

# Spider Recording Scheme News

## Spring 2017, No. 87

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SRS website: <http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk>

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 87 will be published in Summer 2017. Please send contributions by the end of May at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: srs@britishspiders.org.uk or grayspeterharvey@gmail.com. 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

Exciting news is of Matt Prince's discovery of *Pelecopsis susannae*, a south-west European money spider previously unrecorded in Britain, in a park on the edge of Dartmoor in December 2016. The males of this winter-active species have an raised head and abdominal scutum typical of the genus and the palp has a thumb-like projection on the dorsal surface of the cymbium not found in other British species. Matt's identification was confirmed by Peter Merrett and Robert Bosmans. Matt and his wife Nicola found a number of individuals using a broad paint brush and tray on moss covered trees.

We also have two interesting reports of imports into the UK, a *Holoplatys* jumping spider and *Gibbaranea bituberculata*, an orb web spider believed to be extinct in Britain, as well as new records of the Priority Species *Semljicola caliginosus* found by Bob Merritt in Dumfries-shire (VC72), new to the county, and North-west Yorkshire (VC65).

### Spider records

We currently have 1,030,675 spider records in total in MapMate. About 421,987 have at least some phase 2 habitat information, all uploaded and summarised on the SRS website. An update is provided in this News of VC record totals. Many thanks go to those AOs who have regularly provided records to the recording scheme.

### SRS and OPS website

Between the SRS website going live in 2010 and moving to a new server in April 2014 there were approximately 158,336 visits from 106,092 users from 171 countries/territories, with 871,104 page views. From April 2014 to 13 Feb 2017 the website has had 240,361 visits from 170,682 users from 188 countries/territories, with approaching 1.1 million page views. The facility enabling members of the public to submit records of 13 "easily recognisable" spider species has generated 314 records. The SRS website now allows anyone to create and download individual species reports, comprising distribution maps and ecological information, as a pdf. Since 12 March 2015, there have been 73,484 downloads of species reports and 5,496 downloads for identification guidance on 24 "difficult" species groups. The website's 'contact us' link continues to attract large number of emails from the public, most seeking help with spider identification, but it too has inevitably resulted in additional species records. There have been 1978 downloads of BAS Factsheets from the website since 28 Oct 2015.

### Area Organiser changes

Dave Carr takes over as AO for Herts (VC20) and Cambs (VC29). David's email is david.carr38@zoho.com and address 40 The Maples, Harlow, Herts CM19 4QZ.

Circumstances mean that Dave Holloway resigns as Area Organiser for VCs 105-110. Many thanks go to Doug Marriott, Ian Dawson and Dave Holloway for all their work over many years for these VCs. Ian remains AO for Hunts.

If anyone can volunteer to take on one or more of VCs 105-110 please let me know.

### *Holoplatys*, an accidental import to the UK

by Tone Killick

On Sunday 11th December 2016 photos were posted on the British Spider Identification group showing a distinctive looking jumping spider. Initially it was identified as a UK species *Marpissa nivoyi* but I kept going back to the photos and the more I compared them to photos of confirmed *M. nivoyi*, the less I was convinced. I got in touch with the lady who's name is Jayne and she informed me that the spider had been found in her daughter's bag which had previously been to Shanghai in mid November.

On Monday 12th December Jayne sent me the specimen which due to unforeseen occurrences, I didn't receive till Thursday 15th December. Thankfully the UK weather had been fairly mild and the spider arrived safe and well. After opening the parcel and seeing the specimen, *Marpissa nivoyi* was discounted at once and the next job was to identify this mystery spider. I took some photos and posted to different arachnid groups and initially response was zero. I then sent emails to Dr David Hill, editor of *Peckhamia*, the scientific journal covering



Figure 1. *Holoplatys* jumping spider.



**Figure 2-4.** *Holoplatys* jumping spider.  
Photographs © Tone Killick

research on jumping spiders and Dmitri Logunov at the Manchester Museum and both responded fairly quickly and at the same time a few of my Australian friends came up with the same genus, *Holoplatys*.

It's a fascinating spider with enlarged front legs that it holds up in the air, somewhat like a scorpion's claws. The body is extremely flat and well adapted to slip into the fissures of bark. I've decided to keep the specimen to observe and when it dies, it will be sent to Dmitri Logunov who will hopefully be able to identify it to species level. I must say that the resilience of spiders amaze me because this little arachnid has travelled at the very least 5,600 miles if Shanghai was its boarding point and possibly 9,500 miles if Australia was the boarding point. A postscript to all this is that Jayne sent me an update email and she mentioned that whilst in Shanghai, her daughter stayed in a boarding house with Australia backpackers. So g'day *Holoplatys* mate, let's throw another fruitfly on the barbie.

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## ***Gibbaranea bituberculata*, a spider for Christmas**

by Keith Kerr

Christmas day 2016, mid way through present opening, something caught my eye: a spider. As is not unusual in our household, I shout "Spider" and either my wife or son follows up with; "keep an eye on it, I'll get a pot!" I am far from being an expert on them but I knew immediately that this sub-adult male was not something I recognised. That made me excited. Not at all is the case that if I don't recognise it, it must be rare, but if I don't recognise it, it must be a new species for me - just as rewarding. After the un-wrapping I had a chance to take a look at our catch. I could tell right away that it was one of the Araneidae family and the distinctive abdominal markings led me to it being a *Gibbaranea* species. Not having the slightest hint of green, anywhere on its body ruled out *G. gibbosa* straight away, and it



**Figures 1-3.** *Gibbaranea bituberculata*, an orb web spider. Photographs © Keith Kerr

didn't have the habitus of *G. omoeda*, not to mention this species being absent in Britain, leaving me with my initial gut feeling - *G. bituberculata*. To clinch the correct ID however, I had to rear it through what was to be one more moult, to adulthood. I was prepared for a long wait but luckily, it was not to be. Barely 3 weeks later, on January 18th, it had moulted and inspection under the microscope revealed the fully formed palps which confirmed adulthood.



**Figure 4.** The adult male *Gibbaranea bituberculata*. Photograph © Keith Kerr

Now. Was my initial thought a bit far-fetched? Have I stumbled across a decent find? Well, no AND yes to those questions as it WAS *bituberculata*! In my eyes it was, anyway, so I sent the specimen to Pip Collyer, my county recorder, for confirmation. Pip was quickly on the case having previously been liaising regarding the find, and he kindly confirmed it was *bituberculata*. Fantastic!

Finding a species not known in Britain for over 50 years produces questions. It is almost certainly an adventive record and in the back of my mind was the fact that we had a real Christmas tree in the house and as highly likely mode of transport to my find, where would that have come from? I turned my detective head on and went back to the garden centre we got our tree from, to speak to the staff about the origins of our tree. They were surprisingly intrigued and very interested to hear of the spider themselves, and could not have been any more helpful.

Without the individual tree code (which we had thrown out straight away), it would be impossible to know the tree's exact history. However, what they could tell me, was that this type and size of tree would have been grown in either Belgium or Scotland. I then wondered if maybe there's an as yet, undiscovered population in Scotland somewhere now?!

However, they then explained that whether grown in Belgium or Scotland, they would all have been shipped to the Netherlands, before then being distributed back to us here in the UK.

So, the exact origins are going to remain unknown. Could it have come from Scotland? Belgium? The Netherlands? Or did it just jump on for somewhere to hide at the garden centre? Or even from my own garden where the tree laid for a few days before coming indoors?



**Figures 5-6.** The adult male *Gibbaranea bituberculata*.  
Photographs © Keith Kerr

The last one's doubtful, but who knows?? Maybe one day it'll be the missing puzzle piece to a discovery in Scotland, or one closer to home? I shall be on the lookout just in case!

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## ***Steatoda nobilis*, a new 10km square record for Lincolnshire**

by Annette Binding

In mid-January 2017 I received several photographs of spiders taken by Hugh Middleton in the conservatory at his home in Navenby, South Lincolnshire. Hugh thought the spiders were *Steatoda nobilis* and I was able to confirm his identification.

Quite how the spiders came to be in the conservatory is something of a mystery. Hugh told me that he had moved to the house about 18 months previously. Since then he has been photographing the wildlife in and around his garden on a more or less daily basis. He saw the first *Steatoda nobilis* in October 2016 and thinks it is unlikely that he would have missed these spiders as they are quite conspicuous. They appear at night coming out of a gap where the conservatory roof meets the wall. Hugh tells me that the most he has seen at one time is two.

As far as I am aware this is only the second 10km square record for *S. nobilis* in Lincolnshire.

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## ***Steatoda nobilis*, a further new 10km square record for Lincolnshire VC 54**

by Annette Binding

Shortly after I wrote about a new 10km square record for *Steatoda nobilis* in Lincolnshire, I received a list of spiders recorded in 2016 by Karen and Sarah Hand. Karen and Sarah recorded *S. nobilis* new to the county in 2014 and since then they have found it every year at their home in Addlethorpe, N. Lincolnshire. However, in 2016 they also recorded *Steatoda nobilis* from Sykes Farm, Gibraltar Point NNR, another new 10km square for N. Lincs.

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## **Some recent spider records from Watsonian Yorkshire (2014 – 2016)**

by Richard Wilson

### **Introduction**

It has been a few years since I last submitted an article on spider recording in Watsonian Yorkshire (Wilson, 2014) so this article provides a brief update on what has occurred in the intervening three years; plus some other important records in preceding years that have come to my attention.

Recording by me has been sporadic and for the most part, reliant on professional work which has mostly focussed on upland environments, particularly mires, peatbogs and acid grassland habitats within the Yorkshire Dales in my ongoing study of one of the UK's rarest species: *Semljicola caliginosus*, which is a Species of Principal Importance (= UK Priority Species).

Surveys for this species were undertaken in 2015, funded by Buglife – the Invertebrate Conservation Trust and Natural England. *S. caliginosus* was re-recorded from its previous known locations at Bull Bogs, on the Buttertubs Pass (SD 868 955); and Shunner Fell Rake, Great Shunner Fell (SD 852 979) between May and July 2015. Despite searches elsewhere, including Starbotton Fell and Greensett Moss, Whernside, in seemingly similar habitat, no other records were obtained. However, whilst writing up the report for this work, Bob Merritt contacted me to say he had recorded this species at two other locations whilst surveying for water beetles on the edge of small tarns. He took a single female in April 2009 on Baugh Fell (SD 733 940); and another single female in June 2009 on Knoutberry Currack, Angram Common (SD 830 979). Interestingly, both these new locations are aligned on a similar latitude to Great Shunner Fell and Bull Bogs (on Muker Common). Whether this is coincidence or there is something about this east-west orientated high ground at this latitude is unknown; but it is curious.

As is typical when recording in under-recorded regions, other noteworthy species came to light. As part of the 2015 studies, I captured a single male *Clubiona norvegica*, which was the first record for VC 65 (north-west Yorkshire) and the sixth location in all of Yorkshire. According to the Spider Recording Scheme (SRS) website, this is a species mostly known from Wales but widely scattered elsewhere (SRS, 2017a). A second new VC 65 record was the diminutive *Walckenaeria alticeps* from Bull Bogs; a very similar species to *W. antica*, and which may have been overlooked. The same studies also re-recorded the nationally notable *Hilaira pervicax*, the relevance of which is given in Wilson (2014).

Perhaps the most surprising record in recent years came from Brian Eversham, a visiting naturalist to the county, who went for a walk looking for snails at the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust reserve at Brockadale, near Pontefract in November 2014. Whilst grubbing within the calcareous grassland on a south-facing slope (SE 511 172), he came across the distinctive subterranean webs of the purse web spider *Atypus affinis*. No specimens were collected but photographs were seen by Peter Harvey who confirmed the record. This represents the first Yorkshire record (VC 63: south-west Yorkshire); and is very much an outlier (see SRS, 2017b) in England with only a few scattered locations away from its south-eastern core range.

Finally, it is worth repeating the table presented in Wilson (2011), updating the number of species recorded in each of the Yorkshire vice-counties (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Update on the number of species recorded in each of the Yorkshire vice-counties

Vice-county	No. of Species
(61) south-east Yorkshire	328 (+1)
(62) north-east Yorkshire	361 (+7)
(63) south-east Yorkshire	372 (+5)
(64) mid-west Yorkshire	353 (+7)
(65) north-west Yorkshire	226 (+12)

(as at 31/12/2016). Numbers in parentheses are the additions since 31/12/2010

#### Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank Peter Harvey for confirming/verifying some specimens; Dr Sarah Henshall (Buglife), David Bodenham (Ecosapiens) for commissioning and assisting with the field surveys in the Yorkshire Dales; Bob Merritt, Jim Pewtress, and Geoff Oxford for records.

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### *Semljicola caliginosus* (Falconer, 1910) new to vc72, Dumfries-shire, and a note on its occurrence in vc65, North-west Yorkshire

by Bob Merritt

*Semljicola caliginosus* is a UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species found sparingly in wet places in northern England and Scotland, mostly on high ground. To date it has been recorded from only 7 hectads from 1992 onwards and from 23 hectads before 1992 (information derived from SRS website).

On 5 August 2016 I recorded a single female *S. caliginosus* at Shiel Loch, NS734031: a small lochan on exposed moorland at an elevation of 437 metres AOD



**Figure 1.** Shiel Loch, Dumfries & Galloway.  
Photograph © Bob Merritt

about 8 kms south-west of Sanquhar, Dumfries & Galloway. I sampled an area of sedge-swamp (fig. 1, to the left of the open water) comprising Bottle Sedge *Carex rostrata* and *Sphagnum* moss, using a long-handled metal-framed pond net. The water here was 20 - 30 cms deep. Other spiders which I recorded are shown in Table 1. On 15 November I returned to the lochan to see whether I could find any additional specimens of *S. caliginosus*. On this second visit I recorded 5 male and 3 female *S. caliginosus* using my pond net to push the floating/emergent vegetation (fig. 2) under the water surface in order to dislodge any spiders and capture them as the net was withdrawn, along with various aquatic invertebrates which I routinely record, notably water beetles.



**Figure 2.** Microhabitat of *Semljicola caliginosus* at Shiel Loch. Photograph © Bob Merritt

On 5 November I discovered a second site for *S. caliginosus* in Dumfries & Galloway, namely Grassyard Loch, NY095784, near Hightae, Lochmaben. This site (fig. 3) is on the floodplain of the River Annan at an elevation of 43 metres AOD. The loch lacked any areas of open water and comprised dense beds of Reed Sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima*, Common Reed *Phragmites australis* and willow *Salix* sp. I recorded a single male *S. caliginosus* by sweeping my pond net in a small pool



**Figure 3.** Grassyard Loch, Dumfries & Galloway.  
Photograph © Bob Merritt

created by using my weight to depress a quaking area of the *Glyceria maxima* bed; most of the bed was fairly solid underfoot and merely damp. On 19 February 2017 I returned to the site, which was slightly wetter than on my previous visit, and recorded 4 male and 3 female *S.*

**Table 1.** Spiders recorded at several sites for *Semljicola caliginosus* in vc72 and vc65

	Shiel Loch	Shiel Loch	Grassyard Loch	Grassyard Loch	Baugh Fell	Angram Common
	NS734031	NS734031	NY095784	NY095784	SD733940	SD830979
	05/08/2016	15/11/2016	05/11/2016	19/02/2017	20/04/2009	01/06/2009
<i>Bathyphantes approximatus</i>			1f			1m, 1f
<i>Bathyphantes gracilis</i>		2m, 1f	1m, 1f	1m, 3f		
<i>Bathyphantes setiger</i>	1f					
<i>Centromerita concinna</i>		3m, 5f				
<i>Diplocephalus permixtus</i>		1m				1f
<i>Drepanotylus uncatus</i>		1m, 3f	5f	8m, 9f		2f
<i>Erigone atra</i>				1m, 1f		
<i>Erigone promiscua</i>					1f	
<i>Gnathonarium dentatum</i>		1m, 1f				
<i>Halorates distinctus</i>			2f	7m, 6f		
<i>Hypomma bituberculatum</i>		1f				1m
<i>Lophomma punctatum</i>		1f			1f	
<i>Pachygnatha clercki</i>			1f			
<i>Pirata piraticus</i>	2f					
<i>Semljicola caliginosus</i>	1f	5m, 3f	1m	4m, 3f	1f	1f
<i>Tallusia experta</i>		2m				
<i>Tetragnatha extensa</i>	1f					

**Figure 4.** Microhabitat of *Semljicola caliginosus* at Grassyard Loch. Photograph © Bob Merritt**Figure 5.** Tarn on Baugh Fell, Cumbria (vc65). Photograph © Bob Merritt

*caliginosus* from several small trample-pools (Fig. 4) amongst the *Glyceria maxima*. These, and other spiders, were collected from the water surface using a tea strainer or a finger.

In 2009 I recorded *S. caliginosus* from two sites in vc65, North-west Yorkshire: namely a small tarn (Fig. 5) on Baugh Fell (now in Cumbria), SD733940, elevation 617 metres AOD, one female on 20 April, and a small tarn on Angram Common, SD830979, elevation 633 metres AOD, one female on 1 June. On both occasions the *S. caliginosus* were collected using my pond net. At Angram Common this involved running the net, Hoover-style, along the surface of an area of shallowly-flooded Bog Cotton-grass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, pushing down hard to force the water, scarcely more than a couple of centimetres deep, over the rim of the metal frame and into the net. At Baugh Fell the *S. caliginosus* was

collected in the manner described previously for Shiel Loch, though the vegetation in this case was *E. angustifolium* in addition to *Sphagnum*.

I thank Peter Harvey for confirming the ID of three specimens of *S. caliginosus*: a male from Grassyard Loch and a female from Shiel Loch and from Angram Common.

### An update of VC record totals

The table below gives an update on VC totals for each VC, based on numbers of records currently in the recording scheme. Many thanks go to Area Organisers, and especially those who have regularly provided records to the recording scheme. If you have records to send in, please do so so that our distribution maps and autecological data remain up-to-date. Data in any form are gratefully received, but unfortunately these will go into a backlog if in a user- and database-unfriendly

VC	Total	2000-on	2010-on	2015-on	VC	Total	2000-on	2010-on	2015-on
1	2912	593	197	122	57	15999	3634	453	119
2	1908	576	119	39	58	10423	554	360	68
3	9528	3941	1470	287	59	13925	2840	828	26
4	4170	1805	1660	430	60	18346	9294	1409	99
5	5379	1480	205	3	61	7725	1028	224	25
6	5066	745	274	100	62	10138	1205	755	90
7	14434	2763	85	11	63	21792	7022	1213	171
8	13569	3373	72	38	64	12654	3923	1561	158
9	20026	8606	2420	294	65	2781	1243	891	382
10	2529	1876	75	57	66	3363	381	261	26
11	12610	5363	1527	164	67	5642	768	719	239
12	10005	5550	2418	698	68	1311	104	76	5
13	6332	2750	805	107	69	12309	5627	358	154
14	9615	5899	1325	202	70	14798	6313	1817	265
15	23823	14365	3777	1433	71	3999	21	21	17
16	13370	6362	1366	142	72	3411	1121	1093	1082
17	46071	25055	9403	1017	73	9361	1504	1387	1274
18	76194	28174	7208	2461	74	1337	252	183	124
19	54362	5911	1436	277	75	2146	24	13	4
20	14494	4041	397	88	76	2290	64	42	2
21	14201	4021	1030	256	77	3472	693	566	2
22	7633	4322	750	25	78	919	63	54	2
23	5029	1020	76	28	79	462	45	34	
24	4890	842	434	179	80	707	37	36	
25	23795	8540	2035	338	81	829	37	27	
26	10311	6216	1761	282	82	3269	1029	991	224
27	19206	6689	1309	221	83	5224	195	83	35
28	6885	2356	1354	154	84	925	24	1	
29	8724	3127	1084	4	85	4874	522	305	192
30	30423	8938	1152	34	86	6583	431	123	
31	10403	5990	2396	8	87	2680	1006	279	13
32	9331	1230	89	16	88	6739	1905	1423	3
33	3962	1220	82	26	89	3124	470	230	
34	4472	909	86	27	90	8186	375	135	2
35	3139	549	79	2	91	2449	1275	454	1
36	4160	941	87	1	92	5536	2381	1267	
37	11292	5110	595	155	93	3369	1547	369	
38	7883	1492	203	23	94	1104	335	189	
39	25936	813	138	76	95	6487	5299	1523	4
40	12018	3444	1615	53	96	17062	12598	3343	35
41	5948	1475	608	18	97	1594	465	56	2
42	2199	457	182	43	98	1769	196	91	1
43	1523	74	23	6	99	2441	43	33	1
44	3601	70	18	5	100	910	128	22	19
45	10963	2090	93	19	101	919	246	221	
46	12137	2392	536	131	102	2061	667	347	
47	2373	139	18	15	103	604	468	7	
48	5850	1265	433	2	104	2000	650	115	
49	13632	4380	1537	714	105	2261	358	273	
50	6744	941	519	232	106	3004	2108	1113	
51	5334	417	286	1	107	6290	5437	3236	
52	6615	1303	886	155	108	1727	336	106	
53	5939	2492	810	248	109	22235	6493	24	
54	14436	4625	875	375	110	935	125	93	
55	39464	12061	222	72	111	1916	1328	49	
56	12022	6687	1606	55	112	525	24	1	

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