

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

A FEW MYRIAPOD RECORDS FROM PICARDIE, NORTHERN FRANCE

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During a brief visit to Picardie in April 2008 a few myriapod records were made and, in view of the paucity of published records from the area it seems useful to list these. All the sites were in the Somme Département, a number of the millipedes were kindly identified or confirmed by Helen Read.

Quend Ville:

Waste ground, near church (09.iv.08):

Geophilus electricus f

Grounds of ruined château (08 & 09.iv.08):

Henia vesuviana m, *Geophilus flavus* m

Lithobius forficatus fii, *L. melanops* m, *L. microps* m

Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus 1m 6f, *C. punctatus* m

Allaiulus/Leptoiulus sp. 6f, *Polydesmus* sp. f,i

Parc Ornithologique du Marquetaire:

Under wood by path (08.iv.08):

Lithobius forficatus, *Ommatoiulus sabulosus*

St. Valery sur Somme:

Grassland at HWS, Cap Hornu (10.iv.08):

Henia vesuviana mfff, *Geophilus flavus* f

Crécy-en-Ponthieu area:

Battlefield area (11.iv.08):

Under stones by road: *Henia vesuviana* mm

Wood on grass: *Polydesmus angustus* f

Forêt de Crécy by D111, (11.iv.08), deciduous woodland, under wood, bark, etc:

Geophilus truncorum 4, *Cryptops hortensis* 2, *Lithobius crassipes* mf

Glomeris marginata, *Cylindroiulus punctatus* 3, *Polydesmus angustus* f

Searches were made at St. Valery & elsewhere on the Baie de Somme on saltmarsh and other areas for littoral species, all completely unsuccessful. It would be useful to have records of such species from this area of coast for comparison with those of Southern England and those known from Brittany.

POLYDESMUS ANGUSTUS IN WEB OF META MENARDI IN THE FOREST OF DEAN

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While visiting Hopewell Colliery in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire with my daughter and family on 28th May 2003 I noticed a dead specimen of *Polydesmus angustus* Latzel 1884 suspended in a web of a female of the Cave Spider *Meta menardi* (Latreille 1804). Smithers (1996 & 2004) does not mention any of the *Polydesmus* species as being prey of this spider in Devon.

The observation was in the twilight zone, about 50m in from the gated exit which opened into woodland. The *Polydesmus* could have crawled in from the entrance or down through the fissured rock strata from the

surface several metres above. The specimen (male) was dead but appeared not to have been damaged, digested or decomposed, so there was no indication whether it had simply fallen into and been suspended by the web, or whether it really was a prey item to be consumed later. The web was at about head height (just under 2m) at an angle to the vertical where the wall curved irregularly to the roof of the tunnel. The spiders *Metellina merianae* and *M. mengei* were also present in the tunnel, in webs nearer to the gate.

The mine is beside the B4226 Speech House Road between Coleford and Speech House, at SO604115, vc34, Alt.110m asl. It is a small family-run business which is both a working mine and a show mine open to the public on payment of a fee.

REFERENCES

- Smithers, P. (1996) Observations on the Prey of the Cave Spider *Meta menardi* (Latreille, 1804) in South Devon. *Newsletter of the British Arachnological Society*. **77**: 12-14.
- Smithers, P. (2004) Myriapods as Prey of the Cave Spider *Meta menardi*. *Bull. Brit. Myriapod & Isopod Grp.* **20**: 17-19.

FURTHER OBSERVATIONS OF *BUDDLUNDIELLA CATARACTAE* IN WALES

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Another inland site in Wales has been located for *Buddelundiella cataractae* Verhoeff 1930 to add to that reported by Harper (2004) in the Clydach Gorge, Abergavenny. On 2nd April 2009 I found a singleton of the species five kilometres downriver from the previous site, on the alluvial plain close to where the River Clydach joins the River Usk, by the village of Gilwern - this time among soil crumbs under pots of Passion Vine in my backyard (SO247153; vc42; Alt. 65m asl); five more were found there on 21st April. There would appear to be no obvious link between the two sites except perhaps transfer on dirty boots; or perhaps the species is generally distributed in the area from its industrial past of iron and coal mining, iron smelting, limestone quarrying, lime burning and the associated canal and railway links from the Welsh coastal ports - Newport, Cardiff and Barry being the nearest. At the time I was looking for tiny Collembolans to feed a very small subadult Theridiid spider which accounts for my concentration on minute invertebrates. *B. cataractae* has a very close resemblance to a grain of sand when rolled up, in colour, translucency and size, which makes detection difficult, but in warm weather and a damp situation the animal readily uncurls and moves slowly within about 20 seconds if one observes a small area for long enough.

In 2008 two further sites for the species were discovered on the coast of south Wales, the species' stronghold in the UK, during the BMIG field weekend based on Swansea. I am grateful to Steve Gregory and Ian Morgan for allowing me to include the records here:

- 28th March 2008: Steve Gregory found four specimens at Bracelet Bay, Mumbles, Swansea (SS630872 vc41) - under stones embedded within a clay bank above high water mark of a shingle beach.
- 29th March 2008: Ian Morgan found one individual only at North Dock, Llanelli (SS 499999 vc44) - under plant material deposited by a very high spring tide at the edge of a river, adjacent to a former industrial / dock area (now next to a road). The grid ref was extremely difficult to ascertain as the site lies at the junction of four 10km squares. It could be at SN499000 (ie. the next one north).

REFERENCES

- Harper, J. (2004) *Buddelundiella cataractae* inland in Wales. *Bull. Brit. Myriapod & Isopod Grp.* **20**: p.49.