

Report on the BMIG field meeting at Morecambe 2017

Paul Lee¹, A. D. Barber² and Steve J. Gregory³

¹ 1 Holly Cottages, Church Road, Tattingstone, Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 2LZ, UK.

E-mail: arachne2222@aol.com

² 7, Greenfield Drive, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0UG, UK.

E-mail: abarber159@btinternet.com

³ 4 Mount Pleasant, Church Street, East Hendred, Oxfordshire OX12 8LA, UK.

E-mail: stevejgregory@btopenworld.com

Introduction and background

The 2017 BMIG field weekend, held from 30th March to 2nd April, was based at The Berkeley Guesthouse, Marine Parade, Blackpool. During the weekend sites in Lancashire (West VC60 and South East VC59) and Cumbria (Westmorland with Furness VC69) were visited.

The first ever joint field meeting of the British Isopod Study Group and the British Myriapod Group was held at St Martin's College, Lancaster in April 1983. Twenty-eight members attended what seems to have been a busy weekend in the field with visits to eight coastal and limestone sites around Morecambe Bay, and sessions in lecture room and bar.

Twenty-two species of millipede are listed in the meeting report in BMG Newsletter 2 (Richardson, 1983). The finding of both *Brachychaeteuma bagnalli* and *B. bradeae* along with a variant that could not be ascribed to either species from Meathop Wood (VC 69) was described and the specimens figured and discussed by Gordon Blower in BMG Bulletin 3 (Blower, 1986).

Richardson (1983) also reports 16 species of centipede collected. Barber and Steeden (2012) report a further six species including both segregates of *Geophilus carpophagus* and an indoor record of *Scutigera coleoptrata* and provide more detail of the distribution of all 22 species. Records of a further four species were found in the database of the Centipede Recording Scheme bringing the total known from the area prior to the BMIG visit to 26.

There is no record of the woodlice recorded during the 1983 meeting. Currently 20 species of woodlice are recorded from the area (VC59, 60 & 69), but this includes two species, *Philoscia affinis* and *Metatrichoniscoides leydigii*, which have been recorded since BMIG's 2017 field meeting (Gregory, 2020; Hughes, 2020).

Methods and sites

The 2017 meeting was not organised as a systematic search for any target species but the collection of *Brachychaeteuma* specimens was hoped for with a view to finding more specimens of the Meathop Wood variant in order to shed more light on its true status.

A summary of the sites visited and the sub-locations within these sites is shown in Table 1. Further details of the species records for each site are summarised in Tables 2 to 4.

Results

Only five of the species recorded during the weekend are listed in the Natural England species status review (Lee, 2015) as being anything other than common and with a threat status greater than Least Concern. These are the centipede *Lithobius lapidicola*, the millipedes *Choneiulus palmatus*, *Cylindroiulus parisiorum* and a *Brachychaeteuma* species, and the pill-woodlouse *Armadillidium album*. The species lists contain a strong synanthropic element reflective of many of the sites visited.

Table 1: List of sites visited. Recorders: KA - Keith Alexander; TB - Tony Barber; KC - Kevin Clements; SG - Steve Garland; SJG - Steve Gregory; PL - Paul Lee; AL - Angela Lidgett; HR - Helen Read; PR - Paul Richards; AW - Ashley Watson; DW - Derek Whiteley

Site no.	Locality	Grid Ref	VC	Date	Recorder
1a	Myerscough College (inside glasshouses)	SD4940	60	31/03/2017	TB, SG, SJG, AL, HR, PR
1b	Myerscough College (outside glasshouses)	SD4940	60	31/03/2017	TB, AL, HR, PR
1c	Myerscough College (western gardens)	SD4939	60	31/03/2017	AL
2	Salthill Quarry, Clitheroe	SD756425	59	30/03/2017	PR, AW
3	Eggerslack Wood	SD4079	69	01/04/2017	TB
4	Brown Robin, Grange	SD4179	69	01/04/2017	HR, PR, AW
5	Humphrey Head, Grange	SD3973	69	01/04/2017 02/04/2017	TB, SJG, HR, PR, AW SG, DW
6	St Paul's Church, Lindale	SD4180	69	01/04/2017	TB, HR, PR, AW
7	Royal Oak, Lindale	SD418806	69	01/04/2017	TB, HR, PR
8	St Mary's Church, Allithwaite	SD386768	69	01/04/2017	TB, HR, PR
9	Middleton NR, Heysham	SD4159	60	31/03/2017 01/04/2017	TB, PL, HR; KC
10	Overhouses Great Wood	SD6465	60	01/04/2017	KA
11	Thrush Gill Wood	SD5770	60	31/03/2017	KA
12	Littledale	SD5662	60	01/04/2017	KA
13	Cow Fall Wood	SD5762	60	01/04/2017	KA
14	Dallam Tower Deer Park	SD4980	69	31/03/2017	KA
15	Spinks Gill	SD590791	60	31/03/2017	KA
16	Marl Hole Wood	SD5869	60	31/03/2017	KA
17	Yealand Manor Estate	SD5074	60	31/03/2017	KA
18	Sunderland Point	SD4255	60	31/03/2017	DW
19	Arnside Knott	SD451774	69	31/03/2017	KC
20	Jack Scout	SD460734	60	31/03/2017	KC
21	Crag Foot	SD466735	60	31/03/2017	KC
22	Eaves Wood	SD471759	60	31/03/2017	KC
23	Warton Crag	SD496724	60	31/03/2017	KC
24	Red Nab, Heysham	SD403591	60	01/04/2017	KC
25	Heysham Power Station	SD407592	60	01/04/2017	KC
26	Overton	SD432578	60	01/04/2017	KC
27	Grubbins Wood	SD4478	69	01/04/2017	DW, SJG
28	Gaitbarrow reserve entrance	SD4776	60	01/04/2017	DW
29	Dalton Crag	SD5576	60/69	01/04/2017	DW
30	Park Wood NR	SD563778	69	01/04/2017	SG
31	Sandscale Haws NT	SD1875	69	02/04/2017	DW
32a	Walney Island	SD199637	69	02/04/2017	DW
32b	Walney Island	SD200637	69	02/04/2017	DW
33	Sandscale	SD200755	69	02/04/2017	SG
34	Formby	SD274081	59	02/04/2017	KC

Two of the five locations with the highest species richness, Myerscough College, inside glasshouses (4 centipedes, 7 millipedes, 3 woodlice) and Myerscough College, outside glasshouses (1 centipede, 9 millipedes, 3 woodlice plus landhopper) were associated with gardens. A third, Middleton Local Nature Reserve (3 centipedes, 7 millipedes, 5 woodlice), was a brownfield site. However, the two richest sites, Brown Robin and Humphrey Head were semi-natural sites on limestone but, the fauna recorded from these sites on this occasion did not prove as interesting as expected.

Centipedes

As can be seen from Table 4, a round dozen species were found, a relatively low number compared with the diversity recorded previously. The only species of note was *Lithobius lapidicola* Meinert, 1872 collected from inside glasshouses at Myerscough College. In Britain this centipede was first reported from greenhouses at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh (1986, coll. Charles Rawcliffe, det. E. H. Eason). The only subsequent outdoor records are from above the beach, at Sandwich Bay on the Kent coast and from East Suffolk and South Essex, close to the coast. However, there are also records from heated glasshouses at Abbotsbury (Dorset), Bangor (North Wales), Birmingham Botanic Garden and the Butterfly House at Whipsnade Zoo. Its presence in these two distinct habitats remains an enigma. The animal is small (8mm) and without very obvious identification features. Of a comparable size to *Lithobius microps*, it lacks the swollen last legs of that species. Lee (2015) lists it as IUCN Status (GB) Near Threatened and GB Rarity Status Nationally Rare.

Millipedes

During the 2017 meeting 29 species were recorded, five from South East Lancashire (VC59), 19 from West Lancashire (VC60) and 17 from Cumbria (VC69) (Table 6). The only notable species were the Nationally Scarce *Choneiulus palmatus* and *Cylindroiulus parisiorum* and an unidentified species of *Brachychaeteuma*. The latter was collected from Brown Robin in VC69. These were female specimens and cast no further light on the *bradeae/bagnalli* variation. A female *Chordeuma* was noted also but this was not identified to species. *Boreoiulus tenuis* was one of the species reported but the site name was not available.

Although the first English specimens of the Nationally Rare *Melogona voigtii* have since been reported from Dalton Crags (Gregory & Garnham, 2020), the species was not collected here or elsewhere in 2017. The only *Melogona* species reported was the common *M. scutellaris* from the nearby site of Park Wood.

The glasshouses at Myerscough College produced a good range of hothouse and other synanthropic specialists including *Choneiulus palmatus* and *Cylindroiulus parisiorum*. Non-native *Oxidus gracilis*, *Poratia digitata* (Fig. 1), *Cylindroiulus truncorum* and *C. vulnerarius* were frequent with *C. truncorum* spilling out into outdoor areas around glasshouses.

Woodlice

During the 2017 field meeting 12 species of woodlice and the landhopper *Arcitalitrus dorrieni* were recorded (Table 5). The only species of note was the Nationally Scarce *Armadillidium album* which was found at Sandscale Haws in VC69. The gardens and glasshouses at Myerscough College proved to be the most diverse site visited with eight species of woodlice and *Arcitalitrus dorrieni* recorded. The woodlice included *Trichoniscus provisorius* and an unidentified styloniscid (Fig. 2), alas female and immature specimens (that cannot be identified), from inside the heated glasshouses and *Porcellionides pruinosus* from the outdoor gardens.

Philoscia 'muscorum' was recorded from nine sites (making it the fourth most widely recorded woodlouse after *Oniscus asellus*, *Porcellio scaber* and *Trichoniscus pusillus* agg.). However, in the following autumn (2017) *Philoscia affinis* was reported from Britain for the first time (Segers *et al.*,

2018) and subsequently it has proved to be widespread in woodlands and coastal habitats in western Britain, including six woodland sites in West Lancashire (VC60) (Gregory, 2020). Thus, it is highly probable that some of the *Philoscia* recorded during the BMIG weekend may actually be *P. affinis* and they are listed herein as *P. muscorum sensu lato*. It is perhaps unfortunate that previously *P. muscorum* had been considered to be an ‘easy’ species that could be readily identified in the field with no need for the collection of specimens and microscopic examination.



Figure 1: *Poratia digitata* live specimen from glasshouses at Myerscough College
(Image © Paul Richards, www.flickr.com/invertimages)



Figure 2: Immature *Styloniscid* (recently moulted) from glasshouses at Myerscough College
(Image © Paul Richards, www.flickr.com/invertimages)

Table 4: Summary of species of centipede recorded during the BMIG meeting at Morecambe.

Location:	1a	1b	1c	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	27	29
<i>Haplophilus subterraneus</i>			X		X	X	X		X				X			X	X			X
<i>Schendyla nemorensis</i>								X												
<i>Strigamia maritima</i>							X							X	X			X		
<i>Geophilus flavus</i>				X																
<i>Geophilus alpinus</i>				X	X	X				X										
<i>Geophilus truncorum</i>			X		X						X									
<i>Cryptops hortensis</i>	X										X									
<i>Lithobius forficatus</i>	X					X					X	X	X			X			X	
<i>Lithobius lapidicola</i>	X																			
<i>Lithobius melanops</i>	X	X					X													
<i>Lithobius microps</i>				X	X						X								X	X
<i>Lithobius variegatus</i>					X											X			X	

Table 5: Summary of species of woodlouse and landhopper recorded during the BMIG meeting at Morecambe.

Location:	1a	1b	1c	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	27	29	30	31	32a	32b	33
<i>Androniscus dentiger</i>						X	X	X																			
<i>Haplophthalmus mengii</i>									X																		
<i>Trichoniscus pusillus agg.</i>	X			X	X	X	X				X	X			X			X	X								
<i>Trichoniscus provisorius</i>	X																										
<i>Trichoniscus pygmaeus</i>						X	X		X																		
<i>Styloniscidae spp.</i>	X																										
<i>Philoscia muscorum s.lat.</i>		X		X		X	X				X				X				X			X			X		
<i>Oniscus asellus</i>	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X		X		X	X					X	X	X				
<i>Porcellio scaber</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X			X			X						X
<i>Porcellionides pruinosus</i>		X																									
<i>Armadillidium album</i>																								X			
<i>Armadillidium vulgare</i>		X		X			X				X									X					X	X	
Landhopper																											
<i>Arcitalitrus dorrieni</i>		X																									

Table 6: Summary of species of millipede recorded during the BMIG meeting at Morecambe.

Location:	1a	1b	1c	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	18	19	21	22	23	25	26	27	28	29	30
<i>Glomeris marginata</i>					X		X					X							X	X				X	X	X
<i>Chordeuma sp.</i>								X																		
<i>Melogona scutellaris</i>																										X
<i>Brachychaeteuma spp.</i>						X																				
<i>Nanogona polydesmoides</i>						X	X	X																		
<i>Oxidus gracilis</i>	X																									
<i>Brachydesmus superus</i>		X	X		X	X	X				X														X	
<i>Polydesmus angustus</i>		X	X			X	X	X			X		X		X			X	X	X	X				X	
<i>Polydesmus coriaceus</i>			X	X							X															
<i>Poratia digitata</i>	X																									
<i>Macrosternodesmus palicola</i>										X																
<i>Ophiodesmus albonanus</i>								X		X																
<i>Nemasoma varicorne</i>													X	X												
<i>Choneiulus palmatus</i>	X																									
<i>Proteroiulus fuscus</i>	X			X							X								X	X						
<i>Blaniulus guttulatus</i>		X				X	X	X																		
* <i>Boreoiulus tenuis</i>																										
<i>Julus scandinavicus</i>							X	X																		
<i>Ophiulus pilosus</i>		X		X	X		X		X	X	X				X											
<i>Cylindroiulus britannicus</i>	X	X	X								X															
<i>Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus</i>								X		X																
<i>Cylindroiulus latestriatus</i>							X									X										
<i>Cylindroiulus parisiorum</i>	X																									
<i>Cylindroiulus punctatus</i>		X	X	X		X	X		X		X	X	X	X			X	X		X		X	X			
<i>Cylindroiulus truncorum</i>	X	X																								
<i>Cylindroiulus vulnerarius</i>	X																									
<i>Brachyiulus pusillus</i>		X																								
<i>Ommatoiulus sabulosus</i>										X																
<i>Tachypodoiulus niger</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X	X	X	X		X				

*site details not recorded

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Keith Alexander, Tony Barber, Kevin Clements, Steve Garland, Steve Gregory, Paul Lee, Angela Lidgett, Helen Read, Paul Richards, Ashley Watson and Derek Whiteley for submitting their records.

References

- Barber, A. & Steeden, J. (2012) Centipedes from the Fylde Coast (Lancashire) and adjacent areas. *Bulletin of the British Myriapod & Isopod Group*, **26**: 24-31.
- Blower, J. G. (1986) Distribution and variation of the species of *Brachychaeteuma* occurring in Britain and Ireland. *Bulletin of the British Myriapod Group*, **3**: 43-48.
- Gregory, S.J. (2020) Further observations of *Philoscia affinis* Verhoeff, 1908 (Isopoda, Oniscidea, Philosciidae) in Britain and Ireland: Distribution, Habitat and Identification. *Bulletin of the British Myriapod & Isopod Group*, **32**: 2-14.
- Gregory, S.J. & Garnham, N. (2020) *Melogona voigtii* (Verhoeff, 1899): a millipede new for England (Chordeumatida: Chordeumatidae). *Bulletin of the British Myriapod & Isopod Group*, **32**: 47-55.
- Hughes, T.D. (2020) The occurrence of *Metatriconiscoides leydigii* (Weber, 1880) (Isopoda: Oniscidea) on the Ribble Estuary, Lancashire. *Bulletin of the British Myriapod & Isopod Group*, **32**: 26-58.
- Lee, P. (2015) *A review of the millipedes (Diplopoda), centipedes (Chilopoda) and woodlice (Isopoda) of Great Britain*. Natural England Commissioned Reports No.186.
- Richardson, D. T. (1983) BISG/BMG meeting, St Martin's College, Lancaster 15-17 April, 1983. *British Myriapod Group Newsletter*, **2**: 2-3 (unpublished).
- Segers, S, Boeraeve, P, & De Smedt, P. (2018) *Philoscia affinis* Verhoeff, 1908 new to the UK (Isopoda: Philosciidae). *Bulletin of the British Myriapod & Isopod Group*, **30**: 21-25.