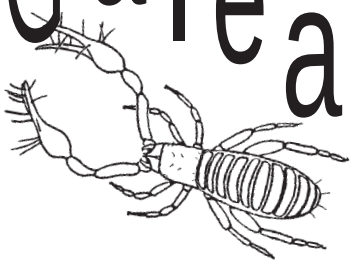
Galea



— *Newsletter of the Pseudoscorpion Recorders Group*

No.1

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Editor: Gerald Legg

Contributions to me c/o The Booth Museum of Natural History, 194 Dyke Road, Brighton, BN1 5AA; e-mail booth-mus@pavilion.co.uk

Welcome to all those fascinated by pseudoscorpions and to the rest of you who have to be converted to loving these endearing invertebrates.

Once seen, never forgotten. Having watched people discover their first pseudoscorpion I know that these creatures hold a fascination which is quite different from that shown for any other terrestrial invertebrate. What is it that makes them so interesting and intriguing? Is it their shape; odd scorpion-like pedipalps; the way they walk, sensing the environment ahead with their palps; their ability to run as fast backwards as forwards? Or what? They certainly have some unique habits amongst our arachnids: spinning 'nests' in which to aestivate, moult and have their young; feeding their young with milk and later regurgitated food; dancing; and many more. And - there are only 27 species in Britain! [That we know of - more of that later].

This and subsequent *Newsletters* will help to spread the pseudoscorpion word as well as provide a chance to discover things about them and to encourage YOU to find them thus helping us to understand their distribution and ecology. Such information is vital to help our understanding of the biodiversity (excuse the cliche) of Britain and Ireland.

What is most important, this is NOT my *Newsletter*, but **YOURS**. Contributions, no matter how small, will be welcome.

Editor

Neobisium (Neobisium) maritimum (Leach 1812) (Neobisiidae) a pseudoscorpion new to Scotland

On 8th October 1997 a single specimen of the pseudoscorpion *Neobisium maritimum* was collected from under an embedded rock in an outcrop on the middle shore zone, North Newton, Lochranza, Isle of Arran (NR933517, VC 100). The shore at North Newton is relatively exposed, lacking extensive seaweed cover and the zone in which *N. maritimum* was found is dominated by the barnacle *Semibalanus balanoides* (L.).

This is the first Scottish record of this scarce littoral species which occurs sporadically along the west coast of England and Wales as far north as the Isle of Man. Consequently, this find represents a considerable expansion of its range. Currently this is the most northerly specimen known, althought it is likely that it may be found elsewhere on the north-west coast of Scotland and England, possibly in the middle shore zone. This species also occurs in the upper and splash zones of the shore. In Europe it occurs on the western coast of Ireland and France.

My thanks to Gerald for confirming the specimen and for providing additional information.

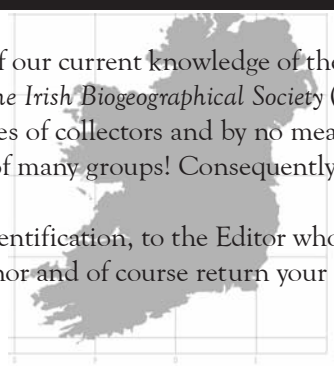
Alex Ramsay, Dryfemount, Dundas Street, Bo'ness, West Lothian EH51 0DG

Alex Ramsay

Irish Records

An updated and detailed account of our current knowledge of the Irish pseudoscorpion fauna was published recently in the *Bulletin of the Irish Biogeographical Society* (1998 **20**, 105-126). It is clear from this that the distribution reflects the activities of collectors and by no means a true picture of the Irish fauna. A common picture with the distribution of many groups! Consequently, Irish records in particular would be very useful.

Send records, and or specimens for identification, to the Editor who will add the information to the National database, forward details to Jim O'Connor and of course return your specimens.



'New Species' - What can I find?

New species to Britain are still out there to be discovered! Already in the past year or so two have been added to the British list - that's an increase in the number of pseudoscorpions in Britain of nearly 10%. The distribution of these two species also needs to be investigated further .

1. *Larca lata*

Found: 1982, recognised 1996

Delving into a rot hole in a fallen decaying oak in the Cranbourne Forest area of Windsor Great Park, a few handfuls of dry nest material were found and removed. Using Tullgren funnels a number of pseudoscorpions were collected. Never assume anything is what you expect it to be! These I identified as being *Chelifer cancroides* - a species I had only seen once before. As a result the specimen was used in the main illustration for this species in the *Linnean Synopsis* (Legg, G. & Jones, R.E., No. 40 1988). However, the eagle eye of Mark Judson noticed that the illustration was not *Chelifer* but resembled *Larca lata*. Mark examined the material and confirmed that this was the case and was also able to describe the protonymph which had not been seen before.

This discovery raises two points. One, don't assume that just because there are few species (in 1995 only 25) to be found in this order, that your's must be so-and-so. If in any doubt CHECK. And two, yes there are now 27 species on the British list and if YOU keep looking there could be 28, 29, 30 ...

A full account of *Larca lata*, one of Europe's 'rarest and most enigmatic species' (Judson 1996) appears in *Bull. Br. arachnol. Soc* **10** (6), 205-210). It appears to like dry habitats especially birds' and mice nests. As Mark suggests, perhaps it is phoretic on parasitic insects particularly mosquitoes (a phoretic female has been caught attached to a mosquito near a nest). So get out there and look!

2. *Microbisium brevifemoratum*

Found: 199?

This creature likes old, cold, acid bogs and was found in *Sphagnum* in the north of England. A full account by Mark Judson is awaiting publication in the BAS Bulletin.

Look into more nests. Although these have been fairly well examined I'm sure something could turn up. Try sea bird nests for starters (but don't break your neck, and, don't fall foul of the Wildlife and Countryside Act!).

Mammal nests could also prove interesting. On continental Europe the magnificent *Lasiochernes pilosa* pals up with moles, living in their nests'. Careful examination of mole bedding (don't hurt the moles!) could possibly yield specimens. The south of England may be a better place to start looking since this species may be here on the extreme edge of its northerly range which on the Continent extends to Eastern France, Germany and Luxemburg. Some years ago I looked for this species but perhaps too far north to find any.

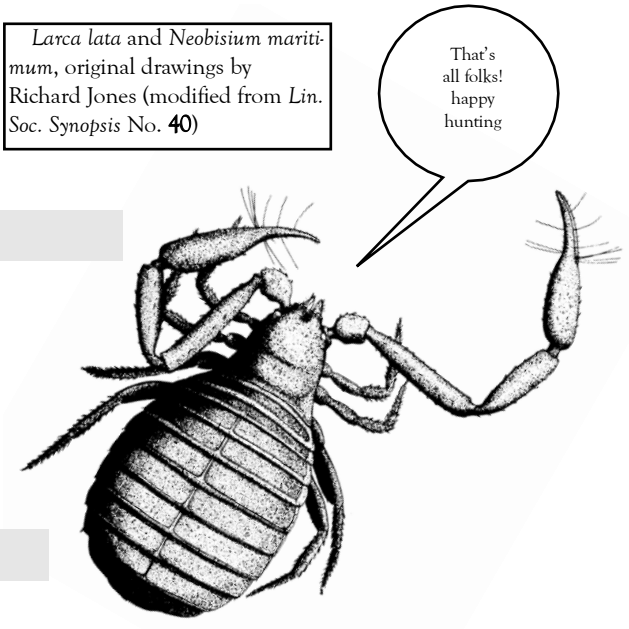
And others ...

Try different sampling/trapping techniques

From my experiences it seems that the way we get our specimens strongly influences what we find. Fairly obvious really I know, but this simple and common place idea was brought home to me when sampling tropical forest soil and using Tullegrens to extract the arthropods. What in the literature were listed as rare turned up in droves. Similarly with pseudoscorpions in the UK. *Dinocheirus panzeri* by the bath load from Tullgren extraction of old pigeons' nest debris and similarly *Cheiridium museorum* from barns.

Deep pitfall traps, used by coleopterist, could yield something interesting. So far *Chthonius ischnocheles* has dropped into one, but may be there are others waiting to be found.

Branch traps and all manner of other devices laid in habitats not often examined could yield interesting specimens. We'll look at some of these in more detail in a later Newsletter - please drop me a note of any ideas YOU have or methods you use.



Larca lata and *Neobisium maritimum*, original drawings by Richard Jones (modified from *Lin. Soc. Synopsis* No. **40**)