



British Myriapod Group

Spring 1996

Newsletter number 24

Editor: Dick Jones

WALTZING MATILDA.

A lot has been happening since the last Newsletter; for a start I have been to Australia and I failed to collect any centipedes there at all. It wasn't that I never looked, I turned over most of the logs and stones of south west Australia! For some reason there were no geophilomorphs about. There were plenty of woodlice, mainly *Oniscus asellus* and *Porcellio scaber* from Europe, and a few local species, plus millipedes and some scolopendromorphs. I even found a couple of snakes but, even when I went to places which had produced specimens in the past I still drew a blank. It set me back a bit, here was I, ready to show all these colonials how it was done and nothing. The soil was damp, in fact it was raining for some of the trip, but there were none to be had. Perhaps it was too late in the season, I shall have to go again! Paul Richards went at roughly the same time, although to a different part of Australia, and found quite a few.

I have been busy correcting the computer printouts of the cards Monks Wood has put on computer for us. There are five trays, (I don't know how many cards/records that is) and I have got another tray of cards that have yet to be computerised. Alas, we have gone from being near the top of the list to some way down because Monks Wood has just got a contract for a botanical atlas. In the world of market led research the big guys call the shots unfortunately. Our

present account of £659.89p does not hold much weight when up against the big shots, but I'm sure we will be fitted in somewhere in the next financial year. You can all use the meantime to send in some more cards!

We were asked to send someone to the Conference for the Joint Committee for the Conservation of British Invertebrates. I could not go because of previous commitments but luckily Helen was there and has written about it below.

Our next weekend away is to the Dorset border with Somerset and Devon in April. The Kingcombe Centre is set in an ancient landscape, or so I am told. I don't know what we will find so I shan't make any predictions, but it will be sunny for a change, honest. There are Taunton and Yeovil to explore and there is always the coast at Bridport and Sidmouth to turn up something. See you on April 11.

MILLEPATTIA

This French journal is published more or less twice yearly at 70FF for two issues including postage. The current one includes articles on Le Polyxène by Monique Nguyen & Duy Jacquemin, L'élevage des myriapodes by Jean-Paul Mauriès and one of Jean-Jacques' songs 'Le Jule et la Scutigère'.

Edited by Jean-Jacques Geoffroy it is obtainable from Pénélope, Corcelles basses, F-01340 Foissiat. A combined subscription with its sister publication, Pénélope which deals with arachnids is available.

THE HOUSE CENTIPEDE SCUTIG- ERA COLEOPTRATA (L.) IN LANCASHIRE.

On 23 March 1994, a centipede brought into the Entomology section at Liverpool Museum for identification proved to be a female *Scutigera coleoptrata* (L.). It was caught the previous day by Mr. I. Trickett in his Dingle, south Liverpool, Merseyside, flat which is situated only a short distance from the R. Mersey docks. (SJ 37-87-). He mentioned that similar centipedes had been seen regularly in his home but he found them difficult to capture.

By coincidence, a second specimen, this time alive, was brought into the museum on 5 April 1994 by Mr. P. Livesley, from his flat in south Liverpool and close to the first site. He also mentioned the presence of other specimens in his home and claims to have seen several at one time. In October 1994, he brought in another live specimen and presented it to the Natural History Centre. These records are very interesting and show that *Scutigera coleoptrata* may have managed to establish itself in this part of south Liverpool, probably having been imported through the docks.

I have not been able to trace any previous examples of this species in Lancashire, at least in recent years, and it is possible that the above specimens are the first for the county.

Chris Felton

OBITUARY

I have just heard that F. A. Turk passed away after a short illness on 14 February 1996. No doubt there will be a detailed obituary in a future Bulletin.

A RECORD OF CRYPTOPS ANOMALANS NEWPORT IN LANCASHIRE

On 19 November 1993 I found a dead *Cryptops* centipede in a basement room in Liverpool which was clearly larger than the common *C. hortensis* Leach when compared with this species. Using Eason (1964), I concluded that the specimen resembled *C. anomalans* Newport, especially in possessing the diagnostic dorsal carapace character of this species, although the forcipular sternite characters appeared closer to the remaining British species *C. parisi* Brölemann. I sent the specimen to Tony Barber who said in reply that he had no doubt that it was *C. anomalans*. This centipede is largely, if not entirely, synanthropic in Britain and is apparently common in London gardens. There are also scattered records for south west England and south Wales (Barber & Keay, 1988). The room in which the Liverpool specimen was found has a short tunnel on one side that leads out into an area of flower beds and a grass lawn. In view of its known distribution in Britain, and the fact that I have not found any further specimens, it is likely that this record of *C. anomalans* here, the first for Lancashire, is an isolated one.

References

- Barber, A. D. & Keay, A. N. 1988 *Provisional atlas of the centipedes of the British Isles*. I.T.E.
Eason, E. H. 1964 *Centipedes of the British Isles*. London. Warne.
Chris Felton

ORKNEY

Orkney and Shetland, off the north coast of Scotland, are of considerable biogeographical interest both because of their separation from the mainland and for the fact that they were for a long period under Scandinavian, rather than Scottish (i.e. Edinburgh based), influence. Shetland was collected on in 1974 by two groups and also by Jon Daws in 1992. A report on the centipedes was published in the Bulletin in 1986. The most interesting find was *Geophilus proximus* on Unst. It has not been recorded subsequently for Britain. There have also been isolated records from Fair Isle.

Orkney has been visited at various times by Charles Rawcliffe who has produced valuable records and more recently by Gordon Corbet.

I visited the Orkneys in August of last year (1995) for a holiday, driving up from the west country. The journey was comparatively straight forward with motorways and good roads (or empty roads) for much of the journey and we made sufficient progress to include Loch Eribol but not Cape Wrath. On the basis of our experience I would not recommend Thurso for an overnight stay, there are lots of other possibilities around the area!

It was on the journey over, as the Old Man of Hoy drew into view that the weather, which had been magnificent as you may recall, began to rain. Our time in the islands was during what was, even for Orkney, unseasonable wind and rain with bright periods.

The islands are, however, fascinating and well worth a visit and inter-island journeys are straight forward and quite cheap. Tree cover is virtually absent apart from plantations (mostly Sycamore) although Berriedale Wood on Hoy is the most northerly, natural woodland in Britain apparently. Despite the latitude the islands are bathed by the North Atlantic Drift and, if shelter is provided, a surprising range of plants, including fuschia may be grown in gardens.

Had the weather remained warm and dry I expect we would have had a better holiday but found fewer myriapods, a number of which were seen. Orkney is a great place for twitching and even I was able to recognise the bonxies and arctic skuas, and we saw the site where the last great auk was killed on Papa Westray. It is also an incredible place for anyone with even a passing interest in archaeology.

I did find *Proteroiulus fuscus* which, I think, is new to the islands but otherwise the species were similar to those of Charles and Gordon.

Total records for VC111 so far

Diplopoda

Nanogona polydesmoides
Archiboreoiulus pallidus
Boreoiulus tenuis
Proteroiulus fuscus
Cylindroiulus latestriatus
Cylindroiulus punctatus
Brachyiulus superus
Polydesmus angustus
P. inconstans

Chilopoda

Strigamia maritima
Geophilus oligopus
G. carpophagus
Brachygeophilus truncorum
Lithobius forficatus
L. melanops
L. borealis
L. crassipes
Lamyctes fulvicornis

A more formal report will be written for the Bulletin in due course but meanwhile, if you want a change from the Costa Bomb..... I would appreciate any specimens or records and will pass them on to the Orkney Field Club who made me very welcome at one of their field meetings.

Tony Barber

CONFERENCE ARRANGED BY THE JOINT COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION OF INVERTEBRATES.

BIODIVERSITY OF INVERTEBRATES.

The JCCBI is a forum for discussion about issues relating to the conservation of invertebrates. It consists of representatives from various societies and groups concerned with invertebrates such as the British Dragonfly Society, Dipterists Forum, Butterfly Conservation etc. This was the first conference it has organised, which aimed to bring together the different societies with organisations like JNCC and English Nature to talk about future directions for the JCCBI.

In the morning talks were given which outlined what has happened since the Rio Conference in terms of biodiversity. To briefly summarise:-

There is a Government commissioned document which has been produced and is divided into two main parts, one dealing with species conservation and the other with habitats. The species action plans list 467 invertebrates for which it is anticipated that action plans will be produced, 46 have been completed so far. As far as habitats are concerned there are 36 key habitats of which 14 action plans have been produced and the rest are due in the next 3 years.

The complete list includes 7 millipedes: *Polydesmus coriaceus*, *Trachysphaera lobata*, *Nanogona polydesmoides*, *Metainulus pratensis*, *Melogona scutellare*, *Chordeuma sylvestre* and *C. proximum*. But no centipedes. Well done Paul Harding for getting some listed.

The Government's response to this document is due this spring, obviously it would be ideal if it would be made policy but it is more likely to just endorse it.

These are of course national action plans but it is anticipated that there will be local ones too. Local plans may be organised and co-ordinated by different organisations in each area (in my area for example it is the Bucks., Berks. and Oxon. Naturalists Trust). Many areas have not yet started to think about local biodiversity action plans let alone thought about who should co-ordinate them. These will have their own priorities, plans, species and habitats.

Members of groups such as BMG can have a significant impact in helping with local plans, these could include future monitoring as well as drawing up the initial plans. As members often have significant information about animals and habitats in their local area they can play a valuable part in these local plans. Please listen out for local details and don't forget to put in a plea for invertebrates so that they do not get forgotten.

The afternoon of the conference was spent talking about the roles specialist invertebrate groups and societies can play both in the biodiversity plans and in the wider picture. These included ideas like specific surveys, co-ordinated research and identifying key sites for taxonomic groups.

The JCCBI are also organising a field meeting to which members of all groups and societies are invited. Although not an ideal time of the year for myriapods the details are given here in case anyone would like to attend.

I have now been invited to represent the BMG on the JCCI at meetings and hope to bring you more news in the future.

Helen Read

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Centipedes and Millipedes from the Channel Islands (especially Jersey) and Normandy / Brittany are still required.

Tony Barber & REJ

CHESHIRE

Cheshire Wildlife Trust are seeking all records of myriapods for the county as part of their Biodiversity Audit. Contact Kelly Newton, CWT, Grebe House, Reaseheath, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 6DA

FIELD MEETING

July 27 New Forest, Hampshire. MV Paul Waring (01733 571917)

Meet at 14.30 & 20.00 hrs at SZ272997 at the car park at Set Thorns Inclosure. To record heathland wildlife and search for the Speckled Footman moth *Coscinia cribraria*. We aim to cover the heaths of Boundway Hill, Long Slade Bottom, Hinchleslea, Holmsley and around Burley, including Goatspen Plain and Picket Plain, dividing into groups where necessary. If it is a wet or windy night, we will run traps in Set Thorns and Wilverley Inclosures where we also have permission for day work. Bring all over-night gear. A joint meeting for all the societies which compose the Joint Committee for the Conservation of British Invertebrates (JCCBI). The media might be present but you can join one of the groups which will avoid them if you would prefer.

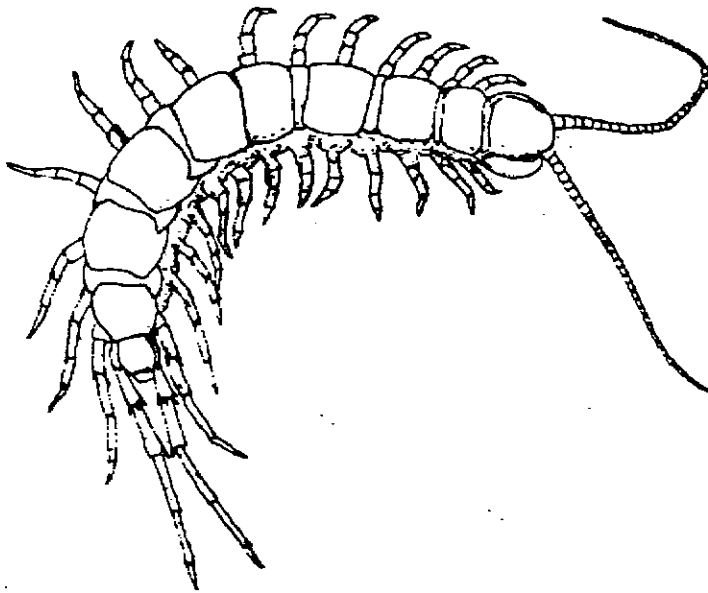
BULLETIN 12

Volume 12 of the Bulletin of the British Myriapod Group is due out at Easter 1996. This edition will contain papers on *Haplopodoiulus spathifer*, *Anthogona britannica*, *Polydesmus barberii*, *Melagona voigtii* and *Anamastigona pulchellum* all new to Britain among other things. Copies may be obtained from Tony Barber. Back issues for many volumes are still available at £3 plus postage and photocopies of the remainder can be obtained at the same price.

CAN YOU LIVE WITHOUT IT?

Millipedes, Centipedes and Woodlice of the Sheffield area, by Paul Richards. Priced at £5.00 (+43p p&p.). Contains many keys, distribution maps of the area etc. It is a must to read, if only to discover the worlds most prominent spelling mistake!

British Myriapod



ADDRESSES FOR CORRESPONDENCE

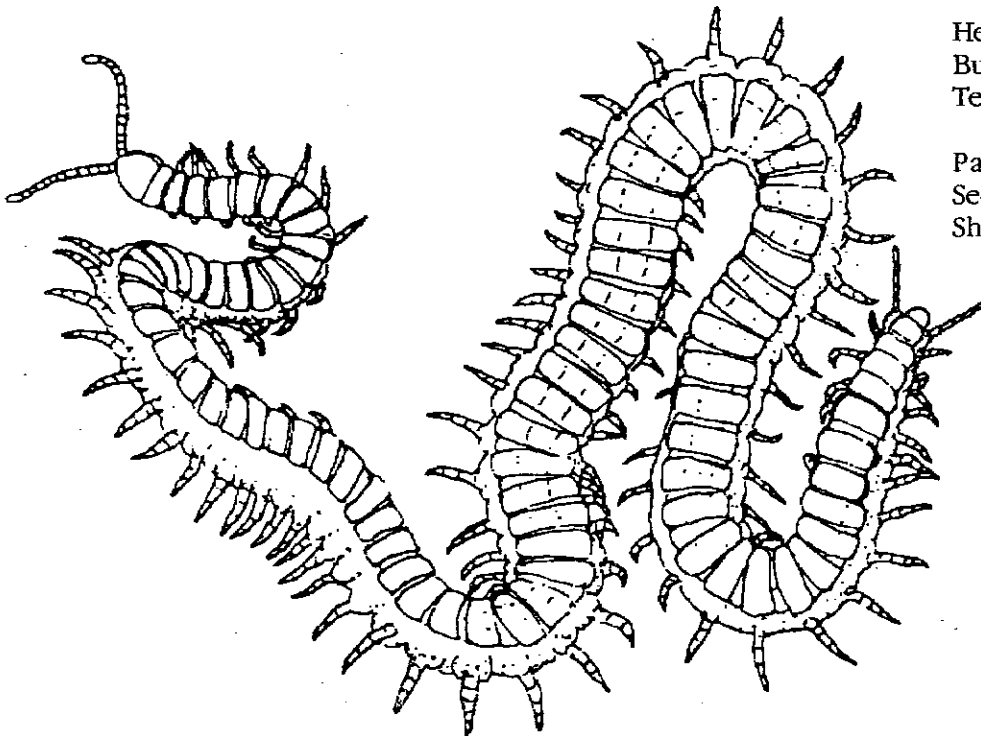
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NEXT BMG NEWSLETTER.

This will be out in the spring. Material for inclusion should reach R.E.J. by 30 September 1996.

Supplies of record cards and additional copies of the British Myriapod Group Newsletter can be obtained from the Biological Records Centre (BRC). Changes of address should be notified to Dick Jones or BRC. If you no longer wish to receive the BMG Newsletter, please notify BRC in writing.

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