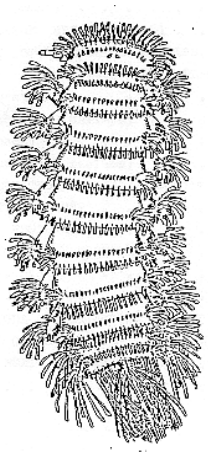
British Myriapod and Isopod Group



Spring 2011 **Newsletter number 22** **Editor: Paul Lee**

BMIG business

AGM notice

All BMIG members are invited to attend the AGM to be held at 8pm on Friday, 15th April 2011. The venue will be the University of Kent, Canterbury Campus.

The present committee welcomes nominations for officers and ordinary committee members from any BMIG member. Ideally nominations would be communicated to the secretary beforehand but they can also be made from the floor at the AGM.

Thank you to the contributors who have made putting together this issue a relatively easy task. I don't want anyone to think they don't need to put pen to paper but it did make a pleasant change to be able to choose what should go into this issue. There is plenty of space still to fill in the autumn issue and the Bulletin editors are keen to receive papers and short notes so there is no excuse to keep your observations to yourself. That goes for records too. Whether it is from BMIG field meetings or from your own excursions the recording scheme organisers want to see your records keep coming in. In particular Tony Barber is now going through a process of tidying up the remaining unsorted records he has for the centipede atlas but is still happy to receive either records or specimens from Great Britain, Ireland or the Channel Islands. If you are sending millipede records (or specimens for checking) by post please note I have a new address.

Paul Lee, 33 Lawford Place, Lawford, Manningtree, Essex CO11 2PT

2011 BMIG AGM and Field Weekend

The 2011 meeting will be held from Thursday 14th to Sunday 17th April 2011 and will be based at the University of Kent, Canterbury Campus. Note that on this occasion we are meeting the weekend before Easter.

One of the main purposes of the meeting will be to systematically survey sites for two UK BAP species, which occur mainly in Kent – the millipedes *Polyzonium germanicum* and *Metaiulus pratensis*. This will be a significant challenge for BMIG with over 50 sites in 26 different 10km squares to visit and survey using a standardised method. However, it will produce high quality data that constitutes a major contribution to the conservation of the species.

There are no longer any University rooms available but members are welcome to make their own accommodation arrangements and join us for the field work etc. However, you should still let Paul Harding know that you plan to attend so that we can provide details of survey methods, meeting times etc.

Paul Harding, 60 Boxworth Road, Elsworth, Cambridge CB23 4JQ.
Tel: 01954 267218. Email: pha@ceh.ac.uk .

2011 BMIG Autumn Field Meeting

Following on from the success of the visit to Kintyre last Autumn BMIG has been offered free accommodation for a dozen or so people at Dundreggan Lodge, Glen Moriston, for the week September 10 - 17. We would have to pay for food and travel but Dawn Collis is prepared to co-ordinate the catering. The free accommodation is in return for contributing to the collective knowledge of the invertebrate fauna of the area by our records of myriapods and isopods, and anything else we care to record. Glen Moriston is between Fort William and Inverness and getting there by public transport will not be easy, but if you want to come we will do our very best to find a way of conveying you from some point that is on the public transport network. Accommodation is limited so please contact me as soon as possible if you want to attend.

Glyn Collis Email: g.m.collis@gmail.com

The Point of Ayr?

Well the main reason for going to the Point of Ayr (near Prestatyn) in North Wales seemed to be to buy Helen Read an ice-cream. However, as we were on a recording outing during the BMIG Spring 2010 meeting, it seemed only reasonable to have at least a quick look on the saltmarsh for the odd myriapod or isopod.

Unfortunately, apart from a few *Armadillidium vulgare*, all I could find was one very small spider hiding under a large rock. This was pootered up and pickled for later examination. Of course it proved to have one of those epigynes which you feel you should recognise but can't

quite put a name to. So off it went to Peter Merrett who, thanks to having just acquired a book about Canadian spiders, was able to give a very quick and definitive answer. This was the first British record of *Islandiana falsifica* (Keyserlilng, 1886) – otherwise found in Alaska, Canada, Sweden, Finland and Siberia – but strangely not so far from Iceland.

The point of air? Well it has been suggested that the spider's appearance at the Point of Ayr was as a result of the recent volcanic eruption in Iceland and its possible atmospheric transportation in the volcanic dust which so disrupted aeroplane flights. Unfortunately one spider doesn't make a new British species. Will it turn up in Britain again? Well the truth is out there.

With thanks to Peter Merrett for identifying the spider and to BMIG colleagues for tolerating my arachnological diversions. The ice-cream was good though.
Mike Davidson (mike.davidson55@btinternet.com)

Appeal for centipedes from Singleton Park
Does anyone have any specimens of *Cryptops* from the hothouse at Singleton Park, Swansea? John Lewis has looked at a specimen for me and it is not one of the usual ones.
Tony Barber

Bulletin of the British Myriapod and Isopod Group Volume 24
Volume 24 of the Bulletin of the British Myriapod and Isopod Group (and back issues) can be purchased from Paul Harding. The cost of Vol.24 (including postage) is:

UK individual members	£5 (cash or cheque payable to BMIG)
UK institutions	£10
European members	€10 (cash)
	or £9 (sterling cheque / bank transfer)

Worldwide costs by agreement with Paul.
Paul Harding, 60 Boxworth Road, Elsworth, Cambridge CB23 4JQ.
Email: pha@ceh.ac.uk .

Lamyctes emarginatus
I recently came upon *Lamyctes emarginatus*, for the first time, on the shore of Bassenthwaite Lake in the Lake District. The specimens were all within 2 to 3ft of the water line. The substrate at this point was made up of shale and in this particular area the *L. emarginatus* were in very damp, not wet, coarse silt of shale origin overlain by hand sized pieces of shale. I was particularly drawn by the number of these 10mm centipedes which I thought initially were a *Lithobius* species but on investigation turned out to be *Lamyctes emarginatus*.

Finding this species in an apparently unrecorded area (see NBN Gateway distribution map) in such large numbers (hundreds) and in an area of only a few metres of shore line led me to contact Tony Barber and tell him of my find. He directed me towards some background information. I have briefly extracted and summarised information on this interesting species taken from a research article in a special issue of BioRisk dealing with alien terrestrial arthropods in Europe (Stoev P et al. (2010) Myriapods (Myriapoda). Chapter 7.2. In: Roques A et al. (Eds) Alien terrestrial arthropods of Europe. *BioRisk* **4**(1): 97–130. doi: 10.3897/biorisk.4.51). The original article can be downloaded as a pdf at:
http://pensoftonline.net/biorisk/index.php/journal/article/view/51/52
and should be consulted for details of the references cited.

Britain is thought to have one of the largest numbers of alien myriapods but little information is yet available for non-indigenous myriapods in Europe (DAISIE 2009, Roques *et al*.2009). The most recent overview of alien organisms in Europe (see DAISIE 2009, p225) lists two centipedes *L. emarginatus* and *L. caeculus* as aliens of Europe. These lists of alien species have been published for only a few countries and in Britain this is due mainly to the efforts of Tony Barber.

Members of the genus *Lamyctes* are represented in Europe only by parthenogenetic populations. Males of this species are known only from Macaronesia, New Zealand, Tasmania and Hawaii (see also Attems (1935) and Zapparoli (2002) for a single male from Greece. Taking into account the entire family Henicopidae is predominantly distributed in the Southern Hemisphere and presuming that regions where males are found are native areas of the species, *L. emarginatus* could have been introduced to Europe from one of the above regions, most likely Ausralia or New Zealand. It has only been recently found in Great Britain (Barber 2009b).

The most widespread of the myriapod species is the parthenogenetic centipede *L. emarginatus* whose range in Europe spreads from the Urals to Iceland and is an outdoor species. From the point of view of its ecology *L. emarginatus* is stated to show a remarkable plasticity regarding its environment. In Britain there is a greater number of rural records in comparison with (sub)urban. In artificial habitats it has been recorded in gardens, roadside verges, hedges, embankments, crops *Zea mays* and *Medicago sativa* and even human rubbish. In natural habitats it lives in woods (deciduous or mixed coniferous/ deciduous) and has been recorded from open and coastal areas (Barber and Keay 1988, Zerm 1997, Zapparoli 2006). According to Anderson (2006), it predominates in open and disturbed areas with sparse vegetation. A great many are associated with lake shores, rivers or river banks. *L. emarginatus* shows clear preferences for temporarily flooded sites, no matter for how long the inundation lasts. Its appearance as a pioneer species on mine sites may indicate that the species shows preference to disturbed habitats (Zerm 1997). In close proximity to water pools the species abundance can reach 95% of all centipedes (Minoranskii 1977).
Peter Nicholson Email: peternich@btinternet.com

Significant records for woodlice in Scotland
Recently Mike Davidson sent me some specimens of *Trichoniscoides sarsi* from two coastal sites near Stonehaven in Kincardineshire in eastern Scotland (see Mike's article below). This is over 400 km further north than

previously known sites in 'land-locked' Leicestershire. To Mike's credit, rather than assuming that the specimens were the predominantly 'coastal' *T. saeroeensis*, he had dissected a male specimen to check and thus discovered *T. sarsi* instead. There is no reason why *T. sarsi* should not be widespread along the eastern coast of Britain. It is common along the Netherlands coastline on the opposite side of the North Sea, where it seems to replace *T. saeroeensis*. It cannot be assumed that all small white coastal woodlice with red eyes are *T. saeroeensis.* Identifications ought to be based on male specimens.

Duncan Sivell of Buglife has sent me some female specimens of an intriguing trichoniscid from near Edinburgh. They are slightly larger and darker than the common *Trichoniscus pusillus* and have a single large ocellus. Thus, using available British identification works, they readily key out to *Oritoniscus flavus*, an Atlantic species known from the Pyrenees to southern Ireland. However, I suspect that they may be *Hyloniscus riparius*, a common central European species perhaps better suited to the cold eastern regions of Scotland, which shares these same morphological characters. Without a male we cannot be certain, but either way it is a significant find.

These new discoveries come barely a few weeks after Buglife have published listings of non-marine isopods (woodlice and waterlice) known to occur in Scotland. The document, compiled by BMIG members Gordon Corbet and Glyn Collis, can be found on-line at:
http://www.buglife.org.uk/Resources/Buglife/Scottish_Species_Knowledge_Dossier_Isopoda_Non-marine.pdf
I guess I will have to start revising the new woodlice atlas already!
Steve Gregory

New Scottish Isopod Records
April 2010 proved to be an interesting month for our knowledge of isopod distribution in Scotland. While on our way to the 2010 BMIG meeting in North Wales, we made a quick visit to Dawyck Botanic Garden, near Peebles in the Scottish Borders. Relatively few species of myriapod or isopod were found in the short time available; however *Oniscus* specimens from under the bark of a dead tree were clearly out of the ordinary for that neck of the woods (NT172351 on 7th April 2010). On closer examination they proved to be hybrids between *Oniscus asellus asellus* and *O. asellus occidentalis*. They were very clearly arched, compared with the flatter *O. a. asellus* elsewhere on the site, and the males had various degrees of forking of the first endopod. A subsequent visit to the site on 24th June produced some more specimens from the same tree but nowhere else in the Gardens.

On 27th April 2010 I visited the old cliff-top cemetery at Cowie, just north of Stonehaven (NO884873). I collected a variety of myriapods and isopods, including a number of small rusty/whitish isopods from below stones on the clay soil. What appeared to be the same species was also found below embedded boulders in the clay at the foot of the cliff (Old Kirk Shore at NO885872). These were a *Trichoniscoides* species, which I initially put down as *T. saeroeensis* – based on previous experience and having referred to the distribution atlas. However, having been well tutored by Steve Gregory, I eventually dissected them to find they were in fact *T. sarsi*. This is well outside the previously known range for this species and suggests that it may well be much more widespread than previously thought. You just have to get out the dissection tools.
My thanks go to Steve Gregory for verifying both the *Oniscus* hybrid and the *T. sarsi* specimens.
Mike Davidson (mike.davidson55@btinternet.com)

Myriapod reprints
The Manchester Museum has a considerable number of reprints of papers by H.K and S.G. Brade-Birks. The following are available on request to Graham Proudlove: All are referred to in abbreviated form, with the number in their "Notes on Myriapoda" series:
Notes 34: *Lithobius borealis*.
Notes 32: *Euphorberia ferox* fossils
Notes 28: *Kampecaris* fossils
Notes 30: Diplopoda and Chilopoda for 1925
Notes 20: Luminous Chilopoda
Notes 27: Wandering millipedes
Notes 33(1) and (2): Economic status
Notes 36: Sources for description and illustration [last of the Notes].

Also:
Presidential address by Brade-Birks, S.G to 2nd Myriapod conference, 1974.
Rolfe, S.W. *Ophyiulus pilosus* (1934)
Randell Jackson, A.R. Arthropods observed 1915
Bagnall, R.S. November at Grange over Sands 1916

Notes 36 is still a most valuable document with its pointers to the main European literature (Attems, Brolemann, Verhoeff, Schubart etc). Notes 33 (1+2) also seem to have currently useful information and I don't know if the study of luminescence has ever been bettered.
Graham Proudlove, Department of Entomology, The Manchester Museum, The University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL, UK.
Email: g.proudlove@manchester.ac.uk. Phone 07806 433484 and 01706 839752

Biological data on centipedes
Thanks to the members of the BMIG a great deal of valuable information on centipede distribution has been collected and recorded. However, field observations on the biology of centipedes have rarely been recorded. They were more common in publications in the19th and earlier part of the 20th century. The fact that centipedes are rarely seen to be "doing anything" makes such observations all the more valuable. Any information on the following, whether made in the field or in simple laboratory experiments, would be of great interest and could be published under *Miscellanea* in the Bulletin.
Behaviour: surface activity in the day or at night; records of centipedes in buildings or up trees; any responses when disturbed including possible escape reactions.
Feeding: prey and method of capture; group feeding; any observations on the use of the ultimate legs of *Cryptops* (or

any other scolopendromorphs) would be very valuable; any plant associations.
Predators: method/direction of attack; any parts discarded uneaten.
Reproduction: egg-laying; brooding (with accurate description of posture, number of eggs/larvae and their colour) - please preserve eggs and larvae in 70% ethanol; female lithobiomorphs carrying eggs.
Colour; any unusual colour or colour pattern.
Inter and intra specific reactions; same or different species found in close proximity e.g. under same rock; different stadia found together; precise habitat e.g. position on sea shore of *Strigamia maritima* and *Geophilus gracilis* - do they occur together*?*
Luminescence: do both *Geophilus carpophagus* and *G. easoni* luminesce? Likewise for *Strigamia acuminata* and *S. crassipes?* records of luminescence in any other species.
Structural abnormalities: Segmental abnormalities have been recorded in continental specimens of *Stigmatogaster subterranean* but, strangely, not in British specimens. Is this because we haven't looked?
Anything else.
John Lewis

When is *Scutigera* not *Scutigera* ?
A scutigeromorph, superficially resembling *Scutigera coleoptrata* [which has been recorded from buildings in various parts of Britain and the Channel Islands] was found in Swindon, possibly associated with packaging from China. It was sent to me by Sharon Reid of FERA (Central Science Laboratories). I sent it on to Greg Edgecome (Natural History Museum) who recognised it as the widespread East Asian species *Thereuonema tuberculata*. *Thereuonema*, he says, has long, spike like spiculae on the stigmatotergites that shine under illumination. The moral of this story is that one should not automatically assume that any "*Scutigera coleoptrata*" found indoors in Britain or Ireland is necessarily that species and specimens should be checked and/or kept for reference. I think it is reasonable to assume, however that Channel Islands specimens (which are sometimes found outdoors) are *Scutigera coleoptrata*.
Tony Barber

Electronic woodlice
It may be of interest that Vandel (1960), Faune de France vol 64, is now available on the web. Link as follows:
http://www.faunedefrance.org/bibliotheque/docs/VANDEL(FdeFr64)IsopodeTerrestre.pdf
Hopefully the second part (vol 66) will follow soon.
Graham Proudlove

Centipede Distribution Update
Eurygeophilus pinguis - West Cornwall (one site) (Angela Lidgett & Eric Philp)
Stigmatogaster souletina - third West Cornwall site (BMIG 2009)
Lithobius lucifugus - third Scottish location (Glyn Collis)
Lithobius peregrinus -second port town location (Paul Lee)
Lithobius tricuspis - another site in South Wales where abundant (Christian Owen)
Tony Barber

The MilliPEET resources: A hugely valuable set of resources for the Diplopoda
I have recently come across a set of beautifully designed and written web pages devoted to millipede systematics and taxonomy. They provide a great tool for learning. They were developed by Petra Sierwald and colleagues at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago with input from many highly qualified Diplopodologists. They were funded by the NSF PEET program (Partnership for Enhancing Expertise in Taxonomy). There are two different home pages but they appear to point at the same content:
myriapoda.org/milliPEET/fieldmuseum.org/research_collections /zoology/zoo_sites/millipeet/
All interested in Diplopods would benefit from a perusal of these wonderful resources.
Graham Proudlove

First Welsh record of *Lithobius lapidicola* Meinert
During a COFNOD course on centipedes, millipedes and woodlice held at Treborth Botanic Gardens, Bangor, North Wales in October 2010 a puzzling female *Lithobius* was found in the heated orchid house. This has now been confirmed by Marzio Zapparoli as *Lithobius lapidicola* Meinert, first found in Britain by Charles Rawcliffe in a greenhouse at the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh and subsequently found out of doors on the East Kent and Suffolk coasts.
Tony Barber

NEXT NEWSLETTER: Autumn 2011
Please send your contributions to reach the editor by 30 September 2011

Supplies of record cards and additional copies of the British Myriapod and Isopod Group Newsletter can be obtained from the Biological Records Centre.

BMIG Hon. Sec.:
Dr H.J.Read, 2 Egypt Wood Cottages, Egypt Lane, Farnham Common, Bucks. SL2 3LE
E-mail: Helen.read@dsl.pipex.com

Centipede Recording Scheme Organiser:
Mr A.D. Barber, Rathgar, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0BD
E-mail: abarber159@btinternet.com

Millipede Recording Scheme Organiser:
Mr P. Lee, 33 Lawford Place, Lawford, Manningtree, Essex CO11 2PT
E-mail: paulatarachne@aol.com

Non-marine Isopod Recording Scheme Organiser:
Mr S. Gregory, Earth Trust, Little Wittenham, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4QZ
E-mail: stevejgregory@btopenworld.com

Biological Records Centre, CEH Wallingford, Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford OX10 8BB
Tel: 01491 692424 Fax: 01491 692564 E-mail: brc@ceh.ac.uk

The British Myriapod and Isopod Group Newsletter is printed and distributed for the British Myriapod and Isopod Group by the Biological Records Centre, supported by funding from the NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.