

BRITISH MYRIAPOD GROUP

Newsletter No 9 September 1988

Editor Dick Jones

MAFIA MILLIPEDE INVADES BRITAIN - SHOCK, HORROR!

R. E. J.

Steve Hopkin has been stealing the limelight recently in the New to Britain Department with his *Haplophthalmus* species and, seeing that Rundle is now besotted with dandelions, its nice to see that the Myriapod Group is fighting back. Our champion is C. P. Rawcliffe who turned up a very interesting specimen in one of the greenhouses of the Royal Botanic Garden at Edinburgh.

As luck would have it, of the twenty odd tubes that Charles sent to me the one containing this specimen was the only one to lose its alcohol in the post. However it was still easy to see that it was something interesting and it looked to me like an aberrant *Cylindroiulus vulnerarius* with ocelli. Gordon I understand was originally of the same opinion but my spies tell me that it was actually Helen Read who finally ran it down as *Cylindroiulus salicivorus* Verhoeff 1908. Henrik Enghoff has confirmed the identification as this species which hitherto has never been recorded outside of Italy.

Hopefully we will have a note by Charles accompanied by Gordon's excellent drawings in the next Bulletin. It looks very similar to *C. vulnerarius* but the ocelli give it away.

On the centipede front Messrs. Lewis, Keay and Jones have two new geophilid centipedes which will be published in the near future and Andy has recently found yet another on the Isle of Wight. The British lists seem to be far from complete so get out and keep looking. You might even find a new species at the bottom of the garden, after all I did!

THE APRIL WEEKEND IN WALES full of surprises.

A. N. Keay

I didn't believe my eyes, Doug Richardson wearing a sports jacket, slacks and a shirt and tie. Was this a late attempt at casting off his Compo image? (Come back Compo all is forgiven, apart from the scotch that you owe me).

That was not the only surprise of the trip, *Lithobius tenebrosus* from Aberystwyth was another. It looked very similar to *L. melanops* which was also present and both came from the sea cliffs at Constitution Hill. Other surprises were *Henia brevis* from an open oak woodland at altitude rather than from the usual synanthropic sites and *Cryptops anomolans* and *C. parisi* from urban/suburban sites over most of mid south Wales. The moorland didn't fail us either with the expected *Geophilus carpophagus* in large numbers and sometimes large sizes.

All in all it was a good trip for which we must thank Steve Hopkin. Good meals, a few drinks and pleasant company. There was the passing of an era when Doug handed over the Millipede Scheme with the speech reported in the last newsletter. Dick Jones was not much in evidence, it would seem that he hasn't the head for Welsh whiskey!

Oh yes, it snowed too.

MILLIPEDE RECORDING SCHEME

R. E. J.

I am glad to say that the sight of the maps in the Millipede Atlas has prompted quite a few of you to turn out your cupboards and drawers and other odd corners in the pursuit of records that have gone astray. A huge input from Des Kime and a series of records gleaned from Maidstone Museum has fleshed out the maps for S.E. England considerably whilst Gordon Blower has been ploughing through his old note books in the north and the Isle of Man. I can proudly announce that I have got through a whole sheet of Letraset dots whilst updating the maps and if a few more of you who I know are sitting on records can produce them soon we might get a few updated maps in the next newsletter. Meanwhile new records are also trickling in at a constant rate. Several large batches have come from N.C.C. surveys, Paul Harding made a trip to Northern Ireland and Charles Rawcliffe continues to blitz the Firth of Forth area. Those tireless Yorkshiremen, Richardson and Lee, are still trying to record every millipede in the county and very nearly succeeding.

A look at the maps has set me thinking about one or two species. For example *Chordeuma proximum* and the two *Melogona* species have very few records scattered across the south of England. Are they overlooked there? A quick stop off in the New Forest last Christmas enabled me to collect a dozen or more mature *C. proximum* in five minutes just by raking at the leaf litter with my hands. This July I searched the same area in the same way and found numerous *Melogona* specimens but unfortunately they were immature. A further search in some south Wiltshire woods showed the same state of affairs. So all of you get out in the winter and rake through the leaf litter in your local woods. Now you know what to do in that lull after Christmas lunch, you might even find *C. sylvestre*.

Another species that I find interesting is *Brachychaeteuma melanops*. According to Blower (1985) it is found on basic soils but, although I have found it once on chalk and once on limestone, most of my records from Huntingdon and Hampshire have been on very heavy clay soils in gardens. I checked two Hampshire gardens that fitted these conditions this July and it was present in both under bricks etc. If you know of any sites that sound suitable go and check them now. It can look rather like a pale *Brachydesmus* but it is always white and can roll up. Another thing that I noticed about the specimens that I collected in July was the fact that they had more ocelli than are shown in Blower and these formed a narrow triangle. I must send them to Gordon.....

MILLIPEDES FROM THE NEWBRIDGE ON WYE MEETING

There were no great surprises but several interesting species were collected. *Chordeuma proximum* and the two *Melogona* species were widespread. D. Bilton found *Choneiulus palmatus* and *Cylindroiulus vulnerarius* and Doug Richardson found *C. parisiorum*. The two elusive soil species *Ophiodesmus albanus* and *Macrosternodesmus palicola* were found by Doug and Tony Barber and Charles Rawcliffe and P. Lee respectively. Pam Copson collected a specimen of *Brachychaeteuma*, possibly a first for Wales, but it may not be possible to run it down to species.

VICE-COUNTY DISTRIBUTION: MILLIPEDES

Additional records to 8 August 1988

Species	Vice-counties	Recorder
<i>Archiboreoiulus pallidus</i>	27	R. E. Jones
<i>Blaniulus guttulatus</i>	35	A. D. Barber
<i>Brachychaeteuma melanops</i>	44	I. K. Morgan
	H3	R. E. Jones
	15	A. J. Rundle, E. C. Philp
<i>Brachydesmus superus</i>	H8	R. E. Jones
	H18	R. E. Jones
	H39	Butler (old record)
	35	A. D. Barber
<i>Brachyiulus pusillus</i>	43	J. Bratton
<i>Choneiulus palmatus</i>	42	D. Bilton
<i>Chordeuma proximum</i>	11	R. D. Kime
	43	D. T. Richardson, A. D. Barber
<i>Cylindroiulus britannicus</i>	42	D. T. Richardson
	43	D. T. Richardson
<i>Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus</i>	35	A. D. Barber
<i>Cylindroiulus latestriatus</i>	H8	R. E. Jones
	43	P. Lee
<i>Cylindroiulus nitidus</i>	85	C. P. Rawcliffe
<i>Cylindroiulus paristorum</i>	42	D. T. Richardson
	1	R. E. Jones
	15	A. J. Rundle, E. C. Philp
<i>Cylindroiulus vulnerarius</i>	1	P. Pratley
	11	R. E. Jones, A. N. Keay
	35	D. Bilton
Records of this last species from vice-counties 7 & 13 would appear to be in error. I suggest that you delete them from the published list.		
<i>Leptoiulus belgicus</i>	28	R. E. Jones
	15	A. J. Rundle
<i>Macrosternodesmus pallicola</i>	42	D. T. Richardson, P. Lee
	35	R. E. Jones
<i>Melogona gallica</i>	41	I. K. Morgan
	42	I. K. Morgan
	83	C. P. Rawcliffe
<i>Melogona scutellare</i>	44	I. K. Morgan
	43	J. G. Blower, P. Copson, P. Lee
	42	A. D. Barber
	15	A. J. Rundle, E. C. Philp
<i>Nanogona polydesmoides</i>	105	R. D. Kime
<i>Nemasoma varicorne</i>	14	K. Alexander
	19	K. Alexander
	97	R. D. Kime
<i>Nopoiulus kochii</i>	22	S. Hopkin
<i>Ommatoiulus sabulosus</i>	H18	R. E. Jones
	H38	A. G. Irwin

Species	Vice-counties	Recorder
<i>Ophiodesmus albonanus</i>	42	C. P. Rawcliffe
	34	A. D. Barber, A. N. Keay
	64	P. Lee
	72	C. P. Rawcliffe
<i>Polydesmus angustus</i>	H8	R. E. Jones
<i>Polydesmus inconstans</i>	87	C. P. Rawcliffe
<i>Polyxenus lagurus</i>	44	I. K. Morgan
	43	J. Bratton
	42	P. Lee
<i>Proteroiulus fuscus</i>	H39	P. T. Harding
	19	K. Alexander
<i>Stygioglomeris crinita</i>	27	A. G. Irwin

Please update lists given in PRELIMINARY ATLAS 1988. Check your vice-county lists and see if there are any species missing that you have recorded, I have only your cards to work from so if there are then let me know the details.
REJ

CENTIPEDE RECORDING SCHEME

CENTIPEDES FROM THE NEWBRIDGE ON WYE MEETING

A. D. Barber

Vice-county Records from meeting.

(New records ■)

Species	Vice-counties				
	41	35	46	42	43
<i>Haplophilus subterraneus</i>		□	□	□	□
<i>Schendyla nemorensis</i>		■	□	■	□
<i>Henia brevis</i>				■	
<i>Strigamia crassipes</i>		■	□	□	
<i>Strigamia acuminata</i>				□	
<i>Strigamia maritima</i>			□		
<i>Geophilus carpophagus</i>			□	□	□
<i>Geophilus electricus</i>		■		□	□
<i>Geophilus osquidatum</i>		□	■	□	■
<i>Geophilus insculptus</i>			□	■	□
<i>Necrophloeophagus longicornis</i>	□	■		□	□
<i>Brachygeophilus truncorum</i>			□	□	□
<i>Cryptops anomolans</i>		■			■
<i>Cryptops hortensis</i>		■	□	□	■
<i>Cryptops parisi</i>		□	■	■	
<i>Lithobius variegatus</i>		□		□	□
<i>Lithobius forficatus</i>	□	□	□	□	□
<i>Lithobius melanops</i>			□		□
<i>Lithobius borealis</i>			□	□	
<i>Lithobius tenebrosus</i>			■		
<i>Lithobius crassipes</i>			■	□	
<i>Lithobius microps</i>		□	□	□	□

Obviously the most exciting find of the meeting was Andy Keay's specimen of *Lithobius tenebrosus* from Aberystwyth. Like so many of these finds it was not identified until it was examined afterwards. *L. tenebrosus* has been recorded from Cornwall by F. A. Turk in the 1940s and earlier by Bagnall from the N.W. but its presence in Britain has until now been somewhat in doubt. Quite widespread in Europe, the Welsh coast was an unexpected place to find it so it would be worth searching for it elsewhere.

Including collections made on route, a total of 22 species were discovered during the weekend: 12 Geophilomorphs, all 3 species of *Cryptops* and 7 Lithobiomorphs. It was interesting that neither *L. borealis* nor *L. crassipes* appeared to be especially common, although on this trip there was a definite tendency to collect from disturbed habitats. The widespread occurrence of the two larger *Cryptops* spp. follows a trend previously seen in Somerset last year.

TAKE OVER BID?

A. N. Keay

Over the past five years I have seen a serious decline in *Lithobius microps* in my garden. They are seemingly being replaced by *Cryptops hortensis* which has built up numbers over the same period. Has anyone else noticed this phenomenon? We know that *Cryptops* species are very aggressive but is this the cause of the decline of *microps*?

AGONY COLUMN A reader writes....

Dear Marge,

Sometime ago I joined the B.M.G. I filled in record cards without a thought in the world and it was great fun. I never bothered with things like filling in the vice-county number or putting my code number in the little boxes, in fact I didn't even remember my number. I wrote letters instead of numbers at the start of map references, I never wrote neatly or clearly and I never crossed out the latin names; I just ticked the column farthest from the name or underlined them ambiguously so that it went through half of the name below. Whenever I visited a site I always gave it a different name and never used the one on the O.S. map.

The other side of the card I usually ignored but, if I did fill it in, I put more than one tick in each section and always ticked "other" even though the habitat was on the list, I never bothered to check. Lastly I never filled in the "site conservation status", even for N.N.R.s or S.S.S.I.s, or if I did I only did so for half of the cards from any named site. Life held no responsibilities and the sun always shone.

Then something happened, I fell in with a smooth talker called Harding from I.T.E. who persuaded me to become a Scheme Organiser. The way he described it, the job was full of glamour and Helen Read would think I was wonderful! But it was not like that, everyone was doing just what I had always done, having a good time and leaving me to sort it out. Only a wise old Yorkshireman seemed capable of filling in all the boxes correctly. These days I am losing sleep and my Tippex bottle is permanently empty. What is happening, what can I do?

Worried, Norfolk

Dear Worried,

What you are suffering from is called the "poacher turned gamekeeper syndrome". Its symptoms include Tippex sniffing and writing silly letters in newsletters. Unfortunately there is no known cure.

BULLETIN OF THE BRITISH MYRIAPOD GROUP Volume 5 is still on sale, price £3.00 from Tony Barber, Rathgar, Exeter Road, Ivybridge, Devon. PL21 OBD, U. K.

BISG/BMG MEETING 1989 Enclosed with this newsletter you should find a booking form for the 1989 meeting at Hallsannery Field Centre in North Devon. Don't miss the chance to find *Chalandea pinguis*, a centipede that tries hard to mimic a symphylan! My son has just returned from Devon bringing me *Leptoilulus belgicus*, *Ophiodesmus albananus* and *Cryptops parisi* among other things and he is only nine years old. Just think what we grownups should get up to!

WANTED Andy Keay would like pickled specimens of immature geophilomorphs. He is attempting to describe all of the adolescens stages which, a quick glance through Eason will show, are not at all well known for many species.

NEXT BMG NEWSLETTER No 10, Material for inclusion should reach R. E. J. by the end of February 1989. Material should preferably be typed but floppy discs using Locoscript 1 or 2 for Amstrad 8000 series PCWs are especially acceptable as they save me extra typing.

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Any mis-spellings of Welsh place names in this newsletter are entirely the fault of the Editor and Tony Barber's handwriting.

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*           THIS IS WASTED SPACE
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*           Putting together a newsletter is much easier if there is too
*           much material rather than too little. Short notes and
*           comments can be inserted into small spaces and there is no
*           need for boxes like this. This entire newsletter was written
*           by only three people. Are you all sending your observations
*           to the Bulletin for Miscellanea instead? Let's have some copy
*           for the next edition. Do you like the new format?
*           Is it too much like the SUN?
*           Do you want pictures of Samantha Fox on page three?
*           Write in and tell us.
*
*           Oh dear, I think this editor thing is going to my head.
*           Now where did I put that green eyeshield?
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