

Spider Recording Scheme News

Summer 2021, No. 100

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Editorial

by Matt Prince

Thank you to all those who have submitted records so far. Please continue to submit records to your Area Organisers as before, and Area Organisers please synchronise your mapmate records with my CUK "brb". Records in other electronic formats, such as Excel spreadsheets are also acceptable.

I am pleased to announce that Jeremy Poole has taken over as Area Organiser for Dorset, his mapmate CUK is "cb0" (cee-bee-zero). An exciting county to be involved in. Also pleased to announce John Partridge is picking up the Area Organiser role for Worcester, his mapmate CUK is "1hj". It might not have quite the variety of habitats as Dorset, but it still has a substantial list, with hopefully yet more to be discovered.

Still seeking organisers are the following vice counties: South (3) and North (4) Devon, Berkshire (22), Gloucester East (33) and West (34), Hereford (36), Staffordshire (39), Leicestershire and Rutland (55), Nottinghamshire (56), Derbyshire (57), Channel Islands (113).

As noted last time, please contact me if you are interested in taking over the Area Organiser role for any of these counties, all rich in interesting spiders, all under-recorded, and all would benefit from even the most basic point of contact. Great experience, whilst valued, is not essential, as there is a network of experts that can help with difficult determinations, conservation issues, etc.

Also, please help future issues by sending *SRS News* articles to Richard Gallon. Short or long, on your interesting discoveries and observations. **The newsletter depends on your contributions!**

***Trachyzelotes pedestris* (C. L. Koch, 1837) New to Hertfordshire, VC 20**

by David Carr

Over the past 12 months I have made several visits to an abandoned gravel extraction site in Broxbourne, Hertfordshire (TL3706). During one such visit on 5th May 2021, I spent some time turning over stones, wood and other general debris that had been left on concrete machinery foundations. Under one of the stones, I found an adult female of *Trachyzelotes pedestris*, a species apparently not recorded previously in Hertfordshire.

Other species that I have recorded at this site which are uncommon in Hertfordshire include *Ero aphana*, *Xerolycosa nemoralis*, *Haplodrassus signifer* and *Salticus zebraneus*. On several occasions I have found *S. zebraneus* by beating low branches of the only pine tree on the site.

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Lockdown Spidering

by Mike Towns

Like many others, during the Spring 2020 lockdown I did some work on recording the ground- and tree-dwelling spiders and harvestmen in my garden. However, rather than just confining my survey to the lockdown, I carried it through from April to October.

Mine is a big garden by modern standards, about 650 m² to the rear and backing on to a mature semi-natural oak/ash woodland on a steep scarp slope, and to the front is a downward-sloping area of approximately 180 m². There are hedge-style habitats along the boundaries with the adjoining houses, up to 2.5 metres high in places, and areas of long grass at both the front and back that I leave un-mown until late summer. I'm not into flowerbeds!

Single, nested plastic cup pitfall traps were placed in three of the boundary hedges, in a long-grass area at the front of the house (~80 m²), and in the woodland edge under the tree canopy. I also put single tree-trunk pitfall traps on a mature hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*); a domestic apple tree; an ornamental evergreen, *Cornus capitata*; and a semi-mature Bishop's pine tree (*Pinus muricata*). All were emptied weekly.

I used two types of tree-trunk traps. A small yoghurt pot trap (Fig. 1), and a water bottle trap (Fig. 2). The square, translucent yoghurt pot (about 5 x 6 cm deep) is suspended between two nails and can be lifted out, emptied and refilled. The bottle trap is a cut-off from a 1.5 litre water bottle (~7 cm wide), pushed slightly flat against the trunk for broader contact, and kept in place with wire wrapped around the trunk and some extra support from duct tape. It is emptied by unscrewing the cap and allowing the contents to drain into a container. This year I'm experimenting with using square juice bottles for the bottle traps, which may make it easier to attach the bottle to the tree trunk using a staple gun rather than wire, and



Figure 1. Yoghurt-pot tree trunk trap on *Cornus*.
© Mike Towns.



Figure 2. Water bottle tree trunk trap on Hawthorn.
© Mike Towns.

allow easier attachment to larger size trees – as well as looking slightly less Heath Robinson! I've used the yoghurt pot traps elsewhere, and while they don't catch many individuals they often turn up unusual species.

The species list I obtained is not a complete inventory of spiders from the garden, a lot more could be collected through hand searching, sweeping, beating etc., but it was a reasonably comprehensive exercise.

A total of 41 spiders and 12 harvestmen were taken (13 harvestmen if several undetermined immature *Dicranopalpus* are included). Of these, 30 spiders and 12 harvestmen were taken in the ground-based pitfall traps, and 11 spiders and 2 harvestmen in the tree trunk traps (see Tables 1–3).

Comment

The most obvious thing of note was the abundance of *Pardosa amentata* in the Wood Edge habitat and the sudden falling off in numbers quite early in the 'season'. The Wood Edge trap was set among ivy and leaf litter under the overhang of the tree canopy, but there was a 2-metre-deep strip of ruderal vegetation to the front consisting of mixed bare ground and tall, mostly nettle-based herbage with straggly bramble. This strip was trimmed to ground level in March before the growing season fully started. Beyond this ruderal strip was a lightly mown wide grass path area and then a large area of long grass. All the *P. amentata* in the Wood Edge, bar one male on 14 May, were taken in the weeks of the 16, 23 and 30 of April. As the growing season progressed, it seemed that rather than favouring the woodland edge, *P. amentata* preferred the more open grass habitat and was reluctant to penetrate the rapidly growing fringe of tall ruderal vegetation at the woodland edge, or to enter the woodland. From casual observation, I noted *P. amentata* as being present on the lightly mown path areas between the pockets of long grass, retreating to the long grass/ruderal edges on disturbance, but appearing to avoid exploiting the inner areas.

No *P. amentata* were taken in the Long Grass habitat at the front of the house or in the abutting Hog Hedge (so named because hedgehogs nested there one summer), although one individual was taken in the nearby Bin Hedge that abuts a concrete drive. The eight individuals of *P. amentata* in the Sedge Hedge were taken from 23 April to 14 May.

The Sedge Hedge (Fig. 3) partially adjoins a mown area and is a mix of open floor with leaf litter from *Cornus* and Holly (*Ilex aquifolia*) and a few other shrubs.

Table 1. Spiders from ground-based pitfall traps

Species	WE	BH	SH	HH	LG
<i>Bathyphantes gracilis</i>				1	7
<i>Clubiona terrestris</i>	1		1	2	
<i>Cnephalocotes obscurus</i>			1		1
<i>Dicymbium nigrum</i>				4	4
<i>Dicymbium tibiale</i>					3
<i>Diplostyla concolor</i>		10			
<i>Enoplognatha ovata</i>		2			
<i>Erigone atra</i>	1				3
<i>Erigone dentipalpis</i>	1				7
<i>Ero furcata</i>		1			
<i>Gongylidium rufipes</i>		1	1		
<i>Metellina mendei</i>		1			
<i>Micrargus subaequalis</i>		1			3
<i>Microneta viaria</i>		2			
<i>Monocephalus fuscipes</i>		2		5	31
<i>Neriere clathrata</i>	2		2	1	1
<i>Ozyptila praticola</i>				4	
<i>Pachygnatha degeeri</i>		3		1	20
<i>Palliduphantes ericaeus</i>			1	2	
<i>Pardosa amentata</i>	116	1	8		
<i>Pardosa nigriceps</i>				1	
<i>Pardosa prativaga</i>	1				
<i>Pisaura mirabilis</i>	3				
<i>Stemonyphantes lineatus</i>		4		1	2
<i>Tegenaria saeva</i>	1				
<i>Tenuiphantes flavipes</i>	3	7	1	9	1
<i>Tenuiphantes pallidus</i>	3				
<i>Tenuiphantes tenuis</i>		1		1	25
<i>Tenuiphantes zimmermanni</i>	2	6	2	11	
<i>Trochosa ruricola</i>			1		
<i>Trochosa terricola</i>		1	1	2	9
Species totals [31]	11	15	10	14	14

Key: WE = Wood Edge; BH = Bin Hedge; SH = Sedge Hedge; HH = Hog Hedge; LG = Long Grass

There is a short, linear cluster of dense, tall-growing Pendulous sedge (*Carex pendula*) at the open edge of the hedge where the trap was set, which had been lightly cut back over the winter. The Sedge Hedge trap was generally poorer in species than the other sites, in part due to leaves regularly blocking the trap, despite my best efforts! It was also damper than the other hedges and was the only place where *Trochosa ruricola* occurred. The harvestman *Nelima gothica* was present here as well as at the Wood edge. There are only three records for *Nelima gothica* in North Devon, further to the south and west, so this survey extends its recorded range.

Species confined to the Wood Edge were, *Pardosa prativaga* and *Tenuiphantes pallidus*, and although *Pisaura mirabilis* was taken only at the Wood Edge trap, a couple of nursery tents and adults were observed in the Long Grass habitat and other uncut grass areas in the garden later in the summer.

Species	Haw	Bis	Cor	App
<i>Clubiona comta</i>	3		2	2
<i>Drapetisca socialis</i>			1	
<i>Harpactea hombergi</i>		2		
<i>Hypomma cornutum</i>	1			
<i>Labulla thoracica</i>			1	
<i>Lepthyphantes minutus</i>	1	3		
<i>Linyphia triangularis</i>			1	
<i>Metellina segmentata</i>		1		
<i>Palliduphantes ericaeus</i>			1	
<i>Steatoda nobilis</i> (imm)		8		
<i>Theridion mystaceum</i>	1			
Species totals [11]	4	4	5	1

Key: Haw = Hawthorn (trap height 1.5 m); Bis = Bishop's Pine (trap height 1.4 m); Cor = *Cornus* (trap height 0.7 m); App = Apple (trap height 1.8 m)

The Bin Hedge (Fig. 4) (named because it contains our rubbish bin store) is a dense, more thickly grown, wide hedge (3.5 m) with native Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), native Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), Guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), some ornamental shrubs, and a backing of tall ornamental privet. Ivy with leaf litter and light herbage covers the hedge floor. *Diplostyla concolor* occurred only here and was the most abundant spider taken, and it was the only site for the harvestman *Odiellus spinosus*, which is new to North Devon. I'd seen it previously in the vicinity of the house but hadn't realised it was a new record. Other species taken only in the Bin Hedge were, *Enoplognatha ovata*, *Ero furcata* and *Metellina menzei*.

Another harvestman new to North Devon is *Oligolophus hanseni*, taken from the Hog Hedge. I hadn't seen this species for several decades so was pleased to find it here in my garden. The Hog Hedge floor is a shady mix of bare soil, ivy, leaf litter and sparse herbs under various ornamental trees and shrubs next to a very thick mat of mature ivy completely covering, right down to the ground, a 1.5m high wooden fence. The crab spider *Ozyptila praticola*, sparsely recorded in Devon, was also present here. I'd found this species previously in a similar hedge habitat with standing trees on a local retail estate.



Figure 3. Sedge Hedge along the left, Wood edge at the back. © Mike Towns.

Species	WE	BH	SH	HH	LG
<i>Anelasmaocephalus cambridgei</i>	2	2	2	2	
<i>Lacinius ephippiatus</i>	7	2	3	37	6
<i>Leiobunum blackwalli</i>	1	1	1		1
<i>Nelima gothica</i>	1		1		
<i>Nemastoma bimaculatum</i>	2	5	1	8	1
<i>Odiellus spinosus</i>		1			
<i>Oligolophus hanseni</i>				1	
<i>Oligolophus tridens</i>	2	1			
<i>Opilio saxatilis</i>		1			1
<i>Paroligolophus agrestis</i>	1		2		
<i>Platybunus triangularis</i>	8	5	5	5	5
Species totals	8	8	7	5	5

Harvestmen species in tree trunk pitfall traps

Leiobunum rotundum on *Cornus* trunk (1)

Paroligolophus agrestis on Hawthorn trunk (1)

Key: WE = Wood Edge; BH = Bin Hedge; SH = Sedge Hedge; HH = Hog Hedge; LG = Long Grass

The Hog Hedge (Fig. 5) was also notable for the large number of *Lacinius ephippiatus* harvestmen trapped. Numbers peaked in July, possibly from 'swarming' together for mating.

Tenuiphantes tenuis occurred in abundance in the Long Grass habitat, which is contiguous with the Hog Hedge, as did *Monocephalus fuscipes* and *Pachygnatha degeeri*. *Trochosa terricola* was the only lycosid here, and in higher numbers than elsewhere.

The harvestman *Anelasmaocephalus cambridgei* was taken in all the hedge habitats and the Woodland Edge, but not in the Long Grass habitat. The B.A.S. species summary suggests calcareous soils are the habitat for this species, but my garden soils are best described as neutral. The associated B.A.S. broad habitat data shows the recorded habitats are rather more varied than the text suggests, but other soil compositions can emulate calcareousness (P. Harvey, pers. comm.), although it might simply be the availability of snails that determines



Figure 4. Bin hedge. © Mike Towns.



Figure 5. Long Grass with Bishop's Pine, looking towards Hog Hedge. © Mike Towns.

presence or absence of this species (R. Gallon, pers. comm.).

The tree trunk traps yielded a number of sparsely recorded species for North Devon: *Drapetisca socialis*, *Hypomma cornutum*, *Labulla thoracica*, *Lepthyphantes minutus* and *Theridion mystaceum*. But judging by the much greater number of records for these species in South Devon, all are probably more common than records suggest. I was surprised that only one spider species, *Clubiona comta*, was taken on the apple tree despite it being forty or fifty years old with good, rough bark.

Palliduphantes ericaeus was the only spider taken in both ground-based and tree trunk pitfalls. The trunk trap on the *Cornus* where it was taken was only 70 cm up from the ground, so the pendulous sedge at its foot eventually grew above the height of the trap, probably allowing the spider to access the trap.

The final item of note was the appearance from late August to October of a number of well-grown immature *Steatoda nobilis* in the Bishop's pine tree trunk trap. This species is common in and around my house and in the local area. As no specimens were taken from the tree before August, it seems likely that these juveniles were seeking places for overwintering. At around 25 years old, the tree has deep fissures in the bark with plenty of potential hiding places.

All in all, doing my garden was an interesting exercise. I was quite pleased to find so many species, some of them of note, and it illustrated the surprising variety of habitats that can be found in an untidy garden setting. There are plenty more spiders to be found, and the woodland beckons, but I want to save that as my project for retirement rather than during yet more lockdowns!

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Peter Harvey and Richard Gallon for comments on *Anelasmacephalus cambridgei*.

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***Phaeoecdus braccatus* (L. Koch, 1866) New to Essex**

by David Carr

During a general recording field meeting organized by the Essex Field Club to Middlewick Ranges, Colchester in

North Essex (VC 19), on the 28th June 2021, participants visited a heathy acid grassland area of gorse scrub, interspersed with sparsely vegetated patches with a sandy substrate (TM0122). By grubbing among the stems of small clumps of grass growing on one of these sparsely vegetated areas I found a spider which, on cursory examination, I thought might be an adult female of *Asagena phalerata*. Peter Harvey had found *A. phalerata* during a visit to this site several weeks previously (second Essex record for this species).

On examination of this spider the next day under the microscope, it was immediately apparent that it was the Nationally Rare Gnaphosidae species *Phaeoecdus braccatus*, a species not recorded previously in Essex. I sent the specimen to Peter Harvey who kindly confirmed my identification.

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***Ozyptila simplex* New to the North Lancashire Coast**

by Chris Workman

On 16th May 2021 members of the North Lancashire Wildlife Group gathered to find interesting flora and fauna of the coastline at Middleton Sands SD417570. The area is a grazed saltmarsh, extending onto the extensive sands of Morecambe Bay. At the Extreme High-Water mark there is a west-facing artificial bank, 2–3 m high, of broken Carboniferous limestone rocks (10 to 30 cm 'diameter') protecting the adjacent pastoral farmland (Figs. 1–2). The EHW strandline contains partially degraded wood and fibrous plant matter with relatively little seaweed (Fig. 3). The unfortunately normal amount of plastic litter is also apparent.

It was in this high-water strandline habitat that I was hand searching for spiders by turning over randomly selected stones or wood and fibres. The most common species seen on this warm (for N. Lancashire – air temperature 18°C), sunny morning was the salticid *Heliophanus cupreus*. However, I also collected a single small thomisid, later identified as *Ozyptila simplex* (Figs. 4–5). The literature indicated that this was highly unlikely, so I contacted the vice-county recorder, Richard Burkmar, who confirmed the identification. He added that this is the



Figure 1. General view of habitat – artificial stone embankment. © Chris Workman.



Figure 2. Stone embankment.
© Chris Workman.



Figure 3. EHW strand line detail with sample tube 50x15 mm. © Chris Workman.

most northerly British record and the only record north of an approximate line between the Severn and the Wash. Is this a case of under-recording or the effects of habitat warming?

The local site aspect would indicate warmer than normal localised temperatures due to the substrate nature, angle of slope enhancing direct insolation, and with zero shading. However, how the specimen arrived there (ballooning?) and whether it is an isolated specimen or part of a breeding population can only be ascertained by further sampling. A second visit to the site on 1st June



Figure 4. *Ozyptila simplex* male. Dorsal carapace showing clavate hairs. © Chris Workman.



Figure 5. *Ozyptila simplex* male. Palp, ventral view.
© Chris Workman.

failed to find further specimens. I hope to continue visiting the site to build up a better picture of the spider fauna there.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to Richard Burkmar for helping with the identification and encouragement to further promote my interest in spider ecology.

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***Diplocephalus protuberans* (O. P. - Cambridge, 1875) New to Caernarvonshire, North Wales**

by Richard C. Gallon

In the last S.R.S. News I reported on the discovery of *Diplocephalus protuberans* (O. P. -Cambridge, 1875) as new to Denbighshire (Gallon, 2021). Given that I had only found this species once before I was delighted to find it again this year.

I was attending a Bioblitz with work at Gwern Gof Isaf farm in Snowdonia on the 17th July 2021. The weather was unseasonably hot, so I focused my attention to sampling amongst the shingle and cobbles of a small stream (SH68816007), benefiting from the dabbled shade of small willow trees fringing this water course (Fig. 1).

Only five spider species were discovered amongst the un-vegetated cobbles: *Oedothorax fuscus*, *Oedothorax*



Figure 1. Willow-fringed upland stream behind Bioblitz stand. © Richard Gallon.

agrestis, *Tenuiphantes tenuis*, *Leptorhoptrum robustum*, and a single female *Diplocephalus protuberans* which represents the first record for Caernarvonshire.

Reference

Gallon, R. C. 2021. *Diplocephalus protuberans* (O. P. - Cambridge, 1875) new to Denbighshire, North Wales. *S.R.S. News. No. 99. In Newsl. Br. arachnol. Soc.* 150: 12.

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A New Site Record for *Minicia marginella* (Wider, 1834) in Cumbria

by Richard C. Gallon

On the 21st June 2021 I visited Butterburn Flow with other arachnologists to confirm the continued presence of the Nationally Rare linyphiid *Minicia marginella*. Richard Wilson (2016) had surveyed this population here several years ago, so it was with great relief to confirm that this rare spider was still present in good numbers (Figs. 1–2). These records will be detailed more fully in a future article covering survey work in Cumbria and Northumbria.

A week later on the 28th June 2021 I called in at Drumburgh Moss NNR, *en route* to survey spiders in Scotland. Given the length of time it would take to drive north, my time at Drumburgh was limited. Scrutinising aerial images of the site I decided to head directly to what appeared to be relatively un-modified raised bog surface, walking past previously-cut marginal areas which had been banded to retain the bog's water.

I selected an area of bog (NY25605848) with large hummocks of cranberry, moss and heather (Fig. 3). Using a Stihl G-vac vacuum sampler I recovered 20 spider species from this habitat, including distinctive sub-adults of *Taranucnus setosus* and *Hypsosinga albobittata*. Some of the tiny pale linyphiids on the sample tray looked familiar, but I did not have time to examine them in the field.

On my return from Scotland I was pleased to discover that my Drumburgh Moss sample contained two adult male and two adult female *Minicia marginella*. This represents only the fourth British locality for this species.

Minicia marginella was first recorded from Britain in 1987 at the base of chalk cliffs near Dover (Snazell, 1991, 1992). In 2014 it was discovered at Butterburn Flow, an



Figure 1. *Minicia marginella* adult male from Butterburn Flow. © Richard Gallon.



Figure 2. *Minicia marginella* adult female from Butterburn Flow. © Richard Gallon.



Figure 3. *Minicia marginella* habitat at Drumburgh Moss NNR. © Richard Gallon.

upland acidic mire (Wilson, 2016). A single sub-adult male was collected at Bettisfield Moss from raised bog hummocks on schwingmoor (Gallon, 2018a, 2018b). The Drumburgh Moss record reported here was also associated with hummocks above a bog surface, as at the two other British bog sites for this species.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Kevin Scott (Cumbria Wildlife Trust) for granting survey permission for Drumburgh Moss.

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