British Myriapod and Isopod Group

www.bmig.org.uk

Newsletter 34

Spring 2017

Welcome to the spring edition of the BMIG newsletter where you'll find all of the most interesting news and recording articles for British myriapods and isopods. There is a lengthy discussion by Tony Barber about how the centipede *Lithobius forficatus* got its name as well as other interesting articles about woodlice from Whipsnade Zoo and centipedes from Brittany. In this issue you will also find information regarding officer places now available in the society, please do get in touch with Paul Lee if you have an interest in getting involved. As always there are links to upcoming events and also to several interesting training events led by Paul Richards in the coming year. This issues photo with pride of place is of a live *Turdulisoma* from Paul Richard's Flickr page (invertimages). If you have any interesting photos for the next issue in autumn then please send them to my email address found at the bottom of the newsletter.

Richard Kelly Newsletter Editor

AGM notice

All BMIG members are invited to attend the AGM to be held at 8.30pm on Friday, 31st March 2017. The venue will be The Berkeley Guesthouse, 39 Marine Road West, Morecambe LA3 1BZ.

Officer Elections

The present committee welcomes nominations for vacant officer roles 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. Officers to be elected during the AGM are:

Secretary Vicky Burton is currently taking minutes of those meetings she can attend. Imogen Wilde has resigned from the role of Membership Secretary and we have no one with the task of dealing with enquiries. Ideally, we need someone to take on all aspects of the Secretary's role or at least to pick up those aspects of the role not currently covered by Vicky.

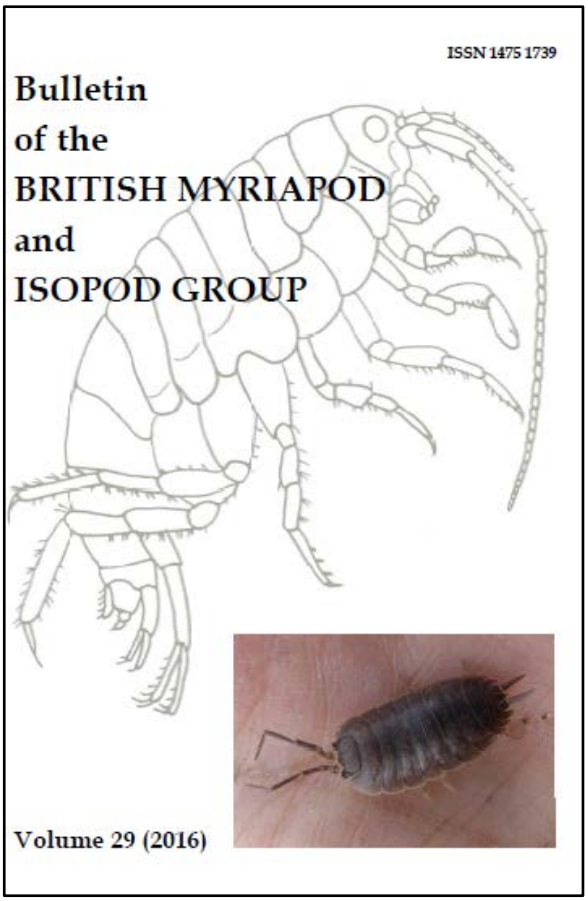
Training Officer would help develop a course that could be 'hawked' around the country. There are currently occasional FSC courses, BENHS workshops and Sorby workshops but a series of coordinated courses might be better, perhaps a series of courses at different levels. Also, could provide modules for universities. Would be responsible for finding places to run courses and co-ordinating the running of these. This role could be a valuable addition to a CV.

Projects Officer organizing small projects such as the Polyzonium project we ran during the Kent 2011 meeting. Projects could be individual or meeting focused and possibly involving citizen science. Again, this role would make a valuable addition to a CV.

Conservation Officer liaison with conservation bodies and events, like Invertebrate Link, Buglife etc. There should be close links between this role and the Project Officer.

BMIG Bulletin Vol 29 (2016)

The latest volume of the BMIG bulletin is available on the BMIG website. This volume from the end of 2016 includes new records of the woodlouse *Trichoniscoides* and the millipede *Cylindroiulus apenninorum* and an article about the decline of the *Porcellio laevis* in Britain and Ireland. Also find the field report for the BMIF meeting at Claonaig, Kintyre in Scotland and a review of the book Les chilopodes (Chilopoda) de la moitié nord de France.



Call for Information

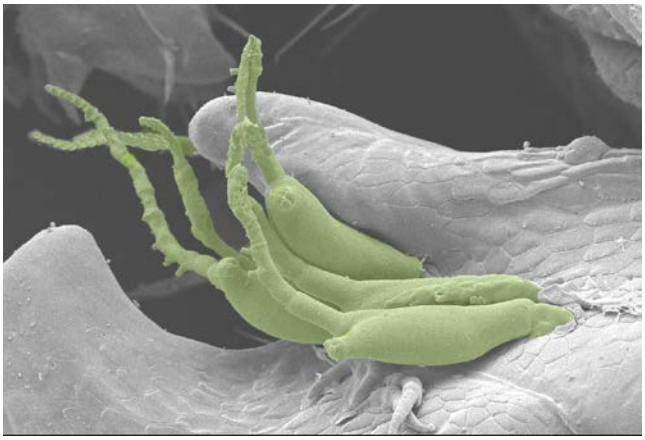
Find a new fungus for Britain – on a millipede

Troglomyces triandrus is a tiny fungus (order Laboulbeniales) which grows on *Archiboreoiulus pallidus*, and so far as known only on *A. pallidus*. Its presence is revealed by tiny black spots on the mandibles (of males) or antennae (females) of *A. pallidus*, and it is assumed to be transmitted during copulation. The fungus is known from Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Norway and Spain. Several (but not very many) British *A. pallidus* have been examined, but none had the fungus.

Therefore, if you come across *A. pallidus*, please check for black spots! I shall be happy to confirm that the spots are due to *T. triandrus*.

So far the only laboulbenialean known from British millipedes is *Rickia laboulbenioides*, known from several *Cylindroiulus*species, see http://www.bioimages.org.uk/html/r151100.htm. *Rickia uncigeri* grows on *Unciger foetidus* and is thus another potentially British species.

Contact Henrik Enghoff at the Natural History Museum of Denmark, henghoff@snm.ku.dk.



More strange beasts in South Wales

Unusual and new creatures are still being found in South Wales. Back in 1981 the tiny soil dwelling *Metatrichoniscoides celticus* was described new to science from the beach at Ogmore in Glamorgan. This is Britain's only endemic woodlouse with no reliably confirmed records beyond South Wales. It had not been seen since 1986, so last October Christian Owen and Mark Telfer (armed with appropriate tools!) visited the site. A few rocks were heaved out of the ground and bingo – there it was clinging to the underside of the upturned rocks, including the all important male for confirmation. By my reckoning, this species is even more elusive than *Stenophiloscia*!

On a roll from their success at Ogmore, Mark and Chris then popped into the gardens of the nearby St. Fagans National History Museum. Here they found another small white job, which lacking ocelli, was initially assumed to be *M. celticus*' closely related, but predominantly synanthropic, congener *M. leydigii.* However, examination of male specimens shows that this is not a species of *Metatrichoniscoides,* but probably a species of *Trichoniscoides*. There are several unpigmented blind *Trichoniscoides* known from mainland Europe, but none have been recorded from the UK before. It has yet to be satisfactorily named, but watch this space…

Then in early December, during a visit to the Rhondda valleys, Chris turned up a well pigmented chordeumatid with stout body setae, akin to *Ceratophys confusa*, but with very different male gonopods. A flurry of emailed images resulted in a prompt reply from Joerg Spelda suggesting *Turdulisoma* sp. (Haplobainosomatidae) a genus with four known species distributed across the Iberian Peninsula. Joerg added that Chris' specimens show strong affinities to, but also distinct from, *T. helenreadae* (Mauries, 2015) (named in honour of BMIG's very own Helen Read), one of the many undescribed species found by the participants of BMIG's field meeting to Galicia (north-west Spain) in 2004. Chris' millipede, too, is possibly another undescribed species.

Steve Gregory

How the centipede got its name – *Lithobius forficatus*

In almost all parts of Britain and Ireland any large chestnut brown centipede that you see is most likely to be *Lithobius forficatus*. It can be up to 30mm long but does not seem to have ever had a distinctive English name although in recent years the title of "common lithobius" has been given. The French name "Le scolopendre à trente pattes" (the centipede with thirty legs) used by Latreille back in 1802 might have given us a more colourful designation perhaps.

There are three other relatively large species of *Lithobius* recorded in these islands which, like *L. forficatus*, also have four or more teeth on each side on the forcipular coxosternite. *Lithobius pilicornis* (up to 35mm) has been found in synanthropic sites (in towns) at various localities as far north as a cemetery in Edinburgh. It is relatively more frequently found in Wales and south and west England and in West Cornwall turns up in rural sites as well. *Lithobius piceus* (up to 21mm) is known from rural sites, often woodland in the Surrey/Hampshire /Sussex area and has been found more recently in South Wales. *Lithobius peregrinus* (up to 24mm) is a vagrant which has been found twice in Britain in port towns.

In an issue of the *Bulletin of the BMIG* in 2014 (**27**:43-52), I reviewed some of the earlier accounts of British centipedes & reference to this will list most of the various authorities mentioned here. The key "starting point" for scientific names is, of course, Linnaeus' *Systema Naturae* 10th edition of 1758 where *Scolopendra forficata* is the third species in

his list, after *S. lagura* and *S. coleoptrata* and preceding *S. gigantea*, *S. morsitans*, *S. electrica*, *S. phosphorea, S. occidentalis* and *S. marina*. The name *forficata/forficatus* derives from the Latin and refers to being provided with shears / scissors, presumably referring to the poison claws (or is it to the last pair of legs?). The name "*Scolopendra forcipata*" (Scolopendra forchue) given by De Geer in 1778 is the same species.

Linnaeus' 1758 account of *S. forficata* is brief:

SCOLOPENDRA. Pedes numerosi, totidem utrinque quot corporis segmenta. Antennae seraceæ. Palpi duo, articulate. Corpus depressum.

forficata. 3. S. pedibus utrinque XV. *Fn.svec*. 1263

Raj.ins. 45.

Mouff.ins. 199

Aldr.ins. 635

Habitat in Europa, *in* America *septentrionali*. *Kalm.*

The references are to Linnaeus' own *Fauna Svecica* of 1746, John Ray (Joanne Raio) (1710), Thomas Muffet (Tho. Movfeti) (1634) and to another I have not been able to identify. P.Kalmii, "Pensylvanium & Canadiam, 1747" is listed in the introduction to the work as collector.

Ray's posthumously published *Historia Insectorum* described *Ad Scolopendra accedens trigina pedibus instructa* with a length of 1¼ inches (32mm) and its description seems to refer to *Lithobius forficatus* (or something very similar):

"Corpore est depresso, unciam 1¼ longo. Antennæ sere globulosæ. Corpus larinsculum, rufescens, novem annulus prærer caput constans. Caput rocundiusculum, depressum; forcipes validate. Pedum 15 paria, quorum posteriora gradatim longiora, ultimam semunciam longum, ultra corpus extenditur.

Sub lignis & corticibus artorum latitat, estque satis frequens, Araneum devoratem vidit D. *Willughby*". (Francis Willughby was Ray's student and collaborator).

The Fauna Svevica (1746) includes both millipedes and a "Scolopendra submarina" in a list of six types of Scolopendra; Ray's species is listed as:

1263. SCOLOPENDRA plana; pedibus utrinque quindecim.

Raj.ins. 45 Ad Scolopendra accedens trigina pedibus instructa.

Suecis Twåstiert.

Habitat in terra.

DESCR. Rubra est, vix digitum transversum longa. *Pedes* antrici craffi & validi. Ultima longissimi, hinc cauda quasi bifurcate. *Corporis* articuli alterni reliquis dimidio breviores.

The 1761 edition of Fauna Svevica lists only 3 species of the genus, *lagura*, *forficata* and *electrica* with the millipedes (other than *S. lagura*) now in the genus Julus and the description of S. *forficata* the same as in the 1746 work. John Berkenhout, in his 1769 *Outlines of The Natural History of Great Britain and Ireland*, names the same three species. He describes *S. forficata* as: "Feet

30, Segments 9, Tawny, smooth. Antennae of 42 joints. Length 1 inch. Runs swift. Under stones".

In 1781 James Barbut in *The Genera Insectorum of Linnæus exemplified by various specimens of English Insects drawn from Nature* described *S. forficata* as "this scolopendra, the largest in this country, is of a dun colour, smooth, composed of nine scaly segments without reckoning the head. The feet are fifteen in number on each side and the last, longer than the rest and turned backwards, form a kind of forky tail. The antennae are twice the length of the head and consist of forty-two short segments. The insect's progressive motion is very quick and sometimes serpentine. It is found under stones on the ground, under flower pots and garden boxes".

The generic name *Lithobius* was first used by W.E. Leach in 1814. It derives from two Greek words, λίθος (lithos, stone) and βίος (bios, life) and clearly refers to the habit of many lithobiids of living under stones and in similar locations. *Scolopendra forficata* thus became *Lithobius forficatus*.

One of the features of *Lithobius forficatus* (it also applies, usually to a more limited extent, to other centipede species) is the large number of synonyms that exist, either specific or subspecific; Chilobase currently lists a total of 33. There are several reasons for this including, as anyone who has looked at centipedes will be aware, the fact that, unlike millipedes & woodlice, centipede gonopods have extremely limited use in description and identification. Whereas with millipedes, examination of the reproductive structures of a mature male, for instance, can be definitive this is not the situation with a centipede. Add to this the innate variability in any animal species, the existence of immatures that might be described as a different species to the adult and the apparent capacity of some species to spread around the world and be described by various authorities and the problem becomes apparent. *Lithobius forficatus* is commonly associated with human activity and thus a likely candidate for accidental transport. Apart from most European countries (including Iceland and Greenland), it has been reported from much of the United States, Hawaii, Brazil and St. Helena.

Leach had added *Lithobius variegatus* to the genus *Lithobius* but gave us two further species names which we now know to be synonyms of *L. forficatus. Lithobius laevilabrum* – under lip very smooth, with lightly impressed obscure dots on the anterior part; feet testaceous yellow. (In *L. forficatus* the whole underlip deeply punctulated, the dots impressed; feet testaceous yellow) and *Lithobius vulgaris* described from Great Britain which appears have been another name for *L. laevilabrum*. G. Johnston (1835) reported *Lithobius vulgaris* from Berwickshire whilst R. Templeton's (1836) *Catalogue of Irish Arachnöìda*, listed *L. forficatus* as very common and *L. lævilabrum* as occasionally seen. In an 1847 list by Walkenaer & Gervais, *L. forficatus* is described as "D'Angleterre: plus rare en Ireland" and *L. laevilabrum* as "De l'Ecosse et des isles voisins".

In the 1840s another British worker, George Newport, added further species names which we now know to be synonyms; *L. americanus* (North America), *Lithobius argus* (New Zealand), *L. brevicornis* (Italy), *L. hardwickei* (Singapore), *Lithobius leachii* (Europe) and over the years others have described new species which, thanks to the work of the late

Ted Eason and others, are now known to be synonymic.

Things seemed stable for the generic and higher order names for *Lithobius* and *Scolopendra* with the former applying to *scolopendre à trente pattes* and its allies and the latter to the so called "giant centipedes". However, in 1955 a referral by R. E. Crabill, Jr. to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in 1955 described an interesting situation. Although Linnaeus had not designated a type species for the genus *Scolopendra*, in 1810 Latreille had done so, designating *S. forficata* as such. The same author had, in 1831, also designated the now *Lithobius forficatus* as the type species for the genus *Lithobius*.

Technically, if rules of priority had been strictly applied, since *S. forficata* came before *S. morsitans* in Linnaeus' list then *Scolopendra* was a senior synonym of *Lithobius* which should, in consequence, no longer be used. This would have resulted in the need for all species of *Lithobius* to be called *Scolopendra* and higher groups such as families and orders to be changed accordingly. The species known as *Scolopendra* would need another name (possibly *Rhombocephalus*) and consequently the higher groups also. One can just imagine the effect of all this!

Crabill commented that "The incorrect nomenclature currently in use has become so firmly entrenched in the literature over so long a period of years that nothing but confusion would result if an attempt were now made to apply the ordinary rules in the case". He asked the ICZN use its plenary powers to designate a type species for the genus *Scolopendra* and to place the generic names *Scolopendra* and *Lithobius* on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology, *morsitans* and *forficata* as in *S. morsitans* and *S. forficata* to be placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology and Lithobiidae and Scolopendridae to be placed on the Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology. 24 specialists from round the world including names such as Nell Causey, J.L. Cloudsley-Thompson, O. Kraus, E. Palmen, F.A. Turk and W. Bucherl wrote in to support this and there were no objections. The voting members of the ICZN agreed unanimously with the proposal (Opinion 454).

The genus *Lithobius* contains more than 500 species/subspecies and has a number of subgenera. *L. forficatus* is placed in the subgenus *Lithobius* along with most British/Irish species (*L. curtipes* and *L. crassipes* are in subgenus *Monotarsobius* and *L. microps* in *Sigibius*). Hence readers may come across reference to *Lithobius* (*Lithobius*) *forficatus*.

Acknowledgements:

The Linnean Society of London for their help and their permission to use pictures of the specimen of *Scolopendra forficata* in the Linnaean collection.

Additional References:

These are in addition to those given in the *Bulletin BMIG* article referred to above (**27**:43-52).

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Latreille, P.A. (1802). *Histoire Naturelle generale et particulière des Crustacés, et des Insectes* **2**:569. Paris, L' Imprimerie de F.Dufart.

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Tony Barber

Hot woodlice and centipedes

In recent months there has been a flurry of recording activity within tropical glasshouses; perhaps an attempt to escape the damp chill of late winter. Mark Telfer has been keeping warm inside the Butterfly House at Whipsnade Zoo. Here he found a small dark, but attractively patterned philosciid woodlouse with bright orange antennae and uropods, akin to *Burmoniscus meeusei*, but differing in the structure of the male pleopods. This was provisionally identified by Stefano Tatiti, thanks to Mark's images of relevant features, as *Anchiphiloscia pilosa* (Budde-Lund, 1913). Although widely distributed around the Indian and Pacific oceans, this appears to be the first recorded occurrence of this woodlouse on the European Continent. When I visited the Butterfly House in February it was numerous in some areas, but very fast and difficult to capture.

In a similar exercise to keep warm, Keith Lugg and I have visited several tropical glasshouses since the New Year. Among the woodlouse highlights have been the discovery of the tiny ball-rolling *Reductoniscus costulatus* from three sites; *Trichorhina tomentosa* and *Styloniscus cf mauritiensis* from two sites; and *Nagurus cristatus* from a single site. The centipedes *Lamcyes caeculus* and Lithobius cf lapidicola were also recorded from two sites. These are all species previously known from just a few British sites suggesting that such artificial habitats are under-recorded. However, for me the biggest surprise was finding *Porcellio dilatatus* (a well documented inhabitant of manure heaps) under stones in the Arid 'Cactus' House at Birmingham Botanic Gardens. It just goes to show that you'll never know what will turn up, especially inside a heated glasshouse.

Steve Gregory

Centipedes in the Départmentes of Finistère and Côtes-D'Armor, Brittany

Brittany is always of interest to British workers due both to its proximity to and its similarities with SW England and at various times small collections of centipedes have been made by British workers such as Gordon Blower and John Lewis. Its coast is especially interesting in relation to littoral species found on both sides of the Channel (or not as the case may be). Etienne Iorio has contributed significantly to our knowledge of both the Breton fauna and that of France in general. The latest paper by Antoine Racine and Etienne (Racine & Iorio, 2017) includes information about habitats for seashore geophilomorphs and adds to our knowledge of such species as well as including centipede species in general from the two départements of Finistère and Côtes-d'Armor.

Previously species such as *Geophilus seurati* (*G. gracilis*), *Schendyla peyerimhoffi* and *Schendyla monodi* were all known from very few French sites. The first two are, of course, also known from the British Isles but *S. monodi* has never been found here and, indeed in the 2014 *Catalogue* it is noted from

only two stations in France (Lorio, 2014). The authors report the three species from 27, 7 and 7 sites respectively. They also include *Hydroschendyla submarina* (13 locations) and *Strigamia maritima* (11). Other centipede species included in the account include *Lamyctes emarginatus*, *Lithobius borealis*, *L. calcaratus*, *L. forficatus*, *L. macilentus*, *L. melanops*, *L. muticus*, *L. piceus piceus*, *L. tricuspis*, *L. aeruginosus*, *L. crassipes*, *L. microps*, *Cryptops anomalans*, *C. hortenis*, *C. parisi*, *Stigmatogaster subterranea* (*Haplophilus subterraneus*), *Henia vesuviana*, *Schendyla nemorensis*, *Arctogeophilus inopinatus*, *Geophilus easoni*, *G. electricus*, *G. flavus*, *G. osquidatum*, *G. truncorum*, *Pachymerium ferrugineum*, *Strigamia acuminata*, *S. crassipes*. Four species previously recorded from Finistère but not found in this study were *Scutigera coleoptrata*, *Lithobius pilicornis pilicornis*, *Lithobius variegatus* and *Geophilus algarum*.

Recommended reading for British and Irish workers, especially if they have an interest in halophilic species.

References:

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Racine, A. & Iorio E. (2017) Contribution à la connaissance des chilopodes du Finistère et des Côtes-d'Armor (Myriapoda, Chilopoda). *Invertébrés Armoricains* **16**:3-28

Tony Barber

Round BMIG Quiz

Congratulations to Lee Johnson who was the first person to correctly answer Round BMIG Quiz 1.

What place in Wales links a decorated woodlouse, a 20th century English sculptor and typeface designer, Father Ignatius of Jesus and possibly Bruce Chatwin's Vision?

The place is Capel-y-ffin in the Black Mountains. *Armadillidium pictum* occurs on nearby Tarren yr Esgob, Father Ignatius founded a monastery there in 1869, which was later occupied by the sculptor Eric Gill, and a nearby farm called The Vision featured in Chatwin's novel *On The Black Hill*.

Round BMIG Quiz 2 Find the link between a notable locality for individual BMIG species with other information about the locality. Please remember to solve all elements of the puzzle.

What place in England links a littoral diplopod and a littoral isopod with a disastrous Tiger, naturists and a memorial tank?

Think you know the answers? No prizes, but email pha@ceh.ac.uk.

Upcoming Training

ID courses in 2017

As part of the Nature Counts project for Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust, Paul Richards will be leading the following FREE identification day schools in Sheffield:

Thursday 19th Oct. Introduction to Woodlice

Friday 3rd Nov Introduction to Millipedes & Centipedes

Details available on www.wildsheffield.com nearer the time. Or contact Paul to book a place p.richards@wildsheffield.com.

Centipede and Millipede identification course

Led by Paul Richards and facilitated by the Field Studies Council (FSC) this introductory course will be held at Preston Montford and introduces the ecology and identification of British species.

http://www.field-studies-council.org for more details.

Next issue – Autumn 2017

The next instalment of the newsletter will be available in the autumn. If you have any news, interesting findings or photos that you would like featured please send them to the newsletter editor at the email address below by the 10th September 2017.

Events of interest

Bioblitz

The next garden BioBlitz is coming up in June 2017. See the website for details on how to get involved.

www.gardenbioblitz.org/

17th International Congress of Myriapodology

ICM 2017 will be held in Krabi, Thailand 23-26th July. Registration closes on the 31st March, visit the link below to register and keep up-to-date with developments.

http://www.17icm.sc.chula.ac.th/

10th International Symposium on Terrestrial Isopods (ISTIB)

ISTIB 2017 will be held in Budapest, Hungary between 27th and 30th August. Deadline for registration is May 15th.

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