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## MISCELLANEA

### SOME CUMBERLAND CENTIPEDE RECORDS

1. Lithobius macilentus

On 7/x/1987 a single female L.macilentus was taken at Errerby Scar (NY 389571) near Carlisle. This is the first record of this species in vice-county 70. The centipede was found below an old decaying carpet dumped at the top of the gorge of the River Eden. L.macilentus has a wide distribution in Britain (Barber, A.D. & Keay, A.N. 1988, Provisional Atlas of the Centipedes of the British Isles. BRC, Monks Wood) rarely being common in one place. Such facts are often true for parthenogenetic species, and indeed only females of this species have ever been recorded in Britain. The habitat analysis for L.macilentus given in the atlas does not show any strong preference for synanthropic sites, most records coming from the litter of deciduous woods.

2. Geophilus fucorum seurati

On 3/i/1990 two individuals of this centipede were found below stones on the shore at Ravenglass (SD 08-95-). This is a new record for vice-county 70. The geophilids occurred in a mixture of fine silt, sand and gravel around the high water mark of spring tides, on the seaward edge of the estuary. Other species present were the centipede Strigamia maritima (Leach), the oniscid isopod Ligia oceanica (L.), the beetle Aleochara algarum Fauvel, littoral amphipods, and littorinid molluscs. In the British Isles G.f.seurati is exclusively coastal or estuarine. Its distribution is largely south-western, but a recent Scottish record (Barber, A.D. & Keay, A.N. 1988, Provisional Atlas of the Centipedes of the British Isles BRC, Monks Wood) indicates the possibility of a much wider occurrence. The species has recently been rediscovered in Ireland (Bilton, D.T. in press). Abroad G.fucorum is recorded from the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of France, with the sub-species seurati being known from Algeria. In the future the species may be found to have a wider distribution, since many countries remain poorly investigated for Myriapoda.

3. Cryptops hortensis

On 26/iii/1987, a single adult C.hortensis was found at St. Bees Head (NX 94-13-, VC 70). A further visit on 3/iv/1987 produced more specimens. At St. Bees the centipede was found under loose stones in a area of slumping cliff grassland in the splash zone on the shore. The animals were taken from a mixture of grass litter and heavy reddish clay, together with the isopods Oniscus asellus L. (of which an albino example was found), Porcellio scaber Latreille and Trichoniscoides saeroeensis Lohmander. The only other record to date from vice-county 70 is that of a single female found in an old manure heap at Beechgrove (NY 40-57-) near Carlisle during September 1987. This centipede does often occur in rural sites, but shows a marked preference for synanthropic urban localities, particularly in the north of its British

range. It becomes less frequent from the Midlands northwards, with only three Scottish records (Barber, A.D. & Keay, A.N. 1988, Provisional Atlas of the Centipedes of the British Isles. BRC, Monks Wood). Also from the Atlas note that of all records 73% are coastal (≤15Km from the sea). Coastal sites are well-known as thermal refugia for cold-sensitive species, but the importance of urban sites as such is less well documented. Barber (1985, Bijdr. Dierk. 55:16-24) discusses the role of such localities in the distribution of some British Chilopoda. The distribution of C.hortensis, which is most abundant in urban or coastal localities in southern England seems to suggest that this is a species which reaches the limits of its temperature tolerance in the British Isles. In the far north it may be entirely restricted to seaside thermal refugia and the heat islands provided by towns, though more work is needed here to clarify the situation. It is interesting to note that St. Bees Head also supports two other 'southern' species near the northern edge of their ranges, namely the millipede Polydesmus gallicus (Latzel) and the woodlouse Armadillidium vulgare (Latreille). The former of these is also known from the Beechgrove site (Bilton, D.T. 1988, Bull.Brit.Myriapod Gp. 5:37-38).

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## CLINOPODES LINEARIS (KOCH) (CHILOPODA: GEOPHILIDAE) IN OXFORDSHIRE AND SURREY

In October 1987 this large soil centipede was found to be abundant in sandy calcareous loam below Pinus and Populus in the University Parks (SP 51-07-), Oxford. This represents a new record for vice-county 23. The animals were all found at depths of 3-15 cm in the soil. In the field they closely resembled the common Haplophilus subterraneus (Shaw), but when examined under a microscope the highly characteristic coxal pore arrangement on the last legs was clear. On 17/xii/1989 two large adult C.linearis were taken from litter at Alderhurst (SU 99-69-, VC 17) near Egham. These had almost certainly been forced out of the soil by previous heavy rains. As at the Oxford site the Egham soil was sandy loam which had been cultivated. This centipede is well-known from the Surrey area, but other British records are very few (Barber, A.D. & Keay, A.N. 1988, Provisional Atlas of the Centipedes of the British Isles. BRC, ITE). The species is found as a synanthrope in many parts of northern Europe and Scandinavia, and is believed to be native to the shores of the Mediterranean (Brolemann, H.W. 1930, Fauna de France 25).

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## RECENT RECORDS OF CYLINDROIULUS VULNERARIUS (BERLESE)(DIPLOPODA: JULIDAE) IN THE BRITISH ISLES.

This blind snake millipede was first reported as British by Blower (1985, Millipedes Synopses Br. Fauna (N.S.) 35:1-242), who noted records from Manchester, Swansea, Dublin and the London area, most of these being for ornamental parks and gardens. The species has since been recorded from the Scilly Isles (Jones, R.E. & Pratley, P. 1987. Bull.Brit.Myriapod Group 4:7-15), Cardiganshire (Morgan, I.K. 1988, Bull.Brit.Myriapod Group 5:11-25) and

the New Forest area (British Myriapod Group 1988, Preliminary Atlas of the Millipedes of the British Isles. BRC, ITE). Abroad C.vulnerarius is known from northern Italy where it is believed to be native, and as a synanthrope from Sweden, Holland and Belgium (Blower, op.cit.). To the previously published records I can add the following, all of which are new for their respective vice-counties: 20/iii/1986 Beechgrove (NY 40-57-, VC 70) Carlisle, under plastic sheet in old nursery garden; 1/v/1987 Iffley Road (SP 52-05- VC 23) Oxford, amongst garden rubbish on rich soil; 1/v/1987 Botanic Gardens (SP 52-06-, VC 23) Oxford, in compost heap; 1/iii/1988 St Cross Road (SP 51-06-, VC 23) Oxford, in soil below rotting newspapers; 10/vi/1988 The Queen's College (SP 51-06-, VC 23) Oxford, under paving slab in garden; 7/ii/1990 West's Garden Centre (SP 54-06-, VC 23) Oxford, in compost heap; April 1988 roadside verge (SO 25-16-, VC 42) nr Gilwern, under car tyre. With the exception of the Beechgrove and St. Cross Road sites all these records are for one or two specimens only. At these two localities C.vulnerarius has been monitored at various times of the year, since its discovery until winter 1989/1990. At both sites it has been noticed that the millipede can only be found close to the soil surface from November to April. Surprisingly for a blind species C.vulnerarius was found to be surface active at night when kept in captivity. Blower (op.cit.) notes its occurrence in pitfall traps near Manchester. It seems likely then that this species is capable of dispersing itself, as well as being moved around extensively by man. It is interesting to note that the two colonies examined were both small, containing in the region of 25-50 adult individuals in an area of around 70cm$^2$, and apparently stable in size. Judging by present information C.vulnerarius is a widespread species in England and Wales, occurring in urban and suburban synanthropic localities.

D.T. BILTON

## NOPOIULUS KOCHII (GERVAIS)(DIPLOPODA: BLANIULIDAE) IN TWO SUBURBAN LOCALITIES

Blower (1985, Millipedes, Synopses Br. Fauna (N.S.) 35:1-242) notes that all old British records of this small millipede are erroneous, many arising from nomenclatural confusions. He also indicates that the species may occur in Britain. The first certain record of the species is for an intercalary male from Manchester (Hopkin, S.P. & Blower, J.G. 1987, Bull.Brit.Myriapod Group 4:27-29). Morgan (1988, Bulletin of the British Myriapod Group 5:11-23) details the finding of N.kochii in two sites in Carmarthenshire, and the recent atlas (British Myriapod Group 1988, Preliminary Atlas of the Millipedes of the British Isles. BRC, Monks Wood) also lists records for vice-counties 58, 64 and 67, these being all the British records to date. On 4/vii/1987 N.kochii was found to be abundant under wood and chipboard on soil derived from an old manure heap at Beechgrove (NY 40-57-, VC 70) near Carlisle. This site on the northern edge of the city is a disused nursery garden with a rich fauna of Myriapods (Bilton, D.T. 1988, Bull.Brit.Myriapod Group 5:37-38). The Blaniulid was found to be still present at the site in January 1990. I have also discovered Nopoiulus on the site of a 1960's municipal dump near Donnington Bridge (SP 524043, VC 23) in Oxford. Here it was common in soil below a decaying matress during October 1987. Records of N.kochii to date indicate that it is widespread in England and Wales, always apparently occurring in synanthropic locations.

D.T. BILTON

## DEAD MILLIPEDES, OMMATOIULUS SABULOSUS (L.), ON SAND DUNES AT BRAUNTON BURROWS, DEVON.

On 10 May 1990 during a field trip to Braunton Burrows, Bideford Bay (NGR SS 453353) a large number of apparently dead and dying Ommatoiulus sabulosus (L.) were found by Sixth Form pupils of Taunton School at the top of a large sand dune on both its east and west faces. Twenty-three specimens were collected in addition to three active specimens; two O.sabulosus and one Tachypodoiulus niger (Leach).

Blower (1985) notes that O.sabulosus is often seen in large numbers on the foreshore adjacent to duneland as, for example, on the Lancashire coast at Ainsdale, Newborough Warren, Anglesey and West Gower in South Wales.

It proved difficult to assign the specimens to a stadium using the ocular field method, so the number of rings were counted. Of the 25 specimens of O.sabulosus 23 were females. They has between 46 and 51 rings. Of the two males, one had 48 rings, the other was damaged. Reference to Blower's (1985) data on anamorphosis in Iulidae shows that the specimens could be in any of the stadia IX to XIII in all of which adults occur.

The specimens were collected during a dry period and may have been dying of desiccation.

### REFERENCE

Blower, J.G. 1985 Millipedes. Synopses of the British Fauna No 35
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J.G.E. LEWIS

## LITHOBIUS FORFICATUS (L.) CARRYING A WOODLOUSE

Late in the evening of 10 May 1990 a Lithobius forficatus (female, length 25 mm, coxal pores 7.8.8.6) was observed carrying an Armadillidium vulgare (Latreille) of about 6.5 mm diameter when rolled up. Examination of the woodlouse showed the head, segment 1 and the last 5 segments to be partially crushed.

L.forficatus has previously been reported to feed on woodlice (Cloudsley-Thompson, 1953, 1958).

### REFERENCES

Cloudsley-Thompson, J.L. 1953 A note on the littoral terrestrial arthropods of the Isle of Man. Entomologist 86: 11-12.
Cloudsley-Thompson, J.L. 1958 The effect of wind on the nocturnal emergence of woodlice and other terrestiral arthropods. 1.
Entomologist's Mon.Mag. 84: 106-108

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## ARE ALLOTMENTS SANCTUARIES FOR CENTIPEDES?

Allotments can be surprisingly interesting places for the urban naturalist. I say 'surprisingly' since many of our Association Members (not synonymous with best growers!) are over free in their application of super strength biocides of one sort or another. However the local allotments occupy a very large area surrounded by housing and are bordered mainly by elm hedges containing mature oaks and standard hawthorns and also by rubbish heaps strategically built against boundary fences.

Note that I refer to 'rubbish heaps' - containing cabbage stalks, beer cans, broken glass, old window frames, fertilizer bags, stones and even the occasional ancient garden tool, firmly anchored with copious quantities of soil filched from the vegetable bed. A compost heap is a different matter and less permanent. The tidy gardener will pride himself on his compost heap and will take his rubbish to the local amenity tip. It is the untidy, neglectful allotment holder who provides the best habitat for wild life.

I was bequeathed a large and ancient rubbish heap which contained all the items mentioned above. Unfortunately I wanted the space for flowers so last spring several days were spent carting the offending garbage away. It was not wasted time for I found Lithobius forficatus and three geophilomorph species during my labourings. Haplophilus subterraneus was inevitable and abundant but equally common was Henia vesuviana - my first finding of this species and a great thrill! At 60 mm some of the females seemed incredibly large. A single specimen of Geophilus osquidatum was also collected. Lithobius forficatus was abundant in various sizes and this species like H.subterraneus I often turn up when digging the long-cultivated vegetable plot.

It seems to me that 4 species of centipede within such a small area is a fairly rich habitat and while I am guilty of destroying this particular one. I do not think there is any risk of some of the other even larger heaps being cleared! Acutally I found a specimen of H.vesuviana when forking over the new flower/shrub bed this April so it would appear that they have not all moved home!

My thanks to Tony Barber for checking my specimens and for identifying G.osquidatum. He tells me that neither it not H.vesuviana are unexpected in Exmouth but both are nice finds. He can say that again!

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## AN UNUSUAL HABITAT FOR LITHOBIUS FORFICATUS?

Taking down the shade from a circular fluorescent light in order to insert a new starter I made the usual cursory inspection of the mummified livestock within it. On this occasion there was a very dried out L.forficatus among the expected Diptera and Lepidoptera. It seems unlikely that the centipede would have climed up the walls and across the ceiling to reach its goal so I imagine it crawled down the light flex from the loft above. But surely it is not likely to have been living there from 'choice' and I expect it was carried up amongst the flotsam which is stored in my roof space.

P. IVIMEY-COOK

## HENIA GOES WALKABOUT!

One October morning in 1988, when the air was heavy with mist and the pavements damp, I came fact to face with Hena vesuviana setting out to cross the road. Like all good Samaritans I helped it one its way so it would not get run over. I bet, though, that the minute I was out of footfall it turned and headed back from whence it came like the headless caterpillers I rescued from public footpaths!

One does not often see centipedes out in broad daylight, does one? I assume the damp weather was an attraction.

Pauline Ivimey-Cook

## EDITORS NOTE

The notes from Pauline Ivimey-Cook were sent to us last year and refer to incidents in 1988. It is possible that the record of L.forficatus is in fact due to its climbing of the walls, a vertical movements such as this are well known in centipedes and other arthropods. H.vesuviana has in fact been reported before in the daytime by Ron Daniel of Plymouth.

Eds