

# Spider Recording Scheme News

## Autumn 2017, No. 89

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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. 90 will be published in Spring 2018. 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 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.

We now have 1,039,621 spider records in total in MapMate. About 424,400 have at least some site-based phase 2 habitat information. A backlog of Excel data in very user-unfriendly format remains to be dealt with.

As you will see from articles in this SRS News, we have recently had a number of exciting and unexpected discoveries. There will certainly be many more still to be made when undertaking spider recording, so please get out there and help your Area Organisers improve coverage of their area, but seek help and guidance to make sure your records are correctly identified and scientifically sound. In many cases this may require voucher specimens to be available.

### Two new Area Organisers

I am delighted to announce two new Area Organisers. Richard Pearce has taken on the role of Area Organiser for Northamptonshire (VC32). His contact details are Dr Richard J. Pearce (Arachnologist), Lecturer in Animal Ecology, Moreton Morrell College, Part of WCG, Moreton Morrell, Warwickshire CV35 9BL; email: rpearce@warwickshire.ac.uk

Richard writes that the reception staff are aware that when he receives specimens in the post with the word 'arachnologist' on, they ensure these are treated with care and that he is informed ASAP. Please liaise with Richard about submitting records for VC32 and any spiders requiring identification or confirmation.

Richard Burkmar takes over as Area Organiser for VC58 (Cheshire), VC59 (Lancashire South) and VC60 (Lancashire West). Many thanks to are due to Chris Felton for his past work as AO for Lancashire South. Richard introduces himself below:

This is by way of an introduction to myself as the new area organiser for the Cheshire (VC58) and Lancashire (VC59 & VC60). I've been recording spiders since 2006 when I undertook my 'initial training' with Paul Lee on a couple of Field Studies Council (FSC) residential courses. In the intervening period I've done most of my recording in the vice counties of South Lancashire, where I live, and Shropshire, where I've worked for the last five years.

In the early years of my recording in Lancashire I was lucky enough to have been encouraged and mentored by

Jenifer Newton, a wonderful naturalist with an infectious enthusiasm. It was a great blow to spider recording in the North West when she passed away. I have also been encouraged and helped by Chris Felton at Liverpool Museum.

Between 2009 and 2013 I worked at the Local Environmental Record Centre for North Merseyside, Merseyside BioBank, managing it from 2010. For the last five years I have managed a project called "Tomorrow's Biodiversity" for the FSC in Shropshire. As part of that project I have worked with Nigel Cane-Honeysett (area organiser for Shropshire) to develop and deliver a suite of spider and harvestman ID courses ranging from engagement, through field ID to microscopic ID.

The project I currently work on for the FSC concludes at the start of 2018 and it is my intention to work in the North West thereafter. I have wanted to make a greater voluntary contribution to the biological recording community for some time and taking on the role of area organiser for Cheshire and Lancashire is part of my plan to do that. I see two main aspects to the role of area organiser: 1) collating and verifying records to facilitate record flow between local recorders and the National Recorder; 2) encouraging, mentoring and training local recorders.

If you record spiders and/or harvestmen in Cheshire or Lancashire, please get in touch - I would love to hear from you. I hope that in the coming years we can build a vibrant community of spider recorders in Cheshire and Lancashire. You can email me at rich.burkmar@gmail.com or write to 40 Old Vicarage Road, Horwich, Bolton. BL6 6QT.

### Discovery of *Thanatus formicinus* (Clerck, 1757) in Clumber Park, a first for Nottinghamshire and the first time the spider has been seen in the UK for 48 years

by Lucy Stockton

On a sunny September morning, Trevor Harris and I were searching for spiders in Clumber Park, Nottinghamshire when we came across a rare and exciting find. Clumber is a grade 1 listed country park, created by the Dukes of Newcastle and was historically part of Sherwood Forest. The park is a mosaic of broadleaved woodland, heathland, acid grassland, coniferous plantations and arable farmland with a lake in the centre.

As part of the ecological monitoring at the park, we happened to be searching at the right time and place to find our rare spider *Thanatus formicinus*. We were



**Figures 1 & 2.** *Thanatus formicinus* female from Clumber Park. Photographs © Lucy Stockton

finding little that morning with sweep netting over the grass-heath so decided to go searching in the base of the heather (*Calluna vulgaris*). The spider ran away from me twice but with persistence and some luck I caught it; at the time I had no idea that it would turn out to be such a rare find. Upon closer inspection our spider had a conspicuous cardiac mark, a black diamond shape, edged with white. While Trevor was searching through the ID book I could see his face had a puzzled, serious look. This was something new, something different. We found the identity of the spider and were confident that it was *T. formicinus* due to its distinctive markings.

A quick subsequent search that afternoon in the same area revealed two more individuals of the *T. formicinus* species, so now we know that it is resident up in the Midlands. One of the spiders was sent to Peter Harvey, who confirmed the identification. Although it appeared to be an adult female there were some differences in the epigyne to the figure in Roberts (1996) and it was also sent on to Peter Merrett, who thinks it is definitely fully adult, and that Roberts' drawing was probably of either a very old specimen or a continental one, which may explain why it looked rather different.

The habitat it was found was mature and building *Calluna vulgaris*, with moss underneath and also some bare ground. In the wider area there are rushes and other wet ground species. This may be quite similar to its

former Sussex sites. Peter Merrett in the 1991 Red Data Book (Bratton, 1991) on invertebrates other than insects states that the spider occurs in boggy areas with *Sphagnum*, tall *Molinia caerulea* and mature *Calluna vulgaris* and *Erica tetralix*. Peter Merrett (who was the last person to find the spider in 1969) expands on this to say the two Ashdown sites were both quite wet, with *Molinia* and *Sphagnum*. Legsworth had very old tall heather and scattered trees nearby (birch and pine), but Duddleswell was more open and exposed, some way from trees (pers. comm. to P. Harvey).

At the time we did not know the weight of this discovery, as our ID book had been vague about its distribution, stating only: widespread in Europe. We were puzzled by this vague description and were not sure what it meant about its distribution in the UK. Upon further investigation we discovered that our spider had been recorded in three sites in the very south of England, but not since 1969! The spider is nationally rare and classified as Critically Endangered (Possibly Extinct) in the UK in the latest national status review.

Further research is needed to see if this spider is living anywhere else in the local area and to find out more about its population.

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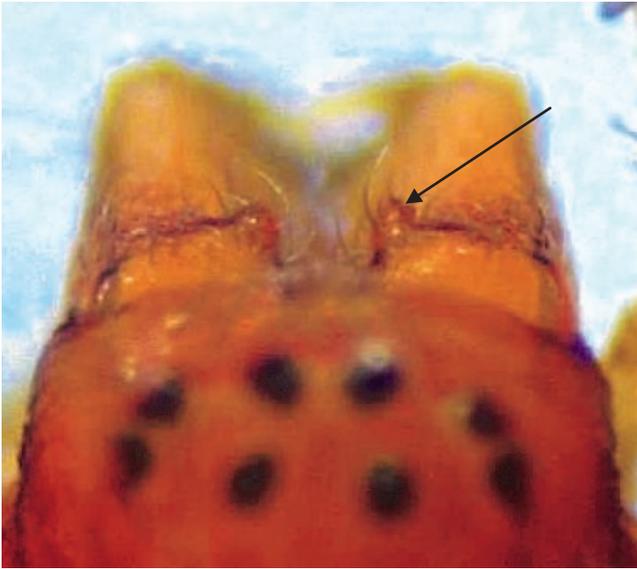
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## The rediscovery of *Nigma flavescens* in Britain

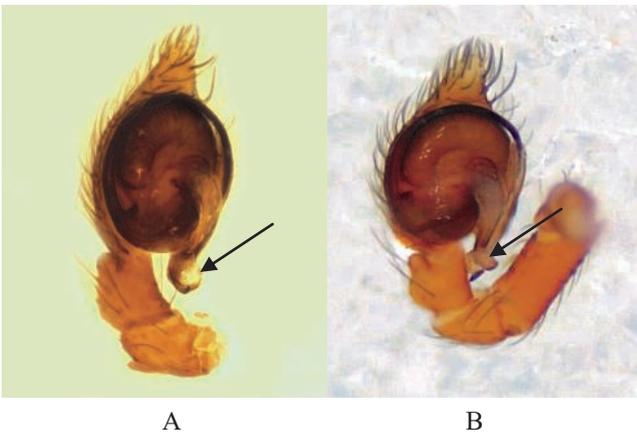
by Tony Russell-Smith

*Nigma flavescens* was originally included on the British list of spiders on the basis of two males and one female collected in Gibside, Co. Durham in 1909 (Jackson, 1924). Given that there was some doubt as to the true identity of these specimens and that it had never been found again in Britain, the species was subsequently formally removed from the revised British checklist (Merrett & Murphy, 2000).

On the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2017, I visited Hothfield Common LNR near Ashford, one of the few areas of heathland and valley bog remaining in Kent. Beating gorse bushes produced the usual selection of theridiids and



**Figure 1.** Head and chelicerae of male *Nigma flavescens*. Specimen from Hothfield Common LNR, Kent. The arrow indicates the projection on the cheliceral ridge.



**Figure 2.** Male palp of A) *Nigma puella* and B) *N. flavescens* viewed ventrally. Arrows indicate the position of the tip of the conductor. Fig. 2A courtesy of Pierre Oger. Fig. 2B specimen from Hothfield Common N.R., Kent.

*Philodromus* species but in addition a single male *Nigma* specimen which in the field I took to be *N. puella*. However, later examination of the specimen under the microscope suggested it could be *N. flavescens*. In particular, the ridges on the anterior margin of the chelicerae had a small projection on the inner side which is entirely absent in *D. puella* (See Fig. 1 and Locket & Millidge Vol. 1, Fig. 27C). Accordingly, I sent the specimen to Peter Merrett who kindly confirmed the identification.

The male palps of *Nigma puella* and *N. flavescens* are very similar, especially when viewed retro-laterally (compare for example Figs. 15a and 15b in Roberts, 1985). In ventral view, the difference between them is somewhat more apparent, and in particular the shape of the tip of the conductor is clearly dissimilar (Fig. 2). In *Nigma puella*, this structure is more or less oval in shape while in *N. flavescens* the shape somewhat resembles a bird's head with a pointed "beak" directed posteriorly.

Judging from the photographs on Pierre Oger's website (<https://arachno.piwigo.com>), there is some variation in the appearance of the conductor tip in *N. puella*, but it never has a sharply pointed process as in *N. flavescens*.

*Nigma* species appear to be rather uncommon in Kent. The autumn maturing *N. walckenaeri* is most frequently recorded but mainly across the metropolitan part of West Kent. There are only two records for *N. puella*, a female from Burnt Oak Wood, Orlestone Forest collected by Peter Harvey in 1991 and a male collected by myself in East Blean Woods, near Canterbury in 2006. The latter specimen was beaten from an oak in this ancient woodland site on the 5<sup>th</sup> June. The discovery of *Nigma flavescens* at Hothfield prompted me to re-examine the specimen from East Blean and to my surprise (and slight embarrassment) this too turned out to be *N. flavescens*! The occurrence of the species in two localities in East Kent suggests that it might occur elsewhere in the South-East and it would certainly be worthwhile checking any putative *Nigma puella* specimens in case they are actually *N. flavescens*.

#### Acknowledgements

I owe a special debt of gratitude to George McGavin for taking the photo-micrographs of the male of *Nigma flavescens*. I am also most grateful to Pierre Oger for allowing me to reproduce the photo of the palp of *N. puella* from his excellent website. Finally, my thanks as ever go to Peter Merrett for confirming the identity of this specimen.

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## The buzzing spider *Anyphaena sabina* L. Koch, new to Essex

by Peter Harvey

Buzzing spiders have 2 pairs of distinctive dark brown markings on their pale brown abdomen. They hunt by running down their prey on trees and bushes. The buzzing name comes from the way the males vibrate their abdomen against the surface of leaves in order to attract females.

Until 2012 the only species known in this country was the widespread and common *Anyphaena accentuata* and identification was a simple matter. However this is no longer the case. *Anyphaena sabina* was first found in Britain as a single female in poor condition collected by Edward Milner at Mile End Park (Middlesex) in 2011 using pitfall trapping (Milner, 2012). The current author provisionally identified the spider and this identification was confirmed by Dr Peter Merrett and John Murphy.

Subsequently a single male was found in 2014 from a Malaise trap on a green roof on the south side of the River Thames near the Millenium Dome on the Greenwich Peninsula and identified by Richard Wilson (Wilson, 2015), and in 2015 a male was found in the Natural History Museum Wildlife Garden by Tom Thomas, both confirmed by the author. This year the author found two female *Anyphaena sabina* (Plate 1) on 25 May at the Waterworks Nature Reserve in the Lee Valley where they were beaten off scrub. These are the first records for Essex. It seems likely that the species will increasingly spread more widely in south-east England and already the author has confirmed another female collected by Edward Milner on 01 June 2017 on the Middlesex side of the River Lea at Springfield Park. Unfortunately although the genus is one of the easiest spiders to identify in the field, even as juveniles, species identification will now require confirmation of an adult under a microscope, since the appearance is very similar to pale individuals of *Anyphaena accentuata*, a spider found in similar habitats and which is extremely variable in colour and depth of pattern, from pale individuals to very dark. The situation is also now even more complicated by the author's discovery of a third species *A. numida* in September 2017 in the Lee Valley. The *A. sabina* specimens the author has seen to date seem to suggest it is like pale individuals of *A. accentuata*, although the range of variation in Britain is yet to be confirmed. The third species *A. numida* is also pale.

### Acknowledgements

The author is very grateful indeed to Peter Merrett for providing his excellent figures of the *Anyphaena sabina* epigyne and palp (Figs. 1-3 at end of *A. numida* article) and to Rowley Snazell for providing these electronically. He is also grateful to the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority for commissioning the survey at the Waterworks Nature Reserve and Middlesex Filter Beds and for permission to publish this note.



**Plate 1.** Adult female buzzing spider *Anyphaena sabina*, new to Essex. Photograph © Peter Harvey

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## The buzzing spider *Anyphaena numida* Simon, new to Britain

by Peter Harvey

The author collected three *Anyphaena* individuals on 07 September 2017 at two adjacent sites in the Lee Valley, Middlesex Filter Beds Nature Reserve in Middlesex and Waterworks Nature Reserve on the Essex side of the River Lee, which all turned out to be the buzzing spider *Anyphaena numida*, new to Britain. *Anyphaena numida* is known from Portugal, Spain, France and Algeria. Simon (1929) in *Les Arachnides de France* (p.960) gives Pyrennees-Orientales and states it is a common species in Algeria.

Earlier in the year I had found *Anyphaena sabina* females at the Essex site, as well as the usual *A. accentuata* at both sites, but this time I collected two very pale *Anyphaena* from the Middlesex site by beating scrub/hazel and thought they were probably *A. sabina*. The male was subadult and the female looked with a lens as though it probably had an adult epigyne. By the time I had driven home the subadult male had already matured in the tube! The following morning the female had also moulted so it had evidently been submature, not mature as I had thought at the time. They were obviously not *A. sabina*, and from the Spiders of Europe website they were clearly *Anyphaena numida* (see Plates 1 & 2), an identification Dr Peter Merrett has confirmed. A juvenile female from the Essex site matured on 15 September 2017.



**Plate 1.** *Anyphaena numida* male from Lee Valley. Photograph © Peter Harvey

It is possible the species has established from introduction with Olympic Park landscape plantings further south in the Lee Valley, but it can be expected to spread and start appearing elsewhere in the region. Indeed Mick Massie has already found it at the end of October in west London at Gunnersbury Triangle (see following article). Urones *et al.* (1995) show a phenology chart that suggests September as the main month for mature males (in the Iberian peninsula), and this adult season is borne out in this country by these collections in the Lee Valley. Autumn is a very unusual time to expect other *Anyphaena* species to be adult in Britain, so we should now definitely be looking for *Anyphaena numida* at this time of year.



**Plate 2.** *Anyphaena numida* female from Lee Valley. Photograph © Peter Harvey

Identification will require confirmation of an adult under a microscope, since the overall appearance is similar to *A. sabina* and pale examples of the widespread and common *Anyphaena accentuata*, an extremely variable spider in colour and depth of pattern. All three species are found in similar habitats.

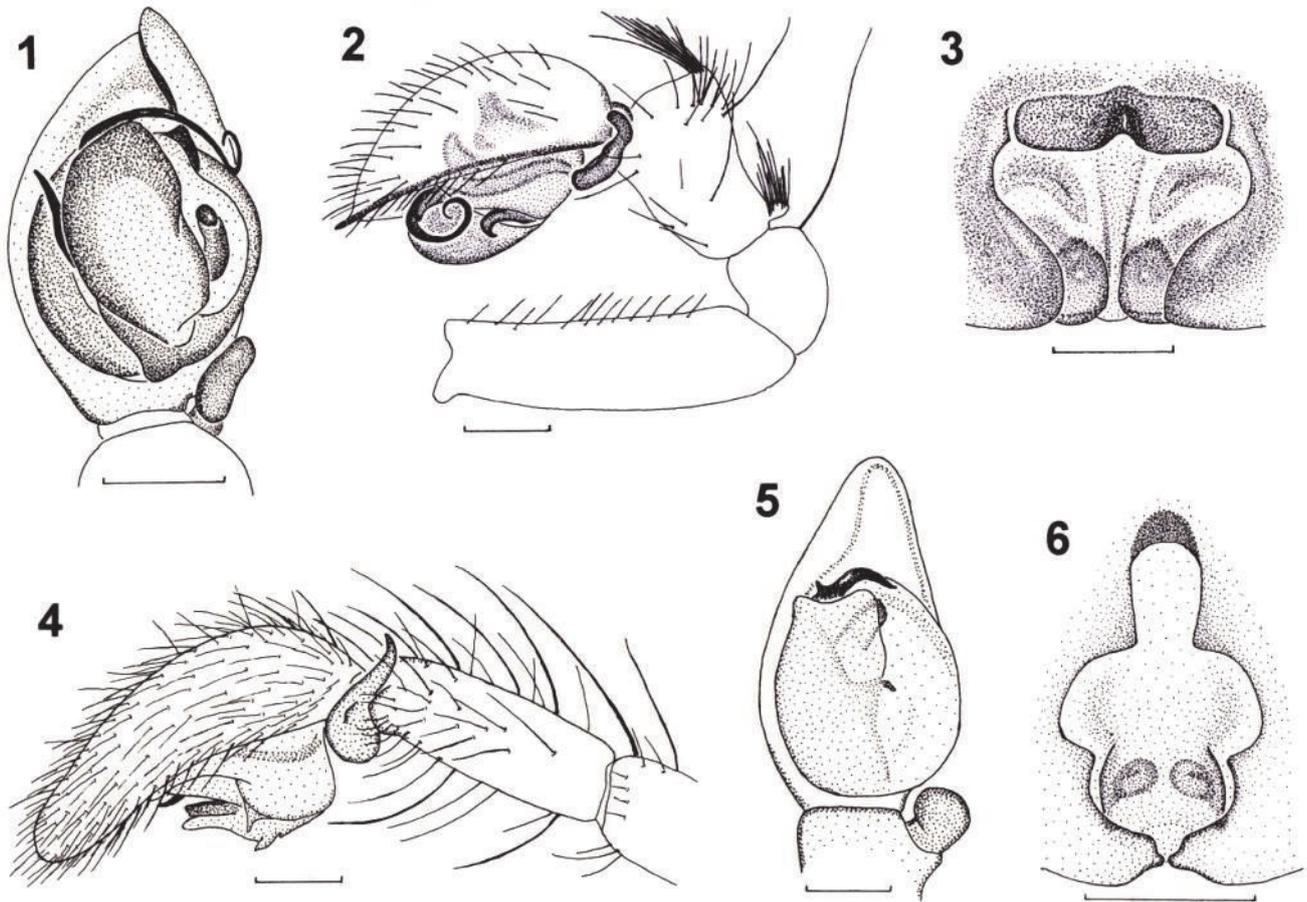
#### Acknowledgements

The author is very grateful indeed to Peter Merrett for providing his excellent figures of the epigyne and palp for the Lee valley *Anyphaena numida* specimens overleaf (Figs. 4-6) and to Rowley Snazell for providing these electronically. He is also grateful to the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority for commissioning the survey at the Waterworks Nature Reserve and Middlesex Filter Beds and for permission to publish this note.

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**Figures 1-3.** *Anyphaena sabina*. 1 Male left palpal bulb, ventral; 2 Male left palp, retrolateral; 3 Epigyne, ventral, hairs omitted.  
**Figures 4-6.** *Anyphaena numida*. 4 Male left palp, retrolateral; 5 Male left palpal bulb, ventral; 6 Epigyne, ventral, hairs omitted.  
 Scalelines = 0.2 mm. Figures © Peter Merrett

## The buzzing spider *Anyphaena numida* Simon - a new record for Britain

by Mick Massie

I made a visit to Gunnersbury Triangle on 28 October 2017, a small Chiswick nature reserve managed by London Wildlife Trust. I have made observations here over the years as it is in the same TQ2078 square as my house. The site gets the name from the triangular shape created by the railway lines and roads that form its boundaries. It is mainly closed canopy secondary woodland, some wet woodland, a few small meadows and is generally very dark with bramble, ivy, yew and holly below some tall birches and willows and a few other deciduous trees.

*Anyphaena accentuata* is a very familiar species from trees and shrubs in West London, and at this time of year just about every beating tray yielded juveniles of this species here. I had hoped to find *Anyphaena sabina* which I haven't seen yet, so when I saw a mature male that looked a 'bit odd' I potted it to photograph at home. The general impression was a pale *Anyphaena* lacking the crisp dark 'accents'.

Unsure of what I had found, I put a photograph up on the British Spider Identification group on Facebook. This

is a lively and informal arena with some knowledgeable British and Continental European arachnologists as members. It was clear from the photograph that I posted that the pedipalps were not *Anyphaena accentuata* or *A. sabina* as they clearly lacked the brush of pedipalp stridulating hairs of these species, but no definite conclusion was offered. At this point I was excitedly anticipating a possible first for Britain.

I then sent a photograph to Edward Milner and to Peter Harvey to ask their opinions, and got an immediate response from Peter telling me of his find of *Anyphaena numida* in the Lee Valley a month earlier. Peter subsequently confirmed my specimen. I thought to go back to try to find a female, and was rewarded by finding some on what I think is the only *Quercus ilex* in the reserve, right next to the District Line, and others on nearby ivy.

It occurred to me that the railway lines that bound the reserve, one going east to Upminster and the other east to Stratford and beyond, could possibly provide a transport corridor for spiders and other invertebrates in trees overhanging the trains and sheds of these lines. This could quickly link the finds in the Lee Valley to the West of London.

Another observation is that I am writing this report five days after my original find - astonishingly fast owing



**Plates 1 & 2.** *Anyphaena numida* from Gunnersbury Triangle. **Top.** Male. **Bottom** female. Photographs © Mick Massie

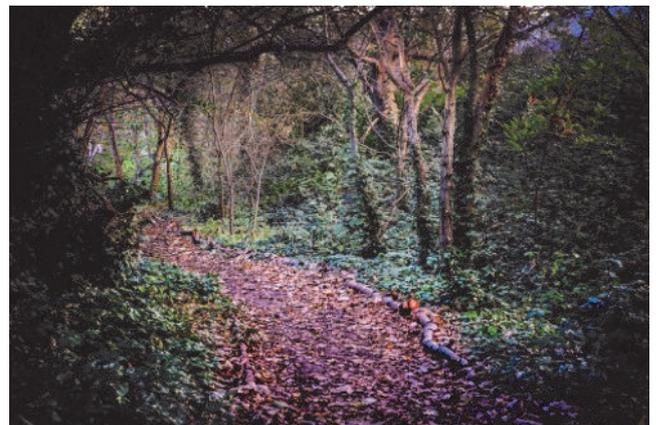


**Plate 3.** *Anyphaena numida* gravid female from Gunnersbury Triangle. Photograph © Mick Massie

to social media, digital photography and the internet. The Facebook group plays no little part in this, and while much of the discussion is of a low level, it provides a stimulating and refreshing way to engage with beginners and specialists. The group is not public, so only members see the posts - they aren't broadcast to the world. Facebook has many, very good special interest groups covering just about any natural history topic, and I recommend to everyone that they give it a try.

Of course, I would not be able to have reached such a rapid conclusion without the brilliant and timely support from Peter Harvey, to whom I am indebted once again. Thank you Peter.

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**Plate 4.** *Anyphaena numida* habitat at Gunnersbury Triangle. Photograph © Mick Massie

## The Marbled Cellar Spider *Holocnemus pluchei* (Pholcidae) – a third British location

by Geoff Oxford

The pholcid *Holocnemus pluchei* (Scopoli, 1763) is a native of the Mediterranean region but has been introduced to, and become established in, many countries across the world in recent decades. In Britain it is known to have established in two locations in the Midlands. Jon Daws found the first specimen in 2005 in an ASDA distribution centre in Lutterworth (Daws, 2005) and subsequently in 2005 and 2006 (see Daws, 2007 for an update). Meanwhile, a second breeding population was reported from a plant nursery glasshouse at Welford-on-Avon by Bill Smillie and Pip Taylor (Taylor, 2006). Jon Daws informs me that the Lutterworth population was still there in 2010, when he left for another job, and that colonisation probably occurred in the late 1990s. The current status of the Welford population is unknown.

A third location for this species was discovered near York on 29 July 2017, when a single mature female was spotted in Dean's Garden Centre, Stockton-on-the-Forest (SE647552). The female was brought home for further examination and positive identification. A few days later she was returned to the garden centre and a thorough search made for other individuals, but in vain. In the original web was an exuvia from this specimen (judging by the coloration of the leg joints) suggesting that the female had been brought in as a juvenile. If this was the only individual imported then obviously a viable population will not establish. The plants from Dean's are brought in either *via* The Netherlands or, even less directly, from a UK distribution centre.



**Figure 1.** *Holocnemus pluchei* in situ at Dean's Garden

This is a very attractive species with a reticulate pattern on the dorsal abdomen, giving it the common name of Marbled Cellar Spider. This is quite distinct from the rather bland coloration of *Pholcus phalangioides*. Also unlike *Pholcus*, *Holocnemus* has a black sternum and a broad black band running the length of the ventral abdomen, and so the two species can readily be distinguished from both dorsal and ventral aspects. The carapace is not flat but resembles a couple of puffy cushions separated by a deep, median 'valley' leading from a flat, triangular ocular area. At first I thought the Dean's specimen was an immature male since the palps appeared swollen but smooth; I then noticed the protruding epigyne which perfectly match that of *H. pluchei* when viewed in a spi-pot. Enlarged palps are a feature of mature females of this species (see images at: <https://araneae.unibe.ch/gallery/photos/1070>).



**Figure 2.** *Holocnemus pluchei* female showing the 'puffy' carapace and the enlarged palps. Photograph © Geoff Oxford



**Figure 3.** Lateral view showing the protruding epigastric region and (just) the enlarged palps. Photograph © Geoff Oxford

It seems likely that *H. pluchei* will be more frequently

found in Britain as potential source populations spread in Europe and is well worth looking for in places that receive imports from the continent. I thank Jon Daws for additional information on the Lutterworth population.

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### A new site for *Semljicola caliginosus*, *Hilaira nubigena*, *Meioneta mossica* and *Clubiona norvegica* in Dumfriesshire, vc72

by Bob Merritt

On 1 September 2017 I investigated a small un-named lochan at NS711046 on a moorland plateau near Polgown about 3 kilometres north-west of Shiel Loch, where I had discovered *Semljicola caliginosus* (Falconer, 1910) the previous year (Merritt, 2017). Although shown as a

lochan, elevation 518 metres AOD, on the latest OS Explorer map, there was no indication of its presence on several satellite views of the area which I accessed via the internet earlier this year.

On reaching the location of the lochan it was evident that a wetland still existed there in the form of a swampy area of bottle sedge *Carex rostrata* and *Sphagnum* moss (Fig. 1) with a maximum water depth of about 35 cms. Using my long-handled metal-framed pond net, I sampled a small part of the swamp by depressing the surface vegetation in order to submerge it (Fig. 2), and, as the net was withdrawn, I collected a selection of the spiders which had become dislodged.



**Figure 2.** Micro-habitat in which the spiders were collected at NS71100463. Photograph © Bob Merritt



**Figure 1.** An un-named late-succession lochan near Polgown, Dumfriesshire and Galloway. Photograph © Bob Merritt

A total of ten species was collected (Table 1), including my target species, the UKBAP *S. caliginosus*, for which this site is the third for Dumfries and Galloway (D & G), all since 2016. Three other species are also of particular note, namely *Hilaira nubigena* Hull, 1911, this being the second record for D & G (the other being a single female collected from *Sphagnum* moss at Windy Standard, elevation c.675 metres, in 1997); *Meioneta mossica* Schikora, 1993, this being the third record for D & G (the others being a single male grubbed from among roots of *Calluna* and coarse grasses at The Band, Gatelawbridge, elevation 410 metres, in 2016, and two females vacuum-sampled at ground level from among *Calluna* and coarse grasses at Fell End, Kirkcowan, elevation 125 metres, in 2017); *Clubiona norvegica* Strand, 1900, this being the second reliable record for D & G (the other being a single specimen pitfall-trapped from a *Molina*-dominated bog margin at Silver Flowe NNR, elevation c.250 metres, in 1978. Full details of these records have been, or soon will be, lodged with the Spider Recording Scheme database.

Species	Quantity/ gender	Status designations	
		IUCN	GB Rarity
<i>Bathyphantes</i> sp.	1 female		
<i>Bolyphantes luteolus</i>	1 female	LC	
<i>Clubiona norvegica</i>	2 males	LC	NS
<i>Drepanotylus uncatus</i>	1 male	LC	
<i>Hilaira excisa</i>	1 female	LC	
<i>Hilaira nubigena</i>	1 male	VU	NR
<i>Meioneta mossica</i>	1 male	LC	NS
<i>Pelecopsis parallela</i>	1 female	LC	
<i>Pirata piraticus</i>	2 females	LC	
<i>Semljicola caliginosus</i>	1 female	EN	NR

**Table 1.** List of spiders collected from the 'lochan' near Polgown

Key: LC = Least Concern. VU = Vulnerable. EN = Endangered. NR = Nationally Rare, NS = Nationally Scarce

Earlier this year a wind farm was constructed on the moorland surrounding the newly-sampled site shown in Figure 1. Indeed, the photo of the nearby Shiel Loch (Merritt, 2017), if taken now rather than in November 2016, would show the horizon dotted with half-a-dozen wind turbines. I don't know whether it was luck or judgement which caused the turbines and access road to miss the late-succession lochan, but they did. However it was a close thing, with an access road passing a mere 20 metres from its southern edge.

I have no idea at present whether many, if any, of the recorded species also occurred in the drier margins of the lochan and beyond. Time was limited, and I concentrated on the area which most closely resembled the habitat where I found *S. caliginosus* at Shiel Loch.

I thank Peter Merrett for determining the identity of the specimens of *M. mossica* and *P. parallela*.

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## *Syedra myrmicarum* (Kulczynski) (Linyphiidae) in Hampshire

by Jonty Denton

On the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2017 in Shapley Heath Copse, North Hampshire (SU7554) I took an unfamiliar rufous spider from the base of a long dead but standing rotten hulk of a fir tree which was occupied by a large *Lasius brunneus* nest. Peter Harvey kindly determined this for me as a male *Syedra myrmicarum* the first for Hampshire and VC12. It was present in the excavated galleries made by the ants, who showed no interest in it.

31 Thorn Lane, Four Marks, Hampshire GU34 4BX

## *Macaroeris nidicolens* (Walckenaer) (Salticidae) in East Sussex

by Jonty Denton

I beat a male from sea buckthorn, closely followed by numerous other adults on mature black pines *Pinus nigra* planted beside the A259 north of Sovereign Harbour, Eastbourne (TQ638023) on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017. The association with black pines is remarkable with other new localities including Greenwich Park in West Kent in 2016. This appears to be the first record for Sussex.

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## Is the jumping spider *Synageles venator* (Araneae: Salticidae) on the move in Essex and England?

by Peter Harvey

The jumping spider *Synageles venator* is an ant-mimic, usually found in association with ants. It has always occurred in sand dunes on the coast, usually low down among marram, and among similar tussocky vegetation in fens. The Spider Recording Scheme (SRS) website summary page for this species, based on text prepared for a national status review by the author, Ian Dawson, Peter Merrett and Tony Russell-Smith states 'the spider is fairly

common in some large dune systems, but infrequently recorded elsewhere'. The spider was almost confined to a few locations on the coasts of southern England and South Wales, but also previously recorded from Yaxley and Woodwalton Fens, Huntingdonshire and there are old records from Dorset. At Yaxley Fen the spider was 'Beaten from bushes between Yaxley and Peterborough by the Rev. H.P.B. Chubb' published by F.P. Smith in *Science Gossip*, 1901.



**Figure 1.** Jumping spider *Synageles venator*. Photograph © Peter Harvey

Dr Eric Duffey recorded the spider at Holme Fen NNR and Woodwalton Fen NNR in 1961 and it was also recorded at Hastings in 1961. There are more recent records from Lyme Regis in Dorset, Braunton Burrows in N. Devon, Berrow Dunes in N. Somerset and South Wales from Tenby to Kenfig NNR, Camber Dunes in Sussex and from two old brick pits in the Peterborough area (one subsequently developed for housing). At the brick pits, the species had been found on a fairly steep bank with *Phragmites* and partial vegetation cover near the margin of a pool and the spider has been found at Misson Carr in Nottinghamshire on several occasions in 2004 and 2005 3-4 feet up on a wooden gatepost and wooden post-and-rail fencing, but none found on the ground (Williams, 2005; 2006), but all these habitat areas seem to have some affinities to either dune or fen. Other records since then until recently have also suggested little change in the overall habitat preferences for the species.

*Synageles venator* was first found in Essex by the author in 1998 at Barking Levels PFA (pulverised fly or fuel ash) Lagoons together with the rare ruby tailed chrysid wasp *Cleptes nitidulus* in a remarkable area of weathered 'dune-like' PFA with nearby areas of *Phragmites* and 'fen' vegetation. This site was exceptionally interesting and supported an important invertebrate fauna including many dune species. Unfortunately the site and surrounding area was developed for housing, and in the absence of any further records from Essex and the lack of apparently suitable habitat, the author assumed that the spider had become extinct in the county, along with the ruby tailed wasp.

However a single female *S. venator* was collected by C.W. Plant from a brownfield site in Dagenham in 2006, a few kilometres to the west, and later identified by the author. This site has been destroyed for development. Then in 2007 the author beat single females from bushes on three occasions at a brownfield site with landfill history in Newham. The spider was clearly well established at the site, which proved to be very interesting



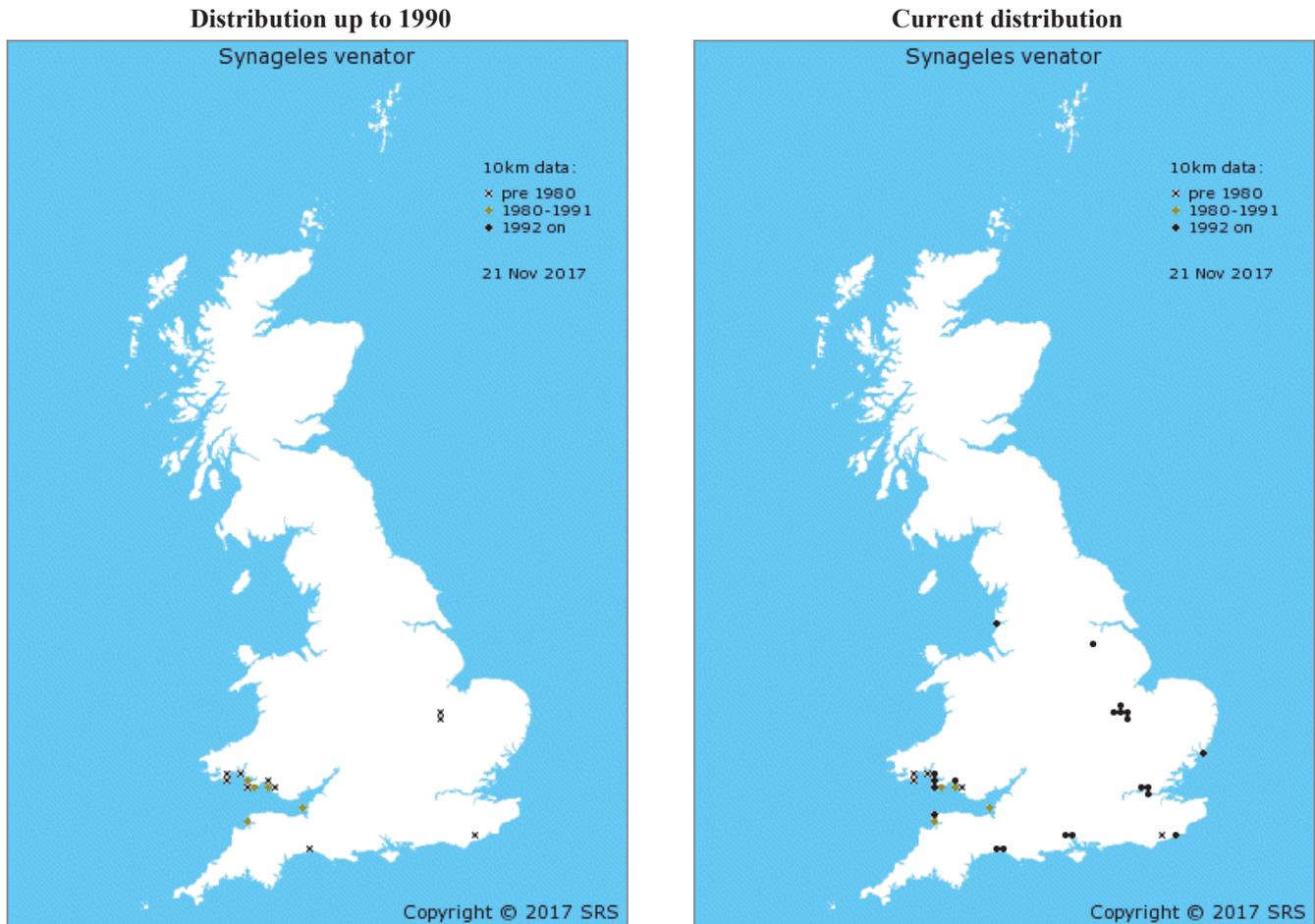
**Figure 2.** PFA 'dune' at Barking Levels in 1998. Photograph © Peter Harvey

generally and to support an important assemblage of rare and scarce invertebrate species, including two priority UKBAP species. Driving past in May 2008 the whole area could be seen to have been extensively bulldozed and completely destroyed. In 2008 the spider was recorded at Beckton Gas Works by Andy Phillips during a consultancy survey where the site has been subsequently developed and at West Thurrock Marshes by Colin Plant Associates.

The evidence seemed to suggest that a metapopulation of *Synageles venator* was present in the local area (in itself very interesting), but it was increasingly difficult to see how any population could survive, with the amount of any type of habitat, let alone likely to be suitable for this spider, reduced to practically nothing by the scale of developments in the area. Hence it seemed likely that the species should again to be considered extinct in Essex (Harvey 2008).

However, despite this, the spider has now increasingly been found at new sites near the Thames in Essex, including habitats and situations very unlike dunes or fens. The author found the species at a site next to West Thurrock Marshes in 2014 and on several occasions at Anchor Field, a site next to Lakeside in Thurrock in 2015. 2017 has already seen two more S. Essex locations for the spider at Rainham Marshes, photographed by Yvonne Couch and posted on the EFC Facebook page, and several individuals identified by the author in material collected by Adrian Knowles at a site with pasture and scrub near South Ockendon. Most recently Sheila Hamilton-Dyer posted photographs of the spider on the SRS website she had found in the garden and a local allotment in Southampton on 30 September 2017 and then another found in the kitchen on 17 October.

The species is widespread and more frequent in Europe (SRS website summary page) and the Spiders of Europe website states that it occurs in dry and warm localities, amongst low vegetation, on sandy to rocky ground, on reed, fences and walls of buildings. Many plants at the northern edge of their range in Britain which are found in France in a wide range of habitats become much more fussy and restricted in Britain. It seems likely therefore what we are seeing in *Synageles venator* may be similar and that climate change and warmer temperatures in southern Britain are now allowing the spider to thrive in a much wider range of habitats than previously. This may now be a species which might start to be found much more widely in southern Britain, so keep a look out, and please report any records to the recording scheme and your Area Organiser. There are several other European species with a very similar



**Figure 3.** Change in recorded national distribution of *Synageles venator* between 1990 and present (see Spider Recording Scheme website Times Series Maps page for the species at <http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/portal.php/p/Time+Series+Maps/s/Synageles%20venator>)

appearance, so a voucher specimen or good quality photographs will be needed for verification.

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## Providing grid references with records

by Peter Harvey

A grid reference which does not include the location where the invertebrate was actually found does not give us accurate information, or information useful for meaningful analyses or for example if someone wants to try and refind a rare species in the future.

However the use of 10-figure grid references has increasingly become a vogue because it is now so easy to provide, but this is a plea **not to use 10-figure grid references** for records except in exceptional circumstances.

As is standard practice, a grid reference should be **enclosing**, in other words it should define the grid square **within which** the taxon was found. So a ten-figure grid reference is stating that the species was found **WITHIN A SINGLE SQUARE METRE**. Yet this is rarely what is meant at all, and recorders are only providing this degree of apparent accuracy because of the modern ease of getting this figure. There are a number of problems with

this, not least that the GPS is not actually accurate to this resolution. Apparently GPS-enabled smartphones are typically accurate to within a 4.9 m radius under open sky. However, their accuracy worsens near buildings, bridges, and trees. There is in any case little point in defining the location of a mobile species to a single square metre (10-figure grid reference) or even 10 square metre area (8-figure grid reference). Additionally, if you walk around a tree, along a pathway, around your house or garden, you will cross into many 1 square metre areas! This is also true when recording on sites in the wider countryside - a recorder will almost certainly enter numerous one metre squares when surveying a site and finding spiders by observation, grubbing, sweeping, beating etc. Even assuming the 10-figure grid references were accurate, to do this meaningfully would mean that there would be no time to actually effectively undertake survey (as well as generating vast numbers of pointless locations). Every action of sweep sampling or beating around a large oak tree for example would generate a whole lot of 10-figure locations.

Normally a 6-figure ones (100m square) is likely to be the sensible resolution for both meaningful accuracy and for groups of living things that are inherently mobile. In urban areas a full postcode may be enough to define the area. The only exception might be for very rare species which are confined to very localised areas, or where traps are used at fixed locations over a time period or the dynamics of a population of a species like *Eresus* are

metre areas and about 500 10 figure one metre square areas. It would be silly to record all these as separate sites unless a special project required this level of detail. In fact many recorders providing a 10-figure grid reference are actually giving the grid reference for the centroid location of a large site, but in a way which suggests a single enclosing 1 square metre.

If undertaking survey at a site on any one occasion, it is often only practical to separately sample within a small number of 100m square (6-figure) or 1km square (4-figure) areas. If it is really impossible to divide up the recording into these sample areas, then it may be necessary as a last resort to use a centroid grid reference, but in this case it should be made transparently clear in the site name that the grid reference is a centroid, and not an enclosing grid square. This can be done e.g. by using a location name such as "Hatfield Forest (centroid)" (see <http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/portal.php/p/Recording+spiders>) for more guidance on recording spiders.

The modern fashion for recorders to use 10-figure grid references means that biological databases will become filled with apparent locational accuracy when nothing is further from the truth. Avoiding this is massively important for all sorts of reasons, and unless we are clear about the meaning of what we are providing, we are generating a huge data quality problem.

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being studied, or for example where the location of specific webs is being monitored. Below is an example of a 6 figure (100m square) and an 8 figure 10 square metre area containing a small back garden. The house, front and back garden would cover four whole 8 figure 10 square

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