

BRITISH MYRIAPOD

GROUP, NEWSLETTER No. 11

Sept. 1989

Editor: Dick Jones

HONORARY EDITORIAL

Tony Irwin.

It's difficult to imagine Dick Jones lost for words, but in July this year he lost most of them. An unexpected stroke struck, leaving our editor speechless and bed-bound for quite a few weeks. Feeling unsure of what to expect, but secure in the knowledge that there would be no dreadful jokes, I set off for the hospital to see for myself. There he lay with the wryest of smiles and a familiar twinkle in his eyes. I could see that any respite from his jokes was going to be short-term!

But what could he remember of more serious things? The night before, my wife Trisha had manufactured a four-foot long *Tachypodoiulus niger* (...take one four-foot foam sausage, some unwanted black silky thing and some of that frilly stuff that you get round the bottom of lampshades...), so now I reached into the bag and out it sprang. Would he recognise its proud lines or would he ring for Sister? Without a moment's hesitation, he pointed at it, laughed and said "Er..er.." - he could remember the ending of the specific name! I knew then that the speech therapists were in for a difficult time. Could they cope with "*Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus*"?

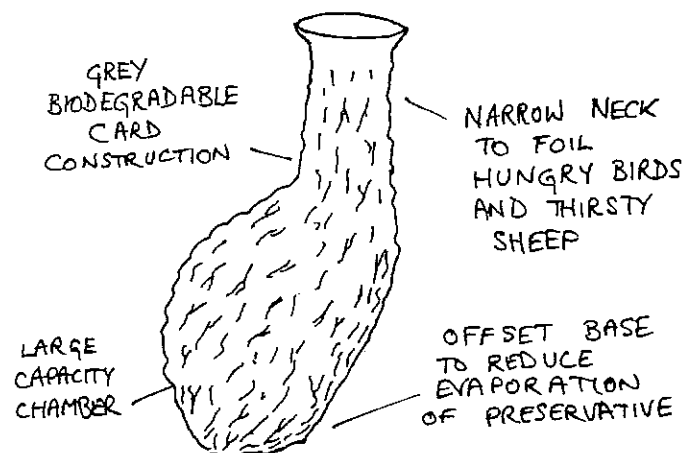
A couple of visits later, we had established that a Myriapod Newsletter must go out, following hot on the heels of the initial telephone bulletin, to reassure everyone that the millipede scheme was not looking for a new organiser. Having been given the 'front page', I thought I'd try an interview.....

"Well Dick, how do you see the future of millipede recording in Britain?"

"Well..I..er....Well..I..er....Well..I..er....Well..I..er....oh shit!"

Ah, I thought, following the example of Jackson and Rundle's slugs, we're going to turn our attention to the subject of coprophagous millipedes!

Dick hasn't wasted his time in hospital. He's designed a new high-capacity biodegradable pitfall trap. This trap is specially shaped to accommodate large numbers of specimens for those of us who take a long time to find where we've placed our traps and is biodegradable for those of us who lose them completely! Dick has overheard the nurses asking people for specimens but so far he's been unable to find any.



Rumour has it that plans for an all-terrain wheelchair (fitted with a fork-lift for rotten logs) were on the drawing board, but fortunately for woodland conservation in Norfolk, Dick is back on his legs again. In fact he has made such a remarkable recovery that we delayed the production of this Newsletter so that he could produce it himself. (His Amstrad discs were in such a muddle I just couldn't cope.) Over to you, Dick....

MILLIPEDES ur um, urr umm.

R.E.J.

Actually it was June when I became stricken but that is by the way. I would like to thank all those who have written, sent cards or visited, it was much appreciated. This is the first newsletter to be produced one handed but it is the last I am sure, the hand now twitches and the prognosis is good.

The last field meeting was held at Hallsanery and a very good one it was too. Steve Hopkin immediately found a *Chalandea pinguis* in the grounds of the field centre and Andy Keay, not to be outdone, immediatly found a *Brachyschendyla dentata*. Andy then went on to discover a *Enantiulus armatus* at Arlington House. Steve then found *Boreoilus tenuis*, Keith Alexander *Polyxenus lagurus*, Helen Read and P. Lee found *Macrosternodesmus palicola* and *Ophiodesmus albonanus* and Tony Barber found *Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus*. P. Lee and myself found *Brachychaeteuma melanops* while Gordon Blower found *Chordeuma proximum*.

Away from the weekend Charles Rawcliffe has discovered *C. caeruleocinctus* in Edinburgh about 100 miles from the nearest dot, and Tony Irwin has returned from Ireland with a tube containing, amongst other things, *Leptoilulus belgicus* and some immature *Melogona*.

HALLSANERY MEETING, CENTIPEDE RECORDS

A. D. Barber

North Devon has been relatively poorly collected apart from the first BMG meeting way back in 1970 which first found *Chalandea pinguis*, and odd visits by various workers including myself. In consequence, although few new vice-county records turned up, a very useful collection of records from the area were made.

Outstanding amongst these were new 10km records for the elusive *Chalandea* which is obviously widespread in that area and it is hoped that a paper on this species will be in the next issue of the Bulletin when it appears. Andy Keay did not find any of his *Henia vesuviana* apparently (he must have forgotten to pack them in his luggage) but he did find *Hydroschendyla submarina* and also *Brachyschendyla dentata*, that elusive small schendylid that has been found from South Devon, Surrey, London and Norfolk.

Detailed records are on cards; if anyone still has not passed them in please do so. Records received are those from Steve Hopkin, Helen Read, Ian Morgan, Keith Alexander, John Bratton, R.S.Key, Pauline Ivimey-Cook, Paul Lee, Andy Keay Gordon Blower, Doug Richardson, Tony Barber and Dick Jones. If anyone is left out - apologies!

Rather than try to give all localities 10km grid records are given including some made on the journey to and from the site.

In the last B.M.G. Newsletter I drew attention to the association between the millipede *Craspedosoma rawlini* and woodland flushes. It was surprising therefore, to discover this species under bark, c.2m up a beech tree one night in late March. We are all aware of the tree-climbing antics of *Tachypodoiulus niger* (and of course various sub-cortical species) but *Craspedosoma* in this niche was unexpected.

Adrian Fowles had a similar surprise when he inspected a 'bark-trap' set on a tree trunk in dingle woodland (at Coed Nant Llolwyn 22/588770, VC46), where he found a single specimen of *Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus*. It would be easy to casually dismiss individuals of this species as sturdy females of *T. niger*; telsons should therefore be checked. There are just two known records of *C. caeruleocinctus* in Dyfed, one of which was in leaf litter below a hillside hazel copse. I am still uncertain of the ecological requirements of this species. The related *C. londinensis* too, is rather rare in our area but the few records tentatively suggest an association with bryophyte mats and other ground vegetation that grow in slightly base-enhanced situations in valley woodlands.

Myriapodologists widely appreciate that the warm, damp conditions of spring and autumn are productive periods for survey work. Species that are difficult or even impossible to find in late spring and summer (especially drought years such as 1989) can quite easily be located. It may well be that certain species e.g. *Chordeuma proximum* have evolved a particular life-cycle to avoid periods of dessication (and to take advantage of autumnal leaf falls). Other species may simply be difficult to find in summer rather than truly absent. As well as time of year, weather conditions can make all the difference in searching for species that are often considered scarce or rare. Thus a visit to the Gower Peninsula (VC41) in late April this year was made memorable by the appearance of *Brachychaeteuma melanops* in every limestone ashwood examined. The millipedes were found under stones embedded into the soil and leaf litter. The previous night had witnessed heavy rain, which doubtless helped.

Brachychaeteuma should also be searched for in synanthropic situations. I deliberately leave flat stones at various points in my garden, which during autumn-spring regularly hold *Brachychaeteuma melanops* and *Leptoiulus belgicus*.

Regarding *Leptoiulus belgicus*, it was pleasing to find several adults in one base-enriched mossy tangle at the base of an otherwise acidic wood slope in the Heddon Valley (20/65-47) during the April 1989 North Devon BMG/BISG meeting. In contrast to the semi-natural habitat occupied by this millipede in the south-west peninsula, *Leptoiulus* is markedly synanthropic in Carmarthenshire, adults normally occurring from very late summer to April. A search of the compost heap of my garden in late April revealed what I believed to be young instars of this species but no adults. I have never found adults in the spring-summer period in south-west Wales.

The unmistakable centipede *Chalandea pinguis*, which I was also fortunate to find at Heddon, is regarded as a Devonian speciality. Immediately upon my return from the N. Devon meeting, I carefully searched many coastal woods in Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire for this species, but not one *Chalandea* was found, in spite

of the otherwise biogeographical affinities between SW England and SW Wales. *Chalanda*, therefore, may genuinely be absent from the latter area.

Whilst digging over the garden in April and early May, when the soil was still damp (and also warm), *Henia brevis* was frequently brought to the surface, together with numerous specimens of the commoner centipedes *Haplophilus subterraneus* and *Necrophloeophagus flavus*. One specimen of *N. flavus* exhibited partial and irregular luminescence (giving false hopes of *Geophilus osquidatum*!). A garden fork is preferable to a spade for obvious reasons, and it is worth checking under the lumps of disturbed and partially broken-up soil a few days after digging. *Brachychaeteuma melanops* was regularly found in such circumstances in my garden, which, incidentally, is on deep alluvial soil.

Finally, after a few days heavy and long-awaited rain in early August, an opportunity was taken to check a known site for *Thalassisobates littoralis* where previous visits in the dry summer had revealed none. In contrast, during the visit on 13 August after heavy rain, *Thalassisobates* was almost embarrassingly easy to find at one of its two Welsh sites - Penrhwyngwyn, Machynys 21/517975, VC44.

Penrhwyngwyn comprises a natural shingle beach that extends eastwards from the Machynys for c 0.25km. Prior to the dumping of industrial slag and other rubbish it would have been at least a kilometre in length, the coarse shingle being derived from the boulder clay of the Machynys Peninsula.

Thalassisobates was usually located under stones of about 10cm (or greater) diameter that were slightly embedded in surrounding grit where there was a very slight accumulation of fine organic material. Mostly larger (adult?) specimens were found but smaller individuals were also present, with a concentration of animals about 60cm below the strandline. Where various organic debris accumulated en masse on the strandline *Thalassisobates* was absent though it did occur once, under discarded clothing lying on finer gritty material, c. 5m below the strandline.

The sparse vegetation on the shingle ridge zone occupied by *Thalassisobates* was as follows: *Atriplex littoralis*, *A. patula*, *Suaeda maritima*, *Halimione portulacoides*, *Beta maritima*, *Glaucium flavum*, *Artemisia maritima*, *Plantago maritima* and *Festuca rubra*. Readers may like to use this information to help them check suitable coastal shingle sites in their areas to ascertain whether this species is more frequent than hitherto thought.

WHERE HAS IT BEEN FOR THE LAST 30 YEARS?

Andy Keay

John Lewis first recorded *Pachymerium ferrugineum* from Cuckmere Haven, Sussex in 1960, and until this year there were no further records for this distinctive species. This summer has resulted in two records from the British coast; firstly from Walberswick on the Suffolk coast and secondly from Newtown in the Isle of Wight. *Pachymerium* is possibly widespread along our south and east coast but is difficult to find as its habitat seems to be confined to shingle banks. Pitfall trapping accounted for the I.O.W. specimen whereas the Walberswick specimen was found as a result of hand sorting. Further details of these two records will be found in the Myriapod Bulletin to be published later this year.

VICE-COUNTY DISTRIBUTION: MILLIPEDES

Species	Vice-counties	Finders
<i>Boreoiulus tenuis</i>	2	S. P. Hopkin
	4	S. P. Hopkin
<i>Brachychaeteuma bradeae</i>	85	C. P. Rawcliffe
	27	R. E. Jones & J. G. Goldsmith
	70	D. T. Bilton
<i>Brachychaeteuma bagnalli</i>	4	R. E. Jones & P. Lee
<i>Brachychaeteuma melanops</i>	10	A. N. Keay
	41	I. K. Morgan
<i>Brachydesmus superus</i>	H35	J. G. Blower
<i>Brachyiulus pusillus</i>	H33	P. T. Harding
	4	many recorders
<i>Choneiulus palmatus</i>	22	S. Hopkin
	49	A. D. Barber
	70	D. T. Bilton
<i>Chordeuma proximum</i>	2	J. G. Blower
	70	D. T. Bilton
<i>Cylindroiulus britannicus</i>	52	A. D. Barber
	6	S. P. Hopkin & D. T. Bilton
	85	C. P. Rawcliffe
<i>Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus</i>	4	R. E. Jones & T. Barber
	83	C. P. Rawcliffe
<i>Cylindroiulus latestriatus</i>	H33	P. T. Harding
	H39	A. G. Irwin
	4	many recorders
<i>Cylindroiulus londinensis</i>	52	A. D. Barber
<i>Cylindroiulus punctatus</i>	H35	J. G. Blower
<i>Enantiulus armatus</i>	4	A. N. Keay
<i>Glomeris marginata</i>	H35	J. G. Blower
<i>Julus scandinavus</i>	H35	J. G. Blower
<i>Leptoiulus belgicus</i>	H38	A. G. Irwin
<i>Macrosternodesmus palicola</i>	3	A. D. Barber
	4	R. E. Jones & P. Lee
<i>Melagona gallica</i>	85	C. P. Rawcliffe
<i>Melagona scutellare</i>	83	J. G. Blower
<i>Nanogona polydesmoides</i>	H35	J. G. Blower
<i>Nemasoma varicorne</i>	H33	P. T. Harding
<i>Nopoiulus kochii</i>	70	D. T. Bilton
<i>Ophiodesmus albonanus</i>	4	R. E. Jones & H. Read
<i>Ophiulus pilosus</i>	H35	J. G. Blower
<i>Polydesmus angustus</i>	H35	J. G. Blower
	H39	A. G. Irwin
	42	S. P. Hopkin
<i>Polydesmus denticulatus</i>	85	C. P. Rawcliffe
	5	J. Bratton
<i>Polydesmus gallicus</i>	H33	P. T. Harding
	2	J. G. Blower
<i>Polydesmus inconstans</i>	H35	J. G. Blower
	3	A. D. Barber
	8	N. C. C. survey

<i>Polyxenus lagurus</i>	65	K. Alexander
	4	K. Alexander
<i>Proteroiulus fuscus</i>	H35	J.G. Blower
<i>Tachypodoiulus niger</i>	H35	J.G. Blower

Please update lists given in PRELIMINARY ATLAS 1988

REJ

COLLECTING ON THE ISLE OF MAY

C.P. Rawcliffe

The Isle of May, which is included in VC85 (Fife), is situated at the mouth of the Firth of Forth. The island is small, 1.6 x 0.25 km rising to a maximum height of about 51 m. There are very few trees and only small beaches. It is a National Nature Reserve, the property of the Nature Conservancy Council, to whom it was made over in June 1989 by the Commissioners of Northern Lights.

There is self-catering accommodation for not more than 6 persons (bird-watchers preferred) at the Low Light. I was able to stay there for three full days, 28th - 30th June, in order to collect Myriapoda and Isopoda for which I had an N.C.C. permit.

In the definitive book on the island by Dr W.J. Eggeling, "The Isle of May" there are listed the following species (App III, Species Lists), much of which is said to date back to Evans c.1919.

CHILOPODA

Brachygeophilus truncorum
Geophilus insculptus
Lithobius crassipes
melanops
forficatus *
Strigamia (Scolioplanes) maritima
 * Collected by N.C.C. in 1958.

DIPLOPODA

Brachydesmus superus
Brachyiulus pusillus *
Cylindroiulus latestriatus
Macrosternodesmus palicola

* Almost certainly this species - Bagnall.

Collecting, hampered by some inclement weather on the 28th and 30th, was confined to the disused gardens/trapping areas, the beach at Kirkhaven and the gully below the Low Light. The results are as follows:-

CHILOPODA

Lithobius crassipes
forficatus
Geophilus insculptus
carpophagus
Necrophloeophagus flavus

DIPLOPODA

Brachydesmus superus
Blaniulus/Archiboreoiulus ♀
Boreoiulus tenuis
Cylindroiulus latestriatus

Examination of these results show that of the Chilopoda I missed *L. melanops*, *S. maritima* and *B. truncorum*, but was able to add *G. carpophagus* and *N. flavus*, whilst for the Diplopoda I missed *M. palicola* and *B. pusillus*, but added *B. tenuis* and one unidentified species. The diplopod *M. palicola* I would regard as unlikely; the nearest recorded specimen in the 1988 Atlas is in the 100 km square NY - 35, but strange things do happen. A return visit in 1990 is desirable.

ASK, OH MY SWEET FUN GUY!

Tony Irwin

A contrived title perhaps, but it does set the tone for this note. We are referring to a 'social disease' that afflicts millipedes and many groups of insects. The Laboulbeniales are a group of ascomycete fungi which are normally transmitted through bodily contact. Thus male flies tend to have the fungi growing under their abdomen, and the females above. Those of you who have witnessed the foreplay of cockroaches will understand why they have the fungi on their antennae.

One group of millipedes, *Cylindroiulus luscus* and its allies, are occasionally found with certain species of Laboulbeniales growing on the anterior legs. The fungi do not appear to harm the millipedes in any way, though dense growths may reduce mating efficiency. We are not yet sure which species occur on millipedes in Britain, and I am hoping to gather material to establish which fungi are involved. Recently Dick received a large number of *Cylindroiulus britannicus* from the Welsh Peatland Invertebrate Survey, many of which have these fungi on the legs around the genitalia (the millipedes, I mean).

If anyone comes across small glassy outgrowths looking rather like accessory gonopods with black basal holdfasts on the legs of any millipedes, please send the specimens to me.

DETERMINED SPECIMENS OF BRITISH MYRIAPODA

Anyone needing named species, sex or stadia please drop a note to Gordon Blower who will be delighted to reduce the size of his ever growing collections. Please indicate requirements (Species x,y,..., an assortment of common species, just millipedes, just centipedes etc.).

MYRIAPODA 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.

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.

THYSANURA AND DIPLURA

Andy Keay is hoping to build up a reference set of Thysanura and Diplura and would welcome any specimens you may find. Please preserve in 70% alcohol with a brief note of grid ref., date and habitat data and send them to him.

BISG/BMG MEETING 1990

There is a notice with this newsletter giving details of the next meeting, to be held at Thornham Field Centre, Suffolk. Let's see if we can find a *Pachymerium* or two.

FIRST CENTIPEDE AND MILLIPEDE RECORDS FROM FAIR ISLE

Two *Lithobius forficatus* and *Cylindroiulus latestriatus* were collected by Rebecca Pritchard and Margaret Wilkinson and sent in by Graham Rowe. If anyone has contacts going to offshore islands, all records are welcome.

ISLE OF MAN

We now have recent records from I.O.M. due to collections by Adrian Fowles and others. Has anyone else further records from there as we are trying to prepare a list for the Bulletin?

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NEXT BMG NEWSLETTER

Material for inclusion should reach R.E.J. by mid- February. Copy should be typed preferably, but floppy discs using Locoscript 1 or 2 for Amstrad 8000 series PCWs are especially acceptable as they save me extra typing.

PS If anyone did not get the pun it was ASCOMYCETE FUNGI.