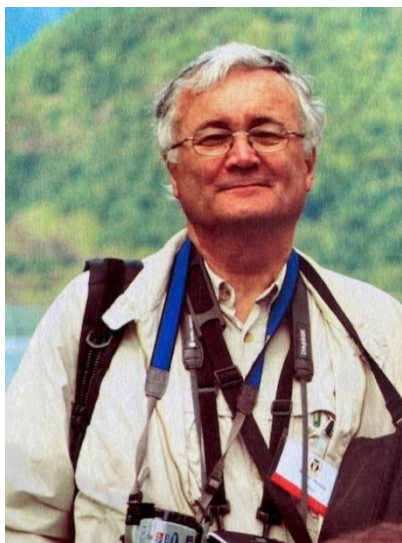


Obituary

Bjarne Andreas Meidell (1943 – 2022)



Bjarne Andreas Meidell passed away in Bergen on Tuesday 17 May 2022 (Norway's National Day!) at the age of 78 after a long illness.

Bjarne was born in Haugesund on the 21 September 1943. As a young biology student and research assistant at the Zoological Museum in Bergen, he was encouraged by Professor Hans Kauri to study myriapods, a previously little-noticed group in Norway, on which no major work had been done since the pioneer work by Edvard Ellingsen in the early nineteenth century. Bjarne started fieldwork in Rosendal in 1966, and after his master's degree in 1972 he got a position as university lecturer. Later in his life he served as head of the Zoological Museum for several periods and was also elected head of the Norwegian Association of Researchers (Forskerforbundet) in Bergen several times. In 2007 he retired from his positions at the Museum and until 2013, when he became a pensioner, he held a full-time position as the administrative head of the association.

Bjarne was an enthusiastic and good teacher, teaching various courses in Zoology. There are many students who will remember with pleasure the field courses he led annually at the field station in Rosendal and in Jutland, Denmark. I (HJR) attended one of these and remember it as being a very happy occasion, with everyone coming together each evening and Bjarne leading a discussion on our daily findings.

Bjarne attended all but the first and last meeting of the ICM and was elected honorary member of the society during the 16th ICM meeting in Olomouc, Czech Republic in 2014.

He organized the 13th International Congress of Myriapodology in Bergen, something he strongly desired to do and which was a very successful event. The warmthness of his welcome to everybody and the cheery nature of his organisation was typical of him as a person.

Bjarne was an early pioneer in the use of computers and created a national museum documentation project and a national database for museum objects. He also produced an early database of myriapod publications which he was generous in sharing. He was also the Norwegian representative in the "Nordic Code Centre", which compiled a list of scientific names. At the museum, he built up a large scientific collection of specimens collected both from freshwater and terrestrial environments.

Bjarne became particularly interested in the flat-backed Polydesmida and undertook several trips to the large collection at the MNHN in Paris. He built up the Bergen University Museum collection of myriapods, with emphasis on the Nordic fauna, which is now quite large. Two of Bjarne's students also worked on the Polydesmida. Aage Simonsen defended his PhD thesis on "Phylogeny and biogeography of the millipede order Polydesmida, with special emphasis on the suborder Polydesmidea" in 1990. Per Djursvoll, finished his master's thesis on polydesmids in 1998 and is now the collection manager at the museum, still working on this group. Bjarne was heavily involved in the publication of a Nordic book on Myriapoda, being published in the series Nationalnyckeln (Anderson et al. 2005), although teaching and especially administrative work at the Museum in Bergen took most of his time. In addition to myriapods, Bjarne was also interested in woodlice, earwigs, onychophorans and botany. As the Norwegian myriapod fauna shows many similarities to the British fauna, many of Bjarne's publications and observations have been very relevant to British workers over the years.

As a person, Bjarne was warm, kind and considerate to others. He had a tendency to be modest about his own achievements and he had a subtle sense of humour that could be relied upon to break the ice in more formal moments.

Bjarne is survived by his former wife Kari and their two sons Christian and Andreas, as well as five grandchildren. He was a loving father and grandfather.

A list of the scientific publications by Bjarne Andreas Meidell is available on the CIM website.

Per Djursvoll, Hilke Ruhberg & Helen Read