

British Arachnological Society



NEWSLETTER No 7

SEPTEMBER 1990

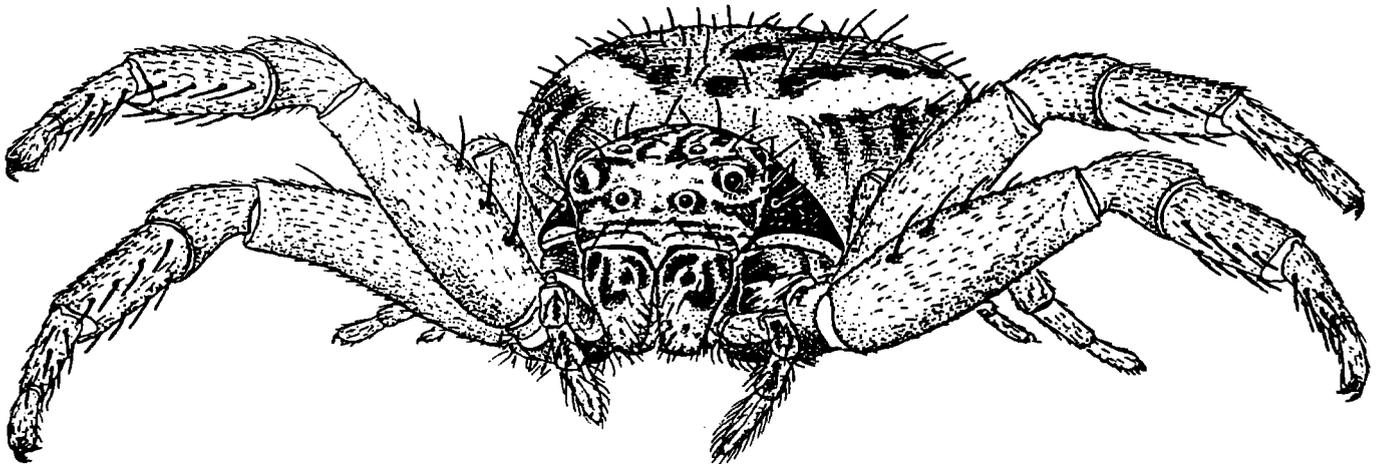
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SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME

The work of the Spider Recording Scheme is gathering impetus: more and more recorders are sending in data that have been collected from publications, while fieldwork continues with enthusiasm. As a result, it has been decided to publish the S.R.S. Newsletters every quarter - in September, December, March and June. The first six issues were entirely paid for by the Biological Records Centre at Monks Wood, including the duplication, despatch and postage, and we are most grateful to Brian Eversham and his team for all the help they have given.

From now onwards, the September and March issues will be entirely subsidised by the British Arachnological Society, while the BRC will continue to be responsible for the other two issues each year. We intend to make the autumn and spring issues available for contributions from SRS recorders, with an emphasis on fieldwork; this issue bears out this decision, and I am most grateful to all those who have contributed notes and articles.

All SRS recorders are warmly invited to send in articles. Those for the March 1991 issue should reach me before the end of February. Simple line drawings, maps and other diagrams are welcome. Many people have adopted a spider logo to put at their letter-heads, and I am including one or more in this Newsletter.



Xysticus cristatus ♀ drawn by Mike Roberts to illustrate an article he wrote for the Sorby Natural History Society of Sheffield.

Mike Roberts and his wife, Debbie, are now well settled into their new home at: Burns Farm, Cornhill, Banff. AB4 2DL (Tel. 04666.231). We wish them well in their new life and look forward to a revolution in the spider-recording around Inverness.

From Northumberland to Sussex

Chris Topping

As a complete newcomer to spider-collecting in the south of England, I have found that there were a few things which caught me by surprise when I became the A.O. for East and West Sussex. My first misconception, that the place would be heavily worked and crawling with spider collectors, was exploded when Clifford informed me that there were only 24 completed RA65 cards held by him for the two vice-counties.

However, to counterbalance this disappointment, I have discovered that spiders appear to be much more numerous in these warmer climes. The diversity of species that can be easily found is amazing to someone used to collecting in the north of England. In fact, finding new and interesting species seems to happen by accident. Moving a concrete block at work resulted in the discovery of a female Steatoda nobilis with an egg cocoon (a species that I believe is to go on the British list this year), and routine suction sampling of a single wheat field on the Downs produced both Euophrys herbigrada and Meioneta simplicitarsis. All three species being new both to me and the county records. What I shall find when I actually go looking for spiders I just don't know!

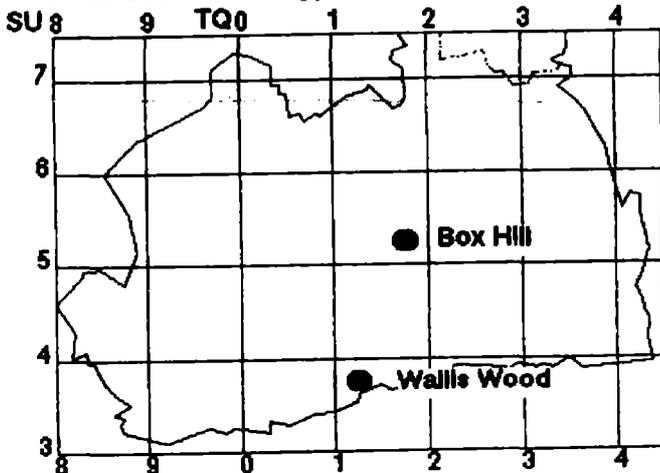
A Further Site for Hyptiotes paradoxus in Surrey

Martin Askins

Spurred on by the National Organiser's urging to "fill in the gaps", I've been

collecting in some of the under-recorded 10Km square in Surrey over the past year. The Surrey Wildlife Trust has several reserves in these areas so, on the basis that these should be relatively interesting or undisturbed sites, I've generally visited these first.

Recorded sites for Hyptiotes paradoxus in Surrey



This May I spent an afternoon at a reserve in the south of the county, Wallis Wood. On the northern border of the reserve is a row of yews, and from one of these trees I beat a specimen of Hyptiotes paradoxus, a small ginger specimen, approximately

4mm. long. Further search failed to produce any more. However, on a second visit with John and Frances Murphy and Peter Merrett later in the month, John beat two more specimens from the tree. The only known site for Hyptiotes in Surrey is at Box Hill, some 13 km north of the reserve.

A Week's Collecting on the Isle of Rhum

David Beaumont

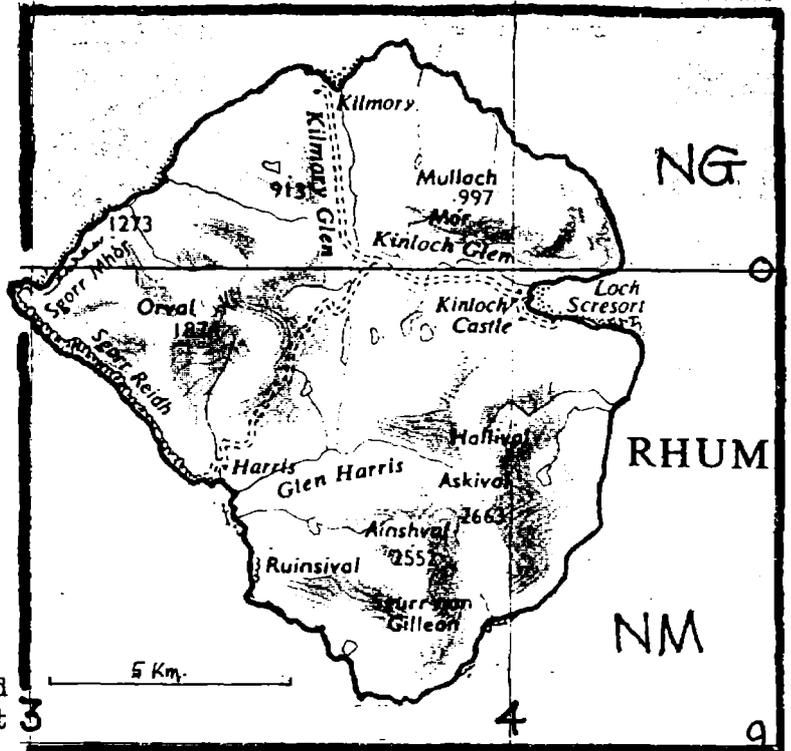
From the 25th to the 30th of June this year, the Scottish Entomologists Group held their annual meeting on the spectacular Island of Rhum. I was happy to see that amongst the list of participants were Jim Stewart and David Horsfield - we three arachnologists having successfully infiltrated the Group!

Rhum has only two roads and a handful of landrovers. In an attempt to cover as much ground as possible I decided to do most of my work on foot. This decision turned out to be a good one because travel by landrover on Rhum was similar to being in a tumble-drier with ten other people.

A Week's Collecting on the Isle of Rhum (continued)

The interior of Rhum is quite mountainous with considerable scree slopes, and this loose material is often riddled by the burrows of Manx Shearwaters. At low altitudes the habitat is mainly acid bog, but the N.C.C. has planted native trees in an attempt to replace the original woodland cover.

The list below includes samples contributed by several interested entomologists, including some from their pitfall traps. Several species are new to the previous Rhum list. Meioneta nigripes and Hilaira frigida are high altitude species - the former found at about 2250 ft. near the summit of Hallival, and the latter just below the summit of Orval at 1600ft.

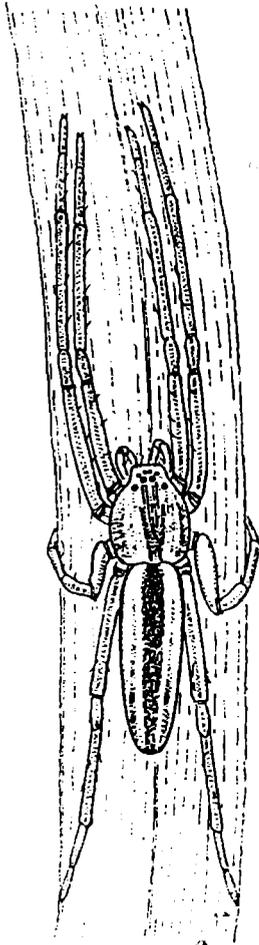


A species new to the Scottish list was taken below the summit of Hallival: namely the Salticid Euophrys petrensis. Twelve adult females were found under a stone in their silken cells with accompanying egg sacs - two were taken for identification.

<u>Kinloch woodland</u> NM 39.99 27.6.90	<u>Kilmory woodland</u> NM 36.80 25.8.90	<u>East-facing slope below Hallival</u> NM 40.96 27.6.90.	<u>Harris: woodland & surrounding pasture</u> NM 33.95 25.6.90	<u>South-facing herb-rich slope nr. mausoleum</u>
P. nigricipes L. alacris N. peltata	P. nigriceps A. pulverulenta M. mengei M. merianae P. pumila M. apertus *	H. montana * A. diadematus L. zimmermanni	D. cupreus P. palustris * P. pullata M. merianae D. nigrum T. vagans * L. ericaeus	D. cupreus D. lapidosus Eu. frontalis P. pullata T. terricola P. degeeri E. promiscua * L. ericaeus L. mengei
<u>South Nature Trail heather moorland</u> NM 41.98 27.6.90	A. subtilis C. dilutus L. alacris L. ericaeus N. peltata M. pusilla	<u>Coire Dubh</u> NM 39.96 27.6.90	<u>An Dornabac</u> NM 34.95 29.6.90	<u>Woodland pitfall traps</u> 25 - 29.6.90.
C. trivialis T. terricola A. cuspidata S. abnormis L. ericaeus	<u>Woodland pitfall traps</u> 25 - 29.6.90.	Eu. petrensis + P. pullata M. merianae M. nigripes * L. ericaeus L. zimmermanni M. pusilla	S. senoculata D. cupreus Eu. frontalis R. lividus A. diadematus	X. cristatus P. palustris T. terricola
<u>Papadil: south-facing herb-rich slope</u> NM 35.92 28.6.90	C. reclusa O. trux P. pullata P. piraticus P. uliginosus *	<u>Hallival</u> NM 39.96 28.6.90.	<u>Orval: below summit</u> NM 33.99 25.6.90	
D. cupreus Z. latreillei * P. nigriceps P. pullata C. trivialis Eu. frontalis E. ovata H. merianae	<u>Kilmory Fank</u> S. senoculata C. reclusa P. palustris	<u>Askival</u> NM 39.95 28.6.90	H. frigida * L. zimmermanni	
		Cr. silvicola S. abnormis L. zimmermanni		

* New to existing list for Rhum
+ New to Scotland (to be confirmed)

Field meetings together with the individual efforts of members have again made big strides towards the aim of good county coverage for the national recording scheme. I am particularly grateful to Ray Ruffell and David Carr for the work they have been doing in this respect.



Tibellus Oblongus

9 species have been recorded new for the county so far this year, the most remarkable being Haplodrassus umbratilis from an area of steep south-facing grassland with scrub at Hadleigh Downs, South Essex. The species has previously only been recorded from mature heathland in Dorset and Hampshire.

What seems to be a thriving population of Steatoda nobilis has turned up at Westcliff-on-Sea, S. Essex. The species was found by Roger Payne of Southend Museum. He had commented a number of times previously about a large Steatoda that inhabited his house and garden, but this time the male that fell into his bath was so much bigger than it should be for S. bipunctata that he sent the specimen to me. How widespread S. nobilis will be in the region we still do not know.

Roger also found Marpissa muscosa this year at Thornodon Park in S. Essex on fencing at the edge of woodland. There are only 2 other records for the county - an old record for the Colchester area and a very old one from Epping Forest.

Other NCRs that have been found are: Haplodrassus dalmatensis at Colne Point, Zelotes petrensis in very old grassland at Mucking Heath, Salticus zebraneus on pine trunks at South Wood near Maldon, Pelecopsis mengei in grass roots at Langham, N. Essex, unusual for the south of Britain, Agyneta cauta from a small sphagnum bog in Epping Forest, Agyneta ramosa from leaf litter at West Wood and Rowneys Wood both in N. Essex and Centromerus capucinus from the edge of a dyke on grazed marsh at Howlands Marsh, N. Essex.

J.E.Hull recorded Philodromus collinus from Essex in 1947, but the record does not seem to have been accepted by other arachnologists. The spider has been found this year at Hales Wood in N.W. Essex and then the following day at Layer Wood and South Wood both in N.E. Essex, so the species is reinstated for the county. Another spider, Zelotes pedestris, was also recorded by Hull. It has been found again this year, in a new locality at Hadleigh Downs.

Zodarion italicum was originally recorded for Britain in 1985 from the Grays area. This year pitfalls in grassland at Hadleigh Downs (S.E. Essex) and Dagenham Chase (S.W. Essex) have turned up some specimens. Since the spider has also been found near Sheerness in Kent and is now recorded from the London area (Edward Milner pers. comm.) it is possible that the spider may be widespread in the region.

Pitfall trapping in grassland localities is suggesting that the species Argenna subnigra and Panomomops sulcifrons are more widespread than previously thought. Species such as Philodromus praedatus, Achaearanea simulans and Tetragnatha pinicola continue to be found in different parts of the county. It will be interesting to see if the patterns of distribution and abundance beginning to emerge for Essex are matched in other areas.

The drawing of Tibellus oblongus (above) is printed by kind permission of the artist, Mike Roberts.

Spiders through the Letterbox

James Wright

Being a participant of the Spider Recording Scheme has never been a boring experience for me. Starting off with a very vague idea of spider identification, finding the much-required help as a novice, and dealing with a conscience that made it feel wrong to kill spiders - all took their part in getting me to write around to try to become more of a contributor and less of a hindrance to the Scheme. Two years later, I find myself with a fatigued postman, a file full of really helpful letters, and a feeling of being part of something that will make a real contribution to what is already known about spider distribution.

With much help, advice and assistance, not least from Clifford and from my Area Organiser, Chris Felton, I now find myself in the happy position of helping others who are at the same stage of identification I was not too long ago. Ten new county records under my belt, coupled with an extroverted need to exclaim to the world the importance of spiders and how fascinating they are, have seen me on T.V., Radio and in the papers - all leading to more contact with 'like-minded fellows'. It's grown out of all proportion ... and so has the mail!

Whilst visiting a certain site has led me to ask questions on a number of things, another site has provided me with the need to find out even more. Consequently my mail now extends into mainland Europe and the USA, with even more help and encouragement coming through my letterbox. I am currently awaiting sponsorship for a survey trip to the Isle of Man - a much under-recorded county - that all came about through initial contact by letter.

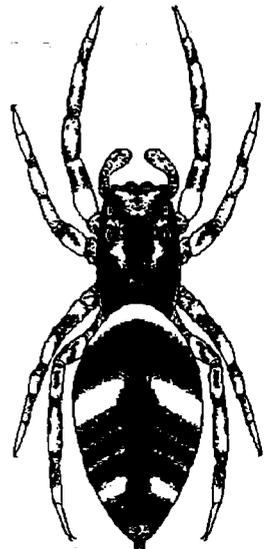
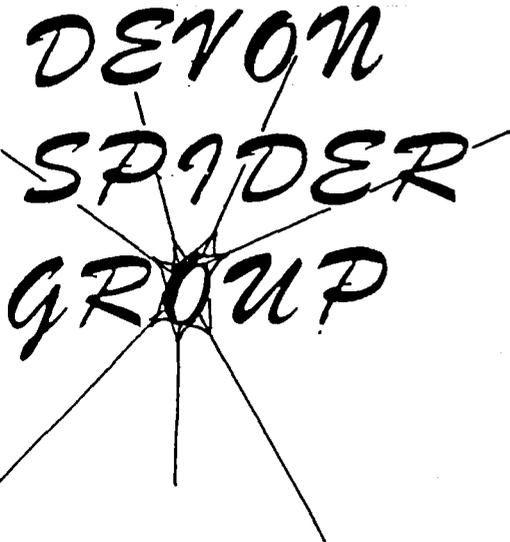
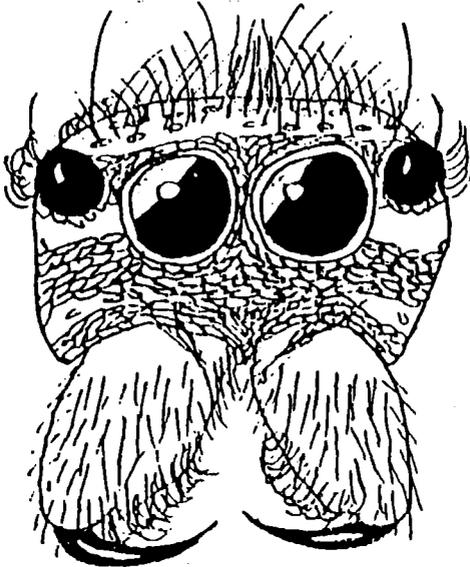
The need for each and everyone of us to communicate with each other is very important for a number of reasons: it provides friendship through fellowship (a much neglected bonus of being an SRS member), it gives those who are less experienced (and I include myself in this group) a better chance to achieve their full potential by getting help from those who are more expert, it prevents repeated effort going to waste by recording the same sites of interest, and it gives us all more reason to want to get together, meet and make the S.R.S. the most successful scheme of its kind - small in number though we are.

Letter - Headings used by S.R.S. Members

James Wright

Peter Smithers

Craig Slawson



Request for Information

The list of records made at the Flatford Mill Course in August/September 1984 includes the species Xerolycosa miniata. The origin of this record is unknown. If anyone can throw light on it, details should be sent to the Area Organiser for Essex, Peter Harvey (9 Kent Road, Grays, Essex. RML7 6DE)

Scottish Records

David Beaumont, Area Organiser for a number of the Scottish Vice-Counties, has written to ask for recent SRS data for the whole of Scotland over the past year. He is presenting a progress report to BRISC with a view to their promoting the SRS in Scotland during the coming year. The following numbers of RA65 cards have now been accepted for the various Scottish Vice-Counties:

72	Dumfries	3	15	92	South Aberdeen	9	49
73	Kirkcudbright	36	53	93	North Aberdeen	1	22
74	Wigton	24	32	94	Banff	1	12
75	Ayr	22	23	95	Moray	6	9
76	Renfrew	12	23	96	East Inverness	27	54
77	Lanark	26	26	97	West Inverness	17	19
78	Peebles	3	22	98	Argyll Main	24	26
79	Selkirk	1	12	99	Dunbarton	4	5
80	Roxburgh	5	20	100	Clyde Isles	12	12
81	Berwick	2	11	101	Kintyre	12	15
82	East Lothian	29	38	102	South Ebudes	42	49
83	Midlothian	69	86	103	Mid Ebudes	4	6
84	West Lothian	11	15	104	North Ebudes	11	12
85	Fife/Kinross	17	21	105	West Ross	44	44
86	Stirling	8	22	106	East Ross	5	8
87	West Perth	8	10	107	East Sutherland	5	5
88	Mid Perth	49	61	108	West Sutherland	29	37
89	East Perth	29	36	109	Caithness	4	4
90	Angus	7	58	110	Outer Hebrides	9	10
91	Kincardine	2	7	111	Orkney Islands	4	5
				112	Shetland Islands	2	2

Total in October 1989 = 635 (first column)

Total in September 1990 = 996 (second column)

It will be seen that in less than a year, the total number of RA65 cards has been increased by more than 50%. Our thanks are due to a large number of collectors and recorders, and particularly to the Area Organisers:

Miss Isobel Baldwin for South-East Scotland

Mr Jim Stewart for East Central Scotland

Mr David Beaumont for South-West Scotland

Mr Mike Davidson for the Eastern Highlands

Mrs Claire Geddes for the Western Highlands

Mr David Horsfield for the North Highlands and Islands

The extraction of Scottish records from various literature sources is just commencing, using GEN7 cards, while the recording of specimens in museums and other collections has already started with data from Dundee Museum, made by Jim Stewart.