

BRITISH MYRIAPOD GROUP

Newsletter - October 1984

Honorary Editor - D T Richardson

No. 3

MILLIPEDE SURVEY

D T Richardson

Response to my request for new records, which appeared in the November 1983 Newsletter, has not been great. Just over 1500 individual records have been received but 1000 of these were from Dr Adrian Rundle. The millipede workshop, which I ran for Mrs P Copson at Warwick Museum in May, generated almost 250 records, with several new species for the county. Several surprise packages from Charles Rawcliffe resulted in Peebles, Selkirk, Edinbury and Linlithgow having their distinction, as being the most poorly recorded vice-counties in Great Britain, eliminated once and for all. Over 100 records resulted from the Brancaster meeting, and regular contributions arrive from Dr Steve Hopkin and Keith Alexander. Thank you all very much.

No doubt the almost unprecedented dry weather we have enjoyed for the last 5 months has contributed to the paucity of records, but may I again ask you all to go out and do some collecting and to help swell the records for the Survey.

As for material submitted for identification, no one has had to wait more than 7 days for an answer.

All completed record cards, specimens for identification and enquiries related to the scheme (except requests for supplies of recording cards) should be addressed to: D T Richardson, 5 Calton Terrace, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 2AY. Telephone No: Skipton (0756) 5284.

BMG/BISG MEETING - BRANCASTER 1984

Andy Keay

Yet again, the opportunity to meet and chat together has proved to be one of the most valuable aspects of our field meetings. The field work produced many interesting millipedes, less so for the centipedes. Conditions were certainly not at their best, with the driest spring for some 80 years, and it is a tribute to the collecting skills of the members that so many species were found. We must extend our thanks to the organisers, Dick Jones and Tony Irwin, for the hours of work that they must have put in, on our behalf, to ensure a successful meeting.

A number of "regulars" were sadly missed from this occasion. We hope that they will be able to attend the next field meeting to be arranged by Steve Hopkin at Bangor in North Wales (see details enclosed).

Centipedes recorded in Norfolk - April 1984

Location	<i>L. forticatus</i>	<i>L. crassipes</i>	<i>L. melanops</i>	<i>L. microps</i>	<i>L. calcaratus</i>	<i>C. hortensis</i>	<i>S. maritima</i>	<i>S. acuminata</i>	<i>S. crassipes</i>	<i>N. longicornis</i>	<i>G. carpophagus</i>	<i>S. nemorensis</i>	<i>B. truncorum</i>
Thursford Wood	X							X			X		X
Barney Wood	X					X							X
Swanton Novers	X	X									X		X
Hunstanton Cliffs		X	X										X
Cley	X		X										
Bucks Common	X	X						X					
Ringstead Down	X		X	X					X	X			
Whally Farm	X					X					X		
Snettisham					X					X			
Salthouse	X										X	X	
Whally	X					X							
Brancaster			X				X				X	X	
Dersingham	X		X										
Holme	X	X	X	X		X							
Gore Point				X									

Millipedes recorded in Norfolk - April 1984

Location	<i>B. guttulatus</i>	<i>C. punctatus</i>	<i>C. latestriatus</i>	<i>C. nitidus</i>	<i>C. teutonicus</i>	<i>Craspedosoma rawlinsi</i>	<i>G. marginata</i>	<i>P. angustus</i>	<i>P. gallicus</i>	<i>Proterotulus fuscus</i>	<i>Polymicrodon polydesmoideus</i>	<i>Polyxenus lagurus</i>	<i>I. scandinavicus</i>	<i>O. pilosus</i>	<i>B. superus</i>	<i>T. niger</i>	<i>Unciger foetidus</i>
Thursford Wood	X																
Barney Woods		X	X			X	X	X						X			
Swanton Novers		X	X				X	X		X							
Holme			X	X					X								
Gore Point										X							
Ringstead Downs		X									X			X		X	
Snettisham																	
Brancaster		X										X				X	
Dersingham				X	X			X							X		X

Vice-county Distribution - Centipedes (Table page 5)

The present list is the final one of three covering the distribution of centipedes in the British Isles. Like the others it is an update of a previous list. It should be treated with some caution as errors may have crept in and it includes all the older literature records with a few obvious anomalies missed out. It is hoped that in future a computer listing, based only on records (including literature) in the recording system, will be available. However it is useful to give a general idea of poorly recorded areas.

Channel Islands records are not included; it is hoped to give an account of these in a subsequent newsletter; meanwhile further records from these islands and from Brittany are urgently required. Records from the Scillies are not distinguished but there are clearly some possibilities of rare or new British species occurring there. Work on an old collection of F Turk produced some interesting geophilomorphs, including one not so far identifiable type, from a wood. New collections urgently needed from the Scillies.

Worst recorded areas of Southern England are Suffolk, Essex, Northamptonshire, Wiltshire and Monmouth (Gwent). There are few modern records from Cambridge.

Provisional atlas of Centipedes

With the planned introduction of new recording cards at the beginning of 1985 (see News section), it is intended to summarise the result of the initial survey (1970-1984) in a provisional atlas. BRC is currently processing and checking records. It is essential that all remaining records should reach Tony Barber or Andy Keay as soon as possible and by the end of December at the latest. It is hoped that the provisional atlas will be published towards the end of 1985.

Geophilus pusillifrater Verhoeff

A species answering to this description was collected by John Lewis in Sussex. Dick Jones now has a specimen from a rock crevice in West Cornwall. Elsewhere it is recorded from Yugoslavia; clearly there could well be a nomenclatural problem here since such a distribution pattern is odd, to say the least. Meanwhile, one might anticipate further specimens occurring on the South/West/Welsh coasts.

The "missing" British Centipedes

Certain species of centipede are listed as British and as such may have appeared on the recording card but have so far failed to turn up in recent collections.

Lithobius erythrocephalus C.L. Koch

This has a general European distribution including the Netherlands but no reliable recent British records seem to exist.

It has been described as up to 16 mm long, chestnut brown, antennae about 30 articles, forcipular coxosternite with 2 + 2 rather blunt teeth and no lateral shoulders. Tergites 9 and 11 almost right angled, accessory claw on last legs, female gonopod spurs 2 + 2 long and slender.

Lithobius tenebrosus Meinert (= nigrifrons)

A species widespread in Scandinavia but with no modern British records. Up to 14 mm long, brown to dark brown, antennae 36-43 articles, forcipular coxosternite 2 + 2. Posterior angles of T9, T11, T13 with blunt projections, claw of 15th leg single, female gonopod spurs 2 + 2 rather squat.

Lithobius agilis C.L. Koch

A widespread European species; specimens of L. tricuspis may key out here. There are only two old Irish records from the British Isles.

Lithobius lapidicola Meinert

British specimens assigned to this species are to be regarded as L. borealis and record card data for the two will be amalgamated. L. borealis characteristically has the accessory prefemoral spine on the 15th legs. Any doubtful specimens should be referred on. Confusingly, L. borealis in the North tends to have projections on T9 which may make separation from L. melanops difficult.

Schendyla zonalis Broi. & Rib.

There are no recent records of this species from Britain but specimens of S. nemorensis from the South Coast should be checked. It seems to be a Mediterranean animal, but that does not necessarily mean it does not occur in Britain.

Pachmerium ferrugineum (C.L. Koch)

A very widespread and distinctive species occurring from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean, this was recorded by John Lewis from the Sussex coast. It has not, apparently, been recorded from the French Atlantic coast. Up to 50 mm long, reddish yellow, 43-45 pairs of legs, numerous small pores on coxae of last legs, both dorsally and ventrally. Coastal areas eg under moss, stones etc, in coastal woodland/scrub perhaps on Scottish coast.

Geophilus proximus C.L. Koch

This has similarities to G. insculptus but has a normal claw on the second maxillae compared to the tubercle of the latter species. It does not have the isolated coxal pore on the last legs.

It is known from Scandinavia and the Netherlands and might possibly occur in Britain although all early records are assigned to G. insculptus.

Scutigera coleoptrata (L)

We still await modern British reports of this, which are likely to be from buildings and it may not even be recognised as a centipede. It did persist in a Scottish brewery for a number of years in the nineteenth century and there have been odd reports from greenhouses. It is reported from Jersey but more records to clarify its status there would be useful.

Lamictinus coeculus (Broi.)

This is a very small lithobiid (up to 5 mm long, on ocelli, rather short antennae, likely to be only females) has been found in greenhouses in Denmark, Finland, Sweden, France and Italy. It is also known from Australia, Hawaii, Mexico, Cuba and Tanzania.

It would be worth looking for in Britain in greenhouses, amongst soil and plant pots - it may have been missed, being mistaken for juveniles of another species such as Lithobius microps.

England South: Centipedes

Vice-county Records

		1		2		3		
1234	56789	01234	56789	01234	56789	01234	56789	Species
****	*****	*****	*****	..***	*****	*****	****	Brachygeophilus truncorum
..**	Brachyschendyla dentata
*..	Brachyschendyla monoeci
**..	*..	*..	**..	*..	*..	Chaetechelyne montana oblongocribellata
..*	*..*	..**	Chaetechelyne vesuviana
...*	Chalandea pinguis
..*	*..	Clinopodes linearis
.....**	..**	**..*	Cryptops anomalans
****	*****	*****	****	..**	*..	****	**..**	Cryptops hortensis
..*	*..	*..*	Cryptops parisi
*..**	****	*..*****	****	..**	*****	**..*	****	Geophilus carpophagus
..**	*..	****	**..	*..***	*..	*..	Geophilus electricus
***	*..	Geophilus fucorum seurati
..*	..*	..*	*****	*..*	****	*..**	*..**	Geophilus insculptus
..	*..*	..***	*..*	Geophilus osquidatum
..	Geophilus pusillifrater
****	*****	*****	****	**..	..**	*..**	**..	Haplophilus subterraneus
***	Hydroschendyla submarina
**	*	*..	***	*..	*..*	..***	Lamyctes fulvicornis
.....	..*	*..	..**	**..*	*..	Lithobius aulacopus (macilentus)
..*	*..	*..*	*..**	*..**	*..*	..**	Lithobius calcaratus
*..	***	**..*	****	*..***	*****	****	****	Lithobius crassipes
.....	*..*	*..*	..*	..**	*..*	..*	Lithobius curtipes
****	***	*..*****	***	*..*****	*****	*..***	*****	Lithobius duboscqui (microps)
****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	Lithobius forficatus
*****	**..*	**..	..*	..**	*..*	..***	Lithobius lapidicola (borealis)
*..**	*****	*****	****	***	*..*****	*..**	***	Lithobius melanops
.....	****	***	..**	*..	Lithobius muticus
.....	****	..*	Lithobius piceus
***	*..**	*..	..*	Lithobius pilicornis
..*	Lithobius tricuspis
****	*****	*****	****	*..***	*..	*****	*****	Lithobius variegatus
*..**	**..*	**..*	*****	*****	*****	*****	****	Necrophloeophagus longicornis
*..	Nesoporogaster souletina brevior
.....*	Pachymerium ferrugineum
****	**..**	*****	****	***	..****	*..**	****	Schendyla nemorensis
..*	Schendyla peyerimhoffi
..**	Schendyla zonalis (status?)
.....*	Scutigera coleoptrata
..	*..	****	****	..***	***	****	Strigamia acuminata
..*	**..*	*..*****	*****	***	*..**	*..**	****	Strigamia crassipes
*..**	**..*	*..*	*..**	Strigamia maritima

FLORESCENCE IN GEOPHILUS OSQUIDATUM

Andy Keay

On the 4th March 1984 two immature specimens of G. osquidatum were found in the Avon Gorge (vc 34) Map Ref. 31/5674. Both were located under stones lying on the ground surface within an area of scrub woodland with a ground flora of Ivy (Hedera helix).

When collected, both specimens appeared to be sky-blue in colour for the posterior two thirds of the body length. This colouring remained for some three weeks even though the specimens were immersed in 70% alcohol.

Several days after their initial collection the specimens were exposed under an ultra-violet lamp. This caused both specimens to floresce with a bright blue/green hue for the posterior two-thirds of their body length. Examination of the specimens suggest that this is caused solely by a secretion on the cuticle which can be removed by slight scraping.

At the time of collection in March it was suggested that the blue colouration was due to the cold weather. If this is so we have found a new aid for weather forecasting to go with the established fir cone and seaweed which our forecasters must already use!

WANTED

WANTED: SPECIMENS

Andy Keay

Geophilus carpophagus from Urban/suburban sites.

Chaetechelyne vesuviana with full details of habitat, microsite etc.

WANTED: CENTIPEDES OF THE BRITISH ISLES

Copies of Dr Eason's (1964) book "Centipedes of the British Isles" published by Warne have now apparently become almost impossible to obtain, and fetch prices far above the publication price. Anyone with a copy they do not use, is asked to contact Dick Jones who wants a copy for Kings Lynn Museum.

WANTED: EUROPEAN MYRIAPODS

Any centipedes or millipedes obtained whilst on holiday in Europe will be welcomed by the European Myriapod Survey. In the first instance Desmond Kime or Tony Barber will act as clearing-houses for material.

NEWS

● Bulletin of the British Myriapod Group

The revival of the Bulletin is being actively discussed and updated versions of articles submitted to the previous (unissued) volume, and new material would be most welcome.

Tony Barber has agreed to act as co-ordinator for the present, so please submit material to him.

● New Recording Card

New style "Eurocards" will be used for recording both millipedes and centipedes in the British Isles, as from 1st January 1985.

The new cards are designed for general NW European use and will allow direct comparison between the faunas of different countries, with different species lists but the same habitat categories (suitably translated) being used by participants in the European Myriapod Survey.

RA 13 (Millipedes) will be replaced by RA 59

RA 14 (Centipedes) will be replaced by RA 58

The new cards, and instructions for their use, will be available from BRC in early December. Please return your order form (enclosed), as soon as possible, to BRC.

● BMG/BISG MEETING 1985

Details of the April 1985 meeting are enclosed. Please return the separate form to Steve Hopkin if you are interested in attending.

● BMG/BISG MEETING 1986

What about looking ahead and giving some thought to where we could/or would like to meet in 1986. No time like the present - these things take some organisation. Any proposals to Doug Richardson, Tony Barber or Paul Harding (BRC).

● NEXT BMG NEWSLETTER

Material intended for the next Newsletter should be forwarded to Doug Richardson by 30th June 1985.

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