

THE BRITISH ISOPOD STUDY GROUP
NEWSLETTER OF THE ISOPODA SURVEY SCHEME

No. 5

August 1971

PLEASE KEEP FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

1. PROGRESS OF THE SCHEME:

Since the introduction of our new recording card for terrestrial and freshwater species we have received a steady flow of completed cards and associated specimens. Also Dr. Lewis Davies of Durham University has sent us a large number of woodlice collected last year on St. Kilda. Outstanding recent captures include *Trachelipus rathkei* from Whitby (well north of other recent records) and *Platyarthrus hoffmannseggii* from a spot nearby. *Porcellio dilatatus* has turned up in Huntingdon town and on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour, Dorset. *Armadillidium depressum* has been found in some numbers in south Somerset (the species is restricted to south-west England) and *Armadillidium album* has been recorded from Borth Dunes in Cardiganshire. The colony of this species at Spurn Head, Yorkshire may have been wiped out by recent oil spillage from Immingham Docks, which has fouled the *Spartina* debris on the shore in which *A. album* lives. No specimens were found during a detailed search after the spillage, in a spot where formerly it was plentiful. This is (or was) one of two known sites for the species on the east coast.

2. FINANCE:

We are very grateful to the Shell grant for Invertebrate Surveys for £50 towards the cost of travel to remote parts of Britain to carry out work for the Survey. Anyone who would like to carry out some such field work can apply for a grant towards the cost. Write to Dr. S.L.Sutton, Department of Zoology, The University, Leeds LS2 9JT.

3. COVERAGE:

Overleaf you will find a map of the British Isles divided into squares each 50 x 50 km. These are the basic units for the first phase of the Isopod Survey Scheme, the aim being to record the terrestrial and freshwater isopod fauna from the main habitats present in each square. (N.B.: for marine isopods a rather different strategy will probably be adopted). Each 50 km on the map has been given a symbol according to our assessment of coverage, ranging from 'good' to 'very poor or non-existent'. This map can therefore show you where the Survey is weakest and where most effort is needed. We hasten to add that there is great scope for improvement even where a square has been put in the category 'good', and survey work should be continued in such areas when it is not possible to go further afield. The actual boundaries of each square can be found by using the National Grid co-ordinates on our map. (A further map will be produced for Ireland.)

4. NOTES ON SPECIES:

Haplophthalmus danicus Budde-Lund.

Recorders are requested to be careful when working dead timber in woodland to look for this inconspicuous species. It is in life a dull fawn to light grey colour, and is rarely very mobile; its elongated shape and short antennae make it easy to pass over as not being a woodlouse at all. During 1970-71 this species has been recorded in Surrey, Worcestershire, Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire and Essex, and may prove to be much commoner than at present seems to be the case. The habitats in which I have found *H. danicus* are deciduous woodland, or deciduous-dominated mixed woodland which has been neglected for many years so that there is a plentiful supply of well decayed large timber. Under the bark of the oldest timber will very often be found a thick layer of granular debris lying between the bark and the wood. It is in this layer that I have taken *H. danicus* on the four occasions that I have recorded it.

P.T.H.

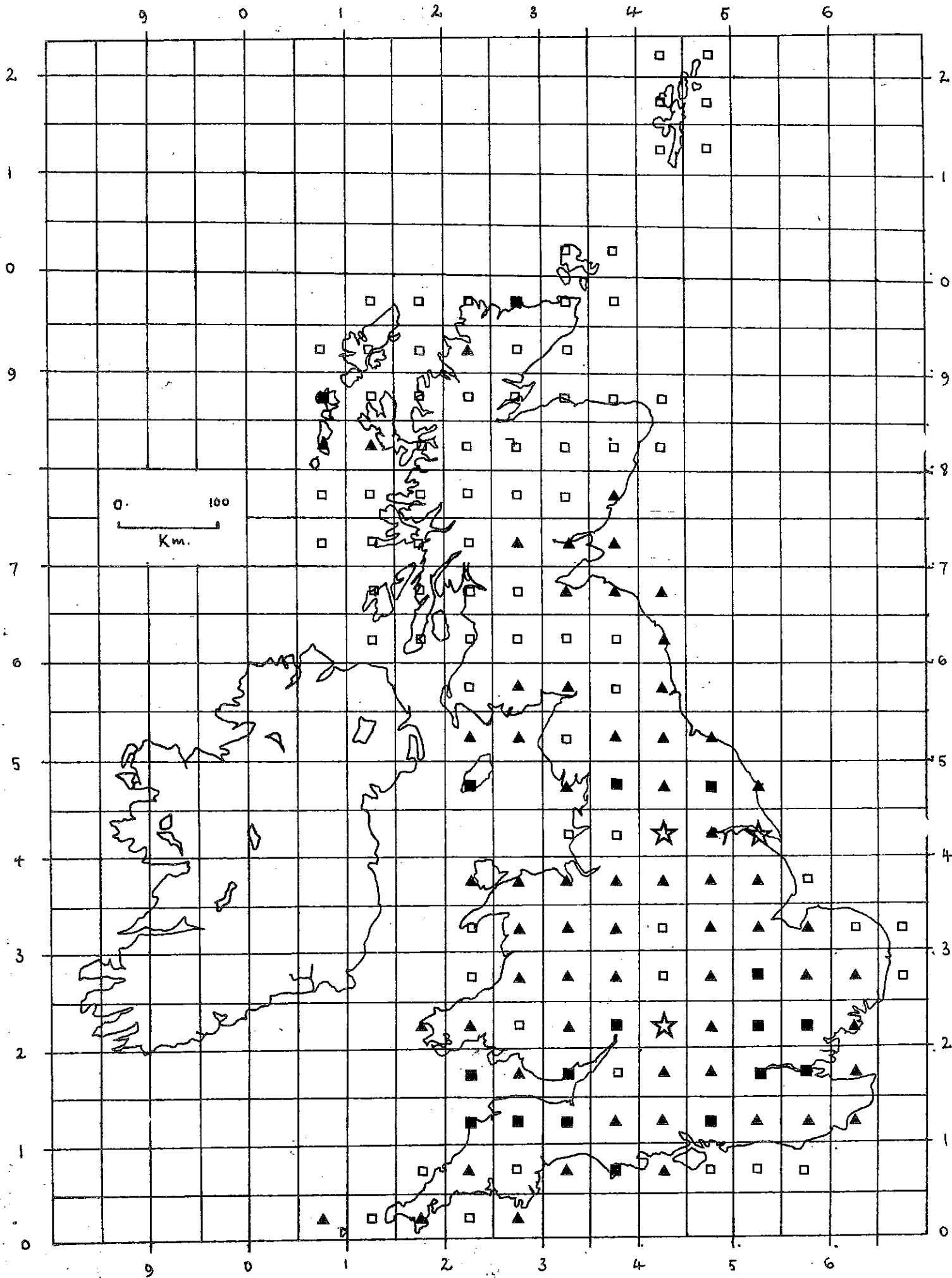
5. VISIT:

Professor E.B.Edney, whose name will be familiar to all as author of the 1953 "Key to British Woodlice" and many papers on woodlice biology, is visiting Britain this summer. He hopes to spend a couple of days learning about the work and methods of the Isopod Survey Scheme with a view to setting up a similar scheme in California, where he now lives.

6. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION:

Anyone knowing of the whereabouts of British specimens identified as *Trachelipus* (= *Porcellio*) *ratzeburgi* Brandt is requested to contact Paul Harding at Monks Wood Experimental Station, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon. The few British specimens labelled *T. ratzeburgi* in the British Museum (Natural History) are all *T. rathkei* or *Porcellio* species and we have been unable so far to find any British material, although this species was quite widely recorded in the past.

P.T.Harding
D.M.Holdish
R.J.Lincoln
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KEY: □ very poor/non-existent; ▲ poor; ■ medium; ☆ good.