

Spider Recording Scheme News

Autumn 2015, No. 83

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. 84 will be published in Spring 2016. Please send contributions by the end of February 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

As always, 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.

Spider news

After the reports in the last *SRS News* of Pip Collyer's discovery of the linyphiid spider *Syedra myrmicarum* at Winterton Dunes in Norfolk and Jonty Denton's discovery of *Clubiona leucaspis* near Guildford in Surrey, Ian Dawson has remarkably found another male *Syedra myrmicarum* in a churchyard in Bedfordshire, and both his article on this discovery and Tom Thomas' article on *Anyphaena sabina* and *Cryptachaea blattea* in the Natural History Museum gardens can be found later in this newsletter.

A male *Philodromus albidus/rufus* found by Alan Wilkinson at a site in North Hampshire (VC12) is confirmed as *Philodromus rufus* sens. str., so this is the first confirmed record away from the recent ones in South Essex. This is an extremely difficult species pair where there is a definite need for confirmation of both male and female *P. rufus* by comparison with reliably identified reference material and by dissection in females.

The discovery of the clubionid *Clubiona caerulescens* in Lincolnshire reported by Annette Binding in this issue is also exciting, representing an opportunity to study this very rare species.

Spider records

We now have 988,510 spider records in total in MapMate. About 417,415 have at least some site-based phase 2 habitat information.

Submission of records through the website

We continue to receive records for a number of 'easily recognisable' species, including further *Zoropsis spinimana* records, but the vast majority of records now result from the SRS "contact us" link which has replaced the BAS website SRS link. There is the usual flood of enquiries in late summer and autumn when people start to notice garden spiders and *Zygiella x-notata* 'false widows'. **A large proportion of these members of the public believe their spiders could be dangerous!!** This is the sad result of sustained media misinformation about 'false widow' spiders.

We are very grateful to Geoff Oxford for producing two more 'easily recognisable' spiders pages, for *Uloborus plumipes* and *Paidiscura pallens*, to add to the ones already available and we have plans to add more.

Difficult species

Many thanks to Mike Davidson for producing guidance

on *Dictyna* identification, published in the Summer *SRS News* and on the website. This issue adds guidance on the identification of the British *Scotina* species very kindly provided by Tony Russell-Smith.

Website visitors

Since the Spider Recording Scheme website went live in August 2010 until the website moved to a new server in early April 2014 we had 156,746 visits from 104,781 users, with 868,879 page views from 169 countries/territories. In the 18 months to early October since the move to a new server, we have had to date 131,582 visits from 94,037 users, with 602,263 page views from 175 countries/territories.

Species pdf reports

The means for a species report pdf to be generated on the species pages of the website went live for all users in November 2014. A system has now been in place since 12 March this year to record each time a website visitor generates a species report, and since 23 and 25 April a system is also in place to record downloads from the website. Since 12th March there have been over 14,000 downloads for 700 species of spider and harvestmen. The top 10 downloads are for *Steatoda nobilis*, *Pardosa agricola*, *Segestria florentina*, *Pseudeuophrys lanigera*, *Nothopantes horridus*, *Misumena vatia*, *Pisaura mirabilis*, *Argiope bruennichi*, *Ero aphana* and *Steatoda bipunctata*.

Syedra myrmicarum in Bedfordshire

by Ian Dawson

While searching primarily for barkflies (Psocoptera) I collected some damp aerial litter lodged low down – less than one metre above the ground – in the rather open central branched trunk of a *Thuja* at TL16215307 in the churchyard of St. Peter's Church, Tempsford, Bedfordshire on 10th October 2015 for sieving at home. Initial results were disappointing with very few invertebrates other than numerous small springtails and a number of ants. One of the few spiders was a pale-coloured adult male linyphiid which I assumed on general size and appearance would prove to be *Lepthyphantes pallidus*, and which I collected directly into alcohol.

When I came to look at it under the microscope it was clearly an unfamiliar species and proved impossible to match to the British literature. The paracymbium furnished with a row of teeth pointed initially to the genus *Centromerus*, but having failed to find any possible

matches among the European species of *Centromerus* on the website **Araneae: Spiders of Europe** (Nentwig *et al.*) I ran the spider through the generic key in Lockett & Millidge: the large posterior eyes appeared to exclude *Centromerus* and instead pointed to *Syedra* though the spider was clearly not *S. gracilis*. I returned to Nentwig *et al.* to check other European species of *Syedra*, and bingo! - the paracymbium of *Syedra myrmicarum* was a perfect match for my spider. The palps were partially expanded which made comparison with illustrations somewhat tricky, but all the other features of the palp appeared compatible with *S. myrmicarum*, notably a small hump towards the base of the cymbium.

The habitat is noted in Nentwig *et al.* as "In heathland and on xerothermic slopes, in formicaries, under stones. Rarely found" - hardly a description of a damp Bedfordshire churchyard! I returned to the site on 13th October to collect more litter, though little remained in the branched trunk, so I also gathered litter from below the tree. Unsurprisingly I found no additional *Syedra*, though I retained several ants which proved on closer examination to be the tree-dwelling Brown Ant *Lasius brunneus*, here near the northern limit of its British range.

With a primarily Central European range *S. myrmicarum* would appear to be a most unlikely spider to turn up in Britain, but checking the recent distribution showed that the species had in fact already been recorded here: a male found by Pip Collyer in a pitfall trap in Winterton Dunes on the east Norfolk coast in late 2014 (*BAS Newsletter* no. 133: 20).

I would like to thank Peter Merrett for confirming the identification. He commented that the genus *Syedra* is extremely closely related to *Centromerus*.

100 Hayling Avenue, Little Paxton, ST NEOTS,
Cambridgeshire PE19 6HQ

***Anyphaena sabina* and *Cryptachaea blattea* (Urquhart, 1886) at the Wildlife Garden, the Natural History Museum**

by T.J. Thomas

At the invitation of Caroline Ware who runs the Wildlife Garden in the grounds of the British Natural History Museum in London, I have begun to visit regularly to collect spiders and harvestmen in order to gain information, with others, on the invertebrate fauna of this site. The Garden was started in 1995 showing a mosaic of British lowland habitats such as meadows, woodlands and wetlands with ponds.

During a visit on June 16th an anyphaenid was beaten from foliage. At first it was thought to be a light-coloured female *Anyphaena accentuata* but, under the microscope, the epigyne (see Figure 1) was quite different from that species. Checking through the *BAS Newsletters* I found Edward Milner's note on *Anyphaena sabina* found at Mile End Park (Milner, 2012). The epigyne in Figure 1 in Milner matched that of the Garden specimen of which a photograph is given here.

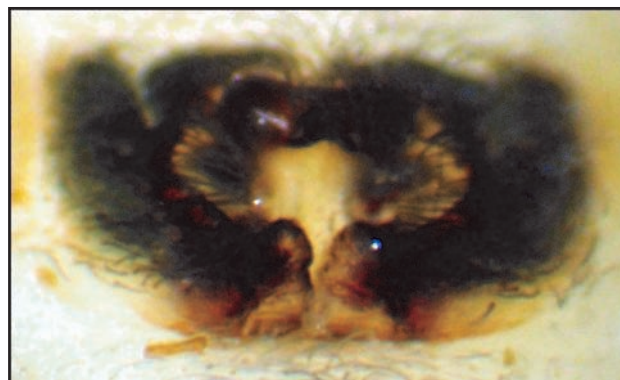


Figure 1. Epigyne of *Anyphaena sabina* from The Wildlife Garden (NHM). Photograph © T.J. Thomas.

At the same time another spider was collected, a female which at first seemed to be an *Achaearanea*, but matched *Cryptachaea blattea* as described in Marriott (2012) in the same Newsletter! However the specimen was destroyed so confirmation was not possible. A fortnight later I visited the Garden again and had the luck to find another female and juvenile in leaf litter.

Peter Harvey confirmed both identifications for which I thank him.

References

- Milner, E. 2012. New *Anyphaena* species recorded in London, a second species new to Britain from Mile End Park, Tower Hamlets. *S.R.S. News* No.72. In *Newsl. Br. arachnol. Soc.* **123**: 23-24.
- Marriot, D. 2012. *Cryptachaea blattea* (Urquhart, 1886) a theridiid new to Great Britain. *Newsl. Br. arachnol. Soc.* **123**: 9-10.

142 Selbourne Road, LUTON, Beds LU4 8LS

***Clubiona caerulescens*: a rare spider recently discovered in Lincolnshire**

by Annette Binding

At the beginning of June this year my husband and I took part in a 'Bioblitz' at Chambers Farm Wood Complex, part of the Lincolnshire Lime Woods. The multi-organizational event was organised by the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust with permission from the Forestry Commission.

Chambers Farm Wood Complex is made up of a number of smaller woods and meadows. We chose to go to Ivy Wood. We collected a small number of spiders, among them a clubionid beaten from low bushes by Allan.

When I began to identify the spiders from Ivy Wood I expected the clubionid to be one of the usual species and was surprised to see that it was not. The male spider had large distinctive looking palps and I was able to identify

it as *Clubiona caerulescens*, a new species for Lincolnshire. We researched the distribution of *C. caerulescens* on the SRS recording scheme maps and discovered that there are only a small number of records with a mainly western, scattered distribution. The last known record was dated May 2002.

We contacted Peter Harvey who asked us to send the specimen to him for confirmation. A few days later, Peter replied confirming that the spider was indeed *C. caerulescens*. Peter told us that the species is exceptionally rare with only four post-1992 and five post-1980 records from across the whole country. The species is currently Notable b but in an as yet unpublished national status review it is now Vulnerable VU (P. Harvey, pers. comm.)

Since then, a second male has been found. It was collected on the 20th August by Richard Davidson in the same general area of Ivy Wood in Chambers Farm Complex. Richard collected four clubionids on that day, one male and three females, and he thought the male fitted the description of *C. caerulescens*. I examined the specimen under a microscope and was able to confirm that the male spider was indeed *C. caerulescens*. Unfortunately all three females were immature and not possible to identify to species level. This second male was found eleven weeks after the first one. We contacted Peter Harvey who replied that this was great news and that this was possibly the first evidence of an established population. We have been back to Ivy Wood, as has Richard, and although we have so far found no further *C. caerulescens* we shall keep looking.

Acknowledgement

Many thanks to Peter Harvey for confirming the identification of the first spider.

6 Willow Court, Washingborough, Lincoln, LN4 1AS
Email: allan.binding@ntlworld.com

A new site for *Arctosa fulvolineata*

by Andrew Bloomfield

My interest in spiders only manifested itself in the spring of 2014, thanks to seeing lots of Lycosidae rushing about in all manner of habitats at Holkham NNR in Norfolk where I work as a nature reserve warden. In 2015 I have made a more conscious effort to try and identify the spiders I find in my day to day work. Not easy, but rewarding when it happens!

One spider that I was particularly keen to see was *Arctosa fulvolineata*. It looked very smart on the photos on the SRS website, was seemingly very rare and yet had been recorded at Scolt Head NNR, a neighbouring reserve west of Holkham. Here were the only Norfolk records; 13 individuals seen on three dates between 1800 and 2007 according to the SRS website. With the saltmarsh habitat of that area stretching into Holkham NNR I thought despite such a paucity of Norfolk sightings there surely had to be a good chance of it being present. My searches in the Burnham Norton and Overy

areas were to no avail, but such is the vastness of the habitat I was not really surprised. On June 29th I had to visit another part of Holkham NNR, Warham salt marshes (see Fig. 3), where I knew there was an interesting area of 'salt pans' close to the footpath and it would be a good site to start another search. Following a high 'marsh tide', the muddy pans and creeks were glistening at low water in the sun and after a few fruitless searches around the cracks and creeks I realised this might be a hopeless task. All I saw were a few *Pardosa purbeckensis* carrying their offspring about. Carrying on with my walk I was then taken aback by a rather stout spider slowly crossing the muddy footpath. I quickly scooped it up in a collecting pot and to my utmost surprise it was a rather battle-scarred *Arctosa fulvolineata*, perfect in its markings, yet with only six legs (see Figures 1 & 2). I surprised myself by knowing what it was straight away, as it did look very distinctive. Needless to say, despite spending the rest of the day in the general area, I found no more. I had been very fortunate with my lucky find.



Figures 1 & 2. *Arctosa fulvolineata* at Warham salt marshes. Photographs © Andrew Bloomfield

According to the SRS website *Arctosa fulvolineata* remains a very rare species in the UK. It is listed as a UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species that has occurred in only eleven 10-km squares since 1992. My site was thus a new one being at TF9444, a distance close to eight miles away from the previous Norfolk sightings. With the North Norfolk coast boasting one of the finest examples of a salt marsh coast in Western Europe (and



Figure 3. Warham marsh. Photographs © Andrew Bloomfield

fully protected by various conservation bodies) stretching between Cley in the east to Holme in the west (approximately 20 miles) the question now is, what is the true status of *Arctosa fulvolineata* in the area? Is it as rare as records suggest or is it due to a lack of recording?

20 Lancaster Road, Blenheim Park, Sculthorpe, Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 7PX

***Agelena labyrinthica* (Agelenidae) – flourishing in South Yorkshire**

by Geoff Oxford* & Joyce Simmons⁺

Agelena labyrinthica is a very common species in southern and central England and Wales, where its presence doesn't warrant a second glance. However, in the north of England it is relatively rare, with only a few recent records creeping up the coasts of Lancashire and south Cumbria. Further east, the most northerly records in recent years are from north Nottinghamshire. Older sightings further north still were from Newton Arlosh (VC 70, 1912), almost on the Scottish border, and in Yorkshire Colin Howes recorded the species from Thorne Moors (VC 63, 1969) and Bilsdale (VC 62, 1977).

On 23 May, 2015, while on a Doncaster Naturalists' field visit, JS photographed an immature *A. labyrinthica* in an old sand/gravel quarry near Austerfield, South Yorkshire, VC 63 (see Figure 1). A visit to this quarry on 27 July 2015 by GO, JS, Paul Simmons and John Scott



Figure 1. Female *Agelena labyrinthica* in Austerfield quarry (SK655956). Photograph © Joyce Simmons

confirmed that a substantial population was present (centre of quarry approx. SK655956). We counted over 40 webs there without an exhaustive search. Just to the south, we found over 50 webs in another old sand quarry (approx. SK655915), which is now part of the Austerfield Mosaic Quarry Nature Reserve. Webs were also apparent along the edge of a disused metallised track running between these two sites.

On 18 July 2015, in between the two visits to Austerfield, JS photographed a co-habiting male and female *Agelena* (Figure 2) in a web along Hindley Lane, a track to the west of Tickhill, South Yorkshire (approx. SK580931, VC 63). Tickhill is some 8 km to the WSW of Austerfield.



Figure 2. Co-habiting pair of *Agelena labyrinthica* at Tickhill (SK580931). Photograph © Joyce Simmons

Although in a different county, these observations are from hectads immediately north of, and adjacent to, two of the three contiguous hectads recorded with *Agelena* in Nottinghamshire. This suggests that the species is well established in the area. How far this apparently isolated patch extends remains to be seen.

* Department of Biology, University of York, Wentworth Way, Heslington, York YO10 5DD
+ 16 Springfield Crescent, Kirk Smeaton, Pontefract WF8 3LE

Identification of the British *Scotina* species

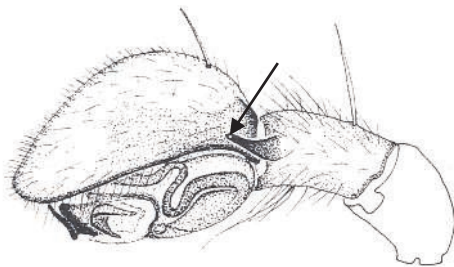
Three similar species of the genus *Scotina* occur in Britain, *Scotina celans*, *S. gracilipes* and *S. palliardii* and distinguishing them requires considerable care. The first two of these are widespread in Britain although more frequent in the southern half of the country. *Scotina palliardii* is rare and virtually confined to southern heathlands, principally in Dorset.

Morphology

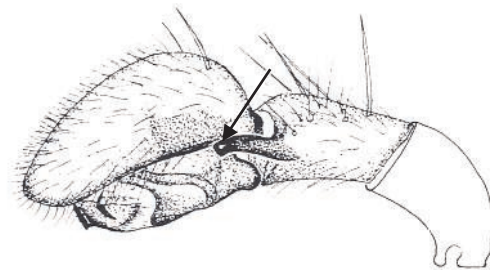
A useful distinction between both sexes of *Scotina celans* and the other two members of this genus is the dorsal pattern on the carapace. In *S. celans* there is a clear median and two similar light lateral bands. In *S. gracilipes* the light bands are absent and in *S. palliardii* they are very faint or absent. In the latter species a thin dark borderline is often present.

Males.

Males of *Scotina celans* and *S. gracilipes* are relatively easily distinguished. When the palps are viewed laterally the tibial apophysis of *S. celans* is relatively thin, pointed and curved slightly upwards while that of *S. gracilipes* is thicker, blunt tipped and curved slightly downwards. Additionally, the abdomen of *S. celans* has a reddish colour and usually a distinct dorsal pattern while that of *S. gracilipes* is brown and lacks a distinctive pattern.



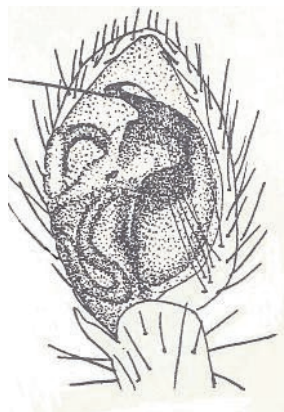
Scotina celans, palp in lateral view.
Tibial apophysis of palp arrowed.



Scotina gracilipes, palp in lateral view.
Tibial apophysis of palp arrowed.

The tibial apophysis of the palp of *Scotina palliardii* is closely similar to that of *S. celans* although the tip is more abruptly narrowed. A more reliable method of distinguishing *Scotina palliardii* from *S. celans* is in the appearance of the embolus when the palp is viewed ventrally. In *Scotina palliardii*, the basal portion of the embolus is narrow while that of *S. celans* is thicker and bulbous in form.

The abdomen of *S. palliardii* resembles that of *S. gracilipes* in being brown in colour and lacking a dorsal pattern.



Scotina palliardii, palp in ventral view. Embolar base arrowed.

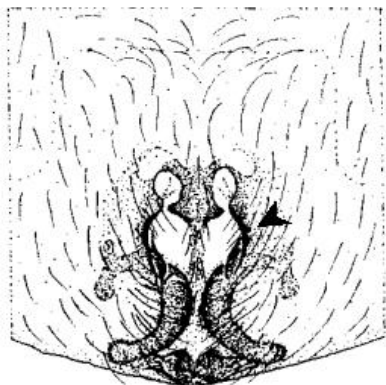


Scotina celans, palp in ventral view. Embolar base arrowed.

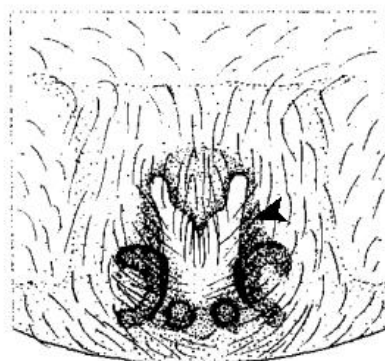
Females.

The epigynes of all three species vary in their degree of sclerotisation and require very careful examination.

In the epigyne of *Scotina celans*, the central opening has curved lateral margins and the sperm ducts (as viewed through the cuticle) approach each other closely along the central line. By contrast, the epigyne of *Scotina gracilipes* has virtually straight lateral margins and the two sperm ducts are much more widely spaced, never approaching each other closely.

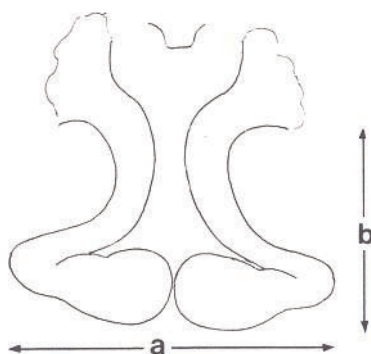


Epigyne of *Scotina celans*, ventral.
Margins of central opening arrowed.



Epigyne of *Scotina gracilipes*, ventral.
Margins of central opening arrowed.

The epigyne of *Scotina palliardii* most closely resembles that of *S. celans* and is easily confused with it. The two species can be distinguished by the relative proportions of the vulvae.



Vulva of *Scotina* species showing measurements needed to distinguish *S. celans* and *S. palliardii*

Scotina palliardii

“a” = 0.24 – 0.25 mm.

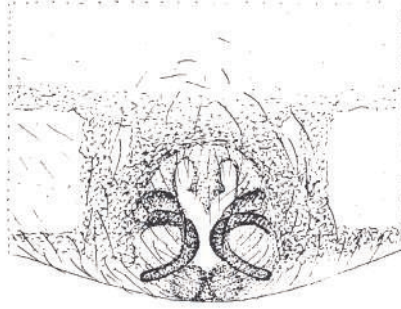
“b” = 0.17 – 0.20 mm.

Scotina celans

“a” = 0.30 – 0.32 mm.

“b” = 0.23 – 0.25 mm.

In most cases, it is not necessary to clear the epigyne as the outlines of the sperm ducts are clearly visible through the cuticle of the abdomen.



Epigyne of *Scotina palliardi* in ventral view.

Habitats

Scotina celans occurs in moss and litter in woodlands, heathland and also calcareous grasslands. On heathland, where it is usually scarcer than *S. gracilipes*, it is normally found in well vegetated damper areas. Peak activity of males is in October and November but females can be found throughout the year. *Scotina gracilipes* appears to be most abundant on dry heathland but has also been collected in woodland, raised bog and sand dunes. Peak activity of males is from July to September but with a more extended period of female activity. *Scotina palliardii* is almost confined to mature slightly moist heathland in southern England although there are also a few older records from calcareous grassland. There are insufficient records of this species to accurately establish periods of peak activity.

Acknowledgements.

My thanks once again to Michael Roberts for permission to reproduce the figures taken from "The spiders of Britain & Ireland" (1987). Permission by the Ray Society to use the figures of the palps in ventral view and the epigyne of *S. palliardii* from Locket & Millidge "British Spiders" (1951, 1953) is gratefully acknowledged. 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: A. Russell-Smith, Bailiffs Cottages, Doddington, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 0TU