletin published in 1992 an article by Barber, Blower and Scheller, the latter contributing by far the greatest input both directly or indirectly (*Bull.Br.Myriapod Group* **8**: 13-23). Entitled *Pauropoda, the smallest myriapods*, it included, as well as descriptive material, notes on collection and examination, a checklist of species and provisional keys down to the level of genera.

### References

Most of these are listed in the 1992 BMG Bulletin report (*Bull.Brit.Myriapod Group* **8**: 13-3).

Other references are:

Blower, J.G. (1986) A pauropod new to Britain and North-West Europe. *Newsletter Brit.Myriapod Group*, **5**: 2 (unpublished).

Brade-Birks, S.G. (1939) Notes on Myriapoda XXXVI Sources for description and illustration of the British Fauna. *J. SE Agric.Coll.Wye*, **44**:156-179.

"W.R.B" (1919) Notes on collecting Pauropoda and Symphyla. *Museums J.*, **18**: 130-132.