British Arachnological Society

SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME

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NEWSLETTER NUMBER 34
July 1999

Members will have read in the last Newsletter (No. 33, March 1999) that I have agreed to take over from David Nellist as the new National Organiser for the scheme. I would like to take this opportunity to thank David for his many years of hard work and wish him well in his future active fieldwork! I am very grateful to David for agreeing to continue as a member of the SRS Committee for the British Arachnological Society and I will be relying on him to help me with his expertise and support.

Peter Harvey

STOP PRESS

Data input from RA65 cards is starting shortly. The deadline for <u>all</u> data is the end of this year.

Please make sure you send in all record cards and computerised data by this deadline. Anything received later than this deadline will not be included in the published atlas and we have no timetable for a second edition.

Stan Dobson is continuing to act as the central point for computerised data. Please note that **computerised data** can now include all species, although the use of the rare species GEN14 cards is still important as a means to maintain detailed information for these species.

If you hold data on computer and have not already done so please contact **Stan Dobson** at Moor Edge, Birch Vale, High Peak, Derbyshire SK22 1BX to ensure your data is compatible. Stan is happy to help get your data into the right form, but not just before the deadline!

I would also appeal to all members holding computerised data to notify me where there may be a significant overlap between data on RA65 cards and data available in digital form. The job of weeding out duplicate records is complex and time consuming. Data already available in digital form is preferred.

<u>We have a massive task ahead</u> completing species accounts for all the British species. As you will read further on in this Newsletter the process has been started and **we need your help** to make sure the information is accurate and useful.

<u>We also have a massive task ahead</u> checking data entry and looking for anomalous records. **We need the help** of Area Organisers and other volunteers in this. The plan is for BRC to enter data on a county by county basis and then for regional volunteers to check the data entry against the cards. We hope all Area Organisers will want to check their own areas and for some to take on other counties not covered by an AO. Regional maps will be made available to help show up anomalous records. It will be an opportunity for volunteers to see the outcome of their efforts!

Rare Salticids in Scotland

Jim Stewart, 109 Greenbank Crescent, Edinburgh, EH10 5TA

While attending the Edinburgh Colloquium in July 1997, Lars Jonsson collected a few spiders in Holyrood Park. Among them were some specimens of the salticid spider Neon robustus, a Scandanavian species previously unknown from Britain. A paper on this discovery is in preparation for publication in the BAS Bulletin.

During the summer of 1998, also in Holyrood Park, specimens of the Nationally Notable (Nb) species *Aelurillus v-insignatus* were found on short turfed, stony ground with a southern exposure. The only previous Scottish occurrence for this species was recorded by William Evans, an Edinburgh naturalist, on a railway embankment site on the south coast of Fife in 1895. In spring of this year 1999 *Aelurillus* has been observed on or around different rocky areas in Holyrood Park, and Gordon Corbet has confirmed its continued existence at the Fife railway site after more than 100 years. Yet another colony of the species has been found recently by Keith Bland on the south rocky face of Kinnoull Hill in Perth.

The distribution of *Sitticus pubescens* in Scotland has been enhanced by its discovery on Calton Hill which lies within a kilometer of Holyrood Park. Although fairly widely distributed in England, the only earlier record for Scotland was from the island of Muck in 1983.

Provisional species accounts and distribution maps

All the RA65 card data sent in since the start of the scheme is at Monks Wood and the national distribution data cannot be accessed until BRC have completed data input. In theory all the data for rare species not listed on RA65 cards should be available on the GEN14 cards. However examination of all the GEN14 cards sent in since the scheme started shows that this is clearly not the case and there are many records which have not yet been fed into the system. At the moment it is therefore only possible to produce provisional distribution maps for very rare species known from a few well-known sites and other species where I can be reasonably certain all the data is available.

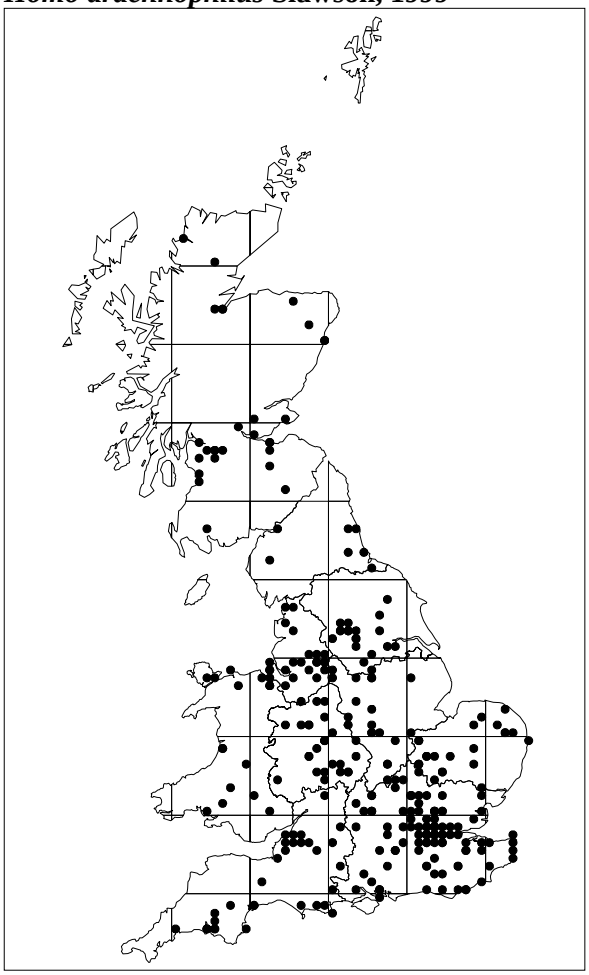
This newsletter includes provisional maps and species accounts for two species, *Zodarion italicum* and *Philodromus longipalpis*. Both species are of ecological interest and may be overlooked in parts of southern England. I am grateful to Eric Philp and Edward Milner for providing details of several Kent and Middlesex records of *Zodarion italicum*.

The urgent need to produce accounts for all British species by the end of 2000 means that we can only hope to make draft accounts available to SRS members for a limited number of chosen species. Choosing these is difficult. Most rare species are relatively well-known and information is already available in Volume 3 of the Red Data Books and the Review of Nationally Notable spiders by Dr Peter Merrett. In many ways it is the more common species which present the greatest difficulty. What do we really know about their detailed distribution and ecology? In order to make our species accounts useful and reliable we need feedback from you. What do you know about the ecology of these species in your part of the country? Is the draft information correct, what can be added and what needs to be changed?

One provisional species account is given in this newsletter for the common species *Pisaura mirabilis* and it is planned to continue publishing provisional accounts in future issues. Most species accounts will be in the order of 100-150 words in length, but for RDB and certain other species longer accounts will be used. The use of county names in species accounts will refer to Watsonian vice county areas.

Please send your comments to the author of the profile. Craig Slawson has started the ball rolling with his distribution map and species account for a newly described species *Homo arachnophilus*. Please note that the format of this species account and the use of mainland Britain for the distribution map will not be the format used in the published maps.

Homo arachnophilus Slawson, 1999



Distribution and Status

A widely distributed rare species, usually solitary, but occasionally migrating great distances to collect in groups of thirty or more in the spring. It can be found in almost any habitat, but it is thought to be parasitic on spiders.

Although known in this country and across the world for over four hundred years, it was only recognised as a distinct species in 1959, the type specimen being described from Flatford Mill, Suffolk.

H. arachnophilus is very hardy, being found throughout most countries in the world, although often in very low numbers..

Habitat and Ecology

This species is easily distinguished from the closely related *H. lepidopterophilus* by the stronger net attachment and the habit of burying its head in the vegetation. The plumage is very variable, including red beret, tweed jacket and an orange proboscis. The genitalia are not a useful identification feature and are therefore not illustrated.

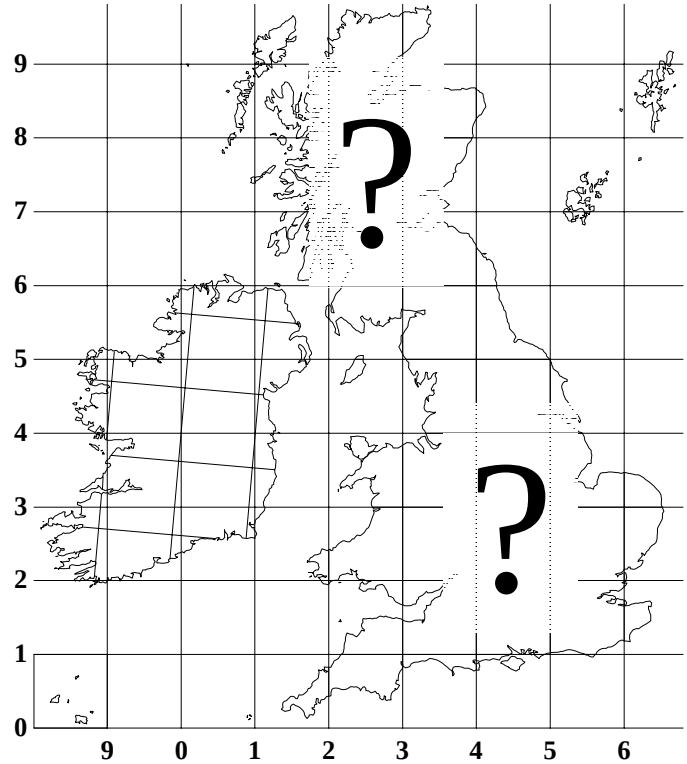
Threats and Management

The greatest threat to the species is a lack of young specimens. The majority of known locations hold mature specimens and there is an urgent need to artificially encourage a new younger generation to ensure the species' continued success.

Author of profile: Craig Slawson

Comments please to Craig Slawson at Heath House, 20 Queens's Road, Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs ST4 7LJ

Pisaura mirabilis (Clerck, 1757) the 'Nursery-web' spider



Distribution

Widespread across Britain.

Status

Common

Habitat and Ecology

The species is found in a wide variety of habitats. Adults tend to occur in reasonably tall vegetation in habitats such as rough grassland, woodland rides, field edges, heathland, gardens and marsh edges. This is a ubiquitous spider, easily recognised even in early immature stages. The adult season extends from May to July. The male catches a fly or other prey item as a courtship 'gift' for the female during mating. The female carries the egg-cocoon in her chelicerae until the eggs are about to hatch, when she constructs a tent-like web in tall herbage in which young remain until they disperse.

Author of profile Peter Harvey using information from Bristow (1958), Jones (1983) and Locket & Millidge (1951).

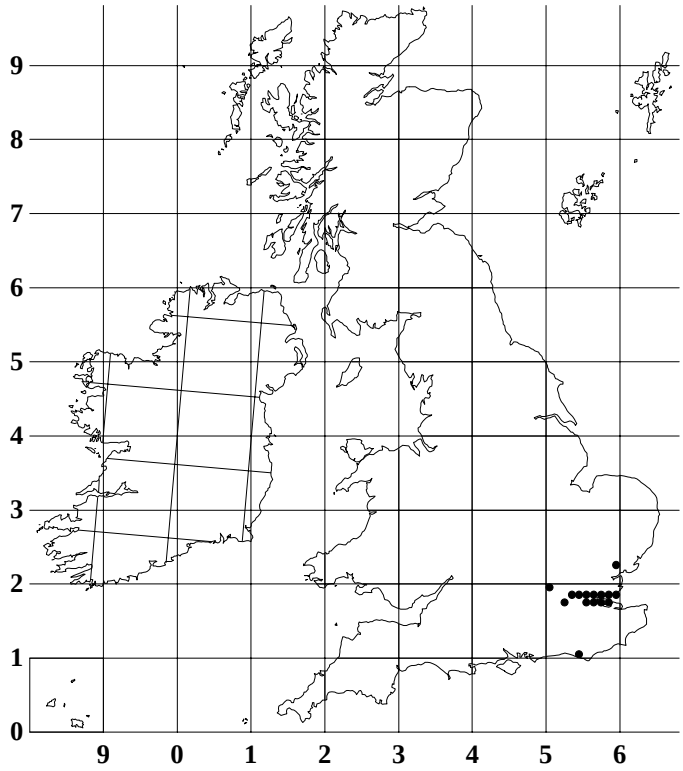
Comments please to Peter Harvey at 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex RM16 2YP

Zodarion italicum (Canestrini, 1868)

Distribution

First recorded from Grays in 1985 (Harvey & Murphy 1985), the centre of distribution in Britain is the East Thames Corridor in South Essex and West Kent. The species is also recorded from Stanway near Colchester in North Essex, Croxley Green in Hertfordshire, Middlesex and more recently (1998) Newhaven in West Sussex.

The species is known from France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland. Austria, Italy, Slovenia and Croatia, and the distribution map in Bosmans (1997) indicates the British records are within the natural range of the species in Europe. Populations may represent a survival from periods when Britain was joined to mainland Europe by a land bridge.



Status

Listed as Naturalised in Recorder but current evidence suggests this is a native species and should be assigned a Nationally Scarce status.

Habitat and Ecology

The spider is strongly associated with dry, warm, sunny open habitats containing a proportion of bare ground. The species is widespread and common in suitable habitat in the East Thames Corridor where the climate is unique in Britain for its low rainfall, high summer temperatures and mild winters. Here the spider has been trapped in large numbers in the drier parts of grazing marsh grasslands, unimproved Thames Terrace grasslands and other open grassland sites. It is also found in old sand and chalk pits and other 'brown field' sites in the region where the substrate provides warm, dry, sunny and sparsely vegetated habitats. The Colchester and Hertfordshire localities are old railway sites with clinker and railway ballast and the Middlesex localities are adjacent to railway lines. The Newhaven record is from a shingle beach.

Records from derelict railway sidings and sites near railway lines have caused some arachnologists to suggest this spider is a recent arrival and that railways may play a part in the distribution of the spider. This view is rejected here on the basis of our current knowledge of its distribution and ecology in Britain and the European distribution.

The spider has been observed using the common black ant *Lasius niger* as prey but in captivity it will take the meadow ant *Lasius flavus* and other ant species are probably used. On hot days the spider appears to become more active in the early evening, possibly a response to slower ant activity.

Adults are mainly found during May and June but the species has a long season with adults being recorded through to September and October.

Threats

The 'Thames Gateway' initiative threatens wildlife habitats in the whole East Thames Corridor. There is enormous development pressure on all open space in the region and 'brown field' sites are especially vulnerable.

Amenity management, the 'tidying up' of habitats and the political urge to plant virtually every open area with trees all represent threats to the nationally important biodiversity of thermophilic and xerophytic species found in the region.

Management

Open sunny habitats need to be maintained by grazing or periodic control of scrub and tree invasion. Occasional disturbance to expose areas of bare ground is likely to be beneficial.

References

Bosmans, R. 1997 Revision of the genus *Zodarion* Walckenaer, 1833, part II. Western and central Europe, including Italy (Araneae: Zodariidae). Bull. Br. Arachnol. Soc. **10** (8), 265-294.

Harvey, P. &Murphy, J. 1985 *Zodarion italicum* (Araneae:Zodariidae), a species newly recorded from Britain. *Newsl. Br. Arachnol. Soc*. **44**: 4.

Author of profile Peter Harvey.

Comments please to Peter Harvey at 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex RM16 2YP

***Philodromus longipalpis* Simon, 1870**

Distribution

The species was first collected in Britain at Box Hill in 1985 but remained unidentified until specimens were identified by Hendrik Segers.

The spider has been collected from widely scattered sites across southern England apparently only by David Carr and the author.

Status

Not listed in Recorder but current evidence suggests this is a rare species.

Habitat and Ecology

All adults have been beaten from the lower branches of old oak trees but juveniles have been taken from heather at Chobham Common in Surrey and from heather under open oak woodland in the Quantocks, South Somerset and kept in captivity until maturity. All records have been of singletons except for the recent collection of two females from one old pollard oak tree by the side of a footpath between wheat fields at Paglesham Churchend in South Essex. Adults have been collected from mid-May to mid-July.

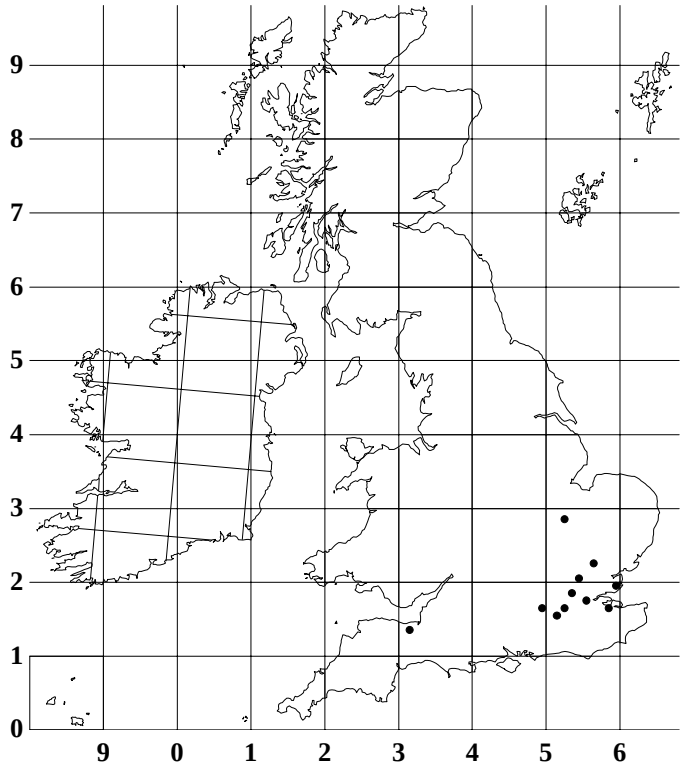
P. longipalpis is significantly larger than other species in the *aureolus* group and juveniles have a characteristic reddish coloration. Specimens which may be this species should be retained alive until mature. The difficulty of identification presented by this group means that all records must be confirmed with a voucher specimen.

Threats

Current evidence points to a low population density and exacting habitat requirements. The loss of hedgerows with old oak trees and the closing in of open woodland are likely to threaten this species.

Management

All records have been from mature oak trees in open habitats or as immatures from heathland in open woodland habitat. Management to retain these open surroundings may be important.



References

Segers, H. 1992 Nomenclatural notes on, and redescriptions of some little-known species of the *Philodromus aureolus* group (Araneae: Philodromidae). Bull. Br. Arachnol. Soc. **9** (1), 19-25.

Author of profile P.R. Harvey

Comments please to Peter Harvey at 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex RM16 2YP

WATCH OUT FOR *Argiope bruennichi*

A CALL FOR RECORDS ……

Argiope seems to be undergoing a dramatic expansion in its range and we should be searching for this species and trying to map its spread across Britain. Look especially in rough grassland which is left uncut during the summer and winter. It seems highly probable that the spider is now present in many suitable sites across southern England, perhaps even as far north as Derbyshire (see Stan Dobson's report of its occurrence in SRS Newsletter No. 26, November 1996).

In order to map the spread of *Argiope* in the Newsletter I need a minimum of ten km grid reference and year date data. Please send me your *Argiope* data and look for it in new areas.

Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex RM16 2YP

Zodarion rubidum, new to Britain

Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex RM16 2YP

I have been working through spider pitfall trap material from many woodland sites in the Epping Forest area for ecologist Paul Mabbott. Earlier this year Paul sent me a tube collected in July 1997 from Temple Mills, Leyton in the London Borough of Waltham Forest, part of the Watsonian South Essex recording area. Looking through the contents I saw a *Zodarion* female and turning it over expected to find the East Thames Corridor speciality *Z. italicum*. To my surprise here was a different species. Reference to Bosmans' Revision of the genus *Zodarion*, part II in the BAS bulletin volume 10 (8) showed the likely candidate to be *Z. rubidum* or possibly *Z. fuscum*, already discovered in Britain by Martin Askins in Wiltshire. With his usual remarkable turnaround by return post Peter Merrett identified the specimens as *Z. rubidum*.

The material collected by Paul Mabbott contained a total of two female *Zodarion rubidum* and one immature together with two male *Xerolycosa nemoralis*, a scarce spider in Essex. The formerly extensive site consists of railway marshalling yards, mostly abandoned. The London Ecology Unit Handbook No. 11 *Nature Conservation in Waltham Forest* gives details of the history of the site. In 1840 the Northern & Eastern Railway opened from Stratford to Broxbourne along the Lea Valley, a siding being connected to one of the last of the several mills which had at various times stood on or near the site since at least the 13th century. Extensions to the sidings were made and the layout was modernised in the late 1950s, but decline in rail-freight caused closure for the marshalling yard and most tracks were lifted in the mid-1980s.

I have recently been able to visit the site and the spider is still present in some numbers. The habitat consists of ruderal vegetation and scrub largely developed on a substrate of old dry railway ballast which ranges in size from coarse stones to finer material. An adjacent grassland area turned up *Zodarion italicum* – this must be the first British locality known to hold two *Zodarion* species!

There is no public access to the site, where the construction of a new road is taking place. With the co-operation of the London Borough of Waltham Forest and the road contractors it seems probable that the spider will survive.

Forthcoming Newsletters

I would like to include in a forthcoming Newsletter a report by Suzanne de Havilland on *Argiope* at allotments near Hastings, East Sussex where the Allotment Association have been studying the spider. We often know remarkably little about even common species and this is an excellent example of how everyone can help increase our knowledge of different species.

My thanks to those who have contributed notes and information for this issue. Newsletter No. 35 will be published in November 1999. Please send contributions as soon as possible to:

Peter Harvey, SRS National Organiser, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2YP
email: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

British Arachnological Society

SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME

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NEWSLETTER NUMBER 35
November 1999

My thanks to those who have contributed notes and information for this issue. Newsletter No. 36 will be published in March 2000. Please send contributions as soon as possible to Peter Harvey, SRS National Organiser, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2YP email: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Remember: **the deadline for <u>all</u> data to be included in the provisional atlas is the end of this year**.

Provisional species accounts and distribution maps

All cards and computer data must be in to BRC by the end of the year. If you have computerised data and have not yet let Stan Dobson know, <u>please do so soon</u>!! There will be about 30,000 cards to input and several hundred thousand computer records to process. Data input should be completed by BRC by the end of May 2000. It was agreed at a meeting with BRC on the 7th July this year that data input would start with the cards collated by Clifford Smith. BRC have now reported that VCs 1-31 of these cards are available for 'punching checking' comprising 3,824 cards and 59,382 records. This is the beginning of an increasing number of records which will need checking by volunteers in the SRS. If you are prepared to help in this process please contact me a.s.a.p.

At a later stage, when all data for each county has been entered, it is hoped that regional maps can be provided to Area Organisers to aid the validation of the records and the identification of errors.

This newsletter includes species accounts for two common species, *Salticus scenicus* and *Lepthyphantes tenuis*. **Feedback from recorders on the distribution and frequency of these species in different parts of Britain is requested**. There may be important observations which should be taken into consideration before the final drafts are submitted for the provisional atlas. A species account and provisional map is also provided for the RDBK *Theridion pinastri* because this is a species where new information suggests a revision of current knowledge is necessary.

Although the draft maps in the SRS Newsletters include an outline for Ireland, data is not available for the Republic of Ireland and the published maps will not show an outline for the whole of Ireland. Apologies for the overlapping grid lines on the draft maps included in the July Newsletter. These result because there is a different grid system in use for Ireland.

What happens next?

The recording scheme does not finish after the production of the provisional atlas. At the end of 1999 all recording will remain as important as ever. Aims of the scheme will be to maintain a database for the distribution of British spiders and to provide a forum for members which will keep everyone up-to-date with developments in our knowledge of the distribution, ecology and conservation of species. Whilst card records will still be very welcome there will be a move to reduce unnecessary repetition of work by accepting, whenever possible, data already computerised direct from disk or email. We should then be in a position to sort and analyse the data on an ongoing basis and provide information to relevant people and organisations.

HATFIELD MOORS FIELD MEETING

Hatfield Moors, like the nearby Thorne Moors has been severely damaged by peat stripping and is under intense threat of complete destruction. Some good habitat survives and Helen Kirk, President of the Doncaster Naturalists Society and Executive Committee member of the Thorne & Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum, has recently found some interesting spiders, including *Evarcha arcuata*.

In order to try and get more data for the site before the deadline for the provisional atlas we have arranged a field meeting to Hatfield Moors on the Saturday 20th November, meeting at the Green Tree Public House SE683097 at 11am. Although you may receive this newsletter after the meeting has taken place we hope that all recorders likely to be able to attend have already been invited. Many apologies to anyone who has been inadvertently missed.

Submission of Computer Records

Stan Dobson Manchester Museum, M13 9PL, UK; Tel: +44 (0)161-275 2632; Fax: +44 (0)161-275 2676; WWW: http://man.ac.uk/museum

Last year, when I issued the document with the above title, I had no real idea of what the response was going to be like. Had I been overwhelmed with data (a situation which I didn't really envisage), I would have needed all the data files to be as near the agreed format as possible in order to cope. What actually happened was that I received a certain amount of data, more or less in the right form, but also a lot of enquiries from people who weren't quite sure how to deal with it. With most of these, I asked them to send their records in whatever form they were, provided that the essential fields were present, and I edited them into the correct form.

In view of this, and also bearing in mind that the deadline for submission is fast approaching, I am proposing the following amendments, mainly simplifications, to the way records should be submitted.

- Send records in any standard form. This could be as a data file from a database or spreadsheet. I can read any files in standard formats such as dBase, Access or Excel and most others should be exportable in delimited text formats - if in doubt, contact me. The only data I have been unable to deal with so far have been in RECORDER files.
- Do not remove GEN14 records. This has been agreed with BRC to reduce the amount of typing in of cards; however, GEN14 cards should still be submitted separately.
- Please leave the species as names unless they have been converted to BRC numbers automatically with a system such as SPIREC. We are worried about spurious numbers appearing due to typing errors and I can easily convert from names.
- In the same way, vice-counties can be submitted as names.
- Submit dates in any form, but it would be a great help if they are all in a consistent format.
- Obviously, as much information as possible is welcome in the records; however, don't let a lack of data deter you from sending them in. As far as the Atlas is concerned, the essential information is species name and grid reference, date, recorder and determiner, closely followed by habitat. Anything else is bonus.

Callilepis nocturna (L.) on the Isle of Wight

Keith Alexander, National Trust, 33 Sheep Street, Cirencester, Glos GL7 1RQ.

This spider has been known from the seacliffs of one small area of south Devon for about 30 years but - until now - had not been found away from this favoured area. A single female was however collected from the bare chalk brow of the seacliffs of Tennyson Down (SZ330855) on the Isle of Wight, 31st May 1998.

The specimen then remained forgotten amongst miscellaneous unidentified material until recently examined by David Nellist. Both the Isle of Wight and south Devon sites combine open rock and sparsely-vegetated ground with a hot sunny microclimate, and plenty of ants - the main prey. Suitable conditions seem to be related to coastal exposure rather than the local geology.

New Records from Worcestershire - or 'How I nearly threw away a rarity'

John Partridge, 31, Duxford Close, Redditch, Worcs B97 5BY

The one that nearly got away was *Theridion hemerobium*. In the middle of August I had discovered the 'address' of *Larinioides sclopetarius*, or you could say belatedly realised that 'buildings, bridges and fences near water' could include lock gates, and I had gone to Strensham Lock on the River Avon to get another record. There were hundreds there, especially on the superstructure of the weir.. I also swept some of the vegetation on the two small islands that make up the lock and weir complex, and collected a few specimens, including a pale Theridiidae that was nearly discarded on the spot as probably immature. It came near being discarded again that afternoon when I found that the epigyne was rather pale, and did not match anything that I could find in 'The Spiders of Great Britain and Ireland', but I labelled it up and put it on one side. On two other occasions it came out to see if I could get any further, and I nearly labelled it *Theridion varians* from the abdominal pattern, but couldn't force the epigyne to match.

It sat there until the end of October, when I was sending off another specimen to Peter Merrett for confirmation as a new county record, and I thought I might just risk looking a fool by sending the unknown specimen as well. Happily, this turned out to be the right thing to do, and Peter identified it for me as *Theridion hemerobium*, hitherto known only from Sussex, Middx, Herts and Leics. There must be a moral in this somewhere.

The other fairly uncommon species found this year, at the end of April, was a male *Hybocoptus decollatus*. This was collected off a set of fence posts in woodland on the Malvern Hills. There were twenty to thirty new posts, and nearly all had a few spiders that looked as if they were trying to be aeronauts. The majority were *Theridion pallens*, together with *Hypomma bituberculatum, Lathys humilis, Oedothorax fuscus* and *Linyphia peltata*.

Other new Worcestershire records from this year are: *Panamomops sulcifrons, Entelecara erythropus, Theonoe minutissima, Pelecopsis mengei, Steatoda grossa, Meta bourneti, Psilochorus simoni*

I would like to record my thanks to Dr. Peter Merrett for confirming the identifications and the new county status for these records, and also for identifying the *T. hemerobium*. This would also be a suitable place to thank David Nellist for his noble efforts in getting me past the beginners stage in my Araneology; he dealt very patiently with my initial mistakes (and quite a few later ones) in identifying common species and gave me many useful hints in areas such as the use of the microscope, lighting, cleaning up glass beads and clearing specimens.

Theridion blackwalli O. P.-Cambridge in Leicestershire.

Jon Daws, 33 Rowan Street, Leicester LE3 9GP

Up until the beginning of 1998, *Theridion blackwalli*'s known distribution within Leicestershire was limited to two records in the far east of the county. These were 1 male collected May 1994 TF001087 Great Casterton Churchyard and 1 female July 1995 SK981043 Ketton Churchyard.

In the autumn of 1997 I got a job as a telephone box cleaner with Amalgamated Cleaning Services, who are one of the five companies sub-contracted by BT to clean all their telephone boxes in Britain. This involved cleaning three groups of between 45-64 phone boxes in rotation, twice a week, working Monday to Saturday. One group of boxes was in the south of the city, the second group were centred around the towns of Market Harborough and Lutterworth, with the third taking in most of the villages of south-east Leicestershire with odd boxes in Northamptonshire. As one would expect, I collected interesting looking specimens as I cleaned and since my rounds also included rural boxes, I occasionally stopped off at the odd churchyard.

At the beginning of May I collected a few spiders from Countesthorpe churchyard, amongst which was a sub-adult male *Theridion*, which due to its coloration, I took to be a possible *Theridion blackwalli*. Having been

alerted to the possibility of *Theridion blackwalli* being found in other parts of the county than in the far east, I made a mental note to visit a few more churchyards.

On the 30/5/98 I was returing home from cleaning phone boxes, when I stopped off at Fleckney churchyard to collect for half an hour. The time was about 5:00pm and at the rear of the church on a shaded wall, 4 male *Theridion blackwalli* walked about in full view within a square metre area one and a half to two metres from ground level. A fifth male specimen was collected forty metres away on the newly built church hall, this time from under a window frame two metres from the ground.

On the 2/6/98 I had been out earlier cleaning local phone boxes and then visited the museum. The weather had started very wet, but had slowly dried out and when I went to the Ford Fiesta van at about one thirty pm, the sun had been shining for over an hour. As I was unlocking the van, I noticed a dark *Theridion* species hanging from the driver's side wing mirror. I tubed the specimen, which I identified as a male *T. blackwalli*, which I believe was an aeronaut. The following day, 3/6/98, while cleaning phone boxes on the country run a male *Theridion blackwalli* was found inside a red phone box at Kings Norton, walking around the windows just over a metre from the floor.

On the 4/6/98 I returned to the Countesthorpe churchyard, where while searching the comers of the churches walls, a female *T.blackwalli* was found half a metre from ground level. The 5/6/98 found me at Kilby, where once again a male *T.blackwalli* was found wandering the inside of a red telephone box. On 6/6/98 I stopped off at Twyford churchyard, where under a small overhang on the church wall, a male *T.blackwalli* was found about half a metre from the ground. Later the same day at Hallaton another male *T.blackwalli* was collected from within a red telephone box two metres from the floor. A further male *T.blackwalli* was taken from the wall of the chapel situated within the ground of Wigston cemetery on the 8/6/98.

The morning of the 9/6/98 found me cleaning phone boxes in Market Harborough. At the edge of the town centre still on the High Street a male *T.blackwalli* was again found within a red telephone box. Interestingly, a female *Achaearanea simulans* was taken from the outside of the box a few moments later. Further down the road, on one of Market Harborough's council estates (Fairfax Road), I cleaned a triangular "doorless" phone box. On this morning a male *T.blackwalli* was being blown about on the top of the phone boxes mechanism; this was probably another aeronaut.

On 10/6/98 I returned to the red phone box at Kings Norton, to find a second male *T.blackwalli* wandering the phone box. Several hours later a female *T. blackwalli* was found in the red phone box at Medbourne, in a web about two metres from the floor. The second female of the day was again in her web, situated in a similar place in Theddingworth's red phone box. Bitteswell churchyard produced two female *T. blackwalli* on the 12/6/98 , both from the walls of the church, with one from the rear and the other from around the stonework of the main doors.

While out cleaning phone boxes, one gets to know where all the shops, petrol stations and public toilets are situated and their opening times. So on the 15/6/98 while visiting the toilets situated within the Wigston cemetery, I noted several spider species inside the toilet on the walls and ceiling, amongst which were two male *T. blackwalli*.

The final *T. blackwalli* record of the year came from the red phone box at Ashby Magna on the 16/6/98, when another wandering male was found on the glasswork of this box. On 22/6/98 1 finished working for ACS. This curtailed my collecting activities and no further *T. blackwalli* records were forthcoming. A few records obviously point to aeronauts, others to ideal permanent habitats such as churchyards, with eight records coming from red phone boxes .

This species could be more of a frequent aeronaut than previously realised, but due to the brevity of its maturity season unless you are out and about at the right time, it could easily be overlooked. I have collected many species of known aeronauts from inside red phone boxes. These have climbed up the outside of the box and then wandered through the 15 mm high ventilation gap that goes around the phone box at about two metres high. This slit has a downward curving overhang at the top to stop rainwater getting into the phone box; conversely any small creature wandering up the outside of the phone box (such as a spider to aeronaut) would be channelled inside.

The 1999 season.

The first record of the year came on the 28/4/99 while collecting spiders in Narborough churchyard. Two sub-adult male *T.blackwalli* (one was collected) were found amongst the decorative stonework either side of the main doors.

A further record came from the yard of a terraced opticans practice on the Narborough Road, Leicester. My wife was the optical dispenser there and when I dropped her off I occasionally examined the yard for spiders. On the 19/5/99 a male *T.blackwalli* was found under one of the window sills. This prompted me to visit Desford churchyard in the west of the county on the same day, where a male and sub-adult female *T.blackwalli* were found together under a window sill.

Having finished a night shift at Asda on the 25/5/99, 1 drove to Fenny Drayton churchyard where a male, sub-adult male and a female *T.blackwalli* were discovered in the corners of the stonework around the main entrance to the church. Several churchyards later another male *T.blackwalli* was collected from beneath the window sill of Sibson church. The following day I visited another group of churchyards, this time to the north-east of Leicester, where the final church of the day yielded a female and sub-adult female *T.blackwalli*. These were collected from a two metre high brick wall and from the church wall respectively.

On the 1/6/99 I visited a further group of churchyards in the south-west of the county, where at Claybrooke Parva two male and two female *T.blackwalli* were captured. A male and female were found amongst the ornate stonework around the walls of the church, with the other male and female being found inside a small wooden shed adjacent to the church wall. The female was within her web on the back of the door, with the male wandering around about half a metre away on the same door. The shed had no windows, so the spiders were in relative darkness.

At Frolesworth churchyard a male *T.blackwalli* was found amongst the stonework at the entrance to the church. With a female being discovered spun-up in the recesses of a carved gravestone in the grounds of Dunton Bassett churchyard. These were the final *T.blackwalli* records of 1999.

Conclusion.
This spider has a short maturity season, with recognisable sub-adults being found from late April to late May and adults from mid-May to the end of July. From the evidence gathered from these few records it would seem that males mature up to several weeks before females. There is also evidence that both sexes aeronaut as adults. It would seem that this species could arise almost anywhere when aeronauting, with it surviving/breeding in some unlikely places, such as telephone boxes.

Although these records are nothing more than a snapshot of what *T.blackwalli* is doing in Leicestershire, it would seem that from mid-May to mid-June *T.blackwalli* could be looked for almost anywhere in England.

Provisional species accounts and distribution maps

***Salticus scenicus* (Clerck, 1757)**

Distribution
Widespread across Britain.

Status
Common and probably present in virtually every garden at least in southern England. It is widespread and common throughout Northern Europe (Roberts 1995).

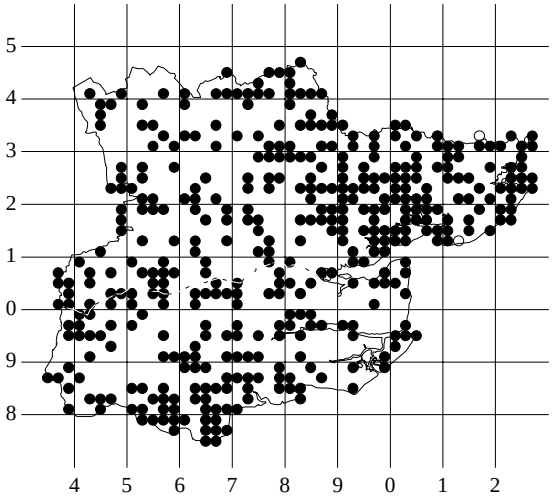
Habitat and Ecology
The species is found on sunny walls and fences but is also found in more natural open habitats, on rocks and sometimes tree trunks. This is an easily recognised spider whose adult season extends from May/August. As with all Salticidae the spider has good vision and the enlarged chelicerae in the males, easily seen by the females, play a role during courtship.

Author of profile P.R. Harvey and David Nellist using information from Bristow (1958), Jones (1983), Locket & Millidge (1951) and Roberts (1995).

Lepthyphantes tenuis (Blackwall, 1852)

Distribution

Widespread across Britain.



Status

Common and can be regarded as one of most ubiquitous spiders.

Habitat and Ecology

The species is a frequent aeronaut which can be found in many different habitats including ruderal vegetation, grassland, woodland, wetland and heathland but is perhaps especially associated with grasslands. It can be considered a 'pioneer' species which will quickly colonise new habitats and take advantage of disturbed ground. Adults can be found throughout the year.

Author of profile P.R. Harvey

A distribution map for Essex illustrates a situation which is probably reflected in most other parts of Britain. Please send any relevant feedback.

Theridion pinastri L. Koch, 1872

Distribution

The species was first recorded in Britain as a male at Chobham Common, Surrey in 1977 (Murphy & Murphy 1979) with a female taken in the same vicinity in 1984. There have been a number of more recent records (Carr 1998; Carr & Harvey 1996; Harvey *et al* 1993; Jones 1992) and further unpublished records in S. Essex and W. Kent which suggest that the spider may be more widespread in southern Britain than previously suspected.

The species is widespread in central and southern Europe.

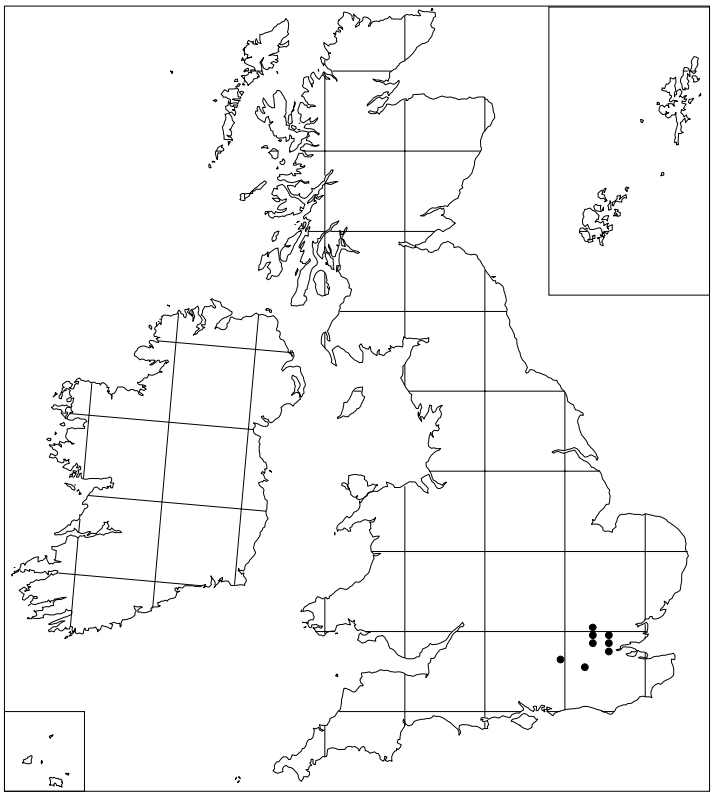
Status

Insufficiently Known RDBK. Current evidence now suggests this species is a rare native spider which should belong to the Rare (RDB3) category.

Habitat and Ecology

The spider has previously been associated with mature heathland in Britain and pine woods on the Continent (Merrett in Bratton 1991). However recent evidence suggests that mature deciduous trees such as large oak or beech in open situations at the edge of woodland clearings, acid grassland or heathland are more typical. Mature males and gravid females have been beaten off the lower branches of oak at Leyton Flats in S. Essex and further males and females have been collected from large oaks in open habitat in S. Essex and Hertfordshire, and from mature beech at Burnham Beeches in Buckinghamshire (Harvey et al 1996; Carr 1998). However in 1998 an adult female was also collected from scrubby oak in a hedgerow near Dartford Heath in W.Kent and an adult male was taken in a pitfall trap set in a silt lagoon at Rainham Marshes in S.Essex.

Of the 14 specimens collected in Britain adults have all been found in the period early June – mid July except for a single female taken in October.



Threats

Although most recent records involve mature deciduous trees, a common feature is an open habitat at the edge of clearings or widely spaced trees in open grassland or heathland. Lack of management resulting in the development of secondary woodland and the closure of open woodland is probably detrimental to this species.

Management

Management to retain open surroundings by light grazing or periodic control of scrub and tree invasion is likely to be important.

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Carr, D. 1998. *Theridion pinastri* L.Koch new to Hertfordshire. *Spider Recording Scheme Newsletter* **32**: 4.
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Murphy, J.A., & Murphy, F.M. 1979. *Theridion pinastri* L.Koch, newly found in Britain. Bull. Br. Arachnol. Soc. **4**: 314-315.

Author of profile Peter Harvey.
Comments please to Peter Harvey at 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex RM16 2YP

female *Theridion pinastri* with egg sac on oak leaf

Diplocephalus protuberans and other spiders recently found in Hastings, East Sussex

Andrew Phillips, 45 West Hill Road, St.Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex

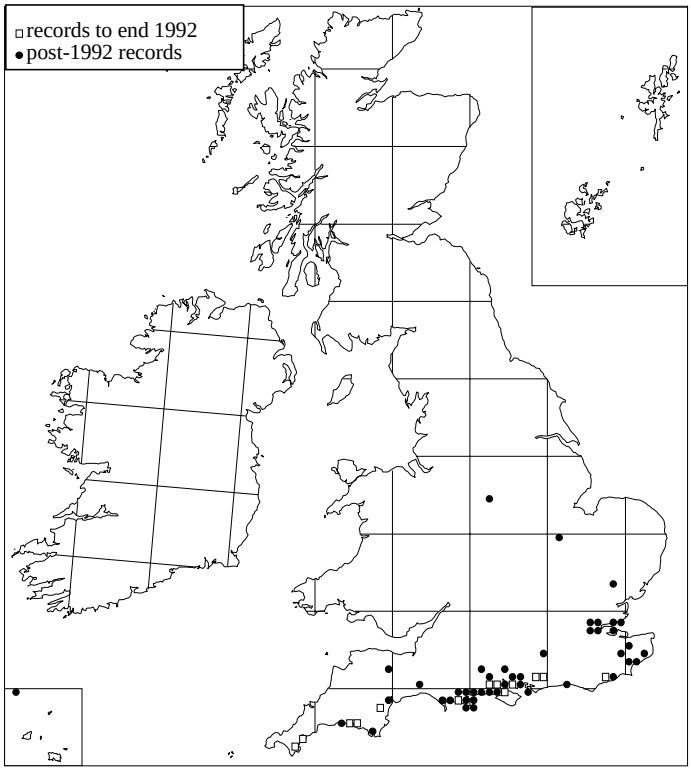
I was pleasantly surprised to read J. Denton's article in the March 1999 SRS newsletter on the occurrence of *D.protuberans* in Hampshire just after I had received confirmation of a male of the species that I had found in Hastings, East Sussex. The spider was found in leaf litter beside a wooded gill stream in Ecclesbourne Glen, Hastings Country Park (TQ838102) during November 1998. It has been recognised for some time now that the gill streams of Hastings and the Weald have a bryophyte flora typical of more Western and Northern parts of Britain. It is becoming clear as more and more Northern and Western species of invertebrates are found in this area that the invertebrate fauna also has a Northern/Western flavour. Other Northern/Western species recorded from Hastings have included the water beetle *Hydraena pygmaea* and the caddis-fly *Diplectrona felix*.

Other spiders recently found in Hastings have included *Hybocoptus decollatus*, beaten from gorse on the undercliff at Fairlight Glen, Hastings Country Park (TQ852106), and *Episinus truncatus* and *Micrargus laudatus* were found from a small area of landslip at the base of the cliffs at Rock-a-Nore, Hastings (TQ830096).

An update on the expansion in range of *Argiope bruennichi* (Scopoli, 1772)

Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2Y

Argiope bruennichi distribution in October 1999



I am very grateful to all those people who have sent me their records of *Argiope bruennichi*. Peter Smithers has written a more detailed review of recent British records for the BAS Newsletter. All the data I have received is reproduced here in the form of a map which clearly shows the remarkable increase in range which is occurring for this species. We should continue to document this expansion in range and I would urge all SRS members to keep a look out for the species in future years.

The article on this spider in the Mail started an influx of reports and a spate of articles in local newspapers. My own local newspaper carried an article about a sighting of this 'venomous European wasp spider' by a local resident who had identified it and obtained information, unfortunately not all accurate, using the internet. A report from Blackpool seems likely to involve *Dysdera crocata* and a report from Cleveleys in Lancashire has been found to be *Araneus diadematus*. Two sightings in south Essex reported to me by members of the public were also of *Araneus diadematus*, despite all the newspaper articles carrying excellent photographs of *Argiope*.

A new Area Organiser

Lincolnshire has been without an Area Organiser for several years. I am very pleased to announce that Annette Binding, a BAS and SRS member, has agreed to take on the role. Anyone with completed record cards or computerised data for this county should send them into the Spider Recording Scheme via Mrs Annette E. Binding at 6 Willow Court, Washingborough, Lincoln LN4 1AS

The next newsletter

Newsletter No. 36 will be published in March 2000. Please send contributions as soon as possible to Peter Harvey, SRS National Organiser, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2YP email: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

British Arachnological Society

SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME

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NEWSLETTER NUMBER 36
March 2000

This is quite a bumper issue for the Spider Recording Scheme newsletter. Many thanks to those who have contributed articles, notes and information for this issue. Newsletter No. 37 will be published in July 2000. Please send contributions as soon as possible to Peter Harvey, SRS National Organiser, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2YP email: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

The provisional atlas, GEN14 (rare species) cards, and draft species accounts

The December 31st deadline for the inclusion of records into the provisional atlas saw an enormous number of cards being sent in before the end of the year. Thank you very much to all the recorders and Area Organisers who has co-operated to enable this to happen - I realise the enormous amount of effort which goes into completing cards and making sure that all the available data has been sent in to national schemes like ours.

Data entry of spider cards at BRC will take longer than originally anticipated but progress is still on line for the publication of the provisional atlas in 2001. An essential part of this process will be the 'punching checking' of data entered at BRC and then validation of the data-set to weed out unreliable records and records in the wrong place, etc. Thank you to the members of the SRS Sub-Committee who have already been participating in this process, and thank you to all those Area Organisers who have volunteered to help. If anyone else can add their name to the list of volunteers we will all have a less burdensome job ahead! Please let me know.

There is very evidently a shortfall of Rare Species GEN14 cards which have been submitted to the scheme. These will be the last records to be computerised at BRC, so there is still time to submit them for inclusion in the atlas. Without a GEN14 card, unless recorders have written in these species on RA65 cards they cannot be mapped. Please, please complete GEN14 cards if you have not already done so. There are even important records of rare species which have published in the BAS Newsletter or Bulletin which have not been submitted to the scheme. If the literature provides adequate details then it *may be* possible for someone with the time to spare to get the data into the maps. Otherwise these important records will be missing, detracting from the value of the atlas.

Remember that if data has not been submitted then it cannot be mapped!!!

Species accounts which need to be completed for the provisional atlas are a major task. A lot of progress has been made, for which I am very grateful to the remarkable number of arachnologists who have each taken on a set of species. There are now **over 100 draft accounts completed**, and it is important we get as much feedback on these as possible. Unfortunately limitations of space mean that I have only been able to include draft accounts for a few species in this newsletter. I hope to remedy this later in the year. There will be important observations which should be taken into consideration before the final drafts are submitted for the provisional atlas. There has already been some extremely valuable feedback on accounts included in previous newsletters.

Feedback from recorders on the ecology, distribution and frequency of these species in different parts of Britain is requested.

FIELD MEETING TO HATFIELD MOORS ORGANISED FOR SATURDAY 1ST JULY 2000

Famed for red data invertebrates, notably *Bembidion humerale* & *Curimopsis nigrita*, as well as its nationally important population of breeding nightjars Lindholme lies roughly in the centre of Hatfield Moors, SSSI. It is privately owned and to their credit the family have kept the area of lowland raised mire, acid & calcareous grassland, and ancient oak woodland free from the ravages of peat extraction.

The fauna & flora of the Humberhead Peatlands, especially neighbouring Thorne Moors SSSI, has been extensively documented by Skidmore et al. Hatfield Moors however, because of limited access has not received as much attention by naturalists. Commercial peat exploitation continues on vast tracts that surround the refugia at Lindholme, which heightens the urgency to gather data. The arachnofauna especially has been sadly neglected which is why after the discovery of *Evarcha arcuata* last summer, a species new to Yorkshire, a determined effort is being made to produce a definitive list for Hatfield Moors.

The meeting organised for **Saturday 1st July 2000** is being hosted by the Doncaster Naturalists' Society. It is also being attended by members of the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union. After a day in the field members and visitors are invited to a buffet tea to be taken at the Robin Hood & Little John Public House in the nearby village of Hatfield Woodhouse at 4.30pm. BAS/SRS recorders will be meeting 10.30am at the Green Tree Public House SE683097.

Anyone requiring further information/directions is advised to contact Helen Kirk on 01724 712223 (evenings & weekends) or by e-mail: kaptainkirk@talk21.com.

Helen will need to have a good idea of numbers for the buffet tea. If you intend to attend, please let her know in good time - Peter Harvey.

The field meeting to Hatfield Moors Saturday 20th November

Helen Kirk 01724 712223 (evenings & weekends) or e-mail: kaptainkirk@talk21.com.

In November 1999 members of the BAS visited Lindholme and despite the late date and cold weather the list for the day approached seventy species. Species of note included *Theridion simile, Cercidia prominens, Ceratinella scabrosa* and *Walckenaeria dyseroides.* Appreciation is extended to David Carr, Stan Dobson, Tom Faulds, Trevor Harris, Peter Harvey and Geoff Oxford who travelled considerable distances to join members of the DNS & the Thorne & Hatfield Conservation Forum in their quest for data. A full write up of the results of both meetings will be included in a later newsletter .

The Recording Scheme Now

The recording scheme has not finished!!! All recording remains as important as ever and there is still much to do to improve coverage in many parts of the country. There is an on-going need to monitor changes in our spider fauna brought about by habitat loss, fragmentation to our countryside, climate change, etc. There are also certainly plenty of surprises, with a remarkable number of new species being discovered. Please keep on visiting places of interest and recording spiders!

Problems with SPIREC.

Stan Dobson, Moor Edge, Birch Vale, High Peak, Derbyshire SK22 1BX email: stand@beeb.net

Users of Spirec who change to a faster machine may find that it won't run and get error message 200. If they contact me I can send them a version that will run. I am grateful to Dr Alan Morton for supplying the means to overcome the problem, and to Francis Farr-Cox for suggesting that I contact Alan for help.

Please note my new e-mail address for sending material to me. The Museum address is still available.

Habitat preference and altitudinal distribution of *Lepthyphantes tenuis* and *L. zimmermanni* in North Wales

Richard Gallon, 23A Roumania Crescent, Llandudno, North Wales LL30 1UP

I have recently purchased a distribution-mapping program, which has allowed me for the first time to plot all my spider records at tetrad level. The map produced for *Lepthyphantes tenuis* clearly indicated that I had not taken this common species in upland Snowdonia (Fig. 1); however, the map for *L. zimmermanni* showed that this species was recorded there (Fig. 2).

Fig. 1: Distribution of L. tenuis in North Wales

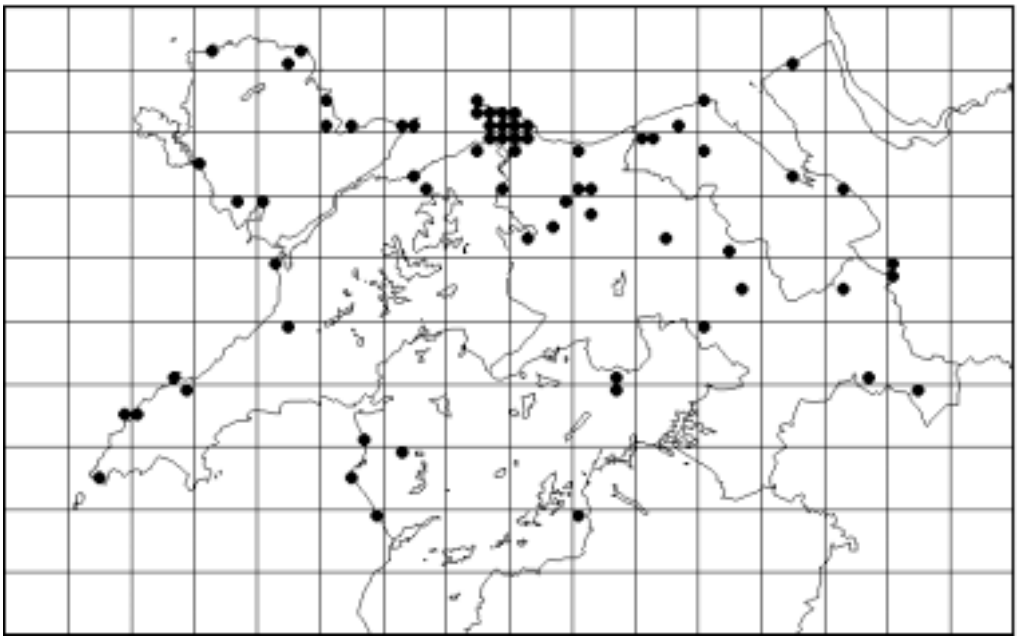


Figure 1: Map showing the tetrad distribution of *Lepthyphantes tenuis* in North Wales. Vice county boundaries, lakes and 600 m contours are also shown.

Fig. 2: Distribution of L. zimmermanni in North Wales

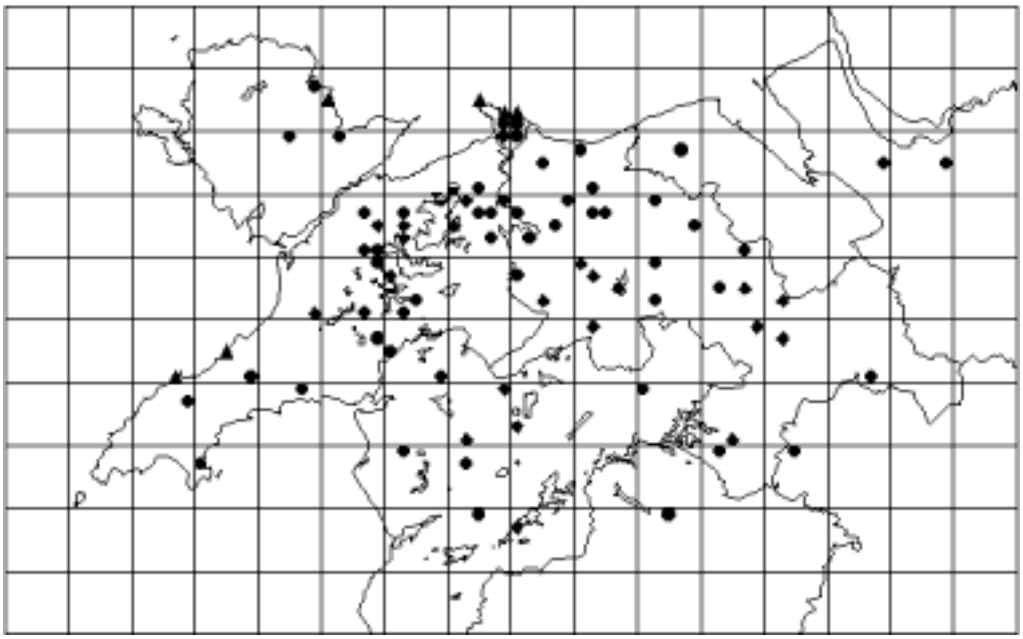


Figure 2: Map showing the tetrad distribution of *Lepthyphantes zimmermanni* in North Wales. = exposed coastal grassland; = woodland records; = upland grassland; semi-filled circles = felsenmeer.

In order to investigate this observation I decided to produce altitudinal distribution graphs for both species. For *L. tenuis* (102 records) I found that I had not collected any specimens above 330 m (Fig. 3); whilst *L. zimmermanni* (96 records) ranged from sea level to the summit of Snowdon (1065 m) (Fig. 4).

Figure 3: Altitudinal distribution of *Lepthyphantes tenuis* in North Wales

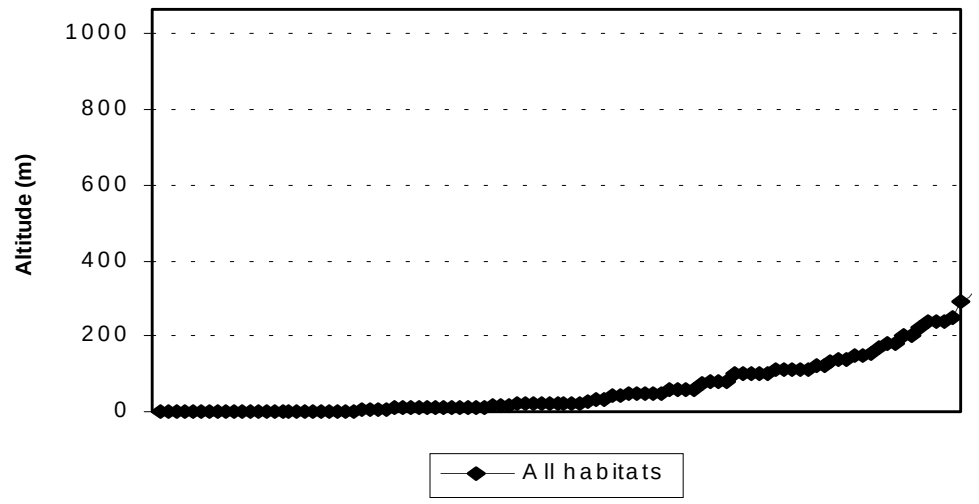
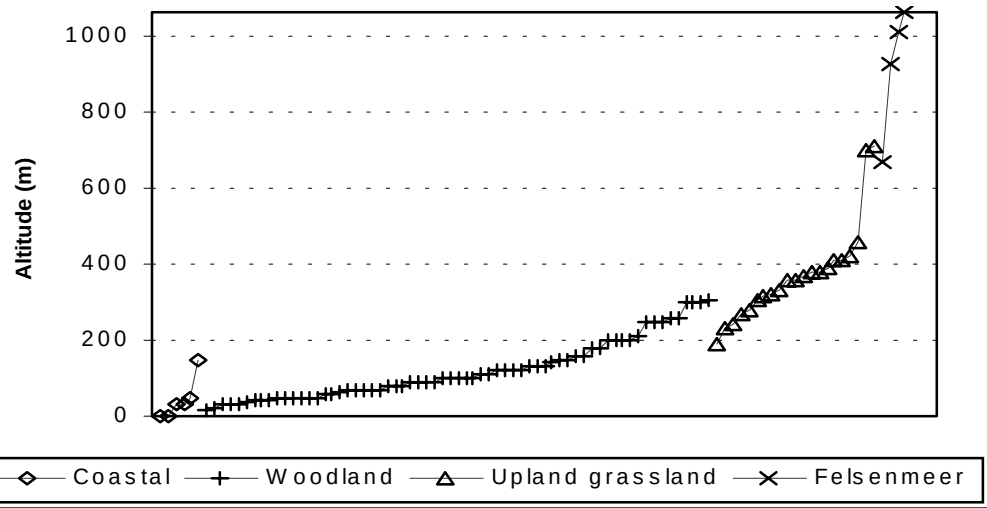


Figure 4: Altitudinal distribution of *Lepthyphantes zimmermanni* in North Wales



From habitat records it was clear that all *L. tenuis* specimens were from open, lowland grassland sites (including sand dunes). In contrast *L. zimmermanni* was found to inhabit several different habitats, namely exposed, coastal grassland with thick plant growth, woodland (coniferous & deciduous), upland grassland (moorland) and under felsenmeer rocks on mountaintops. From figure 4 it can be observed how these different habitats are utilised at different altitudes.

From these preliminary observations it appears that lowland grassland sites are exclusively inhabited by *L. tenuis*; only on exposed, coastal sites does *L. zimmermanni* inhabit lowland grassland. *Lepthyphantes zimmermanni* inhabits woodland leaf-litter in the lowlands to the exclusion of *L. tenuis*. In upland grassland

and moorland *L. tenuis* gives way to *L. zimmermanni*. Exposed mountain summits are also utilised by *L. zimmermanni*, but here the species finds a niche beneath the broken rocks, which form the felsenmeer fields.

Supporting evidence for the above contentions is provided by Goodier's extensive mountain pitfall trapping carried out in the 60's and 70's. He did not take *L. tenuis* in his mountain traps, but he did record *L. zimmermanni* beneath summit rocks (Goodier 1967, 1970a, 1970b, 1970c).

It will be very interesting to see if such distributional observations are apparent for these two species in other parts of Northern Britain.

References

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Goodier, R. 1970a. Notes on mountain spiders from Wales. 1: Spiders caught in pitfall traps on the Snowdon National Nature Reserve. Bull. Brit. Arachnol. Soc., **1**: 85-87.
Goodier, R. 1970b. Notes on mountain spiders from Wales. 2: Spiders caught in pitfall traps on the Cwm Idwal National Nature Reserve, Caernarvonshire. Bull. Brit. Arachnol. Soc., **1**: 97-98.
Goodier, R. 1970c. Notes on mountain spiders from Wales. 3: Spiders caught in pitfall traps on the Rhinog Mountains, Merionethshire. Bull. Brit. Arachnol. Soc., **1**: 99-100.

Neon robustus Lohmander, 1945 recorded for the first time in North Wales (Caernarvonshire, VC. 49)

Richard Gallon, 23A Roumania Crescent, Llandudno, North Wales LL30 1UP

On the 19th April 1999 my father and I paid a short visit to the Great Orme to observe a sea bird colony on the cliff faces near the old lighthouse (SH755843, 50 m).

The Great Orme, for those unfamiliar with it, is a large Carboniferous limestone headland near Llandudno renowned for its calcicole flora. Over the years the Great Orme has also produced a number of interesting spiders including *Atypus affinis*, *Episinus truncatus*, *Ballus chalybeius* and *Micrargus laudatus*.

Once we had descended down the steep slope to a secure vantage point, I embarked on a session of 'grubbing about' amongst the clumps of grass. This collecting technique did not yield anything of interest, so I turned my attention to a large scree composed of weathered limestone. Working through this habitat I turned up a couple of Salticidae which had concealed themselves within silk-cells beneath the rocks. A third specimen was also taken which was not in a silk-cell. The jizz of these specimens was to all intents and purposes that of *Euophrys frontalis*.

Later that day, beneath the microscope, I discovered that two of the jumping spiders (those within silk-cells) were immature, but the larger one was a mature female. I tentatively identified the specimen as *Neon reticulatus*, but at the time remember thinking that it was a particularly large example of the species. The specimen was then stored away.

With the publication of a paper (Snazell *et al.* 1999. Bull. Brit. Arachnol Soc. **11**: 251-254) outlining the differences between *N. reticulatus* and *N. robustus*, I decided to take a second look at my outsized *N. reticulatus*. With a total length of 3.19 mm and a carapace length of 1.33 mm, my specimen was clearly *N. robustus*. To verify the identification I forwarded the spider to Peter Merrett who kindly confirmed that it was *N. robustus*.

It is interesting to note that my specimens were found in a NNW facing scree slope within a sheltered valley as compared with the typical southerly aspect mentioned in the paper by Snazell *et al*.

The Great Orme is only one of a series of structurally similar limestone outcrops in North Wales and therefore it is likely that this spider will turn up at these sites in the future.

66 years on

Ian Dawson, RSPB Library, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds SG19 2DL
ian.dawson@rspb.org.uk (work) ian.dawson@lineone.net (home)

W S Bristowe visited the island of Ramsey off the Pembrokeshire coast from June 3rd to 5th 1933, and recorded 53 species of spider there, including the RDB3 *Clubiona genevensis*, of which he found "four females in white cells attached to lower surface of stones" (*Proc. Zool. Soc. London* 1934: 1-9.). Ramsey is now an RSPB reserve, and as part of a sabbatical project to collect both new and known data on spiders on RSPB reserves, my partner Debra Clayton and I visited Ramsey exactly 66 years later, from June 2nd to 5th (1999), with the main aim of rediscovering *C. genevensis*, apparently unrecorded there since Bristowe's visit.

Our visit was highly successful, for in addition to our rediscovery in one small area of the island of a healthy population of *C. genevensis* (27 females or cells with eggs), we also found single females of *Lathys stigmatisata* (RDB3) and *Aelurillus v-insignitus** (Nb), both new to Wales, and 1 male and 2 females of the Notable B *Micrargus laudatus**, this last in the same habitat as *C. genevensis*. To cap this the recent paper in the *Bulletin* on the discovery of *Neon robustus* in Britain sent me hurrying to look again at 2 female *Neon* taken from a pile of loose rocks at the southern end of the island, as at the time I thought they looked very big and rather dark. Sure enough they turned out to be *N. robustus* – a third new Welsh species from the island!

In spite of decidedly unsettled weather during our visit our final total of 65 species exceeded Bristowe's by 12, though our lists share only 31 species in common. Pitfall-trapping over the summer by Dick Loxton (who also recorded *L. stigmatisata*) has now added a further 38 species to the island list, bringing the total to a very respectable 125 species.

Bird protection and spiders

We also carried out fieldwork on seven other RSPB reserves last summer in Dorset, Devon, Bedfordshire and Highland Region. The success of our fieldwork greatly exceeded our expectations, the highlight being 2 males of a small erigonine from the Insh Marshes in the Spey valley, new to Britain, either *Wabasso replicatus* (or, if the Old and New World forms are treated as the same species, *Wabasso quaestio* which has priority: Peter Merrett is currently researching this). It is hoped that females may be found next summer, and a full account of the discovery will appear in the *BAS Bulletin* in due course.

In addition to this and our Ramsey finds, we also discovered the RDB2 *Heliophanus auratus* and *Ero aphana** new to Arne, Dorset, the former the first record away from Essex; confirmed the continued presence of four RDB2 species at Abernethy: *Haplodrassus soerenseni*, *Clubiona subsultans*, *Dipoena torva* and *Pelecopsis elongata*; and found a total of 22 Nationally Notable species of spider, including *Araneus alsine** from Corrimony reserve, below Glen Affric (the second Scottish and most northerly site) and *Araniella displicata** from the RSPB HQ at Sandy, Beds, also a new northernmost record.

We have gathered all the spider records held by wardens for RSPB reserves, but with rather few exceptions these records are surprisingly meagre or for some reserves non-existent. We would therefore be delighted to receive any records of spiders from RSPB reserves to add to our database. The RSPB is keen to build up knowledge of the invertebrate fauna of its reserves and any request to reserve wardens to collect spiders is likely to be welcomed in return for a list of species found with notes on location, habitat, numbers etc. It is clear that bird reserves are often good for spiders too and there must be many more exciting spiders awaiting discovery on RSPB reserves.

I would like to thank Dr Peter Merrett for identifying *Wabasso* and also confirming *H. auratus*, *L. stigmatisata* and *N. robustus*, and David Nellist for much help and encouragement and confirming the identification of several of the extralimital records (asterisked above); also, all the wardens whose reserves we visited for their help.

Neon robustus Lohmander yet again!!

Doug Marriott, 19,Winton Drive, Croxley Gn.WD3 3RF.

During the first Orfordness survey 18-19 June 1994 I turned over a large baulk of timber lying on the extensive shingle foreshore and collected 3 male *Neon*s. One of these was damaged and discarded but the other two were subsequently identified as *Neon reticulatus*. The size of them and the configuration of the palps made me somewhat dubious at the time but as there were no other *Neon* species in Roberts that fitted I believed that they must be large examples of *Neon reticulatus.* However, the publication in the latest Bulletin of the outlines of *Neon robustus* by Rowley Snazell and others, made me dig them out and look at them again. On inspection they seemed to be exactly the same as the *N. robustus* drawings in the Bulletin. For confirmation they were sent to Peter Merrett who kindly confirmed that the Orfordness specimens were indeed *Neon robustus*. I believe other people on the first survey took what were identified as *Neon reticulatus* and on the second survey, which I could not attend, females were recorded. Perhaps these should be examined again in the light of this re-identification.

My sincere thanks to Peter Merrett for confirming the identifications so swiftly.

Meta bourneti (Simon) in Hampshire

Ken Halstead, Mistletoe Cottage, Masseys Lane, East Boldre, Brockenhurst, Hampshire SO42 7WE

I have to report on the unfortunate circumstances concerning a thriving colony of the spider found in a hollow lime tree near Burley in the New Forest.

On 22nd February I was shown a specimen by the Head Keeper of the Forestry Commission who had been called in by the owners of the tree as it was considered to be in a dangerous condition and containing bats. He thought that it might be *Meta menardi* but my instant reaction was that it was larger than the normal size of that spider and darker in colour. It was over 16 mm. in length and lacked annulations on the legs (which gave an appearance of the darker colour). On checking the epigyne it was obviously *Meta bourneti*.

What the owners' thought were bats the Keeper discovered were four to five large egg sacs suspended on the inside walls of the tree. Also present were about 20 spiders. About a third of the bottom five feet of the trunk was rotten and had partly collapsed when the owner leant on it.

Although I visited with the Keeper within two days of this colony being brought to my attention, the tree had been cut down, leaving only the five foot high stump of the lime. We spent two hours examining the stump and the 12" thick sliced portions but could only find one live female and alas no egg sacs.

The owners were rather contrite when they realised what they had done and would have only pollarded the tree to about 12 feet and said they would have capped it etc, to keep the unique microclimate intact. The inside was very wet and the spiders obviously thrived in the completely dark interior. Whether any have survived by crawling to the large stable block approximately 15 feet away remains to be seen and I intend to return for further examination.

I would strongly recommend that any apparent *Meta menardi* which lacks annulations on the legs, has its epigyne examined. As far as I know this spider has not been recorded in Hampshire and there appear to be no more than seven previous records.

Steatoda grossa (C. L. Koch)

Ken Halstead, Mistletoe Cottage, Masseys Lane, East Boldre, Brockenhurst, Hampshire SO42 7WE

On 26th February I was called to a house in Lymington regarding a spider found in a garage, which turned out to be a large female *Steatoda grossa*.

I had not seen this spider before and I would enquire as to how many reports there are of this species in the New Forest and in Hampshire.

While cleaning out one of my sheds on 29th February I found a large female *S. bipunctata* and was impressed by the comparison of the flat shape of this spider to the plumpness of *S. grossa*. What is interesting are the comparatively similar markings on the abdomens which are prominently triangular in *S. grossa*.

In America this spider is believed to predate on black widow spiders.

Dictyna species

Jennifer Newton, Holly House, 94 Main Street, Hornby, Lancaster LA2 8JY

Having read in all the books that *Dictyna latens* is uncommon generally, and rare in the north, it was with some surprise that I found it at a number of sites in North Lancashire (VC60). I now have 6 sites for *D latens* (7 tetrads, 5 hectads) 6 sites for *D arundinacea* and only one site for *D uncinata*, definitely the rarest of the three.

D latens appears on various low shrubs, juniper, gorse, heather, as well as tall herbs such as thistle, knapweed, wild carrot, hogweed. At two sites it is very abundant, males and females hidden in the dead heads of many of the composites and umbellifers. It can be quite hard to extricate, and I don't think it would be readily swept out, though I did beat a subadult male out of gorse in January. The sites are varied, all little disturbed now although one is a former limestone quarry, one a colonised artificial mound, of bare substrate 15 years ago (the dug-out foundations for Heysham Power Station). Three are on limestone, three on neutral soils. Two of the sites are marshy, but two are fairly dry. Several are near the coast, but one is a few miles inland. The highest altitude is about 120m.

I have also found *D latens* at two sites on the Galloway coast, in similar rank vegetation, also in reasonable quantity. *D arundinacea* I have found only on lowland mosses and upland heather moor, in reasonable quantity, mostly on heather but occasionally on rushes (and a few times on gorse in Cumbria and Galloway). *D uncinata* is present in much smaller quantity on the same Heysham Power Station site as *D latens*, in similar rank vegetation. I was surprised to find *D uncinata* in considerable numbers at Newbourne Springs and Flatford Mill at the BAS AGM last year, so I don't think it can be that I am not looking for it in the right places here. What is very interesting is that the Essex, Leicestershire, Wiltshire and even Yorkshire atlases all show *D uncinata* and *arundinacea* to be common and widespread with *D latens* rare. Is *D latens* a north-western species? Has anyone else experience of it?

DRAFT SPECIES ACCOUNTS

It has been very difficult to choose which draft accounts to include in this issue of the newsletter - there is so much choice! However there are still 85 species without any author and many RDB and Notable species accounts which may need updating. I am still looking for volunteers.

With Jennifer Newton's article on her experiences of *Dictyna* species in N. Lancashire, I have decided to include the draft accounts for *Dictyna arundinacea, D. latens* and *D. uncinata* which I had already written, very much from my own experience of the species in Essex. I hope this will stimulate some feedback on what the situation is in different parts of Britain.

I have included John Partridge's draft for *Araneus quadratus* because it would be interesting to get some feedback on the suggestion in Crocker & Daws (1996) that the spider is either under-recorded or declining. Certainly in Essex, although widespread, the species is local rather than common.

Richard Gallon's observations and his article *on Lepthyphantes tenuis* and *L. zimmermanni* in North Wales have also prompted me to include Richard's draft for *L. zimmermanni* and an updated account for *L. tenuis*.

***Dictyna arundinacea* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

Distribution

The spider is widespread throughout northern Europe (Roberts 1995). It is widely distributed in Britain.

Status

A common species in many parts of Britain but Bristowe (1958) states it has seldom been found in Wales.

Habitat and Ecology

On low, especially dry or dead vegetation (Jones 1983). This is a common species found in rough grassland or herbage growing at the edges of fields, hedges and woodland rides where it spins its web in the tops of plants which supply a rigidity and suitable structural spaces. The old heads of various umbellifers, thistles and plants like ***Hypericum*** are favoured situations. On heathland the spider is very common on heather.

Adult late Spring to mid summer. In June the male seems to stay for a month or more in the female's web where they both live in a rough chamber with several openings (Bristowe 1958).

Author of profile P.R. Harvey

***Dictyna latens* (Fabricius, 1775)**

Distribution

The spider is widespread in Europe but rare or absent in the north (Roberts 1995). It is widely distributed in England but with rather few records in Wales and Scotland.

Status

Uncommon, rare in the north.

Habitat and Ecology

The spider occurs in heathland, rough grassland, old sand and gravel pits and well established unmanaged ruderal vegetation. It is especially frequent on heather, gorse and other scrub in heathy places.

Adult in summer, maturing a little later than *D. arundinacea* and *D. uncinata*.

Author of profile P.R. Harvey

***Dictyna uncinata* Thorell, 1856**

Distribution

Widespread throughout Europe (Roberts 1995). The spider is widely distributed in England but with rather few records in Wales and Scotland.

Status

A common species but apparently rare in the north.

Habitat and Ecology

A species that seems to be found higher in the vegetation than *D. arundinacea* where it makes its mesh web across the surface of the leaves of bushes and trees. It is commonly found in scrub, hedgerows and woodland where the spider can be beaten off bushes and the foliage of trees along the sides of rides and the edge of clearings. It has been found in gardens and has occasionally been noted on prostrate rockery plants spun up in the dead flower heads of the previous year (Crocker & Daws 1996).

Adult late Spring to mid summer, females sometimes persisting into the autumn.

Author of profile P.R. Harvey

***Araneus quadratus* Clerck 1757**

Distribution

The spider is widespread throughout northern Europe (Roberts 1995). It is widespread throughout Britain with records from most counties.

Status

Common, although Crocker (1996) suggests that it may be declining. This may be due to loss of suitable habitat.

Habitat

The spider is found on vegetation which has sufficient height and strength to support the large orb web, such as undisturbed grassland, heather and gorse. There may be a preference for damper situations. The web is usually found stretched across the gap between plants, with a large tent-like retreat at one side, where the spider can be found if not in the centre of the web. This spider holds the British weight record, and is very variable in coloration. Adult females can be found in summer and autumn, adult males in summer.

Author of profile. W. J. Partridge using information from Bristowe (1958), Crocker & Daws (1996), Jones (1983), Locket & Millidge (1951) and Roberts (1985 & 1995).

***Lepthyphantes tenuis* (Blackwall, 1852)**

Distribution

The spider is widespread throughout northern Europe (Roberts 1995). It is widespread across Britain.

Status

Common and can be regarded as one of most ubiquitous spiders in many parts of Britain, remaining widespread in the north of Scotland.

Habitat and Ecology

The species is a frequent aeronaut which can be found in many different situations. It is regularly recorded indoors and in lowland England habitats include ruderal vegetation, gardens, grassland, arable fields, wetland, heathland and woodland, but is perhaps especially associated with grasslands. R. Gallon notes the species has a particular fondness for living in rabbit scrapes in the short turf of limestone grassland. In many of these situations it can be considered a 'pioneer' species which will quickly colonise new habitats and takes advantage of disturbed ground. In open lowland grassland *L. tenuis* is found to the exclusion of *L. zimmermanni* but in upland exposed grassland *L. zimmermanni* replaces *L. tenuis* completely (R. Gallon 2000).

Adults can be found throughout the year.

Author of profile P.R. Harvey using information from R. Gallon, C. Geddes, W.G. Rixom and H. Williams (pers. comms.).

***Lepthyphantes zimmermanni* Bertkau, 1890**

Distribution

Widespread throughout Britain and Ireland, northern Europe and Russia (Platnick 1997; Robert 1985).

Status

Common within its varied habitats. It is one of the most frequently encountered spiders in the Welsh mountains (Goodier 1967).

Habitat and Ecology

This spider occurs in a wide variety of habitats from sea level to the summits of high mountains. On exposed coastal sites (cliffs) this spider is found beneath overhanging low vegetation. In other lowland grasslands this species is replaced by *L. tenuis*. *Lepthyphantes zimmermanni* is frequently found amongst leaf litter and under logs in both deciduous and coniferous woodland. It replaces *L. tenuis* in upland (+330 m) grassland and moorland where it inhabits clumps of low vegetation (grass, sedges, rushes and moss). On high mountain summits it lives beneath felsenmeer rocks.

Both sexes are mature throughout the year.

Author of profile RC Gallon

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British Arachnological Society

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NEWSLETTER NUMBER 37
July 2000

Many thanks to those who have contributed articles, notes and information for this issue. Newsletter No. 37 will be published in November 2000. Please send contributions as soon as possible to Peter Harvey, SRS National Organiser, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2YP email: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Data entry continues at BRC and text production by volunteer authors for the Provisional Atlas is proceeding well, with over 160 draft accounts already completed. Publishing of the atlas remains on line for 2001.

It will soon be the time of year for adult *Argiope bruennichi*. Please keep a look out and report finds, especially any in new parts of the country, to your Area Organiser and myself. We should continue to investigate and monitor its changing status, as well as be on the lookout for more new species!

Spirec users

Stan Dobson, Moor Edge, Birch Vale, High Peak, Derbyshire SK22 1BX email: stand@beeb.net

Users of Spirec who change to a faster machine may find that it won't run and get error message 200. If they contact me I can send them a version that will run. I am grateful to Dr Alan Morton for supplying the means to overcome the problem, and to Francis Farr-Cox for suggesting that I contact Alan for help.

Please note my new e-mail address for sending material to me. The Museum address is still available.

Wanted - Spiders from Garden Centres

Dr. Steve Hopkin, Division of Zoology, School of Animal & Microbial Sciences, University of Reading, PO Box 228, READING, RG6 6AJ, UK. Email : s.p.hopkin@reading.ac.uk

I am supervising a couple of undergraduate Zoology students who are studying the spiders of garden centres for their Part 3 research projects. One student is looking at overall diversity and attempting to relate this to the length of time that the businesses have been established. The other is focussing on the behaviour and taxonomy of *Uloborus plumipes* which is extremely common in garden centres and glasshouses in the Reading area. *U. plumipes* first turned up at several widely separate localities in the early 1990s (Liverpool, Southampton, Reading) and must have been imported in a batch of plants although their exact origin is still a mystery. It would be helpful to us if members of the Spider Recording Scheme could send us any records of *U. plumipes*, or indeed specimens. The species spins a cribellate orb web up to 30 cm across although this is often much smaller if space is restricted. At rest, *U. plumipes* resembles a small piece of dried vegetation. It is dark brown to pale cream in colour and the egg sac is characteristically star-shaped. The front legs bear tufts of hairs which aid in the camouflage (hence plumipes).

An unusual record of *Mymarachne formicaria* (Salticidae)

Gabriel Weyman, Zeneca Agrochemicals, Jealott's Hill Research Centre, Bracknell, Berks RG12 6EY

A male *Mymarachne formi*caria (Salticidae) was found in an office at Zeneca Agrochemicals, Jealott's Hill International Research Centre, Bracknell, UK (map ref. SU8773) on 6 April 2000. Identification was made by Zeneca ecologists Peter Kennedy and Gabe Weyman, and confirmed by Peter Harvey of the Spider Recording Scheme. The Zeneca site is grass and arable, with some woods, and would not normally be the habitat of this spider, especially indoors on an office noticeboard! None of this species have been found there before, despite many years of invertebrate sampling. It appears that a colleague, Julie Pickervance, had been collecting pond-edge sweep-net samples from a wooded heathy area near Woking on 28 March 2000 (site map ref. SU939581) and may have accidentally been the source of this find. She commented that there were lots of spiders in the samples (a point she noted as she is not fond of spiders). She works in the next office along the corridor from where the *Myrmarachne* was found a week later. Anyone wishing to visit the site where the spider may have originated should contact the authors first, as it is private land and permission must be sought.

A new Area Organiser

I am pleased to report that Heidi Cunningham has taken as Area Organiser for Berkshire. Please send records and record cards for Berkshire (VC22) to Heidi M. Cunningham, 5 Furzebank, Sunninghill, Berks SL5 7BP

Draft species accounts

Over 160 draft species accounts have now been written. For practical reasons, these will only be circulated to Area Organisers and interested arachnologists for comment and feedback. Even though the atlas will very much be a provisional publication, we still need as far as possible to 'get it right' before the text is published. Please let me know if you would like to have an input to this important process.

There are two draft accounts included here, for *Atypus affinis* and *Nigma puella*.

Atypus is included because, although it is not officially Nationally Scarce or Notable, its discovery always provokes excitement and even press coverage. In my experience, even though the spider is difficult to locate and may well be under-recorded, it is genuinely scarce in the modern agricultural landscape. *Atypus* is very likely to have suffered a serious decline during the last half of the 20th century and I would be very pleased to receive feedback from other arachnologists on their own experience and judgement.

Atypus affinis Eichwald, 1830

Distribution

The spider is widespread in Europe as far north as Denmark (Roberts 1995). It is widely distributed in southern Britain but with scattered records as far north as Scotland.

Status

Scarce and very local but more common in the south. Large populations have been recorded but it is likely that much of our modern landscape supports only small isolated colonies.

Habitat and Ecology

Atypus is typically found in unimproved open habitats such as heathland, chalk grassland or other old grasslands. Most of its tubular web is underground and a friable substrate will aid burrowing. In heathland the spider prefers loose sand with young heather hanging loosely over it, and fairly free from moss and other close vegetation (Dallas 1938) and gravelly banks covered with tufts of heather (Main 1921-23). In grassland the spider often makes its tubes in the ground in undisturbed areas around the edge of scrub and at the base of ant hills. The silk tube is well camouflaged with bits of earth and debris and the spider can be difficult to find.

The presence of grazing may be a factor explaining an association with the edge of scrub. There are presumably significant resource implications for the rebuilding of purse-webs after trampling. ***Atypus*** must therefore require relatively

undisturbed habitats. Dallas (1938) had already identified "wear and tear" due to increased trampling, as the cause of the probable loss of some colonies in the London district.

The life of the spider is long, possibly up to 7 or even 8 years (Bristowe, 1958) and it spends almost all this time inside its purseweb. The main prey seems to comprise beetles, bees, flies, earwigs and woodlice. Males can be trapped in pitfalls and may be numerous at favourable sites.

The Nationally Scarce (Notable A) spider hunting wasp ***Aporus unicolor*** uses ***Atypus*** as its host, which it locates and paralyses within the spider's silken burrow (Edwards 1997).

Females are adult all year. Bristowe (1958) states that during the winter months from about November to early February *Atypus* is in a state of hibernation at the bottom of the tube, and the aerial portion remains in a collapsed condition. At one site with a large population odd males have been trapped in the winter, but there is a main peak for September-October with smaller numbers in April and May.

Threats

The association with old and undisturbed habitats and the dramatic loss of heathland and unimproved grasslands in much of southern England mean that many colonies are isolated and liable to local extinction. Intensive grazing and public amenity pressure will threaten the survival of colonies through the effects of trampling.

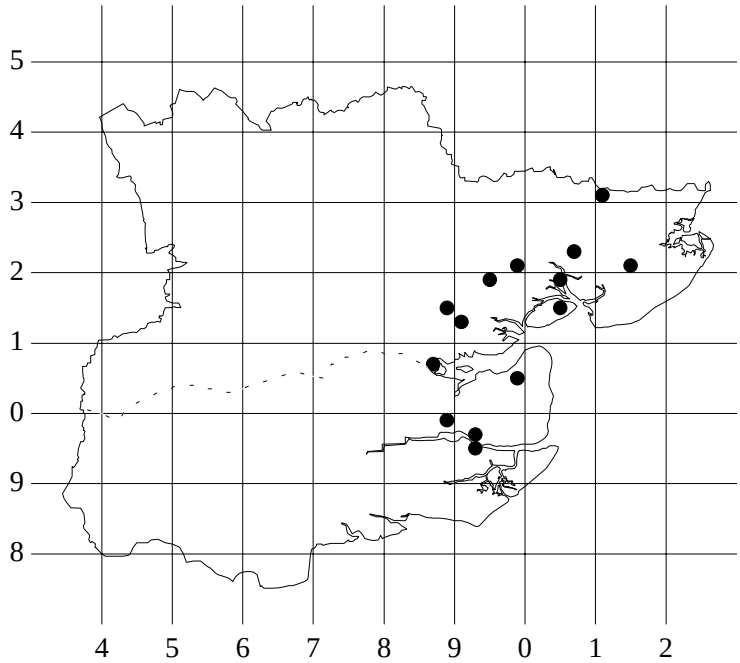
Management

The spider is vulnerable to inappropriate management. Without management to control scrub open habitat and open sandy or gravelly banks will disappear. On the other hand, trampling, intensive grazing and the cutting of grasslands is also likely to destroy colonies. Occasional management to control scrub would seem to be most appropriate.

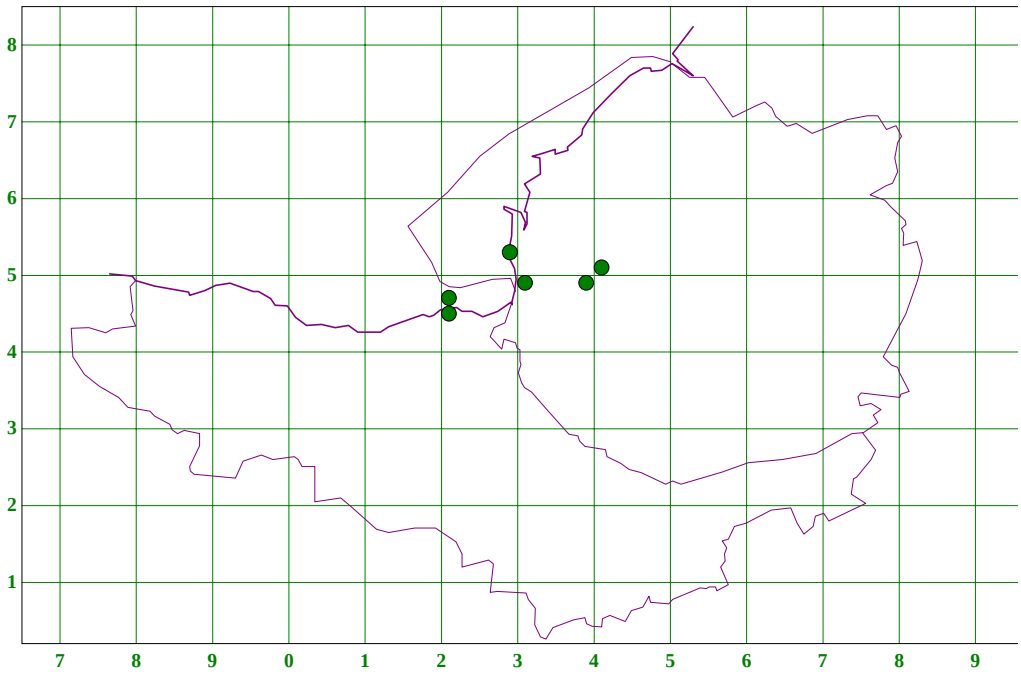
Author of profile P.R. Harvey

Nigma puella is presented here with two maps which show an unusual distribution pattern in both Essex and Somerset. I am very grateful to Francis Farr-Cox for making available the Somerset map. In Essex the spider is confined to an area near the coast in the east of the county where it is reasonably frequent. Extensive fieldwork has failed to locate it elsewhere in the county. The distribution in Somerset relative to the coast is so like the Essex one the national picture could be very interesting. It is almost as though the distribution has resulted from an initial point of introduction. Is the pattern repeated in other counties? Can anyone come up with other ideas to explain the distribution pattern?

***Nigma puella* distribution in Essex**



***Nigma puella* distribution in Somerset (map by Francis Farr-Cox)**



***Nigma puella* (Simon, 1870)**

Distribution

The spider is restricted to south of a line from Suffolk to Glamorgan. It is widespread in western and southern Europe (Merrett 1990), but apparently rare or absent from the rest of northern Europe (Roberts 1995).

Status

Nationally Scarce (Notable B). The spider is very local and never abundant, but may be frequent in some areas.

Habitat and Ecology

The spider occurs on low broad-leaved bushes and shrubs in hedgerows and gardens, but also sometimes in scrub and open woodland. It spins a small web on the surface of leaves.

Both sexes are adult in May and June, with females until September. In North Essex females with egg sacs have been found in their webs on the under-surface of leaves in September but most records have been in June and July.

Threats

The excessive trimming and loss of hedgerows are likely to threaten this species. Where the species occurs on hedgerows between arable fields the spider and its potential prey are probably threatened by spray drift from pesticides.

Management

Open surroundings seem to be important. The retention of wide field edges and headlands should be encouraged to help maintain a diverse invertebrate fauna an reduce the effects of spray drift on hedgerows and at the edge of woodland. Management should prevent the closure of scrub and woodland.

Author of profile Peter Harvey, based on the species account in Merrett (1990).

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NEWSLETTER NUMBER 38
November 2000

Many thanks to those who have contributed articles, notes and information for this issue. Newsletter No. 39 will be published in March 2001. Please send contributions as soon as possible to Peter Harvey, SRS National Organiser, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2YP email: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Progress towards the provisional atlas

All cards have been coded, ready for punching. About 28,000 cards were submitted. All but 3,500 field cards, and c.800 Rare Species cards, have now been punched. All punching should be finished by the end of October.

About 14,000 cards are ready to send out for checking. This is the major task still remaining. 5327 cards were sent out for checking in the latest batch, and most of these are now back, and are in the process of being edited Another 4737 cards have already been checked, edited, and progressed to automatic validations.

There are still some more batches of electronic records to come (including my own!!) and when they arrive, they will be need to have automatic validations carried out.

10,260 records are in the process of having automatic validation carried out. 130,903 records have been completely validated. This includes all the records submitted in electronic format to date.

To date, there are 287 unedited draft accounts and some of these have been included in the July 1999, November 1999, March 2000 and July 2000 Newsletters. There remain 79 species without any existing account or promised author, as well as 133 RDB and Nationally Scarce (Notable) species with existing published accounts by Peter Merrett which may need updating, and which will need to be adjusted to a format suitable for the atlas. Additional volunteers are still wanted!

Feedback on these draft accounts by Spider Recording Scheme members and other arachnologists is essential if we are to make sure the text reflects people's knowledge and experience in the field. Unfortunately it is not going to be practical to publish draft text in the timescale available. However the National Biodiversity Network Gateway may provide an exciting opportunity for many members to access both the draft maps and text and respond with valuable information. Please read the article by Jonathan Cooper on the next page for details. If you cannot access the internet then you can still receive the draft text (but not maps – this would involve too much paper generation and postage!) by notifying me that you would like to be involved in reading and responding to the draft text for the provisional atlas.

Using the NBN gateway (www.searchnbn.net) for validation of Spider Recording Scheme data

Jonathan Cooper

Introduction

The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) has developed a web site for distributing and sharing biodiversity information, particularly biological records. This site has become known as the NBN gateway. It is still in its pilot development stages, but is available for everyone to see at www.searchnbn.net. It is planned that the Spider Recording Scheme, in collaboration with BRC, use this web site to distribute draft maps to its members for interactive checking. These pages will not be available to anyone other than spider recorders. Here is a brief description of the website, how SRS would like to use it and how SRS users will be able to access it.

The NBN gateway

The NBN gateway works like a search engine, where the user types in the name of the species or location they are interested in and a list of web pages is presented that match the search. The types of web pages that can be found include:

- Species dictionaries
- Species accounts
- 10km national species maps
- Occurrence on SSSI's and SAC's
- Interactive maps of sample points/records

The web pages are built from a central database of species records, geographic boundaries and textual information. Since it is still a pilot system, its taxonomic coverage is limited to bryophytes, beetles, crayfish, Odonata and marine species, but this will expand. Also, only information that is already in the public domain is available to the public, other information (such as interactive maps and species occurrence on sites) are hidden behind a security system.

Using the NBN gateway for SRS data validation

It is planned to provide interactive maps for geographic validation of spider records. These maps will only be available to SRS registered users (explained below). Once the unvalidated SRS records have been loaded onto the central NBN database, SRS users can use the interactive map to zoom in on spider records, interrogate them (point and click on the dot for record information) and flag them if they think they need further checking. Data can be viewed either by single species, or all species together if the validator is particularly familiar with a site.

When a record is flagged the user will be able to add a comment. This information will be returned, via the internet, to a central database. All records flagged and commented in this way will then be passed to a co-ordinator who has the final responsibility for dealing with them. It is hoped that with the assistance of spider recorders in this way, errors can be spotted and corrected before they reach the printed page.

Accessing SRS only web pages

Anyone can access the NBN gateway. However, they will soon discover they only have access to information that is already in the public domain, such as published species accounts and 10km dot maps, but not the SRS draft maps. To gain access to web pages intended only for SRS users you must do two things:

1. **Register**: the easiest way to do this is to click on the 'Register' link on the home page (top right). This presents a short form to fill in. When filling in the form be sure to select '*Spider Recording Scheme*' as your organisation, and give yourself a user name and password. Once the form has been filled in press '*Register me!*', this will give you Peter Harvey's e-mail address. Then...
2. **e-mail Peter Harvey**: Peter will be moderating access to the SRS only web pages. You should e-mail him so he can upgrade you from '*public user*' to '*SRS user*', this will then give you access to all pages available to SRS users via your unique user name and password.

Obviously, there will be no draft spider maps or text for SRS users to see until they are posted on the website. This is likely to be around January 2001.

Herefordshire spiders - or some that will miss the Atlas!

Wayne Rixom, 44 Edward Avenue, Aldridge, West Midlands WS9 8AX

It has been over 2 years since mt last contribution to the SRS Newsletter (no30, Mar 1998) and compared to earlier years I have suffered from something that catches up with all recorders: eventually, the law of diminishing returns!

In July 1998 a national notable species, *Philodromus collinus* was beaten from conifers at Queens Wood S067-27-. A locality that at the time was the most western record in Britain. The most interesting spider that year came when *Scytotes thoracica* was found in the summer. Initially on the exterior of an old monastery in Hereford (under loose mortar). More significantly it was also found under windowsills of a closed public records office in Leominster, protected only by the overhang but otherwise fully exposed to the elements. Last year there were just three additions. Of most interest was the appearance of *Achaearanea simulans* (Nationally Notable Nb) at 2 different sites.

'I'his year *Xysticus bifasciatus* turned up in traps set at the summit of a tiny reserve called Monument Common SSSI an area of patchwork gorse and grassland dominated by ant mounds. Also present here was *Drassodes pubescens*.

Another record at Leominster this year was an immature *Steatoda grossa* in an atypical habitat. An old pipe on waste ground. I remember reading in BAS/SRS columns that storm drains and inspection chambers have been recent sites for this species, which is rare in the Midlands with only 4 northern records from Worcestershire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and an old one from Staffordshire (G C Slawson). Amongst records from. other naturalists supplied to me this year was *Pardosa agricola* on the north bank of the river Monnow.

By far the least expected record this year came when I undertook pitfall trapping of a trust reserve of dry calcareous grassland at Nupend Wood. This forms part: of a long-term objective to try and track down possible habitats for an old record of *Pardosa paludicola,* possibly genuine according to Dr Merrett (pers comm). Instead of that of course I find over 50 specimens of another RDB2 spider, *Pelecopsis radicola* from no more than 5 traps. These came from a site about 2km south west of the original locality. There would probably have been even more if there had not been. some trap losses over the 3 week run. Is this a record from so few traps examined? Could this RDB species be excluding the far more widespread species *P. parallela* (absent in the county so far) from a suitable microhabitat here I wonder? Furthermore is this species moving north. Such a large local population could well suggest a firm basis for this.

Bianor aurocinctus (Araneae: Salticidae) captured at Hatfield Moors SSSI, Yorkshire

Richard Wilson, 82 Harold Terrace, LEEDS, West Yorkshire, LS6 1LD.
e-mail: riwspider@hotmail.com

As part of my MSc Biodiversity & Conservation at the University of Leeds, I have been studying the spiders and ground beetles (Coleoptera: Carabidae) of this former raised peat-bog in South Yorkshire (National GR: SE 6904). The method of capture has been entirely pitfall trapping.

During the week commencing 14th June 2000, in one of the pitfall traps situated on sandy soils with sparse vegetation (average cover ($1m^2$): 12%), a single male *B.aurocinctus* was caught. This is a nationally notable 'Na' species and as far as I know, a new species for Yorkshire. The individual was confirmed by Mr. T.Thomas (Bedfordshire Recorder).

In addition to this species, several male *Euryopis flavomaculata* have been caught in the wetter areas of heathland (dominated by *Calluna vulgaris*), a species that I've never seen before.

Update on *Argiope bruennichi*

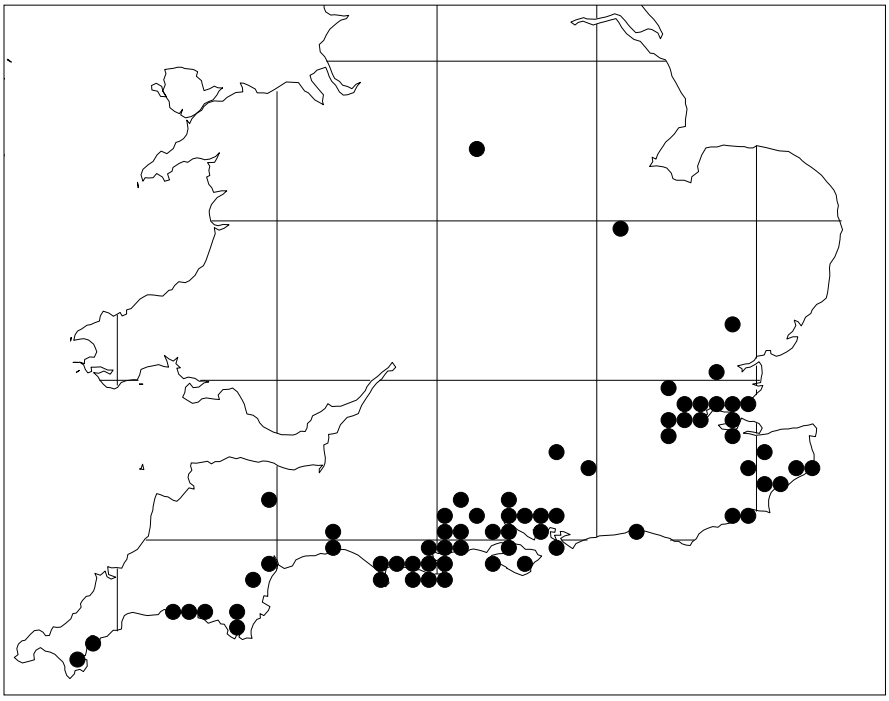
Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays Essex RM16 2YP

I am very grateful to those people who have responded to my appeal for records of *Argiope*. I have received a number of records from new areas, but in the main reports this year have consolidated data within areas the spider is already known.

It still surprises me how such a striking species can be difficult to spot. David Carr, Ken Hill, Eric Philp, Tony Russell-Smith and myself paid a visit to Minster undercliffs and Bedlams Bottom in Kent on the 8th October. We found one specimen at Bedlams Bottom, on the edge of the River Medway in Kent, in typical habitat in rough grassland. Searches eventually turned up three more females, all close to the original discovery.

All data available to the end October 2000 is given in the map below. If you have any additional data please send it to me.

Argiope bruennichi distribution in October 2000



Corrected address details

Address details for Michael Kilner, Area Organiser for vice counties 35, 41, 42, 43 and 100 (Monmouth, Glamorgan, Brecon, Radnor and Clyde Isles) were shown incorrectly in Newsletter 36. The correct details are: 58 Llandegfedd Way, New Inn, Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 0RG. Apologies for this.

Changes in Area Organiser details

Mike Taylor has left Worcester VC37 and Salop VC 40 and moved from his previous address to 12 Walsingham Mews, Rickinghall, DISS, Suffolk IP22 1ET.

John Partridge has very kindly agreed to take over from Mike Taylor. His address details are:

31, Duxford Close, Redditch, Worcs. B97 5BY

British Arachnological Society

SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME

srs@britishspiders.org.uk

PETER HARVEY
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NEWSLETTER NUMBER 39
March 2001

Many thanks to those who have contributed articles, notes and information for this issue. Newsletter No. 40 will be published in July 2001. There are plans to see if it is feasible to incorporate the SRS Newsletter into the BAS Newsletter for BAS members. It would therefore be very helpful indeed to have contributions in good time.

Please send contributions for the next newsletter, by the beginning of June at the latest, to Peter Harvey, SRS National Organiser, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2YP email: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Progress towards the provisional atlas – data entry, checking and draft accounts almost complete!

All records on cards have been entered by BRC, a total of over 285,000. A process of checking and validation follows, involving punching checking, the editing of punching corrections, loading to a holding table, running automatic validations, resolving auto-validation problems and final loading to the main database. All cards have been coded and punching checking is almost finished. An enormous thank you to those people who have helped in this arduous but very important task.

In addition over 150,000 records in electronic format have been submitted through Stan Dobson, some of which still have some validation work remaining. An enormous thank you again to Stan for the huge amount of effort involved in sorting out data received into the correct format for BRC and in resolving the many errors which turn up in the datasets.

Draft accounts are now virtually completed thanks to the volunteer authors who have beavered away to come up with the goods. This text should be available to arachnologists who register on the NBN Gateway by the end of the first week of March, with a facility to provide feedback on each species account. We can only improve the accuracy and usefulness of the accounts if you respond with critical and useful additional information. Jon Cooper has worked hard to get the accounts and SRS web pages ready on the NBN Gateway. The provision of draft text and maps in this way is a first, and it should be an important experiment in helping to validate data and improve species accounts. For those of you who are not able to access the internet, I can provide draft text on paper, but since there will be about 200 A4 pages involved, I would appreciate help to cover the cost of post & packaging.

Draft maps for each species will not become available on the NBN Gateway (**www.searchnbn.net)** until all the data has been punching checked and validated at BRC. In the meantime, incomplete maps for two species of spider will soon be provided to trial the process and allow those of you with access to the internet to get a feel for what will be there in the future. Apologies to those people who have previously tried and failed to access the SRS pages on the NBN Gateway.

Plenty of work will remain to be done even after the provisional atlas is produced – as well as providing much-needed information (albeit provisional) on the modern status of each species to help in the conservation and management of spider biodiversity, it should provide the focus on where most recording effort remains to be done. To this end I have included some experimental analyses of county data summarised by Michael Kilner in 1997 to indicate how we might be able to use the atlas dataset to help target under-recorded parts of the country and to investigate the reasons for different species diversity in different counties.

New to Britain: *Megalepthyphantes collinus occidentalis* (Machado, 1949)?

Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex RM16 2YP

One male and two females of an unfamiliar linyphiid were found by the author on the Isle of Sheppey at Minster in Kent on the 2nd November 1999 in the company of Eric Philp during a trip to increase the number of spider records from under-recorded 10km squares. The closest initial match I was able to come to was *Lepthyphantes collinus* in *Spinnen Mitteleuropas* by Heimer & Nentwig, but the tibial apophysis was not as shown for this species in *Tierwelt Deutschlands*. Needless to say the situation turned out to be more complex, and after seeing the specimens Peter Merrett agreed that although the spiders were close to *collinus*, further specimens were required! Despite intensive searching a further visit to the same spot on the 12th November 1999 failed to find any more. However another trip to the site with David Carr, Eric Philp and Tony Russell-Smith on the 8th October 2000 did result in one more female, collected by Tony Russell-Smith.

The spider is closely related to, but distinct from, typical *M. collinus* (L. Koch, 1872), and probably best treated as a subspecies at present, contrary to Saaristo (1997) who regarded it as a synonym of *M. collinus.* The British male resembles the type material of *occidentalis* in having a truncated tibial apophysis, but shows some differences, and may represent another subspecies (Merrett & Murphy, 2000).

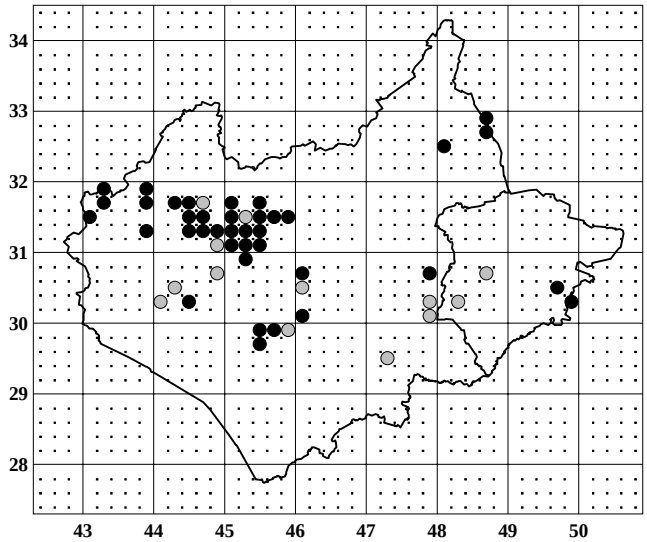
The specimens have been found in tall open herbage growing on stabilized shingle at the foot of London Clay undercliffs, and dense tall grass close to the beach. The area of vegetated shingle is very small and vulnerable to disturbance and change. An extensive length of undercliff near Minster has previously been graded and the natural habitat destroyed. The whole area of remaining undercliff looks to be of considerable interest, and needs to be more thoroughly investigated for its spider fauna, especially at other times of year.

Millennium Atlas - Spiders of Leicestershire and Rutland

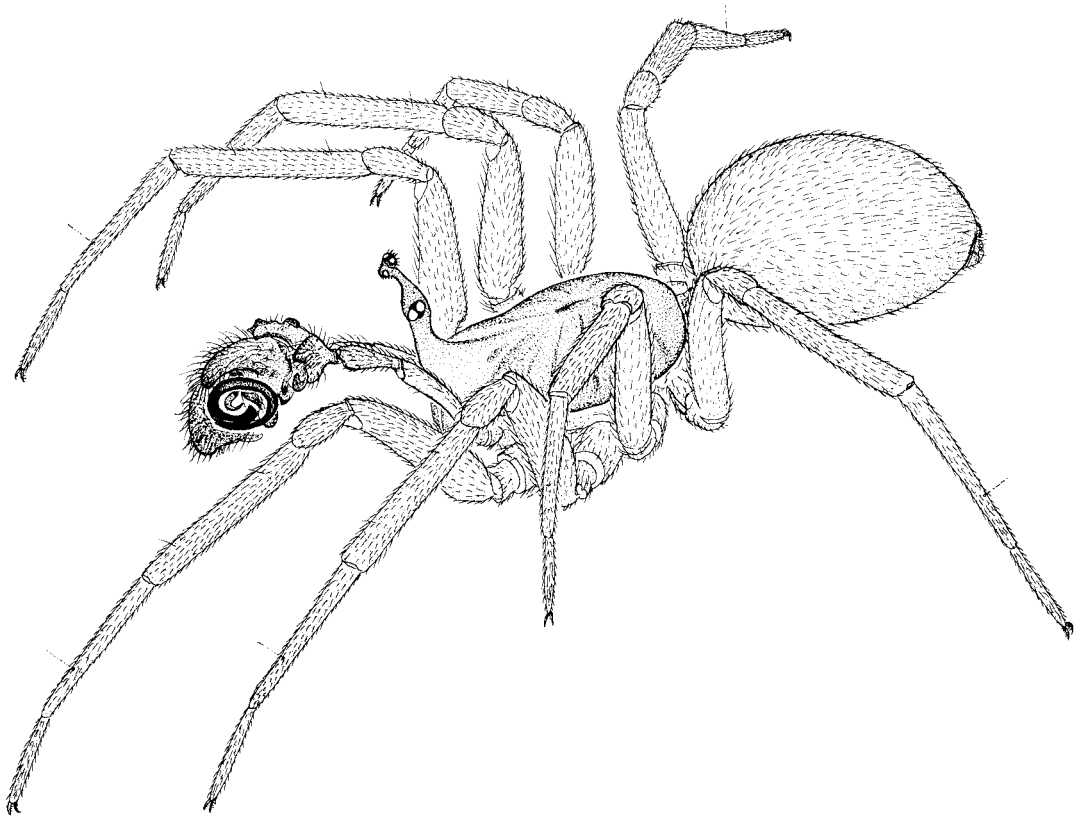
by John Crocker and Jonathan Daws.
Publication late April 2001, 120 pages A4.
Loughborough Naturalists' Club in Association with Kairos Press.

This new Atlas brings the recording of the spider fauna in Leicestershire and Rutland up to date (August 2000), and is an essential companion to the earlier publication (Crocker & Daws, 1996) which covered the topography of the two counties and traced the history of arachnology in the Vice-county. Style and format have been maintained such that the two parts, 1996 volume and the Atlas, complement each other, but each is complete in itself. This extension to the main volume stands on its own as a point of reference at the turn of the millennium, and the layout makes detailed information easily accessible. It will be the first publication to present a county fauna in the new revised international systematic order and incorporates all recent changes in nomenclature. The authors have therefore provided a convenient comparison between the old and new checklists which many readers will find useful.

Walckenaeria acuminata Blackwall, 1833



Leicestershire and Rutland are together one of the best studied Vice-counties in Britain and this beautifully produced publication covers over 30,000 records, including 12,000 new records (which include 14 new county records) and plots the distribution of 341 species, representing over half of the British list (645). Detailed commentaries are given of all the new county records and of some of the rarest species where additional records have been obtained, with a wealth of other supporting detail directed at the present emphasis on biodiversity. The maps are plotted on a 2km square basis (tetrad) and are enhanced by specially commissioned drawings of actual local specimens by Michael J.Roberts, author of the highly acclaimed Collins Field Guide to the Spiders of Britain and Northern Europe.



This detailed report will be of great value to those in adjoining counties as a comparison with their own spider faunas. As George Crabbe (Nichols, 1798) declared when writing about spiders and other obscure non-insect arthropods " nothing particular need be mentioned of these genera, the same species which are found in other counties will be met with here". We have come a long way since 1798, and whereas Crabbe may have had some justification for his dismissive statement, there is an element of truth in it. What is both interesting from a geographical point of view and important from an ecological standpoint is also of great value in the current focus on biodiversity monitoring in this and other counties.

The book has been heavily subsidised and is offered at a substantial pre-publication discount price of £8 + £2 postage & packing, from Kairos Press, 552 Bradgate Road, Newtown Linford, Leicestershire LE6 0HB.

Erigone aletris Crosby & Bishop, 1928 an addition to the English list

Richard Gallon, 23A Roumania Crescent, Llandudno, North Wales, LL30 1UP

On the 23 December 2000 my father and I made an excursion to the Devil's Causeway near Whitton (SE 892242), North Lincolnshire (VC. 54). This site backs onto the south side of the Humber Estuary and on the day in question was bitterly cold. A poor choice of footwear meant I had to walk along a defensive sea walk composed of clinker. Grubbing within the moss and grass at the edge of this wall produced nothing of interest except very cold hands! Fortunately I noticed that several linyphiids were in the process of ballooning off dead nettle, dock and umbellifer stems, these were duly consigned to the collecting pot. Most of the catch consisted of common species like *Lepthyphantes tenuis*, *Oedothorax fuscus*, *Diplostyla concolor* and *Erigone atra*, however a single pair of *Erigone aletris* made the day (kindly verified by Peter Merrett).

Stewart (BAS Newsletter, 1997 (78): 4) mapped the British distribution of *E. aletris* and showed this to be focused around the Firth of Forth on the east coast of Scotland. The discovery of this species in Lincolnshire, some 300 km south, apparently represents the first English record for the species. It would be interesting to know whether this Humber Estuary find represents a southwards spread from the Firth of Forth population or a separate introduction point of this North American species.

The mystery of a mouse spider

Ray Ruffell 155 Halstead Road, Stanway, Colchester, Essex CO3 5 JT

On 7th October 1989 an adult female *Scotophaeus scutulatus* was found on my bedroom wall. Almost five years later, on 19th July 1994, a sub-adult male of this species was found on my stairs and kept in captivity until it matured on 2nd August 1994. In December of that year I moved home some five kilometres to an established 1930's bungalow. Almost six years later, on 11th September 2000, I found a mature male of the same species in the hallway of my new home. Meanwhile there have been no reports of the species being recorded elsewhere in Britain.

Some interesting questions arise from this discovery. Did the species get carried to the new home in my belongings? If so then the translocation must have been in the form of a) a fertilised female, b) an immature male and female, or c) an egg sac. If I did not in some form or other transport the species then a colony must either have existed in the new location before we moved in or else the species has moved in since we took up residence. If the latter then it probably exists in other nearby houses. If the species has been sharing my home for at least 11 years then the time between discovery of the three individuals, that is; five years between first and second, six years between second and third, is remarkable, because any likely looking candidate has been closely scrutinised. It would certainly indicate that it is an extremely secretive spider or has persisted in very low numbers. If the colony was here before me then what were the odds of my moving from one home to another that supported a species of spider unrecorded elsewhere in this country?

I suppose that the most likely explanation is that it moved home with me, but I just wonder if, within the Colchester area, there exists an extensive population of this obviously elusive spider. The fact that it has not been discovered by anyone else may be due to a scarcity of arachnologists in these parts rather than a scarcity of the spider and the species does look very similar outwardly to *S. blackwalli.*

A request for spiders

Rebecca Crowley, c/o: Dr.H.Braig, School of Biological Sciences, University of Wales, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2UW, Wales.

I am a final year Bsc Zoology undergraduate at Bangor University, Wales currently researching the presence of the bacterium Wolbachia in the spiders: *Pholcus phalangioides, Dysdera erythrina* and *Meta merianae*. I would be extremely grateful to receive <20 of each species - alive or in alcohol - from anyone who is interested. Please send any spiders to the name and address above.

Some interesting websites

Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex RM16 2YP

Apart from our own BAS website run by Craig Slawson, I have been very impressed by some of the other arachnological websites that I have had reason to access recently. David Nellist and myself have been looking at the possibility of including in the atlas species accounts a list of European countries from which each species has been recorded, at least for Western Europe. I have been amazed at some of the checklists available on the web now for European countries, and also the distribution maps for species available for some countries. The following are a list of sites I have found especially useful.

http://euridice.tue.nl/~ptutelae/IWG/Araneae/Hp/diashow/index.html - slide show by Piet Tutelaers on *Hyptiotes paradoxus*
http://www.ntnu.no/vmuseet/nathist/norspider/index.htm - Norwegian spiders including checklist and distribution maps
http://www.nrm.se/en/spindlar.html - including checklist of spiders for Sweden
http://www.spiderling.de.vu/ - German spider distribution maps
http://www.arages.de/checklist_e.html - check lists for Germany, Austria and Switzerland
http://www.zmuc.dk/EntoWeb/collections-databaser/dklist/main.htm - including checklist of spiders of Denmark
http://www.butbn.cas.cz/klimes/arachno/ - including checklist of spiders of Czech
http://cksr.ac.bialystok.pl/kuprzool/spiders.htm - including checklist of spiders of Poland
http://members.aol.com/Arachnologie/Faunenlisten.htm - including checklist of spiders of Romania
http://spiders.arizona.edu/salticid/CATALOG/0-TIT-PG.HTM - an amazing lot of information on world salticids including lots of genitalia drawings
http://entomologia.rediris.es/gia/catalogo/ - including checklist for spiders of the Iberian peninsula
http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/Vines/5197/checklist.html - checklist of spiders of Portugal
http://perso.club-internet.fr/saitis/montardi/salticidae/catalogue/catalogue_frame.html - catalogue of salticids of France

The relationship between numbers of species and county areas

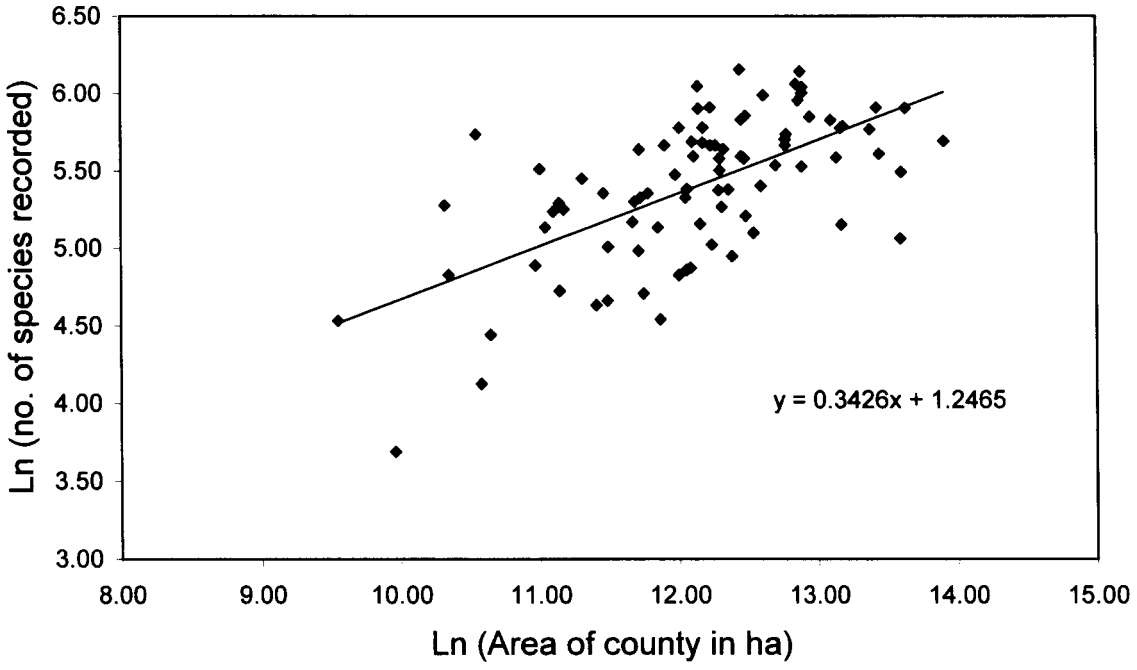
Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex RM16 2YP

For aculeate Hymenoptera (bees, wasps and ants) Dr Michael Archer (Archer, 1995; Archer & Burn, 1995) has demonstrated that, at sites where the species list is more or less complete, there is a significant positive linear relationship between the number of species and site area (expressed as natural logarithms). It has seemed likely to me that a similar relationship may exist for other taxonomic groups (such as spiders) and for 'sites' as big as counties. I have therefore used the data on county species lists which Michael Kilner provided in SRS Newsletter No. 28 to see whether an analysis might be of use to investigate the species diversity of counties and whether or not they are likely to be significantly under-recorded. The results could be of enormous use in deciding where to target future survey and in the identification of genuine species-richness or paucity in different counties.

Now there are a number of problems with the data used here. The county areas have been obtained from information available in my local library for traditional counties. These may not equate accurately with the counties used in the maps included in Locket, Millidge & Merrett (1974) or the subsequent county updates by Peter Merrett (1975, 1982, 1989, 1995). I have also not attempted to update the lists from Michael Kilner's figures using the latest county records update by Merrett (2000). Since Rutland has not had separate county records recognised after 1974, when Rutland ceased to be a separate independent county (Crocker & Daws, 1996), Leicerstershire and Rutland are taken together and the number of species includes the 14 new county records mentioned earlier in this issue.

An analysis of the data for counties in the whole of Britain is plotted in the graph below:

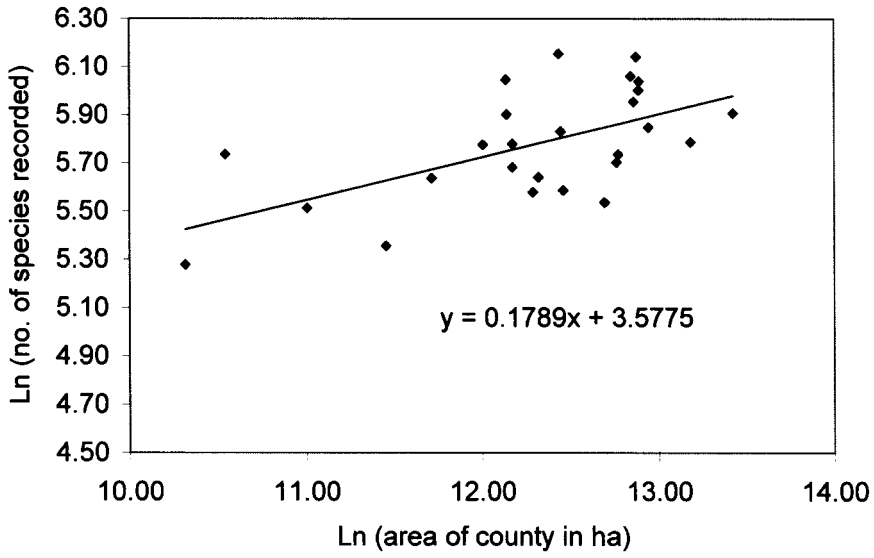
Scatter diagram for the whole of Britain



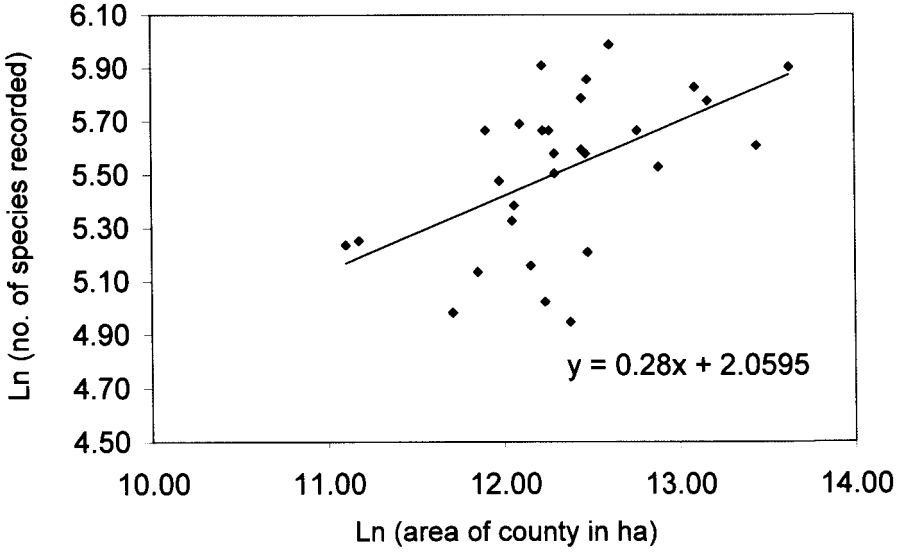
However, counties differ in the variety and amounts of habitats available, particularly in large parts of lowland England where modern agriculture has destroyed much wildlife habitat, and in regions such as the south-east where a high proportion of quality wildlife habitat has been lost to housing, industrial development and road transport improvement schemes.

Also varying elements of the British spider fauna are clearly present or potentially present in different geographical regions of Britain, and this will presumably affect the relationship between area and numbers of species in different regions. I have tried to address this to some extent by dealing separately with separate parts of Britain:

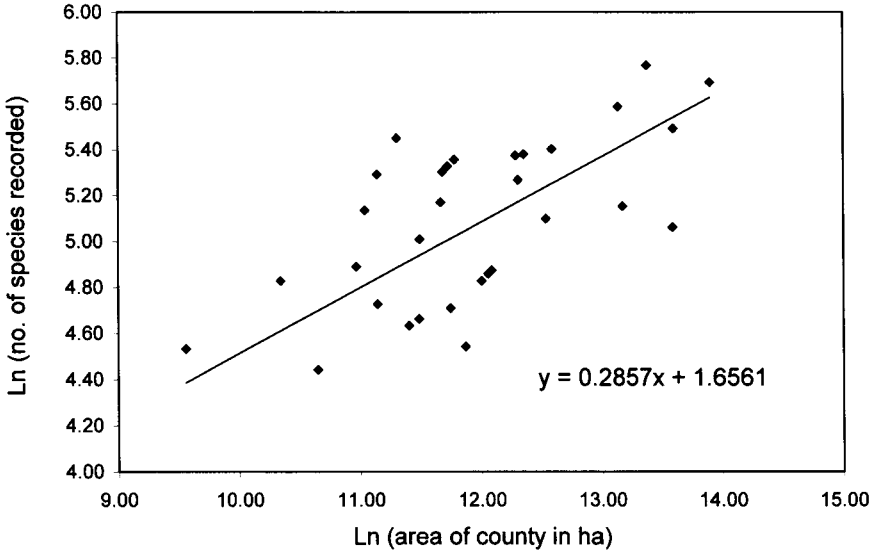
Graph for counties in England south of a line between the Wash and the Severn



Graph for counties in England and Wales north of a line between the Wash and the Severn



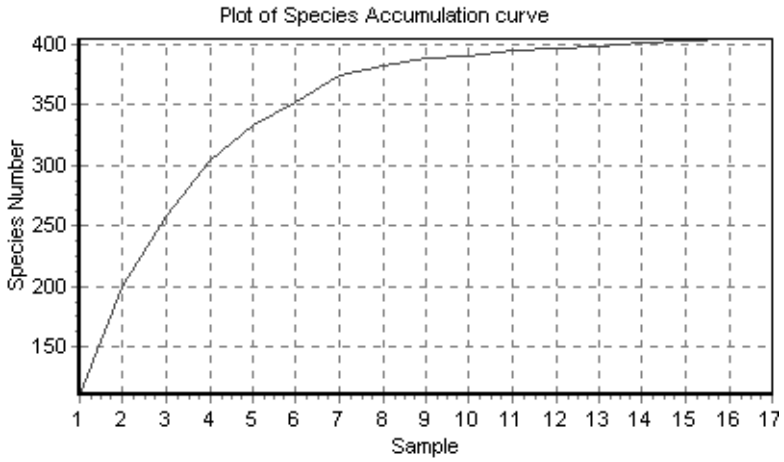
Graph for Scotland



Discussion

These analyses obviously leave a lot to be desired and the use of up-to-date data would be desirable. However there do seem to be some definite relationships shown, which enable some crude conclusions to be drawn and hopefully provide some food for thought. As more counties become thoroughly surveyed for spiders, the trendline may move higher, making the average relationship between the number of species and area greater, and raising the expected number of species to be recorded in each county. Nevertheless the same overall pattern is likely to remain similar and may now then allow a better identification of where species diversity in a county is related to factors other than recording coverage, such as the latitude and its effect on the fauna of the region, the range of habitats available and the effects of modern agriculture on the landscape.

Essex has been pretty thoroughly worked in the last seventeen years or so. An accumulation graph for the county of species data of more than 43,000 records made over the years 1984 to 2000 (samples 1-17) looks like this:



The current total of species reliably recorded for the county is 423, of which there are no modern records for seventeen species. This leaves modern records for 406 species and even one of these is known from only one site which has now been destroyed, and several others are under extreme threat). It would appear that the species total for Essex may well be pretty close to complete (a dangerous and provocative statement I know!). Although it is true that Essex has coastal habitats which many other counties do not have, a very great proportion of the county is heavily affected by modern agricultural practices, with little decent wildlife habitat left apart from ancient woodlands isolated by arable fields. Even a large proportion of the coastal grasslands and seawalls have been extensively degraded over the last half century. This may therefore suggest that other southern counties should be able to compare favourably with Essex. In this respect it is of interest to examine the data for counties south of a line between the Wash and the Severn:

Traditional counties	Area (ha)	no. spider spp.	Ln (area)	Ln (no. spp.)	predicted no. spp.	difference between actual and predicted
Gloucs	325700	254	12.69	5.54	347	-93
Hunts	94700	212	11.46	5.36	278	-66
Northamptonshire	258400	267	12.46	5.59	333	-66
Herefordshire	218100	265	12.29	5.58	323	-58
Norfolk	531900	326	13.18	5.79	379	-53
Wilts	348300	300	12.76	5.70	351	-51
Cambs	224600	282	12.32	5.64	325	-43
Cornwall	351400	310	12.77	5.74	352	-42
London	30300	196	10.32	5.28	227	-31
Devon	676500	368	13.42	5.91	395	-27
Oxfordshire	193900	294	12.18	5.68	316	-22
Somerset	417800	347	12.94	5.85	363	-16
Beds	122600	281	11.72	5.64	291	-10
Middx	60200	248	11.01	5.51	256	-8
Bucks	194000	324	12.18	5.78	316	8
Leics & Rutland	254900	341	12.45	5.83	332	9
Herts	163700	323	12.01	5.78	307	16
Suffolk	383800	386	12.86	5.96	357	29
Kent	394900	405	12.89	6.00	359	46
Berks	187700	366	12.14	5.90	314	52
Essex	395800	423	12.89	6.05	359	64
IOW	38100	310	10.55	5.74	236	74
Sussex	377400	429	12.84	6.06	356	73
Hampshire	389400	465	12.87	6.14	358	107
Surrey	186900	423	12.14	6.05	314	109
Dorset	252400	471	12.44	6.15	331	140

An improvement in the accuracy of an analysis might be obtained by looking not just at all species recorded in each county, but also the occurrence of certain groups of species within there geographical range. Archer (1997) has divided the aculeate Hymenoptera into six statuses based not only on the number of 10km squares from which they have been recorded, but also their geographical range in Britain. He has the following categories: **Very Rare** – found in 1-15 10km squares, 1970 onwards (similar to Red Data Book statuses). **Rare** – found in 16-30 10km squares, 1970 onwards (similar to Nationally Scarce Notable A species). **Scarce** – found in 31-70 10km squares, 1970 onwards (similar to Nationally Scarce Notable B species which are found in 31-100km squares, 1970 onwards). (Southern) **Restricted**, found in more than 70 10km squares, 1970 onwards, and in the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology (ITE) Land Classification groups 1 and 2 (Southern Lowlands, South-West and Southern Coasts). (Southern) **Widespread** – found in more than 70 10km squares, 1970 onwards, and in the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology (ITE) Land Classification groups 3 and 4 (Midland Lowlands, and Central Coasts) as well as groups 1 and 2. **Universal** – found in more than 70 10km squares, 1970 onwards and further ITE Land Classification Groups, particularly 7 and 8 (Northern Lowlands and North-Western Seaboard). Archer has not so far investigated northern restricted and northern widespread species, but these categories might be more obviously applicable to our spider fauna than the aculeate Hymenoptera.

This idea could be very usefully applied in some form to British spiders, not only as a form of quality coding for the assessment and comparison of site fauna, but also in the investigation of the numbers of species recorded in different counties and different regions of Britain.

There are some definite mismatches between traditional county areas which I could obtain by reference to the library and the counties used in Locket, Millidge and Merrett, and there are figures which I could not obtain. These are listed below. If anyone can help complete gaps I should be very grateful. Many of these problems might become solved by the use the Watsonian vice counties and the species data which will become available in the BRC dataset.

County	Area (ha)	No. spp. recorded	County	Area (ha)	No. spp. recorded
Cumbria		326	Clyde Isles		206
E.Yorks		354	Hebrides		99
S.Yorks	156000		Islay & Jura		81
Isle of Man		218 (in 1998)	Mull		63
Buteshire	56500		Skye		176

I would welcome additional information and comments from readers.

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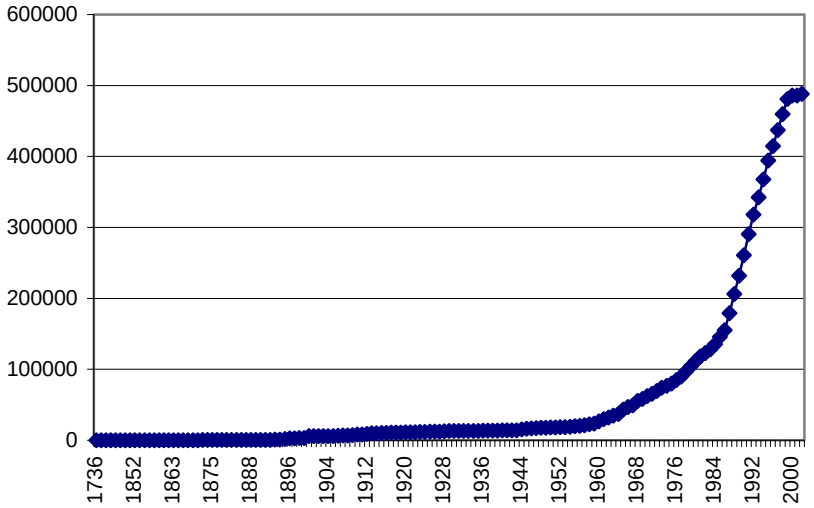
NEWSLETTER NUMBER 40
July 2001

Many thanks to those who have contributed articles, notes and information for this issue. Newsletter No. 41 will be published in November 2001. Please send contributions by the end of September at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2YP email: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Progress towards the provisional atlas

Currently nearly 488,000 records have been submitted to the scheme, by cards and in computerised format. All punching and validation of card data was completed at BRC earlier in the year and all electronic records received have been validated. There still remains some further data to be submitted in electronic format via Stan Dobson. An analysis of records in the dataset year by year is interesting, showing very clearly the dramatic effect and importance of the late Clifford Smith and his work in getting the Spider Recording Scheme up and running, and on the importance of the Spider Recording Scheme to the recording and submission of spider records in this country (see fig. below)

Accumulated numbers of records



All the species accounts have been drafted, and nearly all have been available either on request or on the NBN Gateway for perusal and comment from registered SRS members (at www.searchnbn.net, or via the SRS pages of the BAS website). Draft distribution maps have also been available on the NBN Gateway since the beginning of June. Well over thirty arachnologists have taken advantage of the facility to access the accounts and maps and to help identify errors and provide additional information. This has proved to be extremely valuable.

While going through all the draft spider accounts, it became clear that quite often the information on adult season available in standard texts leaves a lot to be desired. As well as a large amount of computerised data recorded by the Essex Spider Group, male/female date data has now also very kindly been provided by Martin Askins, John Crocker,

Francis Farr-Cox, Richard Gallon, Paul Lee, John Murphy and Jennifer Newton to bring the total number of records available with male/female date information to over 125,000 covering quite a wide range of the country. More data have been subsequently supplied by Bob Merritt, but I have yet to include this in the main male/female dataset. With the help of Martin Askins the data have been used to produce adult season charts, which have now been used to inform the revised species accounts. The provisional atlas will also provide a chart for most species summarising the available male/female data.

With the availability on the internet of checklists for a number of European countries, together with other published checklists, it has also been possible to update each species accounts with a brief summary on the distribution in western and central European countries. This does not include any assessment on the status of the species in these countries, where they may be widespread and very common or very rare. This information does not appear to be readily available.

Finalised text will be supplied to BRC by the end of August, and the atlas should be published in two volumes by the end of the year.

After the provisional atlas

The submission of computerised data will be encouraged, so that we can maintain an up-to-date dataset. Plenty of work will remain to be done after the provisional atlas is produced – as well as providing much-needed information on the modern status of each species to help in the conservation and management of spider biodiversity, it should provide the focus on where most recording effort remains to be done. Analyses of the atlas dataset should help target under-recorded parts of the country and provide the means to investigate the reasons for different species diversity in different counties, as well as to help understand the distribution and ecology of each species. Adult male/female date data is clearly something that we should now collect as part of standard recording for the scheme. There is already some very interesting data suggesting different patterns from the south to the north of the country, but we need more information.

Computer data

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Until early last year, I was going into Manchester Museum every week to work on the spider collections there. At the beginning of May, due to a massive rebuilding project, the laboratory facilities were closed down and everything was put into storage and will remain so until well into next year. At the Museum, I had an e-mail address which I can no longer use, and unfortunately, nothing was forwarded to me at home.

I have recently discovered that at least one person sent their Atlas records to that address and, of course, I never received them. If anybody else sent records to me at stan.dobson@man.ac.uk and these weren't acknowledged, would they please resubmit them **urgently** to my home address which is stand@beeb.net.

Finding *Uloborus plumipes*

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This interesting recent addition to our fauna (Roberts,1997) has spread rapidly in garden centres, though few records have been submitted to the Spider Recording Scheme and it must be grossly under-recorded. It would be good to document its spread across the country, though I suspect it may already be too late: I have found it in every garden centre where I have looked for it in the last twelve months, mostly in central east England, but ranging from Cumbria to Kent. If *U. plumipes* is present it is usually easy to find, especially once you get your eye in.

The best place to start looking is in the roof area, often but by no means always in the house plant section. Many garden centres seem to have polycarbonate roofs with aluminium supports which the spiders use to attach their webs. It is easier initially to find the very distinctive creamy or off-white papery eggsacs which look like tiny shriveled holly leaves, about the size of a finger nail. However, looking up at the eggsacs in the roof, they may look dark, no doubt partly a result of looking into the light and partly a result of their becoming browner/dirtier with age. The spiders themselves are cryptic, hanging upside down in their horizontal webs with the long front pair of legs, with their curious usually dark 'feathered' tibiae, stretched out in front. The variably coloured abdomen is strongly humped and triangular in profile. Even tiny spiderlings are instantly recognisable. The adults are quite small, rarely exceeding much more than a centimetre, extended legs included. If it is present in the roof area you may also be able to find it on plants, though its cryptic posture and small size make it harder to find in this situation. I have not yet found it outside, but individuals I have kept in captivity are very

tough and will live and breed with a minimum of care. I would be surprised if it has not by now found its way on plants into some conservatories.

Despite looking at hundreds I have yet to find a male and it has been suggested that the species can breed parthenogenetically. However, the website Spinnen Mitteleuropas states "in glasshouses reproduction by parthenogenesis has been assumed as apparently only females occur, but due to the cryptic way of life of the males this must be doubtful" [my translation]. It would be interesting to know if other observers have found males in this country. Mike Roberts' note on the initial discovery of the species referenced below notes that subadult males were found at Scunthorpe in January 1997 and Rowley Snazell reports that in two garden centres locally (Dorset) males are not at all difficult to find.

While looking for *U. plumipes* why not also check the inside walls low down for *Achaearanea tepidariorum* which I have also found in several local garden centres?

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A day at Foulness, and *Arctosa fulvolineata* rediscovered in Essex

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On 19th May 2001 the Essex Spider Group visited Foulness, an event kindly organised by Ken Hill. Access to Foulness is controlled by the MOD and is restricted to a few areas only. This time our time was spent at Wakering Stairs and Haven Point to the south of Foulness Island itself. We had previously visited this area on 12th June 1999 and did not really expect the interesting haul of species that the day finally provided.

First David Carr found a male *Haplodrassus minor* in tidal litter on a small sand and shell shingle bank at Wakering Stairs. This Nationally Vulnerable (RDB2) species has been found at five other places on the coast in Essex, all in similar situations. At the same location David found a male and female of the Nationally Scarce (Notable A) salticid *Sitticus inexpectus*, also collected in similar habitat at other coastal locations in the county.

The sea wall here has been reinforced on its seaward side with a concrete facing. The litter and tidal debris which accumulates at the base of this and around the vegetation which manages to grow in cracks in the concrete was a productive place for spiders. Eating our lunch sat on the concrete near the top of the sea wall also proved interesting. Amongst the occasional *Zelotes apricorum* and numerous *Salticus scenicus* seen running or jumping over the concrete, a female *Zodarion italicum* was spotted by David's eagle eye and captured. The spider is widespread along the East Thames Corridor and has been recorded previously as far east as Barling and Shoebury Old Ranges, so it is not altogether unexpected to find it four to five kilometres further on.

In the afternoon we moved on towards Haven Point to the northeast. Sea Purslane grows sporadically on the landward side of the sea wall and on small islands in the borrowdyke, evidence of the very brackish nature of the borrowdykes in this region. At one point we stopped to investigate an area of obviously saline mud and vegetation on the landward side of the sea wall. Whilst Ken settled down for an afternoon nap, David Carr and myself both found males of the Nationally Scarce (Notable B) *Agraecina striata*, in Essex typically found in this kind of brackish habitat. The prize of the day however went to a lycosid with a whitish marking on its back which rapidly disappeared as David turned over a small rock. Although about the right size, it did not look quite right for *Trochosa ruricola* and we spent some time trying to locate the spider, eventually successfully capturing a male *Arctosa fulvolineata*. A female then turned up under a nearby stone and David found another pair under a piece of wood a few metres away. At Haven Point itself, another four males and two females were found in an area of saltmarsh where the mud was covered with a variety of litter and pieces of wood. These are the first records of this spider in the county since the old Flatford Mill Spider Group days! Over the years we had searched all the old locations and likely habitat elsewhere in the county without success, and had come to the conclusion that this species was probably extinct in Essex. We had even looked for spiders at this very same place at Haven Point at about the same time of year only two years previously.

It just goes to show how much of a sampling exercise fieldwork represents, where absence in itself proves very little. There is no substitute for being in the right place at the right time!

The increased distribution of *Nigma walckenaeri* (Roewer, 1951) in North Gloucestershire

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Although the species became a new Gloucetershire county record with its discovery in 1993 from my own garden in Alderton (GR SP005343), the species has now arrived in and around Tewkesbury and including a number of key sites.

During routine fieldwork in late summer 2000, it was noticed that a fair number were occupying ivy on a bridge over a disused railway at Beckford (GR S0980356). In early October 2000 a good-sized population was discovered on a protected embankment just east of' Tewkesbury, a notable site for Glow-worm *Lampyris noctiluca* and the reason for halting Phase II of a proposed relief-road. The area is part of an extensive wet flood-plain which surrounds the town.

Nigma walckenaeri also occupied sites previously recorded for the Spider Recording Scheme and although its presence was unnoticed until last year it seems unlikely that the species was overlooked during past fieldwork. Queen Margaret's Camp (GR S0896314) has been subjected to beating and sweeping techniques since 1991, and from April-November. Also, Tewkesbury Abbey Gardens (GR SO891324) has been surveyed 1994-1996 and yet *Nigma walckenaeri* is now a likely occurrence for late summer/autumn during this year's recording programme.

Good numbers were also discovered on ivy, elder and lilac alongside the cemetery in Priors Park Estate (GR SO892318) just south of the town in September 2000.

To the west of Tewkesbury very little evidence of the species is known although it is hoped that 2001 fieldwork may confirm my assumption that the species is spreading westward.

It would be interesting to hear from recorders in Worcestershire, Herefordshire and the Welsh Counties as to the likelihood of the species appearing in their vicinity.

Editorial note: it should be noted that a distribution centred in the Severn Vale and Thames Valley regions, as shown by *Nigma walckenaeri*, is a situation known for a number of other invertebrate species, such as the ant *Lasius brunneus* (Alexander, K.N.A. & Taylor, A. 1997. The Severn Vale, a national stronghold for *Lasius brunneus* (Latreille) (Hymenoptera: Formicidae). *Br. J. Ent. Nat. Hist.* **10**: 217-219), and reflected in a number of other spider species.

Philodromus collinus, an urban spider?

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In Leistershire *Philodromus collinus* had previously been collected from scrubby situations on limestone grassland, the ride of a coniferised ancient woodland site and a rural churchyard, all in the far east of the county. In the late Spring/early Summer of 2000 a concerted effort was made to collect records of *Atea sturmi* from urban parks around Leicester, by beating yew and other conifers. While beating for *A. sturmi* all other spiders were potted up for identification later. Amongst the collection from Monk's Rest (a former suburban large house and gardens, now a public park) on the 11/06/00 were 4 males and one female *P. collinus,* which had been collected along with *P. aureolus*.

This led to a rethink of this species' distribution within the county, since it had been assumed that *P. collinus* was not only confined to the far east of the county but also to 'natural' habitats. Several days later a male *P. collinus* was collected from Gilrose Cemetery (a Victorian cemetery in suburban west Leicester) again by beating conifers. There were two further records for this species for that year, both from the west of the county, one from a rural churchyard and the other from the open ride of a coniferised ancient woodland site (this later collection also included a female *P. praedatus*).

All the records for *P. collinus* are from habitats with similarities to parkland (churchyards, scrub mosaics, open rides, etc.), so it should come as no surprise that this species has colonised city parks and cemeteries that contain reasonable amounts of yews and other conifers. These areas of public open space mimic this species 'natural' habitat of parkland and is one which should not be ignored by arachnologists. The list of other species that have been collected from Leicerter's city parks also include*: Tetragnatha obtusa, Gibbaranea gibbosa, Atea sturmi, Cyclosa conica, Hypomma cornutum, Panomomops sulcifrons* and *Pityophantes phrygianus*.

Lepthyphantes insignis in Leicestershire

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One female of this spider was first recorded for the county by D.A. Lott from pitfall traps set on a reclaimed open cast site at Ravenstone, on the 26/06/1991. Since then there have been a further nine records, all except one of single individuals, with five coming from pitfall trap material. The majority of these pitfall traps were set in arable/ley with one set in heathland adjacent to permanent pasture, and in the author's opinion concern dispersing aeronauts. The remaining four records were collected by hand; two were swept from the same ride of ancient woodland just over three years apart, with the remaining two records coming from dark subterranean type records.

The latter two records come from 2001, with the first of these concerning a single female that was discovered beneath a hollowed-out cast iron flower holder situated at ground level on top of a concrete grave cover amongst lush growth of Spanish Bluebells and partly shaded by a large tree. When the flower holder was rolled over the female was situated in her web, with two white egg sacs adjacent to the web stuck to the side of the flower holder. The second record concerns two males and five females that were found in a row of recently constructed drainage culverts in an extension to an ever increasing Victorian cemetery. The culverts were about 1m by 0.5m and 0.5m deep with water in the bottom, all interlinked by a pipe at either end.

The pale spiders were collected in the hope that they were *Lessertia dentichelis*, but then in the belief that they were *Lepthyphantes pallidus* since they were not white enough (both species have been taken from sewer systems in Leicester with the *Lessertia* the commoner of the two in the habitat). The females were taken from their webs made in the corners of the culverts and the males from under the manhole covers. Several of the female webs had white egg sacs adjacent to them, stuck onto the concrete wall of the culverts.

Only two of the line of culverts were investigated with L. insignis being present in both of them, the other four culverts being left since sufficient specimens had been collected. In the second culvert several pale female spiders close to the bottom were left, so this species seems to have a well established and viable population here.

The above records suggest that this spider lives a subterranean life style (possibly gregarious in favourable conditions), with possible affiliations to woodland and the ability to disperse successfully over large distances. These statements are based on relatively few records and the author would welcome any comments and observations on this elusive species.

Nigma puella in Leicestershire

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On the 10/06/0l I visited one of my local parks in west Leicester. Braunstone Park and surrounds were the estate of the Winstanley family that was compulsory purchased in the 1920's, with much of the land going for council housing. This left 168 acres of land around the former ancestral home to be used as formal gardens and open space. Although over the years council management policies and vandalism have degraded the park it can still boast; two lakes, a stream, many old oaks, formal gardens and areas of scrub with tall herb and rough grassland.

It was while beating a holly bush at the edge of an open spinney that a male *Nigma puella* fell onto the beating tray. This species presence in the county came as a bit of a surprise at first, since on consulting the draft distribution map for *N. puella* from the forthcoming national atlas I found that most records came from around the coast with the two nearest places it had been found being South Wales and Suffolk (both over a 100 miles away). The habitat for this species is on bushes and overgrown hedgerows in gardens, park land and field boundaries, so old suburban and urban parks and gardens anywhere in southern England are worth investigating for this species.

Two other species collected at the same time that are worthy of note where *Philodromus collinus* and *Achaearanea lunata*. A male of the first species was beaten from ornamental conifers, with two adult females and five sub-adult males of the second species being taken from their tangled webs which were found in the many corners of the walled gardens wall buttresses.

Spider Recording in Rye Bay boosted by Interreg II Project

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The Two Bays, One Environment Interreg II Project has enabled an increase in the wildlife recording in the Rye Bay area, which extends from the Rother valley in the north to Pett Level in the west and Camber and the Midrips in the east. Recording work has concentrated on the UK Biodiversity Priority habitats, with particular focus, with regard to spiders, on the vegetated shingle at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, and the sand dunes at Camber.

An intensive year-long pitfall trapping study was carried out on the *bare* shingle at Rye Harbour during 1999-2000. This habitat is sometimes regarding as being of low importance for wildlife, even amongst invertebrate ecologists. Spiders are extremely difficult to find on bare shingle and even harder to catch! Pitfall trapping was considered the most effective way of recording the surface dwelling invertebrates on this habitat type. Some very interesting results were observed.

A different community of spiders occurred during the late spring to late summer season compared to the late autumn and winter period. During warmer weather *Drassodes lapidosus*, *Zelotes apricorum*, *Salticus scenicus*, *Euophrys obsoleta*, *Sitticus inexpectus*, (*Neon levis/picta)* and *Pardosa agricola* dominated the catch. During autumn and winter a number of different species started to appear, with some surprises. The omnipresent *D.lapidosus* still dominated the catch, but species that have never been found on shingle at Rye Harbour before appeared regularly in the catch. These included the woodland and cave dwelling species *Cicurina cicur*, the wetland species *Crustulina sticta*, and the synanthropic species *Tegenaria domestica*. The latter species occurred regularly in traps set as far away from buildings and manmade structures as is possible at Rye Harbour. Other invertebrates never recorded before at Rye Harbour also occurred, including the millipede *Nanogona polydesmoides*, which was found in large numbers during cold weather.

Pseudoscorpions were also recorded regularly in small numbers throughout the year, including *Chthonius tenuis*, *C.orthodactylus* and *Roncus lubricus*.

The results of the survey are still being collated, and when complete a full report will be published including a phenological analysis.

A superb community of spiders was found at Camber Dunes including, *Lathys stigmatisata, Haplodrassus dalmentensis, Philodromus fallax, Marpissa nivoyi, Attulus saltator, Phlegra fasciata, Synageles venator, Neoscona adianta, Trichopterna cito*, and *Ceratinopsis romana*. The pseudoscorpion *Dactylochelifer latreillei* was very common throughout the dunes.

The wetland habitats within Rye Bay are next to be targeted, including reedbeds, reedfen, fen marsh and wet woodland.

The Salticidae of Rye Bay and Hastings

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The unique, complex geology of Hastings has created a compact mosaic of habitats which when viewed in combination with the adjacent area of Rye Bay represents an incredibly rich and diverse area of southern England.

Fine examples of ancient woodland, reedbed, fen marsh, sand dunes, vegetated shingle, saltmarsh, maritime cliff and slope, dwarf scrub, dry acid grassland and lichen heath occur throughout the area, as well as urban built up areas and agricultural land.

The invertebrate fauna of this area is incredibly rich and the jumping spiders of the area are no exception. The following is a brief summary of the species and distribution of the Salticidae of Rye Bay and Hastings.

Salticus scenicus (Clerck 1757)

Very common throughout the area on buildings and manmade structures, also common on the shingle at Rye Harbour and the cliff fall boulders at Hastings.

Salticus cingulatus (Panzer 1797)

Uncommon within the region, the only records being from shingle at Rye Harbour, on Camber Castle and on cliff face scrub at Hastings.

Heliophanus cupreus (Walckenaer 1802)

Very common and widespread within Hastings amongst low vegetation, although unusually is quite uncommon within Rye Bay where it seems to be replaced by the following species.

Heliophanus flavipes C.L.Koch 1848

Very common and widespread within Rye Bay amongst low vegetation and on shingle at Rye Harbour, but only occasionally found within Hastings.

Marpissa muscosa (Clerck 1757)

Locally very abundant on old fence posts and adjacent trees on small farms within Rye Bay.

Marpissa nivoyi (Lucas 1846)

This spider used to be very common on the dunes at Camber but seems to be declining in recent years. It still occurs at Camber but is only found rarely.

Ballus chalybeius (Walckenaer 1802)

Occasionally found in sweet chestnut coppice woodlands within Hastings.

Neon reticulatus (Blackwall 1853)

Common in leaf litter within woodland at Hastings and Rye Bay.

Neon pictus Kulczynski, 1891?

First recorded in Britain on shingle at Rye Harbour in 1998. The species occurs abundantly on shingle throughout the reserve.

Bianor aurocinctus (Ohlert 1865)

There is only one record of this species, a male on the edge of an arable field in the Brede Valley. The spider was found on dried, cracked, compacted ground feeding on ants.

Euophrys frontalis (Walckenaer 1802)

Very common and widespread throughout the area usually found at the base of vegetation and under stones.

Talavera aequipes (O.P.-Cambridge 1871)

Occasionally recorded from shingle at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.

Pseudeuophrys lanigera (Simon 1871)

Frequently found in Hastings on buildings and other manmade structures.

Pseudeuophrys obsoleta (Simon 1868)

Very common and sometimes abundant on shingle at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.

Sitticus pubescens (Fabricius 1775)

Frequently found in Hastings on buildings and other manmade structures.

Sitticus inexpectus Logunov & Kronestedt 1997

Very common and sometimes abundant on shingle at Rye Harbour and the Midrips.

Sitticus (Attulus) saltator (Simon 1868)

Occasionally found on the sand dunes at Camber.

Evarcha falcata (Clerck 1757)

Frequently found on bushes and trees on the edge of woodland and hedgerows within the region, although seems to be absent from Hastings.

Phlegra fasciata (Hahn 1826)

Occasionally found on shingle at Rye Harbour and sand dunes at Camber.

Synageles venator (Lucas 1836)

Recently found amongst vegetation on the stabilised dunes at Camber bordering the Rye golf course.

Myrmarachne formicaria (DeGeer 1778)

Recently found amongst low vegetation on the cliffs at Hastings.

Web sites

Richard Gallon has set up a website for the spiders of North Wales at http://www.geocities.com/north_wales_spiders and viewing this site is highly recommended. It contains vice county lists, site species lists for the Great Orme and Cadair Idris, coverage and topography maps, and distribution maps for all the species recorded in the region.

Millennium Atlas - Spiders of Leicestershire and Rutland

by John Crocker and Jonathan Daws. 120 pages A4. Loughborough Naturalists' Club.

This new Atlas (see Newsletter No. 39) is now published and brings the recording of the spider fauna in Leicestershire and Rutland up to date. It is an essential companion to the earlier publication (Crocker & Daws, 1996) which covered the topography of the two counties and traced the history of arachnology in the Vice-county. Style and format have been maintained such that the two parts, 1996 volume and the Atlas, complement each other, but each is complete in itself.

After problems which resulted in the rejection of the original print run, the atlas has now been printed by new printers. The result is absolutely excellent, with high quality reproduction of the outstanding spider drawings by Michael Robert. The maps plot the distribution of 341 species, representing over 30,000 records for Leicestershire, including 12,000 records new since the 1996 atlas. Detailed commentaries are given of all the 14 new county records and of some of the rarest species where additional records have been obtained, with a wealth of other supporting detail directed at the present emphasis on biodiversity. My only gripe is that instead of confining consideration of status to a ***regional*** level, the national status has been unofficially altered for a number of species. For a variety of very good reasons this cannot be done except by publication of a new Red Data Book or official national review. Changing national status is not the role of a county atlas, and for me it detracts from an otherwise unsurpassed production. In one case, *Maso gallicus*, the draft national map shows clearly that the official status is correct and should not be altered, and I would also argue about several of the other 'changes' made.

However this is an important book on the British spider fauna and is definitely a book to buy. It is available to BAS/SRS members at the discounted price of £13 post free from John Crocker at 34 Bramcote Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 2SA. A few of the companion 1996 publication are also available for sale at a discount. If you have not yet ordered this book or its 1996 complement, both of which are likely to become collectors items in the future, do so now!

Peter Harvey

British Arachnological Society

SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME

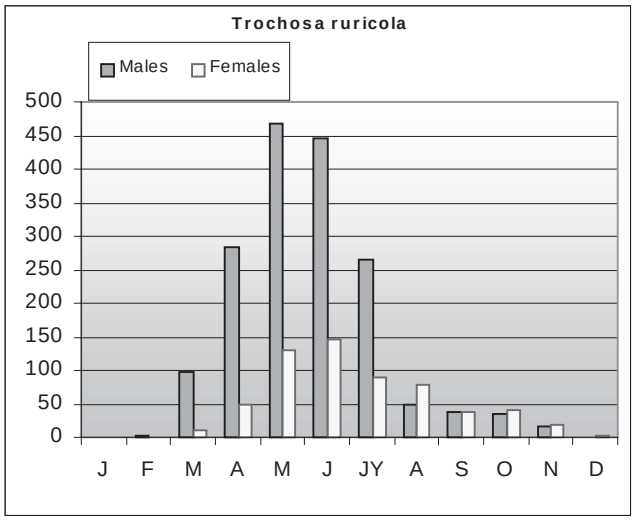
srs@britishspiders.org.uk

NEWSLETTER **NUMBER 41** **November 2001**

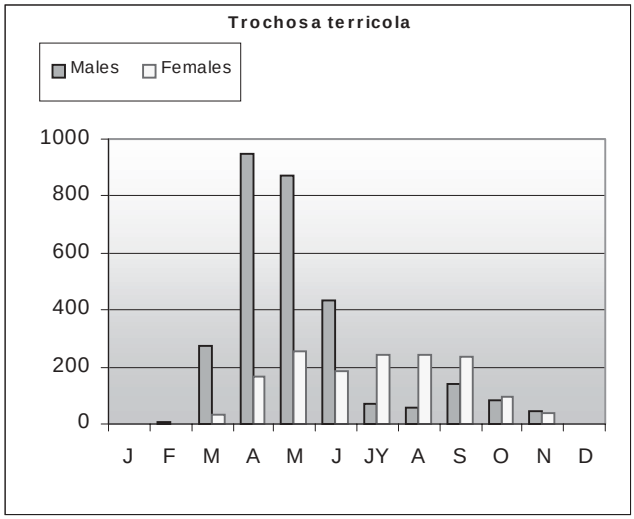
Many thanks to those who have contributed articles, notes and information for this issue. Newsletter No. 42 will be published in March 2002. Please send contributions by the end of January at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2YP email: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Progress towards the provisional atlas

A total of over 490,000 records have been submitted to the scheme in time for inclusion into the provisional atlas. These have all been punching checked and have undergone other standard checks at BRC. The status of records queried by arachnologists on the NBN Gateway or by examination of hard copy draft maps has been checked as far as possible in the time available, and decisions have been made whether or not to map them on the advice of Peter Merrett and other members of the SRS Subcommittee of the British Arachnological Society. A dataset of male/female data provided by the Essex Spider Group, Martin Askins, John Crocker, Francis Farr-Cox, Richard Gallon, Paul Lee, John Murphy, Robert Merritt, Jennifer Newton and John Partridge based on over 130,000 records has been used to inform the species accounts and will be used to produce a chart of numbers of males and females recorded monthly, to be included in the accounts for most British species. All text and male/female data has been submitted to BRC and publication work on the atlas is under way. Publication is now expected in early January 2002.

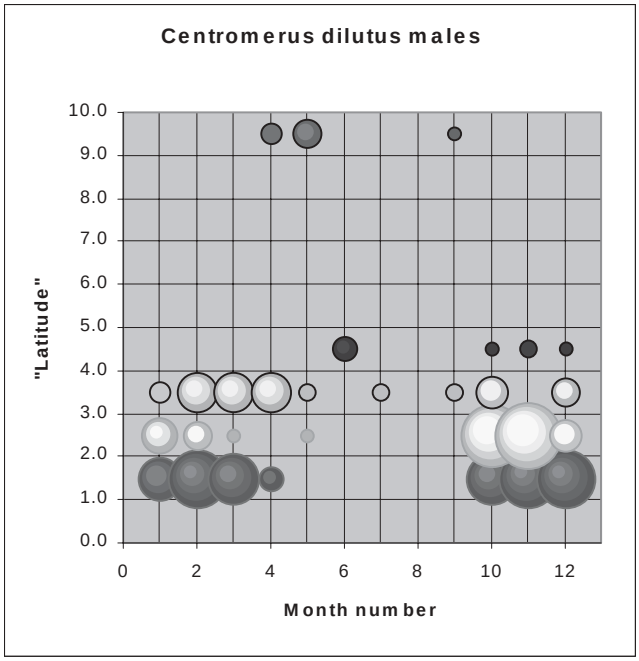


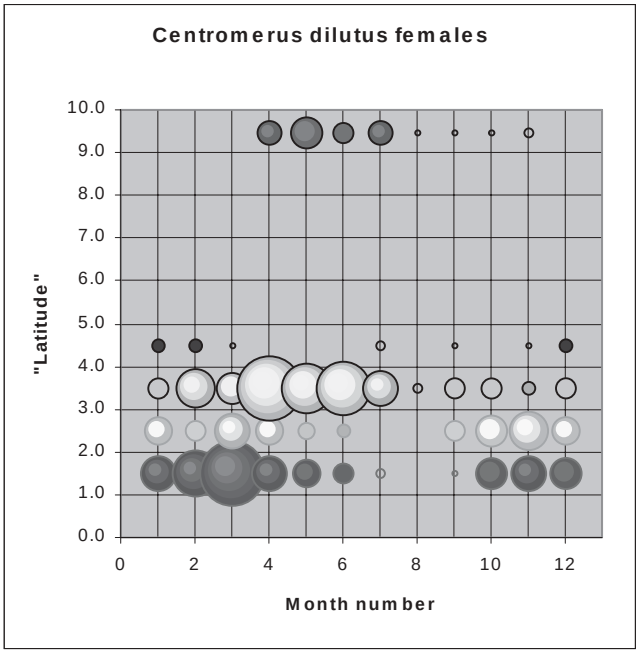
Draft text and distribution maps are still available to registered SRS members (at www.searchnbn.net, or via the SRS pages of the BAS website), although it is too late now to provide any feed back prior to publication. The intention is that the published dataset and maps will be on the NBN Gateway at some stage after publication, with access to data behind the dots available to registered users. This should help research into relationships between species and recorded information on habitat, altitude, etc. The intention is also to keep this regularly updated.



For me, one of the most interesting aspects to come out of the work towards publication has been the value of male/female data provided with records. Two examples of charts such as those to be published in the atlas are given below, for *Trochosa terricola* and *T. ruricola*. I think these demonstrate the value of having such data available.

These data are potentially even more interesting when looked at on the basis of their latitude and longitude in Britain (using the 100km OS grid for northings and eastings). The data available indicate that for a number of species the maturity period changes further north (e.g. phenograms for *Centromerus dilutus* overleaf):

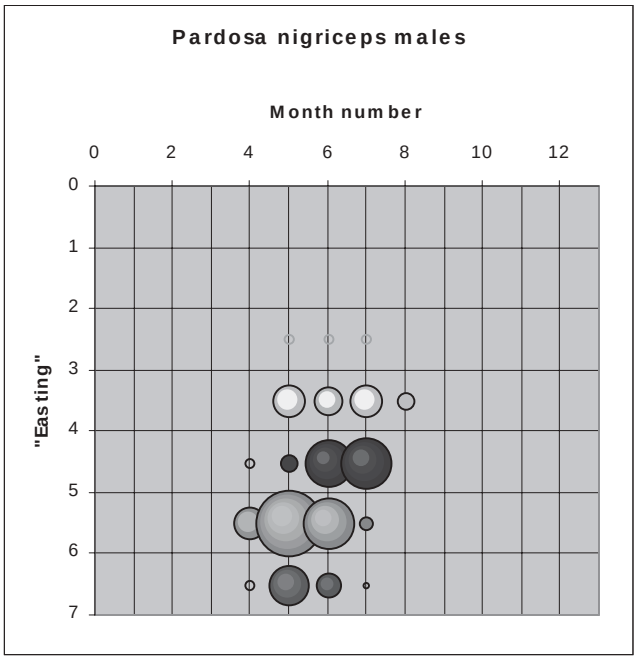


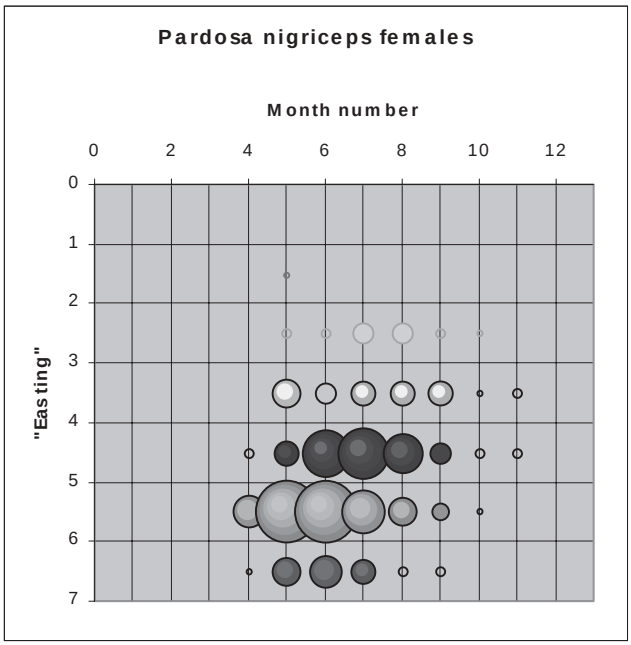


Also, for some species there is an indication that maturity period changes from east to west (e.g. *Pardosa nigriceps* right):

However, at the moment the data available do not cover a wide enough range of latitude or longitude, and it hasn't been analysed on a year by year basis; but wouldn't it be nice to have enough data coverage to properly examine patterns across the country?

As well as concentrating on under-recorded parts of the country and under-recorded parts of each county, the collection of male/female data should be major feature of phase two of the recording scheme. If anyone already has male/female data which they could submit to the scheme please contact me.





PLEASE KEEP THE RECORDS COMING INTO THE SCHEME

The intention is to try (being the operative word) to keep card data up-to-date in the future on at least a yearly basis, and to increasingly encourage and accept data which is already computerised.

Habitat data submitted to the recording scheme

Of the 490,000 records that have been submitted to the spider database, nearly half have coded information on habitat. Mark Telfer has provided me with a breakdown of these data. They vary from 40,950 records from deciduous woodland to 161 records from machair, and only five habitats account for over 50% of these records (deciduous woodland, grassland-other, heath/moor-heather, woodland-mixed and wetland vegetation-other).

The number of records per coded habitat varies over a very wide range, and of course it is often difficult to assign one collecting area to a single coded habitat. The number of species recorded in each habitat (fig. 1) is therefore unlikely to be an accurate or complete indication of habitat richness.

Graphing the relationship between the number of records and the recorded species diversity (fig. 2) indicates a reasonably close relationship between number of records and number of recorded species, levelling out when sufficient records have been made. This suggests that for many habitats more records would result in more species being recorded. There is also some evidence, not unreasonably, that buildings, cave/tunnel/well and cultivated land have fewer species than other habitats. However the graph also suggests that most habitats potentially might reveal remarkably high numbers of species. It seems that a lot more data is required before any conclusions can be valid.

Individual species habitat data have not been available for use in the text during the production of this atlas, and its analysis will become a future aim of the Spider Recording Scheme. Another aim for the second phase of the recording scheme should also be to be to raise the number of records from poorly recorded habitats.

Fig. 2. Relationship between species diversity and number of records

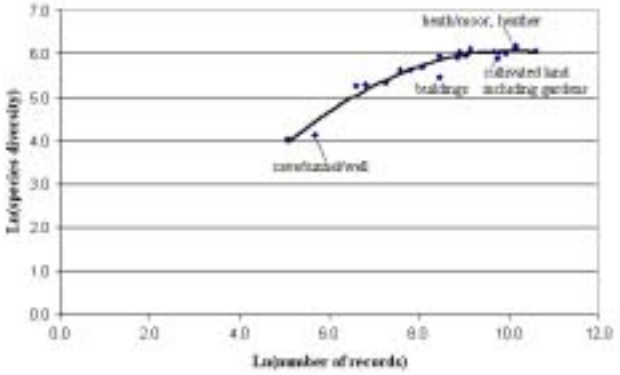
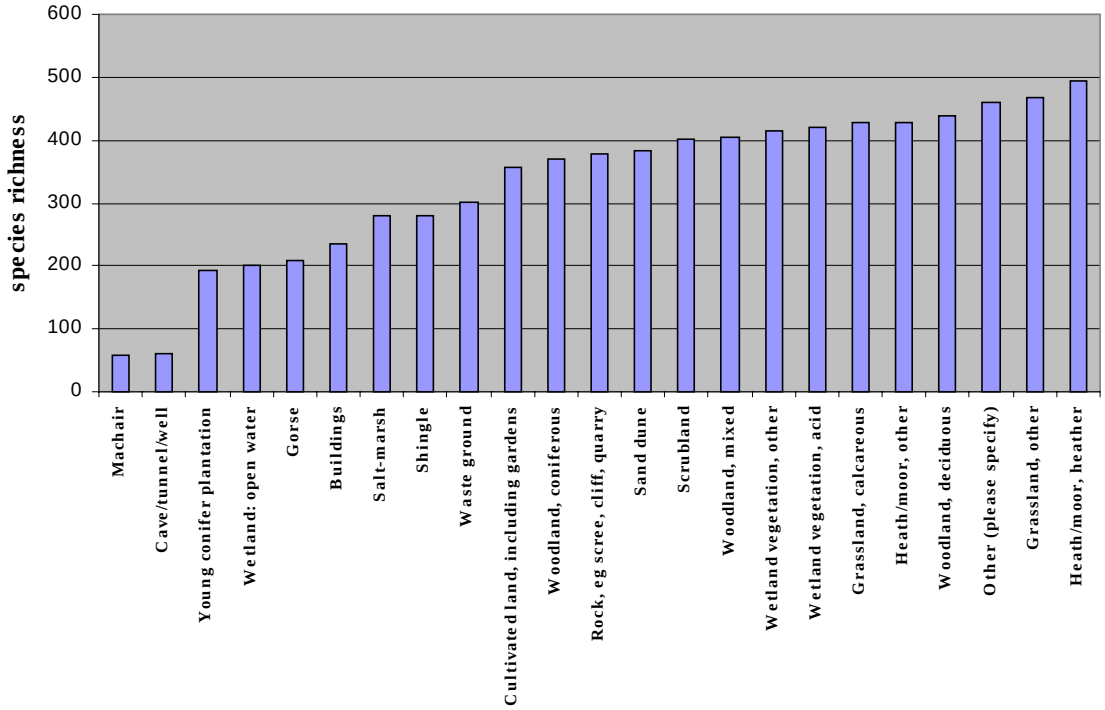


Fig. 1. Species richness per coded habitat type



Continuing submission of computer records

Stan Dobson Moor Edge, Birch Vale, High Peak, Derbyshire SK22 1BX stand@beeb.net.

The input of electronic data for the provisional atlas has now been completed, but records should still be submitted for the next atlas and beyond. The system as prescribed in the 1998 document 'Submission of computer records' has worked quite well, and, for the most part, will be retained; but it has become apparent that there are shortcomings in the data requirements which were based on the RA65 cards. These will have to be revised, but for the time being, data can be sent in more or less the same format as before. However, some changes, initiated by BRC, have already been made to this and others have been proposed for immediate adoption. Modifications to the specification as set out previously are given below.

When the updated specification is finalised, a revised document will be produced. For those interested in submitting electronic data for the first time, the original (amended in line with the modifications below) is still available from me.

MODIFICATIONS.

Additional fields.

A Dateclass field has been introduced for use when the date is known only approximately. Please insert this immediately after the Year field and enter a single character '+', '-', 'C' or 'P' meaning 'after', 'before', 'about' (use average date for a range) or 'published in' (undated, literature record) respectively. Leave blank for known dates. .

Data are now being requested for statistical work on the seasonal appearance of the sexes and juveniles. If possible, please include three separate fields for males, females and juveniles giving either the number seen or collected, or any other character such as 'x' to indicate that they were present. If this is not possible, use a single field with an indication such as 'm, 2f'. If egg sacs are seen with females, it would be a good idea to note this.

Relaxations of requirements.

Originally, a strict naming convention for files was specified. This has been found to be unnecessary and many people didn't follow it anyway, so it can be abandoned. However, please make sure that your file names identify you, as occasionally details have to be checked later and it isn't so easy when more than one file is called something like 'spiders.csv'! Incorporate your name, initials or recorder number and, if you send more than one file, please don't use the same file name.

Data can be sent by e-mail (preferably); otherwise it must be PC compatible and can be on 3.5" floppy discs, 100Mb Zip discs or CDs. Large files sent by e-mail should be compressed to save downloading time.

The file can be in csv (comma-separated variable) form as plain text, or as an Excel or Access file. Other data formats may be acceptable; please contact me for further information.

Field names in a header row are acceptable.

An additional category has been introduced for the Source field. This is 'LRC' (digit 4) which refers to 'Local Records Centre or similar'.

Occasionally the VC number is indeterminate. In such cases use 0 and if there is a VC name field, leave it blank.

For species, originally, the BRC code number was required rather than the name, but it has been found that the name is more reliable as it can be converted automatically without errors. Please include both as a doublecheck.

When entering names in the recorder and determiner fields, if there are many, it would help a lot if they are entered surname first. I have to have numbers allocated to these names, and it is very much quicker changing them if the surnames come first.

General comments.

Any records of rare species which are sent in on GEN14 cards should also be included with the electronic data to minimise card entry.

Please ensure that there are no double quotes anywhere in the data fields. This is most important as they prevent correct operation of the checking program.

Experience has shown that very few files reach me that require no modification, but please remember that for every minute that you save by not formatting your records correctly, that is an extra minute for me and it is multiplied by all the files I receive.

If there are any queries or if you require more help in producing your record file, please give me a ring on 01663 743551 or e-mail me at stand@beeb.net.

A further record of *Pistius truncatus* from Blean Woods, Kent

A. Russell-Smith 1 Bailiffs Cottage, Doddington, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 0TU

Although first recorded in Britain from the New Forest in the 19th century, *Pistius truncatus* (Pallas, 1772) is currently only known from East Blean Woods L.N.R., near Canterbury in Kent. Two sub-adult specimens were beaten from a small oak tree in July 1995, one of which, a male, was subsequently reared to the adult stage by the late Frances Murphy (Allison & Russell-Smith, 1996). Since that date, at least 12 attempts have been made by the author to collect this species in the same area, as well as several in other parts of the Blean Woods complex, but without success.

On the 29th July 2001, the author collected a specimen by beating small oaks in the same general area of East Blean Woods in which *P. truncatus* was taken previously. A single adult female was taken from a tree less than 20 m from where the previous specimens were collected in 1995. This tree was of very similar size and appearance to that on which it was collected earlier. The specimen was kept live, photographed

at the author's home and then, in view of its apparent rarity, returned to the same tree on which it was found. It seems likely that this species is mature in late July and possibly early August in this country, rather later in the year than many records from the continent.

Other spiders collected from a series of small oaks in the same general area included species that are typically found on the foliage of deciduous trees. On this occasion *Xysticus lanio, Philodromus praedatus, Ballus chalybeus, Heliophanus cupreus, Anelosimus vittatus* and *Araniella cucurbitina* were all taken. On previous sampling occasions at earlier periods in the year, *Clubiona compta, C. brevipes, Misumena vatia, Philodromus aureolus, P. dispar, P. albidus, Araneus triguttatus,* and *Araniella opistographa* were also beaten from oaks in this area.

***Pistius truncatus* from Blean Woods, Kent**

photograph by A. Russell-Smith

This record suggests that a viable population, albeit possibly extremely small, does exist in East Blean Woods. As with other extremely rare invertebrates, management recommendations for its conservation cannot be based on adequate population data until an effective sampling protocol becomes available. Beating of tree limbs is almost certainly a highly inefficient way of sampling invertebrates, if only because a small proportion of readily accessible branches is sampled on any given tree. However, techniques such as insecticidal fogging, while certainly more efficient in an absolute sense, are clearly not appropriate for rare and potentially endangered species. However, if the observation from continental countries that *P. truncatus* is normally associated with "scrub" oaks (J. Murphy, pers. comm.) holds true in Blean Woods as well, it would be important to ensure the continued coppicing of a reasonable proportion of oak trees, as opposed to "promoting" them to high forest trees.

Reference

Allison, R. & Russell-Smith, A. 1996. *Pistius truncatus* (Pallas, 1772) in Kent. *Newsletter of the British Arachnological Society* **76:** 4.

Spider Recording In South Wales

Michael Kilner 58 Llandegfedd Way, New Inn, Pontypool NP4 0RG

Glyncornel Environmental Centre, situated in the heart of the Rhondda valley, was the venue for a July spider identification training day, hosted by Stan Dobson and myself. The event was inspired by collecting done on the site by A.R. Jackson exactly 100 years before (with no activity at all in between!). 14 people attended over the weekend, for a combination of fieldwork in the SSSI woodlands adjoining the centre, and other nearby habitats, and later laboratory work. An excellent time was had by all, and even the weather was kind. A total of 61 species were taken over the weekend, including *Theridion impressum*, *Ceratinella scabrosa* and *Evarcha arcuata*, all new to Glamorgan. The opilionid *Sabacon viscayanum* was also abundant. Such was the enthusiasm of the participants that a spider recording group is now being established for Glamorgan and Gwent.

This enthusiasm is already bearing fruit. *Phlegra fasciata* has since been found by Simon Warmingham at Kenfig Burrows national nature reserve, making this the third site for this Red Data Book species in the county.

Another good find in the area was *Hypomma fulvum*, which I took from a reed bed at Uskmouth nature reserve on the Gwent levels. This is the first record of this species for Wales. *Pirata latitans* was also present. *Dolomedes* has also been seen in the area, but the only specimen that I have seen to date was the desiccated carapace and legs of a female (no abdomen), so the species will have to remain off the Gwent list for the present.

Hopefully, if the recording group takes off, there will be many more additions to the local lists in the near future.

addendum

On 9 September 2001 I went out to Piercefield Woods, Chepstow (Monmouthshire, VC35) where I found a single *Hyptiotes paradoxus* in Yew woodland. *Hyptiotes* was previously known from the other side of the river Wye, in Gloucestershire, but I believe that this is the first record from Wales. I looked for other specimens, without success, but the habitat is classic *Hyptiotes*, and I am sure that there will be a viable population there.

Where's Denny?

Michael Kilner 58 Llandegfedd Way, New Inn, Pontypool NP4 0RG

I was interested to be sent some specimens and litter samples from Denny Island, (OS grid reference ST458810), a small rocky outcrop lying in the middle of the Severn estuary, almost equidistant between the English and Welsh shorelines. Denny is a limestone rock outpost, with a bare rocky shoreline, and an extensive colony of cormorants. The centre of the island, such as it is, is dominated by Tree Mallow, although this is apparently in decline owing to the slow spread of the cormorant colony.

I had been hoping to visit the island myself, but unfortunately the original trip date was cancelled, and another date arranged at short notice, on which I was unable to attend. The specimens were therefore collected on 11 August 2001 by Colin Titcombe and Graham Harris, who do extensive work on the fauna and flora of Monmouthshire.

A single female *Dysdera erythrina* was taken from amongst the mallow, and numerous *Tiso vagans* and *Ostearius melanopygius* were found within samples of cormorant nest litter. Whilst these are very common species, they probably represent the first ever spider records from the island, which is an unappealing site for research because of its small size and the estuarine currents which make a prolonged stay (30 minutes maximum) impossible. I would be very interested indeed if any SRS member knows of any previous records from Denny.

Two other points. *Dysdera* seems to crop up quite often on islands, and I am interested to know what it feeds on. The only woodlouse in the samples that I was sent was the shore slater *Ligia oceanica*, which in its adult form at least is much bigger than *Dysdera*, and would pose a difficult challenge. Has *Dysdera* been recorded feeding on this species before, and if so, are juvenile *Ligia* available all year round? (or at least when *Dysdera* is active).

Lastly, Denny island sits almost exactly on the border between Monmouthshire (VC35), West Gloucestshire (VC34) and North Somerset (VC6). Exactly which vice county does it belong in? I am told it is Monmouthshire, and certainly most of it seems to be in VC35, but of course, I am biased towards the Welsh side. If anyone can provide a definitive answer, please let me know.

Philodromus albidus Kulczynski, 1911 in Watsonian East Gloucestershire (VC33)

Paul F. Whitehead Moor Leys, Little Comberton, Pershore, Worcestershire WR10 3EH

On 8 June 2001 I visited Kinsham Gravel Pit, Worcestershire (covering parts of both Watsonian V.-C. 33 and V.-C. 37) as part of an ongoing bio-assessment programme of a species-rich biologically diverse managed agrarian landscape (Whitehead, 1995, 1996), generally known as The Kemerton Estate. Kinsham Gravel Pit is now a privately-owned biological conservation site, and the assessment programme is arranged by the Kemerton Conservation Trust through its Conservation Officer.

Working across extensive areas of species-poor ruderal herbage (*Epilobium roseum* Schreb., *Senecio jacobaea* L. and *Ranunculus repens* L.) growing on previously cultivated ground between areas of open water and an ancient boundary hedge, I swept a completely white *Philodromus* off *Epilobium roseum*. The specimen was a small female, and was readily identified (Roberts, 1993, 1995) as *Philodromus albidus* Kulczynski. The find site was in the administrative county of Worcestershire, but just, and only just, inside Watsonian East Gloucestershire VC33 (SO93).

On 25 June 2001, I knocked a large female *Philodromus* off a flower-cluster of privet *Ligustrum vulgare* L. at the same site, forming part of a young linear amenity planting at the edge of a field. The vegetation probably best represents scrub edge in a largely open ruderal area, containing a water-body extending over some 0.3km^2, undoubtedly impacting on local micro-climate. This specimen had the abdominal dorsum heavily suffused with deep pink, and the epigynes were somewhat different to those of the first specimen. I then consulted David Nellist who kindly sent me a copy of a paper by Segers (1989). This proved most enlightening on the subject of variation in the form of the spermatheca duct, and I was left then with no doubt that this second specimen was also *P. albidus*.

The southern edge of Kinsham Pit is marked by some older plantations, and more recently developed amenity woodland, but these are >500m distant from the find sites. The *P. albidus* on 8 June 2001 was in a completely open herb-dominated landscape with no trees nearer than 150m.

According to the draft national distribution map kindly sent to me by Peter Harvey, *P. albidus* is presently limited to the area more or less south-east of a line from the Wash to the Bristol Channel, with a marked concentration of records in Essex. Kinsham Gravel Pit lies on the north-western edge of this range, and although there appear to be one or two records from Worcestershire and Warwickshire, *P. albidus* is thought to be new to VC33.

I am grateful to the people named in the text for providing information on *P. albidus* and its variation and to the Kemerton Conservation Trust for permission to visit the site. Dr P. Merrett also made some helpful comments.

References

Roberts, M.J., 1993. *The spiders of Great Britain and Ireland* Compact Edition. 1-3. Harley Books.

Roberts, M. J., 1995. *Spiders of Britain and northern Europe*. HarperCollins.

Segers, H., 1989. A redescription of *Philodromus albidus* Kulczynski, 1911 (Araneae, Philodromidae). *Bulletin British Arachnological Society* **8** (2): 38-40.

Whitehead, P.F.,1995. The invertebrate fauna of the Kemerton Estate, Worcestershire. Part I: Terrestrial Habitats. *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England.* **156**: 89-105.

Whitehead, P.F.,1996. The invertebrate fauna of the Kemerton Estate, Worcestershire. Part II: Arboreal habitats and Beggarboys wetland. *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England.* **157:** 170-190.

Ozyptila blackwalli, new to Essex

Peter Harvey 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex RM16 2YP

This year I have been undertaking an invertebrate survey at Belton Hills in south Essex, funded by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and English Nature. Belton Hills are south-facing coastal grasslands on clay, which have been the subject of various unfriendly planting and management schemes in the past, but which are now a Local Nature Reserve recognised for

their floral and faunal importance. Low density populations of two national Biodiversity Action Plan bumblebee species *Bombus humilis* and *B. sylvarum* were identified at the site last year, and the purpose of the survey was to identify other invertebrate species of importance in relation to recommendations for appropriate management of the reserve.

As part of this survey pitfall traps and pan traps were set in different compartments. Many invertebrate species of interest have been found, including the Nationally Scarce (Notable A) spider *Phrurolithus minimus* and the Nationally Scarce (Notable B) *Episinus truncatus*, which was widespread across the site at its only known Essex locality. One female of this species was first collected at Belton Hills by Roger Payne in 1997. Not surprisingly the 'East Thames Corridor' species *Zodarion italicum* has also been found at the site. However the real surprise was the presence of a single male *Ozyptila blackwalli* (confirmed by Peter Merrett) in a pan trap set between 29 May and 15 June 2001. This was in a small area of shorter open grassland amongst longer species-rich grassland in an area where some ornamental tree planting has taken place in the past.

Since no further specimens have been taken, it is not possible to confirm the status of the species at the site. However, with its isolation from other recorded populations, it seems very likely that the species exists here at a low population level.

Steatoda nobilis (Thorell,1875) at the Park Street gun shop

Doug Marriott 19 Winton Drive, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth, Herts., WD3 3RF (E-mail; dugmar @ supanet.com)

On the 27th of July I received a call from a Mr. Fred Twilley, who writes weekly nature notes in the Herts Advertiser,saying that he had a spider which he had identified as a *Steatoda* sp. and comparing with the photos in Dick Jones' book he thought it was *Steatoda paykulliana*. Apparently his son works at a gun shop in Park Street, near St.Albans, just along the road from David Nellist's domain, and while his son was pulling down the security shutters at the close of business this spider fell to the ground and he collected it and took it home. His father brought the specimen over to me the following day and it was obviously too big for *S. paykulliana.* It was 11-12 mm. in length, very dark and warty and I identified it as a male *Steatoda nobilis.*

This is an unusual occurrence and if one refers to the provisional maps for the Atlas there are small colonies along the south coast and one record for Essex near the Thames Estuary, but as far as I know there are no records of the species being found inland in the U.K. So where did it come from? The security shutters are operated each day. The owner of the shop had been on the continent fairly recently so he could have imported it but then it would be more likely to have found a niche indoors and not walked outside and up the shutters. Then again, someone local may have been to the south coast and brought it back. Next door is a Chinese restaurant so maybe it came in with their fruit and veg. but it is certainly a puzzle. My thanks are due to David Nellist for verifying the id and to the Twilleys for collecting and referring this unusual spider.

***Steatoda nobilis* female from Essex**

photograph by Peter Harvey

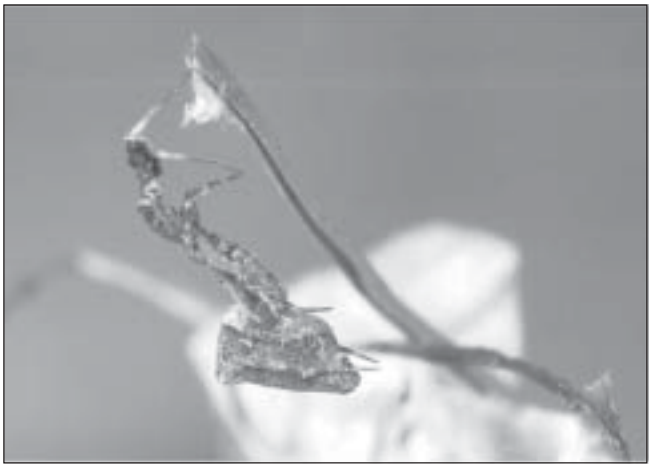
Uloborus plumipes in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire

Colin Howes Doncaster Museum & Art Gallery, Chequer Road, Doncaster, S. Yorks DN1 2AE

On 5th August 2001 I visited Tickhill Garden Centre, Tickhill, Doncaster, South Yorkshire (SK603930), just before 6pm closing time. In the limited time available a number of old and tattered webs and some new webs were located. Of these at least ten were occupied by *Uloborus plumipes*. Nine were amongst the spear-like foliage (all above head height) of 10-15ft tall Yucca palms and one in an adjacent Norfolk Island Pine. These were in a covered and enclosed area with fountains and running water, the humidity kept fairly high for the benefit of Australasian Tree Ferns.

Uloborus plumipes

photograph by Peter Harvey



At first the immobile spiders, some of which were very tiny (probably recent hatchlings) were very difficult to see, stretched out in their webs. However, with the use of a long thin cane it became an easy matter to check which tiny angular objects were spiders and which were pieces of debris. The outstretched elongated front limbs with their ornate gauntlets of dark bristles

quickly became an easy means of identification. Although time was limited, I couldn't see any signs in the more exposed areas of the centre where air-flows were cooler and at a higher velocity.

Spurred on by the Tickhill discovery, on the 12 August I visited several of the larger, more established Garden Centres in the Doncaster region and can report the following :-

Branton (SE/633017) VC63

15 hatchlings and 1 adult *U. plumipes* on *Ficus alii* (at about 6-7 ft.); 1adult *U. plumipes* on *Cicas revoluta* (at about 5ft.)

Epworth (SE/782040) VC54

Sweltering and rather stuffy. A large number of *U. plumipes* of all ages, including some dead and mildewed. There were 20+ *U. plumipes* of all age categories in roof frames above tropical plants such as *Musus banana, Diefenbachia* sp. and *Dracenia marginata,* all above 6ft off the ground; 40+ *U. plumipes* of all age categories on aluminium window frames and roof structure above water features with no plants, in enclosed and high humidity conditions. All spiders were above 4ft off ground; 50+ *U. plumipes* of all age categories on aluminium window frames and roof structure in tropical pets department (no plants, enclosed and with high humidity). All spiders were above 6ft off the ground. None were noticed in dryer departments or in semi exposed and more out-door sections.

Howden (SE/757285) VC61

2 spiderling *U. plumipes* were found on *Dracaena marginata* at 3-45ft in enclosed area with high humidity; 1 spiderling *U. plumipes* was on *Ficus benjamina* at 4-5ft in enclosed area with high humidity; 15+ tiny spiderlings and 1 adult *U. plumipes* were on *Ficus benjamina* at 4-5ft in enclosed area with high humidity; 20+ tiny spiderlings and 2 adult *U. plumipes* were on *Ficus benjamina* at 4-5ft in enclosed area with high humidity; 30+ *U. plumipes* of all age categories were on aluminium window frames and the roof structure at the south-facing and warmer end of the greenhouse plants section. All were above 6ft off ground, and none were noticed in drier departments or in semi exposed and more out-door sections. Interestingly at the Howden Garden centre there was a 'colony' of at least seven *Pholcus phalangioides* in one corner. They were on the aluminium framework and painted breeze block wall of the structure's lower section. They were still in a warm and humid area but were occupying a zone (about 3-4ft) beneath the *Uloborus* population which were relative trapeze artists operating in sunnier conditions at between 6-10 ft. Incidentally, I think Both *Pholcus* and *Uloborus* may represent a new VC61records.

No *U. plumipes* were seen at Blaxton, where all the sky-lights were open creating cooler, well ventilated conditions or Brodsworth, where conditions were decidedly cooler and there was more air movement, and the site is exposed and very windy.

Further visits to new garden centres produced more records:

Wentworth (SK/390978) VC63

Wentworth Garden Centre, Wentworth, Rotherham 18th August 2001. Four tiny spiderlings, in webs in the foliage of a 5ft Palm-like plant labelled *Beaucarnea nolina* within the central 'hot-house' area.

Swillington Common, Garforth, Leeds (SE/385326) VC64

Strike's Garden Centre, Selby Road, Garforth, Leeds 2nd September 2001. The spiders were numerous (I stopped counting at 175) and in all size (?age) categories. They were in webs mainly at heights from about 5ft to 10ft+ on the aluminium frame work of the main glass house structure. They showed preference for less ventilated, therefore warmer and more humid conditions. They were virtually absent from the better ventilated areas subject to greater air-flows, cooler and fluctuating temperatures.

Unless other BAS members from the Leeds area have records, this would seem to be new for VC64.

***Uloborus plumipes* eggsac**

photograph by Peter Harvey

Congregations of Adult *Araneus diadematus* (Araneae: Araneidae) in Hertfordshire and Greater London

Richard Wilson Nature Conservation Bureau, 36 Kingfisher Court, Hambridge Road, NEWBURY, Berkshire, RG14 5SJ. riwspider@hotmail.com

As part of an ongoing contract to carry out botanical surveys of Thames Water sites, the sewage treatment works at Fiddlers Hamlet, Hertfordshire (TL477003) was visited on the 10/09/2001.

In one small area of the site I observed at least 30 individual *Araneus diadematus* sitting on their webs which were located within a small brick observation hatch. What caught my attention apart from the numbers involved was the fact that the webs were all intertwined such that many were indistinguishable from their neighbours. Thus the web structure was more similar in appearance to those created by *Tegenaria* species as opposed to the more familiar orb webs associated with *A.diadematus*. For those individuals that were located in the central portion of this entangled web, I rather doubt that any small creature would manage to get through the upper section without getting ensnared.

A similar observation earlier in the year (22/08/2001) at Stain Hill reservoir, Greater London (TQ 130 693) involved far fewer individuals (c.10) and all the adults were sitting on the typical orb web though in close proximity to each other.

British Arachnological Society

SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME

srs@britishspiders.org.uk

NEWSLETTER **NUMBER 42** **March 2002**

Many thanks to Richard Gallon for his contribution in this issue. Newsletter No. 43 will be published in July2002. Please send contributions by the end of May at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2YP
email: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

The provisional atlas and onwards.....

By the time you get this newsletter, the two volumes of the provisional atlas of British spiders should finally have been published.

Inevitably perhaps, it has taken longer than planned, but I hope the you will find the results worth the wait.

In the end a total of over 517,000 records were received from 2,470 different 10km squares. Phase 1 of the scheme has thus received at least one record from over 86% of the 2,862 10-km squares in Britain which contain some land, and the maps for many common and widespread species certainly show better coverage than I ever expected.

I have written in previous newsletters about some of the ways I hope to see the scheme move forward after publication of the atlas. For me, one of the most interesting aspects to come out of the work towards publication has been the value of male/female data provided by arachnologists who kept this data even though it had not been a part of phase one of the scheme. I would ask that if at all possible you record and submit these data in future - we are working on an updated RA65 recording card, and on ways you can submit data via the internet, as well as providing data in the computerised format described by Stan Dobson in the last newsletter.

The atlas frequently raises many more questions than answers, and there is still much to do. As well as the collection of male/female data, we need to concentrate on recording sites of high nature conservation interest, threatened sites, under-recorded parts of the country and under-recorded parts of each county, as well as under-recorded habitats.

PLEASE KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK! KEEP THE RECORDS COMING INTO THE SCHEME

Argiope bruennichi - a request for new records

Peter Harvey 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex RM16 2YP
email: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

This species has now been found in Suffolk (P. Lee, pers. comm.) and Shropshire (P. Smithers, pers. comm.). I hope to run an update on its spread in the November newsletter. Please keep a look out during late summer and autumn and send me details of any new records.

Uloborus plumipes joins the Welsh list

Richard Gallon 23A Roumania Crescent, Llandudno, North Wales LL30 1UP

Foot & mouth restrictions had seriously affected my spidering activity in 2001, so after reading Ian Dawson's piece (SRS newsletter, July 2001 (40): 2-3) on locating *Uloborus plumipes*, I decided that this would be a worthwhile exercise.

On the 3rd September 2001 I called into Batty's Nurseries, Penrhyn Bay (SH816816; vc. 49) to see if I could locate any *Uloborus*. Mr. Neville - the owner - kindly allowed me to search the greenhouses for spiders. As I walked into the house-plant section, a large orb-web suspended in a corner caught my eye. In the web was what appeared to be a small, brown dried leaf. The 'leaf' soon came to life when I captured it, and it was indeed a mature female *Uloborus plumipes*. This spider had also secured an elongated, white, spiky egg sac to one of the greenhouse's wooden roof beams. No other specimens were seen, but this record appears to be the first for Wales.

I also heeded Ian's advice to look out for *Achaearanea tepidariorum*. Beneath the greenhouse staging were hundreds of female specimens of this theridiid, accompanied by their pear-shaped egg sacs. This spider was in every greenhouse I looked in, and several specimens were also observed under the outdoor plant staging.

This unorthodox collecting trip was well worth the effort as both species were new to me.

British Arachnological Society

SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME

srs@britishspiders.org.uk

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 43 July 2002

Many thanks those recorders who have contributed to this issue. Newsletter No. 44 will be published in November 2002. Please send contributions by the end of September at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2YP email: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

The provisional atlas and onwards.....

The provisional atlas was finally published at the beginning of April 2002. Although extremely frustrating it was probably inevitable that the planned deadlines were not attained. I hope the result has been worth the wait.

The atlas frequently raises many more questions than answers, and there is still much to do. We obviously need to continue recording sites of high nature conservation interest, threatened sites, under-recorded parts of the country and under-recorded parts of each county, as well as under-recorded habitats. However, for me, one of the most interesting aspects to come out of the work towards publication was the value of male/female data provided by arachnologists who kept these data even though their inclusion had not been a part of phase one of the scheme. In the near future, the SRS will hopefully be incorporating this important new dataset which gives phenological information for adults of each species (separately for males and females) using data kindly provided by the Essex Spider Group, Martin Askins, John Crocker, Ian Dawson, Francis Farr-Cox, Richard Gallon, Paul Lee, John Murphy, Robert Merritt, Jennifer Newton and John Partridge, and I have already learnt from Steve Gregory of data that will become available for Oxfordshire. Recording information of this sort will become a new focus of the next phase of the recording scheme. Male/female data, however limited in its acquisition and methodology, is an important mechanism to look at the phenology of spider species, not only in Britain as a whole, but more importantly by latitude, longitude and year.

Another major aim of phase 2 of the recording scheme is to establish an improved habitat classification for recording purposes.There are many reasons for this, for example we need to better establish a profile of the ecological characteristics of each British spider species, we need good quantitative data to identify the 'hot-spots' of biodiversity of spiders in the British landscape and those habitats where species richness and/or presence of notable species makes them of special conservation interest. We need to assess how well these habitats are represented in protected areas. Above all we need to provide quantified information on spider ecology which will aid future research and stimulate new studies, and establish a data bank which will form a base line against which all future ecological work can be compared especially regarding aspects of landscape change and human activities.

The eventual aim might be to publish a volume describing the ecological characteristics of each British species in quantitative terms, discussing the implications of the results and highlighting aspects which seem to have no rational explanation, with suggestions for future work which may help resolve the issues.

Phase 2 will also include a management classification for recording purposes, so that we can establish a mechanism for identifying the effects of different management on the associated spider fauna. Data from this should better inform and enable recommendations to be made for appropriate management of different habitats for their spider fauna.

Coming up with a useful but workable habitat and management classification system has been extraordinarily difficult, and I am very grateful for the input of Dr Eric Duffey, the Spider Recording Scheme Subcommittee and various other arachnologists in helping me try and sort out a satisfactory system.

The last pages of this newsletter consist of a 2-sided A4 recording card with the latest draft proposed recording structure. The card attempts to provide a system which can give us much better data for the future, but I realise that there will be many circumstances where it will be impracticable to record all the requested data **- but please remember, data not provided is potentially important information lost forever!**

I would be very grateful indeed for comment and feedback from recorders on the the structure and workability of the

draft. The development of this card has been more for clarification of the recording structure than for actual card use, so please don't be too put off by the small font size. Also backward compatibility with the existing card has meant that there is an overlap in habitats. This is deliberate, not only for compatibility, but also to allow for habitats where recorders have difficulty in identifying a particular habitat.

When the data structure has been finalised, a booklet will be sent to all recorders and BAS members setting out the new phase 2 recording format with notes about submission of computerised data and completion of the card. Hopefully this will take place with the November mailing.

Whilst I believe it is essential to retain our excellent system of Area Organisers to help co-ordinate and stimulate recording locally, it might help to establish a network of Regional Co-ordinators who would collate, co-ordinate and enter computerised data. Any offers will be very gratefully received!

Quality of data is paramount. One of the roles of Area Organisers has always been to vet specimens of rare and scarce species as well helping inexperienced arachnologists, either by confirming identifications themselves or by passing the voucher specimens onto others with the necessary experience. Despite this, there are clearly a few dots that have crept into the provisional atlas which should be checked. We are now hoping to set up an additional national verification system where a panel of arachnologists will decide each year which records need further further confirmation.

Progress has also been initiated towards a re-appraisal of national spider status using the new IUCN criteria. JNCC will use the existing spider dataset to produce a draft analysis for subsequent expert examination by members of the BAS and SRS. This is an important initiative that we need to be fully involved in.

Please keep up the good work, and keep the records coming into the scheme. Although the submission of computerised data is preferred, record cards (including the old ones) will always remain welcome.

Area Organiser changes

Unfortunately Wayne Rixom has had to resign as Area Organiser for Herefordshire due to health problems. Wayne has done lot of work in the county and I would like to thank him for all his efforts and wish him a speedy return to good health. John Partridge has agreed to take over, and so is now AO for Hereford, Worcester and Shropshire (Salop) -VCs 36, 37 and 40. Records for these counties should be sent to John at 31, Duxford Close, Redditch, Worcs. B97 5BY
email: perdix31@aol.com.

Andrew Phillips has taken over as Area Organiser of East and West Sussex (VCs 13 and 14). Please submit records for Sussex to Andrew at Flat 4, 45 West Hill Road, St. Leonards-on-sea, East Sussex TN38 0NA
email: APhillips@hastings.gov.uk.

Dr Steve Hopkin, who is undertaking a lot of fieldwork in the county, has agreed to take over as Area Organiser for East and West Cornwall (VCs 1 and 2) from Peter Smithers. Peter remains AO for North and South Devon. Records for Cornwall should now be submitted to Steve at Division of Zoology, School of Animal & Microbial Sciences, PO Box 228, University of Reading, READING RG6 6AJ
email: s.p.hopkin@reading.ac.uk

Steatoda grossa (C. L. Koch, 1838) (Theridiidae) in the Orkney Islands

Ross H Andrew Millfield Cottage, Costa, Evie, Orkney KWl7 2NJ

A spider forwarded to me in October 2001 by environmental services officers of Orkney Islands Council was recognisably a well-marked immature female of the species *Steatoda grossa*. Environmental Services had obtained the specimen from a concerned householder Iiving in the parish of Holm,. Orkney East Mainland. A large globular black spider had been reported which, it was feared, might be a venomous black widow.

After making my provisional identification, I contacted Edward Milner (BAS Area Organiser for Orkney and Shetland) and Peter Harvey of the BAS Spider Recording Scheme, who asked for a mature specimen, if at all possible, to confirm the identification.

The householders explained to me that they had moved from Plymouth three years previously and that cases had been brought in from an unheated garage and unpacked in the conservatory, where spiders had subsequently been seen. I later visited the house to find five specimens of *S. grossa* in varying stages of maturity which had been retained for me. None were reported to be as large as the original specimen that had caused such concern, but which had not been kept. I sent a mature female to Peter Harvey, who confirmed the identification.

I am now attempting to rear three specimens of *S. grossa* to maturity, the original immature female, a more mature but completely unmarked purplish black juvenile female and an immature male. From the number of specimens observed (mostly female) of varying age, it would appear that the species may have established a colony within at least one Orkney house, a modern, centrally heated, well isolated bungalow with very large south facing conservatory.

This is the northernmost occurrence to date for the species within the UK, the previous northernmost record coming from Westmorland.

I have asked the householders to report any further sightings of large specimens with the possibility, bearing in mind their move from Plymouth, of other *Steatoda* species being present. My thanks to Peter Harvey for providing Provisional Atlas and additional information on *Steatoda* and for confirming the identification.

Macaroeris nidicolens (Simon, 1914), a jumping spider new to Britain

Edward Milner 80 Weston Park, London N8 9TB

During the London Natural History Society's spider foray to Mile End Millennium Park in the east end of London (in the Watsonian recording county of Middlesex and within the old county of London) on Sunday 12th May 2002, a number of specimens of an unfamiliar salticid were swept from young pine trees. Most of the specimens were juveniles but one appeared to be an adult or a subadult female, although the epigyne was not very well-defined. The spiders were quite strongly built and fairly similar in appearance to *Marpissa muscosa* although a little smaller and distinctively marked in reddish brown. Being unable to identify them I sent all the specimens to Peter Harvey who expressed the view that they were not a British species, and sent them on to Peter Merrett and John Murphy. They both thought the species to be *Macaroeris nidicolens* (Simon, 1914), but considered that an adult male would help confirm the identification. Among the other specimens obtained on the foray was an adult male of *Misumena vatia*, surprisingly a new record for London.

I revisited the park on the 2nd June to try to find males, and carefully swept the lower branches of all the groups of small pine trees which have been planted in the park on both sides of the "green bridge". This resulted in the capture of several further specimens; adults of both sexes and some juveniles, from four separate groups of trees. Sweeping of other vegetation in the park such as tall herbs, bushes and the lower branches of other trees did not produce any further specimens, although an adult male *Theridion pinastri* was obtained from the pine trees, this being the first record of the species for London.

The new specimens were sent to Peter Harvey and thence to John Murphy who confirmed the identity as *Macaroeris nidicolens* (Simon, 1914). This is a fairly widespread species of southern and central Europe. It is known from France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary as well as around the Mediterranean. The typical habitat is on the branches and trunks of trees especially pines according to Roberts (1995) who provides illustrations***** of the species under the synonym *Eris nidicolens*.

Further enquiries at Mile End Park revealed that the pine trees, mostly *Pinus nigra*, had been planted in November 1998 and had been obtained from Hilliers Nursery in Hampshire. How and when the spiders colonised these trees is not known, and so far no search has been made of pine trees at Hilliers Nursery. This find may possibly be further evidence of global warming but the spider could have reached the London area from France and Belgium and become established without climate change. So far searches of small pines in other London parks (Holloway Rd, Hampstead Heath etc) have failed to produce further specimens of *M. nidicolens*.

Reference: Roberts, M.J. 1995. Field Guide to the Spiders of Britain and Northern Europe. Harper Collins. London

*** Editorial note**
the epigyne of the four females from Mile End does not closely resemble the figure in Michael Robert's Collins Field Guide. Illustrations are available on the internet at Proszynski's Salticids of the World website at
http://spiders.arizona.edu/salticid/CATALOG/

Callilepsis nocturna new to Wales

Peter Harvey 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex RM16 2YP
email: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

On 27th May 2002 Dave Bangs, a member of BWARS (Bees, Wasp and Ant Recording Scheme), found a number of females and possibly some males of the extremely rare gnaphosid spider *Callilepsis nocturna* running very actively and ant-like on the bare rocks of the lower cliffs at Marloes Sands, Pembrokeshire (SM 785074). It was a sunny and warm day, and the spiders were very vigorously searching cracks in the almost vertical strata of the cliff. Dave collected one female which he confirmed at home by microscopical examination. He also subsequently sent the specimen to me for confirmation, due to the importance of the record.

The spiders were in the company of *Heliophanus cupreus* and an unidentified ant of similar size. Other species noted on the cliff were a ruby-tailed wasp in the *Chrysis ignita* group, the solitary wasps *Ancistrocerus parietinus* and *Podalonia hirsuta*, a blue-black species probably a spider hunting wasp, the bumblebee *Bombus pascuorum*, the hoverfly *Eristalinus aeneus*, 24-spot ladybird, the click beetle *Agrypnus murinus*, Green Tiger Beetles, Oil Beetles, the Heath Snail *Helicella itala* (dead but recent shells) and the Point Snail *Cochlicella acuta*.

Dave remembers that the vegetation included a mayweed-type species and lots of Kidney Vetch, but of course this crumbly cliff-face vegetation is not the same as on the grassy cliff-top where there was Spring Squill, Primrose, Red Campion, etc.

This is only the third British site for *Callilepsis nocturna*, a Nationally Endangered (RDB1) species otherwise known only from Prawle and Signalmans Point in Devon, where it was first found by John and Frances Murphy in 1969, and Tennyson Down on the Isle of Wight (Alexander 1999). The discovery extends the known range of the species considerably and suggests that it might be worth looking for the spider at other sites on the coast of south Wales and southwest England.

References
Alexander K. 1999. *Callilepis nocturna* (L.) on the Isle of Wight. Spider Recording Scheme Newsletter, **35**.

Uloborus plumipes joins the Welsh list

Richard Gallon 23A Roumania Crescent, Llandudno, North Wales LL30 1UP

Foot & mouth restrictions had seriously affected my spidering activity in 2001, so after reading Ian Dawson's piece (July 2001 SRS newsletter, **40**: 2-3) on locating *Uloborus plumipes*, I decided that this would be a worthwhile exercise.

On the 3rd September 2001 I called into Batty's Nurseries, Penrhyn Bay (SH816816; vc. 49) to see if I could locate any *Uloborus*. Mr. Neville - the owner - kindly allowed me to search the greenhouses for spiders. As I walked into the house-plant section, a large orb-web suspended in a corner caught my eye. In the web was what appeared to be a small, brown dried leaf. The 'leaf' soon came to life when I captured it, and it was indeed a mature female *Uloborus plumipes*. This spider had also secured an elongated, white, spiky egg sac to one of the greenhouse's wooden roof beams. No other specimens were seen, but this record appears to be the first for Wales.

I also heeded Ian's advice to look out for *Achaearanea tepidariorum*. Beneath the greenhouse staging were hundreds of female specimens of this theridiid, accompanied by their pear-shaped egg sacs. This spider was in every greenhouse I looked in, and several specimens were also observed under the outdoor plant staging. This unorthodox collecting trip was well worth the effort as both species were new to me.

Notes on *Hyptiotes paradoxus* (Koch) (Uloboridae) in Surrey

Jonty Denton 2 Sandown Close, Alton, Hampshire GU34 2TG

The new Atlas points out that confirmation of the continued presence of *Hyptiotes* is required at many of the known sites. I found it at the first attempt by beating under yews on Mickleham Downs (TQ1753) on 23.vi.1995. I can also confirm that the population at Walliswood (TQ1238) is still extant and adults were present on scattered yews in otherwise deciduous woodland on clay in 2000. Similar conditions exist at another Surrey Wildlife Trust reserve at Vann Lake (TQ1539) some 4km to the east. I was not surprised to find *Hyptiotes* here in April 2001. I initially found a female on the bare twigs of a fallen ash, but further searches on yews produced more adults in May and June. The habitats in these small blocks of woodland are typical of woodland covering huge areas of the Weald through Surrey into Sussex. It is hard to believe that this spider is not much more widespread through the Surrey part of the Weald at least, especially as it seems able to find quite isolated Yews amongst oak dominated woodland.

SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME NEWS

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NUMBER 44 **NOVEMBER 2002**

EDITORIAL

Included but Still Distinct

This is the first edition of the S.R.S. newsletter to be included in the B.A.S. Newsletter. The use of the word 'included' is quite deliberate: although physically incorporated into the Society's Newsletter, S.R.S. News will retain its distinct identity and continue to be edited by the S.R.S.'s National Organiser. The only really significant change is to the name: S.R.S. 'News' rather than 'newsletter'. An example of the suggested format for referencing [this article]: Harvey, P. R. (2002) Editorial. S.R.S. News No. 44. **In** *Newsl. Br. arachnol. Soc.* **95:** 7. This new arrangement has several advantages: crisper reproduction of half-tones, slight reduction in the task of the distribution team, lessening the likelihood of mislaying editions, availability of back numbers and, perhaps most important, circulation to our overseas members.

Inclusion of *Galea* has been postponed until next year. At the time of writing, this also applies to *Ocularium*.

Phase 2 of the Recording Scheme

I am very grateful for all the feedback received over draft ideas for Phase 2 recording. Although feedback has not indicated any problem with the level of data suggested, I know that it may well be impractical to achieve this level in all cases. I am concerned about finding a practical balance between that which will enable us to achieve a better understanding of the ecology and management requirements of species, and what it is sensible to expect arachnologists actually to do. I am just as guilty as anyone else in not finding the time to supply everything required now, let alone in the future! Hopefully the *Provisional Atlas* and publications like the *Millennium Atlas of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland* indicate the value of aiming high in recording schemes. It is important to recognise that we will always welcome record details with the minimum of species name, date, locality, grid reference, collector and determiner—although more information can be remarkably useful. Do not underestimate the value of structured data.

With this newsletter, I had hoped to publish a booklet outlining and explaining full details of Phase 2, with recommended data-collection information. Lack of time has prevented this, but it should certainly be available for the March mailing. Plans are afoot to allow Spider Recording Scheme data to be entered into standard packages such as Recorder with our new level of structured data incorporated. I continue to welcome feedback on what to record in Phase 2 and how best to achieve this.

Records—Keep Them Coming In!

Thank you very much to all those who have continued to send in record cards, especially Tom Thomas who has sent in a large number of cards for Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire as well as for various other counties. We now have 729 cards sent in by Recorders since the *Atlas*, and BRC have indicated that they should be able to continue punching these.

Area Organiser Changes

Ian Morgan has resigned as A.O. for Carmarthenshire. He feels that with changes in his circumstances, spider recording in the county will be helped by the appointment of a new volunteer. We are very grateful to Ian for his work in the past.

Tom Thomas has passed responsibility for Huntingdonshire over to Ian Dawson. Tom remains A.O. for Bedfordshire. Records for Huntingdonshire should now be sent to Ian Dawson at 100, Hayling Avenue, Little Paxton, ST NEOTS, Cambridgeshire, PE19 6HQ.

John Ewing has very kindly agreed to become A.O. for County Derry in Northern Ireland. John is keen to get local support and interest going. All records should be sent to him at 107, Killoween Drive, MAGHERAFELT, Co. Derry, Northern Ireland.

Argiope bruennichi and *Uloborus plumipes*

I had hoped to run an update on these two species in this newsletter, but lack of time means that it will have to wait until the March issue. I have received quite a few new records for both species, and would welcome any more still to be fed into the system. Recent records for *Argiope bruennichi* seem to be filling in gaps in its distribution rather than extending its range.

Macaroeris nidicolens (Simon, 1914)

At my request, Edward Milner went back to the Mile End Park site (SRS newsletter 43: 3) on 21st July 2002 and captured a live specimen of the jumping spider *Macaroeris nidicolens* (Simon, 1914) which he sent to me. I subsequently photographed the spider; one of the resulting photographs is reproduced below. (The spider died on 30th August 2002.)

My thanks go to all those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 45 will be published in March 2003. Please send contributions by the end of January at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32, Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Spiders in Houses and Gardens

by Tony Russell-Smith

I suspect that, when choosing places to collect, most of us tend to head for the nearest nature reserve or other protected area in the hope of finding interesting species. This undoubtedly helps to explain the strange gaps in distribution of otherwise common spiders that are obvious in the maps of the *Provisional Atlas*. I also suspect that many recorders rarely bother with searching their own gardens and houses, assuming that they only harbour common and widespread species. Certainly the number of records from 'buildings' that were included in the provisional atlas form a small proportion of the total although it is not clear how many records from gardens were received since these were lumped together in the general category 'cultivated ground'.

Recently, a colleague who produces a monthly wildlife column for the local newsletter asked me to collate my records from our own parish. In the process, I was astonished to find that over the past 11 years I have recorded 92 species from my garden and a further 12 species from the house. Since all the records have been from casual hand collecting and from beating bushes and trees rather than a result of systematic survey, I thought it would be worth a short article here, with the aim of encouraging others to record the spiders of their own houses and gardens.

Our house is in a rural setting on the edge of a small village on the North Downs in Kent. The garden is just under half an acre in extent and surrounded on three sides by a plantation of 50 year-old oak and ash, established by the Forestry Commission just after the Second World War. The garden is largely lawned (perhaps 70 percent of the total area), but with the usual flower borders (mainly perennials) and a small but productive kitchen garden. There is also a large shed *cum* garage and a smaller tool shed. The few hedges are mixed, with hawthorn, beech and some holly. The house is a mid-Victorian brick-built cottage with a cellar beneath.

The spider fauna of the garden consists of a mixture of species which might be expected from almost any habitat, the common *Pardosa, Erigone* and *Lepthyphantes* species, for example, with a woodland element (e.g. *Pardosa saltans, Achaearanea lunata, Monocephalus fuscipes, Microneta viaria* and *Anyphaena accentuata*) and an element perhaps associated with drier habitats. The latter includes species such as *Dysdera crocata, Drassodes lapidosus* and *Troxochrus scabriculus*. Many species are associated with particular micro-habitats. On trees (particularly a mature oak) and shrubs there are *Anyphaena accentuata*, four species of *Philodromus*, four species of *Theridion, Araniella cucurbitina* and (occasionally) *Cyclosa conica*. The gravel on the drive is inhabited by thriving colonies of *Micrargus subaequalis* (perhaps from nearby chalk grassland) and *Erigone promiscua* (origin unknown, the only other Kent record is from Dungeness !). The outbuildings are home to the usual collection of largely synanthropic species such as *Steatoda bipunctata, Nuctenea umbratica* and *Tegenaria gigantea*. A regular occupant of the compost heap is *Ostearius melanopygius*, while in the dark cavity beneath the cover of the septic tank is a small colony of *Meta menardi*. Some spider families are certainly underrepresented in the garden and include Gnaphosidae (2 species, 1 regular), Salticidae (2 species, none regular) and Thomisidae (4 species, none regular).

In addition to the many commoner species, four nationally notable species have been recorded on at least one occasion: *Coelotes terrestris* (Nb, under logs), while nationally scarce is extremely widespread in all types of woodland in Kent and thus not unexpected (3 records). *Achaearanea simulans* (Nb, beaten from a hedge) was quite unexpected, with only one other Kent record, from Ham Fen. Equally unexpected was a specimen of *Trachyzelotes pedestris* (Nb) from short grass. This species is quite widespread and not uncommon in chalk grassland in Kent and the chalk grassland on the valley side about a quarter of a mile away might have been the origin of this specimen. Finally, *Philodromus praedatus* (Nb) has been beaten from the mature oak in the garden on two occasions. Again, this species is widespread in Kent and probably much commoner than previously realised.

Inside the house there are good populations of *Pholcus phalangioides*, and *Tegenaria gigantea. Scytodes thoracica* and *Nesticus cellulanus* are also present, the latter principally in the cellar, although both species were seen much more frequently when we first moved in and before we installed central heating. Three species of salticid have been found either on the outside walls or inside the house. *Salticus scenicus* is a regular inhabitant while *Sitticus pubescens* and *Pseudeuophrys lanigera* have both been taken on three or four occasions each. Casual visitors to the house are a surprising mixture and include *Dysdera crocata, Achaearanea simulans, Theridion tinctum, Neriene peltata, Anyphaena accentuata, Clubiona comta, C. corticalis, Misumena vatia* and *Philodromus dispar.*

Although the garden is probably a bit larger than the average and has the advantage of being adjacent to woodland, it is otherwise not untypical of tens of thousands of rural gardens throughout the country. The value of gardens for conservation of biodiversity of other groups, such as birds or butterflies, has already been well established. Not only do they provide havens of high vegetation diversity in what is often an otherwise relatively impoverished countryside, they also provide 'stepping stones' which, in conjunction with linear features such as hedgerows or the verges of rural lanes, allow movement of populations from one habitat pocket to another. Indeed, this might explain the presence of such 'oddities' in my own garden as *Trachyzelotes* or *Philodromus praedatus.* I would therefore urge everyone to spend some time recording in their own gardens and houses (if they have not done so already). This is particularly the case if you happen to be situated in one of the under-recorded 10 km squares within your area. After all, nobody could complain about the effort involved: it is quite literally 'on your own doorstep' !

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Notes on Home and Garden Collecting

by T. J. Thomas

Over the years, casual collecting of spiders and harvestmen from my house and garden has given a longish list of species. No serious attempts at collecting were made until 1995 when, during a casual sweep around my garden to test out a new sweep net, *Nelima gothica*, a harvestman new to Bedfordshire was captured. A pitfall trapping experiment was set up to establish if this was a 'one off'. The results since then have shown that this harvestman is resident in the area. In fact eleven species of harvestmen have been found in the pitfalls of which six species have also been found by other means. The spider results are fairly impressive as well: 87 out of the 113 species noted have been taken in the pitfalls. This shows that gardens may be more interesting habitats than is often appreciated. Mind you, my garden is now being turned from its 'unkempt'

state (see B.A.S. Newsletter **86:** 9–10) to a more tamed site. This may show up by the changes in the arachnids caught, e.g. the wolf spiders are certainly down in numbers: 96 in May 2001 as against 235 in May 1998.

A plot of the results shows that fewer new species are being captured each year and the grand total is so far 'levelling' to 87 spider species. This implies that the 'capturable' limit may be close, even allowing for adventitious captures. Of these 87 species, 34 have been taken in every year of the trapping (1995–2001), implying that they are resident or active in the area. Several common species in the garden, e.g. *Salticus scenicus, Dysdera crocata*, have rarely been taken, which is not surprising as their habits are not likely to result in them being trapped regularly. Plotting the activity of some of the captured species from the numbers in the traps does show similarities to those given in the new provisional atlas.

Some odd captures have occurred. An immature *Anelosimus vittatus* was found indoors, but this may have been an escape from leaf litter that had been sorted in the kitchen some days previous to that capture. A mature male *Pachygnatha listeri* turned up in the pitfalls: I have no idea where this came from. Best of all, since finding *Enoplognatha latimana* at Hinchingbrooke Country Park, Huntingdon, in 2001, I have spent time in the northern uplands (at 90 m a.s.l.!) of Bedfordshire searching for this species. After one morning of this, once home all my captures were found to be *Enoplognatha ovata*. As an end to the day my garden pitfalls were checked. A male *E. latimana* was there. So, I might as well stay at home and let them come to me!

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Check Those Nets!

by Steve Hopkin

The 'Biology of Spiders' course at Reading University ran successfully again this year; thirty-five students took the course. We have now been able to analyse the data in the recently published *Provisional Atlas* and, before this year's course, 158 species of spider had been recorded from Ordnance Survey 10 x 10 km Grid Square SU77. We found seven new species for SU77 bringing the total for the Reading area to 165. The best find was a single female of what we have christened the 'pale sewer money spider', *Lessertia dentichelis*, found by one of the students inside a toilet cistern in a house near Cemetary Junction in East Reading! We also found a healthy colony of *Segestria florentina* living in the walls of St Mary Butts Church in the town centre.

One surprising development was the frequency with which *Pholcus phalangioides* and *Scytodes thoracica* turned up on the University campus, well away from buildings. At first, I thought that the students must have got their collections mixed up but then it occurred to me that it could be the result of 'contamination'. When we checked the fieldwork equipment storage room (no windows, constant temperature, little disturbance for most of the year), we found several *Pholcus*, and a *Scytodes* on the wall. Thus it is possible that when the students removed the nets for their practical work, specimens of these species could already have been in the nets! Then again, the records may be genuine; *Pholcus* and *Scytodes* may be managing to survive out of doors in our milder climate. We just don't know. Next year we shall be more careful and check all our equipment for hitchhikers—something to bear in mind if you collect spiders by sweep netting!

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Ero aphana (Walckenaer, 1802) in a Surrey Suburban Garden

by Clive McCarthy

On 5th June 2002, two adult female *Ero aphana* (Walckenaer, 1802) were captured from within a timber and brick garden shed at Molesey, Surrey (VC17, TQ139678). They were housed together in a clear perspex box 9 cm high and wide by 14 cm deep. They soon settled in opposite top corners, hanging upside down in the characteristic pose of their genus.

After a day, one of them captured and ate a small female *Enoplognatha ovata*, marginally smaller than herself. The attack did not occur on their first contact but on a later chance meeting, when the *Ero* swiftly seized her prey by the foreleg, as expected. This meal increased her girth by around 100 percent and was, no doubt, beneficial towards the batch of ten eggs she produced eleven days later.

The other spider refused all offerings for over three weeks. Eventually, she ate an immature *Achaearanea lunata* which had been in the container, unmolested, for three days. By this time she was living alone, as the other *Ero* had been sent to Peter Harvey (who, in view of its surprising location, subsequently sent it to Dr Peter Merrett) for positive identification. She died about six days later, on 6th July.

To return to the first *Ero*: what would happen if she was introduced to a small, immature *Pholcus phalangioides*? This latter species is also adept at overpowering other spiders and very nimble of leg in escaping potential hazards. I once found one quietly feeding upon an adult *Scotophaeus blackwalli!* A young *Pholcus* of suitable size was selected from my resident population and introduced to the *Ero* quarters. Perhaps predictably, *Pholcus* immediately caught the advantage and, turning her back to the *Ero*, rapidly began swathing the other spider's legs in silken threads. *Ero* offered no resistance and her potential prey would soon have slain her had I not quickly intervened. My *Ero* was lucky to be alive; she was unable to bite herself free despite several persistent attempts. With much delicate and meticulous handling I was able to extricate her legs from their bindings with the aid of a pin and white spirit, which dissolved the silk wrapping. The freed spider appeared to recover immediately and continued her normal habits from then on. This experiment needs to be repeated, as I am sure this one encounter will not be typical of what could take place. Also, if an *Ero* was actively seeking prey in the vicinity of a *Pholcus* web 'in the field' the outcome might be different again.

On17th June, the first *Ero* laid a batch of ten eggs—during the early hours of the morning, so the event went unwitnessed. The eggs were enclosed within the typical oval sac, with the usual wirey copper-hued threads spun over the surface. This sac was suspended from a small mat of silk, on the under surface of the box lid, by a 5 mm thread. The mother spider did not guard her egg cluster and took no further heed of her progeny. By 9th July pale spiderlings could be observed within the sac and on the evening of 21st July they emerged. All ten hatched successfully and took up various positions within their box. Some recently hatched *Theridion* sp. were introduced, and by 6 a.m. the next day the young *Ero* had found most of them.

Here is an excellent opportunity to rear *E. aphana* from the very beginning. Also some questions arise: why was *E. aphana* discovered inside a shed when its supposed habitat is outside, amongst dry heathland? Have all the many *Ero* egg-sacs I have seen in sheds and outhouses been of this species all along? (I have only previously ever found *Ero* egg-sacs in these areas). How does such a small spider escape the attention of all the resident *Pholcus* often lurking within the same location? And do the eggs develop at a faster rate than if they were laid outside amongst herbage? So far only *Ero* has the answers.

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Another *Drassyllus* from the Great Orme, Llandudno, North Wales

by Carl Davies

Following on from the exciting discovery of *Drassyllus praeficus* (L. Koch, 1866) on 29th May this year on my first hunting trip on the Orme, I made further collections at a lower altitude—just above sea level. One area of particular interest was the abandoned Coastal Defence base (SH 750830). Though there are no longer any buildings there, except for a couple of small underground ammunition stores (surprisingly almost devoid of spiders), the area contrasts with the general rugged dry limestone habitat of the Orme, being more akin to a sandy heathland.

On 22nd June I was generally grubbing about turning loose boulders, some of which were very large (and in one instance had revealed a 'family' of about twelve beautiful Slow Worms, *Anguis fragilis*, that slithered sedately off into the grass) when I saw a concrete post lying on its side; it measured some five feet in length and a foot square in section. After much determined effort and with some assistance, I managed to roll the post over. This revealed little more than fresh wormholes until, on closer examination, I noticed a small black spider, obviously a *Zelotes* or *Drassyllus*, but decidedly smaller than the *D. praeficus* I had recently found.

Under the microscope I determined it as a mature female *Drassyllus pusillus* which, although not as rare as *D. praeficus*, is a local and not common species: this appears to be only the second record of the species in this 10 km square. In the following two weeks I set a number of pitfall traps in the locality and captured a further adult female.

I would like to thank Richard Gallon for confirming the identities of the two specimens.

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Two Nottinghamshire Records

by Howard Williams

In late March 2002, I observed in a heated section of the Dukeries Garden Centre, some miles south of Worksop, several *Uloborus plumipes* Lucas, 1846 hanging in their somewhat flimsy webs. They were still there two weeks later, but when County Organiser Tom Faulds visited the spot some weeks after that he could find no trace of them. The owners had, however, been spraying, but if, as seems likely, the species is fairly well established there, I have no doubt it will reappear. As far as I know, this is a first record for the county, thus filling a gap between discoveries in Leicestershire to the south (in text of *Provisional Atlas of British Spiders,Volume 1,* 2002) and South Yorkshire to the north (Howes: S.R.S. Newsletter No. 41, November 2001).

A small garden centre just south of Worksop and another about 6 miles north of the town not far from the Yorkshire border had none as far as I could see from fairly brief visits. Roofs and walls in both these nurseries were spread with sheets of insulating plastic material which looked very new and clean. Maybe if this material is renewed every year, permanent settlement by the spider might be inhibited, though it seems hardly likely, given the abundance of plants and niches in which to hide or take up residence. Moreover, webs of *Tegenaria* and *Amaurobius* were plentiful and *Salticus scenicus* and a young *Araneus diadematus* were seen in one of the centres; *Tegenaria* and *Amaurobius* were also present in the other centre together with *Dictyna uncinata*. Most probably *Uloborus plumipes* has yet to arrive.

Another curious discovery occured in April of this year in the bathroom of our house. Going to bed late one night I saw, as I thought, a shiny black linyphiid on the tiled windowsill walking with a slow jerky gait. I pooted it into a tube and put off looking at it until the next day. Under the microscope the entire dorsal surface was distinctly black, but this black coloration descended the flanks as bars between an orangey base colour, giving the sides a somewhat striped appearance. It no longer looked like a linyphiid either. A look at the eyes revealed it for what it was—*Oonops domesticus* de Dalmas, 1916—confirmed by the tibial spines of leg 1. This spider is very common in the house, moving as it does in a series of short jerky walks alternating with short jerky dashes, but the colour put me completely off my stroke. Has anyone else come across melanic versions of *Oonops*? I can find no references to it in any of my books.

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New Locality for *Hyptiotes paradoxus* (C. L. Koch, 1834)

by Steve Hopkin

According to the *Provisional Atlas*, *Hyptiotes paradoxus* (C. L. Koch, 1834) is a Nationally Rare (RDB3) species. It has always been near to the top of my 'wants' list, so I was pleased when my wife and I found several of these spiders in a small Yew wood on a south-facing slope near to the National Trust Holies Hanging Reserve at Streatley (VC 22 Berkshire) on 22nd August 2002. The site is along the edge of the narrow road leading from Ashley Hill that follows the line of Grim's Ditch (SU 592795). The webs were extremely difficult to see: you have to get the angle of the light just right to spot them.

The first web I saw was about 1.5 m above the ground and consisted of the characteristic three sectors coming to a point from which a single strand of silk leads to the spider. It took us about ten minutes to locate the first specimen by following this strand between the leaves of the Yew. *Hyptiotes* is superbly camouflaged and would be impossible to find without following this strand of silk. Its posture resembles that of *Uloborus plumipes*, now a common species of glasshouses in Reading and elsewhere. I coaxed the spider into a specimen tube only to discover that there were two, a female and (a much smaller) male with huge palps. The web was much larger than the mental picture I had held in my head during the twenty years I have been looking for *Hyptiotes*. The sides of the triangle that formed the web were about 40 cm in length, and the strand of silk leading to the spider was about 80 cm. Once we had 'got our eyes in', we found another six webs in twenty minutes which we left undisturbed. In one of these webs, which was 3 m above the ground, the single strand of silk leading from the triangular web to the spider was at least 1.5 m in length!

Yew woods are not uncommon in the Chilterns and it seems likely that *Hyptiotes* is much more widespread than current records would indicate.

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SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME NEWS

srs@britishspiders.org.uk

NUMBER 45 **MARCH 2003**

EDITORIAL

In this mailing (UK members) is a booklet that outlines and explains details of Phase 2 of the Recording Scheme, with recommended data-collection information. This will also be provided to all new Recorders who register with the scheme.

It is hoped that add-ons will be developed for use with biological recording packages such as Recorder and MapMate that will allow computer records to be entered with our new level of structured data incorporated. Stan Dobson is also working on a new Windows version of SPIREC to allow easy data input to a variety of database software. Recorders will be kept informed on progress in the newsletter.

As previous issues of the SRS newsletters should have made clear, if at all possible the Recording Scheme wants far more than 10km square distribution maps. This has always been true, but is especially so now, when the aims of the scheme are being extended to try and find out much more about the ecology and phenology of spiders and any changes to the distribution and frequency of species in the future.

So, we are collecting and will continue to accept records, all records, with as much information as possible. I realise it may be unrealistic to expect Recorders to complete the new RA65 card in all circumstances, but its main aim is to clarify the field structure and categories for computerised recording, whilst still retaining compatibility with the old card. If you submit card records, I would urge you now at least to record male/female numbers and habitat structure in addition to what you provided in the past.

Thank you very much to all those who have continued to send in record cards and computerised data. We now have 966 cards sent in by Recorders since the *Atlas*, and hope to be able to get these punched in and validated in the reasonably near future. The provisional maps are on the NBN Gateway at http://www.searchnbn.net/, to registered users, and the detail and interactive layers available are quite impressive. The aim is to update these maps on a yearly basis, so please keep sending in records on a regular basis (if possible in computerised form).

Area Organiser Changes and a Change of Address

Ian Dawson has agreed to take over from Deborah Procter for Cambridgeshire (VC 29). Thanks go to Deborah for all her work in that county. She remains AO for East and West Norfolk (VCs 27 and 28).

Andrew Phillips is Area Organiser for Sussex (VCs 13 and 14). His address has changed to 58b, West Hill Road, St Leonards On Sea, East Sussex, TN38 0NE

Details of all Area Organisers will be available as part of the B.A.S. Handbook in the members' area of the B.A.S. website at http://www.britishspiders.org.uk/members/ You will need to register with Craig Slawson to obtain access to these pages.

My thanks go to all those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 46 will be published in July 2003. Please send contributions by the end of May at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32, Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Figure 1. *Phaeocedus broccatus* (L. Koch, 1866), male.

Rare Heathland Records

by Ian Dawson

A visit on 19th June 2002 to Avon Heath Country Park (SZ1203) in Dorset (but VC11, South Hants), managed for Dorset C.C. by the RSPB, turned up two female *Ero aphana* (RDB2) from gorse at opposite ends of the site, a female *Dipoena inornata* from the interface between gorse and heather, and a male of the handsome gnaphosid *Phaeocedus braccatus*, Notable B but recorded from only 8 10-km squares post 1980. This last was discovered running on my arm after I had been shaking heather over a net.

100, Hayling Avenue, Little Paxton, ST NEOTS, Cambridgeshire, PE19 6HQ

Figure 2. *Ero aphana* (Walckenaer, 1802), female.

Recent Records for *Uloborus plumipes* and *Argiope bruennichi*

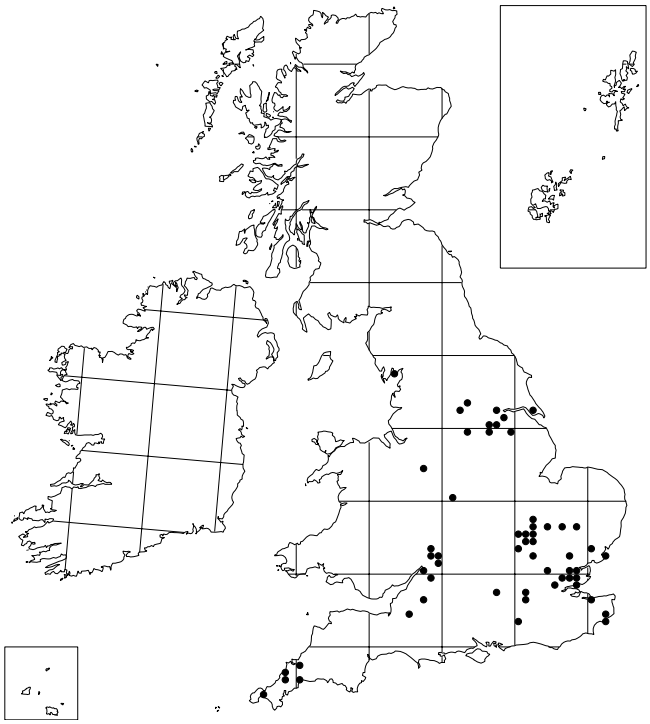
by Peter Harvey

I am very grateful to the many people who have sent in recent records for *Uloborus plumipes* and *Argiope bruennichi*. Ian Dawson and John Dobson have been especially active on the *U. plumipes* front!

Since publication of the *Atlas* I have received records of *Uloborus plumipes* from Jon Cranfield, Ian Dawson, John Dobson, Stan Dumican, Alan Feest, Andrew Green, David Haigh, Steve Hopkin and his Reading students, Clive McCarthy, Alan Pashby, Wayne Rixom, C. & I. Twissell, and Tracy at IKEA in Birstall, Leeds.

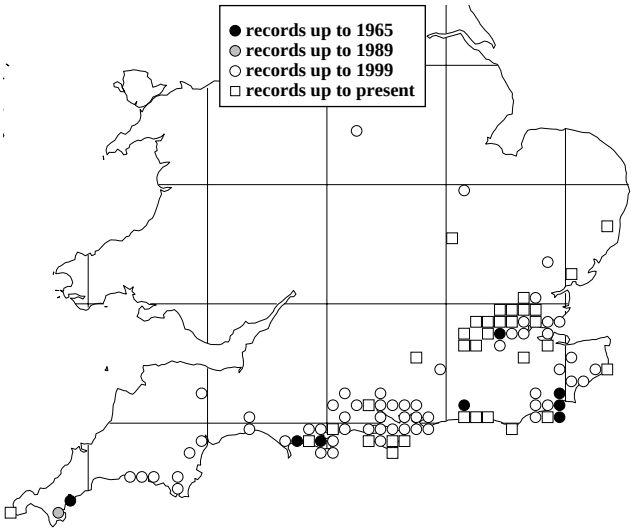
The following have supplied me with records of *Argiope bruennichi*: Martin Adam, Richard Allen, N. Anderson, Liz Appleton, David Baldock, Bryan Bullen, Phil Butler, Phil Carter, Barbara Chapman, Cornwall Trust, Sheila D., Tony Day, John Dobson, Ian Douch, Tim Gardiner, Seth Gibson, Adrian Harris, Ken Hill, S.A. Hudgell, Ian Holt, Colin Jupp, Louis Lawler, Gerald Legg, Edward Milner, L. Ralpty, Richard Revels, Ciaran Shaman, Peter Smithers, R. Stevens, John Swindell, Tom Thomas, Gordon Turner and Phil Wilkins. Quite a few of these records have come by e-mail or using the forms posted on the Essex Field Club website www.essexfieldclub.org.uk, and many from non-arachnologists have been supported by very good quality photographs.

Uloborus plumipes



Uloborus plumipes is increasingly found in garden centres and nurseries over much of the country (see map), where the spider is no doubt proving useful as a form of pest control. It remains to be seen if the spider will become established in conservatories and houses. Females, juveniles and egg sacs are usually recorded, but males have been found on various occasions.

Argiope bruennichi



Recent records for *Argiope bruennichi* basically consolidate the existing range (see map), filling in gaps in its distribution rather than extending its range. Whether this is due to several relatively poor summers remains to be seen. Longer milder autumns definitely seem to favour this and other late summer/autumn maturing species. In Essex the spider can be present in very large numbers in suitable habitats in the south of the county, usually in damp unmanaged grassland near the Thames, but it also occurs well away from the coast in mid and north Essex.

Please continue to send in records of both species so that we can continue to monitor their distribution in the UK.

32, Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP

Is *Enoplognatha latimana* Spreading?

by Ian Dawson

Within the space of two days in mid-July 2002 I found *Enoplognatha latimana* at Little Paxton LNR(TL1963) and Hinchingbrooke Country Park (TL2171), both in VC31, Huntingdonshire; Tom Thomas had already found it, new to VC31, at the latter site. These are the farthest inland localities for the species according to the *Atlas*. It is tempting to think that *latimana* is spreading as a result of climate warming. I have regularly checked *ovata* at the former site in previous years, though I may not have looked in exactly the same habitat at the right time of year for *latimana*, so it may have been present earlier. The species was taken at both sites from spinnings with various insect prey remains, well off the ground in isolated plants (rose and grass respectively) in areas of dry sunny rough grassland and scrub adjacent to disused gravel pits. In both cases I was expecting the occupant of the spinning to be a *Theridion* sp.

Peter Harvey commented: 'I think the main reason it has not been found inland in many places is that people don't sample the right habitat. Away from the coast especially, it occurs in open "waste ground" types of habitat, in scruffy unmanaged vegetation. Sweeping Bristly ox-tongue is often productive. Your description of isolated plants in areas of dry sunny rough grassland and scrub sounds a perfect *latimana* habitat.'

100, Hayling Avenue, Little Paxton, ST NEOTS, Cambridgeshire, PE19 6HQ

Spiders of River Shingles: *Caviphantes saxetorum* (Hull, 1916), New to Lancashire; *Arctosa cinerea* (Fabricius, 1777), New to Westmorland and VC69

by Jennifer Newton

As part of the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan, an investigation of the invertebrates of the shingle banks at 15–30 m a.s.l. on the River Lune in North Lancashire (VC60), was started in 2002. There are old records of rare species of bugs and beetles from these banks, and Thrush Gill Island was the site of the investigations by Albert & Albert (1976) when *Arctosa cinerea* was first recorded in Lancashire.

Pitfall traps were set up on bare shingles of the 1 km wide flood plain, immediately north (upriver) of Thrush Gill Island (SD5870), and also a kilometre or so further upriver, north of Arkholme (SD5972/73). The summer of 2002 was marked by unusually frequent flash floods. A few traps were set out in May on the northern stretch of river but the main layout was delayed until mid June to late July. Even so the first main set was disastrously flooded, and in one section the second set was also flooded.

Unlike the results reported for rivers in Northumberland and Scotland (Eyre *et al.*, 2002), our results showed a great predominance of shingle species of spiders. Of the 699 adult specimens of 14 species identified, 644 belonged to 4 species mostly or entirely confined to shingles. The most abundant species were *Pardosa agricola* (383), *Oedothorax apicatus* (219) and *Arctosa cinerea* (36). Most interestingly, there were six specimens of *Caviphantes saxetorum*, a Nationally Scarce (Na) linyphiid 1 of river shingles, not reported by Albert & Albert (1976). From 23rd June to 12th July one male and one female were trapped at SD586712 and one male at SD582709, and a further three males were trapped at the latter site between the 12th and 27th July. *Caviphantes saxetorum* is a tiny spider and may easily be overlooked amongst all the *Oedothorax apicatus* and *Pardosa agricola* spiderlings. The female has an indistinct epigyne which appears subadult. The male palps are distinctive, but not readily placed, and the species has in fact been put in several different genera since its discovery in 1916 (Cooke & Merrett, 1967).

Interestingly the narrow strip of shingle at SD582709 which provided four specimens of *Caviphantes saxetorum* and five of *Arctosa cinerea* was seriously disturbed by floods, cattle and people. Only five *Pardosa agricola* and 23 *Oedothorax apicatus* were trapped here, but there were five other widespread species of spider, giving in total 69 specimens of nine species, relatively greater species richness than at any of the other sites. The other *Caviphantes* site, with 388 specimens of ten species, was fenced off from cattle and people, and to some extent protected from flooding by willows just upstream. Over all sites, the only other locally uncommon species with some fidelity to shingles was *Leptorhoptrum robustum* with two specimens.

In addition to the 36 specimens unfortunately trapped and killed, a number of live specimens of *Arctosa cinerea* were seen on most visits to most stretches of unvegetated shingle. Many were wandering over the surface or hiding under stones; a few were uncovered in burrows in fine substrate under bigger stones. On 1st August one female with eggsac was found in a burrow under a large flat stone in a Cumbrian stretch of the Lune, just north of Kirkby Lonsdale (SD612808). This appears to be the first record for Westmorland and VC69, although it is known from the River Eden in the north of Cumbria (Cumberland, VC70). Immediately after the find there was a torrential downpour which caused extensive flooding and must have covered the burrow. I did not manage to return to see if the spider had survived.

I would like to thank Kevin Briggs and Anna Dunstan of the Environment Agency, and Tony Serjeant of the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, for help with setting up the traps; Edward Towers for permission to trap on his land; and Peter Merrett for confirming the identification of *Caviphantes saxetorum*.

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Survey of Portland Spiders

by Ian Pembroke

I live on the Isle of Portland in Dorset, SW England—a limestone island of about 1,036 ha, half being open spaces.

Although many arachnologists have collected spiders here, as far as I can ascertain no comprehensive list has been made of all the species found. This seems rather a pity because, with strictly defined boundaries and with a fairly limited range of habitats, the island presents a unique opportunity to study the ecology of its spiders.

Although a novice in arachnology, with encouragement from members of the island's Bird Observatory and Field Centre, in Autumn 2001 I embarked on a project to list the species found on Portland with the aim of producing a baseline for examining, amongst other things, the relationship of shrinking habitats with spider numbers, and the effects of global warming on the ecology of spiders in a small area of Southern England.

The main habitats on Portland are calcareous grasslands, scrub, quarries and shingle, although there is a small spring forming a damp area and there are minuscule areas of hardwood trees and salt marsh, and a few caves. Its climate comprises an almost constant wind, gale force at times, and mild temperatures, with few frosts in winter. Consideration of all these environmental factors might indicate that a limited selection of species would be found, although all would not necessarily be common ones (I have already been fortunate enough to have found *Bianor aurocinctus*—a first for Dorset, *Ozyptila nigrita*, *Episinus truncatus* and *Meta menardi*).

I decided to publish a web site to record and show the spiders found. At the time of writing (end of 2002) the site features about 100 photographs and a list of species found so far. The site also lists species found by others and sent to the Recording Scheme, as well as some old past records.

If any readers have details of other species that they have found on Portland and not submitted to the scheme, I would be pleased to hear from them.The URL for my site is http://www.website.lineone.net/~ian.pembroke

I wish to extend my thanks to Mark Telfer at the Biological Records Centre for extracting the Portland species from the records.

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Spider Species New for the Greater London Area Found on Green Roofs and the First Record of *Erigone aletris* Crosby & Bishop, 1928 in S England

by Gyongyver Kadas

The term 'green roof' describes both ornamental roof gardens and extensive roofs with more naturalistic plantings or self-established vegetation. Intensive green roofs are like parks and gardens at roof level, and require deep soil and regular maintenance. Extensive roofs have more naturalistic plantings and a shallower natural substrate which is sown with herb and lawn mix or left to colonise naturally or planted with sedum matting. Extensive green roofs require little or no mantenance and are relatively inexpensive to establish. Application of green roofs is widespread in North America and Western Europe, especially in Switzerland and Germany, where 13 million m^2 of green roofs were created in 2001. In the UK, however, they are not yet common. Although the usual reasons for establishing green roofs are for broader environmental benefits, such as reduction of rainwater run-off and thermal insulation, they also have great potential for biodiversity and conservation. Most of the green roofs surveyed in the project described here were sedum based.

A research project undertaken in the summer of 2002 investigated the invertebrate fauna of green roofs in Greater London, focusing on the spider community, to gain information about the biodiversity and conservation potential of this particular habitat. The Black Redstart Biodiversity Action Plan inspired the project. This small robin-like bird is the rarest breeding bird in this county, a true town dweller, found mostly on brownfield sites such as former bomb sites. Not only are these brownfield sites home to this rare bird but they also have an incredibly rich and diverse flora and fauna: up to 15 percent of the Nationally Scarce and Rare invertebrates are found on these sites according to Gibson (1998). Therefore it is very important that, if these brownfield sites are to be developed, appropriate mitigation is provided for the loss of these valuable wildlife habitats. The application of green roofs could serve as mitigation: this project aimed to find out how the design of these roofs could be improved to best achieve this function.

Methodology of my study, part of an M.Sc. in Conservation at University College London, was based on a similar Ph.D. research project in Basel, Switzerland, where a very high concentration of Red Data Book beetles and spiders was found on green roofs (Brenneisen, 2001). Samples were collected from the end of May to mid-July 2002. Although this coincides with the active period of many species, some were surely missed because of the time constraints of this project, constraints which also limited the number of sites examined to 10 green roof and 3 brownfield. Despite these limitations, over 3,000 individual spiders were collected with 59 species represented—a remarkable 9 percent of the total UK and 26 percent of the Greater London spider faunas. (And we should not forget that these species were found only in artificial urban habitats!)

In addition to the usual ubiquitous species, six species not previously recorded from Greater London were discovered, including *Erigone aletris* (Linyphiidae), new to Southern England. The only previously recorded established population had been from Scotland; the spider has recently been found in North Lincolnshire (Gallon, 2001). It seems to be well established in South-East London, around Canary Wharf, Greenwich and Deptford, as all the roofs and brownfield sites sampled around these areas contained this species in quite high numbers. However, they were not to be found on any of the other sites around Central, South and South-West London. The inevitable question is: how did this species actually get here? *E. aletris* is originally a North-American coastal species, so it is very likely to have found its way to Scotland and England in ships sailing across the Atlantic. It is not yet clear how long ago the London populations arrived, or whether they came from America or from Scotland. (A future research project might be able to resolve this by DNA analysis.)

One of the most surprising findings of the research was that even supposedly specialist species have taken to green roof habitats, for example the wetland lycosid *Arctosa leopardus* (also a new record for Greater London). This finding is most interesting, as it was previously thought that green roofs would house species that are adapted to mostly arid or dry conditions or ubiquitous species. However, on roofs where the conditions are damper, such as where shaded by other buildings, or at places where rainwater can accumulate, wetland species could be found. This is of much interest as it indicates that with appropriate green roof planning and design, roofs could support species from a wide variety of habitats—important in terms of habitat mitigation for, e.g., brownfield sites.

Another new record for Greater London was *Steatoda phalerata* (Theridiidae). This species was surprisingly found in the very centre of London, near Kings Cross station, on the roof of the temporary home of the Almeida Theatre. This green roof was covered mostly with sedum plants, but also had a wide range of herbs that had established as a result of minimal management on the roof. Consequently this habitat had a very varied flora and fauna. Unfortunately this green roof has since been removed, as it was only a temporary home, so most probably *S. phalerata* no longer occurs at Kings Cross.

This research has even encountered Nationally Scarce species on green roofs and brownfield habitats. The lycosid *Pardosa agrestis* (Nb status and also a new record to the Greater London area) was found on some of the sampled roofs on Canary Wharf and in the very heart of London on the Almeida Theatre. The species has mostly been recorded previously in the southern half of Britain on sparsely vegetated habitats based on chalk or clay soil (Harvey *et al*., 2002). While it is a Nationally Scarce species it seems to benefit from the conditions that green roof habitats can provide.

Another Nationally Scarce spider, *Bianor aurocintus* (Salticidae), with Na status came from a brownfield site in Deptford next to Deptford Creek. This species is also a new record for the Greater London area. Although only a few brownfield sites were sampled, the presence of Nationally Scarce species on these sites indicates their importance in terms of wildlife habitats.

Green roofs are a somewhat new phenomenon in this country, and they are mostly found on environmental centres or showcase buildings. However, they have a great, unexploited potential to serve as wildlife habitats in urban environments, where green spaces are limited and valuable wildlife habitats such as brownfield sites are under increasing developmental and regeneration pressure.

As the findings of this project and the research carried out in Basel, Switzerland have already indicated that green roof habitats can play a very important role in urban wildlife and conservation, it is very important that these biodiversity benefits are maximised. For this reason this project sought to find out which factors in green roof design (such as depth of substrate, management, vegetation cover, height and area of building, aspect, etc.) are most influential in terms of species composition and species numbers. It was found that the depth of substrate and the structural diversity are most influential in terms of species composition. This is not surprising, as the type and depth of substrate used on green roofs determines the vegetation that is able to colonise and the species that will follow. In terms of structural diversity, the more structurally diverse the habitat, the more niches will be created for different species. For example, on a roof, if depth of substrate varies between 5 and 30 cm, in places where the substrate is deeper taller herbage will develop benefiting tall vegetation-loving species, and on shallow substrate, species

adapted to low vegetation or bare soil will flourish. The type and depth of substrate has great significance in terms of habitat re-creation. Many of the valuable wildlife sites such as gravel workings and derelict riversides on the Thames Estuary are already gone or are allocated for redevelopment. These sites have a very rich invertebrate fauna, not only for spiders but also for many hymenopteran species such as the two Biodiversity Action Plan bumblebees, *Bombus sylvarum* and *B. humilis*.

If the right substrate such as sand and gravel mixture is used on green roofs, these habitats may encourage the presence of these and many other species. Even better, the original substrate of the site may be recycled on the roofs of these new developments. The recycled substrate will not only contain the local seed bank (which will help to develop essential food plants for dependent invertebrate species and save some of the species already present), but will also achieve the broader environmental goals of recycling material and reducing lorry journeys.

While green roofs do not yet appear on mainstream buildings, there is no doubt that there will be more to come in the near future. Already the London Spatial Development Strategy, the Mayor's most important strategy, will contain recommendations for green roofs in supplementary planning guidance. However, these recommendations will be fuelled by concern for broader environmental issues, such as energy gain, storm water attenuation, noise and air pollution, and action has to be taken to ensure that biodiversity issues are also included.

The Black Redstart Biodiversity Action Plan takes pioneering action so that biodiversity issues are included in planning briefs, and more and more green roofs are being put up with biodiversity in mind. In fact the first such green roofs, using recycled substrate, are already in place on the Laban Dance Centre in Lewisham, and the Creekside Education Centre. These roofs were initiated and advised by the Black Redstart Action Plan, and there are further such roofs planned with the Action Plan's advice. Recommendations and more detailed description planning guidance and even recommendation for invertebrates can be found on the recently launched Black Redstart website: http://www.blackredstarts.org.uk. (A brief description of this project and also of the research carried out in Basel, Switzerland can be read on this website.)

This project was only a preliminary study of how invertebrates and wildlife in general benefit from green roofs in urban environments. Further, more detailed, investigation of the biodiversity benefits of green roofs, mainly focusing on invertebrates, particularly spiders, beetles and bees started in January 2003. This research is a full time Ph.D. project at Royal Holloway University of London, in partnership with the Black Redstart Action Plan. This project was initiated by the Black Redstart Action Plan and could not have been completed without the guidance and invaluable advice of Dusty Gedge. I am also grateful to Peter Harvey for his help in spider identification and general advice on invertebrates.

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Additional Records of Notable Spiders Not Included in the *Provisional Atlas*

by Jonty Denton

This note summarises some significant modern records of scarce spiders, which (largely through my own incompetence!) were omitted from the *Provisional Atlas* (Harvey *et al.*, 2002).

South Devon (VC3). Araneidae: *Araneus angulatus* Clerck, Ashclyst Forest, on tall sloe hedge, vii. 2001.
Dorset (VC9). Segestriidae: *Segestria bavarica* C. L. Koch, Portland (SY6869), in holes on quarry face, 6.vii.1995. Gnaphosidae: *Micaria romana* L. Koch, East Weare, Portland (SY6972 & 7072), only old records shown but still present and abundant on cliff top grassland, viii.2000. Araneidae: *Araneus marmoreus* var. *pyramidatus* Clerck, The Oaks, Kingston Lacy (ST9603), female on hedge, viii.2000. Salticidae: *Myrmarachne formicaria* (De Geer), Black Ven, Charmouth (SY3593), two females on open clay on slumping undercliff, 5.vi.02. Eype's Mouth (SY4590), male and immature, 16.vii.02.

South Hampshire (VC11). Salticidae: *Sitticus inexpectus* Logunov & Kronestedt, Browndown (SZ5898), Gilkicker Point (SZ6097), v–vii. 2000–02, abundant on sparsely vegetated shingle. Gnaphosidae: *Trachyzelotes pedestris* (C. L. Koch), Micheldever Spoil heaps (SU5245), vi.2002.

North Hampshire (VC12). Atypidae: *Atypus affinis* Eichwald, Woolmer Forest on heathland (SU73 and SU83), 1998. Scytodidae: *Scytodes thoracica* Latreille, Liss (SU7727), 1992–93. Alton in old shed (SU7138), 1994–96. Araneidae: *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer), Woolmer Forest (SU83), ix.1998–99 (J. Buckley). *Araneus marmoreus* var. *pyramidatus* Clerck, Conford Fen (SU8133), 21.viii.1997. Greywell Moors (SU7352), tall vegetation in tall river fen area, vii.1999.

Surrey (VC17). Atypidae: *Atypus affinis* Eichwald, Box Hill (TQ1751), male wandering in open, 19.ix.1994. Linyphiidae: *Thyreosthenius biovatus* (O. P.-Cambridge), Frensham Common (SU8638 & 8640), Tugley Wood (SU9833), Thursley NNR (SU9041), Blackheath (TQ0345), Esher Common (TQ1262), abundant at all these sites in wood-ant nests *Formica rufa*, ix.1998, and in all of a further 30+ nests examined in Surrey. Araneidae: *Araneus angulatus* Clerck, Vann Lake (TQ1539), on fallen ash branch in woodland, iv.2001. *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer) Bookham Common (TQ1256), female swept in open glade, 12.x.1996. Pisauridae: *Dolomedes fimbriatus* (Clerck), Esher Common, Black's Pond (TQ1262), 1988-2002. A classic locality for many years, and still abundant. Gnaphosidae: *Micaria silesiaca* L. Koch, Fairmile Common (TQ1161), open disturbed heath, 22.v.2000. Salticidae: *Marpissa muscosa* (Clerck), Hatchlands Park (TQ0652), v–ix.2000. *Sitticus caricis* (Westring), Gracious Pond LNR (SU9863), several in quaking mire area, iv–v.2000. *Aelurillus v-insignitus* (Clerck), Esher Common (TQ1262), disturbed heathland under in pylon ride, 22.v.2000.

West Sussex (VC13). Araneidae: *Araneus angulatus* Clerck, Petworth Park (SU9623), on large oak, vi.2001. Gnaphosidae: *Zelotes petrensis* (C. L. Koch), Levin Down (SU8813), on bare chalk downland, 13.vi.1997. Salticidae: *Sitticus inexpectus* Logunov & Kronestedt, Pagham Harbour near Church Norton (SZ8795), v.1994–96.

Reference

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Hyptiotes paradoxus Website

Piet Tutelaers has revised his website devoted to *Hyptiotes paradoxus* at http://www.knnv.nl/eindhoven/iwg/Araneae/Hp/

The main improvements over the previous version are a new bigger map for Europe and nine different partial clickable maps (all credits for this map work go to Aloys Staudt). Finds are now in different colours representing their collecting date. With Internet Explorer (but not yet with Netscape) users can see per find (if available) year and author of first publication, year and name of collector, and place and area. There is a new layout with an about, references and thanks, the slide show is more visible and has an extra slide.

Piet hopes that this information will stimulate others to provide information on their *Hyptiotes paradoxus* finds. In particular by helping to gather information for the grey points or the countries that are still missing (Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, etc.).

Please visit the new site and let Piet know if you can suggest further improvements or if your favourite browser has problems with the maps.

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New Site for *Clubiona rosserae* Locket, 1953

by Ian Dawson

The RDB1 BAP Priority spider *Clubiona rosserae* Locket, 1953 was discovered from a water trap sample collected in April 2000 in Botany Bay, Lakenheath Fen RSPB Reserve, Suffolk, as part of the RSPB's biodiversity work programme, though it has only recently been identified.

Botany Bay comprises 31 ha of semi-natural fen, with a direct connection to the river Little Ouse. Cattle-grazed until 1964, the area is now 25 per cent reed monoculture and the remainder is mixed, unmanaged fen with lines of mature willow. The area was declared an SSSI for its notable assemblage of rare Diptera (including the only known British site for the sciomyzid *Anticheta atriseta*: Foster & Procter, 1997), Lepidoptera and two rare aquatic plants.

The water trap survey ran between 16th April and 28th June 2000. Two traps were run at each of three sampling sites, producing 214 spiders of just 12 species, though these also included a single female *Maro sublestus*. The specimen of *Clubiona rosserae* came from a trap at TL675853 in the period 16th–30th April 2000. This trap site is close to the edge of a dense stand of *Carex riparia*, with shallow standing water throughout the winter months. There was only a single male *C. stagnatilis* from the exact same site, in the period 1st–12th May, though there were a few other males of *stagnatilis* from the water trap survey. An earlier survey at the reserve using both pitfalls and water traps ran through July and August 1997: the traps in Botany Bay captured 1,200 spiders of 31 species, though none was of particular note.

When sorting and identifying the material in November 2000 I had come across an odd-looking female *'Clubiona stagnatilis'* and wondered about the possibility of *rosserae* but, because of its rarity and because the epigyne did not match Roberts's (1985) drawings particularly well, I decided it was in all probability within the range of variation shown by *stagnatilis* and I put the specimen to one side.

However, recent progress with the *Clubiona rosserae* BAP project (under the aegis of the British Arachnological Society, English Nature, Anglian Water and BugLife—The Invertebrate Conservation Trust) prompted me to look out the spider and dissect the epigyne. Viewed dorsally this seemed to match the drawing of the cleared vulva of *rosserae* in Locket & Millidge (1953) fairly well, but reference to Heimer & Nentwig (1991) was inconclusive. However, for comparison I also dissected a *stagnatilis* which was clearly different and so decided it was after all worth sending the putative *rosserae* to Peter Merrett for his opinion. He confirmed that it was indeed *rosserae*.

Clubiona rosserae was first described by G. H. Locket (in Locket & Millidge, 1953) from Chippenham Fen, Cambridgeshire, where 'Two pairs were found by the authors when shaking out cut sedge, 23rd September, 1951.' The species has been found at Chippenham Fen on several subsequent occasions, e.g. by Kirby (1996), who undertook a pitfall and water trap survey from 14th–28th July 1995, with 10 pitfalls and 5 water traps at each of 5 sites. These produced a single *C. rosserae* from a water trap in compartment 8: 'Tall mixed fen with much *Phragmites*, managed by cutting.' Two specimens had been found in the previous survey in 1991, also from the same compartment, but both in pitfalls rather than water traps. David Carr also found a male here on 6th October 1996 (Carr, 1997).

There is also a single record from Tuddenham Fen, Suffolk in 1960. Botany Bay is only about 16 km to the north of Chippenham Fen, and a little closer to Tuddenham Fen, which lies to the southeast. *C. rosserae* has also subsequently been found at a few sites on the Continent.

I have since dissected several more *stagnatilis*: the vulvae of all were very similar, with none approaching *rosserae* in shape. It is unsound to draw too many conclusions from a single *rosserae* specimen; nevertheless, the accompanying photographs (Fig. 1, top and middle pairs) comparing the epigynes (ventral view) and vulvae (dorsal view) of *rosserae* and *stagnatilis* may be helpful as a supplement to the rather meagre literature. The overall shape and proportion of the vulva seems to be the best feature for distinguishing the two species. Peter Merrett (pers. comm., 2002) wrote: 'It seems one cannot take too much notice of details, but the *rosserae* vulva is much broader, and narrower in the middle'. The difference in the shape of the hind margin also looks to be a useful pointer.

One feature shared by the drawing of the type specimen, the drawings in Heimer & Nentwig, and the Lakenheath specimen which might be worth checking further is the angle between the spermathecae: more diverging anteriorly in *stagnatilis*, more nearly parallel in *rosserae*.

Merrett also noted that 'compared with *stagnatilis* specimens the posterior median eyes [in this specimen] are conspicuously larger and closer together, as stated by Locket'. Locket (1953) noted that: 'The posteriors are larger in *C. rosserae*. Distance between posterior medians: 2.3–2.7 diameters in female. (In *C. stagnatilis* the distance is 3.5–5.5 diameters in female).' This feature may be a useful additional check for any putative *rosserae*, though Figure 1 (bottom pair) shows that the differences are by no means striking. However, the photographed *stagnatilis* has eyes a little closer together than Locket's minimum, so this feature might be more obvious in other examples.

The July Chippenham Fen record above was overlooked as a month of recorded maturity in the account in the *Provisional Atlas* (Harvey, *et al.*, 2002). Together with this Lakenheath Fen April record the species has thus been found mature in every month from February through to October except March and August.

Further survey work at Lakenheath is planned for 2003, but the discovery of C. *rosserae* prompted an exploratory visit at the end of November. Huge numbers of linyphiids were present in the sedge beds of Botany Bay. Only a few adult clubionids were found, not including *rosserae*, though encouragingly there were numerous immatures of *Clubiona* spp. at all stages.

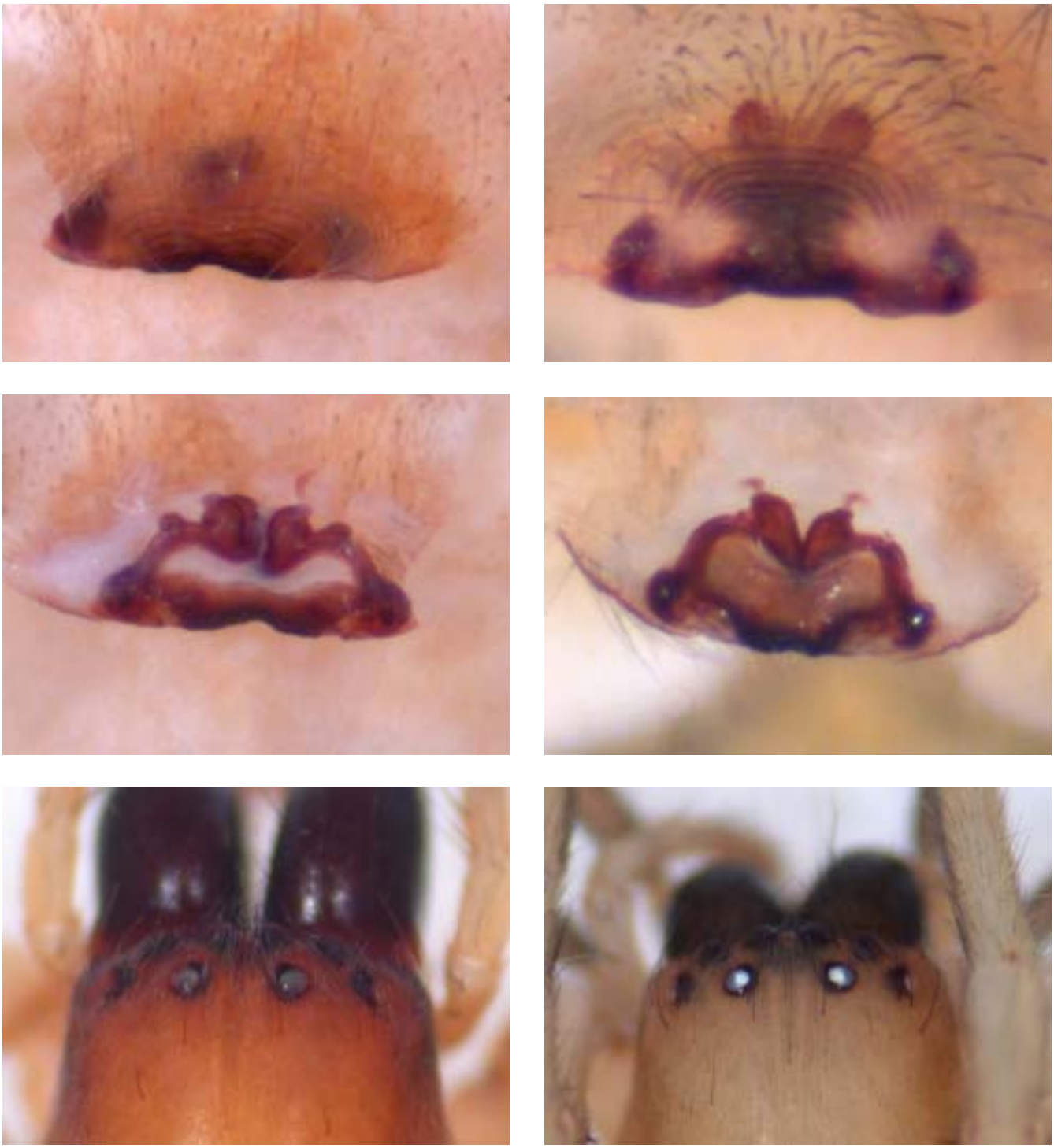

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Figure 1. Caption.

Left hand column: *Clubiona rosserae* Locket, 1953.

Right hand column: *Clubiona stagnatilis* Kulczynski, 1897.

Top pair: epigynes in ventral view.

Middle pair: vulvae, dorsal view.

Bottom pair: eye pattern , dorsal view.

Recent Scottish Finds

by Ian and Debra Dawson

On 15th July 1999 we sieved two males of the linyphiid *Wabasso quaestio replicatus* (Holm, 1950), new to Britain, from flood litter on Insh Fen (NH812025), part of the RSPB Insh Marshes Reserve in the Spey Valley, Scotland. The year had been abnormally wet and much of the fen was still under water. A return visit the following year on 14th July, when it was much drier, produced two subadult males, but still no females, though clearly the species had bred successfully.

Determined to find females, we returned in July 2002 and had success at last! Three females were found on 13th July by raking *Molinia* tussocks and sieving *Sphagnum* at two sites some 300 m apart, either side of the spot where the original males were found. We also found five more subadult males and three subadult females, all a few days earlier on 9th July, suggesting that the main period of maturity in the UK is late July or perhaps August. Prior to our visit we had arranged for pitfalls to to be set up on Insh Fen to run from the second half of June and through July. In the light of our success in the field it is perhaps surprising that the first set of samples, from 19th June to 9th July, failed to produce any *Wabasso*, not even immatures. The other notable species found on the fen by hand-sampling—*Semljicola caliginosus* and *Hilaira pervicax*—were both present in numbers in the pitfalls. Unfortunately, the pitfalls came to a premature end, as the week after our visit exceptional rainfall caused the Spey to flood: the traps and their contents disappeared under a couple of feet of water.

Although *Wabasso* is a very typical small (1.5–1.7 mm) dark linyphiid, the females in particular having no obvious features, subadults of both sexes are recognisable by the combination of the position of TmI (0.45), absence of TmIV, tibial spines (2221) and the tarsus of leg I being considerably longer than the metatarsus.

It is hoped that a full account of *Wabasso* will appear in the *Bulletin* in due course.

Figure 1. ***Wabasso quaestio replicatus*** **(Holm, 1950), female.**

During the same Scottish holiday we spent only an hour, on 12th July, in a piece of rather poor Caledonian pine forest in Rothiemurchus Forest close to Loch Morlich (NH9509), with only a few old pines among many younger trees but with a good understorey of juniper, bilberry, heather and mosses. This was adjacent to a parking area/picnic site by the main road up to Cairngorm, with the inevitable evidence of human disturbance. Nevertheless this produced two female *Pelecopsis elongata* and two subadult male *Clubiona subsultans* (one later moulted to maturity), both RDB2 species; also an immature *Zora nemoralis*, the carapace pattern quite distinct from *spinimana*, recorded from only seven 10-km squares post 1980.

On our way north, on 6th July we spent a morning in the Black Wood of Rannoch. Raking grass tussocks of *Deschampsia* and sieving *Sphagnum* in a wet flush in an open area of the wood just above the road at NN575565 produced a single female of the RDB1 *Robertus scoticus*.

In these last two cases, it is interesting that short visits to sites chosen completely at random in quite extensive areas of native forest, but in neither case particularly promising looking, should turn up several of their special spiders. Perhaps we were just lucky, but it is more likely that these spiders are widespread and not uncommon within these habitats.

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Steatoda grossa (C. L. Koch, 1838): New Record for North Wales

by Carl Davies

Last November I finally got around to uncovering a couple of boarded-over fireplaces at my home address. The property, or at least the front half, was built in the 1860s and is thought to have originally been the seaside retreat of a wealthy person. This was at the time when Llandudno was being developed and promoted as a popular seaside resort.

The surround to the first fireplace on a front first floor bedroom was encrusted with layers of paint and the opening boarded by Asbestolux, leaving no access from the chimney to the room. The fireplace had been like this for at least 17 years and may even have been boarded over in the 1950s, as was the fashion at the time. An investigative hole through the Asbestolux confirmed that the grate and surround were in place and the whole covering was removed to reveal a fantastic original and decorative Victorian cast iron fireplace. I set about removing some of the debris of old mortar in the grate and then removed the cover to the flue, behind which was again a substantial amount of mortar debris.

Inside the chimney area just above the flue I noticed a mess of broken web and an empty egg sac, though a limited search of the immediate area through the small opening did not reveal any sign of a spider. However within about half an hour, whilst cleaning the fire, I counted half a dozen spiderlings appearing from within the flue, followed shortly by an adult descending on a thread out of the flue opening. Having duly collected the specimen I identified it as a mature female *Steatoda grossa*. Given the circumstances, it appears that the species is established here, though investigation of another similarly boarded fireplace proved fruitless.

Being a guesthouse for most of its history, there has been an innumerable passage of people from all areas of the country and abroad, and this may account for the initial introduction of the species. Future renovations will no doubt turn up more specimens and, hopefully, other new records.

No. 9 Guest House, Chapel Street, LLANDUDNO, N Wales, LL30 2SY

A Third Scottish Locality for *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer, 1802), the 'Strawberry Spider'

by Duncan Williams

On 9th September 2002 I visited a Forestry Commission forest block near Fort Augustus (East Inverness-shire, VC96) in order to assess a series of permanent vegetation transects as part of an ongoing Forest Research experiment into the influence of commercial conifer plantations, and associated drainage, on adjacent blanket bog.

Remarkably, the site also yielded a single female specimen of *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer, 1802) from within a 1 m^2 vegetation quadrat in which I was working at the time! While assessing the cover of *Myrica gale* within the quadrat, I was immediately struck by the presence of a bright red, strawberry-looking female araneid sitting in a web spun between plants of Bog Myrtle, some 15 m from the forest edge. Having seen the spider previously, in 1999 at Killiecrankie on a field course run by Stan Dobson, I was quite confident that it was indeed the so-called Strawberry Spider. I was equally aware of its presumed rarity, so saw fit to retain the mature specimen as a voucher.

Figure 1. *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer, 1802), female.

The site, Lonmor (NH335067), includes a mosaic of open, unplanted boggy areas within a conifer plantation composed mainly of *Picea sitchensis*, *Pinus contorta* and *Pinus sylvestris*. Crop age and height is variable, with individual stands having been established from the 1920s onwards. In the open area where the spider was discovered, the field layer was dominated by low, ericoid sub-shrubs (*Calluna vulgaris*, *Erica tetralix*), *Eriophorum vaginatum* and *Trichophorum cespitosum*. Short (to 30 cm), sparse *Myrica gale*, was also a significant element in the field layer. *Sphagnum capillifolium*, *S. papillosum* and other bryophytes typical of northern peatlands largely dominated the ground flora.

There are only five post-1979 British records of *Araneus alsine* mapped in the recently published *Atlas* (Harvey *et al*., 2002) and only two other Scottish sites. Indeed, the presence of this spider at the Corrimony RSPB reserve (Dawson, 2000), also in VC96, would suggest that the spider might occur much more widely in the region. Boggy open clearings in commercial conifer plantations of similar character to Lonmor, and native pine/birchwoods could yield further northern records of this strangely elusive spider.

I would like to extend my thanks to Peter Harvey for confirming the identity of the specimen, and for prompting this short communication.

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Forest Research, TSU (N), Lairg Field Station, Ord Croft, LAIRG, Sutherland, IV27 4A

House Spiders (*Tegenaria* species)

by Ian Dawson

As many house spiders appear to be under-recorded in the *Atlas*, the sight of a *Tegenaria gigantea* running across the living room carpet at home in early September prompted me to ask colleagues at the RSPB at Sandy, Bedfordshire to bring in any spiders they found indoors in their homes. Within the first couple of weeks I had been presented with fine males of *T. parietina* from a fairly modern semi at Sandy (TL1649) and a late seventeenth century thatched cottage at Abbotsley, Cambridgeshire (TL2256; VC31, Huntingdonshire). A visit on 28th September to Audley End near Saffron Walden in NW Essex (TL5238), to see the restored walled organic kitchen garden first established there in the 1750s, allowed me to record a few spiders. These included a large male *Tegenaria* on the wall above the entrance to the walled garden, at least 100 m from any building. This too on examination with a lens proved to be *parietina*. Then in the second week of October a fourth specimen of *parietina*, a dead rather dried-up male, was brought in by another colleague from an eighteenth century brick-built house in Potton, Bedfordshire (TL2249). I measured the stretched leg span of this specimen at just under 13 cm, with leg I 69 mm long, and body length just 12.5 mm, though this appeared slightly shrivelled. Three completely new 10-km square records and a first post-1980 record, all within a few weeks for a species recorded from only 25 such squares in the *Atlas*. Is it having a good year, or are most large *Tegenaria* ignored, being assumed to be *gigantea/saeva*?

100, Hayling Avenue, Little Paxton, ST NEOTS, Cambridgeshire, PE19 6HQ

A Cautionary Note to GPS Users

by Stan Dobson

Like many other naturalists, I have acquired a GPS (Global Positioning System) unit to obtain more accurate grid references for my recording. Mine is an Etrex, made by Garmin, which appears to be one of the most popular.

My first attempt was the reading in my garden, and I was a bit disconcerted to find that all the records I had made there over many years had apparently been given the wrong grid reference. Well, I thought, perhaps my map reading isn't up to scratch; but then I found that readings elsewhere didn't agree with other peoples'. Some of you may remember that during the A.G.M. weekend last year at Morfa Dyffryn, I checked it against some other units and found disagreement. When eventually I had the opportunity to check it against a well-defined point on a map and found an error of several hundred metres, even after carefully checking the settings, I decided that it was faulty, but I first rang Garmin's help-line.

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When I explained the problem, the operator immediately asked if the error was about 500 metres. When I said yes, he asked me if the datum was set to WGS84 (World Geodetic Survey 1984). Again I said yes and he then told me to change it to 'ORD surv GB'. Having done this, my unit now agrees exactly (within the stated tolerance) with the OS maps.

The point is that I am quite familiar with setting-up procedures, and I followed the instructions in the manual to the letter. In it the default datum setting was given as WGS84 and this should only be changed if using maps that specify a different datum. As I live in the Peak District, the OS maps which I use mostly are the Dark Peak and White Peak 1:25000 Outdoor Leisure Maps: I looked in them and found no mention of a datum. However, after my help-line conversation, I looked in some standard 1:50000 OS maps and found 'OSGB (1936) Datum' in the small print in the legend.

I have no experience of any other units, but I imagine that the situation is similar and it's worth checking that the setting of any unit is correct. The error is particularly relevant if your records are used in mapping, as it can easily move you into the next 1 km, or possibly the next 10 km, square. And don't forget to reset the datum if you go abroad or work on latitude and longitude.

Moor Edge, Birch Vale, HIGH PEAK, SK22 1BX

Uloborus plumipes Lucas, 1846 in Molesey, Surrey

by Clive McCarthy

There is a colony of *Uloborus plumipes* Lucas, 1846 within the local florists on the main shopping street at Molesey in Surrey (TQ146682). Two adult females together with their egg clusters were collected from beneath the small spotlights, located within the window display, about 3 metres from floor level. Several small webs were noted, scattered around the area, from immature spiders and hatchlings.

The two adult spiders were housed in an aquarium used for crickets as no suitable area was available. The spiders soon settled themselves within the plastic cover, where they seemed to adapt well. The tube lighting gave them some resemblance of their former home providing a little warmth.

Small flies and fungus gnats were readily accepted as food, as was a *Lasius niger* ant. If the prey moved, the spider would approach in a comical bouncing manner, like a trapeze artist testing the reliability of his ropes. As has been noted by other observers, copious wrapping and secure bindings were employed before the spider was satisfied and finally bit the prey.

Consequently, one spider grew fat and later produced an egg sac, laid during the night. Some weeks later the baby spiders emerged and they were too numerous to count. Being so minute what may they feed on?

The two adult spiders are continuing to live without any light. They have both moved position several times and do not seem to be affected by the colder temperature or lack of light. One has now laid a second clutch of eggs.

As to the *Ero aphana* spiders reported in the last newsletter, I am left with just two male siblings. Two escaped, two wandered from a new location among the houseplants, three died suddenly and one was slain by a third-instar *Pholcus*. The two remaining spiders live in the same Perspex box in which they were born, and are resting most of the time at this colder winter season.

264A, Walton Road, MOLESEY, Surrey, KT8 2HT

New Welsh Record for *Drassyllus praeficus* (L. Koch, 1866)

by Carl Davies

On 29th May 2002, having recently moved to this area, I ventured out on my first collecting trip in search of an *Atypus* colony on the Great Orme (LNR), Llandudno, North Wales—a coastal headland of Carboniferous Limestone already noted as an important outpost for southern spider species.

Whilst examining rocky outcrops at location SH765825, I took and later identified a mature female of the Nationally Scarce (Notable A) spider *Drassyllus praeficus* (L. Koch, 1866) from a fissure on the underside of a weathered limestone boulder. Looking at the distribution map, this specimen is a new record for Wales and the most northern record to date. Further investigation at the site on the evening of 16th June resulted in taking and confirming identification of a further specimen. A number of specimens that I took to be *D. praeficus* were typically found under rocks of varying size (isolated rocks being the most productive) and always co-habiting with ants.

This is the second occasion on which, having set out in search of *Atypus*, I have come across a rare species. The first occasion was in 1995 on Puffin Island off the coast of Anglesey, North Wales, when I identified *Segestria bavarica* (subsequently discovered on the Great Orme by Richard Gallon). The specimen was confirmed by Stan Dobson and Richard Gallon and is deposited in my personal collection. All my future trips will be on the pretext of finding *Atypus*!

No. 9 Guest House, Chapel Street, LLANDUDNO, Co. Conwy, N Wales

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Sitticus pubescens (Fabricius, 1775) in NW Wales

by John H. Bratton

Publication of the *Provisional Atlas*, and especially the species profile of *Sitticus pubescens* written by Laurence Bee, has prompted me to publish my findings on this species in northwest Wales, which were too late for inclusion in the *Atlas*.

On 22nd August 2000 I found an immature salticid, thought by John Murphy to be a *Sitticus* species, on the top of a large boulder at Porth Llanlleiana, Anglesey (SH388950). Though resting on a shingle beach, the boulder was sufficiently stable for its top to be coated by the black lichen *Verrucaria*, indicative of the upper fringe of the intertidal zone on sheltered rocky shores but extending into the supralittoral on exposed coasts. On 13th July 2001 I found more *Sitticus* on *Verrucaria*, on the rocky coast near the Holyhead breakwater (SH233839) and these two adult females were identified as *S. pubescens*. Three days later the rocky shore east of the beach at Aberffraw (SH358674) produced two males. I am grateful to John Murphy for examining one of these. He tentatively agreed it was *S. pubescens*, albeit unusually dark, and with small denticles along the ventral edge of the tibial apophysis that he had not previously noticed in this species. He recommended sending one to Peter Merrett, who kindly confirmed that it was *S. pubescens*. A further juvenile male salticid with similar markings was taken in the *Verrucaria* zone south of Porth-y-garan (SH258768) on 27th July 2001.

As well as representing a new species for VC 52, these findings add a new habitat to those mentioned in the *Atlas*; and a natural habitat in contrast to the association with buildings described by Bee.

18, New Street, Menai Bridge, ANGLESEY, LL59 5HN

SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME NEWS

srs@britishspiders.org.uk

NUMBER 46 **JULY 2003**

EDITORIAL

Mark Yeates of Teknica Ltd, funded by the British Arachnological Society, has worked with the S.R.S. to develop a phase 2 compatible record structure for MapMate. MapMate is an increasingly popular biological recording and mapping software package, and now allows the easy input of spider records in a format that we hope will greatly increase our understanding of the detailed ecological and management requirements of every species of British spider.

As well as its use of up-to-date checklists, one of the greatest advantages of MapMate is the ease with which records can be uploaded to and exchanged with a central MapMate database over the internet. At least initially, I can act as the Spider Recording Scheme MapMate 'hub', so that recorders using MapMate can sync their data directly to me. My MapMate centre is 2gv.

A copy of the national atlas dataset is now held by the Spider Recording Scheme in Microsoft Access. It is probable that in future this dataset will be transferred and updated in MapMate, but in any case all new data are now using MapMate. I would urge recorders to read Ian Dawson's article in this newsletter on MapMate and the Spider Recording Scheme, and consider its use if you are currently using alternative computerised software. MapMate can be ordered for £24.99 from the website at http://www.mapmate.co.uk/

Stan Dobson is developing a new version of SPIREC to allow easy phase 2 data input to a variety of database software, and this will be an excellent alternative for recorders who do not wish to commit themselves to one database product. Recorders will be kept informed in the newsletter on progress.

As previous issues of the S.R.S. newsletter have made clear, the Recording Scheme wants to try and find out much more about the ecology and phenology of spiders in different parts of Britain and any changes to the distribution and frequency of species in the future. Recent records of *Ero aphana* suggest we may have another species spreading in southern Britain (see the article later in this issue), and this is another example of where we can pick up and monitor changes. In any case, it would be extremely valuable to be able to look at the phenology of species across Britain. So, we are accepting and will continue to accept records, all records, with as much information as possible, especially if the data include male/female numbers and habitat structure.

The *Atlas* maps are on the NBN Gateway at http://www.searchnbn.net/, to registered users, and the detail and interactive layers available are quite impressive. As stated in the March newsletter, the aim is to update these maps on a yearly basis, so please keep sending in records on a regular basis. Jon Cooper has kindly provided an article in this newsletter explaining what is available, describing the spider data on the gateway, the different ways it can be viewed and what is coming in the next few months as regards changes to the speed, reliability and look of the gateway.

Adrian Fowles has drawn my attention to the availability of the spider checklist for Wales, which can now be accessed as a pdf file from CCW's website, by logging onto http://www.ccw.gov.uk/reports and following the link to Research & Reports.

I would like to remind recorders that past newsletters are available on the British Arachnological Society website at http://www.britishspiders.org.uk/srs/srs.html currently back to issue number 29 (November 1997). Craig Slawson is gradually making earlier issues available as time allows.

Thank you very much to all those who have continued to send in record cards and computerised data. We now have 1,130 cards sent in by recorders since the *Atlas*, and hope to be able to get these punched in and validated in the reasonably near future. A big thank you to Glyn Bridge, Gordon Corbet, David Haigh, Tom Thomas and Jim Stewart for sending in many cards so far this year.

Verification and sending specimens by post

It is worth remembering the difficulty that exists in correctly identifying many invertebrates, including spiders, until sufficient experience is gained. Some species can be difficult even to experienced arachnologists, and it is no shame to get specimens checked—indeed, it is important that unusual or difficult specimens are routinely verified if our data are to be scientifically valuable and viewed as reliable. The S.R.S. has a policy on verification of specimens, and the phase 2 booklet outlines the following procedures:

In the early stages of his/her involvement in the Scheme, a recorder may be asked to supply named specimens, in support of their records of some of the 'common' and 'frequent' species, until such time as their competence has been established by the Area Organiser. **Rare species or species outside their known range should in any case be checked by another competent arachnologist, and these checks reported as part of the record.**

If it is necessary to send a specimen to an Area Organiser for checking, please remember that damage can be caused if it is incorrectly packaged for posting. The following guidelines should be followed:

1. Place the specimen in a small tube with a well-fitting plastic stopper or screw top. Either fill the tube completely with liquid (to prevent mechanical damage by air bubbles during transit) or restrain movement of the specimen using a small piece of tissue, such as part of a paper hankerchief or kitchen paper. Cotton wool should not be used for this purpose, as the cotton strands become entangled with the spider.

2. Write clearly in pencil or **alcohol-proof and waterproof ink** (e.g. using a 'Rotring' or 'Pilot' water resistant drawing pen) on a label that is placed inside the tube with the specimen. **Do not label the outside of the tube.** If the tube leaks such labels are often rendered illegible, or, if the label is lost, the material becomes worthless. All tubes should contain a label giving the minimum information of location, grid reference, date, collector.

3. Indicate if the liquid in the tube is other than 70% alcohol. Avoid the use of glycerine which can stick trichobothria to the surface of the legs, making them very difficult to locate. If iso-propyl alcohol is used rather than Industrial Methylated Spirits, then 50–60% dilution is recommended to avoid the specimens becoming brittle.

4. The tube containing the specimen should be protected by using a hollowed-out block of polystyrene, a tin lined with cotton wool or paper padding, or plenty of bubble wrap inside a box or padded envelope.

5. Remember that a covering letter written in ink or ballpoint may be rendered illegible if the tube leaks in transit.

6. If specimens are to be returned then stamps to the appropriate value should be enclosed.

I myself use polypropylene tubes for storing and posting specimens. These have the great advantage that they are absolutely airtight, not needing topping up even after many years, and they are also practically indestructible—an important feature when sending items by today's post! I was also recently surprised to discover that these tubes are substantially cheaper than the glass equivalents obtainable from natural history suppliers. John Murphy put me on to these tubes many years ago. They are marketed by Sarstedt (a supplier of medical and laboratory products) 68, Boston Road, LEICESTER, LE4 1AW; Telephone: 0116 235 9023. The company does not normally deal with individuals, but will certainly take orders for tubes and stoppers in 1,000s.

I am indebted to John Harper for some extra dos and don'ts regarding posting:

- Never use postage labels that could come off or may not stick well to some surfaces, or to dirty envelopes
- Preferably use virgin envelopes
- Write return address on back of envelope
- Include letter with sender and recipient addresses
- Pad tube well (e.g. with bubblewrap) but make package flat so that it will go through a letter box
- Reinforce with tape

Difficult species and a spider crib

A lot of correspondence and planning is going on in respect of supplying help, not currently easily available in the literature, in the identification of difficult species. It is hoped that something substantial to help recorders can be produced by early next year, although the exact format is to be decided. I am very grateful to those recorders who have provided me with feedback, and continue to welcome comments and contributions. This can only increase the value of what we make available to recorders in the future.

Area Organiser changes and address corrections

Mrs Jennifer Newton has taken over as Area Organiser for VC60 (Lancashire West) from Chris Felton. Please send future records for VC60 to Jennifer Newton, Holly House, 94, Main Street, Hornby, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA2 8JY. Chris Felton remains A.O. for VC59 (Lancashire South).

John Harper has taken over as Area Organiser for VC42 (Breconshire). Although he lives in modern Monmouthshire by the latest of boundary changes, he lives in Watsonian VC42. John also sees it as a challenge to equal VC35's list, an excellent aim! Please send future records for VC42 to John Harper at 4, Fairhome, Gilwern, Abergavenny, NP7 0BA.

Welsh recording is steaming ahead. Michael Kilner has set up a Welsh Recorders' forum, producing a regular newsletter with 3 issues currently available, and issue 4 in preparation. The newsletter is primarily aimed at informing people who do not know that much about arachnids, but want to learn. It is a good example of the sort of development we would welcome in other parts of the country.

Michael has agreed to take over the role of A.O. for VC44 (Carmarthenshire), as several of his group members live close to the border, and he can co-ordinate records and specimens, as well as visiting the area himself. Michael Kilner remains A.O. for VCs 35, 41, 43 and 100.

Ian Dawson has pointed out two address errors in the Members' Handbook Area Organiser list sent out with the March mailing. The RSPB Scottish HQ (Dave Beaumont's address) moved from Regent Terrace back in 1998! Although my main list was correct, I had failed to amend the Area Organiser list which was used to prepare the Handbook page. The address should be **Dunedin House, 25, Ravelston Terrace, Edinburgh, EH4 3TP;** e-mail: dave.beaumont@rspb.org.uk .

Iain Downie, A.O. for Ayr and Renfrew, is now working for the British Trust for Ornithology at **The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk , IP24 2PU**; e-mail: iain.downie@bto.org. Although now a long way from his two VCs, Iain is happy to carry on as A.O., and will be actively promoting recording in these counties.

My thanks go to all those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 47 will be published in November 2003. Please send contributions by the end of September at the very latest to Peter Harvey at 32, Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk.

Provisional Atlas Data on the NBN Gateway Website

by Jonathan Cooper

The data used to create the *Provisional Atlas* are now available on the NBN Gateway website for you to explore (www.searchnbn.net). You can view not only spider distributions as 10 km dot maps, but also the original detailed records, many of which are to the nearest 100 metres.

Many of you will be familiar with the initial involvement of the Spider Recording Scheme with the NBN Gateway. We built a demonstration system that allowed you to interrogate and comment on the draft *Atlas* records through an interactive map on the web. This aided the validation work coordinated by Peter Harvey and Mark Telfer of the Biological Records Centre.

However, things have moved on, and in November 2002 we worked with Mark and Peter to load the *Atlas*'s underlying validated dataset onto the website. There are over half a million records covering 651 species with almost two-thirds recorded to 100 metres. Here is a summary, giving the number of records within category of precision: 10 km 16,577; 2 km 161,265; 1 km 4,962; 100 m 328,758; Total 511,562.

So how can you access these data? To answer this I will first present some relevant areas of the website for you to visit and then describe Peter Harvey's crucial role in controlling access to the data.

The starting point is the home page (www.searchnbn.net). From here there are several ways to navigate to web pages that use spider records, but the simplest is to type your species name into the search box. A tip is to surround the name by double quotes, e.g. "Anyphaena accentuata". You can also use a thesaurus to check for synonyms. Here is the list of pages you will get for carrying out a search on *Anyphaena accentuata*, followed by a brief description of each of these.

- National 10 km distribution map
- Interactive map
- Occurrence in protected sites
- New prototype interactive map

National 10 km distribution map: provides a thumbnail national 10 km map with options to change the datasets and date range for the data displayed and show a higher resolution printable map.

Interactive map: this is soon to be replaced by the new map (right), but was our first attempt at a simple map that displayed raw records (i.e. not 10 km summary) as dots, and provided tools for panning, zooming, selecting data with

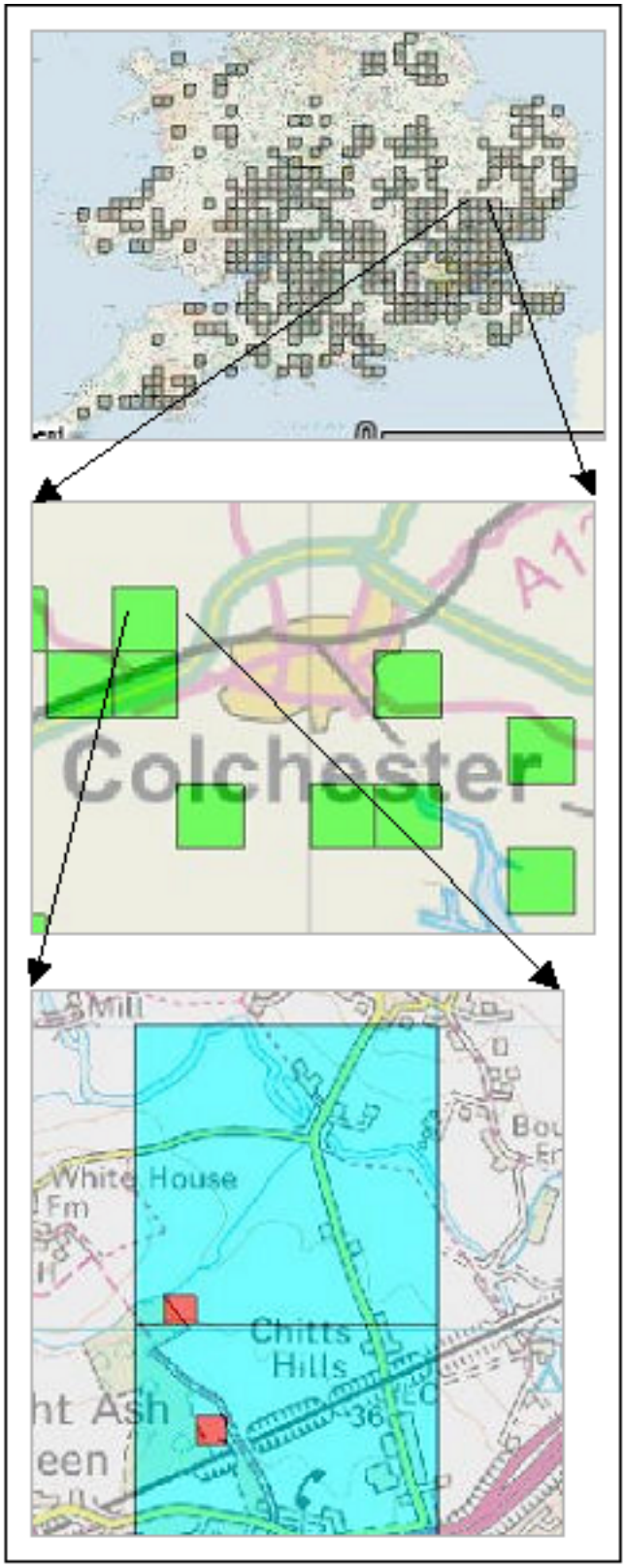

Figure 1. Zooming in on records of *Anyphaena accentuata* near Colchester. For explanation see text.

polygons and interrogating records. It is also possible to draw a polygon and request all the species data within it that you have access to.

Occurrence in protected sites: the NBN Gateway has the digitised boundaries of different administrative boundaries (such as SSSIs), which makes it possible to compare your data with them. On opening this page you are first shown what percentage of your species' records occur on each boundary type. Selecting one of the boundary types provides a full list of all the sites (e.g. the individual SSSIs) that records overlap. Finally, a single boundary can be selected to discover what other information is available for it.

New prototype interactive map: as mentioned above, this will soon replace the original interactive map. There are a number of reasons for this, but mainly to improve reliability. At present it is a prototype that is under test and has no help written, but playing with the tools soon shows you how to pan, zoom, select, etc. One important advance over the old map is that records are not shown as dots, but are squares based on the underlying grid reference. This is illustrated in Figure 1, which shows snippets of how the view changes as you zoom in on records of *Anyphaena accentuata* near Colchester. The colours grey, green, cyan and red represent 10 km, 2 km, 1 km and 100 m layers, respectively (apologies for reproduction in black and white).There are Ordnance Survey backdrops to a resolution of 1:50000 and records can be queried by selecting the appropriate tool and dragging the mouse over them.

As mentioned above, access to this dataset is controlled by Peter Harvey. In conjuction with the B.A.S., he has made the 10 km summary maps publicly available, but not the detailed data. We have tried to make the process of applying for access as simple as possible: it involves two steps from you and one from Peter:

1. Register with the Gateway by selecting 'Register' on the home page (www.searchnbn.net) and fill in your details.
2. E-mail Peter (srs@britishspiders.org.uk) asking for access to the data.
3. Peter will then moderate your request and add you to the list of users if appropriate, which gives you access to the data.

The data on the Gateway belongs to the Spider Recording Scheme and it is only they, via Peter, who can decide who has access. One further point is that access is not all or nothing, but can refer to different views of the data: for example, Peter could opt to give someone access to 10 km mapping only and no access to detailed data.

In conclusion, a few words on changes that will be taking place in the near future:

First, more map-related features will become available. These will include the reinstatement of data validation tools, habitat and other boundary mapping, coincidence mapping (so spiders can be viewed against other species), tools for drawing polygons and 'chopping out' species records for an area. Also, querying data by Vice County and 10 km grid square is in the pipeline.

Second, the NBN Gateway will become faster, more reliable and look different. This is because we are moving the entire system onto a set of dedicated machines. At the same time we are changing the site in response to the feedback we have received during the last year.

Finally, working with Peter Harvey, we will import yearly updates to the spider data, which should assist your recording through time as part of the Spider Recording Scheme.

Biological Records Centre, Abbots Ripton, Monks Wood, HUNTINGDON, Cambridgeshire, PE28 2LS

MapMate and the Spider Recording Scheme

by Ian Dawson

MapMate is one of several software programs available for biological recording in the UK. Written originally to enable members of the Somerset Moth Group to maintain and exchange their records, it has become very popular among amateur recorders of all branches of natural history, and is undergoing continuous development. Recently, the B.A.S. commissioned development of the program to enable the recording of the additional habitat information required for Phase 2 of the Spider Recording Scheme. This article highlights some of MapMate's features, and concludes with an outline of the S.R.S. customisation and some suggestions to encourage consistent data entry.

MapMate is a relational database based on Microsoft Access 97. The program is very intuitive and user-friendly and can be used at a basic level. However, it has considerable depth for those who want to explore further some of its many mapping and query possibilities. It also appears to be very robust. In two years of regular use by me it has hung just once—more than can be said for most well-known software!

There is a MapMate e-mail group where problems can be posted. Not only are you likely to get a helpful reply from an expert user, the program's author also often comments or answers queries and is open to suggestions for improvement. New patches and software updates are regularly available for free downloading from the MapMate website. However, the aim is to keep MapMate straightforward to use without adding lots of features which may be of limited interest to most users.

Data entry

MapMate comes with up-to-date checklists for most groups of British fauna and flora. Users include national experts in many groups who ensure that the checklists are current. Taxa cannot be added to or edited by users, but new species or corrections are patched in on request, usually within a couple of days.

With one exception, there is a single data entry form for each major table: sites, recorders, references (=sources), and records. Once relevant sites, recorders and references are set up by the user, entering species records is straightforward. All recurring fields, such as site, date, recorder and reference can be locked, so entering data from one collection tube is very quick with typically just species, quantity and sex to add for each record.

The exception to a single data entry form comes when entering a new site using the Spider Recording Scheme defaults. This is discussed further under the heading 'Spider Recording Scheme Phase 2' below.

When entering species records, the first two letters of the genus and the first three of the specific name will fetch either the full name of the species or, in the few cases where these are duplicated, all matching options. Thus 'padeg' will produce *Pachygnatha degeeri* or 'leten' will give the choice of *Lepthyphantes tenuis* or *Lepthyphantes tenebricola*. However, there are many ways of entering a species and almost any set of letters will pull out a limited set of possibilities. Trial and error will show which combinations of letters work best for you. I have found the quickest way to enter *Lepthyphantes tenuis* is by typing 'uis', or for *Lepthyphantes zimmermanni* 'zim'.

Other data entry shortcuts built in include entering 'me' in the Recorder field for your own name, or 'today' in the date field for the current date.

Most fields have a restricted choice from which the user selects (F2 produces a pop-up list of available options), thus ensuring consistency. For sites already set up, typing the start of the name produces a list of matching options; or a question mark followed by a 10-km square, e.g. ?TL16, will list all sites within that 10-km square to choose from. As usual there are several ways to carry out any operation. Finally, there is a Comment field which will accept anything the user wishes to note up to several pages long. Many users are likely to want to record extra information on occasion for their own interest. Provided such information is added consistently, it can be retrieved and analysed.

Filters

Most of us have an interest in other aspects of natural history and will wish to record more than just spiders. Each user can set up his or her own recording preferences for the different taxonomic groups they record, and for their preferred recording areas. This works at two levels. First, you run through a wizard to set your configuration, choosing all the taxa groupings and geographical areas you are likely to use regularly. This creates your own personal taxa library as a subset of the entire taxa library (say flowering plants, spiders, ground beetles and birds). Secondly, for entering records you set preferences from within your configuration (e.g. spiders only). These filters further reduce the choices available when entering data, but it is very easy to change preferences—or indeed your entire configuration—at any time to enable records to be entered for different taxonomic groups or geographical areas. Once entered on MapMate your records form part of the database, irrespective of your current configuration or recording preferences.

Filters are also used to select just those records required (taxonomic groups and geographical areas) when creating atlases, running queries, or exporting data.

Queries

Nearly 150 queries are built in to the program, e.g. 'Species list for <vice-county> in <year>' or 'Species not recorded this year by <recorder>'. Many queries allow the use of an asterisk [*] as a wild card. It is thus simple to run a query on a wider site and pull out all the records or just a species list for all sites related in some way, provided these are named consistently. I maintain a database of all spider records from RSPB reserves and, by including the string 'RSPB reserve' in the site name, can retrieve all relevant records by searching for '*RSPB reserve*'.

A number of quick queries are available from the main data entry form. Pressing F5 produces all records matching only the criteria you enter in one or more fields, and is thus an excellent way to review and check what you have input after entering records for one tube, when most fields are still locked. Adventurous users can also create their own custom queries. Most queries run against the taxa and geographical defaults currently set up by the user, so it is simple to produce a list of, say, all spider records for a vice-county, or all ground beetles for England.

Mapping

As its name implies, this is one of the best features of MapMate, enabling the user to visualise his/her records. 'Atlases' can be created at different scales, such as 1 km, 2 km, or 10 km, with different symbols or colours for a range of variables, making it simple to show records by date-band, or to highlight your own records. Records can be traced back from dots on the map which makes for easy checking of anomalous records. Special maps can be created showing, for example, the number of recorded tetrads, or which 10-km squares are the best recorded. The user can add their own picture maps to help put records directly into context. You can create as many different atlases as you wish for any combination of taxa and geographical areas. Atlases are automatically updated as new records are added, making this one of MapMate's star features.

Copying and pasting

MapMate works seamlessly with other Windows programs such as Excel and Word. One area **not** catered for within MapMate is the production of sophisticated reports. However, by copying and pasting the results of queries into a spreadsheet or text editor they can then be formated and edited to produce a report for printing.

Exchanging data

By creating a so-called 'sync' file of records matching current defaults, users can send their relevant records seamlessly by e-mail or via the web to other MapMate users, or to a central 'hub'—Peter Harvey in the case of the S.R.S. MapMate 'remembers' what it has sent and where it has sent it, so new syncs only send new records. This is a powerful feature, and for this alone it is hoped that as many spider recorders as possible will use MapMate.

'Syncing' also makes the process of sending in non-spider records to other recording schemes very simple—records you might not otherwise have bothered submitting if you have only a few. By the same token, now that the S.R.S. is geared to handling MapMate records, we can expect some spider records, which in the past would have been lost, from recorders of other groups.

It is also possible, with a little care and patience, to import data into MapMate from a tab-delimited text file, so all those records you have in another database or spreadsheet do not need to be entered afresh. MapMate is compatible with the National Biodiversity Network standards, though records cannot be exchanged directly with Recorder 2000/2002. However, virtually all the data associated with a record (potentially almost 80 fields which the user can pick and choose to suit!) can easily be exported to a standard spreadsheet such as Excel.

Spider Recording Scheme Phase 2

In addition to adding to our knowledge of spider distribution in the UK, the main aims of Phase 2 are to obtain the data needed for a better understanding of the ecology and phenology of our spiders and the effects of different habitat management; in short to establish a profile of the ecological characteristics of each British spider species.

All options on the Phase 2 printed recording card are also available within MapMate when you set the S.R.S. preferences. When recording a new site, after entering the basic site data which all sites in MapMate require, such as name, grid reference, administrative area and vice-county, enter 'srs' in the habitat field. Now when you save the new site, a further special data entry screen appears designed for the Spider Recording Scheme which allows the recording of S.R.S. Site Detail. Most fields on this form have a fixed list of values to choose from, and are relevant to the site. Each site can only have a single 'Site Detail' associated with it. This means that you should use a naming system for different sub sites within a main site (see below).

The fields in a Site Detail, matching the options on the new RA65 S.R.S. card, are:

Habitat. Main habitat. There is some overlap of habitats to allow for compatibility with the old RA65 categories.

Sub-habitat

Substrate

Hydrology

Managed – evident or known management features.

Grazing – evident or known grazing management features.

Frequency – evident or known frequency of management

Altitude in metres

Notes – any additional information about the site, habitats and management can be entered here, though this field is optional. All other fields are required, even if unknown and entered as 'Not recorded'.

Micro-habitat details relevant to the species record, again replicating the options available on the new RA65 S.R.S. card, are entered on the individual record form. These include **Habitat structure and vegetation density** combination and **Habitat detail** for the species record. This information should help to build up information on the detailed habitat preferences of each species and whether they move to different niches at different times of year. This distinction between the macro- and micro-habitat is an important one with invertebrate recording and is fully catered for when using the S.R.S. preferences in MapMate.

MapMate Help is context-sensitive, so by selecting F1, relevant and useful help appears.

Site names

A site in MapMate is a unique combination of name and grid reference (from a 10-km square of the OS National Grid down to an 8-figure Grid Reference which represents a 10-metre square). Thus there can be several sites with the same name and different grid references, or even with the same grid reference but different names. Note also that where two main habitats adjoin, different sites need to be created to record the different S.R.S. habitat site details.

There is no hierarchy of parent and child sites in MapMate as there is in some other biological recording software. At first sight this might seem like a drawback, but even where such a feature exists, one recorder's parent site might be another's child. In order to try and get some consistency in site names, it is suggested that sites be recorded as '**MainSite, SubSite: Compartment**', using comma and colon as separators. As noted above there will often be more than one main habitat at a site with the same grid reference, e.g. grassland and wetland or garden and building. Because different habitats need to be recorded as separate sites, include the basic habitat in parentheses after the site name to distinguish the sites and to save having to check the site detail every time when entering data. By entering sites consistently subsequent analysis will be made much easier.

Examples of site names using the above conventions:

Little Paxton Pits, Sailing Lake: NW (wetland)
Little Paxton Pits, Sailing Lake: NW (grassland)
Tempsford, Station Road 122a (house)
Tempsford, Station Road 122a (garden)

Another aim of Phase 2 is to obtain numerical data nationally on the collection of adult male and female spiders. The use of these samples will enable us to obtain better understanding of the adult season of each species, and to relate this to longitude, latitude and the possible effects of climate change. **It is very important when recording the sex as male or female that the stage is also recorded correctly.** 'Adult' is the default stage on the MapMate data entry form for records. Subadults and immatures of some spiders are safely identifiable to species, and subadults are usually able to be sexed. These must be recorded as 'subadult' in the stage field to avoid skewing the phenology data.

We also wish to record whether vouchers exist so that notable records may be checked if required. MapMate has a so-called 'Smart comment' feature. By entering !sv when entering the number and sex the comment 'Voucher specimen available' is added to the Comment field. Other smart comments available include !sn for 'Noted but no specimen collected', and !sm for 'Microscope identification, specimen not retained or lost'.

Finally, remember that it is better to record too much rather than too little. Data not entered are effectively data lost.

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New Records of *Ero aphana* (Walckenaer, 1802)

by Peter Harvey* and Steve Hopkin[+]

The first author (P.H.) visited a site adjacent to Lakeside Retail Park (TQ591779) in VC18 (South Essex) on 26th May 2003, and beat a single female of the rare pirate spider *Ero aphana* (Walckenaer, 1802) from the lower branches of hawthorn growing at the edge of tall open grassland. Remarkably, on the same day an e-mail was received from the second author (S.H.) about a female *E. aphana* found by one of his undergraduate students attending the Reading University *Biology of Spiders* course. This specimen was found on 20th May 2003 in a horsebox full of hay at Kingsclere near Basingstoke! The horsebox contained hay taken from several fields in the vicinity of Wait's Farm (SU530611), VC12 (North Hampshire). The student returned to search elsewhere on the farm for further examples (including a male) but so far to no avail.

During a second visit to the South Essex site on 6th June, a second female *Ero aphana* was found, this time beaten from the lower branches of a gorse bush at the western edge of the site. This region of south Essex is geologically complex with a chalk outcrop north of the Thames variously overlain with sands, and so the vegetation frequently has areas containing plants normally associated with chalk grassland adjacent to or mixed with areas containing acid grassland plants. The area has been quarried over a long period of time, since at least the sixteenth century, but in modern times mineral extraction became much more extensive and the area between Purfleet and Grays contained a remarkable complex of old quarries. Unfortunately, local councillors and planners have long viewed these quarries as an eyesore and blight on the region, and most sites have already been lost to industrial and retail use, and to massive housing developments such as 'Chafford Hundred'. Thurrock intends to allow development of almost all those left.

Figure 1. ***Ero aphana*** **(Walckenaer, 1802), female witth egg cocoon. Photograph courtesy of Ian Dawson.**

Unfortunately, the Local Authority also plans to develop the majority of this (small) site for housing. The *Ero aphana* site, overlooking the Thames and sloping down from the top of the southern quarry edge, represents a unique green field fragment of the pre-quarry landscape and is home to many rare and scarce invertebrate species, including what may be the largest national population of a distinctive Red Data Book fly *Dorycera graminum*, the bumblebee *Bombus humilis* and the solitary wasp *Cerceris quinquefasciata*, all national BAP species on English Nature's Species Recovery Programme. The new UDP is currently at deposit stage, and it can only be hoped that the plans to develop the site for housing can be changed at a Public Inquiry in the face of the nature conservation evidence.

Ero aphana was first recorded in Britain in 1974 (Merrett & Snazell, 1975) and, until last year, all records have been from dry southern heathland, including that of Ian Dawson reported in the last SRS News (Dawson, 2003). In 2002 Clive McCarthy found the species within a garden shed in a suburban garden in Surrey (McCarthy, 2002), and it now seems there is the possibility that the range of the species is expanding. The species may have colonised Britain relatively recently (Peter Merrett, pers. comm.) and is still spreading, and/or climate change may be a factor. Whatever the reason, it would seem that *Ero aphana* could turn up in a range of warm habitats in southern England—keep a look out!

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Further Notes on the Biology of *Homo arachnophilus*

by Tony Russell-Smith

This species was described recently by Slawson (1999) who mapped its distribution in Britain and provided brief notes on its habitats, ecology and management. The publication of the *Provisional Atlas of British Spiders* (Harvey *et al*., 2002) provides an opportunity to examine some further aspects of its habitats and ecology. These notes apply specifically to *Homo arachnophilus* ssp. *britannicus* (**ssp. nov**.) and the results should not be applied uncritically to other sub-species.

Climatic influences on distribution

Examination of the map in Slawson (1999) shows clearly that the vast majority of records of this species in Britain (87% of the total) are from an area south of 54° N. This corresponds almost exactly with the July mean isotherm at 15.6 °C and strongly suggests that low summer temperatures severely limit the distribution of this sub-species in Britain. Further indications that temperature may be of significance for the subspecies come from the clumping of records in and around major conurbations. The map shows the largest aggregation of records in and around London but with other aggregations around the northern cities (Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds), and in Scotland, around Edinburgh and Glasgow. It is now well

established that urban climates are 3–5 °C warmer on average than those of the surrounding areas. It is not yet known what aspect of the life cycle of this species is most affected by temperature, but the clumped distribution around conurbations suggests that it may influence aspects of reproduction as it is here that the majority of brood nests of the species are found.

Although there is evidence that temperatures significantly influence the distribution of this sub-species, rainfall may also play a role. An overlay of mean annual rainfall isohyets on Figure 1 in Slawson (1999) indicates that 77 per cent of all records come from areas of the country with less than 1000 mm mean annual rainfall. Although the preference of the sub-species for drier, warmer conditions is evident, the exact interaction between temperature and moisture in controlling its distribution has yet to be elucidated.

Foraging areas

Although this sub-species is primarily araneophagous, as the trivial name suggests, it is known that many individuals forage for a wide range of invertebrates, including other arachnids, Hymenoptera, Diptera and even myriapods. Figure 1 in Harvey *et al*. (2002) indicates the areas in which this sub-species has been found to forage. It is clear that foraging is again largely confined to southern and central Britain, with little foraging north of 54° N, in Wales or in SW England. The reasons for this are far from clear and might potentially be due to lower prey abundance in these areas or, alternatively, the effect of low temperatures at higher altitudes in reducing the foraging efficiency of *H. arachnophilus britannicus*. There may also be other influences on the selection of foraging areas. Within the general foraging range described above, there are some clear gaps that are not apparently related to climatic factors. For example, little foraging appears to have been observed in the fenland area of East Anglia around the Wash. While the reason for this is unknown, it is possible that the intensive agriculture of this region has reduced prey abundance below levels at which foraging is efficient.

Population statistics

According to the data in Slawson (1999) the total population of *H. arachnophilus britannicus* is 216 individuals. Taking the total area of Britain as 242,430 km^2, this gives a population density of 0.00089 individuals km^{-2}, lending strong support to his contention that this is a rare and possibly endangered species. Some indication of the proportion of individuals that no longer actively forage in the population can also be gained from Figure 1 in Harvey *et al*. (2002). This suggests that out of the total foraging population of 150 over the period 1987–2001, 33 became inactive, indicating that approximately 1.5 per cent per annum of the population ceased foraging altogether. While we do not have accurate figures for current recruitment to the actively foraging population, anecdotal evidence suggests this is low and possibly does not balance the rate of loss. If this situation were to continue into the future without further recruitment, we could predict total cessation of active foraging by roughly 2070 and a population of only 66 individuals remaining.

Although there is much that remains to be learned about the biology of this fascinating sub-species, it is clear that unless recruitment to the population can be stimulated, there is a real possibility that it could become extinct by the end of the twenty-first century.

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Uloborus plumipes Lucas, 1846 in Surrey

by Glyn Bridge

Having started looking at spiders relatively recently, in Spring 2002 I was searching the worldwide web when I came across an article about *Uloborus plumipes* Lucas,1846. It was not until 12th October 2002, whilst visiting a small greenhouse selling plants at Savill Gardens in the Windsor Great Park section of Surrey, that I remembered the article. Within a couple of minutes I had found half a dozen of what I suspected were *U. plumipes*. On returning home I retrieved the article and confirmed my suspicions.

I have since concentrated on searching as many likely places as possible in Surrey, and so far have found the species at Homebase, B & Q, numerous nurseries, and even on a trolley stacked with plants for Christmas in our local Woolworths. Of the 19 places so far visited locally only two have failed to produce *Uloborus*: one a nursery which grow their own stock from seed, the other a local garden centre which only had hardier indoor plants in a greenhouse unheated during the day, when it was quite cold.

In all cases I explained what I was doing and so was able to establish that the plants had all arrived from Holland, sometimes with several deliveries a week. I have so far only found two egg sacs, in early to mid October and, judging by the small size of the majority, most of the spiders were immature.

I would like to thank Peter Harvey for encouraging me to continue my search—which I am doing with relish, finding it hard to pass a likely looking spot, much to the bemusement of the family.

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A Moving Tale

by Ian Dawson

On 13th July 2002, as part of our search for *Wabasso quaestio replicatus* at Insh Fen in the Spey Valley, Scotland, I sawed off at ground level a large tussock of *Molinia caerulea* from NH81160230 and brought it home to Little Paxton, Cambridgeshire in a strong plastic sack for sorting. I dissected the tussock carefully later that week, retaining all the spiders seen, but the results were rather disappointing producing only the following: *Pocadicnemis pumila* 1f; *Hilaira pervicax* 4ff; *Meioneta saxatilis* 1f; *Ozyptila trux* 1f 2jj

The remains of the grass tussock were returned to the plastic sack and left outside in the garden to compost down. The sack was not sealed, though was sheltered from rain under the overhang of a window.

We were tidying the garden on 13th April and came across the sack. Instead of composting down, the contents had dried out and thus effectively become straw. As I have found *Microctenonyx subitaneus* in similar dry plant material in the garden in the past I thought it would be worth sieving the material again to see what if any spiders had taken up residence. This produced: *Amaurobius similis/fenestralis* 1j; *Phrurolithus festivus* 1j; *Lepthyphantes tenuis* 1f (with an ectoparasitic grub on the abdomen as large as the spider—this pupated overnight, leaving the spider dead); *Ozyptila trux* 1f; *Maro sublestus* 2ff.

The first two were clearly local colonists (*A. similis* and *P. festivus* are common species in our garden), and the third could have come from Insh or locally, but the last two species

must be presumed to have originated from Insh. I have recorded *O. trux* locally only from Monks Wood NNR and, given that there were several in the original tussock, I had no doubt overlooked a tiny immature.

However, the presence of the two specimens of *Maro sublestus*, which perhaps came as eggs, hatching and maturing over the ensuing nine months, provides a cautionary tale. It is interesting that these wetland spiders had thrived despite the tussock drying out, though, having in July removed all the spiders and other invertebrates I came across, there would have been few predators or other competition. There were good numbers of tiny springtails in the litter so food was not a problem. *M. sublestus* has been recorded from only eleven 10-km squares, including Woodwalton Fen, only 22 km to the north of Little Paxton, but also from Insh in the late 1970s and again in June 1996.

This episode highlights how easily spiders can be introduced, at least temporarily, in vegetation. Also, how should such occurrences be recorded? I have used the original Insh grid reference for *O. trux* and *M. sublestus*, but recorded the date as 13th April 2003 (as the spiders were not found until then and did not mature in captivity). However, to avoid any false bias in any analysis of maturity dates, I recorded the stage as unknown rather than adult, together with an appropriate comment on the circumstances of finding, but such records may not always be so apparently clear cut.

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Figure 2. 'Worth checking every Teg.'

House and Garden Spiders

by Ian Dawson

I read with interest, in S.R.S. newsletter No. 44, the accounts by Tony Russell-Smith and Tom Thomas of their house and garden spiders. Whilst I have not recorded quite so many species as either, nevertheless the combined total for our garden and house is 94 species in a little under 5 years. Although I endeavour to check every spider seen inside the house (one of those numerous *Scotophaeus* must one day be *scutulatus*!), most collecting in the garden has been casual, simply noting any spiders which show themselves, with occasional sweeping or beating of shrubs, or sieving litter. I ran pitfalls for the calendar year 2000, starting with four traps, but reduced to a single pitfall after March as a response to too many newt deaths. The garden is small (*c.* 400 m^2), with a lawn, pond and borders with shrubs and herbaceous plants, but with no trees, and flanked by similar gardens. Most of the front is a tarmac drive, though the surviving pitfall was in the border adjacent to the drive. The house is a small semi-detached bungalow about 30 years old, with a two-storey extension and integral garage, on the edge of a large modern housing estate. However, the back overlooks a disused gravel pit, now a nature reserve, fringed with willows and *Phragmites*, from which it is separated by a fence and path. The River Ouse is about 400 m away.

Figure 1. *Scotophaeus*: 'numerous inside the house.'

The garden spider total to date is 87 species, 10 of these recorded from the pitfalls only, while 44 species have appeared in the house. The influence of the adjacent water is evidenced by an abundance of *Larinioides sclopetarius* on, and often inside, the house. Two *Agelena labyrinthica* females appeared in 2002 weaving their spectacular sheet webs in the garden, while *Episinus angulatus* and *Ozyptila praticola* are found regularly, and *Phrurolithus festivus* is commonly seen running on the patio and in the compost heap. *Prinerigone vagans* turned up in a mercury vapour moth trap in April 2002 and *Microctenonyx subitaneus*, new to VC31, was sieved from an accumulation of dry leaves in October 2000. Highlights of the pitfall survey were singles of the nationally notable *Lepthyphantes insignis* (Nb), and first VC31 records of *Troxochrus scabriculus* (frequent) and the bizarre male of *Panamomops sulcifrons*, while several *Micrargus subaequalis* were also recorded. I have recorded *Oonops domesticus* outdoors (from the stiff leaves of a Yucca) as well as indoors.

Tony Russell-Smith was surprised to find *Clubiona corticalis* indoors, but this is one of our more frequent indoor visitors, with 11 records from walls and ceilings, while *Philodromus dispar* and *Dysdera crocata* both appear as frequently indoors as in the garden. The local *Tegenaria parietina* has trapped itself in the bath on a single occasion, proving the worth of checking every 'Teg'. Indoor surprises have included *Theridion pictum* and *Hahnia nava* (twice each), *Pachygnatha clercki* and, most surprising of all, *Philodromus collinus* (Notable B) running on our lounge wall in June 2002—there are virtually no conifers within several miles of the house!

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SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME NEWS

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EDITORIAL

Trial forms are available for recording some 'easily recognisable spiders' on the Essex Field Club website at HYPERLINK "http://www.essexfieldclub.org.uk". These are well used by all sorts of people, including many not Essex-based and some from as far away as the USA and Canada. Seventy-one internet based forms have been sent in between March and September: 29 for *Dysdera crocata* (18 from the USA!); two for *Salticus scenicus*, one for the UK; two for *Uloborus plumipes* in Sweden; one for *Araneus diadematus*; 31 for *Argiope bruennichi*, including one each from Belgium, Denmark and Spain, and two from the USA (!); one for *Scytodes thoracica* from the USA; five for *Misumena vatia* including two from Canada and one from the USA. Although there obviously are potential problems, not least that the forms are not intended for use in other countries, virtually all the British responses appear to constitute good records, often supported by digital images that confirm the record. The system generates interest and information from people who would otherwise not input to recording schemes.

I have received many records this year for *Argiope bruennichi*. Whilst these do not extend the known range, the number of records from non-arachnologists suggests that the spider has had a good year, probably due to the long warm summer and autumn. Other discoveries of interest from members of the public include *Segestria florentina* at Tiptree in Essex and new locations for *Steatoda grossa* and *Meta bourneti*.

Short-term objectives are to complete a review of national spider statuses based on the latest IUCN criteria, and to produce guidance on the identification of difficult species—a 'spider crib'.

My thanks go to all those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 48 will be published in March 2004. Please send contributions by the end of January at the very latest to Peter Harvey at 32, Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk.

Frontinellina frutetorum (C. L. Koch, 1834): A New British Record

by Olwen Williams

I have to confess, we worked from back to front and started with the web. It was a fine evening, my son had come for supper and we had about twenty minutes cooking time to go. My new garden, bigger than the old one, has some shrubs and a small apple tree. In the honeysuckle, there was a muss of fine strands, a flattish web underneath and a small spider waiting to be identified. No spi-pot? No problem, soon constructed. That web—*Linyphia*? *Neriene*? Plate 31 or 32 in Roberts. 'That's the one', says Huw, who knows nothing about spiders: '*Frontinellin*. Markings are exactly right. And the shape.' 'Hang on', I protest, 'You can't do it like that. You have to look at all the features, including the genitalia. Anyway, that can't be right. The book says it is absent from Britain.'

Figure 1. ***Frontinellina frutetorum*****, female. Photograph by Ian Dawson.**

'I bet it is, though,' says he, 'and here is another one in the apple tree'. *Frontinellina frutetorum* (C. L. Koch, 1834) is described as a 3.5–5.6 mm spider, which builds a bowl-shaped web, with a flat web about 10–20 mm below (hence the 'doily'). Webs are typically in bushes and lower branches of trees. The spider hangs from the underside of the bowl. My specimen did not move much on disturbance and obligingly dropped off into the pot when approached.

F. frutetorum is the only known European *Frontinellina* species, occurring in France, Germany and Belgium, southwards and eastwards through continental Europe, and as far north as Finland. The black and white abdominal markings are characteristic and the abdomen is highest at the posterior end (Fig. 1). The first femur lacks spines and legs are not annulated. The epigyne is dark and protrudes slightly. All these features being present, I sent one of the pair off for confirmation, firstly by Ian Dawson and then Peter Merrett. Huw was dead right—a couple of female *Frontinellina frutetorum*, with typical bowl and doily webs, were sitting in my garden at Newnham, Cambridge (TL443572). They were first found on 16th September 2003, both on the tips of branches at about head height.

This seemed a great opportunity to meet my new neighbours.'Excuse me, but do you mind if I check your bushes for a very rare spider?', is a great introduction, but sadly there were no more to be found. *Linyphia triangularis* and *Neriene montana* lurk in the innards of their bushes. Sudden enlightenment—my predecessors in the house had, for the last five years, imported pot plants of all types from Italy. Are they established and breeding here? That remains to be seen next spring. I guess I'd better rejoin the B.A.S.!

I am a mostly retired medical doctor. Indulging a passion for natural history, I have just finished a B.A. in Natural Sciences (Zoology and Geology) at Cambridge University and will start an M.Phil. in Biological Anthropology shortly. I remain to be convinced that I prefer primates to invertebrates, however!

My thanks go to Huw Williams for his part in the plot, and to Ian Dawson for his help in confirmation and for the photos.

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Spiders of Artificial Subterranean Habitats in Leicestershire

by Jon Daws

Within Leicestershire there are few natural caves or potholes. So the search for subterranean spider species has focused on the thousands of miles of man-made structures that provide moist and dark places for spiders to live. These places have included: service tunnels for reservoir dams, old blocked-up pillboxes, disused railway tunnels, the county sewer system, and telephone and television cable holes. The initial investigation into subterranean habitats within Leicestershire concentrated on the sewer system, but this had its drawbacks as most sewer manhole-covers are situated on residential private property. Another problem with the older metal sewer manhole-covers is that many of their lifting handles have rusted through or broken off completely, making them difficult or impossible to lift. The solution for a more comprehensive look into subterranean habitats has been solved by the legacy of the infrastructure of the major telephone and cable television companies, which provide thousands of cable holes throughout our communities; from one-street villages to city centres.

The initial survey of sewer systems concentrated on open-plan council housing estates built during the 1970s and 80s, where access could be gained to a number of sewer manhole-covers that were on public/communal land. Even access to a single sewer manhole could produce useful records, with most records away from cities being from rural churchyards. The depth of these sewers sometimes came as a bit of a surprise, with some having drops of over seven metres, but most were only up to two metres deep. A natural extension to this survey work of subterranean habitats evolved to include the cable holes owned by the cable and telephone companies. This expansion allowed collecting trips to be organised to target subterranean habitats, rather than just occasionally delving into them when opportunities arose.

The results were quite fascinating with a small number of species soon characterising the species composition of this subterranean habitat. Some of these species are not restricted to this habitat and are found quite commonly in and around our houses, such as *Tegenaria gigantea* and *T. domestica.* Other species, including *Lessertia dentichelis* and *Nesticus cellulanus* could be considered resident cave spider, never or only occasionally found in other habitats within the county. A third group of spiders that are collected as occasional aeronauts (sometimes in numbers) use this and other subterranean habitats as breeding chambers, and include *Lepthyphantes insignis* and *Lepthyphantes pallidus*. A fourth group of spiders are common aeronauts which have occasionally found their way into this habitat through cracks and holes in or around their covers, specimens of which have occasionally been found with egg cases. A fifth group of spiders are either nationally or locally rare and have only been found in this habitat occasionally, but would naturally either live beneath stones or in dark damp habitats such as rotting trees, and include *Mastigusa macrophthalma* and *Cicurina cicur*.

When collecting spiders of subterranean habitats top of the list of species one seeks are the pale money spiders, since it is almost impossible to identify them to species in the field. This group includes *Lessertia dentichelis, Porhomma convexum, Lepthyphantes pallidus* and *L. insignis,* with the possibility that other species of subterranean habitats may be found.

Although the sewer system and cable hole systems are both subterranean habitats, there are definite differences in the make-up of their respective spider faunas. This could partly be because the sewer system is older than the cable system and deals with waste water products, including hot water, making this subterranean habitat warmer than the cable system (but it should be noted that the cable holes often hold a few centimetres of water). The sewer system is more likely to flood in stormy weather. The main differences in spider faunas between the two subterranean habitats is that *Lepthyphantes insignis* and *Pholcus phalangioides* are mainly confined to the telephone and cable systems, whereas the more unusual species are mostly restricted to the sewer system.

Cicurina cicur: has only been found in subterranean habitats on a single occasion on the 7th May 2003, when a female was found in a web in the sewer system of Ryhall village in east Rutland (TF035105).

Mastigusa macrophthalma: has its national stronghold in the Charnwood Forest of NW Leicestershire, where it is found in association with ants on remnant heath/moor land. This species was found in the sewer system at Whetstone churchyard (SP558974), which is just south of Leicester, when a female and two immatures were collected from the underside of a manhole-cover on the 16th February 2002. A second visit on the 26th July 2002 produced a male, a sub-adult male, a sub-adult female, 4 immature females, and egg sacs attached to the concrete sides of the manhole. The eyes of these specimens were not reduced. Previously immature specimens of this genus had been found within the Leicester sewer system in 1997 and had been thrown away since without an adult specimen species identification was impossible. Since 1997 this species has been looked for within the Leicester sewer system without success.

Pholcus phalangioides: is occasionally found within cable/telephone systems around the city and county. They are found from individuals to mixed groups of all ages and sexes distributed throughout a system, which must indicate their ability either to successfully breed and survive our winters within this habitat or to be able to re-colonise from surrounding buildings. There is also some circumstantial evidence that this species may be in competition with *Nesticus cellulanus* and may even prey on this species, since the two species are not usually found together.

Steatoda grossa: was found, new to the county, in the sewer system in east Leicester at two sites (SK619036, SK621036) on the 6th Apri1 1997: one female and a sub-adult female at the former location and a sub-adult at the latter. The site was re-surveyed on the 2nd August 2002 when females and eggsacs were noted at both sites; as yet no males have been seen.

Nesticus cellulanus: is the commonest species found within our cable/telephone/sewer systems throughout the city and county. It commonly breeds in this subterranean habitat, with individuals of all ages and sexes often found in close proximity. There have been occasions where this species has been absent from a whole village's cable/telephone system or confined to individual manholes; in such instances *P. phalangioides* is usually present.

Lessertia dentichelis: is found in small numbers within the cable/telephone/sewer systems around the city and county, throughout the year. This species is slightly more common within the sewer system, but even then can be elusive with occasions when only an individual is collected in an hour of searching.

Porrhomma convexum: is rarely collected within the county, and then usually as an aeronaut. There is a single record from telephone manholes at Burbage in the south-west of the county.

Lepthyphantes pallidus: is an infrequent inhabitant of the cable/telephone/sewer systems around the city and county.

Lepthyphantes insignis: is an infrequent spider of usually the cable/telephone systems around the city and county, where it can breed in small colonies. Since this species was first found in a subterranean habitat in Leicestershire, it has been collected from both urban and rural situations:

07/05/01	2m/5f/e	SK564067	Gilroes Cemetery, L, drainage system
26/07/02	1f	SP557975	Whetstone Church, Ls, sewer hole
04/08/02	2f	SK621045	Rowlettes Hill E, L, tel/cable holes
15/08/02	1f	SK515205	Loughborough, Ls, tel/cable holes
20/08/02	1m	SP648935	Fleckney, Ls, tel/cable holes
24/09/02	1m/2f/e	SK842112	Langham, Rutland, telephone hole
19/11/02	1m/lf	SK799392	Bottesford, Ls, tel/cable holes
15/04/03	2f	SP745887	Great Bowden, Ls, cable hole
30/04/03	2f	SP536841	Lutterworth, Ls, telephone hole

m = male, f = female, e = eggs, L =Leicester (city), Ls = Leicestershire

On the 24th September 2002 at Langham beneath a manhole cover attached to roots growing through the side of the manhole were over thirty white egg cases with one male and two females in attendance. There were obviously too many egg sacs present for the number of spiders found, so could this have been a particularly good spot where females that were attracted by pheromones would lay their eggs and then depart.

The national distribution of some of the species that have been found to be common or not infrequent within the vice county of Leicestershire are likely to be rather under-recorded. This applies in particular to *Nesticus cellulanus* and *Lessertia dentichelis* and to a lesser extent to *Lepthyphantes insignis*, which most arachnologists must come within feet of on a daily walk around their neighbourhoods. The rarer species so far found in this habitat and other species may also be found to be more common within these subterranean worlds.

This survey has only scratched the surface of our knowledge of the species that inhabit this dark world beneath our feet and the lives they lead. Further survey work is needed not only within this county, but also across the country. My own survey work will continue, with an emphasis on the limestone area of Rutland and north-east Leicestershire, in the hope of finding further subterranean species that inhabit the cracks and fissures that naturally occur in the ground, and which may find their way into the local cable or sewer systems.

Peter Merrett holds a single female *Porrhomma* specimen with reduced eyes, so far unidentified, which was collected from a telephone manhole in north-east Leicestershire. Unfortunately it has taken six years to find a single specimen, so it may take a further decade to find a male, but finding the right time and place for peak activity of the more unusual species will probably just be the beginning

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Hyptiotes paradoxus (C. L. Koch, 1834): New Record for Nottinghamshire

by Howard Williams

In August of this year I decided to beat some yews in Carlton Wood near Worksop in N. Notts, partly to reconfirm the presence of *Diaea dorsata*, partly in the hope of finding *Gibbaranea gibbosa* which, in my early days of recording there, I thought I had once found. It was, however, immature and I lacked the confidence at that time to 'claim' it for the wood. I never found it since in repeated searches.

The upshot of this particular search far exceeded expectations: among various species, including *Diaea*, I found I had taken two adult female *Hyptiotes paradoxus (*C. L. Koch, 1834), an RDB3 species which, according to the *Provisional Atlas*, has not been found in eastern or central England. The nearest counties would seem to be Cheshire in the west and Staffordshire to the south-west.

County Organiser Tom Faulds confirmed the specimens and we decided to search the same patch of yews a week later, when two other females were found. All but one of the four were returned to the trees, a fourth being retained as a voucher. We also found two new records for the wood in these yews: *Gibbaranea gibbosa* at last, and *Achaearanea lunata*.

Two other yew-beating expeditions elsewhere in the wood produced no more *Hyptiotes*, so perhaps a core colony has recently set up in this small area of the 40 acre wood. I believe them to be recent arrivals because I have recorded here for many years, though I cannot swear to having beaten this particular area of yews in that time. If this is so, where they have appeared from is a bit of a mystery as this is a small wood unvisited by tourists from other regions who might have carried the spiders with them. On the other hand, Center Parcs Sherwood and Sherwood Forest Country Park are only some dozen miles away as the crow flies; and visitors from other areas do converge there.

Carlton Wood, according to Laurence Bee's description in the *Provisional Atlas*, is ideal habitat for the species: broad-leaved woodland (mainly ash-elm with some oak, sweet chestnut, sycamore and holly) interspersed with much yew, some in fairly dense patches. Perhaps, after all, it has always been here in small numbers. Other Midlands recorders may be encouraged to go out and explore their yew spider populations.

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The Crab Spider *Synema globosum* (Fabricius, 1775) in Britain

by Tony Irwin

On 26th July 2003, I spotted a hoverfly, *Episyrphus balteatus*, sitting very still on a Cotton Thistle, *Ornopordum acanthium*, flower in my garden in Norwich (TG211082). At first I suspected that the crab spider *Misumena vatia* was at work, but then noticed that the culprit was shiny black and yellow. A quick check of the books and several on-line sites confirmed that it was a female *Synema globosum* (Fabricius, 1775).

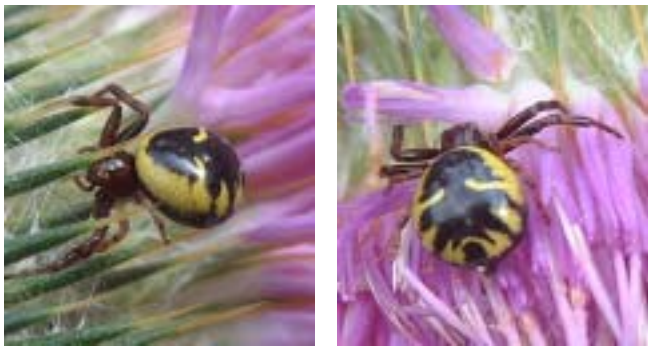

Figure 1. *Synema globosum*, female, lateral and posterior views.

Its known distribution includes France, Netherlands, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Poland, Portugal, Sicily and Spain. To my knowledge, this species has not been recorded in Britain before. No further specimens have been found during searches throughout August and September.

How it turned up in a garden in Norwich remains a matter for speculation, but my wife did receive a bouquet of cut flowers some weeks previously, and that might have been the source. Nearly 250 tonnes of cut flowers are imported to Britain every day (figure derived from Hansard written answers), so it is perhaps inevitable that *Synema* might be imported with them sooner or later.

The specimen is preserved in the collections of Norwich Castle Museum (accession no. 2003.100).

I thank Peter Harvey for information about the distribution of this species in Europe

Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, Shirehall, Market Avenue, NORWICH, Norfolk, NR1 3JQ

Theridion hemerobium Simon, 1914: Are You Looking in the Right Places?

by Jon Daws

In 1996 *Theridion hemerobium* Simon, 1914 was found in a fishing complex at Wanlip, north of Leicester, a first record for the county. Situated on the River Soar flood-plain, the area had been used for gravel extraction. At the time this species was thought to be restricted to a small area of the fishing complex, with its epicentre at a fishing platform and duck nesting-box in a large area of shallow marsh at one end of one of the many fishing lakes. The species was recorded over a number of years, usually from man-made structures except on one occasion when I found it in reedmace standing in 15 cm of water whilst looking for *Tetragnatha striata*.

Table 1. Records of *Theridion hemerobium* from Wanlip.

06/09/96	1f	SK606115	on fence, 30 m to ditch, 100 m lake & river
27/04/97	1m	SK605117	in empty plastic barrel at side of fishing lake
01/06/97	2f	SK604115	on duck nesting box in marsh; in reedmace*
24/08/97	1f	SK604115	under fishing platform in marsh
06/06/99	4m5f	SK604116	under fishing platform in marsh

* = more details in text above, m = male , f = female

Theridion hemerobium was forgotten for several years; then I moved house and started to collect in my new locality. About 200 m from my home, the Grand Union Canal runs alongside an area of rough open space with a minor sewage pumping station close to the canal. On 24th July 2003 two female specimens were collected from the steel barred fence surrounding the pumping station. They remained in the boot of my car for the following two weeks; they were then identified as *T. hemerobium.*

This find suggested that the species might be a lot commoner than previously suspected, so a series of collecting trips were organised aimed at finding this species in as many new 10 x 10 km squares within the county as possible. Ordnance Survey maps were consulted and the Rivers Soar and Trent, and the Grand Union Canal were selected to be visited. It soon became apparent that *T. hemerobium* was not being found on brick and concrete structures, but was present on wood and metal ones. So looking for this species on the many brick and concrete bridges that cross the Leicestershire waterways proved futile. This species did occur on the wooden railings of one bridge at Thurmaston (18th August 2003). I have no idea why this is the case, but suggest that competition from other *Theridion* species (*T. tinctum*, *T. mystaceum*, *T. melanurum* and *T. varians*) for breeding areas and possible threats from other spider species such as *Amaurobius* may be contributory factors.

This species is probably quite mobile and able to colonise new, relatively temporary structures such as fishing platforms, fences and signs. So far the specimens that have been collected all seem to be found in slightly shaded/sheltered areas and all seem to need to be either hanging/concealed under something (stiles, fishing platforms and signs) or in a small retreat on bare metal surfaces.

Figure 1. *Theridion hemerobium* Simon, 1914. Image by P. Harvey.

A further factor seems to be that in the county *T. hemerobium* is restricted to the canal and river systems, with the few lakes visited away from these producing no specimens.

In Leicestershire this species has been found on the Nottinghamshire border, in the north, on the River Trent; to the Northamptonshire border in the south, along the Grand Union Canal. At several places this species has only been found as singletons after an hour or so of searching; while at other sites (such as at Foxton 26/08/03) 6 specimens were collected in 15 minutes from a 50 metre stretch of the canal, with only a twentieth of the potential habitat being surveyed.

Table 2. Leicestershire records of *Theridion hemerobium.*

24/07/03	2f	SP574984	Leicester: on metal fence 20 m from Grand Union Canal
10/08/03	1m,5f	SP636966	Newton Harcourt: on lock gates, fence, and lock sign
11/08/03	2f	SK596128	Rothley: under fishing platform over lake on fence 40 m from river
13/08/03	1f	SK470309	Sawley Cut: on temporary 'footpath closed' sign at side of canal
15/08/03	1f	SK578016	Leicester: under wooden walk-way at side of canal
18/08/03	1f	SK608094	Thurmaston: on wooden bridge over the River Soar
26/08/03	8f*	SP699899	Foxton:*six on metal pilings at side of canal, 2 on metal sign board
26/08/03	1m,3f	SP701897	Foxton: on metal pilings at side of canal
26/08/03	1f	SP720901	Market Harborough: on metal sign-post, 5 m from canal
27/08/03	1f	SK518222	Loughborough: under top step of a stile, 5 m from the River Soar

Abbreviations as previous table

It is obvious from this small survey that this species has been vastly overlooked and is quite likely to be found to be commonplace along most of our canal and river systems throughout southern Britain.

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SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME NEWS

srs@britishspiders.org.uk

NUMBER 48 **MARCH 2004**

EDITORIAL

Unfortunately, I have not been very well for several months, and this has delayed plans to progress a review of national spider statuses based on the latest IUCN criteria and the production of guidance on the identification of difficult species. Hopefully progress can be made in the near future.

With respect to difficult species or unusual records, I am sure misidentifications can easily be made with species such as *Dysdera erythrina*/*crocata*, *Pocadicnemis pumila*/*juncea*, *Pseudeuophrys erratica*/*lanigera*, *Pardosa agricola*/*agrestis*/*purbeckensis*/*monticola* and *Trochosa spinipalpis*/*terricola* females, to name just a few. I would urge arachnologists to recognise when something is unusual and should be checked. One of the main aims of phase 2 of the recording scheme is to increase our knowledge on the ecology of all British spider species, and this can only be done when identifications are reliable. Unexpected records outside the known distribution, unusual habitats or maturity dates, distorted palps and specimens in poor condition from pitfall material, are all things that should trigger the need for extreme caution in identification and, where there may be any doubt specimens should be checked by another arachnologist, preferably one the members of the new Verification Panel of the British Arachnological Society:

Peter Merrett, 6, Hillcrest, Durlston Road, Swanage, Dorset, BH19 2HS
Tony Russell-Smith, Bailiffs Cottages, Doddington, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 0TU
Rowley Snazell, 10, Bon Accord Road, Swanage, Dorset, BH19 2DS
Ian Dawson, 100, Hayling Avenue, Little Paxton, St Neots, Cambs, PE19 6HQ
and myself, Peter Harvey, 32, Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2YP

Eric Duffey has asked me to request recorders to look out for specimens of *Nigma puella* to help a study by a Czech student (Jiri Kral, e-mail: spider@natur.cuni.cz) who is researching the chromosomes of *Nigma* species. However *Nigma puella* does not occur in his country. He would prefer immature or subadult specimens, i.e. before mating, so that he can examine the chromosomes in the sex glands. Fortunately in Britain female *N. puella* (when live) is a distinctive species even when juvenile or subadult, with its characteristic red abdominal markings. If you can help please contact Jiri.

In Issue No 14 of the Pisces Conservation newsletter, Pisces Conservation Ltd report that they are currently working on an e-book of Locket & Millidge, the standard work on British Spiders before the publication of Michael Roberts' *The Spiders of Great Britain and Ireland*. Locket & Millidge (Vols I & II, 1951, 1953) and Locket, Millidge & Merrett (Vol. III, 1974) is still an extremely valuable work, with drawings of palps and epigynes and excellent descriptions that can often help identify 'difficult species'. The target release date is mid-March, and their website is at: www.pisces-conservation.com/softebooks.html

Figure 1. ***Nigma puella*** **- photograph © Peter Harvey.**

My thanks go to all those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 49 will be published in July 2004. Please send contributions by the end of May at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32, Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk.

An Essex Population of *Segestria florentina* (Rossi, 1790)

by Peter Harvey

The only previous Essex records of the large and impressive 6-eyed spider *Segestria florentina* (Rossi, 1790) are a female found on the wall of a bedroom in Southend-on-Sea (Payne 1994), and a large female in November 2002 at Leigh-on-Sea in a box containing a toy that had been sent by mail order from West London (R. G. Payne, pers. comm.). Now Fred Stevens has identified a flourishing colony of *S. florentina* at Tiptree in Essex (TL892159).

The original Tiptree spider, or its cast 'skin', was found in the garden of Fred's sister by his 6-year-old niece, Tara, who thought it looked 'different' from the usual garden spiders. Fred searched on the web and identified it as *Segestria florentina*. He sent me photographs showing the characteristic green iridescent jaws of adult *S. florentina* and I was able to confirm his identification.

Fred looked where his niece found the original spider and discovered the characteristic webs high on the wall. During the daytime the webs' owners were too shy to

show more than the tip of a couple of black legs, but at night at least 6 live *S. florentina* were confirmed.

Bristowe (1958) describes the web of *Segestria* with its characteristic long straight 'fishing lines' radiating from the tubular entrance, quite unlike the matted silk of the common *Amaurobius similis* frequently to be seen on walls and fences in houses and gardens. Brushing one of the fishing lines very gently with a fine tip of grass should get the owner to dart out of her tube with the speed of lightning, biting fiercely and then once more backing into her tube—all in the space of about two seconds.

Of three British *Segestria* species, only the smallest, *S. senoculata*, is at all widespread, and *S. florentina* is scarce with scattered records in southern England. When Bristowe wrote *The World of Spiders* the spider was only known to be established in a few southern towns near to the sea, but it has increasingly been found inland as far north as Oxford, and it seems to be increasing in numbers and distribution.

Reference

Bristowe, W.S. (1958) *The World of Spiders*. Collins, London.
Payne, R. G. (1994) Two large foreign spiders in Southend. *Essex Field Club Newsletter*, **12**: 7.

32, Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP

Figure 1. *Segestria florentina* - photo © Fred Stevens.

Instant Results with *Ero aphana* (Walckenaer, 1802)

by Jonty Denton

On the 7th August 2003, I was up early, sorting through the previous night's moth catch, when the post arrived. Opening the latest B.A.S. Newsletter I was immediately distracted from assorted Lepidoptera, and muesli, by the article on *Ero aphana* by Harvey & Hopkin (2003). They reported a capture just up the road from Alton, and provided a super photo by Ian Dawson, which made me even more envious, and their concluding remark of 'keep a look out', certainly hit home. I tossed the Newsletter onto the table with a brooding 'mmmmmm', and shovelled up another heap of cereal, only to stop half way from the bowl. The Newsletter collided with the moth-trap light, and out of the corner of my eye I noticed a spider wobbling from its thread attached alongside the rain guard. It was an adult female *Ero aphana*, the first I had ever seen! At this ungodly hour my brain was only partly engaged, so the complexity of this extraordinary coincidence took a while to hit home.

Perhaps the conclusion to draw from this bizarre event, is that the probabilities come down if you assume that *Ero aphana* is far more widespread than current records suggest. Garden sheds would appear to be a good place to start!

Reference

Harvey, P. & Hopkin, S. (2003) New records of *Ero aphana* (Walckenaer, 1802). S.R.S. News No. 46. **In** *Newsl. Br. arachnol. Soc.* **97**: 14.

2, Sandown Close, ALTON, Hampshire, GU34 2TG

Recent Records of *Philaeus chrysops* (Poda, 1761) (Beautiful Jumper) in Britain

by M. E. A. Shardlow

Although included in several recent books on British and European spiders, and listed as being absent from the British Isles, there are in fact a small number of British records of the large and stunningly attractive jumping spider, *Philaeus chrysops* (Poda, 1761). All records have been from in and around London, and, while there is no evidence of it having established a breeding population, it is a potential colonist.

Philaeus chrysops is an epilithobiont, a species associated with open, stony and rocky habitats, occurring up to an altitude of at least 380 m (Růžička, 2000). The spider has only been widely recorded in the Mediterranean region, although there are records from eastern Europe and through Asia to Japan. The spider occurs through much of France, but is rare outside the south. It is rare in Poland and threatened with extinction and red-listed in Germany.

David Nellist was sent a male *P. chrysops* which had been collected on 18th June 1992 in the front garden of a house on the Cassiobury Estate, about 2 km west of Watford town centre (TQ095975). It appears that the specimen had been spotted just at the edge of the drive in front of the house, and that the car which occupied the drive had recently returned from the south of France. It was concluded that the specimen had hitched a lift and then dropped off onto the drive.

In June 2001 Peter Harvey was sent a male *P. chrysops* from a garden in Muswell Hill, North London (TQ290903). The family living in the attached house had stored tiles in the garden originating from Portugal and it was concluded that the spider had been imported with the tiles.

On 3rd August 2003 another male specimen was collected in a garden by Stefan Farrelly in Herne Hill, London (TQ319744) and sent to the author. The origin of this specimen is unknown.

While a number of southern European jumping spiders are recorded from groceries and other plants, there are apparently no such records for *P. chrysops*. This is perhaps a result of the species' ecology and its positioning of retreats on solid, inanimate surfaces, usually stones or rocks in the wild, rather than amongst vegetation. The preponderance of male records perhaps results from the

Figure 1. *Philaeus chrysops* - photo © Peter Harvey

spectacular red coloration of the male's abdomen.

While perhaps an unlikely colonist, it does occur at the same latitudes as Southern England in Eastern Europe (Prószyński, 1976), and in Lithuania at 54°23'N, 25°09'E, at the same latitude as Northern England (Rëlys, 2000). Considering how many species in other taxa are now spreading North and expanding their range as a result of climate change, we should not be too surprised should it succeed in persisting through the English winter.

I am grateful to Peter Harvey and David Nellist for permission to publish their records of *Philaeus* and assistance with this article, and to Stefan Farrelly and Louise Dean of the Veterinary Laboratories Agency who found the most recent specimen and gave permission to publish the record.

Figure 2. *Philaeus chrysops* - photo © Peter Harvey.

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Prószyński, J. (1976) Studium systematyczno-zoogeograficzne nad rodzina Salticidae (Aranei) Regionów Palearktycznego i Nearktycznego. *Rozpr. W. S. P. Siedlce*, **6**: map 112.

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Růžička, V. (2000) Spiders in rocky habitats in Central Bohemia. *J. Arachnol*. **28**: 217–222.

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Theridion hemerobium Simon, 1914: New to Shropshire

by Nick Law

It was with some interest that I read the article by Jon Daws on *Theridion hemerobium* Simon, 1914 (S.R.S. News No. 47), having encountered this species last year in Shropshire. During some M.Sc. course field work, (Biological Recording: Collection and Management; Birmingham University), I undertook a brief sampling survey of Yell Wood which forms part of Cole Mere S.S.S.I. Beating mature *Rhododendron* overhanging the north shore of the mere, I collected a single mature female, along with mature female *T. pictum*, *T. varians* and *Kaestneria dorsalis*. This proved to be a first county record for Shropshire (13/07/2003, SJ43023354).

Previous records show a strong association with water: lakes, rivers and the canal system. At Cole Mere the Llangollen Canal borders the north side of the mere with an overflow ditch connecting the two water bodies thereby effectively linking the Shropshire record to the canal system.

From the *Provisional Atlas* it would seem that most of the records for this species have, like the Leicestershire and Wanlip ones Jon has detailed, been made either on man-made structures or from marginal emergent vegetation. As the Cole Mere specimen was beaten from a bush we should perhaps be careful not to restrict searches specifically to man-made features and make sure other natural habitats are examined carefully as well. However, it would be interesting to return to Cole Mere and search more widely to see if *T. hemerobium* is also present on man-made structures.

Jon's comment that he believes the species is overlooked and likely to be commonplace is also of interest. Cole Mere is the only English site for *Nuphar pumila* (Least Water-lily), and past and recent survey work has shown that the population, along with the wider aquatic macrophyte fauna of the mere, is in decline. *Nuphar pumila* is now only to be found at one point on the north shore of the mere, very close to where *T. hemerobium* was collected. In an attempt to overcome this problem there is an ongoing programme to remove overhanging vegetation to reduce shading on the water and the dense stand of *Rhododendron* on the north shore was due to be removed sometime early in 2004. The fact that *Nuphar pumila* is rare in England is undisputed (it holds Nationally Scarce status), but is *T. hemerobium* equally rare or simply under-recorded? At Cole Mere there is therefore a possible conflict between the conservation management for these two species. This dilemma serves to highlight the differences that exist in our knowledge of invertebrate populations and distributions compared to our more popularly and extensively recorded flora.

I would like to thank Stan Dobson and Peter Harvey for confirming my identification and commenting on the distribution of this species, and Peter Merrett for confirming the New County Record.

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SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME NEWS

srs@britishspiders.org.uk

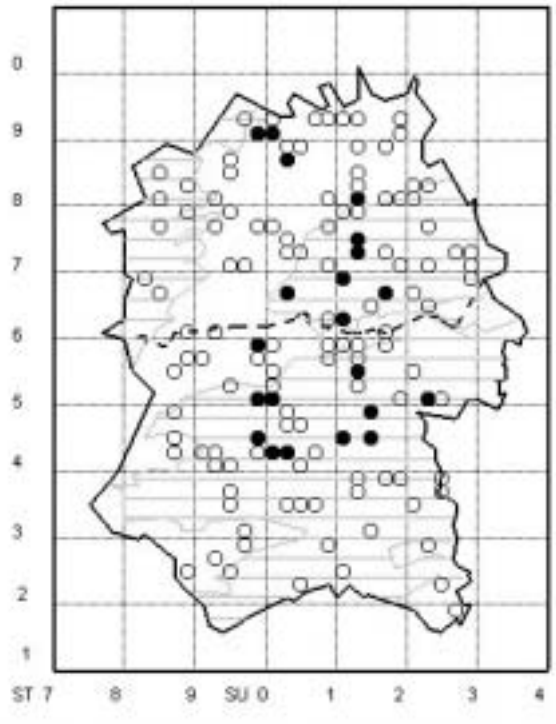
NUMBER 49 **JULY 2004**

Enoplognatha latimana in Wiltshire

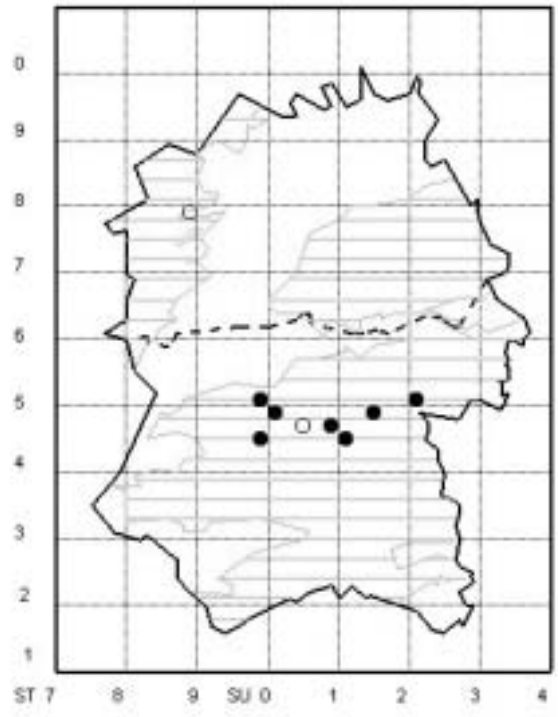
by Martin Askins

Enoplognatha latimana Hippa & Oksala, 1982 was first recorded in Wiltshire on 3rd August 1998, at Stanton Park, Forestry Commission land in North Wiltshire. The specimens, two males, were taken in a cleared area of the park with long grass, some brambles and sporadic saplings (including pine). A return visit, on 5th August 2000, confirmed the species' presence with an adult female. Prior to this confirmation, on 30th August 1999, a second site in Wiltshire was found, this time at West Down near Tilshead on the Salisbury Plain in South Wiltshire, when two females and cocoons were found.

In 2003 several sites on Salisbury Plain were visited over the period from the end of June and into July. *E. latimana* was found at seven of the sites. In general the spiders occurred in areas of grassland with isolated or sparse clumps of taller plants. At the same time several sites on the Marlborough Downs were examined, but no new sites for *E. latimana* were found. The maps show the records for *E. ovata* and *E. latimana* in Wiltshire (filled symbols represent records made in 2003; the lined areas denote underlying chalk or limestone). The records for *E. ovata* give an indication of the sites visited in 2003. Though the sites on the Marlborough Downs were mainly road or pathside and not 'identical' to those on Salisbury Plain, the absence of *E. latimana* is a marked contrast with that on Salisbury Plain.



Distribution of *Enoplognatha ovata* in Wiltshire.



Distribution of *Enoplognatha latimana* in Wiltshire.

It appears that *E. latimana* occurs widely on the Salisbury Plain, but is otherwise more locally distributed in Wiltshire. In S.R.S. News No. 45 Ian Dawson reported recent finds of *Enoplognatha latimana* in Huntingdonshire, wondering whether it was extending its range. Similar areas on Salisbury Plain have been visited before and *E. latimana* not found, but the spiders on Salisbury Plain have not been extensively recorded. Whether *E. latimana* is extending its range, or has just not been recorded before, is not clear.

69, Savill Crescent, Wroughton, SWINDON, Wiltshire, SN4 9JG

Philaeus chrysops (Poda, 1761) in Suffolk

by Tony Irwin

Matt Sharlow's paper on *Philaeus chrysops* (Poda, 1761) (S.R.S. News No. 48: 12–13) notes that recent British occurrences have all been in the London area, so it may be worth recording that this species has now turned up in West Suffolk. On 1st June 2004, I received a call from a plant nursery at Coney Weston (TL9678), to say that they had found a large red and black spider that jumped. The very handsome male had probably been imported from Italy with a recent delivery of plants. When discovered, the spider had just bitten the head off a weevil.

***Philaeus chrysops,* male. Photograph by Tony Irwin.**

I am grateful to Tracy Ellis of RTP Nurseries for contacting me about the spider and to Peter Harvey for further information on the species.

Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, Shirehall, Market Avenue, NORWICH, Norfolk, NR1 3JQ

Separation of Similar Species by Eye-Pattern

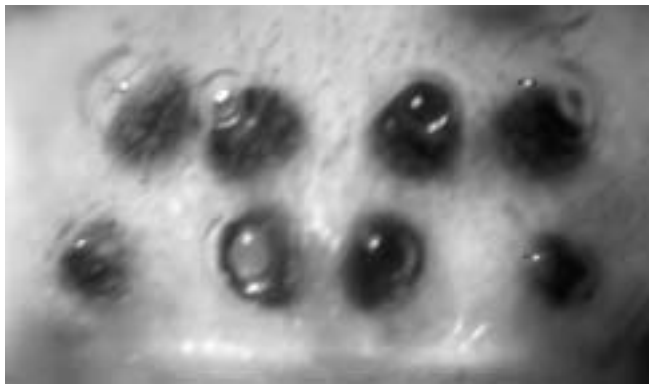
by Stan Dobson

In the pages of Locket & Millidge *British Spiders* (1951, 1953), there are plenty of little gems of information which many people are not aware of, or possibly have forgotten. Two of these, which I have found very useful over the years, concern eye-pattern: one of these in the field and the other under the microscope,

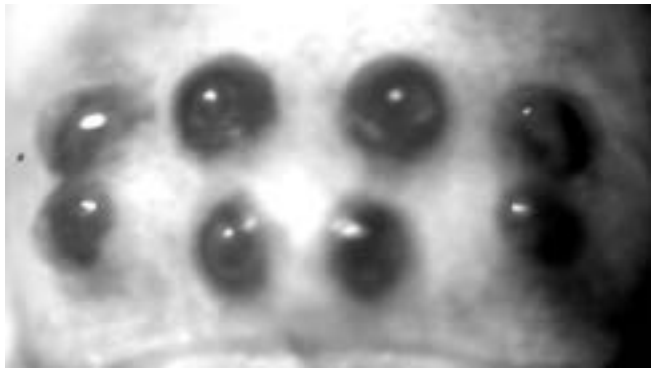
Tetragnatha striata L. Koch, 1862
This species used to be considered very rare. The map in *British Spiders* **III** shows thirteen dots; the Provisional Atlas now shows many more and it is always worth looking closely at *Tetragnatha* species found on waterside vegetation. The separation is remarkably simple and can easily be seen with a hand lens when the spider is in a tube, even with immatures. The photographs show the front view of the heads of *T. striata* (top) and *T. montana* (bottom, which has a similar eye-pattern to all other British *Tetragnatha* species). On either side, the spacing between the lateral anterior and posterior eyes of *T. striata* is greater than that between the median anterior and posteriors (top picture), whereas in all the other species, this spacing is smaller.

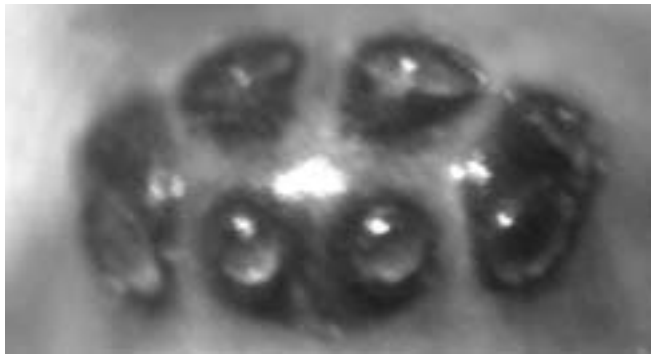
Apart from the eyes, it is worth examining the upper surface of leaves of vegetation such as *Phragmites*, growing in water, for the egg sacs which resemble shiny bird droppings.

Lepthyphantes zimmermanni Bertkau, 1890
With clean specimens, there should be little trouble in separating the various species of *Lepthyphantes*; however, with old, damaged or highly pigmented specimens, there is often a problem, especially separating the two commonest species, *L. tenuis* and *L zimmermanni*. In this case, look at the eyes. With *L. tenuis* and, I believe, all the other species in this group, the anterior eyes are all approximately the same size and equidistant (top photograph). With *L. zimmermanni* however, the anterior medians are much smaller and set close together (bottom photograph). The photographs were taken from the front, but as the eyes project somewhat, this size difference and separation can be seen from various angles.



Eyes (anterior view) *Tetragnatha striata* above, *T. montana* below. Photographs by Stan Dobson.





Eyes (anterior view) *Lepthyphantes tenuis* above, *L. zimmermanni* below. Photographs by Stan Dobson.

Moor Edge, Birch Vale, HIGH PEAK, Derbyshire, SK22 1BX

Editor's note. *Tetragnatha striata* also looks 'different' in the field, with a body shape and pattern that suggests it is different from the other *Tetragnatha* species. Appearance in the field is often an excellent guide to identification, but mistakes can always be made without careful checking of voucher specimens at home. It is all too easy to make identifications in the field that turn out to be wrong at home!

Macaroeris nidicolens (Walckenaer, 1802) (Salticidae) in Surrey

by Jonty Denton

Adults and juveniles of *Macaroeris nidicolens* (Walckenaer, 1802) were abundant on pine trees, *Pinus nigra*, across a wide area of the old airfield at Brooklands, Surrey (TQ068626-066620). The trees were well established, with abundant male flowers and cones, and had been planted over 10 years ago. The spider was present on virtually every pine tree examined along a shelter-belt alongside the River Wey stretching over 400 m. Males and females appeared to be equally abundant in May and early June, and subadults were not infrequent, with over 40 of each sex, and age group seen to date. Occasional juveniles were seen on deciduous bushes including hazel, but adults were only beaten from pines.

Other local species present on the trees included *Micaria subopaca* Westring, 1861, *Gibbaranea gibbosa* (Walckenaer, 1802) and *Araneus sturmi* (Hahn, 1831), the same pines also yielded two weevils new to Britain!

Kingsmead, Wield Road, MEDSTEAD, Hampshire, GU34 5NJ

Notable Spiders from Woolmer Forest, North Hampshire (VC12)

by Jonty Denton

Woolmer Forest is the largest remaining block of Lower Greensand heathland in Britain, and supports a very rich spider fauna. Mature heath habitats are found close to more disturbed acid grassland areas, with a flora of a 'Breckland' nature, rich in scarce annuals. The west of the forest (SU7832 & 7932) from where all these records were made is the best studied area. In 2003 Brian Armstrong undertook a pitfall trapping exercise to look at the impact of grazing on terrestrial invertebrates; these included several new species for the Forest:

Liocranidae
Scotina palliardii (L. Koch, 1881) 8 males and 2 female were found in pitfall traps set in grazed open heathland in early March and emptied on 16th March. New for VC12, and the first post-1980 record from outside Dorset, clearly Notable A status would appear to be justified!

Gnaphosidae
Drassodes pubescens (Thorell, 1856) several males in pitfall set in ungrazed breckland-like acid grassland on former railway sidings, April–May 2003. New Vice County record.
Haplodrassus dalmatensis (L. Koch, 1866) several males in pitfalls set in ungrazed breckland-like acid grassland on former railway sidings, April–May 2003. First modern records for VC12.

Linyphiidae
Meioneta beata (O. P.-Cambridge, 1906) several males in pitfall set in ungrazed breckland-like acid grassland on former railway sidings April 2003. New for VC12.

Acknowledgements. Many thanks to the M.O.D. for allowing us access onto the training area, and Brian Armstrong for maintaining the pitfall traps.

Kingsmead, Wield Road, MEDSTEAD, Hampshire, GU34 5NJ

Some Notable Records from Recent Fieldwork

by Ian Dawson

A visit to Cliffe Pools RSPB reserve on 10th June 2003 turned up the RDB2 *Clubiona juvenis*, new to Kent. A male and three subadult females were sieved from damp litter in a small reedbed *Phragmites* with Sea Club Rush *Bolboschoenus maritimus* at the west end of the reserve. The curiously thin elongated abdomen together with large anterior median eyes give the species a rather distinctive appearance, features shown by the subadult females as well as the sexually mature, and therefore unmistakable, male. In Britain this species inhabits a few East Anglian reedbeds but has also been recorded from brackish reedbeds in Dorset and Essex.

An initial survey of the spiders of Farnham Heath RSPB reserve, Surrey, was made on 26th June 2003. Most of the reserve is currently covered with dense conifer plantations and is unlikely to hold much of arachnological interest. However, the long-term plan to return the reserve to heathland is an exciting prospect, and it is to be hoped that at least some of the Surrey heathland specialities colonise in due course. Beating the low branches of ancient oaks with a bracken understorey on the boundary of Tankersford Common produced three males of the very rare theridiid *Dipoena erythropus* (RDB2), recorded in Britain on only four previous occasions, with a grand total of nine or ten individuals. Previous records of *D. erythropus* have been from gorse, heather and pine adjacent to heathland, so its exact ecological requirements can only be guessed at. The last two records came from Hazeley Heath near Hartley Wintney and Thursley Common, respectively, in the adjacent 10-km squares to either side of Farnham Heath. Thanks go to Peter Merrett for confirming the identification.

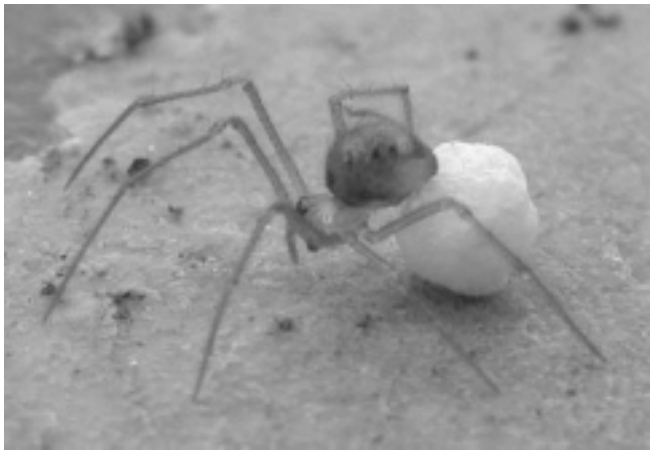
Pitfalls run through 2003 at RSPB HQ at The Lodge, Sandy, Beds produced some interesting local species including *Hypsosinga albovittata*, *Drassodes pubescens*, *Zelotes electus*, and no fewer than five species of liocranid including both *Scotina celans* and *Scotina gracilipes*, the last together with *D. pubescens* new county records for Bedfordshire. *Z. electus* has been recorded previously from the small remnant of heathland here, the Sandy area and the Brecks being the only inland localities in the UK for this usually coastal species.

A day's surveying at Geltsdale RSPB reserve, Cumbria on 12th August 2003, with Dave Blackledge and Jennifer Newton, turned up two females of the tiny theridiid *Rugathodes bellicosus* among a pile of limestone rocks on a slope above the River Gelt, immediately recognisable by their habit of carrying their eggsacs attached to the spinnerets.

Following a successful request in autumn 2002 for RSPB staff to bring in house spiders (see SRS News, No. 45, March 2003, **In** *Newsl. Br. arachnol. Soc.* **96**: 17) several colleagues continue to supply the occasional spider. Of note were yet more males of *Tegenaria parietina* from houses in Sandy, Willington, and Harlington, all in Bedfordshire, and all from the period 13th to 26th August 2003.

A male and a subadult female of *Phrurolithus minimus* were sieved from a dry mowings' pile in Monks Wood NNR, Huntingdon, on 20th April 2003. This species has previously been recorded no closer than the Chilterns to the southwest, the Essex coast to the southeast, and the Peak District to the northwest.

Liocranum rupicola **above and** ***Rugathodes bellicosus*** **below. Photographs by Ian Dawson.**



A visit to Prawle Point, Devon, on 8th May 2004 produced two male *Acartauchenius scurrilis* under stones, which would appear to be the first records from mainland Devon (though recorded from Lundy), thus filling the gap between Dorset and Cornwall. Although not directly associated with ants, many stones here sheltered ant nests. Also good to find, though less unexpected, was a male *Liocranum rupicola* from coastal rocks near Froward Point to the east of the Dart Estuary, on 6th May.

An interesting-looking small theridiid on the inside wall of an outside gents' toilet at a garden centre at Coton, near Cambridge, on 29th May 2004 proved to be the seldom-recorded *Theridion familiare*, new to Cambridgeshire. The rich orange-brown carapace and legs, conspicuously annulated darker, gave it a distinctive appearance. A week later, while searching the walls of Little Paxton Church for *Theridion blackwalli* (successfully) (see John Daws' piece in Spider Recording Scheme Newsletter No. **35**, November 1999, pp. 3–5), I also found a very dark small theridiid with a small white patch on the underside in front of the spinnerets which was clearly not *blackwalli* and I thought likely to be *T. mystaceum*. However, checking under the microscope revealed it to be a female *T. familiare*, new to VC31 (Hunts), and quite unlike the bright male.

100, Hayling Avenue, Little Paxton, ST NEOTS, Cambs., PE19 6HQ

New Records of Red Data Book Spiders in Southwest England

by Peter Smithers

Hyptiotes paradoxus (C. L. Koch, 1834)
There is exciting news from Chris Wooley at Seal Hayne who has discovered a mature male *Hyptiotes paradoxus* (family Uloboridae) climbing one of the sticky traps that he had set out in a field of wheat stubble in late August.

This spider is usually associated with evergreen trees and shrubs, but has been predominantly recorded from Yew. It produces a small triangular web that is attached to the vegetation by the base. The spider then grasps the apex of the web and forms a living bridge between it and the vegetation. Once a prey item has hit the web the spider lets go of the vegetation and the triangular web collapses around the prey.

The current status of this species is RDB3. It has been recorded from Hampshire, Southeast of England, the Welsh border, Cumbria, east Devon and Somerset. This is the third, and the most westerly record so far, for the Southwest of England.

Gnaphosa occidentalis Simon, 1878
A female of this species (confirmed by Peter Merrett) was collected from beneath stones in maritime grassland at Penhale, Cornwall in June of this year. This spider is currently designated RDB1 and has not been recorded in Britain since 1935 and then only three specimens from two sites on the Lizard, Cornwall. Nothing is known of its biology. This confirms the continued presence of *G. occidentalis* in the UK and makes the Penhale cliff tops an important refuge for this species.

Gnaphosa occidentalis **female. Photo by Peter Smithers.**

147, Molesworth Road, Stoke, PLYMOUTH, Devon, PL3 4AJ

Interesting Records from the Biology of Spiders Course at Reading University

by Steve Hopkin

The *Biology of Spiders* course at Reading University has been run on four occasions since Summer 2000 and about 180 undergraduate students have been trained to identify UK spiders. We now have records collected over four years from the Reading area (SU67 and SU77) and several other localities in the region. The course consists of a series of lectures on basic spider biology and ecology, and practical classes in which the students have to prepare a reference collection in Kilner jars of material they have captured. They work in groups of up to four, although a few students work on their own. The course is popular as there are few 'whole animal' modules available, our Department having gone down the molecular route like so many other universities; between 35 and 55 undergraduates register for it each year.

A spin-off from the course is the number of students who decide to carry out their Part 3 research project on spiders. This has led to quite intensive surveys of local nature reserves and some very interesting records, a few of which I would like to highlight in this brief note.

At the beginning of the course, none of the students has any experience of identifying spiders. However, almost all of them climb the learning curve very rapidly. When I check through their reference collections at the end of the course, there are very few misidentifications. Myself, plus two postgraduate demonstrators, are on hand during the practical classes to give advice and help with the keys. We use Mike Roberts's Collins Guide for most species and his Harley volumes for the money spiders (with occasional consultation of Locket & Millidge). Consistent problems are getting some species to families, particularly Theridiidae and Linyphiidae. Also, many students give the previous or subsequent names to some species in the Collins Guide since in several places, it is not clear to which description the figures refer (see for example pp. 84 and 85 for *Dictyna*). In my copy I have drawn a box around the text of some species and their palp/epigyne illustrations to avoid confusion (not Mike Roberts's fault I know).

Records from the first year of the course appear in the 'Spider Atlas'. Subsequent recording has resulted in the total number of species (including Atlas records made before 2000) for hectads SU67 and SU77 of 125 and 169 species respectively. The combined total for SU67 and SU77 is 190 species. Red Data Book Notable B species that are common and widespread in these hectads are *Marpissa muscosa*, and *Philodromus albidus* (s.s.). Numerous 'Local' species are common including *Achaearanea lunata* (abundant around buildings) and *Zilla diodia*. One interesting feature is the frequency with which we have found *Pholcus phalangioides* in sweep net samples taken some distance from the nearest building. I had suspected that this might be due to contamination of sweep nets within our field course equipment room (see S.R.S. News No. 44: 9), but we now carefully check these for spiders before going out into the field. Several *Pholcus* were found on Yew trees in June 2003 at Hartslock (SU616793) several hundred metres from the nearest dwelling (yet another indication of global warming?). A population of *Hyptiotes paradoxus* was also discovered on Yew trees at the Hartslock site.

A healthy population of *Segestria florentina* exists in the walls of St Mary Butts church in the centre of Reading. A species that is clearly spreading is the pirate spider *Ero aphana*. As reported in an earlier article (S.R.S. News No. 46: 14), this species was found by one of the students in a horse box near Basingstoke in May 2003. One of our students subsequently found a mature female specimen, and a juvenile, in a garden in Tilehurst in Reading (SU675750) in July 2003. Both specimens were captured in a Malaise trap that had been set up to catch flies. It must be present throughout Reading, although attempts at aerial pitfall trapping in my garden have been thwarted by the activities of our local grey squirrels!

Going further afield, Snelsmore Common near Newbury (SU460700) has proved to have a very high diversity of spiders. Most interesting of all the records were two females of *Evansia merens* captured in pitfall traps in June 2003 (checked by Peter Harvey). In the 'Spider Atlas', the distribution is heavily biased towards the north and west. The Snelsmore record extends its range by at least 100 km.

Within houses, *Scytodes thoracica* is very common (like *Pholcus*, *Scytodes* has also turned up some distance from buildings on several occasions). One of the students was enterprising enough to look inside a toilet cistern and discovered a female *Lessertia dentichelis*! Perhaps we should add toilet cisterns to the habitat categories on the recording card.

The course is running again in a new format (compressed into three weeks instead of ten weeks as in the past), and is slightly later in the year (14th June to 2nd July) so we will hopefully be able to extend our species list, possibly even break through the 200 barrier?

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The Discovery of *Steatoda triangulosa* at Sketty, Swansea on 9th April 2004

by G. H. Jones

On Sunday the 11th April 2004 my wife Jennette found a specimen pot containing a spider on our front doorstep. There was no documentation accompanying the specimen and so I initially puzzled over who the sender could be. I phoned Simon Warmingham who knew nothing about it.

It was a species with which I was unfamiliar so I consulted Roberts (1995) and, not wishing to kill the specimen to examine the epigyne, provisionally determined it as a female *Steatoda triangulosa* (Walckenaer, 1802). However, as Roberts states that it is 'absent from Britain', I began to doubt my determination.

Later that evening the identity of the sender was revealed when I received a telephone call from Paul Alton, who asked whether I had identified the spider which he had left on my doorstep when passing through my village earlier that day. My first question was had he been abroad recently... his reply was that he and his partner Sylvie Herault had returned to South Wales on 1st March 2004 having lived in southern France for the past three years. It transpired that Sylvie had found the spider on a bedroom wall at their home in Sketty, Swansea on the 9th April 2004.

I telephoned Mark Winder, secretary of the South Wales Arachnid Group, and told him the tale outlined above. Mark consulted the 'Atlas' and said that there was one previous record for Britain, of a specimen collected at Leicester in 1996 and therefore, if Sylvie Herault's spider was indeed *S. triangulosa*, it constituted the second British and first Welsh record of the species.

I took several transparencies of the specimen and showed it to Simon Warmingham who agreed with my determination. I then forwarded it to Mark with a request to pass it on to Peter Harvey for confirmation of its identity.

Details are as follows: Collector S. R. V. Herault (P. B. Alton). Determiner G. H. Jones. Date collected 9th April 2004. Date determined 11th April 2004.

Sites:

3 Emmanuel Gardens Sketty Swansea SA28EF. UK grid reference SS618914, VC.41.

Village in France where Paul and Sylvie resided from 2001 to 2004. Le Rouret, Department Alpes Maritimes.

18, Heol Maendy, North Cornelly, BRIDGEND, Glamorgan, CF33 4DD

***Steatoda triangulosa*. Photograph by Peter Harvey.**

Micrommata ligurina (C. L. Koch, 1845)—A Mothers' Day Left-Over??

by Doug Marriott

On Monday 22nd March 2004 I was contacted by the nature journalist for the Herts Advertiser, Mr Fred Twilley. He had received a large bright green mature female spider that he thought was *Micrommata virescens*. Apparently this specimen was found in the kitchen of a house in Redbourn, Hertfordshire. I collected the spider and indeed at first glance it did look like *M. virescens*, but a large mature female in March seemed unlikely. Under the microscope several differences were noted when compared with the illustrations and drawings in Mike Roberts's guides. The epigyne, whilst superficially similar in shape, was significantly different on the anterior margin. Also the markings on the carapace shown in Roberts were missing and the abdomen was also only lightly marked. On each side of the fovea there was a black line consisting of dense black hairs which gave the impression to the naked eye of a small 'equal' sign. These differences made me suspect that this was a foreign importation.

The spider was despatched to John Murphy who quickly came back and identified it as *Micrommata ligurina* (C. L. Koch, 1845). This has a Mediterranean distribution and is found from Portugal to Turkey and beyond and also in North Africa. John commented that he had not seen a female so large or so green. It certainly was a most attractive specimen and its presence in Redbourn was probably the result of a Mothers' Day gift of a plant or flowers the previous day.

My sincere thanks to John Murphy for identifying the spider for me and for providing the information on distribution.

19, Winton Drive, Croxley Green, RICKMANSWORTH, Herts.,WD3 3RF

Note from the National Organiser:

When Doug e-mailed me about the *Micrommata*, he mentioned a female record of *M. virescens* shown for December in the Provisional Atlas (Harvey *et al*. 2002). This made me search the original data used to generate the adult season charts, and from the details given it now seems likely that this record is also a foreign import, probably *M. ligurina*, and that the specimen was misidentified. Details of the record are: '12/12/1997. Bosworth Hall Hotel, Market Bosworth SK407034, coll. Sheryl Hilder, det. Jan Dawson. Artificial. On wall of hotel kitchen; at the time, a delivery of foreign fruit was being checked. Released back to site, shrubbery adjoining kitchen.' Unfortunately, since the spider was not kept we are now unable to confirm its true identity.

Reference

Harvey, P. R., Nellist, D. R. & Telfer, M. G. (eds.) 2002. *Provisional Atlas of British Spiders (Arachnida: Araneae), Volumes 1 & 2*. Biological Records Centre, Huntingdon.

Silometopus reussi (Thorell, 1871) (Linyphiidae) and *Argiope bruennichi* (Scopoli, 1772) (Araneidae) in Berkshire

by Jonty Denton

The following records appear to be the first for Berkshire (VC22) for these species:

Silometopus reussi (Thorell, 1871) adults were abundant in a large manure heap near the Holybrook near Southcote (SU6871) in July 2003.

Argiope bruennichi females were found in tall neutral grassland near to Theale lake (SU65-6670) in August and September 2003.

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SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME NEWS

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NUMBER 50 **NOVEMBER 2004**

EDITORIAL

I am very sorry to have to announce the death of Alan Scott, the Cheshire Area Organiser, who passed away on 12th September 2004. Alan did a sterling amount of work for the recording scheme and was instrumental in making Cheshire one of the better recorded vice counties for spiders. His efforts will be sorely missed and our sympathies and good wishes go out to his family and relatives.

As some members will know I underwent major emergency abdominal surgery in June, and now have about a foot less colon! I am very grateful to all those people who have wished me a speedy recovery and can report that it does finally seem to have cured the ill health problem I had since last October. Unfortunately this has meant that plans to progress a review of national spider statuses based on the latest IUCN criteria and the production of guidance on the identification of difficult species have been delayed yet again.

I am very grateful for the MapMate sync files containing a large number of computerised records sent in by Paul Lee, Nick Law, Jennifer Newton, Andy Phillips, Ray Ruffell, Mark Telfer and Howard Williams and the large numbers of Excel records provided by Tony Russell-Smith. I have continued to receive cards and records from several recorders and Area Organisers, and I am especially grateful to John Bratton, Steve Hopkin and Tom Thomas for the large number of cards they have sent in. The post-atlas card total now stands at 1413, of which 1147 are the old RA65 cards and 133 new RA65 cards. If we want to update the atlas dataset, then these will have to be computerised. At the moment new records (on cards or computerised) seem to come in piecemeal, with many counties not represented. However now is the start of a blitz to get new data in.

A NEW DEADLINE FOR RECORDS!

The deadline for the provisional atlas data was the end of 2000, and it seems reasonable to aim to update the maps after 5 years. The plan is to update the maps available on the N.B.N. Gateway and to provide them in a printable PDF format at the B.A.S. website. Printed copies could also be produced at cost to members who do not have internet access.

Depending on the data received, it may also be possible to use the new phase 2 structural habitat and management information to start preparing more detailed ecological profiles for the different species.

So, please start sending in your records and carry on doing so before the deadline: end of 2005. MapMate data will not require processing, and hopefully other computerised data will not present too much of a problem. However card or paper data will take some considerable time to deal with, and the sooner we receive them the better.

My thanks go to all those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 51 will be published in March 2005. Please send contributions by the end of January at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32, Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

A Self Support Group for Norfolk

by Peter Nicholson

I would like to contact individuals in my local area who might be interested in forming a self-support group. I am willing to be a focal point in organising this, preferably through the medium of e-mail. I do wish to make it very plain that I am a recorder and not an expert. The aim is to encourage those in the area, like myself, who have shared in the camaraderie of field excursions and have enjoyed the socialising of like minds.

The object would be to encourage each other into being more productive and possibly to take on projects in the future. We might meet regularly on an informal basis at some hostelry to discuss ideas and encourage field excursions. Individuals would share information, but records would be submitted to the S.R.S. on an individual basis. Depending on the expertise within the group help on identification/verification could be undertaken under the Spider Recording Scheme's and/or Deborah Procter's guidance.

St. Michaels, 9, Stalham Road, Hoveton, NORWICH, NR12 8DG
e-mail: petenich@btinternet.com

Araniella inconspicua in Leicestershire

by Jon Daws

For the third year in a row, I went to Burbage Common in early spring (12th May 2004) to beat for *Araniella inconspicua* on the young oaks as their leaves were just opening. Burbage Common is a mosaic of heath, scrubby patches of woodland and mown grass areas, with two large adjacent woodlands (one of which is ancient). After an hour of beating juvenile *Araniella* from oak branches I gave up for another year and returned to the car. Since there was still a little time before I had to leave the site, I decided to try sweeping the edges of several of the scrubby areas. Within twenty minutes a male *A. inconspicua* had been swept from an area of tall herb/bramble/rough grass (SP446950) adjacent to one of the scrubby areas that contained a few oaks. This male *A. inconspicua* is a new county record, and I suspect this species is probably present in small numbers at this site. As this species is so difficult to find there is a possibility it may well be present

***Araniella inconspicua,* female. Photograph Peter Harvey.**

elsewhere in the county. The other interesting record was of a female *Porrhomma campbelli*, which was also swept from the edge of an area of scrubby woodland and represents a fourth county record.

177, Featherstone Drive, LEICESTER, LE2 9RF.

Theridion hemerobium Update for Leicestershire

by Jon Daws

Since the article in the S.R.S. News No. 47 (November 2003) on the discovery that *Theridion hemerobium* is much more widespread in Leicestershire than previously thought, more information has come to light. On the 13th October 2003 the Ashby Canal at Shackerstone (SK375066) was visited, with a range of sizes of *T. hemerobium* from small immatures to sub-adults being discovered, but no adults. This species was then ignored until the following spring, when the Ashby Canal was once again visited, with the following results:

30/03/04 1♀ SP406935 Ashby Canal, Hinckley: on canal pilings.
30/03/04 1♀ SP392964 Ashby Canal, Stoke Golding: on canal pilings.
30/03/04 1♀ SK395001 Ashby Canal, Shenton: on canal pilings.

Along with the adults that were collected, a large number of sub-adults and large immatures were also found. This would indicate that this species has a long breeding season with adults being present between March and September, with the breeding cycle only being interrupted by the onset of winter.

Until now all the British records of *T. hemerobium* have been connected to river or canal systems or their close environs, such as gravel pits or adjacent lakes. This restriction has been further borne out within Leicestershire, by the fact that this species has not so far been recorded from reservoirs, isolated lakes or non-navigable streams or rivers. This has meant that all Leicestershire records for this species have come from the navigable parts of the Rivers Trent and Soar, the Grand Union Canal and the Ashby Canal.

However on 21st June 2004 a visit to a garden centre in the village of Seagrave (SK613175) produced a single female *T. hemerobium* that was collected from the side of their large corrugated water container/reservoir. The garden centre is situated 3 km east of the River Soar/Grand Union Canal and 50 m above the base of the Soar Valley, so in all probability this specimen could have aeronauted from there. A further interesting fact was that it was collected in fairly close proximity to a female *Achaearanea tepidariorum* that had emerged from one of the greenhouses. Prior to finding this specimen of *T. hemerobium* I had always worked on the theory that the species was accidentally introduced into the English canal system sometime within the last fifty years and has spread along our navigable waterways since then. This record would therefore be the first indication that the species probably uses aeronauting to get around.

These latest records also continue to confirm this species has an aversion to brick and concrete structures, with it being present on the metal pilings along the canal, but absent from adjacent bridges. This affinity for metal and wooden structures in themselves does not mean that this species will be present, since a collecting trip along a stretch of the Grand Union Canal close to the centre of Leicester failed to find this species on metal and wooden structures, with the conclusion that immature stages of *T. hemerobium* need adjacent wetland/bank-side vegetation to be present for either food or shelter, to maintain a local viable population.

Adults of this species could be collected within Leicestershire on a daily basis between March and September without much effort, so it could be under-recorded in southern Britain. These Leicestershire records have been compiled by a single collector, who will obviously present some bias toward certain collecting techniques (e.g. metal canal pilings). So it would be interesting to get other arachnologists' views on this species' distribution within their county and the habitat niche it occupies there.

The only other new records of *T. hemerobium* within Leicestershire are listed below; these bring the total number of 10 km squares this species has been recorded from within the county to fifteen:

20/07/04 8♀ SK376067 Ashby Canal, Shackerstone: canal pilings and fishing platforms.
18/08/04 1♀ SK491292 River Soar, Kegworth: on wooden bridge.

177, Featherstone Drive, LEICESTER, LE2 9RF.

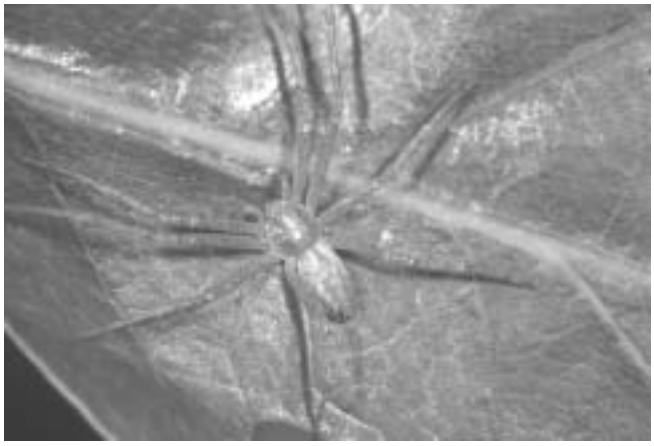
Philodromus albidus Kulczyński, 1911 New Record for Lincolnshire

by Annette Binding

From April to July of this year my husband, Allan, and I were conducting an invertebrate survey of a small area of land on and around the disused railway line at Coningsby. Known locally as The Pingle, the area consisted of a series of small ponds and wet woodland with mature oaks, willows, alder, ash and elm. The disused railway line itself had been grassed over and planted with widely spaced trees and the grass was kept short by regular mowing. The area is a proposed local nature reserve and had not been surveyed before for either plants or invertebrates.

On one of our visits during June, Allan beat a small pale spider from one of the mature oaks on the woodland edge adjacent to the mowed area. At first I thought it was a juvenile because of its small size and pale colouring. However, when I later examined it under the microscope I was surprised to see that it was a mature female which I identified as *Philodromus albidus* Kulczyński, 1911. Since this spider is relatively rare and was new to Lincolnshire, I took it to Tom Faulds, Nottinghamshire

County Recorder, and he confirmed my identification. Later Peter Harvey confirmed that this was the most northerly record of this species.



***Philodromus albidus*, male. Photograph Peter Harvey.**

We made further visits to the site but found no more *Philodromus albidus*. We did, however, find *Tetragnatha nigrita* Lendl, 1886, a species which is very uncommon in Lincolnshire, this being only the fifth record. It was also confirmed by Tom Faulds.

I am grateful to Tom Faulds and Peter Harvey for their help with identification and information about these spiders.

6, Willow Court, Washingborough, LINCOLN, LN4 1AS.

Argiope bruennichi New to Lincolnshire 2004

by Annette Binding

On 26th August this year, I received a phone call from Phil Porter, the warden at Whisby Nature Park near Lincoln. He told me he had received a photograph, via an e-mail, of a spider which looked like a female *Argiope bruennichi*. Phil gave me the telephone number of the person who had sent the e-mail, Jane Paterson, who is a member of the volunteer wildlife survey team at Whisby Nature Park. The spider had been found by Paul Skelton, one of Jane's work colleagues, in the middle of a sugar beet field amongst trial plants near Navenby in Lincolnshire (SK998577).

The spider was collected by John Maddison, another work colleague, but had been released back at the field on the previous evening, after the photograph had been taken. Luckily someone had spotted the same spider earlier on the 26th August and John was dispatched to find it, which he did. Needless to say, Allan and I wasted no time in getting over to Navenby to collect the specimen, not least because the previous week a spider which was described over the phone as being very large with yellow-orange and black stripes, had turned out to be a female *Araneus diadematus*. This time, though, it was indeed a female *Argiope bruennichi*. Jane then took us out to see the area where the spider had been found and we found some remnants of web, but no other spiders. At this stage we thought the spider had probably come into the area via the beet seed boxes as the seed is grown in France and packed in Holland, both places where, according to my books, the species occurs on the continent.

The following day, I spoke to Peter Harvey on the telephone and he said it was more likely to be a result of the species' spread northwards. Peter was able to give me much more information about the spiders' habitat preferences. It was only after I put the phone down that we remembered that the site where the spider was found is very close to an old Roman Road alongside of which some of the grass verges are left uncut. Part of the old Roman Road is now just a farm track and so vegetation there has been allowed to grow long. Since Peter told me that the spiders need rough, unmanaged areas of long grass, it would seem that these places would provide a more suitable habitat than the sugar beet field. Peter also told me that the spiders are often in large numbers, but difficult to spot owing to their cryptic colouring. We went back to the area two days later and explored the road verges and part of the Roman Road farm track, but found no more *Argiope bruennichi*. The day was quite breezy and it was difficult to spot any webs amongst the grass although there were good numbers of *Araneus diadematus* present.

Argiope bruennichi is a spider species I had wanted to see, but I never thought that one would be found in Lincolnshire. This is probably the most northerly record for this species.

I am grateful to Peter Harvey for information about *Argiope bruennichi* and to Paul Skelton for finding the spider, John Maddison for capturing it and to Jane Paterson and Phil Porter for passing the information on to me.

6, Willow Court, Washingborough, LINCOLN, LN4 1AS.

Pardosa lugubris sensu stricto in Britain

by Peter Harvey

This year I was identifying spiders and aculeate Hymenoptera for the R.S.P.B. from pitfall traps set in sample locations at the R.S.P.B. reserve at Abernethy (VC94) as part of an experimental study into the use of burning or cutting management in the forest field layer. *Pardosa lugubris/saltans* was present in a number of the samples and after various attempts to compare the palps to the drawings in Töpfer-Hofmann *et al*. (2000) I still could not make up my mind whether they were *P. saltans* or *P. lugubris,* since there always seemed to be some variation and no certain match to the figures. It was only when I went to Essex specimens of *P. saltans* that the difference was obvious. I sent several specimens to Dr Peter Merrett for his opinion and he agrees that they are *P. lugubris sensu stricto*. It is embarrassing to report that when working through similar samples in 2003 I had identified the spider as *Pardosa saltans*, despite checking against the figures in Töpfer-Hofmann *et al*. A total of 119 males and 13 females were present in the 2002 samples and 76 males and 17 females in the 2003 samples from various locations in the reserve.

Ian Dawson has checked about half a dozen each of male and female *P. saltans* in his own collection and a single male and two assumed females of *P. lugubris* from Abernethy in 1999. He also has two females that may well be *P. lugubris* from Corrimony (below Glen Affric to the N.W. of Loch Ness) which are a little bigger than those from Abernethy, but otherwise matching them (Ian Dawson, pers. comm.). I am very grateful to Ian for the following provisional summary of apparent differences from *P. saltans* and accompanying photographs:

***P. lugubris* males**
Apparent differences from *P. saltans:*

Palps
- strong tooth at tip of cymbium in *lugubris.*
- shorter cymbium relative to longer, finer median apophysis.
- less strongly bristled, especially on palpal femur and tibia.
- cymbium more convex basally, with distal half of cymbium straight (almost all straight or slightly concave in distal half in *P. saltans).*
- distal half of cymbium paler brown.

Certainly the most obvious feature that I noticed was the strong tooth, compared with a very small or almost absent tooth in my Essex specimens of *P. saltans*. The shorter more convex cymbium is obvious when compared directly with specimens of *P. saltans*, but I found this much more difficult to appreciate when comparing specimens with the figures in Töpfer-Hofmann *et al*.

Ian notes in particular the strong dark bristles on the palpal femur and tibia, especially anterolaterally, in *P. saltans.* He reports that these seem to be obvious in life with a hand lens, suggesting that males may be separable in the field (but voucher specimens of both species will be essential).

Upperside
- central pale carapace band is wider, with less straight sides, and more strongly tapering at rear.

Underside
- contrastingly darker anterior spinnerets are very obvious.

***P. lugubris* females**
Tentative differences from *P. saltans*:

Upperside
- as in the male the central pale carapace band is a little wider, with less straight sides, and more strongly tapering at rear (though one of Ian's *P. saltans* females tapers similarly). The central band is pinched in about a third back from posterior eyes with a 'tooth' of darker pigment.
- indistinct but complete narrow paler lateral carapace bands which are lacking, irregular or broken in *P. saltans*. (Increasing the brightness and contrast of the photos brings this out). Ian assumes this feature, if constant, is visible only in preserved specimens.

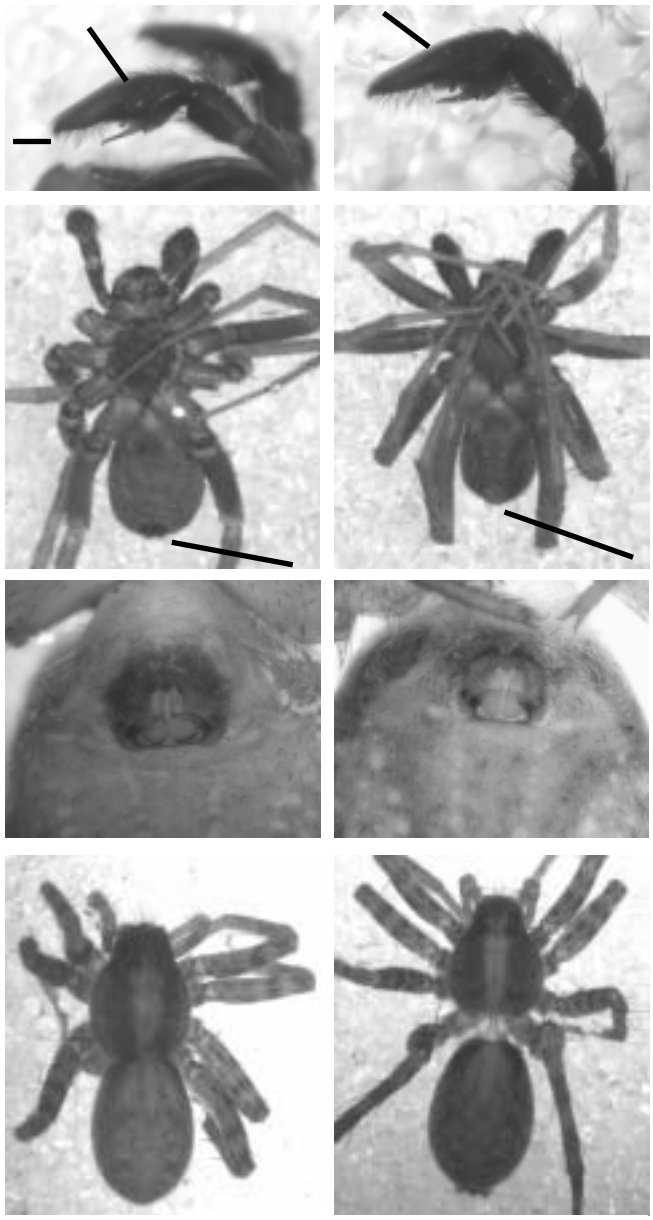
Underside
- strongly contrasting dark area to sides and front of epigyne (any dark pigment more diffuse in *P. saltans*).
- contrastingly darker anterior spinnerets.

The underside features are perhaps more promising, especially as Töpfer-Hofmann *et al*. note that females from the Netherlands show darker spinnerets.

It is obviously unwise to draw firm conclusions until more specimens are available, and pigmentation may bleach in old specimens making identification of females impossible. However Ian has provided an excellent starting point to encourage people to check their specimens and provide feedback confirming or refuting these suggestions. Please send any feedback and possible *P. lugubris* to a member of the Verification Panel (see S.R.S. News **48** in *Newsl. Br. Arachnol. Soc*. **99**).

I am very grateful to Mark Hancock (R.S.P.B.) for permission to report the identification of *Pardosa lugubris*. The sampling work was supported by the EU Life programme, BP (through the Scottish Forest Alliance) and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Pardosa lugubris *Pardosa saltans*



Photographs by Ian Dawson.

Reference

Töpfer-Hofmann, G., Cordes, D. & Helversen, O.v. (2000) Cryptic species and behavioural isolation in the *Pardosa lugubris* group (Araneae, Lycosidae), with description of two new species. *Bull. Br. arachnol. Soc*. **11** (7), 257–274.

32, Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP.

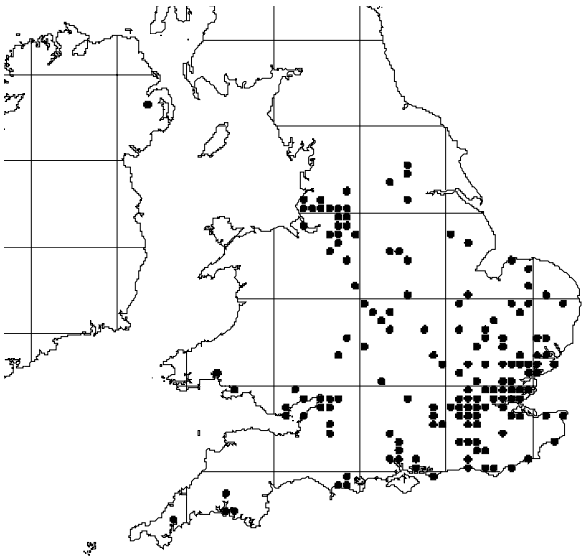
Website Forms and an Update on *Argiope bruennichi*

by Peter Harvey

On the Essex Field Club website www.essexfieldclub.org.uk I have a number of pages with information about invertebrate species that are relatively easy to identify, and forms that people can use to submit their records. Photographs often support records submitted, or if there is any doubt about the identification then I ask for a photograph or voucher to be posted to me. The response has varied widely from species to species, and the most

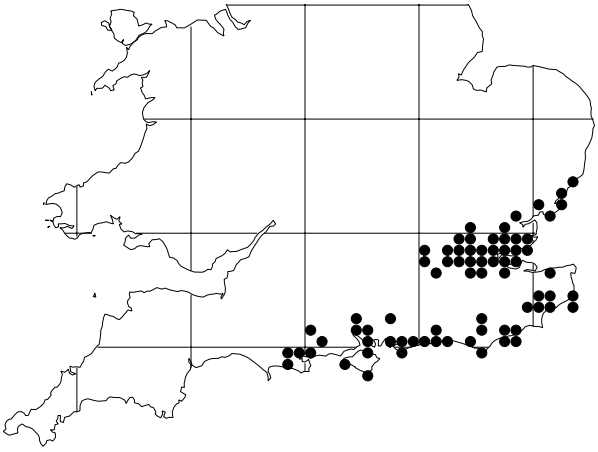
successful by far has been the Lily Beetle, with 250 responses to date this year, and wide coverage way beyond Essex even including nine responses each from Canada and the U.S.A. Only a small percentage of the records I receive are Essex ones!

Argiope bruennichi is the next most successful, with 60 British records submitted so far this year as well as ones from Guernsey, France, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Greece and the U.S.A. They are mostly from existing centres of population, but I have also had especially useful ones from people in the Colchester area and Suffolk supported by enough information or a photo to confirm the observation.
It is interesting to compare the provisional atlas map with the map of website records and a map showing the distribution based on all records to date:

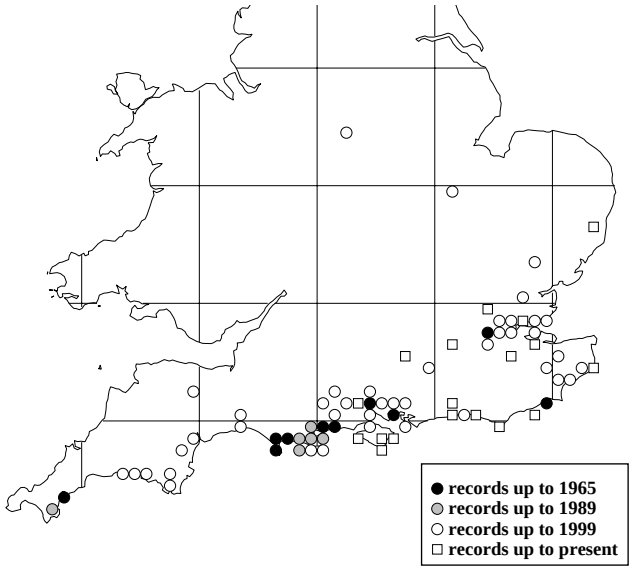


Lily beetle records received this year.

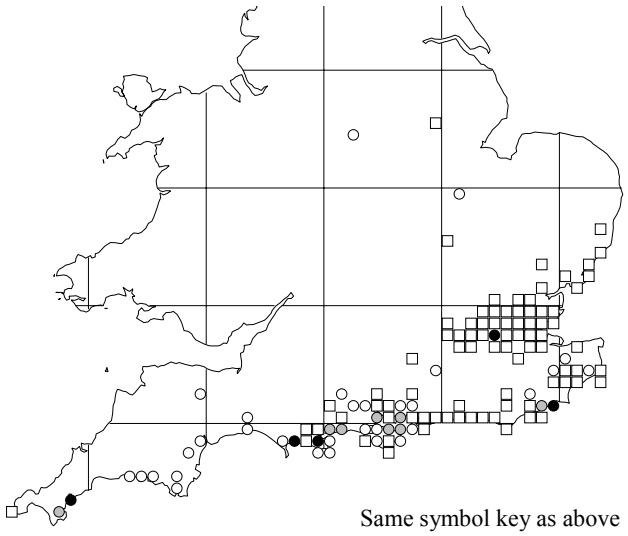
It is also interesting how the response to different species varies – I have had, for example, practically no forms submitted for *Salticus scenicus* (this year 5 UK and 1 each from Canada and U.S.A.) or *Araneus diadematus* (3 UK and 1 each from Canada and U.S.A.), yet these would be useful species for us to get more records. They must both be very under-recorded in coverage terms.



Website records for *Argiope bruennichi* this year.



***Argiope bruennichi* records in provisional atlas.**



Same symbol key as above

All records for *Argiope bruennichi* to date.

The large number of people who submit records in many different counties and countries makes it clear that there is a big demand out there for people to be able to submit observations. Not surprisingly it is the large and striking species that seem to dominate. Every year in late summer and autumn, e-mail enquiries start to come in about large spiders that people see for the first time in their house or garden, usually just after their son/daughter has returned from far-flung foreign places. They are often concerned that the spiders may be a foreign import and deadly poisonous! In almost every case they turn out to be *Araneus diadematus* or one of the larger *Tegenaria* species that the person has never noticed before. On the other hand a number of enquiries and record forms about bites from the south coast and the Southend area in Essex have been confirmed as *Steatoda nobilis*, including a specimen from Ivybridge in Devon, the first record from that county since the original record near Torquay by Pickard-Cambridge in 1879.

32, Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP.

Confirmed internet records of *Steatoda nobilis* this year.

Araneus diadematus in Shetland

by Peter Harvey

On 28th July 2004 Alex Wylie e-mailed me pictures of a spider he had found in his greenhouse at Lerwick, Shetland (HU461405). These were of a very well marked *Araneus* that I identified as *A. diadematus* (a very variable spider in colour and pattern) and it was especially interesting because it seems to be the first record for Shetland, and the furthest north in Britain that any araneid spider has been recorded (reference to the maps in Harvey *et al*. 2002).

However just before I wrote this note I remembered someone had sent me a very similar well-marked *Araneus* from Illinois several years ago, and it occurred to me that there might just be another closely related species found in the U.S.A. I looked at garden spiders in my own garden, and the pattern was substantially different from that of the Ohio and Shetland spiders. The scape projecting from the epigyne of the Illinois *Araneus* was much longer and thinner than the sample female *A. diadematus* that I went and collected in my own garden. I therefore sent the Illinois specimen to John Murphy for his opinion. He has looked into whether there are other possible species, but can't find one that would match, and thinks that the Illinois specimen must be within the intra-specific variation of *A. diadematus* (John Murphy, pers. comm.). Michael Roberts has also considered the possibility of whether *A. diadematus* might comprise two or more closely related species, but has come to the conclusion that there is only one, extremely variable species (Roberts, 1987).

Presumably the amount of suitable habitat for large orb-web spiders like *A. diadematus* will be fairly limited in the Shetland Islands and it is most likely to be found in gardens where tall herbaceous plants and shrubs are growing. However it is interesting that the spider was established in Alex's greenhouse rather than garden, so perhaps the extra shelter and warmth are also factors this far north. I am very grateful to Alex for permission to report the discovery and to use his photographs in this note and to John Murphy for examining the Illinois specimen and providing his conclusion.

References

Harvey, P. R., Nellist, D. R. & Telfer, M. G. (eds) (2002) *Provisional Atlas of British Spiders (Arachnida, Araneae), Volumes 1 & 2.* Biological Records Centre, Huntingdon.

Roberts, M. J. (1987) *The spiders of Great Britain and Ireland. Volume 2. Linyphiidae*. Harley Books.

Greenhouse where *Araneus diadematus* was found.

***Araneus diadematus* both photographs Alex Wylie.**

32, Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex RM16 2YP.

SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME NEWS

srs@britishspiders.org.uk

NUMBER 51 **MARCH 2005**

EDITORIAL

Jim Stewart has done an enormous amount of work in Scotland as Area Organiser for a remarkable number of vice counties: 82 (East Lothian), 83 (Midlothian), 84 (West Lothian), 85 (Fife and Kinross), 86 (Stirling), 87 (Perth West), 88 (Perth Mid), 89 (Perth East), 90 (Angus) and 98 (Argyll Main). Jim has now decided to give up the role, passing on 1240 tubes of his reference collection and 117 bottles of specimens of less common species to be lodged in the National Museum of Scotland. I would like to thank Jim for the enormous amount of work he has done as Area Organiser and for helping the provisional atlas to reach fruition with a remarkably well-covered Scotland.

So now a plea for volunteers to take on one or more of these vice counties and the following 5 others currently vacant north of the border: 72 (Dumfries), 78 (Peebles), 79 (Selkirk), 80 (Roxburgh) and 81 (Berwick). There is still a lot of work to be done and plenty of good spiders to find!

John Crocker and Jon Daws will both be familiar to members for the publication in 1996 of the remarkable county fauna on spiders of Leicestershire and Rutland, followed in 2001 by a substantial update in the form of a Millennium Atlas. John has finally persuaded Jon Daws to take over as Area Organiser for VC55 Leicestershire (with Rutland). Many thanks are due to John Crocker for his enormous efforts and achievements as Area Organiser and for the immense contribution the very large VC55 database made to the national atlas. I am very grateful to Jon for agreeing to take up the reins in one of the best recorded counties in the country. Jon is well known for his activities in sampling little investigated habitats and skill at finding rare and new species (for example see later in this News).

Don't forget the December 2005 deadline for new data

Thank you very much indeed to everyone who has started to send in new data, especially via MapMate. In particular I failed to thank in the last newsletter Michael Usher and Dick Loxton for the very large number of valuable records with phenology information that they had previously provided me with – my only excuse is that the data lay buried under newer workload and had been forgotten after I had made a start on entering it into MapMate.

Just to make sure protocol for the submission of records is clear, record cards are always welcome but will need to be inputted before the data become useful – this will take considerable time and effort, so if you are going to submit your data in this way please do so as soon as possible. If you have records in computerised format, but not in MapMate, then please send to Stan Dobson who will endeavour to collate the data for submission for the proposed updated maps. If you have your records held in **MapMate**, then do not convert the records to a spreadsheet in order to send them – this negates one of the most powerful features of the software. Use the MapMate sync facility to submit your records directly to me (centre 2gv). MapMate will keep track of what records you have sent or edited, and seamlessly keep up-to-date when you do more syncs in the future. You can send sync files either as an e-mail attachment or via the MapMate website. One question I have been asked is whether the MapMate fields provide sufficient data for the S.R.S. MapMate has incorporated our phase 2 data requirements and guidelines since early 2003, when Technika Ltd modified the software in co-operation with the B.A.S./S.R.S. Assuming you are using an up-to-date version, and are using the S.R.S. data entry templates, then you will automatically fulfil what we want when you sync your data. This information will be the key to a better understanding of the autecology of our British species. The checklist in MapMate is completely up-to-date. It is best to select the filter described as Araneae: Spider Recording Scheme in your configuration, but it will not matter if you also include the Arachnida: Araneae option – the main difference is the inclusion in this list of Channel Islands species and certain other differences where species have been split or are unidentifiable as females. This will not cause a problem to the recording scheme.

Please send articles for the July S.R.S. News by the end of May to Peter Harvey at 32, Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

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A Shocking Experience

by Jimmy McKellar

Firstly I would like to state: I in no way cast blame on either manufacturer mentioned in this article as the problem was one of my own making. However I would like to alert other users to the potential hazard of this particular combination of circumstances.

On the 18th of November 2004 I was looking through my microscope when I received a nasty electrical shock. I was using a Meiji Techno, model SKC microscope with a separate Flexispot lamp, model SPU power supply.

I had pushed the stage clips to either side so that I could accommodate a larger object and reached out to adjust the illumination while continuing to look through the eyepieces. It was at this point I received an unpleasant electric shock.

I confess that because I was unhappy with the microscope's original lighting I simply cut the cable off at the entry point at the rear making it un-powered and un-earthed. On investigating the cause I discovered that the microscope stage clips droop down but have an upturned end, this terminates at about the same height as the ventilation slot on the side of the lamp's power source. When the lamp was lifted slightly for adjustment the stage clip entered the slot and must have come into contact with the mains. Fortunately neither the microscope nor I was earthed thereby alleviating any real danger. I was surprised the fuse on the lamp did not blow as the stage clip must have touched the lamp casing. To prevent a repeat event I simply plugged the lamp into a different socket at 90

degrees to the original position and now the side closest to the stage clip has no ventilation slot. The moral of this story is check all possible potential hazards out and take action before they become a problem.

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Records of Uncommon Spiders from Southern England, 2004

by Jonty Denton

Theridiidae: *Dipoena tristis* (Hahn) (Notable A)
Southwood (SU8454) 7th July, adult female from gorse bushes on relict heath area. This appears to be the first record for North Hampshire (VC12).

Linyphiidae: *Erigonella ignobilis* (O. P. -Cambridge)
Southwood (SU8454) 25th September, adults found in suction samples taken in an area of open damp grassland surrounded by old woodland. According to Harvey *et al.*, (2002) this is the first post-1980 record from south-east England, and the first for North Hampshire (VC12). There are old records from SU94-96 in Surrey.

Tetragnathidae: *Meta menardi* (Latreille)
The awful weather in early July brought down a large beech tree near Heron Pond in Bushy Park (TQ1669). The tree had looked sound, but the basal 3 m or so of the trunk was hollow. On 9th July, inside the exposed cavity were two female *M. menardi*. The remaining bole of the tree was taken away to the estate yard, and a further female was found on the rim of the broken-off section of the cavity. Reference to the atlas shows that there are no previous records for this species in Middlesex.

Araneidae: *Araneus marmoreus* Clerck var. *pyramidatus*.
I took an adult female on the edge of Ashenground Wood, West Sussex (TQ3223) on 30th August. It was a surprise to find that the atlas had only one previous record from the Weald, which was a pre-1950 record, also from TQ32!

Salticidae: *Salticus zebraneus* (C. L. Koch)
Widespread on large trees in Bushy Park, Middlesex (TQ1470, TQ1569) in July.

Reference

Harvey, P.R., Nellist, D.R. & Telfer, M.G. (eds) (2002) *Provisional Atlas of British Spiders (Arachnida, Araneae) Volumes 1 & 2*. Huntingdon: BRC.

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Araneus alsine (Walckenaer, 1802) in West Inverness-shire (VC97)

by Duncan Williams

On 6th September 2004, I spent an afternoon sweeping field layer vegetation on the Allt Mhuic Nature Reserve, Loch Arkaig. The sample yielded several specimens of *Pachygnatha listeri* Sundevall, 1830 and *Xysticus ulmi* (Hahn, 1831). This seemed reasonable reward for the effort – with both of the above, at least in northern Britain, being rather poorly known and seemingly local spiders. In addition, a single female of *Cercidia prominens* (Westring, 1851) was swept from low sparse *Myrica gale* Bog Myrtle and *Carex* spp. growing in a small flush in an area largely dominated by *Molinia caerulea* Purple Moorgrass (NN122913). This latter find would appear to represent a significant northern record: only four other Scottish records are evident in the Atlas of British spiders (Harvey *et al*., 2002).

More excitingly, two juvenile specimens of *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer, 1802), were swept from a weak *Juncus acutiflorus* Sharp-flowered Rush dominated flush (NN119913). Despite their small size (ca. 4 mm) the two specimens were still immediately recognisable as belonging to that highly distinctive species; being familiar from previous experience of *A. alsine* near Fort Augustus VC96 (Williams, 2003).

Despite my confidence in the identity of these two juveniles, I made a second visit to the site some three weeks later, on 24th September 2004 in an attempt to obtain mature specimens for absolute confirmation. Almost immediately on commencing sweeping of an open damp area dominated by low *Myrica* and *Molinia* among open oak/birch woodland (NN119912) two mature female specimens of *A. alsine* were duly taken. Further survey over the course of the day yielded specimens elsewhere along Loch Arkaig. A further mature female was located in an oak leaf spun to clumpy *Myrica* further down Loch Arkaig at Ardechive (NN145 899). At this site, grazing by cattle was readily apparent, even on the plants of *Myrica* to which the leaf was spun. One, strikingly dark female was found in a spun retreat of dead *Myrica* leaves among robust growth (>1 m tall) of Bog Myrtle growing through dense hummocks of *Molinia* (NN097913). This latter locality also yielded a female specimen of *C. prominens*, swept from *Myrica*.

On 8th October 2004 one further site was discovered – near Coire Choille (NN246809), Spean Bridge. Again, a single female *A. alsine* was found in an oak-leaf spun to plants of Bog Myrtle. Here, however, the *Myrica* grows in more discrete clumps, with the grass sward being more heavily grazed down by livestock.

Despite its large size and entirely distinctive appearance, there are remarkably few modern records of this Nationally Notable B spider in Britain. The Atlas (Harvey *et al*., 2002) only lists five post-1979 records, though Denton (2003) adds two further southern records not included therein.

The 80-hectare Allt Mhuic Nature Reserve is managed (in partnership between Butterfly Conservation, Forestry Commission Scotland and Forest Research) with primary regard to its interest for Lepidoptera, most notably the Chequered Skipper Butterfly *Carterocephalus palaemon* (Pallas, 1771). The locality near Spean Bridge also supports this species. It is worth noting that this distinctive butterfly has been known from Scotland only since 1939. Only over the last 30 years or so has the true nature of its limited UK distribution in Lochaber and Argyll been elucidated. Given that a member of such a small and popular group of invertebrates could remain undetected over such a large area for so long it seems entirely plausible that *A. alsine* (which would appear to favour broadly similar damp clearings in open woodland) might be found elsewhere within the known range of the Chequered Skipper. Reference to the species richness map in the Atlas (Harvey *et al*., 2002) suggests that the extensive areas of oak woodland to the west of Fort William would appear to have received scant attention from arachnologists.

I would like to thank Peter Harvey for confirming the identity of the spiders referred to above.

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Williams, D. (2003) A third Scottish locality for *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer, 1802), the 'Strawberry Spider'. S.R.S. News No.45. **In** *Newsl.Br.arachnol.Soc.* **96**: 17.

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An Imported Pholcid in Felixstowe

by Paul Lee

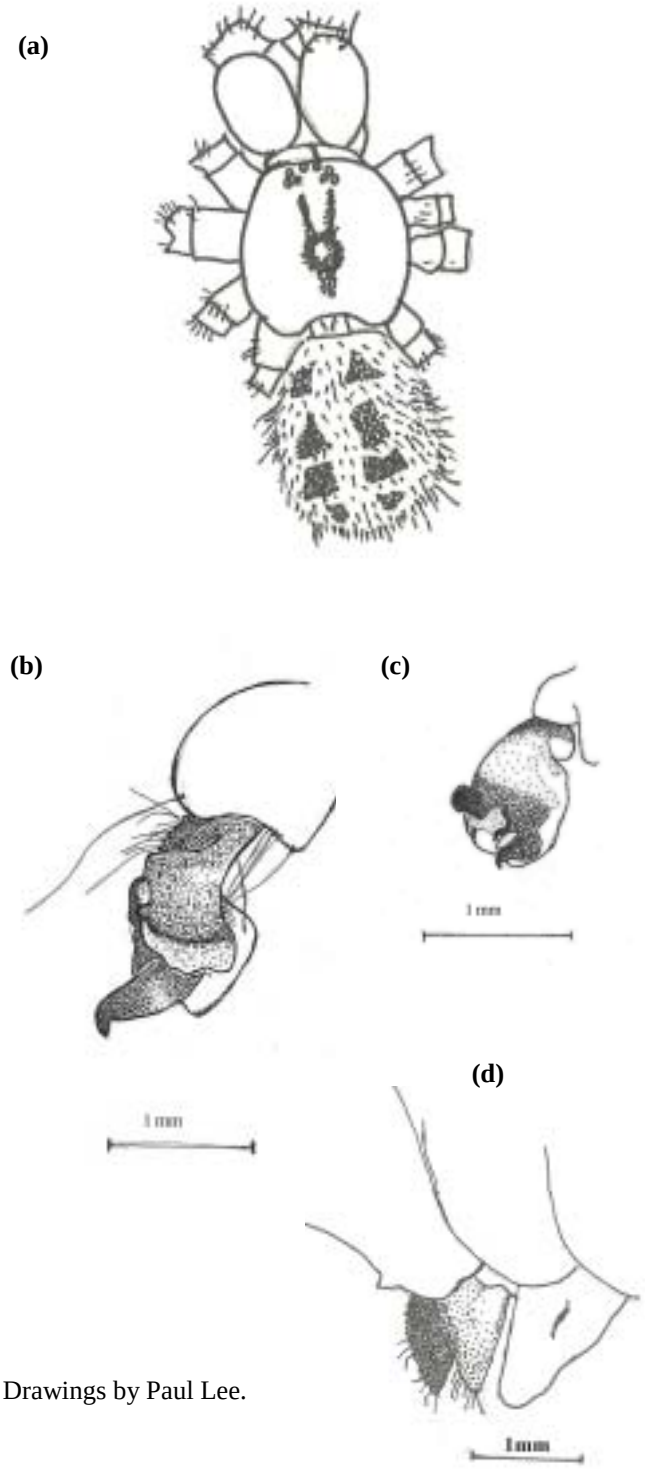
In July 2004 I was sent three spiders by Emma Costello of Igrox Ltd, a pest control company based in Worlingworth, Suffolk. These spiders originated from a container on Felixstowe docks which Igrox had been called in to fumigate. One spider was immature and I have been unable to get anywhere with naming it; I have not been able to identify even the family it belongs to. The other two spiders were adults, a male and a female pholcid. Although similar in body length to the very largest *Pholcus phalangioides*, the specimens from Felixstowe had longest leg lengths in excess of 55 mm. The body was also more globular and the legs stouter than in *Pholcus* and therefore gave the spiders a much bulkier appearance as well. The femur of the palp was very large and this was especially noticeable from above. Finally the male chelicerae each had a dark, granulated ridge protruding from the anterior face. Each ridge was almost as massive as the chelicera itself. Based on my drawings of the male palpal organs and chelicerae the spiders were identified as *Artema atlanta* Walckenaer, 1837 by Dr. Bernhard Huber of the Museum Koenig, Bonn.

Artema atlanta was originally described from specimens that had been collected in Brazil, but Brignoli (1981) has suggested that the species was introduced to the Americas from the Old World. Whatever its origins, this tramp species has been very successful in hitching a lift with man on his travels around the globe. It has now been reported from all the continents except Antarctica and has become an established part of the fauna in warmer climes. In 2001 it was reported as being imported into Antwerp (van Keer & van Keer, 2001), not that far from Felixstowe as the ferry sails!

The presence of two specimens of *Artema atlanta* in a container on Felixstowe Docks hardly merits an addition to the British checklist. However, it does further demonstrate the potential for the introduction of alien species and the risk of their becoming established should climatic change be favourable.

References

Brignoli, P. M. (1981) Studies on the Pholcidae, I. Notes on the genera *Artema* and *Physocyclus* (Araneae). *Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.* **170**(1): 90–100.



Drawings by Paul Lee.

***Artema atlanta*: (a) Whole male spider, (b) Lateral view of tarsus of left palp, (c) Underside of palpal bulb, (d) Lateral view of left chelicera.**

Lee, P. (2000) Further notes on the long-legged spider, *Pholcus phalangioides*. *White Admiral*, **45**: 39.

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Phrurolithus minimus (C.L. Koch, 1839) in Cumbria, VC69

by Jennifer Newton

On a visit to Holme Park Fell, SD5478, a National Trust property on limestone in south-east Cumbria, in March 2003 I was puzzled to see a number of tiny ant-like spiders under loose limestone rocks at the foot of a south-west facing slope of limestone pavement. The spiders were bright red in colour, very similar to the red of the *Myrmica* ants which were also present in large numbers. None of the spiders was mature, but I managed to rear a male to maturity to confirm my suspicion that it was *Phrurolithus minimus*, a Nationally Scarce, Na species. A return in early June produced one female. In 2004 there were excellent numbers of subadults in April, and on 8th May, on a visit with Cumbria Wildlife Trust and B.A.S. most of the eight members found adult specimens under rocks, including one mating pair photographed by Phil Shaw, the only other B.A.S. member. In October I found further immature specimens.

***Phrurolithus minimus* pair. Photograph by Phil Shaw.**

The colony extends for a few hundred metres along the base of the limestone pavement, crossing into the next tetrad, and is clearly a large and flourishing one. Although the site faces south-west it is at 150 m altitude in quite an exposed position. Holme Park Fell is part of the Hutton Roof Crags – Farleton Knott complex of limestone pavement, rock outcrops and scree, well known for its rich diversity of plants and invertebrates. However *Phrurolithus minimus* was not found by Chris Felton on a section of Hutton Roof surveyed recently by the Liverpool Museum team for the Cumbria Wildlife Trust. The nearest record for the species is in Dove Dale in Staffordshire, at 250 m altitude, with the few other British records all further south, mostly from south-east England. It is interesting that the other member of the genus, *P. festivus* is scarce this far north, with just a few records from Gait Barrows NNR in this area.

My thanks to Peter Merrett for confirmation of the identification and to the National Trust for permission to survey spiders on the property.

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Spider records from the Butterfly House, Lancaster

by Jennifer Newton

I was invited to visit the Butterfly House in Lancaster in August 2004 to see if I could help with their spider problem – there is a build-up of numbers in the summer and these spiders attack some of the carefully nurtured caterpillars. In the very humid heat of the tropical butterfly house it soon became clear that the main culprit was *Achaearanea tepidariorum*: there were large numbers of males alongside females guarding their egg sacs under various large leaves. This is the first recent record for Lancashire. In addition I picked up a tiny spider which turned out to be an adult male, and also a tiny adult female. Both were distinctively marked spiders with clear genitalia reminiscent of Theridiidae but not fitting any of the British species. Tony Russell-Smith very kindly and rapidly identified both specimens as *Coleosoma floridanum* and I was able to read up about the species in Crocker & Daws (2001) and the Provisional Atlas. It seems that it is a tropical species which has been transported round the world, first recorded in this country from Kew in 1966, also from Rutland Water Butterfly Centre in 1999 plus a couple of other records from the south-east. It looks as if butterfly houses will be a good bet for finding new county records for these two species. I had hoped to find *Uloborus plumipes* but without success – perhaps they don't like the high humidity. British species inside the hothouse were *Scotophaeus blackwalli*, *Neriene montana*, *Enoplognatha ovata*, *Lepthyphantes minutus* and *Tegenaria* probably *saeva*, but I couldn't catch the adult specimens.

The Butterfly House in Lancaster is maintained at high temperatures and humidity throughout the year, as the tropical butterflies are kept through the winter.

Reference

Crocker, J. & Daws, J. (2001) *Spiders of Leicestershire and Rutland: Millennium Atlas*. Kairos Press, Newtown Linford, Leicester.

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Some Spiders of Misson Carr Nature Reserve Nottinghamshire

by Howard Williams

In 2004 I obtained permission from Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to survey, mainly for spiders and fungi, Misson Carr reserve in the north of the county. This large reserve, only acquired by the Trust in 2002, is a fragment of the county's formerly more extensive northern carrlands – themselves the southern fringe of the larger carr areas of South Yorkshire. Surrounded by arable and some pasture fields, it has been preserved thanks to its ownership by the MoD before its purchase by the Trust. It comprises wet scrub woodland with *Phragmites*, and an area of acid grassland; and is particularly known for its extensive macro and micro moth lists as well as for some uncommon breeding birds.

***Synageles venator* (Spain). Photograph by Peter Harvey.**

A short walk-about visit here in February produced, after a brief grubbing session in one section, 18 species of spider, of which one was a female *Clubiona subtilis*, a scarce spider in most areas and a county first for us. Another uncommon spider taken was *Gongylidiellum latebricola*, a male.

A further visit in May produced a number of interesting species as a result of beating, sweeping and grubbing in a limited number of sections. These included: a second (male this time) *C. subtilis* in a different section from February's female; another spider uncommon in Notts and a county first, *Baryphyma trifrons* (f); *Trichopterna thorelli* (m, f), only the second record for Notts, the first being not far off on another damp reserve in 1998; another scarce spider in the county, *Ceratinella scabrosa* (m); a spider infrequently collected by us, *Xysticus ulmi* (m, f); *Araneus marmoreus* var. *pyramidatus* (immatures or subadults). The last-named species appears to be uncommon in the county, though abundant in parts of Sherwood Forest and apparently here at Misson. A female *Kaestneria dorsalis* was a pleasing find, being not common hereabouts.

It was a visit in August with County Organizer, Tom Faulds, that produced the most remarkable discovery at the site entrance (SK712971), and that after we had packed everything away in the car prior to leaving the site. I noticed on the wooden gatepost what seemed at first sight to be a pale brown ant. About 15 minutes before I had seen a similar thing on the other gatepost, but it had vanished into a crack before I could get a good look. After a rushed unearthing of pooter and tubes etc from the car, we captured it; but unable to make much of it there and then, pooted it into a tube of alcohol containing other spiders from that spot to be examined later.

It turned out to be the jumping spider, *Synageles venator* (f), a Notable A species, a scarce, mainly coastal species of the South Welsh and southern English shores and dunes. The nearest sites to us are some 100 km to the south near Peterborough. I understand from Peter Harvey that its location 3–4 ft up on a gatepost and fence is itself unusual, the species normally being observed on the ground.

The rest of the bag that day was undistinguished, so *Synageles* made up for the hours spent sweltering under a hot sun and swarms of biting insects, the concomitant, alas, of fenscapes in high summer. To date, the number of spiders recorded on this site after 3 visits – one very brief – is 70. There must be many more awaiting identification and hopefully the list will lengthen given time.

My thanks are due to Tom Faulds for his initial confirmation of *Synageles* and to Peter Harvey for his definitive one, and also for additional information.

References

Harvey, P. R., Nellist, D. R. & Telfer, M. G. (eds) (2002) *Provisional atlas of British spiders (Arachnida, Araneae), Volumes 1 & 2.* Huntingdon: Biological Records Centre.

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Walckenaeria mitrata Rediscovered

by A. Russell-Smith

The linyphiid *Walckenaeria mitrata* was first recorded in this country from Blean Woods NNR, near Canterbury, Kent in 1967 (Swann, 1971). A total of five specimens were taken in pitfall traps in mature (ca. 30 year old) mixed chestnut and beech coppice in Little Den Lees (TR 108608). Three males and one female were captured in the period 13th April to 11th May 1967 and a further female in the period 16th November to 14th December of that year. In 1968, a single female was taken in a quadrat sample of leaf litter at the same site on 19th December.

Since that date, no further specimens of this species have been collected in Britain, despite a considerable amount of hand collecting and some pitfall trapping in apparently suitable habitats in the Blean Woods NNR over the period 1991 to 2003. During 2004, Aaron Scarlet, an undergraduate student at Christchurch College Canterbury, carried out a field project to compare surface activity of invertebrates in three different ages of chestnut/birch coppice in Church Wood, part of the Blean Woods NNR (TR121597). Five pitfall traps were located in each of three adjacent areas of coppice, one cut the previous winter, one cut 5 years previously and coppice last cut 15 years previously. The pitfall traps were initially placed in the field on 11th May and then emptied at approximately 2 week intervals until the 28th October. Two males of *Walckenaeria mitrata* were trapped in the five year old coppice during the period 11th to 25th May. A single female of the species was taken in the area cut the previous winter during the period 5th to 22nd June. Interestingly, these areas were quite different from that in which the species was found in the 1960s. There, the over-mature coppice had a well developed canopy 7–10 m in height and a deep layer of leaf litter. The areas in which the species was found in 2004 were either bare ground with some resprouting of coppice or a dense thicket of five year old regrowth of chestnut and birch. In neither was the litter layer very well developed, except immediately beneath chestnut stools in the 5 year old coppice.

It seems therefore, that *W. mitrata* can exploit a range of woodland habitats and it seems strange that it has not been found in Blean Woods during the intervening 35 years since its first discovery. Like the thomisid, *Pistius truncatus*, confined in this country to East Blean Woods LNR, it may be able to survive at very low population levels. Given this, its discovery elsewhere in Britain will probably only come about as a result of intensive survey work.

Reference

Swann, P. H. (1971) *Wideria mitrata* (Menge), a spider new to Britain (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Bull. Br. arachnol. Soc.* **2**: 11–12.

1, Bailiffs Cottage, Doddington, SITTINGBOURNE, Kent, ME9 0JU.

Megalepthyphantes sp. n. in Kent

by A. Russell-Smith

On the 4th November 1999, Peter Harvey and Eric Philp were collecting at Minster on the Isle of Sheppey (Kent) when a male and two females of an unfamiliar linyphiid were taken by Peter and provisionally identified as *Megalepthyphantes collinus*. The specimens were examined by Peter Merrett who found that they were very close to, but distinct from, *Megalepthyphantes collinus occidentalis*. This subspecies is known only from Portugal but the nominate species is otherwise quite widespread in central Europe. Subsequent examination has convinced Peter Merrett that this actually represents a new species of *Megalepthyphantes* which will be described in the near future. The collection site was in tall open herbage growing on stabilised shingle below a London Clay undercliff and in dense tall grass close to the beach (TQ962734). A further female was collected at the same site by this author on the 8th October 2000. The site was visited again by the author on 12th October 2001 but without finding any further specimens.

The author collected at Seasalter, Nr. Faversham (TR 060648) on the 21st September 2002 where two females of this species were collected while turning bricks and other debris in a dense stand of the grass *Arrhenatherum elatior* on shell sand. The same site was revisited on the 28th October when another solitary female was taken. A visit to Whitstable on 4th October 2002 revealed another male and two females at Castle Hill (TR120673). These were found in tall grass & herbs growing on shingle against a concrete groyne. Several more females were seen but not collected on this occasion. A repeat visit to the same site on 28th October produced three further females. Although the sites at Seasalter and Whitstable were revisited in October 2003, no specimens of *Megalepthyphantes* were collected. The shingle was extremely dry at this time following the hot summer and very few spiders were seen.

Both the Seasalter and the Whitstable areas were visited again in October 2004. No further specimens were found at Seasalter but at Whitstable the species was found to be common at a location near Island Wall, about 1 km to the east of Castle Hill (TR097656) on the 18th October. A total of 4 males and 4 females were collected but overall between 15 and 20 specimens of both sexes were seen. Females spin a very loose and untidy sheet web about 20–25 cm above the ground. Here it was found in a similar microhabitat to that at Castle Hill, in tall grassy vegetation with many forbs against a concrete groyne. Subsequent visits in October 2004 to three sites on shingle on the east coast of Kent (Deal, Walmer and Kingsdown) failed to find the species in superficially similar vegetation to that at Whitstable. Finally, a single rather damaged male of this species was taken from a pitfall trap in Church Wood, part of the Blean Woods NNR near Canterbury (TR122597) about 8 km due south of Whitstable between the 14th and 28th October. The site was a 15 year old chestnut and birch coppice with the canopy about 5–6 m high and a fairly thick litter layer.

In summary, *Megalepthyphantes* sp. n. is now known to occur in tall grassy vegetation on stable shingle/shell-sand along a short (ca. 12 km) stretch of the North Kent coast and also in coppice woodland in Blean Woods NNR. Although this seems a strange combination of habitats, it is matched by that of another uncommon species, *Trichoncus affinis*, which is now known to be fairly frequent in Blean Woods but elsewhere in Britain is confined to coastal shingle in the south-east.

***Megalepthyphantes* sp. n. Top and middle, female; bottom male. Photos by Peter Harvey.**

Adults of *Megalepthyphantes* are present between late September and early November and the species is reasonably abundant at one site in Whitstable. A common feature of all the shingle sites from which it has been recorded was that the ground beneath the vegetation was fairly moist, perhaps due to the underlying layer of London Clay at Minster and to runoff from concrete groynes at Whitstable. This may explain its absence from sites on the east coast of Kent where the shingle below the vegetation layer was completely dry. While at present only known from North Kent, there is no reason to suppose that suitable habitats do not exist elsewhere along the south or east coast of Britain and it may well have been overlooked because it matures relatively late in the year.

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Achaearanea riparia in Leicestershire

by Jon Daws

This species was discovered new to VC55 on the 20th July 1997, when a single male was swept from rough limestone grassland within the working quarry at Ketton (SK975059). The specimen was considered to be an aeronaut, with the possibility that this species could be established within the quarry or adjacent areas. No further records for this species were recorded until a subadult male was collected from its web at the side of the working quarry at Ketton on the 31st May 2004 (SK972056) The spider was found at ground level close to the base of a spoil heap, under a small rock outcrop, where its tangled web stood about 3 cm high. Although the adjacent spoil heaps and quarry sides were searched, no further specimens were found.

A month later (29th June 2004) a quest to find further sites for *Dictyna latens* in the north of the county involved sweeping some of the wide rough grass verges to the east of the village of Seagrave; but this search was unsuccessful. As part of this collecting trip a two metre wide field margin of fine grasses (SK627167) was also swept, which produced a male *A. riparia*. This record was unexpected and was initially written off as a stray aeronaut, but on talking to Peter Harvey I learned that the edges of ploughed fields are a possible viable habitat for this species with the small bank type habitat that is produced by ploughing.

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Adjusting to the Climate

by Jon Daws

The second record for *Scytodes thoracica* for Vice-County 55 came from the outside wall of Uppingham Church (SP866996) on the 24th July 2000. A female was found dead in a *Steatoda* web, with a further female taken alive from the inside wall of the church. The fact that a specimen of *Scytodes* was found outside was considered anomalous, the spider had possibly wandered out of a open window and had been unable to get back inside and had then succumbed to native aggression. This was until on a visit to Husbands Bosworth Church (SP644844) on the 7th July 2004, two female *S. thoracica* were collected from the outside of the church. One was found, five feet from the ground, on an old unused churchyard sign, leaning against the church wall; the other was collected from beneath a small pile of two high house bricks that were adjacent to the church porch. The church was locked and there was no time to gain access.

There is little doubt that this species would not survive our worst winters out in the open, but could they survive our mild ones, persisting long enough to colonise further distant heated buildings? There is evidence that other non-native species have survived our winters for at least a few years; John Crocker had a small *Achaearanea tepidariorum* population in an unheated glass house, in his Leicestershire garden for several years during the 1990s, until an unusually cold winter spell killed them off. Whilst living in Suffolk in the early 1990s a female *Pholcus phalangioides* survived a very cold winter in one of a block of free standing unheated garages, when temperatures fell to below minus ten degrees some nights and remained below freezing for one particularly cold week. The female *P. phalangioides* mostly remained inert and immobile in its web during the very cold spells, but recovered and became active on some of the warmer winter days. In Leicestershire today, there are some large populations of *P. phalangioides* living and breeding within the county cable systems, with their only protection coming from the depth of the cable holes, some up to three feet deep. So perhaps with global warming these and other synanthropic species are on the verge of becoming a part of our urban or suburban fauna, or like the second *Scytodes* found within VC55 the climate may prove to be the least of their potential problems.

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Holocnemus pluchei in Leicestershire

by Jon Daws

On the 28th September 2004, whilst working in an Asda distribution warehouse at Lutterworth in south Leicestershire, I noticed a spider's web about a metre from the floor in a corner between a wall/roof balustrade and the wall. The web was triangular about 30 cm by 30 cm and looked like a *Linyphia* sheet web, there was a very active female spider adding silk to the web whilst hanging upside down beneath the web. The initial impression was of a *Pholcus phalangioides*, but the web was not the usual messy *Pholcus* affair, with the movements of a large long legged *Linyphia* species. The spider was collected and Mike Roberts 'Spiders of Britain and Northern Europe (1995)' was consulted, with the spider being initially identified as a *Pholcus opilionoides*.

The spider was sent to Peter Harvey for his opinion, who agreed that it superficially looked like a *Pholcus opilionoides* but noted the fact that the specimen had swollen palps, a character not mentioned in Roberts (1995). Peter knew that there are quite a few species of pholcids in central and southern Europe but did not have enough knowledge of the species or the relevant literature, so sent the specimen to John Murphy who identified it as a *Holocnemus pluchei* (Scopoli, 1763). The spider had probably been imported into the warehouse on one of the thousand or so pallets that come into the depot on a daily basis, but it remains to be seen whether this is a singleton or the possibility that there is a breeding colony.

I would like to thank both Peter Harvey and John Murphy for their help and identification skills.

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Theridion hemerobium Simon and Other Riverside Spiders

by Tony White

In his interesting article on the distribution of *Theridion hemerobium* in Leicestershire (S.R.S. Newsletter 50) Jon Daws draws attention to the possibly neglected habitat of riverside or canal-side structures. Rivers and canals in general provide an abundance of potential insect prey and so it is not surprising that spiders are also abundant in riparian habitats. Certainly in the Northampton area (VC32) *T. hemerobium* is very common on bridges over the canalised River Nene. At Cogenhoe, for example (SP833613), it is present in large numbers, as it is on other riverside structures both to the east and west.

***Larinioides patagiatus* photo by Peter Harvey.**

***Larinioides sclopetarius* photo by Martin Askins.**

Well within the town boundaries of Northampton, boat moorings beside the river support vary large populations of *Larinioides* species. On a visit to the Far Cotton area (SP752596) on 3rd June 2002 I was able to take, from one structure, specimens of *Larinioides cornutus, L. sclopetarius* and *L. patagiatus.* The last of these three appears to be a new record for Northants. These spiders, like their relative *Nuctenea umbratica,* tend to be crepuscular or even nocturnal in their habits and during daylight hours can be almost impossible to lure from their retreats, even when tempted by a tuning fork. My visit took place at dusk and each spider was occupying the hub of its web. For arachnologists a visit to their local river or canal on a summer evening can be a very rewarding experience.

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Ero tuberculata in Norfolk

by Tony Irwin

On 24th October 2004, my daughter found a spider sitting on the wall in the bathroom of our house in Norwich (TG211082). I recognised it as an *Ero* species and later identified it as *Ero tuberculata*. Peter Harvey tells me that it seems to be the most northerly recent record of this species in Britain.

While photographing it, I was intrigued by the various positions it adopted on a twig. It often preferred to sit on a small silk platform slightly away from the twig, with its legs well tucked-up, apart from one extended forward and another backwards. In appearance it appeared to be a discarded cranefly carcase from a spider's web. At other times it closely resembled a bird dropping (as do many boldly-marked black-and-white or brown-and-white spiders, beetles and moths).

***Ero tuberculata* photo Tony Irwin.**

Another pose was to sit with its legs more widely spread, so that the pattern on the abdomen and cephalothorax could be easily seen (see figure). When looking at this I was struck by its resemblance to a monkey's head. Perhaps the tubercles on the abdomen of this species are there to enhance this appearance. Although the scale may appear to be all wrong, it is known that predators are sometimes 'taken in' by the resemblance that beetles and caterpillars have to the heads of snakes. Could this be another example of mimicry? Or am I working too late at the office these days?

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Spider Recording Scheme News
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Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

Editorial

Don't forget the December 2005 deadline for new data

Thank you very much indeed to everyone who has been sending in their new data. Please continue to send in your records, and if you haven't yet provided post-atlas records please try and do so before the **December 2005 deadline**. Also if you hold records with adult male/female information that you have not already provided in the form of records, please send it in for inclusion, even if the distributional data were already submitted for the atlas – duplication of distributional information is not a problem if you can add phenology or any other phase 2 ecological information to data previously submitted.

The provisional atlas dataset holds 517,839 records, but we are now receiving increasing amounts of new data by MapMate, or in spreadsheet and tabular form that I will continue to add to MapMate as time allows. I currently hold 150,456 spider records in MapMate of which probably half were included in the provisional atlas but for which we now have centralised and quantifiable male/female and other information. The post-atlas card total stands at 1570, of which 1168 are the old RA65 cards, 269 new RA65 cards and the remainder GEN7, 13 and 14 cards. BRC Monks Wood has agreed to include the computerisation of the old RA65 and GEN cards into their 2005 schedule.

So we should have a very substantial amount of new information with which to update the maps and start to use in analysis to help clarify the ecology and phenology of our species. As an example of the kind of analysis we can now easily generate from MapMate data I have produced some queries that MapMate has provided as a patch which can be used to analyse spider data for various phase 2 features such as structural habitat, broad habitat and management. We would easily be able to use these and many other similar queries on the spider dataset in the future.

Area Organiser changes

In the last newsletter I reported the retirement of Jim Stewart as Area Organiser after long service and much hard work for the British Arachnological Society and Spider Recording Scheme. Mike Davidson has very kindly volunteered to take on Angus and Perthshire, which means that he is now AO for VCs 87 (Perth West), 88 (Perth Mid), 89 (Perth East), 90 (Angus or Forfar), 91 (Kincardine), 92 (Aberdeen South), 93 (Aberdeen North), 94 (Banff) and 95 (Moray or Elgin). Please send records for these VCs to Mike at 1, Crowmallie Cottages, Pitcaple, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire AB51 5HR; email: mike.davidson@sepa.org.uk

Clarification on the Usage of Some of the S.R.S. Phase Two Terms

by Peter Harvey

Phase two of the recording scheme has profiling of the ecological characteristics of each British spider species as one of its most important aims, and many of the features we would like arachnologists to record are designed to help achieve this. The use of categories is essential if these data are to be usable in analyses, but whatever system is used, there will be difficulties – we will always be trying to balance the recording of useful information with a system that is realistically simple! The result will be a compromise and there will be instances where things do not fit easily into any category. Since we will use these data to generate an ecological profile for every British species of spider, it is important that we all have the same understanding of the meaning of the categories. The use of SRS-based queries in MapMate has highlighted some confusion over the use of a few of the phase two terms.

Habitat Structure & Detail (or MapMate Status & Method)

The **Structural Habitat** (**MapMate Status**) categories seem to have caused a number of problems. I am not a trained ecologist, so there may be plenty of scope for argument, but we do all need to use a similar interpretation if the resultant data are going to provide useful analyses. The thinking behind the categories is based on the vegetation layers used in woodland ecology – the climax vegetation assumed to be characteristic of most of the British Isles.

My understanding is as follows: the **canopy** refers to the overhead foliage and branches of the trees and shrubs in a woodland; the **field layer** refers to the herbaceous vegetation growing underneath and the **ground layer** refers to the ground or litter layer above the underlying substrate, but would include ground expanses of encrusting lichen and moss. '**Shrub and low canopy to 5 m**' and '**Shrub and low canopy above 5m'** are simply an attempt to separate the ability to sample scrub, hedgerows and the lower canopy of woodland edge e.g. by beating, with the fauna that may be associated with higher canopy beyond reach of normal fieldwork, but which can be sampled e.g. by fogging or by scaling trees to reach the tree tops – we don't expect too many records for this category, even though the results might be of great interest!

In phase two of the recording scheme these terms are applied to habitats other than woodlands, hence grasslands and heathlands etc also have a ground layer and field layer, and if there is a significant scrub component then also a "Shrub/low canopy" element (in MapMate '4.0 Shrub/low canopy to 5 m'). In a situation where moorland or heathland has tall woody ericaceous plants for example,

there may be a difficulty in allocating this to the field layer or to the shrub/canopy below 5 m. I personally think in general this could be categorised as a field layer >20 cm unless the ericaceous vegetation is very tall, very woody and the associated fauna is comparable to that typically found on scrub or the lower branches of trees. To some extent it is a question of how the spiders use the vegetation – are they using the structural features provided by the woody heather in the same way as in shrubs/scrub, or are the structural features of non-woody heather shoots more significant? If the situation defies easy resolution it is almost certainly best left 'Not recorded' and noted in the Comments field!

The features refer to the habitat or structural feature **IN WHICH YOU HAVE FOUND** the spider – not to the surrounding habitat or to features above the structural layer you sample. Hence you should not record a spider from 'Shrub/low canopy to 5 m' unless you actually found it in this structural layer or beat it from the layer. Similarly if you find a spider by grubbing (on the ground) it should be recorded as from the ground layer (i.e. in MapMate, 1.0 -1.5 options for the Ground layer) regardless of whether the ground layer is in the open or under dense woodland (the broad habitat is already recorded elsewhere). A bare litter ground layer in woodland or open grassland or heathland would be 1.1 Ground layer: bare ground; the ground layer in a dense herbaceous woodland field layer or densely vegetated grassland meadow would be 1.4 Ground layer: dense veg. cover. Similarly the low vegetation and field layer options apply to the 'herbaceous' layer of plants growing to a height of <20 cm (Low vegetation <20 cm) or above 20 cm (Field layer >20 cm). Evidently there may be problems with assigning these to a particular situation, but I would advise taking an approximate average view to the vegetation height (and density) and if you can't make up your mind then don't record that feature, or record details in the comment field. In general the sampling method will often be related to the structural vegetation layer you are sampling – grubbing and pitfall traps set in the ground will be associated with the ground layer, sweeping with low vegetation and the field layer and beating with shrub/canopy below 5 m.

The structural or MapMate Status categories are also intended to be based on structural vegetation layers rather than simply on height above the ground. Hence if, for example, a spider was found on a tree trunk, under bark, or in aerial litter, then whatever level it was found in it **should not** be listed as 'Canopy above 5 m', since vegetation structure is not really applicable in these situations. In these instances the Structural Habitat should not be recorded (or in MapMate the Status should be 'Not recorded'), and instead the phase two Detail or MapMate Method can be recorded as 'On tree trunk', 'Under bark' or 'Aerial litter, birds nests etc' respectively. We can then ultimately query the data to obtain numerical information on those species found in these micro-habitats and at what time of year.

In phase one the broad habitat categories contained 'Cultivated land, including gardens (13)' and 'Buildings (14)'. To try and separate information on spiders found inside buildings with those more often associated with gardens, phase two changed these to 'Buildings, indoors (14)' and 'Gardens, parks (36)', but retained 'Cultivated land, including gardens (13)' to maintain continuity with the data already submitted in phase one. Since it would really have been better to separate 'Cultivated land, including gardens' into three categories, 'Cultivated fields', 'Gardens' and 'Parks' to avoid the risk of overlap, it would now be best to treat the phase two 'Cultivated land, including gardens (13)' as 'Cultivated fields (13)'. We know of course that some species, such as *Zygiella x-notata* or *Salticus scenicus,* are usually found on walls/fences or the outsides of houses. These should be recorded with the detail (in MapMate the Method) 'On fence' and 'On wall'. The broad habitat will already have been recorded as 'Gardens, parks'. As Ian Dawson (Dawson, 2003) has recommended, because MapMate associates sites with a broad habitat type, where one locality contains more than one habitat each habitat needs to be set up as a separate site – e.g. Tempsford, Station Road 122a (house) and Tempsford, Station Road 122a (garden). Hence *Salticus scenicus* recorded on the outside of the house (but in the garden, not indoors) should be recorded under site Tempsford, Station Road 122a (garden) but with Detail or Method 'On wall'. Similarly if the species is recorded on a wall or building in the middle of moorland then it should be recorded at the site with moorland as the broad habitat, but with the Detail or Method 'On wall'. This should cover most eventualities, and if you can't satisfactorily match, then leave that feature as 'Not recorded'. Additional information can always be included in the Comment field (although this will not then be easily available for use in analysis).

Because MapMate associates a site with a broad habitat it can seem difficult at first to enter records where sites contain a number of habitats. However, it becomes much easier once you get used to the way the software works, and it is in fact really quite logical to create a separate site for each major habitat (or compartment) e.g. Oxshott Heath (woodland); Oxshott Heath (heath); Oxshott Heath (sand pit) each associated with the relevant broad habitat type. If at all possible when entering sites for the S.R.S. please use one of the SRS phase 2 habitat categories and record the associated substrate and management features if they are apparent or you have that information. It is even possible to enter different management categories as separate sites e.g. Hitchcock Meadow (pre-grazing) and Hitchcock Meadow (post-grazing) in order to compare species associated with the same site but after a different management regime has been introduced. Remember that each site only has to be entered once and is then available for all species records. In addition remember that as long as you are consistent with the way you name sites then you can query them either separately or all together by using wildcards e.g. '*Oxshott Heath*' will find all sites containing 'Oxshott Heath' in their name.

In summary, in cases where you are unsure about how to record something, then it is best not to record that feature (or in MapMate to choose 'Not recorded'). On the other hand we should try to record as much as feasible so that we can build up a better understanding of the ecology and behaviour of each species. If recorders still have questions over interpretation of the phase two features, please don't hesitate to request clarification. We do need to use a similar interpretation if we are to make use of what should become extremely valuable ecological information about the habits and behaviour of our species.

I am very grateful to Tony Russell-Smith for reading the text and making helpful suggestions.

Reference

Dawson, I. (2003) MapMate and the Spider Recording Scheme. *S.R.S. News No. 46.* In *Newsl. Br. Arachnol. Soc.* **97**: 12–13.

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Clubiona caerulescens in Bedfordshire

by T. J. Thomas

In the north-western part of Bedfordshire are a number of woodlands on heavy clay. For the past ten years or so I have been regularly visiting one of these as part of a study by the Ouse & Nene Branch of The British Naturalist's Association. Known locally as Knotting Wood, there are two parts, West Wood and Sheeprack Wood, separated by a long narrow section called Dean Lane Meadow. An historical survey has shown that West Wood (as it is marked on the maps) is over 900 years old e.g. there is on record an argument over grazing rights in the meadow and the adjacent compartments in 1247. Also, particular plants in the ground flora tend to confirm that the woodland is old though clearance, then replanting in the 1920s, has resulted in oak and ash trees of a measured 80–90 years of age, giving the superficial appearance of a young wood.

In order to make my spider collecting more interesting I usually concentrate on particular habitats or even single plants. Whilst working the wood during May 1st 2005, I chose to compare Midland Hawthorn, in full flower, and Common Hawthorn with the buds beginning to break open. Both plants are plentiful throughout the woods. A mature male of the uncommon spider, *Clubiona caerulescens***,** was beaten from a Midland Hawthorn that was on the edge of a compartment of West Wood. The spider was distinctive for its large and dark palps though it was not recognised until examined later. This capture is a new record for the wood and the county.

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The Distribution of *Theridion hemerobium* Simon, 1914 Throughout the Navigable Canal System of Great Britain

by Nick Law

Introduction

A chance encounter with *Theridion hemerobium* Simon, 1914 during field work in Shropshire; a need to find a topic for an M.Sc. dissertation; and finally, the suggestion that *T. hemerobium* "..is quite likely to be found to be commonplace along most of our canal and river systems throughout southern Britain", (Daws, 2003), collectively provided the catalyst for a detailed survey, of the navigable canal system of Great Britain, for this species. This was undertaken by the author during July–August 2004.

Methodology

A map of the Inland Waterways of Great Britain was marked off with 10 km² grid squares. These were then analysed, and a note made of those which contained a length of navigable canal. Omitted from this analysis were:

- Short lengths of navigable canal which were not connected to the main canal system
- Navigations; including tidal river navigations and non-tidal river navigations
- Navigable drains
- Navigable canals within London
- 10 km² squares for which (at that time) there were published records for *T. hemerobium* from canals (Daws, 2003).

This analysis resulted in 191, 10 km² squares (within 8, 100 km^2 squares) for potential survey. It was then decided that approximately 20% of these would be surveyed using a stratified random sample. Selection of the final 40 survey squares was achieved using random numbers: generated within an Excel spreadsheet.

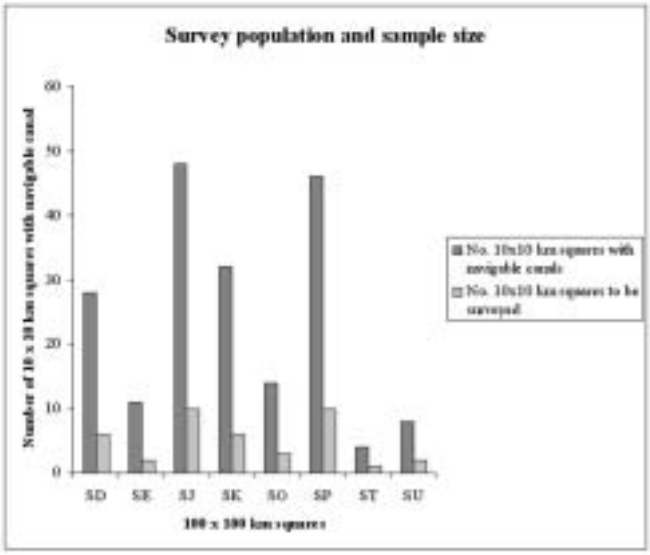

Figure 1. Survey population and sample size.

In order to expediently cover the considerable distance of canal to be surveyed, a bicycle was transported to each site: the towpath system providing suitable cycle access.

Initially, a process of hand searching solid structures, and beating vegetation adjacent to the canal, was employed. However, it soon became apparent that hand searching would be the most suitable method. Therefore, with the exception of a couple of squares, the survey technique involved cycling the towpath until the preferred habitat was located and duly searched. If no *T. hemerobium* were found, the next area of preferred habitat was located and searched. And so on, until all of the canal (along the accessible towpath) had been covered. If the preferred habitat was not present, other structures known to be used by *T. hemerobium*, e.g. wooden fences and stiles (Daws, 2003), were searched: normally on the return journey.

Results

Of the 40 10 km² squares surveyed, *T. hemerobium* was recorded in 37 (92.5%). Although not as yet subjected to any statistical analysis, these results would seem to confirm that *T. hemerobium* is distributed widely, throughout the British canal system; from the wide

Gloucester & Sharpness Canal, in the south west; as far north as the Lancaster Canal.

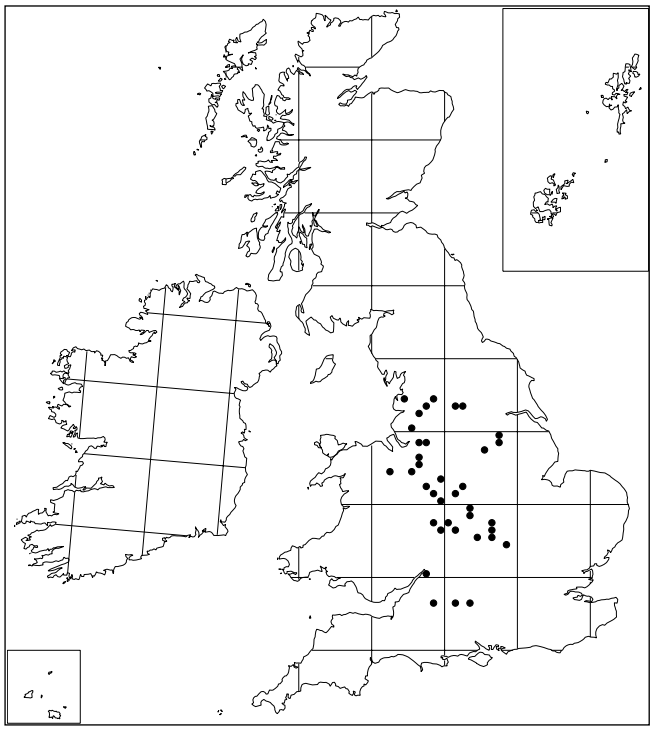

Figure 2. Distribution map of 10 km² survey squares where *T. hemerobium* was recorded.

Discussion

90% of the records, at individual locations, were from galvanised steel pilings. This reflects an apparent preference by *T. hemerobium* for this sub-habitat; and consequently, a bias towards searching these areas during the survey. Specifically, it is the horizontal bar running parallel to the canal surface of the pilings (Fig. 3) which is used. I have called this a tie-bar; apparently, in canal terminology, this refers to something else and this rail is therefore known as the 'bumper' (pers. comm. O'Dea).

In many instances where there were long stretches of this piling, large populations were present; and *T. hemerobium* was recorded very quickly. This was not always the case though: on the Shropshire Union Canal (Llangollen Branch), close to Llangollen, many hours were spent searching the favoured habitat until a single female was found close to the lift bridge at SJ22794233.

Webs are constructed across the face of the piling and the spiders are generally located beneath the overhang of the upper rib of the bumper. Often they will be concealed within a small retreat, constructed from debris, or in a silk cocoon. Unlike *T. varians*, which was occasionally encountered occupying this niche habitat with *T. hemerobium*, specimens would not normally tend to drop immediately when disturbed. It was also noticed that once placed in a specimen tube, *T. varians* would be very active; whilst *T. hemerobium* would, in contrast, be relatively sedate in its movements.

The Kennet & Avon Canal has only been restored relatively recently, and here, there was very little in the way of piling present: most of the banks had soft margins with emergent vegetation. However, even in the absence of the preferred habitat, *T. hemerobium* was still present; mainly on wooden structures close to the canal.

T. hemerobium was not found in; SD81 (Rochdale Canal), SK38 (Sheffield & Tinsley Canal) or SP09 (Tame Valley Canal and Rushall Canal); all urban areas.

Very few adult males were recorded. Often juvenile males (most likely *T. hemerobium*) would be close to webs with spiderlings, but not normally if a female was nearby.

A great variation in abdominal markings and coloration was observed within collected specimens. This was particularly notable on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal at Alvechurch Marina (SP022117221). Here, specimens resembled; *T. pictum*, *T. varians* and *T. tinctum*. Despite becoming very familiar with the species in the field, the author never acquired sufficient confidence to identify juveniles, because of these variations.

Another type of canal piling encountered was one consisting of vertical concrete slabs, with a tie-bar (bumper) resembling a length of railway track. This bar was invariably rusty; and therefore, both rougher in texture and darker in colour, than the more commonly encountered galvanised piling. Specimens taken from these tended to be noticeably darker in colour. It is therefore possible, that the species is capable of some degree of adaptation in response to its environment: a degree of melanism possibly affording some camouflage in these situations.

Whilst this survey has considerably furthered our knowledge of the distribution of this species, it has inevitably raised many questions and other avenues of potential investigation. It seems somewhat surprising that a species which is widespread across the country, in an easily accessible habitat, has been so overlooked: many of the survey records are expected to be first vice county records. One possibility is that this is a recent colonist, which has spread rapidly. If this is the case, have boats assisted with this rapid dispersal?

It is expected that others will now be able to readily make records for *T. hemerobium* in the 80% of the 10 km^2 not surveyed. However, this will not add significantly to our wider knowledge of the distribution of *T. hemerobium* in Britain. On the other hand much of the navigation system excluded from the survey is connected to the canal system; perhaps this is where recording effort should now be directed?

Figure 3. Bumper on galvanised steel piling.

Site	Grid ref	10 Km	VC	No.	Date	Comment
Lancaster Canal	SD4746	SD44	60	2 f	29-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SD47574654.
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	SD5908	SD50	59	2 f	30-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar. SD59120841
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	SD6424	SD62	59	2 f	29-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SD64292485.
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	SD7631	SD73	59	2 f	28-Aug-04	Rusty railway track tie-bar over concrete pilings, SD76543136.
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	SD8846	SD84	59	2 f	28-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SD88644628.
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	SE1739	SE13	63	2 f	28-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SE17093922.
Leeds & Liverpool Canal SSSI	SE2335	SE23	63	2 f	28-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SE23653594.
Shropshire Union Canal - Llangollen	SJ2242	SJ24	50	1 f	30-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar. SJ22794233, by swing bridge.
Shropshire Union Canal - Llangollen	SJ5646	SJ54	58	2 f	03-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SJ56864686.
Shropshire Union Canal - Middlewich	SJ6257	SJ65	58	5 f	03-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SJ62975741.
Shropshire Union Canal	SJ6761	SJ66	58	2 f	03-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SJ67056104.
Bridgwater Canal	SJ6987	SJ68	58	1 f	27-Aug-04	Underneath wooden bench on towpath, SJ69578749.
Shropshire Union Canal	SJ7029	SJ72	40	1 f	01-Aug-04	Wooden fence around sluice gear, SJ70592936.
Bridgwater Canal	SJ7286	SJ78	58	1 f	27-Aug-04	Underneath rail on wooden fence, SJ72708694.
Shropshire Union Canal	SJ8317	SJ81	39	2 f	24-Jul-04	Underneath wooden seat by bridge 26, SJ832172.
Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal	SJ9308	SJ90	39	2 f	01-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SJ93110814.
Wyrley & Essington Canal	SJ9800	SJ90	39	2 f	01-Aug-04	Rusty railway track tie-bar over concrete pilings, SJ98570056.
Trent & Mersey Canal	SJ9330	SJ93	39	1 f	23-Jul-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SJ932302.
Trent & Mersey Canal	SK1115	SK11	39	2 f	07-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SK11211519.
Trent & Mersey Canal	SK2222	SK22	39	2 f	10-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SK22182213.
Chesterfield Canal SSSI	SK5879	SK57	56	3 f	15-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SK58077923.
Chesterfield Canal SSSI	SK7283	SK78	56	1 f	31-Jul-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SK72568369.
Chesterfield Canal SSSI	SK7090	SK79	56	1 f	31-Jul-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SK70799036.
Gloucester & Sharpness Canal	SO7406	SO70	34	4 f	25-Aug-04	Rusty railway track tie-bar over concrete pilings, SO74210679.
Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal	SO8277	SO87	37	1 f	04-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SO82837718.
Worcester & Birmingham Canal	SO9465	SO96	37	1 f	20-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SO94126585.
Worcester & Birmingham Canal	SP0272	SP07	37	5 f	04-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SP02217221.
Stratford-upon-Avon Canal	SP1967	SP16	38	1 f	20-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SP19006704.
Oxford Canal	SP3883	SP38	38	1 f	06-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SP38668313.
Ashby Canal	SP3997	SP39	38	1 f	06-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, by bridge 25, SP39219720.
Ashby Canal	SP3997	SP39	38	1 m	06-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, by bridge 25, SP39219720.
Coventry Canal	SP3196	SP39	38	1 f	28-Jul-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SP31479629.
Oxford Canal	SP4650	SP45	23	2 f	22-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SP46455018.
Oxford Canal	SP4453	SP45	38	2 f	22-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SP44085375.
Grand Union Canal	SP6657	SP65	32	1 f	21-Aug-04	Rusty railway track tie-bar over concrete pilings, SP66785762.
Grand Union Canal	SP6765	SP66	32	1 f	21-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SP67605650.
Grand Union Canal	SP6075	SP67	32	1 f	06-Aug-04	Wooden fence & gate approx. 7m from the canal, SP60527503.
Grand Union Canal	SP6075	SP67	32	4 f	06-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SP60557502.
Grand Union Canal	SP6075	SP67	32	1 m	06-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SP60557502.
Grand Union Canal	SP8240	SP84	24	1 f	21-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SP82594091.
Grand Union Canal	SP8241	SP84	24	1 f	21-Aug-04	Galvanised steel piling tie-bar, SP82114133.
Kennet & Avon Canal	ST8059	ST85	7	1 f	25-Aug-04	Under wooden handrails on steps rising from underpass, ST80435995. Outside survey area, not mapped in Fig. 1.
Kennet & Avon Canal	ST8060	ST86	7	2 f	25-Aug-04	Under wooden seat on aqueduct, ST80406005
Kennet & Avon Canal	SU1561	SU16	7	1 f	26-Aug-04	Under rail of wooden fence. SU15346120.
Kennet & Avon Canal	SU1561	SU16	7	1 f	26-Aug-04	Underneath wooden seat on towpath, SU15806109.
Kennet & Avon Canal	SU3368	SU36	22	1 f	26-Aug-04	Underneath wooden seat by lock, SU33626876
Kennet & Avon Canal	SU3568	SU36	22	1 f	26-Aug-04	Underneath wooden stile in fence by lock, SU35146819.

Table 1. Records of *Theridion hemerobium* from the 2004 survey of British canals.

References

Daws, J. (2003). *Theridion hemerobium* Simon, 1914: Are you looking in the right places? *S.R.S. News. No.* 47. ***In*** *Newsl. Br. arachnol. Soc.* **98**: 10.

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Steatoda nobilis in Warwickshire

by Rob Bate

Although first recorded in Britain about a hundred years ago, *S. nobilis* is assumed to be an immigrant species introduced from Madeira and the Canary islands with bananas. The British Arachnological society website notes that it had been unclear whether or not recordings were chance introductions but it is now considered to be a thriving species along the South Coast.

Hampton on the Hill is a small village in S Warwickshire, close to the county town of Warwick and close to the M40 motorway and A46 main road. I have noticed the local flora and fauna to be that described in the textbooks as typical of the southern half of the country, compared with Birmingham twenty or so miles north; hornets are seen in the summer and there have been reports of rare bees, moths etc. in the locale.

During the late Autumn it was noted that there were a number of spiders active after dark, easily seen by torchlight around the outside porch and shed. There were many walnut orb weavers *Nuctenea*, very many *Zygiella* and some *Steatoda bipunctata* and various others, all actively spinning webs or hunting. All garden spiders *Araneus diadematus* had disappeared by late November. A large well marked spider was noted upside down in a tangle web in the corner of the porch, and this was provisionally identified as a *Steatoda* of some description. The spider was photographed with a Canon EOS 10D digital SLR with a 100mm Macro lens and ringflash and the pictures e-mailed to Peter Harvey for help in identification. The spider was captured using a simple net and kept in a glass 5 litre aquarium (£10 from local B&Q) where she rapidly produced a large tangle web and fed well on fisherman's maggots (available at a time when other prey is unreliable) and has reached a good adult size.

Detailed searching revealed several other smaller specimens which appeared identical to the big spider. Although the abdominal pattern of a well marked specimen is fairly typical, precise identification is dependent on detailed microscopic examination of the spider's palps and epigyne by experienced observers. Accordingly a specimen was sent off and positively confirmed as *S. nobilis*. This is, I believe, the first Warwickshire record for this species.

As a simple experiment, a small specimen of *S. bipunctata* and one of the supposed *S. nobilis* were placed in separate plastic boxes and fed over a period of a few weeks. At the conclusion the *S. bipunctata* was a chubby little 5 to 6 mm, the *S. nobilis* was over a centimetre (cephalothorax and abdomen) with a well defined abdominal pattern, a gold mark reminiscent of the old leather stamp, the hidemark, with a pronounced gold anterior abdominal ring. To date there are six decent-sized specimens and a number of smaller ones, still too young to accurately assess. Having observed the others closely, my feeling is that they are immature *S. nobilis* spiders.

How did they get here? We are regular visitors to Devon and travel down to Hampshire to photograph

Steatoda nobilis female. Photo by Rob Bate.

orchids. A spiderling could easily have travelled back with us. However we have a breeding population here and this would imply either the introduction of a sexually mature fertilised female (= a big spider) or else the introduction of spiderlings in such proximity as to meet and mate. Could the spider have simply increased its range further than expected? A brief search has not revealed any other specimens on a neighbouring farm or in the local area. This will, I suspect, be a Spring project.

S. nobilis is a member of the comb-footed spiders, Theridiidae, with the N. European species showing considerable variation in size, shape and colouring. In the genus *Steatoda* the European species are all fairly heavily built, all have a light band around the anterior abdomen and variable abdominal patterns ranging from a few light dots to a well defined and species-identifying marking. *S. nobilis* is typical of the larger *Steatoda*, with a mature female roughly the same size as a common Garden Spider *Araneus diadematus*, usually seen in a tangle web comprising multiple vertical strands built in a corner, window frame or similar. The spider hangs upside down in the web (as opposed to *Tegenaria* which run over the upper surface) and hides in crevices when disturbed. It is very similar to the closely related *S. grossa* and the European *S. paykulliana* and, more alarmingly, the Black Widow spiders (*Lactrodectus* spp.). Indeed the larger *Steatoda* species are often called "False Widow Spiders", the general outline and appearance being very similar to their more dangerous cousins, this being especially so in the case of *S. paykulliana* (S. Europe) which sometimes has a red abdominal pattern that often causes alarm!

There have been reports in recent years of the spider biting people (Jackson, 2003; Warrell *et al*., 1991), it being apparent that there is a systemic effect of envenomation as well as the expected emotional component consequent upon the painful bite of a large and brightly coloured spider, the cases described in the medical literature suggest a direct neurotoxic effect with hypersecretion of synaptic neurotransmitter (acetylcholine) and associated parasympathetic stimulation (internet source: http://www.kingsnake.com/toxinology/old/arachnid/arachnid.html) in which respect the venom would appear to mimic that of the Black Widow (lactrotoxin). Lactrotoxin antivenin has been successfully used to treat envenomation from the larger *Steatoda* (Graudins *et al*., 2002). The toxin does appear to initiate excess production of neurotransmitter rather than block its breakdown via inhibition of acetylcholinesterase (cf. organophosphate nerve gas) and on casual observation produces very rapid immobility of insect prey.

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Steatoda nobilis female. Photo by Rob Bate.

Sitticus distinguendus (Simon, 1868), New to Britain

by Peter Harvey* and Tony Russell-Smith°

In September 2003 two males and one sub-female of a small jumping spider were collected in pitfall traps set at a location in Thurrock, S. Essex where a complex of various habitat types are developed on old pulverised fly ash (PFA) substrate. Although not altogether happy at the time, the first author had identified these as the Nationally Scarce (Notable/Nb) dune species *Sitticus saltator* known from two Essex sites, and considered Vulnerable in the county. The collection of live specimens (males and females) in the same area in April 2005 made it clear the spider was not this species and that it was not any other species previously recognised in the British fauna. Specimens were sent to Dmitri Logunov, an expert on the Salticidae, and he identified them as *Sitticus distinguendus*. The spider is evidently well established within a small area with a number of males and females being found in quite a short time of searching. It is interesting that the size of the males seems quite variable, some being substantially larger than the two specimens collected in 2003.

In June 2004, the second author collected in sparse grassland at Swanscombe Marshes in N. Kent in the company of David Nellist and Doug Marriott. A single female of a *Sitticus* species was collected which at the time was provisionally identified as *S. pubescens*. As with the Thurrock specimens, this identification was regarded as slightly suspect on habitat grounds alone. When this specimen was subsequently compared with those collected at Thurrock, it was immediately clear that it was also a female of *Sitticus distinguendus*.

S. distinguendus has a Palaearctic nemoral range from France to Maritime Province and Japan, north to Tansk and South Yakutia and south to Shanxi (Logunov & Marusik, 2000). This publication provides the following habitat details for the species: zonal forb-grass steppes, salt marshes, sloping shrub-stony steppes, screes and cobble-gramineous stands, bird cherry stand, stony river banks and taiga edges, larch forests and mountain steppe-

West Thurrock PFA. *Sitticus distinguendus* habitat. Photo by Peter Harvey.

semidesert, cliffs and screes. In addition Bonte *et al*. (2003) record the species as fairly common on grey dunes at Boulonnais in northern France, Żabka (1997) describes the habitat as sandy places covered with sparse vegetation and Krasnobayev (2004) describes habitats in some regions of European Russia as upland meadows and pine forests, sandy and cretaceous sloping steppes and on riverbanks.

In Thurrock the very localised habitat is dry sparsely vegetated ground close to seasonally wet areas on a substrate of fine almost sand-like PFA and stony clinker that has a distinctly saline character. In the area immediately adjacent to where the spider has been found salt can often be seen encrusted on the surface and plants such as glasswort *Salicornia* grow. Much of the rest of the site comprises dry flower-rich grasslands with plant species associated with calcareous substrates as well as sparsely vegetated 'sandy' areas that provide a mosaic with features of heathland. At Swanscombe Marshes, the very sparse, open grassland in which the specimen was collected has developed on a substrate of cement factory flue-ash. In terms of soil texture and possibly micro-climate this is likely to be rather similar to the PFA habitat at Thurrock. The character of the habitat where the spider has been found in Britain appears to have distinct ecological similarities to most of its recorded habitats in Europe, for example grey dune vegetation has high affinities with heathland and chalk grassland vegetation and at Boulonnais the grey dunes make contact with chalk grassland (Bonte *et al*. 2003).

Whilst Dmitri Logunov comments that there are no zoogeographical constraints on this species occurring in Britain and even expresses surprise that the species has not been found in Britain before, it seems that suitable habitat may be hard to come by in this country. Certainly the male spider is quite distinctive in life, and it seems unlikely that it has been overlooked to the extent that it will turn out to be widespread on dune systems in England. It would seem that despite the somewhat unusual (and unique) habitat of the two known populations there is no reason to suppose that the occurrence of *S. distinguendus* in Britain is the result of anything other than natural colonisation of suitable habitat. It seems most likely that these newly identified British populations have originated from the north European coast.

Reference to checklists available for western and central European countries indicates that *S. distinguendus* is evidently widespread, listed for France, Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Poland. However although Bonte *et al*. (2003) record the species as fairly common at the sites sampled at Boulonnais in northern France, they did not record it from sites sampled in Belgium and the Netherlands and also note that grey dunes are now heavily fragmented and patchily distributed within a matrix of dense dune vegetation. *S. distinguendus* is listed as Endangered in the Czech Republic (Buchar & Růžička, 2002) and in Flanders (Instituut voor Natuurbehoud, 2005). It has a Proposed Red List status of Endangered and Declining in Norway, as Vulnerable in Poland (Żabka, 1997), and there is only one 10km dot for the species in the Spiders of Serbia. It is also regarded as one of the most interesting species from Antwerp (Vanuytven, 1997).

Unfortunately both places in Britain where the spider has been found are brownfield sites in the Thames Gateway, and as such are highly threatened by development in the near future. Similar habitat is unlikely to be widespread in the region, and will also be under the same development threat. However, it will certainly be worth investigating any post-industrial sites such as de-commissioned power stations or cement works where such poorly vegetated, fine-grained, alkaline substrates might occur in the hope that this species may be found in new sites.

We are very grateful to Dmitri Logunov for making the original identification and for providing information on the distribution and habitat of *S. distinguendus*.

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Sitticus distinguendus male. Photo by P. Harvey.

Selecting Potential Priority Spider Species for Biodiversity Action Plans

by Tony Russell-Smith* & Peter Harvey°

In Summer 2004, the Society was approached by Buglife who requested that we take part in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan review for spiders. The first stage of this process involved selecting a shortlist of species from the British fauna that appeared to satisfy a set of four criteria relating to their conservation status. Following this, a second stage will address the issue of what (if anything) could be done to conserve each species on the short list while in stage three consideration will be given to the best ways in which conservation can be implemented. After consultation in Council, it was agreed that a small *ad hoc* group of members would be set up to take this forward and that the wider membership would be consulted through the Newsletter. This article reports on the results of stage one of this ongoing process.

Criteria for inclusion of species and method of assessment against criteria

Criterion 1. International threat.
There are no species within the British fauna for which any prior assessment of global threat is available. Furthermore, because knowledge of the distribution and, to some extent, abundance of the British spider fauna is well in advance of that for other European countries, there are no hard data on which the direct threat to spiders throughout Europe can be assessed. The data sources used to make an assessment of the status of spiders elsewhere in Europe were:

- Mapping of distribution of spiders in Germany http:// www.spiderling.de.vu/
- Checklists of species from 20 European countries
- References to Europe in species accounts in the Provisional Atlas of British Spiders.

While the German distribution maps are interesting and valuable, they are based on non-systematic survey work and apply to a very different bio-geographic region of Europe from Britain. It was decided therefore to use the proportion of countries in Europe from which a species had been recorded as a proxy for the threat criterion. This approach has very obvious drawbacks, not least that the occurrence of a species in a checklist tell us nothing about its status in that country, but at least it provides a consistent assessment against this criterion. For the purpose of this exercise, species which were found in 8 or fewer countries out of 20 were considered as potentially threatened. A few additional species were included here where members of the group felt there was other evidence for decline within Europe as a whole, or loss and threat to habitat seemed likely to have resulted and continues to result in a significant decline. A total of 22 species fell into this category.

Criterion 2. International responsibility & UK decline.
Species included were those which have shown >25% UK decline over the relevant period and which are known from 15 or fewer European countries (out of 20). The method of estimating decline is explained under Criterion 3. In total, 20 species fell into this category.

Criterion 3. Marked decline in UK.
The basis for estimating decline in the UK was the dataset used in the construction of the Provisional Atlas of British Spiders (Harvey, Nellist & Telfer, 2002) and is thus derived from species presence in 10 km grid squares. Data for all UK species were analysed and each species that showed a decline was further assessed to remove any artefacts – in particular those due to patchy recording effort. Decline was measured between two time periods, 1951–1986 and 1987–2000. These two survey periods were chosen on the basis that 1951–1986 represents the first major modern survey of spiders resulting from the publication in 1951 of British Spiders by Locket & Millidge and 1987–2000 is the second major survey of spiders resulting from the instigation of the Spider Recording Scheme and the publication in 1985 and 1987 of The Spiders of Great Britain and Ireland by Michael Roberts. The second survey period was much more intensive than the first, despite its shorter time period. To take account of this, species were compared for 10 km squares with a minimum of 100 records in both survey periods. There was a clear proportional relationship (see Fig. 1) between these results, enabling predictions to be made of the expected numbers of 10 km squares for each species resulting from the increased effort of the second survey period. 39 species out of a total of 49 were included under this criterion.

Criterion 4. Other factors.
It was thought important to not simply consider individual species in isolation, but to take account of their relevance to appropriate Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) as many of these species are likely to be sensitive indicators of habitat change. We believe that the species groups included should be listed under the appropriate HAPs and indicate here what we believe these to be. In addition, several coastal habitats are either already threatened or likely to be threatened in future by sea-level rise associated with global warming and we have indicated this potential threat here. Although montane habitats are only included currently as a broad habitat action plan, they are likely to be under threat from global warming and one species from this habitat type is highlighted here.

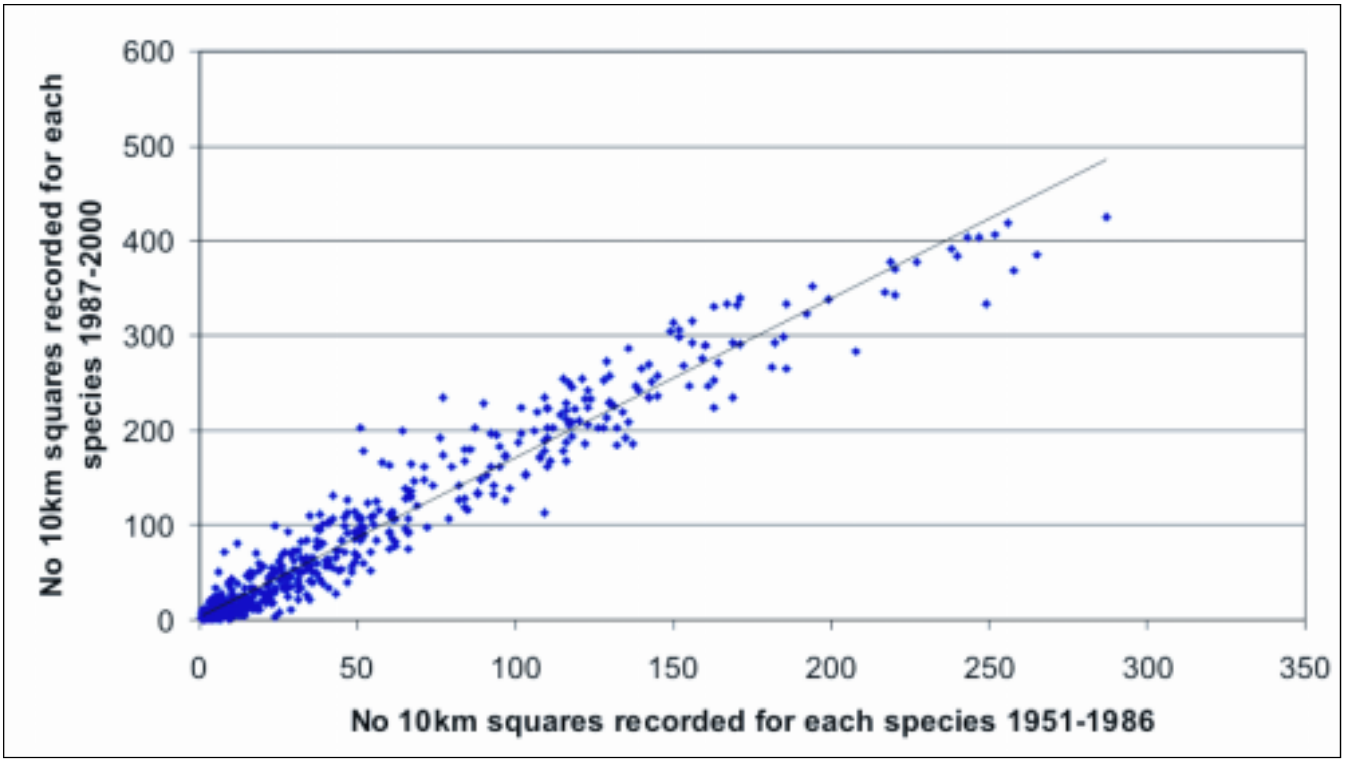

Figure 1. Graph of relationship between numbers of 10 km squares recorded for each species, for those squares (457 in total) with at least 100 records in both survey periods.

Summary of assessment of species against BAP criteria.
Table 1 summarises the species believed to satisfy each of the four criteria for inclusion in the BAP list. A number of interesting points emerge from this selection. Firstly, not all of the species are necessarily rare at present. Some, such as *Atypus affinis*, *Dictyna pusilla* and *Meioneta mollis* are still fairly widespread in Britain but nevertheless have shown a decline of more than 50% between the two survey periods. Since this was not attributable to any obvious changes in recording effort, they have been included in the list as species that certainly need close monitoring in the future. Another group of species have shown smaller proportional declines (25–50%) but, from the limited information we have on their distribution in Europe, it appears that the UK might hold a significant proportion of the total population. They include, for example, *Zelotes electus*, *Sitticus saltator* and *Baryphyma maritimum*. It is possible that some of these species may eventually be removed from the list when better information on their European populations becomes available. Finally, a large majority of the species (84%) could be assigned to habitats for which an Action Plan already exists. It seems likely therefore that a major delivery mechanism for conserving these species will be through habitat conservation.

Species excluded from the BAP list.
Although not strictly relevant to the topic, it is perhaps of interest to highlight certain groups of species which, while apparently fulfilling one or more of the criteria for inclusion, were excluded from the list because the evidence was inadequate (see Table 2). The first group included those species for which it was likely that the apparent decline was due to differences in recording effort in the two survey periods. A particularly obvious case was that of species recorded from Dorset heathlands and the New Forest during systematic surveys conducted by Peter Merrett and Rowley Snazell during the 1970s. Many of these species, such as *Scotina palliardii, Haplodrassus dalmatensis* and *Talavera petrensis*, are most reliably sampled in pitfall traps. Their apparent decline is quite likely due to the fact that there have been no systematic surveys using pitfall traps in these areas since the 1980s. Another, smaller group of species that have apparently declined are those that inhabit specific micro-habitats that are rarely sampled by conventional collecting techniques. They include species that live exclusively in ants' nests such as *Mastigusa macrophthalma, Acartauchenius scurrilis* and *Thyreosthenius biovatus*. There has been little systematic survey of spiders in ants' nests since the days of Donisthorpe in the 1930s. Equally poorly known are species that live in fissures in the soil or underlying bedrock. They include, for example, *Wiehlea calcarifera*, *Pseudomaro aenigmaticus* and possibly *Mioxena blanda*. This exercise has highlighted the need for focused surveys of both particular areas (e.g. the Dorset heathlands) and particular specialised microhabitats in order to establish the real status of many apparently rare and declining species. In the case of specialised microhabitats, there may well be a need to develop dedicated sampling techniques for the species concerned. Such surveys might well form the basis of projects which could be undertaken by B.A.S. members, either individually or as small teams.

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BRC No.	Species	Int. Threat	UK resp. & decline	>50% Decline in UK	Other factors
101	*Atypus affinis*	Yes ?	Yes?		Calcareous Grassland HAP
201	*Eresus sandaliatus*	Phase 2		Yes	Heathland HAP
404	*Dictyna pusilla*			Yes	Heathland HAP
701	*Argenna patula*			Yes	Saltmarsh HAP. Hab. threat
801	*Altella lucida*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Heathland HAP
1901	*Haplodrassus dalmatensis*			Yes	Sand dune HAP. Hab. threat
2202	*Zelotes electus*		Yes ?		Saltmarsh HAP. Hab. threat
2204	*Zelotes petrensis*		Yes ?		Heathland HAP
2902	*Clubiona caerulescens*			Yes	
2907	*Clubiona juvenis*		Yes ?		Fen HAP
2914	*Clubiona rosserae*	Yes		Yes	Fen HAP
2915	*Clubiona frisia*	Yes ?		Yes	Sand dune HAP. Hab. threat
3202	*Agroeca cuprea*			Yes	Sand dune HAP. Hab. threat
3601	*Zora armillata*	Yes		Yes	Heathland HAP
4404	*Ozyptila nigrita*			Yes	Calc. Grassland HAP
4507	*Philodromus fallax*			Yes	Sand dune HAP. Hab. threat
4509	*Philodromus margaritatus*			Yes	
5302	*Neon valentulus*			Yes	Fen HAP
5402	*Pseudeuophrys obsoleta*	Yes		Yes	Shingle HAP
5501	*Sitticus caricis*			Yes	Fenland HAP
5601	*Sitticus saltator*		Yes ?		Sand dune HAP. Hab. threat
6301	*Oxyopes heterophthalmus*		Yes ?		Heathland HAP
6703	*Alopecosa fabrilis*			Yes	Heathland HAP
6902	*Arctosa fulvolineata*			Yes	Saltmarsh HAP. Hab. threat
7402	*Dolomedes plantarius*	Phase 2		Yes	Fen HAP
8903	*Dipoena inornata*			Yes	Sand dune HAP. Hab. threat
8906	*Dipoena torva*	Yes	Yes ?		Native Pine Woodlands HAP
9605	*Robertus scoticus*			Yes	Native Pine Woodlands HAP
11303	*Araniella displicata*			Yes	Pine trees/heather
12307	*Walckenaeria corniculans*			Yes	Heathland HAP
12319	*Walckenaeria stylifrons*	Yes		Yes	
12506	*Entelecara omissa*	Yes		Yes	Fen HAP
13501	*Hybocoptus decollatus*	Yes		Yes	Beech & yew woodland HAP
13601	*Baryphyma duffeyi*	Yes		Yes	Saltmarsh HAP. Hab. threat
13603	*Baryphyma maritimum*	Yes	Yes		Sand dune HAP. Hab. threat
14503	*Silometopus incurvatus*			Yes	Sand dune HAP. Hab. threat
14601	*Mecopisthes peusi*	Yes		Yes	Heathland HAP
15502	*Tapinocyba mitis*	Yes		Yes	Heathland HAP
16001	*Monocephalus castaneipes*		Yes ?		
16501	*Notioscopus sarcinatus*			Yes	Wet woodland HAP
16601	*Glyphesis cottonae*	Yes		Yes	Lowland raised bog HAP
17710	*Erigone welchi*	Yes		Yes	Blanket Bog HAP
18101	*Semljicola caliginosus*	Yes		Yes	Blanket Bog HAP
19904	*Meioneta mollis*			Yes	Lowland acid grassland HAP
20312	*Centromerus serratus*			Yes	Beech & yew woodland HAP
20802	*Saaristoa firma*			Yes	
22112	*Midia midas*	Yes		Yes	Beech & yew woodland HAP ?
22117	*Lepthyphantes pinicola*	Yes		Yes	Montane. Hab. Threat
22741	*Nothophantes horridus*	Yes		Yes	Highly specialised habitat
22123	*Megalepthyphantes* n. sp.	Yes			Shingle HAP

Note: Three species on this list have existing BAPs, *Eresus sandaliatus, Clubiona rosserae* & *Dolomedes plantarius*

Table 1. List of spider species proposed for BAPs with criteria believed to be satisfied. See text for explanation of assessment of criteria.

BRC No.	Species
403	*Dictyna major*
603	*Lathys stigmatisata*
1905	*Haplodrassus soerenseni*
1906	*Haplodrassus umbratilis*
2101	*Phaeocedus braccatus*
2205	*Zelotes longipes*
2502	*Drassyllus praeficus*
2601	*Gnaphosa leporina*
2602	*Gnaphosa lugubris*
2801	*Micaria alpina*
2803	*Micaria romana*
2804	*Micaria silesiaca*
2805	*Micaria subopaca*
2906	*Clubiona genevensis*
3002	*Cheiracanthium pennyi*
3204	*Agroeca lusatica*
3207	*Agroeca dentigera*
3401	*Scotina celans*
3402	*Scotina gracilipes*
3403	*Scotina palliardii*
3603	*Zora silvestris*
4301	*Xysticus acerbus*
4308	*Xysticus luctator*
4309	*Xysticus luctuosus*
4310	*Xysticus robustus*
4407	*Ozyptila scabricula*
4410	*Ozyptila pullata*
4506	*Philodromus emarginatus*
5405	*Euophrys herbigrada*
5407	*Talavera petrensis*
5701	*Evarcha arcuata*
6409	*Pardosa paludicola*
6417	*Pardosa lugubris s.s.*
6901	*Arctosa cinerea*
8201	*Mastigusa arietina*
8202	*Mastigusa macrophthalma*
8203	*Tuberta maerens*
8501	*Hahnia candida*
8703	*Episinus truncatus*
8901	*Dipoena coracina*
8902	*Dipoena erythropus*
8905	*Dipoena prona*
9002	*Crustulina sticta*
9101	*Steatoda albomaculata*
9302	*Achaearanea riparia*
9503	*Enoplognatha oelandica*
9505	*Enoplognatha tecta*
10701	*Araneus alsine*
11301	*Araniella alpica*
11601	*Singa hamata*
12312	*Walckenaeria incisa*
12314	*Walckenaeria mitrata*
12316	*Walckenaeria nodosa*
13202	*Dismodicus elevatus*
14403	*Pelecopsis nemoralioides*
14801	*Acartauchenius scurrilis*
14903	*Trichoncus saxicola*
15101	*Evansia merens*
15901	*Thyreosthenius biovatus*
16403	*Micrargus laudatus*
16702	*Erigonella ignobilis*
17401	*Typhochrestus digitatus*
17402	*Typhochrestus simoni*
17602	*Wabasso replicatus*
17707	*Erigone psychrophila*
17901	*Mecynargus morulus*
18501	*Leptothrix hardyi*
18701	*Halorates distinctus*
18802	*Carorita paludosa*
18901	*Wiehlea calcarifera*
19001	*Mioxena blanda*
19301	*Jacksonella falconeri*
19401	*Pseudomaro aenigmaticus*
19711	*Porrhomma cambridgei*
19911	*Meioneta fuscipalpa*
20101	*Maro minutus*
20102	*Maro lepidus*
20103	*Maro sublestus*
20301	*Centromerus brevivulvatus*
20302	*Centromerus albidus*
20308	*Centromerus semiater*
20309	*Centromerus levitarsis*
20701	*Oreonetides vaginatus*
22120	*Lepthyphantes whymperi*
22402	*Neriene furtiva*
22703	*Zodarion rubidum*
22801	*Orchestina* sp.

Table 2. List of spider species excluded from the BAP list, but which are considered to need further research.

Spider Recording Scheme News November 2005, No. 53

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 54 will be published in March 2006. Please send contributions by the end of January at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32, Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Editorial

Progress towards an update of spider distribution maps

Thank you very much indeed to everyone who has been sending in their data. By the end of 2005 we should have a considerable amount of new data with which to update the maps and undertake a national status review using the IUCN criteria. We hope to provide the new maps on the internet via the NBN Gateway and as a downloadable PDF file. We will also be able to provide hard copies for the cost of printing and posting. We should also be able to start to use these data to help clarify the ecology and phenology of our species, although there is still a long way to go in getting detailed habitat and other data from a wide enough area of the country to adequately examine many of the most interesting questions phase 2 of the recording scheme sets out to address.

Please continue to send in your records. In particular if you hold computerised records with adult male/female and/or habitat information that you have not already provided, please send it in for inclusion even if the distributional data were already submitted for the atlas. Duplication of distributional information is not a major problem if you can add phenology or any other phase 2 ecological information to data previously submitted.

The post-atlas card total now stands at 1682, of which 1168 are the old RA65 cards, 377 new RA65 cards and the remainder GEN7, 13 and 14 cards. Gavin Broad at B.R.C. Monks Wood included the computerisation of the old RA65 and GEN cards into their 2005 schedule, and the backlog was sent to B.R.C. in March for entry. These were all done by the middle of August, and an important set received in August was turned around within a week! I would like to thank Gavin Broad and Val Burton very much indeed for this work. The cards and print-outs of the data entry are now in the process of being checked by volunteers from the B.A.S. Council, to whom I am also very grateful.

It will almost certainly not now be practical to undertake computerisation of any new cards for inclusion in the maps, but computerised data can be accepted until the deadline, especially if submitted as MapMate sync files. In any case, don't stop sending in records after the deadline. Although we will use the new distributional data for the new maps and the status review, it will take longer to start to use new phenology and habitat information, so new data are always going to be important.

The text of the new RA65 cards is too small for B.R.C. to enter and I will attempt to enter all these data into MapMate during the autumn. I also have a substantial amount of new data that has been provided in spreadsheet or tabular form, together with a backlog of files that need to be put into consistent format and imported into MapMate or Access, and I will endeavour to do all these during the autumn.

MapMate

Since MapMate is the only software that adequately addresses what we want to record in phase 2 of the recording scheme, we would like as many spider recorders to use it as possible. We intend to provide one or more MapMate sessions at the A.G.M., hopefully with hands-on workshops, to introduce the software to members and show some of the things that can be achieved.

Although the software is not expensive at £24.99 for a single user, there are nowadays additional costs, currently £12 a year for a single user, for continued support, checklist updates and free software updates to enable continued development of the software. However, bulk purchase of MapMate is considerably cheaper. For example, a 25x bulk purchase costs £375 (i.e. £15 each) and 50x bulk purchase £625 (i.e. £12.50 each). In these cases, continued licence extensions cost £100 per year for 25 users (£4 per year) and £160 per year for 50 users (just over £3 per year). In addition, MapMate would create a B.A.S. 'group' which any existing user may choose to join and gain update benefits in future.

We would therefore like to investigate the demand from recorders for: (1) new copies of MapMate and (2) existing users who would want to join the B.A.S. group and gain the support cost benefits. If you are seriously interested in either of these options please e-mail me by the end of December. We will then know the level of demand and I can get back to interested parties in the New Year with costs.

UK Status review

The status review of spiders using the IUCN criteria is now scheduled for early 2006, making use of the new data. Funding from JNCC to aid this process has been agreed and we have a deadline of early June 2006 to complete the review. The UKBAP review process has been very helpful in clarifying some of the concepts involved in criteria such as 'decline' and 'international importance'. As soon as all the new data are added to the atlas dataset, various analyses will be undertaken to evaluate possible declines and areas of occupancy. We will carry out a preliminary exercise to assign draft IUCN statuses which, if time allows, will be published in the March Newsletter to invite comment from the membership before a final version is submitted to the JNCC.

Three Spiders New to Dorset

by Robert Cumming

Neon robustus Lohmander, 1945 on Portland: I found one male of *N. robustus* on 8th May 2004, and on 7th June 2005, one female and a (likely) immature male which did not survive to adulthood. These were all taken on the tumble of grassland, scree, scrub and disused quarries at Southwell Landslip which overlooks the sea on the east side of the island. The 2004 male was found on the underside of a flat stone sitting across a footpath, immediately surrounded by grassland. I found *Phrurolithus festivus* nearby. The 2005 specimens were taken on a planned visit to confirm the species' local presence. Both were in silken cells under hand-sized stones among sparse grasses and herbs. They were collected late on a cold evening. Their stones were close to a badly-eroded path up a nearby slope, and were heavily shaded by this slope from the south and west – an inauspicious-seeming spot, the first I checked that evening and the only one to yield anything of interest. This immediate area has yielded *Dysdera erythrina*, *Amaurobius ferox* and *Textrix denticulata* on other visits. In the medium term these sites may be subject to increasing erosion (by people) and scrub species could encroach on the grassy areas. But *N. robustus* might be thriving in stable screes and mature scrub, habitat which is widespread on Portland. Searching these areas is less easy than turning over stones on grassland.

Episinus maculipes Cavanna, 1876 at Lyme Regis: On 25th June 2005 I joined a group of volunteers surveying Ware Cliff at Lyme. This is a soft cliff and this valuable habitat is the subject of a survey by Buglife – the Invertebrate Conservation Trust (Whitehouse, 2005). Ware Cliff is very soft fossiliferous black shale. I found *E. maculipes* while standing on the beach at the point where a grove of willows on the slumped cliff gave way to patchy scrub and then a short bank of exposed soil. I put a sheet at the base of this bank of soil and beat the grass, scrub and herbs overhanging its lip. An *E. maculipes* female quickly appeared. I didn't recognise it, except that I knew I had not seen it before – a beautiful mottled grey colour in life. Also found at this point on the cliff were female *Synageles venator*, a male *Dictyna latens*, and representing the riff-raff element, a female *Metellina mengei*. Elsewhere on the cliff I found *Episinus truncatus* males, further *S. venator* and *D. latens*, and a female *Zelotes apricorum.* Quite a good day.

Dipoena erythropus (Simon, 1881) on Portland: On 11th July 2005 I found a female of this species under a rock at King Barrow Quarry, a new Dorset Wildlife Trust nature reserve. This is an RDB2 species living in an unexpected place. I took it to be a linyphiid at first glance. The site is very promising; finds within 50 m of the *D. erythropus* so far include *D. inornata* (one female from a grassy area), *Zelotes subterraneus*, *Z. latreillei*, *Alopecosa barbipes*, and large numbers of *Dysdera erythrina* and *Textrix denticulata*.

The immediate vicinity of the specimen features exposed rock, fine scree, and larger boulders. A conspicuous feature of the area is a prostrate *Cotoneaster* species which grows over the rock and sparse soil in extensive mats. There are also patches of grass, and scrub species such as privet. The whole site teems with ants.

I returned to the quarry on 23rd July 2005 with Rowley and Elaine Snazell. We found no further *D. erythropus*, although Rowley added a few species to the site list, including *Trichoncus saxicola* and *Zelotes apricorum.*

Extensive areas of the reserve have been disturbed by off-road motorcyclists, and the disturbed areas show few species of spider. The place where I found *D. erythropus* is relatively free of this disturbance, and the problem is being reduced by concerted action by DWT and the police.

These three species have been conspicuously easy to find. I am still quite new to spiders; it seems that a bit of leg-work at likely looking sites yields rarities quite readily. I'm sure that west Dorset has a few more surprises to uncover! My thanks to Rowley Snazell and Peter Merrett for checking identifications.

Reference

Whitehouse, A. (2005) Living on the Edge – the importance of maritime soft cliffs and slopes for insect conservation. *Antenna (Bull. Royal Ent. Soc.)* **29** (3): 179–185.

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Nigma walckenaeri Plays a Mating Game

by Paul Prince

I am lucky enough to have a small population of these beautiful and notable spiders in my garden. Their distribution is mainly confined to London and south Essex, although there are records from Gloucestershire. In this West London garden they have taken up residence on ivy which in turn has consumed the fence, adjacent to the ivy is a rose bush and *Fatsia japonica* – the spiders can be found here too and they seem to be very keen to set up shop on the latter. I have tried to photograph them before with little success as the spiders are quite small (3–4 mm) and the leaves on which they reside are very reflective.

On a late August morning I spotted a male wandering around the *F. japonica* leaves in search of a female. I'm sorry to say that I missed any courtship between the pair as I had rushed in the house to retrieve my camera and upon my return I found the couple embraced. The male appeared to lift the female free from the leaf surface and in this position the couple remained for a period of 5–10 minutes. At the end of their copulation there was a brief struggle with the pair dancing around the leaf before the embrace was ended. Curiously, the male stayed put, occupying his mate's web, whilst she ran away onto another leaf. The male remained alone in her web for a period of 24 hours, after this time he was gone. I found it odd that the female ran away leaving the male in her web. I have witnessed this phenomenon on two separate occasions, however, and I have also seen a male and female sharing a web, although whether mating had taken place in the latter case is not known.

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Nigma walckenaeri embrace. © Paul Prince.

Prey Capture by *Hyptiotes paradoxus*

by Stephen Dalton

A few months ago I attended a field studies course at Juniper Hall, Box Hill on spiders. The weeklong session was run by spider guru Tony Russell-Smith, president of the British Arachnological Society.

Here I joined seven other spider enthusiasts and learned all about the extraordinary lives of these fascinating albeit maligned creatures, including their physiology, classification, evolution and perhaps most important to field naturalists their identification. Spiders can be notoriously difficult to identify, frequently involving peering at their privates through stereo microscopes – indeed many species are impossible to identify unless sexually mature.

At regular intervals we were marched up Box Hill equipped with collecting nets, beating trays and a copious supply of glass tubes into which our specimens were deposited. Later in the day we took our collection back to the lab for identification, which for spider novices such as myself often proved a long drawn out process using the microscopes and complex keys, the sessions frequently running on until ten in the evening. We were an enthusiastic bunch!

Figure 1. *Hyptiotes paradoxus* male in triangle web. © Stephen Dalton.

Figures 2 & 3. *Hyptiotes paradoxus* collapsing web on prey. © Stephen Dalton.

Box Hill is particularly rich in all sorts of animals and plants and can boast a number of rare and unusual spiders. Among these are the Purse Web Spider, *Atypus affinis*, our only representative of the 'bird-eating spiders' and another sinister looking species the Cellar Spider *Meta menardi* that is found in insalubrious surroundings such as sewers, caves, ice-houses and other dark, damp habitats. But my favourite was the minute *Hyptiotes paradoxus*, sometimes referred to as the Triangle Spider.

Hyptiotes is a rare 3–4 mm long spider found in a handful of locations in England that spends its life in the middle and upper branches of yew and sometimes box trees. Apart from its memorable scientific name that slips so readily off the tongue it has a curious unspider-like appearance resembling a fragment of leaf litter. It never spreads out its eight legs like a proper spider, preferring to keep them bundled up close to the body giving it a hunch-back look. To add to this strange form, *Hyptiotes* is blessed with enormous out of proportion balloon-like palps that are as large as the already bulky cephalothorax. Also unlike most other spiders, *Hyptiotes*, together with other European members of its family the Uloboridae, does not possess poison glands.

In retrospect it seems a miracle that our one and only specimen, a male was spotted at all, which was only

Figure 4. *Hyptiotes paradoxus* male recycling web. © Stephen Dalton.

discovered after a six man afternoon-long hunt amidst the gloom of yew trees. Once found though the little creature's future seemed bleak as unfortunately the serious study of spiders requires microscopic examination while immersed in alcohol. Although not unduly sentimental, I have a reverential approach to all living things and the mind blowing evolutionary forces that have led to each one of them. Moreover knowing the technique used by *Hyptiotes* to catch prey I was determined to photograph the phenomenon for others to also wonder at. Thus with some difficulty I succeeded in persuading my fellow spider fans to part with their specimen and allow me to take the creature back alive to my studio.

Perhaps the most intriguing thing about spiders is the diverse range of strategies that different families have evolved for catching prey. As well as devising all manner of ingenious traps in the form of webs, spiders employ a host of other devious methods including jumping, chasing, ambushing, spitting, fishing, masquerading as other animals and even attracting prey by mimicking the prey's pheromones. *Hyptiotes* uses a web but in an unconventional way.

It constructs about 1/6th of an orb in the shape of a triangle. The web is tensioned by the spider which sits at the apex holding out a stretched loop with its front feet. When a fly strikes the web, *Hyptiotes* releases the loop partially collapsing the web and further entrapping the fly. This action is done several times, the spider letting out more silk from its spinnerets while gradually advancing towards the struggling prey. The series of photographs here show the operation clearly.

To obtain the pictures (Figs. 1–4) the spider had to be persuaded to build its web, which it only did after three weeks and after I had constructed a large net enclosure with a yew branch and placed it under a yew tree in the garden. Finally after the photography was complete I released the spider back to its old home among the yew trees of Box Hill. However I was left wondering whether the environmental costs of the fuel used for the journey were justified!

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Variation in Numbers of *Philodromus albidus* in Wiltshire

by Martin Askins

In Peter Merrett's review of nationally notable spiders (1990) *Philodromus albidus* is described as "Fairly widespread in southern England, but local and never very numerous." However, in the Provisional Atlas (2002) Peter Harvey points out that in Essex it is widespread and frequent and that Ian Dawson has found it "in numbers" in Huntingdonshire. Recently in Wiltshire I've found *P. albidus* frequently and it has even been the most numerous philodromid found at some sites. I had the impression that when I started recording in Wiltshire *P. albidus* had been infrequent and, if recorded, only found in ones or twos. Though I don't record actual numbers of individual spiders seen, I do differentiate between when I have seen one or several of a species. Looking back at my records, numbers of *P. albidus* do appear to have 'taken off' in 2000 (Figure 1). Even when crudely adjusting for the number of days spent recording each year (in the period April – July when the spider is found) the trend is the same or even emphasised. Doing a similar exercise on other spiders which would be collected by the same methods as *P. albidus* does not produce the same result. The total numbers involved here are actually small and the results are hardly conclusive, but has anyone else noted such an increase in *P. albidus*?

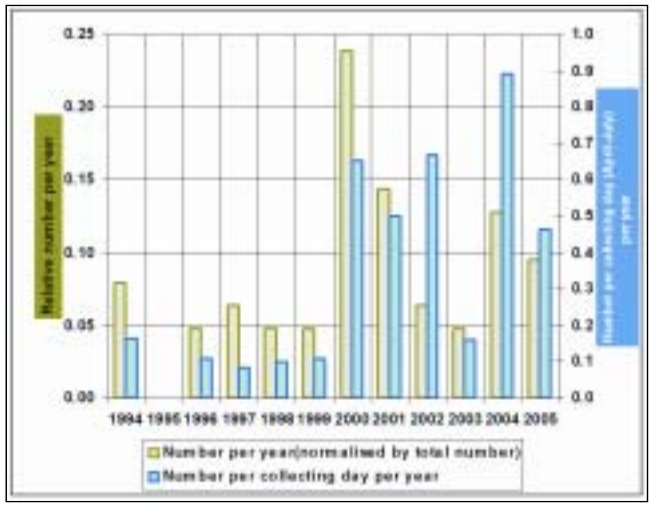

Figure 1. Variation in relative numbers of *Philodromus albidus* with year.

Figure 2. Gravid *P. albidus* female. © M. Askins.

References

Harvey, P. R., Nellist, D. R. & Telfer, M. G. 2002, Provisional Atlas of British Spiders. Huntingdon: Biological Records Centre.

Merrett, P. 1990, A Review of Nationally Notable Spiders of Great Britain, NCC Report.

69, Savill Crescent, Wroughton, SWINDON, Wiltshire, SN4 9JG.

Some Casual Observations on *Arctosa fulvolineata* (Lucas, 1846) from North Kent Saltmarshes

by A. Russell-Smith

Arctosa fulvolineata is a rare saltmarsh lycosid in Britain, currently listed as RDB3 and recorded from only nine sites on the East and South coasts, from north Norfolk to Hampshire. In Kent, the only previous records are from saltmarsh sites on the north coast at Faversham and Milton near Sittingbourne.

During 2004 the author collected on a small patch of saltmarsh in the Oare Marshes LNR, just west of Faversham (TR010649) on the 15th May. While turning bricks dumped in the upper saltmarsh (*Halimione portulacoides* zone), two male lycosids were collected which somewhat resembled a *Trochosa* sp. but with a conspicuous orange stripe along the dorsal surface of the abdomen. Two females of what were considered to be the same species were also seen but not collected as they were carrying egg-sacs. Under the microscope, the males proved to be *Arctosa fulvolineata*. The following day, I collected on saltmarsh at Conyer, near Teynham (TQ963654) which is about 4 km to the West of Oare Marshes. Here two males and two females of *A. fulvolineata* were collected under bricks in exactly the same upper saltmarsh zone. In addition, at least three other females carrying egg-sacs were seen but not collected. In all cases, the females were in small voids in the mud beneath the bricks. It was noted that *A. fulvolineata* was never present beneath bricks where amphipods ("sand-hoppers") were very abundant. In fact, the most common associate of the spider was the small, pale carabid beetle *Dicheirotrichus obsoletus* (Dejean) which is a nationally notable B species. Finally on the 25th May 2004, I visited the Swale Marshes NNR on the Isle of Sheppey (TR052682) about 5 km N.E. of Oare Marshes. Here, a single male of *A. fulvolineata* was collected from under rubbish on upper saltmarsh, just below the seawall at the north-western corner of the reserve.

In 2005, the site where this species was collected in Oare Marshes was revisited on the 18th May. Nearly all the bricks on the patch of upper saltmarsh had been swept away, presumably by winter storms. However, a single female *A. fulvolineata* was seen but not collected close to where it had been found in 2004. Another visit was paid to the Conyer site on the 12th October 2005 without any expectation of finding adult lycosids. To the author's surprise, a single adult female of *A. fulvolineata* was taken under a brick in the same upper saltmarsh area. Even more surprising, two females of this species were seen but not collected from under bricks in an earthen bank (part of the spoil from an adjacent disused brickworks) which was about 2 feet higher than the normal high tide mark at this point on the coast. One of these females was found in a silken burrow similar to those made by other *Arctosa* species.

It would seem that *Arctosa fulvolineata* is more common than previous records would suggest, at least along this short stretch of the North Kent coast. The common factor in finding specimens was the presence of bricks or other rubbish on areas of upper saltmarsh. Harvey (2001) reports finding this species at Foulness, on the Essex coast, in exactly the same microhabitat. While the habit of dumping rubbish on saltmarsh sites is certainly not to be condoned, in this instance it may make finding a rare species that much easier! Indeed, if a systematic survey for *A. fulvolineata* was required, placing bricks or concrete slabs on areas of upper saltmarsh might provide a way of doing so, provided of course they were removed once the survey was completed. The other intriguing observation was to find females of this species well above the high-tide mark in autumn. It raises the possibility that some females over-winter and that there may be seasonal movement up the shoreline, possibly to avoid inundation during spring tides. However, these casual observations are based on very few specimens and a much more intensive and organised survey would be required to establish whether this is indeed the case.

Reference

Harvey, P. 2001. A day at Foulness, and *Arctosa fulvolineata* rediscovered in Essex. *Spider Recording Scheme Newsl.* **40:** 3.

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A First for Sussex and a Strange Location for *Meta menardi* at Beachy Head

by Richard Price

During the excellent B.A.S. spider identification and biology week at Juniper Hall, I was lucky enough to be shown *Meta menardi* in the ice house of the Field Studies Centre.

Two weeks after the course I was walking from Eastbourne to Peacehaven. Adjacent to the path at TV59177 95662 I noticed a hole, and in the middle of the

Beachy Head path. © Richard Price.

hole I spied a huge spider. It was in the middle of a web eating a woodlouse (*Armadillidium vulgare*). I was amazed as it was a large specimen of *M. menardi*. I searched for a pot but only had small tubes and nothing big enough to collect it.

This was a surprising location to find such a spectacular spider as it was very near to the Beachy Head viewpoint in an area very often visited by the public, but no one had recorded it before. I contacted Dr Tony Russell-Smith to tell him of my discovery and he said that I should get a specimen because *M. menardi* could be confused with *M. bourneti*. Peter Harvey of the recording scheme pointed out that most spider records require a voucher specimen to be available and pointed out that the retention of a voucher specimen is unlikely to impact on a population, with natural predation having a vastly greater effect. I vowed to keep an eye out for the spider next time I walked along the path.

On the 17th August I walked again over Beachy Head and investigated the hole. Nothing was immediately visible but I had a large pot and I reached my hand in and ran the pot on the underside of the hole. Into the pot dropped *M. menardi*. She was a huge female. I took the spider home and took a photograph of it before taking it to Evan Jones for confirmation. After spending a few nights with the spider, I was somewhat attached it! It was large and beautiful and I did not want to kill it. Evan agreed that it could be identified and released so we built a shallow spy pot using cling film and viewed the epigyne under a microscope. Evan confirmed that it was *M. menardi*.

I took Evan to the location where the spider had been found and we released it back into the hole and then took a walk around the vicinity to search for more holes and more *M. menardi*. There are numerous fissures throughout the cliff top. After releasing the specimen Evan and I walked and whilst looking in these fissures, found three more *M. menardi* including one male in the same hole as the returned spider. We did not take these to examine the epigyne but concluded that there is a colony present.

On 4th September I again searched the holes. I got some strange looks from passers-by as I poked my head down the holes in the ground! I saw a possible *M. menardi* down a hole but it was too deep to reach. I caught a smaller spider that I thought might be *M. menardi* but when I checked the epigyne it turned out to be *Metellina merianae*. I believe that these spiders are nearer to the entrances of the fissures when conditions are fairly damp.

M. menardi is normally found in cellars and caves and in the Provisional Atlas of British spiders (Harvey *et al*., 2002) it is stated that they are probably under-recorded due to their habitat preferences. These spiders were found in fissures on the cliff top just down from the view point at Beachy Head. The cliff top is very exposed and gets a lot of sun. Some of the holes are quite shallow whilst others are very deep. Evan said that underneath the cliffs at Beachy Head there exists a complex of caves that have been used during wars and have since been sealed. Perhaps these fissures are connected to the caves. It would be interesting if the B.A.S. could persuade someone to open the caves so that they could be investigated for their spider fauna.

I have briefly searched the Internet for information about Beachy Head and its caves and found that the website of the Kent Underground Research Group (2005) states that caves can form when large masses of rock resting on unstable clay simply move apart and leave what is in effect a large crack. “These are known as 'tectonic' or fissure caves and are often associated with landslips. A good example in chalk is Beachy Head Fissure near the lighthouse situated on the cliff top above a landslip. It consists of a 50 ft shaft leading to a tall natural passage, descending to a depth of about 70 ft.” I wonder how many *M. menardi* specimens might be found down this shaft?

References

Harvey, P.R., Nellist, D.R. & Telfer, M.G. (eds) 2002. *Provisional Atlas of British spiders (Arachnida, Araneae), Volume 2*. Huntingdon: Biological Records Centre.

Kent Underground Research Group (2005) website: www.kurg.org.uk

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Spider Recording Scheme News
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Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 55 will be published in July 2006. Please send contributions by the end of May at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32, Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: srs@britishspiders.org.uk

Editorial

Progress towards an update of spider distribution maps

Thank you very much indeed to everyone who has been sending in their data. We now have a considerable amount of new data with which to update the maps and undertake a national status review using the IUCN criteria. We will be able to provide the new maps on the internet via the BAS website as a downloadable PDF file and via the NBN Gateway. However the maps will only be as good as the data provided! At the time of writing we know that there are at least two post-atlas datasets out there that have not yet been submitted. If you have not sent in records, then they will not be able to appear on the maps, but it is still worthwhile sending them in – we may be able to update the maps on a regular basis, especially if data are provided in computerised format, preferably in MapMate.

The post-atlas card total now stands at 1881, of which 1314 are the old RA65 cards, 165 GEN7/13/14 cards, and 433 new RA65 cards. BRC computerised 1232 old RA65 and 185 GEN cards into their summer 2005 schedule. This has resulted in a total of 9204 records. I have also managed to computerise a good proportion of the new RA65 cards and all the old style cards that have come in since.

The cards and BRC print-outs of the data entry have been checked or validated by volunteers on the BAS Council and I am very grateful indeed to Rod Allison, Lawrence Bee, Ian Dawson, Stan Dobson, Tony Russell-Smith, John Stanney and Emma Shaw for this incredibly important task. It hopefully means that we have reduced data entry errors to a very low level. I am also very grateful indeed to John and Emma for taking a large set of paper hand-written records and computerising these into Excel, and to Ian Dawson who has entered a substantial number of RA65 cards into MapMate.

I am also very grateful indeed to Henry Arnold at Monks Wood for his rapid responses and patience in resolving a seemingly endless number of issues concerning records in both the new and old datasets.

A large backlog of data that have been provided by a number of recorders in spreadsheet or tabular form has been put into consistent format and imported into MapMate. This was a major task not only because of the number of files, but also because a great deal of effort has to be put into making the data consistent in format and suitable for import. It is quite remarkable how many ways the name for the same taxon, recorder, site etc can be entered.

I have continued to receive computerised data from various recorders via MapMate and currently hold 235,750 spider records in MapMate, with an additional 20,586 records waiting to be put into a format suitable for input into the software, but which have already been combined with all the other data for the national status review.

Getting the Excel and similar files into MapMate and entering records from the new RA65 cards has raised a number of very important issues about the interpretation of habitats and various phase 2 features. There have been quite a few instances where site descriptions and habitats have not appeared to match, or there has clearly been a substantially different interpretation of habitats from the ones I would have expected. I think there will be a need to produce some fairly comprehensive guidance in the newsletter on how we want these features to be interpreted and how we can be consistent.

UK Status review

The status review of spiders using the IUCN criteria is scheduled to be completed by the end of June 2006. Getting all the new data into shape and into one database has taken considerably longer than expected. However analyses on the combined atlas dataset and new data have now been undertaken and a preliminary assessment of IUCN status will have been considered by the BAS subgroup by the time this newsletter is published. Unfortunately due to the late arrival of many records it has not been possible to produce a draft list in time for the March newsletter.

Updating the maps

Including the provisional atlas dataset, we now have a total of nearly 830,000 records. In addition at the time of writing there are several sets of computerised records still known to be out there somewhere! It will now be comparatively easy to generate an updated set of maps for all the British spiders, which will then be combined into a single pdf file that can be made available on the BAS website. The data will also be provided to BRC so that it can be archived and made available as a dataset on the NBN Gateway.

Essentially the maps will represent the results of the spider recording scheme since 1987, in particular of the considerable efforts by recorders over many years. This remains an incredible legacy to the late Clifford Smith, the National Organiser of the Spider Recording Scheme from 1987 until 1993, who encouraged, cajoled and generally inspired people to get out there recording spiders, as well

as to David Nellist who took the reins when Clifford stepped down due to ill-health. Gaps or 'missing' dots on maps will almost certainly be due to arachnologists failing to provide their data – the maps are only as good as the records received!

MapMate

A note was included in the Autumn Newsletter asking for people to register an interest in a bulk purchase of MapMate and a 'BAS MapMate Licence Group'. I have had a good response to this, with 31 recorders so far who wish to be in the licence support group, involving 36 copies of the software and 5 recorders who have purchased the software at a 25x bulk price of £15 a copy. **If anyone else is interested in taking up an offer of reduced cost for software or the group licence, please let me know.**

Some recent records which appear to be new for VC60 (N. Lancashire).

by Jennifer Newton

Winmarleigh Moss SSSI, centered on SD4447, is the largest lowland raised bog in Lancashire which still retains a reasonable flora and invertebrate fauna, including Large Heath butterfly *Coenonympha tullia* and Bog Bush Cricket, *Metrioptera brachyptera*. Pitfall traps set by Jeremy Steeden in 2004 and 2005 produced an interesting set of spiders including *Euryopis flavomaculata* (2m), *Walckenaeria atrotibialis* (4m 4f), *Hypselistes jacksoni* (7f 1m), *Scotina gracilipes* (13m), all species with no documented previous records for VC60. A second VC60 record for *Hypselistes jacksoni* (1f) resulted from sweeping bracken and rushes on moorland at 180m in NE Lancashire, Leck Fell, SD6578 in November 2005.

Centromerus arcanus. One female was found in a species-rich basin mire SD5876 near Whittington, close to the Cumbrian border, at the relatively low altitude of 130m, August 2005.

Tetragnatha striata. Specimens were found by bird-ringers on the *Phragmites* at Leighton Moss RSPB reserve, SD4874 in 2003. In 2004 I was surprised to find a specimen on *Phragmites* at the edge of a small industrial reservoir just south of Heysham, SD4159. This is a post industrial site, with a great deal of disturbance. The steep-sided reservoir now supports a reasonable flora around the edge and is excellent for a range of dragonflies. Specimens from both sites were immature and identified by the distinctive eye pattern. I am grateful to Chris Felton for confirming the identification.

Alopecosa cuneata. An adult male was taken by Jeremy Steeden in a pitfall trap under heather on an old golf course at Lytham, SD3130 in May 2004.

Pirata piscatorius. One immature male was seen by Laura Cotton on the surface of sphagnum on Lord's Lot bog in August 2004 and was reared through to maturity in the following spring. Lord's Lot bog is an artificial schwingmire, a floating raft of sphagnum, cranberry, bilberry and heathers over a dammed lake in the middle of a conifer plantation. Pitfall traps have caught large numbers of *Pirata piraticus* and *P. uliginosus*, *Trochosa terricola*, *Alopecosa pulverulenta*, but this is the first specimen of *P. piscatorius*. It is also the first documented record for Lancashire.

Hahnia pusilla. One adult female was found in April 2005 under a stone in an old gritstone quarry in moorland in Forest of Bowland AONB, SD6661. There have been 2 recent records of the species in VC69, very close to the border with Lancashire.

Drassodes lapidosus. One female was collected in a pitfall trap set by Jeremy Steeden in June 2005 on an old industrial site on the coast at Lytham, SD3727. A month later a female of *Drassodes cupreus* turned up on the same site. *D. cupreus* is common throughout the vice county, from coastal wasteland and limestone grassland to high moorland, under stones and debris and in gorse and heather. In spite of careful searching this is the first specimen of *D. lapidosus* I have come across, and I think many of the older records from the general area must refer to *D. cupreus*.

Talavera aequipes. I was very pleased to find two males of this tiny jumping spider in sparse grassland at Heysham Nature Reserve, SD4059 in May 2005. The reserve has developed over spoil from the construction of Heysham Power Station in the 1980s and has attracted an interesting invertebrate fauna (including a fine population of *Agelena labyrinthica*)

Talavera aequipes male. © Peter Harvey.

Uloborus plumipes. One immature specimen was discovered in the Lancaster Butterfly House in June 2005, after unsuccessful searches in 2004. Derek Bunn reported its presence in some numbers in a garden centre at Forton, SD4851, in 2005.

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A new site for *Agroeca lusatica* (L. Koch, 1875) in Kent.

by A. Russell-Smith

Agroeca lusatica has been known from only a single site in Britain, Sandwich Bay NNR, Kent where it has been found on many occasions on sand dunes. A second supposed record from Ynyslas Dunes, Cardiganshire (Harvey *et al*., 2002) was subsequently shown to be for a related species, *Agroeca dentigera* (Felton *et al*., 2004).

The author collected on the small area of sand dunes at Greatstone-on-Sea, Kent on the 16th March 2005 where a number of female *Agroeca* were taken amongst dense marram grass. Under the microscope most proved to be *A. inopina* and *A. proxima* but a single female had an epigyne that corresponded to that of *A. lusatica*. The specimen was sent to Peter Merrett who kindly confirmed the identification. It is good to know that this RDB1 listed species occurs in at least one other site in Britain (currently a local nature reserve) and lends hope that it might occur in other sand dune sites on the south coast. The Greatstone site is remarkable for having all the British species of *Agroeca* other than *A. brunnea* and, of course, the newly discovered *A. dentigera*.

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Ero aphana a new spider for Nottinghamshire in 2005

by Annette Binding

Every year my husband, Allan, and I spend a week doing voluntary work for the National Trust at Clumber Park in Nottinghamshire carrying out invertebrate surveys within the park, covering most orders including spiders.

On 30th June 2005 Allan and I had spent several hours surveying a strip of broad set-aside land between a pine plantation and agricultural land. The land was formerly heathland. The edge of the pine plantation contains some gorse and broom scrub. In recent years this strip of set-aside land has been extended which has allowed many wild flower species to re-appear together with invertebrates associated with heathland and grassland habitats.

On our return to the Base Camp for lunch, Allan brushed a tiny spider from his hair. It landed on the table so I quickly potted it thinking it was probably another of the many small *Theridion* species we had encountered during our surveys. A quick look at it through the microscope later showed it to be a male *Ero* species but at that time I did not take the identification any further. It was not until November that I started to identify the specimens from Clumber Park. When I came to the *Ero* specimen I expected it to be *Ero cambridgei* as I had already recorded that species at Clumber Park. That expectation proved to be very wrong as the spider turned out to be *Ero aphana*, a RDB2 species. On looking at the national distribution maps on the NBN Gateway I saw that there were no records near Nottinghamshire.

I telephoned Peter Harvey to ask him if he would look at the spider to confirm my identification and he agreed to do so. Within a couple of days the spider was returned to me, Peter having confirmed the identification. Peter also confirmed that this is the most northerly known record for this species and that it is a long way from the currently known range.

Although the spider was collected in the Base Camp, we believe it is more likely that it came from the area of set-aside land where we had spent the morning.

I am grateful to Peter Harvey for his help in confirming the identification of the spider and for information regarding its current distribution.

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New Welsh record for *Crustulina guttata* (Wider, 1834)

by Simon Warmingham

On 28th June 2005 I decided that the seafront at East Aberthaw (ST0366) merited a visit. Although various habitats are found at the site, my preference is the shallow layer of stones on sandy substrate, interspersed with small grass tussocks immediately south of the seawall.

Nothing of eye-catching quality was taken until mid-afternoon; approaching dark cloud and claps of thunder dictated that I turn over one last stone. Previous poring over Michael Robert's colour plates meant that I knew instantly that this was *Crustulina* underneath. It looked tiny, especially compared to *Dysdera* sp. also found here. The observation was subsequently mentioned to Mike Kilner (Area Organiser for South Wales) on a S.W.A.G. field trip; he thought it was a first for Glamorgan VC41.

I paid a second visit to the site on a fairer 5th October, whereupon two adult females and two adult males of *Crustulina* were taken; plenty of juveniles of the species were also present. This was the most numerous spider seen under stones that day. I was pleased to take and later identify a male of the linyphiid *Ceratinopsis romana* from marram nearby. Mike later informed me that this is a new site for the spider. Perhaps I had better get a copy of the spider atlas!

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More on *Meta menardi*

by Simon Warmingham

Following on from Richard Price's strange location for *Meta menardi* (SRS News 53), how about a garden shed? My father's small, long established, east-facing stone and slate-roofed shed backs onto a sandstone cliff face (an old quarry) in Wetheral, Cumbria (NY4654). The door of the shed is shut when not in use, so the interior is kept very dark. I hadn't been into spiders for very long, but on entering the shed on 27 December 2002, eight tell-tale "light bulb" egg sacs were hanging from the dark roof lining. Although I had a hunch as to what the species was, I didn't have a microscope at that time, so a female specimen was sent off to Peter Harvey, who duly determined the animal. As there are no cave systems in the immediate vicinity of the site, one wonders if they previously led a subterranean existence. What other non-troglodytic places might they be lurking in?

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Is *Theridion tinctum* increasing and spreading north?

by Jennifer Newton

The Provisional Atlas (Harvey *et al*. 2002) map of *Theridion tinctum* shows an unusually clear distribution pattern, with numerous records from Yorkshire south (excluding Wales and the SW) but only 2, recent, records in Scotland. Unusually there are few old records, only 5 pre-1950 records without more recent updates. An *Atlas of Yorkshire Spiders*, (Smith 1982), with a good historical base, shows 6 records, first record 1953, and there are another 5 later records in the Provisional Atlas. As a distinctive spider, although small it is relatively easy to identify, and not hard to find if trees and shrubs are beaten, and it is not uncommon as a garden resident. It will not readily be sampled by pitfall trapping.

The database for the Provisional Atlas (Harvey, per. comm.) has just over 3500 records from David Mackie, covering a wide range of species over a wide area but the majority from Cheshire, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Wales in the 1950s –1970s, There is a solitary record of *Theridion tinctum*, from Lindow Common, SJ8381, in Cheshire, VC58, in 1970, the first documented Cheshire record. Since then there have been 15 records from Cheshire entered in the provisional atlas, mostly from the 1990s, including one of mine from a house in Sale, N Cheshire, SJ8091, in 1991.

A similar pattern emerges for Lancashire. There is a single record for VC59, SJ69, in 1995 in the Provisional Atlas. I know of 3 post atlas records for VC59, two by Nick Law from his canal survey, SD5307 and SD9012 in August 2004, and one by Brian Hugo in January 2006, from silver birch in Burnley, SD8533 (interestingly Mackie's Cheshire record was from silver birch).

The first known record for W Lancashire, VC60, was made in July 2000 by Jeremy Steeden under trees at the Royal Lytham Golf Course, SD3427 followed a year later by specimens from woodlands near Blackpool, SD3336 and SD3533. In May 2003 Steeden found it near Preston, SD4933, and another specimen turned up just to the north, SD5234 in May 2005. In October 2004 several immature specimens were found by Brian Hugo in birch litter on Heysham Moss, SD4260, a small relict raised bog in north Lancashire.

In June 2000 an adult female appeared on the boot of a car parked in Cumbria, (Westmorland) VC69, under trees at Waitby Greenrigg CWT reserve, NY7508. As the car was from Heysham in Lancashire it could not be certain that this was a Cumbrian specimen. Then in August 2005 I was surprised to beat 3 specimens, 2 adult females and one subadult male from pines on Cliburn Moss in central Cumbria, NY5725, the extreme north of VC69. This is a basin mire, an NNR well known for its rich invertebrate fauna. It was heavily planted up with pines, which are now being cleared from some areas.

It seems that *Theridion tinctum* now occurs in a variety of habitats, both man-made and semi-natural, over much more of the country than in the first half of last century. I would be interested to hear if anyone else has noticed an increase in abundance of *Theridion tinctum* or its arrival at new sites. I am also intrigued by the stated association with yew, which I have not observed in this area.

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Update on spiders at Misson Carr NR, North Nottinghamshire

by Howard Williams

Last year I wrote an article about some of the more uncommon spiders amongst a total of 66 species, taken on this reserve in 2004. This low-lying area was formerly part of a Ministry of Defence missile site, and consists of scrub woodland and two areas of acid grassland over peat, one being slightly damper than the other and more varied in grasses and vegetation.

The 2004 spiders were taken by sweeping, beating and grubbing in the scrub woodland and its rides; so in 2005 I decided to set pitfall traps in the grass heath areas during June and July. As a result, 35 more species were added to the list for the site, bringing the total to 101. Most were from the pitfall traps, but some were swept or beaten from the grassland or scrub edges.

Of the total to date, 7 represent, to the best of my knowledge, new county records (marked **x** on the table), while 7 (marked **y**) are spiders very infrequently recorded previously in the county and considered fairly uncommon

generally.

One of the things County Organizer, Tom Faulds, and I wished to follow up was the unusual presence here in 2004 of the Notable A salticid, *Synageles venator*. On my first visit in early May 2005, I again saw two males running on the wooden gatepost of the reserve car park. In mid-June, Tom and I found five males and two females running on the gate posts and wooden post-and-rail fencing of the car park. Two others were also seen, but were too quick for sex or stage to be determined. None was found in a short grubbing session on the ground at the foot of the fencing or on the gravelly floor. On two further visits in July I saw nothing of them, but the days were cool and dull with a strong wind on one of them. There is every reason to believe, however, that *Synageles* is thriving on the post-and-rail fencing at the entrance. It seems to enjoy the warmth and light here and the refuges supplied by the numerous splits and cracks in the wood. However, they have not yet been seen on any other wooden fencing in other parts of the reserve.

The next most uncommon spider of 2005 was beaten from a clump of scrub willow and hawthorn at the edge of the grass heath – the Notable B theridiid, *Achaearanea simulans*, just one female. Later beatings in the same area failed to produce any more.

The pitfall traps, especially in the damper of the two grass areas, produced predictably large numbers of *Pardosa pullata* and *Pirata hygrophilus*; but also two much more uncommon lycosids – five male *Pirata latitans* and three male *Pirata uliginosus*. There were no females captured, even by mid-July.

Another surprise with the pitfall traps was the large number of male and female *Euryopis flavomaculata* revealed to be present on this damp grassland. Previously I had just once found a single specimen in Nottinghamshire, in a mixed plantation on former sandy heathland. In both localities, however, its prey, ants, are present in large numbers. Members of the genera *Formica*, *Lasius* and *Myrmica* are abundant throughout the reserve, under the damp scrub as well as on the heath areas. They also explain the presence of *Phrurolithus festivus*, a new reserve record this year.

One more species should be added to the total number in due course. We found the salticid *Heliophanus* on the drier heath, but it was a subadult female which we released – impossible to say whether *H. cupreus* or *flavipes*.

To conclude, many commonly occurring species are still missing from the list for Misson Carr. I was surprised to realise, for instance, that *Metellina segmentata* had not been recorded, or *Philodromus aureolus*, or *Clubiona terrestris*. Still plenty to do then!

My thanks are due to Tom Faulds both for active help on the reserve and for checking the more uncommon species; and to Peter Harvey for his generous advice on and corrections of ant identification.

Mimetidae
Ero cambridgei
Theridiidae
Achaearanea simulans **x** [Nb]
Anelosimus vittatus
Enoplognatha ovata sens. str.
Euryopis flavomaculata **y**
Paidiscura pallens
Steatoda bipunctata
Theridion sisyphium
Theridion tinctum
Theridion varians
Neottiura bimaculata
Linyphiidae
Baryphyma trifrons **x**
Bathyphantes gracilis
Bathyphantes parvulus
Centromerus dilutus
Ceratinella scabrosa **y**
Cnephalocotes obscurus
Dicymbium nigrum
Dicymbium tibiale
Diplocephalus latifrons
Diplocephalus picinus
Diplostyla concolor
Dismodicus bifrons
Entelecara acuminata
Erigone atra
Erigone dentipalpis
Erigonella hiemalis
Gongylidiellum latebricola **y**
Gongylidium rufipes
Kaestneria dorsalis **y**
Kaestneria pullata
Lepthyphantes mengei
Lepthyphantes pallidus
Lepthyphantes tenuis
Lepthyphantes zimmermanni
Linyphia triangularis
Meioneta beata **x**
Meioneta rurestris
Meioneta saxatilis sens. str.
Micrargus herbigradus sens. str.
Microlinyphia pusilla
Microneta viaria
Monocephalus fuscipes
Neriene montana
Oedothorax apicatus
Oedothorax fuscus
Pocadicnemis juncea
Porrhomma pygmaeum
Robertus lividus
Saaristoa abnormis
Savignia frontata
Trichopterna thorelli **y**
Walckenaeria cucullata
Walckenaeria obtusa **y**
Tetragnathidae
Tetragnatha extensa
Tetragnatha montana
Tetragnatha obtusa
Metellina mengei
Pachygnatha clercki
Pachygnatha degeeri
Araneidae
Araneus diadematus
Araneus marmoreus var. *pyramidatus* **y**
Araniella cucurbitina sens. str.
Araniella opisthographa
Larinioides cornutus
Zygiella atrica
Zygiella x-notata
Nuctenea umbratica
Hypsosinga pygmaea
Lycosidae
Pardosa nigriceps
Pardosa palustris
Pardosa prativaga
Pardosa pullata
Pirata hygrophilus
Pirata latitans **x**
Pirata uliginosus **x**
Trochosa terricola
Alopecosa pulverulenta
Dictynidae
Dictyna arundinacea
Dictyna uncinata
Liocranidae
Phrurolithus festivus
Clubionidae
Clubiona brevipes
Clubiona lutescens
Clubiona phragmitis
Clubiona reclusa
Clubiona stagnatilis
Clubiona subtilis **x**
Gnaphosidae
Drassyllus pusillus
Haplodrassus signifer
Zelotes latreillei
Zoridae
Zora spinimana
Philodromidae
Philodromus cespitum
Thomisidae
Xysticus cristatus
Xysticus ulmi
Ozyptila atomaria
Ozyptila praticola
Ozyptila trux
Salticidae
Euophrys frontalis
Salticus cingulatus
Salticus scenicus
Synageles venator **x** [Na]
Heliophanus sp.

New Nottinghamshire Records = x
Rare Nottinghamshire Previous Records = y

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Philodromus histrio saltmarsh form – a request for information

by Peter Harvey

This species is a scarce spider of heathland, but in Essex an apparently uniquely camouflaged colour form occurs on Sea Purslane and Shrubby Seablite in saltmarsh, and the heathland form is unknown (all substantial heathland areas in Essex have long gone, with only small remnants surviving in the county).

Since 1987 the Essex Spider Group has recorded the spider in saltmarsh situations at various points around the Essex coast, but as far as I know there are no reports elsewhere of the species in a similar habitat or of such a distinctive colour variety. However it seems very likely that it may also occur on the Suffolk and Norfolk coast, and the species has certainly been recorded in both the recent and more distant past in areas near the Suffolk coast - but what colour form was found?

Philodromus histrio saltmarsh form. © Peter Harvey.

Philodromus histrio normal form. © Peter Harvey.

I should be very interested indeed in any observations that other arachnologists may have on the saltmarsh form or of any other colour forms of *P. histrio*.

The Essex Spider Group, which was initiated by Kate Hawkins before she left the county at the start of 1987, consists of David Carr, Ken Hill, Ray Ruffell and myself. We have been active since 1986.

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A garden pitfall trapping experiment: some comments

by T.J.Thomas

Introduction: In 2002 a Luton garden was described as "unkempt". Since then the garden has been brought towards some control by clearing, cleaning and replanting. This has not only improved the garden's appearance but also has altered many habitats with their cover and possibly the availability of prey. This may mean that the composition of the spider fauna has been changed and is still changing as the garden is now regularly attended. A pitfall-trapping regime had been started in April 1995 (for the reason given in Thomas 2002) so it was interesting to examine the results from nearly eleven years trapping (April 1995 – December 2005) for any changes that may have occurred in the spiders taken. Interpretation of the results needed care for the numbers of spiders in the pitfalls were few, being an average of four individuals per day. Casual collecting by sweep netting can produce more than that within a few minutes of effort. The figures have been looked at from the arbitrary point of view of "dominance" i.e. those families and species making up the majority of captures.

Spider Families: Seventeen spider families were represented by the spiders collected (thirty-three families are given in the check list of Merrett and Murphy 2000) with an annual average of fifteen families of which eleven had been present in every year. Of the total spiders trapped three families accounted for 86%: Linyphiidae (50%), Lycosidae (24%) and Tetragnathidae (12%). The other families ranged from <0.1% to 6% e.g. the Oonopidae was represented by one individual to members of the Thomisidae regularly caught in small numbers (see, however, below for *Ozyptila sanctuaria*).

Species: In the same trapping period 106 spider species were taken which, when added to those collected by other methods, meant that 129 species were listed for house and garden. The main activity of the trapped spiders was from April to August when 74% of all captures took place.

It was assumed that the "capturable" species (meaning those species that were likely to be taken in the traps because of their lifestyle i.e. those usually at ground level, hunters, and wanderers) would have been achieved within a few years of trapping. This was confirmed, for the pitfalls, after reaching a maximum by 1998, settled to taking four or five new species per year, usually represented by individuals, though only two were taken in 2005.

Of the forty-eight species found in the Linyphiidae four made up 57% of the linyphiids: *Erigone dentipalpis* (28% - for comparison, *E. atra* (6%)), *Lepthyphantes tenuis* (11%), *Stemonyphantes lineatus* (10%) and *Centromerita bicolor* (8%). There were five species - if a possible from the immatures of *Tetragnatha montana* group is included – in the Tetragnathidae, but one, *Pachygnatha degeeri*, was over 99% of these captures. Of the eight species in the Lycosidae, three made up 77% of

the lycosids: *Alopecosa pulverulenta*, including immatures (44%), *Pardosa amentata* (22%) and *P. prativaga* (11%). Therefore, out of the 106 species only eight were "dominant".

Changes in the "dominant" species.

Of those "dominant" species in the Linyphiidae where numbers dropped were: *C. bicolor* with a maximum of 207 in 1997 but by 2004 was down to four individuals and *S. lineatus* (a species that I associate with rabbit holes on chalk downland and amongst garden plant stems) numbers were 239 (1997 maximum) but 14 in 2004. The removal of ground cover and coarse vegetation from the garden would have altered the habitats that these two species prefer. Numbers in both species are recovering as the new replanting is beginning to provide greater cover.

On the other hand, *E. dentipalpis* increased from 17 in 1996 to 255 in 2004 (maximum of 350 in 2002). This spider is common in grassland so this increase in numbers may be due to the grooming of the lawns; perhaps this opening up of the garden allows greater chance for the capture of aeronauting spiders such as this species. *L. tenuis* remained fairly steady over the years at a mean of 53, though increases in numbers during 2002 and 2004 brought the overall mean to 74, suggesting that this is a species, not only resident, but as with *E. dentipalpis*, being positively affected by the changes. The close cropping, then regular mowing of the lawns may have helped in making available a ground structure suitable for *L. tenuis*, for many small webs seen on the lawn were occupied by this species.

The Lycosidae numbers fell steadily over the years from 656 in 1996 to 72 in 2005. *Pardosa amentata* and *P. prativaga* averaged 76 and 38 individuals per year i.e. relatively few captures yearly. Of these two species the former remained fairly steady averaging 90 until 2004/5 when only 13 and 11 individuals were taken respectively. *P. prativaga* declined steadily from 2001 bringing the overall mean from 54 to 37. As *A. pulverulenta* had accounted for almost half of all lycosids then the nearly twenty-five fold drop in its captures had the greatest effect on the lycosid numbers: 412 in 1996 to 17 in 2005 (including the immatures). Again, the regular gardening and disturbance may have had an effect on all the lycosids but especially *A. pulverulenta*.

For the tetragnathid, *P. degeeri*, captures ranged from 77(1997) to 298(2002) with a mean of 170. There were years of low numbers: 77 in 1997, 98 in 1998 and 82 in 2004. Probably these changes were due to the disturbance, perhaps natural variability and weather, particularly as the garden was being opened up. It may be that *P. degeeri*, though a hunter is like *L. tenuis*, a resident affected by the grooming of the garden, but not driven out.

The wide range of families trapped, from hunters to web-builders, show how mobile spiders really are. Some species may be residents regardless of drastic changes, whilst others are disadvantaged, with others coming in, perhaps passing through for "better" sites (Janetos 1995). An example of immigration that occurred was that of the little crab spider, *Ozyptila sanctuaria*. From 1995 to 1998 there was nothing of this species, then in 1999 two males were taken; from then on the numbers increased yearly as follows: 2000 (17 males), 2001 (17 males), 2002 (34 males and 6 females), 2003 (26 males and 5 females), 2004 (54 males): the majority of captures were from the lawn pitfalls.

Apart from seeking new or more suitable sites some movement may be due to males seeking females for mating. Examination of the figures for 1995-2005 showed that for the mature spiders the male/female ratio ranged from 1.4 to 3.2 and for immatures 0.9 to 1.2. Thus the results show that more males are on the wander than females.

Comments

The relatively few captures per day imply that pitfall trapping is apparently not so effective a technique as others, e.g. sweep netting. But amongst its advantages are uses as a passive technique by being in place for as long as required and examined regularly, supplementing results by other collecting procedures. Also, the technique may monitor some changes, but probably only those on a gross scale judging from the above results. One drawback is that the holes in the ground that are the pitfalls may be avoided by some creatures, and used by others, e.g. sometimes webs had been built across or inside the traps. The procedure's results are, therefore, going to be biased, not being representative of the spider fauna. There are probably other criticisms of pitfall trapping (e.g. Parker 2000). With any collecting technique there are going to be disadvantages so any results should be treated with caution.

The results of this pitfall trapping experiment, which is continuing, show that a garden, despite regular management, may hold an extensive spider fauna. Gardens these days are being recognised as refuges for wildlife regardless of the consistent and constructive disturbance in the cared-for garden and, perhaps, as corridors between the countryside. If a garden such as this one in Luton, in a built-up area and being just a mile from the town centre, has provided such a spider list then those gardens better situated, e.g. alongside woodlands (Williams 1999), may provide safe habitats for the more unusual arachnids. The problem is that the attractive and visible fauna are more likely to be noticed and recorded e.g., birds, mammals, butterflies, rather than the smaller creatures such as spiders and harvestmen.

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List of species recorded from the Luton garden

Amaurobiidae
Amaurobius fenestralis
*A. similis**
*A. ferox**

Dictynidae
Dictyna uncinata

Oonopidae
Oonops domesticus
*O. pulcher**

Dysderidae
*Dysdera crocata**
Dysdera erythrina

Gnaphosidae
*Drassodes lapidosus***
*Drassodes cupreus***
*Scotophaeus blackwalli***
*Micaria pulicaria**
*Zelotes latreillei**

Pholcidae
Pholcus phalangioides

Clubionidae
*Clubiona comta**
*Clubiona corticalis**
*Clubiona lutescens**
Clubiona pallidula
*Clubiona reclusa***
*Clubiona terrestris***

Liocranidae
*Phrurolithus festivus**

Thomisidae
*Xysticus cristatus***
*Ozyptila sanctuaria**
*O. praticola**
*Ozyptila trux**

Philodromidae
*Philodromus aureolus**
Philodromus cespitum
*Philodromus dispar***
Tibellus oblongus

Salticidae
*Salticus scenicus***
*Heliophanus flavipes**
*Euophrys frontalis**
Pseudeuophrys lanigera
Sitticus pubescens

Lycosidae
*Pardosa amentata***
*Pardosa nigriceps**
*Pardosa palustris***
*Pardosa prativaga***
*Pardosa pullata**
*Alopecosa pulverulenta***
*Trochosa terricola***
*Trochosa ruricola**

Pisauridae
*Pisaura mirabilis***

Agelenidae
*Tegenaria agrestis***
*Tegenaria domestica***
*Tegenaria gigantea***

Hahniidae
Hahnia montana

Mimetidae
*Ero cambridgei**
*Ero furcata***

Theridiidae
*Steatoda bipunctata***
*Anelosimus vittatus***
*Neottiura bimaculata***
Theridion blackwalli **
*Theridion melanurum**
*T. mystaceum**
Theridion pallens
*Theridion sisyphium***
Theridion tinctum
*Enoplognatha latimana**
*Enoplognatha ovata***
*Enoplognatha thoracica**

Tetragnathidae
*Tetragnatha extensa**
*Pachygnatha clercki **
*Pachygnatha degeeri***
*Pachygnatha listeri**
*Metellina segmentata***
Metellina mengei

Araneidae
*Zygiella x-notata***
*Araneus diadematus***
*Araneus quadratus***
Nuctenea umbratica
Araniella cucurbitina
A. opistographa

Linyphiidae
*Walckenaeria acuminata***
*Walckenaeria antica**
*Walckenaeria unicornis**
*Dicymbium nigrum**
Entelecara acuminata
Entelecara erythropus
*Gongylidium rufipes**
*Dismodicus bifrons**
Hypomma cornutum
*Maso sundevalli**
*Pocadicnemis pumila**
*Pocadicnemis juncea**
*Oedothorax fuscus**
*Oedothorax retusus**
*Oe. gibbosus**
*Silometopus reussi***
*Tiso vagans***
*Monocephalus fuscipes**
*Micrargus herbigradus**
*Micrargus subaequalis**
*Savignya frontata**
*Erigonella hiemalis**
*Diplocephalus cristatus**
*Diplocephalus latifrons**
*Diplocephalus picinus**
*Araeoncus humilis**
*Panamomops sulcifrons**
*Lessertia dentichelis**
*Milleriana inerrans**
*Erigone atra***
*Erigone dentipalpis***
*Ostearius melanopygius***
*Porrhomma microphthalmum**
*Meioneta beata**
*Meioneta rurestris***
*Meioneta saxatilis***
*Microneta viaria**
*Centromerita bicolor**
*Bathyphantes gracilis***
*Bathyphantes parvulus**
*Diplostyla concolor**
Labulla thoracica
*Stemonyphantes lineatus***
*Megalepthyphantes nebulosus***
*Lepthyphantes alacris***
*Lepthyphantes ericaeus**
*Lepthyphantes flavipes**
*Lepthyphantes leprosus***
*Lepthyphantes mengei**
*Lepthyphantes pallidus**
*Lepthyphantes tenuis***
Lepthyphantes zimmermanni
Helophora insignis
*Linyphia hortensis**
*L. triangularis***
*Neriene clathrata***
Neriene. montana
*Microlinyphia pusilla***

* = In pitfalls
** = In pitfalls and by other methods.

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Spider Recording Scheme News
July 2006, No. 55

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 56 will be published in November 2006. Please send contributions by the end of September at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Editorial

Despite the late arrival of several large datasets it has now been possible to work through all the new records submitted to the recording scheme, sort out any problems in the data and generate a basic database of taxon, grid reference and year combining both the provisional atlas data and new records. This has been used in the status review and for producing updated distribution maps.

Where records have been submitted on cards or as Excel files it will take much longer to get all the information into MapMate, hence it will be some time before we know whether we are starting to get enough phase 2 data to evaluate more detailed aspects of species autecology. When all the data fields are brought into one overall database towards the end of the year, these will also be provided to the NBN Gateway for inclusion in the spider data already available. The updated maps are already available on the SRS pages of the BAS website as a single downloadable pdf file. Please note that this is a large file at over 18Mb.

Despite the large amount of data available to the Spider Recording Scheme, more than in almost any other major invertebrate group, the Status Review Subgroup has found the application of the IUCN criteria extremely difficult. A major problem is how to interpret in a sensible and consistent way the decline criteria that form the basis of the process. This has taken longer than expected and is now scheduled to be completed by late 2006. An explanation of the process used in the status review and the reasons for the date bands used in the maps is provided in the next article.

Please continue to send in your records - we will be able to keep distribution maps up to date very easily, especially if records are provided using MapMate - the synchronisation process makes the process of sending new or edited records very easy. Card records will be much more of a problem, but please continue to provide records in this way, if you cannot do so using MapMate or using another computerised format. However the difficulty of data entry and validation of card records will mean that there will be a long timescale needed before this kind of record can be included in any new maps.

Status Review Background

The status review is based on the revised IUCN Guidelines (IUCN 1994). The main categories that can be applied to spiders are EXTINCT (EX), CRITICALLY ENDANGERED (CR), VULNERABLE (VU), LOWER RISK (LR), DATA DEFICIENT (DD) and NOT EVALUATED (NE). Taxa included in the Lower Risk category can be separated into three sub-categories:

- Conservation Dependent (cd). Taxa which are the focus of a continuing taxon-specific or habitat-specific conservation programme targeted towards the taxon in question, the cessation of which would result in the taxon qualifying for one of the threatened categories above within a period of five years.
- Near Threatened (nt). Taxa which do not qualify for Lower Risk (conservation dependent), but which are close to qualifying for Vulnerable.
- Least Concern

The methods used closely follow guidance set out in Dr Stuart Ball's draft paper *Wildlife Statistics Project: Estimating range change from general biological recording data*.

The data

The data used in the status review consist of a combination of the provisional atlas data and new data, totalling 723,384 records in total. The new data consist of 240,067 records from MapMate (including Excel data imported into MapMate after work to get them into standardised and consistent format), which have presented no problem in use for analyses, but 23,534 records from Excel files received at a late stage have had to be used as they stand, generating many, many more instances where problems over date and grid references have had to be resolved before use.

Excluded data

Records were not included if from the Channel Islands or Ireland (Eire or Northern Ireland). These had to be excluded from the analysis dataset.

Tetrad grid references were required for estimates of occurrence. These can be extracted from the atlas dataset and provided by records in MapMate, but the new BRC entered data and very large Excel datasets from several sources that could not be imported into MapMate in the timescale available presented a problem. In the end, they had to be temporarily imported into a second copy of MapMate in order to extract tetrad grid references.

Analyses

1. Finding the year during which half the records in the scheme were made

The first stage of the analyses involved finding the year during which half of the records in the Spider Recording Scheme were made, and the 25%, 50% and 75% percentile years.

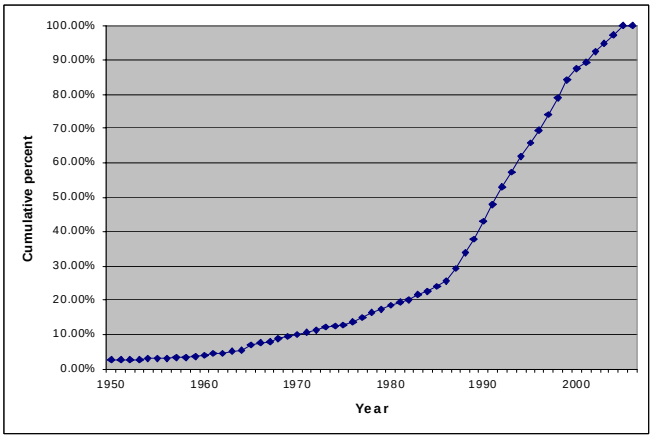


Figure 1. Cumulative records in the scheme by year

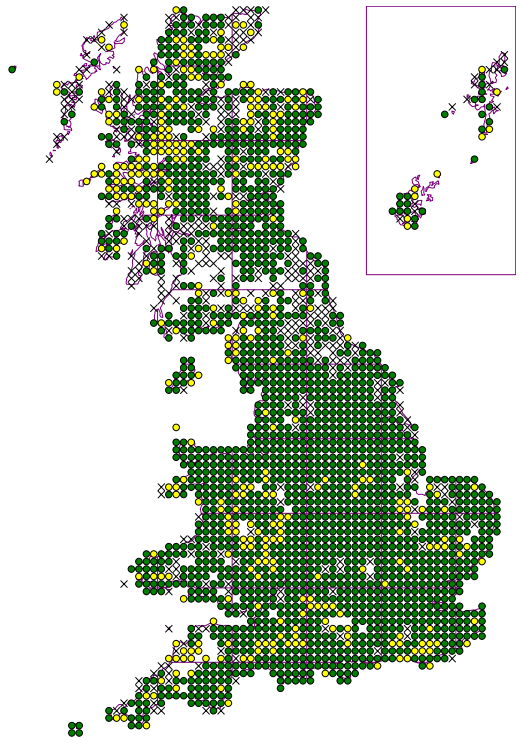
The results are
25 percentile year = 1986
50 percentile year = 1992
75 percentile year = 1998

Hence ranges are compared for records up to 1992 and with those from 1992 onwards. Calculated change is deemed to have occurred between 1986 and 1998, i.e. over a period of 12 years.

Finding the squares surveyed in both periods

The second stage involved finding the subset of 10km squares for which there are records in the dataset from both the earlier and later half of the records.

Period	No. of 10Km sqs.
Up to 1992 only	355
1992 onwards only	353
Both before and after 1992	1830
Total	2538



X = 10km squares with records only <1992, yellow circles records only 1992-on, green circles records for both periods.

3. Counting the number of squares for each species

Considering only the subset of 10km squares that were surveyed in both periods, the number of 10km squares was calculated in which each species was recorded in each of the two time periods.

4. Calculating the change in range

The proportional change in range of a species was calculated using squares recorded in both survey periods, by dividing the number of squares from which it was recorded in the later period (>=1992) by the number in the earlier period (<1992), shown as a percentage.

Taxon	10km <1992	10km >=1992	Ratio >=1992/<1992
Acartauchenius scurrilis	4	3	75.00%
Achaearanea lunata	106	182	171.70%
Achaearanea riparia	23	9	39.13%
Achaearanea simulans	28	108	385.71%
Achaearanea tepidariorum	23	50	217.39%
Achaearanea veruculata	1	1	100.00%
Aelurillus v-insignitus	27	19	70.37%
Agalenatea redii	139	223	160.43%
Agelena labyrinthica	223	274	122.87%
Agraecina striata	26	21	80.77%
Agroeca brunnea	117	93	79.49%
Agroeca cuprea	6	3	50.00%
Agroeca dentigera	1	1	100.00%
Agroeca inopina	89	58	65.17%

5. Deciding whether or not the change is significant

The standard error was calculated according to the formula provided in Stuart Ball's paper, together with 95% confidence limits (which are only considered significant if the sample size N is sufficiently large (>=30) and the proportion p is not too close to 1 or zero (usually considered to mean $0.1 < p < 0.9$). If the 95% confidence limit is less than 1.0 for a decline, or the lower confidence interval is above 1.0 for an increase, then the change is considered significant.

6. Area of Occupancy

Area of Occupancy is defined as "the area within the 'extent of occurrence' which is occupied by the taxon, excluding cases of vagrancy."

IUCN recommend the use of a 2x2 km grid (i.e. tetrads) to estimate Area of Occupancy. However Stuart Ball recommends the use of 10km squares on the basis that recording schemes are usually based on 10km resolution, and that the proportion of records at greater resolution varies greatly between recording schemes. The Spider Recording Scheme appears to represent an example where a very high proportion of records are available at higher resolution:

Resolution	No. records	Percentage
10km	17359	2.40%
2km	483	0.07%
1km	222714	31%
100m	482704	67%
Total	723379	

In other words 97.6% of the total dataset is available at 2km or tetrad resolution. On this basis there is good reason to suggest that we should use tetrads for Area of Occupancy in respect of spiders, especially if interpretation of these is used with caution and applied making use of existing ecological knowledge.

7. Frequency Ratios

Species may occur in a very restricted number of 10km squares yet be quite common and widespread within these areas with high tetrad numbers. Species occurring in a small number of 10km squares but with low tetrad numbers indicate a scattered, possibly even widespread, distribution but now with isolated sites and populations. These are the vulnerable species that require the greatest nature conservation effort (Pearman, 1997). The huge losses of semi-natural habitat in many parts of the country make the isolation of populations a very real problem for many species. Even the more widespread species which occur in many more 10km squares but with very low tetrad numbers may be under much greater threat of decline through loss or degradation of habitat than apparent from a 10km or tetrad distribution map.

Pearman calculates a Frequency Ratio of tetrads/10km square by comparing the number of tetrad and 10km square records for a species. With every tetrad thoroughly covered and a species found in every tetrad the maximum Frequency Ratio is 25. This figure is unlikely to be approached except in some very common and widespread species and for complete coverage of every tetrad square. A very low Frequency Ratio however may indicate that a species should be of nature conservation concern even though the 10km square distribution may suggest a widespread and common species. Significantly Pearman demonstrates that many Scarce plants have very low Frequency Ratios compared to some RDB species which are quite common and widespread where they occur.

Frequency Ratios as a ratio of for example 1992-on tetrad/10km square records can be used here to allow some form of assessment of the frequency of species and the isolation of their populations. Unfortunately this is still far from a satisfactory method of assessing the isolation of populations: one tetrad record in one 10km square will provide the same Tetrad Frequency as fifteen tetrad records in fifteen 10km squares; the fifteen 10km square records may be grouped together in one part of the country, or separated and spread across the country. Also the results assume good, or at least consistent, coverage of tetrads across the country, and this is clearly unlikely. However it seems worth investigating as a method to help add background to the decisions on status.

The following table summarises the ratio of tetrads to 10km squares for the whole dataset:

Year range	No. recorded 10km sqs	No. recorded tetrads	Ratio tetrad/10km
>=1986 (25% percentile)	2361	12521	5.30
>=1987 (start of SRS)	2329	12336	5.29
>=1992 (50% percentile)	2177	10554	4.84

If every tetrad in the country had been recorded, the tetrad/10km square ratio would be 25, so considering the average ratio for the whole dataset and for each species provides an overall context.

In addition a higher ratio figure is more likely to indicate that a species, even one recorded from few 10km squares, is less isolated and vulnerable than comparable species with lower ratios. Some examples are given in the following table for species with similar counts of 10km squares:

Taxon	10km sq	Tetrads	Tetrad/10km Ratio
Zilla diodia	136	243	1.79
Xysticus ulmi	143	246	1.72
Xysticus erraticus	145	165	1.14
Walckenaeria vigilax	137	163	1.19
Uloborus plumipes	139	167	1.20
Silometopus elegans	141	182	1.29
Philodromus albidus	135	236	1.75
Ozyptila atomaria	136	169	1.24
Oedothorax agrestis	143	157	1.10
Minyriolus pusillus	142	188	1.32
Lepthyphantes leprosus	142	201	1.42
Erigone promiscua	144	185	1.28
Enoplognatha latimana	139	227	1.63
Drassyllus pusillus	145	189	1.30
Argiope bruennichi	145	350	2.41
Agyneta conigera	145	173	1.19

There is an indication from these ratios that species such as *Xysticus erraticus, Oedothorax agrestis* and *Walckenaeria vigilax* should be viewed as more vulnerable than species such as *Argiope bruennichi, Zilla diodia, Xysticus ulmi* and *Philodromus albidus.* This can be supported by knowledge on the ecology of these species and the experience of arachnologists in the field. *Oedothorax agrestis* for example appears to have very restricted requirements, such as an association with flood debris along streams and rivers, whereas *Argiope bruennichi, Zilla diodia, Xysticus ulmi* and *Philodromus albidus* may be widely distributed and frequent in much wider areas of the countryside, as in Essex.

The low ratio for *Uloborus plumipes* can be explained by the widely scattered nature of its garden centre locations, and is an example of where we obviously have to interpret the data sensibly.

Other statuses

Lower Risk (Nationally Scarce)

Other new status reviews have continued to use the nationally scarce (Notable or Scarce) category for appropriate species in the Lower Risk category e.g. Lower Risk (Nationally Scarce) in Falk & Crossley (2005). Lower Risk (Nationally Scarce) is not a threat category, but rather an estimate of the extent of distribution of these species. Lower Risk (Nationally Scarce) refers to species which are not included within the IUCN threat categories and are estimated to occur in less than 100 hectads of the Ordnance Survey national grid in Great Britain (formerly termed “Nationally Notable” by Falk 1991).

We propose to continue the subdivision of this category into Scarce A and Scarce B, i.e. **Scarce A** refers to species estimated to occur within the range up to 30 10-kilometre squares of the National Grid System. **Scarce B** refers to species estimated to occur within the range 31 to 100 10-kilometre squares of the National Grid System.

A proposal for further categories

There are systems in use to enable an evaluation of the quality of a recorded fauna, which can then be used to compare sites e.g. Dr Michael Archer has published a system for use with the aculeate Hymenoptera (Archer, 1995) and there is a comparable system in use for evaluating saproxylic beetle fauna (Fowles, Alexander & Key, 1999).

Michael Archer's method for comparing the species quality of the solitary aculeate Hymenoptera at different sites uses status values for each species to calculate a national quality score and a method of deriving a Species Quality Score, by dividing the total score by the number of species recorded . The six statuses used are Very rare, Rare, Scarce, Restricted, Widespread and Universal. These statuses are derived from data being made available in atlases published by the Bees, Wasps and Ants Society (BWARS) and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (Biological Records Centre) at Monks Wood. Major problems however reside over the cut off dates used in the atlases, with all modern records being post-1969 – this means that the statuses are derived from data up to 36 years old and there have certainly been major declines in the distribution of species that are not apparent from the maps, and not a reflected in the statuses. On the other hand where species have spread and become more frequent, such as with the Bee Wolf *Philanthus triangulum*, because recent records are included in the maps the changes are reflected.

To enable the evaluation and comparison of wooded habitats for the conservation of dead-wood Coleoptera rarity categories are given to each qualifying species. The categories and scores used are summarised in the following table:

Rarity category	Score
RDB1, RDB2, RDB Appendix, Extinct	32
RDBI (Indeterminate)/RDB3	24
Nationally Scarce A/RDBK	16
Nationally Scarce B	8
Very Local / Uncertain	4
Local	2
Common	1

The Saproxylic Quality Index for a site is then calculated by dividing the total score by the number of saproxylic species.

Discussion proposals for spiders

We propose that we set up a comparable status category system for spiders, to facilitate a similar method for the evaluation and comparison of the spider fauna present at sites, of particular importance where there are threats from development or management priorities need to be decided. The BAS are in the best position to place each British spider taxon into categories beyond those based on the IUCN criteria, using the data we have available from the Spider Recording Scheme. Obviously these statuses should be reviewed as new data become available to enable them to be kept up to date.

We would very much welcome comments on these proposals and ideas for their development.

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The updated maps

Many thanks indeed to the many recorders who have submitted records to the recording scheme to enable the distribution maps to be updated. The previous article explains how the 50% percentile year for records submitted to the scheme is 1992. Hence the new maps have used 1992-on records as the most recent date band symbol, with 1950-1991, 1900-1949 and pre-1900 as earlier date band symbols. This has enabled change to be estimated by comparing the numbers of 10km square records before and after the 50% percentile year for those squares where survey has been undertaken in both survey periods. The results are available for download from the BAS website, and it is very interesting to see the changes in different species.

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Araneus angulatus in a garden in Hampshire

by Shirley Cardus

I was first alerted to the possible presence of *Araneus angulatus* in my garden near Basingstoke in VC12 when a specimen was found (but never formally identified) at a moth trapping evening in July 2003. Its web was large (like so many orb-web spiders I hear you cry!), stretching between two hedges. I've been on the lookout ever since and the large web was all I had to go on. Perseverance paid off when I noticed a large web spanning a gap of about 1 metre between two leylandii hedges in late May this year. I traced the web into the hedge and sure enough there was a spider that looked awfully like *A. angulatus*. I watched it over the next few days and examined it in situ with a hand lens, becoming more and more convinced of its identity. Meanwhile I continued to search my garden for other evidence of this spider in the belief that it was unlikely that there would only be one specimen. Again, it was the web, this time stretching from another leylandii hedge across to tall plants in a wild flower area, which gave away the presence of the second of these spiders.

This time I wanted confirmation. So a bit of internet searching brought me to the Spider Recording Scheme and Peter Harvey. Peter was, understandably, rather sceptical when he received my email. Undeterred by his suggestion that this was a variant garden spider I badgered him with more details until he offered to identify a live specimen for me. A spider was duly posted to him and I was thrilled to receive his confirmation that it was *Araneus angulatus*, only the 12th record since 1991 and a first for a garden. On its return I was able to return the spider to the exact spot he had been taken from and as I write, 10 days later, he is still there.

Notes and observations:

Both spiders were found on the north faces of separate leylandii hedges. These hedges act as windbreaks from the prevailing southwest winds. They are trimmed annually so that they remain at about 7 feet tall by about 18 inches deep. My guess is that they are approximately 20 years old and they are about 700 metres long in total. One spider was found at a height of about 5 feet 6 inches, the other lower at around 2 feet 6 inches..

The garden extends to approximately 3 acres and comprises areas of short-mown grass (lawn is too grand a title for my weed infested grass!), large areas of rough pasture grass, leylandii hedging, mature yew and beech hedges, flower beds, shrubs and mature trees (oak, horse chestnut, whitebeam, holly, bird cherry, plane). In two areas the rough pasture grass has been allowed to grow, creating wild flower areas; these are cut once annually. No pesticides have been used on the garden in the last 6 years.

The garden is surrounded on three sides by paddocks; on two sides these are in organic conversion and are grazed by cattle.

I have noted during the time that I have been watching the spiders (only one since 16th June) that there is little evidence of web spinning on a regular basis – I assumed that a new web would be made each night but the occurrence seems to be much less frequent than this – maybe only once a week. Is this normal? Each spider has a few strands of web covering a small area of the hedge where they reside; could these act as triggers for an ambush attack?

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The subadult male *Araneus angulatus* from Hampshire, photograph Peter Harvey

Steatoda nobilis (Thorell 1875) a spider new to Wales at Barry, Glamorgan (VC41)

by Greg Jones

On 11th January 2006 I visited The Knap, a large shingle beach to the south west of Barry to search for the rare and elusive woodlouse *Buddelundiella cataractae* Verhoeff 1930. After several hours of unsuccessful searching I decided to cut my losses and spend the remaining hour or so of daylight in pursuit of arachnids.

The first site that I visited was the public lavatory at The Knap car-park at ST099665. In a corner, just behind the door and *c.* 20 centimetres from the floor, was a large male theridiid. The weather, although bright and sunny was rather chilly, rendering the specimen torpid so that it was easily potted. Although I had never encountered *Steatoda nobilis* before, I was reasonably certain of its identity because of its size and distinctive abdominal markings. The only other species present at this site was *Zygiella x-notata* in small numbers. I then visited Barry Island, the resort area of the town a kilometre to the east of The Knap and searched the public lavatories there, but all that I found were several *Z. x-notata* and a solitary *Pholcus phalangioides.*

At home later the same evening I examined the specimen microscopically and this confirmed my provisional field determination as *S. nobilis.* I took several transparencies of the specimen before preservation in ethanol. Several days later the specimen was examined by Simon Warmingham who agreed with my determination. Then on 9th February 2006 I again visited the public lavatory at The Knap and on this occasion I found another specimen ..... a dead mature female, suspended from the ceiling. Both specimens were seen and examined by SWAG members at a Theridiidae ID workshop at the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff on 25th February 2006.

Steatoda nobilis male © Greg Jones

As to the origin of *S. nobilis* at Barry: the town was one of the major banana ports in Britain for many decades during the twentieth century but this trade has now ceased and has moved further up the Bristol Channel to Newport in Monmouthshire (VC 35). Roberts (1995) says that "..... the species has been repeatedly introduced, from the Canary Islands and Madeira, with bananas" and that it is "well established near the south coast of England".

Following this find, I intend to conduct extensive searches of Barry, especially the largely abandoned dockland area, to determine the extent to which *Steatoda nobilis* is established there. Also, visits to the docklands of Cardiff and Newport could well reveal the presence of *S. nobilis* and possibly other alien arachnids associated with the banana trade.

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19 Heol Maendy, North Cornelly, Bridgend, Glamorgan CF33 4DD

A spider in sheep's clothing

by John Bratton

While collecting sheep wool from a barbed wire fence on 19 March 2006, five of the tufts of wool were found to contain a single *Larinioides cornutus*, each in a tightly spun silk cell. The fence was crossing rushy pasture in Malltraeth Marsh RSPB reserve, Anglesey, SH456713. Of the three specimens collected, one was immature and the other two were adult females. The weather at the time was similar to the previous five days, and may be significant: sunny but with a cold east wind, and the tufts of wool were exposed to both.

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A plea for regular articles

Please send in articles (and pictures) for the SRS News on any observations or discoveries of interest to the recording scheme. Don't think that other arachnologists will not be interested - they will! Short or longer pieces are just as welcome. Send your contributions to Peter Harvey at 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2YP or by e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

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Spider Recording Scheme News
November 2006, No. 56

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 57 will be published in March 2007. Please send contributions by the end of January at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Editorial

It is with enormous regret and sadness that I have to report that Dr Steve Hopkin was killed in a car accident in the summer. Steve was an outstanding naturalist with an astonishing range of expertise and many remarkable skills, as evidenced by the many excellent publications and articles he produced to help and encourage naturalists to pursue less popular groups. Steve was the Cornwall Area Organiser for the SRS and had set up an excellent website with county maps and species text at www.stevehopkin.co.uk/cornishspiders/. He had also incorporated records provided by the Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS) and was surely going to revolutionise spider recording in the county. Steve will be sorely missed.

Peter Smithers has agreed to take on a temporary holding role for Cornwall, but we would be very grateful for offers from any arachnologists who feel they could take over as Area Organiser on a more permanent basis.

The 18Mb file with updated distribution maps mentioned in the July SRS News has not caused any problems on individual computers. However after upload and download over the internet a variety of faults have occurred that have made the downloaded file unusable. This has meant that the download has been removed and replaced by access on the website to separate species maps linked to the checklist on the website. I am very grateful to Craig Slawson for setting this up. Please note that symbols provide the date band of the latest record/s for a square, hence later symbols may overlay earlier ones. I can still make available the original file with Ian Dawson's index on a CDROM if members send me a recordable CD and postage at cost.

I will continue to computerise paper data that could not be done in time for the updated maps. There is also a large amount of Excel data that I still need to get into MapMate without losing any detailed ecological information. An example of the sorts of useful and interesting information we can extract when this has been done is given below, using one of the SRS queries provided in MapMate.

A plan of action has been agreed to move forward on the preparation of a 'spider crib' to help in the identification of difficult species. I will keep you up to date with progress on this and the national status review in the March newsletter.

Example of table generated by SRS habitat query in MapMate

Taxon	01_Shingle	02_Saltmarsh	03_Sand dune	05_Heath/moor, heather	06_Heath/moor, other	07_Gorse (*record as sub-habitat if part of main habitat	08_Wetland, open water	09_Wetland vegetation, acid	10_Wetland vegetation, other	11_Grassland, calcareous	12_Grassland, other	13_Cultivated land, including gardens	14_Buildings, indoors	15_Rock, scree, cliff or quarry	16_Cave, tunnel, well or culvert	17_Scrub (*record as sub-habitat if part of main habitat	18_Woodland, deciduous	19_Woodland, conifer	20_Woodland, mixed	21_Woodland, young conifer plantation	23_Other (specify in notes)	24_Wetland, acid bog	25_Wetland, fen	26_Wetland, carr/swamp	27_Wetland, marsh	28_Wetland, reedbed	29_Wetland, edges of lakes, ponds, rivers and streams	30_Grassland, neutral	31_Grassland, acid	32_Grassland, improved	33_Post-industrial, mineral extraction sites/spoil heaps	34_Post-industrial, buildings/industrial infrastructure	35_Arable	36_Gardens, parks	Not Recorded
Acartauchenius scurrilis											1																							
Achaearanea lunata				1	4					1	2						14	2	12		1		3	1			1			1			12	1
Achaearanea riparia																														1		2		
Achaearanea simulans				2					1		2						3	1	4		3							1	1	1			2	
Achaearanea tepidariorum													32														1				4		3	
Aelurillus v-insignitus				2																									2					
Agalenatea redii	1		5	14	4	2		4	4	10	38	1		7		3	5	1	4		3	4			1		8	5	53	20		3		
Agelena labyrinthica	1	10	6	56	21	19		1	1	3	44	5	1	1		6	19	5	15	1	4		3			3	12	11	1	40	16	5	5	1
Agraecina striata	6		5								3														2					3				
Agroeca brunnea				4	3					1							16	2	9			1								17		1		
Agroeca cuprea			1															1																
Agroeca inopina		1	26	4						3	2					2	1	1								1	1			14		1		
Agroeca lusatica			1																															
Agroeca proxima		3	25	31	3			2			1			1		1	4	20	4	1		30		1				3		28		1		2
Agyneta cauta										1	2						1	1	1			1												2
Agyneta conigera			3	2	4			1	2	1	2			1		1	11	11	2			4					1	2		1				1
Agyneta decora	1		3		13			2	1	9	31	2		2			4	1	1			10				1		2	1	1				
Agyneta olivacea				2	1			1			1					1	3	40				5												
Agyneta ramosa				1	1					1	2					1	1	18	1			3	1	1										1
Agyneta subtilis				2				1								1	11	15	2			6			1				2					3
Allomengea scopigera			3	1	11			2		3	11			1		1	2	7	1			4				2			2					12
Allomengea vidua								1	3								1					1	1	1		4	1							
Alopecosa barbipes			2	27						18	8			2		2	1	1			1							3	58	2				5
Alopecosa cuneata			6	1						1				1														6	2		1			
Alopecosa pulverulenta	8	6	34	23	49			6	17	60	114	16	2	14		10	36	66	2		4	38	2		3	1	5	22	39	2	121	19	31	14	40
Amaurobius fenestralis	1			5	5			1		4	13	3	1	4		2	122	52	44		7	3	2	7	2		4		11	3	3		1	6	4

Pardosa lugubris (Walckenaer, 1802) at Grass Wood, North Yorkshire

by Paul Lee* and Richard Price[o]

The first report of *Pardosa lugubris sensu stricto* from Britain was based on specimens collected from the RSPB Abernethy reserve in Scotland (Harvey, 2004). As early as 1999 Ian Dawson collected specimens that were only later recognised as *P. lugubris*. Ian also discovered the species at Corrimony. Further specimens were collected by Mike Davidson in 2004 from three sites in Glen Affric and from woodland near Inveran in Sutherland (Peter Harvey, pers. comm.) but until now, these Scottish sites have remained the only British locations known for *P. lugubris* s.s.

On the final day of the 2006 BAS weekend at Malham Tarn one of us (RP) was invited to accompany Ted and Gillian Lovesey on a visit to the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust reserve at Grass Wood, north of the village of Grassington in Wharfedale. Grass Wood is an important SSSI, one of the few remaining areas of ancient ash woodland in the Yorkshire Dales. The ground flora is especially rich, and it is the only known site for native Lady's Slipper Orchid in Britain. Unfortunately it was extensively planted with conifers some 60 years ago, but the YWT is working to remove the exotics and replace them with native trees. From an arachnological perspective, Grass Wood is important as one of very few northern sites for the impressive green spider *Micrommata virescens*. It was with the hope of re-finding *Micrommata* that Jennifer Newton had suggested a visit to the site. The section of the woodland visited was on a south-west facing slope where accumulations of loose limestone scree appeared to be suppressing the vegetation and had created a number of small clearings. Ted Lovesey, who now paints rather than records the natural world, offered to help in the hunt for spiders. After a brief five minute search amongst the scree at grid reference SD9829765316, Ted presented a spider to RP describing it as 'a *Pardosa* that might be interesting'. The specimen was a rather sad looking mature male that had proven to be agile despite having only three legs. It was a rainy day and the conditions eventually ended our visit to the wood without discovering further *Pardosa* specimens.

After struggling to identify the specimen at home, RP eventually submitted it to PL as part of an assignment for an MSc course being undertaken with the University of Birmingham. PL determined the specimen as *Pardosa lugubris sensu stricto* before sending it, firstly to Peter Harvey and then to Peter Merrett, for confirmation.

In almost all respects the specimen agrees closely with the diagnostic features noted by Töpfer-Hofmann *et al.* (2000). Peter Merrett considered the dorsal surface of the cymbium to be less convex than it might be but it was this convexity that first alerted PL to the possibility that the specimen was *P. lugubris*. The prominent cymbial claw characteristic of the species is reduced on the left palp and it was only after noting the convexity of the cymbium that the right palp with its typical claw was checked. Both palps have the expected paler brownish tip to the cymbium. The ratio of tip-length to cymbium-length is c.0.32 and falls at the lower end of the range (0.32-0.37) given by Töpfer-Hoffmann *et al.* (2000). The specimen displays the blackish anterior spinners that are also found in the female and are significantly darker than the same structures in *Pardosa saltans*.

Although the Scottish specimens of *P. lugubris* have all been found within areas of Caledonian pine (Harvey, 2004), elsewhere in Europe the spider occurs in a wide range of forest types, both coniferous and deciduous, and has even been found in hedgerows (Töpfer-Hofmann *et al.*, 2000). Therefore there is no reason to suppose that *P. lugubris* was introduced to Grass Wood during the coniferisation of much of the area during the middle of the last century. It seems likely that *P. lugubris* awaits discovery in more woodlands, at least in northern England and Scotland, and both *P. saltans* and *P. lugubris* may well occur together on some sites. Thus we reiterate Peter Harvey's encouragement to check your specimens of *P. saltans*, wherever they may have been collected, and submit any possible *P. lugubris* to the Verification Panel (see S.R.S. News No. 48 **In** *Newsl. Br. arachnol. Soc.* **99**) for checking.

We are very grateful to Ted and Gillian Lovesey for kindly taking RP on the outing to Grass Wood and to Ted for collecting the spider. Thanks also to Jennifer Newton for providing background information on Grass Wood and for arranging permission to collect there in the first place and to Peter Harvey and Peter Merrett for their assistance in verifying the identity of the specimen and providing valuable information on the spider.

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Discovery of *Holocnemus pluchei* colony at Welford, Stratford upon Avon

by Pip Taylor

With the cessation of regularly fumigating our glass houses with pesticides and the introduction of an Integrated Pest Management program (IPM) we at W J Findon & Son have noticed a dramatic increase in beneficial predators at our sites. The first unusual spider to colonise our Stratford branch was *Achaearanea tepidariorum*. Then *Larinioides sclopetarius* turned up followed by *Uloborus plumipes*. As local Environment Coordinator I have instructed staff to report anything unusual to me for investigation. An unusual spider was reported at our Welford nurseries (CV37 8QH) by maintenance man Bill Smillie. They have colonised one side of a glass house and have been positively identified by Peter Harvey as *Holocnemus pluchei*, and this would appear to be the first recorded breeding colony in the UK.

***Holocnemus pluchei* photograph © Russ Woodcock**

***Holocnemus pluchei* webs on side of glasshouse photograph © Russ Woodcock**

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Some Nottinghamshire Spiders

by Howard Williams

In August 2003 Tom Faulds, Trevor Harris and I made two visits of some 8 hours in all to Sherwood Forest Country Park (SFCP), where we beat, swept and grubbed two smallish areas of heathland and one of oak woodland. To these can be added two very brief visits by me in the same year and an even briefer one in 2005. The idea was to see if some of the uncommon species found there in the large-scale BAS survey of 1979 organized by Lawrence Bee were still present. In this we were reasonably successful. The number of spiders identified in the end was by no means as extensive as in the original survey, but that was not the object; we were not as organized or equipped, and no pitfall or other trapping methods were used. In all there were 69 records representing 48 species. Immatures not recorded were noted from the following families: Linyphiidae, Lycosidae, Agelenidae, Dictynidae, Clubionidae, Gnaphosidae.

Some of the more interesting of the 1979 spiders whose continued presence was confirmed were: *Steatoda phalerata*; *Meta bourneti* (Nb) (a 1987 record also exists for this species); *Araneus marmoreus* v. *pyramidatus*; *Cercidia prominens*; *Zora silvestris* (RDB2); *Thanatus striatus*.

Lawrence Bee states that he had observed *Meta bourneti* near ancient oak trunks in the forest. We found it in the more conventional location of a GPO service pit whose manhole cover is walked over daily by hundreds of visitors. When the cover was lifted for us in July 2003, large numbers of impressively sized females and their equally impressive white spherical egg sacs were revealed. The sudden influx of light caused some consternation among the spiders as they moved cumbrously to seek out shadier areas. The Park staff were as impressed by them as I was – I had never seen the species before, though I had seen its redder-coloured cousin, *Meta menardi*, in the caves of Creswell Crags back in 1992. In August 2006 the cover was raised again, and the colony still thrives. This service pit is dry, containing cables running in conduits to various parts of the Visitor Centre, and no doubt the spiders scatter themselves via these. What these large spiders feed upon in total, unbroken darkness is hard to imagine. Interestingly, when the cover of a nearby wet sewage pit was raised, it contained nothing at all.

There are plans for restructuring this part of the Country Park, removing the Visitor Centre across the road in order to relieve pressure on the ancient oaks areas, some being in close proximity. At least the rangers are aware of the presence of this spider at the Centre itself, and hopefully measures will be taken to ensure that this underground site (and possibly others similar to it) are safeguarded rather than obliterated once the need for them has gone.

The rarest spider rediscovered from 1979 is undoubtedly *Zora silvestris* which is abundant on both heathland areas (one site dryer than the other). Among the grasses on the sandy soil here there is heather, and *Zora* lives in and on both. It is a very rare spider, the few other records of it being pre-1979 in a few counties in the south of England. It is good to know it still flourishes here in the heart of England.

Four other species found there seem to be new records for SFCP. The first, *Nesticus cellulanus*, was recorded in 2003, not unsurprisingly, in the same location as *Meta bourneti* (but not in 2006). It also appears to be the only Notts record for this species. Two others are the uncommon *Walckenaeria furcillata* (2003) and *Philodromus collinus* (Nb) (2005), the former on heathland, the latter uncharacteristically walking across a pathway between broad-leaf trees. *Tegenaria agrestis* also appears to be a new site record here.

2003 was a good year, being the year also that *Hyptiotes paradoxus* (RDB3) was discovered in Carlton Wood, N. Notts in yews. (Newsletter 98, Nov.2003). Tom and I found it again in August 2006 in much the same place in the wood (1 female and 3 immatures). It seems to be surviving here at a low population level, which is good news as this is the only site for it in central/northern England east of the Pennines. There must be other pockets of *Hyptiotes* in places like Clumber Park or even much smaller pieces of woodland with yew and broad-leaf trees in close proximity.

At Misson Carr *Synageles venator* was still present (2006) on post-and-rail fencing and even posed for photos this time. Sweeping and beating produced several specimens of *Achaearanea simulans* (Nb) which has thus proved more

***Hyptiotes paradoxus* at CarltonWood**
photograph © Tom Faulds

numerous here than previously thought. Better still, sweeping the low vegetation and bushes in the car park area produced a male *Achaearanea riparia* (Nb) – it would seem to be the second most northerly record so far for this scarce predominantly southern species, thus forming an intermediate link with a record in South-east Yorkshire (Updated Maps 2006). This year saw two other fairly uncommon records at Misson Carr: *Episinus angulatus* and *Walckenaeria atrotibialis*. Four common species were also new records for the reserve this year: *Maso sundevalli*, *Linyphia hortensis*, *Pardosa saltans* and *Clubiona pallidula*, so bringing the site total to 111 species. For good measure the uncommon harvestman *Lacinius ephippiatus* was also a new record here.

My thanks go as usual to Tom Faulds for his company on some of these jaunts and for his checking and correction of tricky identifications.

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The occurrence of *Apostenus fuscus* Westring (RDB1) at Lydd on Sea, Kent

by Alex Williams

The discovery of a spider in the next 10k square to where it is already well established does not usually warrant special mention, but perhaps the occurrence of *Apostenus fuscus* at Lydd on Sea is an exception. The only British locality for this spider has hitherto been the RSPB Bird Reserve at Dungeness TR0620 where it was found on shingle with a mixture of low plants (Williams & Locket, 1982).

On the 20th April 2006 I took two specimens of this interesting species whilst sieving the detritus at the roots of Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber* (L.) DC. at TR087202 halfway between the road from New Romney to Dungeness and the sea. The shingle on this part of the beach is covered with coarse grass in the form of False Oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* (L.) near the road and broken up into separate tufts towards the sea, together with scattered Red Valerian. Between the Valerian and the shoreline are a few Sea-kale *Crambe maritima* L. The detritus contained little of further interest, consisting mainly of woodlice and centipedes but also a single male *Hahnia pusilla* C.L. Koch which I find to be uncommon in Kent.

Lydd on Sea shingle beach
photograph © Alex Williams

Although *A. fuscus* is only known from shingle banks in this country it is by no means confined to dry stony places in Europe as Heimer & Nentwig (1991) report that it is also a woodland species.

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Proliferation in *Amaurobius similis* (Blackwall, 1861)

by Paul Whitehead

The boundary of my garden at Little Comberton, Worcestershire (VC37 SO94) is delineated by a screen of annually cut Western Red Cedar (*Thuya plicata* Donn ex D. Don). Using the advantages of hoar frost on 20 November 2005 it was possible to see that the entire south-eastern face of it was uniformly covered by amaurobiid spider webs, subsequently confirmed as being those of *Amaurobius similis* (Blackwall).

Representative density of webs of *Amaurobius similis* (Blackwall) on frosted *Thuya plicata* screen, Little Comberton, Worcestershire, 20 November 2005

The screen is 2.1m high and 141m long. A count of 44 webs in a 1.8m length of its south-eastern face extrapolates to a total of c3450 webs, which are also sited on the north-western face of the screen but in lesser numbers; these were not counted. The mean density of webs is therefore 12 per square metre of screen face, which confirms the remarkable effectiveness of such a screen for invertebrate flight interception and as their resting place. This provides a real estimate of the size of the spider population, for all of the webs were constructed in the seven week time span that elapsed after the screen was cut. Cut *Thuya plicata* is clearly specifically favoured by *A. similis* because where a more open-textured Lawson Cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* (A. Murray) Parl.) is planted in the screen webs were virtually non-existent. This provides further telling evidence of the extent of anthropogenic impacts on spider faunas.

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An update on *Megalepthyphantes* sp. nov.

by A. Russell-Smith

Since I last wrote about this relatively new addition to our fauna in Newsletter 102 (July 2004), there have been a number of additional records of the species that extend our knowledge of its distribution and habitats. On the 1st of February 2005, I collected a single female from a small rotten elm stump on the edge of my garden in Doddington, Kent (TQ 951580). On the same date another female was taken from a well-rotted fallen trunk of field maple in a hedgerow of a chalk grassland field about 500m from my house but in the neighbouring parish of Newnham (TQ 955578). Both of these localities lie about 6 miles inland from the stretch of the North Kent coast where it has been taken previously. A further female was sorted from a pile of rotting grass on the edge of Sharsted Wood, next to my garden on the 28th August 2005. Finally, I visited Camber Sands, near Rye in Sussex on 22nd October 2005 in the company of Evan Jones and Richard Price. Here I was surprised to find a male and two females in deep and quite damp pockets in the yellow dune zone dominated by marram grass (TQ 9540918614).

In addition to Kent, this species has now been recorded from East Sussex, confirming the suggestion in my previous note that it was likely to be found in other coastal areas in southern Britain. However, it is now clear that it is certainly not confined to shingle, as was previously thought, and in fact occurs in quite a wide range of habitats. The only feature that these appear to have in common is that they are all relatively damp. While adults of both sexes have been found in autumn in the field layer of coastal grasslands (on both shingle and sand dunes), females have been found in rotten stumps and logs in woodlands and hedgerows later in the winter. It is possible that these females are using such micro-habitats as over-wintering refugia but where they occur in autumn has yet to be determined. Clearly, there is still a great deal to be learned about the biology of this species but this will require active field-work in both autumn and winter in a range of different habitats.

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Ero aphana at Horsenden Hill

by Mick Massie

Rising to the dizzy summit altitude of 85m, Horsenden Hill open space (TQ162844) is a Site of Metropolitan Importance with 143 ha of varied habitats: grassland, hedges and woodlands. It is in Ealing and is the highest point in NW London, with a view of 6 counties, the North Downs, Chilterns and 10 London Boroughs. It the site of an ancient hill fort and was an anti-aircraft battery in WW II. To the south and east the hill is bounded by the Grand Union Canal (Paddington branch). To the south-west lies Perivale Wood Nature Reserve, run by the Selborne Society.

As for much of Middlesex, the solid geology is Eocene with sand and loam Claygate Beds on the higher ground over London Clay. The same Claygate Beds form the upper slopes of the hills at Harrow, Hampstead, and Highgate. Small remnants of glacial drift Pebble Gravels form the hill cap (London Ecology Handbook 16).

Horsenden Hill is the location for an annual joint meeting of London Natural History Society and Butterfly Conservation which focuses on the White-letter Hairstreak, the larvae of which feed on elm. This is traditionally in late June. As a novice arachnologist, I took along my sweep net. I had only started recording spiders a few weeks earlier and still have a lot to learn, mainly by making public and embarrassing identification goofs. My spider list for the day amounted to a grand total of nine species!

One of the small spiders I swept had two pairs of abdominal tubercles, and I began to suspect I may have an *Ero* species. The anterior pair were much closer together than the posterior, so my field guide indicated *E. tuberculata* as the likely species. I took a microscope

photo and sent it off to the ever helpful Peter Harvey. Imagine my surprise and delight when he suggested and later confirmed *Ero aphana*, a first record for Middlesex ! I now understand that this species has spread elsewhere from its select Dorset heathland base and another record has been made in Middlesex at Hounslow Heath, but it does not diminish the buzz of this find for me.

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Microscope photography on the cheap

by Mick Massie

As a novice recorder of spiders, I find it useful to take microscope photographs of eyes, genitalia, spinnerets, bristles, etc to use as reference. I also send some photos to Peter Harvey when I need identification hints and his accurate advice is always rapid and invaluable. Sending specimens through the post may be needed for final confirmation, but the photo is a useful tool. Peter asked me to describe my microscopy set-up, because it was very cheaply put together and yields usable results.

I have an old stereo microscope, bought cheaply second hand (try Ebay). It gives a 12.5x and 50x magnification with the 10x eyepieces. I use a cheap (£100) compact digital camera that I hold resting against the eyepiece. I use a wide angle setting or telephoto depending on the subject. Experimentation is necessary and costs nothing with digital. My camera allows manual exposure which is best, but aperture priority and exposure compensation would work too. Most of my photos are taken at about 1/20th, f8, 400ASA. I focus the subject in the eyepiece and use the normal autofocus range, not macro. My more expensive 10x zoom SLR style camera does not work well in this setup, the lens is just too big to rest against the eyepiece.

I had to learn a lot of lessons about lighting (I am reluctant to spend £500+ on a halogen cold light just yet). I now use two torches. One is a 'halogen' type with a focussing beam, bought at LIDL for £4.99, the other is a LED Lenser pen torch with a focusing lens which yields a pinpoint, parallel beam (unlike many LED torches). Each of these is held by a desktop tripod. I'm looking for a pair of retort stands and clamps to make this a bit more 'professional'. I use Picasa (free software) to catalogue and manipulate the photos.

Whilst I would like a trinocular microscope, double gooseneck halogen light and Coopix 4500 with a digiscoping attachment, my equipment does a useful 'cheap and cheerful' job.

***Philodromus* eyes. Black and beady!**
photograph © Mick Massie

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Macaroeris nidicolens (Walckenaer, 1802) in South Essex

by Peter Harvey

This jumping spider was first recorded in Britain in 2002 on pines in Mile End Park in Middlesex (Milner, 2002) and subsequently found in 2004 at Brooklands, Surrey also on pines (Denton, 2004). In Europe the species occurs mainly in southern and central Europe, but is found as far north as Belgium.

On 7th June 2006 I beat one adult male *Macaroeris nidicolens* and several subadults and juveniles from gorse bushes at a brownfield site next to the Thames in Thurrock, South Essex. One subadult male matured in captivity on the 9th June and one subadult female on the 18th June.

Although it was originally thought most likely that the spider had been imported with pines into the Mile End Park site, it now seems more likely that the spider has naturally colonised Britain from Europe and is in the process of spreading into sites that provide hot conditions. Searches elsewhere in the region have so far failed to find the spider in new sites, but my feeling is that it is worth looking for on pines and gorse anywhere in the southeast.

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Spider Recording Scheme News March 2007, No. 57

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My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 58 will be published in July 2007. Please send contributions by the end of May at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Editorial

A number of volunteers on BAS Council are helping in the preparation of a 'spider crib' to help in the identification of difficult species, so progress should be made on this now.

Unfortunately there has been little progress on the national status review due to a combination of enormous difficulties in reaching an understanding on how to sensibly apply the IUCN criteria to our spider data and delays in some of the data analysis needed.

I have now managed to import large amounts of Excel data into MapMate, although this has highlighted a number of difficulties discussed further in the section on SRS Phase 2 broad habitats etc. Other than the provisional atlas dataset all data submitted to the recording scheme are now in MapMate except for some paper data that could not be computerised in time for the updated maps.

Where particular care is needed in recording

Please record species found at an unusual time of year with great caution, and if in any doubt whatsoever get your specimens checked by the Area Organiser and if necessary a member of our Verification Panel. Use the adult season charts in the provisional atlas as a guide, e.g. *Linyphia triangularis* is exclusively adult as a late summer/autumn species, sometimes surviving into the winter—but if you believe you have this species from earlier in the summer, then you are almost certainly misidentifying the spider for *Neriene peltata*, which although a somewhat smaller spider has a rather similar epigyne.

Any species found in an unexpected part of the country or outside its normal range should be checked by the Area Organiser, and if there might be any doubt, also by our Verification Panel.

SRS Phase 2 broad habitats, structural vegetation layers, collecting methods or detail and MapMate

In phase 2 of the Spider Recording Scheme we are beginning to obtain considerable quantities of detailed data on our British spiders in a standardised computerised format. Since these data are potentially extremely valuable in providing us with considerable quantities of information about the detailed ecology of species, both generally and in different parts of the country and at different times of year, it seems very important to try and obtain consistent data. This article is an attempt to clarify these issues.

When validating card data against BRC computer entries and when I was entering data from new RA65 forms into MapMate I came across a numbers of cases where site descriptions did not match up at all with the broad habitats that had been completed by the surveyor. Using the Ordnance Survey on-line map service to check the grid references against the OS map often indicated that there seems to be confusion about the use the broad habitat, with some recorders thinking about the broad habitat at too much of a fine scale.

To this end I will try and set out my understanding of the use of broad and structural habitats in the scheme. I fully acknowledge that there will be cases where choices will be difficult, or even impossible, and in these cases the recorder should either make what they see as clearly the best choice or should leave it not recorded – there are definitely cases where it is better to have no data than data that would confuse. No habitat classification can ever be wholly satisfactory and there remain many problems with the one we are currently using, some of which we hope to address.

Broad habitats

The broad habitat is the basic overall habitat in which you have collected the spiders and to complete this you need to think at a larger scale than your immediate collecting area, e.g. in a mixed woodland you should include grassy paths, rides or clear felled areas as part of the mixed woodland, not as grassland. On the other hand a large grassland field between two woodland blocks should be classified as the relevant grassland broad habitat. Collecting off coniferous trees in a mixed woodland should not be classified as coniferous woodland, unless you can create a sizeable sub-site or compartment within the woodland that is wholly made up of coniferous trees. Collecting off coniferous trees in a mixed woodland is a matter of detail, and something that needs to be recorded in the comment field. A single tree or small number of trees do not in themselves constitute woodland or a woodland category.

The SRS is encouraging the use of MapMate biological recording and mapping software, for various reasons, but in particular for its ease of exchange of data over the internet, the software's ability to automatically keep track of records subsequently edited, added or deleted, the up to date checklists used and excellent support provided. In MapMate broad habitats, sub-habitats and associated substrate, hydrology and management features are site based, so that new sites need to be set up for each combination of these. This is not as time consuming or difficult as it seems, since it only has to be done once for any site/sub site. Good ways of naming these have been set out, e.g. by Ian Dawson in his article on MapMate in SRS News 46 (July 2003). As long as

your basic locality name is consistent, then you can create as many sub sites as you like without affecting the ease with which the data can be searched. Even if you are submitting records by recording cards, it is useful to realise that sites will be used in this way.

The broad habitats are a combination of the original phase 1 RA65 habitats with additional phase 2 habitats, to allow continuity in the data. Currently the broad habitats and sub habitats consist of the following:

Broad habitats	
Shingle	1
Saltmarsh	2
Sand dune	3
Machair	4
Heath/moor, heather	5
Heath/moor, other	6
Gorse (*record as sub-habitat if part of main habitat)	7
Wetland, open water	8
Wetland vegetation, acid	9
Wetland vegetation, other	10
Wetland, acid bog	24
Wetland, fen	25
Wetland, carr/swamp	26
Wetland, marsh	27
Wetland, reedbed	28
Wetland, edges of lakes, ponds, rivers and streams	29
Grassland, calcareous	11
Grassland, other	12
Grassland, neutral	30
Grassland, acid	31
Grassland, improved	32
Rock, scree, cliff or quarry	15
Post-industrial, mineral extraction sites/spoil heaps	33
Post-industrial, buildings/industrial infrastructure	34
Cultivated land, including gardens	13
Arable	35
Gardens, parks	36
Buildings, indoors	14
Cave, tunnel, well or culvert	16
Scrub (*record as sub-habitat if part of main habitat)	17
Woodland, deciduous	18
Woodland, conifer	19
Woodland, mixed	20
Woodland, young conifer plantation	21
Other (specify in notes)	23
Not Recorded	

Subhabitats

1. Ditch
2. Verge
3. Hedgerow
4. Gorse scrub
5. Scrub (other)
6. Scattered Trees

Not Recorded

Evident management features for a site or sub site are:

1. Unmanaged
2. Grazed
3. Cut
4. Coppiced
5. Clear-felled
6. Burning
7. Physical disturbance

Not Recorded

Hence for example a clear-felled area within a woodland would be classified as a broad woodland habitat and then as '5. Clear-felled'. Since clear-felled areas will be replanted or left to regrow, in a number of years time the habitat of this same area will have changed. To allow for this in MapMate the site name could be along the lines of e.g. 'Blakes Wood (clear-felled area)', so that if someone records the same place in 40 years time when it has returned to mature woodland, records from exactly the same area can still be related to the habitats present at the time of collection rather than just the grid reference.

Habitat detail, method (MapMate Method) and structural vegetation layers (MapMate Status)

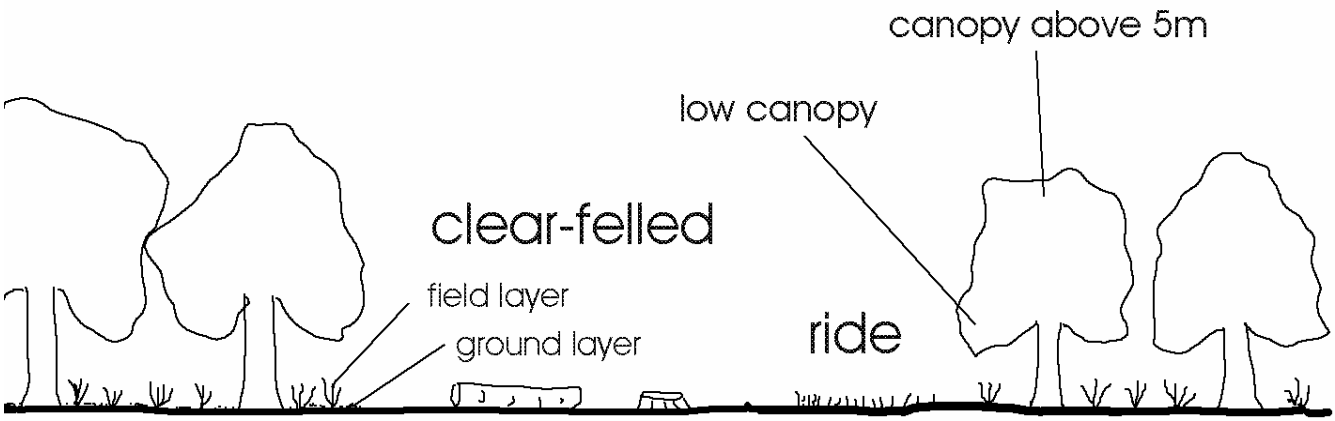
When looking through MapMate records sent to me by recorders there is sometimes an obvious mismatch between the collecting method and the structural vegetation layer that has been selected.

Nothing about ecology is ever simple, and the phase 2 structural classification (in MapMate the Status field when using 'Araneae: Spider Recording Scheme' in your configuration) was an attempt to record more detailed information of where spiders are found by using a system based on the vegetation layers in woodland. In a simplified form these can be seen as the ground layer, the field layer, the understory or shrub layer and the canopy. Non-woodland habitats can be seen in a similar way, but without the canopy.

Unlike with broad habitats this time we should be thinking on a small scale, the actual area around you when you are collecting or have set traps.

Structural habitats always refer to **where a spider is found**, not to the surrounding vegetation. For example, spiders collected by grubbing on the ground or at the bases of plants would be classified as in the ground layer.

BROAD HABITAT ALL WOODLAND



The field layer refers to herbaceous vegetation . Spiders collected by sweeping are normally from the field layer which generally is <20cm or >20cm and <1-1.5m in height.

Shrub and low canopy refers to woody species, i.e. scrub or shrub species and low branches of trees, which are most easily sampled by beating - even if they are sampled by sweeping actions they are still considered as shrub or low canopy. Hence bramble would count as being in this layer unless it is prostrate or not woody.

To try and take some account of the vegetation cover (e.g. a good proportion of spiders appear to always be found in areas of sparsely vegetated habitat or small areas of bare ground, or always in tall dense vegetation etc) we subdivided these. You can use the general category where it is not feasible or sensible to subdivide.

The MapMate 'Method' field also allows you to record either your collecting method or detail about where in a habitat the spider was found (these had to be combined in order to be incorporated into the MapMate record entry). Whilst it is possible to create new Methods in MapMate, you must remember that if you do this, these will not then be within the SRS classification and will not be available for analyses.

Several habitat details are included because they provide microhabitats commonly used by various spiders, such as 'On tree trunk', 'On fence', 'On wall', 'In aerial litter, birds nests etc'. However these particular microhabitats cannot satisfactorily be associated with structural vegetation layers – e.g. on a tree trunk is not the same as the structural canopy layer that can be beaten to find spiders, so in cases like this the Status field should be left 'Not recorded'.

There has occasionally been some confusion over the meaning of the term 'grubbing'. 'Grubbing' refers to the time honoured technique used by arachnologists and other ground dwelling invertebrate specialists, where the field worker can be found on their hands and knees, backside in the air, using their hands to sort amongst the roots and ground layer of plants and litter. It therefore has a pretty close association with the ground layer (of course even this is not always easy to know for certain e.g. if you are grubbing amongst tall vegetation, you may disturb spiders that then drop un-noticed to the ground, where you then find them – nothing is perfect!).

Habitat detail and Method

0. Not Recorded
1. In litter
2. Under stones, logs, debris
3. Under bark
4. In aerial litter, birds nests etc
5. On tree trunk
6. On fence
7. On wall
8. On vegetation
9. In plant roots
A. Amongst herbage

T1. Pitfall trap
T2. Water trap
T3. Malaise trap
7. On wall
T5. Sweeping
T6. Beating
T7. Grubbing
T8. Sieve and sort

Of course these are not fixed associations, since it is possible to employ aerial pitfall or pan traps, and beating can be employed on tall herbaceous vegetation as well as scrub or canopy.

Analyses of these kinds of data can provide us with valuable information about whereabouts in a broad habitat different spiders are usually found, and also by looking at these data throughout the year and by longitude and latitude we can learn whether species move into different structural habitats during the year or behave differently in different parts of the country. Many field workers will already know that these things happen, but the availability of these data will enable us to quantify what happens and apply statistics to find out whether the data provide significant results.

On examining in detail some of the MapMate data that I have been sent, there is a proportion of records where the methods do not match the Status or structural vegetation. **Therefore can I please make a plea for MapMate users to check their records against the table on the following page**, edit them where necessary and then resync to me (cuk 2gv), so that we can begin to use the SRS Phase 2 data for analyses.

Method or habitat detail	Likely associated structural vegetation layer (MapMate Status)
5. On tree trunk 6. On fence 7. On wall	Not recorded
T1. Pitfall trap T2. Water trap T7. Grubbing T8. Sieve and sort 1. In litter 2. Under stones, logs, debris 9. In plant roots	1.0 - 1.5 Ground layer
8. On vegetation A. Amongst herbage T5. Sweeping	2.0 - 2.5 Low vegetation (<20cm)
8. On vegetation A. Amongst herbage T5. Sweeping	3.0 - 3.5 Field layer (>20cm)
8. On vegetation A. Amongst herbage T6. Beating	4.0 - 4.5 Shrub/low canopy to 5m
Tree fogging or aerial traps, or you have climbed up into a tree on a ladder or are using walkways in the tree canopy!	5.0 Canopy above 5m
T3. Malaise trap	Could be ground, low vegetation or field layer, or not applicable depending on its placement

An example of the results that we can start to obtain from the records currently in MapMate is summarised in the following table for *Clubiona terrestris*, a spider that probably tends to move from the ground layer into the vegetation and canopy during summer months, over-wintering in litter (including aerial litter.

Records for *Clubiona terrestris* by SRS Status (structural habitat) and month

	Month											
Status	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
1.0 Ground layer	5	7	13	25	39	21	17	14	38	44	23	14
1.2 Ground layer: sparse veg. cover		1		4	5	5	2	1	4	2		
1.3 Ground layer: moderate veg. cover		2	2		1	6	1	1	5			1
1.4 Ground layer: dense veg. cover				2	2	3		1	2			
Total ground layer	**5**	**10**	**15**	**31**	**47**	**35**	**20**	**17**	**49**	**46**	**23**	**15**
2.3 Low vegetation (<20cm): moderate						1						
2.4 Low vegetation (<20cm): dense				1			1					
Total low vegetation (<20cm)	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
3.0 Field layer (>20cm)					5	12	2	4	1			
3.3 Field layer (>20cm): moderate						5		1	1			
3.4 Field layer (>20cm): dense				1	2							
3.5 Field layer (>20cm): varied mosaic					2							
Total field layer (>20cm)	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**9**	**17**	**2**	**5**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**0**
4.0 Shrub/low canopy to 5m				1	4	16	6	1	3	3	1	
4.3 Shrub/low canopy to 5m: moderate				1	1				1			
4.4 Shrub/low canopy to 5m: dense					1	1						
Total shrub/low canopy	**0**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**6**	**17**	**6**	**1**	**4**	**3**	**1**	**0**
5.0 Canopy above 5m									**1**			

There are at least 32 fields of information in the MapMate SRS Phase 2 structure, with several of these effectively hidden from the user (such as BRC number). Whilst this all might seem too time consuming and tiresome to record, quite a few fields are associated with a site, so only have to be completed once for any site or sub-site. In addition where a casual fieldwork visit is made to a site it may well not be possible to complete the fields relating to management, substrate etc – **if in doubt don't complete**. Structural habitat features are related to each separate species record, but if you keep all the spiders from one structural habitat separate from those collected from another structural habitat (e.g. you keep those collected by grubbing in one tube of alcohol, those swept in another tube and those beaten into another tube and so on) then it is not difficult to enter these quickly into MapMate from your lists of identifications by locking the fields that remain the same and entering only the taxon and quantity/sex for all those species recorded from the same Status and by the same Method.

I am only too aware that no habitat classification is ever going to be satisfactory or accommodate for all circumstances. The NVC system is not only beyond many naturalists (if for no other reason than the price of the volumes) but is also not particularly relevant from an invertebrate point of view, where spiders for example are rarely bothered by the plants present other than from a structural point of view. I am in the process of thinking about whether to update the current classification in a way that can reasonably easily accommodate existing data. In particular there is the problem over how to allow broad habitats within habitats or habitat systems to be recorded, e.g. large areas of grasslands within woodlands, dune systems supporting pine plantations, calcareous grasslands, marshes, fens and so on, as well as the dunes themselves. I would welcome ideas and opinions from members of the BAS.

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Habitat-Site associations and how to define site names in Mapmate

by Peter Harvey

Validation of data computerised by BRC from RA65 cards in autumn 2005 raised a number of issues about lack of consistency in the use of site names generated by paper data, and inconsistencies between site descriptions and broad habitats. I have recently managed to find the time to import these and various other Excel data into MapMate. This has raised an important question over how to deal with site names in MapMate, so that broad habitat information is not lost, and I have had to make unilateral decisions over site names and associated habitats in order to make the data consistent with the overall aims of the recording scheme.

In MapMate every site consists of a unique site name-grid reference combination. SRS broad habitats and other SRS site-related information (SRS Site Details) are uniquely related to each site, whereas numbers, sex of specimens, structural habitat, collecting methods, etc are associated with individual species records. Many parent sites will contain a number of different broad habitats, and hence it will be necessary to set up a sub site for each SRS Site Detail combination. This is not as onerous as it might seem, since it only has to be done once for any one sub site. However it becomes essential to ensure that sites and sub sites are named in a way that clarifies the broad habitat that is associated with it, so that confusion does not arise when it is used, both by the creator of the site name, but also perhaps by other MapMate users.

The means to do this has already been explained extremely well in Ian Dawson's article "MapMate and the Spider Recording Scheme" (July 2003 SRS News **46**: 12-14).

The purpose of the current article is to remind MapMate users of its importance and the value in using a standardised method to assign site and sub site names. Hopefully it will also be useful for non-MapMate recorders to be aware of the implications their site names might have when their records are imported into MapMate, since these will have to be adapted to ensure that site name-SRS broad habitat/SRS Site Detail combinations are unique.

The recommended method to use when naming sites is **MainSite, SubSite: Compartment** followed by a descriptive identifier for the **SRS broad habitat/SRS Site Detail** in parentheses, so that you and other users can identify the habitat associated with a particular site name. Hence examples of sites named in this way might be as follows:

Savernake Forest, Grey Road (decid)
Savernake Forest, Braydon Oak (mixed)
Savernake Forest, Birch Copse (conifer)
Savernake Forest, Cp 12 (clear felled)

Or

East Head (saltmarsh)
East Head (shingle)
East Head, West (fore dune)
East Head, Northwest (fixed dune)
East Head, Central (dune slack)
East Head (scrub)

This method can also be used to differentiate areas of land where management changes take place and associated changes in species are being monitored:

Bellrope Meadow (ungrazed)
Bellrope Meadow (grazed)
Savernake Forest, Cp 12 (prior to clear fell)
Savernake Forest, Cp 12 (clear felled, 1 year re-growth)
Savernake Forest, Cp 12 (clear felled, 2 year re-growth)
Savernake Forest, Cp 12 (clear felled, 3 year re-growth)

The whole site name is limited to 64 characters. Although sites are also identified by their grid reference, unless any associated habitat is identified in the name you or another MapMate user would be able to use the site without easily realising that the habitat associated with it might not be applicable to the records you are about to enter (although

this can be checked in the data entry window by clicking on **Site** and selecting from the drop down list **Show all related** > **Site Details**).

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What is a spider habitat?

by Tony Russell-Smith

We have probably all had the experience from time to time of finding a species of spider in the "wrong" habitat. For example, all the books say that a species is strictly confined to, say salt marshes, and it turns up in a pitfall trap on heathland. In some cases this will doubtless be a consequence of the dispersal of spiders by ballooning on the end of silk strands. While spiders can, to some extent, control where and when they take to the air during ballooning, as far as we know they have very little control over where they eventually come down. However, when a species persistently turns up in an unexpected habitat, other factors may well be involved, including our own ability to define exactly what constitutes that habitat. Here I give a couple of examples from my own experience but would be interested to hear of others that readers have encountered themselves.

The first example is the distinctive jumping spider *Marpissa nivoyi* (Lucas, 1846) which all the literature tells us is an inhabitant of the field layer of sand dunes. Sand dunes are indeed where a majority of the specimens I have collected here in Britain have come from. However, in the south-west of France, near the Côte Sauvage in Charente Maritime, I have taken it on several occasions from dry grassland on limestone, as far as 5 km from the nearest coast. It was interesting therefore when in 2005 I collected the species in two quite unexpected habitats in Kent. The first was in a very sparse dried up patch of reeds (*Phragmites australis*) at Samphire Hoe, near Dover. This is an artificial platform jutting out from the coast and made up of the millions of tons of chalk marl spoil from the drilling of the channel tunnel. While much of the area has re-vegetated in the 16 years since its creation, there are still large areas with only very sparse dry grassland and to that extent it might be considered to somewhat resemble sand dunes. The second was a little further along the same coast at Folkestone Warren. Here, several *M. nivoyi* were taken in clumps of grass on vertical chalk cliffs along the coast. The nearest sand dunes to either of these sites are roughly 15 km to the West at Greatstone-on-Sea near Dungeness. The only features that these two habitats appear to share is that they were both very hot and dry and they both had vertical surfaces; reed stems in one case and vertical chalk faces in the other.

The second example is the little erigonid, *Maso gallicus* Simon, 1894. Up until about 1990 this had been found in calcareous grassland in Kent, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire on the one hand and in several fenlands in East Anglia on the other hand. It was, therefore, an example of what Duffey (1968) termed "diplostenoecious" species, those that appear to be confined to two, contrasting, habitat types. However,

Marpissa nivoyi
photograph © Peter Harvey

during a field trip to Brittany in 1992, this species was found in a range of habitats. It was taken, as expected, by sweeping mixed fen in the Briére marshes as well as in reedbeds but was also swept from dry grassland in open pine woods and from *Agropyron* grassland on sea walls around the Loire estuary. Clearly, in this part of its range it has a relatively wide habitat amplitude. Interestingly, in Britain, it has been collected more recently by sweeping sparse *Arrhenatherum* grassland on shingle at Dungeness and at Sandwich Bay in Kent.

These examples prompt two lines of thought. The first relates to the way we see and describe habitats. Human senses are dominated by vision and we therefore tend to describe habitats in terms of their broad visual characteristics. Thus we speak, for example, of "woodland", "heathland", "fenland" or "sand dune" habitats – all defined by fairly simple visual characteristics related to the morphology of the dominant plants and/or the substrate on which they grow. Invertebrates the size of spiders however, almost certainly perceive habitats in quite different ways. We know that there are two factors that are of outstanding importance in habitat choice by spiders. The first is habitat structure, be it the structure of the vegetation (particularly for web-builders) or of the non-living substrate such as the litter layer in woodlands. The second is the particular micro-climate they require, as demonstrated in the classic paper by Nørgaard (1951) on lycosids in Danish peat bogs. Unfortunately, neither of these factors are accurately reflected in the broad habitat descriptors we customarily use. Thus, if *M. nivoyi* were asked to describe its preferred habitat (and could speak!) it would quite probably not mention sand dunes at all but might well say something like "hot, dry and sunny places with vertical surfaces on which to hunt prey". How precisely *M. gallicus* would describe its preferred habitat is less easy to discern but it seems unlikely that it would use the term diplostenoecious! None of this is to suggest that broad habitat descriptors are of no value, since a large proportion of spider species are most frequently found in particular habitats. It is though, important to bear in mind their limitations and it is for this reason that the descriptors used in phase 2 of the SRS include much more detailed sub-divisions of habitats as well as their structural characteristics.

The second issue that comes to mind is habitat choice by spiders on the edge and nearer the centre of their geographical ranges. It has been known for many years that invertebrate habitat choice can change in different parts of the species' geographical range. Duffey, in the paper on sand dune spiders mentioned above, cites examples given by Richards & Waloff (1954) for two grasshopper species that reach their northern limit in Britain. *Gomphocercus rufus* (L.) is a woodland species on the continent but in Britain is only found on chalk grassland in southern England. *Stenobothrus lineatus* (Panz.) is found in fenland in France but only occurs in open grassland in this country. In each case it is suggested that the cooler climate in Britain limits these species to open ground areas where insolation is greatest. A good example of a potential similar case in spiders is that of the salticids that are either exclusively or principally limited to maritime shingle in this country. These include *Heliophanus auratus, Pseudeuophrys obsoleta, Sitticus inexpectus, Phlegra fasciata* (also on sand dunes) and *Pellenes tripunctatus*. None of these species is confined to shingle on the continent. For example, in Greece I have found *H. auratus, P. obsoleta* and *P. fasciata* to be widespread in maquis and garrigue habitats. Many of these species are also recorded from land-locked countries of central Europe including Switzerland, Austria, the Czech and Slovak republics which have no marine shingle habitats. Indeed, both *Phlegra fasciata* and *Pellenes tripunctatus* are widespread inland in both France and Germany.

While it is tempting to assume that it is indeed the microclimate of shingle sites in southern Britain that allow these species to survive, it is possible that habitat structure also plays a role. The numerous voids between the individual pebbles on shingle beaches are certainly used by these species as a retreat from predators (as anyone who has tried to collect salticids on shingle beaches will know!) but may also be used as shelter in adverse weather conditions. The surface of shingle is a very inhospitable place during the winter months even in southern Britain and the spaces deeper in the shingle bank are likely to be significantly warmer and less windy at that time of year.

All of this tends to suggest that when trying to describe a spider habitat, it is the micro-climate and the physical structure that we should be trying to define, as these are the features that directly influence spiders' choices. Unfortunately, neither of these characteristics are necessarily easy to quantify, at least for the amateur arachnologist. Nevertheless, in my experience some of the best field arachnologists appear to have an innate understanding of the importance of such factors and are able to find interesting spiders where the rest of us only collect widespread and common species. Perhaps a case of a little bit of forethought and planning yielding dividends !

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Uloborus plumipes reaches new latitudes

by Mike Davidson

I regularly irritate the staff at the local supermarkets by taking my fruit and veg loose to the check-out for weighing - thankfully the owners finally seem to be getting the message about excess packaging. But that is just an interesting aside. What of course I am really there for is to search amongst the produce for evidence of *Uloborus plumipes* - but with no success. I had seen the beast before in the University Botanic Garden greenhouses in Amsterdam, so felt I had got the jiz and would be able to spot it easily as soon as one arrived.

In August 2006, on a regular lunch-time trip to the Duthie Park Winter Garden greenhouses (and tea-room!) in Aberdeen (NJ937045), I was surprised to see the display trellises, in the plant sales section, festooned with *U. plumipes* webs. Most webs had a spider and many of them had egg sacs. The spiders had also made webs between some emergent aquatic plants to the bridge over their artificial indoor stream. How had I missed the initial infection? So far they don't seem to have spread much further through the greenhouses and the staff seem to be "dusting" the plant stalls more regularly so there are fewer webs. A more thorough investigation of the invertebrate fauna is called for.

This appears to be the most northerly record so far but there are loads of garden centres and greenhouses in the north of Scotland worth checking. Anyone going to Unst?

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Timed hand collecting and repeating the East Anglia Fenland Surveys of 1969-1974

by Richard Price

In the SRS news (Duffey, 2006) Eric Duffey wrote about his surveys of the East Anglian Fens and the timed hand collecting method that he first used in 1967 (Duffey, 1968). Eric Duffey seems to be the only person who has ever scientifically applied timed hand collecting for spiders**.** For this reason, I decided to write about timed hand collecting and drum up some support for a repeat of the East Anglian Fenland Surveys of 1969 – 1974.

When recording spiders properly, we are collecting scientific data. If we use standardised collection techniques then we improve upon these data by enabling comparable studies to be carried out. If you are thinking of surveying a site that at a future date might be

resurveyed, or compared against another, then this article might contain some useful ideas.

Let us initially investigate the other method for surveying epigeal invertebrates, pitfall trapping. Pitfall trapping is the method that is most frequently used to collect epigeal invertebrates and has the advantage of being both cheap and quick (Holland and Reynolds, 2005). It is considered to be the technique best suited to the purpose (Sutherland, 2006). However, there are problems and concerns that have led to pitfall trapping often being discussed in the literature.

Timed hand collecting for spiders was first documented by Eric Duffey in his paper on the ecological analysis of the spider fauna of sand dunes. He correlated the time spent against the number of species collected and compared families and species found in 7 habitats. These habitats were drift-line, fore-dune, yellow dune, marram transition zone, dune heath, dune slack, and dune meadow (Duffey, 1968).

During transpiration experiments spiders were found to exhibit different behaviour patterns when conditions became harsher, some moved around less (Baehr and Eisenbeis, 1985). This behaviour could affect search techniques, in particular that of pitfall trapping.

During a 1992 study C. J. Topping and K.D. Sunderland (Topping & Sunderland, 1992) found that pitfall trapping is ineffective and its limitations are often overlooked.

D-vac and pitfalls are problematic and cannot easily be used to sample in the full range of habitat variation found on sand dunes. Continuous pitfall trapping over a period of a year yielded less information than four days of timed hand collecting. Studies that used pitfalls tended not to use the type of habitat classification that is so important in the SRS phase two data set (Duffey, 2003).

Thomas (2006) found that casual collecting carried out for a few minutes with a sweep net could produce more numbers than pitfall trapping and concluded that pitfall trapping might not be as effective as other techniques

Pitfall trapping is selective. If the survey is specifically for spider fauna pitfall traps will still collect from other groups such as beetles. Unless effort is made to curate and record these groups, invertebrates are killed for no purpose.

Perhaps it is time to look at an alternative to pitfall trapping. The timed hand collecting outlined by Eric Duffey is an alternative method for surveying epigeal invertebrates. It has been explored for fenland habitats and perhaps it can work for others.

Timed hand collecting

The methodology proposed by Eric Duffey involves timed hand collecting, in and on the ground level vegetation. During the collection every spider seen is taken without selection. This is done to reduce recorder bias whereby less experienced recorders collect the larger and more visible species. All sub-adult and immature spiders are excluded from the analysis although their total is recorded. During the 1969 to 1974 surveys Eric Duffey and his team spent an hour on each site in the morning and an hour on each site in the afternoon. Members of Duffey's team averaged 9 per survey. Each hourly collection was bottled separately. After each hour they moved to a new place even if it was only a few metres away (pers. comm., Duffey 2006). By sampling for periods of one hour it is possible to calculate how long is needed to collect in each area before no new species are found (Duffey, 2003). This type of data would be very valuable for the BAS and future studies. Therefore, this technique really is worthy of further investigation.

Timed hand collecting can work as a standardised survey method if timed counts are used. This means that species can be monitored and semi-quantitative data collected enabling comparisons across years, or sites. Indices of abundance or relative abundance can also be produced (Hill *et al.*, 2005).

Timed hand collecting in East Anglia

The use of timed hand collecting to repeat the 1969-1974 surveys could result in data being available that could be used for surveillance. When interpreted these data could detect if desiccation is occurring and determine if it is affecting spider assemblages. These data would be valid for scientific studies, and because the survey method is repeatable, it could be incorporated into future site monitoring schemes.

Eric Duffey has kindly corresponded with me and I have collated a table (see table 1) listing the site names, grid references, survey dates.

Each species list would be collated and incorporated into the BAS Phase 2 data. Because the results of the 1969-1974 surveys have not been published the data could also be sent to Eric Duffey so that he could incorporate it in future publications. He is preparing work that would examine changes in the fauna at the sites.

A new survey period could start in 2007, participants would be responsible for identifying their own spiders and if necessary submitting them to a determiner for confirmation. Timed hand collecting is a very convenient method for gathering scientific data. Members could arrange trips with family and friends who might not necessarily be experienced, pick a site and devote the odd hour to surveying. If carried out over a number of years, valuable data sets would be created.

Timed hand collecting combined with habitat classification for the BAS phase 2 data set yields good information that can be used to compare sites (Duffey, 2003). Because many of the sites are in close proximity to each other much could be achieved by a car full of people, only one or two of which would need to be experienced. In a day, several sites could be visited. Site access has already been obtained for Caldecote Fen and East Ruston Common. Other site owners could be approached, if enough interest from within the BAS is shown.

Perhaps we could plan some fenland surveys for next year? For each site I have a list of the contact details of whom to approach for access.

Further notes on timed hand collecting

We have to consider any flaws in the timed hand collecting methodology. Perhaps bias could be caused by different techniques being utilized as hand collecting techniques. For example, if during a survey two people used d-vacuum suction sampling for half an hour each and this was not noted and therefore not repeated in consecutive surveys, bias would be introduced into the data sets. Therefore any surveyors should carefully note the techniques used within the timed hand collecting.

The method outlined in this article becomes

Table 1. Eric Duffey and others - Surveys 1969 - 1974

Site Name	Grid Ref	Date	Ownership
East Winch Common	TF702158	9 June 1974	NWT
Stoke Ferry Fen (denotified)	TL683978	14 June 1974	
East Walton Fen is now East Walton and Adcock's Common SSSI	TF734165 OS236 Kings Lyn, Downham Market & Swaffham	9 June 1974 12 June 1974	Private
Foulden Common	TF761001	14 June 1969 15 June 1969 16 June 1969 17 June 1969 18 June 1969 19 June 1969 20 June 1969 21 June 1969 7 Sept 1970 8 Sept 1970 9 Sept 1970 10 Sept 1970 11 Sept 1970 12 Sept 1970 13 Sept 1970 14 Sept 1970 15 Sept 1970 16 Sept 1970 17 Sept 1970 18 Sept 1970 19 Sept 1970 20 Sept 1970 21 Sept 1970 22 Sept 1970 23 Sept 1970 24 Sept 1970 25 Sept 1970 26 Sept 1970 12 June 1974	Private
Caldecote Fen (denotified). Have Duffey's original map.	TF741035	13 June 1974	Private (ECA)
Pashford Poors' Fen	TL 735836	18 June 1969	SWT
Thompson Common Fen is now called Thompson Water, Carr and Common SSSI	TL935958	14 June 1969 15 June 1969 16 June 1969 17 June 1969 18 June 1969 19 June 1969 20 June 1969 21 June 1969 19 Sept 1970 20 Sept 1970 21 Sept 1970 22 Sept 1970 23 Sept 1970 24 Sept 1970 25 Sept 1970 26 Sept 1970	Part NWT
East Ruston Common	TG340280 OS 252 Norfolk East Coast	13 June 1974	East Poors' Allotment Trust

particularly powerful in we consider that a BAS member acting alone in expert capacity could drag inexperienced family and friends along for collecting trips that would be fun and yield excellent scientific data. Timed hand collecting methodology should not be used exclusively, as non-selective searching would reduce the enjoyment that many of us feel when partaking in field trips. However, some might like to include an hour of it in field trips as appropriate.

Funding and finding an organiser

I have enough information to be able to organise surveys over a period of a few years. The aim would be to re-visit the sites and provide the BAS and Eric Duffey with scientific data. The visits would be fun. Timed hand collecting would need to be part of the agenda for the first half an hour to an hour but would not constitute the whole visit.

I am in the process of applying for the funding that would provide an incentive for helpers by paying for their travelling and accommodation expenses. I have been advised to try Natural England, the JNCC, the Norfolk and Suffolk Wildlife Trusts, and the Ted Locket Fund. I know of some grants available via the BEHNS, BES, and the BAS. The BAS Ted Locket fund contains £1000 that is specifically to help with field studies; this seems very relevant to the repeats of Eric's East Anglian surveys.

Conclusion

Currently, a lot of literature focuses on pitfall trapping and the pros and cons of it, timed hand collecting appears to be overlooked. Comparative studies of the best techniques that are specific to collecting spiders in different habitats also seem to be sparse.

The level of re-survey effort is probably dependant upon the funding obtained. This type of study could answer many important questions. What are the best techniques for surveying each habitat for spiders? When are the best times for surveying different habitat? What is the level of desiccation at the sites that were originally surveyed? How does desiccation on the fens affect the spider assemblies? Perhaps someone within the BAS can devise a study that could lead to the best techniques for each habitat being identified. As a start we have timed hand collecting for fenlands to work on.

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[1]Surveillance is repeated surveying to detect change(s) (Sutherland, 2006).

[2]Permission has been gained for East Ruston Common from the 8th to the 10th of June and for Caldecote Fen in May/June (date to be confirmed).

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The Friston Forest Project

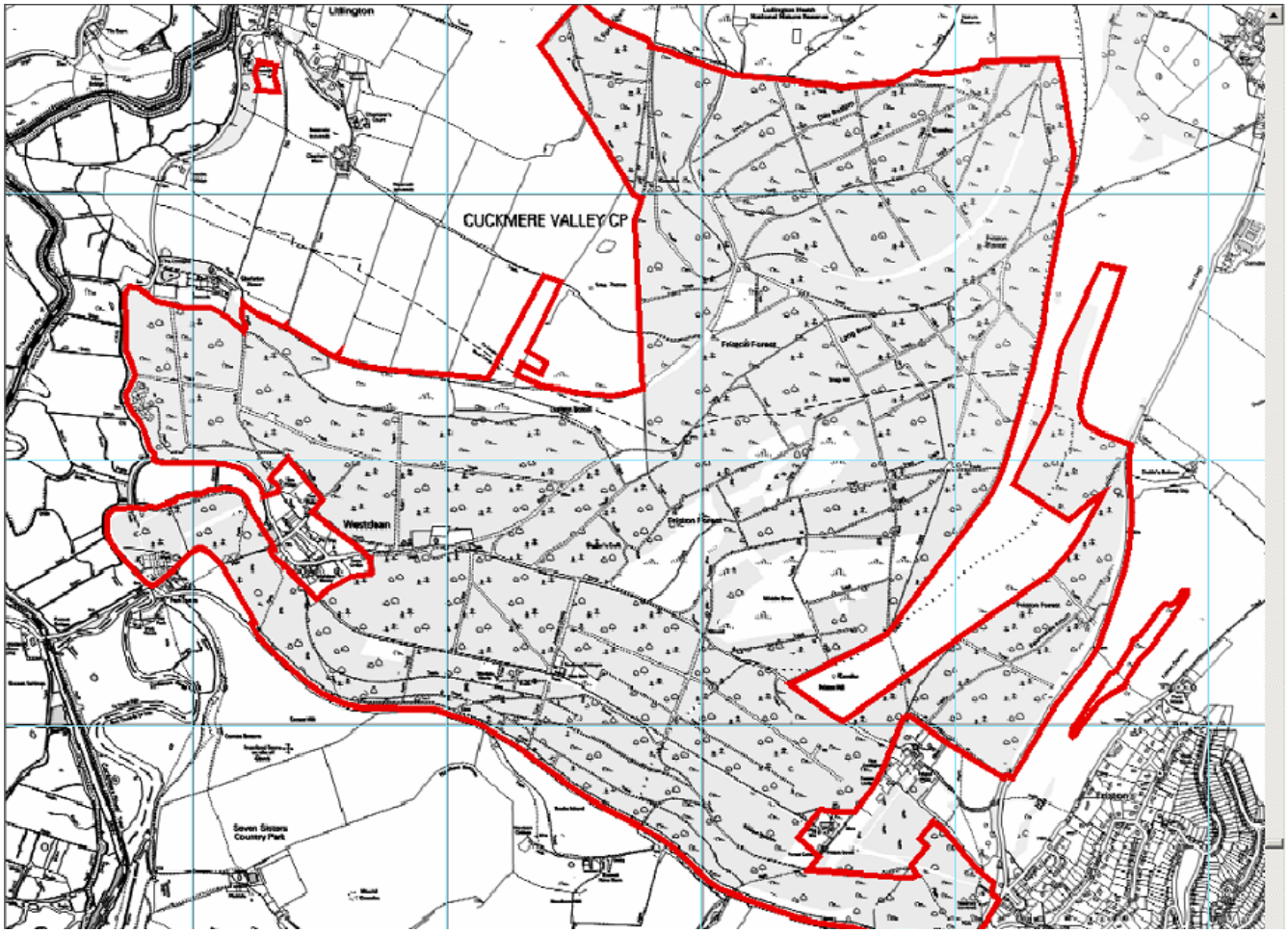
by Richard Price

Friston Forest has been plantation woodland and is managed via conventional forestry management; it is not ancient woodland or an SSSI. The site has some good habitats such as species-rich grassland (chalky and neutral), and small fragments of chalk heath vegetation and scrub. The Friston Forest Project partners have decided to change the management of the site by introducing British white cattle to the project area to reduce the uniformity of the plantation, encourage the growth of more scrub, and expand the grassland areas. As part of this process, the site managers decided to obtain baseline data for the site.

On the 23rd of September I attended the Adastra Recording Day that was organised by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SBRC) and spent the day recording spiders from the site. Prior to the recording day the SBRC had no spider records from the site. The SRS had two records from the site, in 1981 *Pardosa nigriceps* and in 2001 *Argiope bruennichi.*

Ideally, to obtain baseline data for the spiders on the site it would need to be surveyed at least four or more times in the year, using a variety of techniques to record different species (pers. comm. Peter Harvey, 2006). However, a worthwhile list of spiders was obtained on the day, including two Notable B spiders. Many of the records were found by walking around with the expert Peter Hodge who kindly let me have specimens from his sweep net. It was quite a revelation to see how he used a stick to tap invertebrates from the shrubs into the net.

Friston Forest Project Area



Species list from Friston Forest (recorded 23rd September 2006)

Cyclosa conica
Drapetisca socialis
Misumena vatia
Paidiscura pallens
Metellina segmentata sens. str.
Enoplognatha ovata sens. str.
Trachyzelotes pedestris (Nationally Notable B)
Agalenatea redii
Linyphia triangularis
Araneus angulatus (Nationally Notable B)
Araneus diadematus
Pisaura mirabilis

The *Araneus angulatus* was collected by Dave Monk and handed to me. I recorded the details and sent it to Peter Harvey who confirmed it. This species is local and infrequent in woods usually within the coastal corridor. It is associated with broad-leaved woodland and found in or at the edge. The webs are sometimes spun high up in trees. The management recommendation is to maintain woodland edges within existing woodland glades and rides (in Harvey *et al*., 2002). The spider was found on the ground and halfway down a narrow grass covered sloped pathway at TQ545011. Brambles were present on both sides within a yard or so of the path. The tree cover was not dense. A number of webs were seen about 20ft up stretched out between the trees on large frame threads. It seems probable that these are *A. angulatus* webs. The SRBC holds 7 records for this species in Sussex. In the UK, the distribution maps have been updated and national statuses are being reviewed. There are only 12 post 1992 UK 10km square records for *A. angulatus*, together with 9 for between 1950-1991, 1 between 1900-1949, and 2 before 1900. Therefore, *Araneus angulatus* is a scarce spider, and one that will probably be classified be classified as Near Threatened in the next review (pers. comm. Peter Harvey, 2006).

Conclusion

Comments from the BAS were passed to a co-ordinator of the Friston Forest Project who replied that the cattle would be going in during March at the earliest, thus giving time to carry out a more thorough survey. Please can anyone who wants to assist contact me.

Acknowledgements

Penny Green of the Sussex, Biodiversity Records Officer, Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre for letting me use information from the Adastra recording day flyer; Peter Harvey for information provided and for reviewing this article; Peter Hodge for his sweep net skills; Dave Monk for collecting the *A. angulatus* and providing details.

[1]The Friston Forest Project partners are Sussex Wildlife Trust, South East Water, Forestry Commission, Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SBRC), English Nature and University of Brighton.

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Pseudeuophrys lanigera (Simon, 1871) from Northumberland

by Ian Wallace

On 27.12.2004 a specimen of this spider was collected from a bedroom wall in a house at Fenham, Newcastle upon Tyne. It went into a batch of assorted material and has just been dealt with. Chris Felton has confirmed the identification and the specimen is now in the World Museum Liverpool collections. Dr. Peter Merrett confirmed that he knew of no other VC 67 records.

For the past 30 years we have used the particular room about 3 times a year when visiting my mother-in-law. The species is found occasionally both at our home on the Wirral and at the museum. It would seem possible that we have inadvertently introduced it with luggage from our loft, however, on the particular day in question we noticed the spider before we had unpacked anything, so it had at the very least been living there for several months.

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Araniella inconspicua in Leicestershire (VC55)

by Jon Daws

This spider was first found in the county at Burbage Common (SP446950) on the 12th May 2004, when a single male was swept from rough grass adjacent to scrubby oaks (SRS newsletter no.50). Since then there have been a further two records for the county;

13/05/05	1 female	Alter Stones	SK484108
23/05/06	2 gravid females	Luffenham Heath Golf Course	SK959027

On both occasions *A. inconspicua* was beaten from oak trees which had just opened their leaves. At Altar Stones the oaks were growing on the poor, acid, peaty soils of the Charnwood Forest amongst patches of gorse. At Luffenham Heath the oaks on the golf course were growing on limestone along the edge of the eighteenth fairway.

These records are some of this species' most northerly in Britain, but are not evidence of its range expansion. It is rather evidence of greater field work targeting this species and its habitat during its peak season. With this in mind, it is quite probable that *A. inconspicua* may well be present in many of the English counties north of Leicestershire, maybe as far as the Scottish borders, since both of the common species of *Araniella* - which it is often found with - are fairly well recorded in Scotland.

177 Featherstone Drive, Leicester LE2 9RF

Holocnemus pluchei - a second British population

by Jon Daws

H. pluchei was recorded from an Asda distribution centre in south Leicestershire in September 2004 (SRS newsletter no.51). Since this time the population has been monitored on an irregular basis, with the species being present on all occasions, although no males have yet been seen. After the initial specimen had been collected, a concentration of similar looking webs were noted along a thirty metre length of wall, with the webs being constructed across the corners created by the wall and roof balustrades. The webs were present from close to ground level to eight metres above, with a concentration of webs between three and six metres. Many of these old webs - above the annual three metre reach of the cleaning team - are still present, although a little derelict.

The *H. pluchei* population within the warehouse fluctuates from month to month, with females and occasionally immatures noted throughout the year. These spiders with their sheet webs live in fairly close proximity to *Pholcus phalangioides*, a spider that is more common within the warehouse as well as more evenly distributed. There is also some evidence that the population numbers of *H. pluchei* are occasionally swelled by more spiders arriving at the warehouse usually on pallets of wine from either France or Spain.

The discovery of a further population of *H. pluchei* (SRS newsletter no.55) in a glass house close to Stratford upon Avon (just forty kilometres from Lutterworth, Leicestershire) begs the question, how many more undetected populations lie in southern Britain waiting to be discovered. Also the range of indoor habitats this species will tolerate seems to be quite wide: with the Leicestershire warehouse being a dry habitat, hot during the summer and cold during the winter; whereas the glasshouse would be more humid and perhaps have a better temperature control system, more so than the warehouse, where the bay doors are left open all year round.

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Spider Recording Scheme News
July 2007, No. 58

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 59 will be published in November 2007. Please send contributions by the end of September at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Pierrepont Farm, Tilford. Surrey

Pierrepont Farm was donated to the Countryside Restoration Trust in 2006. The Trust, which has charitable status, was formed in 1993 as a reaction to the over-intensification and "chemicalisation" of farming. Its primary objective is to demonstrate that modern day farming can be done successfully without harm to the environment, and that proper farm management can actually be beneficial to the countryside and its flora and fauna.

Pierrepont Farm is a 206 acre dairy farm. 148 acres is pastureland for the Jersey herd. The remaining comprises 48 acres of woodland (mostly deciduous, and thought to be ancient) and 23 acres of watermeadow. The River Wey, a chalk stream, runs through the farm.

The Trust has a local Volunteers' Group who will undertake conservation and related work. During the initial stage, a sub-group, the Monitoring Group, is recording the existing state of the flora and fauna so that, hopefully, we have a clearer picture of the current state of the farm's ecological condition. This, we believe, is critical before undertaking any conservation work. Clearly, we do not want to undertake a particular conservation initiative to assist one specific species or group of species only to find that it has an unforeseen detrimental effect on other species.

With the above in mind, if any British Arachnological Society member would be prepared to visit the farm and provide any input with regard to the spiders currently present (including whether any are rare) and what they should be doing to encourage the spider fauna, please contact Ross Williams, Chairman, Pierrepont Farm Volunteer Group, The Old Vicarage, Tilford, Surrey GU10 2DA Tel: 01252 790931 Email: ross.williams@clydeco.com

Prey capture by *Pholcus phalangioides*

by Jeremy Early

The property is a four-bedroomed in Reigate, Surrey and I have seen *Pholcus phalangioides* in most of the rooms as well as up the stairs and in the boiler/washing machine section. The image was taken in the front room, where a fair-sized (but unfortunately unidentified) spider ran across the carpet at 10.30pm and fell foul of the *P. phalangioides* web which, unlike the vast majority that I've noticed, was virtually at ground level, across the lintel and skirting board.

The prey attempted to escape but the resident, staying out of reach, used principally the front two legs to pull the strands of the web swiftly but carefully and make a parcel. It looked for all the world as if she was playing the organ. The process took four minutes, whereupon she hauled the prey out of sight behind a small box used in connection with the telephone.

***Pholcus* with spider prey**
photograph © Jeremy Early

For the record, the only prey I have previously seen *P. phalangioides* catching were crane flies, which were not wrapped anything like so 'remotely'.

jeremy@early.uk.com

Norfolk Spider Group and new Area Organiser

by Peter Nicholson

I am very grateful to be asked by Deborah Procter retiring Area Organiser to take on the role of SRS Area Organiser/ County Recorder for Norfolk and will endeavour to continue raising the profile of spiders in Norfolk and generating records for the SRS. I will be glad of all the support of those in the group and to thank Peter Harvey and Tony Irwin Curator of Natural History at the Castle Museum for their encouragement

The Norfolk Spider Group is active but thin on the ground, which is not to be unexpected. It is supported by a group of 12 people who are not necessarily in Norfolk but record occasionally here and others who are prepared to come to surveys. I am building links with the Norfolk and

Norwich Naturalist Society (N&NNS) through their Scientific Committee. Pip Collyer a member of the group and keen recorder and N&NNS Council Member and myself support projects such as the Little Ouse Headwaters Project, Catfield Hall Fen survey, where we undertake spider recording for interested landowners / organisations and provide reports on our finds.

Last year I also represented spiders at the N&NNS stand at the Norfolk Show, Wild About Norfolk and a couple of NWT Reserve Open days, finishing the year with a Beginners Spider Day at Wheatfen.

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Second site for *Steatoda albomaculata* in Wales

by Simon Warmingham

On April 4th 2007 I decided to visit a part of Merthyr Mawr N.N.R. which I hadn't worked before; namely an area of dune on the visible remnant limestone outcrop on the north-east side of the site (SS8677). Soon after getting down on hands and knees to grub about, I came across a smallish, plump spider on the underside of a low lying web. The white chevron marks on a predominately dark abdomen made this instantly recognisable as a subadult female *Steatoda albomaculata*.

Has the species been overlooked or blown over with a frequent westerly from the other site where the species is found in Wales – Kenfig N.N.R.? Could it be present at other south Wales dune systems?

9 Maerdy Park, Pencoed, Glamorgan CF35 5HF

Cicurina cicur New to Lincolnshire

by Annette Binding

In February 2006 I was given a number of spiders collected in Lincolnshire by Colin Smith, Lincolnshire county moth recorder.

One of the specimens got overlooked until recently when I discovered it whilst tidying my desk. I identified it as a female *Cicurina cicur*, a species I had not come across before. Colin had collected the spider at Wickenby Wood TF033827 on the 16th March 2005. A search of the Lincolnshire records showed that the species had never been recorded in Lincolnshire before.

Wickenby Wood SSSI is part of the Lincolnshire Limewoods ancient woodlands, which are mentioned in the Domesday Book and like most of the Limewoods it is on clay. Parts of the wood are very wet and like many of the other Limewoods, Wickenby Wood is somewhat under recorded for spiders.

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Nesticus cellulanus, is this as scarce as records show?

by Peter Nicholson

I was recently asked to visit a site near to Hoveton by Stewart Wright a keen naturalist and member of Norfolk and Norwich Naturalist Society. He had come across a spider which had attracted his attention in one of the glass/ green houses he was responsible for. *Nesticus cellulanus* is a species which requires damp conditions and prefers dark and shady places. It is generally associated with caves, mines, cellars, drains and in this particular case the underside of a timber trapdoor covering a reservoir for water in the floor of the green house.

On being shown the species, which were not immediately obvious, the colouration varied from being a pale brown colour to an off white to pale yellow with little or no annulations to the legs. This is not the colour or pattern expected when referring to Roberts. Examination of various specimens showed that the females found were mature but the males not, this being early February. It is should be noted that mature spiders are generally found in most seasons. As for the variation in colour Bristowe states that those that live in darkness are paler than others collected in place where there is light and this seems to be born out here.

Nesticus cellulanus
photograph © Stewart Wright

Having identified the species I was concerned at the variation in pattern and had the species confirmed by Peter Harvey. I was also surprised to find how under recorded this species is. In Norfolk there are no records on the British Arachnological Society database or other County records which I have to hand. There appears to be only one 10km in Suffolk and two in Essex; in fact according to the NBN Gateway there is a lack of records in the South East in total. Is this a true reflection of reality?

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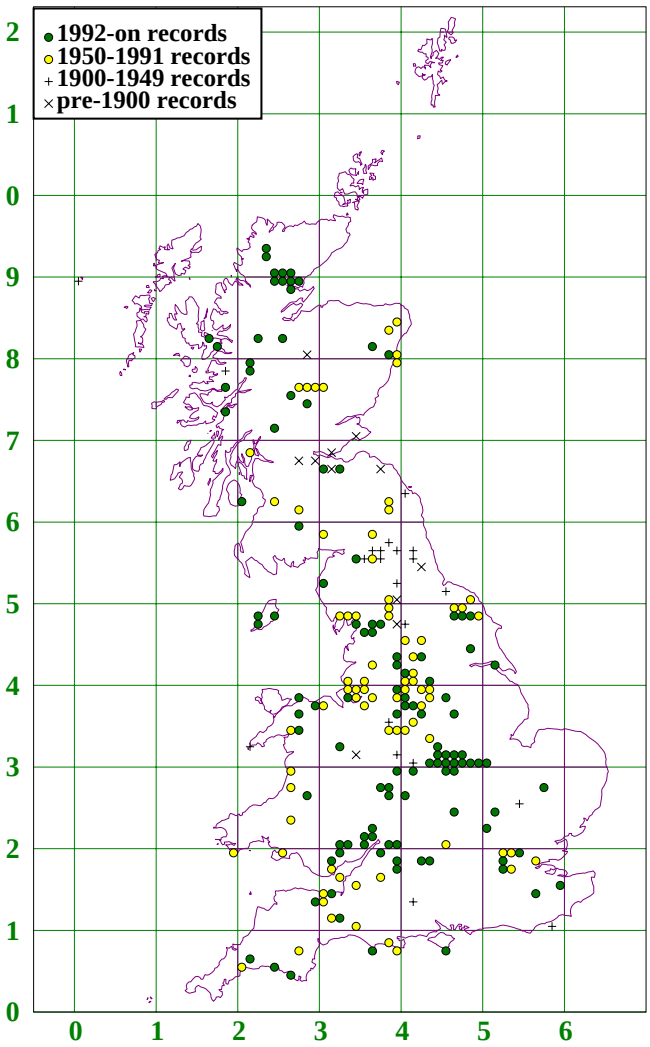

Records of *Nesticus cellulanus* submitted to the Spider Recording Scheme to the end of 2005.

A spider's plunder

by O. Crundall

On the 24th May I sauntered down to the River Thames in Kingston, Surrey. It was a warm sunny day and occasionally an enormous carp, resembling a torpedo, would loom up in the water at the confluence with the River Hogsmill. I looked down from the low wooden bridge onto the waterside sedges and indulged my senses on the titillatingly grotesque morphology of gravid *Tetragnatha extensa* specimens basking languidly on their hubs. My eyes moved to the railing I was clutching, and there I saw a wandering adult male *T. extensa* having some difficulty clawing his way towards the hub of an adult female *Larinioides sclopetarius*'s web.

I feared for his safety, expecting the unseen proprietor to surge forth at any second, but he went completely unmolested as he slowly gathered up Chironomid flies caught in the web. Having almost reached the hub, he performed an about-turn and started to leave the web. Near the periphery he inadvertently startled an *Araneus* sp. spiderling that had cheekily incorporated its orb into the stocky outer support threads of the *Larinioides* web. The *Tetragnatha,* having reached the safety of a wooden pole, stopped to consume his plunder.

I regard this incident as being a case of a male spider stealing prey to give him sustainance during his travels. Are there any other non-*Argyrodes* species in which the adult males steal the prey of other spiders?

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Catfield Hall Estate, Norfolk – spider recording 2006

by Peter Nicholson[1] and Pip Collyer[2]

Summary

In summary the years spider recording was successful with the total number of species recorded during the year 102 species in 17 different families [see Appendix 1]. It is very unlikely that this number is anywhere near the total range of species to be found at this site, but it does give a very good feel that the present management practices have enabled a wide diversity of spider species to be successful in this range of habitats. Further recording at varying times throughout the year would be beneficial for evaluating the possible number of species at this site.

The methodology of recording was speculative and left purely to the knowledge and field craft of the two recorders. This enabled flexibility and the ability to sample different habitats to see what each had to offer. Each habitat required a different approach to sampling and so the variability of methodology meant it was not possible to analyse the species data to give any clear guide lines on site management practices.

Methods and results

Recording was confined to four main areas on one day each month from March to September inclusive. This total is therefore likely to represent a significant under-recording, especially as the search was concentrated on the wetter areas of the Estate where the more unusual spiders were likely to be found. Also some species of Linyphiidae are more readily found in the autumn and winter months and no pitfall trapping, which might be expected to record some different species to those found by hand collecting and vacuum sampling, was employed.

There were four main sites recorded within the Estate, their titles and notes indicating the nature and composition of the selected areas:-

SRA 1 North Marsh TG375214

Fen where rushes provide stalks and heads for secure retreats and web building for *Larinioides cornutus.* Mid height vegetation such as Willow herb gives similar structure for *Araneus marmoreus* and *A. quadratus.* Lower vegetation gives ideal micro habitats' for a variety of spiders and prey invertebrates. The ground layers provide ideal substrate for ground hunting Lycosids and Linyphids.

SRA 2 North Marsh Carr TG 372214

The area varies from damp to wet under foot and

composed mainly of Silver Birch with an under story of brambles. There is an accumulation of leaf litter and dead wood with moderate low vegetation.

SRA 3 Woodland strip TG376212
Essentially a strip of mixed woodland with an under story of holly bushes and a tall mixed hedge to one side. Either side is pasture. The shrub / low canopy structure is good for a number small web builders and the leaf litter for many small ground hunting spiders including the Linyphiidae.

SRA 4 Boat-house area TG 374211
This is a mown marsh and orchid area at the right season, but from our point of view it was essentially a wet moss / short grass area with good potential for the small specialised spiders associated with this type of area.

In addition, some occasional recording was made around Rose Marsh [TG 376207], the enclosure just north of the woodland strip [TG376213] and around the pond to the north of the access drive, adjacent to the cottages [TG378213]

Around half of the spiders found were in the family Linyphiidae which is to be expected as this family represents approximately half of the British spider fauna. Of the 36 species of Lycosidae on the British list, 9 were recorded at Catfield. Only one spider, *Kaestneria dorsalis* [family Linyphiidae] was recorded at all four sites, and only one, *Zora spinimana* [family Zoridae] at three of the sites. Whilst *Zora spinimana* is common and found in a range of habitats from heath land to raised bog, *Kaestneria dorsalis* is less common, being somewhat local in distribution and not particularly associated with damp habitats.

The following spiders are particularly noteworthy as being uncommon or rare:-

Centromerus semiater [Linyphiidae] Nationally Vulnerable [RDB 2] Boat-house area.

Hypomma fulvum [Linyphiidae] Nationally Scarce [Notable A] North Marsh.

Sitticus caricis [Salticidae] Nationally Scarce [Notable B] Boat-house area.

Philodromus albidus [Thomisidae] Nationally Scarce [Notable B] North Marsh Carr and Woodland strip

Erigonella ignobilis [Linyphiidae] Very local distribution. Boat-house area.

Pirata tenuitarsis [Lycosidae] Local distribution. Boat-house area.

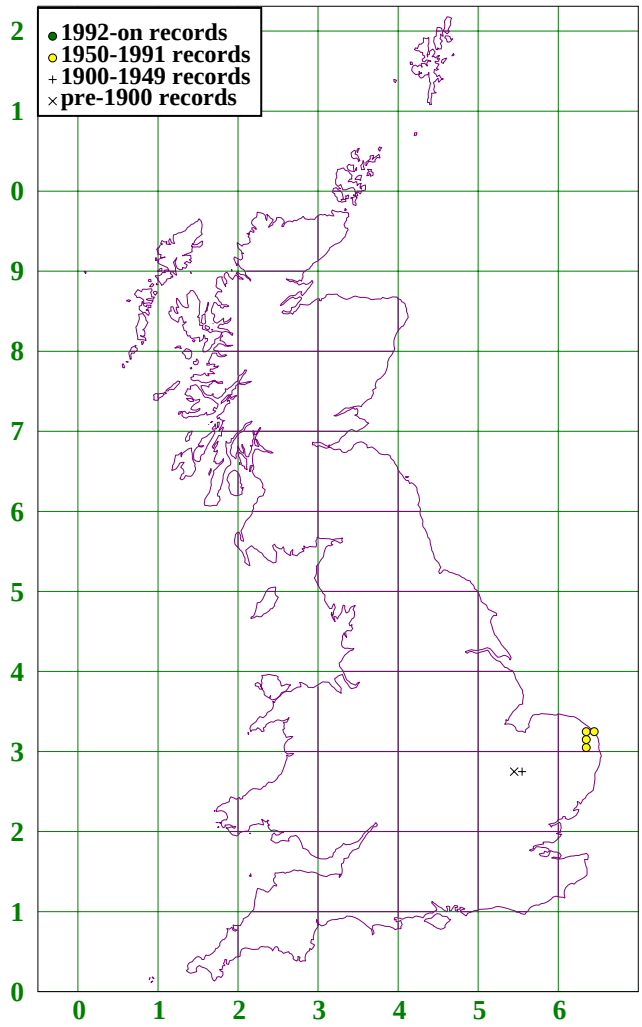
Trochosa spinipalpis [Lycosidae] Rare or local. North Marsh Carr.

Tetragnatha nigrita [Tetragnathidae] Generally uncommon and confined to southern counties. Boat-house area.

As can be seen from the distribution map below, *Centromerus semiater* is confined to the extreme eastern part of the country with only one other record since 1980 [Catfield Fen – 1989]. It is a species of wet habitats as is *Hypomma fulvum* which is most common in reed beds in eastern England. *Sitticus caricis*, whilst more widely scattered, is a spider of bogs, marshes and fens.

Comments
The principal threats to all these spiders is drainage of land and in particular, the abandonment of traditional management of sedge beds by summer mowing leading to encroachment of scrub and Carr woodland.

Little recording has been carried out on the southern part of the Estate and whilst the habitats are likely to be very similar to those chosen for study, some further recording in these areas would be worthwhile.



Records of *Centromerus semiater* submitted to the Spider Recording Scheme to the end of 2005.

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Spider Recording Scheme News November 2007, No. 59

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 60 will be published in March 2008. Please send contributions by the end of January at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Editorial

Unfortunately little or no progress has been made with a UK status review of spiders. We still need to finalise interpretation of the criteria and how this affects the status each species is given, to update existing species text as necessary and provide text for any new species included in the review. We await a lead from JNCC on input to this and progress to publication.

A session on using MapMate to record for the recording scheme was given at the AGM in June 2007. There are currently 282137 Araneae records in the MapMate database. Over the winter period I intend to import all the provisional atlas dataset (over 517,000 records in Access) into MapMate. Habitat and other site related data will need to be separately imported through Access after site codes have been created by MapMate. This will then mean however that all our data will be together in one database, much increasing the ease with which data can be extracted and analyses can be undertaken.

I am very grateful to Mike Towns for a huge number of detailed records with detailed site habitat and date information in Excel file format from a large number of sites in various parts of the country. I have also received over 100 new RA65 cards from Tom Thomas, mainly for Bedfordshire. These will make an enormously valuable addition to the records held by the recording scheme.

Information and guidance on the identification of difficult species is making slow progress, but will hopefully be completed over the coming winter months. Updated phase 2 guidelines to take account of MapMate are also planned to be completed over the winter.

Two encounters with spiders

by Howard Williams

I recently came across two spider species in an unexpected habitat location. The two occurrences were in different months and places, but the location was the same in each case.

On 12th July while on holiday in Oxfordshire, I came across my first *Drassodes lapidosus*. This species, common in southern England, is apparently rare in Nottinghamshire with just one record for the county (Lawrence Bee at Budby Heath, 1989). Although I did recognize it as a gnaphosid of some kind, I was unable to identify it until I took some specimens back home to inspect under the microscope.

Apart from unfamiliarity, there was a more interesting reason why I was in some doubt about the spiders, and that is their location. There must have been dozens of them (many or most with white egg sacs) in webs built high up at the juncture of the walls and roof of a wooden bird-hide at Farmoor Reservoir. Some also occurred lower down on the walls or under the window shelving, but most were higher than this. Now most literature states that the species is to be found under stones, on screes or even synanthropically under loose debris etc lying around in gardens. Peter Harvey finds it frequently on waste ground (pers. comm.). All these examples are presumably low down or at ground level in the open.

The hide itself (Shrike Meadow Hide) is situated in an area of mown grass quite close to the reservoir embankment. Further off down the slope on the other side is a hedge, a footpath and some low-lying wetland. The hide is in a sense quite isolated, so it would be interesting to know how this colony established itself there so successfully. One can only speculate, but perhaps the wood of the hide originally bore some egg sacs while stacked somewhere awaiting use. The doors and windows of the hide seem to be open for much of the time, so it is also possible that some ballooning youngsters found their way in through the apertures and found a niche there.

Despite the proximity of all these webs and silken cells to each other, the spiders themselves appear to get along well enough. Intermixed with them were many *Steatoda bipunctata* and at least one young female *Tegenaria gigantea/saeva* – occupants more to be expected there.

One of the two females I took back retained her egg sac. In a plastic film spool holder in her cage she built a cell for herself and the egg sac and never re-emerged. Nor would she take food. Ultimately she died standing over the egg sac. In the early days of August young spiders began to appear. After only a day or so, some had died or been killed by their siblings, so I decided to release the remainder against a sheltered wooden fence in my garden. It remains to be seen whether any manage to survive there in the nearby loose debris.

The second encounter also coincidentally involved a bird-hide, but this time in Titchmarsh NR in Northants on 18th August – a gravel pits reserve. In neither of these instances was I really equipped for spidering, having, on both occasions, gone along to do a spot of birdwatching, but this time I did have a lens.

This hide too was festooned with webs, mostly high up as in the previous hide, with many medium to large spiders standing in them and scores of egg sacs. A look through the lens at a long-legged male revealed a *Larinioides*, as did an inspection of a large female. The

striking markings and size made me think of *Larinioides sclopetarius*, but I have been caught out before on that score, as some *L. cornutus* can achieve sizes well in excess of the dimensions given in most texts.

A look through the microscope back home confirmed that these spiders were indeed the local to uncommon *L. sclopetarius*. I have seen these at Lound gravelpits in Notts on a metal, strutted bridge over the river Idle and on wooden post-and-rail fencing, just such places as are mentioned in the literature. It seemed odd to find so many congregated inside a small, dark, wooden hide; more looked-after than the previous one, for the door and windows are kept shut when the hide is not in use. Another interesting thing is that the webs in the crowded space were no longer the familiar orb webs, but rather resembled a mix of *Tegenaria* sheets and *Theridion* tangles, but were very extensive and light and often inextricably merging one with another.

Males, females and immatures were present in the webs, but the only other species I could find after an admittedly cursory look round was *Zygiella x-notata*, a common inhabitant of bird-hides everywhere, usually but not always in the windows.

Various contributors (including me) have written in to the Newsletter over the years describing encounters with spiders in unfamiliar places and it seems to me that we have here two other instances of how opportunistic spiders may be when they find themselves in unusual surroundings, and how they are capable of turning circumstances to their advantage.

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The 2008 re-surveys of the East Anglian Fens

by Richard Price

Introduction

This article follows on from the article on timed hand-collecting and repeating the 1969-1974 East Anglian Fenland Surveys (March 2007 SRS News 108:23-26) and further discusses why they are a good idea, and how they might be achieved.

Background

The original survey covered 53 fens in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire and aimed to discover how they differed in relation to geographical situation and land use history. When the data were analysed Duffey decided to reduce the fen total to 44. This was to ensure that all the fens included the same cover.

During the 1969-1974 surveys the fens were grouped into 3 major and 1 minor geographical region. Three geographical groups were defined, West Norfolk (named Breckland Edge Fens), the Norfolk Broads and the Suffolk Coastal Fens. The largest of the major groups was the 14 Breckland Edge fens situated in small drainage areas on the edge of the West Norfolk upland with the Breck soils to the East and Fenland basin to the West. In this document 8 sites are listed. All sites were surveyed in June, 2 were also surveyed in September. The 14 Breckland Edge fens are as follows from north to south: Sugar Fen, East Winch Common, East Walton Fen, Caldecote Fen, Borough Fen, Stoke Ferry Fen, Foulden Common Thomson Common, Cranberry Rough, East Wretham, Pashford Fen, Icklingham Poors Fen, Tuddenham Fen (all in Norfolk) and Chippenham Fen (Cambridgeshire).

The 1964-1974 survey was a large project, a history of land use over the last 200 years was commissioned for 9 of the Breckland Edge fens and Eric used copies of the first 1 inch OS maps (early to late 19th century) to assess changes in the others. More of the Breckland Edge fens had been affected by drainage and reclamation than elsewhere in East Anglia. It is these fens which need to be reassessed.

The survey technique consisted mostly of grubbing in the ground vegetation. This included taking spiders from surface vegetation and even tall herbs when they formed part of the area collected in. Surveyors paid particular attention to the litter layers using waterproof trousers or a stout waterproof sheet to kneel on.

Aims and outputs for 2008

The primary aim is to produce a second set of good quality scientific data for comparisons with 8 of the original sites surveyed in 1969-1974. Additionally, it is hoped that the data can be used by future surveys.

Re-surveying the fens will update our knowledge of their fauna and having historical comparable data is an opportunity that shouldn't be missed. We should seek to identify the best methods for standardising the surveying of spiders. This will lead to the BAS and others being able to examine sites and possibly even regions against each other and across years. Possibly data could be incorporated in monitoring schemes. This work could be used by scientists who are trying to standardise sampling processes (Webb *et al*., in press; Feest, 2006). The surveys will also provide an 'ideal opportunity to survey for *Dolomedes plantarius* and *Clubiona rosserae'* (Janet Beccaloni, pers. comm.) and attempt to re-find the rarer species from the 1969-1974 surveys.

The best possible result from the re-surveys will be for the sites to be protected and managed appropriately. Eric visited 7 sites in 2007, 5 from our target list and assessed them for their botanical value; he found it depressing. Those managed by Natural England are being neglected and are overgrown. However, those managed by the Norfolk wildlife trust are in good shape. Eric identified

three sites that would definitely benefit from more detailed study. These are; Thompson Common, Foulden Common, and East Walton Common, the last two are overgrown but could be restored (pers. comms.).

Survey Locations

The hope for 2008 would be to survey all sites listed below. However, this is dependent upon availability and the support of members. The sites can be listed in priority and those that are close to each other can be grouped. If the team size is 9 then we could visit all sites in 5 days, because 9 people each carrying out 1 hours collecting equals 9 hours. The survey locations are grouped to show sites that are near each other. The list gives site names and the total survey time spent for each site. A code is assigned to each site to represent it in table 1.

In the list below (*) indicates that the site was visited by Eric in 2007.

Sites that are south of the Thetford Forest

(*)Foulden (Fou) 26 hours in total
Thompson Common (Tho) 17 hours.
(*)Caldecote (Cal) 8 hours.

Sites that are North of Thetford Forest

(*)East Winch (EWin) 8 hours).
(*)East Walton Common (EWal) 16 hours.

Sites that are East of Thetford Forest

Pashford Poor's Fen (Pas) 8 hours.

Sites that are in South East Norfolk

(*)Stoke Ferry Fen (SFF) 8 hours.

Sites that are in North East Norfolk

East Ruston (ERus) 16 hours.

Any spare time means that we can search for *Dolomedes plantarius* and *Clubiona rosserae* or members can do their own thing.

How and when

Collecting will be in units of 1 hour. Each person will be responsible for bottling their hour's worth of specimens; all spiders will be collected. Only mature spiders will be used in the analysis but juvenile and immature spiders listed, this survey will involve no selection to avoid bias whereby inexperienced people find fewer species when concentrating on larger spiders (Scharff *et al*., 2003).

During the earlier surveys it was found that 90% of species were found in 9 hours of timed hand-collecting. A team size of 9 each carrying out an hour might achieve the same result. With this in mind if we get 4 participants then the hours spent in table 1 can be doubled.

Comparable data sets are more likely to be obtained by surveying the same areas and at the same dates as the original 1969-1974 surveys. Eric has marked out the areas surveyed and maps will be made available.

To create data sets that are comparable with those of the earlier survey it will be necessary to limit the collecting techniques to use the same techniques that were employed during the earlier survey. Therefore, we will be grubbing in the ground vegetation, taking spiders from surface vegetation and even tall herbs, and paying particular attention to the litter layers. Members can also use their own favoured survey techniques although this would not be counted as part of the comparable data sets used for statistical analysis. Techniques that members might use outside of the survey hours will aim to give each site as full coverage as possible and might involve sweeping, beating and vacuum sampling.

Most of the sites were surveyed over a week in mid June. The BAS weekend for 2008 is early in June. Therefore, I suggest the following survey dates:

5 days, arrive evening of:

Friday 16th May 2008 and depart after breakfast on the 22rd of May.

Or;

Friday 20th June, depart Friday 26th June after breakfast.
Alternatively, any one of the following long weekends for 2008 and 2009 or both during 2008.

Arrive evening of Friday 20th June to depart 4pm Monday 23rd of June.

Or;

Arrive evening of Friday 16th May to depart 4pm on Monday the 19th of May.

Table 1 – Possible Itinerary for 2008

	Fou	Tho	Cal	EWin	EWal	Pas	SFF	ERus
Sat	3 hrs							
Sun		2 hrs	1 hr					
Mon				1 hr	2 hrs			
Tue						1 hr	1 hr	
Wed								2 hrs

Statistical analysis

An example of a statistical comparison of a site: Caldecote Fen

Earlier this year I carried out timed hand-collecting to re-survey Caldecote Fen. Table 2 shows the species list compared against that from the 1974 survey. Table 3 shows the composition of the families and this is also shown in the chart. The differences in spider composition are probably due to a number of differences. The 2007 survey was carried out at the end of April 2007, Eric and his team surveyed it in June 1974. In 2007 the team comprised one person surveying for one hour and 45 minutes whereas Eric and his team of 8 surveyed for 8 hours. In 2007 the survey method was almost exclusively a sweep net, Eric and his team used grubbing. In 2007, the area surveyed was a wood; 35 years ago the wooded area had open fen areas. Even without these areas of bias comparisons using two species lists of spiders do not seem to be an easy thing to do. Therefore, the comparison here should be considered as a demonstration and discussion topic rather than something that yields meaningful results.

	1974	2007
Anyphaena accentuata (Walckenaer, 1802)	0	3
Baryphyma trifrons (O.P.-Cambridge, 1863)	1	0
Bathyphantes parvulus (Westring, 1851)	1	0
Centromerus dilutus (O.P.-Cambridge, 1875)	3	0
Ceratinella scabrosa (O.P.-Cambridge, 1871)	1	0
Cercidia prominens (Westring, 1851)	4	0
Clubiona lutescens Westring, 1851	1	0
Clubiona reclusa O.P.-Cambridge, 1863	1	0
Clubiona stagnatilis Kulczynski, 1897	1	0
Clubiona subtilis L.Koch, 1867	8	0
Crustulina guttata (Wider, 1834)	13	0
Crustulina sticta (O.P.-Cambridge, 1861)	10	0
Dictyna arundinacea (Linnaeus, 1758)	1	0
Dismodicus bifrons (Blackwall, 1841)	1	0
Episinus angulatus (Blackwall, 1836)	1	0
Ero cambridgei (Kulczynski, 1911)	7	0
Gonatium rubens (Blackwall, 1833)	1	0
Gongylidium rufipes (Linnaeus, 1758)	0	15
Hygrolycosa rubrofasciata (Ohlert, 1865)	10	0
Hypomma bituberculatum (Wider, 1834)	0	2
Kaestneria pullata (O.P.-Cambridge, 1863)	3	0
Lathys humilis (Blackwall, 1855)	0	1
Lepthyphantes cristatus (Menge, 1866)	0	1
Lepthyphantes ericaeus (Blackwall, 1853)	1	0
Lepthyphantes mengei Kulczynski, 1887	9	0
Lepthyphantes tenuis (Blackwall, 1852)	1	0
Linyphia hortensis Sundevall, 1830	0	3
Maso gallicus Simon, 1894	57	0
Maso sundevalli (Westring, 1851)	7	0
Meioneta saxatilis (Blackwall, 1844)	2	0
Metellina mengei (Blackwall, 1869)	0	9
Metellina segmentata (Clerck, 1757)	0	1
Micrargus herbigradus (Blackwall, 1854)	1	0
Minyriolus pusillus (Wider, 1834)	2	0
Monocephalus fuscipes (Blackwall, 1836)	2	0
Neon reticulatus (Blackwall, 1853)	18	0
Neottiura bimaculata (Linnaeus, 1767)	6	0
Neriene clathrata (Sundevall, 1830)	10	0
Neriene montana (Clerck, 1757)	1	1
Neriene peltata (Wider, 1834)	0	1
Ozyptila trux (Blackwall, 1846)	4	0
Paidiscura pallens (Blackwall, 1834)	0	1
Pardosa nigriceps (Thorell, 1856)	1	0
Pholcomma gibbum (Westring, 1851)	2	0
Pirata hygrophilus Thorell, 1872	15	1
Pocadicnemis pumila (Blackwall, 1841)	19	0
Saaristoa abnormis (Blackwall, 1841)	1	0
Silometopus reussi (Thorell, 1871)	0	2
Tetragnatha montana Simon, 1874	0	18
Theonoe minutissima (O.P.-Cambridge, 1879)	2	0
Theridion tinctum (Walckenaer, 1802)	0	1
Tibellus maritimus (Menge, 1875)	9	0
Tibellus oblongus (Walckenaer, 1802)	1	0
Walckenaeria acuminata Blackwall, 1833	3	0
Walckenaeria atrotibialis (O.P.-Cambridge, 1878)	1	0
Walckenaeria unicornis O.P.-Cambridge, 1861	1	0
Zelotes latreillei (Simon, 1878)	1	0
Zora spinimana (Sundevall, 1833)	10	0

Table 2 - Species list from Caldecote Fen 1974 shown against that from 2007

	Caldecote Fen 1974	Caldecote Fen 2007
Araneidae	1.57%	0.00%
Clubionidae	4.31%	0.00%
Dictynidae	0.39%	0.00%
Gnaphosidae	0.39%	0.00%
Linyphiidae	50.59%	43.86%
Lycosidae	10.20%	1.75%
Mimetidae	2.75%	0.00%
Philodromidae	3.92%	0.00%
Salticidae	7.06%	0.00%
Tetragnathidae	0.00%	49.12%
Theridiidae	13.33%	5.26%
Thomisidae	1.57%	0.00%
Zoridae	3.92%	0.00%

During the survey of Caldecote Fen, rare species found in 1974 were not re-found in 2007. These are: *Ceratinella scabrosa* (O.P.-Cambridge, 1871), *Crustulina sticta* (O.P.-Cambridge, 1861), *Hygrolycosa rubrofasciata* (Ohlert, 1865) and *Maso gallicus* Simon, 1894. This is possibly because of the smaller team size in 2007 and because most of the time was spent sweeping rather than searching in and on the vegetation as Eric's team had.

I attempted to compare the wetland species from each survey using a 2x2 contingency table for Chi Squared testing. However, this failed due to a shortage of data (wetland species) collected in 2007.

Species lists are not the best way of presenting data for statistical testing because there are not the replicates that suit many of the more rigorous statistical methods.

A comparison of the wetland fauna of the 1974 and 2007 data sets could be carried out in a similar manner to that outlined below. To do this first identify the species that tend to be found in wet or moist habitats and then process the data in a similar manner. The results could be used to indicate desiccation at a site.

The Spearman Rank test was used to test the hypothesis that there is a similarity between the sites. The result after removing double zeroes (where both species are 0) was $p = 0.670298$ where $n = 59$. This shows that the hypothesis is accepted and is highly significant at 1%. However, looking at the difference in spider composition a result using this method seems incorrect.

For statistical testing that involves two long species lists from one site or region a Chi-squared test is probably the best method. However, there is a problem when expected values are less than 5 as can happen when there are lots of zero counts.

For descriptive statistics family compositions can be examined using Excel charting against percentage as shown here. Diversity or similarity indices combined with Spearman rank may be the best way to proceed. In a 1969 paper Stratton and Uetz used the G-test method to compare a table of percentage similarity values against those containing Sorenson's similarity indices. This did seem to highlight the differences rather well. There may be more modern ways of doing this and I am willing to take advice.

Conclusion

In September a survey of Thompson Common was carried out by the author along with Peter Nicholson and Pip Collyer of the Norfolk Spider Recording Group. The results will be included in a future newsletter for comparison against the historic data. It was a useful exercise, though we did not stick to the correct protocol. This was my fault, I did not revise the methodology carried out for the original survey and update the protocol sheet appropriately. Therefore much of the data is likely to be non-comparable as we carried out sweeping, beating and vacuum sampling.

For the future a funded program can be put together to carry out surveys in both June and September 2008. The funding (optional for members to claim) would pay for the travel and accommodation costs of members. Perhaps it would also pay something towards their time if the budget would stretch to it. This would help to encourage support of members.

Acknowledgements

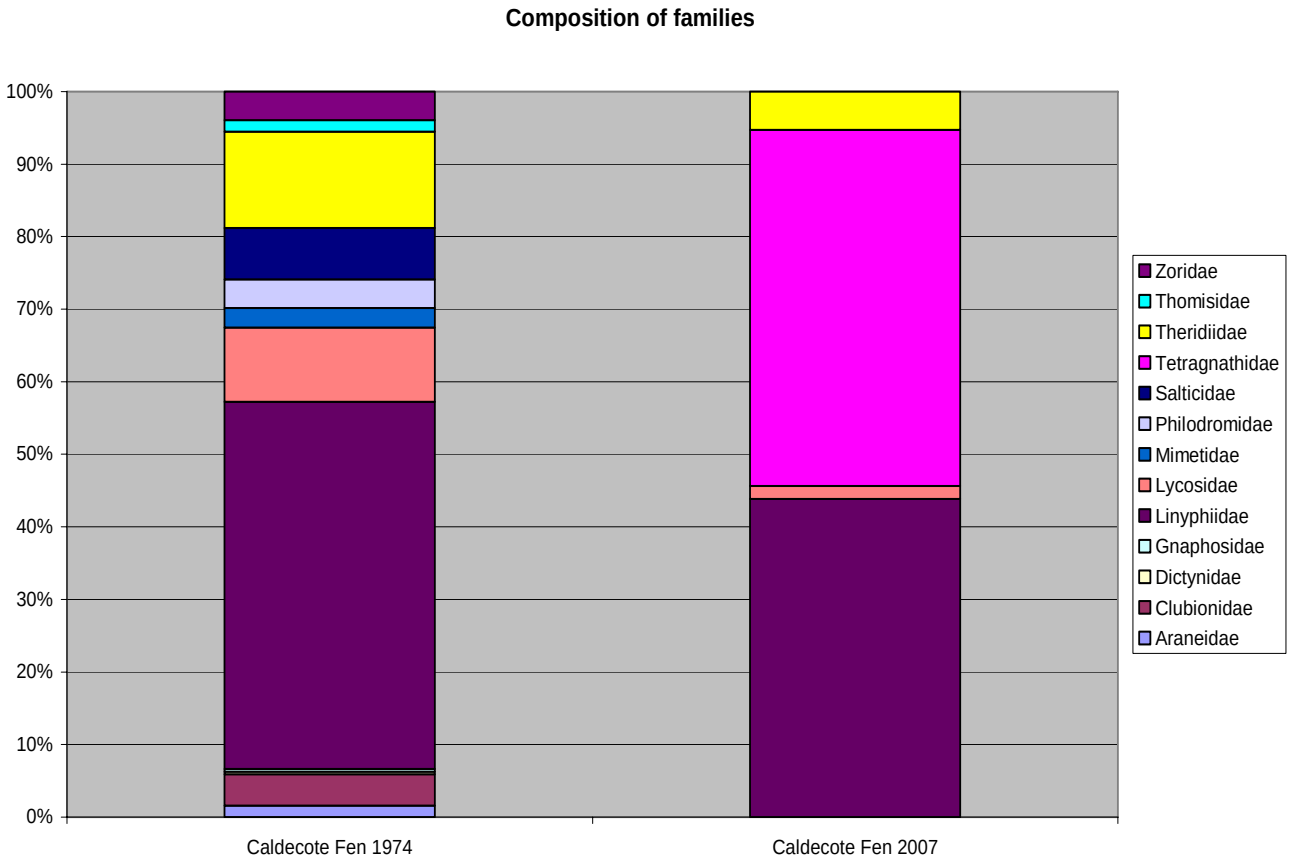
A particular thanks to Eric Duffey for his encouragement and the extensive information and help provided.

Thanks also to:

Mrs Janet Beccaloni, Curator of Arachnida and Myriapoda & mite research assistant, Natural History Museum .

Richard Burkmar (http://www.spacefornature.co.uk) and Mark Gardiner (http://www.gardenersown.co.uk) for advice on statistical methods.

Table 3 - Spider composition by family in 1974 and in 2007



Peter Nicholson and Pip Collyer of the BAS and Norfolk Spider Recording Group for taking part in the tiring but rewarding survey of Thompson Common and experimenting with timed hand-collecting. The ideas generated and experience will make a useful follow up article.

Appendix

Description of the habitat in 2007

The survey area had changed from a wooded area with open fen areas in 1974 to a wooded area in 2007 with no open areas. Trees were common, shrubs present but not common. The area was very shaded and the ground very damp with pools of water and wet leaf litter. From memory, I cannot remember what plants were present and will need to revisit the area next year and pay more attention to the vegetation type (grasses, sedges, reed, field layer plants etc.). Future surveys should always make a note of the vegetation.

Timed hand-collecting protocol sheet

1. Record the grid reference of your current location. If you have a GPS device record it along with the accuracy.
2. Ensure that you have sufficient tubes for an hour's collecting and a pen and paper for noting the time that you devote to different techniques within the searching, for example, half hour sweep netting to tall herbs.
3. Note the start time and collect all species for one hour. Do not check for maturity, if it is a spider than collect it. By sampling for hour long periods it will be possible to calculate how long is needed to collect until no new species are found. Grub in the ground vegetation, taking spiders from surface vegetation and even tall herbs, and pay particular attention to the litter layers.
4. After one hour in a location the team will move to a new location even if it is only a few metres away. Allow a minimum of 10 minute break between each hour.

Notes:
After obtaining each comparable data set from surveying a site we should allow time for casual surveying whereby the participants' can do their own thing. However, these data would not be used in comparisons.

The habitat where collections are carried out should be noted, in particular note: openness (i.e. whether trees and shrubs are common); type of vegetation (grasses, sedges, reed, fieldlayer plants etc.); is the ground, and especially the litter, wet, damp or dry.

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Metellina mengei – a spider of spring and early summer?

by Howard Williams

I wonder if the consistently warmer annual temperatures of the past decade or so are changing the old assumption that *Metellina mengei* is mature mostly in the months April-June, while *Metellina segmentata* is so mostly in the months July-November. There has always been overlap of course, but looking over the past 6 years I find that I have recorded *M. mengei* males and/or females on 3 occasions in September (the latest being several males and females on 15th September this year – 2007); on 2 occasions in July; and two very late (or very early) males on one occasion in January 2003.

The other records (11 occasions) did occur in the months April-June, so that the likelihood of an early-year *Metellina* being *M. mengei* still holds true. It might nevertheless be worth examining more closely some later-season *M. segmentata* – they may prove to be *M. mengei* after all.

On the other hand, all my records of mature *M. segmentata* males and/or females have occurred in the classic months of July-November. An exception, oddly enough, was a male and female found at the same site and January date as the two *M. mengei* males mentioned above. These, perhaps, were very late rather than very early.

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Spider Recording Scheme News
March 2008, No. 60

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My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 61 will be published in July 2008. Please send contributions by the end of May at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Editorial

A UK status review of spiders has now progressed to a draft stage, and hopefully will be published before the end of the year. Information and guidance on the identification of difficult species is still making slow progress.

I am very grateful to John Partridge and John Stanney for computerising a large number of new RA65 cards; the resultant data have now been added to our dataset.

Together with other records received, we now have an ever increasingly valuable dataset comprising not only distributional data but also a great deal of detailed ecological information.

If you have data, especially computerised data, which you have not yet submitted to the recording scheme please make a special effort to do so. If your data are not submitted then they cannot be used to help in the UKBAP review, national status review or other work undertaken by the Society on your behalf. If you don't yet use MapMate for your spider records, please seriously consider changing to this to aid exchange of data. As a MapMate user registered with the BAS MapMate group, not only is your software support cost supported entirely by the BAS, but you can regularly submit your records very easily indeed.

Wildlife Surveys in National Trust Gardens

by Matthew Oates

The National Trust needs to learn more about the wildlife occurring in its 130 formal gardens, attached to historic mansions. Recent surveys of a small sample of gardens discovered four species of invertebrate new to Britain: a Mediterranean whorl snail, a bug on mistletoe, an obscure leaf litter fly and a paper wasp. Also, grassland fungi surveys identified several National Trust lawns as being of national importance, particularly for wax cap fungi. It is likely that many Trust gardens are of importance for rare or declining species, perhaps especially invertebrates (e.g. mining bees and dragonflies). Clearly, it is the resident and regularly visiting species that count, rather than odd vagrants.

Obviously, these places are gardens, rather than nature reserves, but the Trust will do whatever it can to encourage wildlife in its gardens, especially rare species, so long as this does not unduly compromise garden management.

The Trust wishes to hear from naturalists visiting its gardens, particularly specialists in the less widely recorded wildlife groups. Entrance to gardens is free to members. Some care will need to be taken over recording methods, such as using nets publicly and entering garden ponds: do please contact the Trust property in advance should your recording techniques necessitate such disturbance (see NT web site or Members Handbook). Many properties will welcome detailed surveys by specialists and can enable free entrance, including on days when gardens are not open to the public.

Full details of existing survey knowledge, garden by garden, and information for surveyors are on the Trust web site. See www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wildlifeingardens Records of interest are welcome via a special email address: gardenswildlifesurvey@nationaltrust.org.uk

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A second record of *Steatoda triangulosa* for Leicestershire

by Jon Daws

A female specimen of *Steatoda triangulosa* was found at the ADC1 (formally SAC1) Asda warehouse, Lutterworth, south Leicestershire (SP508844); on the 17/04/2007. It was discovered in its web in a stack of blue Chepstow pallets, within the warehouse. These pallets come and go from the warehouse in their thousands every day; either as singletons with product on them or in stacks of ten to exchange for pallets delivered. At least once a day a lorry takes away a load (360) of excess pallets back to the Chepstow company which own the pallets and leases them out to distribution companies. Some of these pallets travel vast distances even within the Asda network with the ADC1 depot supplying other depots and stores in Scotland and Northern Ireland on a daily basis.

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Go beat a Spruce tree!

by Jon Daws

Although these non-native evergreens may not have done you any harm, they may be holding a county record for many of the counties in southern Britain! In Leicestershire three of the four records of *Pityohyantes phrygianus* have come from this species of tree, the fourth record was from Yew trees. These records are:

26/06/1994	Pickworth Great Wood	SK985148	1 female
03/05/1997	Evington Park, Leicester	SK624036	1 male
16/06/2003	Coleorton Churchyard	SK391172	3 females
19/05/2007	Launde Big Wood	SK787037	1 female

Two of the three records from beating spruce were from trees planted within ancient woodland. The third came from a shelter belt of trees planted along the edge of a public city park within Leicester. The churchyard record of three female specimens came from beating mature yew trees. This churchyard lies adjacent to an estate that has had a lot of tree planting activity over the last few decades.

Although *P. phrygianus* has not been particularly sought within the county. I have taken the opportunity when presented to beat spruce trees in a bid to find this species. At Launde Big Wood I only had to beat a single tree to find this species! So next late spring/early summer go and beat some Spruce trees!

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Is *Hybocoptus decollatus* common in southern England?

by A. Russell-Smith

Hybocoptus decollatus (Simon, 1881) is currently listed as Notable B and has been recorded from some 20 sites in Britain, almost all of which lie south of a line between the Thames and the Severn Eastury.

At the BAS Council meeting in spring 2007, Rowley Snazell mentioned that, while collecting in early April in his garden at Swanage in Dorset, he beat *H. decollatus* from ornamental conifers in some numbers. He suggested that it might have been widely overlooked as it matures relatively early in the year.

Having discussed these findings, I decided to investigate the presence of *H. decollatus* in various locations in East Kent. I collected principally from yew and mainly in country churchyards over two days on the 16th and 19th April. The churchyards were located across East Kent, from Milstead near Sittingbourne in the north to Postling near Hythe in the South. I visited nine churchyards in five 10 km squares and two woodland sites on chalk where yews occur. In this short survey, *H. decollatus* was collected by beating yew trees in eight out of nine churchyards, in several cases in large numbers. The largest numbers were taken at Waltham Church (TR113485) where 60 specimens were collected in the space of 15 minutes. Only on very shaded yews at Lower Hardres Church (TR151332) was this species completely absent. Likewise, in the two woodland sites, no *H. decollatus* were taken where the yews were in full or partial shade. A single female was beaten from a box tree in Doddington Church (TQ940576) but no attempt was otherwise made to investigate its presence on other trees or shrubs.

Previous to this, *H. decollatus* had been recorded from only one site in Kent. This was on yews around an old chalk quarry at Hollingbourne (TQ 848558) where again it occurred in considerable numbers in May 2001 and 2002. This brief survey thus increased the number of sites it is known from in Kent almost 10-fold and the number of 10km squares 5-fold. It seems likely that this small species may well have been widely overlooked in southern England, perhaps because not many people collect by beating trees this early in the year. It would be well worthwhile for BAS members to investigate yews and other fine-leaved species in April to establish whether indeed this species is actually more common in the southern counties than is currently realised.

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Shedding some northern light on *Larinioides sclopetarius*

by Mike Davidson

During October, while with my partner on a reunion of her university marine biology class, we went for a very enjoyable group walk along the River Tweed from the Scottish border town of Kelso. Having enjoyed the good company, fresh air, fine views and glimpses of kingfishers, we returned to the town near the ruined Abbey.

While inspecting the local architecture, as you do, I noticed a lamp-post festooned with conjoined orb-webs and a number of spiders "hanging-out" in the webs. Undeterred by the shouts of; "you can't do that!" and "the bobbies are coming!" I shinned up said lamp-post to retrieve a male specimen for later identification – surprisingly the marine biologists seemed rather hesitant when it came to getting up close to an invertebrate that wasn't in a tank of sea water or already pickled!

When I eventually I got round to putting it under the microscope, shortly after reading Howard Williams' article in the November 2007 newsletter (no. 59), I realised it was a species I had not seen before: *Larinioides sclopetarius*. Looking at the SRS atlas, this would appear to be a new record for Roxburghshire (VC80) and only the 4th Scottish record.

According to the species profile in the Provisional Atlas (Harvey *et al*., 2002), its natural habitat appears to be tree trunks adjacent to water, but is usually found on fences and bridges. I imagine that the colony of spiders viewed the cast-iron lamp-post very much as a surrogate tree, possibly accessing the hollow inside through various holes and enjoying the additional prey attracted to their community partnership web by the light. Being near the river, presumably there was abundant prey to support this high density living.

Thinking about Howard's bird-hide full of *L. sclopetarius* and their egg sacs I wondered whether the spiders weren't just seeing the hide as a giant hollow tree – providing a sheltered and warm environment for raising their young – with their normal prey catching orb-webs on the outside. Perhaps if I had been able to view the lamp-post endoscopically, I might have found a similar tangle of webs with egg sacs.

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Pholcus phalangioides in N.E. Scotland

by Mike Davidson

16th January 2008 brought my first spider record of the year. A male *Pholcus phalangioides* was discovered in the ladies "powder room" in the laboratories of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). As far as I know this is the first record of this species in Aberdeen – a surprising fact given the human migration caused by the oil industry. Perhaps a visit to one of the local removal firms' warehouses would be in order. It will be interesting to see what the recent influx of Eastern Europeans brings to Aberdeen, in addition to improved dental services.

The record from the SEPA building is almost certainly linked to the arrival of a large number of packing crates from Livingston, west of Edinburgh. It will be interesting to see if any other specimens turn up and whether *Pholcus* becomes established in the building.

During 2007, *Pholcus* was recorded in a cottage at Migvie near Tarland (NJ434067) and some years ago a thriving colony was recorded in the warden's house at Dinnet National Nature Reserve (NO448999) – lovingly tended by his wife through a minimal dusting management strategy. The NBN also lists an imprecise record for Speyside (NH80) from Scottish Natural Heritage. However, one record which seems to have been missed is on Roland Richter's list for Moray (Richter, 1953), from Gordonstoun House (Gordonstoun School) near Elgin in Moray (NJ1868), where Mr Richter was a teacher.

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Nigma puella (Simon) (Dictynidae) in Surrey

by Dr Jonty Denton

I found three female *N. puella* on sallow bushes at the margins of a damp grassy glade on Brentmoor Heath (SU9461), 11.vii.2007. Just a few days before on the 8.vii., I found a female on a hazel bush at Zions Copse South Hampshire, Vc11 (SU4220). Its association with counties with a coast was so clear (Harvey *et al.*, 2002) that I had not included it on my provisional near miss species to look out for in Surrey!

***Nigma puella* female**
photograph © Jonty Denton

Reference

Harvey, P.R., Nellist, D.R. & Telfer, M.G. (eds) 2002. *Provisional Atlas of British Spiders (Arachnida, Araneae) Volumes 1 & 2*. Huntingdon: BRC.

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More on *Metellina*

by Phil Taylor

On 15th September 2007 I was observing a large female *Metellina segmentata* on her web at my local Harefield Place nature reserve (this species is very common hereabouts during late summer and early autumn). The female in question was sitting under a leaf at the edge of the web when a tiny, white caterpillar dropped onto the web from above. The spider rushed out and examined the prey item, but made no attempt to bite or wrap it. As I watched, a previously un-noticed male spider appeared from another corner of the web. The male approached the female, who backed off, away from the prey item, allowing her suitor to quickly wrap the catch.

After the caterpillar had been secured, both spiders began circling each other. Several brief bouts of 'sparring' and 'jousting' then took place before the female violently grabbed her mate. Such was the ferocity of her embrace that I feared the male had met his end; but, after being locked together for well over a minute, the spiders separated.

The female then again stood guard over the prey item, whilst the male, to my surprise, then proceeded to make a circuit of the web and repaired several damaged areas! His chores completed, the male then retreated back under a leaf at the edge of the web, whilst the female continued her vigil with the food item, but still made no attempt to consume it. I then left, but re-visited the web some twenty minutes later and found the situation had not changed.

My limited collection of spider books all state that male *Metellina* spiders will not attempt to mate until the female's jaws are busy feeding on prey. On this occasion the male acted accordingly, but the female showed no interest in eating. Is the post-mating behaviour of this particular male often observed?

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Out with the Old and in with the New – *Tegenaria silvestris* in Aberdeen

by Mike Davidson

On 20th September 2007 I arrived at work to find a spider in a tube on my desk – a not unusual occurrence. A colleague had moved some equipment in one of our laboratories and had been just quick enough to catch a fast-moving spider. It was obviously a *Tegenaria* – but not a species I had seen before – our building, which is due for demolition in 2009 has previously yielded up living and dead specimens of *T. gigantea*, *T. saeva* and *T. atrica*.

The large palp of this species seemed fairly distinctive – even in life – and with reference to Roberts (1985, 1995) and the illustrations on the *Spinnen Mitteleuropas* web site (Nentwig *et al*., 2003) I was fairly confident that it was *T. silvestris*.

I had also looked up the provisional atlas (Harvey *et al*., 2002) and found, to my disappointment, that apparently this was not a new record for the area, but that it had been discovered in Aberdeen by Prof. J.W.H. Trail of Aberdeen University in 1872. The only other Scottish records for this species were also attributed to Trail in Perthshire (Dunkeld) and Angus (Lintrathen) in the same year.

I was interested to find out where exactly Trail had found this species in Aberdeen and consulted his publications on Scottish spiders (Trail, 1873; 1878) but found no reference to *T. silvestris*. It quickly became obvious that all the Scottish records related to what Trail called *T. sylvicola* - what we now know as *Cryphoeca silvicola*. So all Trail's Scottish records for *T. silvestris* appear to result from a taxonomic translation error – which probably also applies to at least some of the older English records - which would be worth checking.

According to the Atlas, *T. silvestris* is a species found in damp situations in woodland, in caves, under bark, logs and stones and sometimes on scrubby waste ground and along railway lines. Apparently it occasionally enters houses. So why was it in a laboratory building in Aberdeen? I suppose there are two plausible possibilities, as it is unlikely to be resident. It may have been brought in with some equipment, used on a landfill site near Fraserburgh the day before the spider was found. Alternatively, it may have arrived with a delivery of laboratory supplies from within its normal range. We may never know how it got here, but it is an interesting new Scottish Record.

Thanks to Peter Harvey for taking the time to verify this ID for me and for providing details of the historical records from the B.A.S. database.

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A rare observation of *Micrommata virescens* mating in Gloucestershire

by David Haigh

Micrommata virescens is the only British representative of the mainly tropical family of spiders, the Sparassidae (Heteropodidae). Spiders of this family are hunters with excellent eyesight and very rapid in their movements. If a British spider could be said to be spectacular then this species is that spider. The female is up to 15mm, bright green with its central abdominal mark outlined in yellow. The male is smaller, around 10mm, with a green carapace and an abdomen with a central red stripe edged with broad yellow bands.

M. virescens is nationally very local, though in Gloucestershire there are 12 sites from which records exist. Woodland on the Cotswolds and Forest of Dean provide records and favoured habitats are woodland clearings or along woodland rides, especially where sapling trees are colonising.

On two occasions Roger Gaunt, County Moth Recorder has found *M. virescens* in his moth trap at East Wood, Forest of Dean. Undoubtedly the spiders were preying on moths and other insects attracted to the light. To find *M. virescens* is always exciting but this year in May Roger photographed a mating pair. This is so rarely seen and Roger did not feel he did the pair photographic justice. However the male is well defined and uppermost with the female's abdomen below.

***Micrommata virescens* mating photograph © Roger Gaunt**

The following description of mating was summarised from W.S. Bristowe's account in *The World of Spiders* (New Naturalist series). There is no preliminary courtship, the male simply jumping on to the much larger female and seizing her abdomen or a leg with his chelicerae (jaws). The female makes no resistance while he climbs on to her back and leans over, allowing him to insert one of his palps. Mating may last 6 or 7 hours with each palp being inserted only once. At the end he retires rapidly. The males have a very short season, March-June, soon dying off after mating. The mated female constructs a silk lined nursery close to the ground, less than 0.5m, by fastening 3 or 4 oak leaves together and guarding her package of green eggs. During this time she does not feed and becomes emaciated.

Of the 15 county records since 1930 only 3 have been of the adult male and Roger's record is the first to be photographed. He was fortunate that the male was uppermost and more or less stationary. I have personal experience of the male when in 1989 at Pinchley Wood I noticed one on my trouser leg and before I could get a better look it had run up my jacket front, over my left shoulder and away never to be seen again.

Since *M. virescens* is well camouflaged, visually aware and fast, it is probably under-recorded in the county. I would greatly appreciate further records of this species.

I thank Roger Gaunt for his records and should other moth enthusiasts find spiders in their traps I would welcome records or specimens.

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Araneus alsine in Lincolnshire

by Annette Binding

In late 2007 Colin Smith (Lincolnshire County Moth Recorder) gave me a number of spiders, some of which had been caught at mercury vapour light. Among those caught at light was a male *Araneus alsine* which was caught on the 13 September in a damp clearing near the banks of the River Rase in Willingham Forest TF131893.

This is only the second time this species has been recorded in Lincolnshire. It was last recorded in June 1919 at Stainton Wood near Langworth by L.A. Carr when a male and female were found ‘low in ditches’. I contacted Peter Harvey about the current national distribution of this spider and he informed me that it had very few recent records.

Peter also told me that the habitat seemed right for the species. There are many such damp clearings in Lincolnshire Woods including the Lincolnshire Limewoods, and more clearings are being created by ongoing coppicing work within the woods, so it is possible that the species might be more widespread in the county.

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Neon reticulatus - an occasional mountaineer?

by Dave Holloway and Dave Blackledge

On 17th September 2007, DH spent a short time looking under stones near the summit of Grisedale Pike near Keswick in Cumbria. A very dark adult female salticid spider was found in a silk cell on the underside of a flat piece of slate and brought home for identification. Single sub-adult individuals were found in the same vicinity in similar circumstances on 9th September and 22nd September and left in situ. Several other visits to the

summit during the summer months and since these dates have not produced other comparable findings. All the searches have been very brief during fellrunning visits and were not specifically spider field trips.

It was expected that the spider would turn out to be *Neon robustus* which has been recorded in Cumbria (Blackledge and Newton, 2002) from rocky fellside situations since the species was first discovered in Britain in 1997 (Snazell *et al*., 1999). Examination with a lens clarified that it was a member of the genus *Neon*.

The spider was passed to DB for identification to species level. Dave suggested that it was *Neon reticulatus* and identification was subsequently confirmed by Ian Dawson. This record seems to be of interest because of the dark coloration and the montane habitat.

A line shows the exact location where the *Neon* adult was found. In this shot the larger middle one of the 3 small snow patches at the top is the area where subadult *Neon* were found on 9th and 22nd Sept 2007. To give an idea of scale the path at the top right is 1-2 metres wide © David Holloway

Montane habitat

In Britain, the Provisional Atlas (Harvey *et al*. 2002) tells us that *Neon reticulatus* is usually taken from leaf litter in woodland and from moss in open boggy areas. It has also been recorded in bracken litter, stones in grassland and on beaches. In terms of altitude, the atlas mentions records to 350m in mid-west Yorkshire.

Grisedale Pike occurs in the part of the Lake District where Skiddaw Slates are the underlying rock. Its top is a narrow lofty windswept promenade which is the meeting point of various ridges and its height is given as 790m. The summit region where the spider was found is a mixture of very short vegetation and scattered stony areas. The stony areas comprise numerous flattish slates of various sizes, the majority being no bigger than an open hand. It was in one of these stony patches that the *Neon* was found.

A view from ridge (below Sleet How on OS map) looking approx WSW © David Holloway

Dark coloration

One of the initial reasons for suspecting *robustus* was because of the very dark colours on this spider. Adult females of *robustus* are generally thought to be darker than those of *reticulatus* (Snazell *et al*., 1999). When Ian Dawson confirmed the identification as *reticulatus* he commented

> *"While the epigyne and carapace measurements pointed to this species I checked it directly against three specimens of* Neon robustus *to be absolutely certain as the rather dark colouration as well as the habitat looked better for the latter. Indeed my three (reference specimens of) female* robustus *are all paler than this, but they are all noticeably larger, especially the carapace, and the epigyne is very obviously distinct. The central septum is much thinner in* robustus *and the internal structures that are visible are also different."*

It is interesting that this exceptionally dark specimen was found at such an extreme altitude. Perhaps the two could be linked, in that selection for darker individuals occurs in this stony montane habitat - indeed the usual inhabitant of these patches, *robustus*, is generally darker than the largely lowland *reticulatus*.

Peter Harvey kindly supplied some additional information from the existing SRS database. There are only 2 records which are higher; one from Ben Hope (927m) in July 1967 and one from Coniston Old Man (800m) in May 1982. The next highest is from Bannau Sir Gar (671m) in August 1991 and nothing else until one drops a further 150m. The dates of these records are significant as they pre-date the discovery of *N. robustus* in Britain and there remains the possibility that some of them are in fact that species and not *N. reticulatus*. Snazell *et al*. (1999) report that in Sweden *N. robustus* and *N. reticulatus* are rarely found in the same biotopes. However, it seems that in Britain there remains much to be discovered about their respective ecological niches. Peter relates that during an AGM field trip in 2006 to the Malham area, he collected *Neon* from limestone pavement expecting it to be *N. robustus* - but it was *reticulatus*, whilst Rowley Snazell collected *robustus* from nearby Malham Tarn Cliffs.

It seems that there are a few possible explanations for finding *N. reticulatus* in this unexpected location on Grisedale Pike:

1. Opportunism. There are many examples (e.g. Williams, 2007) of spiders turning up in unusual places and surviving for a period of time. It may be that *N. reticulatus* ended up here accidentally and was able to take temporary advantage of the locality.
2. Edge of range. Perhaps a montane environment represents the limits to the range of *N. reticulatus* but this range is an altitudinal rather than a latitudinal one. Russell-Smith (2007) gives other examples of spiders on the edge of their known limits utilising habitats that are not typical over the majority of that range.
3. Typical habitat but under-recorded. Mountain summits are a relatively under-recorded habitat because of the difficulties of collecting in less accessible places and the lower density of recorders in the more upland parts of Britain. As more records accumulate it might reveal that *N. reticulatus* occurs routinely at such altitudes in montane environments; these places will then become considered to be part of its usual habitat.
4. Stones in grassland. Perhaps this record should be seen as just a further example (albeit a high one) of occurrence in a habitat that it is already occasionally known from. The use of the label "montane" is ours. To the spider, it may be just another place with suitable short vegetation and stones.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Ian Dawson for confirming the identification of the specimen, and Peter Harvey for further information relating to *Neon* in Britain.

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Priority Species for Biodiversity Action Plans - an Update

Peter Harvey & Tony Russell-Smith

We last wrote on this topic in Newsletter 103 for July 2005. Since then, the original proposed list of 50 species has been subjected to intensive scrutiny to ensure that all of them fully comply with all the criteria listed in that article. As a result, the list has now been reduced to a total of 31 species (see Table 1). This list was submitted to ministers earlier this year and has recently been approved.

This means that the government have committed to the conservation of these species, although no formal targets have, as yet, been set, something that will probably occur during the production of individual action plans for each species and/or habitat.

Production of BAP documents is the next step in the process. At present, the species are being arranged into what is hoped will be logical groupings for the purpose of delivery of action plans. Such groupings could be based, for example, on shared habitat requirements, shared geographical distribution or shared threats to the species concerned. At some stage, hopefully in the near future, the Society will be consulted on the groupings to ensure that they make sense in terms of what is already known about the species. However, it has also been agreed that species will need an individual written Biodiversity Action Plan because there are specific requirements that cannot be properly accounted for if they were included in a group plan. This will be the next important step in the BAP process in which the Society will be involved, very likely in collaboration with BugLife.

To date, the input from the BAS to the BAP process has been through a very small *ad hoc* committee of five members. Production of BAP documents would be well beyond the capacity of this group and we hope that there will be much wider participation by membership in both this stage of the process and in subsequent delivery of the action plans (see article by Jan Beccaloni). We envisage that production of the draft BAP documents would involve a group of perhaps 10-15 members but that there would be wide consultation with membership so that these drafts can be modified in the light of their knowledge and experience. Clearly, the BAS web-site could play an important role in this, being used to post draft plans as well as a way of allowing membership to comment on them.

Looking through the list of species, it is evident that for most, not surprisingly, there has been no real attempt at systematic recording. The distribution maps in the Provisional Atlas and the 2005 updates on the BAS website are therefore influenced by recorder distribution and activity and may not be an accurate reflection of actual distribution. Among the actions that will certainly be included in many of the BAPs will be further recording to establish more comprehensive and up to date knowledge on the distribution of the species, a role that BAS members can obviously take an active part in. There

will also be a requirement for field monitoring at least some of the species to establish trends in populations. This is likely to prove particularly challenging for the smaller species since, contrary to some reports, many cannot currently be reliably identified in the field. Developing techniques for non-destructive monitoring of populations of such species will be a challenge requiring considerable lateral thought and experimentation.

However, there is one type of activity that is much more important in developing species conservation strategies but which has not figured sufficiently in the invertebrate BAPs to date. This is developing an understanding of the autecology of each species – how that species interacts with its environment and other species within it. An excellent example drawn from another group is the work that Butterfly Conservation has done on conservation of the large blue butterfly (*Maculinea arion*). It was the work carried out by the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology in the 1980's that demonstrated the reliance of the larvae of the butterfly on a species of ant that allowed suitable management of the chalk grassland habitat for re-introduction of the species to this country. There is no reason to suppose that the life cycles and requirements of many spiders are any less complex than those of butterflies and other insects, and understanding them will be crucial to conservation efforts. The Society is making every effort to ensure that adequate ecological studies are included in each BAP statement.

Family	Species	Author & date	Listing criteria	Existing BAP
Clubionidae	*Clubiona rosserae*	Locket, 1953	3,4	Yes
Dictynidae	*Altella lucida*	(Simon, 1874)	4	
Dictynidae	*Dictyna pusilla*	Thorell, 1856	3	
Eresidae	*Eresus sandaliatus*	(Martini & Goeze, 1778)	4	Yes
Gnaphosidae	*Haplodrassus dalmatensis*	(L. Koch, 1866)	3	
Linyphiidae	*Baryphyma duffeyi*	(Millidge, 1954)	3,4	
Linyphiidae	*Centromerus serratus*	(O.P.-Cambridge, 1875)	3	
Linyphiidae	*Erigone welchi*	Jackson, 1911	3	
Linyphiidae	*Glyphesis cottonae*	(La Touche, 1945)	3	
Linyphiidae	*Mecopisthes peusi*	Wunderlich, 1972	3	
Linyphiidae	*Meioneta mollis*	(O.P.-Cambridge, 1871)	3	
Linyphiidae	*Midia midas*	(Simon, 1884)	3	
Linyphiidae	*Monocephalus castaneipes*	(Simon, 1884)	3	
Linyphiidae	*Nothophantes horridus*	Merrett & Stevens, 1995	4	
Linyphiidae	*Notioscopus sarcinatus*	(O.P.-Cambridge, 1872)	3	
Linyphiidae	*Saaristoa firma*	(O.P.-Cambridge, 1905)	3	
Linyphiidae	*Semljicola caliginosus*	(Falconer, 1910)	1,2,3	
Linyphiidae	*Silometopus incurvatus*	(O.P.-Cambridge, 1873)	3	
Linyphiidae	*Tapinocyba mitis*	(O.P.-Cambridge, 1882)	1,2,3	
Linyphiidae	*Walckenaeria corniculans*	(O.P.-Cambridge, 1875)	3	
Liocranidae	*Agroeca cuprea*	Menge, 1873	3	
Lycosidae	*Alopecosa fabrilis*	(Clerck, 1757)	4	
Lycosidae	*Arctosa fulvolineata*	(Lucas, 1846)	4	
Philodromidae	*Philodromus fallax*	Sundevall, 1833	3	
Philodromidae	*Philodromus margaritatus*	(Clerck, 1757)	3	
Pisauridae	*Dolomedes plantarius*	(Clerck, 1757)	4	Yes
Salticidae	*Pseudeuophrys obsoleta*	(Simon, 1868)	4	Omitted in error?
Salticidae	*Sitticus caricis*	(Westring, 1861)	3	
Salticidae	*Sitticus distinguendus*	(Simon, 1868)	2,3	
Theridiidae	*Dipoena inornata*	(O.P.-Cambridge, 1861)	3	
Thomisidae	*Ozyptila nigrita*	(Thorell, 1875)	3	

Table 1. List of spider species approved for Biodiversity Action Plans, 2007

Selection criteria summary

1: International threat
2: International responsibility + decline in the UK
3: Marked decline in the UK
4: Other important factor(s). Even if a species does not qualify under Criteria 1, 2 or 3 there may still be a case for listing it as priority. However, evidence of extreme threat is required.

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Spider Recording Scheme News
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Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 62 will be published in November 2008. Please send contributions by the end of September at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Editorial

As reported in the March issue we hope that the UK status review of spiders will be published before the end of the year. You have an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft statuses given in the article in this issue.

Information and guidance on the identification of difficult species is still making slow progress and we will start by making these available through the BAS website. We are very grateful indeed to Dr Geoff Oxford for completing the identification guide to *Tegenaria gigantea* and *T. saeva.*

New species continue to be discovered, with Simon Warmingham finding *Theridion hannoniae* in South Wales during 2007 (see article in this issue) and a new *Diplocephalus* being found recently near Deal (more in a later issue). There is always plenty to provide interest!

Many thanks go to Mike Davidson for the large number of atlas records he has provided, updated to include male/female information. I would urge all active recorders to regularly provide their records to the recording scheme, since without these data we cannot continue to improve our knowledge on the distribution and autecology of species and on changes in distribution and status of species.

Finding elusive grid reference points

by Stan Dobson

If you are involved with data recording, from time to time, casual records may be made or sent to you where the exact grid reference is not known and the relevant map or GPS data may not be available or inadequate. Alternatively, someone may give you a record from an address without knowing the grid reference, but knowing the post code. These can be problems, but, if internet access is available and particularly if the place is in England, there is a simple way of resolving them.

If you have not already done so, download the latest version of Google Earth (see 'Setting up' below); this is a very impressive program which gives a fairly detailed view of all the country. At the time of writing, this is version 4.2, but earlier versions may behave similarly. (Sadly, the detailed views only appear to cover mainland England, and the immediate adjoining areas of Wales and Scotland; hopefully this will be rectified in later versions). Type in the name of the required location such as a village or landmark, or a postcode, and the picture will zoom in to give a large aerial view of the relevant area. Zoom in further and move the map until you are above the point of interest. Keep moving in until you can identify the exact location, which will be accurate to a few metres or less, then set the pointer immediately over the spot. At the bottom of the screen, you will see the coordinates of the point in terms of latitude and longitude. Make a note of these (I find that working with decimal latitude and longitude is easier).

Unfortunately, Google Earth doesn't recognise grid references (although it recognises British post codes), so it is necessary to do a conversion and a very convenient website for this is given below. This has five parameters: Post Code, OS Grid, Landranger Grid, Lat/Long and MGrid. Post Code and Lat/Long are obvious; OS Grid is the grid reference expressed as digital eastings and northings, each to six digits; Landranger Grid is the grid reference expressed as two letters followed by six digits (the format we are most familiar with); and I am not sure about MGrid (but I think it is something to do with references on a magnetic grid). To use it, click on the Lat/Long button, enter the latitude and longitude, click on 'Convert', and all the other values will be displayed. If you are working in Landranger format and want a grid reference to more than six digits, the extra digits can be read from the OS Grid values. If you are given a record with only the post code, Google Earth can be bypassed and the grid reference obtained directly from the conversion website.

This process can be used in reverse if you have a record, together with the grid reference, and you are interested in knowing what the habitat is like; simply enter the grid reference into Google Earth, zoom in and take a look.

Apart from recording data, this combination of Google Earth and the conversion website is also useful if you need a post code, provided that you know exactly where the address is situated. Simply find the latitude and longitude and proceed as above.

A few points to watch.

Many of the photographs on which Google Earth is based seem to have been taken in bright sunshine early in the morning so that tall objects such as buildings and trees cast long dark shadows. This can be a problem if, for example, you are trying to find a location on a path or a road in a wood.

Longitude values to the west of the Greenwich meridian are negative, so don't forget the minus sign or you will probably find that the grid reference is shown as being in the North Sea!

Latitude/longitude coordinates are given latitude first which is the opposite way round to grid references where eastings come before northings.

Setting up.

To download Google Earth go to http://earth.google.com/download-earth.html, change 'Select location' to 'Other', click on 'Agree and Download', then when you are invited to download the installation file, click on 'Save File'. The execution file will be downloaded to your desktop; double-click on this and Google Earth will be installed.

When Google Earth is running, to change from degrees, minutes, seconds to decimal, click on 'Tools', then 'Options', select the '3D View' tab, then click on the 'Decimal Degrees' button in the 'Show Lat/Long section.

The conversion.website is www.streetmap.co.uk/streetmap.dll?GridConvert

Moor Edge, Birch Vale, HIGH PEAK, SK22 1BX

Lessertia dentichelis in Cumbria

by Dave Holloway

On 5th April 2008 I was delighted to find a subadult *Nesticus cellulanus* under a drain cover in my yard at home in Workington and paid little attention to several small shiny pale brown spiders in the same location. Subsequent realisation that *Lessertia* was a possibility led to an adult male being collected on 29th April. On this occasion no *Nesticus* was seen. There were however two other pale spiders on white circular egg sacs and a further two adults (one of each sex) nearby. The drain was checked for a third time on 31st May and (in addition to a superb adult *Nesticus* female with egg sac) there were 2 adult females, an adult male and two subadults on the drain cover itself, all presumed to be the same pale species. There were also some sheetwebs in the corners of the drain as it dropped vertically, one of which contained a spider of the pale species. There were several more small white circular egg sacs on the walls of the drain and two actually plastered to webs.

The collected male was identified as *Lessertia dentichelis* under microscopic examination. It was passed to Dave Blackledge the following day who confirmed the identification and further clarification of the species identity was later obtained from Ian Dawson.

This is only the second record for Cumbria, the previous being in 1910 at Anthorn. Sadly the exact details of the Anthorn site are unknown. These are the two most northerly British records for the species. Both Anthorn and Workington are coastal locations which may be significant if low temperatures are a factor in limiting the distribution of *L. dentichelis*.

Drains are not a habitat that has received much arachnological attention in the county! I took the opportunity to steal a quick look at a couple of other drain covers during local roadworks but no egg sacs or spiders were noted. The domestic location of the drain may be significant because humidity is known to be important for *L. dentichelis* (Harvey *et al.* 2002). A domestic site guarantees a frequent supply of fresh household waste products including warm, steamy bath water!

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Dave Blackledge, whose encouragement has been invaluable as my "spidering" has developed. Further thanks to Dave and to Ian Dawson for confirming the identification of the spider.

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Theridion hannoniae – new to the British Isles

by Simon Warmingham

After arachnid collecting in many of Glamorgan's hectads, I felt that a 'square-bash' for SS89 was in order. Mynydd Bach (Welsh for small mountain) looked a promising site on the map, so that was my destination on 30th July 2007. Many usual suspects associated with gorse bushes and *Nesticus cellulanus* under large stones were taken. But it was at SS856930 on a west-facing slope at 202m that I collected a male *Theridion* amongst stones from a discarded damaged gabion.

Later examination of a palp under the microscope had me scratching my head; it didn't match up with anything in 'big Roberts' so I sent it, along with troublesome *Lepthyphantes* spp. to Peter Harvey for his verdict. It was close to drawings Peter had available of *Theridion hannoniae* in Roberts' Spinnengids and *T. petraeum* in Tierwelt Deutchlands. Mindful of the Wiltshire *Theridion* that was included in the 2000 Merrett & Murphy checklist as an unidentified *Theridion* sp. until it proved to be an abnormal *T. varians* male, Peter sent it to Peter Merrett for his opinion. Peter Merrett identified it as *T. hannoniae* but advised sending it to Dr Barbara Knoflach-Thaler in Innsbruck for examination, since there are several closely similar European species. Dr Barbara Knoflach-Thaler compared the specimen with material in their collection and duly confirmed the identification of *T. hannoniae*.

I was greeted with hail and heavy rain on a return visit to the site on 30th April 2008, but a few motionless young and an adult female were present. I will follow Peter Merrett's advice and seek out more specimens, but not decimate this possibly isolated population in the process!

Identical gabions had been used along part of the bank of the water channel alongside the cement trackway adjacent to the *Theridion* site. The nearest known *T. hannoniae* populations to this site are in the Netherlands,

Belgium and France (Bosmans *et al*., 1994). If the Welsh population has been introduced with the stones, where had the stones come from?

My thanks go to Peter Harvey, Peter Merrett and Dr Barbara Knoflach-Thaler for their efforts in identifying the mystery *Theridion*, figures of which are included in Roberts' *Spinnengids*, a European version of the Collins Field Guide.

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9 Maerdy Park, PENCOED CF35 5HJ

Theridion hannoniae **female provided by Simon Warmingham. Photograph © Peter Harvey**

Mynydd Bach with discarded gabion. Photograph © Simon Warmingham

Discarded gabion at Mynydd Bach with Nantyfyllon village in background. Photograph © Simon Warmingham

More records of *Macaroeris nidicolens* in Essex and a comparison with *Zodarion italicum*

by Peter Harvey

On 27th September 2007 an adult female *Macaroeris nidicolens* was beaten from Wild Privet, Hawthorn and scrambling Travellor's Joy scrub on a south-facing bank at a site near Lakeside Shopping Centre in South Essex. Earlier in the year this same scrub had provided an adult female *Ero aphana*, first recorded in Essex in 2003 (Harvey & Hopkin, 2003) and another species clearly expanding its range and being recorded in a variety of habitats. The site near Lakeside is about 2km from the locality where several adults and juvenile *Macaroeris nidicolens* were beaten off gorse bushes at a brownfield site next to the Thames, the first record for the county (Harvey, 2006).

On 23rd May 2008 a subadult female *M. nidicolens* was beaten from gorse at a north-western extension of Grays Chalk Pit, in a compartment that represents just about all that is left of the former Wouldhams Quarry, a large chalk pit destroyed in the late 1980s as part of a massive housing development between Grays and Lakeside known as Chafford Hundred. This particular compartment was the site of the first discovery in Britain in 1985 of the spider *Zodarion italicum* (Harvey & Murphy, 1985).

The jumping spider *Macaroeris nidicolens* was first recorded in Britain in 2002 on pines in Mile End Park in Middlesex (Milner, 2002) and subsequently found in 2004 Brooklands, Surrey also on pines, by Jonty Denton. In

***Macaroeris nidicolens* male (top) and female (bottom) on gorse. Photographs © Peter Harvey**

Europe the species occurs mainly in southern and central Europe, but occurs as far north as Belgium. *M. nidicolens* has almost certainly recently colonised Britain (or possibly been imported into the country) and is in the process of spreading into sites that provide a suitable microclimate. It is well worth looking out for on gorse, other scrub and pines anywhere in south-eastern England. It also has a long season, with records of adults to date between 12th May and 27th September.

After its first discovery *Zodarion italicum* was soon found to be widespread in suitable habitat along the Thames estuary, including old coastal grazing marsh grasslands with high densities of old ant hills where it was very difficult to find except through the use of pitfall traps. Until the early 1980s South Essex in particular had been very poorly recorded for spiders, with little or no work done except in the Epping Forest area with old records made by the Rev. O. Pickard-Cambridge in 1882, by F.O. Pickard-Cambridge in 1900 and the work of Frank P. Smith which he published in the *Essex Naturalist* between 1901-4 as several notes and as an unfinished series of papers 'The Spiders of Epping Forest' (see references). In contrast to *Macaroeris nidicolens* there is therefore no reason to suppose that the *Zodarion italicum* metapopulation had not been present in suitable habitat in the region for a long time prior to its discovery.

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32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex RM16 2YP

Zodarion italicum **and Inset, igloo made by spider under stones, but very hard to find in soil on grasslands. Photographs © Peter Harvey**

A National Status Review – the draft results

Ian Dawson[1], Peter Harvey[2] and Tony Russell-Smith[3]

The background to the proposed review of UKBAP spiders was described in Newsletter 103 (SRS News 52, July 2005), with details of the final list of accepted species in Newsletter 111 (SRS News 60, March 2008). Running more or less in parallel with this review Ian Dawson, Deborah Procter, Tony Russell-Smith and myself have been working on a new review of the national status of all British spider species to supersede the original Red Data Book for invertebrates other than insects (Bratton, 1991) and review of nationally notable spiders (Merrett, 1990). The background to this new review was set out in Newsletter 106 (SRS News 55, July 2006).

Like all recent reviews the status revisions are applied against the revised IUCN guidelines (IUCN, 1994; IUCN, 2001), which are substantially different from the old Red Data Book criteria and the results of this exercise cannot be compared directly with those from earlier work in Bratton and Merrett. The results may give arachnologists some surprises, as has been the case in some reviews in other groups, but provide an important baseline for future studies.

The main categories that can be applied to spiders are EXTINCT (EX), CRITICALLY ENDANGERED (CR), ENDANGERED (EN), VULNERABLE (VU), NEAR THREATENED (NT), LEAST CONCERN (LC), DATA DEFICIENT (DD) and NOT EVALUATED (NE).

Other recent status reviews have continued to use the nationally scarce (Notable or Scarce) category for appropriate species in the Least Concern category, e.g. Falk & Crossley (2005). Least Concern (Nationally Scarce) refers to species which are not included within the IUCN threat categories but are estimated to occur in fewer than 100 hectads (10-kilometre squares) of the Ordnance Survey national grid in Great Britain (formerly termed "Nationally Notable" by Falk 1991). As in many other groups we think it useful to continue with the subdivision of this category into Scarce A and Scarce B, i.e. LC(Na) or **Scarce A** refers to species estimated to occur in 30 or fewer 10-kilometre squares. LC(Nb) or **Scarce B** refers to species estimated to occur within the range 31 to 100 10-kilometre squares.

Use of IUCN criteria for CR, EN and VU is more or less completely dependent on evidence of decline in the recent past or projected into the future (Criterion A: marked decline over last ten years regardless of current range or abundance; Criterion B: declining species with extremely restricted distribution; Criterion C: declining species with extremely small population size; Criterion D: very small or restricted populations). Thus the only criterion which does not directly depend on evidence of decline is D2, where the number of known extant locations (typically 5 or fewer) is such that the species is classified as VU (Vulnerable), i.e. it is prone to the effects of human activities or stochastic events in an uncertain future, and is thus capable of becoming Critically Endangered or even Extinct in a very short time period. For a full explanation of the criteria see the IUCN (2001) document, available at http://intranet.iucn.org/webfiles/doc/SSC/RedList/redlistcatsenglish.pdf

The Spider Recording Scheme has been running in its present form since 1987 and the majority of records are from between 1987 and the present (see fig. 1 in SRS News 55, July 2006). As explained in Newsletter 106 (SRS News 55, July 2006) this review is based on data consisting of 723,384 records in total, using not only total numbers of 10km squares from which each species is recorded in different time periods, but also comparing records only for squares where records exist in both time periods. The Spider Recording Scheme dataset is certainly very good for an invertebrate group – of 2538 squares with spider records, 1830 (72%) have been recorded both before and after the 50 percentile year of the dataset (1992); 355 squares have records only in the period before 1992, and 353 only from 1992 or later. In addition the vast majority of these data are available at Monad or 1km square resolution. While recognising the imperfections in the data, they have provided the essential starting point for our decisions. We have also had at our disposal the results of analyses run on these data for us by Stuart Ball at JNCC.

During the process we came across a number of species where the data (based on squares recorded only in both time periods in question) suggest major decline in relatively widespread species. Rather than give these threatened status, we have assigned these a 'Watching brief', with the aim that we should keep a close eye on whether the apparent decline continues in these species.

It could be argued that with most invertebrates the quality and quantity of data available are not sufficient to allow certain categorisation of any taxon! We have struggled with assigning statuses to every species for some considerable time now, but hope that the draft results presented here will be seen as a reasonable attempt to combine the apparent results of these analyses with the application of common sense. Although the raw data are based on uncontrolled survey, the analyses were applied consistently across all species and statuses were only modified if we had evidence that there were differences in monitoring effort in the two survey periods. It is also worth repeating that the data on change are derived by comparing records ONLY from hectads recorded in both time periods before and after the 50 percentile year. However, we have also taken into account data available from all squares and what we know about areas in the country that have obviously been under-recorded since 1980.

The results may therefore be questionable, but at least they are consistent. It is also important to realise that the statuses assigned here are not set in stone, and will change in the future as more data become available. It is worth remembering that vast areas of our countryside have suffered massive degradation both during and after WW2 and this change has continued apace with modern agricultural practices, intensification of land-use and reliance on chemical fertilisers and pesticides. It is hardly surprising that many invertebrates should be suffering a major decline in the modern landscape. It should be remembered that if you normally record on nature reserves and parts of the country less affected by agricultural changes, then you may be seeing an unrealistically optimistic picture of what is actually happening to our fauna in the country as a whole.

We are publishing this current draft list of statuses to provide an opportunity for arachnologists to provide feedback prior to publication. The timescale for this has to be short, with any feedback needed by early September if it is to affect the final list. Unfortunately to understand the full reasons for each status, it is necessary not only to

spend time absorbing the implications and detail of the IUCN criteria, but also to apply these to the data available from analyses on the dataset. This is far more than can be provided here, but it would be possible to provide this information on request.

Please send any feedback to Peter Harvey.

Table 1. Draft statuses of relevant species

Taxon	IUCN	Criteria	Old status
Aculepeira ceropegia	EX		
Dipoena coracina	EX		RDB1
Gibbaranea bituberculata	EX		RDB1
Hypsosinga heri	EX		RDB1
Mastigusa arietina	EX		RDB2
Zodarion rubidum	CR/EX		
Agroeca dentigera	CR	B1ab(iii),B2ab(iii)	
Alopecosa fabrilis	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB1
Altella lucida	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB1
Araniella alpica	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB3
Aulonia albimana	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB1
Carorita paludosa	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Centromerus albidus	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Centromerus persimilis	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDBK
Centromerus semiater	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Dictyna major	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Diplocephalus connatus	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Enoplognatha tecta	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB1
Lepthyphantes antroniensis	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB1
Minicia marginella	CR	B2ab(iv)	
Nothophantes horridus	CR	B1ab(iii); B2ab(ii), B2ab(iv)	
Orchestina sp.	CR	A2c, D2	
Ozyptila blackwalli	CR	B2ab(iv)	Nb
Robertus insignis	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB1
Sitticus distinguendus	CR	A3c, A4c	
Thanatus formicinus	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Typhochrestus simoni	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Walckenaeria corniculans	CR	B2ab(iv)	Na
Xysticus luctator	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Xysticus luctuosus	CR	A2c	Nb
Zora armillata	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB3
Zora silvestris	CR	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Agroeca cuprea	EN	A2c,B2ab(ii)	Na
Baryphyma duffeyi	EN	A2c,B2ab(ii)	RDB3
Baryphyma gowerense	EN	B2ab(iv)	RDBK
Caviphantes saxetorum	EN	A2c,B2ab(ii)	Na
Centromerus brevivulvatus	EN	B2ab(iv)	RDB3
Centromerus levitarsis	EN	A2c,B2ab(ii)	RDB2
Centromerus serratus	EN	A2c,B2ab(ii)	Nb
Clubiona caerulescens	EN	A2c,B2ab(ii)	Nb
Clubiona genevensis	EN	A2c,B2ab(ii)	RDB3
Clubiona pseudoneglecta	EN	A2c,B2ab(ii)	
Clubiona rosserae	EN	B2ab(iv)	RDB1
Dipoena melanogaster	EN	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Dipoena prona	EN	A2c,B2ab(ii)	Nb
Enoplognatha oelandica	EN	B2ab(iv)	RDB3
Erigone welchi	EN	B2ab(iv)	Na
Hahnia candida	EN	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Hilaira nubigena	EN	B2ab(iv)	Na
Hygrolycosa rubrofasciata	EN	B2ab(iv)	Na
Jacksonella falconeri	EN	B2ab(iv)	
Lepthyphantes pinicola	EN	B2ab(iv)	Nb
Maro lepidus	EN	B2ab(iv)	RDB3
Maro sublestus	EN	B2ab(iv)	Na
Meioneta mollis	EN	B2ab(iv)	
Micaria alpina	EN	B2ab(iv)	RDB3
Midia midas	EN	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Mioxena blanda	EN	B2ab(iv)	Nb
Neon valentulus	EN	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Ozyptila scabricula	EN	A2c; B2ab(iv)	Nb
Pardosa paludicola	EN	A2c; B2ab(iv)	RDB3
Pelecopsis radicicola	EN	B2ab(iv)	RDB3
Philodromus emarginatus	EN	A2c; B2ab(iv)	Nb
Philodromus fallax	EN	A2c	Nb
Philodromus margaritatus	EN	A2c; B2ab(iv)	Nb
Pistius truncatus	EN	B2ab(iv)	RDB1
Porrhomma egeria	EN	A2c	
Porrhomma rosenhaueri	EN	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Scotina palliardii	EN	B2ab(iv)	Na
Semljicola caliginosus	EN	A2c, B2ab(iv)	Nb
Silometopus incurvatus	EN	B2ab(iv)	Na
Talavera thorelli	EN	B2ab(iv)	
Tapinocyba mitis	EN	B1ab(iii)	Nb
Trichoncus saxicola	EN	B2ab(iv)	Nb
Tuberta maerens	EN	B2ab(iv)	RDB3
Wiehlea calcarifera	EN	B2ab(iv)	Na
Xysticus robustus	EN	B2ab(iv)	Na
Xysticus sabulosus	EN	B2ab(iv)	
Acartauchenius scurrilis	VU	B2ab(iv)	Na
Achaearanea riparia	VU	A2c,B2ab(ii)	Nb
Agroeca lusatica	VU	D2	RDB1
Agyneta subtilis	VU	A2c	
Allomengea scopigera	VU	A2c	
Allomengea vidua	VU	A2c	
Alopecosa barbipes	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Apostenus fuscus	VU	D2	RDB1
Araeoncus crassiceps	VU	A2c	
Araeoncus humilis	VU	A2c	
Arctosa alpigena	VU	B2ab(ii)	RDB3
Atypus affinis	VU	A2c	
Bathyphantes setiger	VU	A2c	
Callilepis nocturna	VU	D2	RDB1
Carorita limnaea	VU	D2	RDB1
Centromerus incilium	VU	A2c	Nb
Ceratinopsis romana	VU	A2c,B2ab(ii)	Nb
Cercidia prominens	VU	A2c	
Cheiracanthium pennyi	VU	B2ab(iv)/D2	RDB2
Clubiona frisia	VU	B2ab(iv)	RDB3
Dictyna pusilla	VU	A2c,B2ab(ii)	
Diplocephalus protuberans	VU	A2c,B2ab(ii)	Nb
Dipoena erythropus	VU	A2c,B2ab(ii)	RDB2
Dipoena inornata	VU	A2c	Nb
Dismodicus elevatus	VU	A2c,B2ab(ii)	Na
Dolomedes plantarius	VU	D2	RDB1
Drepanotylus uncatus	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Eresus sandaliatus	VU	D1, D2	RDB1
Erigonella ignobilis	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Ero tuberculata	VU	B2ab(iv)	Nb
Euophrys herbigrada	VU	B2ab(iv)	Na
Evansia merens	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Glyphesis cottonae	VU	B2ab(iv)	Na

Gnaphosa leporina	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Gnaphosa lugubris	VU	B2ab(iv)	Na
Gnaphosa nigerrima	VU	D2	
Gnaphosa occidentalis	VU	D2	RDB1
Gonatium paradoxum	VU	B2ab(iii)	RDB2
Gongylidiellum latebricola	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Gongylidiellum murcidum	VU	B2ab(iv)	Nb
Hahnia pusilla	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Halorates distinctus	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Haplodrassus dalmatensis	VU	B2ab(iv)	Nb
Haplodrassus silvestris	VU	B2ab(iv)	Nb
Haplodrassus soerenseni	VU	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Haplodrassus umbratilis	VU	B2ab(iv)	RDB3
Harpactea rubicunda	VU	D2	
Heliophanus auratus	VU	D2	RDB2
Heliophanus dampfi	VU	D2	RDBK
Hypselistes jacksoni	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Larinioides patagiatus	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Lathys nielseni	VU	B2ab(iv)	Na
Lathys stigmatisata	VU	B2ab(iv)	RDB3
Lepthyphantes complicatus	VU	B2ab(iv)	Nb
Leptothrix hardyi	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Maro minutus	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Mastigusa macrophthalma	VU	B2ab(iv)	RDB3
Mecynargus paetulus	VU	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Meioneta fuscipalpa	VU	D2	
Micaria romana	VU	A2c; B2ab(iv)	Nb
Micaria silesiaca	VU	A2c; B2ab(iv)	Nb
Micaria subopaca	VU	A2c; B2ab(iv)	Nb
Micrargus laudatus	VU	A2c	Nb
Micrommata virescens	VU	A2c	
Monocephalus castaneipes	VU	A2c	
Neon pictus	VU	D2	
Neriene furtiva	VU	A2c	Nb
Neriene radiata	VU	A2c; B2ab(iv)	Nb
Notioscopus sarcinatus	VU	A2c	Nb
Ozyptila nigrita	VU	A2c	Nb
Ozyptila pullata	VU	D2	
Pardosa trailli	VU	B2ab(ii)	Nb
Pellenes tripunctatus	VU	D2	RDB1
Phaeocedus braccatus	VU	A2c; B2ab(iv)	Nb
Philodromus histrio	VU	A2c	
Pirata piscatorius	VU	A2c	
Porrhomma convexum	VU	A2c	
Pseudeuophrys erratica	VU	A2c	
Robertus scoticus	VU	D2	RDB1
Saaristoa firma	VU	A2c	
Scotina gracilipes	VU	A2c	
Sitticus caricis	VU	A2c	Nb
Sitticus floricola	VU	B2ab(iv)	RDB3
Steatoda albomaculata	VU	A2c	Nb
Talavera petrensis	VU	B2ab(iv)	Nb
Tapinocyba insecta	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Tapinocyboides pygmaeus	VU	B2ab(iv)	RDB3
Taranucnus setosus	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Tegenaria picta	VU	D2	RDBK
Trichoncus hackmani	VU	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Trichopterna cito	VU	B2ab(iv)	RDB2
Trichopterna thorelli	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Trochosa robusta	VU	B2ab(iv)	Nb
Trochosa spinipalpis	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Typhochrestus digitatus	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Wabasso replicatus	VU	D2	
Wacklenaeria stylifrons	VU	D3	RDB1
Walckenaeria clavicornis	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Walckenaeria dysderoides	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Walckenaeria furcillata	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Walckenaeria incisa	VU	B2ab(iv)	Nb
Walckenaeria kochi	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Walckenaeria mitrata	VU	D2	RDB1
Walckenaeria monoceros	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Walckenaeria obtusa	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Xysticus acerbus	VU	B2ab(iv)	Na
Xysticus bifasciatus	VU	B2ab(iv)	
Zodarion fuscum	VU	D2	
Zodarion vicinum	VU	D2	
Zora nemoralis	VU	B2ab(iv)	Nb
Centromerus minutissimus	DD		
Hahnia microphthalma	DD		RDBK
Lepthyphantes beckeri	DD		
Neriene emphana	DD		
Pardosa lugubris sens. str.	DD		
Porrhomma cambridgei	DD		
Pseudomaro aenigmaticus	DD		RDBK
Synema globosum	DD		
Trachyzelotes fuscipes	DD		
Walckenaeria alticeps	DD		
Araneus alsine	NT		Nb
Araniella displicata	NT		Na
Arctosa fulvolineata	NT		RDB3
Baryphyma maritimum	NT		Nb
Centromerus capucinus	NT		
Centromerus cavernarum	NT		RDB3
Clubiona juvenis	NT		RDB2
Clubiona subsultans	NT		RDB2
Dipoena torva	NT		RDB2
Dipoena tristis	NT		Na
Donacochara speciosa	NT		Na
Erigone psychrophila	NT		Na
Megalepthyphantes sp. n.	NT		
Oxyopes heterophthalmus	NT		RDB2
Pelecopsis elongata	NT		RDB2
Phlegra fasciata	NT		RDB3
Porrhomma errans	NT		Nb
Rugathodes bellicosus	NT		Nb
Segestria bavarica	NT		Na
Theridion pinastri	NT		RDBK
Trichoncus affinis	NT		RDB2
Uloborus walckenaerius	NT		RDB3
Zelotes longipes	NT		Na
Zelotes petrensis	NT		Na
Zygiella stroemi	NT		Nb
Aelurillus v-insignitus	LC (Na)		Nb
Agraecina striata	LC (Na)		Nb
Anelosimus aulicus	LC (Na)		Nb
Araneus angulatus	LC (Na)		Nb
Araniella inconspicua	LC (Na)		Nb

Arctosa cinerea	LC (Na)		Nb
Argenna patula	LC (Na)		Nb
Asthenargus paganus	LC (Na)		
Clubiona norvegica	LC (Na)		Nb
Crustulina sticta	LC (Na)		Nb
Drassyllus lutetianus	LC (Na)		Na
Drassyllus praeficus	LC (Na)		Nb
Enoplognatha mordax	LC (Na)		Na
Entelecara omissa	LC (Na)		Na
Episinus maculipes	LC (Na)		RDB3
Episinus truncatus	LC (Na)		Nb
Erigone capra	LC (Na)		Nb
Glyphesis servulus	LC (Na)		
Halorates holmgreni	LC (Na)		Nb
Haplodrassus minor	LC (Na)		RDB3
Hybocoptus decollatus	LC (Na)		Nb
Hypsosinga sanguinea	LC (Na)		Nb
Hyptiotes paradoxus	LC (Na)		RDB3
Lessertia dentichelis	LC (Na)		
Liocranum rupicola	LC (Na)		Nb
Macaroeris nidicolens	LC (Na)		
Macrargus carpenteri	LC (Na)		Na
Marpissa nivoyi	LC (Na)		Nb
Marpissa radiata	LC (Na)		Na
Maso gallicus	LC (Na)		Na
Mecopisthes peusi	LC (Na)		Nb
Meioneta mossica	LC (Na)		
Meioneta simplicitarsis	LC (Na)		Na
Meta bourneti	LC (Na)		Nb
Myrmarachne formicaria	LC (Na)		Nb
Neon robustus	LC (Na)		
Philodromus longipalpis	LC (Na)		
Phrurolithus minimus	LC (Na)		Na
Porrhomma oblitum	LC (Na)		Nb
Pseudeuophrys obsoleta	LC (Na)		RDB3
Saloca diceros	LC (Na)		Nb
Salticus zebraneus	LC (Na)		Na
Satilatlas britteni	LC (Na)		Nb
Singa hamata	LC (Na)		Nb
Sitticus inexpectus	LC (Na)		Na
Sitticus saltator	LC (Na)		Nb
Syedra gracilis	LC (Na)		Nb
Synageles venator	LC (Na)		Na
Theridion familiare	LC (Na)		Nb
Thomisus onustus	LC (Na)		Nb
Thyreosthenius biovatus	LC (Na)		
Trematocephalus cristatus	LC (Na)		Na
Zelotes subterraneus	LC (Na)		
Zodarion italicum	LC (Na)		
Agroeca inopina	LC (Nb)		
Agyneta cauta	LC (Nb)	Watching brief	
Agyneta olivacea	LC (Nb)		
Agyneta ramosa	LC (Nb)		
Alopecosa cuneata	LC (Nb)		
Araneus marmoreus	LC (Nb)		
Araneus triguttatus	LC (Nb)		
Argenna subnigra	LC (Nb)		
Ballus chalybeius	LC (Nb)		
Bianor aurocinctus	LC (Nb)		Na
Ceratinella scabrosa	LC (Nb)		
Ceratinopsis stativa	LC (Nb)		
Cheiracanthium virescens	LC (Nb)		
Cicurina cicur	LC (Nb)		
Coelotes terrestris	LC (Nb)		Nb
Diplocentria bidentata	LC (Nb)		
Dolomedes fimbriatus	LC (Nb)		
Drassodes pubescens	LC (Nb)	Watching brief	
Entelecara congenera	LC (Nb)		Nb
Entelecara errata	LC (Nb)		Nb
Entelecara flavipes	LC (Nb)		
Erigone tirolensis	LC (Nb)		Nb
Ero aphana	LC (Nb)		RDB2
Euryopis flavomaculata	LC (Nb)	Watching brief	
Evarcha arcuata	LC (Nb)		Nb
Halorates reprobus	LC (Nb)	Watching brief	
Hilaira frigida	LC (Nb)		
Hilaira pervicax	LC (Nb)		Nb
Hypomma fulvum	LC (Nb)		Na
Hypsosinga albovittata	LC (Nb)		
Latithorax faustus	LC (Nb)	Watching brief	
Lepthyphantes angulatus	LC (Nb)		
Lepthyphantes expunctus	LC (Nb)		
Lepthyphantes insignis	LC (Nb)	Watching brief	Nb
Lepthyphantes whymperi	LC (Nb)		Nb
Mangora acalypha	LC (Nb)		
Marpissa muscosa	LC (Nb)		Nb
Mecynargus morulus	LC (Nb)	Watching brief	
Meioneta gulosa	LC (Nb)		
Meioneta nigripes	LC (Nb)		Nb
Microctenonyx subitaneus	LC (Nb)		
Moebelia penicillata	LC (Nb)	Watching brief	
Nigma puella	LC (Nb)		Nb
Nigma walckenaeri	LC (Nb)		Na
Oreonetides vaginatus	LC (Nb)		
Ozyptila brevipes	LC (Nb)		
Ozyptila sanctuaria	LC (Nb)		
Ozyptila simplex	LC (Nb)		
Panamomops sulcifrons	LC (Nb)		
Pardosa agrestis	LC (Nb)		Nb
Pardosa hortensis	LC (Nb)		
Pardosa proxima	LC (Nb)		
Pelecopsis nemoralioides	LC (Nb)	Watching brief	
Philodromus collinus	LC (Nb)		Nb
Pirata tenuitarsis	LC (Nb)		
Pityohyphantes phrygianus	LC (Nb)		Na
Porrhomma campbelli	LC (Nb)		
Porrhomma montanum	LC (Nb)		
Robertus neglectus	LC (Nb)	Watching brief	
Rugathodes instabilis	LC (Nb)		
Scotina celans	LC (Nb)		
Scotinotylus evansi	LC (Nb)		
Silometopus ambiguus	LC (Nb)		
Sintula corniger	LC (Nb)	Watching brief	
Thanatus striatus	LC (Nb)		
Theridion blackwalli	LC (Nb)		
Theridion hemerobium	LC (Nb)		
Theridiosoma gemmosum	LC (Nb)		Nb
Tiso aestivus	LC (Nb)		Nb
Tmeticus affinis	LC (Nb)		

Trachyzelotes pedestris	LC (Nb)		Nb
Walckenaeria capito	LC (Nb)		
Walckenaeria nodosa	LC (Nb)	Watching brief	
Xerolycosa miniata	LC (Nb)		
Xerolycosa nemoralis	LC (Nb)		Nb
Xysticus lanio	LC (Nb)		
Zelotes electus	LC (Nb)		
Argiope bruennichi	LC		Na
Achaearanea simulans	LC		Nb
Philodromus albidus	LC		Nb
Philodromus praedatus	LC		Nb
Tetragnatha pinicola	LC		Nb
Tetragnatha striata	LC		Nb
Zilla diodia	LC		Nb
Agroeca proxima	LC	Watching brief	
Agyneta conigera	LC	Watching brief	
Agyneta decora	LC	Watching brief	
Aphileta misera	LC	Watching brief	
Bolyphantes alticeps	LC	Watching brief	
Bolyphantes luteolus	LC	Watching brief	
Centromerita concinna	LC	Watching brief	
Centromerus prudens	LC	Watching brief	
Ceratinella brevis	LC	Watching brief	
Clubiona trivialis	LC	Watching brief	
Dicymbium brevisetosum	LC	Watching brief	
Entelecara erythropus	LC	Watching brief	
Erigone arctica	LC	Watching brief	
Erigone longipalpis	LC	Watching brief	
Floronia bucculenta	LC	Watching brief	
Gonatium rubellum	LC	Watching brief	
Hahnia helveola	LC	Watching brief	
Macrargus rufus	LC	Watching brief	
Meioneta beata	LC	Watching brief	
Metopobactrus prominulus	LC	Watching brief	
Pachygnatha listeri	LC	Watching brief	
Pelecopsis mengei	LC	Watching brief	
Pholcomma gibbum	LC	Watching brief	
Poeciloneta variegata	LC	Watching brief	
Porrhomma pallidum	LC	Watching brief	
Saaristoa abnormis	LC	Watching brief	
Silometopus elegans	LC	Watching brief	
Tapinocyba pallens	LC	Watching brief	
Tapinocyba praecox	LC	Watching brief	
Tapinopa longidens	LC	Watching brief	
Tibellus maritimus	LC	Watching brief	
Walckenaeria cucullata	LC	Watching brief	
Walckenaeria cuspidata	LC	Watching brief	
Walckenaeria nudipalpis	LC	Watching brief	
Eperigone trilobata	NE		
Frontinellina frutetorum	NE		
Theridion hannoniae	NE		

All other species not listed above are categorised as LC (Least Concern). We have not assessed introduced or synanthropic species for IUCN status in this review.

We think this is probably the first time that anyone has attempted to quantify decline in spider distribution, not just in the UK but in any country in the world. Because of the data deficiencies, it is important that in future the conclusions are checked critically, at least for a representative sub-set of species. An obvious group on which to focus efforts would be those species which are still very widespread, but which have shown an apparent marked decline between the two periods i.e. our 'Watching brief' taxa.

Species showing decline

A large number of species show apparent decline, derived by comparing records from hectads recorded in both time periods before and after the 50 percentile year. The raw data indicate over 250 taxa where there has been a population decline of over 30%. 161 of these taxa have figures indicating a decline of 50% or more, sufficient to be considered for Endangered status, and 50 of these taxa have figures indicating a decline of at least 80%, sufficient to be considered for Critically Endangered status. The way we have interpreted these figures depends on whether we believe the apparent decline can be explained by under-recording, for example because of species' specialist micro-habitat or unusual maturity period, or in other ways.

In a number of instances we have had to opt for unsatisfactory compromises, so for example although *Baryphyma gowerense* has nine post-1980 hectads mapped in the provisional atlas, there are no post-1992 records, even though the hectads have post-1992 records of other species. *Erigone psychrophila*, a montane spider of bog pools, has 9 post-1980 records but none post-1992, although all 12 hectad records for the species have been recorded in both time periods. We don't believe this decline and have opted for Near Threatened status. We have taken a similar view with many other montane species, where survey may not have occurred at sufficient levels or at the right times of year to record the species. We are also aware that much heathland in Dorset and Hampshire has not been thoroughly resurveyed using pitfall traps since the 1980s.

On the other hand spiders such as *Baryphyma duffeyi* occur in areas and a habitat where survey has continued and the apparent decline may be real. It is a spider where subadult males can be recognized by their developing head projection even in the autumn, and has been looked for in recorded sites yet not refound. The species occurs in very localised areas within its saltmarsh habitat, and developments along the Thames Gateway and south-eastern coast together with sea level rise pose very real additional threats – but perhaps managed retreat presents opportunities to favour this and other spiders?

In quite a number of species we have taken the approach that the apparent decline may not be as great as figures suggest, but to this are added factors such as habitats vulnerable to succession and inappropriate management. There is good reason to believe that many fens and heathlands have become very degraded since recording was undertaken in the earlier days of the Flatford Mill Spider Group and British Arachnological Society, often through lack of management during the last half century.

Species showing increase

Whilst the status review is concerned with those species where there is evidence of marked decline and the Scarce species, over 200 British spiders have shown an increase in the two periods, in some cases dramatically so. Some are widespread species such as *Theridion impressum*, which is a common spider in much of lowland Britain. However the provisional atlas (Harvey *et al*., 2002) indicates an absence or few records from areas generally well-recorded in the southeast and southwest. In Essex the spider had always been a rare spider, with a handful of records. In recent years it has been turning up in the county more frequently and in areas where it had not been found previously. It seems probable that this is in some way due to climate change. *Steatoda grossa* is another spider where the atlas shows a widespread, but scattered, distribution in southern Britain, with the species being commonest in coastal areas of southwest England. It was probably originally introduced and is usually found in synanthropic situations and was very rare in Essex, known from a single 1956 Dockland record and 1983 record from a cellar in Manor Park, both in east London (VC18). In recent years the spider has been turning up more widely and more often in the county, and is also being found outside in semi- natural situations away from buildings.

Other spiders, such as *Philodromus albidus* and *Achaearanea simulans* (both currently Nationally Scarce (Notable B) have clearly been undergoing both a recent expansion in range and frequency, again probably due to climate change. The *Philodromus aureolus* group provides further examples of species where there has been a large increase in records. *P. praedatus*, was not recorded in Britain for a very great number of years and was considered to be very rare indeed. Males possess a characteristic tibial apophysis which is not difficult to identify, but the epigyne of females are more difficult to recognise, and dissection is required to appreciate differences between species. However diagnostic characters are now much better understood, so that it is possible for arachnologists familiar with the group to even provisionally identify *P. praedatus* females in the field. The species has turned out to be remarkably widespread in a specific habitat situation, on large oaks in open or woodland edge situations which are hardly likely to have been under-recorded in the past – yet museum collections examined have failed to revealed specimens misidentified as other taxa in the *aureolus* group (although plenty of misidentifications have been revealed!). Another *Philodromus* in the *aureolus* group, *P. longipalpis* has been relatively recently recognised in the British fauna, but there is no current evidence to suggest the species has lain misidentified in past collections. Like *P. praedatus* the much rarer *P. longipalpis* seems associated with oaks in open situations, especially where these are stressed by drought or root disturbance, sometimes even occurring on isolated oaks between arable fields. Like *P. praedatus* the spider can often be provisionally identified as being distinctly different in the field.

Other species have certainly been present in Britain for some length of time, such as *Argiope bruennichi*, first recorded at Rye in 1922, but which have shown evidence of increasing range since the 1970s (Merrett, 1979) and have subsequently expanded dramatically since the 1990s. Other species, such as *Steatoda nobilis*, are assumed to have been introduced, and although recorded from Torquay by Pickard-Cambridge in 1879 the first established populations were only identified and described from the Dorset and Hampshire area by Snazell & Jones (1993). *S. nobilis* has now clearly spread without human aid into a number of southern counties of England and Wales. *Ero aphana* was confined to high quality southern heathland, but can now be found widely in England in all sorts of habitats, including gardens and outhouses. The spider may be spreading due to climate change or it may have become established from an original colonisation and is in the process of spreading.

Then there are relatively recently recognised species in the British fauna such as *Agyneta olivacea* and *Neon robustus* where the apparent increase merely reflects their recognition and subsequent recording. Some species such as *Tetragnatha striata* and *Meta bourneti* have shown apparent increase which is probably due to increased sampling in their specific ecological niches. There are also a number of rare spiders such as *Clubiona juvenis*, *Philodromus longipalpis* and *Theridion pinastri*, which occur in well sampled habitats, but which may occur at low population levels in many areas and so may only be picked up by a sufficient level of sampling - or by pure luck, being at the right place at the right time.

Another example is provided by *Dolomedes plantarius*, where there is absolutely no reason to think that the populations that were identified in Pevensey Levels in the 1980s and South Wales in the 1990s are new, rather simply that *Dolomedes* previously seen at these sites were assumed to be *D. fimbriatus* by previous naturalists, and adults were not checked by microscopical examination – and of course it is illegal to collect *D. plantarius* without licence.

We are very grateful to Deborah Procter for her valuable input and advice on this status review and to Stuart Ball for running analyses on our dataset.

Note that this is a draft list, and publication here does not mean that these statuses are valid. This must wait until they are accepted and published by JNCC.

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Eperigone trilobata (Emerton, 1882), newly recorded in Britain

by Peter Harvey

A single male of *Eperigone trilobata* was collected at a site near Tilbury in S. Essex during 2007. The spider was taken in pitfall traps set between 1-16th August in an area of mown grassland within a site containing a variety of nearby habitats, ranging from sparsely vegetated dry sandy grassland to a wetland area, relic grazing marsh and ditches. I was unable to identify the spider and sent it to Peter Merrett, who identified it as *Eperigone trilobata*, the type species in the genus and apparently well illustrated in Millidge (1987). Van Helsdingen (1982) also contains drawings of the palp and epigyne. No further specimens were collected at the site.

Peter Merrett notes that the species is widespread throughout the USA and Canada, and also recorded from Mexico. It has been recorded in Europe, and is on the checklists for Germany and Switzerland. It would seem to be an import and there is no reason why the species should not become established in Britain if a female manages to breed.

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Ero aphana (Walckenaer, 1802) new to Hertfordshire

by Doug Marriott

On the 19th May 2008 I revisited, for the first time for a couple of years, my local site in Croxley (VC20, TQ078950) which used to be the former London Transport engineering sidings some 40+ years ago. The old railway spoil and rubbish has gone or is covered by scrubby vegetation. Beating some gorse bushes unexpectedly produced a female *Ero aphana*. This is a first record of this species for Hertfordshire VC20 although recent reports show that it has been expanding its range northwards (Binding, 2006; Denton, 2004; Harvey & Hopkin, 2003; McCarthy, 2002). Mick Massie recorded it from Horsenden Hill in Middlesex in 2006 (Massie, 2006) and I recall a verbal report of the species in the Ruislip area also which is not too far away from here.

Since then I have made two further collecting trips locally. The first was to my son's house in Rickmansworth, which he moved into recently and whose garden is surrounded with bushes many of them yew. Beating these produced another female *Ero aphana* along with a female *Zilla diodia*. The straight line distance between the two sites is approximately 1.5 miles.

On Sunday 22nd June I attended an invertebrate meeting in Ruislip Woods in Middlesex, VC21 and proceeded to beat some gorse bushes as previously in Croxley and took another female *Ero aphana*. Again the distance between sites is about 3-4 miles. So in the space of four weeks and three local sites *Ero aphana* has turned up in each one. This species is clearly colonising new areas rapidly and would probably be found on other sites in Hertfordshire if only we had more arachnologists to look for it.

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Spider Recording Scheme News November 2008, No. 62

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 63 will be published in March 2009. Please send contributions by the end of January at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Editorial

I would like to make a plea to all recorders for contributions to the newsletter –articles are usually from a small band of regular contributors, but there must be many more active arachnologists out there who regularly find interesting spiders or make observations that would be of interest to others. It is always interesting to read about the spider fauna in different parts of the country and I am sure members would value a regular section in the Newsletter which was a "regional roundup", and which provided news from either particular counties or parts of the country. So, if you can contribute a short article about spiders in your area (be it a single county or group of counties) even once a year, it would make the newsletter much more interesting for everyone. The articles could include not just information on rare species but also new records for the area, comments on apparent changes in frequency or distribution of species, pleas for information, reports of field meetings, requests for records from under-recorded squares and so on.

Guidance to help in the identification of *Tegenaria saeva/gigantea* has been provided by Geoff Oxford, *Porrhomma* and *Zelotes apricorum/subterraneus* have been completed by Tony Russell-Smith and I have covered *Alopecosa cuneata/pulverulenta* and *Dysdera crocata/erythrina*, both species pairs where misidentifications seem a fairly regular problem. These 5 sets of difficult species guidance should now be available on the BAS website as downloadable pdf files. More guidance on difficult species identification will be added as it becomes available. We also start including this information in the SRS News with two items in this issue.

I would like to reiterate the general need to keep voucher specimens for all but a small number of easily recognisable spiders. The importance of voucher specimens was set out in the Phase 2 booklet provided to all BAS members in 2002 and available for download from the BAS website. Page 6 of this booklet under *Verification and voucher specimens* explains that "*Recorders should normally retain <u>all</u> specimens. This enables valuable information to be obtained when, for example, it is realised that what had been regarded as a single species is, in fact, composed of two or more species (e.g. as with* Enoplognatha ovata/latimana, Meioneta saxatilis/mossica, Walckenaeria antica/alticeps*). A collection should be organised along the lines recommended by John Cooke in the Bulletin of the British Spider Study Group, **32**: 1-3. Voucher specimens are needed to ensure that no errors are made in identifying the species. This problem tends to be greater for the rarer species because collectors/recorders do not have many specimens with which to make comparisons. In almost all cases, specimens can be collected without making any significant difference to the population: collecting has a minute impact compared with natural mortalities and the loss of habitat to unsympathetic management, modern agricultural practices and various land developments*".

Individual species may be retained in separate tubes as a reference collection, but for general purposes if all specimens collected at one site on the same date are kept together in one tube, with details written in alcohol-proof ink or pencil on a label placed inside the tube, and a system of numbering tubes is used to allow easy location and access, then the storage of such material should not be too difficult or take up too much space. If there is then any need in the future to re-examine specimens, the vouchers are available. The use of polypropylene tubes detailed in the Members Handbook is strongly recommended so that evaporation of alcohol is not a problem.

After incorporating feedback received from arachnologists we intend to complete revision of the national status of spiders and hope that the final review can be published by early next year.

Diplocephalus graecus (O. P.-Cambridge, 1872) new to Britain

by Richard Price[1] and Tony Russell-Smith[2]

During a visit to Fowlmead Country Park near Deal in Kent (Grid Ref. TR 365538) on 31st May 2008, Richard Price carried out vacuum sampling on an area of well vegetated coal shale. This park has been developed on what was originally the coal spoil heap for Betteshanger Colliery which ceased operation in 1989. The vegetation consisted mainly of a mixture of short grasses and bird's foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*). Among the spiders collected was a small male erigonine which was sent by Richard to Tony for identification. The specimen did not correspond to any species in Roberts and was then sent to John Murphy who commented that it was closest to *Diplocephalus protuberans* in the British fauna but was certainly not that species. Investigation of the literature on *Diplocephalus* led Tony to a paper by Robert Bosmans on Linyphiidae of N. Africa (Bosmans, 1996). The figures of the male palp and cephalic lobe of *Diplocephalus graecus* appeared to correspond reasonably with those of the specimen collected. The specimen was then sent to Peter Merrett who confirmed the identification. A further visit

to the site was organised on 27th September 2008 when a small group of BAS members, comprising David Carr, Peter Harvey, Ken Hill, Richard Price and Tony Russell-Smith, carried out a short survey for spiders. On this occasion two more males were collected by Richard using the vacuum sampler in lichen-rich grassland in a small clearing in a planted Holm oak (*Quercus ilex*) woodland, confirming that a viable population exists at this site.

Bosmans (*op. cit.*) comments that this species is one of the commonest erigonines in the Mediterranean region and often occurs in man-made or man influenced habitats. For some 20 years it appears to have been spreading northwards in Europe, having been recorded in France (as far north as Paris) and Eastern Europe (Romania and Bulgaria). More recently, *D. graecus* was collected by Bonte *et al*. (2002) on sand dunes in southern Belgium where it appeared to be reasonably common at Westhoek dune reserve at De Panne (approximately 10 km N.E. of Dunkerque in France) in 1999 and 2000. The species was always found in thermophilous habitats including grey dunes, dune slacks and short dune grassland. Given the relative proximity of the Belgian coast, its rapid spread northwards in Europe and the thermophilous man-made habitat at Fowlmead, its presence there is perhaps not totally surprising. It is also not impossible that in future it might be found on the dunes at Sandwich Bay which lie only a mile to the N.E. of Fowlmead.

A full description of *Diplocephalus graecus* will be published in future a edition of the Bulletin.

Acknowledgements

We express our grateful thanks to Mark Kilmurray for permission to collect at Fowlmead and to John Murphy and Peter Merrett for their help with identification.

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Steatoda nobilis in Leicestershire

by Jon Daws

At just after 01:30am, on the 29/07/2008 a large spider was noted on the side of a double decker portacabin that stands outside of the main transport offices of Asda's ADC1 warehouse, Lutterworth, Leicestershire. The spider had come out of its retreat, which lay behind a plastic drainpipe, and was adding silk to its tangled web. An attempt to capture the specimen, using plastic wrap (a much thicker and stronger version of cling-film) was unsuccessful.

The spider, which was obviously female, looked like a large *Steatoda* sp. but not one that seemed familiar. The following evening a much better prepared arachnologist returned with pooter, specimen tube and torch and within a couple of minutes had collected two specimens. A few days later a visit to a microscope at Leicester's New Walk Museum confirmed the specimens as a female and a sub-adult female *Steatoda nobilis*. Fortunately further visits have revealed that there are more immature and sub-adult *S. nobilis* present, with their retreats either behind drainpipes or in holes.

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Philodromus margaritatus in Glen Moriston, Inverness-shire

by Jane Bowman

On June 17th 2008 I visited a 2 acre area of ground near Dundreggan reservoir, upper Glen Moriston which has invariably produced some interesting finds for me. This spring one of these was *Philodromus margaritatus* basking on the bee hives which are abandoned there.

The land is extremely dry, the rock spoil from tunnelling work during dam and tunnel construction having been dumped here many years ago. The ground is now mainly covered in grass, flowers, broom, juniper, heather, native scrub trees with a mature commercial plantation adjacent to the land. There are good stands of ancient birch and Caledonian pine in the area. Half the bee hives were occupied though untended and the profusion of nesting honey bees seems to attract a wide range of insects. I was investigating the ants that were entering an unoccupied hive (these proved to be *Formica sanguinea*) when I spotted the spider on the side of the hive. Having very little knowledge of spiders but suspecting it was a

***Philodromus margaritatus*. Photograph © Jane Bowman**

Habitat with bee hives where *Philodromus margaritatus* was found. Photograph © Jane Bowman

species of crab spider, I emailed a photo to Highland Biological Recording Group to be passed on to Peter Harvey, who identified it as *Philodromus margaritatus.*

I re-visited the site the next day not expecting to see the spider again, but there she was in exactly the same spot: south-facing side of the hive in a slight niche, with an overhanging metal strip immediately above her. She remained inert, despite being peered at closely through a x5 magnifying lens, her colouring offering no degree of camouflage. However she had begun to spin an egg sac so I was hopeful that I'd eventually find spiderlings.

Initially I visited her daily, observing her behaviour: she was always completely inert, apart from turning round presumably during the night! On June 20th there was an overnight frost and the egg sac 'gauze' was substantially thicker, she was straddling the sac as usual, other than that there was still no movement or attempts to catch prey; she was also minus leg IV on the left. I also felt she and her egg sac were quite conspicuous. The weather warmed up considerably over the next few days and she had moved off the egg sac and tucked herself under the over-hanging metal strip in shade; this south side of the hive was very hot indeed. Monitoring her regularly over the next few weeks during different weather conditions I was interested to see the changes in her behaviour. Rainy days she would be close to the egg sac; cold, wind-driven rain saw her flattened over the sac, and the hottest of days her body was slightly arched forming a 'tent' for shade.

These behavioural trends continued throughout July and August. By Aug 4th another leg was lost, she was beginning to appear emaciated, and the only movement I witnessed was leg 1 wafting at a bee which was within reach. The hive had been colonised by early Aug. so it was more difficult to observe her closely. However sadly on my Aug. 22nd visit she had disappeared leaving the egg sac still appearing intact. I'd seen dark specks within the egg sac which I was convinced were developing spiderlings. Despite searching the area for any other 'relations' I disappointingly found none. My final visit was mid October when most of the bees had gone and I was able to peel back the gauze covering and photograph the inside of the egg sac. I was amazed and elated when the cropped photo appeared on the screen and I saw that there appeared to be many 'moultings.'

Spiderling moultings in October. Photograph © Jane Bowman

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Ero aphana (Walckenaer, 1802) new to Devon

by Chris Woolley

On June 28th a spider observed on the wall behind the kettle in my kitchen was photographed and later confirmed by Peter Harvey as being a female *Ero aphana* (Mimetidae). The spider was found near the village of Chudleigh Knighton (SX837767) approximately 16km southwest of Exeter and 3km east of the Dartmoor National Park boundary near Bovey Tracey. This is the furthest west record of *E. aphana* so far. *E. aphana* has previously been recorded from Dorset, Hampshire, Surrey, Essex, Middlesex and Hertfordshire, as well as Berkshire, East Sussex and Bedfordshire (P. Harvey, pers. comm.) with a single northern record from Nottinghamshire (Binding, 2006).

In common with one of the sites of *E. aphana* in Essex (Harvey & Hopkin, 2003), this area of Devon has a history of extensive quarrying, with clay being actively extracted from a number of quarries in the vicinity. Several fragmented, damp lowland heath sites are also in close proximity. Chudleigh Knighton Heath is adjacent to my house and the Bovey Heathfield Reserve is nearby. Both sites are known for their populations of the rare narrow-headed ant *Formica exsecta*. Coniferous plantations of scots pine and spruce in various stages are also in the area with gorse being widespread. This find may indicate that either this species has been unrecorded and present here for some time, or has recently expanded its range westwards. Perhaps the wetter climate in Devon presents no hindrance to its establishment here, and further active searching may indicate whether a sizeable population exists.

***Ero aphana*. Photograph © Chris Woolley**

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Oonops pulcher, a commensal of *Amaurobius*

by Peter Harvey

I am very grateful to Michael Roberts for providing the information given here and to John Murphy for passing this on to me and suggesting that I should write a note in the newsletter to spur our active (and inactive!) spider recorders into action.

Michael Roberts writes that *Oonops pulcher* lives as a commensal with *Amaurobius fenestralis*, *Amaurobius similis* and occasionally with *Coelotes* and *Tegenaria* species. He remembers in great detail about peeling away the bark, the *Amaurobius* scurrying away leaving the *Oonops* not sure where to go; *Oonops pulcher* with beautiful oval eyes. The advice is to beat ivy, but only those patches where cribellate *Amaurobius* webs are in evidence. Look under bark, stones, ivy with evidence of cribellate webs at the edges. Hook out cribellate webs of *A. fenestralis* and *A. similis* including the retreat. Then look through all the debris within the web; *Oonops pulcher* may well have spun a retreat in that fragment of leaf, carapace, coxa or in any manner of accumulated junk. Finally go out with a torch in the dead of night. The *Amaurobius* will be out in force, but will scurry rapidly into their retreats as the torchlight hits them. The *Oonops* may also be moving about on or near the web. But there is a curious thing here. When hit by the light, the *Amaurobius* shoots into its retreat pronto; the *Oonops*, despite their amazing speed seem not to know where to go, or indeed whether to go at all!

Oonops pulcher as a commensal with *Amaurobius similis* and *A. fenestralis* is particularly interesting in relation to the un-named oonopid *Orchestina* sp.?, discovered by Ray Ruffell in 1992 from an ivy covered wall in N. Essex and last collected in 1994, when the ivy habitat was then cut. Searching for oonopids as commensals in such habitats might prove not only to enlighten our knowledge of the distribution of *O. pulcher*, but also might discover an extant population of the mystery *Orchestina* sp.? – don't miss an opportunity! Investigate ivy and stones which have not been disturbed for some time; ivy on churches or neglected ivy on old walls and of course under suitable bark and stones.

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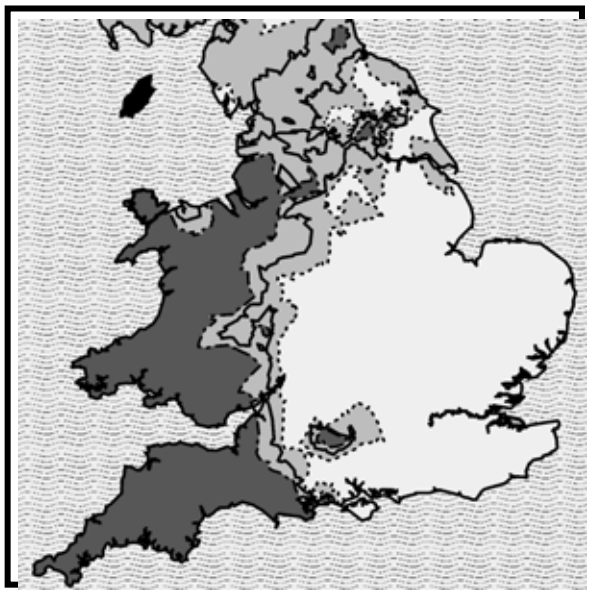
Identification of *Tegenaria gigantea* and *T. saeva*

Over much of central and southern England and Wales, these species are readily separated. The difficulty comes in the regions where the species distributions overlap because here they can hybridise and first generation hybrids may backcross to the parental species producing a graded series of intermediates. The map below shows interpolated 'contour' lines indicating the major zones of overlap, and thus the areas from which spiders with intermediate morphologies may be found. It is important to note that hybrids may occasionally be found well away from the overlap zones as a result of human transportation of one species into the area occupied by the other.



GIS-interpolated map showing areas of England and Wales where *T. saeva* is estimated to occur at a frequency of > 0.78 (dark grey), < 0.22 (white) and between 0.22 and 0.78 (light grey). The dark lines within the light grey areas are where the two species are predicted to occur at equal frequency.

Map reproduced from Croucher *et al*. (2007)

Diagnostic features - males

The figures below show lateral views of the tegulum (T) and 'conductor' (C) of typical *T. saeva* (Fig. a) and *T. gigantea* (Fig. b) from geographical areas well away from the overlap zone. The palps are oriented so that the embolus (E) is just visible. *T. saeva* has an almost 90 degree angle to the lower (as shown here) edge of the tegulum + conductor and the distal point of the conductor ('beak') is narrow (arrowed). In *T. gigantea*, the conductor merges seamlessly into the tegulum with no sharp lower angle, and the 'beak' is much wider and merges more gradually into the body of the conductor.

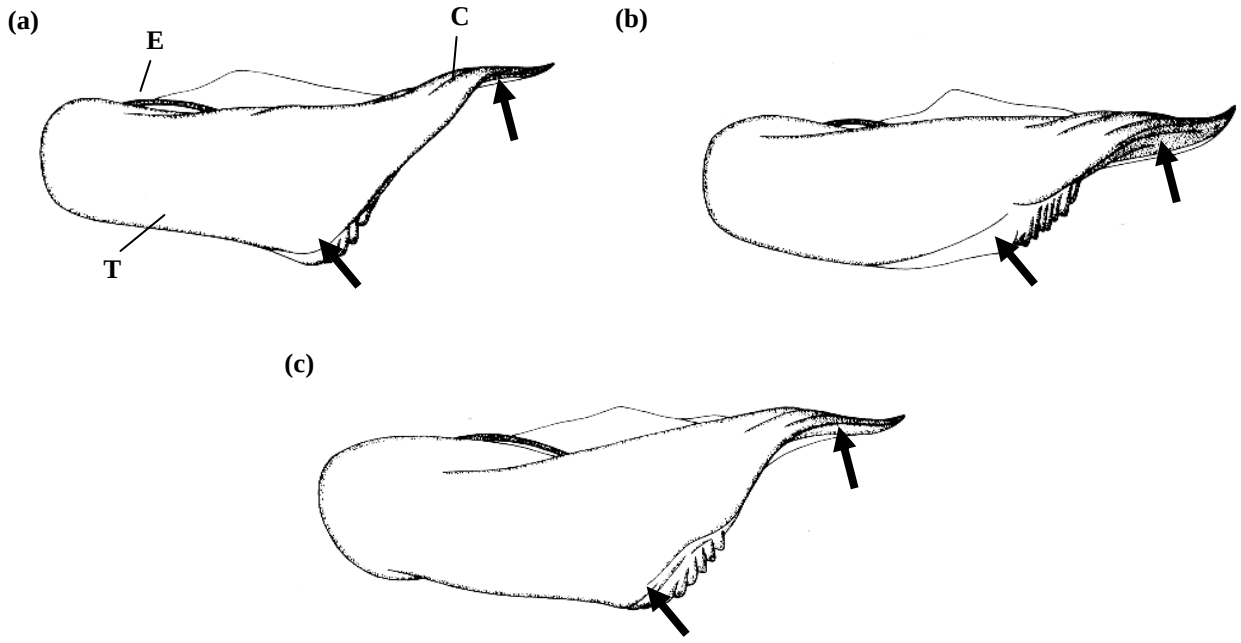


Figure c shows a probably hybrid male in which both the 'beak' and, to a lesser extent, the lower angle are intermediate between 'good' *T. saeva* and *T. gigantea*. In judging the lower angle, the fluted features (above and to the right of the lower arrows) are ignored. Putative hybrids frequently show the 90 degree lower angle of *T. saeva* but the wide 'beak' characteristic of *T. gigantea*.

Diagnostic features - females

Females are generally somewhat more difficult to distinguish than males. Orientation is absolutely crucial. The epigyne is angled so that the anterior, inner surface of the epigastric fold is exactly vertical i.e. in line with the viewing angle (Fig. d).

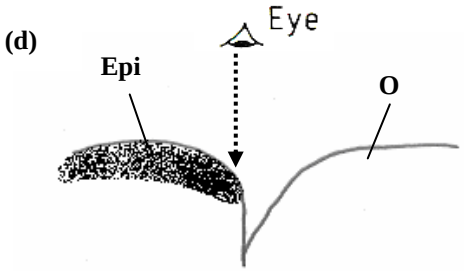
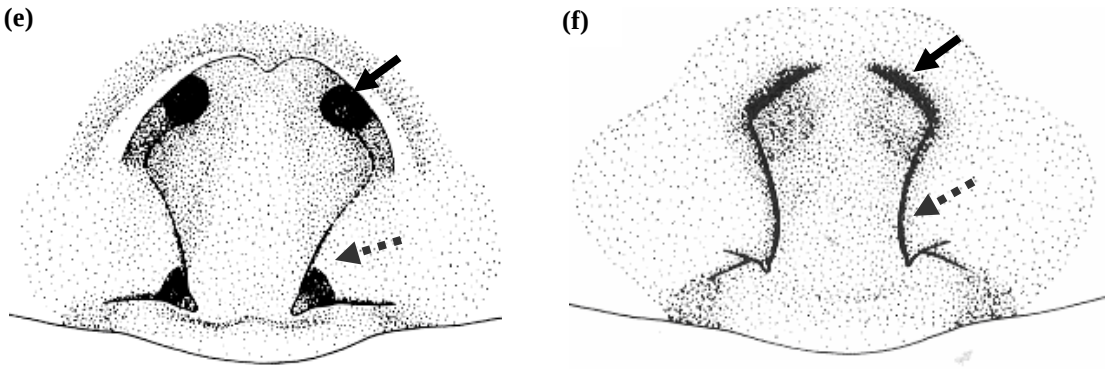


Figure d. Schematic lateral view of the female ventral surface showing the epigyne area (Epi) and the opisthosoma (O), with the epigastric fold in between. The correct viewing angle is shown by the dotted arrow.

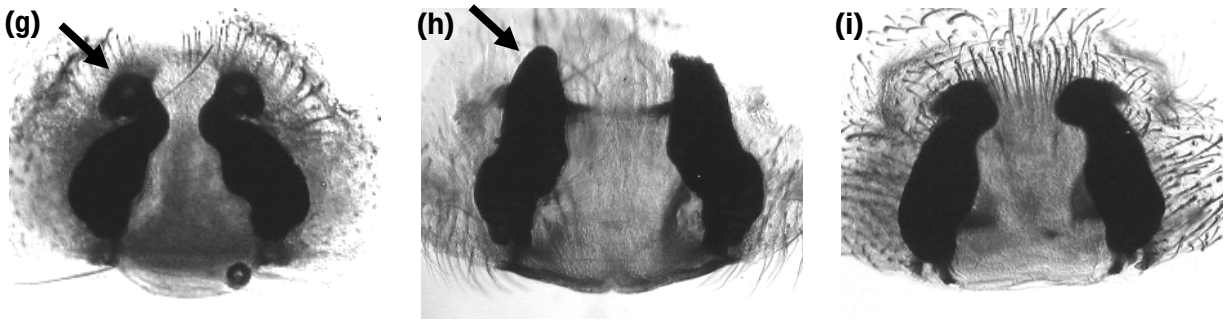
Typical ventral views of epigynes are shown below for *T. saeva* (Fig. e) and *T. gigantea* Fig. f).



In *T. saeva* (Fig. e), when oriented as in Fig. d, the openings to the spermathecae are seen as full, circular dark spots (solid arrow) and without a strongly sclerotised anterior arch. In *T. gigantea* (Fig. f), the openings of the spermathecae are much more oblique and, when oriented correctly, appear as narrow slits (solid arrow). There is also a strong, sclerotised anterior arch over each slit that often join in the mid-line. Note that if viewed <u>obliquely from behind</u>, the openings to the spermatheca in *T. gigantea* are also fully visible and round, hence the need for careful, and consistent, positioning. Roberts (1995) mentions the shape of the apophyses (dotted arrows) as having diagnostic value, but this is not very reliable.

In first-generation hybrid females, the openings to the spermathecae are intermediate between the situations described above, i.e. they appear as half-occluded circles. The degree of sclerotisation of the anterior arch in hybrids is variable. Of course, because of backcrossing into the parent species, all grades of intermediates with respect to this character may be encountered.

The relative orientation of the spermathecae, when viewed dorsally in cleared material, also helps to distinguish the species. In *T. saeva*, the spermathecae strongly converge towards the anterior end; whereas in *T. gigantea* they remain roughly parallel (Figs g and h, respectively). Quantifying this difference is problematic because of the considerable variation in the details of spermathecal shape between individuals. The direction of twist of the anterior end of the spermathecae also seems to differ. In *T. saeva* the twist is strongly outwards (Fig. g, arrow), whereas in *T. gigantea* it is weakly inwards or shows no discernible twist at all (Fig. h, arrow). In hybrids the spermathecal morphology is intermediate (Fig. i)



All line drawings, except for Fig. d, are modified from Merrett (1980).

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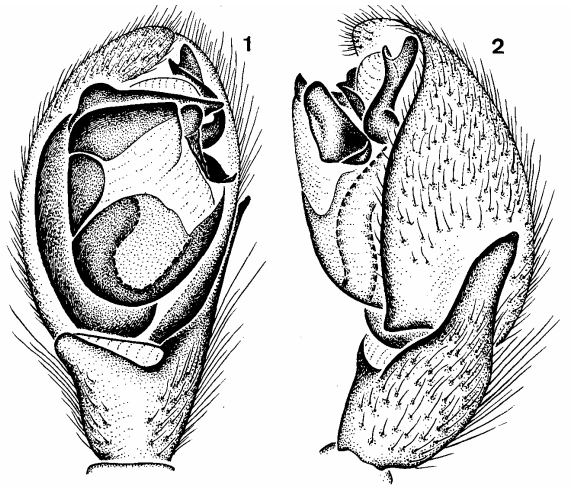
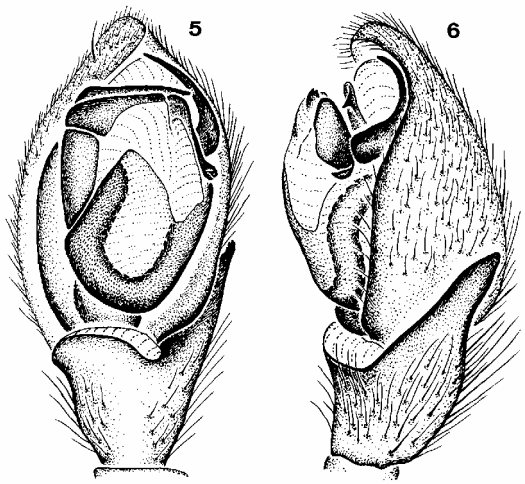
Author: Geoff Oxford

Identification of *Zelotes apricorum* and *Z. subterraneus*

These are the only two *Zelotes* species in the British fauna that are likely to be confused. Males can be distinguished with little difficulty by reference to the tip of the of the embolus. Although this can be seen in both ventral and ecto-lateral view, in practice it is best seen if the palp is rotated approximately 45º away from the horizontal and viewed from slightly anteriorly. Although this is easier if the palp is dissected from the cephalothorax it is not normally essential to do so. In *Z. apricorum*, the tip of the embolus has a prominent flange ventrally near the tip which is clearly rounded. This gives the end of the embolus a Y-shaped appearance (Figs. 1 & 2). By contrast, in *Z. subterraneus* has no flange and is smoothly curved and tapered towards the tip, giving it a characteristic sickle-shaped appearance (Figs. 5 & 6).

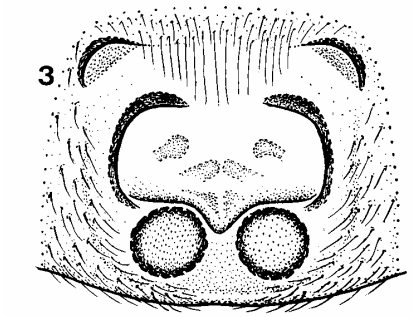


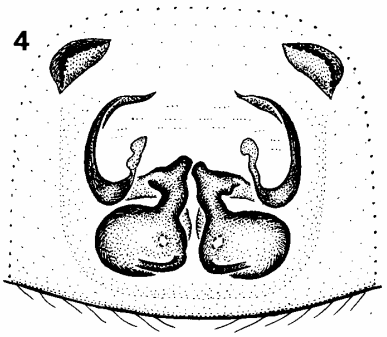
***Zelotes apricorum*.**
Male palp ventral and ecto-lateral



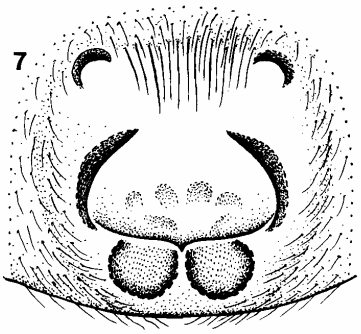
Zelotes subterraneus
Male palp ventral and ecto-lateral

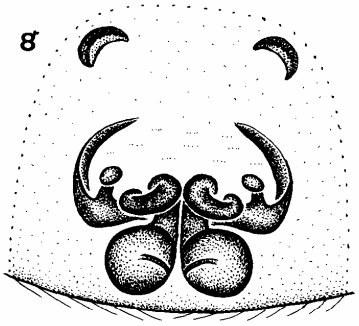
Females of the two species, by contrast, are very much more difficult to distinguish and the only reliable characters are the internal ducts of the dissected epigyne. In the dorsal aspect of the epigyne of *Z. apricorum*, the median epigynal ducts are simple and unlooped (Fig. 4). In *Z. subterraneus*, there is a clear additional loop in these ducts (Fig. 8). It should be noted that the appearance of the external epigyne varies in both species and cannot be used to reliably distinguish them.





Zelotes apricorum. 3. Epigyne ventral
4. Epigyne dorsal.





Zelotes subterraneus. 7. Epigyne ventral,
8. Epigyne dorsal.

An additional complication with these species is that, in some coastal populations, there is evidence for hybridisation between the two species, with some specimens showing characters intermediate between those illustrated here (Murphy & Platnick, 1986). However, out of a series of 93 specimens examined by these authors, only 25% showed clear signs of introgression between the species.

Habitats. *Zelotes apricorum* has a very wide range of habitats in Britain, but prefers warm, relatively dry situations. It is found in both calcareous and acid grasslands, coastal shingle (where it is often abundant), heathland and even open woodland. It is virtually absent from the mountains of Scotland and in northern England is almost confined to the western side of the central pennines (Harvey *et al*., 2002).

Z. subterraneus has so far been found in two types of habitat in the UK, under stones on mountains in northern England and central and eastern Scotland and in coastal habitats (most often shingle) in the south-east (see map on p. 328, Harvey *et al., op.cit*). However, because of the strong possibility that *Z. subterraneus* has been confused with *Z. apricorum* in the past, it is possible that it will eventually be found to occur in a wider range of habitats.

Figures are from Murphy & Platnick (1986).

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Harvey, P.R., Nellist, D.R. & Telfer, M.G. (eds) 2002. *Provisional atlas of British spiders (Arachnida, Araneae)*,Volumes 1 & 2. Huntingdon: Biological Records Centre.

Murphy, J.A. & Platnick, N.I. 1986. On *Zelotes subterraneus* in Britain (Araneae, Gnaphosidae). *Bull. Br. arachnol. Soc*. **7:** 97-100.

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Spider Recording Scheme News March 2009, No. 63

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 64 will be published in July 2009. Please send contributions by the end of May at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Editorial

I am enormously grateful to all the contributors to this issue and once again I would like to make a plea to all recorders for contributions to the newsletter –articles are usually from a small band of regular contributors, but there must be many more active arachnologists out there who regularly find interesting spiders or make observations that would be of interest to others.

I have received several large datasets in Excel recently from Jonty Denton, Bob Merritt, Geoff Oxford and Liverpool Museum, as well as MapMate syncs from Annette and Allan Binding, Pip Collyer, Robert Cumming, Mike Davidson, Paul Lee, Doug Marriott, Jennifer Newton, Ray Ruffell, Tony Russell-Smith and Howard Williams. I am very grateful indeed to all these recorders for their hard work in recording and providing these data.

Completion of the national status of spiders review has again been delayed, but we have now incorporated feedback received and the work should be finished soon. The final list will contain significant changes to the consultation list provided in the July 2008 newsletter.

Further guidance is included in this newsletter to help in the identification of difficult species, where reliable identification can be particularly problematic. Those available to date are all available on the BAS website at http://www.britishspiders.org.uk/html/bas.php?page=difficultsp and more will be added as these become available.

Polypropylene Tubes

by Annette Binding

Recent information from Peter Harvey regarding tubes for long term storage of specimens in alcohol indicated that polypropylene tubes were much better than glass ones. Glass tubes need the alcohol replenishing on a fairly regular basis and this can be very time consuming so Peter recommended polypropylene tubes which do not need topping up. We researched the suppliers of this type of tubes on the internet and found the Teklab Ltd website. We telephoned them and explained what we wanted to use the tubes for. They were very helpful and sent us some samples of the type of tubes we required together with their catalogue within two days. We chose two sizes of tubes and caps then ordered them by telephone. The order was delivered two days later by TNT Courier. The tubes we ordered are supplied by the 1000 with the caps to fit them being sold separately also by the 1000. There are many other types of tube in the catalogue which are supplied in varying quantities although not all of them are suitable for storing spiders in alcohol. There is a small surcharge for orders under £50.

Teklab contact details are as follows:-
Teklab (ML) Ltd
9 Dorothy Terrace
Sacriston
Durham
DH7 6LG

Tel No. 0191 3710451; website: www.teklab.co.uk

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Woolly Jumpers in Aberdeen

by Mike Davidson

You'll be pleased to hear this is not an item about Scottish knitwear but is about some old and recent records for the salticid *Pseudeuophrys lanigera*, which frequents roofs and buildings. For those who absolutely have to have a common name - I was going to title this "The False Eye-browed Woolly Jumper" (loosely based on Parker, 1993) – but I thought better of it! Hopefully the current fad for inventing common names dies out soon.

Shortly after having some roofing work done at our house in September 2008, I found a small jumping spider on the ceiling above my head, beside the Velux window. When I eventually got round to identifying it I found it was a male *P. lanigera*, a species I had not previously seen and I was surprised to find was not the first record for Aberdeen. The Provisional Atlas (Harvey *et al*., 2002) has only two Scottish locations for this species – Edinburgh and Aberdeen. On checking up on the Aberdeen records I discovered that they had been attributed to the wrong year – 1974 instead of 1984 (pers. comm. Claire Geddes). Claire tells me that several male and female specimens were collected for her in the School of Pharmacy at what is now Robert Gordon University (VC92).

So it was good to confirm that *P. lanigera* is still present in Aberdeen. Its recent appearance in our house no doubt resulting from the disturbance caused by the slaters (the human kind) on the roof.

Having offered to provide some I.D. tuition to a

potential enthusiast over the Christmas holidays, I did a major tidy-up of my spider collection and desk. Amongst the miscellaneous tubes was an unidentified salticid, collected (probably by a colleague) on an inside wall at my place of work, south of the River (Dee) in Aberdeen, in September 2006. Of course this proved to be *P. lanigera* (female) and the first record for VC91 (Kincardineshire). A New Year's Resolution to be tidier might be appropriate but I would miss the excitement of discovery so close to the microscope.

References

Harvey, P.R., Nellist, D.R. & Telfer, M.G. (Eds) 2002. *The Provisional Atlas of British Spiders (Arachnida, Araneae)*, Huntingdon: Biological Records Centre.

Parker, J.R. 1993. *British Arachnological Society – Members' Handbook, 2.5 Names of Spiders* (unpublished).

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The arachnids of Dunbennan Cemetery, Aberdeenshire. Part 1: The virtues of a sound beating

by Mike Davidson

My visit, on 5th July 2008, to Dunbennan cemetery (NJ503408) - near the town of Huntly, in Aberdeenshire - was a return visit to search for more specimens of a harvestman I had collected on 17th June - which had me completely stumped and will be the subject of Part 2. I concluded the visit with a fairly half-hearted beating of some yew trees, watching the debris being blown by a strong wind beyond my carefully placed plastic sheet!

The cemetery has been closed to "new customers" for some years but is still maintained (mown and tidied) by the Council. The church has long gone and the cemetery is adjacent to a farm yard and surrounded by a mixture of farmland and commercial woodland, near to the River Deveron.

The debris I did manage to collect was a mixture of needles and the dried orange coloured male flowers of the yew. The only mature spiders I collected from the yew beatings were *Bathyphantes gracilis*, *Textrix denticulata* and *Lepthyphantes tenuis*. As I was about to clear the sheet, part of the orange coloured flower debris wandered off. This proved to be a juvenile dictynid which gave me no clue to its identity and (along with the harvestman) lured me back on 30th July.

This time, in less windy conditions, the beating added a few more species to the list (*Pityohyphantes phrygianus*, *Lepthyphantes minutus* and *Philodromus aureolus*) and again, amongst the yew flower detritus, was an orangey dictynid. Careful searching of the yew foliage, for what I expected to be typical dictynid "nests", produced a total of one sub-adult male and three adult females and egg cases.

Meanwhile back at the lab...much to my surprise they turned out to be *Dictyna pusilla* – a BAP species whose local distribution I had just reviewed for the LBAP group and Local Records Centre. There are a number of known localities for this spider in N.E. Scotland – mainly around the Cairngorms, along the Spey and Dee valleys. There are lowland sites at Darnaway and Aberdeen; however, the most interesting aspect of this new location is the habitat. The SRS Provisional Atlas[1] says, "*D. pusilla* is found on low, dry or dead vegetation where it spins an irregular retreat resembling that of *D. arundinacea*". So far I have found no mention in the literature of *D. pusilla* having been found on yew or any similar evergreen. I would be interested to hear of similar occurrences.

***Dictyna pusilla* adult female**
Photographs © Mike Davidson

A further visit to Dunbennan was made on 12th September, in the hope of finding a mature male (and still looking for that pesky harvestman). The weather was calm and about 16°C. Beating and searching the yews produced a much longer list of spiders with a further two adult female *D. pusilla* and numerous juveniles of various sizes. Several nests were found with egg cocoons.

Having got my eye in, I visited several other places locally where I knew there would be yew – mostly National Trust for Scotland properties – without any success. The reason I think is that in all cases except Dunbennan, the yew undergoes regular clipping.

Dictyna pusilla appears to be ideally suited to this habitat and I would be surprised if it was not found elsewhere in yew and other conifers. Its coloration is quite variable, but generally seems well camouflaged amongst the dead male flowers. It is probably most easily found by searching the twigs for the nests, as they are not

easily dislodged by beating. Many of the males were almost mature and may over-winter as adults. Hopefully this can be tested over the coming months.

***Dictyna pusilla* egg cocoons on yew tree.**
Photographs © Mike Davidson

Footnote: During October a very brief examination, as darkness fell, of an un-pruned yew in a disused cemetery in the city of Perth (regrettably not Australia) produced a couple of immature *Dictyna*s. These look likely to be *D. pusilla* and hopefully this can be confirmed in the spring. The tree also yielded *Scotophaeus blackwalli, Anelosimus vittatus*.

References:

Harvey, P.R., Nellist, D.R. & Telfer, M.G. (eds) 2002. *Provisional atlas of British spiders (Arachnida, Araneae), Volume 2.* Huntingdon: Biological Records Centre.

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The Arachnids of Dunbennan Cemetery, Aberdeenshire. Part 2: A leiobunid harvestman new to Scotland and the British Isles?

by Mike Davidson

I visited Dunbennan Cemetery (NJ503408), near Huntly in Aberdeenshire on 17th June 2008 to look for isopods and was rather surprised to find a mature female leiobunid harvestman so early in the year, hiding behind a gravestone which was leaning against a wall.

It was far too big to be *L. rotundum* or *L. blackwalli* and completely the wrong colour for those species, and I made a note to return later in the year to search for an adult male. As it turned out I became a regular visitor to the cemetery during 2008 to search for *Dictyna pusilla*.

Several juveniles were found during July and August but eventually adult males were collected during September. Reference was made to Martens (1978) in an attempt to identify it – but with no success. Eventually I contacted Hay Wijnhoven in Holland and Axel Schoenhoffer at the University of Maintz, in Germany for their assistance. Initial suggestions, based on my photographs were that it was either *L. rupestre* or *L. tiscae*.

Meanwhile I found a male, of what appeared to be this species, in the corridor at my place of work in Aberdeen about 30 miles from the original site. A search on the walls outside produced several more (along with *L. rotundum*) and reassurance that I had not inadvertently translocated it. A search at the Cruickshank Botanic Gardens in Aberdeen also produced several specimens showing that the species is well established in the area.

A selection of specimens from these three populations has now been sent to Axel for morphological comparison with related species and DNA analysis and I eagerly await his opinion. Axel's initial view is that it is definitely not *Leiobunum rupestre* but related to either *Leiobunum tisciae* or *Nelima appeninica* which are extremely similar and their status is taxonomically in question.

Leiobunum tiscae was reported to have been found in Derbyshire (Martens, 1978) but the species was rejected from the British list by Hillyard & Sankey (1989) and is not mentioned by Hillyard (2005).

I would be very pleased to hear from anyone who has found similar leiobunids.

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New finds in VC 60, north Lancashire, in 2008

by Jennifer Newton

Pitfall trapping on Heysham Moss, SD4260, a tiny area of relict mossland backing on to a new housing estate in Heysham, produced several new finds for the hectad and site, and a new species for the vice-county, *Robertus arundineti*. Traps set up on the Lancashire Wildlife Trust nature reserve in April, May and October produced 6 specimens, 2 females and 4 males. By far the most numerous species was *Pirata uliginosus*, with *Antistea elegans* a distant second. Surprisingly *Pirata uliginosus* was a new record for the site, in spite of a considerable amount of casual recording carried out over the past few years.

A male *Clubiona subtilis* was collected by Jeremy Steeden on September 7th off sparse marram grass from a remnant inland sand dune area in Fairhaven, south of Blackpool, SD3327. Intriguingly this is a species of wetlands, both inland and coastal, mostly in the south-east with a few records from sand dunes (Harvey *et al*., 2002). This appears to be the first record between Wales and the Inner Hebrides.

Another find in the Fylde by Jeremy Steeden was a male *Enoplognatha latimana* from sparse grassland flora on cindery ground at Martin Fold, on the south-east side of Blackpool SD3231. There have been a number of records dating back to 1988 from the south Lancashire dunes, Ainsdale, Freshfield, Formby, but this is the first north of the R. Ribble, in VC60, and appears to be the most northerly record in Britain so far. Although north of Stan Dobson's (Dobson, 2008) recent finds from the Rotherham area it is much closer to other known sites than his. The Rotherham sites sound similar to the one near Blackpool, sparse flora on dry nutrient-poor ground.

Just before his untimely death in October 2008 Neil Robinson collected a new pseudoscorpion, *Pselaphochernes scorpioides* from a wood ant nest in Eaves Wood, SD4676, a National Trust site near Lancaster. This is the first record north of the R. Ribble. Although seriously hampered by ill-health, Neil continued to investigate the invertebrate inhabitants of wood ant nests, placing sample contents of the nest on a low table, from where he could extract specimens while seated on a picnic chair. He has done much invertebrate recording in the north-west, from his own and others' collections, and he will be much missed.

References

Harvey, P.R., Nellist, D.R. & Telfer, M.G. 2002. *Provisional Atlas of British spiders (Arachnida, Araneae)* p.312.

Dobson, S. 2008. Watch out for *Enoplognatha latimana.* *Newsl. Br arachnol Soc.* **112**: 12

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Spiders of Birkdale Green Beach, Sefton Coast

by Richard Burkmar

During May and June of 2008, Inger Kristiansen – then a student at the University of Edinburgh – undertook some invertebrate sampling on Birkdale Green Beach on the Sefton Coast. Birkdale Green Beach is a relatively new feature which is currently about 4km long and up to 200m wide (Smith 2007). Whilst the dune system along much of the Sefton Coast is subject to erosion, Birkdale Green Beach is a prograding section where a mosaic of embryo dunes, slack, swamp, saltmarsh and wet woodland has been developing since around 1990.

Inger was investigating the development and conservation value of the unique Alder Woodland (*Alnus glutinosa*) which has developed along strand lines on the beach (Kristiansen 2008) and was subsequently awarded a Master of Science degree with distinction. Her invertebrate sampling consisted mainly of pitfall trapping supplemented with a little water trapping and beating.

As part of Inger's work, I determined the spiders she collected (with the assistance of Jennifer Newton where determination proved difficult or confirmation was required). This short note summarises the spider records resulting from this work.

In all 734 adult spiders, of 41 species, were identified (see table 1). A further 73 spiders were not identified with certainty (either because they were immature or badly decomposed). Although, as expected, a number of typical specialists of sandy habitats are represented, e.g. *Xerolycosa miniata* and *Arctosa perita*, there are also species more normally associated with other habitats such as *Pardosa purbeckensis* (estuarine) and *Pirata piraticus* (wet habitats). This reflects the variable character of Birkdale Green Beach and the habitat mosaic found there.

Worthy of special mention is *Arctosa leopardus*, a very local species but the most abundant spider collected (251 of the 734 identified). This species is often associated with seasonally wet habitats (Peter Harvey, pers. comm.) and the dune slack and swamp habitats of the Green Beach may suit it very well. Lycosids, in general, were well represented which reflects both the main sampling method of pitfall trapping - a technique well suited to ground living species – and the sampling period which coincided with the adult season for many of them.

Another significant species is the clubionid *Cheiracanthium virescens*, which is very rare in Lancashire, though it has been previously recorded in low numbers on the Sefton Coast from saltmarsh and dunes (Jennifer Newton, pers. comm.).

Perhaps the most notable records were those for *Argenna subnigra,* which is a species of predominantly southern distribution. These are the northernmost modern records for the species in Britain and the first ever for the Sefton Coast.

Taxon	Records	Individuals
Walckenaeria vigilax	7	10
Dicymbium nigrum	1	1
Gnathonarium dentatum	1	1
Gongylidium rufipes	1	1
Hypomma bituberculatum	2	3
Pocadicnemis pumila sens. str.	1	1
Oedothorax gibbosus	2	4
Oedothorax fuscus	3	13
Oedothorax retusus	11	23
Cnephalocotes obscurus	1	1
Troxochrus scabriculus	1	3
Erigone dentipalpis	3	8
Erigone atra	1	2
Lepthyphantes tenuis	4	4
Tetragnatha extensa	2	4
Tetragnatha montana	1	1
Pachygnatha clercki	9	12
Pachygnatha degeeri	10	21
Larinioides cornutus	1	5
Araniella opisthographa	1	1
Pardosa purbeckensis	22	84
Pardosa pullata	16	104
Pardosa nigriceps	9	12
Xerolycosa miniata	7	10
Alopecosa pulverulenta	10	33
Trochosa ruricola	10	27
Trochosa terricola	1	2
Arctosa perita	7	10
Arctosa leopardus	24	251
Pirata piraticus	12	26
Hahnia nava	3	3
Argenna subnigra	4	5
Clubiona reclusa	4	4
Clubiona stagnatilis	9	11
Clubiona neglecta sens. str.	7	10
Cheiracanthium virescens	1	1
Drassodes cupreus	3	4
Haplodrassus signifer	2	2
Zelotes latreillei	2	2
Philodromus cespitum	3	3
Xysticus cristatus	10	11

References

Kristiansen, I., 2008. *The Development and Conservation Value of Alder (Alnus glutinosa) Woodland on Birkdale Green Beach*. University of Edinburgh.

Smith, P.H., 2007. The Birkdale Green Beach-a sand-dune biodiversity hotspot. *British Wildlife*, 19(1), 11.

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News from Lincolnshire

by Annette Binding

One species of spider, *Cicurina cicur,* was added to the Lincolnshire list in 2007. Although collected by Colin Smith in 2005 the specimen was overlooked and was not identified until April 2007. Colin collected the spider at Wickenby Wood on the 16th March 2005. It is the only species in the genus *Cicurina* in Europe and looks very like a clubionid although it differs from those in having a shining glossy carapace, not covered in fine hairs like a clubionid. *Cicurina cicur* favours dark, damp habitats such as cellars and caves and also occurs under stones and in moss in wet woodlands. The species is rare in Britain and most records are from Southern and Eastern England although there are a few records from Yorkshire and Scotland.

As well as *Cicurina cicur*, Colin Smith found a number of spiders with very few other records. They included three species with only one previous record. These were a male *Araneus alsine* which was attracted to a mercury vapour lamp at Willingham Forest on the 13th September 2007. Rare in Britain, the species was previously recorded by L A Carr at Stainton Wood near Langworth in June 1919. It likes damp clearings and ditches in woodland.

The second species with only one previous record was a female *Philodromus histrio* which Colin collected at Crowle Moor NNR on 28th May 2007. The spider, which is distinctively marked, is usually found on heather and the previous Lincolnshire record was from Kirkby Moor in 1995.

The third species found by Colin and having only one previous county record was *Allomengea scopigera*. Colin collected two females and one male at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe – Rimac on 10th August 2007. The species which is widespread in northern and western Britain also has some coastal records from south-east England. It likes wet habitats including salt-marshes. The only previous Lincolnshire record was from Alkborough, one male found on the sea-shore by George Whatmough in September 1976.

Among the other spiders found by Colin Smith in 2007 was the linyphiid, *Walckenaeria cuspidata.* The female spider was collected at Bishopbridge on the 8th March. It was the fifth county record and the first since 1970.

Colin also found two male *Philodromus collinus* (Notable b) at Scotton Common LWT Reserve on 27 June, the 5th county record for this species which is uncommon in Britain.

Both Colin Smith and Stephen Sowden recorded the linyphiid, *Floronia bucculenta*, the single member of the genus *Floronia* in northern Europe. Colin found one female at Willingham Forest on the 31st August and Stephen Sowden found one specimen, also a female, at Graizelound on 3rd October. They were the fifth and sixth county records of this species.

Due in part to family illness and bad weather my own contribution to spider recording in 2007 was mainly in identification of specimens caught by other people. We did, however, make two very early visits to Hardy Gang

Wood in March and noticed the large number of *Cyclosa conica* webs. This distinctively shaped spider makes a web which often has an irregular band of thicker silk across it, known as a stabilimentum. Most of the webs we found on our visits had a stabilimentum. Also at Hardy Gang Wood, we found good numbers of the linyphiid spider, *Drapetisca socialis*. It is the single European species of the genus *Drapetisca* and spins its web on the trunks of trees. The web is extremely fine, making it very difficult to see. Although not uncommon in the county, Hardy Gang Wood was a new site for this species.

Finally a large black spider found at Skellingthorpe by Glenda Peacock was sent to me in October via Phil Porter. It was thought to be a black widow. It was however a large female *Steatoda grossa,* the third county record of this spider. The species which is related to the true black widow, is much commoner in the south of the country. It is, as this one was, usually found in houses and is relatively harmless to man.

I am grateful to all those who have sent records and specimens to me in 2007.

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Uloborus plumipes, a new site in Lincolnshire

by Annette Binding

On 6th November 2008 my husband Allan and I attended an optics show at The Lawn in Lincoln. While we were there we also visited the Sir Joseph Banks Conservatory, a tropical glasshouse, to look at the plants. The conservatory contains plants reminiscent of those collected by Sir Joseph Banks on Captain Cooke's voyage of discovery to the Southern Ocean in the late 18th Century. There are ponds containing Koi Carp as well as running water keeping the humidity up for the plants, some of which are very large including Norfolk Island Pine and banana trees.

We soon noticed a large number of spiders' webs on many of the plants but at first we could see no spiders. Then we realised that some of the pieces of debris in the webs were the spiders. Allan managed to pot a couple of specimens and we brought them home. When I looked at them later under the microscope I was surprised and pleased to see that what I thought might be *Achaearanea tepidariorum* were in fact two female *Uloborus plumipes*, the first I had ever seen. I know of only five previous records of this species in Lincolnshire, four in the north of the county from Scunthorpe and Epworth and one in the south from Gonerby near Grantham.

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Gongylidiellum latebricola new to Lincolnshire in 2009

by Annette Binding

On the 15th January Colin Smith (Lincolnshire County Moth Recorder) gave me a small number of spiders caught this year. Among them were three tubes of spiders collected at Linwood Warren LWT Reserve on New Year's Day. One of the tubes contained spiders collected from moss. A few of them were immature but mature species included *Walckenaeria acuminata*, *Euophrys frontalis*, *Ceratinella brevis* and *Savignia frontata*. There was also a male linyphiid *Gongylidiellum latebricola* which I had not seen before. A search of the Lincolnshire county records showed that the species had not been recorded in the county before.

Linwood Warren is located about one and a half miles east of Market Rasen in Central Lincolnshire. It is mainly acid grassland and wet heathland bordered by mixed woodland and has damp areas rich in mosses and lichens.

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Enoplognatha latimana new to Lincolnshire 2008

by Annette Binding

In 2008 Colin Smith sent me a large number of spiders many of which had been collected at mercury vapour and actinic light traps which had been put out at various locations for moth recording. Colin and his light traps are regular visitors to Willingham Forest, a site which has already produced many interesting species and a tube collected from a mercury vapour lamp on the 30th June 2008 was no exception. There were several different species in the tube, among them were two male *Enoplognatha*. The first one I looked at turned out to be the usual *Enoplognatha ovata* and I expected the second specimen to be the same. However when I looked at the second spider I discovered that it was *Enoplognatha latimana*, a species I had only previously seen on Anglesey, North Wales. I did not think it had been recorded in Lincolnshire and a search of the county records confirmed that *Enoplognatha latimana* was in fact new to the county. The spider was the *lineata* form.

Willingham Forest is a large area of Forestry Plantation woodland, mostly pine, planted on sandy heathland. There are damp areas where the River Rase runs through it and also open areas of sandy heathland offering a wide range of habitat.

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Segestria florentina (Rossi, 1790) - A spider new to North Gloucestershire

by David Haigh

A phone call on August 29th from a resident of Tredworth, Gloucester alerted me to the presence of large wall-dwelling spiders. I visited the property and soon observed the tube webs of *Segestria florentina*. I was shown a moribund specimen which confirmed its identity. There were many webs at the front and rear of the terraced property in old brick walls and behind wooden fascia boards. As far as I am aware this is the first record for North Gloucestershire,Vice-County 33. It has been known for many years in Bristol, at the docks and Clifton.

From this time the local media took up the discovery and it was run in the Weekend Citizen, September 6th, lead story 'Invasion of Green-fanged Spiders', Gloucestershire Echo and Western Daily Press, September 8th, all with accompanying photographs. This publicity generated a number of phone calls from anxious residents in Gloucester and Cheltenham. I was able to confirm further colonies in Cheltenham and Saintbridge, Gloucester. Reactions by residents varied from 'I want them exterminated' to curiosity and interest.

On September 11th ITV Local News/West did a photo shoot and interview with local residents and myself against the back-drop of an old brick wall. I suggested there were probably thousands of this spider in the area judging from the numbers in this 20m brick wall. It was pointed out later that this was probably not a very diplomatic observation. The Sunday Telegraph carried a short article with photograph and in October Times 2, 'Young Times' expanded the spider theme by carrying a cautionary article on exotic spiders which are 'hitching lifts' on imported food and plants. Thanks to climate change and an absence of severe frosts these spiders are able to establish themselves. During the week, October 13th the BBC News Channel took a closer look at alien invaders that are in the UK. The spiders mentioned were 'our' tube-web spider and the 'False Widow', *Steatoda nobilis* (already in Tewkesbury). The ultimate accolade was *Segestria*'s appearance on BBC's 'The One Show' when Mike Dilger in Bristol enticed the spider from its tube using a tuning fork.

***Segestria florentina* showing iridescent green jaws.**
Photograph © Colin Twissell

***Segestria florentina* at entrance of web.**
Photograph © Tim Gobourn

Many references to *Segestria* mention its aggressiveness and ability to inflict a nasty bite. However because of its habitat a person would have to be unlucky or foolhardy to even come into contact with it. Children could be warned not to poke their fingers into holes in walls. It is a large spider, body length up to 22mm and all such spiders should be treated with respect. Certainly males wander the walls at night on courtship but in daytime these spiders are deep inside their tubes.

Segestria has been in this country certainly since the 1930s when it is believed it was imported in shipping from the Mediterranean. It has been established in south coast ports and market towns since that time. It is likely that *Segestria* will make further progress northwards. It is an easy species to locate since the webs are characteristic and walls of docks, churches and older residential properties are favoured habitat. If you are lucky to see the spider note the iridescent green/bronze chelicerae (jaws).

Segestria is found in 3 tetrads in Gloucester, SO81I, SO81J and SO81N and one in Cheltenham SO92G. I would welcome further records of *Segestria florentina.* I am grateful to Colin Twissell for the photographs and 5 more records from Gloucester including the boundary wall of Gloucester Rugby Club.

"Merrivale" 27 St. Lukes Road, CHELTENHAM,
Gloucestershire, GL53 7JF

Clubiona juvenis at Catfield Fen, Norfolk

by Pip Collyer

Last Summer, Helen Smith gathered together a number of volunteers to help with a project to evaluate the possibility of translocating the fen raft spider, *Dolomedes plantarius*. The establishment of additional populations is one of the BAP objectives for this very rare species. Unless new populations are discovered, this is likely to be achieved by translocation to new sites. Potentially suitable sites in Norfolk and Suffolk were to be visited to establish whether *D. plantarius* is present and, if not, to identify habitats suitable for future introduction of the spider.

On 8th August I met up with Helen and another volunteer, Dave Hewitt, at the Butterfly Conservation Site at Catfield Fen just east of Barton Broad. As we set off I noticed that Helen had several metres of stout rope wrapped around her and I remember commenting that I didn't think we would come across too many mountains. Helen explained that she was carrying it as a condition of consent to go on the site. We soon saw the first of several "Danger Keep Out" signs and within half an hour I was to pay for my flippancy as I had sunk up to my waist in a dyke [some water but mostly mud] and was finding it difficult to move let alone get myself out. I had stepped off the end of an insubstantial plank over the dyke onto what I thought was solid ground only to find it was not. In spite of being much smaller and lighter than me, Helen rescued me with the aid of the stout rope, Dave being on the wrong side of the dyke to help.

At this stage I would like to be able to say that on emptying my gumboots I found *Argyroneta aquatica*, but I didn't, although a female with young was found a couple of weeks later when we visited the RSPB Strumpshaw Marshes Reserve.

It was warm and sunny so I decided to ignore my bedraggled state and carry on. I am glad I did because later that day the eagle eyed Dave Hewitt spotted a silk retreat about a metre off the ground as we were working our way through reeds. He managed to persuade the occupant to drop into my pot and I was later able to identify it as a female *Clubiona juvenis*, Nationally Vulnerable (RDB2). The carapace is distinctive being long and almost parallel-side and I would hope to be able to recognise it in the field in future.

***Clubiona juvenis* showing slim appearance. Photograph © Peter Harvey**

***Clubiona juvenis* showing anterior median eyes much larger than laterals. Photograph © Peter Harvey**

An eventful, informative and enjoyable day was rounded off by being shouted at by an irate adjoining owner whose land we had inadvertently trespassed onto. However, Helen's tact and charm soon calmed him down to the extent that he invited her to survey his land also!

25 Harford Manor Close, Norwich, NR2 2LW

Spider recording at Stanford Battle Training Ground

by Pip Collyer

Early in 2007 I was granted a permit to record at the Stanford Battle Training Ground [Stanta] in the Norfolk Breckland. As part of the process, I was shown a 20 minute video of all the horrible things which could happen to me on the site if I picked up some unexploded piece of ordnance or tripped over an unseen trip wire. Since presumably the idea of a trip wire is to remain unseen it seemed to me that this might be a problem but having got that far, I chose to assume that the MOD was merely covering its backside.

Stanta covers about 21 square miles of beautiful countryside between Thetford and Swaffham and encompasses four villages. The villagers were evacuated during the War and whilst the churches remain, although boarded up, there are now few of the original houses left standing. The area is mainly grassland, grazed by sheep (who are presumably able to avoid the trip wires!) but there are areas of heather, gorse, mixed woodland and conifer plantations.

During the year I visited Stanta five times, and faced with such a huge site, I decided to concentrate my efforts on one or two small defined areas. Whilst I did not find anything new to Norfolk I recorded a total of 80 species. I feel sure that this number would have been greatly increased had I used my two stroke vacuum sampler but, in view of the video, I was reluctant to do so. Noteworthy finds were:-

Centromerus incilium – Nationally Scarce [Notable B]
Araniella inconspicua – Nationally Scarce [Notable B]
Trachyzelotes pedestris – Nationally Scarce [Notable B]

The year was not without incident. One day I was sitting in my car, parked beside a track in an open wooded area, whilst eating my lunch. I was wondering whether the small arms fire I could hear was getting closer when round the corner came two soldiers, blacked out and in full battle gear quartering the ground on each side of the track. My sense of unease increased when one took cover behind the car whilst he read his map. I was relieved when he moved on!

25 Harford Manor Close, Norwich, NR2 2LW

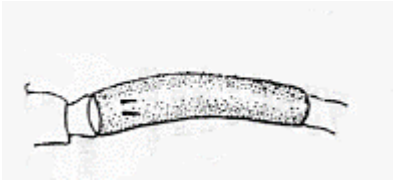
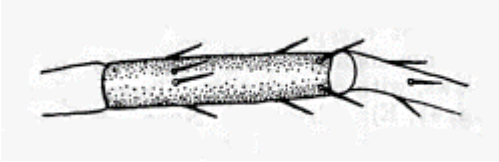
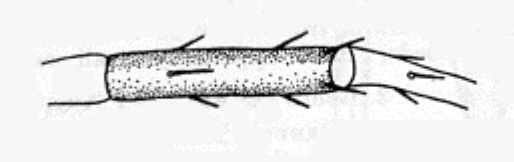
Identification of *Dysdera crocata* and *Dysdera erythrina*

The females of these two species can be very difficult and some may be best left unidentified unless dissected. Adult females have no epigyne, but in *D. crocata* in particular the adnexae are visible through the cuticle in preserved specimens. Juveniles certainly cannot be reliably identified to species level. Particular caution is needed for any *Dysdera* recorded from synanthropic situations, where *D. erythrina* is unlikely to be found.

D. crocata is often found in synanthropic situations in gardens, post-industrial situations and various kinds of wasteground, as well as in shingle or stony habitats. Reliably identified *D. erythrina* suggest that it is a species much more restricted in habitat preferences, and is most likely to occur on heathland, old undisturbed coastal shingle and old grasslands.

The tibial spines are very variable and should not be relied on for identification. The femoral spines are a better guide but again are not totally reliable. If the dorsal femoral spine is present then it is certainly *D. crocata,* but these may be absent in some *D. crocata* leading to confusion with *D. erythrina*.

In living or freshly preserved individuals carapace colour is a guide – typically dark red in *erythrina*, more orange-red in *crocata*. There may be a subtle difference in abdomen colour as well.

	D. erythrina	***D. crocata***
Length	Smaller: male 7-8mm, female 9-10mm	Larger, male 9-10mm, female 11-15mm
Femur IV	No dorsal spines	Short spines (usually 2) dorsally, close to basal end 
Tibia IV	Usually with 2 ventral spines in basal half (apart from the lateral and apical spines) 	Usually with 1 ventral spine in basal half (apart from the lateral and apical spines) 
Female genital markings		Usually pronounced in preserved specimens
Male palp		

Figures from Locket & Millidge (1951).

References

Locket, G.H. & Millidge, A.F. 1951. *British Spiders* Volume 1. Ray Society, London.

Author: Peter Harvey

Identification of *Porrhomma* species

Female specimens of *Porrhomma* present particular problems of identification not only for the beginner, but in some cases for experienced arachnologists as well and it can certainly be considered a critical genus in our fauna. With the exception of two species (*P. errans* and *P. egeria*), which may be distinguished from other British members of the genus by details of their leg spination, all species require detailed and critical examination of the epigynes. As in many spiders, the external appearance of the epigyne in ventral view can be quite variable, particularly in the appearance of the internal structures seen through the cuticle, and care needs to be taken with isolated females for this reason. While most species can be reliably distinguished by careful examination of the epigyne in ventral view, there are a number of closely similar species pairs for which it is often advisable to dissect out and clear the epigyne so that it can be mounted on a slide and studied in dorsal view. Wherever possible, specimens should be compared with material in a reference collection which has been either identified or confirmed by an experienced arachnologist.

In the account below, the species are divided into five groups on the basis of leg spination. The first three groups present no particular problems of identification but the last two, which contain six out of the eleven species recorded from Britain, include a number of particularly difficult species.

Group I. All metatarsi with a single spine.

Porrhomma errans (Blackwall, 1841)

This species can readily be distinguished by the presence of a spine on each metatarsus which appears to be a reliable character. The external epigyne (Fig. 1) sometimes resembles that of *P. pallidum* but the epigynal opening is normally somewhat larger and the spermathecal ducts, seen through the cuticle are more curved and appear broader than those of *P. pallidum*. The species appears to be relatively scarce in Britain and has been found in a wide range of habitats. Although possibly most often in grassland, it has also been taken in woodland, coastal landslips, gardens and allotments. Harvey (in Harvey *et al*. 2002) suggests that it may have a requirement for some bare ground as part of its micro-habitat.

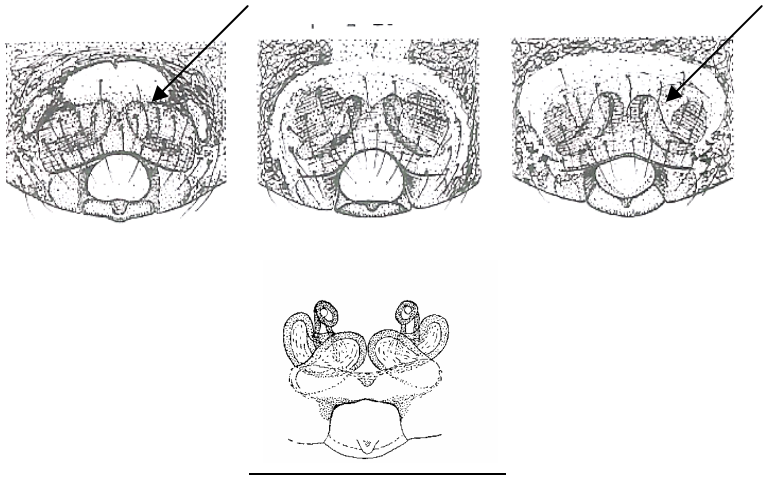


Figure. 1. *Porrhomma errans*. Epigynes in ventral view. Arrows indicate spermathecal ducts as seen through the cuticle. Bottom, cleared epigyne viewed ventrally.

Group II. All metatarsi spineless, femur I with two prolateral spines in addition to dorsal spines.

Porrhoma egeria Simon, 1884

The presence of two prolateral spines on femur I clearly distinguishes *Porrhoma egeria* from all other British species. The epigyne (Fig. 2) can be somewhat similar to that *P. rosenhaueri* and it has very small eyes, though not as extemely reduced as in *P. rosenhaueri*. The single prolateral spine on metatarsus I immediately distinguishes the latter species from *P. egeria*. This is again a relatively scarce species in Britain, although occurring throughout the country. Its habitat is probably largely subterranean and it has been taken in caves, mines, rock scree and occasionally cellars.

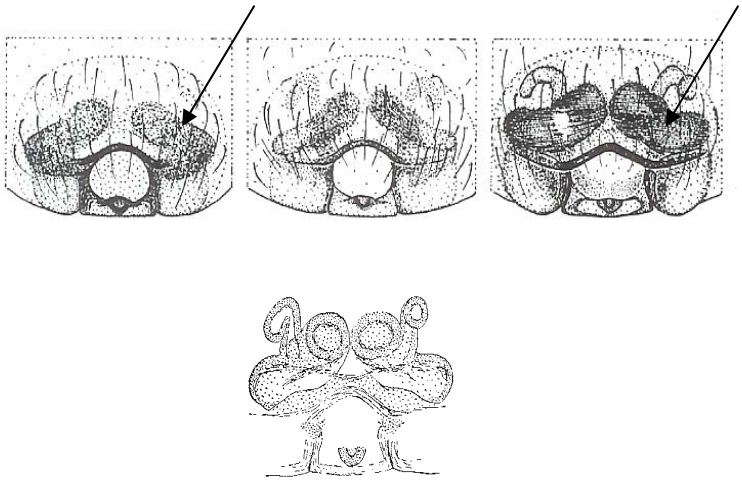


Figure 2. *Porrhomma egeria*. Epigynes in ventral view. Arrows indicate spermathecal ducts as seen through the cuticle. Bottom, cleared epigyne viewed ventrally.

Group III. Metatarsi spineless, femur I with one prolateral spine and with no dorsal spines, tibia I with prolateral spine.

Porrhoma oblitum (O.P-Cambridge, 1870)

The epigyne of this species is very similar to that of *Porrhomma montanum* but normally the epigynal opening is slightly narrower and the spermathecal ducts, as seen through the cuticle, have more of a comma shape (Fig. 3). The epigyne is also closely similar to that of *P. pygmaeum* (see below) and the two species can only reliably be distinguished by the presence of dorsal spines on femur I in *P. pygmaeum*. *P. oblitum* is usually very dark in colour (like *P. pygmaeum*) while *P. montanum* is usually paler and more orange-brown. This is a very local spider and is usually found in very wet litter in damp woodlands, including fen carr. It has also been swept from the field layer of fens.

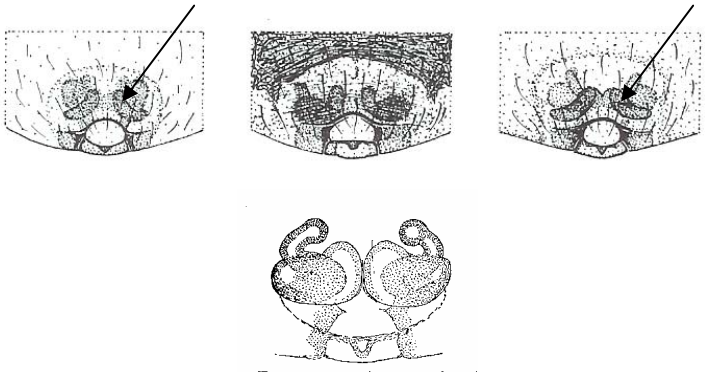


Figure 3. *Porrhomma oblitum*, epigynes in ventral view. Arrows indicate spermathecal ducts as seen through the cuticle. Bottom, cleared epigyne viewed ventrally.

Porrhomma montanum Jackson, 1913

The epigyne of *P. montanum* resembles that of *P. oblitum* but the epigynal opening is usually slightly narrower and the spermathecal ducts seen through the cuticle are straighter and less comma shaped (Fig. 4). The cleared epigyne is clearly distinct from that of *P. oblitum*. This species is normally somewhat larger than *P. oblitum*. *P. montanum* is typically an upland species where it occurs beneath rocks on mountains.

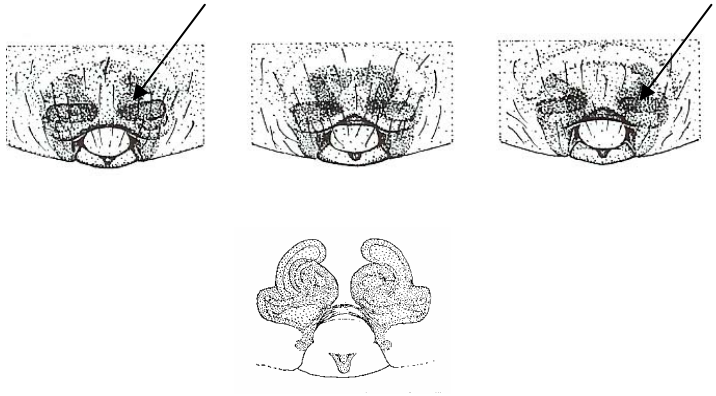


Figure 4. *Porrhomma montanum*, epigynes in ventral view. Arrows indicate copulatory ducts as seen through the cuticle. Bottom, cleared epigyne viewed ventrally.

Group IV. Metatarsi spineless, femur I with one prolateral spine and with no dorsal spines, tibia I without prolateral spine.

Porrhomma cambridgei Merrett, 1994

This species, only recently re-validated, closely resembles *P. oblitum* but lacks a prolateral spine on tibia I and has much smaller eyes. The legs are relatively longer and more slender than those of *P. oblitum* with the ratio of femur I length to carapace length of 0.82-0.91 as compared with 0.70-0.75 in *P. oblitum* (Merrett, 1994). As in other *Porrhomma* species, the appearance of the epigyne is variable (Fig. 5) and probably not distinguishable with certainty from that of *P. oblitum*. This is apparently a rare species in Britain, recorded from only four10 km squares. It occurs in grassland and arable fields and the reduced eyes and pale colour suggest it may be a subterranean species, living in soil cracks.

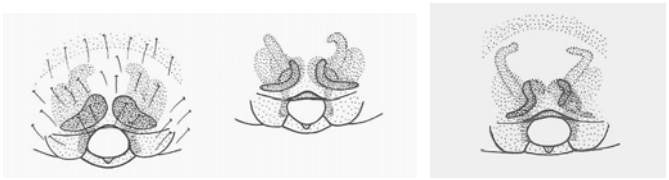


Figure 5. *Porrhomma cambridgei*, epigynes in ventral view. Note close similarity to *P. oblitum* (Fig. 3 above).

Group V. Metatarsi spineless, femur I with one prolateral spine and with one or two dorsal spines.

Among the six species included in this group, two, *P. pygmaeum* and *P. pallidum* have epigynal openings that are markedly smaller than the others. The remaining four species can be distinguished by a combination of the size and shape of the epigynal opening and the form of the internal ducts as seen through the cuticle. A number of the species can, however, have somewhat similar epigynes when viewed externally and it is sometimes helpful to examine the internal structure by dissecting out the epigyne and making a temporary slide mount.

Porrhomma pygmaeum (Blackwall, 1834)

P. pygmaeum has an epigyne with a particularly small opening which is notably narrower than that of *P. pallidum*. The spermathecal ducts, seen through the cuticle, are distinctive and frequently appear as two round spots (Fig. 6). The epigynal opening often appears much more opaque than in the other species of this group. The region anterior to the epigynal opening is often heavily pigmented and in this case it may be helpful to dissect and clear an epigyne to reveal the internal structures. In the cleared epigyne, the spermathecae are directed inwards (Fig. 6) while those of *P. pallidum* are directed forwards (Fig. 7). This is by far the commonest species of the genus in Britain and is normally found in damp marshy habitats. It is also a very common aeronaut and consequently may be found in all habitat strata of grasslands, scrub and woodland.

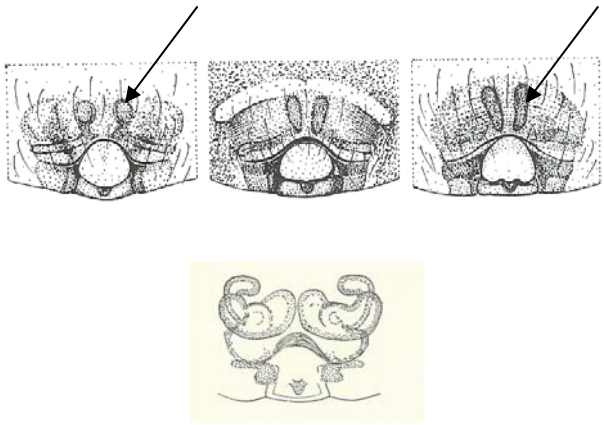


Figure 6. *Porrhomma pygmaeum,* top row, epigynes in ventral view, Arrows indicate spermathecae as seen through the cuticle, often less clearly visible than this. Bottom, cleared epigyne viewed ventrally.

Porrhomma pallidum Jackson, 1913

The epigyne of *P. pallidum* viewed ventrally is very similar to that of *P. pygmaeum* but the epigynal opening is relatively much wider. In addition, the spermathecal ducts, seen through the cuticle, appear quite different, resembling two "eyebrows" above the opening (Fig. 7). The ends of the spermathecae nearly always show through the cuticle as two distinct round spots. The spider is also normally much paler in overall colour than *P. pygmaeum* although recently moulted specimens of the latter species may resemble *P. pallidum* in colour. In the cleared epigyne, viewed dorsally, the spermathecae are directed forwards, rather than inwards as is the case in *P. pygmaeum* (Fig. 6). This is a widespread species in Britain, although commoner in the north than the south. It occurs in the ground layer of both woodlands and upland habitats, under stones or in moss.

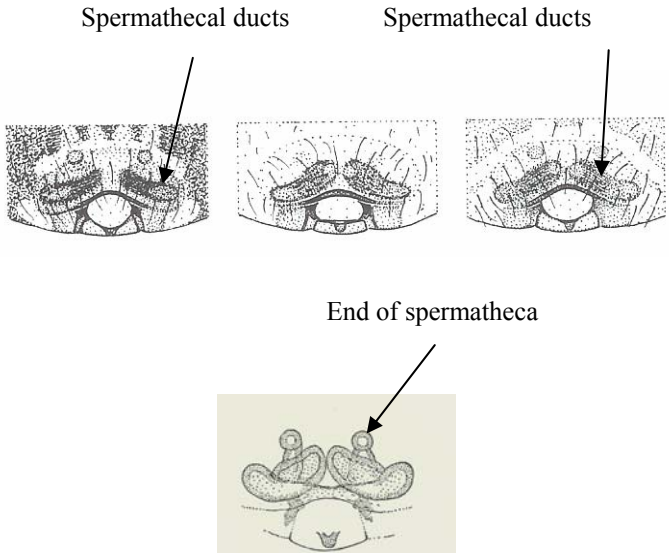


Figure 7. *Porrhomma pallidum,* top row, epigynes in ventral view, Arrows indicate spermathecal ducts as seen through the cuticle. Bottom, cleared epigyne viewed ventrally.

Porrhomma microphthalmum (O. P.-Cambridge, 1871)

In the epigyne of *P. microphthalmum* viewed ventrally, the spermathecal ducts seen through the cuticle are broad and appear like a pair of posteriorly diverging tear-drops, even in rather dark specimens (Fig. 8). The epigynal opening is rather square in outline compared with that of *P. convexum* (Fig. 9). The epigyne is similar in shape to that of *P. rosenhaueri* but the latter occurs only in caves and is extremely rare in Britain. The cleared epigyne viewed ventrally differs from that of *P. convexum* in that the spermathecae are directed forward (Fig. 8) whereas those of *P. convexum* are directed inwards (Fig. 9). *P. microphthalmum* is also a widespread species but, unlike *P. pallidum* is much more common in central and south-eastern Britain. It is commonly found in agricultural fields and sparsely vegetated grasslands including mudflats and saline grasslands. It is reputed to be partially subterranean, living in cracks in the soil.

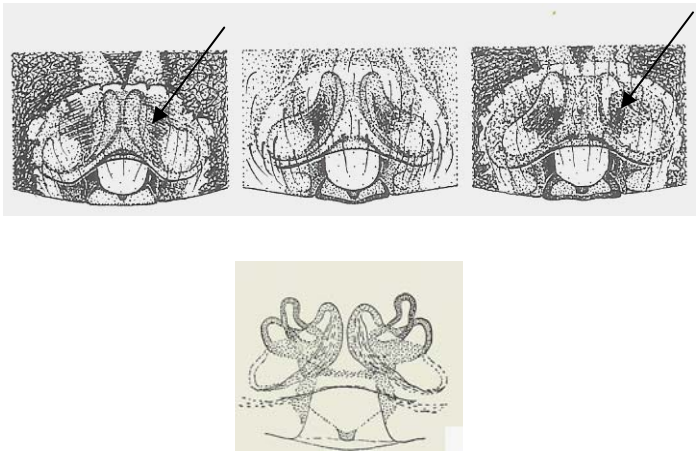


Figure 8. *Porrhomma microphthalmum*, top row, epigynes in ventral view, Arrows indicate spermathecal ducts as seen through the cuticle. Bottom, cleared epigyne viewed ventrally.

Porrhomma convexum Westring, 1861

The epigyne of *P. convexum,* viewed ventrally, is somewhat similar to that of *P. microphthalmum* but differs in that the epigynal opening is often slightly narrower and is distinctly more rounded anteriorly (Fig. 9). In this species the spermathecal ducts viewed through the cuticle are narrow and show a right angled bend with the central portion directed forward so that, in some specimens they appear like exclamation marks (Fig. 9). The cleared epigyne, viewed ventrally, is quite different in form from that of *P. microphthalmum* (Fig. 8). *P. convexum* is widespread but uncommon in central and northern England but rare in Scotland and southern England. It is normally found in damp mines and caves but it has also been taken in culverts, cellars, rock piles and thick undergrowth.

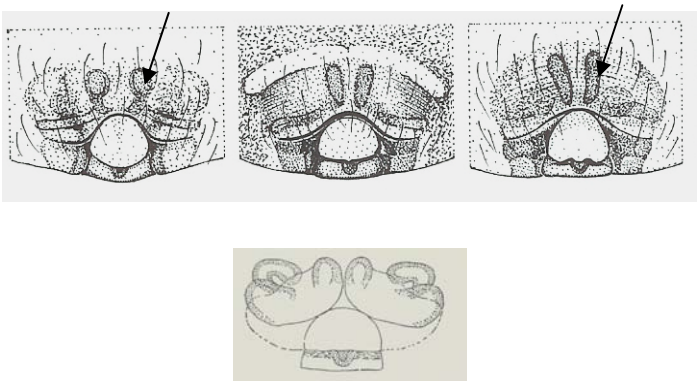


Figure 9. *Porrhomma convexum*, top row, epigynes in ventral view, Arrows indicate spermathecae as seen through the cuticle. Bottom, cleared epigyne viewed ventrally.

Porrhomma campbelli F.O. P.-Cambridge, 1894

This species has a very distinctive epigyne with an opening that is more or less pear-shaped (distinctly narrowing posteriorly) and with extremely broad, dark ducts seen through the cuticle lying transversely across the epigynal plate (Fig. 10). In the cleared epigyne, viewed ventrally, the massive epigynal ducts are characteristic and unlikely to be easily confused with that of any other *Porrhomma* species. It is a fairly large species with relatively small eyes but not as small as those in *P. egeria*. This is a widespread but rare species in Britain which has been collected from beneath rocks and in dry litter of reedbeds as well as in mole burrows. Sometimes in heathland and grassland, it has also been recorded ballooning on upland moorland but is never numerous. It has been suggested that it may be an inhabitant of subterranean mammal burrows.

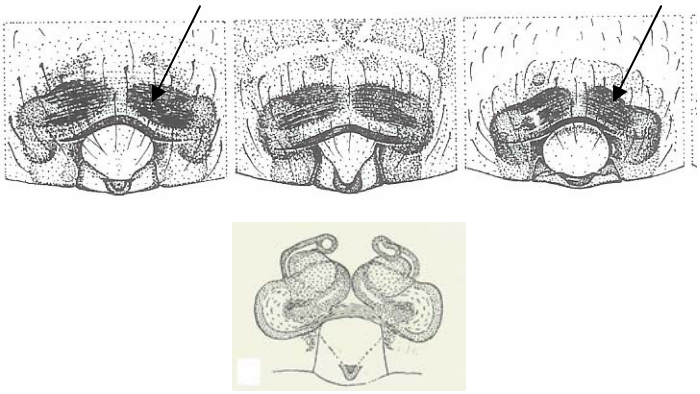


Figure 10. *Porrhomma campbelli*, top row, epigynes in ventral view, Arrows indicate ducts as seen through the cuticle. Bottom, cleared epigyne viewed ventrally.

Porrhomma rosenhaueri (L. Koch, 1872)

P. rosenhaueri has an epigyne which closely resembles that of *P. microphthalmum*. However, the epigynal opening is slightly narrower and has a small notch in the posterior border of this opening (Fig. 11). It occurs exclusively in caves and is the rarest of all *Porrhomma* species in Britain, having been recorded from only two sites in S. Wales.

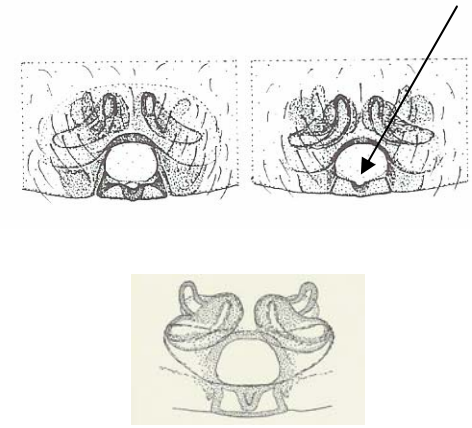


Figure 10. *Porrhomma rosenhaueri*, top row, epigynes in ventral view. Arrow indicates notch in posterior margin of epigynal opening. Bottom, cleared epigyne viewed ventrally.

Figures from Locket & Millidge (1951), Merrett (1994) and Roberts (1987).

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Author: Tony Russell-Smith

Identification of *Alopecosa cuneata and A. pulverulenta*

Identification of males should be no problem – as well as the palpal differences the swollen tibiae 1 are obvious, even in the field.

The females of these two species can be very difficult. Reliance only on the epigyne is fraught with danger, since the epigynes can be variable. The light dorsal abdominal band enclosing the lanceolate stripe of *A. cuneata* is very distinctive and unless this is present, you are almost certainly looking at *A. pulverulenta* (and *A. cuneata* should not be recorded without recourse to expert opinion). In northern Scotland some female specimens of *A. pulverulenta* approach *A. cuneata* in bright very clearly marked abdominal markings, but these are whiter than the markings of *A. cuneata*.

	Alopecosa cuneata	***A. pulverulenta***
	Males	
		
Tibiae 1	swollen	normal
	Females	
		
Abdominal marking	Dorsal abdominal marking very pronounced, broad and yellowish white	Dorsal markings usually brownish and not usually pronounced in southern specimens, pronounced but white in some Scottish material
Epigyne	Epigyne is smaller than *A. pulverulenta* and narrowest part of central tongue about one third of opening. Variable and not always conclusive.	Epigyne is larger and narrowest part of central tongue over one half of opening.

References

Locket, G.H. & Millidge, A.F. 1951. *British Spiders* Volume 1. Ray Society, London.
Roberts, M.J. 1985. The spiders of Great Britain and Ireland Volume 1. Harley Books, Colchester.

Author: Peter Harvey

Correction to the article by Simon Warmingham on *Theridion hannoniae* in the July 2008 SRS News: the spider has not been found in the Netherlands.

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Spider Recording Scheme News
July 2009, No. 64

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 65 will be published in November 2009. Please send contributions by the end of September at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Editorial

I am very grateful to all the contributors who have provided articles for this issue. It goes without saying that the newsletter could not appear without these contributions and I once again implore all recorders to provide articles, long or short, for the newsletter.

Although putting dots on a map is obviously an important part of any recording scheme, gaining better understanding of the autecology of species is probably our single most important aim. This means recorders should aim to observe and record as much information as possible that helps this understanding, based on our phase 2 recording guidelines. The crucial element is for this recording to be structured in a consistent way, so that the data can be used in analyses. MapMate enables all these phase 2 recording features to be recorded in this way, as long as the SRS recording structure is used. Hence please use the SRS Site Details in MapMate to record broad habitat and other site-related features, rather than the MapMate habitat field - anyone can add any habitat to the MapMate habitat field, and whilst the user may well be justified in believing their habitat category is more appropriate, unless it has been agreed for general use by everyone else as well, the information is essentially unusable in any analyses.

The Society has agreed to develop a Recording Scheme website which will provide the latest up-to-date distribution maps at national and regional/county level, dynamically generated from website database tables containing data uploaded from a master SRS dataset held in MapMate. This will enable broad and structural habitat, phenology and other recorded information to be provided graphically for all species, both at national and regional levels.

Public access will be at 10km level or at 5km at county level and this would be linked to Google maps and aerial images so that users can visualise the relevant areas. Although the default will be that no detailed record information is provided to the public, recorders will be able to choose if they want their recorder information to be made available. Registered BAS members and SRS recorders will be able to access the full data behind the dots, and help validate records and submit comments to a validation database.

Species pages will initially include text written for the provisional atlas or subsequently developed for other purposes, but the aim will be for any registered user to edit and add to these so that they become more accurate and also reflect regional differences. Difficult species information will also be made available in a form in which there will be editable species-based or genera-based database entries that registered users can add to, edit and upload images, figures, etc. to help others.

Area Organisers will be able to administer regional or county sections of the website to manage their own pages and provide access to local arachnologists to add their own pages, run their own blogs, advertise local field meetings, provide information on local sites and species of interest and suggest recording targets, etc.

All this is obviously a pretty major undertaking and will take time to develop into a comprehensive resource, but much of the technology already exists, developed by Teknica Ltd for the Essex Field Club on their website at www.essexfieldclub.org.uk. The primary aim is to make a facility that everyone can input into, develop and improve. The Society is applying to the OPAL project for funding to help get the project off the ground and should know by the end of September if this funding is available (OPAL comprises a partnership of the Natural History Museum, Field Studies Council, National Biodiversity Network, Met Office, Royal Parks and 10 universities across England. OPAL was awarded a grant from the Big Lottery Fund in August 2007 and will run until December 2012).

I was recently able to confirm the third British record of *Synema globosum* from a photograph sent to me by Neil Harvey of EECOS (Essex Ecology Services Ltd) taken by Pat and Simon Cox in their garden at St Osyth in North Essex. Apparently their garden backs onto a wholesale nursery, so it is quite likely that the spider came in with plants and we are no nearer forward in knowing whether this species is now truly established in this country or not.

Area Organiser changes

Eric Philp and Rowley Snazell have been Area Organisers for Kent and Dorset respectively for very many years indeed. Both have done sterling work in collating and verifying records for their counties and submitting data to the Recording Scheme over this time. They have now decided it is time to pass on the baton, and Tony Russell-Smith takes over as AO for Kent and Rob Cumming for Dorset. Many thanks to Eric and Rowley for all the hard work over the years.

Please send your spider records for Kent to Tony Russell-Smith at 1 Bailiffs Cottage, Sharstead Park, Doddington, SITTINGBOURNE, Kent ME9 0JU. Tel: 01795-890209 Email: mrussellsmith@btinternet.com

and for Dorset to Rob Cumming at 7 Monmouth Road, DORCHESTER, Dorset DT1 2DE. Tel: 01305-264092 Email: robc43@aol.com. Both can receive records in MapMate and this is the preferred method. Please contact them for details.

Mike Davidson also takes on VC85 Fife and Kinross, to add to his already valiant total of VCs 87-95: 87 Perth West, 88 Perth Mid, 89 Perth East, 90 Angus (Forfar), 91 Kincardine, 92Aberdeen South, 93 Aberdeen North, 94 Banff, 95 Moray (Elgin).

Mike's contact details are Mr. Mike B. Davidson, 77 Mile-End Avenue, ABERDEEN, Aberdeenshire, AB15 5PS. Email: mike.davidson55@btinternet.com

Apology

In the article on identification of female *Porrhomma* species in the SRS Newsletter No. 63 for March 2009, I inexplicably failed to acknowledge Mike Roberts. As most readers will have already realised, the majority of figures of the epigynes used in the article were taken, with his permission, from volume 2 of his book, *The Spiders of Great Britain & Ireland*. My very sincere apologies to Mike for this oversight, without who's splendid figures the article would have been impossible.

A. Russell-Smith

Web raider caught in action

by Martin Matthews

During a field meeting of the Gloucestershire Invertebrate Group on Chase End Hill, at the southern end of the Malvern Hills, on 13 September 2008, I noticed a scorpionfly walking on a thread of spider silk stretched between herbs at the edge of the path (see Fig. 1).

Scorpionflies are insects of the family Panorpidae, which is part of the small order Mecoptera ('long-wings'). They are easily recognised by their two pairs of rather narrow wings (usually marked by scattered black patches), long legs, thread-like antennae and red-tipped abdomens. Both sexes have small biting mouthparts at the tip of a long 'beak'. The males display a swollen genital region that curls forward above their abdomen: this may look threatening, but carries no sting.

Scorpionflies are equipped as carnivores, but are thought to scavenge dead and immobilised insects rather than hunt active prey. The adults are said to steal some of their food from spiders' webs, but it is difficult to find first-hand accounts or illustrations of this behaviour.

On this occasion, a male scorpionfly was seen probing the trapped flies with its mouthparts as it moved along the thread of spiders' web, but it was not clear whether it was actually feeding on the corpses. There was no sign of a resident spider. I drew the attention of two fellow entomologists to the sight before capturing the scorpionfly for identification later. I then realised that there was also a female nearby. She was resting on a leaf close to one end of the silken thread, and may have been a mate, or potential mate, of the male I had just caught, which proved to be *Panorpa germanica*, a common and widespread species.

Fig. 1. Scorpion fly on spider's silk
Photograph © Martin Matthews

This observation leaves behind some unanswered questions. What was the spider doing while her larder was under attack? Was the scorpionfly simply searching for food, or did it need an insect corpse to use as a courtship gift? Perhaps readers of this newsletter can provide answers from their own experience.

My thanks go to David Haigh, who read an article about this event in the Gloucestershire Naturalists Society newsletter, and suggested that readers of Spider Recording Scheme News would be interested in a similar account.

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The identification of desiccated, adult spiders in a collection supposedly made by A. R. Jackson in the late 1930s at Wheatfen Broad, Norfolk

by David R. Nellist

In 2001 members of the British Arachnological Society recorded the spiders of Wheatfen Broad (Norfolk) over two weekends, one in May and the other in September. Prior to these visits little was known of the spider fauna of the site. Dr A. R. Jackson had recorded 82 species in 1936; Captain M. J. D. Cockle, a former owner of Wheatfen, added 10 species during the years 1937-1946, and a party led by Dr Eric Duffey added 38 species in 1971. An account of the two BAS surveys, together with a full species list, appeared in the British Arachnological Society Newsletter, No. 97, in 2003.

It was mentioned in the BAS account that at the end of the second visit I had been handed a small box of tubes containing spiders. This had recently been discovered in Wheatfen Cottage, a small isolated dwelling on the fen, and the home for 40 years of Ted Ellis, the well-known writer and broadcaster, and still occupied at the time of our visit by his widow Phyllis. From 1928 to 1956 Ted had been Keeper of Natural History in the Castle Museum in Norwich. He died in 1986. I was told that the specimens had been collected on the fen in 1937 or 1938 by Dr A. R. Jackson and were thus of historical interest. This note describes the separation of the specimens from the detritus in the tubes, their rehydration, their identification to species level (where possible), and the attempt to decipher the very limited information on the labels.

The cardboard box contained a large number of small tubes, each of which had originally been closed with a cork. Over the years the majority of these had disintegrated into lumps of various sizes and indeed in a small number of tubes they had been reduced to little more than powder, completely burying any specimens. In most cases the cork debris was removed from the tubes with forceps without damage to the desiccated specimens, but it was clear that attempting to separate small, brittle specimens from the very fine cork debris would simply lead to more damage and so it was left in place.

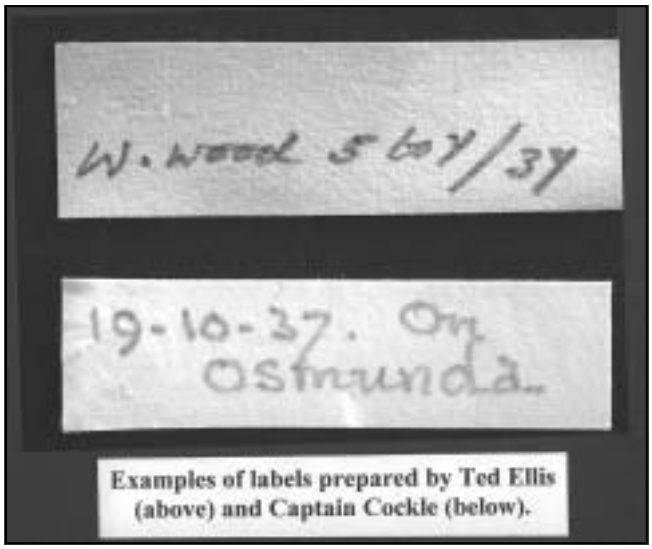
In order to rehydrate the specimens di-sodium phosphate and wetting agent were used in the concentrations recommended by Jocqué (Jocqué, 2008). In the absence of *Agepon*, the wetting agent recommended by Jocqué, an alternative was used marketed in the UK by Paterson for photographic purposes. In fact this was also manufactured in Germany and my hunch is that it is in fact re-labelled *Agepon*. The mixture was added to each tube until it was about half-full and covering the specimens and debris. For treatment the tubes were divided into two batches of about 60, but even so it was impossible to ensure that all tubes had exactly the same treatment time and this varied between 10 and 15 days. After treatment the solution and debris were removed by careful use of a very fine suction tube, the specimens washed in water and then transferred back to spirit. At this stage a preliminary examination of the contents of each tube allowed those that contained juveniles or clearly unidentifiable specimens or, indeed, no specimens at all,

to be discarded. Specimens in 127 tubes then remained for possible identification.

Examination of the specimens after re-swelling showed that although evidence of shrinkage was still present females were, in most cases, readily identified, but care was needed with males where the palps were generally expanded and the structures twisted. The table shows that 64 males and 110 females of 52 species were recorded, the most abundant being *Hylyphantes graminicola* (Sundevall, 1830) with 7 males and 33 females, and *Kaestneria dorsalis* (Wider, 1834) with 1 male and 19 females. Twenty-four species were represented by a single specimen. Three species were new additions to the checklist generated after the BAS visits in 2001 - *Episinus maculipes* Cavanna 1876, *Zygiella stroemi* (Thorell, 1870) and *Oedothorax fuscus* (Blackwall, 1834). The presence of the first two of these was unexpected ! *Episinus maculipes* was first recorded in Britain in 1929 by J. E. Hull at Tiptree Heath in Essex over 60 miles south of Wheatfen [Hull, 1934]. Hull did not give any information about the habitat. It has subsequently been recorded from a few sites near the coast from Kent round to the Forest of Dean [Smithers, 1998]. Previous records of *Zygiella stroemi* have been confined to central, southern England, with one isolated record from central Scotland, all far removed from Wheatfen (Harvey, *et al*., 2002). Because the presence of these two species was surprising Peter Merrett kindly confirmed the identifications.

A paper label, with dimensions of about 1 x 3 cm or less, had been included in most of the tubes, presumably added at the time of collection, with text written in pencil. Before the phosphate treatment these were removed, one by one, the information transferred to a record sheet and the label then replaced in the tube. In a few cases the labels were badly stained and the text, if any, was illegible. Interestingly, the writing style on each label was in one of two hands, lower case block letters or a linked hand-writing style, as shown on the figure. This suggested that two collectors had been at work, although, curiously, one tube included two labels with identical information written in the two different hands! Overall, 65 tubes contained labels written in the lower-case, block style and 58 in the linked, handwriting style. The year on the labels showed that three tubes contained specimens collected in 1927, 1928 and 1936 respectively, 94 tubes held specimens collected in 1937, 10 collected in 1938 and 3 in 1939. Sadly the labels provided very little useful information. To give three typical examples – “Misumena vatia f W 1937”, “W wood 5-7, 37” and “19-10-37 on osmunda”. Presumably details of the exact locality, habitat, collection date etc. were not regarded as being important at that time, the emphasis being, rather, on the collecting and describing of new species.

Having been told that the collection had been made by A.R. Jackson I assumed that one of the styles on the labels belonged to him and that probably Ted Ellis had produced the other set. Seeking more information I contacted Peter Nicholson, the SRS Area Organiser for Norfolk who, as a volunteer, maintains and catalogues the spider, myriapod and isopod collections in the Castle Museum in Norwich just a few miles from Wheatfen. With the help of Tony Irwin, the Curator of Natural History at the Museum, Peter was able to show that the handwriting on the upper label is that of Ted Ellis whilst the lower is the work of Captain Maurice Cockle (see following photograph).



Examples of labels prepared by Ted Ellis (above) and Captain Cockle (below).

Cockle had met Ted when he visited the Castle Museum in 1933 and was at this time the owner of Wheatfen Broad. Although he did not regard himself as a naturalist he was interested in the general natural history of the Broad and encouraged other naturalists to visit and record the wildlife. Any specimens he did collect were passed on to other specialists, and A. R. Jackson would no doubt have identified spiders collected by both Cockle and Ellis. Based on the evidence of the writing on the labels we now know that Ted Ellis collected the four males of *Zygiella stroemi* and Captain Cockle collected the single female of *Episinus maculipes*.

Interestingly, back in 1988 a slim biography of Ellis written by Eugene Stone was published by Jarrold Colour Publications, a company that no longer exists but which at that time was based in Norwich (Stone, E., 1988). I have a copy in my collection and recalled that a photograph of Ted Ellis with Captain Cockle and E.A. Ellis (a snail expert and no relation to Ted) was included in the book. I was unable to trace the author but Peter Nicholson was able to locate a high quality print of the picture in the Castle Museum archives and provided a copy which I have included in this note. It shows Ted Ellis on the left, with Cockle in the middle and E. A. Ellis on the right.

Photograph of Ted Ellis (left), Captain Maurice Cockle (middle) and E. A. Ellis (right) from print in Castle Museum archives, Norwich

Table: Species from Wheatfen Broad

Identified from rehydrated specimens

Taxon	Sex	Taxon	Sex
Theridiidae		**Tetragnathidae**	
Steatoda bipunctata (Linnaeus, 1758)	1f	*Pachygnatha clercki* Sundevall, 1823	1m
Episinus maculipes Cavanna, 1876	1f	*Pachygnatha degeeri* Sundevall,1830	2m
Anelosimus vittatus (C. L. Koch, 1836)	1m	*Metellina segmentata* (Clerck, 1757)	2f
Achaearanea lunata (Clerck, 1757)	2f	*Metellina mengei* (Blackwall, 1869)	1m; 2f
Theridion sisyphium (Clerck, 1757)	5m, 3f	*Metellina merianae* (Scopoli, 1763)	1m; 1f
Theridion tinctum (Walckenaer,1802)	1m	**Araneidae**	
Paidiscura pallens (Blackwall, 1834)	1m, 1f	*Zygiella x-notata* (Clerck, 1757)	1f
Enoplognatha ovata (Clerck, 1757)	2f	*Zygiella stroemi* (Thorell, 1870)	4m
Linyphiidae		**Lycosidae**	
Hylyphantes graminicola (Sundevall, 1830)	7m, 33f	*Pardosa amentata* (Clerck, 1757)	1f
Gnathonarium dentatum (Wider, 1834)	3m; 2f	**Dictynidae**	
Gongylidium rufipes (Linnaeus, 1758)	6m; 2f	*Dictyna uncinata* Thorell, 1856	2m; 1f
Hypomma bituberculatum (Wider, 1834)	2f		
Baryphyma trifrons (O. P.-Cambridge, 1863)	1f	*Clubiona phragmitis* C. L. Koch, 1843	1m; 2f
Oedothorax fuscus (Blackwall, 1834)	1m	*Clubiona brevipes* Blackwall, 1841	1m
Oedothorax retusus (Westring, 1851)	2m	**Philodromidae**	
Lophomma punctatum (Blackwall, 1841)	1m	*Philodromus dispar* Walckenaer, 1826	1f
Erigonella hiemalis (Blackwall, 1841)	1m	*Philodromus aureolus* (Clerck, 1757)	2f
Diplocephalus cristatus (Blackwall, 1833)	2m	*Philodromus cespitum* (Walckenaer, 1802)	1f
Diplocephalus picinus (Blackwall, 1841)	1f	*Philodromus albidus* Kulczynski, 1911	1f
Bathyphantes approximatus (O. P.-Cambridge, 1871)	1f	*Tibellus oblongus* (Walckenaer, 1802)	1f
Bathyphantes gracilis (Blackwall, 1841)	1m; 3f	**Thomidisae**	
Kaestneria dorsalis (Wider, 1834)	1m; 19f	*Diaea dorsata* (Fabricius, 1777)	1m
Drapetisca socialis (Sundevall, 1833)	3m; 4f	*Misumena vatia* (Clerck, 1757)	1f
Tenuiphantes tenuis (Blackwall, 1852)	3m; 2f	*Xysticus cristatus* (Clerck, 1757)	2m; 2f
Linyphia triangularis (Clerck, 1757)	3f	*Xysticus lanio* C L. Koch, 1835	4m; 1f
Neriene montana (Clerck, 1757)	1f	*Xysticus ulmi* (Hahn, 1831)	1m
Neriene clathrata (Sundevall, 1830)	1f	*Ozyptila trux* (Blackwall, 1846)	1m; 3f
Neriene peltata (Wider, 1834)	2f	*Ozyptila brevipes* (Hahn, 1826)	2m
Microlinyphia impigra (O. P.-Cambridge, 1871)	1m	**TOTALS**	
		52 species	174
			[64m; 110f]

Finally, and appropriately, on the 22nd May this year a special gathering in the Castle Museum in Norwich celebrated the 100th anniversary of Ted Ellis' birth.

I am greatly indebted to Peter Nicholson who identified the authors of the labels by comparison with labels in collections of known provenance in the Castle Museum in Norwich, and for providing a high-quality copy of the photograph from the Museum's collection.

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An update on *Hybocoptus decollatus* in Kent

by A. Russell-Smith

In an earlier article, the author reported the occurrence of *Hybocoptus decollatus* at a number of churchyard locations from East Kent in spring 2007 (SRS Newsletter 60, March 2008). It was clear that, here at least, this species is not as uncommon as previous records suggested. However, all the eight sites at which the species was found were on the chalk of the North Downs and it was thought worthwhile to check for its presence in other parts of Kent. Accordingly, during April and May 2009, surveys of a further 24 churchyards were carried out; twelve on the chalk and twelve in the wealden area of Kent. The latter consists of generally lower lying areas of clay and sandstone south of the North Downs. In each case, between 20 and 40 minutes were spent at each site, beating the lower branches of yew trees and, where present, bushes of holly or box. The combined results of both the 2007 and 2009 surveys are shown in summary form in the map (Fig. 1).

It can be seen that this species was apparently absent from sites on the clays and sandstones of the Weald. By contrast, it was present, often in considerable numbers, at all but two sites on the chalk in East Kent. However, it was not recorded at three sites on the chalk of West Kent (west of the River Medway).

Clearly, in this rather brief study, it is impossible to say that the species is definitely absent from sites where it was not collected. However, the data do suggest that it is confined to the chalk in Kent. It is too early to say whether it is truly absent from the chalk in W. Kent and further sampling is needed in this part of the county. Exactly why it should only be found on chalk is not at all clear. In the earlier survey, it was noted that the species was most common on yew trees fully exposed to sunlight and absent from heavily shaded trees, for example in woodland. However, this cannot be the explanation for its distribution as many of the yews in wealden churchyards were fully exposed to the sun. During the 2009 survey, shrubs other than yew were sampled in seven churchyards but no *H. decollatus* were found on them. This contrasts with the situation in Dorset where Rowley Snazell collected *H. decollatus* on ornamental conifers (Snazell, pers comm.).

This study has doubled the number of known *H. decollatus* sites in Kent from eight to 16. There is little doubt that if other churchyards on the chalk were visited it would be found there too. It would be extremely interesting to conduct surveys in other counties of southern England with chalk escarpments to establish whether a similar distribution pattern is found there as well.

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Russell-Smith, A. 2008. Is *Hybocoptus decollatus* common in southern England? *SRS Newsletter* 60: 14.

1, Bailiffs Cottage, Doddington, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 0JU

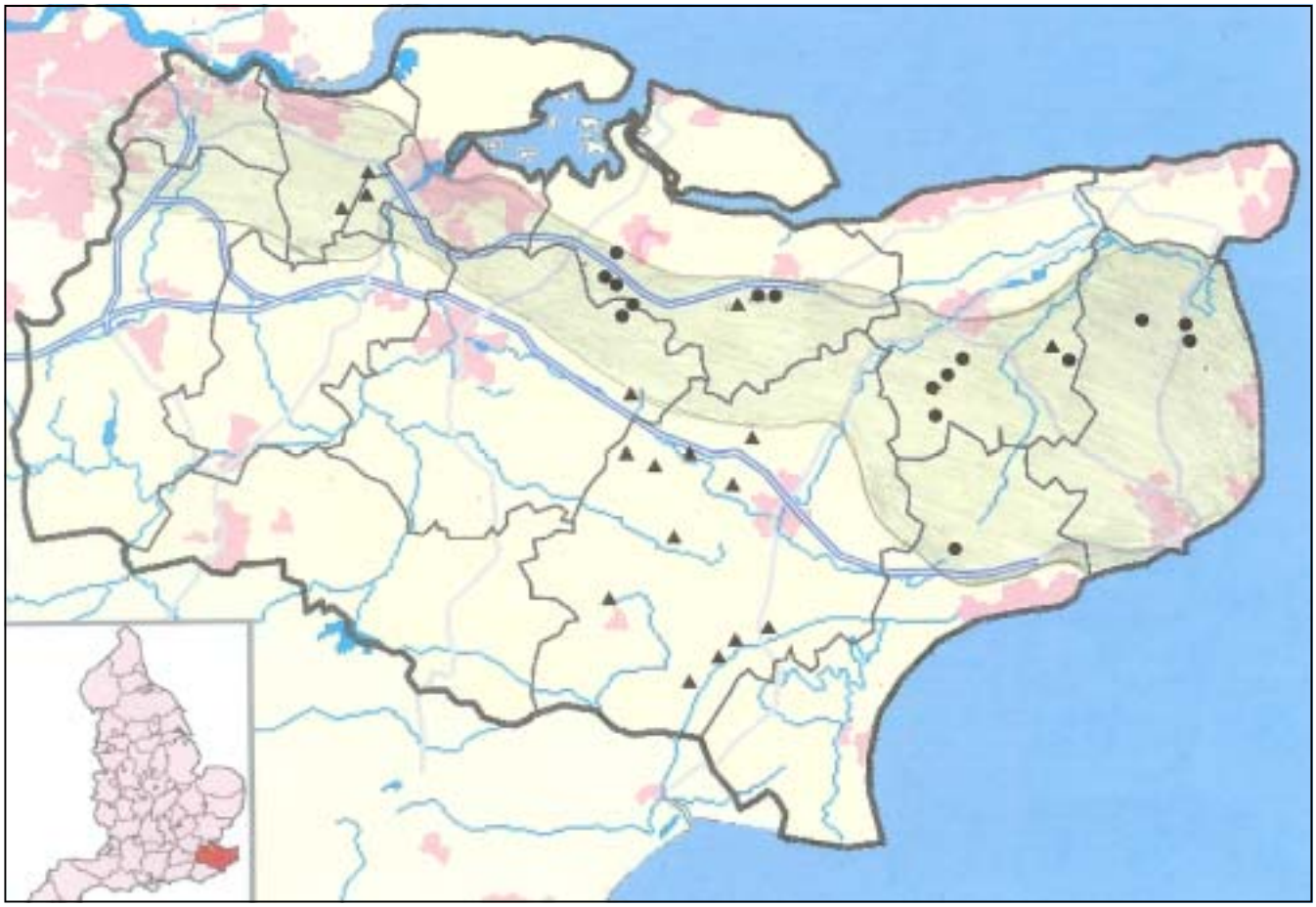

Fig. 1. Map of the known distribution of *Hybocoptus decollatus* in Kent.
Key: Black circles, sites where the species is recorded; black triangles, sites where it is apparently absent. Green shading shows the approximate extent of chalk in the county.

Theridion pinastri at Richmond Park in fogging samples

by Peter Harvey

Peter Hammond passed a number of spider samples on to me for interest recently. These included samples left over from tree fogging undertaken at Richmond Park in 1983-1984. The samples proved to contain various spiders of interest, but the most notable species is probably the presence in the samples of a large number of specimens of *Theridion pinastri* (see Fig.1).

A total of 95 specimens identifiable as *T. pinastri* were found, with 18 males, 18 females and 59 subadults or large juveniles. The samples containing *T. pinastri* were from large oaks along a ride in Sidmouth Wood (TQ1873 and TQ1973) with one sample from birch and one additional sample from a tree between Sidmouth Wood-Queen Elizabeth Plantation (TQ1972). At the time of the fogging survey, these would have represented the second location for this species in this country.

Fig. 1. *Theridion pinastri* female
Photograph © Peter Harvey

Although the original discovery of *T. pinastri* in this country in 1977 was of a male found on the ground in a small open patch fringed with grass among tall heather at Chobham Common (Murphy & Murphy, 1979) and the second record was of a female from pine in the Langshot Bog area of the same site in October 1984, nearly all subsequent records in Britain have been of adults beaten from large oaks, especially where these are in open sunny conditions, very much the typical habitat for spiders such as *Philodromus praedatus* and the much rarer *P. longipalpis*. Several records have been from pines and several from mature scrub in hedgerows, and a single male was collected in pitfall traps at Rainham silt lagoons, an area with little scrub and no woodland.

The species has been collected in the Epping Forest area using a flight interception trap set in the canopy above 5m and a Malaise trap believed to have been set at height in an old oak. Harvey *et al.* (1993) suggested that it is possible that the species usually lives high up in trees and is therefore difficult to sample by usual methods and that this might account for its apparent scarcity. We commented that it would be interesting to have more data from fogging available. The current results seem to justify this view!

Details about the precise location of fogging sampling at Richmond Park and the methods used are found in Stork & Hammond (1996) and Stork *et al.* (2001). A distribution map showing the current known distribution is provided in Fig. 2.

Fig. 2. Distribution of *Theridion pinastri* in Britain
Black circles, records 1977 to 1991
Black squares, records 1992 to present

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Spider Recording Scheme News November 2009, No. 65

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 66 will be published in March 2010. Please send contributions by the end of January at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: srs@britishspiders.org.uk or grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Editorial

I am very grateful to all the contributors who have provided articles for this issue. We all depend on your efforts!

As described in the last newsletter, the Society has agreed to develop a Recording Scheme website which will provide the latest up-to-date distribution maps at national and regional/county level, dynamically generated from website database tables containing data uploaded directly from a master SRS dataset held in MapMate. The Society applied to OPAL and heard in September that it had been successful in gaining funding to support this development. After several hiccups, we are now just awaiting final confirmation before the project can start. However there should be major progress and an active website by early next year, so keep a look out for links on the BAS website and then get involved.

The main aim of the website will be to provide the data collected by you and collated by the Area Organisers and Recording Scheme, in various ways that help everyone increase our understanding of the autecology and phenology of all British spiders and help in their identification. The website will be interactive and encourage your input as a registered user, so a lot depends on you. Please register and get involved as soon as the website gets up and running.

Can I make a plea for MapMate users to check their phase 2 SRS habitat and site-related data. This will be uploaded and used on the new website to provide summary information on each species, and will include structural habitat information, relating to whereabouts in a broad habitat the spider has been found. The existing dataset certainly contains errors, for example where the structural habitat is recorded as "Shrub/low canopy to 5m", but the collecting method is given as grubbing, or the species in question is virtually never found except at ground level. Can I make a special plea then, for MapMate users to check their data for inconsistencies such as these, to correct them and then submit updated data through their Area Organiser or directly to me through the MapMate synchronisation process, so that we keep these errors to an absolute minimum when the website goes live.

Many thanks are due to Jon Daws for providing over 8000 new Leicestershire records, to Stan Dobson for extracting these from SPIREC into text files and to Jon then checking them for errors. Also as usual, many thanks go to those MapMate users and Area Organisers who regularly provide their records through MapMate. All these data should soon be available to all BAS members and SRS recorders through the new website.

David Nellist has provided me with a correction to his article in the last SRS News on rehydrating desiccated specimens, where he accidentally referred to the use of di-sodium phosphate (page, 12, para. 4, line 1), but this should of course have been tri-sodium phosphate.

Opiliones Recording Scheme

by Peter Nicholson, National ORS Organiser

I felt a short note would be in order, to keep all those interested in harvestmen up to date with progress since the BAS AGM on the 20th June 2009.

Thanks should go to John Partridge our Hon. Secretary for arranging for the transfer of BRC records to me. These records are temporarily held in an MS Access database, and it is proposed over the winter period to format the records for loading into MapMate, this being the database used for the SRS and also now adopted by the ORS. I am aware from your previous emails that a number of you hold records which will be of great value but please keep these until the transfer to MapMate is complete. If for some reason you feel it necessary to pass them over now, then I will hold them until they can be downloaded.

Do keep recording Opiliones. If identification is a problem I can probably arrange for someone to act as a mentor in your region if needed. I have a number of volunteers in different areas that can help, or send them to me.

A special plea has gone out from Paul Richards, as most of you on the circulation list will know, to find his nemesis *Paroligolophus meadii*, which has evaded him for his FSC identification guide. Please let me know or Paul direct if you think you know of a source of live specimens.

I have been getting reports of *Dicranopalpus ramosus* being in unusual numbers from Kent to the Scottish Borders. Is this the case in your area?

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Worcestershire spiders

by John Partridge

In common with almost all other invertebrates this year, spiders have not been around in large numbers in Worcestershire, but a few records are worth mentioning.

In a group surveying day on the Malvern Hills on 30th July 2009, SO757440, close to the Herefordshire border, my attention was drawn to a spider consuming a bee, in the top of a thistle. The spider looked like *Enoplognatha ovata*, and I nearly dismissed it as such, but it didn't seem quite right, either in appearance or habitat, so I collected

Fig. 1. *Enoplognatha ovata* (left) *E. latimana* (right) Photograph © Geoff Oxford

it, and later identified it as *Enoplognatha latimana* – as far as I know a first for Worcestershire. For those of you familiar with *E. ovata*, apart from its occurrence in a habitat where I do not usually find *E. ovata*, *E. latimana* seems to lack the characteristic black spots on the abdomen.

Fig. 1 from Geoff Oxford shows the three colour varieties of *E. ovata* on the left, and two of the colour varieties of *E. latimana* on the right. Geoff informs me that the third colour variety of *E. latimana* has only been found once in Britain, but Peter Harvey tells me that he has collected this variety in Essex on several occasions.

The next species - *Nigma walckenaeri* - was first recorded in Worcestershire at Elmley Castle SO984410 in October 2003, and then in Little Comberton SO966431 in 2007. David Stratford, a local amateur photographer, photographed a pair in his garden in Droitwich, Worcestershire, SO906625 on 26th September 2009, and the female with hoverfly on 14th September 2009 (See Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. *Nigma walckenaeri* female with hoverfly prey (top) male and female (bottom). Photograph © David Stratford

It is also worth recording that Mick Blythe collected two of Wyre Forest's 'specials' in The Great Bog SO743763 on 8th July 2009. These were *Araneus alsine* and *Neriene radiata.*

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Enoplognatha tecta in Suffolk

by Pip Collyer

Together with other volunteers I have accompanied Helen Smith this summer on a number of visits to sites in various parts of the country, as part of the ongoing search for overlooked populations of the fen raft spider *Dolomedes plantarius* and suitable sites for its possible translocation. On 9th July we visited the Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Castle Marshes Reserve at Barnby between Beccles and Oulton Broad, about 4 miles from the coast.

The Wildlife Trusts like us to report back on any spiders found, to add to their species lists and we therefore make a note of species seen and obtain consent to take those spiders which we can't immediately identify, for later examination under the microscope. So it was that a few days after our visit I was sorting through the Castle Marshes spiders and identified a female *Enoplognatha* but struggled to be more specific than that. At first, I thought it might be *E. mordax* although this is found on salt marshes, the ventral abdominal markings did not fit the description and the epigyne was not right. In fact the epigyne looked more like that of *E. tecta*, but that didn't seem likely because there had been only two records in Britain, a female found by O. Pickard-Cambridge in May 1888 and a male recorded by Rowley Snazell from a pitfall trap in July 1974. Both of these records were from neighbouring localities in Dorset.

I therefore sent the spider to Peter Harvey with a note to the effect that it didn't seem likely to be *E. tecta*, and he replied that he couldn't see that it was anything else, but would send it to Peter Merrett for his opinion. Peter confirmed the identification.

Castle Marshes are traditional grazing marshes drained by 2-4 metre wide dykes, adjoining the, embanked, tidal reaches of the River Waveney. Because our primary purpose was to find *D. plantarius*, our search was almost exclusively confined to the dyke margins and this is where the spider was found. The margins are fairly well poached by cattle grazing and the vegetation comprises a varied and species-rich mosaic of rushes, sedges and broad-leaved species under a metre high. The dykes themselves have a rich flora and invertebrate fauna. Many, including the one on which *E. tecta* was found (see Fig. 1), are densely covered by water soldier *Stratiotes aloides* and Frogbit *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*.

I would like to thank Peter Harvey for his help not just with this spider but for assisting me on numerous occasions with difficult species. My thanks also go to Peter Merrett for confirming the identification and for directing me to his and Rowley Snazell's publication (*Bull. Br. arachnol. Soc*. 1975. **3** (4): 106-112) on new and rare British spiders including *E. tecta*. Peter

Fig. 1. *Enoplognatha tecta* ditch at Castle Marshes, Suffolk. Photograph © Helen Smith

Nicholson kindly photographed the spider and Helen Smith provided photographs of the dyke in which it was found. I am grateful to them both for this.

Finally, I would particularly like to thank Helen Smith for an interesting and informative summer, giving me the opportunity to visit sites I would not otherwise have access to. She remains focused on the search for new populations of *D. plantarius*, in spite of the lack of success so far, deals firmly with inquisitive cows (and the odd bull) and, in all likelihood was the one who picked up *E. tecta* in the first place.

Fig. 2. *Enoplognatha tecta,* whole female above, epigyne below. Photographs © Peter Nicholson

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Parasites of tetragnathids

by Peter Nicholson

As SRS Organiser for Norfolk I receive occasional requests to help answer various spider related queries. In this case I thought the information would be of general interest to members. The query arose from a photo sent in by a member of the RSPB staff enquiring whether I had any idea what the parasite might be in the photo shown in Fig. 1. As I was unable to help directly, I requested help, and Dmitri Logunov of Manchester Museum (University of Manchester) once again came to my assistance. Dmitri thought it the larva of an Ichneumonidae, Hymenoptera but knew of a contact, a Finnish colleague who was interested in spider parasites. His colleague was able to confirm the parasitoid was either *Acrodactyla quadrisculpta* or *A. carinator*, Ichneumondidae, Pimplinae; both species occur in the UK and attack tetragnathid species.

Fig. 1. *Tetragnatha* with parasitoid larva. Photograph © Matthew Wilkinson

Many thanks to Dmitri and his Finnish colleague Niclas Fritzen for their help in answering this tricky question. I have often found *Tetragnatha* immatures with this form of parasite, but have not previously taken it further.

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Pseudeuophrys lanigera (Simon, 1871) in Cumbria

by Dave Holloway

Believing at the time that *Pseudeuophrys lanigera* had only occurred in the county before at Carlisle Museum (Clarke, 1972), I was excited to find an adult female on the wall of my office at work in Distington on 28th February 2008. An immature was later found in the same room on 2nd April 2008, again on an interior wall.

I tried unsuccessfully to find the species by looking on the underside of the slates in the roofspace of the house I lived in at the time, 4 miles away in Workington. Later (5th May) I was delighted to find it on the outside of the roof by looking out of a skylight window. Several individuals of different ages were seen and on the following day one came close enough to be temporarily caught and its identification confirmed (an adult female). The spiders seemed pretty distinctive with the long white stripe on their upper surface standing out. Despite warm sunny weather periods of up to 20 minutes would pass without seeing one, then one would break cover from its hiding place under the slates. After a few minutes of short dashes of several inches the spider would again disappear under the slates.

I was later informed that Dave Blackledge had twice recorded the spider from his (slate-roofed) house at Port Carlisle on the Solway on 20th September 2007 and 14th April 2008 and that Simon Warmingham had found it on a south facing wall at his father's house in Wetheral on 4th June 2008. This is a 19th century property with very old slates in the roof.

I was also aware that on the Virtual Fauna of Lakeland website (http://www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk/ last accessed 29th May 2009) there was reference to the species occurring in 2000. This led me to some other records in Carlisle at John Strutt's house. John has recorded the spider over an extended period from 1999 to 2009. Interestingly his house has a tiled roof and the property was not built until 1984. Many of his sightings were away from the roof itself (but nearby), e.g. vehicle, shed, brick stack and wheelie bin.

I should point out that I have drawn on the sources mentioned already and that not all of these records currently exist in the SRS database.

As is often the case the limited amount of evidence permits further speculation and enquiry whilst only hinting at the eventual answers! Some interesting questions arise about this species' distribution in Cumbria, its progress northwards and its preferred habitat.

Distribution in Cumbria

It seems that *Pseudeuophrys lanigera* has been established in the county for some time, the earliest record dating from 1971. John Strutt's records span a period of ten years (from 1999 to the present) demonstrating the ability of the species to establish itself at a site. The increase in recent records wherever arachnologists have been suggests that the species is likely to be seriously under-recorded in the county and the true extent of its colonisation remains unknown. So far, apart from the two records of mine in West Cumbria the other sightings are all from the north of the county in or near Carlisle. It must remain possible, therefore, that the species does have a patchy distribution and may not exist in houses throughout the county.

Fig. 1. *Pseudeuophrys lanigera*.
Photograph © Simon Munnery

Progress northwards

The atlas (Harvey *et al*., 2002) describes how the species is moving northwards but the map shows very few records north of Lancashire/Yorkshire. Once established in Cumbria it is interesting to surmise how the problem of travelling northwards across the relatively sparsely populated Border regions would be achieved. Wallace (2007) and Davidson (2009) have reported its occurrence in recent years in Northumberland and Scotland respectively. The provisional atlas (Harvey *et al*., 2002) suggests that airborne dispersal is the most likely method but states that assistance by man is also probable. Certainly slates are reused by roofers and it would seem feasible for spiders existing in roof spaces and attics to move northwards with people's belongings.

The current Scottish records are from Aberdeen and Edinburgh, with the earliest Aberdeen records from 1984 (Davidson, 2009). As with Cumbria it will be interesting as time passes to see whether these are isolated pockets or whether the species has become widely spread but is much under-recorded. The species may also be extending its range elsewhere in Europe with the first record for Poland being reported by Wesolowska & Rozwalka (2008).

Preferred habitat

Although the spider has been found generally around houses its primary location appears to be on roofs and walls (Harvey *et al*., 2002). When I first found my *Pseudeuophrys lanigera* I was struck by the similarities between the slate roofed buildings where I had found it and areas of scree in Cumbria where I had found its near relative *Pseudeuophrys erratica*. Both habitats offer

hunting surfaces, the slate retains heat well affecting the microclimate and there are opportunities beneath the surface layer for deep shelter and hiding from predators. Jones (2002) lists the species as one of a number of key tecticolous invertebrate species that appear to benefit from green roofs in urban London. Roofs would appear to be critical but many of the Cumbrian records originate from walls and other sites in and around houses. Perhaps these other sites bring the spider to the attention of observers. Surveying roofs would be a difficult but revealing project!

Sadly I have so far been unable to find *Pseudeuophrys lanigera* on the slate roof at my current address.

Acknowledgements

My thanks as always to Dave Blackledge, without whose encouragement my "spidering" would have faltered long ago. Dave provided details of Cumbrian records for the species and confirmed the identification of the first adult female that I found. I would also like to thank Simon Warmingham and John Strutt, who supplied further details from their own records. Steven Hewitt (at Tullie House; formerly Carlisle Museum) also helped by providing details from the Virtual Fauna of Lakeland database. I am also indebted to Simon Munnery for permission to use his wonderful photograph of this species.

Grid References

Tullie House, Carlisle	NY398559
Port Carlisle	NY241621
Wetheral	NY468546
John Strutt's House, Carlisle	NY403580
Distington	NY005235
Workington	NY218264

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Salticidae: *Hasarius adansoni* at the Eden Project Cornwall

by Peter Nicholson

I had the pleasure of being invited to the Eden Project, Cornwall to participate in an Invertebrate Survey arranged by the British Myriapod and Isopod Group on the 21st April 2009, where photos were taken of two immature salticids (see Figs. 1 & 2 below).

Figs. 1 & 2. *Hasarius adansoni* (immature male above, immature female below). Photographs © Peter Nicholson

I took the specimens in the Rain Forest Biome at one of its highest points where the ground layer was dry to the touch and there was only a sparse covering of litter. As would be expected the humidity and temperature were high. The specimens were active and in the process of chasing each other over the litter surface.

On examining the two specimens it became apparent

that they were sub-adult and considering their location, form and coloration it was thought they might be male and female *Hasarius adansoni* but there were differences from the adults. It was necessary to have their identification confirmed. I was advised to contact Dmitri Logunov of Manchester Museum (University of Manchester). Dmitri was able to take the two specimens and rear them through to maturity, when he was able to confirm them as both male and female *H. adansoni*. I was unfortunately unable to photograph the pair as adults for comparison.

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Spiders near not far

by Howard Williams

An advantage of pursuing spiders rather than, say, birds (unless you live in a coastal bird hotspot) is that you never truly know what you may find on any given outing, nor do you have to travel far to find even rare or uncommon species. This is no doubt due to the small number of active spiderers and the small size and hidden nature of most spiders. Be that as it may, the excitement that goes with the chase ("the game's afoot") need never be far distant for the keen arachnologist.

No farther, for instance, than your own house. The wretched spring weather we have suffered now for two or three years again put me off from any ambitious spider projects in the earlier part of the year. So it was with some satisfaction that I found in the kitchen in early May what looked like a linyphiid, but what the microscope showed to be an uncommon little theridiid: a male *Theridion blackwalli*. It apparently enjoys the indoor life as I have occasionally found it here previously. I do not find it every year, however; but because it is tiny and I'm not always on the lookout, I suspect it is a resident. Both sexes turn up every few years in kitchen or bathroom and once on the outside of the patio door – 1998, 2000, 2003, 2006 and the current year; any time between January and August. It does also live outdoors in the adjacent 40 acre Carlton Wood, where I once took it in a pitfall trap.

Early in February this year I went out to place a plastic cloche from our garage-cum-shed over the rhubarb in the back garden. A week or so later I lifted this cloche, and happening to glance inside it, saw a tiny spider in the dome. I almost didn't bother with it but had second thoughts, fetched the pooter and later had a look at it. Just as well, as it turned out to be a species I had never found before, a female *Porrhomma errans*, a Notable B spider, pretty rare and as far as I know a first Nottinghamshire record. According to Peter Harvey in the Provisional Atlas, bare ground may be a factor in its habitat requirements. It is true that the cloche was placed on bare earth, but equally possibly the spider may already have been in the cloche on the garage shelf. With Carlton Wood adjacent to the garden it may also have originated there. Not knowing which is another of life's little frustrations.

Having small grandchildren with keen minds but short legs and attention span can also be an incentive to keep close to home territory. Knowing my interests, my two granddaughters urged me one day in July to find some creepy crawlies – spiders would be a bonus but anything would do – so out came the umbrella and stick and we beat the lower parts of a tall Cupressus in the front garden. Out tumbled nothing of great arachnological interest except several immature *Diaea dorsata*, which in our county is not common and is always a pretty spider to find with its cream, brown and green colours. It occurs plentifully in the wood behind us in yews, but I had actually found it in the garden here only last year. Also in this Cupressus was a young harvestman, *Dicranopalpus ramosus*, which in the last twenty or so years has been rapidly on the move northwards from its previous haunts below a line from Cardigan Bay to the Orwell in Suffolk. I first recorded it in Nottinghamshire in 2003 in Sherwood Forest, and it has turned up in other localities here in 2004 and 2008. Its smooth body and ocularium and the conspicuous pedipalps make it striking and unmistakeable.

Two days later the 4-year-old granddaughter and I went into the wood for a very brief expedition. There was indeed time to beat only one tree, a rather unpromising-looking yew with those thin, sparse, straggly lower branches that some develop as they grow taller. As expected nothing but some small immatures showed up – except for one oddly shaped gingery spider. I knew immediately what it was, as I had found it in 2003 and 2006, also in yews. *Hyptiotes paradoxus* again, a female subadult. It is exciting to me for two reasons: firstly I found it this time in a quite different part of the wood from previously, which is good news - it has either always been widespread here or is increasing its range within the wood; secondly the location here is, as far as I know, the only one on the eastern side of the UK north of Buckinghamshire for this rare RDB3 spider.

I had to travel 15 miles east (not too far) in June to find my final spider of note at the Lound sand and gravel pits. I had found it here once before in September 2004, immature, on a hawthorn hedge. On maturity it proved to be a female *Larinioides patagiatus*, another quite rare spider. Successive attempts to refind it had all failed. This year, however, when I was not particularly looking for it, some general sweeping of vegetation and lower oak branches produced a male and female. Later, in a different section of the site, a gorse beat produced another female of a striking reddish hue, though the other two were more like variants of *Larinioides cornutus*. So success at last! It was pleasing to find it still survives at Lound.

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The comb-footed spider *Anelosimus aulicus*, a modern record for Essex

by Peter Harvey

On 8th June 2009 a single female *Anelosimus aulicus* was beaten at a site in Thurrock threatened with housing development. Adults of *A. aulicus* do not have much of a visible epigyne, and a return trip several days later to try and locate a male (which has an extremely distinctive palp) was unsuccessful, so although I had reference material from a site in Berkshire, I thought the identification should be verified, and I am very grateful to Peter Merrett for confirming the identification.

A. aulicus is restricted to heathland and coastal grasslands in southern England between Devon and Hertfordshire, with (old) records shown for Kent, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk in the county distribution maps provided in Locket *et al*. (1974). Other than a 1981 record described in Philp (2005) as the only recent record for Kent from Lydden, and the new record for Essex here, there are no modern records in the south-east of the country and the spider is very rare north of the Thames. The basis for *A. aulicus* being recorded for Essex in Locket *et al*., (1974) is unknown, since it was not recorded by the earlier arachnologists who worked in the county (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1883-86; F.O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1899-1900; F.P. Smith, 1901-2; 1903-4; J.E. Hull, 1935; 1947-51), or the Flatford Mill Spider Group, who undertook survey at sites in both Suffolk and North Essex between 1953-1962 (Cooke, 1962).

This species is typically found on gorse *Ulex* on lowland heathland and coastal grasslands, where it spins a small web near the end of gorse branches. The spider is often resistant to beating, but easily found by searching the ends of gorse branches (P. Merrett, pers. comm.). The author has also swept the species in some numbers from low vegetation on post industrial land in Berkshire supporting habitat with heathland characteristics. There is no gorse at the Essex site where the spider was found, and the spider would probably either have been beaten from scrub or from mature oaks, two of which were sampled during the visit. Unfortunately, at the time of collection the spider was assumed to be *A. vittatus*, a common spider of these habitats, and precise details were not noted.

The site is part of the grounds of a former London borough of Newham reform school, now owned by the Four Acre Trust, a grant-making charitable trust supporting charities. It has been identified as a Potential Local (County) Wildlife Site in a review of nature conservation sites in the local authority (Thurrock Biodiversity Study 2006-11. Thurrock Greengrid Strategy, EECOS 2007). The footprint of the old school has already been developed for housing, with the remaining open land now open to the general public, and used by local residents for walking and exercising dogs. The habitats consist of unimproved acid grassland on Thames Terrace sands and gravels with some scrub, hedgerows and several old oaks above the Mardyke valley, an ancient route of the Thames. Two planning applications to develop the main and best part of these old grounds have been refused, with the basis for refusal including the lack of an adequate Transport Assessment, insufficient survey information to establish the presence of protected species or habitats on the site and formulate appropriate mitigation measures, and the absence of a Flood Risk Assessment. However the Four Acre Trust has appealed, and the appeal will be subject to a public inquiry early in 2010. The Four Acre Trust website summarises its funding criteria as "Supporting charities that give individuals – mainly children and young people – help in making the most of their lives". One might have hoped that such a charitable Trust would have a more enlightened view to sustainability and nature conservation than indicated by its actions here.

Fig. 1. *Anelosimus aulicus* female. Photograph © Peter Harvey

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Identification of *Clubiona neglecta* and *Clubiona pseudoneglecta*

Clubiona pseudoneglecta Wunderlich, 1994 was first recorded from Britain on the basis of 4 females from Tresco (Isles of Scilly) collected in 1959 (Merrett, 2001). it has also been recorded from two other localities, St. Ouen (Jersey) and Sandwich Bay NNR (Kent). The species appears to be well established at the last site where specimens were first collected by S.A. Williams in 1975 but where it has been collected since by the present author in 2002 and by D. Carr, P. Harvey and the author in 2007. The species is very closely related to *C. neglecta* and requires careful examination to distinguish it.

Identification

Males of *C. pseudoneglecta* may be distinguished from those of *C. neglecta* by the form of the palpal embolus which is shorter and less curved distally seen in ventral view (Fig. 1).

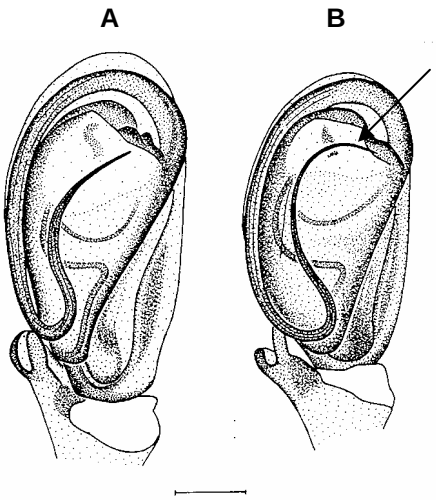

Figure 1. Male palps of A) *Clubiona pseudoneglecta* and B) *C. neglecta* in ventral view. Arrow shows longer and more curving tip of embolus in *C. neglecta.*

Additionally, the distal, unsclerotised portion of the tegulum seen in lateral view is much broader and slightly more pointed than that of *C. neglecta*, the distal end of the cymbium extends further beyond the tip of the tegulum than in *C. neglecta* and the ventral extension of the tibial apophysis is differently shaped, being slightly broader and "knobbed" at the tip (Fig. 2).

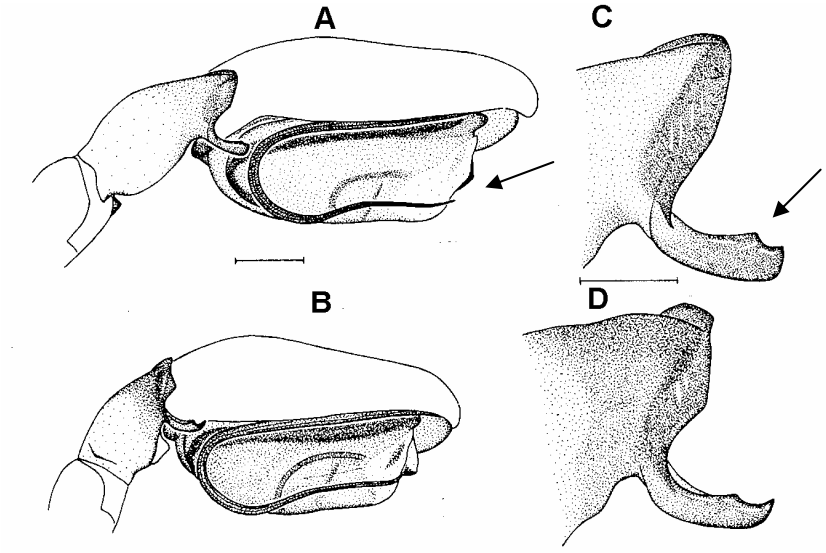

Figure 2. Male palps of A) *Clubiona pseudoneglecta* and B) *C. neglecta* in lateral view. Arrow indicates wider and more pointed distal portion of tegulum in *C. pseudoneglecta*. C) Detail of tibial apophysis of *C. pseudoneglecta.* D) Ditto for *C. neglecta*. Arrow indicates broader more knobbed end of ventral extension in *C. pseudoneglecta.*

However, all of these characters are fairly subtle and, certainly in the case of the tibial apophysis, difficult to discern. The most obvious difference between males of the two species lies in the length of the basal elements of the chelicerae which in *C. pseudoneglecta* are almost twice as long as those of *C. neglecta* (Fig. 3).

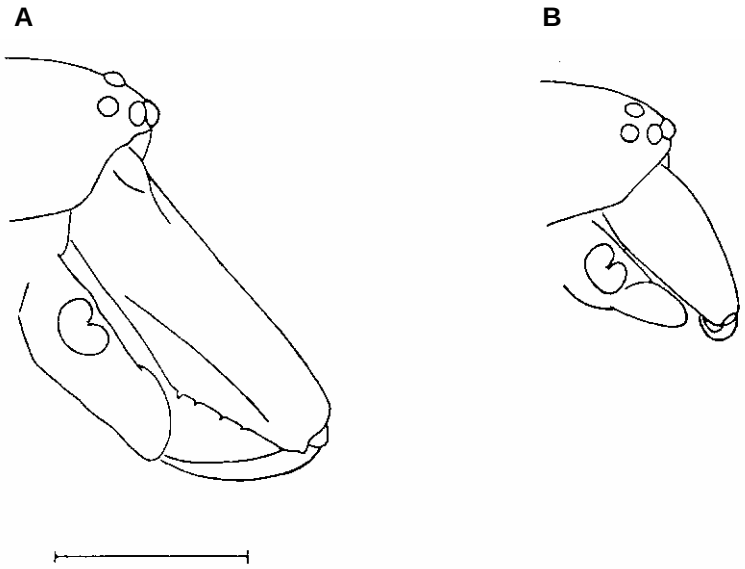

Figure 3. Male chelicerae of A) *Clubiona pseudoneglecta* and B) *C. neglecta* in lateral view.

Females of *C. pseudoneglecta* are distinguished from those of *C. neglecta* by details of the internal structure of the epigyne. The anterior primary seminal receptacles, normally partially visible through the cuticle overlying them, are always smaller in *C. pseudoneglecta* than in *C. neglecta* (Fig. 4). In the cleared epigynes (Figs. 4C and 4D), it can be seen that the posterior seondary receptacles are thinner and more elongate in *C. pseudoneglecta* and appear more irregularly shaped when seen through the cuticle covering them. The posterior secondary receptacles of *C. neglecta* are large and appear almost perfectly spherical through the cuticle. In addition, the lateral copulatory ducts are thinner and more abruptly curved towards the mid-line of the epigyne in *C. pseudoneglecta* than in *C. neglecta*. As in all spiders, there is some variation in the form and arrangement of internal structures of the epigyne and it is essential to compare specimens with properly identified reference material.

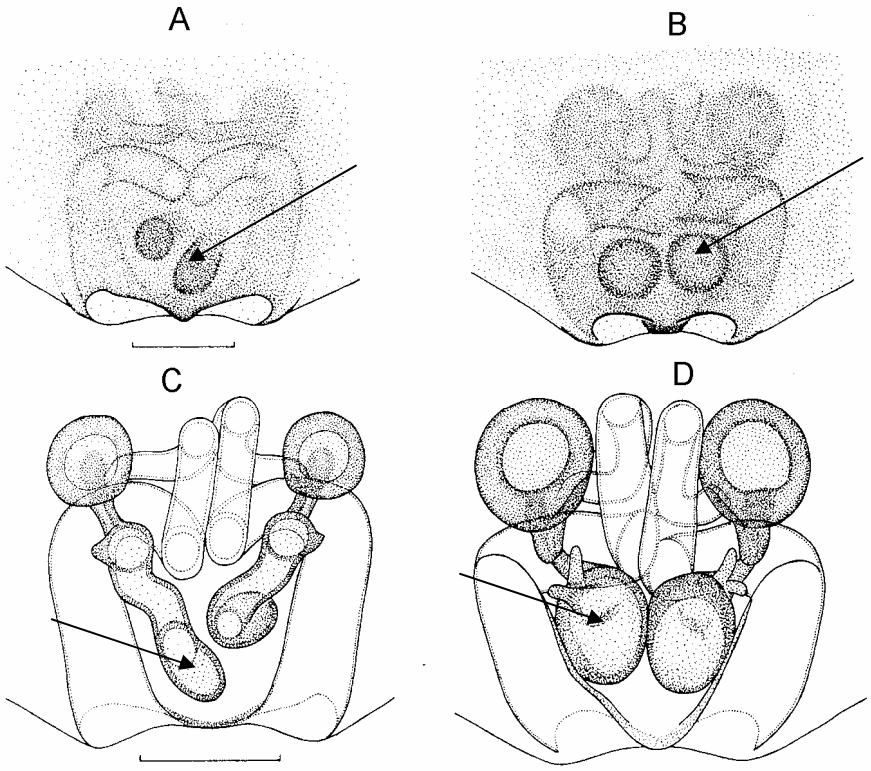

Figure 4. Epigynes of A) *Clubiona pseudoneglecta* and B) *C. neglecta* in ventral view. C) and D) show cleared epigynes of the same species in dorsal view. Arrows indicate posterior secondary receptacles.

Habitats
In Britain, this species has been recorded on sand dunes at Sandwich Bay NNR in Kent where it has been found both in sparse vegetation on fore-dunes and dense grassland on stabilised dunes. In Scilly, the habitat was not recorded but is likely to have been either coastal grassland or dunes. It has been recorded from sand dunes in Belgium and the Netherlands but further south in Europe has been collected in oak forest in France (Le Peru, 2007) and relatively dry grassland habitats in Germany and Hungary. The author has also collected it in sycamore woodland near the Mediterranean coast of Turkey. Changes in preference from relatively shady habitats in warmer areas of Europe to more exposed habitats in the cooler regions of northern Europe are seen in other species that in Britain are confined or nearly confined to sand dunes or shingle habitats. It seems likely therefore that *C. pseudoneglecta* may in future be found on sand dunes and perhaps in dry coastal grassland at other sites in southern England.

Acknowledgements
I am very grateful to Dr. Peter Merrett for allowing me to use his original figures of *Clubiona neglecta* and *C. pseudoneglecta* in this account and commenting on the first draft.

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Author Tony Russell-Smith

Identification of *Neon robustus* and *Neon reticulatus*

Neon robustus Lohmander, 1945 was first discovered in Britain in Edinburgh in 1997 (Snazell *et al*., 1999). Subsequently it has been found to be quite widespread in Britain, from the Isle of Skye in the north to Portland on the south coast but with a majority of records from the western half of Britain. *Neon robustus* is very closely related to *N. reticulatus* and particular care is needed in distinguishing the two species.

Identification

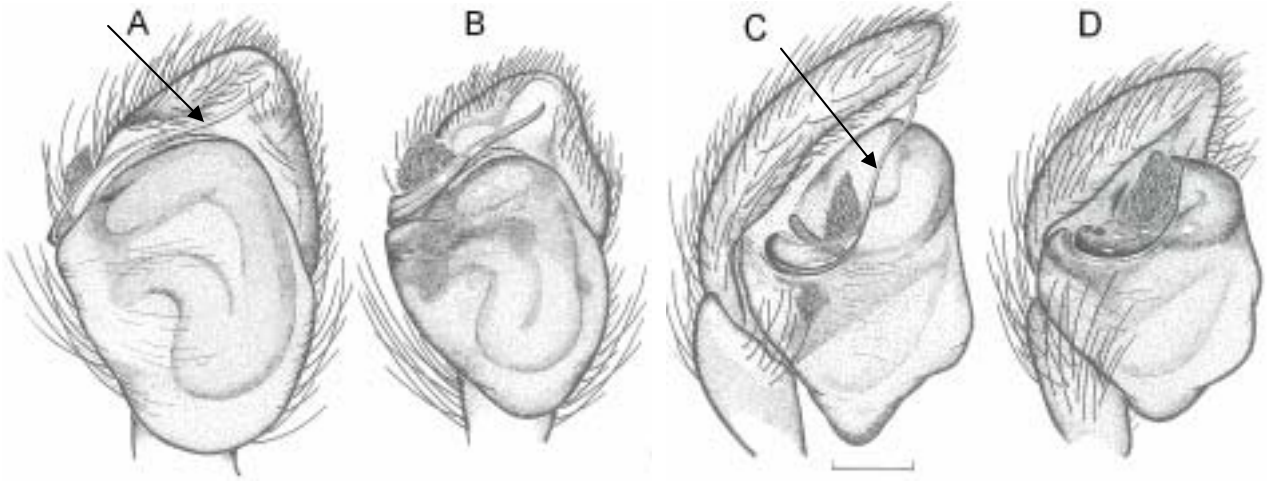

Figure 1. Male palp of A) *Neon robustus* in ventral view and C) in mesal view. Male palp of B) *N. reticulatus* in ventral view and D) in mesal view. Arrows indicate longer embolus in *Neon robustus*.

Both sexes of *Neon robustus* are larger than those of *N. reticulatus*. Snazell *et al*. provide a table of carapace lengths for the two species which suggests that both males and females of *N. robustus* are on average 13% longer than those of *N. reticulatus*. In coloration, *N. robustus* tends to be significantly darker than *N. reticulatus* and the abdomen of males is less hairy in the former species.

Males of *Neon robustus* have a longer embolus than that of *N. reticulatus* when the palp is viewed either ventrally or mesally (Figs. 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D). The spiculate lobe, which lies between the embolus and the margin of the cymbium, is also significantly smaller in *N. robustus* than in *N. reticulatus*.

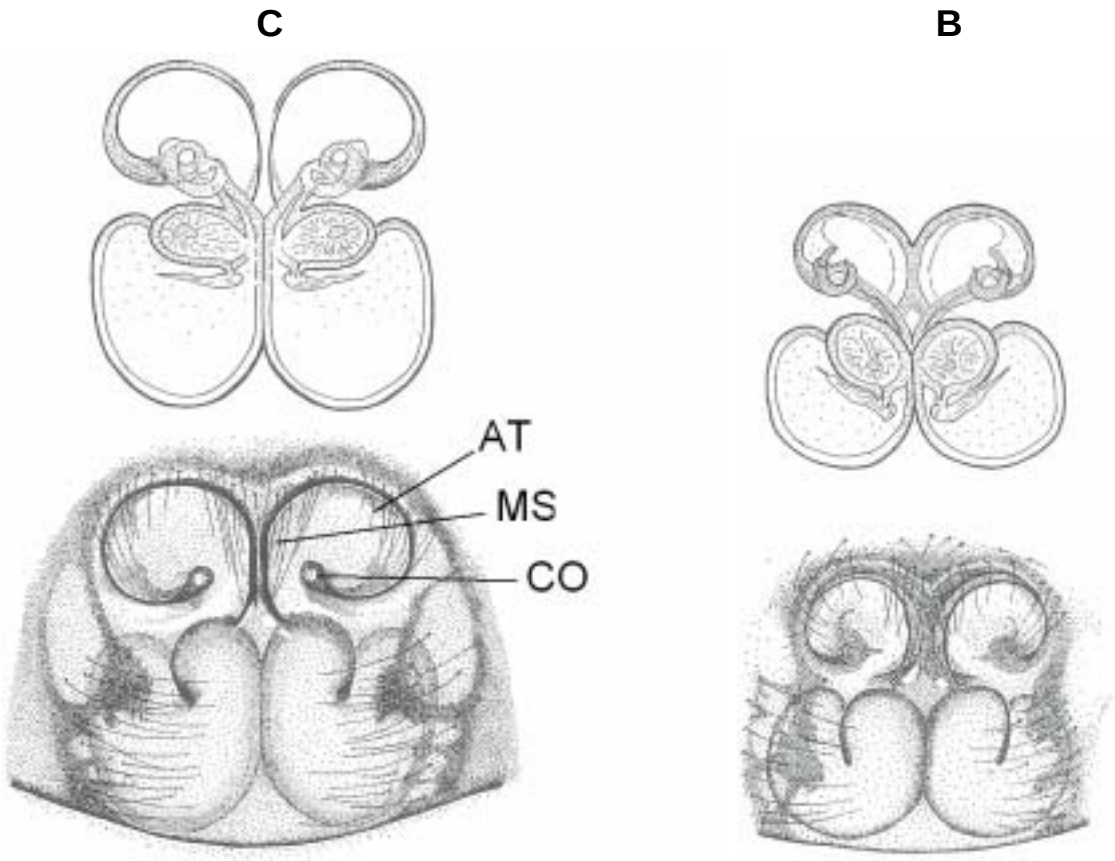

Figure 2. Epigynes of A) *Neon robustus* and B) *N. reticulatus* viewed dorsally (above) and ventrally (below). Key: AT = atrium, MS = median septum, CO = copulatory opening.

Females of *Neon robustus* differ from those *N. reticulatus* in that the median septum between the two atria is much narrower, the atria are larger and more circular and the copulatory openings are broader and more apparent (Fig. 2A). In *Neon reticulatus* there are hook-shaped projections of the vulva visible in the centre of the atria and the band of sclerotisation around the anterior margin of the atria is much broader than in *N. robustus* (Fig. 2B).

Habitats

Neon robustus is described as a thermophilous species, occurring in open rocky situations, often south facing. In Britain it has been found on rocky scree inland and on rocky cliffs and shingle on the coast. In Sweden it is quite common on stone walls. By contrast, the much more widespread *N. reticulatus* occurs both in leaf litter in woodland and in moss in open, damp boggy ground. It has also been recorded from beneath bracken, in grassland and on a beach (Harvey *et al*., 2002). Although *N. robustus* currently appear to be very much less common and with a more restricted distribution than *N. reticulatus*, the possibility of the two species being confused in the past may mean that it has been under-recorded.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Rowley Snazell for allowing me to use his original figures of *Neon robustus* and *N. reticulatus* in this account.

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Author Tony Russell-Smith

Nigma puella (Simon) (Dictynidae) in Middlesex

by Jonty Denton

On 17.viii.2009 I beat a female *Nigma puella* from hazel at edge of open parkland in Regents Park (TQ2783); this appears to be the first for VC21. A few metres away I also beat over 30 adult female *N. walckenaeri* (Roewer) from a single ivy covered post. *N. puella* may well be expanding its range inland as along with my own recent records from Surrey, Edward Milner found it in Woolwich Park in Kent, the first for Greater London.

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Heliophanus auratus C.L.Koch (Salticidae) in Hampshire

by Jonty Denton

On 11.viii.2009, whilst surveying the saltmarsh Hayling Billyuat on Hayling Island, I picked up a female of the RDB2 jumping spider *Heliophanus auratus* (kindly confirmed by Peter Harvey) with several *Sitticus inexspectus*, on a small area of open shingle at foot of a small linear island created to enclose oyster beds. This is the first record for Hampshire, and VC11.

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Some Scottish spider records

by Jonty Denton

An adult female *Cyclosa conica* (Pallas) was beaten from small wych elm in deep shade in ghyll woodland at Milton Lockhart SSSI, Lanarkshire (NS8149) on 1.ix.2009. New for VC77.

Several *Oonops pulcher* Templeton were found under bark with *Amaurobius fenestralis* both at Bankhead of Tinwald, Dumfriesshire (NY0583) 30.viii.2009, and Milton Lockhart SSSI, Lanarkshire (NS8149) on 1.ix.2009. This appears to be the first record for VC72.

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SPIDER LOAN REQUEST

Systematic revision of the genus *Mastigusa* (Dictynidae)

I am working on a new master thesis project under the supervision of Nikolaj Scharff (Zoological Museum, University of Copenhagen, Denmark), and I am requesting material (fresh as well as old) of the genus *Mastigusa* from collections. The genus holds three living species (and 8 fossils) and is currently placed within the family Dictynidae. It was formerly assigned to the genus *Tetrilus* and has been placed in the family Agelenidae. I am looking for material of the followings species (as well as any undetermined material in your collection):

Mastigusa arietina (Thorell, 1871)

Mastigusa lucifuga (Simon, 1898)

Mastigusa macrophthalma (Kulczynski, 1897)

If I can obtain fresh material of the three species, the project will also include a molecular component. Therefore, I particularly welcome any recently fixed specimens for DNA work (spiders fixed in 95% ethanol work best) or live animals.

Please forward material to either myself or my *supervisor*, Nikolaj Scharff at the following address:

Rasmus Aagaard Jensen/Nikolaj Scharff

The Natural History Museum of Denmark

Zoological Museum

Department of Entomology

Universitetsparken 15

DK-2100 Copenhagen

Denmark

 ISSN 0959-2261.

Spider Recording Scheme News
March 2010, No. 66

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 67 will be published in July 2010. Please send contributions by the end of May at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: srs@britishspiders.org.uk or grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk

Editorial

As usual I am very grateful to all the contributors who have provided articles for this issue. Please keep providing articles.

Work on a Spider Recording Scheme website was delayed by hiccups in the OPAL grant process and the timeslot originally set aside for the work has had to be reorganised. Work should now be completed by the end of May this year.

As always many thanks are due to those Area Organisers, MapMate users and other recorders who have provided their records to the scheme during 2009 and early this year. All these data will become available to all BAS members and SRS recorders through the new website.

The new national status review for spiders was finally completed and provided to JNCC in November 2009. We hope that it will be published by JNCC as soon as possible.

Area Organiser change

Richard Wilson has taken over the Area Organiser role for VC64 (York Mid West) & VC65 (York North West) from Jennifer Newton. Many thanks indeed for all the work Jennifer has done over the years in these two Vice Counties. Jennifer remains AO for VC60 (Lancashire West), VC69 (Westmorland North) and VC70 (Cumberland).

Richard would be happy to hear from other active/ inactive arachnologists or receive specimens, especially if these are from parts of the county distant from Leeds. Please contact Richard at Richard Wilson, 161 Burley Wood Crescent, LEEDS, West Yorkshire LS4 2QJ
E-mail: riwspider@yahoo.co.uk

Dicranopalpus ramosus (Simon) in Scotland

by Mike Davidson

This distinctive and easily identified harvestman was first recorded in Britain at Bournemouth in 1957 (Sankey & Storey, 1969). It is most likely to be an accidental introduction and Hillyard (2005) gives its normal distribution as being Morocco (type locality Mogador), Portugal, Spain and SW France, occurring from sea level to 1000m. Over the last 50 years it has spread northwards through England, Wales and also occurs in Ireland. The most recent Opiliones Recording Scheme map (Hillyard, 2005) shows the distribution extending north to Cumbria.

Hillyard noted that it had been recorded at Edinburgh. This was not mapped, but probably refers to a record from the Lothian Wildlife Information Centre 'Secret Garden Survey'. The species was found in Haddington, to the east of Edinburgh and south of the Firth of Forth in October 1995 (pers. comm. Bob Saville). These records appear on the National Biodiversity Network Gateway.

D. ramosus is generally synanthropic and is common in gardens where it can be beaten from hedges and trees, especially conifers. However many peoples' first experience of this species will be of seeing it spread-eagled on a wall (especially if the wall is whitewashed – as in my first encounter in Dorset in 1978). It characteristically sits flat against the wall with all four pairs of legs straight out to each side (see Fig. 1). The other striking character is the obviously bifid palp which can be seen by eye or at low magnification (zoom in on a digital photo).

Fig. 1. *Dicranopalpus ramosus*
Photograph © Mike Davidson 2009

The 1995 Haddington record remained the only Scottish locality until 2009. On 22nd July, while surveying the spider fauna of the yew trees in a cemetery in Perth (NO111233), I was fortunate to collect an immature specimen - easily recognised by the distinctive form of the palp. I returned to the cemetery on 8th September 2009 and fairly quickly found an adult *D. ramosus* on the side of a gravestone, on the perimeter wall. Also found in the same micro-site were *Leiobunum rotundum* (Latreille) and *Opilio parietinus* (De Geer).

Coincidentally I received a photographic record of *D. ramosus* from a colleague, Iain Lawrie, who had photographed it on a house wall at Earlsferry in Fife (NT484100) on 30th August 2009, after it was spotted by his daughter Catriona.

I imagine *Dicranopalpus* is spreading through the horticultural trade and it will be interesting to see how far north it gets over the next few years.

Thanks to Catriona Lawrie for finding the Fife specimen and Iain Lawrie for supplying the details.

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Spiders of lowland heathland in southern England

by A. Russell-Smith

Introduction

From an invertebrate perspective, lowland heaths are among the richest and most threatened of all habitats in Britain. In the six southern counties of England from Cornwall in the West to Sussex in the East, they cover a little over 40,000 ha of land, of which just under half lies in Hampshire with a further 17% in Dorset. This represents a small fraction, perhaps only a tenth, of the total area at the outset of the 19th century. Loss of heathland was due initially to agricultural improvement to allow arable cropping. However, far greater threats came in the 20th century with major urban expansion into heathland areas on the one hand and a massive increase in forestry plantation on heathlands on the other. The expansion of forest plantations was particularly rapid from between the two world wars until the 1960s, when a policy of self-sufficiency in timber production operated by the Forestry Commission saw thousands of hectares of heathland planted to conifers. In many cases, further loss has been caused by lack of management resulting in scrub and woodland invasion on former heathland. While the outlook for heathland survival is now slightly better, with a large proportion of current heathlands afforded protection at either national or local level and the national forestry policy of planting on heathlands effectively reversed, there is no room for complacency. In particular, the fragmentation of heathland into numerous small, often widely separated, patches has placed populations of many rare heathland invertebrates and plants at risk of local extinction or loss of genetic viability.

Lowland heathland is perhaps the richest habitat for spiders in Britain and provides a home to an exceptional array of rare and endangered species. During survey work carried out in the 1960s and 1970s, Peter Merrett and Rowley Snazell recorded 267 species from southern heathlands, 40% of the total known British fauna. Work at Chobham Common in Surrey by John and Frances Murphy produced a list of over 300 spider species from this one site alone. Among the species characteristic of this habitat, 47 will be accorded Red Data Book status according to IUCN criteria in the upcoming national status review and a further 32 will be ranked as nationally notable. Some of these species are not confined to lowland heathlands but all of them have a stronghold in this type of habitat. More significantly 11 of these species (Table 1) have recently been added by the Government to the UK list of priority species that require Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs), making 12 in total. Hopefully, this means that funds are likely to be made available for conservation of these species as part of a wider strategy targeting heathland invertebrates. However, for effective conservation, a proper understanding of both the current status and the ecological requirements of BAP species is essential. While our knowledge of the distribution and status of heathland spiders in southern England during the 1960s and 1970s was fairly sound, there has been no consistent monitoring of changes since that time. Given that there have been major changes in both the extent and quality of heathland vegetation in the region over this period, it is important that further surveying is carried out to ensure both well designed action plans and as a sound basis for future management decisions.

Table 1. Spiders characteristic of lowland heathland which either have an existing BAP (*) or for which an action plan is required. Abbreviations: CR = Critically endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, NT = Near threatened, Na = Notable A. Note that these are provisional categories, pending publication of the definitive species review by JNCC.

Family	Species	Status
Dictynidae	*Altella lucida*	pCR
Eresidae	*Eresus sandaliatus* *	pEN
Gnaphosidae	*Haplodrassus dalmatensis*	pNa
Linyphiiidae	*Glyphesis cottonae*	pVU
Linyphiiidae	*Mecopisthes peusi*	pNa
Linyphiiidae	*Notioscopus sarcinatus*	pVU
Linyphiiidae	*Saaristoa firma*	pVU
Linyphiiidae	*Tapinocyba mitis*	pEN
Linyphiiidae	*Walckenaeria corniculans*	pCR
Lycosidae	*Alopecosa fabrilis*	pCR
Salticidae	*Sitticus caricis*	pVU
Theridiidae	*Dipoena inornata*	pVU

The original heathland survey

Over the period 1968 to 1971, Peter Merrett and Rowley Snazell carried out a survey of spiders on lowland heathlands stretching from Cornwall in the West to Sussex in the East. This provides an important information baseline from which subsequent changes in the status of heathland spiders can be measured. Pitfall trapping was carried out at 124 sites, of which 25 were in Cornwall, 26 in Hampshire, 20 in Devon, 18 in Sussex, 17 in Dorset with only 9 each in Somerset & Surrey. The main aim of the survey was to investigate the potential value of these sites for the Nature Conservation Review by sampling the spiders across as wide a range of locations as possible. Within each major area, sites were selected in a range of different vegetation types, from tall mature dry heathland to younger shorter heather, with some sites in open stony

areas or recently burnt heathland, and some on wet heathland (but not bog). At each site, eight pitfall traps were used, placed in a single line about 10 paces apart. They were operated continuously for approximately twelve months but were emptied rather irregularly, as time allowed. All spiders collected were identified and totalled for each site and species over the twelve months.

The full results of this survey will be published elsewhere and only a few highlights are mentioned here. In terms of species diversity, the richest heathlands were in Dorset (mean species number 60) and Surrey (mean no. 58) and the least rich in the western counties of Cornwall (29) and Devon (34) with the other three counties having intermediate values. However, these aggregate figures conceal very considerable variations between individual sites. For example, in Dorset alone, values for individual sites range from 53 to 72 and the differences between all but the most rich and least rich counties are unlikely to be statistically significant. Indeed, it would be expected that the species richness of individual sites would be affected by factors other than simple geographical position, including microhabitat diversity, structure of the vegetation and age of the heathland, to mention just a few. Hopefully, further analysis of the survey data will shed some light on which factors are most important for heathland spider diversity.

It is also interesting to examine the results of this survey with respect to the BAP species listed in Table 1. Two of the species, *Eresus sandaliatus* and *Altella lucida*, have only been recorded in modern times from a single site each in Britain, but the latter was represented by a single individual from its site at Morden Bog in Dorset. Three further BAP species, *Notioscopus sarcinatus*, *Walckenaeria corniculans* and *Alopecosa fabrilis* were only recorded from a single site each. The first of these is characteristic of extremely wet, boggy sites and would not normally be caught in pitfall traps. *Walckenaeria corniculans* has only been recorded from six 10 km squares in Britain on very few occasions and is perhaps more characteristic of woodlands than heathlands while *Alopecosa fabrilis* has been recorded from only two 10 km squares. Three species, *Haplodrassus dalmatensis*, *Mecopisthes peusi* and *Tapinocyba mitis*, were recorded from between 25 and 38 sites in the survey and are clearly heathland spiders which are adequately sampled using pitfall traps. Interestingly, the four remaining BAP species, *Glyphesis cottonae*, *Sitticus caricis*, and *Dipoena inornata* were not collected at all in this survey. *Glyphesis cottonae* and *Sitticus caricis* are, like *N. sarcinatus*, species of wet boggy conditions and were not recorded for that reason. Overall, the results from the study do suggest that monitoring heathland spiders will require a combination of different sampling techniques and that, for some of the rarest species at least, dedicated surveys will be needed.

Proposed new survey work

An important first step in developing action plans for the BAP species listed in Table 1 will be to establish their current distribution and status as well as further clarifying their precise ecological requirements. Following discussions between the BAS and Buglife, it has been agreed that initially BAS will organise a series of exploratory one-day surveys on sites in Dorset and Hampshire in 2010 and further that BAS and Buglife will jointly apply for funding to DEFRA for a more intensive two year survey of southern heathlands. The latter will be from a funding source entitled "Understanding the status, taxonomy and ecology of UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species" which covers a broad range of groups from lower plants, through freshwater and terrestrial invertebrates to amphibians and reptiles.

1) Preliminary work in 2010

Survey work will focus on 6 to 8 sites in Dorset and Hampshire and will be coordinated by Chris Spilling. The aim of these surveys is threefold:

- To provide information on the current status of all spider species at the sites visited
- To explore suitable survey techniques that can be used to compare the spider fauna of different heathland sites and contribute to a protocol for the wider research project
- To allow participants both to experience first hand the diverse spider fauna of southern heathlands and contribute to developing methodologies for future surveys.

While the participants will be free to spend the majority of the time at each site collecting in any way they choose, they will be asked to spend one hour on timed hand-collecting in a defined area of habitat. This technique, pioneered by Eric Duffey in the fenlands of E. Anglia, allows comparison of the fauna of different sites by providing a more or less standardised unit of collecting effort in each. In addition, the use of a vacuum suction sampler at each site will be considered but this will clearly depend on the availability of equipment and time to sort and identify catches. Experienced participants will be expected to sort and identify their own collections but some assistance will be provided to less experienced collectors with identification of difficult or critical species. All participants will be asked to provide a copy of their lists to Chris Spilling, who in turn will feed the combined results of the surveys into the SRS database. In addition an account of the survey will be prepared for the BAS Newsletter.

Subject to favourable weather conditions, the following dates have been provisionally identified for field work:

May: Tuesday 11th, Sunday 16th, Sunday 23rd and Tuesday 25th

September: Sunday 26th

October: Tuesday 5th

If any member is interested in attending one or more of these field visits they should contact Chris directly either by e-mail chrissp@btinternet.com or by telephone (01929 426699). He will then keep them informed of locations, meeting points and times as well as of any changes to the schedule.

2) Future work

The BAS and Buglife have agreed to seek funding to continue these studies. If we are successful, funding will be used to expand survey to a much larger number of sites and to deploy a wider range of survey methods, including

pitfall trapping. The latter technique is particularly effective for small ground-active species which include two-thirds of those listed in Table 1. In addition, some ecological studies will be undertaken on a few species for which reasonable populations can be identified.

1, Bailiffs Cottage, Doddington, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 0JU

More northern lamp-light on *Larinioides sclopetarius*

by Mike Davidson

Since I last shinned up a lamp-post in Kelso in 2007 (Davidson, 2008), I have discovered another population of *Larinoides sclopetarius*, also around lamp-posts, further north in the Fair City of Perth (NO121231 on 21st May 2009). The location was far more vertiginous than the rather modest structure in Kelso, around a lamp on a railway footbridge high over the River Tay. My retrospective risk assessment confirmed that standing on the handrail and using my umbrella to dislodge the spider was perfectly safe, given the lateness of the hour.

Heiling & Herberstein (1998) cite similar situations in Vienna, with these nocturnally active spiders concentrating around light sources in urban habitats, such as along bridge railings which are equipped with light tubes. In Perth, it was late evening following heavy rain (hence the umbrella) and all the lights along the bridge, river embankment and on adjacent road signs were festooned with webs of this species.

Of course sampling the population at Perth may be considerably safer than visiting David Beaumont's 1988 site at Ardeer Explosives Factory, at Stevenston in Aryshire! Other Scottish records are from Castle Semple (1990) in Renfrewshire and Langholm (1998) in Dumfrieshire, as well as my record from Kelso in 2007.

The Perth record would appear to be a recent extension of its range and further searching around similar railway river crossings further north may well be fruitful.

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Agroeca cuprea Menge in Scotland

by Mike Davidson

The Spider Recording Scheme provisional atlas[1] shows *Agroeca cuprea* as restricted to a few sand-dune and dry grassland sites on the south coast of England, along with a small Breckland cluster, a recent (2007) Cumbrian coastal site and one Scottish location at St. Cyrus National Nature Reserve in Kincardineshire (see Fig. 1). As noted by Jennifer Newton[2], most of the records for this Biodiversity Action Plan species are from before 1980, and this prompted the Grampian Spider Group (GSG) to undertake some survey work in 2009 to confirm *A. cuprea*'s continued presence at St. Cyrus NNR.

Fig. 1. St. Cyrus NNR. **Photograph ©** Mike Davidson 2009

St. Cyrus NNR has a relatively mild climate for these latitudes, and fertile soils derived from the lavas and sedimentary rocks of the lower old red sandstone which form the cliffs behind the sand-dunes (Fig.1). It is well known for its unusual flora and invertebrate fauna with several species at or near their northern limit here.

The original record of *A. cuprea* was attributed to John Murphy, who very kindly provided additional details of his single female specimen, caught on a wet day in July 1971 at about NO7564. It was collected from an area of grass or low plants, growing at the base of the sandy cliff/bank at the back of the beach.

Nagging memories that I had seen this species before proved correct and, after I trawled through notebooks and old reports, I realised that a male specimen had been collected by a previous incarnation of the GSG at St. Cyrus (NO7463) on 18th August 1991. Identification had been confirmed by M.J. Roberts.

The first 2009 visit, on 3rd May, produced a good list of spiders but unfortunately no sign of *A. cuprea*. On advice from Peter Harvey, pitfall traps were put out and harvested twice over a period of a month, from 5th September to 4th October. The pitfall traps did not produce any specimens of *A. cuprea*, however on 20th September a single female (Fig. 2) was found in moss on the dunes (NO751644), near the pitfalls. This was in roughly the same area, at the base of the cliff, as was searched by John Murphy nearly four decades ago. *A. cuprea* was one of 50 species found during the 2009 surveys, out of a total list for this site of about 90 species. Additions to the list in 2009 include *Agroeca proxima*, *Harpactea hombergi*, *Micrargus herbigradus*, *Oonops pulcher*, *Walckenaeria antica*; and from pitfall traps only: *Leptorhoptrum robustum* and *Pelecopsis mengei*.

It is reassuring that *Agroeca cuprea* continues to survive at St. Cyrus NNR and hopefully we will eventually understand more about its ecology and habitat requirements and locate other sites. The main threats at St.

Fig. 2. *Agroeca cuprea*. Photograph © Mike Davidson 2009

Cyrus are likely to be people pressure, site management for other groups and ultimately sea level rise. The main threats to arachnologists are very large falling rocks!

I am grateful to John Murphy and Peter Harvey for advice on finding this species and to Scottish Natural Heritage for permission to carry out the survey.

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2009 - A Scottish miscellany

by Mike Davidson

2009 threw up three interesting records which are worth mentioning briefly. My visit to the Island of Raasay in July (which will be reported separately) produced a female *Agraecina striata* in an area of wetland, on coastal shingle at Brochel (NG585462). From my northern perspective this is a southern species, with the provisional atlas (Harvey *et al*., 2002) describing it as confined to south of a line from the Wash to Cardigan Bay – apart from a few records from SW Scotland and the Isle of Man. The Raasay site is therefore a long way north of its previous range and, given its remoteness, it probably occurs more widely in Scottish coastal wetland habitats.

Another *striata*, this time a female *Tetragnatha striata*, turned up in a tiny area of reed-bed on the shore of Loirston Loch, on the south edge of Aberdeen (NJ936010). Again, this is largely a southern species with the only previous Scottish record at the Loch of the Lowes in Perthshire (Aug. 1999). Loirston Loch is heavily used and "managed" by anglers and is adjacent to the proposed location for a new football stadium.

The third species, *Theridion tinctum*, is perhaps more common than the previous two, but again has a southern UK distribution (up to Yorkshire) with two previous Scottish outliers at Balnaguard Glen (NN940514, Aug. 1995) and Invervack (NN840658, July 1991), both in the Tay catchment. The new record was also from the Tay, on the embankment in Perth (NO120236) in May 2009. Although this species is noted as occurring on low vegetation, especially yew, it has not so far turned up in my surveys of yew in Perth and elsewhere.

Scotland is regularly noted as being under recorded, but there seems to be a desperate need for more Spider Recording in Northern England!

Thanks to Peter Harvey for verifying these specimens.

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Harvey, P.R., Nellist, D.R. & Telfer, M.G. (eds) 2002. *Provisional atlas of British spiders (Arachnida, Araneae), Volume 2.* Huntingdon: Biological Records Centre.

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Wan Fell SSSI, VC70, Cumbria

by Jennifer Newton

Wan Fell SSSI consists of 305 hectares of lowland heath bisected by a valley mire, with scattered birches and some areas of planted conifers. It lies between 180 and 250m altitude on the western flank of the Eden valley, about 5km north of Penrith, NY53. It is a privately owned site with no public rights of way, little in the way of footpaths, and very little nearby car parking space. It became Open Access a few years ago, but is still difficult to walk across and appears little visited.

The Provisional Atlas (Peter Harvey, pers. comm.) shows 94 species, listed by Harry Britten (1912) in his account of the Arachnids of Cumberland. Britten was a very active naturalist in the early years of the twentieth century, a gamekeeper on the nearby Nunwick Hall Estate, Great Salkeld, before becoming Assistant Keeper of Entomology at Manchester Museum[1].

The Atlas gives no further records until 1999 when *Tetragnatha extensa* was added. This century the site has been visited by Simon Warmingham, who added 3 new species in 2008, and by Dave Blackledge and myself in September this year, when 11 more species were added. A total of 55 species were recorded on the 2 visits, leaving

Fig. 1. Wan Fell. Photograph © Jennifer Newton

53 of the 1912 records still to be refound. Considering that we have looked at a tiny fraction of the site, a small piece of lowland heath and a small section of the mire on the northern side, on only 2 days (July and September) it is remarkable how many species were found. Dave's vacuum sampler was by far the most productive method, though sweeping/beating the heather was also rewarding. Small disused quarries provided further species under rocks.

The new species are a curious mixture of very common and rarer species. It is hard to believe that *Tetragnatha extensa*, *Metellina merianae*, *Pirata piraticus*, *Theridion sisyphium*, *Pachygnatha clercki* and *Philodromus cespitum* were not present before 1912, and maybe they were considered too common to note (though plenty of very common and widespread species are listed). *Philodromus cespitum* was abundant in September 2009 (mostly immature but with a female on eggs) and it is possible that it was mistakenly listed as *Philodromus histrio*, the only *Philodromus* given by Britten. Surprisingly *Larinioides cornutus*, found in 1999 (and 1912), was not refound in 2008 or 2009. It seemed typical *Larinioides* habitat at an appropriate time of year, but while plenty of *Metellina segmentata*, *Araneus quadratus* and *A. diadematus* were seen there was no sign of *Larinioides*.

Centromerus arcanus, *Meioneta mossica*, *Sintula corniger*, *Episinus angulatus*, *Neottiura bimaculata*, and *Drapetisca socialis* are among the most notable new finds, while *Bathyphantes setiger*, *Hypselistes jacksoni*, *Drepanotylus uncatus*, *Walckenaeria kochi*, and *Aphileta misera* are important refinds of species of some level of conservation concern. However there are plenty of important species still to be refound, and the site will certainly repay further visits.

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[1] Tullie House Museum website: http://www.tulliehouse.co.uk

Wann Fell list

Taxon	First Recorded	Last Recorded
Segestria senoculata	1912	1912
Oonops pulcher	1912	1912
Episinus angulatus	2009	2009
Theridion sisyphium	2009	2009
Theridion impressum	1912	2009
Theridion pictum	1912	1912
Neottiura bimaculata	2009	2009
Robertus lividus	1912	1912
Robertus arundineti	1912	1912
Pholcomma gibbum	1912	1912
Theonoe minutissima	1912	1912
Ceratinella brevipes	1912	2009
Ceratinella brevis	1912	1912
Walckenaeria acuminata	1912	1912
Walckenaeria antica	1912	1912
Walckenaeria nudipalpis	1912	1912
Walckenaeria kochi	1910	2009
Walckenaeria vigilax	1912	1912
Hypomma bituberculatum	1912	1912
Gonatium rubens	1912	2009
Peponocranium ludicrum	2009	2009
Pocadicnemis pumila sens. str.	2009	2009
Hypselistes jacksoni	1908	2009
Oedothorax gibbosus	1912	1912
Oedothorax fuscus	1912	1912
Oedothorax agrestis	1912	1912
Pelecopsis mengei	1912	1912
Evansia merens	1912	1912
Tiso vagans	1912	1912
Minyriolus pusillus	1912	1912
Tapinocyba pallens	1912	1912
Satilatlas britteni	1911	1912
Monocephalus fuscipes	1912	1912
Micrargus herbigradus sens. str.	1912	2009
Savignia frontata	1912	2009
Erigone atra	1912	2009
Drepanotylus uncatus	1912	2009
Aphileta misera	1912	2009
Porrhomma pygmaeum	1912	2009
Meioneta rurestris	1912	2009
Meioneta mossica	2009	2009
Meioneta beata	1912	1912
Centromerus arcanus	2008	2009
Tallusia experta	1912	2009
Centromerita bicolor	1912	1912
Centromerita concinna	1912	2009
Sintula corniger	2009	2009
Saaristoa abnormis	1912	2008
Bathyphantes approximatus	1912	1912
Bathyphantes gracilis	1912	2009
Bathyphantes nigrinus	1912	1912
Bathyphantes setiger	1910	2009
Poeciloneta variegata	1912	1912
Drapetisca socialis	2009	2009
Tapinopa longidens	1912	2009
Floronia bucculenta	1912	1912
Labulla thoracica	1912	1912
Stemonyphantes lineatus	1912	1912

Taxon	First Recorded	Last Recorded
Bolyphantes luteolus	1912	2009
Lepthyphantes tenuis	1912	1912
Lepthyphantes zimmermanni	1912	2009
Lepthyphantes cristatus	1912	1912
Lepthyphantes mengei	1912	2009
Lepthyphantes ericaeus	1912	2009
Linyphia triangularis	1912	2009
Neriene montana	1912	1912
Microlinyphia pusilla	1912	2009
Tetragnatha extensa	1999	2009
Tetragnatha montana	1912	1912
Pachygnatha clercki	2009	2009
Metellina segmentata sens. str.	1912	2009
Metellina merianae	2009	2009
Araneus diadematus	1912	2009
Araneus quadratus	1912	2009
Larinioides cornutus	1912	1999
Nuctenea umbratica	1912	1912
Araniella cucurbitina sens. str.	1912	1912
Hypsosinga albovittata	1910	1910
Zygiella atrica	1912	2009
Pardosa palustris	1912	1912
Pardosa pullata	1912	2009
Pardosa amentata	1912	1912
Pardosa nigriceps	1912	2009
Alopecosa pulverulenta	1912	2009
Alopecosa barbipes	1912	1912
Trochosa terricola	1912	2009
Pirata piraticus	2008	2009
Pisaura mirabilis	1912	1912
Textrix denticulata	1912	2009
Tegenaria domestica	1912	1912
Argyroneta aquatica	1912	1912
Antistea elegans	1912	1912
Dictyna arundinacea	1912	2009
Cryphoeca silvicola	1912	1912
Amaurobius fenestralis	1912	2009
Clubiona trivialis	1912	2009
Clubiona diversa	1912	1912
Cheiracanthium erraticum	1912	2009
Cheiracanthium virescens	1908	1908
Drassodes cupreus	1912	1912
Gnaphosa leporina	1912	1912
Micaria pulicaria	1912	1912
Philodromus cespitum	2008	2009
Philodromus histrio	1912	1912
Xysticus cristatus	1912	2009
Xysticus sabulosus	1910	1912
Ozyptila trux	1912	2009
Ozyptila atomaria	1912	2008
Neon reticulatus	2009	2009

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Philodromus margaritatus in Glen Moriston, Inverness-shire: 2009 update

by Jane Bowman

Having recorded and monitored a female *Philodromus margaritatus* found on a bee hive last summer in Glen Moriston (BRS Newsletter 113 Nov.2008), I was left disappointed not to have seen her spiderlings or to have found a subsequent spider in order to photograph in a more aesthetically pleasing situation.

My reward came on Sept. 18th 2009 when in ancient woodland on Dundreggan Estate, a couple of miles west of last year's sighting, three females were found during an official Spider Survey which I was attending as 'guide'. This particular small wooded area (see Fig. 1), covering approx. 7 hectares, is predominately birch with a few rowan trees adjoining an established Sitka plantation to the east. It is on a steep, north-facing, craggy slope at 400m isolated from the bulk of the Estate's ancient birch and Scots pine above the River Moriston. To the north and west lies higher, very exposed open moorland. The wood is extremely cold in the winter and only on late spring, summer and early autumn days does sun penetrate, due to the high crags rather than the tree canopy. Dense bilberry and crowberry with outcrops of heather, carpet the woodland floor, interspersed by wet flushes. The wood is a popular shelter and feeding ground for Black Grouse.

Fig. 1. The 7 hectare wood area.
Photograph © Jane Bowman

The first birch branch to be beaten on the periphery of the wood during the survey revealed a female *Philodromus margaritatus* in the beating tray, followed by two other females from another birch tree slightly further into the wood. Releasing one spider back onto her tree she scuttled about until coming to rest amongst Cudbear lichen camouflaging her perfectly. Interested to see if she could be encouraged to move, I gently poked her but she refused to budge. I propped my walking pole against the tree to mark her position, realising that by taking my eyes off her to prepare the camera, it would then be virtually impossible to spot her!

Returning alone a couple of days later in good weather to see if I could find any spiders purely by observation of branches or tree trunks, but to no avail, though due to the

improved weather I realised these outer trees would receive summer sunshine. It will be interesting this year to search deeper into the wood where less sunshine penetrates and search again. I was delighted however, to find an isolated birch tree whose lower trunk was riddled with Goat Moth (BAP species) caterpillars.

A week later I was visiting another Goat Moth birch tree I'd recently discovered and decided to eat my lunch at a nearby burn. Admiring the rocky outcrops and the range of colours among the rowan berries, I **fortunately** tripped and grabbed a convenient birch branch to avoid falling. Steadying myself I was aware of a pair of spider legs wafting in the air next to my hand and astonished to realise they belonged to another *Philodromus margaritatus*, presumably annoyed at the intrusion and threat to her welfare! She subsequently settled down enabling me to photograph her beautiful markings. As an interesting colour variant to the other females I could afford to take my eyes off her briefly as the camouflage was less subtle. Initially I assumed this colour variation indicated a male spider, but thanks to Peter Harvey for suggesting that from what could be seen of the palps in the photograph, the spider was most likely a female.

This birch tree was 2km from the previous week's females and at the western edge of the south-facing native ancient woodland, an area of approx.100 hectares at 200-300m above the River Moriston (see Fig. 2). The woodland is predominately birch, good stands of Scots Pine and a few ancient oaks. A very open situation benefiting from continual sunshine, including winter sun, though very exposed to westerly winds.

Fig. 2. The 100 hectare wood area. Photograph © Jane Bowman

I felt very privileged (as I did with last year's female) to have spotted her through observation. However, without my mishap resulting in the leg waving, I'm sure her camouflage amongst the variety of lush lichens would normally make these wonderful spiders extremely difficult and time-consuming to find simply by looking.

This year's target is of course a male and spiderlings!

Fig. 3. Two of the three *Philodromus margaritatus* individuals found. Photograph © Jane Bowman

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Norfolk Spiders 2009

Peter Nicholson, County Recorder

One of the main spider projects, started in 2008 and continued through 2009, was a survey to find the whereabouts of the fen raft spider *Dolomedes plantarius* (Clerck) in United Kingdom. As you might be aware we are fortunate to have one of the three known UK populations of this charismatic spider in our county as well as its family member *Dolomedes fimbriatus*. The survey is to establish whether there are any *D. plantarius* populations that have been overlooked, or misidentified as *D. fimbriatus*.. The spin off of these surveys in Norfolk was the chance for local spider recorders to capitalise on the chance to find other species in areas not often visited.

It was through the endeavours of Dr Helen Smith a leading researcher in *D. plantarius* that these surveys have been undertaken, supported by keen local arachnologists all over the country. I should draw your attention to the

Dolomedes website (http://www.dolomedes.org.uk/) which explains the *D. plantarius* monitoring and recovery programme, funded by Natural England (formerly English Nature) at Redgrave and Lopham Fen NNR, since 1992. Helen now runs the translocation programme on behalf of Natural England. Whether or not translocations go ahead is based in part on establishing positively or negatively the possibility of any other resident populations.

The present outcome of these surveys in Norfolk has shown no new *D. plantarius* sites but those of you venturing out again next year in Norfolk are asked to be vigilant for the possibility of its presence in the Broads. To help those not sure of what they are looking for, the Broads Authority have produced small ID cards which can be obtained by emailing Helen Smith via the *Dolomedes* website.

The surveys may not have produced *D. plantarius* but in August 2008 *Clubiona juvenis* was found by David Hewitt west of the Catfield Hall estate in an area owned by Butterfly Conservation. This was a pleasant surprise as this is generally thought rare and confined to a very few marshy localities in the south and east of England, the Broads and Fens of Norfolk being one of these areas. It was also remarkable that it was not found during the surveys undertaken in previous years on Catfield Hall estate given its proximity and similarity of habitat. The results of this survey are being celebrated and published in N&NN Societies latest Occasional Publication (No. 11).

Sutton Fen came under scrutiny during the year where Pip Collyer found *Philodromus collinus* in the lower branches of mature oak trees (*Quercus* spp): it is uncommon in Britain and recorded from sites in the south and south east of Britain. It has also been recorded in Norfolk pre 1983 mainly in the Santon Downham area on heath and heather, also Thompson Common and Weeting Heath.

Another species of interest which is rare in Britain but frequently found in the fens and broads of East Anglia was *Marpissa radiata* from the Salticidae family, commonly known as jumping spiders. These are to be found in the reed heads and require careful examination before the spider reveals itself.

The Wasp Spider *Argiope bruennichi* has been drawing comment over the last few years as it has moved up along the coast from Suffolk. Although few actual records are coming in at present it seems to be gathering a presence in the county. There are healthy populations now being recorded as far round as Horsey Mill on the north coast of Norfolk with the odd report from within the county.

A visit to RSPB Strumpshaw Fen at the invitation of Tim Strudwick, Senior Warden, resulted in *Meta bourneti* being recorded from their macerator. It is the rarer of two Tetragnathidae species which are often confused, the other being *Meta menardi*. Both species drawing attention to themselves by being 12-15mm in length and both associated with total darkness such as the deep interiors of caves, culverts, sewers and Nissen huts. These two species are often recorded incorrectly due to an assumption that the spiders are *M. menardi* rather than examining specimens fully.

Strumpshaw also turned up another species not often recorded by arachnologists due to its unique life style and that is the Water Spider *Argyroneta aquatica*. This species spends most of its time submerged and requires a net and is more likely to be found by those people who pond dip or those clearing weed from ponds and dykes. Please pass these records on, with a photo, if you see this species. This species is not normally found skating on the water surface.

An incidental record passed to me by a vigilant observer Shane Allen, who found *Ero tuberculata* in the Fakenham area. This species being uncommon for Britain and only having four records to its credit in Norfolk, these being pre-1991 and located at Grimes Graves, Scole and Catfield Common. This attractive creature is of the family Mimetidae which is represented by only four species of this genus in Britain. They are commonly referred to as 'pirate spiders' for they prey on other spiders in their own webs.

Lastly due to a *Dolomedes* survey just over the border in Suffolk on the Waveney marshes near Barnby, Pip Collyer and Helen Smith discovered *Enoplognatha tecta* a very rare and under recorded species with only two records from Dorset, in 1974 and 1888. A report of this finding was published in the British Arachnological Society Newsletter in November 2009.

A visit to Blakeney point was undertaken recently on behalf of the National Trust and a report on this will be published soon.

To finish I would like to welcome back from France, to Norfolk, the well known and distinguished arachnologist Eric Duffey.

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Araneus angulatus Clerck (Araneidae), *Theridiosoma gemmosum* (L.Koch) (Theridiosomatidae) & *Enoplognatha mordax* (Thorell) (Theridiidae) from the Isle of Wight

by Jonty Denton

I took a single male *Enoplognatha mordax* from saltmarsh edge on eastern edge of the Yar Estuary (SZ355886) on 23rd June 2009. This appears to be the first record of this Nationally Scarce A spider from VC10.

On 25th June I spent a day sampling the tall herb rich fen habitats at Freshwater Marshes (SZ346862) and beat a single immature *Araneus angulatus* from bushes growing amongst tall herbs in fen, and found several adult female *Theridiosoma gemmosum* at base of emergent stems of *Glyceria, Phalaris* etc. The later appears to be particularly under-recorded. It is a species I rarely fail to find in any half decent wetland habitats in central southern England, maybe because many specimens were found in my pond net, into which it was dislodged from its very low web. Recent records come from an isolated balancing pond beside the M25 dating from mid 1980s, and a small pond in a Sussex Wood, also created in the 1980s.

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Tegenaria picta Simon, 1870 (Araneae: Agelenidae) – a spider new to Surrey [VC 17]

by Scotty Dodd

Tegenaria picta Simon, 1870 was first recorded in Britain from a chalk pit in West Sussex [VC 13] during 1982 (Jones, 1984; Roberts, 1996) with further records from the same locality during the 1990s. The species was discovered at a new West Sussex site in 1990 and it has also been recorded from East Hampshire (Harvey *et al.*, 2002). The current conservation status of *T. picta* is RDBK – Insufficiently Known.

Tegenaria picta is reported here as new for Surrey [VC 17] based upon a single adult female collected and identified by the author and confirmed from the voucher specimen by Peter Harvey. It was collected using a suction sampler on an area of chalk downland during survey work at Surrey Wildlife Trust's Quarry Hangers (SSSI) nature reserve near Merstham, Surrey (TQ3153) on the 12.vi.2009. The area sampled was sparsely vegetated rabbit grazed turf on a steep south-facing slope.

The elongate posterior spinners are rather longer and more conspicuous than in other British *Tegenaria* (Roberts, 1987), reminiscent of *Agelena,* and its small size could easily lead to the spider being overlooked as a juvenile (P. Harvey, pers. comm.). Thus far British records of adult *T. picta* have been made in the months of June and September.

Acknowledgements
Many thanks to Peter Harvey for kindly offering to verify the voucher specimen and for providing current information on national distribution. Thanks also to Surrey Wildlife Trust for supporting invertebrate survey work on their nature reserves.

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Hilaira excisa (O.P.-Cambridge, 1871) (Araneae: Linyphiidae) – rediscovered in Surrey [VC 17] after a gap of 21 years

by Scotty Dodd[1] & Jonty Denton[2]

Hilaira excisa (O.P.-Cambridge, 1871) is regarded as widespread but uncommon in northern and western parts of Britain, being almost absent from the southeast of England (Harvey *et al*., 2002). It is a wetland species, occurring in a range of damp habitats, including upland moors (Roberts, 1993). There is no published national status but *H. excisa* may be regarded as a regional rarity in southeast England.

Hilaira excisa is reported here as a significant rediscovery for Surrey [VC 17] after a period of 21 years. There are three previous records of *H. excisa* in Surrey, representing two localities in Haslemere (1961) and Godstone (1987, 1988) (Harvey, pers. comm., 2009). A new Surrey locality is given here.

Hilaira excisa was collected using a suction sampler in an area of wet woodland during survey work at a site in Bramley, Surrey (TQ0142), on behalf of Surrey Wildlife Trust, on 11.vi.2009. One male and several females were collected by SD and subsequently determined by JD. The area sampled was a low lying wet flush with a running brook and a ground flora dominated by carpets of Opposite Leaved Golden Saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* L. and tussocks of rush *Juncus* spp. *Theridiosoma gemmosum* (L.Koch, 1877) (Araneae: Theridiosomatidae) [Nb] was also taken in the same sample.

Acknowledgements.
Many thanks to Peter Harvey for comments on the status of *Hilaira excisa* in Surrey and The Birtley House Group Ltd. via Surrey Wildlife Trust Consultancy for supporting this invertebrate survey work.

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Spiders in Kent, 2008-2009

by Tony Russell-Smith[1] & Greg Hitchcock[2]

2008

In many respects, 2008 was a poor year for collecting spiders, with an exceptionally wet period from June to August. Despite this, a number of interesting records were made in Kent, including one species new to Britain.

On the first day of June, TRS was joined by Richard Price from Sussex and David Carr, Peter Harvey and Ken Hill from Essex, to visit Fowlmead Country Park near Deal (TR 365538). This is a new country park created on what was originally the coal spoil heap for Betteshanger Colliery which ceased operation in 1989. TRS had visited the site two years earlier, prior to the formal opening of the park, and had recorded a number of interesting species. It was good to be able to confirm the continued presence of some of these, including *Arctosa perita* and both sexes of *Haplodrassus dalmatensis.* It is assumed that both these species have colonised the bare coal shale areas of the site from the nearby sand dunes of Sandwich & Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve (NNR), which lies about one mile N.E. of Fowlmead. We also collected *Alopecosa barbipes*, an uncommon, mainly coastal species in Kent. However, the most significant find was by Richard Price with his suction sampler. Samples taken from an area with short grasses and bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) produced a single male of what subsequently proved to be *Diplocephalus graecus*, a species new to Britain (Price & Russell-Smith, 2008). The suction samples also produced a single male of the small salticid *Sitticus saltator*, another species characteristic of sand dunes but which was also collected by TRS on a second colliery tip in Kent ten days later, at Snowdown (TR 249509). A final list of 69 species collected at Fowlmead suggests the potential richness of post-industrial sites of this sort. Unfortunately, a second visit on 27th September failed to reveal any other specimens of *D. graecus*. It was therefore pleasing to hear that a second male was collected at Farnham Heath in Surrey in early June 2009 (I. Dawson, pers. comm.). This is not totally surprising as the species has been spreading northward in Europe from its original range in the Mediterranean for a number of years, and is quite likely to turn up more frequently in the future.

During a visit to Oare Marshes LNR near Faversham (TR 006653) on the 16th June, TRS collected two relatively scarce saltmarsh spiders, *Enoplognatha mordax* (both sexes) and *Arctosa fulvolineata* (male). Both species have been recorded from the upper saltmarsh on this site previously but it was good to see that they were both still present. A week later, he visited the sand dunes at Greatstone-on-Sea (TR 082228). As well as recording the typical sand dune species *Ceratinopsis romana*, *Marpissa nivoyi*, *Xerolycosa miniata* and *Zelotes electus*, he also collected three females of *Maso gallicus.* This is the first record for the species from this excellent nature reserve, part of the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Despite its small size, it has a list of spiders almost as long as that for the much more widely known Sandwich Bay NNR. *M. gallicus* is now known from a range of habitats along a stretch of the south Kent coast from Folkestone to Sandwich, including chalk grassland, sand dunes, shingle and even one post-industrial site.

Also in June 2008, GH surveyed a post-industrial site on Holborough Marshes (TQ 710627), see Figs. 1 & 2. Here he collected a male of *Salticus zebraneus* from a fence and a female on cinders on the ground beneath birch trees. This is a rare species in Kent, normally taken on trunks of either pine or oak, with earlier records for Kent from only three other sites. This site also produced *Xerolycosa nemoralis* in good numbers, *Myrmarachne formicaria* and *Trachyzelotes pedestris*. He collected two further males of *S. zebraneus* on 28th June at Monkery Farm, Wissenden (TQ 914417), on this occasion on the trunk of a large oak. It seems possible that this species has been overlooked in Kent and would be well worth searching for in other areas.

Figs. 1 & 2. Post industrial area at Holborough Marshes. Photographs © Greg Hitchcock

2009

The weather in 2009 was an improvement on the previous year, with warmer temperatures in spring and summer but with some periods of heavy rain. A prolonged dry period in September meant that spiders were difficult to find in the autumn.

The apparent spread of the money spider *Megalepthyphantes* sp. n. in the South-East has been documented elsewhere (Russell-Smith, 2006). On 16th March 2009, TRS visited Robin Rigby at his house in Prospect Row, Gillingham and was shown several adult specimens of this species in his small garden, where females produced webs along a wall supporting a garden bed. Photos taken the previous summer by Robin suggested that the garden also harboured a number of other interesting spiders, including *Ballus chalybeius*, a species not normally associated with urban gardens!

Towards the end of May 2009, the authors gained permission to visit Peters Pit SSSI, Wouldham (TQ 717628), an abandoned chalk quarry and Special Area of Conservation (for Great Crested Newts) managed by Kent Wildlife Trust. Although we did not find anything outstanding, the list of 48 species included *Arctosa perita*, *Myrmarachne formicaria*, *Trachyzelotes pedestris*, *Trichoncus saxicola* and *Zodarion italicum*. This site would certainly repay further survey, particularly as it is only a few miles from Upper Great Culand Pit, Burham, the only known site in Britain for the tiny crab spider *Ozyptila pullata*. This species appears to prefer very sparsely vegetated chalk, a feature the two quarries share.

On the 6th June, a group comprising those who had visited Fowlmead the previous year together with GH, Michelle Fountain and Robin Rigby gathered at Pegwell Bay to survey the hoverport (TR 350639). Abandoned in 1987, the concrete hard standing for the hovercraft and demolished buildings now provide plenty of sparsely vegetated habitats for warmth-loving spiders (see Figs. 3 & 4). In the event, the spider fauna proved an interesting mixture of species one might expect from such a site and those characteristic of maritime habitats. For example, both species of *Xerolycosa* were recorded. *X. nemoralis* can often be found on post-industrial sites as well as in

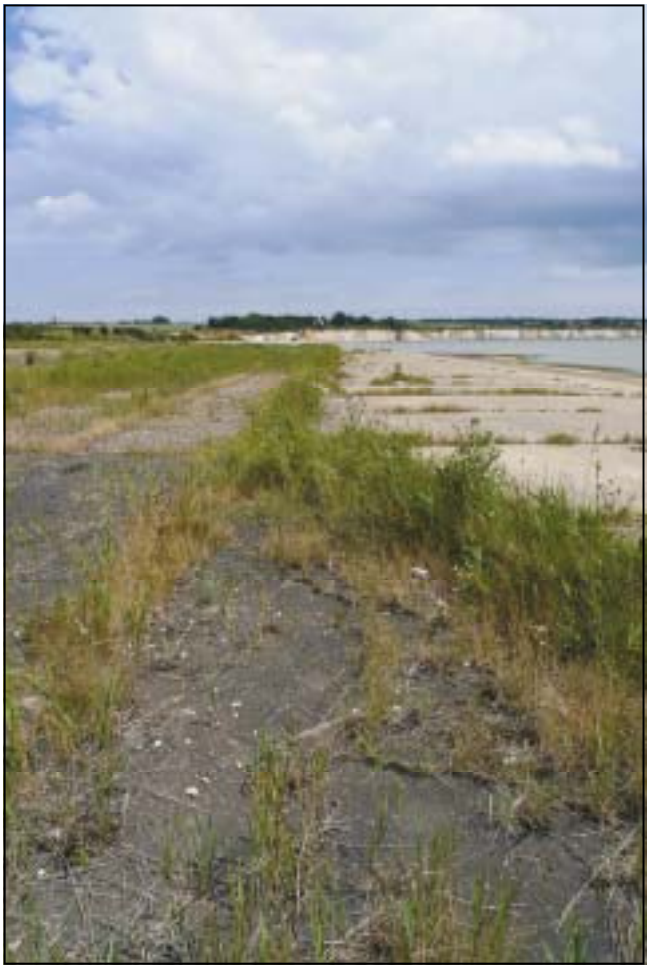

Fig. 4. Old hoverport site at Pegwell Bay
Photograph © Greg Hitchcock

Fig. 3. Old hoverport site at Pegwell Bay. Photograph © Greg Hitchcock

woodland clearings but *X. miniata* is a characteristic sand dune species. Likewise, *Argenna subnigra* occurs in a range of open, dry habitats, including post-industrial sites but *A. patula* is a characteristic saltmarsh species. Other interesting species included *Zelotes electus*, *Thanatus striatus* and *Maso gallicus*. Since all three species are found on sand dunes in Kent and there are dunes fairly close to the site, this is presumably where these species originated.

The hoverport was revisited by GH with the Kent Field Club on the 5th July. He was sweeping a small patch of reed that had colonised the site when he took a female of *Synageles venator*, a species new to Kent. This is a scarce southern spider, normally associated with coastal sand dunes but recently found in two old brick pits near Peterborough, a pulverised fly-ash lagoon and two other brownfield sites in Essex. It seems therefore to be another species occurring on dunes that can, at times, exploit suitable post-industrial sites. On the same visit, GH collected a juvenile male of the sand dune salticid, *Marpissa nivoyi*. The overall total of 53 species collected in June was not particularly high but the site would again repay further work.

Michelle Fountain, who moved to Kent relatively recently, invited the same group to visit Ditton Quarry Local Nature Reserve (TQ716572) on the 13th June (see Figs. 5 & 6). Michelle acts as a voluntary warden for the reserve and wanted to increase the number of spider species recorded from this abandoned Kentish ragstone quarry. As at Peters Pit, there were no outstanding rarities recorded but the total of 57 species was quite respectable for a single day. Among the more interesting species were *Tetragnatha nigrita* and *Philodromus albidus*, both beaten from shrubs and the tiny salticid, *Talavera aequipes* collected in sparse, stony grassland. Subsequently, TRS identified spiders collected by Michelle from the same site in pitfall traps during 2007. The more interesting species trapped included the notable thomisid, *Ozyptila sanctuaria* which is rather uncommon in Kent, the salticid, *Bianor aurocinctus*, which is reasonably widespread but infrequent in warm habitats throughout the county, *Trachyzelotes pusillus* and *Panamomops sulcifrons*. Currently, 84 species have been recorded from this site but this number will certainly increase with further collecting.

In August, TRS was sent a small female theridiid collected by Phil Bance, Sussex Wildlife Trust recorder at Bewl Water, on the Sussex-Kent border. He thought the specimen, collected from a pine tree on woodland edge at Hazel Street near Horsmonden in VC16 (TQ 696389), might be *Theridion impressum*. On examination TRS thought it could be *Theridion pinastri* but, not having collected this species himself, sent it to Peter Harvey who duly confirmed the identification. This is only the second time the species has been taken in a Kent vice-county, the first being at Bexley by Peter Harvey in 1998.

It will probably not have escaped readers notice that practically all the places mentioned in this account are in fact post-industrial sites. In a county such as Kent, where much of the semi-natural vegetation other than woodland has been replaced either by intensive agriculture or by urban development, such habitats are of particular importance for warmth-loving invertebrates of open ground habitats which benefit from the sparse vegetation cover. A good example of this is the post industrial site at Holborough Marshes, where the (calcareous) waste products from the long-vanished cement works provide a surrogate habitat for species more typical of chalk grassland. Many of our more interesting spider species require these types of habitats and it seems likely that such post-industrial sites will become increasingly important for their conservation as time passes; at least one of our species, *Sitticus distinguendus*, is only known from two post-industrial areas, both under threat by development. More attention needs to be given to the conservation of biodiversity-rich post-industrial sites, which all too often

Fig. 5. Ditton Court Quarry. Photograph © Greg Hitchcock

are seen by local councils simply as waste-ground ripe for redevelopment.

Fig. 6. Ditton Court Quarry.
Photograph © Greg Hitchcock

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[1] 1, Bailiffs Cottage, Doddington, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9)JU
[2] 11, Church Row, Shamall Lane, Snodland, Kent ME6 5QR

Did prey scarcity influence orb-web parameters in England during the autumn of 2009?

by Paul F. Whitehead

During the autumn of 2009 it became apparent in many places that female *Araneus diadematus* Clerck, 1757 were constructing large orb-webs in some unusually exposed places the like of which I could not readily recall.

In my garden at Little Comberton, Worcestershire (VC37 SO94 30 m O.D.) on 7th September 2009, I observed a horizontal web 32 cms wide fixed to the roof of an outbuilding and the front of a car by suspension strands 3.01m long. The web was composed of 25 circumferential strands in 11 cms. The first circumferential strand commenced 5 cms from the centre of the web-hub; the web diameter was therefore 32 cms. It occupied a position more or less mid-way between the car and the building; from a distance the spider appeared to be unconnected to anything around it.

At Broadway, Worcestershire (VC37 SP13 101 m O.D.) on 15th September 2009 another large *A. diadematus* web was strung obliquely from the top corner of a carport to a point on its concrete floor, the suspension webs being 2.45 m in length. Another spider *Zygiella x-notata* (Clerck, 1757) built its own substantial web by linking it to the *A. diadematus* web and to the floor beneath it. When cars used the space, the *A. diadematus* attached replacement webs to those. Similarly large highly exposed webs were observed in gardens in the Widcombe area of Bath, Somerset (VC6 ST76 95 m O.D.) on 13th September 2009. One of these was linked to a boundary fence and to a shrub in a central position. That web spanned 3.1 m.

A character of all of these webs was their considerable tensile strength, certainly stronger than an average *A. diadematus* web, and almost beginning to approach those of some of the big *Araneus* spp. found in exposure in the Alps and to the south. This may be a response to the distance covered by the webs.

It might be presumed that these large strong webs resulted from a proliferation of suitable prey and that the spiders were doing well. This however, may not be the case. Witt *et al.* (1968) showed that over time, increasingly hungry *Z. x-notata* spiders might increase their web area significantly. The observations cited here may support that, for there was certainly no local surfeit of muscid flies during the autumn of 2009, and some of these *A diadematus* were rather on the lean side. Although Vollrath & Samu (1997) came to somewhat different conclusions based on laboratory studies of *A. quadratus* webs, both studies confirmed that web parameters change in line with prey abundance.

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Spider Recording Scheme News
July 2010, No. 67

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

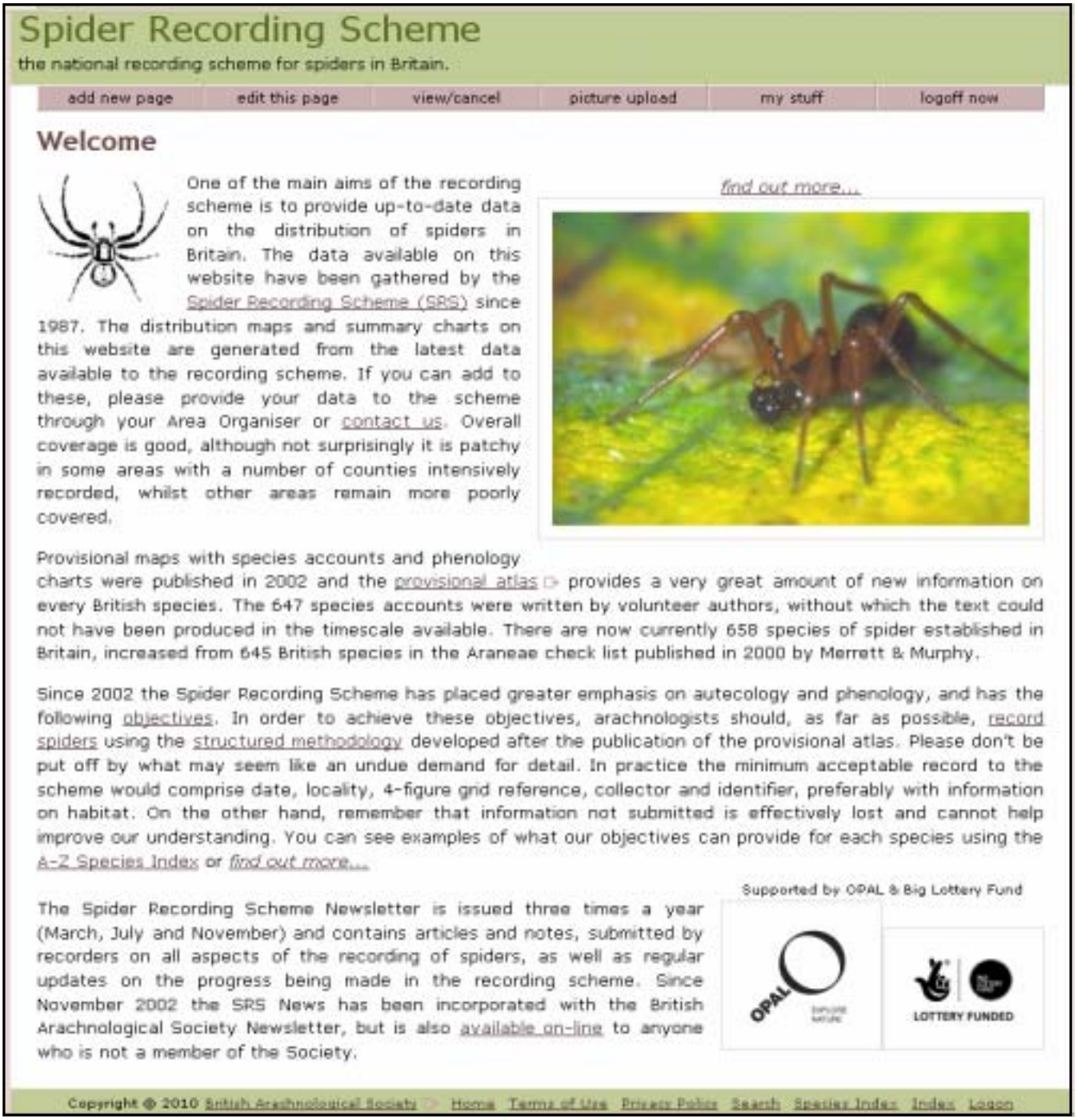
My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 68 will be published in November 2010. Please send contributions by the end of September at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: srs@britishspiders.org.uk or grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk. The newsletter depends on your contributions!

Editorial

I am very grateful to the contributors who have provided articles for this issue. Please keep providing articles. If you haven't previously provided articles, consider writing something (short or long) on any item or observation you find of interest - the newsletter depends on contributions from you!

As always many thanks are due to those Area Organisers, MapMate users and other recorders who have provided their records to the scheme. Data provided directly through MapMate will become available on the new SRS website much sooner than data provided in other

The draft new SRS website home page



formats, since it will not require importing or computerisation with the subsequent greater need for validation.

The national status review for spiders provided to JNCC in November 2009 is still with JNCC and we are uncertain at present when it will be published.

Work on a **Spider Recording Scheme website** has finally progressed and the main stage of development is now complete. You can see the results at http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk and I hope you will find it a useful resource. The website is available to all, but you can obtain additional information and functionality by registering and logging on using the log-on link at the bottom right of the website pages. The data supporting the national and regional maps on the website is as up to date as the records in the master SRS MapMate database, and new data can be uploaded directly to the website by running the special software developed for this purpose by Teknica Ltd. This means the maps are the very latest picture of spider recording. The software uploads all the distributional and recorded phase 2 habitat, site-related information, structural habitat and habitat detail or method provided by recorders in MapMate, so there is a massive amount of new summary data available to all.

Every species has a summary page which provides the national map, text (currently derived either from the provisional atlas or the status review in preparation), a male/female adult season chart, broad habitat, sub-habitat, structural habitat and habitat details charts. Links to summary charts for the management, substrate and hydrology recorded at locations for the spider are provided. These are all constructed from the data held on the website. Any registered user may upload images which will be included on this page if they use the taxon as the image subject field.

A link to regional maps are provided, and these

regions are based on the Area Organiser areas which we use to manage the scheme. These include regional adult season, broad and structural habitat summary charts for the data available in that region - if there are no or few data, then please help to add to this! You can save your favourite region so that it is remembered for future use, and change this at any time. If you are a registered member of the BAS or SRS and you are logged-on, then you can click on the dots on these maps and see the record information behind them. The site grid reference information is linked to a google map view of the recorded location.

Area Organisers and members of BAS Council will be given Administrator access, which will allow them to

allocate their own local recorders as members, and to act as their mentors. Administrators can edit the species text on the Summary pages, so that these will form an evolving, rather than fixed, resource. Any logged-on user can add species notes, allocated to either national or regional level, so that we can begin to build up species information from all recorders, based on both a national or regional perspective.

A Forum is available for logged-on users to post observations, images, questions etc., and like much of the website this will depend on you to contribute and provide responses to other people's questions or observations. It can also be used to post information on meetings etc. This facility is still being developed, with the idea that it will provide a regional as well as national forum. All members will be able to contribute to 'collaborative' species pages, upload images for use in these and other pages, and edit existing text. These will be an evolving resource which can be used to start to build up information and guidance on any aspects which relate to each particular species, such as information which relates to regional and national ecology, identification guidance, how to find a species, or anything else which you think should be included.

A start has been made on allowing users to build up a resource on sites which they know have spider interest. Any logged-on user can submit site details using a site form, and edit existing site information. Images uloaded using the site name as subject will automatically be used in the site account page. A boundary digitiser allows users to draw a polygon or site boundary and save for future use in these pages.

More developments are planned and many more are possible - please make suggestions for improvements either directly to myself or through the website contact facility.

Further observations on the Wasp Spider *Argiope bruennichi* at Coombe Hill, Wotton-under-Edge

by David Haigh

In my report 'Spiders in Gloucestershire 2004' published in *The Gloucestershire Naturalist* No 16, 2005 I said that 'looked for but as yet unrecorded in Gloucestershire are *Argiope bruennichi*, the Raft Spider *Dolomedes fimbriatus* and the Water Spider *Argyroneta aquatica*.'

In September 2008 *Argiope bruennichi* was found and photographed by Rosalind John and Chris Wiltshire on September 14th at Coombe Hill, Wotton-u-Edge. I believe this is a new county record, and GNS News, March 2009 carried my article on this discovery and something of the Wasp Spider's history in Britain and its habits. It was hoped to visit the site in 2009 to survey a possible population.

In the company of Chris Wiltshire (Butterfly Recorder) and Lin Callard, a Gloucestershire Invertebrate Group member, I visited the site on September 8th. Fortunately Chris led us to the site as he remembered it in 2008 and eventually a spider was discovered in the centre of its web. Surprisingly for such a large well marked spider it was difficult to spot, but 'getting our eye in' we went on to discover a further 13 individuals (all females) and 3 cocoons, confirming a breeding population. The spider was found over a limited area towards the top of a steep, well vegetated slope, north-east of Wotton-under-Edge above the B4058 at an altitude of 170 metres. Aspect is south facing. The webs were spun across 'hollows' between tussocks of Tor Grass and hummocks of Common Rock Rose, rarely above knee height. The grassland seemed to be lightly grazed and there was a plant community comprising Eyebright (*Euphrasia* spp), Salad Burnet, Greater Knapweed, Greater Hawkbit, Yellow Rattle, Yellow-wort and Fairy Flax. Next to 3 webs were single cocoons. These are brown, flask-shaped up to 30mm in height and with a short neck. As eggs, protected in this egg case the spider overwinters, hatching in the spring and achieving maturity in late summer. We did not find the male. For such a large spider to reach maturity in about 6 months requires an abundant food source. It is suggested that grasshoppers are the main prey species and while we did not see grasshoppers on our visit I did find a male and female Long-winged Conehead (*Conocephalus discolor*), a bush cricket, a relative newcomer to our county and no doubt welcomed by *Argiope*.

Other orb-web spinning spiders seen at Coombe Hill were *Araneus diadematus* and *Araneus quadratus* occupying the same niche as *Argiope*. Juveniles of *Pisaura mirabilis*, a hunting spider were common and at soil level were *Pachygnatha clercki* and the crab spider *Xysticus erraticus*.

Managing the habitat to the best advantage of *Argiope* requires that grazing pressure is not too great and a sward of mixed height and species is advised.

This is the only known colony in Gloucestershire and I would encourage hill walkers, botanists, bird watchers and countryside lovers to report further sightings of this exotic looking spider.

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Spiders in Gloucestershire 2009

by David Haigh

I was able to attend 7 Gloucestershire Invertebrate Group field meetings where spider recording ranged from the Cotswolds, Water Park and Forest of Dean. In addition visits were made to Badgeworth Nature Reserve, Whelford Pools, Pate's Grammar School Nature Area and the Jenner Garden in Cheltenham. I am grateful to Chris Wiltshire for leading myself and Lin Callard to the site of *Argiope bruennichi*, (The Wasp Spider) at Coombe Hill, Wotton u- Edge in September. In the company of Ellie Phillips, Conservation Officer for Cleeve Common and David Long we located the site of *Atypus affinis*(The Purse Web Spider) in August.

The status of 'rare' spiders is still under review. I shall indicate current status and the provisional IUCN status. There were no new county records but many of the county's interesting records were refinds on known sites and encouragingly from new sites.

Argiope bruennichi, Nationally Scarce Nb, IUCN LC (Least Concern)
Following up the initial discovery of a single female of the 'Wasp Spider' by Rosalind John and Chris Wiltshire at Coombe Hill, Wotton –u- Edge, in September 2008 a return visit was made to the site on September 8th 2009 (see previous article). It will be interesting to revisit the site in 2010 and discover if the spider has survived the severe weather this winter.

Segestria florentina, Introduced, described as Scarce in the Provisional Atlas of British Spiders, 2002 (PABS)
Three further sightings of this large wall-dwelling spider were received, a) Stonehouse, Stroud, female, February 2nd, record from Dr. Geoff Oxford; b) Wickwar, male and female, August 15th, record from John Harper; c) Tredworth, dislodged from chimney stack brickwork on a Victorian terrace, 9 metres above ground, November, record from Tony Taylor.

Atypus affinis, Local, IUCN LC (Scarce B)
A tube of this spider was found in August on Cleeve Hill. This is confirmation of its presence since its first discovery here by Colin Twissell in 1998. Excavation of the soil revealed the tube some 30cms long inside which was a female with young. After photography by Ellie Phillips the spider and young were carefully reinstated below ground. Cleeve Hill is one of only 3 known sites in the county where The Purse Web Spider is known to occur.

Micrommata virescens, Local, IUCN LC (Scarce A)
John Widgery recorded a sub-adult female at Symonds Yat, August 6th. This is the 17th record since the first in 1930. This increasingly rare spider favours sunny glades and rides within mature woodland.

Nigma walckenaeri, Nationally Scarce Na, IUCN LC (Scarce B)
First recorded at Alderton in 1993 by Nigel Burston, *N. walckenaeri* is spreading with records from the 10km squares, SO 82,92,93 and SP03. I recorded it for a second time at Pate's Grammar School Nature Area, July 16th. John Widgery contributed 10 records from sites ranging from Apperley to Woodmancote., 4 tetrads in all, August to October. In November I found a female in a groove on my garage door in Cheltenham. See TGN No 16 for photograph(Colin Twissell).

Zilla diodia, Nationally Scarce Nb, IUCN LC
A sub-adult female was beaten from *Cupressus* at the Jenner Garden in Cheltenham, October 28th. This is the first record for vc 33 and the second east of the River Severn.

Thyreosthenius biovatus, Local, IUCN LC (Scarce A)
A second visit to Ley Park Wood, September 12th produced a further 5 females from nest mounds of *Formica rufa*; 3 of the females taken from an apparently deserted nest, whilst mature,

were very small, less than 1.5mm. The other 2 were taken from active nests and were more than 2mm.

Lepthyphantes leprosus
"Common and probably very under-recorded because its main habitat is inside houses". (PABS). John Harper recorded a male in cellars at Wickwar, October 31st. This would appear to be the first record for vc 34. Previous county records are from Gloucester Cathedral, Churchdown, Cheltenham and Quedgeley. – all vc 33. There are several 'house-bound' spiders , poorly recorded, and I would welcome records of spiders from inside houses, cellars, greenhouses and on outside walls.

Summary of other noteworthy spiders
Two spiders which seem to have a preference for quality herb-rich limestone grassland are:- ***Xysticus bifasciatus***, male, Nationally Scarce Nb, IUCN LC (Scarce A), Whittington Lodge Farm, May 24th, recorder ColinTwissell, 5th county record and ***Cercidia prominens***, Nationally Local, IUCN LC (Scarce B), Strawberry Banks, October 4th, recorded from 12 sites.

Hyptiotes paradoxus, RDB3, IUCN LC (Scarce A)
An adult male was beaten from yew by Tony Taylor at Ley Park Wood, September 12th. Apart from Painswick Churchyard,vc33 all other county records are from west of the River Severn, vc34.

The Cotswold Water Park produced a number of interesting records:-
Microlinyphia impigra, Nationally Local, Lake 42, Lower Mill, August 42, August 16th. 4th county record.
Larinioides sclopetarius, Nationally Local, On notice board Lake 42, Lower Mill, August 16th. Records are confined to the Gloucester-Sharpness Canal, Stroudwater Canal and the Cotswold Water Park.
Tetragnatha nigrita, Nationally Local, Whelford Pools, 2 males, June 24th, 6th county record.
Philodromus albidus, Nationally Scarce Nb, IUCN LC. Whelford Pools, June 24th.

Pit-fall Trapping has continued at Ashleworth Ham and Coombe Hill and once again 2 provisionally Vulnerable spiders have been identified,
Halorates distinctus, Nationally Local, IUCN Vulnerable, 5 males present at Ashleworth Ham, the 2nd record for this site. This wetland spider was first recorded at Coombe Hill, June 2000.
Trochosa spinipalpis, Nationally Local, IUCN Scarce B, a single male at Coombe Hill, May/June, 6th county record.

Of all enquiries I receive about spiders the most frequent must be those for the crab spider *Misumena vatia*. It is fairly common in the county and is included in Bristowe's county lists (1939) and R.S. George's (1957). I have 53 records dating back to 1972. It is widespread in southern England, the Midlands being its northerly limit. Females mature in early summer and can be found sitting on a flower head waiting for prey. The colour of the female varies through white, pale green to yellow and the spider frequently matches the flower colour. This cryptic colouring confers advantage catching their prey and protection against predators. David Iliff provided a photograph for GNS News Winter 2007 of the white form with its prey, the hoverfly *Episyrphus balteatus*. David has also photographed a further colour variant, white with 2 red dorso-lateral lines which appears to be genetically determined and unaffected by background colour. An observation from Cairncross Road, Stroud in July was of the yellow form on Evening Primrose, *Oenothera* sp. Flower- rich scrubby areas, wood margins, and hedgerows are favoured habitats with *Rubus* flowers, Ox-eye daisy and umbelliferous plants being common flower choices.

A recent 'Countryfile' programme on BBC1, February 7th, showed the 'Cave Spider' (*Meta menardi*) being translocated in the Yorkshire Dales from stone buildings to a cave system. Apparently 'cavers' had brought the spiders out on their back packs from below ground and then the spiders 'got off' and built up a large colony inside the buildings. It was felt that if the buildings were to be used for accommodation then 'Cave Spiders' were not fit co-habitees.

Like many 'house-bound' spiders, the Cave Spider is probably under-recorded due to its specific habitat preferences. In Gloucestershire the bulk of 'Cave Spider' records have been received from David Priddis while surveying bat roosts in the Forest of Dean. The 50 records from mines, disused railway tunnels, caves and an ice-house also include records of hibernating Herald moths, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell butterflies, no doubt prey for the 'Cave Spiders'. A very visible feature of a 'Cave Spider' colony are the large white pendant egg sacs. One record by myself is from inside a dumped galvanised water tank within deep woodland at Ban-y-Gor Nature Reserve.

Related to the 'Cave Spider' is *Meta bourneti*, Nationally Scarce Nb and recorded at just 2 sites, an air-raid shelter at Rendcomb, 1947 and cellars in the 'Old Rectory' Haresfield, 1969. There may be under-recording of this species, as it closely resembles *Meta menardi*.

I recently reviewed spider records for Gloucestershire. Bristowe (1939), produced a check list of British spiders, county by county. R. S. George (1957) produced a list of spiders recorded from Gloucestershire and since the 1970s further recording has been undertaken. Bristowe's list totalled 190 species while that of R.S. George's 204. Since 1970 there has been an increase in confirmed records and now the county total is 341 with 2 doubtful. It is noted that 14 species present on the Bristowe and George lists have not been recorded in the last 40 years. The status of county rarities stands at present :- RDB 3 --- 4; Na --- 11; Nb --- 24. The UK total of spider species is 646.

May I thank those contributors mentioned in the text and others who have given me records, often by means of the Internet.

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Spider Recording Scheme News November 2010, No. 68

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 69 will be published in March 2011. Please send contributions by the end of January at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: srs@britishspiders.org.uk or grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk. The newsletter depends on your contributions!

Editorial

As always I am very grateful to the contributors who have provided articles for this issue. I make a plea to all recorders to write something on what you have been doing and what you have found in your spider recording.

Many thanks are due to those Area Organisers, MapMate users and other recorders who have provided their records to the scheme. Since the spring I have received MapMate records from Allan and Annette Binding, Robert Cumming, Mike Davidson, Dave Holloway, Alastair Lavery, Doug Marriott, Jennifer Newton, Ray Ruffell and Tony Russell-Smith, and these records include ones made by other recorders as well, to whom we are also very grateful. All these data have all been easily uploaded to the new SRS website using the software developed by Teknica Ltd for us. I am also grateful to Edward Milner for providing records he has made in VC18 (S. Essex) metropolitan London and to Dr Eric Duffey for records he has recently made at several sites in Norfolk. A special thanks are due to Ray Symonds for providing records from the Cecil Warburton Collection of spiders held at the University Museum of Zoology in Cambridge. The Museum has recently computerised its catalogue of spirit preserved invertebrates and published the records online, including the Warburton material. Ray has curated the Warburton Collection, checking determinations of the British material and updating the nomenclature so that it is compatible with the S.R.S.

As publicised in the July SRS News, the **Spider Recording Scheme website** is up and running and provides the absolutely latest maps for all British spiders and their associated summary autecological information. The website is open to anyone to register, upload images and contribute to the forum, species notes and add or edit information on sites of interest for spiders and other wildlife. This will allow us to build up a resource on sites which recorders know have spider interest.

Members of the BAS and the recording scheme can also interrogate the regional maps to access details of the records behind the tetrads and to view the locations using google maps.

Although planned for later anyway, work was undertaken at very short notice to put in place a facility for members of the public to register and record several 'easily recognisable spiders', supported by uploaded images. This was done in time for a BBC Autumnwatch programme broadcast on 14th October which was to feature raft spiders (*Dolomedes* spp.), 4 spot orb-weavers (*Araneus quadratus*) and wasp spiders (*Argiope bruennichi*).

More developments are planned and many more are possible - please make suggestions for improvements either directly to myself or through the website contact facility.

Islandiana falsifica (Keyserling, 1886), Linyphiidae. New to Wales... and the rest of Britain

by Mike Davidson

During a British Myriapod and Isopod Group outing to North Wales in April 2010, I visited a rather bleak salt-marsh at Point of Ayr (SJ1284) near Prestatyn. The invertebrate catch was very poor, but in addition to a pill woodlouse and centipede, one small female linyphiid was retrieved from below a large embedded boulder near the sea wall. The spider defied identification by me (and Peter Harvey) but Peter Merrett, as always, came up with the goods. This was *Islandiana falsifica*, recorded from Sweden, Finland, Siberia, Canada and Alaska. Its apparent absence from Iceland hasn't prevented speculation, in some quarters, that it arrived in Wales with the volcanic dust!

Marusik (2004), in a study of petrophilous spiders, describes it as being found on pebbly beaches and scree. This doesn't quite fit the Point of Ayr site but widens the options for finding further specimens on the north Wales coast, if you fancy a seaside holiday.

Of course it now needs a suitable common name to commemorate it and your suggestions are sought. Bearing in mind the implication in its specific name and its generic connection with Iceland, I thought "The Iceland Bank Money Spider" would fit the bill. I doubt if we would get any sponsorship from them though.

A more considered paper, featuring Peter Merrett's drawings of the epigyne, will appear in due course.

My thanks to Peter Harvey and Peter Merrett for their assistance in identifying this species.

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Theridion blackwalli O. P.-Cambridge, 1871, (Araneae: Theridiidae) – new to South-east Yorkshire [VC61]

by Joe Ostojá-Starzewski

Over the last twenty odd years I have been involved professionally in the identification of various invertebrates but specialising on mites (Acari), however, other members of the Arachnida, and in particular spiders have increasingly featured in my work and have drawn my interest. In late May 2010 I eventually joined the British Arachnological Society (BAS), a prospect that I have pondered over for some years because of other commitments, so I guess it was with the heightened awareness of a new BAS member that on the 14.vi.2010 I noticed and collected an unfamiliar looking spider from the inside of my bathroom window (SE791648).

Based on the description provided in Jones (1983) and Roberts (1995) I provisionally identified the specimen as a female *Theridion blackwalli* O. P. - Cambridge, 1871. As a relative novice to the business of identifying British spiders I contacted Peter Harvey who kindly agreed to take a look at the specimen for me, confirming my identification. Peter further stated that the specimen is '*a very gravid female with a plugged epigyne, much larger than usual for the species because of this'*.

The current distribution map for *T. blackwalli* shows that most records of this species are south and east of a line connecting Gloucester in the south-west and Goole in the north-east, with a few additional records in the counties along the Welsh border. The most northerly record is in England, near Durham and dates to before 1900. My find represents a first record for South-east Yorkshire [VC 61] and is the second most northerly find to date. I have retained this specimen Ref. No. 002.06.2010 in my own personal collection.

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank Peter Harvey for his help in confirming my identification.

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How did *Midia midas* get its name?

by Tony Russell-Smith

The species we now know a *Midia midas* (Simon, 1884) was described by the great French arachnologist Eugène Simon under the name *Lepthyphantes midas* from a single female collected in the Fontainebleau Forest near Paris. The most obvious characteristic of this small linyphiid spider, which in somatic morphology does indeed resemble a *Lepthyphantes* species, is the enormous scape-like protuberance from the epigyne of the female (Fig. 1). Much more recently, the late Michael Saaristo revised this species, concluding that it was not at all closely related to *Lepthyphantes minutus* (the type species of the genus) and creating the new, monotypic genus *Midia* to encompass it (Saaristo, 1995). One reason that Saaristo excluded *M. midas* from *Lepthyphantes* sensu stricto was that the protrusion from the epigyne is not an S-shaped scape such as is found *Lepthyphantes* and many related genera, but rather a posteriorly directed outgrowth of the anterior margin of the epigynal cavity.

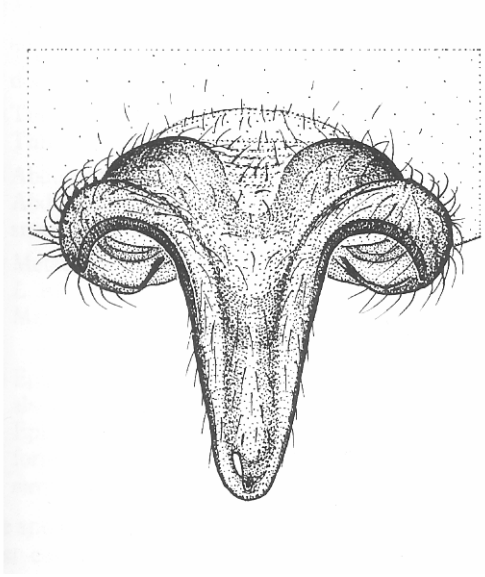

Figure 1. Epigyne of *Midia midas* (Simon, 1884) in ventral view (©Michael Roberts).

Why did Simon apply the specific name "*midas*" to this rare and interesting species? Most readers will have heard of the legendary king Midas and of the gift of being able to turn all that he touched to gold, granted to him by the god Bacchus, the so-called "Midas touch". What may be less familiar to a modern audience is the continuation of the myth, as related by Ovid in his *Metamorphosis*. According to this account, Midas ordered a celebratory feast to be placed before him on his return home from his encounter with Bacchus, but was horrified to find that even the food he touched turned to gold as he tried to swallow it. Midas understood that this "gift" was in fact a curse and prayed to Bacchus to be delivered from starvation, a prayer that the god granted. Rejecting power and splendour, he retired to the country where he became a worshipper of Pan, the god of music. Subsequently, Pan challenged Apollo, the god of the lyre, to a contest of musical skill. Pan played his pipes and gave great pleasure both to himself and to Midas, his follower. Then Apollo struck up his lyre and was immediately awarded the prize by Tmolus, god of the mountains. All present agreed with this decision except Midas, who questioned its justice. Apollo declared that Midas' ears were depraved and immediately turned them to the ears of a Donkey.

Simon was, in common with many of his generation, well versed in the classics and could read and write both Latin and Greek. Perhaps because this was the case, he rarely provided a derivation for the scientific names he

created, as is normally the case today. However, he would quite certainly have been familiar with Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and would have known the myth of king Midas. It seems quite possible that Simon decided that the epigyne of *Midia* resembled a donkey's ear and that this is how it gained its name.

An alternative, perhaps slightly less likely, explanation derives from the origin of Midas in Phrygia, now part of Anatolia, central Turkey. The Phrygians of the 8th century BC had a distinctive type of bronze war helmet (Fig. 2) which would undoubtedly have been worn by a warrior king such as Midas. The form of this helmet does bear a general resemblance to that of the epigyne of *M. midas*. The example illustrated here is in the collections of the British Museum in London, but there is an almost identical helmet in the collections of the Louvre in Paris. Simon had an office in the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle near the Jardins des Plantes which is less than a kilometre from the Louvre. He could well have seen this helmet on display in the Louvre and made the association with the Phrygian king in this way.

Figure 2. A bronze helmet from the kingdom of Uratu, in Anatolia in the collections of the British Museum. 8th-9th century BC.

Clearly, unless some information turns up in Simon's papers, we will never know what was in his mind when naming this species and the suggestions put forward here are inevitably speculative. Recently, the vernacular name "Midas tree weaver" has been proposed for *Midia*. While the second part of the name is reasonably explanatory, those unfamiliar with its Latin name might be forgiven for being slightly puzzled. Should we take a leaf from the book of those 19th century lepidopterists who coined such striking vernacular names for moths as the "Chimney Sweep", the "Confused" and the "Large Ear"? It has to be admitted that the "Asses Ear" or even the "Anatolian Helmet" do have a certain ring about them, even at the risk of leaving the reader even more confused!

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Michael Roberts for allowing me to reproduce the excellent figure of the epigyne of *Midia midas* taken from his "Spiders of Great Britain and Ireland". I also acknowledge the Trustees of the British Museum for allowing me to reproduce the illustration of the helmet in Figure 2.

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Araneus alsine in Glen Moriston, Inverness-shire 2010

by Jane Bowman

Having found *Philodromus margaritatus* in Glen Moriston during 2008 and then on my local stomping ground of Dundreggan Estate in 2009 I thought my exciting 'spider experiences' would be over. However during an official Spider Survey of the Estate during the summer of 2009 carried out by Alastair Lavery, a female *Araneus alsine* was discovered.

Feeling envious that I hadn't seen such a beautiful creature, my aim this summer was to find the spider for myself. Knowing very little about the spider other than it preferred damp, woodland clearings, I started searching on July 9th in a clearing of approx quarter of an acre, on the 10,000acre Estate with its ancient birch woodland. I found a couple of wandering male spiders which I thought looked very promising. An identification was not possible via a photograph, so rather reluctantly sent a specimen to Peter Harvey who confirmed *Araneus alsine* (see Fig. 1).

Returning to the same location a week later to hopefully find a female, I spotted another wandering male which I tracked!! Within a couple of metres he stopped and began swaying from side to side. About 15cm away amongst the *Molinia caerulea* was a leaf, shaped into a cone, from which a female *Araneus alsine* emerged (see Fig. 2). I was delighted; she was so strikingly marked and well deserving of her English name Strawberry Spider or Orange Wheelweaving Spider. I watched entranced for an hour as the male lurked under the female's leaf cone retreat keeping a distance of 10-15cm. She periodically emerged, darted down to within a couple of centimetres of him, but seemed disinterested in his swaying tactics. I felt she'd have preferred a meal!! After a few investigations she then emerged and began to gather up some of her web, which was virtually invisible, rolled into a tight ball (see

Figure 1. Male *Araneus alsine* ©Jane Bowman

Figure 2. Female *Araneus alsine* emerging from a leaf, shaped into a cone ©Jane Bowman

Fig. 3) and disappeared back with the 'ball' into her retreat. Entertainment over, for both the male *Araneus alsine* and myself! This was my last sighting of any males until the end of summer.

Figure 3. Female *Araneus alsine* rolling web into ball ©Jane Bowman

Searching around I found eight more of these leaf retreats, each with a female *Araneus alsine* inside, seen by gently turning the cone through 90 degrees so as to not to disturb the web. Each retreat was made of one, occasionally two dried birch leaves, curled into a cone shape and held together with silk. These were nearly all found suspended from *Molinia caerulea* leaves about 15-20cm from the ground. However a couple of spiders had used bog myrtle, *Myrica gale* leaves, within the plant, which were more difficult to spot (see Fig. 4).

Figure 4. *Araneus alsine* with bog myrtle leaf retreat ©Jane Bowman

No retreat was found directly under a tree's canopy but within roughly a 25m radius of a tree or trees; sunshine for at least part of the day seemed favoured. The ground was damp, but not waterlogged, abundant *Molinia caerulea* growing with bog myrtle, *Myrica gale,* orchids and other wet meadow flowers.

Figure 5. *Araneus alsine* habitat ©Jane Bowman

The spiders were found at many similar clearings within the wood (see Fig. 5), though small clearings (less than 25sq.m.) which appeared to be deprived of sunlight, produced no *A. alsine*. The damp meadow land at the wood's periphery had on average five females per quarter

acre. The top of the tree line at 300m where there are young birch saplings, juniper, lush *Molinia caerulea* as well as moorland vegetation also produced good numbers of *Araneus alsine*. An isolated pocket of woodland above 300m also produced three female retreats (see Fig. 6).

Figure 6. An isolated pocket of woodland above 300m with *Araneus alsine* ©Jane Bowman

Feeling confident at recognising these distinctive leaf cone retreats with their spectacularly coloured occupants, I searched other locations within Glen Moriston, finding the spiders in similar habitats. Unfortunately many open spaces particularly to the east of the glen have bracken cover and whilst the spiders seem to tolerate light bracken cover at the edge of wet flushes they were not to be found amongst the dense, tall bracken. Particularly in Glen Garry, south of Glen Moriston the birch woods are engulfed by scrub and bracken, and I found no *A. alsine* and none in the damp meadows at the periphery of the woods.

However, travelling north of Glen Moriston and passing a location which appeared to have similar habitats to Dundreggan Estate, I searched a large clearing at the edge of a lochan and within ten minutes had located a female in her retreat enjoying a meal (see Fig. 7).

Figure 7. *Araneus alsine* female with prey ©Jane Bowman

I watched very contentedly as a cleg, a particularly unpleasant 'enemy' of humans, flew into her web unaware that it was to be her next meal!! The webs suspended beneath the leaf retreat and just above the ground, are extremely difficult to spot except after dew or rain.

During September whilst searching the same locations on Dundreggan Estate that I'd visited throughout the summer, I found many of the retreats, which by this time I was finding relatively easy to spot, were occupied by young spiders and less mature females. One amazing area of 2sq.m. had a total of 14 leaf cone retreats; twelve of which were youngsters and two female adults. The youngsters are considerably more elusive tucked up high in the cone's point, and if encouraged out they would dart into the depths of the undergrowth, unlike the adults which if disturbed would 'freeze' on a strand of web presenting either ventral or lateral postures and not the more photogenic dorsal view - how very un-female!

Cnoc Fearna. Dalchreichart. Glen Moriston. Inverness-shire. Email: sj.bowman@btinternet.com

Tetragnatha spider feeding behaviour observed at a site near to Greenholme in Cumbria in early July, 2010

by Paul and Judy Dunford

The specimen shown in the photograph (see Fig. 1) was seen by Judy to drop from its web on a line to the surface of the water in the ditch and run directly across the surface to capture a small fly that had landed on the water immediately beforehand.

Figure 1. *Tetragnatha* with prey ©Paul Dunford

The ripples from its contact with the water surface were observed, and the capture happened very quickly. The spider then returned to its web to eat the fly. After many attempts, and then only by misting the web and almost lying in the ditch I was able to achieve only a poor quality photograph from below of the spider on its web (see Fig. 2).

The web, as can be seen, is inclined to the vertical and hanging over the water. Judy was able to obtain a better photograph from above the web. (She was actually trying to photograph a butterfly at the time and I was looking to photograph spiders.) This behaviour raises interesting questions about how the spider sensed its prey.

Figure 2. *Tetragnatha* spider on its web
©Paul Dunford

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HARVESTMEN NEWS

A call to armature and legs, an ORS Update

Peter Nicholson, National Recorder ORS

As many of you know Teknica Ltd, in conjunction with Peter Harvey on behalf of BAS, have produced the SRS website (http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/). Software allows the easy uploading of MapMate records onto the website, which allows recorders to see their efforts much more quickly reflected in the website. Knowing that what you see on the distribution maps is up-to-date will hopefully stimulate more recording and a better understanding of our species.

This software is also available for use by the Opiliones Recording Scheme and will have the same potential for promoting harvestmen, with all the spin-offs of photos, distribution maps and background information as for the Spider Recording Scheme. It will however require support from all recorders to submit content. Over this winter I hope to put together what I have, into reflecting harvestmen and their recording. It will take time and it will require volunteers to take on various aspects of the site. All this will be discussed at a later date.

I now ask you to start collating your records and to go out and record in the time left this year, taking photographs if possible. I will now start accepting records for input to the ORS (MapMate cuk 5cr). I must impress on those who don't send in records in MapMate format that their records will take considerably longer to process. If you are willing and able to convert your own records onto MapMate, please do so. If not please send them to me and I will endeavor to put them on the database as soon as I can. A suitable Excel template will be available for download from the new harvestmen website when that is up and running.

As a rider to all this, much background work is required to get both the database and website up and running. This entails, apart from my time, working with others whose time is limited and all voluntary, so please bear with us.

My address is likely to change in the coming months so please look under the Area Organiser contacts on the BAS website (you will need to be logged-on as a member to do this). This will enable me to change address at a suitable time with less confusion.

Platybunus pinetorum: a new Harvestman (Opiliones) to Britain

by Paul Richards

British records:

4.6.2010	Crookes, Sheffield	SK32425	87442	female
6.6.2010	"	SK3242	8744	"
20.6.2010	"	SK3242	8744	"

Specimens are located in the Natural History Collections

of Museums Sheffield and The University of Mainz (Collection Axel Schoenhofer CAS949), Germany.

Three female specimens of a new species of harvestman to Britain were found in Sheffield in June 2010. Translations of Martens (1978) and Wijnhoven (2009) were used to determine this very distinctive species. It was confirmed by Axel Schoenhofer at Mainz University, Germany. The following description is based on a combination of observations from the Sheffield specimens and the translated keys. Large, dark harvestmen found in spring are likely to be this species.

Length: 5-9mm

Length of second leg: 34 - 41mm

Occurrence: Adults from end of March to end of June (Very early for a species of this size)

Habitat: In Holland found in wet deciduous wood on clay and mixed woodland with, among others, larch, oak, birch and pine with bilberry undergrowth. (Wijnhoven,2009)

Behaviour: Adults on tree trunks and shrub stems or in litter among stones. Younger stages in litter and low herbs. Not found by sweeping, but disturbed from high in Privet (*Ligustrum*) hedge during severe pruning, where it is probably resting deep within the hedge.
Moves little when disturbed. In captivity often sits motionless, flat on soil surface where it is very well camouflaged.

Recognition: Robust with medium to long legs. The russet coloured ocularium is much wider than long and deeply undermined both in the middle and at the front. It carries two rows of 7-9 black tipped pale denticles. Eyes are black rimmed. Teeth on femur of the palp longer than the cross-section of the femur. Large apophyses internal of the palpal patella and tarsus.

Male - Adults nearly black with pale brown legs. Trochanters and palps glossy black. Saddle marking is unclear. The apophyses on the palpal patella and femur are more pointed and obvious than in the female. Immatures are paler and resemble *Platybunus triangularis*. No male specimens found in Britain as yet. It is known to be partially parthenogenetic in other parts of Europe so it is possible that males may prove to be absent from Britain.

Female - Dark, mottled brown body with white edged cephalothorax with black patches. The darker saddle is outlined with white, particularly just behind the ocularium. Trochanters are white with a pattern of fine black lines. Palpal femur with distinctive long, evenly spaced, white spines. These are opposed by a large and small spine on the palpal tarsus.

References:

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Platybunus pinetorum female, Sheffield, 4.6.2010
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Platybunus pinetorum female Sheffield, 21.6.2010
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Platybunus pinetorum female, Sheffield, 4.6.2010
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Platybunus pinetorum female, Sheffield, 4.6.2010
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Acknowledgements
Many thanks to Axel Schoenhofer for confirming the identification of the specimens for me and to Aloys Staudt for allowing me to use his fine picture of the male.

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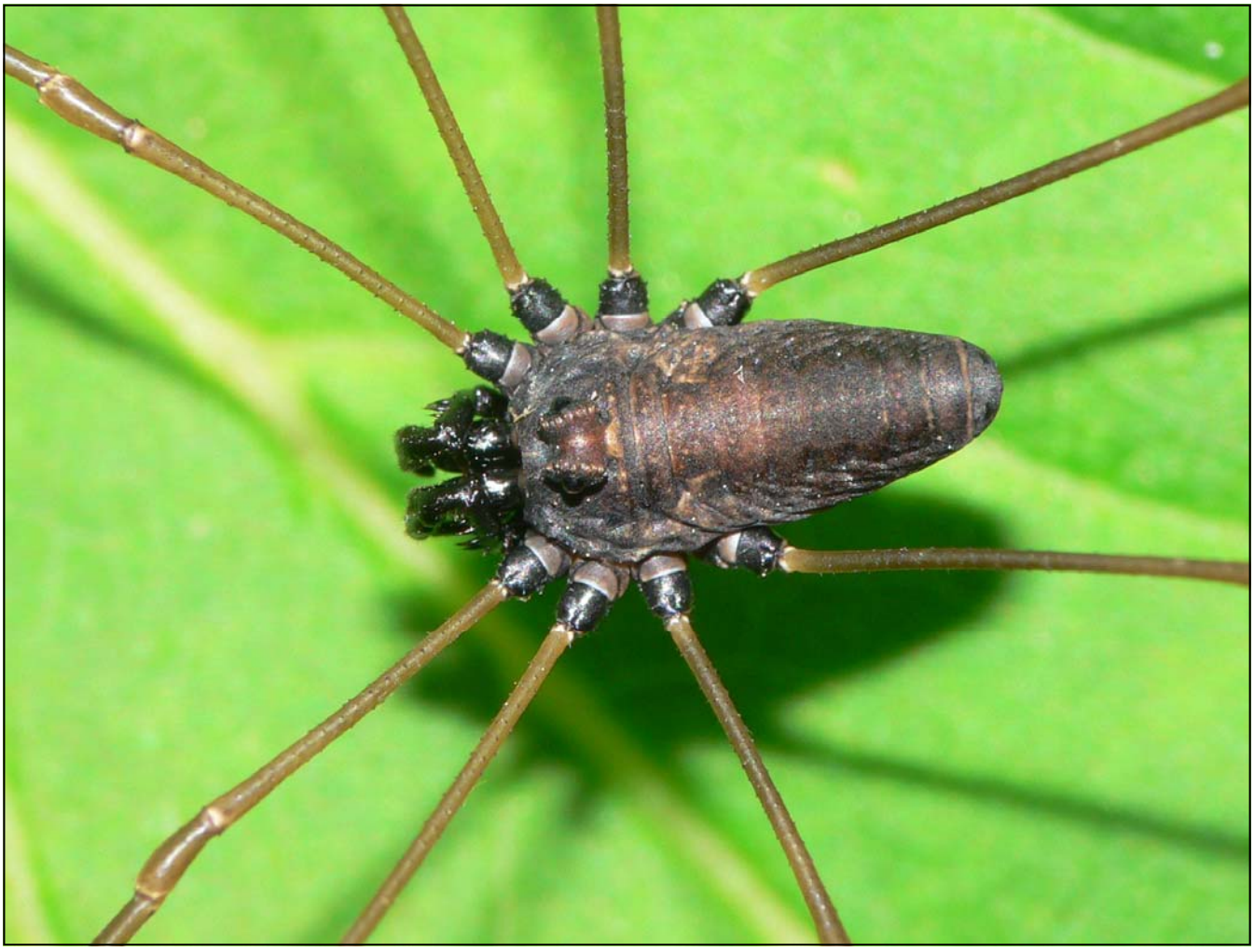


Platybunus pinetorum male, Wald zw. Dirmingen u. Eppelborn/SL, 8. Juni 2009. Photo: Aloys Staudt

Spider Recording Scheme News March 2011, No. 69

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 70 will be published in July 2011. Please send contributions by the end of May at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: srs@britishspiders.org.uk or grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk. The newsletter depends on your contributions!

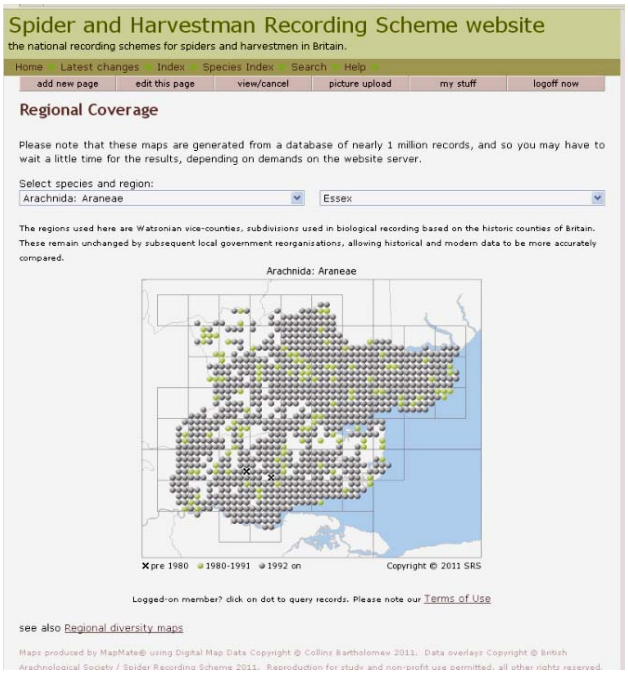
Editorial

Thank you to all the contributors who have provided articles for this issue. Please keep up this good work and if you are not a regular contributor consider putting pen to paper (finger to keyboard!) for future issues.

The Spider Recording Scheme website provides the latest maps for all British spiders and their associated summary autecological information, and as you can read later in this newsletter this now includes harvestmen.

I am very grateful to everybody who continues to provide records to the recording scheme which help to keep the distribution maps up to date - can I make a special plea to those recorders and Area Organisers to send in records from counties where nothing has been received for some years.

I am very grateful to Dr Jonty Denton for identifying vice county errors for sites in his 'patch' and I have now developed national and regional coverage maps on the website which have thrown up many other vice county and grid reference errors, most of which have now been corrected. There are different kinds of diversity maps available to logged-on members and there is now also a feedback facility to report errors or problems with records. This means that these problems can be logged into a database and then dealt with.



The diversity maps include an option which counts the numbers of spiders (or harvestmen) recorded in each 10km square, enabling rapid feedback on under-recorded squares and helping recorders to target squares and achieve the late Clifford Smith's aim for the recording scheme to achieve a minimum of 100 species of spider in every 10km square in the country. Logged-on members can also generate lists for each square, but please note that these data are for study and non-profit use only and under no circumstances whatsoever should they be used for ecological consultancy or commercial purposes - access to these data should be through local record centres or the societies which support county recorders.

The coverage and diversity maps are generated dynamically from the records database of nearly a million records, so they may take some time to appear. It would be possible to use map images which would load quickly, but these would then need regular updating. I have nearly completed the development of a page which will summarise the numbers of species recorded in each vice county, county and country and allow species lists for these to be generated.

Admin users can validate records for 'easily recognisable spiders' submitted by members of the public, so that where acceptable these records can be added to the dataset. Admin users can also upload files such as reports to the website. If the subject of these matches a taxon then these files will automatically become available to users through a link in the species account. Currently reports are available for the UKBAP spiders *Clubiona rosserae* and *Midia midas*, thanks to the help and permission of Buglife, Tony Russell-Smith and the Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust.

The key aim of the website is to be an interactive and collaborative resource, so please register, upload images and contribute to the forum, species notes and add or edit information on sites of interest for spiders and other wildlife. Members of the BAS and the recording scheme can also interrogate the regional maps to access details of the records behind the tetrads and help identify and log errors - so please register, log-on and help!.

Area Organiser changes

Colin Howes is stepping down from the honorary position of Spider Recorder for the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union and Richard Wilson has taken on this role. The SRS Area Organiser position for South-east and North-east Yorkshire (VC 61 and VC 62) has been vacant, and Richard will also be taking on this role. He is already AO for Mid-west and North-west Yorkshire, so Richard is now AO for VC61, 62, 64 and 65. Please send your records for these vice counties to Richard Wilson at 161 Burley Wood Crescent, LEEDS, West Yorkshire LS4 2QJ; email: riwspider@yahoo.co.uk

The status of spider recording in Watsonian Yorkshire

by Richard Wilson

Introduction

Since 2007, I have been actively recording spiders (Arachnida, Araneae) and to a lesser extent, harvestmen (Arachnida, Opiliones) within the Watsonian vice-counties (VC) of Yorkshire. My efforts have largely focussed within VCs 64 (mid-west Yorkshire) and 63 (south-west Yorkshire) given their relative close proximity to Leeds where I reside. Indeed, the River Aire, which bisects the city east-west, provides one of the more obvious VC boundaries within the UK. In November 2009, I took over the honarary position of Area Organiser for VCs 64 and 65 (north-west Yorkshire) and since November 2010, VCs 61 (south-east Yorkshire) and 62 (north-east Yorkshire), which were vacant. VC 63 is covered by Stan Dobson.

My recording has taken place across a number of different sites across the Yorkshire VCs, but mostly within VC 64. I have focussed my efforts at a few different sites each year, rather than more general recording over a wider area. This has enabled me to familiarise myself with the location through the different seasons and has established a baseline survey of the spider diversity at these sites. The majority of the sites so far have been Yorkshire Wildlife Trust nature reserves. However, one site is a privately managed nature reserve run by the local community in Leeds and readers of the *Newsletter* will be familiar with my ongoing study of the spider fauna associated with my my garden and house.

The purpose of this article is three-fold:

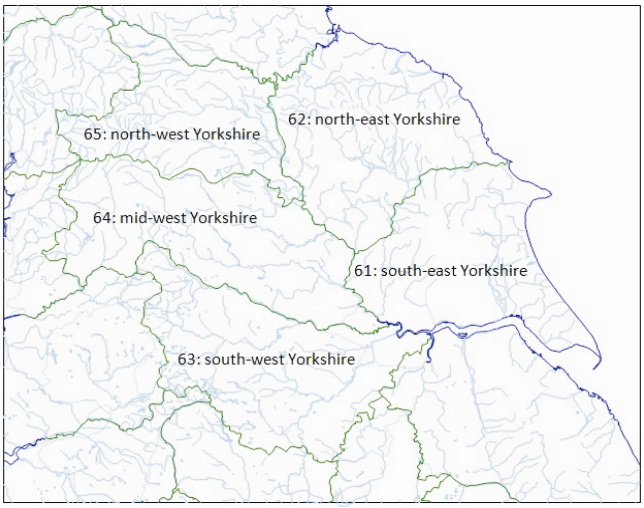
- to provide a brief introduction to the history of spider recording within Watsonian Yorkshire;
- to summarise the extent of recording across all Watsonian VCs based on the national Spider Recording Scheme (SRS) database to identify those areas (10 km grid squares) that are under, or poorly recorded; and
- to make a plea for records, however insignificant, and wherever they may arise, from other recorders resident in, or visitors to Watsonian Yorkshire.

Yorkshire

Geographically, Yorkshire sits roughly half-way up mainland Britain and is blessed with a diversity of landscapes and habitats that few other counties/ regions can match. It covers an area of approximately 11,900 km^2, which represents just over 9 % of England (Office of National Statistics, 2010). Habitats range from the coast, which includes the chalk cliffs at Bempton, the sand/ shingle spit (Spurn Point) emerging from the Humber Estuary and the extensive salt marshes and mudflats beyond. Continuing westwards, the landscape undulates gently crossing the Wolds of the East Riding in the south or rises to the North York Moors in the north, before descending in to the Vale of York. Thenceforth, the landscape rises once more as it rises above 500 m asl in the Pennines (Yorkshire Dales), peaking at 724 m at Ingleborough. The western extremity of Yorkshire is marked by the Howgill Fells that separate the Dales from the Lake District further west. The northern boundary is traditionally demarcated by the River Tees as it flows through Teesdale. The south includes the now degraded peat bogs of Thorne and Hatfield Moors, once part of a much wider wetland system that is remembered in names such as Potteric Carr.

For the purposes of biological recording, Yorkshire is divided in to five Watsonian vice-counties; their boundaries are illustrated in Fig.1 below.

Figure 1: Location of Watsonian Vice-Counties in Yorkshire



History of Spider Recording in Yorkshire

A few references to 'milestones' in Yorkshire arachnology have been described in the paragraphs below to provide some contextual information on recording in the county.

The earliest written reference to spiders in Yorkshire was published more than 300 years ago. Lister (1678) made reference to 38 'species' of spider in his treatise. As this was published before the Linnean system of classification, 'species' names don't follow the familiar binomial system. For example, species number 27 (XXVII) is called "*Araneus flavus unicolor, alvo productiori acuminata*", which my attempt at translation (with the aid of Google Translator) comes to "uniform yellow spider with the abdomen extended and pointed". Without a professional translation, I am unable to correlate the 'species' with the modern accepted taxonomic name. However, Lister did give locations (*Locus*), and for five species, there is a reference to *Eboracum* (what we know today as York). However, there are no dates assigned to any 'species', nor more specific locations, or any indication as to whether Lister collected the specimens himself.

The earliest known spider records attributed with any certainty to an individual are those of the Bradford based naturalist and surgeon, Richard Henry Meade (1814 – 1899). Meade was a consultant surgeon at Bradford Infirmary, moving to Yorkshire in 1840 (Anon., 1899). McLachlan (1900) reported that he made some observations on spiders and harvestmen in the 1850s, publishing during this decade before a complete cessation of work for 10 years. He is noted as capturing the

specimen that became the type specimen of *Tmeticus affinis* (originally described as *Neriene affinis*), collected at Hornsea Mere in 1854 (Blackwall, 1855). He published an article on the occurrence of spiders and their webs in Pelton Colliery, referring to 23 or 24 specimens of *Neriene errans* (now known as *Porrhomma errans*) that were sent to him by a Mr. Stainton (Meade, 1860). Meade continued to record spiders but also harvestmen during the 1850s and 1860s (Meade, 1855; Meade, 1861), and became an expert on Diptera (McLachlan, 1900). The last known record attributed to Meade is a single specimen of *Diaea dorsata*, captured in 1866.

The first collated published list of spiders for Yorkshire was included in the Victoria County History. Pickard-Cambridge stated that Meade never, as far as he was aware "*...published any list of his numerous Yorkshire captures...*". Pickard-Cambridge (1907) in his review of the species known to him in Yorkshire included 219 species considered to be reliably recorded in the county, and a further two species, *Neriene montana* and *Linyphia meadii*, which he considered doubtful. *Linyphia meadii* was originally described by John Blackwall based on male and female specimens collected under a stone at Low Moor, Bradford by Richard Henry Meade in May 1852 (Blackwall, 1853). The species was subsequently transferred to the genus *Bathyphantes*. However, it is now considered a nomen dubium by Platnick (2010). Pickard-Cambridge (1907) also included *P. errans* in his list of spiders in Yorkshire, assigning the initials 'RHM' against the record, presumably on the basis of the specimens' association with Meade. However, Pelton Colliery (NZ 253 517) is in County Durham, just outside Chester-le-Street and well within vice-county 66 (Durham). It would therefore seem that the record has been erroneously assigned to Yorkshire on the basis that Meade identified the specimen. The 219 species referred to form a basic taxonomic list with brief comments on distribution that are mostly associated with towns or cities where the recorders lived, the two principal contributors being Meade and William Falconer, who lived in Slaithwaite, near Huddersfield.

The next equally significant event in Yorkshire Arachnology arrived in the early 1980s with the publication of Clifford Smith's *An Atlas of Yorkshire Spiders* (Smith, 1982). This was the first attempt nationally, let alone within Yorkshire, of mapping all known spider records to hectads (10 km squares), a format that was followed some 20 years later with the national Atlas (Harvey, Nellist & Telfer, 2002). As at the end of 1981, a total of 390 species had been recorded in Watsonian Yorkshire, an increase of 171 species in the 74 years since the Victorian County History.

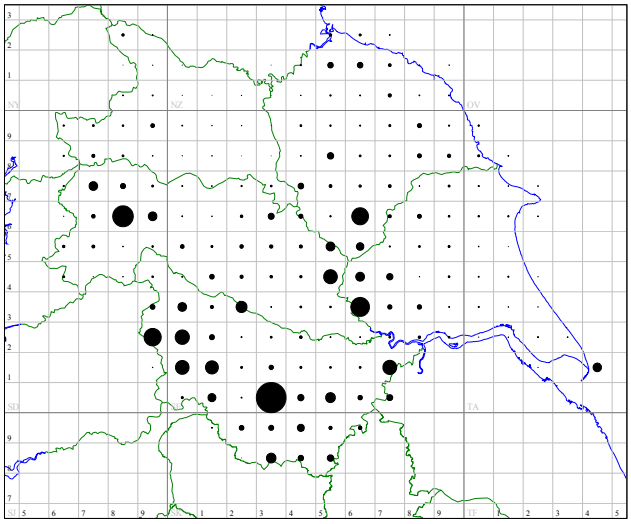
The final milestone occurred during the 20 year period when concerted survey work focussed on collating records for the national Atlas (Harvey, Nellist & Telfer, 2002). By the end of 2001, a further 11 species were added to the Watsonian Yorkshire list, bringing the total to 417 species. Thus by the turn of the century, the total species recorded had probably doubled since Meade was actively recording a 150 years previously.

Spider Recording (Post 2002 Atlas)

A further 6,196 records, comprising 305 species have been recorded in Watsonian Yorkshire between the Atlas being published in 2002 and the end of 2010, bringing the known species and their distribution up to date. In terms of coverage (i.e. number of hectads visited), despite its size, Watsonian Yorkshire has been comprehensive. Of the 205 hectads that either entirely or partially fall within Watsonian Yorkshire, 196 have had at least one spider species recorded. Thus 95.6 % coverage has been achieved, which is higher than the national average of 86 %, based on the national atlas (Harvey, Nellist & Telfer, 2002). Survey effort to cover all tetrads (2 km squares), whilst desirable, would probably be impractical. Despite *c.* 150 years of recording, no single hectad has yet to receive complete coverage of all its 25 tetrads, though SE 10 comes close (SE 10B and SE 10M being the only two tetrads lacking a record).

However, coverage has not been uniform. An idea of survey effort across Watsonian Yorkshire is illustrated in Figure 2, which plots the number of spider records (n = 48,456) in each hectad.

VC61 to 65 Spider Recording Scheme Record Density 10km



From this map, it is evident that there are approximately seven distinct sub-regions that have been subject to relatively intense study. These are:

Spurn Point (TA 41);
the Vale of York (SE 63 – SE 66, SE 54 and SE 55);
Thorne & Hatfield Moors (SE 71);
Barnsley and surrounding area (SE 30 – SE 50);
Leeds (SE 23);
Pennines west of Halifax and Huddersfield (SE 10 – SE12, SE 01 –SE 03 and SD 92); and
the Malham area in the Yorkshire Dales (SD 86, SD 96, SD 77 and SD 87).

Under recorded areas are particularly evident throughout VC 65, central VC 64, north-west VC 62 and much of VC 61. The nine hectads that have not received coverage are listed in Table 1 with a settlement/ geographic feature to aid location.

Table 1: Hectads within Watsonian Yorkshire with no spider records

VC	Hectad	Settlement/ Geographic Feature
61	TA 25	A tiny area (< 0.1 ha) of terrestrial habitat at the foot of a shallow cliff, approximately 1 km south-east of the village of Atwick (near Hornsea). A public footpath runs through this tiny area so potential for spider records.
	TA 33	Countryside around the village of Tunstall, near Withernsea.
62	NZ 42	Urban and industrial area in north Middlesbrough, south and east of the River Tees.
	NZ 11	Countryside to the south of the River Tees in and around the villages of Hutton Magna (west) and Eppleby (east), south-west of Middlesbrough.
	NZ 12	Countryside to the south of the River Tees in and around the villages of Manfield, Cleasby and Stapleton, south-west of Middlesbrough.
	OV 00	A tiny area (< 0.4 ha) of inter-tidal habitat and a fraction of terrestrial habitat at the base of the cliff, *c.* 2 km south-east of Ravenscar. Area appears to be inaccessible by foot from the nearest public footpath so unlikely that any records could be obtained from this precarious location.
63	SE 81	An area of countryside to the north of the B1392 from Eastoft (west) to Luddington (east) and then north-east towards Fockerby.
	SD 90	Mixture of semi-rural and urban environments in the vicinity of Delph, Uppermill and Dobcross, *c.* 5 km east of Oldham.
65	SD 55	An isolated, though quite extensive area of upland (Hawthornthwaite Fell), approximately 4 km west of the nearest human settlement (Sykes) up an unmetalled track (public footpath).

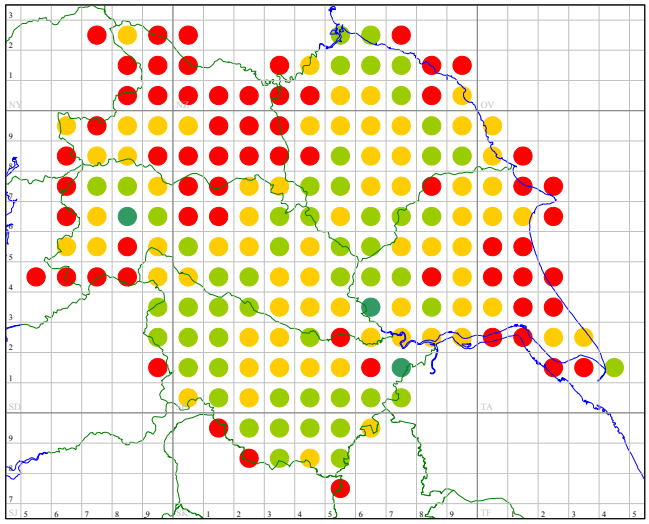
This survey effort is also reflected in the spider diversity for each of the VCs. Since 1850, a total of 428 species have been recorded across all VCs. Table 2 lists the number of species for each VC. The total number of species recorded in Watsonian Yorkshire represents approximately two-thirds of the British list, currently at 645 species (Merrett & Murphy, 2000).

Figure 3 illustrates the number of species recorded within each hectad. This usefully illustrates those hectads (yellow and red circles) that currently support very few species and can be considered to be under recorded (see relative proportions in graph). The dominance of red circles (< 50 species) within the northern Yorkshire Dales (VC 65) and Holderness (VC 61) identify the geographic regions that would benefit most from further study. The high proportion of yellow circles (51 – 100 species) throughout Watsonian Yorkshire demonstrate the general under recording within the Region.

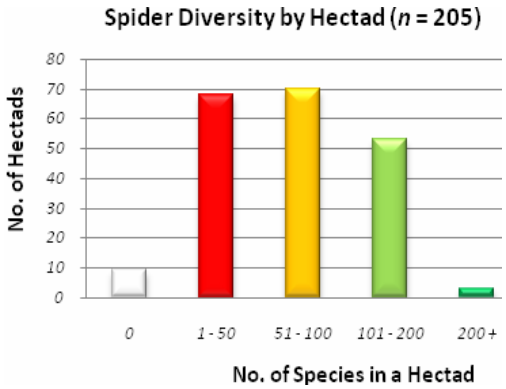
Table 2. Number of Species Recorded in the Watsonian Vice-Counties of Yorkshire

Vice-County	No of Species (as at 31/12/2010)
(61) south-east Yorkshire	327
(62) north-east Yorkshire	354
(63) south-west Yorkshire	367
(64) mid-west Yorkshire	346
(65) north-west Yorkshire	214

Figure 3. Spider diversity within Watsonian Yorkshire



Red circles <=50 spp., yellow circles 51-100 spp.
Pale green circles 101-200 spp. green circles 200+ spp.



The number of hectads with more than 100 species recorded (n = 56) represent just over one-quarter of all hectads in Watsonian Yorkshire.

'Rare' Species

For the purpose of this report, the SRS database was analysed to see which species had not been recorded in any one Watsonian Yorkshire vice-county for at least 50 years, i.e. since 1960. The 50 year threshold was chosen as it seems a reasonably sufficient period, allowing for variations in recording effort over time, for a species to be considered to be rare owing to its scarcity. The 50 year threshold has also previously been adopted by the

Table 3. Species not recorded in Watsonian Vice-Counties for 50 years

Family	Species	VC 61	VC 62	VC 63	VC 64	VC 65
Theridiidae	*Episinus angulatus* (Blackwall, 1836)				x	
	Robertus arundineti (O.P.-Cambridge, 1871)					x
	Robertus neglectus (O.P.-Cambridge, 1871)	x		x		
Linyphiidae	*Ceratinella scabrosa* (O.P.-Cambridge, 1871)		x			
	***Walckenaeria capito* (Westring, 1861)**				x	
	Walckenaeria clavicornis (Emerton, 1882)		x			
	Entelecara omissa O.P.-Cambridge, 1902	x				
	Pelecopsis nemoralis (Blackwall, 1841)		x			
	Pelecopsis nemoralioides (O.P.-Cambridge, 1884)	x	x			
	***Thyreosthenius biovatus* (O.P.-Cambridge, 1875)**		x	x		
	Diplocephalus protuberans (O.P.-Cambridge, 1875)				x	
	***Panamomops sulcifrons* (Wider, 1834)**	x	x		x	
	Lessertia dentichelis (Simon, 1884)		x		x	
	Typhochrestus digitatus (O.P.-Cambridge, 1872)			x		
	Erigone longipalpis (Sundevall, 1830)				x	
	Semljicola caliginosus (Falconer, 1910)			x		
	Drepanotylus uncatus (O.P.-Cambridge, 1873)	x				
	Leptothrix hardyi (Blackwall, 1850)			x		
	Halorates reprobus (O.P.-Cambridge, 1879)	x				
	Halorates distinctus (Simon, 1884)			x		
	Jacksonella falconeri (Jackson, 1908)			x		
	Porrhomma errans (Blackwall, 1841)			x		
	Meioneta innotabilis (O.P.-Cambridge, 1863)		x		x	
	Meioneta gulosa (L.Koch, 1869)			x		
	Microneta viaria (Blackwall, 1841)					x
	Maro minutus O.P.-Cambridge, 1906			x		
	Syedra gracilis (Menge, 1869)		x			
	Saaristoa firma (O.P.-Cambridge, 1905)	x				
	Bathyphantes setiger F.O.P.-Cambridge, 1894	x				
	Megalepthyphantes nebulosus (Sundevall, 1830)		x			
	***Lepthyphantes insignis* O.P.-Cambridge, 1913**				x	
Araneidae	*Araneus marmoreus* var. *pyramidatus* Clerck, 1757				x	
	Larinioides patagiatus (Clerck, 1757)		x			
	Cercidia prominens (Westring, 1851)				x	
Lycosidae	*Pardosa agricola* (Thorell, 1856)	x				
	Xerolycosa miniata (C.L.Koch, 1834)	x				
	Alopecosa barbipes (Sundevall, 1833)				x	
Tegenaridae	*Tegenaria silvestris* L.Koch, 1872			x		
Hahnidae	*Hahnia helveola* Simon, 1875	x				
Dictynidae	*Dictyna latens* (Fabricius, 1775)				x	
	***Argenna subnigra* (O.P.-Cambridge, 1861)**	x				
Amaurobidae	*Coelotes terrestris* (Wider, 1834)	x		x		
Anyphaenidae	*Anyphaena accentuata* (Walckenaer, 1802)				x	
Liocranidae	***Scotina celans* (Blackwall, 1841)**			x		
Clubionidae	*Clubiona norvegica* Strand, 1900		x			
	Cheiracanthium erraticum (Walckenaer, 1802)				x	
	***Cheiracanthium virescens* (Sundevall, 1833)**		x			
Gnaphosidae	*Drassodes pubescens* (Thorell, 1856)	x				
	***Haplodrassus silvestris* (Blackwall, 1833)**			x		
	Zelotes latreillei (Simon, 1878)				x	
	Zelotes apricorum (L.Koch, 1876)	x	x			
	***Urozelotes rusticus* (L.Koch, 1872)**				x	
Philodromidae	***Philodromus emarginatus* (Schrank, 1803)**		x			
Thomisidae	*Xysticus audax* (Schrank, 1803)		x			
	***Xysticus kochi* Thorell, 1872**	x	x	x	x	
	Xysticus sabulosus (Hahn, 1832)	x				
	Ozyptila atomaria (Panzer, 1801)	x	x			
	Ozyptila brevipes (Hahn, 1826)				x	
Salticidae	*Heliophanus cupreus* (Walckenaer, 1802)	x				
	Neon reticulatus (Blackwall, 1853)					x
Total	**60**	**19**	**18**	**15**	**18**	**3**
Percentage of Vice-County List		**5.8 %**	**5.1 %**	**4.1 %**	**5.2 %**	**1.4 %**
Number of Species not Recorded since Smith (1982)		*33*	*59*	*29*	*59*	*40*
Percentage of Vice-County List		*10.1 %*	*16.6 %*	*7.9 %*	*17.1 %*	*18.7 %*

International Union for Conservation of Nature as a means of declaring probable extinction (Fisher & Blomberg, 2010). As 'rarity' can be difficult to define precisely, being dependent on a number of variables (e.g. abundance, range size, genetic diversity or endemism) (Gaston, 1997), and as it can also be a function of the scale at which a species is mapped (Kunin, Hartley & Lennon, 2000), the 50 year threshold adopted for this article seems not unreasonable.

Table 3 lists those species not recorded in any one Watsonian Yorkshire vice-county since 1960. Those 11 species in bold have not been recorded in the whole of Watsonian Yorkshire since this date; 2.6% of the total species recorded.

The 11 species highlighted in Table 3 that have not been recorded since 1960 can be considered as Watsonian Yorkshire's rarest spiders. Determining whether they remain in the county would be a valuable exercise. Judging from the habitat descriptions given in Harvey, Nellist & Telfer (2002), it is possible to place most of them in two broad categories:

- infrequently surveyed habitat: *W. capito* (on high ground), *T. biovatus* (in ants nests) and *L. insignis* (possibly subterreanean/ living in soil); and
- edge of range: *P. sulcifrons*, *A. subnigra*, *S. celans*, *C. virescens*, *H. silvestris*, *P. emarginatus* and *X. kochi*.

One species (*U. rusticus*) is considered to be a sporadic species that may not have gained a permanent foothold in the UK. The only Yorkshire record is from Leeds in 1954 and the last national record was from Merseyside in 1994 (Spider Recording Scheme, 2011).

Future Work

With just under 75% of hectads recording less than 100 species, there is clearly considerable opportunity to increase our knowledge of the true distribution of Watsonian Yorkshire's spiders. A focus in under recorded areas as described in this article will inevitably assist in this objective. Anyone living in, or close to certain areas within VCs 61, 62 and 65 will be able to contribute disproportionately, as many areas are poorly, or very poorly recorded. An alternative project could be to set out and re-locate those species listed in Table 3, especially those 11 species highlighted. It is hoped that this article will provide the encouragement to do so. Surely, there can be no better region in England to survey for spiders than that which contains the Yorkshire Dales, North York Moors, the hidden valleys of the Wolds, the dramatic coastline or some of the great industrial cities of the north!

Submission of Records

As the Area Organiser for VCs 61, 62, 64 and 65, I would welcome receipt of records, preferably by MapMate (identifier 'ab1') of any spiders (and indeed, harvestmen) collected. With prior arrangement, I would also be happy to receive a limited number of specimens. I would also like to know if there are a group of individuals interested in setting up an informal Yorkshire spider recording group, or just who is recording in the county, however sporadically. With this is mind, please note that I have set up a 'Yorkshire Spider' page on the Spider Recording website (http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/portal.php/p/Yorkshire%20Spiders). Please keep an eye out for developments.

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Some recent spider records from Watsonian Yorkshire (2007 – 2010)

by Richard Wilson

Introduction

In the four years covered by this article, I have been recording spiders from various locations within Watsonian Yorkshire, generally nature reserves managed by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) but also a community run nature reserve in west Leeds, my back garden and house, and various casual recording elsewhere. During this period, I've recorded 163 species, mostly within VC 63 (south-west Yorkshire) and VC 64 (mid-west Yorkshire). This article provides information on those species recorded that are considered to be notable for Watsonian Yorkshire and collected by me. To clarify, for the purposes of this article, notable species are those that are either new for Watsonian Yorkshire, or a constituent vice-county, unless otherwise stated. Other species that meet this criterion but not collected by me have either been reported elsewhere such as the record of *Theridion blackwalli* (Ostojá-Starzewski, 2010), or I would encourage the recorder to do so.

Reference throughout has been made to Clifford Smith's *An Atlas of of Yorkshire Spiders* (Smith, 1982) as well as the more recent national Atlas (Harvey, Nellist & Telfer, 2002).

***Steatoda phalerata* (Panzer, 1801)**

A single male was collected in a pitfall trap located in a sparsely vegetated grassland community (formerly arable fields) at Potteric Carr Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), near Doncaster, South Yorkshire (SK 6039 9976) in May 2009. This represented the first record for VC 63 and only the seventh ever record for Watsonian Yorkshire, all having been recorded since the mid-1980s as it was not recorded by Smith (1982). The grassland community is being managed for breeding lowland birds such as the lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*). However, it was advised that areas closer to the footpaths, where birds are less likely to breed, should be periodically scarified to maintain the mosaic of bare ground and sparse vegetation. Other species favouring such habitats such as *Drassyllus pusillus* were also recorded here.

***Steatoda grossa* (C.L.Koch, 1838)**

Several globose females (two were collected for confirmation) were observed in a heated greenhouse (Tropical World) in Canal Gardens, Leeds, West Yorkshire (VC 64) (SE 327 384). This represented a new record for Watsonian Yorkshire. The species is generally considered to be synanthropic though individuals have been recorded outside in more southern areas (Harvey, Nellist and Telfer, 2002). The survey was undertaken inside the Tropical House where various artificial habitats representing deserts, tropical rain forest etc have been created as a tourist facility. A number of other species were recorded, which will be subject to a separate article.

***Entelecara congenera* (O.P.-Cambridge, 1879) (Status: Nb)**

Two females of this small linyphiid was beaten from gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) at Rodley Nature Reserve, west Leeds, West Yorkshire (SE 234 363) on the 30th May 2009. This was a new record for VC 64 but not for Watsonian Yorkshire; having been recorded at a site near Barnsley and at Kimberworth, near Rotherham, both VC 63 in 1994 and 1999 respectively. The gorse bushes were planted to act as screening from the adjacent sewage treatment works and occupy a relatively small area. They are the only specimens, to my knowledge, on the site. As females can be difficult to identify with confidence, the specimens were initially sent to Peter Harvey. He agreed with my determinations, but recommended that I send them to Dr Peter Merrett, who duly reconfirmed the identifications.

This species was subsequently recorded from Bishop Monkton Railway Cutting, near Ripon, North Yorkshire (SE 312 660) (VC 64) in May 2010 by beating the two gorse bushes present. The site is a former railway cutting surrounded by arable fields. The site is managed by the YWT for its calcareous flora; the scrub dominating the old cutting. There are, to my knowledge, only two straggly gorse bushes present within the site and were specifically beaten in May with the hope of recording this spider.

It is interesting to note that at both locations, the gorse bushes are growing in an isolated location, away from other habitats (e.g. heathland/ moorland), where an abundant resource may be present.

***Tapinocyba praecox* (O.P.-Cambridge, 1873)**

This is a widespread species in the UK although there is no particular region where it could be said to favour. The lack of any records in VC 64 until individuals were recorded in grassland at Staveley YWT Reserve (SE 364 636) and Bishop Monkton Railway Cutting YWT Reserve (SE 312 660) in March 2010 is almost certainly down to under recording, especially in the early part of the year when this species is active. The individuals captured here were recorded in grassland communties; a species-rich wet grassland at Staveley and a magnesian limestone grassland community at Bishop Monkton, conforming to the known habitat for this species.

***Cicurina cicur* (Fabricius, 1793)**

This dictynid is a scarce species outside the south-east of England where it is believed to favour calcareous strata (Harvey, Nellist and Telfer, 2002). There are several records associated with the Yorkshire Wolds but until a single male was captured in a pitfall trap in October 2010 in the woodland at Staveley YWT Reserve (SE 3667 6322), none had been recorded in VC 64. This is an autumn active species, which probably contributes to its scarcity as potentially less recording is undertaken at this time of the year. Its cryptic lifestyle, hidden amongst leaf-litter and other detritus in woodland and damp places further reduces its likelihood of being recorded.

***Pirata latitans* (Blackwall, 1841)**

This wolf-spider was neither new to Watsonian Yorkshire, nor any vice-county at the time of capture. However, it is an extremely scarce species with the majority of records associated with Skipwith Common, near York (SE 65 37) in the late 1970s (Smith, 1982). Outside this National Nature Reserve, it is known from only eight other locations and of these, there are only three records in the last 65 years. Two males were captured in pitfall traps at Staveley YWT Reserve (SE 3643 6361) in the wet

species-rich grassland, representing the second record for VC 64; the first being recorded at Upper Dunsforth Carrs (SE 441 630), another YWT reserve.

***Tetragnatha pinicola* L. Koch, 1870 (Status: Nb)**
This spider is a scarce species in Watsonian Yorkshire, there being five confirmed records, all since 2000. A single female was swept from a woodland ride within Ox Close Wood, West Yorkshire (SE 369 464) in May 2010, an ancient woodland site and community nature reserve in the Wharfe Valley, a few kilometres north of Leeds. This represents the first record for VC 64. Nationally, this is a scarce species with the majority of records in the south-east, becoming extremeley rare north of the Humber. This is a species of open woodland, favouring sunny glades/ woodland rides. The specimen was swept from grassland vegetation in a woodland clearing which is being actively managed (coppiced) for charcoal production.

Summary
A total of seven notable species have been recorded within Watsonian Yorkshire by me in the last four years, the majority from YWT nature reserves, suggesting a rate of slightly under two species/ year. Further surveys are planned during the course of 2011 and it is hoped will include the continued investigation and attention on an *ad hoc* basis to explore an emerging thought of mine that *E. congenera* is associated with gorse. More general recording in areas less well surveyed, in particular north-west Yorkshire (VC 65) will also be undertaken. The results of these, and other surveys of interest will be reported in a future article.

Acknowledgements
I'd like to thank the various Reserve Officers and staff of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust for giving me permission to record on a number of their Reserves; East Keswick Wildlife Trust for giving me permission to survey Ox Close Wood, a local community run nature reserve to the north of Leeds; and Rodley Nature Reserve Trust for allowing me to collect in Rodley Nature Reserve. To Peter Harvey, for confirming specimens sent, occasionally correcting my determinations and providing helpful tips on identification. Finally, to my wife for supporting my 'spidering' excursions throughout Yorkshire, though it has to be said, combining a site visit at Staveley with the food at the Royal Oak pub in the village was normally sufficient compensation!

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Some spider and harvestmen records from Stirlingshire (VC86) and Clackmannan (VC87)

by Jonty Denton[1] & Scotty Dodd [2]

*= new VC record. All dates are from 2010. Records without author's initials in brackets were taken by both recorders.

STIRLINGSHIRE (VC86)
Theridiidae: **Anelosimus vittatus* (C.L.Koch) Plean Country Park (NS833865), on gorse, 21.v. (JD) and at Tor Wood Burn (NS833855) on 22.v. (SD).
Linyphiidae: **Meioneta saxatilis* (Blackwall) (1 male), Kincardine Bridge (NS9186) on open saltmarsh 21.v. (JD) with *Oedothorax fuscus* (Blackwall) & *Hypomma bituberculatum* (Wider).
Araneidae: *Larinoides cornutus* (Clerck), Kincardine Bridge (NS9186) on open saltmarsh 21.v. females / immatures were abundant. Also at Dales Wood (NS820850) on 21.v. and Tor Wood Moss (NS824846) on 22.v.
**Hypsosinga pygmaea* (Sundevall) Tor Wood Moss (NS824846), SD swept an adult female on open *Calluna* moor 22.v.
**Cyclosa conica* (Pallas) Dales Wood (NS820850), adult female on 21.v. (SD)
Lycosidae: **Pardosa purbeckensis* (F.O.P.-Cambridge) abundant on open bare mud between plants on open saltmarsh near Kincardine Bridge (NS9186 & NS9286) 21.v.
Gnaphosidae: *Zelotes latreillei* (Simon) (1 female) Kincardine Bridge (NS9186) on open saltmarsh 21.v. (JD).
Opiliones: *Megabunus diadema* (Fabricius), Dales Wood (NS820850) adult male in birch dominated heathy woodland glade, 21.v. (JD).

CLACKMANNAN part of (VC87)
Araneidae: **Araniella opisthographa* (Kulczynski) Inch House Farm (NS933868) on 21.v. (SD).
Phalangiidae: **Dicranopalpus ramosus* (Simon), several adults beaten from bushes along old railway line at Longannet (NS9685), on 09.ix. (JD).

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Spiders from Lincolnshire, 2008

by Annette Binding

One spider, *Enoplognatha latimana*, was recorded in 2008 which was new to the county. Colin Smith collected a single male at a mercury vapour light at Willingham Forest on 30th June. The spider is very similar in appearance to the much more common *Enoplognatha ovata* and can only be separated under the microscope. In the same batch of spiders collected at MV light on that day, there was a male *Enoplognatha ovata* and so I

expected the second *Enoplognatha* specimen to be *Enoplognatha ovata* and was therefore very surprised to discover that the second male was *Enoplognatha latimana*, a species I had only previously seen on Anglesey, North Wales. *Enoplognatha latimana* has the same three colour forms as *Enoplognatha ovata*. The spider caught by Colin was the commonest cream form. The other two forms have either one or two red stripes on the abdomen.

There were a number of species recorded in 2008 which had few previous county records or which had not been seen in the county for many years. Most of these were linyphiids and many of them were sent to me by Colin Smith. Colin found a female *Pelecopsis parallela* in dead reeds at Frodingham Grange on 30th January, the second county record for this species which was new to the county in 2004 when M. L. Denton collected one in a pitfall trap at Scunthorpe; it was determined by Bruce Hoyle and I received the record from the National Spider Database in 2008. Colin found two linyphiid spiders in moss at Crowle Moor NNR, *Ceratinella scabrosa* and *Gongylidiellum vivum*. It was the 3rd county record of *Ceratinella scabrosa* a species which had not been seen in Lincolnshire since 1960. There were eight previous records of *Gongylidiellum vivum* but this was the first record since 1971 and the first female recorded since 1951. Colin found another linyphiid, *Centromerus sylvaticus*, in moss at Great West Wood and at Great Scrubbs Wood on the same day 19th February. These were the first records of this species since 1973.

I collected a single specimen of the linyphiid *Erigone promiscua* from under a stone at Gibraltar Point NNR on 25th July, the 3rd county record of this species. Colin found *Troxochrus scabriculus* at Donna Nook on the 21st March and at Willwick Hill Plantation at Whitton on the 27th March. These were the fifth and sixth county records of this linyphiid which was last recorded in Lincolnshire by G W Whatmough in 1960.

Species other than linyphiids, which were recorded in 2008 included *Achaearanea simulans* (Theridiidae). Allan beat a single female from bushes at Watts Wood LWT Reserve on the 16th July. It was the fourth county record of this species which is currently listed as Notable B, although it will lose its status when the new review of British Spiders is published (Peter Harvey, pers. comm.).

Over the last few years Colin Smith has collected a large number of spiders at both mv light and actinic light traps and among those collected in this way in 2008 was *Episinus angulatus*. There were only four previous records. Colin collected males from three new sites, all caught at actinic light. These were Middle Rasen Plantation on the 24th June, Camshaw Plantation on the 10th July and Linwood Warren on the 22nd July. Another species collected by Colin in his actinic light trap was the linyphiid *Lepthyphantes alacris*. A single male was found in the trap at Dog Kennel Wood, Willingham Forest on the 26th April. This was the eighth county record and the first since 1991.

Two of the more colourful crab spiders were recorded from new sites in 2008. The bright green *Diaea dorsata* (see Fig. 1) was found at Legsby Wood on the 5th May by Colin Smith. This spider has only been recorded from thirteen other locations in Lincolnshire. The large white *Misumena vatia* (see Fig. 2) was found at Callan's Lane Wood on the 1st June by John Lamin. This species has been recorded at eleven other locations.

Figure 1. *Diaea dorsata*, female
©P.R. Harvey

Figure 2. *Misumena vatia*, female
© P.R. Harvey

On 6th November Allan and I found another spider with very few records when we visited the Sir Joseph Banks Conservatory at the Lawn Centre, Lincoln to look at the plants. There were a large number of spiders' webs and although at first we could find no spiders we soon realised that they were disguised as debris in the webs. Allan managed to collect a couple of specimens which I later identified as *Uloborus plumipes*, a species which has spread in heated garden centres and conservatories since the early 1990's when it was probably introduced in pot plants imported from the Netherlands. Spiders of the family Uloboridae are unique in having no poison glands so they have to rely on their skill at wrapping prey items in silk. I know of only five previous Lincolnshire records of *Uloborus plumipes*, four in the north of the county from Scunthorpe and Epworth and one from Gonerby near Grantham in South Lincolnshire. Since discovering the spiders at the Sir Joseph Banks Conservatory, we have looked for it at other garden centres but so far without success.

Colin Smith found a male of the gnaphosid *Zelotes electus* in moss at Donna Nook on the 21st March. It is a coastal species, found mainly on sand dunes. This was the

tenth county record for this spider which is known from only three locations in Lincolnshire.

In grass litter at Gibraltar Point NNR on 24th September Colin found *Clubiona subtilis* and *Thanatus striatus*. *Clubiona subtilis* is known from only three locations in Lincolnshire, Donna Nook, Gibraltar Point NNR and Crowle Moors NNR. It was last recorded in 2006 at Crowle Moors but it had not been recorded at Gibraltar Point since 1985. *Thanatus striatus* had also not been recorded at Gibraltar Point since 1985. It is known from only five locations and the last record was from Messingham, North Lincolnshire in 1988. As well as collecting many spiders himself, Colin Smith also encouraged one of his work colleagues Craig Hobson, to send me a spider which he found in his house in Lincoln on the 27th April, I identified it as a female *Amaurobius ferox* which although fairly widespread in the county has very few recent records, this record being only the fifth since 2001.

Allan and I both found specimens of *Tetragnatha nigrita* at Whisby Nature Park in 2008. This spider is known from only three other locations in Lincolnshire but Whisby Nature Park is the only recent site.

Figure 3. Unidentified spider from bananas
© Alan Binding

Finally, I found a female spider in bananas bought at a local supermarket on the 24th April. It was about the same size as a *Pisaura mirabilis* and had probably been imported from Columbia where the bananas came from. Allan managed to take a few photographs of it (see Fig. 3) before it suddenly just literally curled up and died. It is as yet unidentified and it may not be possible to identify it to species level.

I am grateful to all those people who have sent records and specimens to me especially Colin Smith. This article was originally published in the Lincolnshire Naturalist's Union Transactions, volume 27.

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Araneus quadratus Clerck (Araneidae), preying on Burnet Moths?

by Jonty Denton

In *World of Spiders* W.S.Bristowe, states that spiders find Burnet and cinnabar moths unpalatable and avoid them, even discarding them from their webs. At Horton Country Park, Surrey in August 2010, I saw a web made by a very large *A.quadratus* female which contained the bodies of at least 11 Six-spot Burnets *Zygaena filipendulae*, in a loose tangle close to the spider's lair. Had these been taken for food? Clearly the spider must have drawn them together, but for what purpose? They had become battered and faded, so one could argue they were serving as camouflage. It is possible that the spider caught a fresh female, who then drew in some wouldbe suitors to their fate.

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A proposed name for *Islandiana falsifica*

by Richard Bacon

SRS News No 68 in Newsl Br. arachnol. Soc 119 carries a letter from my old flat-mate, Mike Daividson, asking for a trivial name for *Islandiana falsifica*, a species he recently found near Prestatyn in Wales. Taking on board Mike's request, I submit the following:

1) Eyjafjallajokull taff
2) Taff Eyjafjallajokull

Having performed some research with the small colony of native Icelandic/Welsh speakers in New Zealand, I can confirm that option 2 (Taff Eyjafjallojokull) is culturally acceptable and quite easily pronounced after several glasses of finest New Zealand Riesling, or even Chardonnay.

I therefore propose that *Islandiana falsifica* is hereby known as Taff Eyjafjallajokull.

Levin, New Zealand

Lakenheath Fen, home to cranes, orioles, bitterns ... and *Carorita paludosa*

by Alan Thornhill

In 1995, when **Lakenheath Fen** in Suffolk was acquired by the RSPB, the nature reserve began the latest of the changes it has undergone over the centuries. Immediately prior to that it was mostly arable land, with carrots a local speciality. Also, there were, and still are, some small poplar woods, remnants of a more extensive plantation of Bryant and May, the match manufacturers. Now that it is being returned to something resembling its original state, it is primarily a wetland reserve with extensive reed or sedge beds and open pools, although there is a dry sandy area at the eastern end of the reserve. At the western end is the swamp-like **Botany Bay** (the origin of the name is unknown), which was never farmed and is an SSSI.

Thousands of visitors flock (sorry!) to the reserve each year to see rare birds. It is the only place in the country where golden orioles breed regularly, albeit in very small numbers now, and one of two sites where common cranes are making their UK comeback. A few visitors go to see invertebrates such as dragonflies, butterflies and bumblebees. Perhaps one day some will go to see the reserve's spiders as it is known to be home to many species. About 120 species have now been recorded there, and probably many more remain to be discovered.

Ian Dawson of the RSPB (and BAS member) has carried out several spider surveys on Lakenheath Fen from 1997 onwards and found some rare species, most notable amongst them being *Clubiona rosserae*. The reserve is one of only two places in the country where this species is known to live. Amongst other interesting species recorded from there are the linyphiids *Maro sublestus* and *Entelecera omissa.*

This year I was asked by Buglife to carry out water trapping on Botany Bay in September and October, to search for *C. rosserae* in particular (the only one found there was caught in a water trap) and survey invertebrates generally. The traps, set about 1m high, caught adult spiders of only six species, but none was *C. rosserae.* Traps in the wetter areas caught several *Donacochara speciosa*, a slightly odd-looking linyphiid with its broad, flattish cephalothorax, that is scarce in the UK.

I also surveyed spiders by beating the reeds and sedges, and shaking dead vegetation, in the area around the traps. These methods yielded many more species, principally because they could sample throughout the height profile of the reedbeds. Spider diversity seemed much greater nearer to the ground, due presumably to the abundance of springtails and other small invertebrates.

Several of the spiders caught by beating / shaking were new records for the reserve, mostly typical wetland species such as *Ozyptila brevipes* and *Floronia bucculenta*. Perhaps the most noteworthy find was *Carorita paludosa,* a small linyphiid that has been found at several places within the Norfolk Broads, but at very few other sites in the British Isles (one in Somerset, and two in Ireland), so this is a new record for Suffolk. My thanks to Ian Dawson for confirming the identification.

It will be interesting to see how many wetland spider species eventually colonise the areas reclaimed from arable land. Some, such as *Clubiona phragmitis* and *D. speciosa,* can already be found there but others have so far only been found on Botany Bay.

The list of spiders found on the sandy area at the eastern end of the reserve is, as one would expect, much different to that from the wetter areas, with several species typically associated with heaths or open grassland, such as *Pardosa monticola, Arctosa perita, Talavera aequipes* and *Hahnia nava*. However, almost all of this area has been planted with poplar trees, to encourage golden orioles to breed. As the trees grow, the spider fauna will surely be affected. So, further monitoring of the spiders on this area would be useful, to obtain a fuller list of those present now before the trees become tall.

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Clubiona rosserae at Chippenham Fen

by Ian Dawson

During a field trip of the Huntingdonshire Fauna & Flora Society to Chippenham Fen NNR, Cambridgeshire, on 19th September 2010 with my wife Debra, we found a good selection of spiders, including such interesting species as *Hygrolycosa rubrofasciata*, *Trochosa spinipalpis*, *Marpissa radiata*, *M. muscosa*, *Araneus marmoreus* (including a single f. *marmoreus* among numerous f. *pyramidatus*), *Glyphesis servulus* and *Maso gallicus*. However, chief excitement was provided by a rather small *Clubiona* sieved from a fresh litter pile in SSSI Compartment 7 (formerly Compartment 8) at TL 650693, which proved under the microscope to be a female *C. rosserae*, for which Chippenham Fen is the type locality. The species was described by G. H. Locket in 1953 from two males and two females collected there on 23rd September 1951 (Locket & Millidge, 1953). It has subsequently been recorded from Chippenham on a number of occasions, but not since 6th October 1996 when Dave Carr collected a male (Carr, 1997).

There is only a single record for the UK away from this site: a female found in a water trap at Botany Bay, Lakenheath Fen RSPB reserve, Suffolk, in April 2000 (Dawson, 2003). In Europe it is known from only a few countries, including the Netherlands, Poland, Hungary and Romania, and appears to be rare everywhere.

Dedicated survey work between 2002 and 2005 to investigate the distribution and ecology of this species failed to refind it at Chippenham Fen or at Lakenheath Fen, nor were any other localities found, despite targeted fieldwork at potential sites by BAS members and work by an ecologist under contract to Natural England (then English Nature).

The site of the September record is close to where three *C. rosserae* were found during JNCC invertebrate surveys in the early 1990s (two from pitfalls in 1991 and one from a water trap in 1995 at TL 65056936). It was pure chance that we chose that spot to sample on our September visit. Compartment 7 comprises mixed open fen vegetation, mainly sedge, of which a large swathe had been cut a little earlier in the autumn (see Fig. 1). Litter piles were stacked along the edge.

Figure 1. *Clubiona rosserae* habitat at Chippenham Fen © Ian Dawson

Most of the recent unsuccessful fieldwork has been undertaken in the summer months, and although adults have been found in ones and twos in most months between February and October, I wondered whether *C. rosserae* might be primarily an autumn-maturing spider, given the date on which it was first discovered (four individuals) and the date of the last Chippenham record in 1996.

Accordingly, I arranged a return visit on October 17th, along with Debra, Peter Harvey and Dave Carr. This proved highly successful and between us we found eight mature females and two males. A number of immatures of similar size and colour may also have been this species. These all came from the same compartment as the September find and either from relatively fresh litter piles (less than a month old), or from loose vegetation litter left lying at the edge of the cut area, and all from within a 100 m radius. Searches elsewhere on the fen drew a blank. All individuals collected by IKD were rather pale reddish-brown or yellowish and between 5 and 5.5 mm in length (females) or 4.0 mm (male). Several of the females showed a contrasting darker central abdominal cardiac stripe. While positive identification under a handlens may be doubtful, we were reasonably confident in the field that we had found both sexes. Once examined under the microscope and compared with known *C. stagnatilis*, there is no real possibility of confusion. In fact we found only a single *C. stagnatilis*, a female from loose litter at the edge of the cut area, collected along with two female *C. rosserae*, proving that the two species live together.

The accompanying photographs show six female *C. rosserae*, both alive and under the microscope, one male *C. rosserae*, and the female *C. stagnatilis*. In Fig. 2 the September *C. rosserae* is labelled A, the five October females B to F respectively. The male palps are distinct enough, but the most immediately obvious feature separating all the females examined of both species is the relative width to height of the pigmented area of the epigyne, which in the five females held by IKD is significantly greater than 2:1, whereas in several *C. stagnatilis* females examined it is at best equal to and usually less than 2:1. This is a function of the

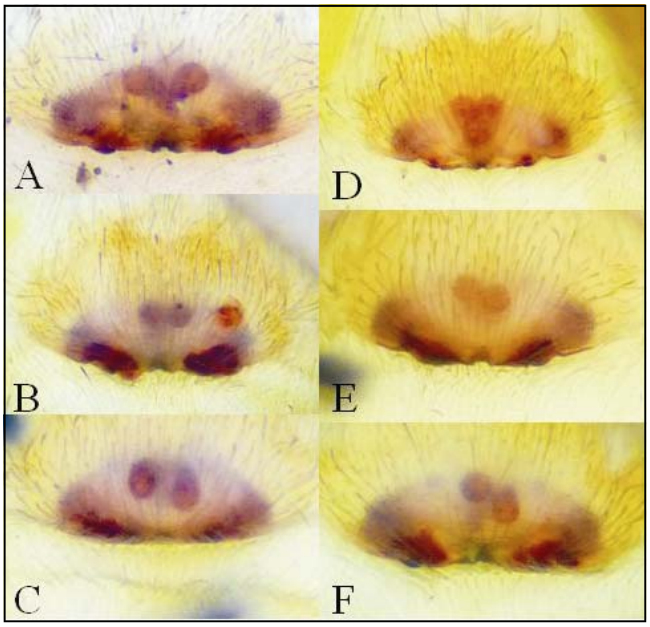

Figure 2. *Clubiona rosserae* epigynes A: 19th Sept 2010, B-F: 17th Oct 2010 © Ian Dawson

Figure 3. *Clubiona stagnatilis* epigynes
sA: Chippenham Fen 17th Oct 2010
sB: Wheatfen 25th May 2002
sC: Ynys Hir 4th May 2006
© Ian Dawson

spermathecae lying closer to the hind margin of the epigyne in *C. rosserae*. The shape of the hind margin also appears to be a useful additional guide with a small deep notch in the centre in *C. rosserae* (straighter in *C. stagnatilis*), and the spermathecae visible through the abdominal wall appear roughly circular (elongated in *C. stagnatilis*). The drawings by Roberts (1985, 1998) match all these characters.

All the *C. rosserae* were rather pale below so the darker contrasting epigyne was obvious, whereas the single *C. stagnatilis* from Chippenham was much darker red-brown both above and below and the epigyne was thus obscured in the live animal. However, the colour of *C. stagnatilis* is clearly variable and can be much paler as

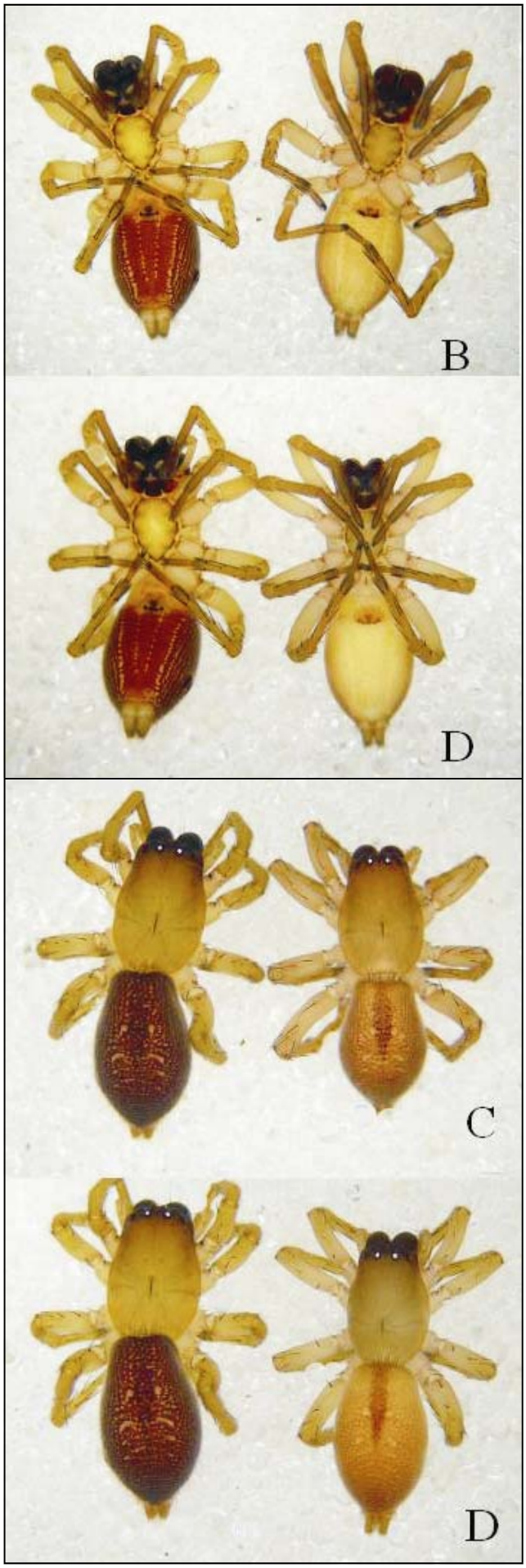

Figure 4. Left: *Clubiona stagnatilis*. Right: *C. rosserae* (*C. rosserae* specimens B, C & D).
Chippenham Fen 17th Oct 2010 © Ian Dawson

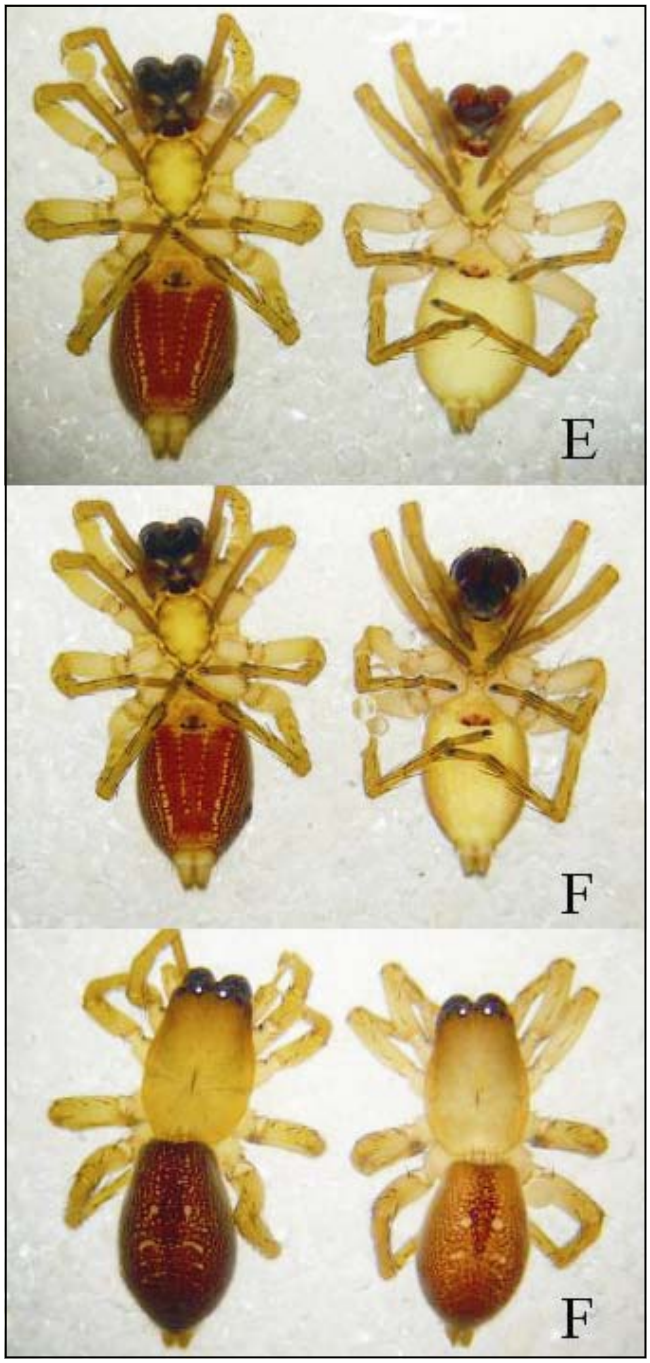

Figure 5. Left: *Clubiona stagnatilis*. Right: *C. rosserae* (*C. rosserae* specimens E & F).
Chippenham Fen 17th Oct 2010 © Ian Dawson

shown by the photos of specimens (Fig. 3) from Ynys Hir, Cardiganshire and Wheatfen, Norfolk. *C. stagnatilis* would also appear normally to be a little larger, with the female collected together with the *rosserae* being 5.7 mm long.

However, as a cautionary footnote, I re-examined the Lakenheath *C. rosserae* female. This is both a darker and at 7.2 mm a much bigger spider than the Chippenham females. However, the proportions of the pigmented area of the epigyne match the above specimens, and when viewed ventrally show further confirmatory characters, notably the spermathecae which are less elongated and do not diverge as in *C. stagnatilis* (see Dawson, 2003). None of the Chippenham females was dissected.

The rediscovery prompted a press release from BugLife which generated a slot on BBC Look East and considerable wider media coverage on both radio and in

Figure 6: *Clubiona rosserae* male, Chippenham Fen 17th Oct 2010 © Ian Dawson

the national press. It was the lead story on the BBC website on 22nd November, and generated news coverage from as far away as Romania and Canada!

Thanks are due to Mike Taylor, the Natural England Reserves Manager for Breckland, both for permission to visit, and for his considerable help on site during both our visits.

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More on *Enoplognatha latimana*

by Howard Williams

In the July 2008 issue of The Newsletter Stan Dobson suggested we should take a closer look at a spider often dismissed as *Enoplognatha ovata*, as some may well prove to be *Enoplognatha latimana*.

This is certainly true as my experience in Nottinghamshire has shown. Stan Dobson also thought that Bill Ely of S.W. Yorks, who had found *Enoplognatha latimana* in the Rotherham area, would need to go as far as the Norfolk Breckland to find the nearest other records of this spider. That was almost true in 2008 when he wrote his article, but is not so any longer. It has been recorded at 3 sites in Nottinghamshire since 2005: by me in the central area of the county at CenterParcs Sherwood in August 2005 and at Rainworth Heath near Mansfield in July 2008 and August 2009; and by A Binding at Clumber Park in July 2009 in the north of the county. Moreover, she also recorded it for a site in Lincolnshire in June 2008, thus creating a 3-counties link from Rotherham in S.W. Yorks through Nottinghamshire into Lincolnshire. This little East Midlands grouping is distinct on the updated BAS maps, as the great majority of *Enoplognatha latimana* records are concentrated in south-east and southern England. Nottinghamshire's other neighbouring counties of Leicestershire and Derbyshire so far seem to have no records of this species.

The Nottinghamshire records are of 10 females and 3 males. At CenterParcs Sherwood and Rainworth Heath the spiders were found by sweeping and grubbing in or under heather; in a mix of heather and bracken; and by beating low-hanging branches above the heather. They were found on both dry and wet heath areas. Heaths, especially heathery ones, would therefore seem to be attractive to the species; but nationally it appears able to adapt itself to a variety of situations like its relative, *Enoplognatha ovata*. While being much less common, *Enoplognatha latimana* may nevertheless prove to be equally widespread. I feel sure it is often overlooked, assumed to be *Enoplognatha ovata*.

Before leaving this subject, the matter of colour forms arises. Of the 12 spiders I collected at the central Nottinghamshire sites, only one had the dorsal red stripes on either side of the abdomen called in Locket and Millidge Clerck's *redimitum* (they were actually referring to *Theridion ovatum* now *Enoplognatha ovata*). Roberts states that *Enoplognatha latimana* is 'usually without red markings' and my samples, though very limited, seem to confirm that. Though the colour variants are without specific value, it would be interesting to know if, generally, the proportion of around one in twelve may be about right for this feature in this species.

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Midia midas in Epping Forest - an update

by Tony Russell-Smith[1], Mick Massie[2], David Nellist[3] & Imogen Wilde[4]

Background

Midia midas is one of Britain's rarest spiders. It is listed as nationally endangered and is identified as a Priority Species for conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP). In the UK, it has been recorded from just five localities, Sherwood Forest, Notts. (Crocker, 1979), Donington Park, Leics. (Crocker & Daws, 1996), Epping Forest, Essex (Russell-Smith, 2002), Hainault Forest (Essex) and Windsor Forest (Berks), where it is always associated with ancient trees, either in forest or ancient wood pasture settings.

In an earlier article (Russell-Smith, 2002), the results of a survey during 1980 for *Midia midas* and other spiders in ancient pollards in Epping Forest were described. At that time, the species was found in bird nests, squirrel dreys and accumulations of litter in 12 trees out of 55 examined (21%) between May and July. A total of four male and fourteen female specimens were collected. Here, we document the occurrence of *Midia* in Epping Forest since 1980 and discuss different survey techniques for this species in the light of future surveys.

The next occasion when *Midia* was encountered in Epping was not until June 1996, when a single female was collected in Long Running (TQ43299605) by David Carr. Subsequently, Peter Harvey collected another female from a squirrel's drey in a pollarded Hornbeam in Little Monk Wood (TQ42097813) in July 2002. Although the species appeared to be of sporadic occurrence in the Forest, this was very likely due to the fact that so few arachnologists collect from its specialised habitat in ancient trees.

Studies in 2003

During 2003, Imogen Wilde and colleagues from the Epping Forest management team (City of London) undertook a survey of saproxylic invertebrates in ancient pollard oaks in several areas of the forest. As a part of this, pitfall traps were placed in rot-holes and snags in the crowns of pollards located in the Barn Hoppitt, Bury Wood/Long Hills and Lord's Wood areas of the forest. The traps were operated from mid-May to the end of July and emptied every 3 weeks. Although the Coleoptera and Diptera from these traps had been sorted and identified, it was only earlier this year that the spiders from the traps were examined and identified. A total of eight specimens of *Midia* were found in the traps, collected from five trees out of the 32 in which traps were placed (16%). It was taken from a single tree in the Barn Hoppitt area and four from the Bury Wood area but was apparently absent from the slightly more isolated Lord's Bushes area.

A new survey in 2010

Plans were drawn up by the BAS, in collaboration with the City of London conservators and Buglife, for a new survey of *Midia* in Epping in 2009. Initially, it was hoped to use the same technique for surveying as was used in the 1980 survey. However, exploratory work early in 2009 in the central area of the forest showed that both bird nests and squirrel dreys had apparently declined markedly and were in fact difficult to find in sufficient numbers. It was

thus decided that the main survey technique would be the use of "artificial nests", constructed from fine twiggy material and leaf litter in nylon mesh bags, which would then be placed in cavities and rot holes in suitable pollards spread as widely across the forest as possible. Nests would then be collected at regular monthly intervals between June and October and all invertebrates sorted from them and identified.

Figure 1. *Midia midas,* female in its web viewed ventrally © Jurgen Lissner.

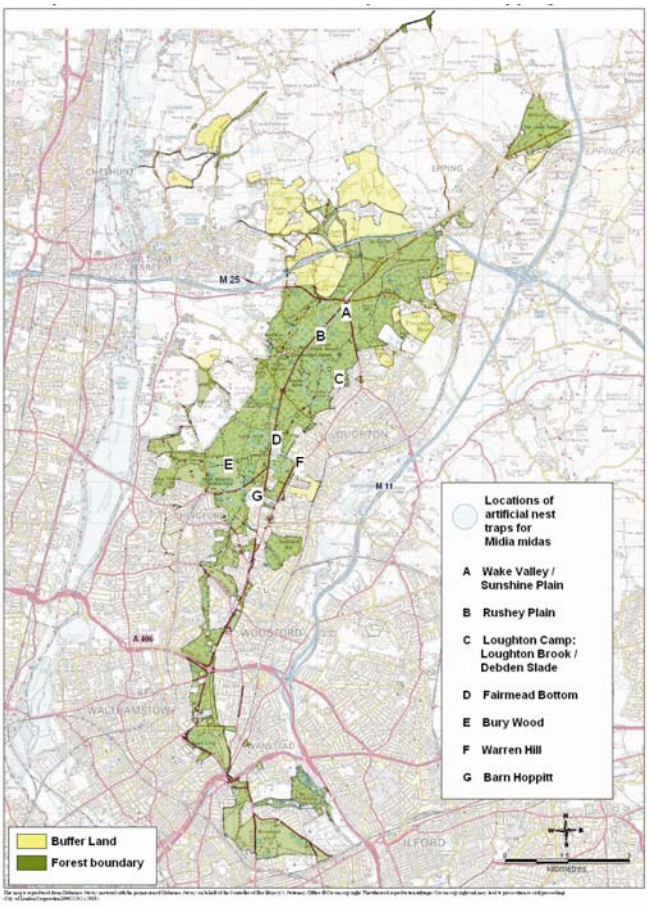
This survey was conducted during summer 2010 with generous funding from the Whitley Wildlife Trust and logistical support from Buglife. A total of 150 artificial nests were constructed, using a mixture of fine birch twigs and beech litter. In May, 50 traps were placed in hornbeam pollards, 50 in beech pollards and 50 in oak pollards. The traps were located in eight areas in the central forest, Fairmead Bottom, Warren Hill, Loughton Brook/Depden Slade, Loughton Camp, Barn Hoppitt, Bury Wood, Wake Valley/Sunshine Plain and Rushey Plain (Map 1). The location of each tree was recorded using a hand-held GPS sensitive to ± 3m and, where available, the CoL tag numbers affixed to many of the ancient pollards.

On each of five successive monthly sampling occasions from June to October, trees were relocated and 30 trap nests were collected, 10 from each of the three tree species. The artificial nests were carefully transferred to sealed polythene bags in the field for return to the laboratory.

The contents of each artificial nest was transferred to a large white tray in the laboratory and all arachnids larger than ca 1.5 mm length carefully collected with pooters and transferred to pre-labelled tubes of 70% ethanol for subsequent identification.

Females of *Midia* are immediately recognisable, even with a hand lens, by the massive projecting scape of the epigyne on the underside of the abdomen (Fig. 1). In the 2010 survey, two female specimens of *Midia* were collected on 9th June, both from Fairmead Bottom. The artificial nests from which they were collected were located in adjacent pollarded oaks. Interestingly, neither of these oaks appeared to be of particularly great age, certainly by comparison with those at Barn Hoppitt which

Map 1. Locations of *Midia midas* study sites within Epping Forest



were of much greater girth and height. This agrees well with the findings from the earlier survey in Epping Forest in 1980 where the majority of the specimens collected were from relatively small hornbeam and oak pollards. Sadly, subsequent monthly collections produced no further specimens of *Midia*.

Conclusions and future studies

At first sight, it might be suggested that *Midia* has shown a considerable decline in Epping Forest over the past 30 years. However, it is important to remember that each survey used different sampling techniques, the efficiency of none of which has been assessed. In particular, artificial nests may be problematic because either their construction or the way they were deployed in trees may have rendered them unattractive to *Midia*. Since the artificial trap nests only revealed *Midia* in 1.4% of those recovered, they hardly justified the labour of constructing, deploying and sorting them.

Despite the fact that the UK has one of the largest populations of ancient trees in Europe, our knowledge of the status of *Midia* is hopelessly inadequate. Before any measures for its conservation can be put in place, it is essential to have a proper understanding of its distribution and status. Because conservation of endangered spiders depends in part on ensuring survival of many separate populations, future work will concentrate on finding new populations of the spider in sites with large numbers of ancient trees. It is hoped that at these sites sufficient natural bird nests and squirrel dreys can be located to

obviate the need for trapping devices. However, in sites similar to Epping, where nests and squirrel dreys are relatively uncommon, it may be necessary to use pitfall traps placed in suitable sites in ancient trees. Some care is needed in using this technique because there is a risk of trapping out this scarce species in individual trees. Traps will need to be checked at regular intervals and removed from individual trees as soon as *Midia* is detected. In addition to these methods, a third technique worth using where there are hollow or fallen trees is sieving of rotten wood. This has been used successfully by Jurgen Lissner in Denmark where he has collected this species on several occasions at Frijsenborg Forest about 20 km north-west of Århus.

The BAS is planning a much wider survey for *Midia*, involving sites in at least six counties across southern Britain. The aim will be to survey ancient trees in areas with a known history of continuous management as forest or tree pasture. We are seeking funding for a two year project to cover the travel costs and provide consumable equipment for surveyors involved in the project. If there are any BAS members who would be interested in joining the survey work, they can contact Tony Russell-Smith by e-mail at mrussellsmith@btinternet.com or by post at the address below.

Acknowledgements.
We would like to thank Jurgen Lissner for allowing us to reproduce his excellent photograph of *Midia*.

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Tetragnatha striata (L.Koch, 1862): new to Cumbria

by Dave Holloway

Whilst living in Cumbria prior to relocating to Scotland I was fortunate to have the opportunity to collect spiders at Siddick Pond Nature Reserve near Workington. The reserve is coastal and has brackish ponds with about 19 acres of reed bed.

Figure 1. Siddick Pond Nature Reserve © Phil Gravell.

On 15th September 2009 I collected some spiders by sweeping low along a ride that had been cut into the reedbed to create a site for bird ringing using mist nets. I noted the straw yellow appearance of some *Tetragnatha* spiders as I tubed them. Later microscopic examination confirmed two female *Tetragnatha striata*. In addition to the usual identification books I found information regarding eye pattern useful (Dobson, 2004). This is currently the only known site for *Tetragnatha striata* in Cumbria (VC70 and VC69).

Tetragnatha striata is provisionally in the LEAST CONCERN national conservation status category (Dawson *et al.* 2008). It was previously categorised as Nationally Scarce (Notable B) - difficulties in accessing its habitat may have led to past under recording as it is usually found in reed beds in standing water (Harvey *et al*, 2002). The species is probably under little threat at Siddick where the reed bed is an ongoing integral feature of the habitat. It probably benefits from cutting rides for bird ringing as this creates an edge effect. The reserve is also managed to maintain reed bed edges to encourage bird species like Bittern and Reed Warbler.

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HARVESTMEN NEWS

An Opiliones Recording Scheme update - a call to armature and legs

by Peter Nicholson, National Organiser ORS

Happy New Year to you and let's hope for an active recording year for us all. The first piece of good news is that the SRS/ORS website is now ready for your records to be uploaded. All the records held by the BRC at CEH (Wallingford), plus some additional records are now in place and the distribution maps of all our British harvestmen are now able to be seen. This again is down to the hard work of Peter Harvey, how does he find the time? Many thanks Peter.

All the website needs now is populating with information and photos. Thanks are due to Paul Richards for starting the ball rolling with many harvestman pictures. My main aim is to get the species text in place and any additional photos needed. There are plans to have regional pages and other relevant topics. Please let me know what you would like to see, all suggestions welcome.

In the next few weeks MapMate users should get an update to their harvestmen taxa list. There is one amendment, *Rilaena triangularis* (Herbst 1799) reverts to *Platybunus triangularis* (Herbst 1799) and the addition of two species, *Leiobunum tisciae* Avram 1968 and *Platybunus pinetorum* (C.L. Koch 1839). Neither species is to be found in Hillyard (2005). Now confirmed records for these species can be added to MapMate and can be uploaded to the website. Those recorders who read the last SRS news (No.68 November 2010 in BAS Newsletter N0.119) will be aware of the article highlighting *P. pinetorum* found by Paul Richards. This species may be an introduction and at present is only known from one site.

Leiobunum tisciae has a protracted history; the first British reference was listed by Martens (1978). The location is thought to have been between Leek and Stoke-on-Trent, but as it could not be confirmed it was not recognised as being on the British list (Hillyard, 2005), also mentioned in J.H.P. Sankey's Provisional Atlas 1988.

Recently this species has been found in Scotland and confirmed by Axel Schönhofer and Prof. Martens. These initial finds in Scotland have been covered in articles by Mike Davidson in the SRS News, including in the *Scottish harvestman update* in this issue.

There is a certain amount of taxonomic confusion arising concerning *Leiobunum tisciae* and *Leiobunum rupestre.* Even though both these species are apparently easily separated, *Leiobunum tisciae* is not recognized in Central Europe whereas *Leiobunum rupestre* is. The problem of getting a description which we can use for identification purposes is confounded by the fact that there is another species, *Nelima apenninica*, which may be conspecific with *Leiobunum tisciae*. The result of all this is that there is a considerable amount of taxonomic work to be done to resolve these issues.

I am assured by Dr. Axel Schönhofer that *L. tisciae*, which is similar in outer appearance to *L. rupestre,* is the only one of the two species which inhabits the coast of Germany and Scandinavia, as well as in Great Britain. Anybody who finds a *Leiobunum* or *Nelima* species which looks similar to the picture of *Leiobunum tisciae* in the recently published FSC *Guide to Harvestmen of the British Isles* by Paul Richards or on our SRS website should send it to myself, Paul or Mike Davidson for confirmation.

[1]Dr. Axel Schönhofer Department of Biology, San Diego States University.

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Scottish Harvestman Update

by Mike Davidson

A very successful workshop was held in Perth (no, sadly, not Australia) in October 2010, utilising the excellent facilities of Perth Museum and including a field trip to the local cemetery. Despite a number of drop-outs, before the event, there were still people on the waiting list who could not be accommodated! Of course *Dicranopalus ramosus* was found and, during the day, participants saw live or pickled specimens of most of the British species. The opportunity was taken to test (hot from the press) Paul Richards' excellent FSC field guide. This was well received, with several copies sold.

Such is the demand for ID training, a further harvestman course is being held in Inverness in February 2011 (we might skip the field work). I am told there is already a waiting list.

Leiobunum tisciae was still around Aberdeen during 2010. I also found a dried corpse in the community centre toilets at Boat of Garten in June, extending its known distribution to Speyside. In September, another specimen was found by Ian Evans (ver. Paul Richards) in the public toilets at Durness. Having got all that way north, perhaps it will now head south. See Paul's guide for I.D. information as it is likely to key out as *Nelima*.

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Spider Recording Scheme News
July 2011, No. 70

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk ***SRS website:*** http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 71 will be published in November 2011. Please send contributions by the end of September at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: srs@britishspiders.org.uk or grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk. The newsletter depends on your contributions!

Editorial

Thank you to the contributors who have provided articles for this issue. Please help future issues by providing articles, short or longer, on interesting discoveries and observations. Also please help by contributing to the collaborative Spider and Harvestman Recording Scheme website. As noted previously, the key aim of the website is to be an interactive and collaborative resource, so please register, upload images and contribute to the forum, species notes and add or edit information on sites of interest for spiders and other wildlife. Members of the BAS and the recording scheme can also interrogate the regional maps to access details of the records behind the tetrads and help identify and log errors - so please register, log-on and help!

Area Organiser changes

With Peter Nicholson moving from the county, Pip Collyer is taking over as Area Organiser for Norfolk (VCs 27 & 28). Many thanks indeed for all the excellent work Peter has done and a big welcome to Pip.

Iain Downie has relinquished his role as Area Organiser for VC 75 and 76 (Ayrshire and Renfrewshire) and Tony White has resigned as AO for VC32 (Northamptonshire). If you would like to volunteer to take over as Area Organiser for these or any other vacant VCs please contact me. Area Organisers perform an incredibly important role in maintaining records for their areas on behalf of the BAS and SRS, and in providing encouragement and help to local naturalists and arachnologists. Many thanks to Iain and Tony for all their past efforts in their roles as Area Organiser.

Some noteworthy records of spiders from Surrey [VC17] during 2009/10, including *Baryphyma pratense* (Blackwall) (Linyphyiidae) new for the county

by Scotty Dodd[1] & Jonty Denton[2]

This note summarises species of interest recorded in the vice-county of Surrey (VC17) during 2009/10. Captures for Brentmoor Heath, Whitmoor Common and Ash Ranges were largely made by pitfall trapping and/or timed suction samples. Species of interest collected by Katherine Cameron (KC) and Andrew Salisbury (AS) are reported here and were determined by JSD.

Heathland species which may be regarded as comparatively common in Surrey (e.g. *Evarcha arcuata*, *Oxyopes heterophthalmus*, *Thomisus onustus*, *Uloborus walckenaerius* etc) are not listed here but were generally encountered on the heathland sites surveyed.

Where a species is suggested as new for a vice county, or an otherwise significant record, this opinion is based upon the data given in Harvey *et al.* [eds.] (2002) and the Spider Recording Scheme website (http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/ - accessed January 2011).

Araneidae

Araneus angulatus Horton Country Park (TQ1861), 9.viii.2010 - two mature females (JSD); *Hypsosinga albovittata* Worplesdon, Whitmoor Common (SU9853), 10.ix.2009 - on heather; Betchworth, Fraser Down (TQ2152), 23.iv.2010 - on chalk downland (SGD).

Clubionidae

Cheiracanthium pennyi Chobham Common, Glovers Pond (SU9764), 10.vii.2009; Ash Ranges, (SU9252), 07.vii.2010 - amongst heather, not previously recorded from site (SGD). Folly Bog, (SU9261), 12.vii.2010 - pair, on mire, not previously recorded from site (JSD); *Cheiracanthium virescens* Ash Ranges (SU9252), 07.x.2010 – This appears to be one of few published record for VC17 since it was reported by W.S. Bristowe at Horsley in 1922. However, an unpublished record for this species (ca.2006/07) from A. Phillips, also at Ash Ranges, has recently been brought to the authors' attention along with a record from Chobham Common pre-1973 by J. & F. Murphy.

Figure 1. *Cheiracanthium pennyi* © J.S.Denton 2010.

Dysderidae

Dysdera erythrina Epsom Golf Course (TQ2259), 06.v.2010 – first record for 20 years? An apparently uncommon species for Surrey (SGD).

Gnaphosidae
Gnaphosa leporina Worplesdon, Whitmoor Common, (SU9853), 18.vi.2009; *Trachyzelotes pedestris* Merstham, Quarry Hangers (TQ3153), 17.ix.2009 – on short-turf chalk downland. (SGD); *Haplodrassus signifer, Zelotes petrensis* (very numerous) Brentmoor Heath (SU9361), 26.v.2010 (collected KC, det. JSD)
Hahniidae
Hahnia helveola Ash Ranges (SU9252), 07.vii.2010 (SGD).
Linyphiidae
Araeoncus humilis Wisley RHS gardens (TQ0658), 31.viii.2010 (collected AS, det. JSD); *Ceratinella brevis* Worplesdon, Whitmoor Common (SU9853), 31.vii.2009; *Baryphyma pratense* Byfleet, Manor Farm TQ0660, 21 iv 2010 – this appears to be a new species record for VC 17, taken in a riparian wet flush in rank meadows adjacent to the River Wey; *Hypselistes jacksoni* Worplesdon, Whitmoor Common (SU9853), 31.vii & 10.ix.2009; *Metopobactrus prominulus* Worplesdon, Whitmoor Common (SU9853), 18.vi.2009; *Neriene furtiva* Ash Ranges (SU9252), 07.vii.2010 (SGD); *Trematocephalus cristatus* Ashtead Common (TQ1859), 5.vi.2009 (JSD), Betchworth, Fraser Down (TQ2152), 25.vi.2010 (SGD); *Walckenaeria cucullata* Ash Ranges (SU9052 & SU9252), 05.v .2010; *Walckenaeria furcillata* Worplesdon, Whitmoor Common (SU9853), 18.vi.2009 (SGD).
Liocranidae
Agroeca brunnea Ash Ranges (SU9252), 05.v .2010 (SGD).
Mimetidae
Ero tuberculata Ash Ranges (SU9052), 07.vii.2010 (SGD).
Sparassidae
Micrommata virescens Ash Ranges (SU9353), 24.v.2009 & (SU9152 & SU9252), 07.x.2010 (SGD).
Theridiidae
Anelosimus aulicus Normandy, Cobbetthill Common (SU9453), 09.vi.2010; *Dipoena melanogaster* Betchworth, Fraser Down (TQ2152), 25.vi.2010 – two females beaten from an open grown Yew tree at the foot of an east facing chalk slope. Last recorded in VC17 during 1997; *Episinus truncatus* Worplesdon, Whitmoor Common (SU9853), 18.vi.2009; Bisley Camp (SU9358), 07.vi.2010; Ash Ranges (SU9152), 07.vii.2010; Ash, Harpers Road (SU9050), 21.vi.2009 - indoors, probably carried in on clothing; Chobham Common, Glovers Pond (SU9764), 10.vii.2009 (SGD); *Steatoda phalerata* Barnes Common (TQ2276), 17.v.2010 - female on acid grassland, new for Greater London area? (JSD).
Thomisidae
Xysticus sabulosus Byfleet, Manor Farm (TQ0659), 21.iv.2010 – ex-agricultural dumping / burning area near Wisley Common (conf. JSD)
Uloboridae
Hyptiotes paradoxus Cranleigh (TQ0635), 02.ix.2010 – juvenile beaten from broadleaved scrub at edge of secondary Oak/Birch woodland on clay, post industrial site (SGD).
Salticidae
Salticus zebraneus Ham Lands (TQ1672), 15.vi.2010 – female on ash trunk (JSD).

Acknowledgements
Many thanks to Peter Harvey for kindly offering to verify voucher specimens and for providing current information on local and national distribution. Thanks also to Surrey Wildlife Trust, Epsom Golf Club, Defence Estates and CHE Ltd. for supporting invertebrate survey work on their respective properties and James Adler (SWT Grazing Project manager) for arranging access to MOD restricted areas.

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Spider and Harvestman Recording Scheme website http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/ - Accessed January 2011.

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Dipoena erythropus (Simon) (Theridiidae) and *Trematocephalus cristatus* (Wider) (Linyphiidae) in Hampshire

by Jonty Denton

On 9.vi.2011, I found two males and a female *D. erythropus* by tapping heather *Erica cinerea* overhanging a narrow 2-3m deep erosion gully/path, on north slope of Caeser's Camp, North Hampshire. These are the first from Hampshire of this RDB2 spider. A few days later on 20.vi, I again found males under *E. cinerea*, spreading over a sandy path at Bagshot Heath, Surrey (SU899618).

Nearby in wooded areas of Bourley Hill, *Trematocephalus cristatus* was not uncommon on tree foliage on 13.v and 9.vi. which appear to be the first records from Hampshire and VC12. I have come across this distinctive money spider at seven widespread sites in Surrey, and one in West Sussex, in past two years, suggesting that it may be on the increase.

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Theridion hemerobium (Simon) (Theridiidae) new to Surrey

by Jonty Denton

I swept a single male *Theridion hemerobium* from bushes growing beside Coxes Mill Pond, Surrey (TQ0564) on 13.vi.2011. This appears to be the first record from VC17.

The somewhat limited habitat information available to date, suggests that proximity to fresh water may be important.

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An Opiliones Recording Scheme update. A call to armature and legs

by Peter Nicholson

This Harvestmen News is a little light on articles, excepting Richard Gallon's welcome efforts. From my own point of view I have received some Excel sheets with records which need to be processed. I am at present involved in restoration work of a property in Malton, North Yorkshire where I will be moving in due course, but this is currently consuming my time in organising, planning and financing what seems to be every conceivable trade and planning body. So in an effort to put pen to paper, or in more modern terms fingers to keyboard, I have revisited the first 'Opiliones (Harvest-Spider) Recording Scheme' Newsletter No1 written by John Sankey (not dated, but the 2nd Newsletter was dated April 1983). Here he summarized what was known and published on distribution, with a particular reference to a variety of *Leiobunum rotundum* as follows:

> The first comprehensive paper on distribution of British Opiliones was that of W.S. Bristowe, *Journal of Animal Ecology* Vol. 18, No.1, May 1949 pp.100-114, who gave vice county maps for 21 species. Since then, *Dicranopalpus ramosus* (Simon) has been added to the British List, J.H.P. Sankey and M.W. Storey, *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine*, Vol. 105, 1969 pp.106-7. In his monograph of European species, J. Martens in *Die Tierwelt Deutschlands, 64 Teil (Weberknechte, Opiliones)* p.402 places an indeterminate species from Scotland (J.H.P. Sankey, *Ent.mon. Mag*. vol.86, 1953, pp.116-7) as a variety of *Leiobunum rotundum*. The few specimens caught to date are currently with Prof. Martens, but more males are wanted for fuller research (see below). Prof. Martens also mentions the finding of *Leiobunum tisciae* Avram in Derbyshire (ibid p.143). The writer (Sankey) has seen these specimens and has searched the area for further examples, but as there is doubt about the exact locality it is not surprising that none has been found (see next page).

For those who read the latest update on *Leiobunum tisciae* in the last newsletter this background may be of interest. Due to awaiting changes required in MapMate the distribution map on the SRS/ORS Recording Scheme website shows no information on *L. tisciae*. The following is also an extract from Sankey's Newsletter No.1 and should help those in Scotland to find this elusive creature.

> Records are needed for most parts of Scotland, but especially on the West Coast and from Islands: especially also in valleys with open deciduous woodland. The burns on the Esk (separating the old counties of Kincardine and Angus) in the region of Edsell, and the burn near the mouth of the small river in the Den of Finella (just by the A.92 – halfway between St.Cyrus and Johnshaven) are vitally important areas where the variety (?) of *L. rotundum* (now thought to be *L. tisciae*, PJN) has been taken. Steep-sided ravines (N.B. beware of the danger of falling rocks, PJN) seem to be its haunts; end of August and September.

The latest publication on the distribution of Opiliones is Hillyard, P.D. 2005. *Harvestmen*. Synopses of the British Fauna No.4, Field Studies Council, but of course it is the intention that all harvestmen records will be uploaded to the SRS/ORS website to help all recorders have the latest information and help to fill the gaps in our knowledge.

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Sabacon viscayanum ramblaianum Martens, 1983 new to Caernarvonshire, North Wales

by Richard C. Gallon

On the 20th May 2011 I attended a BioBlitz event organised by the Snowdonia Society at Ty Hyll (The Ugly House near Betws-y-coed, SH755575). BioBlitz events are designed to engage the public in biological recording; groups are guided around a venue by different specialists with a view to identifying and recording the species they find.

Although I was attending this event as an employee of Cofnod, the Local Biological Records Centre, I was also given the task of leading a group to record spiders and harvestmen. Unfortunately the weather was rather wet, but this did not seem to dampen the spirits of the group I was guiding. Recording arachnids in the rain can be testing, but we managed to collect a reasonable sample by sieving leaf litter and turning rocks and logs within the oak woodland.

Back at home I discovered that the sample contained two specimens of the distinctive harvestman *Sabacon viscayanum ramblaianum*. In Britain this species appears to be restricted to South Wales (S.R.S. website), so this find represents a good northern range extension.

Reference

http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/portal.php/p/Summary/s/Sabacon+viscayanum+ramblaianum

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Identification of *Entelecara acuminata* and *Entelecara congenera*

These two linyphiid species are closely related. Males are relatively easily distinguished by consideration of the shape of the head region of the cephalothorax and by the form of the palpal tibiae, particularly when viewed dorsally. Females present a considerably greater problem as the form of the epigyne is closely similar in the two species and final confirmation normally requires comparison with properly identified voucher material.

The head region of the male of *E. acuminata* is produced into a tall lobe on the side of which there is a large tear-shaped sulcus behind the posterior lateral eyes (Fig. 1A). In *E. congenera*, the head lobe is much lower and more rounded in profile and the sulci behind the lateral eyes are small and inconspicuous (Fig. 1B).

Figure 1A. Cephalothorax of *E. acuminata*, lateral view. **1B**. Cephalothorax of *E. congenera*, lateral view.

When viewed dorsally, the tibial apophysis of the palp in both species has two branches. In *E. acuminata*, the distal branch is longer than the proximal branch and has a rounded tip while the proximal branch has a slightly hooked tip (Fig 2A). In *E. congenera*, the two branches are of more equal length and the proximal branch is not hooked at the tip. In addition, there is a small, thorn-like process between the two branches present in *E. congenera* but not in *E. acuminata* (Fig. 2B). When the palps of the two species are viewed laterally, the difference in shape of the distal branch of the tibial apophysis is also clearly visible.

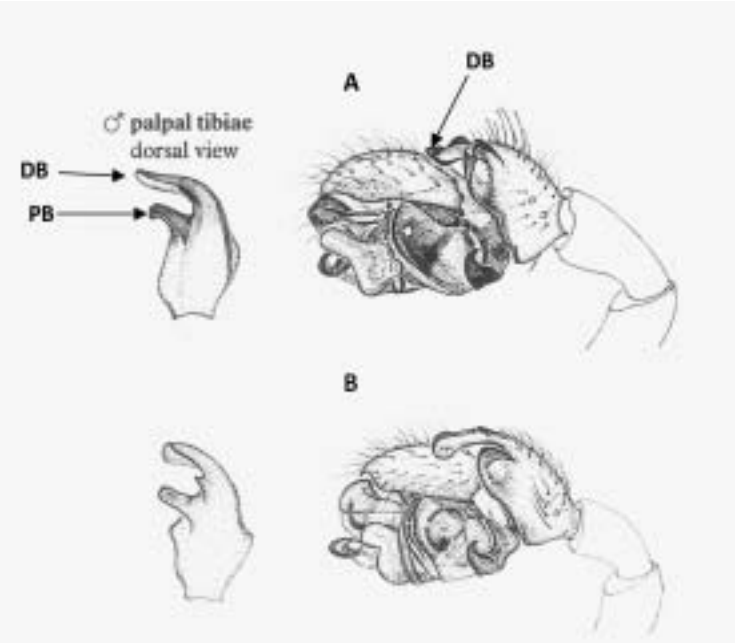


Figure 2A. Palpal tibia and palp in lateral view of *E. acuminata*. **2B** Palpal tibia and palp in lateral view of *E. congenera*. DB = distal branch of tibial apophysis, PB = proximal branch of tibial apophysis.

Females of the two species can usually be distinguished by careful examination of the epigynes. The epigynes of both species have a light median area surrounded by a darkly pigmented region. The pale median area is divided into two

symmetrical halves within each of which is an elongated ovoid structure. In *E. acuminata*, the ovoids are more or less linear in firm and the anterior margins of these structures meet at the midline of the epigyne at an angle (Fig. 3A). In *E. congenera*, these ovoid structures are more or less L-shaped and meet at the midline of the epigyne at the tip of the horizontal bar of the L (Fig. 3B). However, as the figures show, there is some variation within the epigynes of both species and ideally isolated female specimens should be compared with reliably identified voucher material of both species to ensure correct identification.

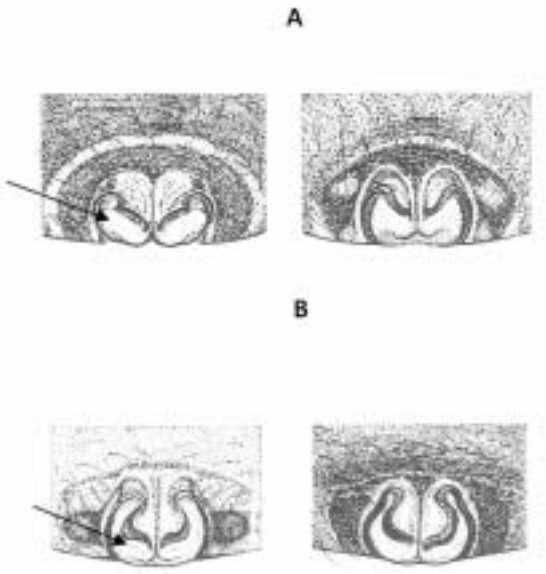


Figure 2A. Epigynes of *E. acuminata*, vental view. **2B**. Epigynes of *E. congenera*, ventral view. Note shapes of symmetrical ovoid structures on either side of mid-line of epigynes.

Habitats. Both species are normally found on shrubs or the lower branches of trees although occasional specimens have been found on the ground and in the field layer. *Entelecara acuminata* is a widespread species in Britain although rare north of Yorkshire and in western areas. About half of all records come from woodlands but it also occurs in grasslands, heathland and moorland. *E. congenera* is very much less common than *E. acuminata* and confined to the southern half of the country where it is almost absent from western areas. More than half the records are from moorland and a further 30% from various types of woodland.

Acknowledgements. Thanks are due to Michael Roberts for permission to reproduce the figures taken from "The spiders of Britain & Ireland" (1987). The information on habitats is from the Spider Recording Scheme database (http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk).

Author: Tony Russell-Smith

Identification of *Bathyphantes gracilis* and *Bathyphantes parvulus*

These widespread and very common linyphiids are closely related and distinguishing them often causes problems. Because the distinguishing feature in males is on the lower margin of the palpal paracymbium, it is important to be able to position the specimen under alcohol in such a way that this is clearly visible. The use of fine glass beads ("ballotini") in the base of the dish in which the specimen is examined is a useful method of doing this.

In males of *B. gracilis*, the lower margin of the palpal paracymbium has a series of 3-4 long setae projecting forward and downward (Fig. 1A) while in *B. parvulus* these setae are completely absent (Fig. 1B). Although there are other small differences between the two species in the proportions of the different sclerites of the male palp, these are difficult to distinguish unless specimens of both species are examined side by side.

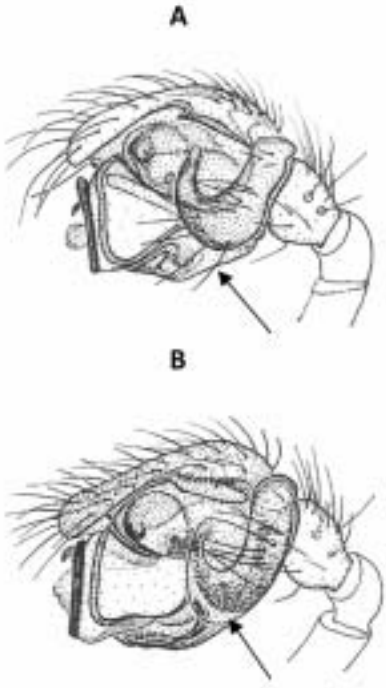


Figure 1A. Male palp of *Bathyphantes gracilis*, lateral view. **1B**. Male palp of *B. parvulus*, lateral view. Arrows indicate ventral setae on paracymbium.

The general appearance of the epigynes of these two species is also very similar, with two slightly converging dark lines on a paler background and a small lobe between them on the posterior margin of the epigyne within which there is a minute circular depression. In *Bathyphantes gracilis*, the small lobe on the posterior margin of the epigyne is narrower and more or less rectangular in form (Fig. 1A) while in *B. parvulus* this structure is broader and has an evenly rounded margin (Fig. 1B). In *B. parvulus* the edge either side of the circular depression normally forms a clearly pigmented smooth plate, which is not evident in *B. gracilis*. There is a faint transverse ridge across the epigyne which in *B. gracilis* is almost straight or slightly sinuous (Fig. 1A) but in *B. parvulus* has a central projection, giving it a more bow-shaped appearance (Fig. 1B). Finally, the whole epigynal area is relatively lightly pigmented in *B. gracilis* while it is usually heavily suffused with grey (occasionally almost black) pigmentation in *B. parvulus*, sometimes rendering details of the structures difficult to discern in the latter species.

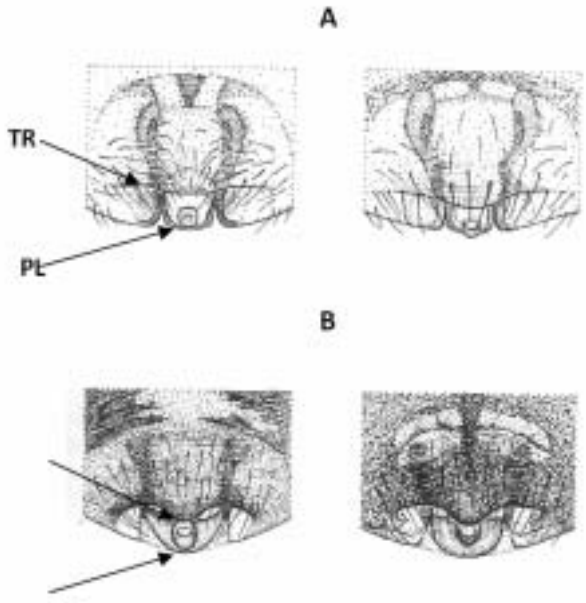


Figure 2A. *Bathyphantes gracilis*, female epigynes, **2B**. *B. parvulus*, female epigynes. TR = transverse ridge, PL = posterior lobe.

An additional useful character in distinguishing these two species is that in *B. gracilis* the abdomen usually has a dorsal pattern of pale transverse bars on a grey background while in *B. parvulus* the abdomen is uniformly grey, normally without any distinguishable pattern. However, occasionally very pale specimens of *B. gracilis* lack a distinctive abdominal pattern.
Habitats. Both species are distributed throughout Britain and are common but *B. gracilis* has been recorded from roughly three times the number of 10 km squares as *B. parvulus*. Both species are found in a very wide range of habitats covering almost the full spectrum available but are most frequent in open habitats such as grasslands and wetlands. *B. gracilis* is a very common aeronaut and is one of the most frequent species in arable fields and other disturbed habitats.

Acknowledgements. Michael Roberts is gratefully acknowledged for permission to reproduce the figures taken from "The spiders of Britain & Ireland" (1987). Peter Merrett provided helpful comments on a first draft of this account. The information on habitats is from the Spider Recording Scheme database (http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk).

Author: Tony Russell-Smith

Identification of *Tetragnatha extensa* and *Tetragnatha pinicola*

These two *Tetragnatha* species can be distinguished from all other British representatives of the genus by the light central mark on the sternum. Although they normally differ markedly in size, with males of *T. extensa* being almost twice the length of *T. pinicola*, occasionally very small specimens of *T. extensa* may superficially resemble those of *T. pinicola*. Generally speaking, *T. pinicola* has a more markedly metallic silver dorsal surface to the abdomen than *T. extensa*, although sometimes small specimens of the latter also show this feature.

In males, careful attention should be paid to the tip of the conductor and to the terminal part of the embolus, which lies in a shallow groove in the conductor. It is important to ensure that these structures are viewed in lateral orientation and to note that in all *Tetragnatha* species the palp is often rotated in preserved specimens. The tip of the conductor in both species is semi-translucent (Figs. 1a and 1b). In *T. extensa*, the tip of the conductor is large, leaf-shaped and has a pointed tip (Fig. 1a). By contrast, in *T. pinicola* the tip of the conductor is small, blunt-ended and curves strongly towards the tip of the cymbium (Fig.1b). The tip of the embolus is much straighter than that of *T. extensa*, although often difficult to discern in the fold of the conductor.

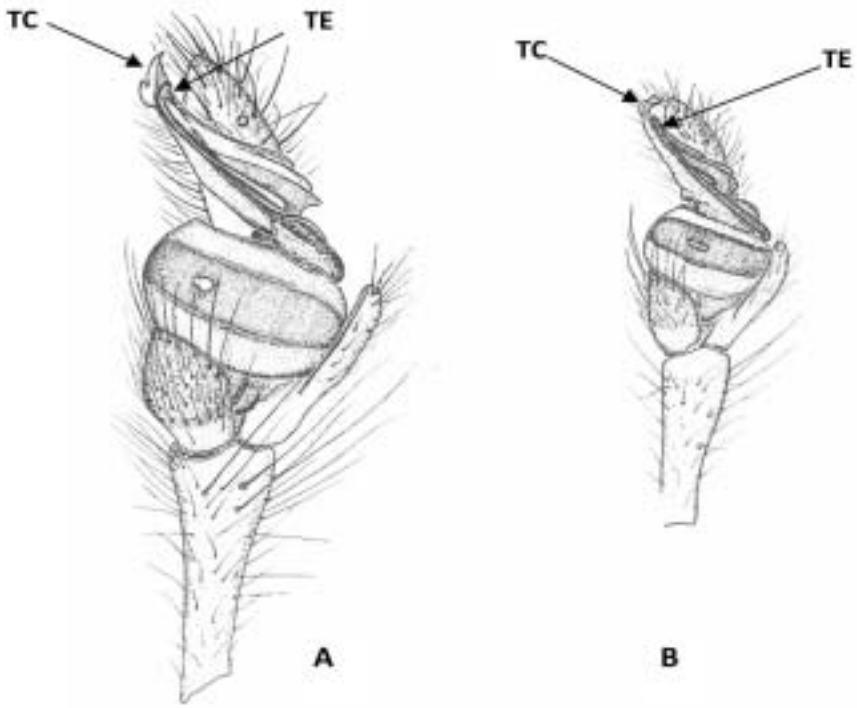


Figure 1A. Male palp of *T. extensa*, lateral view, **1B**. Male palp of *T. pinicola*, lateral view.
TC = tip of conductor, TE = tip of embolus

Distinguishing females of these two species requires particular care as, in common with those of all tetragnathids, they lack a clear external epigyne. In normal specimens, the epigynal area anterior to the epigastric fold in *T. extensa* is extensively darkly pigmented and in some specimens at least, the outline of the spermathecae can be detected through the cuticle (Figure 2A). In *T. pinicola*, however, this dark pigmentation is normally absent and the epigynal area lacks any very distinctive features (Figure 2B).

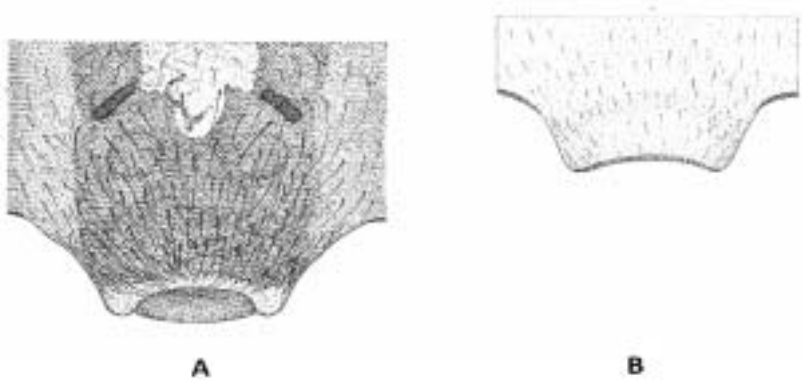


Figure 2A. Female epigyne of *T. extensa*. **2B**. Female epigyne of *T. pinicola*.

In some specimens, these differences may not always be clear. A very useful additional character is the ratio of femur I width to femur III length. In *T. extensa* this is always greater than 0.20 while in *T. pinicola* it is always less than 0.176.

Habitats. *T. extensa* occurs in a very wide range of habitats throughout Britain. Although most common in wetlands of various types, it has also been recorded from woodlands, grasslands of different types, shingle, saltmarshes, sand dunes and heathlands as well as gardens and post-industrial sites. *T. pinicola* is largely restricted to the southern half of Britain. Around a third of all records come from woodlands (often lightly wooded areas) but also from various grassland types, moorland and heathland.

Acknowledgements. I gratefully acknowledge Michael Roberts for permission to reproduce the figures taken from "The spiders of Britain & Ireland" (1987). The information on habitats is from the Spider Recording Scheme database (http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk).

Author: Tony Russell-Smith

Spider Recording Scheme News
November 2011, No. 71

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk *SRS website:* http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 72 will be published in March 2012. Please send contributions by the end of January at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: srs@britishspiders.org.uk or grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk. The newsletter depends on your contributions!

Editorial

Once again thank you to the contributors who have provided articles for this issue. Please help future issues by providing articles, short or longer, on interesting discoveries and observations.

We now have 878,265 SRS records in total to date in MapMate. About 378,413 have at least some site-based habitat information, which provides valuable information to help us to establish a profile of the ecological characteristics of each British spider species. All these data are uploaded and summarised on the SRS website. The ORS data are also uploaded to the website.

As readers will know the key aim of the SRS website is to provide a collaborative resource on distribution and autecological information on British spiders. This means it needs input from as many registered users as possible. The facility set up last autumn in response to a BBC Autumnwatch enquiry to enable the public to submit records for a number of 'easily recognisable' spiders has resulted in a number of submitted records, principally for *Araneus diadematus, Argiope bruennichi* and *Pholcus phalangioides*. Although only few in number, these have helped fill some gaps and the SRS contact link has resulted in more records, some of much greater interest, either with photographs or the actual spiders being sent to me for identification.

Any logged-on user can submit a site location entry for a site of interest for spiders or other wildlife interest. Logged-on members can generate or access a site species list for an entry and this should be of interest to those members who regularly record at or have a special interest in a particular site - but of course there needs to be a site entry for this to function!

Coverage and diversity maps at national and regional scale are now available in a much faster form by using summary information held in a database table rather than it being created each time from the main Records table. Any logged-on member can refresh a map if required, repopulating the summary database table with the latest information for that map.

The regional maps provide coverage, diversity in terms of numbers of taxa, numbers of records, numbers of UKBAP species and numbers of species with nature conservation status (existing and by the new status review) at 10km, 2km, 1km options. Clicking on any of the dots on these maps will provide a logged-on member with a list of the relevant species behind the dot and last year recorded etc. All records behind dots on regional distribution maps are also shown to members if dots are clicked. Details of each record can be viewed and feedback submitted if an error is seen. No feedback has yet been submitted, which either means no errors have been found, or more likely no one has actually used the facility and looked! Please do so, since this will help us to iron out errors in the dataset.

Difficult species guidance and reports for the UKBAP spiders *Clubiona rosserae* and *Midia midas* are available through links on the relvenat species summary pages and we hope to add to these in the future.

In addition any registered member can provide tips on identification and useful guidance, illustrative images etc on the website, automatically linked to the relevant species. Collaborative pages are open to all registered logged-on users to contribute to and Species Notes can be added either at a national or regional/county level. Please help to improve the scope of these resources by helping to input to them.

Another location for *Neoscona adianta* (Walckenaer, 1802) (Araneidae) in North Yorkshire?

by Geoff Oxford

Neoscona adianta is a beautiful spider readily identified in the field by its characteristic colours and markings and by its orb web, which usually contains a silk platform at the hub. The species has its stronghold in south-eastern England but with a rim of populations stretching around the coasts of Devon and Cornwall and west Wales (SRS website, 2011). Interestingly, this is almost exactly the same distribution as shown by the theridiid *Enoplognatha latimana* Hippa & Oksala, 1982, so they may be tracking similar environments.

Neoscona adianta has only one known location in North Yorkshire – its northern limit in Britain – and that is on Strensall Common near York (SE6561). Here the late Clifford Smith collected material between May 1965 and June 1978. In South Yorkshire the species has been found on both Thorne Moor (SE7214, SE7315, SE7515; between July 1972 and June 1994) and Hatfield Moor (SE7006; July 2000) and is also recorded from Conesby Mine, Scunthorpe (SE9014; May 1994) in north Lincolnshire.

On 25 July 2011, a mature female *Neoscona adianta* was discovered in her web on a plant of *Verbena rigida* at Vertigro garden centre on the outskirts of York (SE647567). This site is due south and approximately 5 km, as the crow flies, from the previous Strensall Common location. The habitat between the two comprises heathland (the northern 3 km) and arable fields. Given the relatively short distance, in ballooning terms,

from Strensall Common (minimum 2 km) to the garden centre, this individual could have originated locally. On the other hand, this was a garden centre and one has to be wary of records from such places given the import of

Figure 1. *Neoscona adianta* © Geoff Oxford

horticultural goods from elsewhere.

A thorough search of the Vertigro site on 27 July 2011 revealed no more specimens of *Neoscona* but, to my amazement, a mature female *Synema globosum* (Fabricius, 1775) (Thomisidae) (see Figure 2) was spotted on a *Polygonum* flower. *Synema globosum* is on the SRS list but with only three records in south-east England (SRS website, 2011). It is common across Europe, as is *Neoscona adianta* (Helsdingen, 2011). The garden centre regularly brings in plants from Italy, France, Spain and Holland, countries where both species occur, so the *Synema* is most likely to have been a recent import. The question remains, was the *Neoscona* specimen home grown or another import?

Figure 2. *Synema globosum* © Geoff Oxford

Spurred on by the *Neoscona* record, I also examined on 27 July the area of Strensall Common sampled by Clifford Smith and confirmed the species' continued presence there. In about 20 minutes of sweep-netting I took four mature females and one mature male.

References

Helsdingen, P.J. van (2011) Araneae. In: *Fauna Europaea Database* (Version 2010.1). http://www.european-arachnology.org

SRS website (2011) http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/portal.php/p/Welcome

Department of Biology (Area 14), University of York, Wentworth Way, Heslington, York YO10 5DD. E-mail: geoff.oxford@york.ac.uk

Xysticus luctuosus (Blackwall) (Thomisidae) rediscovered in Surrey

by Jonty Denton

On 26.7.2011, I swept a large, very dark *Xysticus* from herbage at the edge of deciduous woodland on the chalk, at Silent Pool, Surrey (TQ0648). This proved to be *X. luctuosus*, the first record in Surrey since W.Bristowe took it near Horsley in 1922 (Peter Harvey pers. comm.). The habitat was in keeping with previous, albeit limited autecological information. Amazingly the same sweep captured a female *Nigma walckenaeri,* a spider which appears to spreading into the centre and south of the county from the London suburbs (where it can be very abundant in gardens and parks).

31 Thorn Lane, Four Marks, Hants, GU34 5BX

Identification of *Porrhomma* species – a correction

by A. Russell-Smith

It has been pointed out to me by Mike Davidson that there is an important error in my account of the identification of *Porrhomma* species that appeared in the SRS Newsletter No. 114 (March 2009). Figure 6, purporting to be the epigyne of *Porrhomma pygmaeum*, is in fact that of *Porrhomma convexum*, illustrated in Figure 9. The correct illustration of the epigyne of *P. pygmaeum*, arguably the commonest species of the genus in Britain, is shown below.

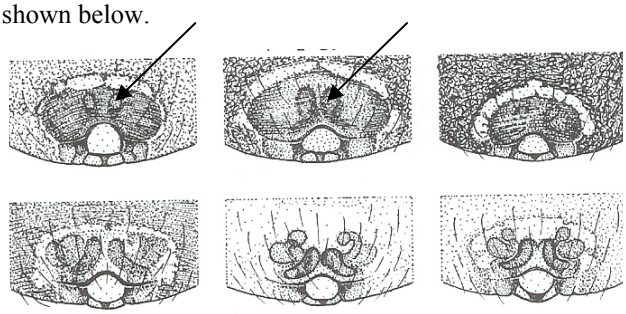
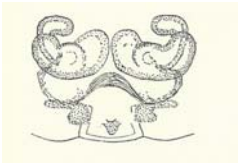


Figure 6. *Porrhomma pygmaeum.* Top row, epigynes in ventral view. Arrows indicate spermathecae as seen through the cuticle, often less clearly visible than this.



Cleared epigyne viewed ventrally.

The correct figure has also now been inserted in the account on the website. I apologise to readers for this error and thank Mike Davidson for bringing it to my attention.

1 Bailiffs Cottage, Doddington, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 0JU

An Opiliones Recording Scheme update. A call to armature and legs

by Peter Nicholson

I am writing this note towards the end of September 2011, a period when harvestmen live up to their name and I am pleased to report that there is an increasing number of reports coming from outside BAS membership in the form of reserve wardens. I would dearly like to receive any notes on any interesting finds from our membership for inclusion in the newsletter.

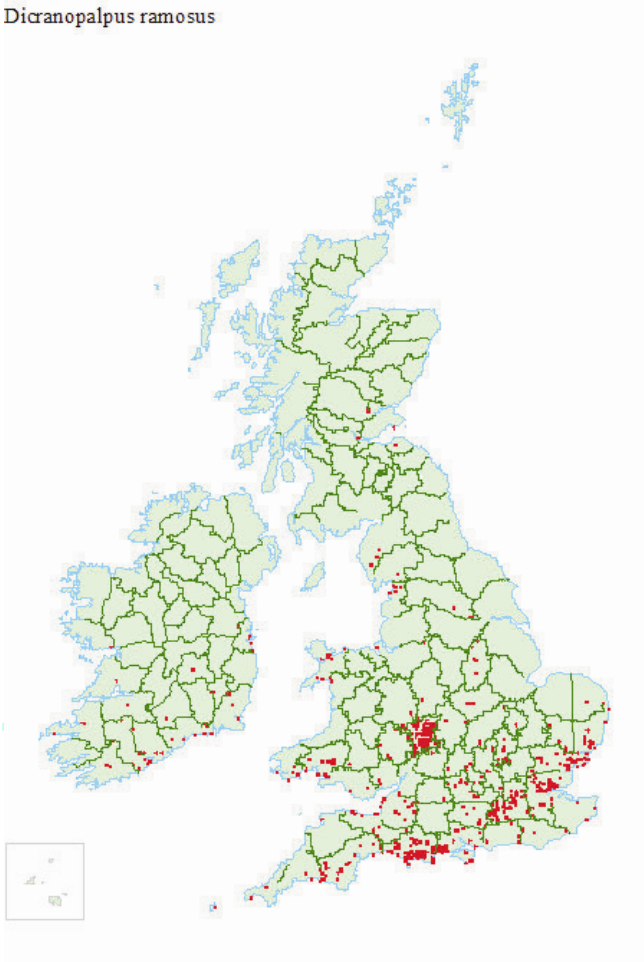
I can report that MapMate has issued the revised update which adds new species *Leiobunum tisciae* and *Platybunus pinetorum* and changes *Rilaena triangularis* to *Platybunus triangularis* and adds a synonym *Rilaena triangularis* for this.

I can also report that I will have moved house to the address at the bottom of this update.

One of the species raising interest is *Dicranopalpus ramosus*, it being a readily identifiable species due to its habit of holding its very long legs out straight and together at right angles to its body when at rest. The other fairly obvious character can be seen in the forked (bifurcated) pedipalps. This is useful both in identification but also to separate the sexes. If you look at the pedipalps you will see that the apophysis of the patella on the female is almost as thick and long as the tibia, whereas the male's are thinner and shorter.

The name of the species comes from the forked appearance (bifurcated) of the pedipalps. The construction from Greek being 'dicranos' meaning two-headed, 'palpus' being palp and 'ramosus' being branch in Latin referring to the apophyses of the pedipalps or possibly the legs.

The first British record (Sankey & Storey, 1969) when it was known as *Dicranopalpus caudatus* was by E. Rix at Bournemouth in 1957. The species distribution now extends from the south coast, where it is well recorded, up as far as Dundee (see Mike Davidson's note in this newsletter). The distribution that we have now is very much recorder-biased, hence the density of records towards the south of Britain. Examination of the habitat data from the SRS/ORS website suggests strongly that parks and gardens are a significant choice of habitat with deciduous woodland being next. Its preference in these habitats is strongly for the shrub/ low canopy with beating



being the most successful means of finding this species. It is stated by Paul Hillyard (*Harvestmen*, p.138) that it is mostly synanthropic in its choice of habitat. This is certainly borne out by the present distribution but I feel that records are very much recorder-biased. It can be seen that many counties have few or no records so please can everybody help to fill the gaps. There is still time when you read this to find this species as it is around until December.

References

Hillyard, P. 2005. *Synopses of the British Fauna* (New Series) No.4. (3rd Edition). Harvestmen.

Sankey, J.H.P. & Storey, M.W. 1969 *Dicranopalpus caudatus* Dressco: first record in Britain and France. *Entomologist's mon. Mag*. **105**, 106-107.

SRS/ORS Scheme website : http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk

Greystone House, Castle Howard Road, Malton, North Yorkshire, YO17 7AT. Tel. No. 01653 692840

My email remains the same: petenich@btinternet.com

Harvestmen identification and ecology, 30 Sept - 03 Oct 2011

by Alan Salkilld - Opilionologist Nymph

As a newcomer to and working my way through Paul Hillyard's key, I have to admit that my progress had been slow and I was keen to find an opportunity to gain some expert guidance, so I breathed a sigh of relief when I saw that Mike Davidson was running a weekend course at the Kindrogan FSC in September 2011.

We started out with an evening lecture introducing the British harvestmen and an overview of what Mike had in store for us. I must say I was slightly dubious when he prophesied that we would all have successfully identified 60% of the UK species by the end of the weekend!!

The following morning we were all keen to get out and start collecting despite the heavy rainfall and after a hearty FSC breakfast we got ourselves kitted up and set off into the wilder parts of the Kindrogan grounds. Unfortunately our 8-legged friends did not share our enthusiasm for the soggy conditions and we returned to the lab with only a few specimens each. However, this was ample to get us started and we were now able to get to grips with the opilione morphology and everyone had identified at least two species by the time we stopped for lunch. Continuous rainfall prevented any more collecting that day but Mike had a comprehensive collection of specimens and there was no risk of running out of things to identify. Mike was keen to encourage us to master some of the more delicate procedures including extracting the opilione genitalia and other key diagnostic features. The participants enthusiastically continued to key out specimens until the evening session when we tore ourselves away from the microscopes for Mike's second presentation on species ID which included some useful information on some of the common pitfalls.

One of the most useful aspects of the course was Mike's box of 'Mystery Harvestmen'! This consisted of 10 species in numbered containers which we had to identify. This was a great way to put our new skills to the test and everybody got at least 9/10.

As we continued to identify new specimens during Sunday morning, Mike asked each member of the group if there were any particular species or features that they wanted to look at. Throughout the afternoon, Mike called us over to examine one of the species from our wish-lists as well as important features for identification. We also benefited from additional information which was not in the key. I also took the opportunity to feed cake crumbs to my captive *Mitopus morio* which were enthusiastically received….that's not in the key either!

Overall the course was an excellent launch pad for my interest in harvestman recording and thanks to Mike's expert guidance and infectious enthusiasm I have come away feeling confident about my approach to collecting and identification. With only 27 UK species (currently) this is a group where there is an opportunity to quickly become competent enough to produce reliable records but still with enough rarities and new arrivals to keep more experienced recorders on their toes! I look forward to contributing my records and filling in some of the gaps in the north-east section of the map!

Figure 1. Harvestman under microscope at Kindrogan weekend identification course 2011

Figure 2. Harvestman workshop, Perth 2010
© Mike Davidson

Spider Recording Scheme News
March 2012, No. 72

Editor: Peter Harvey; srs@britishspiders.org.uk *SRS website:* http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 73 will be published in July 2012. Please send contributions by the end of May at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: srs@britishspiders.org.uk or grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk. The newsletter depends on your contributions!

Editorial

As always, thank you to the contributors who have provided articles for this issue. Please help future issues by providing articles, short or longer, on interesting discoveries and observations.

I am enormously grateful to John Partridge for uploading numerous species notes to the SRS website from the digitised BAS Newsletters 1-100 (1971—2004) on CD. These are now automatically available from species summary pages on the website, and provide an extremely useful and valuable resource.

We now have 889,160 SRS records in total to date in MapMate. About 380,000 have at least some site-based habitat information, which provides valuable information to help us to establish a profile of the ecological characteristics of each British spider species. All these data are uploaded and summarised on the SRS website. Many thanks to all those Area Organisers and other recorders who have provided their records to the recording scheme. We depend on these records to provide up-to-date information on the distribution and autecology of our spiders. New records received electronically, especially by MapMate sync, are uploaded to the website within a short time, so the maps reflect absolutely the latest and most up to date information available.

Feedback on individual records can be submitted by logged-on members so that any errors can then be corrected. Following the last SRS News comments, we have had our first feedback provided on several records by Greg Hitchcock and Richard Gallon, and I have been able to correct these. This is an excellent way of helping to make sure that the data we hold is as good as it gets, so please take a look and report any errors you find.

We are now using Ordnance Survey OpenSpace on the website, where it is used in Site Accounts. Please take a look and try adding sites of interest to those already available. There are also now country, county and VC totals and lists available for logged-on members. Please bear in mind though that these are based on records submitted to the Recording Scheme, and there may be records for a vice county, county or country which are not included.

Area Organiser changes

Tom Faulds has passed over the Area Organiser role in Nottinghamshire VC56 to Howard Williams. Howard emphasises how Tom has always been such a very good mentor, and I would like to add my thanks for all the work Tom has done in Notts and elsewhere on spiders. Please now send your records for Notts to Howard at 131 Windsor Road, Carlton-in-Lindrick, Worksop, Notts S81 9DH, email howard.williams131@gmail.com and MapMate cuk 5gm.

Jonty Denton takes over from Rod Allison as Area Organiser for Hants and the Isle of Wight (VCs 10-12), and we are very grateful to Rod for all the work he has done over the years in his role as AO for these VCs and wish him well. Please send records for these VCs to Jonty at 31 Thorn Lane, Four Marks, Hants, GU34 5BX, email jontydenton@aol.com and MapMate cuk 3wj.

New South Scotland Spider Recording Scheme Area Organiser

Chris Cathrine has taken on the responsibility as Area Organiser for the Spider Recording Scheme for Vice Counties in South Scotland. Chris takes over as Area Organiser for a suite of vice counties in Scotland, VCs 72 (Dumfrieshire), 73 (Kirkcudbrightshire), 74 (Wigtownshire), 75 (Ayrshire), 76 (Renfrewshire), 77 (Lanarkshire), 78 (Peebleshire), 79 (Selkirkshire), 80 (Roxburghshire), 81 (Berwickshire), 82 (East Lothian), 83 (Midlothian), 84 West Lothian), 86 (Stirling), 98 (Argyll Main), 99 (Dunbartonshire), 100 (Clyde Isles), 101 (Kintyre), 102 (South Ebudes). Thanks are due to Dave Beaumont for his past role as AO for VCs 73, 74, 77, 99, 101 & 102. AOs in Scotland tend to have a multiple role!

Chris works as the Buglife Conservation Assistant (Scotland) and Planning Casework Officer (UK), while also running his ecological consultancy, Caledonian Conservation Ltd. It was spiders that sparked his interest in the natural world as a child, often setting pitfall traps with his grandfather. His interest in spiders has continued strongly ever since, and is central to his work in the conservation sector.

The Central Belt is the most populous area of Scotland, and this is a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness and increase recording of spiders. Chris is looking into the possibility of arranging an informal South Scotland Invertebrate Group that can come together to target recording days for different sites. The first step for this is to put together an e-mailing list, so if you are interested please let him know.

Similarly, if you have any spider records for South Scotland, please send them to Chris – he'd be very pleased to receive them. You can contact Chris at 141 Clydesdale Avenue, Hamilton, South Lanarkshire ML3 7SU, mobile 07789771166 or email chris.cathrine@caledonianconservation.co.uk.

We could not have made spiders such a well recorded invertebrate group and published the provisional atlas and 2005 update without the efforts of Tom Faulds, Rod Allison, Dave Beaumont and other dedicated Area Organisers and recorders, and I repeat my thanks here.

Figure 1. Numbers of records submitted to the recording scheme for each VC post-atlas

VC	2000-on	2005-on
1	358	92
2	220	42
3	2,314	347
4	146	59
5	1,140	155
6	249	34
7	2,695	232
8	3,272	380
9	5,904	3,233
10	1,512	224
11	1,705	651
12	1,281	365
13	863	261
14	3,331	975
15	10,867	3,993
16	4,641	2,024
17	9,918	4,062
18	22,344	14,571
19	5,177	2,501
20	3,775	1,614
21	2,722	766
22	2,580	1,345
23	925	677
24	487	248
25	7,061	4,825
26	4,619	1,395
27	4,923	4,185
28	1,209	1,045
29	2,398	427
30	7,553	1,887
31	3,966	1,730
32	1,073	113
33	1,072	148
34	791	205
35	438	10
36	837	356
37	4,545	1,283
38	1,249	1,160
39	671	139
40	1,686	969
41	563	228
42	261	169
43	36	12
44	42	13
45	746	302
46	281	10
47	94	26
48	675	24
49	2,085	285
50	377	46
51	116	23
52	299	53
53	1,730	853
54	3,365	1,523
55	1,011	61
56	5,395	2,500
57	2,351	658
58	180	66
59	1,153	1,025
60	8,241	4,641
61	577	126
62	437	192
63	4,243	1,611
64	2,059	1,566
65	365	199
66	77	33
67	39	20
68	36	3
69	3,938	2,175
70	4,550	2,567
72	24	5
73	117	23
74	49	4
75	11	11
76	22	5
77	120	95
78	25	16
79	30	19
80	1	1
81	1	0
82	38	0
83	109	13
84	23	0
85	242	37
86	384	216
87	583	570
88	779	426
89	377	220
90	270	202
91	1,151	817
92	1,903	1,503
93	1,152	775
94	155	129
95	4,028	2,656
96	9,415	4,041
97	412	222
98	134	55
99	9	9
100	107	102
101	231	220
102	503	330
103	439	398
104	507	259
105	85	19
106	1,375	838
107	3,550	2,499
108	302	224
109	6,438	57
110	34	2
111	1,279	1
112	22	9

Vice county, county and country totals

The SRS website now provides logged-on members with an 'Area Lists' page that provides species totals for vice counties, counties and countries (England, Wales, Scotland). Selecting the vice county, county or country will then generate a species list for that area from the records in the database, with national status and last year recorded. Hopefully members will find this useful.

There is also a new page 'Record Taxon Totals' I have produced which graphically presents the numbers of records in the database since 1900 to the present and the number of spider taxa over the same period. It is interesting how well the numbers of records tie in with the activity of arachnologists inspired by the publication of *British Spiders* by Locket & Millidge (1950 & 1953) and Locket, Millidge & Merrett (1974), then by *The Spiders of Great Britain and Ireland* (Roberts, 1985, 1987) and the start of the Spider Recording Scheme launched in April 1987 and spurred on by the remarkable enthusiasm and energy of the late Clifford Smith.

It is also interesting that the rate of new spider taxa recorded in Britain appears to have been pretty much unchanged over the whole period, with an average of something over one species per year added to the British list and no indication that this has actually changed in recent years.

All the information provided on the SRS website is derived from records provided to the recording scheme and the distribution and autecological information provided dynamically generated from the latest data, so is completely up-to-date with the data provided to the scheme.

I have summarised in Figure 1 the numbers of records we have received since publication of the provisional atlas by vice county, and I would urge Area Organisers from all vice counties to help fill in the gaps.

Chris Cathrine pooting in Scotland

New *Anyphaena* species recorded in London, a second species new to Britain from Mile End Park, Tower Hamlets

by Edward Milner

A single female *Anyphaena* trapped by the author at Kirk's Place, Mile End Park in East London (VC 21, Middlesex) was sent to Peter Harvey, who provisionally identified it as *Anyphaena sabina* L.Koch. 1866 from figures available on the "araneae - Spinnen Europas" website at http://www.araneae.unibe.ch/ and sent it on to Peter Merrett for his opinion. PM agreed *A. sabina* was likely but suggested John Murphy might have specimens from Europe and be able to confirm its identity, which John duly did. The epigyne of the specimen is shown in the photograph below in Fig. 1.

Figure 1. Epigyne of the Mile End Park *Anyphaena sabina* specimen, photograph © P.R. Harvey.

It is clearly different from the epigyne of *Anyphaena accentuata*, the sole member of this family previously represented in our fauna.

Anyphaena sabina, a Mediterranean species, was in a catch from pitfalls first set in a small relic brownfield site at the edge of a newly landscaped area; the trapping period was 16th June to 16th July . The habitat is typical of small neglected urban sites of overgrown rubble; long grass, herb-rich patches on shallow soil, tussocks, a nettle-bed, some small *Buddleia* saplings growing between some large fragments of old brick wall. The site has also produced a single gravid female of the extremely rare (Red Data Book 1, UKBAP) beetle *Brachinus sclopeta.*

This is the second spider new to Britain found in the Park. In June 2002 the salticid *Macaroeris nidicolens* was swept from several planted black pines (*Pinus nigra*) on the landscaped area known as the 'green bridge' (Milner, 2002). Specimens have been found on these pines every year since, but so far the spiders have not have spread to other bushes or trees in the Park. Since 2002, *M. nidicolens* has been recorded from several other sites in Essex and one in Surrey, swept from a variety of different shrubs (Harvey, 2008).

My thanks to Peter Harvey, Peter Merrett and John Murphy for the identification and information on this species.

References

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Milner, J.E. 2002. *Macaroeris nidicolens* (Simon, 1914), a jumping spider new to Britain. *Spider Recording Scheme Newsletter* **43**: 3.

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Three new sites for *Heliophanus dampfi* Schenkel 1923 (bog sun-jumper) in Scotland

by Chris Cathrine

Previously known from only two sites in Scotland and one in Wales, *Heliophanus dampfi* Schenkel 1923 (bog sun-jumper) was found at three new sites in Scotland during 2011.

The first new site, Wester Moss, is a lowland raised bog of high quality in Stirlingshire. It is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and has recently become a Butterfly Conservation reserve for *Coenonympha tullia* (large heath butterfly). The specimens were found by Daisy Shepperd (BTCV Natural Talent Apprentice) on 13th July and collected by David Pryce (Entomology Officer, Perth Museum and Art Gallery) using a bugvac (modified leaf blower) during a Bio Blitz event.

Further specimens of *H. dampfi* were later collected by David Pryce from Dunmore Moss (Falkirk) on 27th July, also using a bugvac. Unlike Wester Moss, which is one of the better examples of a lowland raised bog, Dunmore Moss has been extensively cut over, and *H. dampfi* has survived in a tiny remnant of habitat that has remained untouched by peat extraction operations.

Letham Moss (Falkirk), the third new site, yielded a single *H. dampfi* specimen collected by David Pryce on 6th August, using the same bugvac technique. This site is in by far the poorest condition, and is an active peat works. *H. dampfi* appears to be restricted to the remaining small fragments of the original lowland raised bog habitat.

Specimens were identified by Chris Cathrine, and the Wester Moss specimens were verified by Mike Davidson.

H. dampfi was also collected at Ochtertyre Moss SSSI by Chris Cathrine on 14th July using a sweep net, as part of Site Condition Monitoring surveys undertaken by Caledonian Conservation Ltd for Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). Several juvenile *Heliophanus* sp. specimens were also collected at Flanders Moss and Ochtertyre Moss by David Pryce and Chris Cathrine respectively. Both of these sites are designated as SSSIs and include *H. dampfi* as a qualifying feature, and it is likely that these juveniles belong to this species.

Figure 1. *Heliophanus dampfi* © Lorne Gill

With the exception of the sweep net specimen, all of the *Heliophanus* were found within the bases of well established tussocks, which were interspersed with areas of wet sphagnum. Pitfall traps set at Ochtertyre Moss within the same microhabitats did not include any *Heliophanus* spp. in the catch. Surveys were all undertaken on dry sunny days with little or no wind in June and July, although these months were generally rather wet. After finding *Heliophanus* in the tussock habitat described at Ochtertyre Moss on 30th June, specimens were found with relative ease and speed on the other sites by targeting this microhabitat with a bugvac.

David Pryce applied this technique to a number of other lowland raised bog sites in Scotland during the 2011 season, including Whitecairns Moss (Aberdeenshire), Langlands Moss (South Lanarkshire) and Barleyside Moss (Falkirk). Despite using the same technique and targeting the tussock microhabitat, *Heliophanus* was not found during searches at these other bog sites.

There is a popular belief that, historically, the lowland raised bogs in Stirlingshire were once part of a super bog. There is no evidence that such a super bog ever existed, although historic maps do indicate that the lowland raised bogs were once larger in extent than they are today, offering a greater supply of suitable habitat for *H. dampfi*. Furthermore, land use between bogs has also changed over time, and become less permeable to dispersing invertebrates in modern times. *H. dampfi* is threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation prevents gene flow between isolated populations while land use between bogs may be a barrier to *H. dampfi* recolonising otherwise

suitable habitat fragments. Further surveys will provide a better understanding as to the range of *H. dampfi* in Scotland.

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Theridion pinastri in Cambs. and Beds.

by Ian Dawson

A female *Theridion pinastri* was beaten from an area of scrub at TL193591, immediately to the east of the East Coast main railway line at St Neots, Cambridgeshire (vc31 Hunts) on 11th July 2010, which represents a significant northward UK range extension. The site is a piece of rough ground, formerly cultivated, but now largely overgrown with large areas of hawthorn, rose, bramble and blackthorn scrub, with a small stand of elm trees at the southeast corner, and is earmarked for possible housing development. In this and a few other closely related species, the female epigyne is plugged by the male after mating. Given that June is the peak month for this species and that this female remained unmated, this suggests that any population here is thinly spread.

On 16th June 2011 I potted a male *Theridion* dangling on a thread from the trunk of a large isolated beech on the east side of the old heath at The Lodge RSPB reserve, Sandy, Bedfordshire (vc30) at TL193479, which also proved to be *T. pinastri*. This site is almost exactly 11 km due south of the St Neots site above.

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Dramatic spread of *Nigma walckenaeri*

by Ian Dawson

In October 2007 my wife Debra noticed a silken tent sheltering a small green spider on the top of a leaf on the raspberry canes in our garden which proved to be a female *Nigma walckenaeri*, a first for Huntingdonshire (vc31). I assumed at the time that this was one of those odd out-of-range occurrences and there was no further sign of this species in our garden in subsequent years until August 2011 when we counted good numbers of webs, several of them occupied, on ivy, *Forsythia* and honeysuckle.

In late September 2011, Alan Outen sent me some spiders to identify which he had found and photographed on 22nd September. After photographing them he preserves them to ensure that the identifications can be checked if necessary. The batch included two small green spiders which he rightly could not reconcile with *Araniella*. These proved to be a male and female *N. walckenaeri*, from two different sites in the village of Clifton, mid Beds (vc30). Following my email to him suggesting that he might have found a new county record he posted a message to the Beds Natural History Society newsgroup to alert other naturalists to this new arrival to the county. This brought to light an earlier record which proved to have been photographed in a Luton garden by Hugh Griffithsback in 2006.

With the stimulus of the above finds I wondered if *Nigma* was being overlooked locally and made a number of trips targeting the species within a radius of roughly 50 kilometres of my home in south Hunts. While I was expecting to find a few, I was quite staggered by how widespread and common it is in and around Cambridgeshire. Over a period of four weeks between late September and late October, with a few additional casual records until the end of the year, I recorded the species from 111 sites in 62 hectads in 11 vice-counties, namely: vc19 North Essex, vc20 Hertfordshire, vc24 Buckinghamshire, vc26 West Suffolk, vc28 West Norfolk, vc29 Cambridgeshire, vc30 Bedfordshire, vc31 Huntingdonshire, vc32 Northamptonshire, vc53 South Lincolnshire and vc55 Leicestershire. All these, apart from the records for vcs 30 and 31 noted above, would appear to be new vice-county records.

My searches were entirely visual, with no beating or sweeping. The species generally proved easy to find in urban areas, but often rather harder in villages and rural areas, and was almost always on ivy, though I concentrated my searches on this plant. The sheet web spun across the upper concave surface of a single leaf is very characteristic once you get your eye in. Other plant species on which I found the web included elm, *Forsythia*, Japanese privet, holly, lilac, *Cotoneaster*, *Pittosporum*, *Hebe*, *Pyracantha*, honeysuckle, elder, *Clematis* and *Cotinus*, though in almost every case webs were also present on nearby ivy. The webs were usually well sheltered and occurred on ivy growing over walls and wooden fences, up telegraph poles, and up a variety of trees and shrubs. I found that ivy on ash, sycamore, willow and lime was always worth searching, but other

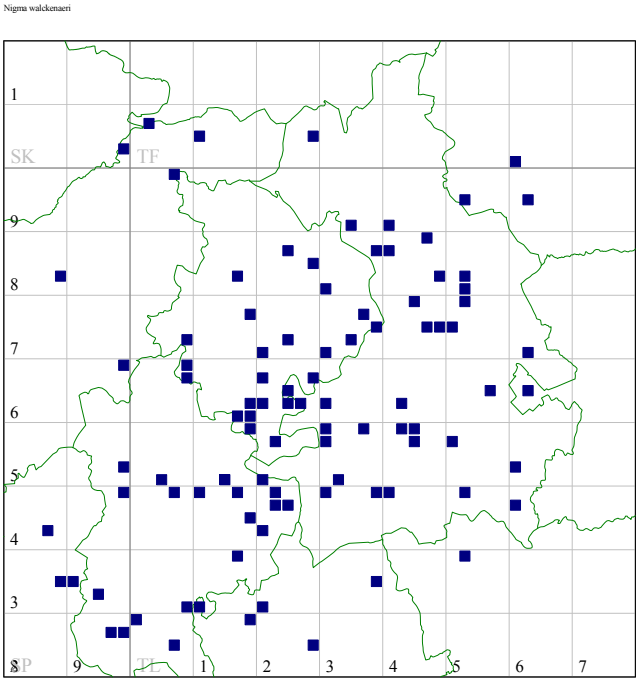

Figure 1. Tetrad records of *Nigma walckenaeri* in Beds, Hunts, Cambs and immediate surrounds.

trees holding occupied ivy leaf webs included elm, oak, horse chestnut, alder, rowan, laburnum, hawthorn and ornamental beech hedge. Webs occurred from a few inches off the ground to 15 feet or more: a pair of close-focusing binoculars proved invaluable. The concentration of webs was considerable in a few sites, with for example over a hundred webs on a luxuriant growth of ivy up a telegraph pole in the village of Somersham, Cambridgeshire.

The spiders can be surprisingly hard to see beneath their tent unless actively poked, and once I had found one spider I tended to move on. I found that females generally remained in situ on their leaf, whereas the males readily dropped out when disturbed. A female was still in residence under her tent on an ivy leaf in St Neots on 27th December, suggesting the species may last into the new year. Because my searches did not start until late September I do not know when *Nigma* first becomes evident, but the SRS website suggests it is adult mainly between August and October, which agrees with our first garden record last year on 21st August, when it was already well established.

Although often easy to find in much of Cambridgeshire and counties to the south, I found it harder to find to the north and west. Thus Leicestershire and Lincolnshire both required several hours of searching before I found *Nigma*, suggesting that it may not yet have reached much farther north and west. Arachnologists are thin on the ground, but I am very surprised that such a distinctive and attractive spider living close to man and often in gardens has apparently escaped the attention of more general naturalists and photographers, as it has clearly undergone a dramatic northward range expansion in recent years largely unseen and unnoticed.

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How common are common spiders?

by Howard Williams

In late December 2011 I was recording fungi on a reclaimed pit spoil heap at Langold Country Park, Nottinghamshire. I took back to identify one of a cluster growing in deep pine litter. On examining it at home, I noticed on the gills beneath a small female spider, probably a linyphiid. Under the x20 lens it didn't really look like a *Lepthyphantes*, though the abdominal pattern somewhat resembled theirs. I then thought perhaps *Bathyphantes*. Later, after a look under the microscope, I discovered it was a spider new to me, described in the literature as widespread and common: *Tapinopa longidens*. I was pleased to have found it. Reflecting that I have been recording spiders for some 20 years in the north of the county and taken till now to discover this one, I looked it up on the species index on the SRS website for Nottinghamshire: only 3 other sites for it in the county recorded at long intervals from 1978. Not that common here then to all appearances.

I then felt curious as to how common it was in the neighbouring East Midlands counties, so looked up the distribution maps in Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Derbyshire. In all cases I counted the rough number of sites where it had been recorded, clumping some sites which seem either truly adjacent or parts of a single larger site and counting city records as from one site too. Table 1 below shows that Lincolnshire and Leicestershire each had 8 sites and Derbyshire 9, or twice as many as Nottinghamshire - but not really that many places.

I thought it might be interesting to take 12 other species described as common and widespread and whose distribution pattern on the SRS maps look approximately similar to that of *Tapinopa longidens*, and see how the number of sites in the four East Midlands counties where these species occur compare to each other and to the distribution of *Tapinopa*. The results can be seen in Table 1.

Lincolnshire has 5 and Derbyshire 1 of these common species with fewer sites recorded (* in Table 1) than for *Tapinopa longidens*; but overall these other species seem to be recorded in each county at many more sites than, or at least at as many sites as, *Tapinopa longidens*. (Incidentally, in South-west Yorkshire north of Nottinghamshire all these species are recorded at many more sites countywide than in the East Midlands with the exception of Leicestershire).

Species	Notts. sites	Lincs. sites	Leics. sites	Derbs. sites
Tapinopa longidens	**4**	**8**	**8**	**9**
Macrargus rufus	4	6*	21	13
Diplocephalus cristatus	5	8	29	14
Lepthyphantes tenebricola	7	3*	12	3*
Lepthyphantes cristatus	7	5*	13	11
Diplocephalus latifrons	10	24	59	18
Bathyphantes parvulus	12	5*	38	14
Gonatium rubens	12	21	43	35
Tiso vagans	13	6*	30	25
Savignya frontata	14	22	44	19
Linyphia hortensis	14	22	44	37
Diplocephalus permixtus	18	4*	29	43
Oedothorax gibbosus	19	14	44	41

Table 1. Some common East Midlands spiders

What all this shows is how relative commonness is from place to place. In all the East Midland counties in the table *Tapinopa longidens* would seem to merit 'County Importance' or even 'Regional Importance' status – two terms used by the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (and maybe other bodies) to rank plants and animals within its boundaries. Another thing the table suggests is that compared with the other two East Midland counties (and SW Yorkshire) Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire are less well covered. The reasons are not far to find: Lincolnshire is a huge county with, I suspect, few recorders; while Nottinghamshire is a long narrow county where only the northern half has been well covered, reflecting where most recorders live and work. Records from the southern half come largely by way of occasional visits by out-of-county recorders. Both Leicestershire and Derbyshire have more

records more evenly spread, suggesting they have or have had more or more energetic recorders. So, in judging commonness, those appearances mentioned above can be deceptive.

Finally, my *Tapinopa longidens* serves as a reminder of how many common and widespread spiders must be out there waiting to be found and recorded in all our counties.

References

SRS Website: Species Index http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/portal.php/p/A-Z+Species+Index and Regional Distribution Maps http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/portal.php/p/Distribution/ accessed 23 Jan 2012.

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Neriene radiata in Cambridgeshire and Sussex

by Ian Dawson

On 11th June 2011 my wife Debra called me out to the garden to see an occupied web spun low between plants of *Penstemon*, *Geum* and *Geranium* in a flower bed between the lawn and raised vegetable beds immediately to the east of our house in Little Paxton, Cambs, TL193628 (vc31, Huntingdonshire). She had tentatively identified the occupant as *Linyphia triangularis*, though the date seemed very early for this species. The spider in residence was clearly an adult female of the *Linyphia*/*Neriene* group of species, but looked interesting! After photographing her *in situ* I took her indoors to check under the microscope and was surprised and delighted to find myself looking at *Neriene radiata*, long known in the UK from only a few sites in the west of Scotland and the Wyre Forest in Hereford and Worcester. No new plants had been introduced to the garden, nor had we been anywhere earlier in the year from where we might accidentally have transported it. An intensive search of the garden produced no further specimens.

However, a former colleague, Graeme Lyons, now ecologist with the Sussex Wildlife Trust, sends me spider photos for identification from time to time. In June 2009 he sent me a photo of what looked like *Neriene radiata* from the Sussex part of Chiddingfold Forest,SU9931 (vc13, West Sussex). Given the significance of the record, I asked him to collect and send me a specimen to ensure that the identification was correct. It duly arrived and confirmed my tentative photo identification.

In the light of these two records it is also worth mentioning a further probable occurrence of this species in Sussex. Gary Bradley who runs the UK Safari website also sends me photos from time to time. In August 2010 these included one of 2 linyphiids in a Brighton garden, taken by Nik Hunt, on 31st July 2010, which with hindsight I am now confident were *N. radiata*, though they had unfortunately disappeared when searched for again.

It is clearly worth keeping an eye open for this species away from its traditional sites. Is it extending its range and spreading into gardens like *Ero aphana* (which also turned up in our garden in June 2009)? At a quick glance it might easily be dismissed as one of the common *Linyphia* or *Neriene* species, though it is distinctive enough when looked at closely. The accompanying photos clearly show the deep abdomen with its characteristic black-and white pattern, the rearmost pale vertical stripe and ventral stripes strongly suffused with yellow and the thickened pale flange to the carapace (presumably the margin of the old specific name ‘marginata’). The long hairs on the sternum should also be noted.

Figures 1-3. *Neriene radiata* © Ian Dawson

Hayling Avenue - Little Paxton, ST NEOTS, Cambridgeshire PE19 6HQ

New spider records in NE Scotland

by Mike Davidson

This is a summary of the new records for vice-counties 90-95 during 2011 and the first for 2012.

Beating bushes in September at the Eastern Necropolis in Dundee proved to be very productive for spiders and harvestmen (reported elsewhere), with *Clubiona comta* and *Entelecara erythropus* adding to the Angus list. Earlier in the year a *Scotophaeus blackwalli* met an untimely end, trampled on a Dundee floor, before being recognised as new to the county.

The Loch of Leys, on the very northern edge of Kincardineshire, has produced the only specimens of *Neon reticulatus* and *Hahnia montana* so far from that county, common species which must be elsewhere.

The Aberdeenshires produced three new records. *Typhochrestus digitatus*, an uncommon species of heathlands and coastal grasslands, made its first appearance at St. Fergus dunes in November. W*alckenaeria nodosa* , a scattered species of damp places turned up at Dinnet NNR and Foveran Links. Perhaps the most interesting of this triplet was *Semljicola caliginosus*, a BAP species previously thought to be restricted to upland wetlands with only four other Scottish localities, which turned up at sea-level during March in reed-beds on the Ythan Estuary.

Banffshire produced *Oedothorax agrestis* from a patch of juniper scrub by a burn near the Lecht Ski Centre and *Halorates reprobus* turned up in litter on the shore at Macduff.

Porrhomma montanum was found in Moray (only just) by vacuum sampling in a pinewood, while *Pityohyphantes phrygianus* (common on conifers everywhere now) was found on juniper in the same November pinewood survey. It definitely pays to go "out of season" and use less usual sampling techniques.

The Grampian Spider Group has also made some good progress in searching out old and new sites for some of our BAP species. Notably *Silometopus incurvatus* was rediscovered on a cold and windy November day on the St. Fergus Dunes. It was last seen there in 1976 by a much younger R. Snazell.

2012 has already got off to a good start with the discovery of a species new to Banffshire. Jane Sim, who has a plant nursery at Aultmore near Keith, brought a spider, which she caught in her poly-tunnel (NJ404532, 11/01/2012), to one of our regular ID sessions. This was obviously interesting and turned out to be a female *Larinioides sclopetarius*, by far its most northerly location. This species was first recorded in Scotland in 1988 and had reached Pitlochry by 2010.

Jane tells me she receives deliveries of plants, pots and trays from European sources as well as Stratford-on-Avon, Eyemouth and Lancashire, so plenty of scope for importation, if it didn't arrive under its own steam. Of course it may have been in the north for a while before Jane's beginner's luck picked it out for examination. Hopefully, now she has started, Jane will keep adding to the Banffshire list.

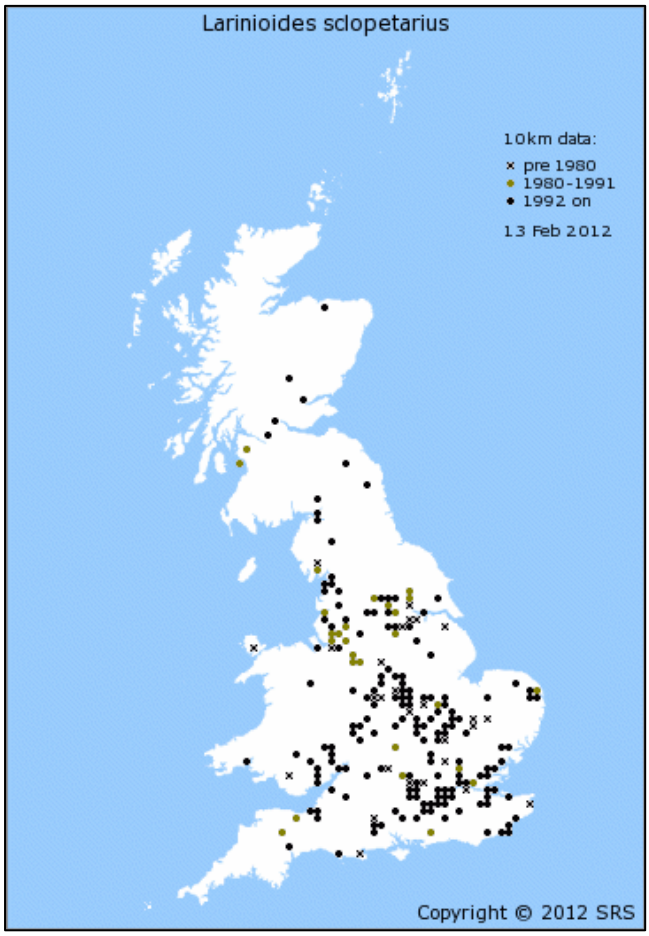

Table 1. New records from VC90-95 during 2001

Vice County	Species	Records
90 Angus	*Entelecara erythropus*	2
	Clubiona comta	2
	Scotophaeus blackwalli	1
91 Kincardineshire	*Hahnia montana*	1
	Neon reticulatus	1
92 South Aberdeen	*Walckenaeria nodosa*	2
93 North Aberdeen	*Typhochrestus digitatus*	1
	Semljicola caliginosus	4
94 Banffshire	*Oedothorax agrestis*	2
	Halorates reprobus	2
95 Moray	*Porrhomma montanum*	1
	Pityohyphantes phrygianus	1

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An elusive spider: Surveying for *Midia midas* in 2011

by Tony Russell-Smith

Following the successful rediscovery of the nationally endangered linyphiid *Midia midas* in Epping Forest in 2010, the BAS decided to undertake a wider survey for this UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species. Currently it is known from only five sites in the UK, where it is always found on ancient trees, either in forest or ancient wood pasture settings. With funding from the Garfield Weston Foundation, survey work started in May 2011. The surveys were geographically wide-ranging, covering ancient woodlands in Essex, Kent, Suffolk, Dorset/Hants, Wiltshire and Worcestershire, and were undertaken by small groups of BAS volunteers.

Surveys were carried out at a total of ten sites in five counties between May and July 2011 (Table 1). Survey methods included sorting litter, old birds' nests and squirrel dreys from ancient trees, pitfall traps placed in the crowns of trees, and the use of a suction sampler to sample from tree trunks and witch's brooms.

In general, the number of samples containing any spiders, the number of individuals and the number of species recorded at each site were extremely low compared with the results from earlier surveys in Epping Forest (Table 2). The number of spiders per sample ranged from 0.56 to 3.50 with the exception of litter and nest samples from Hatfield Forest where a remarkable 27.3 were recorded from each sample. Likewise between 1 and 7 spider species were recorded from each set of samples except in the Hatfield Forest litter samples where 18 species were found. At none of the sites were any specimens of *Midia* collected and in all of them money spiders (Fam. Linyphiidae) in general and lepthyphantines (the group to which *Midia* belongs) in particular were noticeable mainly by their absence.

The reasons for both the low numbers of spiders found and for the absence of *Midia* are not entirely clear. In some cases *Midia* may be genuinely absent from a site and in others the number of samples taken may have been too small to actually detect a species that normally occurs at very low densities. However, a particular factor operating in 2011 was the extreme drought in March, April and May. This period was the driest in southern Britain since records began, with some areas receiving less than 20% of the long-term average rainfall for that period. We believe that the drought may have severely impacted both abundance and activity of spiders in general, making it significantly more difficult to find *Midia* even in sites where it may occur. The drought perhaps explains why 75% of all spiders captured were the common dysderid *Harpactea hombergi*, a widespread spider in the southern half of the British Isles which is found in dry situations, particularly on old trees. While normally present on ancient pollards, the high proportion among all spiders suggests it may be at a competitive advantage in particularly dry years.

Figure 1. Placing a pitfall trap in ancient chestnut tree, Knole Park, Kent. June 2011, copyright M. Fountain

County	Site	Visits	Methods
Kent	Knole Park, Sevenoaks	3	Litter, Pitfall traps
Kent	Lullingstone Park, Eynsford	3	Litter, Pitfall traps
Essex	Hatfield Forest	3	Litter, Pitfall traps
Essex	Hylands Park, Chelmsford	1	Litter
Worcestershire	Ipsley Alders LNR	1	Suction sampler
Worcestershire	Pipers Hill	1	Suction sampler
Worcestershire	Hanbury Park	1	Suction sampler
Worcestershire	Spetchley Park	1	Suction sampler
Wiltshire	Savernake Forest	1	Litter
Suffolk	Captain's Wood, Sudbourne	1	Litter

Table 1. Number of sites, number of visits and methods used in *Midia midas* survey work, 2011. Note: "Litter" refers to leaf litter, bird nests and squirrel dreys.

Site	Date	Method	Samples	With spiders	Individuals	Species	spiders/sample
Knole Park, Kent	10.v.2011	Litter/bird nests	14	8	36	6	2.57
Knole Park, Kent	2.vii.2011	Pitfall traps	21	8	12	7	0.57
Lullingstone Park, Kent	18.vi.2011	Litter/bird nests	7	3	9	3	1.29
Lullingstone Park, Kent	21.vii.2011	Pitfall traps	9	3	5	1	0.56
Hatfield Forest, Essex	25.v.2011	Litter/bird nests	17	0	465	18	27.35
Hatfield Forest, Essex	22.vi.2011	Pitfall traps	18	6	10	7	0.56
Hylands Park, Essex	20.vi.2011	Litter/bird nests	11	4	27	4	2.45
Captains Wood, Suffolk	26.vi.2011	Litter/bird nests	6	3	21	6	3.50
Pipers Hill LNR, Worcs.		Suction sampler	8	7	12	4	1.50
Hanbury Park, Worcs.		Suction sampler	8	5	7	6	0.88
Savernake Forest, Wilts	14.vi.2011	Litter/bird nests	12	12	30	25	2.5

Table 2. Summary of samples taken, numbers of individuals and numbers of species taken during the *Midia* survey in 2011

Although relatively few spiders were collected, a number of interesting species were obtained. Single specimens of the money spider *Monocephalus castaneipes* were found in Knole Park (Kent) and Savernake Forest (Wilts.), in an ancient chestnut and an oak tree respectively. This is a Biodiversity Action Plan species which, although widespread in the UK, has declined by 50% in the past 20 years. In southern England it is normally associated with moss on trunks and branches of trees. At Hatfield Forest (Essex), an immature specimen of the daddy long-legs spider, *Pholcus phalangioides*, was collected in litter from the crown of an ancient hornbeam pollard (Fig. 2). This is a very common species inside houses in southern Britain but it is very rare indeed to find it outside, although there are a few previous records from hollow trees.

In addition to these spider species, a number of endangered or notable beetle species were collected during the survey. A single specimen of the vulnerable (RDB3) soldier beetle *Malthodes crassicornis* was collected in an oak pollard in Hatfield Forest. This species is a speciality of relict old forest with open-grown ancient trees. Nationally notable beetles from Hatfield included the clerid *Opilo mollis*, the staphylinid *Aleochara stichai* and the scirtid *Prionocyphon serricornis*. At Knole Park in Kent, notable beetles included the staphylinids *Aleochara stichai* and *Quedius scitus*, the mycetophagid *Mycetophagus 4-guttatus,* the lathridid *Enicmus rugosus,* the meloid, *Pseudocistela ceramboides* and the aderid *Euglenes oculatus*. All of these species are associated with rotting wood and the last two are particularly associated with ancient woodland. There remain a number of beetles from the survey yet to be identified but it is clear that the techniques used are useful for sampling saproxylic beetles as well as spiders associated with ancient trees.

Problems encountered

The principle problem during the 2011 season was undoubtedly the extremely dry conditions during spring and early summer, which are thought to have seriously impacted spider populations in general. Secondly, the fact that the spiders are only adult for a relatively short period – between early May and mid-July – means that surveying must also be crowded into a relatively short period. Another problem at several of the sites visited has been the highly scattered distribution of the ancient trees. This considerably increases the time needed to carry ladders and other equipment between individual trees, particularly if they are surrounded by dense brambles or other tall vegetation. Finally, with regard to the use of pitfall traps in trees, these were frequently choked with wood frass and dead leaves etc., making it considerably easier for spiders to escape if they did fall into them. Where pitfall traps are employed in 2012, a domed wire-mesh will be used as a cover over each trap, reducing the amount of debris in them while still allowing small spiders to enter the traps.

Survey work during 2012

Following extensive discussion amongst participants in the survey and the BAS Conservation sub-committee, it was decided that we should include two sites where *Midia* has been recorded in the past but have not been re-surveyed for at least 30 years. These are Hainault Forest

Figure 2. An ancient hornbeam pollard in Hatfield Forest, Essex, sampled for spiders in 2011, copyright Tony Russell-Smith

(Essex) where it was last recorded in 1980 and Windsor Forest (Berks.) where it was last recorded from a Jackdaw's nest in 1928. The aim will be to establish whether *Midia* is still present at these sites and whether the techniques used can detect it. If possible, intensive sampling using pitfall traps will be carried out in Hatfield Forest (Essex), Burnham Beeches (Bucks.) and Lullingstone Park (Kent). New sites where surveys will be undertaken, should initial reconnaissance prove successful, will include Cobham Park and Mersham Hatch Park (Kent), Langley Park (Bucks.), Hatfield Park (Herts.), Ashstead Common (Surrey) and Wytham Woods (Oxfordshire), all of which have good populations of ancient pollard trees. At Hainault Forest and Windsor Forest we are hoping to involve local conservation volunteer groups in the work while at Burnham Beeches will be in collaboration with the City of London ecologist based there. If we can reach agreement on these collaborations, we hope to be able to sample more than once during the season, significantly increasing the chances of finding this elusive spider.

Call for volunteers

More volunteers to assist in the survey work are urgently needed. We are particularly anxious to find people willing to help in the Buckinghamshire, Surrey and Essex areas but if you would be interested in surveying in other counties, please contact the author at the e-mail address below.

Acknowledgements

The project would have been impossible without the dedicated efforts of the BAS surveyors, Michelle Fountain, Greg Hitchcock, Richard Pierce and Robin Rigby (Kent); Ian Dawson and David Nellist (Essex); Rod Allison, Martin Askins and Chris Spilling (Wilts.) and John Partridge (Worcs.). We are particularly grateful to the Garfield Weston Foundation for funding to cover the travel costs for these volunteer surveyors.

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Alien harvestmen in Scotland

by Mike Davidson

There has been something of a renewed interest in harvestmen in Scotland recently. The new FSC guide and some funding for training courses have helped introduced a new group of people to the delights of the Opiliones and this is beginning to pay dividends with new recorders producing interesting records. Thanks to everyone who has been sending me harvestman records.

Of course the first thing you do when you start out with a group is go out and find something new to the area. Mike Taylor, moth recorder for Moray, decided he would like to know how to ID the harvestmen he was finding at his moth traps and various locations he recorded at. A flood-lit wall at Brodie, near Forres produced his major triumph, in November 2011, with the first Scottish record of *Opilio canestrinii*. So far only a single specimen has been found. The location is a busy tourist visitor centre and it is possible that this specimen came directly from Europe rather than from one of its other UK locations. Multiple points of introduction may well be normal with recent alien species.

My own efforts in 2011 relate to *Dicranopalpus ramosus*. Having found it in some numbers at a cemetery in Dundee, I was quietly waiting for it to move up the east coast and meet me in Aberdeen. However, when checking out Mike Taylor's site for *O. canestrinii* in Moray, I found it had already reached Forres! It was found on building walls in the Grant Park which is known for its floral displays for Britain in Bloom.

Scottish Leiobunid Questions

Peter Nicolson, in a recent newsletter, raised the issue of John Sankey's mystery *Leiobunum* which he found at various places on his visits to East Scotland. These included the Den of Finella and the Burn at Edzell (VC91). These are all treacherous places and John induced me to revisit these around 1979-80 to collect more specimens. Looking back at our correspondence it seems early optimism that we had found it, gradually turned to acceptance that they were in fact varieties of *L. rotundum*. Of course today's genetic methods might produce a different result.

As a relative novice, I also remember quizzing John about his Scottish specimens of *Leiobunum blackwalli* - which he found at stopping points on those same trips north. Unfortunately they had been lost to dehydration,

and although I have seen this species "down south" I have not been able to find a Scottish specimen. Since John's pre-1980 records there have been only four others; J. Richardson in Ross-shire 1983; J. Stanney on Skye 1986; D.T. Richardson in Wigtonshire 1989; P. Smithers on Rum 1994. I would be delighted to see a Scottish specimen of this species, either one of the above specimens or something more recent.

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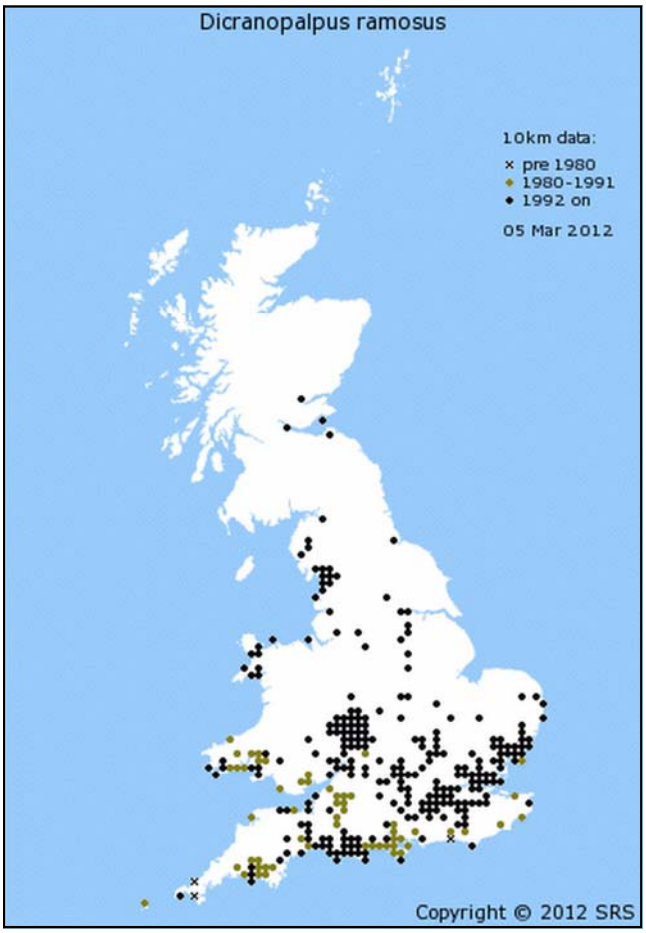

Figure 1. Current distribution map for *Dicranopalpus ramosus* from records submitted

Figure 2. *Dicranopalpus ramosus* © Peter Harvey

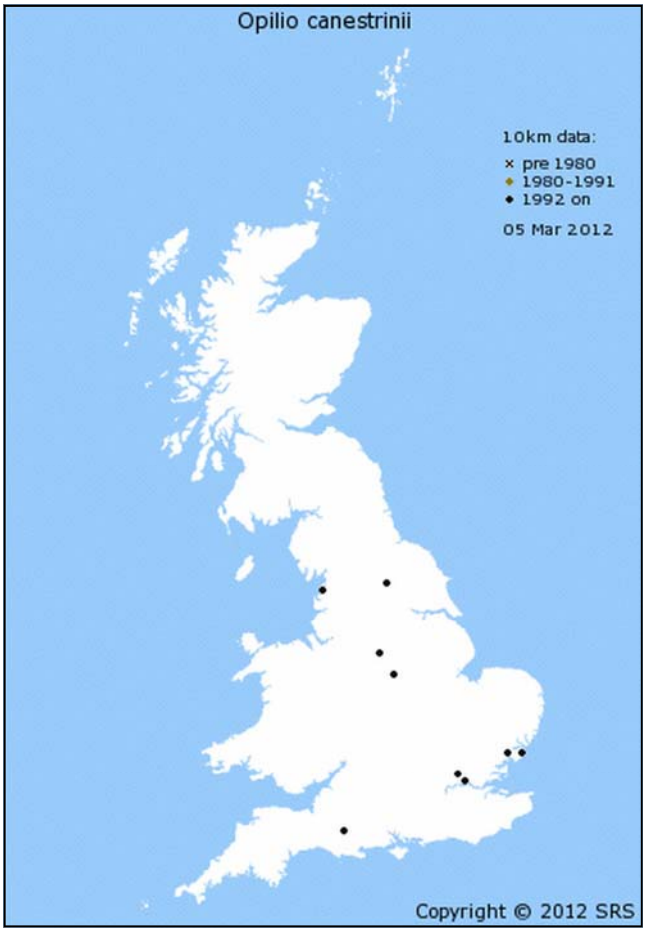

Figure 3. Current distribution map for *Opilio canestrini* from records submitted to the Harvestmen Recording Scheme

Figure 4. *Opilio canestrini* © Peter Harvey