

British Arachnological Society



SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME

David R. Nellist
"Roundwood"
198A, Park Street Lane
Park Street,
St Albans
Herts., AL2 2AQ

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Tel 01727.872981

email davidnellist@compuserve.com

1. EDITORIAL.

1.1 Publication of the Provisional Distribution Maps.

1997 was a reasonably good year for records with 1695 RA65 cards being submitted. A further 260 arrived in the first two months of this year. Most of the cards accumulated since 1987 (about 21,000) have been transferred to the Biological Records Centre at Monks Wood where computerisation of the data is now in progress. If you have outstanding records on cards then do please submit those to me as soon as possible. We are still aiming to have provisional maps available in 1999 but there is a good deal of work to be done yet.

Attention must now be turned to records being held on computer. Stan Dobson, who liaises with BRC on computing issues on behalf of the SRS, has produced a document which gives guidance for those Recorders who are keeping records on computer. This rather technical document would have consumed a good deal of space in the Newsletter and so it is being issued separately. It is essential reading for those who wish to submit records on disc and registered Recorders can obtain a copy directly from Stan (at Moor Edge, Birch Vale, High Peak, Derbyshire, SK22 1BX; Tel: 01663. 743551).

1.2. News of Members.

a). We welcome the following new Area Organisers:

Tom Faulds, 2 Sunnyside, Worksop, Notts., S81 7LN, who takes over Nottinghamshire, (VC 56).

Jennifer Newton, Holly House, 94 Main Street, Hornby, Lancaster, Lancs., who takes over MW Yorks., (VC64), and NW Yorks., (VC 65).

John Stanney, 35 Glaisher Drive, Meir Park, Blythe Bridge, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs., who takes over Merioneth., (VC 48).

b). We welcome the following new Recorder:

Trevor Harris, 125 South Parade, Worksop, Notts., S81 0BP.

c). Change of Address:

David Beaumont to RSPB, Scottish Headquarters, 17 Regents Terrace, Edinburgh, EH7 5BN.

Adrian Colston to 15 Lode Lane, Wicken, Ely, Cambs., CB7 5XP.

Mike Davidson to 1 Crowmallie Cottages, Pitcaple, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, AB51 5HR.

Ian Dawson to 100 Hayling Avenue, Little Paxton, St. Neots, Cambs., PE19 4HQ.

Eric Duffey to Chez Gouillard, 87320 Bussiere, Poitevine, France.

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

b). Resignation.

Roy Kent has resigned as Area Organiser for North and South Lincoln, (VCs 53 and 54).

2. NOTES ON FURTHER RECORDS FROM HEREFORDSHIRE. - Wayne Rixom.

44, Edward Avenue, Aldridge, Walsall, W. Midlands, WS9 8AX.

Several interesting spiders have turned up during the last two years of survey work in Herefordshire. In 1996 the most significant discovery was a female Araniella alpica, an RDB2 species. It was recorded in the only segment of the Forest of Dean in Herefordshire at a mixed woodland site at Dancing Green (SO63-20-), and was beaten from a combination of broad-leaved

and coniferous bushes, including yew. There are few records of this species in Britain and this is by far the most northerly locality, according to the records that I have available.

Hyptiotes paradoxus, (RDB2), was beaten from a mature yew at a local trust reserve in the Wye Valley not far from the county boundary. This follows an earlier record of mine in 1993 near Kinver in VC39. Indications are that this species is possibly more widespread in the area as there are a couple of records from an SRS meeting in the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire. It cannot, however, disguise the fact that some 15 yews were searched prior to the discovery on this occasion. A further record of a mature female from the county at Queen's Wood near Ross (SO55-15-) was confirmed in 1997 to the east of the known locations. Again the spider was found only once despite several careful searches. Incidentally, another find during this search was of Ballus chalybeius, not considered to be rare but, in my experience, very local in the Midlands with only a handful of records, many dating back several decades.

Another spider which seems to be turning up more frequently is Glyphesis servulus, originally recorded at a tiny trust reserve close to the Welsh border in 1996. This was followed by three very significant records in 1997. The first was recorded in a pitfall trap at Haugh Wood (SO58-57-), while the second turned up in what I assumed to be a well-covered locality in VC38 - Sutton Park. I was a little sceptical initially, thinking that there might have been some contamination from previous work conducted at the known sites in VC36, but confirmation came with further examples, all male, in subsequent pitfall trapping at the same locality, a marsh adjacent to a stream, which subsequent investigation shows does seem to have certain affinities with the Welsh flora. It could be increasing its range, or it might have been overlooked in the past - pitfall traps are certainly turning it up! I would however doubt that it is anything like widespread due to its specific habitat requirements.

A third linyphiid, Pelecopsis radicolata, (RDB2), turned up during 1997 in traps at Haugh Wood in a marsh whose soil is flushed by seepage of lime-rich water. This site has an interesting history, originally forming part of a very large area of ancient broadleaved woodland. Another spider of interest from this same site is Haplodrassus silvestris (Nb) and also Zilla diodia (Nb), which was surprisingly common in the woods, on or around trees, in the early summer.

The Herefordshire list now stands at 302, double the total of 10 years ago, some 56 species having been added since 1996.

3. Trichoncus affinis Kulczynski, 1894, FROM AN INLAND SITE IN KENT.

- Tony Russell-Smith.

1 Bailiff's Cottages, Sharstead Park, Doddington, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 0JH.

Recent collecting in the Blean Woods complex, near Canterbury in East Kent, has revealed a number of interesting spider records over the past five years. While sorting litter that had accumulated in the base of a recently coppiced chestnut in Church Wood RSPB Reserve (TR115596), at the end of April 1995, a male and three females of what appeared to be Trichoncus affinis were collected. Given the rarity and coastal distribution of this species in Britain, the record appeared sufficiently unlikely that the specimens were sent to Peter Merrett for checking. He kindly confirmed the identification and commented that they were the first inland records from the UK. Another female was taken in a similar micro-habitat in an area of the wood about one km from the first site in November of last year (1997).

Although this rare species is associated with coastal shingle in southern England, Denis (*Notes sur les erigonides XXVIII, Le genre Trichoncus (Araneae), Annales de la Societe entomologique Francaise, 1, 425-477, 1965*) recorded it from a number of woodland locations in France, including the Forêt de Clairmais in Pas-de-Calais which is presumably quite close to Blean as the crow flies. The possibility that it occurs in other woodland sites in southern England cannot, therefore, be excluded.

4. Zelotes petrensis (C. L. Koch, 1839): RECORDS FOR ESSEX AND KENT.
 - Peter Harvey.
 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex, RM16 2YP.

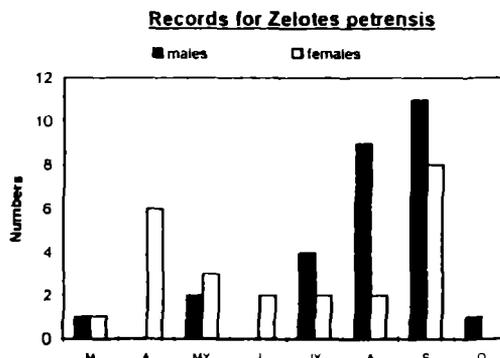
I thought it might be useful to respond to Jonty Denton's note on Zelotes petrensis in Sussex and Surrey in the November 1997 Newsletter, where his own records are of singletons in two sites, and in which he states that this is apparently in keeping with previous information of singletons on chalk or heathy sites. Although my own records only refer to two sites they are not so singular. At Mucking Heath (Orsett Golf Course) in South Essex, I took the species in some numbers along the western edges of the site in ancient, unimproved heath grassland habitat. A total of 23 females and 27 males were taken between March 1990 and May 1991, all in pitfall traps except for the first single female taken by "grubbing around" in grass tufts. Other specimens were encountered but not taken. I have also taken one male and one female at Upper Halling in West Kent, in pitfall traps set in chalk grassland between 25th. August and 23rd. September, 1992.

Mucking Heath is remarkable (in Essex) for its very high diversity of ant species and the high density of ant-hills, indicative of the unimproved nature of the grassland. It has not only proved to be an important site in Essex for many rare spiders, but also for Aculeates (bees and wasps) and Coleoptera (beetles). Despite extensive searching in Essex Zelotes petrensis has not been found elsewhere.

Since some Gnaphosids are known to be associated with ants as prey it occurs to me that this may be relevant to this species. Many Zelotes species are black, evidently well camouflaged for nocturnal activity and are known to be nocturnal hunters. They can however also be seen running in hot sunshine. I have observed Zodarion italicum active in late afternoon and evening in summer months, even carrying Lasius niger prey, and wonder whether this might be related to the ants' slower activity as temperatures drop towards the end of the day making them easier to catch. Could this be true also for ant-hunting Gnaphosid spiders ?

In Essex we have found that even though the commonest Zelotes species, Z. latreillei, can be found sparingly by sight running in the open, or by grubbing around in grass roots, pitfall traps represent a much better way of recording the species. Pitfall trapping has shown the species to occur in many open grassland habitats in the county including roadside verges, sometimes in surprising numbers. Pitfall trapping has also been a successful method of recording other Zelotes species in Essex.

	males	females
March	1	1
April		6
May	2	3
June		2
July	4	2
August	9	2
September	11	8
October	1	



5. ABNORMAL METATARSAL TRICHOBOTHRIA IN Micrargus herbigradus
 (Blackwall, 1854). - Paul Lee.
 155 Corton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 4PR.

In early April 1997, the British Myriapod Group/British Isopod Survey Group held their annual meeting at St John's Town of Dalry. One of the sites I visited during the weekend was Mullock Bay, part of a large area of restricted-access MOD land south of Kirkudbright. The shingle and grassland at this site proved rich in invertebrates and, although strong winds and driving rain made collecting difficult, a small number of spiders were taken including what turned out to be a male specimen of

Micrargus herbigradus. Identification of the specimen took longer than would be expected as the specimen clearly had a trichobothrium on the metatarsus of the fourth leg (TmIV 0.35), whereas both Locket and Millidge, and Roberts, rely on the absence of TmIV to correctly identify the species from their keys. To further complicate the picture TmIV appeared to be absent from the left side and, although at first I assumed it had merely become detached, careful searching by both myself and David Nellist has failed to locate any indication of its presence. David tells me that other species, for example Macrargus rufus, are sometimes found with TMIV, but he cannot recall coming across a left-right anomaly of this sort. Have any other Recorders noted the presence or absence of TmIV where it would not be expected, or the left-right anomaly described here ? Can anyone shed light on the causes of such anomalies ?

6. TWO NEW WELSH RECORDS FOR THE NATIONALLY NOTABLE LINYPHIID SPIDER
Micrargus laudatus (O. P.-Cambridge, 1881). - Richard Gallon.
 23A Roumania Crescent, Craig-y-Don, Llandudno, Co.Conwy, LL30 1UP.

During the past two years I have collected Micrargus laudatus in North Wales on two occasions. My first encounter with this spider was a female collected on the carboniferous limestone hill called Nant-y-Gamar (SH798809). This specimen was discovered at the interface between a limestone cliff and overgrowing grass, on the 1st. December 1996. A couple of months later (15th. February, 1997) I was fortunate to take this species again, but this time on the Great Orme (SH775832). Although the Great Orme is geologically similar to Nant-y-Gamar this second female was found in a different situation. As I was working the barren rocky spoil heaps from the Roman copper mines I happened upon it clinging to the underside of one of the stones.

Although my records are not new for Caernarvonshire (*Locket et.al., British Spiders, Vol.III, 1974*) I suspect that my Great Orme record represents the most northerly site for this species in Britain (the Great Orme being the most northerly point of Caernarvonshire, 53° 20'N). This contradicts the comment made by Wayne Rixom and Mike Taylor (*BAS Newsletter, No. 80, 5-7, 1997*) who suggested that the most northerly site was at Kinver in the West Midlands (52° 27'N).

From published data (*Locket, Millidge and Merrett, British Spiders, Vol.3,1974; Merrett, BAS Bulletins, 8(1),1989 and 10(1), 1995; Merrett, NCC Report, 1990; Rixom and Taylor BAS Newsletter,80, 1997*) Micrargus laudatus has been recorded in the vice-counties shown below. Note that some of the older records are based on counties rather than the Watsonian vice-counties. For these records I have added a question mark, and numbered the VC's which are now incorporated within these counties.

Hertfordshire (20)	Kent (15/16?)	Cornwall (1/2?)	Devon 4(3)	Dorset (9)
Isle of Wight (10)	Hampshire (11/12?)	Sussex (13/14?)	Surrey (17)	
Northants(32?)*	Staffordshire (39)	Merionethshire (48)\$	Caernarvonshire (49)\$	

*...indicates a doubtful record (*Merrett, NCC Report, 1990*).
 \$...indicates old records (*Merrett, NCC Report,1990*).

Peter Merrett in his NCC Report (1990) indicates that this species is essentially a southern species which is found on sparsely vegetated heathland and stony calcareous grassland, especially near the coast. This habitat description fits my records well (NB: both my sites are essentially coastal). He also notes that it is adult from May to August. My winter records suggest that females probably overwinter or possibly have a winter generation.

Thanks are due to David Nellist for informing me of the information present in Dr Peter Merrett's 1990 NCC Report.

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My thanks go to those who have supplied the notes for this issue. Newsletter No. 31 will be published in July and I will be very pleased to receive articles and notes for that issue.

PLEASE NOTE THE ADDITION OF THE NAME "Roundwood" TO MY ADDRESS

David R. Nellist. National Organiser

"Roundwood", 198A Park Street Lane, Park Street, St Albans, Herts., AL2 2AQ.