



British Myriapod Group

Autumn 1996

Newsletter number 25

Editor: Dick Jones

WHAT WE DID IN COPENHAGEN

While talking late one night during the field weekend we were interrupted by an ambulance that had come for Gordon Corbet. Fortunately he is all right. It seems that an allergic reaction to yew pollen from Kingley Vale was to blame, and after a couple of days in hospital he was back home and, more to the point, back in the field. All this came back to me when I went to Copenhagen for the 10th International Congress.

I was sitting in a lecture when I started to feel, well, funny. The next I knew I was lying outside the lecture theatre with lots of myriapodologists looking down at me. An ambulance had been called so, though I didn't think there was anything wrong, I went to the hospital which was just around the corner. A few questions and instead of letting me go I suddenly found my clothes being removed, a drip being fitted into one hand and blood being taken for a sample from the other! Oh well I thought, someone is taking this more seriously than I am, better lay back and see what happens.

I was finally let out on the Monday, after the Congress was over! They even paid for the taxi to the airport which made an NHS raised Briton feel a bit light headed! I'll gloss over the visit but note that in Denmark the biodegradable pitfall traps (BMG Newsletter No.11) are replaced by polythene ones. I missed most of the conference and I never had time to talk to all the people

that I intended to but at least they will know who I am next time!

John Lewis had to go back early as well for family reasons and that left poor Helen to go back in the car on her own! (See below) Despite her laid back style she packed my tent and all that went with it, came and saw me in the hospital often and even sorted out my flight. Thanks Helen.

Have you heard about the National Biodiversity Network? I went to a meeting of Scheme Recorders and other people at the JNCC in Peterborough. The plan is that the JNCC, NERC, The Natural History Museum and the Wildlife Trusts have all joined forces to bid for 50% of a £35,000,000 bid to the Millennium Commission. If it all goes ahead we could be on the Net by the year 2000! Just think, if you want to know the distribution of *Necrophloeophagus flavus* you can just call up the relevant map on the Internet and, Bob's your uncle, there it is. Or just ask the recorder what's what? All well and good but not everyone was too happy with an idea that apparently relies on the Recorders to do much of the work. For a start there are a lot of Schemes that have a lot of cards filled in and stored away but who is going to actually put the records onto a computer? Also, who provides the other 50% of funding? It is an interesting idea and it will save BRC if it goes ahead but I await the future with a certain amount of trepidation.

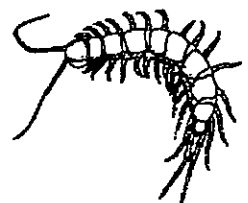
A you can see from the note at the end of the newsletter, yes the bit that you do not bother to read, I am now on the internet. My e-mail address is rej@premier.co.uk and

I hope to be inundated with news for the next newsletter via e-mail!

Well, the Dorset weekend has come and gone, (see the piece by John Hunnisett below). My forecast of good weather was way off the mark so I think that I shall predict nothing in future! Next year we shall go to Galloway which is a big empty space as far as centipedes and millipedes are concerned. There will probably be instructions with this Newsletter. Also we decided on Ireland for the year after. We have two years to get the trip organised and to save up our pennies. Paul will report on the progress.

Cards still come in at a fairly constant rate especially from Scotland where Gordon is slowly amassing a pile which is slowly spreading out from the hinterland of Fife. Martin Cawley has just produced a paper on *Distribution Records for Uncommon Millipedes (Diplopoda) including Thalassiosobates littoralis (Silvestri) New to Ireland*. I've mislaid his letter but it is going to be in *Ir. Nat. J.* I think.

Finally, if you have tubes and identifications with me which have not been done yet then apologies and I hope to get them done this winter. I usually turn them around fast but this summer has just flown by and I have had a lot on my plate so they have just had to wait. If you think you have been forgotten I don't mind if you remind me, you may have been!



Just over a year ago I had the misfortune to become interested in a millipede which was turning up quite frequently in my back garden. Being an inquisitive sort of person I bought Blower's book on the identification of millipedes only to find that this species (*Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus*) had not yet been recorded from Dorset. From that moment I hit a downward spiral. I got in touch with Dick who sent me some additional information and Paul who sent me a mountain of record cards and both left me to my own devices until just before Xmas when an inconspicuous brown envelope came through the door inviting me to a weekend with the British Myriapod Group at the Kingcombe Centre in Dorset. I was a mere beginner with virtually no experience so this couldn't be for me, but on the other hand it was in my backyard.

I promptly forgot all about it for a couple of months until having one of those rare periods of tidiness, a complaint that affects most collectors at some time or another, I came across it again. This time I phoned Paul to book a place. Alas all residential places were booked, but by this time I was hooked, so non residential it had to be.

My original intention was to attend on the Friday and Saturday but when I received information on the weekend I saw that a Mr Barber was holding a centipede workshop on Thursday night. As I had hesitantly identified one of my rare catches as *Strigamia acuminata*, a species which according to a list from Andy had not been found in Dorset, I just had to go to get a positive identification. On the Thursday night I arrived in plenty of time for the workshop only to find on entering the building that confusion reigned and dinner had not yet started. This immediately put me at ease as I was now aware that even the eminent leading lights in the field of

myriapodology can occasionally get it wrong.

Eventually dinner was over and the workshop began. Tony's talk on identification made it sound dead easy. (Although I must admit that later in the weekend I did hear him say there were times when he couldn't be positive. Of course I knew he was only kidding, after all he did write a set of keys). Taking my heart in my hand I approached him with my specimen to ask his opinion. "Has it got the right number of legs" he asked. "Yes" says I. "Then its right then, easy isn't it" says he, end of conversation. This left me a bit confused as after all I had taken nearly two weeks to reach that decision. But its amazing what a bit of confidence, or is it experience, can do for one.

The next day it rained, I found out later that it was the wettest day so far in 1996. I was becoming more convinced that although this motley crew might be brilliant at naming obscure woodlice which I had difficulty in seeing with a lens, their organisational qualities weren't up to much. The previous weekend was much more pleasant. It rained on Portland in amongst the gravestones where Tony found *Armadillidium depressum*, very apt! It rained whilst we were walking along the promenade where I heard John Lewis, quite seriously say "Sometimes I wonder why I do this." I've got to admit by this time I was beginning to wonder a bit myself. However on the way back we were lucky enough to get caught in one of Weymouth's usual traffic jams where we kept quite dry for about half an hour. It rained in the afternoon for our visit to the ancient parkland of Melbury Park. Paul Harding was kind enough to suggest that 4:30pm would be perhaps a better time to head back rather than 5:00pm due to the inclement weather. Personally

2:30pm sounded just fine to me. Fortunately I did find a large tree with extremely interesting lichens on the leeward side, or perhaps it was just drier there. By 3:30 I realised these guys weren't all super human predators after all as groups were starting to mass by the cars for an early return to a dry common room with coffee and cakes.

It was during dinner that I got a true flavour of the group. The conversation reminded me of my last visit to a shop in North Wales where the language could change from English to Welsh without a break in the flow, only in this case it was from English into a barrage of Latin names which most of the time I find impossible to pronounce. By the end of dinner I was sensing that my constant desire to take an interest in all fields of natural history is a common trait amongst like-minded people and it was this that made me feel that perhaps I did belong here after all. As Eric Philp said to me "The main thing is to enjoy what you're doing".

On Saturday some of us saw the sun and a good selection of species on Powerstock Common whilst Paul Richards & Co found The George in Bridport. It's amazing what difference a spell of dry weather can do for one's enthusiasm and thirst.

To sum up I can say that I enjoyed the weekend despite the weather, I met some friendly, well informed people, and picked up many collecting tips. I also picked up some tasks which I wasn't expecting like the writing of this account, an interest in Steve Hopkin's Collembola Recording Scheme and a tempting chance to become involved in the Harvestman Recording Scheme. And I'd thought I'd just retired from work!

John Hunnisett

10TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF MYRIAPODOLOGY.

The 10th International Congress of Myriapodology in Copenhagen this summer turned out to be a rather different experience for most of the British Contingent.

For a start, in order to keep the costs down we had decided to camp. John Lewis, Dick Jones and I set off in the car from Burnham Beeches and, after crossing the Channel to Calais we drove, getting vaguely lost in Belgium where the sign posting left a bit to be desired, and overnighed near Bremmen, Germany. I had found a nice camp-site in Copenhagen situated in an old fort beside the sea and we settled in. Despite coming in for a certain amount of stick from the other delegates we were happy! The conference was its normal mix of people from a wide range of countries. USA was quite well represented and there were delegates from Russia, India, Sierra Leone, New Zealand, Zimbabwe and Argentina. Many were able to attend because of the bursaries Henrik Enghoff had been able to arrange.

The first day or so concentrated on the use of various techniques including molecular ones to elucidate arthropod phylogenies; are the Crustacea more closely related to insects than to the Myriapoda and such like.

The key note speech given by Jonathan Coddington concerned biodiversity. He showed us a slide of the largest expedition of Arachnologists consisting of three members. Did anyone ever tell him about the BMG Hungary trip? By the excursion on Wednesday we were all getting into the swing of things. A visit to some very old oak trees and a good Danish lunch helped stimulate discussion but it was after this that disaster struck. First of all John discovered that his mother in law had been taken seriously ill. Whilst he was arranging a flight home Dick was taken to hospital feeling unwell.

Whilst I waited to see what fate would befall me (Bad things go in threes don't they? Or in my case this year 33's!) I attended some interesting talks on locomotion and

ecology and chaired a session where the only serious threat to time keeping the whole week occurred with one of the invited speakers (Whoops!). In between I learnt to find my way around Copenhagen hospital and failed to find Dick an English paper to read. We also held a meeting concerning the Hungarian material/paper with two out of five people absent! By the end of the week I was still miraculously untouched! The farewell party in Tivoli was a good 'do' but also a rather sad time when we had to say goodbye to everyone until next time (probably Poland, possibly New Zealand). On Saturday morning, having established that Dick was likely to fly home on the Monday, I headed homewards. It was a rather quieter journey than anticipated with an overnight stop in Holland, I even managed not to get lost in Belgium! Perhaps next time we could have a few more British delegates so that I could have some company on the way home!!!!

Helen Read

DORSET (AND SOMERSET) CENTIPEDE RECORDS

Andy Keay in a recent list of vice county records (Bulletin BMG 9, 1993) listed some 18 species for vice county 9 (indicated* in the following list). This did not include *Lithobius borealis*, *Strigamia acuminata*, *Geophilus electricus*, *G. oligopus (insculptus)* and *Cryptops parisi* which had been recorded at the 1991 BMG/BISG meeting or earlier and for which it is likely that record cards had not been completed at the time that he wrote his report. In September 1992 A. J. Rundle collected *Pachymerium ferrugineum* at Durlleston Bay (reported in the BMG Newsletter 18).

A further 3 outdoor species, *Brachyschendyla dentata*, *Geophilus osquidatum* and *G. fucorum* are added by the members of the 1996 meeting giving a total of 27, which compares with 29 for the adjacent but more extensively worked South Devon and 30 for the

Isle of Wight given in the report. In addition Paul Lee has collected *Lithobius lapidicola* from an unheated greenhouse at Abbotsbury Gardens.

Geophilomorpha

Haplophilus subterraneus
Schendyla nemorensis *
Brachyschendyla dentata
Henia vesuviana *
Strigamia acuminata
S. crassipes *
S. maritima *
Pachymerium ferrugineum
Geophilus carpophagus *
G. electricus
G. oligopus
G. osquidatum
G. fucorum
Necrophloeophagus flavus *
Brachygeophilus truncorum *

Scolopendromorpha

Cryptops anomalans *
C. hortensis *
C. parisi

Lithobiomorpha

Lithobius variegatus *
forficatus *
L. melanops *
borealis
L. macilentus *
L. pilicornis *
L. calcaratus *
crassipes *
L. microps *
L. lapidicola (greenhouse)

There are likely to be further species in the county such as *Schendyla peyerimhoffi*, *Hydroschendyla submarina*, *Henia brevis* and *Lamyctes fulvicornis* which will be found if sought for appropriately and possibly others too. An old record of *S. zonalis* from the coasts of Devon & Dorset by R. S. Bagnall should be treated with caution pending further British records.

Tony Barber

DORSET (AND SOMERSET) CENTIPEDE RECORDS

Collectors: John Lewis JL Paul Lee PL John Hunnisett JH
Eric Philp EP Gordon Corbet GC Paul Richards PR
Tony Barber TB Dick Jones RJ Steve Gregory SG

Locations:	Map Ref.	
KC	Kingcombe	30/5599
PC	Churchyard, Portland	30/6872
PB	Chesil Beach, Portland	30/6675
PW	West Weare, Portland	30/6873
PO	Waste site, Portland	30/6971
PK	Powerstock Common	30/5396 to 5497
LO	Loscombe Reserve	30/5098
EH	Eggogdon Hill	30/5395
SW	Swyre	30/5288
WB	West Bexington	30/5286
AG	Abbotsbury Gardens	30/5685
AY	Abbotsbury	30/5784
AB	Chesil Beach, Abbotsbury	30/5684
EY	Eyepes Mouth	30/4491 to 4490
BP	Bridport	30/4692
BF	Burton Freshwater/Bradstock	30/4789
BW	West Bay, Bridport	30/4789
WE	Weymouth	30/6782
LR	The Spittles, Lyme Regis	30/3493
MP	Melbury Park	31/5705
BL	Blackford	31/62
WC	West Camel	31/52
WI	Wincanton	31/72

Haplophilus subterraneus
Schendyla nemorensis
Brachyschendyla dentata
Hentia vesuviana
Strigamia acuminata
S. crassipes
S. maritima
Geophilus carpophagus
G. osquidatum
G. fucorum
Necrophloeophagus flavus
Brachygeophilus truncorum
C. hortensis

C. parisi
Lithobius variegatus
L. forficatus

L. melanops
L. borealis
L. pilicornis
L. calcaratus
L. crassipes
L. microps

L. lapidicola (greenhouse)

MP EY AG KC EH PC PW PK BP AB BL
WI
KC MP PK EH LR
PB
AB PB PW WE BW EY BF
PK
PK
PB PW
AB MP PK AG BW BP BF BL WC WI
SW AG MP BL WC
AB
MP AB KC BF
EY MP KC PK LR AG
EY BP AG PB AY KC PK PW LR MP BF
BL WC WI
PC
EY KC MP PK LR PO LO AG BL
BF MP AG AB AY PC PW PK SW WB EY
LR KC BP WC WI
MP EY LR BW AB WC
PK
BP WI
PK
MP
BP KC MP EH PK WB EY LR PO PC BF
BL WC WI
AG

DORSET (AND SOMERSET) MILLIPEDE RECORDS

SPECIES	BF	BP	EY	AG	AY	LO	PK	KC	PB	MP	WC	BL	WI
	30									31			
	48	49	49	58	58	59	59	59	67	50	52	62	72
<i>Archiboreoiulus pallidus</i>										.			
<i>Blaniulus guttulatus</i>				.				.	.	.
<i>Brachychaeteuma melanops</i>		.	.							.		.
<i>Brachydesmus superus</i>			.	.	.	.		.		.	.	.	.
<i>Brachyiulus pusillus</i>	.									.			
<i>Cylindroiulus britannicus</i>				.				.		.			
<i>C. punctatus</i>		.	.	.	.	.	.	.		.	.	.
<i>C. vulnerarius</i>				.									
<i>Glomeris marginata</i>								.					
<i>Julus scandinavicus</i>										.			
<i>Macrosternodesmus palicola</i>		.		.						.			
<i>Melogona scutellare</i>				.									
<i>Nemasoma varicorne</i>										.			
<i>Ophiodesmus albonanus</i>		.		.						.		.
<i>Ophiulus pilosus</i>				.						.		.	
<i>Polydesmus angustus</i>				.		.		.		.
<i>P. gallicus</i>			.	.	.	.		.			.
<i>P. inconstans</i>				.									
<i>Polyxenus lagurus</i>		.											.
<i>Proteroiulus fuscus</i>				.				.		.		.
<i>Tachypodoiulus niger</i>				.	.	.		.		.	.	.

NEXT BMG NEWSLETTER.

This will be out in the spring. Material for inclusion should reach R.E.J. by 28 February 1997.

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 E-mail rej@premier.co.uk or BRC. If you no longer wish to receive the BMG Newsletter, please notify BRC in writing.

Biological Records Centre, ITE, Monks Wood, Abbots Ripton, HUNTINGDON PE17 2LS
Tel: 01487 773 318 Fax: 01487 773 467 E-mail: pha@wpo.nerc.ac.uk

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