

SCUTIGERA COLEOPTRATA (L.) (CHILOPODA, SCUTIGEROMORPHA) IN JERSEY, CHANNEL ISLANDS

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The so called 'house centipede', Scutigera coleoptrata has been recorded only rarely from houses in Britain and its extraordinary appearance makes it unlikely to have been overlooked. It has, however, been described as 'well established in the Channel Islands' (Eason, 1964). The actual records in the literature seemed to be only two but a letter from Dr W.J. Le Quesne of St Brelade has allowed us to establish its status more clearly.

Turk (1946) recorded an adult sent to him by Miss Harthan from a bath at St Helier that year (27.5.46). The collector reported that she could remember seeing a similar specimen some seven years before. Browning (1956) reported an immature specimen from in a glass house, St Helier (23.7.50). Dr Le Quesne has drawn my attention to a report by Le Seul, Attenborough and Dobson (1960) of a specimen taken in St Ouen's Bay in July 1959 confirmed by G. Owen Evans. The latter authors comment 'This species has now been found on a number of occasions in Jersey'.

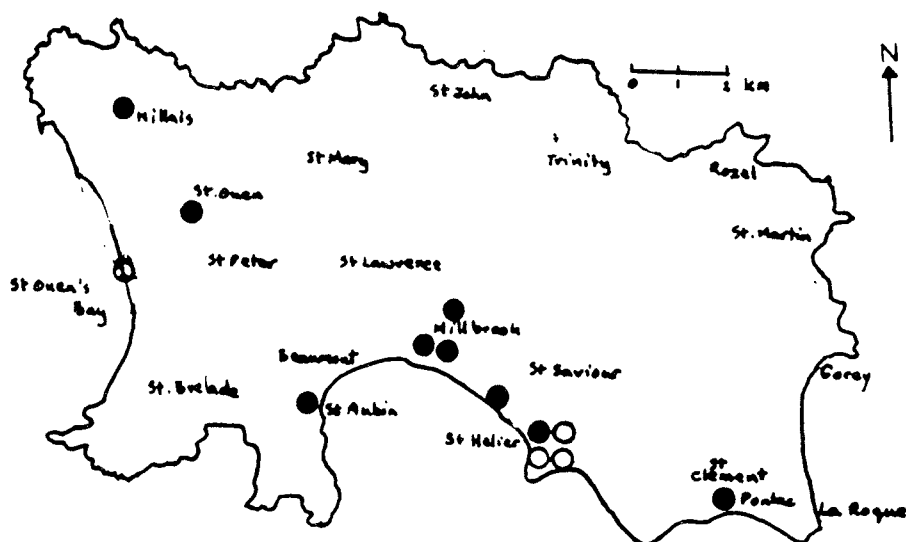
In response to a letter Dr Le Quesne, who had originally reported it from James Road, St Helier where it was causing concern to the residents of a house there, has kindly sent me a list of localities from which it has been reported:

LOCATION	DATE	GRID REFERENCE
Clos de la Chapelle; nr St Aubin's Church	c1985	WV 6048
Millbrook; St Mathew's Vicarage	1988-9	WV 6250
Millbrook; St Mathew's Church Vestry	c1980	WV 6250
First Tower; St Andrew's Road	c1985	WV 6349
Mont Felard; La Pepinière	c1985	WV 6250
Pontac; La Vielle Gare	c1988	WV 6946
St Ouen; Les Hâtiveaux	c1980	WV 5752
St Ouen; Millais	1990	WV 5554
St Helier; James Road	1990	WV 6548
St Helier; Pomona Road	c1950-60	WV 6448

Taking these ten records together with the earlier ones leaves little doubt about the species being well established in the island in suitable locations i.e., buildings including outbuildings apparently. Interestingly we have no records at the present time from Brittany/Normandy nor from Guernsey. The only report from the latter was by Barber and Kime (1971) when only a limited range of species of myriapod were recorded so that it may possibly occur there in buildings.

Records from mainland Britain are extremely sparse; Evans (1907) reported it from a paper mill and a wine cellar in the Edinburgh area and Blower (1955) from Colchester. It was also collected from a house at Hyde, Cheshire about twenty years ago (J.G. Blower, pers.comm.). It is a widespread animal of the mediterranean and elsewhere and is probably conspecific with the Selista forceps (Raf.) of the United States (Brolemann, 1930).

These are photographs of the living animal in Demange (1981).



MAP 1: Jersey showing locations for S. coleoptrata

pre 1960 ● post 1960

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