

# BRITISH MYRIAPOD GROUP, NEWSLETTER No. 10

March 1989 Editor: Dick Jones

THE SPAGHETTI MILLIPEDE - THE PLOT UNRAVELS - but not yet!

R. E. J.

Charles Rawcliffe tells me that the glory of first finding *Cylindroiulus salicivorus* falls not on his shoulders but onto Rundle's. Adrian, stung by my jibe about dandelions, wishes to point out that he has been too busy lately to look at anything, let alone dandelions. He agreed to produce an account of finding this species and several other new hot-house ones but as it has missed the deadline it will appear in the next Newsletter.

The latest official addition to the British centipede list is *Nothogeophilus turki* Lewis, Jones & Keay 1988 which was described in the Journal of Natural History.

Having written about winter collecting in the last Newsletter and said how easy it was I have found this winter rather unproductive apart from one day that turned up *Brachychaeteuma bradeae* and *Ophiodesmus albanus* in good numbers. Can it be that it is too warm? I put in some time extending the known range of *Chordeuma proximum* in the New Forest area, while Ian Morgan has produced an article on winter millipeding which is packed with useful information. Will I be inundated with record cards this spring? So far only J. Trett has sent me any *C. proximum* specimens, including a new v-c record from v-c 35.

The next field weekend is in North Devon, an area which already has its specialities but I'm sure that we will turn up a few more surprises, *Chordeuma sylvestre* or *Leptoiulus kervillei* perhaps. Tony Barber summarises the data on v-c 4 and outlines our chances below.

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## HOLIDAY PLANS FOR MYRIAPODOLOGISTS

R. E. J.

Now is the time of year to plan your holidays. A quick glance at the distribution maps of millipedes should remove any problems about where you will go this year. Forget Marbella, forget Provence, why not go to Northern Ireland! (No, I don't get paid by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.) Seriously though, there are very few records from this area, in fact the boundaries are clearly discernable by the lack of records. Eire is reasonably well covered but there is plenty of room for work there too, particularly in the south in Cork and Kerry. A few years ago I holidayed there and found *Brachychaeteuma melanops*. As far as I know it has not been found in Ireland since.

Then there is Scotland. Apart from the Edinburgh district there are very few records from Scotland apart from around the coast. Many species appear to have their northern limits in the Scottish lowlands, but do they really? We need more collecting to be sure. For instance, Charles Rawcliffe has recently pushed the range of *Cylindroiulus nitidus* up into Perthshire. Is

this its northern limit? As for the Islands, The Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland, we desperately need any myriapod material that we can get from them.

Even in England and Wales there are blank areas, although the Welsh N.C.C. is doing sterling work in the Principality. Sussex is an unknown area with the promise of turning up several of the rarer south coast species such as *Leptoiulus kervillei* or even something new to Britain. Dorset likewise is a blank area. North Devon, Wiltshire, North Hampshire and much of the midlands (with the exception of Pam Copson country), Lincolnshire, Essex and Suffolk are all in need of more field work. Yorkshire is intensively worked but between there and the border there are thin patches. This year make a resolution to collect whenever you visit a new area. Ten minutes scrabbling in a roadside ditch may get you arrested but as long as I get the data afterwards it will have been worthwhile.

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# VICE-COUNTY DISTRIBUTION: MILLIPEDES

Species	Vice-county	Finder
<i>Archiboreoiulus pallidus</i>	83	C. P. Rawcliffe
<i>Brachiulus pusillus</i>	42	A. P. Fowles
<i>Chordeuma proximum</i>	35	J. Trett
<i>Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus</i>	44	I. K. Morgan
<i>Cylindroiulus nitidus</i>	83	C. P. Rawcliffe
<i>Craspedosoma rawlinsii</i>	14	A. O. Chater
<i>Macrosternodesmus palicola</i>	41	J. G. Blower
	45	I. K. Morgan
<i>Melogona gallica</i>	16	G. B. Corbet
<i>Nanogona polydesmoides</i>	81	C. P. Rawcliffe
<i>Ophiodesmus albonanus</i>	41	J. G. Blower
<i>Proteroiulus fuscus</i>	H1	K. Alexander
	H2	K. Alexander
	96	G. B. Corbet
<i>Stygioglomeris crinita</i>	41	J. G. Blower
	16	G. B. Corbet

**Errata** The record of *P. lagurus* from vice-county 42 was by S. Tilling and not P. Lee as stated. *Cylindroiulus latestriatus* has not been recorded from v-c 43. *Cylindroiulus vulnerarius* has been recorded from vice-counties 17 and 23. In addition I am deleting *Cylindroiulus vulnerarius* from vice-county 83 as all specimens that I have seen have actually been *Cylindroiulus salicivorous*.

Please update lists given in PRELIMINARY ATLAS 1988

The full vice-county lists will be published in this newsletter from time to time. Anyone who requires an up to date list can obtain one from me. A copy of the list and up to date distribution maps will be available for consultation at the Devon field weekend.

I am of the opinion that species only collected from hot-houses do not merit inclusion on vice-county lists if they have not, and cannot, become established in the wild. I intend to remove them and institute a separate Hot-house List unless there is a massive public outcry against the idea. REJ

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**WANTED** Andy Keay is still requesting immature stages of geophilomorphs. Any specimens to be sent to the address at the end of this bulletin or handed to Andy at the Field Weekend.

Collections of centipedes and millipedes have been made from Devon and Cornwall ever since the report of *L. variegatus* by Leach in 1817 but the number of collections from N. Devon is small and its fauna is somewhat patchily known. It does contain one local species not known elsewhere in Britain, *Chalandea pinguis*, which is otherwise recorded from the French and Italian Alps and Pyrenees.

Individual collections have been made by the author, by Dr. Eason and others at various times and the following list indicates known and possible species from the area including those collected by the first field meeting of the British Myriapod Group in April 1970. (indicated †)

## DIPLOPODA

- [*Archiboreoiulus pallidus* no S.W. records]
- Blaniulus guttulatus*
- [*Boreoiulus tenuis* no S.W. records]
- [*Brachychaeteuma melanops* S. Devon etc.]\*
- Brachydesmus superus*
- Brachyiulus pusillus*
- [*Choneiulus palmatus* S. Devon, Lundy]\*
- Chordeuma proximum*
- [*Chordeuma sylvestre* two Cornish records, rare]
- [*Craspedosoma rawlinsii* one old Cornish record, one S. Devon]
- Cylindroiulus britannicus* one old record
- [*Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus* no S.W. records]
- [*Cylindroiulus latestriatus* common, coastal]\*
- [*Cylindroiulus londinensis* no S.W. records]
- [*Cylindroiulus nitidus* one S. Devon record]\*
- [*Cylindroiulus parisiiorum* Somerset, Cornwall]\*\*
- Cylindroiulus punctatus*
- [*Cylindroiulus vulnerarius* Isles of Scilly, S. Wales]
- [*Enantiulus armatus* several sites in S. Devon]\*\*
- Glomeris marginata* †
- Julus scandinavicus*
- Leptoiulus belgicus*
- [*Leptoiulus kervillei* S. Devon, Cornwall etc]\*\*
- [*Macrosternodesmus palicola* Somerset, Avon etc]\*\*
- Melogona gallica* †
- [*Melogona scutellare* various West Country records]\*
- Nanogona polydesmoides*
- Nemasoma varicorne*
- [*Nopoiulus kochii* S. Wales]
- Ommatoiulus sabulosus*
- [*Ophiodesmus albonanus* S. Devon etc]\*
- Ophiulus pilosus*
- Polydesmus angustus* †
- Polydesmus denticulatus* †
- Polydesmus gallicus* †
- [*Polydesmus inconstans* various records from nearby counties]\*
- [*Polydesmus testaceus* old Cornish records]
- Polyxenus lagurus*
- Proteroiulus fuscus*
- [*Stosatea italica* not impossible]
- [*Stygioglomeris crinita* no Devon or Cornwall records]
- Tachypodoiulus niger*
- [*Thalassiosobates littoralis* littoral, S. Devon etc]\*\*

# CHILOPODA

*Haplophilus subterraneus* widespread †  
 [ *Hydroschendyla submarina* a littoral species that may be found ]\*  
*Schendyla nemorensis* †  
 [ *Schendyla payerimhoffi* S. Devon, S. Wales etc. estuarine, shore ]\*  
 [ *Brachyschendyla dentata* S. Devon ]\*\*  
 [ *Henia vesuviana* S. Devon, Avon ]\*\*  
 [ *Henia brevis* S. Devon ]\*\*  
*Strigamia crassipes*  
*Strigamia acuminata*  
*Strigamia maritima* littoral †  
 [ *Clinopodes linearis* S. Devon, once ]\*\*  
*Geophilus carpophagus* common on Exmoor etc. †  
*Geophilus electricus* †  
 [ *Geophilus osquidatum* S. Devon, Cornwall, Somerset ]\*  
 [ *Geophilus fucorum* littoral, S. Devon, S. Wales etc ]\*  
 [ *Geophilus pusillifrater* Cornwall, rare ]  
 [ *Geophilus insculptus* S. Devon and elsewhere ]\*  
*Necrophloeophagus flavus*  
*Brachygeophilus truncorum*  
*Chalandea pinguis* 6 sites so far. †  
 [ *Cryptops anomolans* S. Devon, Avon etc. ]\*\*  
*Cryptops hortensis* †  
*Cryptops parisi* one record from N. Devon  
*Lithobius variegatus* †  
*Lithobius forficatus*  
*Lithobius melanops* †  
 [ *Lithobius macilentus* no S.W. records as yet ]\*\*  
 [ *Lithobius tricuspis* S. Devon, one Welsh, one I.O.W. record ]\*\*  
*Lithobius borealis* †  
 [ *Lithobius pilicornis* S. Devon, Cornwall etc. ]\*\*  
 [ *Lithobius crassipes* no Devon records ]\*\*  
 [ *Lithobius curtipes* no Devon records, old woodland ]  
*Lithobius microps* †

\* Species that may be expected to occur in N. Devon with a reasonable probability.

\*\* Species that might be worth looking for.

[] Species not yet recorded in v-c 4

## References:

- Barber, A.D. (unpub., 1978) An investigation into the status of *Chalandea pinguis* (Chilopoda, Geophilomorpha) in North Devon. Nature Conservancy Council Contract HF3-03-208(27)  
 Barber, A.D. & Daniel, R.J. (1989) Devon Millipedes. Nature in Devon 8: 47-52  
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 Blower, J.G. (1972) The British Myriapod Group. Bull. Br. Myriapod Group 1: 1-4  
 British Myriapod Group. (1988) Preliminary Atlas of the Millipedes of the British Isles NERC Huntingdon  
 Daniel, R.J. (1989) Devon Millipedes. Nature in Devon 9: 38-45  
 Gilbert, O. (1949) Myriapoda. Lundy Field Society Annual Report 3: 30-31

A note by Dick Jones in the last Newsletter urged millipede recorders to increase their level of winter-time field work in the hope of producing additional records of *Chordeumatidae*.

In fact, most (but not all) of my myriapod recording occurs in the period September to April when a lull or absence of activity in other invertebrate groups allows me extra time to deal with millipedes and centipedes. In his article, Dick remarks that five minutes 'raking at the leaf litter' in the New Forest at Christmas produced *Chordeuma proximum* which reflects the great ease with which this species can be found during the autumn-winter period. Here in S.W. Wales *C. proximum* starts to appear about the end of September, more commonly about a month or so later, and is abundant until March or April.

I have not found *C. sylvestre* yet but I live in hope that it may occur in one of Dyfed's maritime and mild coastal woodlands. *Melogona gallica* is reasonably common, usually in less acidic litter than *C. proximum*, typically under hazel (*Corylus*) or ash (*Fraxinus*) leaf litter, rather than the thick accumulations of oak (*Quercus*) litter that typify *Chordeuma* sites. *M. scutellare* is rather uncommon in S.W. Wales, occurring on the more calcareous soils of the Carboniferous limestone or in the base-flushed, (but not too wet) areas, or on river alluvium.

*Craspedosoma rawlinsii* I find most frequently in the winter but with records to May. Look for it in very wet, flushed areas at the base of wooded slopes in 'squelchy' situations with mats of opposite-leaved saxifrage (*Chrysplenium oppositifolium*) admixed with such plants as yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), meadow-sweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) or other wet-ground herbage. Once this habitat is known one can home in on *Craspedosoma*; it frequently being found with ease although sometimes one has to work hard before an individual is located in the *Chrysplenium* or mossy tangles. In S.W. Wales *Craspedosoma* seems to be a specialist of those situations where it is often so wet that surface water flows through the superficial plant growth.

As one moves laterally into drier parts next to these woodland flushes *Craspedosoma* is replaced by *Nanogona polydesmoides* (particularly where there is evidence of base-enrichment), or by *C. proximum* or *Polydesmus angustus* in drier, acidic litter nearby.

The Preliminary Atlas shows a wide scatter of records for *Craspedosoma* across the British Isles, including a concentration in wet, low-lying East Anglia. The above notes of mine refer of course to its occurrence as a possible ancient woodland beast in S.W. Wales; I have no experience of this millipede from elsewhere in the country. It was pleasing therefore to receive a tube of millipedes including *Craspedosoma* from Arthur Chater collected in November 1988 in E. Sussex (VC 14) at Ardingly Reservoir. Here *Craspedosoma* was found in a sedgy (*Carex paniculata* & *C. pendula*) marsh under alder (*Alnus*) carr. On enquiring of Dick what sort of habitat he associates with *Craspedosoma* he wrote ... 'most, if not all, *Craspedosoma* records come from damp woodland, poplar plantations, carr, river banks and the like.' It would be interesting to see if other myriapodologists will now find this attractive millipede in their local areas.

*Brachychaeteuma melanops* too I have mostly recorded in the winter months; though records also refer to other periods of the year. In my 'home' vice-county of Carmarthenshire (v-c 44) I have now noted it in at least six 10Km. squares, in gardens, dry coastal wasteground (under industrial slag), under sparsely-vegetated maritime shingle, on the Carboniferous limestone outcrop (in ash woodland), in urban rough grassland and even far inland on stabilised river shingle. Dick's observation that it looks white is a good field character as is its *Chordeumatid* comma-shaped stance when disturbed. It

is usually found under stones embedded in the soil.

*Macrosterodesmus pallicola* is also reputed to be a winter beast but I have only recorded it twice, in limestone rubble-enriched humus beside a Pembrokeshire castle in December and in a base-flushed wooded dingle in early January.

Last winter (1987-88) I was fortunate to find large populations of *Nopoiulus kochii* in Carmarthenshire, principally on old industrial wasteground (dry slag-based soil with sparse grasses etc.). This species, which at first glance in the field looks like *Blaniulus guttulatus* but with blackish ozadenes, I have found to be mostly a winter creature. Perhaps it is more easily found in that season because high water tables (or the lack of danger of dessication) drive it, like many invertebrates to the surface. Sometimes aggregations can be found under large stones or wood in such wasteground habitats which are now rapidly vanishing due to 'environmental improvement' schemes. *N. kochii* appears in numbers at one particular site that I visit regularly during September-October and seems to fade away during the spring.

Lastly *Leptoiulus belgicus* is a distinctly autumnal and early winter beast, adults appearing in August (after the first heavy rains following a dry spell), and especially in September. At that time, in S.E. Carmarthenshire at least, it can be quite easily found in synanthropic situations, gardens, wasteground and the like. It seems to favour the rich humus formed under Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) but also occurs in the drier, open grassland habitat of *Nopoiulus kochii*. I have also recently (September-October 1988) found it in semi-natural habitat, an area of poor fen vegetation, but even this site is not far from human habitation. Whilst most frequent in late August to November, a few individuals can be found throughout the winter, particularly in mild weather. In the field one often notices the contrasting pale lower flanks before the light dorsal longitudinal stripe.

Alas I have nothing to offer on the seasonality of centipedes except the well known clustering of *Lamycetes fulvicornis* records in the late summer and autumn.

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**BULLETIN OF THE BRITISH MYRIAPOD GROUP** Volume 5 is still available for anyone who has not yet purchased a copy, price £3.00 from Tony Barber. Volume 6 is in need of further material, papers to Tony Barber and articles and notes for Miscellanea to Gordon Blower.

**MYRIOPODA AND THE ANCESTRY OF INSECTS** The Charles H. Brookes Memorial Lecture delivered by Professor Wolfgang Dhole. 78pp. 18 text figs. Copies are available from Gordon Blower. £1.50 incl. postage.

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**NEXT BMG NEWSLETTER** Material for inclusion should reach R.E.J. by September. Copy should preferably be typed but floppy discs using Locoscript 1 or 2 for Amstrad 8000 series PCWs are especially acceptable as they save me extra typing.