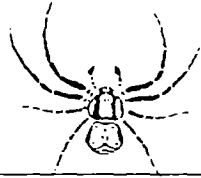


# British Arachnological Society

NEWSLETTER No 9



MARCH 1991

CLIFFORD J. SMITH  
7, MALTON WAY  
CLIFTON  
YORK YO3 6SG  
Tel: YORK (0904) 425928

## SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME

The expenses of printing and distributing this issue of the SRS Newsletter have been met by the B.A.S.

It is with deep regret that we report the death of G H Locket early this year. A much fuller appreciation of his life and work will doubtless be appearing in the publications of the B.A.S., but it is right that we should express our warm thanks to Ted for making the study of spiders so much easier through the publication of "British Spiders" together with A F Millidge. Some of us were privileged to take part in the very first Spider Course at Malham Tarn Field Centre in the mid-1950s, led so ably and enthusiastically by Ted. He has helped so many of us since that time, and he will be sorely missed.

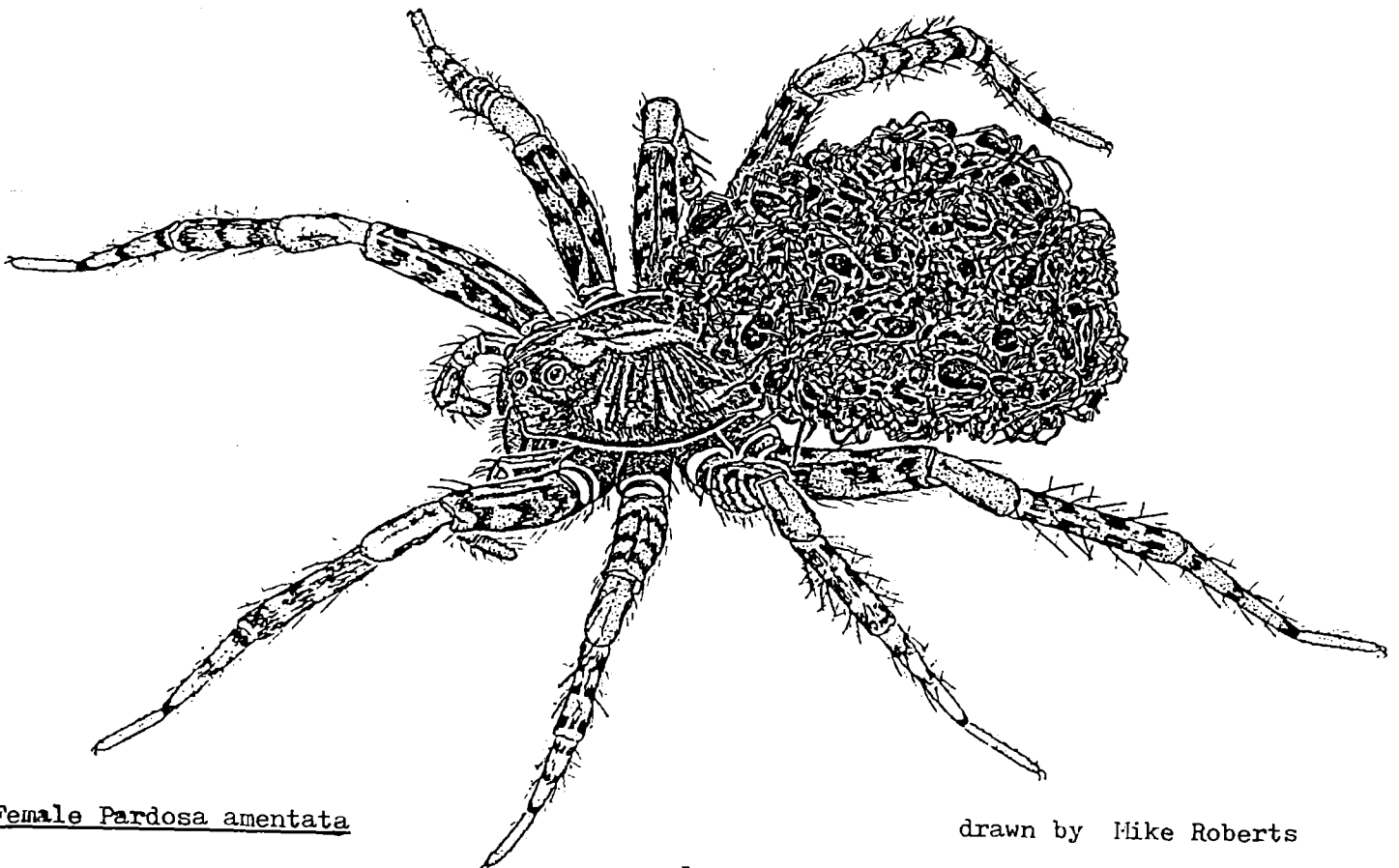
### NEW SRS RECORDERS since Newsletter No 8

Mr Keith Lane 56 Brooks Lane, Bosham, nr Chichester, W.Sussex. PO18 8JY

Mr Paul Lee Rochdale Cottage, Camps Heath, Lowestoft, Suffolk. NR32 5DW

Mr Alex Williams 40 Preston Park, Faversham, Kent. ME13 8LN

Mr Adrian P Fowles Plas Gogerddan, Aberystwyth, Dyfed. SY23 3EE



Female Pardosa amentata

drawn by Mike Roberts

In a recent newsletter, we were advised to try to make contact with anyone requiring pitfall trap material identified. The results from such an exercise obviously depend on the size of the study which has been undertaken and the care with which the material has been handled, but under favourable circumstances, the rewards can be considerable. The following is a summary of what came out of a flood-plain study carried out by the Department of Geography at Loughborough University.

Two sites had been selected, one at Gunthorpe in Nottinghamshire, just east of Nottingham, and one about twenty-five miles away near Repton in the south of Derbyshire, both of them by the River Trent. At each site, five habitat types were identified: "riparian", "wet area", "pasture", "woodland" and "arable". Not having been to the sites, I cannot comment on the appositeness of these names, nor on the similarity of habitats between sites. Traps were laid down in groups and emptied at approximately fortnightly intervals from the beginning of June to the end of August.

The research was based primarily on beetles, but the spiders and harvestmen were passed on to me. Unfortunately, due to the length of time between collections, and the consequent dilution of the collecting fluid, some of the material was in quite a poor state. This was particularly true of the harvestmen; many of these had completely disintegrated and had to be discarded immediately, the remainder could not be treated quantitatively and some of the identifications were based on guesswork. The spiders fared rather better and these were counted as a basis for comparison (although some of the totals included identifications based on an isolated detached abdomen or a single palp). Immatures (with two exceptions) were ignored as there were remarkably few, the majority being very young lycosids; I estimated that these, together with a few specimens in such a poor state as to be unrecognizable, accounted for less than five per cent of the total.

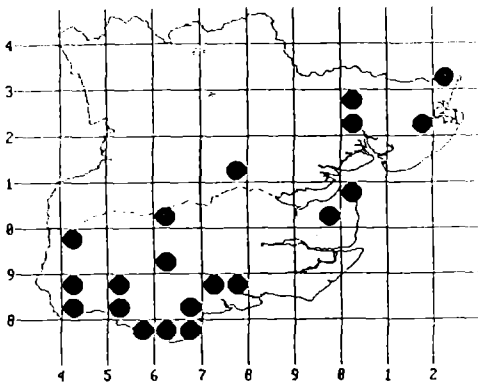
Sixty nine species were identified altogether, fifty two from Repton and fifty eight from Gunthorpe. The total number of specimens counted was over three thousand four hundred. The highest species total was *Oedothorax fuscus* with nine hundred and sixty three. The next highest total was less than half this: *Erigone atra* with four hundred and fifty nine. Then, running down the scale, *Leptyphantus tenuis* (259), *Pardosa amantata* (226), *Erigone dentipalpis* (218), *Allomengea vidua* (180), *Pardosa palustris* (99), *Pachygnatha clercki* (95), *Oedothorax retusus* (95), *Pardosa prativaga* (94), *Bathyphantus gracilis* (94), *Halorates distinctus* (92), *Leptorhoptum robustum* (78) and *Malckenaeria cuspidata* (75). All others had less than thirty, all but half a dozen less than ten. In the above list, I had only seen *A. vidua* on a couple of occasions before, and I had never seen *H. distinctus*! All the *P. prativaga* were from Nottinghamshire; it has still not been recorded from Derbyshire!

Species new to me included such not uncommon ones (they tell me) as *Oxyptila praticola* (one very fine male), *Silemetopus reussi* and *Micrargus subaequalis*, which had eluded me up to now. Less common were *Imeticus affinis*, *Baryphyme pratense* and *Erigone vagans*. Of more significance than my personal firsts were the firsts for the respective counties. There were nine for Derbyshire and no less than nineteen for Nottinghamshire! This was altogether a most satisfying and satisfactory exercise and much to be recommended.

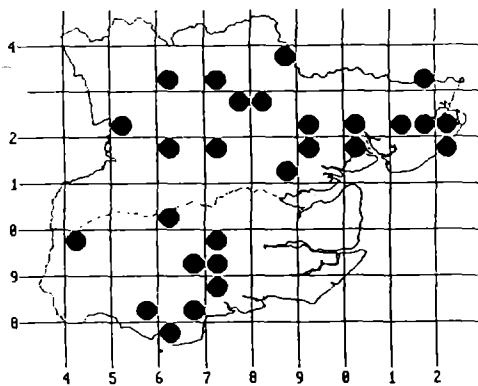
If anyone is interested in a detailed breakdown of the material in terms of numbers of each sex against habitat and date, I would be very happy to supply the complete lists.

My thanks are due to Malcolm Greenwood of Loughborough University for making the material available to me, to Mike Roberts for sorting out a rather mangled *Phrurolithus festivus* and Peter Merrett for confirming the identification and status of the new county records.

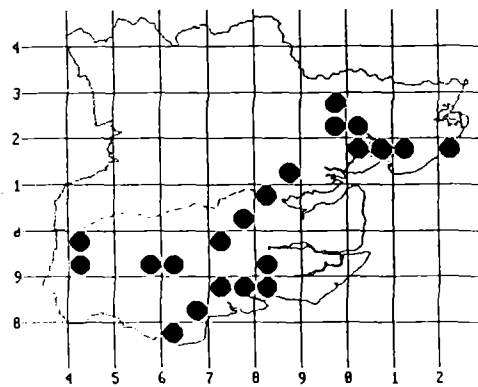
*Enoplognatha latimana* Hippa & Oksala



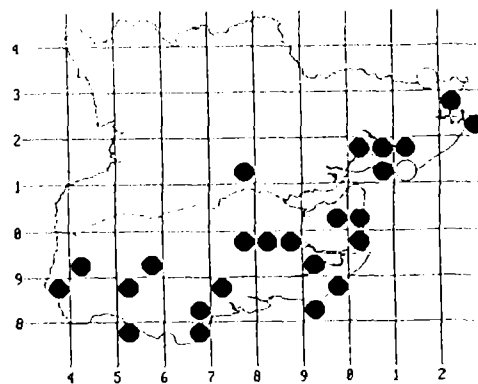
*Tetragnatha pinicola* L.Koch



*Zilla diodia* (Walckenaer)



*Thanatus striatus* C.L.Koch



The very mild winter and spring brought about the maturing of most spring and early summer spiders a month and in some cases even two months earlier than usual in South Essex. By the end of May the drought had made the vegetation look like it normally does in August. Some rain then brought a little relief. Numbers of spiders seemed to be low in the autumn as well, presumably many individuals having succumbed in the summer.

Despite this *Porrhomma microphthalmum* has been taken all over Essex this year, at any time of year and in any kind of habitat. It seems hard to believe that we have just got better at finding the spider, so presumably it had a good year! It will be interesting to see whether arachnologists elsewhere in the country also found this to be the case.

Brannetts Wood, South Ockendon in S.W. Essex was astonishing at the end of May for the abundance of *Philodromus albidus*. Almost every sweep of herbage or beating of scrub and tree foliage produced several specimens.

Some species considered to be nationally rare or uncommon are turning out to be much more widespread in the county than previously expected. (see maps for *A. subnigra*, *T. striatus*, *P. praedatus*, *P. albidus*, *A. lunata*, *A. simulans*, *E. latimana*, *T. pinicola* and *Z. diodia*.)

Essex Spider Group meetings this year together with the individual efforts of members have again made big strides towards the aim of good county coverage for the national recording scheme. These efforts are also making important contributions to our knowledge about individual sites in Essex and are helping to identify the conservation importance of new sites.

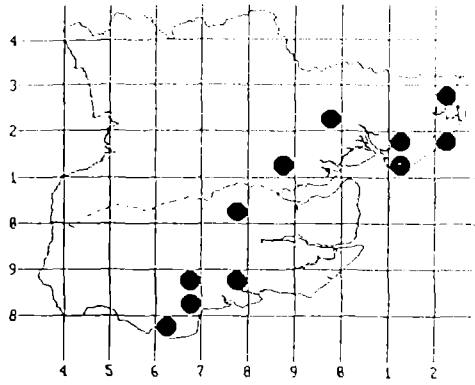
The autumn period produced another two NCRs and other interesting spiders e.g. *Walckenaeria incisa*\* and *Mioxena blanda* from an area of relic ancient heath grassland at Mucking Heath, S. Essex; and *Porrhomma errans*\* from grassland at Benfleet and Hadleigh Downs, S. Essex. Several males of *Atypus affinis* also turned up at Hadleigh Downs. This is the second modern record for the county with an old record from Epping Forest. I collected *Lepthyphantes insignis* from grassland at Eastbrookend, Dagenham Chase, S.W. Essex. This spider was recorded new to Essex only last year by Ray Ruffell from an area of grassland in N. Essex.

Despite the use of pitfall traps through the year at Colne Point in an area of stabilised shingle, an old sand ridge and a small area of sand with marram, *Heliophanus auratus* and *Trichopterna cito* have not been re-recorded.

Spiders of interest have turned up though, including *Mioxena blanda* and *Hahnia pusilla* which are both new to Colne Point. *Haplodrassus minor* and *Robertus arundineti* have been re-recorded and *Attulus saltator* appears to be remarkably numerous in the old sand ridge and marram areas.

Although spiders were fairly thin on the ground at East Mersea on the 15th September, the meeting turned up new localities for *Zelotes electus*, *Philodromus histrio* and *Nigma puella*. The area looks well worth further work.

*Argenna subnigra* (O.P.-Cambridge)

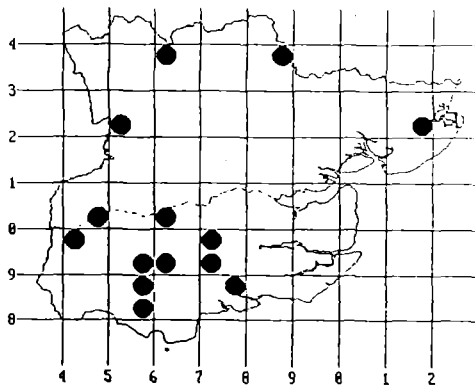


Some species were added to the list of spiders for Sawbridgeworth Marsh when we visited it on September 29th but a small wood nearby produced the greater number of new 10Km records. Of particular interest was the occurrence of numerous males and females of *Oedothorax agrestis* in a ditch in the wood. The few previous Essex records have been of single specimens only.

A total of 12 NCRs have been found this year. Every year seems to produce more NCRs than the year before! One wonders how many more species are still to be recorded for the county! It is interesting to consider that of these 12 NCRs, 6 were taken in pitfall traps. This method of collecting has also produced many of the records for other uncommon species and it is certainly worth using pitfall traps to sample habitats if the time can be found to regularly collect, sort and identify the material. The numerical information obtained is of great interest, especially where the traps are operated through the year and seasonal activity can be recorded.

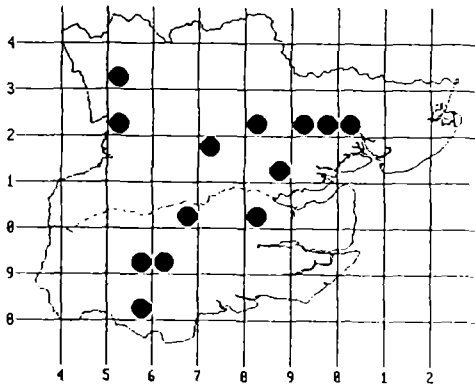
I have produced a 1990 update of provisional distribution maps for Essex, and these maps show the records for 389 species of spider together with 4 varieties or forms. Additional species reliably recorded for Essex bring the total number of species that have been found in the county to 406. The maps have been produced on an IBM-compatible computer using a mapping programme called DMAP, produced by Dr Alan Morton, together with the database PC-File 5 which I use for all my records.

*Philodromus praedatus* O.P.-Cambridge



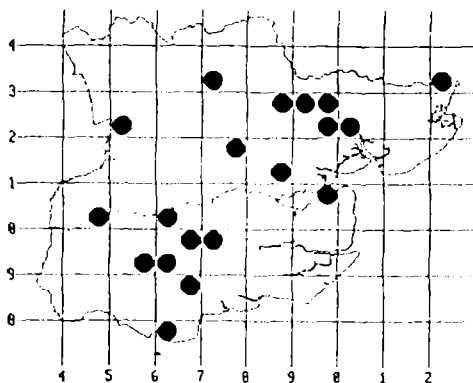
I am very grateful to Peter Merrett for looking at all the NCRs and various other specimens, and for his many helpful comment (and corrections!). I am also indebted to John Murphy for examining problem specimens, and to John and Frances for their unfailing help and encouragement. I am especially grateful to Ray Ruffell for the enormous amount of field work that he does in under-recorded parts of the county, and also to David Carr and Ken Hill for their regular support and work at field meetings.

*Philodromus albidus* Kulczynski

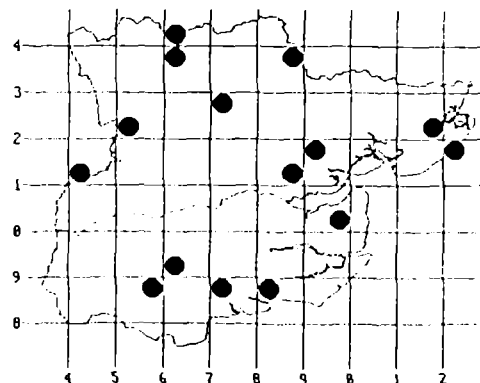


P.R.Harvey, 9 Kent Road, Grays, Essex. RML7 6DE

*Achaearanea lunata* (Clerck)



*Achaearanea simulans* (Thorell)



WETLAND SPIDERS FROM THE WAVENEY VALLEY, 1990

During 1990 it was decided to concentrate on collecting on the wetland habitats of the Waveney Valley. This small river separates Suffolk from Norfolk throughout its length, rising at Regrave and Lopham Fen - until recently the only site for Dolomedes plantarius in Britain. Since both Redgrave and Roydon Common Fens have been included in an intensive pitfall trap survey of East Anglian fenland sites by Deborah Proctor, I decided to concentrate on other wetland areas.

The majority of the river valley is managed as semi-improved grazing meadows which flood from time to time during the winter. The meadows are drained by a network of dykes, and it was along these that most collecting was concentrated. Other habitats include a few small patches of carr woodland, even fewer wet meadows dominated by saw sedge and sweet grass, and some small patches of mixed fen associated with small "broads" at Barnby and Carlton. Of the latter only a small patch of mixed fen at Carlton was examined. In all, hand collections were made in a total of 22 sites between April and September.

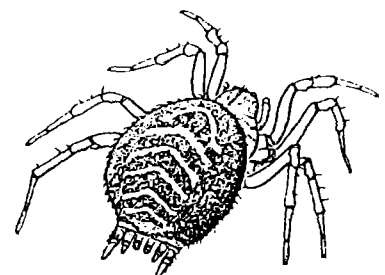
As would be expected, the spider fauna of the dykes was dominated by common wetland species such as Pirata piraticus, Hypomma bituberculatum, Gnathonarium dentatum and Bathyphantes approximatus. However, among the species present, several that are sometimes considered uncommon (as opposed to rare) proved surprisingly abundant and widespread. For example, Baryphyma pratense and Microlinyphia impigra both occurred at 11 out of the 22 sites. Adults of Baryphyma were taken only before the end of June, while those of M. impigra were taken only from June onwards.

Less common, but still infrequent, were Theridion instabile, Dicymbium tibiale and Tmeticus affinis, all of which were collected at 6 out of 22 sites. The latter, in common with the more abundant Leptorhoptrum robustum, appeared to be found only in the wettest and muddiest parts of the drainage dykes. Pirata piscatorius and Drepanotylus uncatatus proved much rarer in this type of habitat, occurring in only one site each.

Among the most interesting spiders was Entelecara omissa: normally considered a fenland species but found in drainage dykes at Carlton Marshes LNR in reasonable numbers. Likewise, Halorates distinctus was found at three sites in the vicinity of Wortwell on both the Suffolk and the Norfolk sides of the river. In each site large numbers were found in very dense sedge beds, and another population was subsequently located in a very similar habitat at Framlingham Mere, about 12 miles south of the Waveney valley. Finally, Pelecopsis mengei was taken with H. distinctus at one of these sites (Wortwell, Norfolk), again in large numbers. As pointed out by Harvey in the last issue of the SRS Newsletter, this is an uncommon species in the south of England.

Semi-improved grazing meadows of the type surveyed remain a relatively widespread feature of the river valleys of southern England, despite considerable losses to intensive arable agriculture. The results from this brief investigation, together with the recent report of Dolomedes plantarius from a similar site on the Pevensy Levels NNR, Sussex (BAS Newsletter, 58: 8) suggests that this type of habitat deserves more attention from arachnologists than hitherto.

A Russell-Smith



Hahnia montana

MJR

## THE OPILIONID RECORDING SCHEME

At our invitation, Mr John Sankey, National Organiser of The Opilionid Recording Scheme, has submitted the following article for inclusion in the SRS Newsletter:

Any biological recording scheme which has produced at least one provisional atlas is clearly under way. To keep it viable new recorders are needed. I am therefore grateful for this opportunity to appeal to Members of the BAS and of the SRS for harvest-spider or harvestmen (Opiliones) records.

True spiders and harvestmen may often be found together when using the beating tray, sweep net, leaf litter sieving or Berlese funnel as well as by visual search. The one-piece body, longest (some outstandingly long) second pair of legs, and two eyes set in the middle of the cephalothorax and complete lack of silk production are important field characters which separate harvestmen from spiders. Both groups are members of the Class Arachnida but are not really very closely related.

Preservation and the curating of a collection are the same as for spiders. 70% methanol with a drop of glycerine to counteract hardening is the usual preservative. Specimens can be put directly into this fluid. Place and date of capture and height OD if taken in upland areas and any other relevant information should accompany the captures and be written on good quality paper with water and spirit-proof ink (NOT pencil) exactly as for spiders.

Identification of very immature individuals may prove difficult, but most of the 24 British species can be determined fairly easily when adult or in the penultimate instar. Most species mature from about June until the frosts. I am willing to help with identification problems where difficulties arise, but regret I cannot undertake to look through large collections or minute immature specimens.

For details of the study and identification of British Harvestmen see Hillyard P.D. & Sankey J.H.P. 1988 Harvestmen 2nd edition. Synopses of the British Fauna (New Series) no.4. London: Brill for the Linnean Society. For distribution and unrecorded areas see Sankey J.H.P. 1988 Provisional Atlas of the Harvest-Spiders (Arachnida: Opiliones) of the British Isles. Huntingdon: Biological Records Centre.

My address is: 3 Glenrose, Old London Road, Mickleham, Dorking, Surrey. RH5 6BY (tel. 0306 883205)

Readers of this article might like to know that there is a weekend course on Harvestmen on 6-8 September 1991 at Juniper Hall Field Centre. Full details may be obtained from the Warden.

### EUOPHRYS ERRATICA on Trees

In July 1985 I was at White Coppice near Chorley in Lancashire in a small wood of stunted oaks on a rocky hillside. Several of the trees had died, and on one of them I found a number of salticids hiding under loose bark - these later proved to be Euophrys erratica. All the standard reference works which I have consulted give the habitat of this species as walls or stony places. Although a dead tree trunk may be a similar substrate to smooth stone, and although there were plenty of stones scattered about, I thought it worthwhile putting on record that it can occur on trees. (Perhaps dead trees are part of the "etc." in "walls, etc." mentioned in Locket & Millidge Vol.I

Stan Dobson



NOTES FOR S. R. S. RECORDERS

Appeal for Items for the next Newsletter: Having seen the type of article that is acceptable for the SRS Newsletter, would Recorders consider sending their own contribution please. The next issue is due in June, and items should be sent to me by the beginning of May 1991.

Records of Uncommon and Rare Species: Readers of the Newsletter are always interested in the recording of uncommon or rare species in Britain. If you are fortunate enough to make such records, please send me details. For example: Bianor aenescens has been taken in a pitfall trap at Thorne Moors, South Yorkshire. Most of the few previous records are in southern England, but there are two records for south Lancashire and one for central Scotland. Perimones britteni has been taken in pitfall traps at two sites in Caithness during 1990 by Dr. Coulson of Durham University. Full details of these two species records have been sent to Dr. Peter Merrett who has authenticated their determination.

Volunteers are needed to act as Area Organisers for several Counties - see the blanks in the accompanying AO List. The duties of an AO are essentially:

- to receive completed RA65 and GEN7 cards, making sure they are properly filled in and reliable.
- to check, if necessary, the correct identification of uncommon/rare species that are entered on the cards. Specimens can always be sent to one of the senior arachnologists in the case of uncertainty.
- to organise the recording of all parts of their responsible territory, by their own visits or by encouraging others.
- to investigate previously published records for their area.






Extracts of Spider Literature: A lot of progress has been made during the past year in the extraction of data from papers published by arachnologists between 1850 and the present day. Journals covering the whole country and others dealing with a single county or district can provide a wealth of material. Help is required in the following ways:

- searching reports and transactions of local Natural History Societies for useful data and transferring it to either RA65s or GEN7s. A set of the latter can be established and used over a number of years for data from various sources.
- check that extraction from a source you have found has not already been done - write to me to enquire, and also to inform me when a source has been extracted.
- if you do not want to undertake the task of extraction, please photocopy the appropriate article(s) and send to me: I will then take the necessary action.

Identification of Problem Species

This table to help with the separation of female Oedothorax specimens has been compiled from data in Mike Roberts' book, and some SRS Recorders may find it helpful to have this kind of information tabulated.

If any SRS Recorders have prepared similar tables for the separation of problem groups, please consider letting me have a copy for possible inclusion in a future Newsletter.

OEDOTHORAX FEMALES		Epigyne			
		Lar. lines	Central Area	Special features	Other features
Oe. gibbosus		straight convergent	triangular		
Oe. retusus		curved less convergent than Oe. gibb.	uniform coloration	small circular ant. openings dark convex connecting line	l. Tib IV spine = < 1.8 diam Tib IV
Oe. apicatus		"	pale ant. d. median.	no openings no connecting line	l. Tib IV spine = < 2.0 diam Tib IV
Oe. fuscus		parallel slightly convergent anteriorly.	rectangular	smaller sem. vesicle.	Median light abdo. stripe
Oe. apertus		thin lines divergent anteriorly.	"	less sclerotized than Oe. fuscus. faint ant ridges outside each tip.	No median abdo. line



NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF S. R. S. AREA ORGANISERS : March 1991

<u>Vice-County Number and Name</u>	<u>Name and Address of Area Organiser</u>
1 & 2 Cornwall	Dr Colin G Butler, Silver Birches, Lower Porthpean, St Austell, Cornwall PL26 6AU
Scilly Isles	Dr Trevor Hughes, Rimes House, Kingston Bagpuize, Oxon OX13 5AY
3 & 4 Devon	Mr Peter Smithers, 40 Copperfields, Horrabridge, Yelverton, Devon PL20 7UB
5 & 6 Somerset	Mr Francis Farr-Cox, 1 Winchester Road, Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset TA8 1HY
7 & 8 Wiltshire	Mr Richard B Coleman, 44 Roman Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire
9 Dorset	Mr Rowley Snazell, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Furzebrook Research Station, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5AS
10, 11 & 12 Hampshire & Isle of Wight	Mr Rod Allison, The Laurels, Manchester Road, Sway, Lymington, Hants SO4 0AS
13 & 14 Sussex	Mr Chris Topping, Institute of Hort. Research, Worthing Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN17 6LP
15 & 16 Kent	Mr Eric G Philp, 6 Vicarage Close, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7BB
17 Surrey	Mr Martin Askins, 47D Upper Court Road, Epsom, Surrey KT19 8RE
18 & 19 Essex	Mr Peter Harvey, 9 Kent Road, Grays, Essex RM17 6DE
20 Herts	Mr David R Nellist, 198A Park Street Lane, Park Street, St Albans, Herts AL2 2AQ
21 Middlesex	Mr J Edward D Milner, 80 Weston Park, London N8 9TB
22 Berks	
23 Oxon	
24 Bucks	
25 & 26 Suffolk	
27 & 28 Norfolk	Ms Deborah Procter, 60 Bracondale, Norwich NR1 2BE
29 Cambridge	
30 & 31 Beds & Hunts	Mr T Thomas, 142 Selbourne Road, Luton, Beds
32 Northampton	Mr Anthony J White, 25 Shelsley Drive, Parklands, Northampton NN3 1ET
33 & 34 Gloucester	Mr David J R Haigh, Merrivale, 27 St Luke's Road, Cheltenham, Glos. GL53 7SF
35 Monmouth	Ms Cynthia Merrett, 3 River Walk, Llantwit Major, South Glamorgan CF6 9SY
36 Hereford	
37 Worcester	Mr Mike Taylor, The Willows, Lye Head, Rock, Bewdley, Worcs.
38 Warwick	Mr Richard Wright, 70 Norman Road, Rugby, Warks. CV21 1DN
39 Stafford	Mr G Craig Slawson, 20 Queens Road, Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 7LJ

40 Shropshire Mr Mike Taylor (as for 37. Worcs.)  
 41 Glamorgan Ms Cynthia Merrett (as for 35. Monmouth)  
 44 Carmarthen Mr Ian K Morgan, 16 Barn Road, Carmarthen, Dyfed SA31 1DD  
 45 Pembrokeshire Mr Stan Dobson, Moor Edge, Birch Vale,  
 via Stockport SK12 5BX  
 46 Cardiganshire Mr Adrian P Fowles, NCC Plas Gogerdden,  
 Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3EE

(There are no Area Organisers for other Welsh Counties at present)

53 & 54 Lincolnshire Mr Roy Kent, 'Stonehaven', Station Road, Sturton,  
 Brigg, South Humberside DN20 9DJ  
 55 Leics. & Rutland Mr John Crocker, 34 Bramcote Road, Loughborough,  
 Leics LE11 2SA  
 56 Nottingham Mr Lawrence Bee, 1 Charnwood Grove, West Bridgeford,  
 Notts NG2 7NT  
 57 Derbyshire Mr Stan Dobson (as for 45. Pembroke)  
 58 Cheshire  
 59 & 60 Lancashire Mr Chris Felton, c/o Liverpool Museum, William Brown  
 Street, Liverpool L3 8EN  
 61, 62, 63, 64 & 65 Mr Clifford J Smith, 7 Malton Way, Clifton,  
 Yorkshire YO3 6SG  
 66, 67, 68 Durham Dr Steve Rushton, Dept. of Agricultural Zoology,  
 & Northumberland The University, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE1 7RU  
 69 & 70 Cumbria Mr John R Parker, Stone Raise, 42 Lakeland Park,  
 Keswick, Cumbria CA12 4AT  
 71 Isle of Man Mr James Wright, 32 Wythburn Crescent, Carr Mill,  
 St Helens, Merseyside WA11 7HD

#### SCOTLAND

72, 78, 79, 80 & 81 Miss Isobel Baldwin, Royal Museum of Scotland,  
 South-East Scotland Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1JF  
 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, Mr Jim A Stewart, 109 Greenbank Crescent,  
 88, 89, 90, 98 & 102 Edinburgh EH10 5TA  
 East Central Scotland  
 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, Mr David Beaumont, Flat 8, 9 Lorraine Road,  
 99, 100 & 101 Downhill, Glasgow G12 9NZ  
 South-West Scotland  
 91 92, 93, 94 & 95 Mr Mike B Davidson, 25 Rutherford Folds,  
 Inverurie, Aberdeenshire AB5 9JH  
 96, 97 & 103 Mrs Claire Geddes, 1 Groam Farm Cottages,  
 Kirkhill, Inverness IV5 7PB  
 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, Mr David Horsfield, c/o Nature Conservancy Council,  
 109, 110, 111, 112 12 Hope Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 2AS

In cases where there is no Area Organiser named, correspondence should be sent to Clifford J Smith at 7 Malton Way, Clifton York YO3 6SG (Tel 0904 625928)

Records from the Channel Islands are welcome but grid references should be omitted: please send them to Clifford J Smith on RA65s or GEN7s.