

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.freemove.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 *Baryphma pratense* (Blackwall) (Linyphiidae) new for the county

by Scotty Dodd¹ & Jonty Denton²

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 records 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.

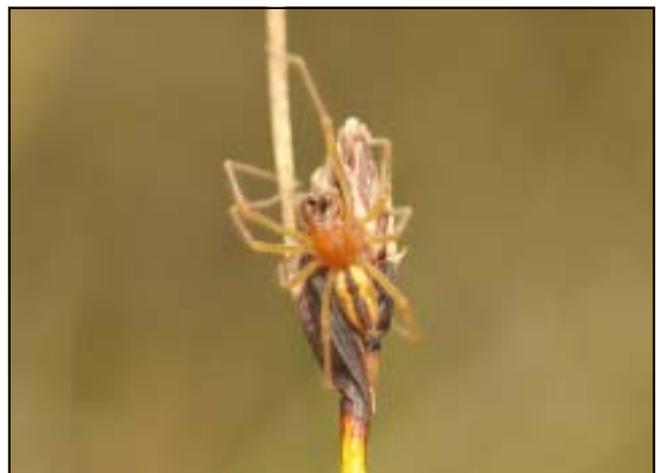


Figure 1. *Cheiracanthium pennyi* © J.S.Denton 2010.

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; *Neriere 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.

References

Harvey, P.R., Nellist, D.R. & Telfer, M.G. (eds.). 2002. *Provisional atlas of spiders (Arachnida, Araneae)*. Volumes 1 & 2. Biological Records Centre, Huntingdonshire.
Spider and Harvestman Recording Scheme website <http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/> - Accessed January 2011.

¹ 1 Pine Cottages, Harpers Road, Ash. GU12 6BZ. jaapiella@yahoo.co.uk.

² 31 Thorn lane, Four Marks, Hants, GU34 5BX. jontydenton@aol.com

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 Caesar'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.

31 Thorn Lane, Four Marks, Hampshire, GU34 5BX Email: JontyDenton@aol.com

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.

31 Thorn Lane, Four Marks, Hampshire, GU34 5BX Email: JontyDenton@aol.com

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.

9 Stalham Road, Hoveton, Norwich NR12 8DG. Email: petenich@btinternet.com

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>

23A Roumania Crescent, LLANDUDNO, North Wales, LL30 1UP.

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.

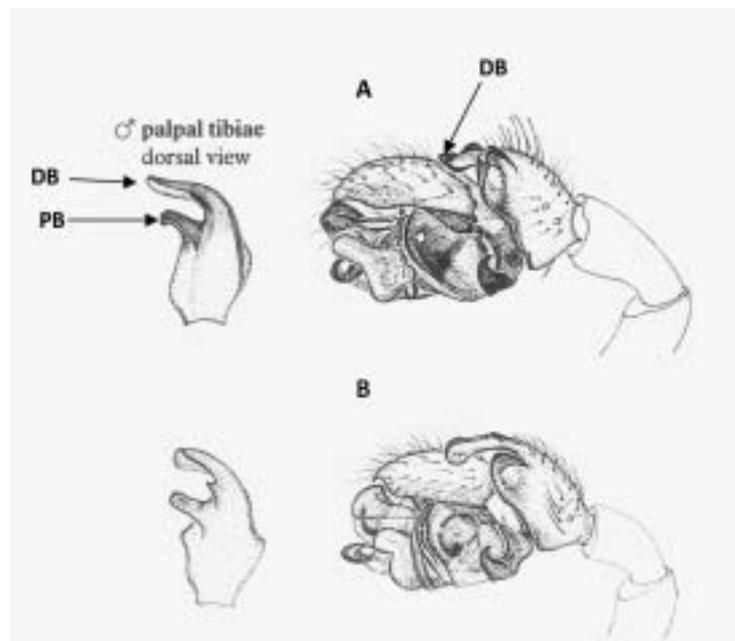


Figure 2A. Palpal tibia and palp in lateral view of *E. acuminata*. **2B** Palpal tibia and palp in lateral view of *E. congenera*.
DB = distal branch of tibial apophysis, PB = proximal branch of tibial apophysis.

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 form 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.

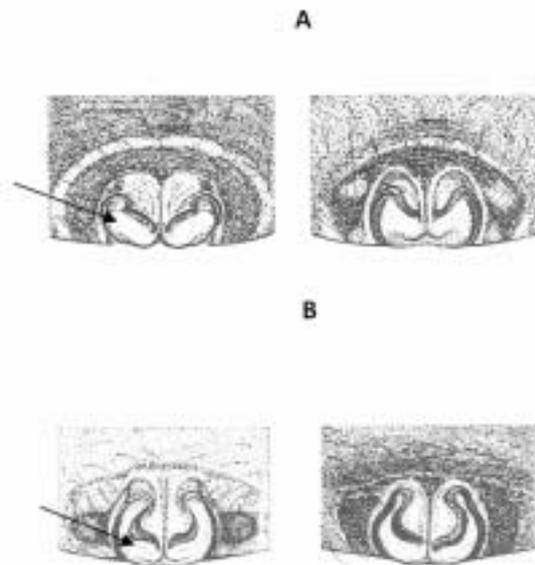


Figure 2A. Epigynes of *E. acuminata*, ventral view. **2B.** Epigynes of *E. congenera*, ventral view. Note shapes of symmetrical ovoid structures on either side of mid-line of epigynes.

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.

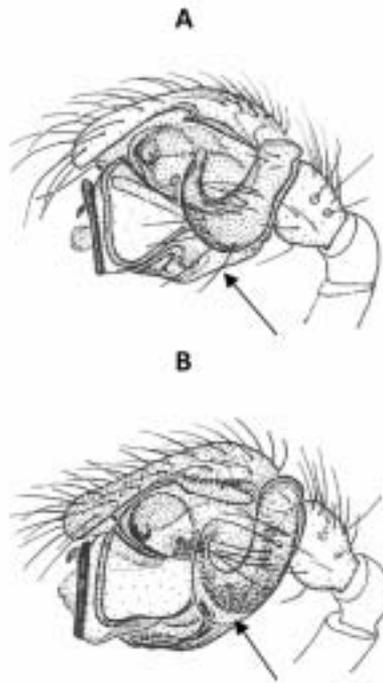


Figure 1A. Male palp of *Bathyphantes gracilis*, lateral view. **1B.** Male palp of *B. parvulus*, lateral view. Arrows indicate ventral setae on paracymbium.

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.

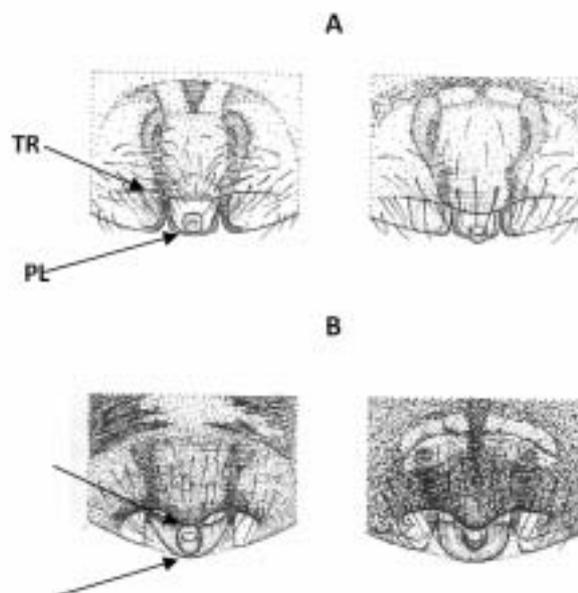


Figure 2A. *Bathyphantes gracilis*, female epigynes, **2B.** *B. parvulus*, female epigynes. TR = transverse ridge, PL = posterior lobe.

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.

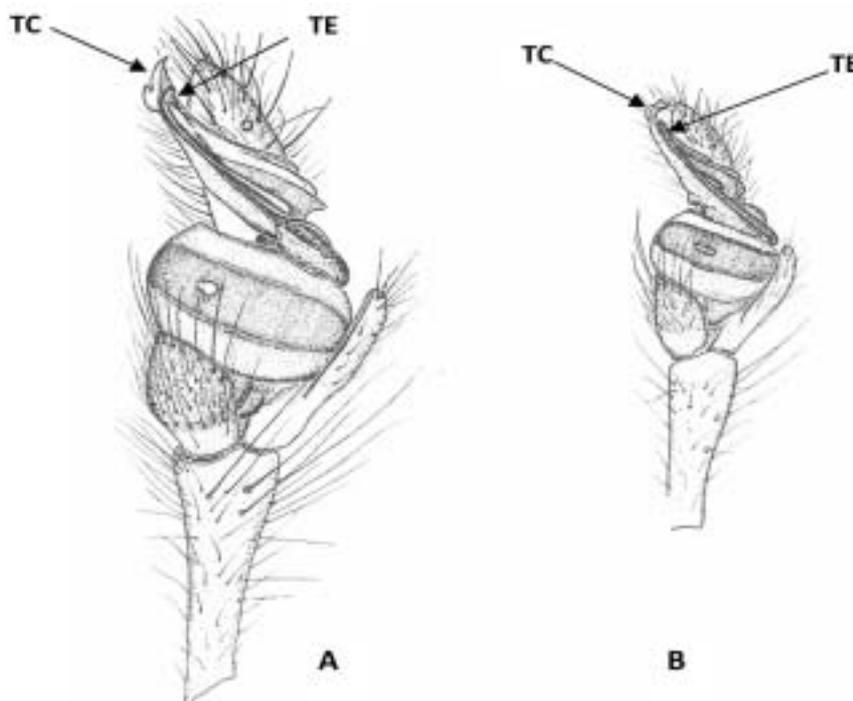


Figure 1A. Male palp of *T. extensa*, lateral view, **1B.** Male palp of *T. pinicola*, lateral view.
TC = tip of conductor, TE = tip of embolus

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).

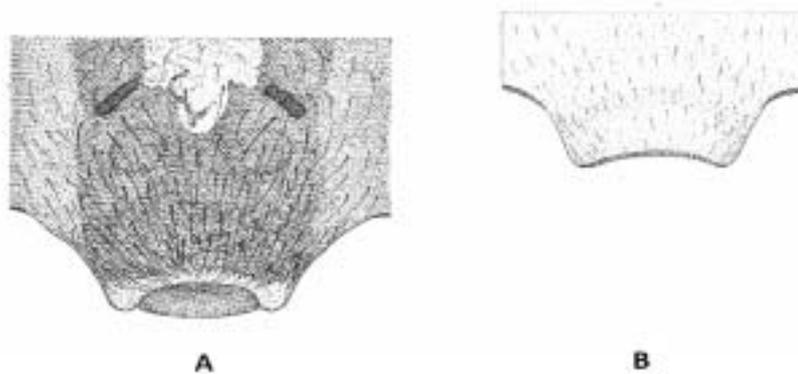


Figure 2A. Female epigyne of *T. extensa*. **2B.** Female epigyne of *T. pinicola*.

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.

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