

AN INTERESTING EXAMPLE OF REGENERATED APPENDAGES IN *LITHOBIUS CRASSIPES* L. KOCH 1862 (CHILOPODA, LITHOBIOMORPHA)

Mike Davidson

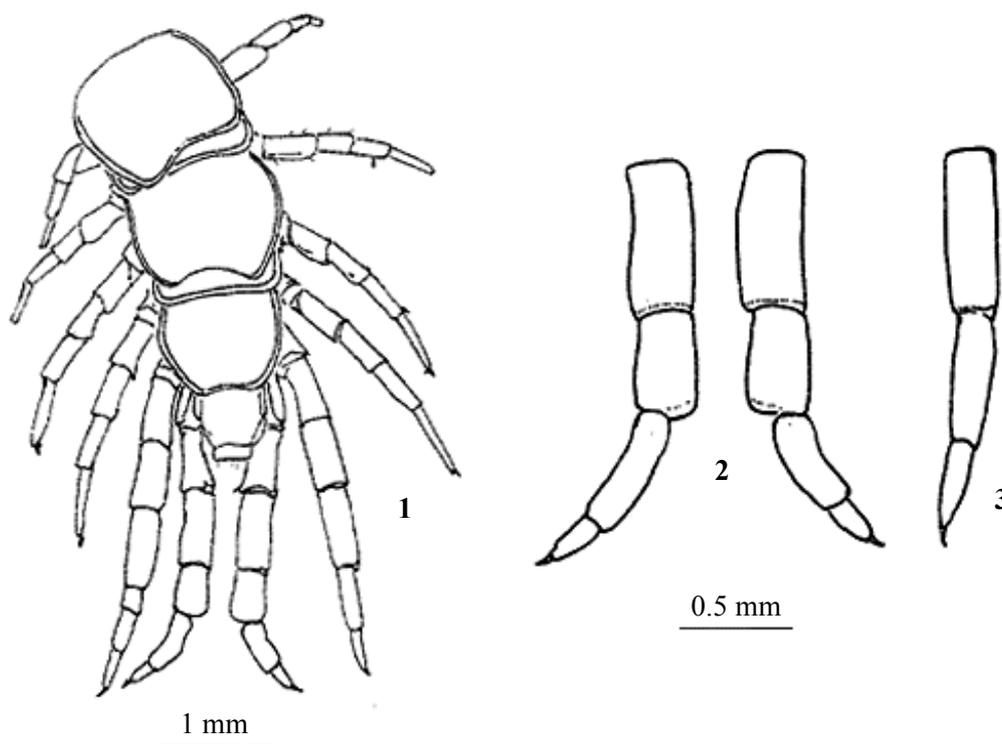
77 Mile-end Avenue, Aberdeen, Scotland, AB15 5PS.

e-mail: mike.davidson55@btinternet.com

The Braes of Gight nature reserve (Scottish Wildlife Trust) is a gorge woodland on the River Ythan, in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. The woodland is a small oasis in an intensive agricultural desert which has been designated as a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone under the EU Nitrates Directive. However, there is much of natural history interest on the reserve and, for those with historical interests, Gight Castle was the home of Lord Byron's maternal ancestors.

A collection of invertebrates was made on 1st June 2006 (at NJ818288) and after all the identifications were completed one unusual male *Lithobius sp.* was left over. This specimen caused some difficulty because both hind legs had equally inflated tibiae and outwardly-curving tarsi and meta-tarsi, initially suggesting perhaps some sort of secondary sexual character. This specimen is illustrated in Figures 1 & 2.

The specimen was referred to A.D. Barber and J.G.E. Lewis who concluded that this was an abnormal specimen of *Lithobius crassipes*, further normal specimens of which had been collected on the same day at this location. The terminal segments of the hind leg of a normal male *L. crassipes* are shown in fig. 3 for comparison.



FIGURES 1-3: *Lithobius crassipes*

1. Dorsal view of terminal segments of male showing deformed hind legs.
2. Enlarged view of the deformed hind legs showing tibia tarsus and meta-tarsus.
3. Terminal segments of right hind leg of normal male for comparison.

Eason (1964) notes that centipedes are able to regenerate lost or broken appendages, with the replacement appendages becoming better developed with each moult. He warns of the importance of recognising the possibility of regeneration, since a regenerated appendage may show abnormal features. Lewis (1981) gives several examples of regenerated appendages within the Chilopoda and provides further literature references for this phenomenon.

It is concluded that that this specimen of *L. crassipes* has suffered bilateral damage at some stage during its development, resulting in a deformed but relatively symmetrical pair of appendages in the adult. No further specimens like this have been found.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Tony Barber and John Lewis for examining the specimen and for their expert advice on its probable identification.

REFERENCES

- Eason, E.H. (1964) *Centipedes of the British Isles*. London: Warne.
Lewis, J.G.E. (1981) *The Biology of Centipedes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.