

## AN INDOOR RECORD OF *LITHOBIUS MELANOPS* NEWPORT, 1845 FROM THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

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A lithobiid collected from within the hospital pharmacy at Port Stanley last year and sent by Shona Strange of the Falklands Islands Government – Department of Agriculture to FERA (Food & Environment Research Agency) in Britain was sent on to me by Sharon Reid of that laboratory. It results from a DEFRA funded study on Improving Bio-security in the United Kingdom Overseas Territories. I tentatively identified it as a female *Lithobius melanops*, a diagnosis confirmed by Marzio Zapparoli (Viterbo) who remarked that all the main morphological characters agree with the descriptions given by Brölemann (1930) and Eason (1984) except that the gonopods spurs were different, being apparently larger than usual but that this could be simply individual variation within the species.

The specimen was collected by Juan Sanchez on top of a metal cabinet amongst paperwork in the pharmacy dispensary of the KEMH, Stanley (08.10.2010). Shona commented that “I think this *Lithobius melanops* might be around a bit as I am sure I have seen what looks like a centipede myself a few times. However they are quite fast moving and not always easy to catch”.

*Lithobius melanops* is a common species in Britain and is one of those centipedes recorded as entering houses (see, for instance, Cloudsley-Thompson, 1956) and is quite often found in greenhouses as well as in gardens and other disturbed habitats. Piles of loose bricks in a domestic garden are a highly likely site for finding the species here. It is widely recorded around the world (Europe including Iceland & the Faroe Islands, Canary Islands, Newfoundland, United States, Tristan da Cunha) and seems it could be dispersed as a result of human activity. Almost certainly this would be the way in which it arrived in the Falkland Islands, quite likely in material transported from the UK.

Mike McLeod (pers.comm.) reports that he had a couple of people reporting a problem with centipedes and has had two in his house although he sprays regularly “to keep the damm earwigs out”. He reports on someone having a lot in her garden and one running across the living room floor. Interestingly, this same person, now 80, said that they were very common when she was a child. Mike reported that he first saw centipedes in between concrete blocks and in large numbers when building their house 11 years ago. Nearly all concrete blocks are imported and most are made by a company near Brighton although there have been a number of imports of building materials from Chile. Obviously, without seeing specimens, we cannot identify which species is involved at this stage although the habits are certainly suggestive of *L. melanops*.

The only previous record of a lithobiomorph centipede from the Falklands appears to be that of Ted Eason’s *Anopsobius macfaydeni*, a henicopid described from there and belonging to a Gondwanan genus known from New Zealand, Chatham & Auckland Islands, Australia, New Caledonia, South Africa and South America (southern Chile & southern Argentina) (Eason, 1993; Edgecombe, 2003). This is a much smaller animal (7.6mm) and was recorded from rural sites on both East and West Falkland. The only Falklands geophilomorph of which I am aware is *Schendylodes alacer* (Pocock, 1891) which also occurs in mainland South America (Pereira & Minelli, 1992).

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