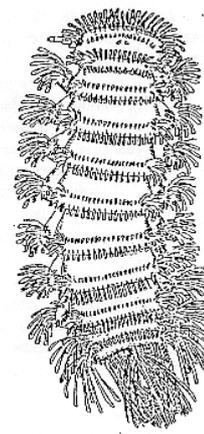




British Myriapod and Isopod Group



Autumn 2008

Newsletter number 17

Editor: Paul Lee

BMIG business

The next BMIG committee meeting is to be held at the RHS gardens at Wisley on Sunday 26th October 2008. On the same day all BMIG members are invited to attend a field meeting in the gardens and glasshouses. The RHS entomologist, Andrew Halstead, has kindly arranged free entry to the gardens and members wishing to take advantage of these arrangements should assemble at the Garden Gatehouse entrance at 14.00. (The Garden is open to the public at 10am and is likely to close in late October at about 5pm.) There is plenty of free parking and various eateries will be open within the gardens if you fancy something more than your homemade sandwiches. For details of how to get to there see www.rhs.org.uk/WhatsOn/Gardens/wisley/wisleyreach.htm. Access to Wisley by public transport is possible but car transport is easier!

Roy Anderson has discovered another Mediterranean millipede from two riverine wooded localities in Northern Ireland. The species has been confirmed by Per Djursvoll as *Polydesmus asthenestatus* Pocock 1894, a native of central Italy from Toscana to Neapoli. Roy is publishing full details of his find in the Irish Naturalists' Journal but will also be writing something for the Bulletin.

Paul Lee, Oakdene, The Heath, Tattingstone, Ipswich IP9 2LX

2009 BMIG AGM and Field Weekend

The 2009 meeting will be held from Thursday 16th to Sunday 19th April 2009 and will be based at Woodland Valley Farm in Cornwall. Woodland Valley is set in Ladock Parish, situated in the very centre of Cornwall about mid-way between St. Austell and Truro. A working organic farm, it is being developed as a centre for education and is home to a micro brewery. The farm is located in a beautiful, secluded valley and includes ancient woodland, ponds, streams, and wetland. Originally a part of the Trethurff Estate (mentioned in the Domesday Book), the farm has been owned by the Jones family since 1960 and is managed on sustainable lines.

There are plenty of opportunities to collect around the farm and in the surrounding countryside and coast including, hopefully, local nature reserves and to visit the Eden Project.

Apart from the inevitable piskies, Cornwall has records for the centipedes *Stigmatogaster souletina*, *Arenophilus peregrinus* and *Lithobius pilicornis*, the millipedes *Chordeuma sylvestre*, *Leptoiulus belgicus* and *Haplopodius spathifer*, and some woodlice too!

The full cost of the weekend including accommodation in shared rooms for three nights and all meals is £120. It is also possible to book for part of the weekend. A booking form should be included with this newsletter. Early booking, by the end of December 2008 would be welcome but all bookings must be confirmed by 1st March 2009. Full details of the programme for the weekend will be published nearer the time but if you have any queries please e-mail me at tony@barber-jones.com
Tony Barber, Rathgar, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0BD

AGM notice

All BMIG members are invited to attend the AGM to be held at 8pm on Friday 17th April 2009. The venue will be the Woodland Valley Farm, Ladock, Cornwall (NGR: SW 908515).

The present committee is keen to receive nominations for new committee members from any BMIG member. Ideally nominations would be communicated to the secretary beforehand but they can also be made from the floor at the AGM.

The J. Gordon Blower myriapod (mainly diplopod) collection in the Manchester Museum

As you all know Gordon Blower was a prolific collector and researcher of the British Diplopoda. He amassed quite a large collection during his lifetime and when he retired he donated the whole collection to the Manchester Museum. Until now this has been stored in good conditions but has not been examined or curated in any way. I have now started the long task of full curation and cataloguing of this nationally most important collection. Full details will be published in the Bulletin in due course (probably in 2010, perhaps 2009 if we finish in time). I have so far completed over 1000 tubes in 52 boxes and there is, at least, as much again. We have some new location records and certainly

some paratypes. It is likely, though at this stage not known, that the Brade-Birks collection is in there somewhere. What condition it will be in is another matter. I have seen at least one piece of paper in a tube labelled "BB" which can only mean one thing in this context. I am liaising with Paul Lee over new records, and Tony Barber for unidentified centipedes. Please contact me if you have specific interests and I will let you know what is present.

Graham Proudlove
g.proudlove@manchester.ac.uk

Corrections to pill woodlouse identification guide

There has been some confusion in recent years regarding the correct identification of the two rather pretty pill woodlice, *Armadillidium pictum* and *A. pulchellum*. As both are of some significance it is important to have reliable determinations. When faced with juvenile *A. pictum* in particular, it can be easily dismissed as an adult *A. pulchellum*. While the FSC publication by Oliver and Meechan (1993) is an excellent guide to British and Irish species, there is unfortunately a typographic mix up between the descriptions of these two species. The following is a brief summary of the errors in the key and species descriptions. A fuller account of the differences between these two species and *A. vulgare* is found in the current BMIG Bulletin (23:9-12) to clarify the situation.

Addendum to Oliver and Meechan (1993):-

Page 86, Identification key, Couplet 6 should read;
"Rear angle of first pereonite **chamfered** (Fig. 36B)
Armadillidium pulchellum
Rear angle of first pereonite **pointed** (Fig. 35B)
Armadillidium pictum"

Page 92, *A. pictum*, species description

Size incorrect - should read; "Small to **9 mm**, can roll into a tight ball."

First pereonite should read; "Rear angle of epimera **acute*** (Fig. 35B)"

* it is perhaps better to use 'smoothly pointed' or 'not chamfered'

Description of male sexual characters correct.

Page 93, *A. pictum*, Fig 35 caption

Size incorrect - should read; "Dorsal view of whole animal, length **9mm**."

Page 94, *A. pulchellum*, species description

Size incorrect - should read; "Small to **5mm**, can roll into a tight ball but leaves a gap."

First pereonite should read; "Rear angle of epimera **chamfered** (Fig.36B)."

Description of male sexual characters correct.

Page 95, *A. pulchellum*, Fig 36 caption

Size incorrect - should read; "Dorsal view of whole animal, length **5mm**."

The descriptions in Steve Hopkin's AIDGAP key (Hopkin, 1991) are correct as are those in Vandel (1962) and Gruner (1966).

References:

- Gruner, H.E. (1966) *Die Tierwelt Deutschlands*. – Krebstiere oder Crustacea. 5. Isopoda, vol.2. Jena: Fischer.
Hopkin, S. (1991) A key to the woodlice of Britain and Ireland. *Field Studies*, 7, 599-650
Oliver, P.G. & Meechan, C.J. (1993) *Woodlice Synopses of the British Fauna No. 49*, Field Studies Council
Vandel, A. (1962) *Isopodes terrestres*. (Deuxieme partie). *Faune de France* no.66. Paris: Lechevalier.
Steve Gregory, Northmoor Trust, Hill Farm, Little Wittenham, Oxfordshire OX14 4QZ
Paul Richards, Museums Sheffield, Weston Park, Western Bank, Sheffield, S10 2TP

Biology of Millipedes reprint

I had thought that the *Biology of Millipedes* by Hopkin and Read was out of print but having contacted OUP I have received a reply that it is available on a print as demand service with an approximately 10 day delivery period. The book is relatively expensive at £65 per copy but is unavailable otherwise. Delivery costs depend on the quantity of the order and where it is being delivered.

Delivery within the UK is set at £3.00

Delivery within Europe is

£5.00 for a padded envelope

£10.00 for a small/ medium sized box

£15.00 for a large box

Delivery to anywhere else in the world is

£10.00 for a padded envelope

£15.00 for a small/ medium sized box

£20.00 for a large box

There is no minimum order quantity. To order copies

contact: The Bookshop

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

116-117 The High Street

Oxford

OX1 4BZ

e-mail: bookshop.uk@oup.com

Helen Read, 2 Egypt Wood Cottages, Egypt Lane, Farnham Common, Bucks. SL2 3LE

The J. Gordon Blower Linnean Society Synopsis of the British Fauna No.35: Millipedes (1985)

As part of the work with the Blower collection in the Manchester Museum I tried to find if there were any second hand copies of this major work available, as neither the Museum nor the University Library have copies. Despite a major search (also carried out by Steve Bolchover) no copies were found to be available anywhere. I trawled the webs of both the Linnean Society and the Field Studies Council but both said that this volume was out of print, and enquiries at book shops elicited the same response. However, emails to the Linn. Soc. and the FSC revealed that the former had 9 copies left in a box and the latter 1 copy. Of the 10, Steve has bought one and I need to keep one for the Museum Library. So there are 8 brand-new, unused, mint condition millipede synopses available. These are the last copies in print anywhere in the world as far as I can tell. Given this rarity they are for sale at £20 each post free. Please contact me if you want a copy. Once these are gone there will be no more available. I am making a profit on these books. This is because I am volunteering to curate the Blower Collection

and all profits will go towards travelling and other expenses involved in this multi-year work.

Graham Proudlove
g.proudlove@manchester.ac.uk

Segmentation in scolopendromorph centipedes

Scolopendromorpha have always been regarded as having either 21 or 23 pairs of legs, the number being constant in species and between sexes. Most forms have 21 leg bearing segments (like our *Cryptops*) but in *Scolopendropsis* and in the family Scolocryptopinae there are 23. This contrasts markedly with the Geophilomorpha the other centipede order in which the young are born with a full number of segments but in which, between and within species and between sexes the number is variable (except within species of Mecistocephalids). The work of Wallace Arthur and colleagues on *Strigamia maritima* explored some aspects of this.

Now, from South America, we have not only a scolopendromorph in which segment number differs between individuals from different parts of its range (*Scolopendropsis bahiensis*) but a new species, reported recently by Amazonas Chagas-Junior, Greg Edgecombe & Alessandro Minelli (Zootaxa 1888;36-46, 2008) in which the leg bearing segment number is 39 or 43 and which has been named *Scolopendropsis duplicata*. What is of particular interest is that this figure is within the range for geophilomorphs but the animal fits comfortably within the Scolopendromorpha.

Tony Barber, Rathgar, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0BD

Spiders' tactics in preying on woodlice

A paper recently made available online in advance of publication in *The Journal of Zoology* contains some interesting observations on predation on woodlice by spiders of the genus *Dysdera*, and how species differences in the manner of attack is related to differences in the shape of the spiders' chelicerae. Using five different species Řezáč, Pekár & Lubin (2008) deprived the spiders of prey for two weeks before presenting them with a woodlouse *Armadillidium vulgare* and watching what happened. Their findings add an interesting perspective on the classic observations by Bristowe on spider-woodlouse predation in British species.

Two species that had elongated chelicerae, *Dysdera abdominalis* and *D. erythrina*, used a pincer like action with one chelicera against the woodlouse's dorsal surface while the other penetrated the soft underside. In contrast, *D. spinnicrus* would grasp the woodlouse with its forelegs and scoop it's chelicerae under the woodlouse to insert the fangs into the ventral surface. This action was helped by the concave dorsal surface of the basal segment of the chelicerae in this species. Another species, *D. dubrovninii*, has flattened chelicerae which could be inserted between sclerites on the dorsal surface. Neither rolling into a ball nor clamping to the substrate would be effective defence against this tactic. Finally, an as yet undescribed *Dysdera* species which has unmodified chelicerae attacked potential prey by

grasping from above. Unlike the other species observed, it failed to capture woodlice.

Reference:

M. Řezáč, S. Pekár, Y. Lubin (2008). How oniscophagous spiders overcome woodlouse armour. *Journal of Zoology* 2008. doi:10.1111/j.1469-7998.2007.00408.x
Not familiar with the doi system for references? Have a look at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_object_identifier

Some recent Cornish myriapod records

During a short stay in West Cornwall in August 2007 a number of centipedes and millipedes were collected from various sites including the gardens at Glendurgan and Trelissick (both National Trust). Since these included several species of interest it seems useful to put these on record with the records from the two gardens listed separately.

Chilopoda:

Stigmatogaster subterranea : near Flushing, Helford, Stithians area

Schendyla peyerimhoffi: Helford

Strigamia maritima: Helford

Arenophilus peregrinus: collected in woodland at Higher Trewithen near Stithians, this appears to be the second record from "mainland" Cornwall and is well away from the coast. The specimen, a female with 45 leg pairs, was examined for me by Lucio Bonato of Padova.

Lithobius variegatus: Stithians village

Lithobius pilicornis: Trewithen nr Stithians, Stithians churchyard, Chapel Porth, Helford

Although specimens of what might have been *Lithobius forficatus* were seen, it was not possible to capture them.

Diplopoda:

Glomeris marginata: Helford

Nanogona polydesmoides: Higher Trewithen (Stithians)

Cylindroiulus punctatus: Helford, Stithians

Ommatoiulus sabulosus: Chapel Porth

Species recorded from Glendurgan

Chilopoda:

Stigmatogaster subterranea

Cryptops hortensis

Lithobius pilicornis

Diplopoda:

Chordeuma sp

Blaniulus guttulatus

Cylindroiulus londinensis

C. punctatus

C. britannicus

Ommatoiulus sabulosus

Julus scandinavicus

Leptoiulus belgicus

Species recorded from Trelissick

Chilopoda:

Lithobius pilicornis

Diplopoda:

Cylindroiulus punctatus

Leptoiulus belgicus

Haplopodoiulus spathifer

A number of the millipedes, including *Haplopodoiulus spathifer*, were determined for me by Paul Lee who commented on this species to the effect that the apparent first legs are actually coxal projections on the second pair and that there are, in fact, a very reduced first pair. This is the first record of this species in the West Country; previous records were from Kew and from the associated sites of Wakehurst Place and Bedgebury.

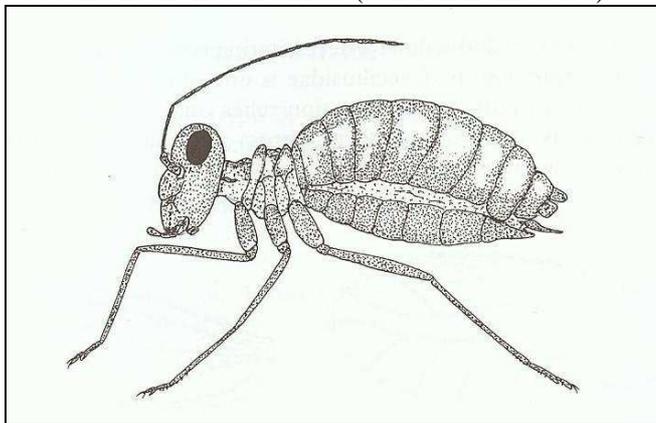
My thanks to Paul for his identifications and comments.

Tony Barber, Rathgar, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0BD

Request for records for Barkflies (Psocoptera) under stones under logs

I have been recently contacted by Bob Saville who runs the Outdoor Psocoptera (Barkfly) Recording Scheme (<http://www.brc.ac.uk/schemes/barkfly/homepage.htm>). The 68 British species are typically found on tree trunks. However, one exception, *Bertkauia lucifuga* (Rambur, 1842), occurs under stones and dead wood in just the sort of places where woodlice, millipedes and centipedes are found. Thus, Bob has asked if BMIG recorders could keep a look out for this species when they are out collecting.

The few records occur though southern England north to the Lothians. On current evidence, it is considered scarce in Britain, but a healthy scatter of records in the Lothians (where Bob is based!) suggests that it is under recorded elsewhere. *B. lucifuga* is a small dark wingless species, which at 2-3 mm in length is about the size of a small Trichoniscid woodlouse. Adults have been recorded from June to October. Habitat preference seems to be broad, ranging from under coastal strandline driftwood, under dead wood in woodland, under stones in grassland and amongst leaf litter at a hedge base. It seems to favour stones or dead wood that lie on the soil surface (rather than embedded).



TR New

If anyone does find a Barkfly under stones or dead wood could they please keep the specimen and contact Bob Saville (bob.saville@blueyonder.co.uk).

Steve Gregory, Northmoor Trust, Hill Farm, Little Wittenham, Oxfordshire OX14 4QZ

AIDGAP key to British centipedes

The long promised AIDGAP key to centipedes is now in its final stages and, hopefully, will be available soon. Many thanks to all those people who have contributed in various ways, especially those who trialled the draft version of the key. Also to Dr Rebecca Farley of the Field Studies Council for her patience & perseverance with the key & with the author!

Tony Barber, Rathgar, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0BD

Myriapod and Isopod courses

Following the success of previous courses, the FSC course "Identifying Centipedes, Millipedes and Woodlice" is being offered again from 6-8 February 2009 at Flatford Mill. Early booking is recommended as places are limited. To book or for further details contact: Flatford Mill, East Bergholt CO7 6UL. Tel: 01206 298283.

Die Hundertfüßer by Jörg Rosenberg

This new textbook on centipede biology (in German) is to be published in March next year. It is available at the pre-publication price of 49.95 euro, a 10 euro saving on the full price. See the publisher's website www.westarp.de for more details.

NEXT NEWSLETTER: Spring 2009

**Please send your contributions to reach the editor by
28 February 2009**

Supplies of record cards and additional copies of the British Myriapod and Isopod Group Newsletter can be obtained from the Biological Records Centre.

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