

# SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME NEWS

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## EDITORIAL

In this mailing (UK members) is a booklet that outlines and explains details of Phase 2 of the Recording Scheme, with recommended data-collection information. This will also be provided to all new Recorders who register with the scheme.

It is hoped that add-ons will be developed for use with biological recording packages such as Recorder and MapMate that will allow computer records to be entered with our new level of structured data incorporated. Stan Dobson is also working on a new Windows version of SPIREC to allow easy data input to a variety of database software. Recorders will be kept informed on progress in the newsletter.

As previous issues of the SRS newsletters should have made clear, if at all possible the Recording Scheme wants far more than 10km square distribution maps. This has always been true, but is especially so now, when the aims of the scheme are being extended to try and find out much more about the ecology and phenology of spiders and any changes to the distribution and frequency of species in the future.

So, we are collecting and will continue to accept records, all records, with as much information as possible. I realise it may be unrealistic to expect Recorders to complete the new RA65 card in all circumstances, but its main aim is to clarify the field structure and categories for computerised recording, whilst still retaining compatibility with the old card. If you submit card records, I would urge you now at least to record male/female numbers and habitat structure in addition to what you provided in the past.

Thank you very much to all those who have continued to send in record cards and computerised data. We now have 966 cards sent in by Recorders since the *Atlas*, and hope to be able to get these punched in and validated in the reasonably near future. The provisional maps are on the NBN Gateway at <http://www.searchnbn.net/>, to registered users, and the detail and interactive layers available are quite impressive. The aim is to update these maps on a yearly basis, so please keep sending in records on a regular basis (if possible in computerised form).

## Area Organiser Changes and a Change of Address

Ian Dawson has agreed to take over from Deborah Procter for Cambridgeshire (VC 29). Thanks go to Deborah for all her work in that county. She remains AO for East and West Norfolk (VCs 27 and 28).

Andrew Phillips is Area Organiser for Sussex (VCs 13 and 14). His address has changed to 58b, West Hill Road, St Leonards On Sea, East Sussex, TN38 0NE

Details of all Area Organisers will be available as part of the B.A.S. Handbook in the members' area of the B.A.S. website at <http://www.britishspiders.org.uk/members/> You will need to register with Craig Slawson to obtain access to these pages.

**My thanks go to all those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 46 will be published in July 2003. Please send contributions by the end of May at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32, Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: [grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk)**



Figure 1. *Phaeoecus broccatus* (L. Koch, 1866), male.

## Rare Heathland Records

by Ian Dawson

A visit on 19th June 2002 to Avon Heath Country Park (SZ1203) in Dorset (but VC11, South Hants), managed for Dorset C.C. by the RSPB, turned up two female *Ero aphana* (RDB2) from gorse at opposite ends of the site, a female *Dipoena inornata* from the interface between gorse and heather, and a male of the handsome gnaphosid *Phaeoecus braccatus*, Notable B but recorded from only 8 10-km squares post 1980. This last was discovered running on my arm after I had been shaking heather over a net.

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



Figure 2. *Ero aphana* (Walckenaer, 1802), female.

## Recent Records for *Uloborus plumipes* and *Argiope bruennichi*

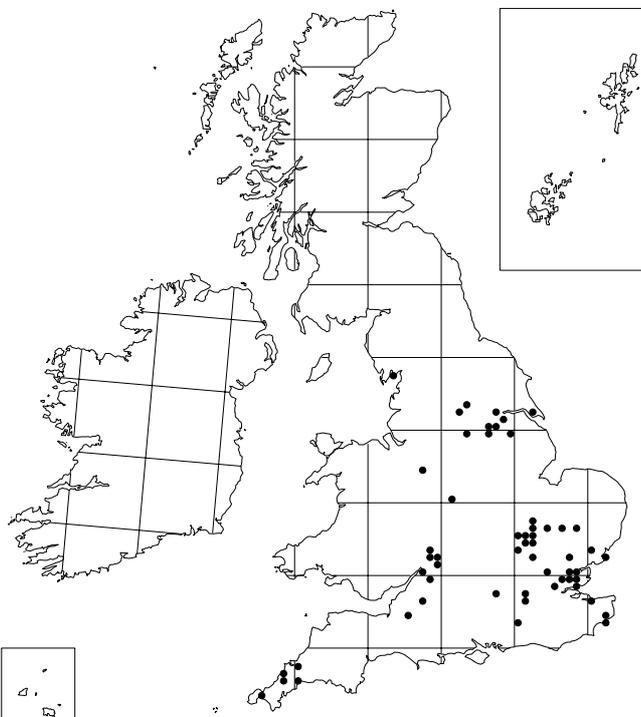
by Peter Harvey

I am very grateful to the many people who have sent in recent records for *Uloborus plumipes* and *Argiope bruennichi*. Ian Dawson and John Dobson have been especially active on the *U. plumipes* front!

Since publication of the *Atlas* I have received records of *Uloborus plumipes* from Jon Cranfield, Ian Dawson, John Dobson, Stan Dumican, Alan Feest, Andrew Green, David Haigh, Steve Hopkin and his Reading students, Clive McCarthy, Alan Pashby, Wayne Rixom, C. & I. Twissell, and Tracy at IKEA in Birstall, Leeds.

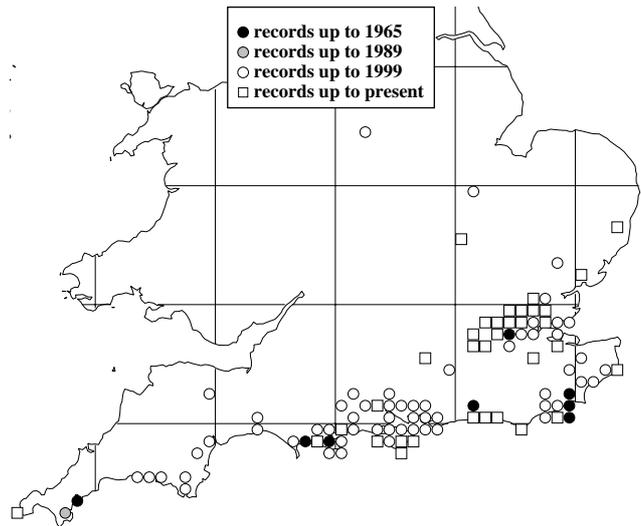
The following have supplied me with records of *Argiope bruennichi*: Martin Adam, Richard Allen, N. Anderson, Liz Appleton, David Baldock, Bryan Bullen, Phil Butler, Phil Carter, Barbara Chapman, Cornwall Trust, Sheila D., Tony Day, John Dobson, Ian Douch, Tim Gardiner, Seth Gibson, Adrian Harris, Ken Hill, S.A. Hudgell, Ian Holt, Colin Jupp, Louis Lawler, Gerald Legg, Edward Milner, L. Ralpty, Richard Revels, Ciaran Shaman, Peter Smithers, R. Stevens, John Swindell, Tom Thomas, Gordon Turner and Phil Wilkins. Quite a few of these records have come by e-mail or using the forms posted on the Essex Field Club website [www.essexfieldclub.org.uk](http://www.essexfieldclub.org.uk), and many from non-arachnologists have been supported by very good quality photographs.

### *Uloborus plumipes*



*Uloborus plumipes* is increasingly found in garden centres and nurseries over much of the country (see map), where the spider is no doubt proving useful as a form of pest control. It remains to be seen if the spider will become established in conservatories and houses. Females, juveniles and egg sacs are usually recorded, but males have been found on various occasions.

### *Argiope bruennichi*



Recent records for *Argiope bruennichi* basically consolidate the existing range (see map), filling in gaps in its distribution rather than extending its range. Whether this is due to several relatively poor summers remains to be seen. Longer milder autumns definitely seem to favour this and other late summer/autumn maturing species. In Essex the spider can be present in very large numbers in suitable habitats in the south of the county, usually in damp unmanaged grassland near the Thames, but it also occurs well away from the coast in mid and north Essex.

Please continue to send in records of both species so that we can continue to monitor their distribution in the UK.

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## Is *Enoplognatha latimana* Spreading?

by Ian Dawson

Within the space of two days in mid-July 2002 I found *Enoplognatha latimana* at Little Paxton LNR (TL1963) and Hinchingsbrooke Country Park (TL2171), both in VC31, Huntingdonshire; Tom Thomas had already found it, new to VC31, at the latter site. These are the farthest inland localities for the species according to the *Atlas*. It is tempting to think that *latimana* is spreading as a result of climate warming. I have regularly checked *ovata* at the former site in previous years, though I may not have looked in exactly the same habitat at the right time of year for *latimana*, so it may have been present earlier. The species was taken at both sites from spinings with various insect prey remains, well off the ground in isolated plants (rose and grass respectively) in areas of dry sunny rough grassland and scrub adjacent to disused gravel pits. In both cases I was expecting the occupant of the spinning to be a *Theridion* sp.

Peter Harvey commented: 'I think the main reason it has not been found inland in many places is that people don't sample the right habitat. Away from the coast especially, it occurs in open "waste ground" types of habitat, in scruffy unmanaged vegetation. Sweeping Bristly ox-tongue is often productive. Your description of isolated plants in areas of dry sunny rough grassland and scrub sounds a perfect *latimana* habitat.'

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**Spiders of River Shingles: *Caviphantes saxetorum* (Hull, 1916), New to Lancashire; *Arctosa cinerea* (Fabricius, 1777), New to Westmorland and VC69**

by Jennifer Newton

As part of the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan, an investigation of the invertebrates of the shingle banks at 15–30 m a.s.l. on the River Lune in North Lancashire (VC60), was started in 2002. There are old records of rare species of bugs and beetles from these banks, and Thrush Gill Island was the site of the investigations by Albert & Albert (1976) when *Arctosa cinerea* was first recorded in Lancashire.

Pitfall traps were set up on bare shingles of the 1 km wide flood plain, immediately north (upriver) of Thrush Gill Island (SD5870), and also a kilometre or so further upriver, north of Arkholme (SD5972/73). The summer of 2002 was marked by unusually frequent flash floods. A few traps were set out in May on the northern stretch of river but the main layout was delayed until mid June to late July. Even so the first main set was disastrously flooded, and in one section the second set was also flooded.

Unlike the results reported for rivers in Northumberland and Scotland (Eyre *et al.*, 2002), our results showed a great predominance of shingle species of spiders. Of the 699 adult specimens of 14 species identified, 644 belonged to 4 species mostly or entirely confined to shingles. The most abundant species were *Pardosa agricola* (383), *Oedothorax apicatus* (219) and *Arctosa cinerea* (36). Most interestingly, there were six specimens of *Caviphantes saxetorum*, a Nationally Scarce (Na) linyphiid 1 of river shingles, not reported by Albert & Albert (1976). From 23rd June to 12th July one male and one female were trapped at SD586712 and one male at SD582709, and a further three males were trapped at the latter site between the 12th and 27th July. *Caviphantes saxetorum* is a tiny spider and may easily be overlooked amongst all the *Oedothorax apicatus* and *Pardosa agricola* spiderlings. The female has an indistinct epigyne which appears subadult. The male palps are distinctive, but not readily placed, and the species has in fact been put in several different genera since its discovery in 1916 (Cooke & Merrett, 1967).

Interestingly the narrow strip of shingle at SD582709 which provided four specimens of *Caviphantes saxetorum* and five of *Arctosa cinerea* was seriously disturbed by floods, cattle and people. Only five *Pardosa agricola* and 23 *Oedothorax apicatus* were trapped here, but there were five other widespread species of spider, giving in total 69 specimens of nine species, relatively greater species richness than at any of the other sites. The other *Caviphantes* site, with 388 specimens of ten species, was fenced off from cattle and people, and to some extent protected from flooding by willows just upstream. Over all sites, the only other locally uncommon species with some fidelity to shingles was *Leptorhoptrum robustum* with two specimens.

In addition to the 36 specimens unfortunately trapped and killed, a number of live specimens of *Arctosa cinerea* were seen on most visits to most stretches of unvegetated shingle. Many were wandering over the surface or hiding under stones; a few were uncovered in burrows in fine substrate under bigger stones. On 1st August one female with eggsac was found in a burrow under a large flat stone in a Cumbrian stretch of the Lune, just north of Kirkby Lonsdale (SD612808). This appears to be the first record for Westmorland and VC69, although it is known from the River Eden in the north of Cumbria (Cumberland, VC70). Immediately after the find there was a torrential downpour which caused extensive flooding and must have

covered the burrow. I did not manage to return to see if the spider had survived.

I would like to thank Kevin Briggs and Anna Dunstan of the Environment Agency, and Tony Serjeant of the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, for help with setting up the traps; Edward Towers for permission to trap on his land; and Peter Merrett for confirming the identification of *Caviphantes saxetorum*.

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## Survey of Portland Spiders

by Ian Pembroke

I live on the Isle of Portland in Dorset, SW England—a limestone island of about 1,036 ha, half being open spaces.

Although many arachnologists have collected spiders here, as far as I can ascertain no comprehensive list has been made of all the species found. This seems rather a pity because, with strictly defined boundaries and with a fairly limited range of habitats, the island presents a unique opportunity to study the ecology of its spiders.

Although a novice in arachnology, with encouragement from members of the island's Bird Observatory and Field Centre, in Autumn 2001 I embarked on a project to list the species found on Portland with the aim of producing a baseline for examining, amongst other things, the relationship of shrinking habitats with spider numbers, and the effects of global warming on the ecology of spiders in a small area of Southern England.

The main habitats on Portland are calcareous grasslands, scrub, quarries and shingle, although there is a small spring forming a damp area and there are minuscule areas of hardwood trees and salt marsh, and a few caves. Its climate comprises an almost constant wind, gale force at times, and mild temperatures, with few frosts in winter. Consideration of all these environmental factors might indicate that a limited selection of species would be found, although all would not necessarily be common ones (I have already been fortunate enough to have found *Bianor aurocinctus*—a first for Dorset, *Ozyptila nigrata*, *Episinus truncatus* and *Meta menardi*).

I decided to publish a web site to record and show the spiders found. At the time of writing (end of 2002) the site features about 100 photographs and a list of species found so far. The site also lists species found by others and sent to the Recording Scheme, as well as some old past records.

If any readers have details of other species that they have found on Portland and not submitted to the scheme, I would be pleased to hear from them. The URL for my site is <http://www.website.lineone.net/~ian.pembroke>

I wish to extend my thanks to Mark Telfer at the Biological Records Centre for extracting the Portland species from the records.

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## Spider Species New for the Greater London Area Found on Green Roofs and the First Record of *Erigone aletris* Crosby & Bishop, 1928 in S England

by Gyongyver Kadas

The term 'green roof' describes both ornamental roof gardens and extensive roofs with more naturalistic plantings or self-established vegetation. Intensive green roofs are like parks and gardens at roof level, and require deep soil and regular maintenance. Extensive roofs have more naturalistic plantings and a shallower natural substrate which is sown with herb and lawn mix or left to colonise naturally or planted with sedum matting. Extensive green roofs require little or no maintenance and are relatively inexpensive to establish. Application of green roofs is widespread in North America and Western Europe, especially in Switzerland and Germany, where 13 million m<sup>2</sup> of green roofs were created in 2001. In the UK, however, they are not yet common. Although the usual reasons for establishing green roofs are for broader environmental benefits, such as reduction of rainwater run-off and thermal insulation, they also have great potential for biodiversity and conservation. Most of the green roofs surveyed in the project described here were sedum based.

A research project undertaken in the summer of 2002 investigated the invertebrate fauna of green roofs in Greater London, focusing on the spider community, to gain information about the biodiversity and conservation potential of this particular habitat. The Black Redstart Biodiversity Action Plan inspired the project. This small robin-like bird is the rarest breeding bird in this county, a true town dweller, found mostly on brownfield sites such as former bomb sites. Not only are these brownfield sites home to this rare bird but they also have an incredibly rich and diverse flora and fauna: up to 15 percent of the Nationally Scarce and Rare invertebrates are found on these sites according to Gibson (1998). Therefore it is very important that, if these brownfield sites are to be developed, appropriate mitigation is provided for the loss of these valuable wildlife habitats. The application of green roofs could serve as mitigation: this project aimed to find out how the design of these roofs could be improved to best achieve this function.

Methodology of my study, part of an M.Sc. in Conservation at University College London, was based on a similar Ph.D. research project in Basel, Switzerland, where a very high concentration of Red Data Book beetles and spiders was found on green roofs (Brenneisen, 2001). Samples were collected from the end of May to mid-July 2002. Although this coincides with the active period of many species, some were surely missed because of the time constraints of this project, constraints which also limited the number of sites examined to 10 green roof and 3 brownfield. Despite these limitations, over 3,000 individual spiders were collected with 59 species represented—a remarkable 9 percent of the total UK and 26 percent of the Greater London spider faunas. (And we should not forget that these species were found only in artificial urban habitats!)

In addition to the usual ubiquitous species, six species not previously recorded from Greater London were discovered, including *Erigone aletris* (Linyphiidae), new to Southern England. The only previously recorded established population had been from Scotland; the spider has recently been found in North Lincolnshire (Gallon, 2001). It seems to be well established in South-East London, around Canary Wharf, Greenwich and Deptford, as all the roofs and brownfield sites sampled around these areas contained this species in quite high numbers. However, they were not to be found on any of the other sites around Central, South and South-West London. The inevitable question is: how did this species actually get here? *E. aletris* is originally a North-American coastal species, so it is very likely to have found its way to Scotland and England in ships sailing across the Atlantic. It is not yet clear how long

ago the London populations arrived, or whether they came from America or from Scotland. (A future research project might be able to resolve this by DNA analysis.)

One of the most surprising findings of the research was that even supposedly specialist species have taken to green roof habitats, for example the wetland lycosid *Arctosa leopardus* (also a new record for Greater London). This finding is most interesting, as it was previously thought that green roofs would house species that are adapted to mostly arid or dry conditions or ubiquitous species. However, on roofs where the conditions are damper, such as where shaded by other buildings, or at places where rainwater can accumulate, wetland species could be found. This is of much interest as it indicates that with appropriate green roof planning and design, roofs could support species from a wide variety of habitats—important in terms of habitat mitigation for, e.g., brownfield sites.

Another new record for Greater London was *Steatoda phalerata* (Theridiidae). This species was surprisingly found in the very centre of London, near Kings Cross station, on the roof of the temporary home of the Almeida Theatre. This green roof was covered mostly with sedum plants, but also had a wide range of herbs that had established as a result of minimal management on the roof. Consequently this habitat had a very varied flora and fauna. Unfortunately this green roof has since been removed, as it was only a temporary home, so most probably *S. phalerata* no longer occurs at Kings Cross.

This research has even encountered Nationally Scarce species on green roofs and brownfield habitats. The lycosid *Pardosa agrestis* (Nb status and also a new record to the Greater London area) was found on some of the sampled roofs on Canary Wharf and in the very heart of London on the Almeida Theatre. The species has mostly been recorded previously in the southern half of Britain on sparsely vegetated habitats based on chalk or clay soil (Harvey *et al.*, 2002). While it is a Nationally Scarce species it seems to benefit from the conditions that green roof habitats can provide.

Another Nationally Scarce spider, *Bianor aurocintus* (Salticidae), with Na status came from a brownfield site in Deptford next to Deptford Creek. This species is also a new record for the Greater London area. Although only a few brownfield sites were sampled, the presence of Nationally Scarce species on these sites indicates their importance in terms of wildlife habitats.

Green roofs are a somewhat new phenomenon in this country, and they are mostly found on environmental centres or showcase buildings. However, they have a great, unexploited potential to serve as wildlife habitats in urban environments, where green spaces are limited and valuable wildlife habitats such as brownfield sites are under increasing developmental and regeneration pressure.

As the findings of this project and the research carried out in Basel, Switzerland have already indicated that green roof habitats can play a very important role in urban wildlife and conservation, it is very important that these biodiversity benefits are maximised. For this reason this project sought to find out which factors in green roof design (such as depth of substrate, management, vegetation cover, height and area of building, aspect, etc.) are most influential in terms of species composition and species numbers. It was found that the depth of substrate and the structural diversity are most influential in terms of species composition. This is not surprising, as the type and depth of substrate used on green roofs determines the vegetation that is able to colonise and the species that will follow. In terms of structural diversity, the more structurally diverse the habitat, the more niches will be created for different species. For example, on a roof, if depth of substrate varies between 5 and 30 cm, in places where the substrate is deeper taller herbage will develop benefiting tall vegetation-loving species, and on shallow substrate, species

adapted to low vegetation or bare soil will flourish. The type and depth of substrate has great significance in terms of habitat re-creation. Many of the valuable wildlife sites such as gravel workings and derelict riversides on the Thames Estuary are already gone or are allocated for redevelopment. These sites have a very rich invertebrate fauna, not only for spiders but also for many hymenopteran species such as the two Biodiversity Action Plan bumblebees, *Bombus sylvarum* and *B. humilis*.

If the right substrate such as sand and gravel mixture is used on green roofs, these habitats may encourage the presence of these and many other species. Even better, the original substrate of the site may be recycled on the roofs of these new developments. The recycled substrate will not only contain the local seed bank (which will help to develop essential food plants for dependent invertebrate species and save some of the species already present), but will also achieve the broader environmental goals of recycling material and reducing lorry journeys.

While green roofs do not yet appear on mainstream buildings, there is no doubt that there will be more to come in the near future. Already the London Spatial Development Strategy, the Mayor's most important strategy, will contain recommendations for green roofs in supplementary planning guidance. However, these recommendations will be fuelled by concern for broader environmental issues, such as energy gain, storm water attenuation, noise and air pollution, and action has to be taken to ensure that biodiversity issues are also included.

The Black Redstart Biodiversity Action Plan takes pioneering action so that biodiversity issues are included in planning briefs, and more and more green roofs are being put up with biodiversity in mind. In fact the first such green roofs, using recycled substrate, are already in place on the Laban Dance Centre in Lewisham, and the Creekside Education Centre. These roofs were initiated and advised by the Black Redstart Action Plan, and there are further such roofs planned with the Action Plan's advice. Recommendations and more detailed description planning guidance and even recommendation for invertebrates can be found on the recently launched Black Redstart website: <http://www.blackredstarts.org.uk>. (A brief description of this project and also of the research carried out in Basel, Switzerland can be read on this website.)

This project was only a preliminary study of how invertebrates and wildlife in general benefit from green roofs in urban environments. Further, more detailed, investigation of the biodiversity benefits of green roofs, mainly focusing on invertebrates, particularly spiders, beetles and bees started in January 2003. This research is a full time Ph.D. project at Royal Holloway University of London, in partnership with the Black Redstart Action Plan. This project was initiated by the Black Redstart Action Plan and could not have been completed without the guidance and invaluable advice of Dusty Gedge. I am also grateful to Peter Harvey for his help in spider identification and general advice on invertebrates.

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## Additional Records of Notable Spiders Not Included in the *Provisional Atlas*

by Jonty Denton

This note summarises some significant modern records of scarce spiders, which (largely through my own incompetence!) were omitted from the *Provisional Atlas* (Harvey *et al.*, 2002).

**South Devon (VC3)**. Araneidae: *Araneus angulatus* Clerck, Ashclyst Forest, on tall sloe hedge, vii. 2001.

**Dorset (VC9)**. Segestriidae: *Segestria bavarica* C. L. Koch, Portland (SY6869), in holes on quarry face, 6.vii.1995. Gnaphosidae: *Micaria romana* L. Koch, East Weare, Portland (SY6972 & 7072), only old records shown but still present and abundant on cliff top grassland, viii.2000. Araneidae: *Araneus marmoreus* var. *pyramidatus* Clerck, The Oaks, Kingston Lacy (ST9603), female on hedge, viii.2000. Salticidae: *Myrmarachne formicaria* (De Geer), Black Ven, Charmouth (SY3593), two females on open clay on slumping undercliff, 5.vi.02. Eype's Mouth (SY4590), male and immature, 16.vii.02.

**South Hampshire (VC11)**. Salticidae: *Sitticus inexpectus* Logunov & Kronstedt, Browndown (SZ5898), Gilkicker Point (SZ6097), v–vii. 2000–02, abundant on sparsely vegetated shingle. Gnaphosidae: *Trachyzelotes pedestris* (C. L. Koch), Micheldever Spoil heaps (SU5245), vi.2002.

**North Hampshire (VC12)**. Atypidae: *Atypus affinis* Eichwald, Woolmer Forest on heathland (SU73 and SU83), 1998. Scytodidae: *Scytodes thoracica* Latreille, Liss (SU7727), 1992–93. Alton in old shed (SU7138), 1994–96. Araneidae: *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer), Woolmer Forest (SU83), ix.1998–99 (J. Buckley). *Araneus marmoreus* var. *pyramidatus* Clerck, Conford Fen (SU8133), 21.viii.1997. Greywell Moors (SU7352), tall vegetation in tall river fen area, vii.1999.

**Surrey (VC17)**. Atypidae: *Atypus affinis* Eichwald, Box Hill (TQ1751), male wandering in open, 19.ix.1994. Linyphiidae: *Thyreosthenius biovatus* (O. P.-Cambridge), Frensham Common (SU8638 & 8640), Tugley Wood (SU9833), Thursley NNR (SU9041), Blackheath (TQ0345), Esher Common (TQ1262), abundant at all these sites in wood-ant nests *Formica rufa*, ix.1998, and in all of a further 30+ nests examined in Surrey. Araneidae: *Araneus angulatus* Clerck, Vann Lake (TQ1539), on fallen ash branch in woodland, iv.2001. *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer) Bookham Common (TQ1256), female swept in open glade, 12.x.1996. Pisauridae: *Dolomedes fimbriatus* (Clerck), Esher Common, Black's Pond (TQ1262), 1988–2002. A classic locality for many years, and still abundant. Gnaphosidae: *Micaria silesiaca* L. Koch, Fairmile Common (TQ1161), open disturbed heath, 22.v.2000. Salticidae: *Marpissa muscosa* (Clerck), Hatchlands Park (TQ0652), v–ix.2000. *Sitticus caricis* (Westring), Gracious Pond LNR (SU9863), several in quaking mire area, iv–v.2000. *Aelurillus v-insignitus* (Clerck), Esher Common (TQ1262), disturbed heathland under in pylon ride, 22.v.2000.

**West Sussex (VC13)**. Araneidae: *Araneus angulatus* Clerck, Petworth Park (SU9623), on large oak, vi.2001. Gnaphosidae: *Zelotes petrensis* (C. L. Koch), Levin Down (SU8813), on bare chalk downland, 13.vi.1997. Salticidae: *Sitticus inexpectus* Logunov & Kronstedt, Pagham Harbour near Church Norton (SZ8795), v.1994–96.

## Reference

- Harvey, P. R., Nellist, D. R. & Telfer, M. G. (2002) *Provisional Atlas of British Spiders (Arachnida, Araneae), Volumes 1 & 2*. Biological Records Centre, Huntingdon.

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## *Hyptiotes paradoxus* Website

Piet Tutelaers has revised his website devoted to *Hyptiotes paradoxus* at <http://www.knnv.nl/eindhoven/iwg/Araneae/HP/>

The main improvements over the previous version are a new bigger map for Europe and nine different partial clickable maps (all credits for this map work go to Aloys Staudt). Finds are now in different colours representing their collecting date. With Internet Explorer (but not yet with Netscape) users can see per find (if available) year and author of first publication, year and name of collector, and place and area. There is a new layout with an about, references and thanks, the slide show is more visible and has an extra slide.

Piet hopes that this information will stimulate others to provide information on their *Hyptiotes paradoxus* finds. In particular by helping to gather information for the grey points or the countries that are still missing (Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, etc.).

Please visit the new site and let Piet know if you can suggest further improvements or if your favourite browser has problems with the maps.

e-mail: Piet Tutelaers at P.T.H.Tutelaers@tue.nl

## New Site for *Clubiona rosserae* Locket, 1953

by Ian Dawson

The RDB1 BAP Priority spider *Clubiona rosserae* Locket, 1953 was discovered from a water trap sample collected in April 2000 in Botany Bay, Lakenheath Fen RSPB Reserve, Suffolk, as part of the RSPB's biodiversity work programme, though it has only recently been identified.

Botany Bay comprises 31 ha of semi-natural fen, with a direct connection to the river Little Ouse. Cattle-grazed until 1964, the area is now 25 per cent reed monoculture and the remainder is mixed, unmanaged fen with lines of mature willow. The area was declared an SSSI for its notable assemblage of rare Diptera (including the only known British site for the sciomyzid *Anticheta atriseta*: Foster & Procter, 1997), Lepidoptera and two rare aquatic plants.

The water trap survey ran between 16th April and 28th June 2000. Two traps were run at each of three sampling sites, producing 214 spiders of just 12 species, though these also included a single female *Maro sublestus*. The specimen of *Clubiona rosserae* came from a trap at TL675853 in the period 16th–30th April 2000. This trap site is close to the edge of a dense stand of *Carex riparia*, with shallow standing water throughout the winter months. There was only a single male *C. stagnatilis* from the exact same site, in the period 1st–12th May, though there were a few other males of *stagnatilis* from the water trap survey. An earlier survey at the reserve using both pitfalls and water traps ran through July and August 1997: the traps in Botany Bay captured 1,200 spiders of 31 species, though none was of particular note.

When sorting and identifying the material in November 2000 I had come across an odd-looking female '*Clubiona stagnatilis*' and wondered about the possibility of *rosserae* but, because of its rarity and because the epigyne did not match Roberts's (1985) drawings particularly well, I decided it was in all probability within the range of variation shown by *stagnatilis* and I put the specimen to one side.

However, recent progress with the *Clubiona rosserae* BAP project (under the aegis of the British Arachnological Society, English Nature, Anglian Water and BugLife—The Invertebrate Conservation Trust) prompted me to look out the spider

and dissect the epigyne. Viewed dorsally this seemed to match the drawing of the cleared vulva of *rosserae* in Locket & Millidge (1953) fairly well, but reference to Heimer & Nentwig (1991) was inconclusive. However, for comparison I also dissected a *stagnatilis* which was clearly different and so decided it was after all worth sending the putative *rosserae* to Peter Merrett for his opinion. He confirmed that it was indeed *rosserae*.

*Clubiona rosserae* was first described by G. H. Locket (in Locket & Millidge, 1953) from Chippenham Fen, Cambridgeshire, where 'Two pairs were found by the authors when shaking out cut sedge, 23rd September, 1951.' The species has been found at Chippenham Fen on several subsequent occasions, e.g. by Kirby (1996), who undertook a pitfall and water trap survey from 14th–28th July 1995, with 10 pitfalls and 5 water traps at each of 5 sites. These produced a single *C. rosserae* from a water trap in compartment 8: 'Tall mixed fen with much *Phragmites*, managed by cutting.' Two specimens had been found in the previous survey in 1991, also from the same compartment, but both in pitfalls rather than water traps. David Carr also found a male here on 6th October 1996 (Carr, 1997).

There is also a single record from Tuddenham Fen, Suffolk in 1960. Botany Bay is only about 16 km to the north of Chippenham Fen, and a little closer to Tuddenham Fen, which lies to the southeast. *C. rosserae* has also subsequently been found at a few sites on the Continent.

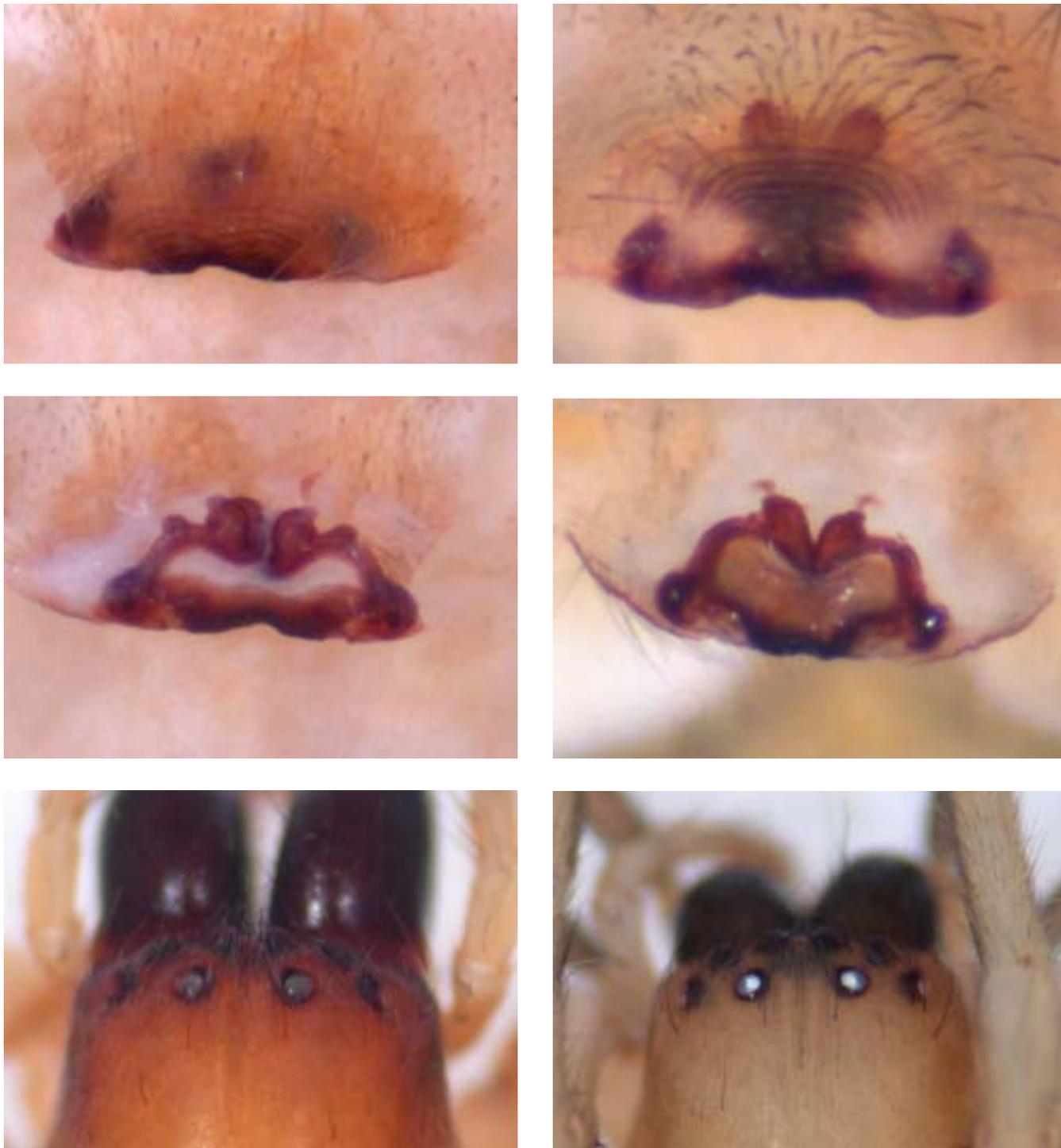
I have since dissected several more *stagnatilis*: the vulvae of all were very similar, with none approaching *rosserae* in shape. It is unsound to draw too many conclusions from a single *rosserae* specimen; nevertheless, the accompanying photographs (Fig. 1, top and middle pairs) comparing the epigynes (ventral view) and vulvae (dorsal view) of *rosserae* and *stagnatilis* may be helpful as a supplement to the rather meagre literature. The overall shape and proportion of the vulva seems to be the best feature for distinguishing the two species. Peter Merrett (pers. comm., 2002) wrote: 'It seems one cannot take too much notice of details, but the *rosserae* vulva is much broader, and narrower in the middle'. The difference in the shape of the hind margin also looks to be a useful pointer.

One feature shared by the drawing of the type specimen, the drawings in Heimer & Nentwig, and the Lakenheath specimen which might be worth checking further is the angle between the spermathecae: more diverging anteriorly in *stagnatilis*, more nearly parallel in *rosserae*.

Merrett also noted that 'compared with *stagnatilis* specimens the posterior median eyes [in this specimen] are conspicuously larger and closer together, as stated by Locket'. Locket (1953) noted that: 'The posteriors are larger in *C. rosserae*. Distance between posterior medians: 2.3–2.7 diameters in female. (In *C. stagnatilis* the distance is 3.5–5.5 diameters in female).' This feature may be a useful additional check for any putative *rosserae*, though Figure 1 (bottom pair) shows that the differences are by no means striking. However, the photographed *stagnatilis* has eyes a little closer together than Locket's minimum, so this feature might be more obvious in other examples.

The July Chippenham Fen record above was overlooked as a month of recorded maturity in the account in the *Provisional Atlas* (Harvey, *et al.*, 2002). Together with this Lakenheath Fen April record the species has thus been found mature in every month from February through to October except March and August.

Further survey work at Lakenheath is planned for 2003, but the discovery of *C. rosserae* prompted an exploratory visit at the end of November. Huge numbers of linyphiids were present in the sedge beds of Botany Bay. Only a few adult clubionids were found, not including *rosserae*, though encouragingly there were numerous immatures of *Clubiona* spp. at all stages.



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**Figure 1. Caption.**

**Left hand column: *Clubiona rosserae* Locket, 1953.**  
**Right hand column: *Clubiona stagnatilis* Kulczynski, 1897.**  
**Top pair: epigynes in ventral view.**  
**Middle pair: vulvae, dorsal view.**  
**Bottom pair: eye pattern , dorsal view.**

## Recent Scottish Finds

by Ian and Debra Dawson

On 15th July 1999 we sieved two males of the linyphiid *Wabasso quaestio replicatus* (Holm, 1950), new to Britain, from flood litter on Insh Fen (NH812025), part of the RSPB Insh Marshes Reserve in the Spey Valley, Scotland. The year had been abnormally wet and much of the fen was still under water. A return visit the following year on 14th July, when it was much drier, produced two subadult males, but still no females, though clearly the species had bred successfully.

Determined to find females, we returned in July 2002 and had success at last! Three females were found on 13th July by raking *Molinia* tussocks and sieving *Sphagnum* at two sites some 300 m apart, either side of the spot where the original males were found. We also found five more subadult males and three subadult females, all a few days earlier on 9th July, suggesting that the main period of maturity in the UK is late July or perhaps August. Prior to our visit we had arranged for pitfalls to be set up on Insh Fen to run from the second half of June and through July. In the light of our success in the field it is perhaps surprising that the first set of samples, from 19th June to 9th July, failed to produce any *Wabasso*, not even immatures. The other notable species found on the fen by hand-sampling—*Semljicola caliginosus* and *Hilaira pervicax*—were both present in numbers in the pitfalls. Unfortunately, the pitfalls came to a premature end, as the week after our visit exceptional rainfall caused the Spey to flood: the traps and their contents disappeared under a couple of feet of water.

Although *Wabasso* is a very typical small (1.5–1.7 mm) dark linyphiid, the females in particular having no obvious features, subadults of both sexes are recognisable by the combination of the position of TmI (0.45), absence of TmIV, tibial spines (2221) and the tarsus of leg I being considerably longer than the metatarsus.

It is hoped that a full account of *Wabasso* will appear in the *Bulletin* in due course.



Figure 1. *Wabasso quaestio replicatus* (Holm, 1950), female.

During the same Scottish holiday we spent only an hour, on 12th July, in a piece of rather poor Caledonian pine forest in Rothiemurchus Forest close to Loch Morlich (NH9509), with only a few old pines among many younger trees but with a good understorey of juniper, bilberry, heather and mosses. This was adjacent to a parking area/picnic site by the main road up to Cairngorm, with the inevitable evidence of human disturbance. Nevertheless this produced two female *Pelecopsis elongata* and two subadult male *Clubiona subsultans* (one later moulted to maturity), both RDB2 species; also an immature *Zora nemoralis*, the carapace pattern quite distinct from *spinimana*, recorded from only seven 10-km squares post 1980.

On our way north, on 6th July we spent a morning in the Black Wood of Rannoch. Raking grass tussocks of *Deschampsia* and sieving *Sphagnum* in a wet flush in an open area of the wood just above the road at NN575565 produced a single female of the RDB1 *Robertus scoticus*.

In these last two cases, it is interesting that short visits to sites chosen completely at random in quite extensive areas of native forest, but in neither case particularly promising looking, should turn up several of their special spiders. Perhaps we were just lucky, but it is more likely that these spiders are widespread and not uncommon within these habitats.

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## *Steatoda grossa* (C. L. Koch, 1838): New Record for North Wales

by Carl Davies

Last November I finally got around to uncovering a couple of boarded-over fireplaces at my home address. The property, or at least the front half, was built in the 1860s and is thought to have originally been the seaside retreat of a wealthy person. This was at the time when Llandudno was being developed and promoted as a popular seaside resort.

The surround to the first fireplace on a front first floor bedroom was encrusted with layers of paint and the opening boarded by Asbestolux, leaving no access from the chimney to the room. The fireplace had been like this for at least 17 years and may even have been boarded over in the 1950s, as was the fashion at the time. An investigative hole through the Asbestolux confirmed that the grate and surround were in place and the whole covering was removed to reveal a fantastic original and decorative Victorian cast iron fireplace. I set about removing some of the debris of old mortar in the grate and then removed the cover to the flue, behind which was again a substantial amount of mortar debris.

Inside the chimney area just above the flue I noticed a mess of broken web and an empty egg sac, though a limited search of the immediate area through the small opening did not reveal any sign of a spider. However within about half an hour, whilst cleaning the fire, I counted half a dozen spiderlings appearing from within the flue, followed shortly by an adult descending on a thread out of the flue opening. Having duly collected the specimen I identified it as a mature female *Steatoda grossa*. Given the circumstances, it appears that the species is established here, though investigation of another similarly boarded fireplace proved fruitless.

Being a guesthouse for most of its history, there has been an innumerable passage of people from all areas of the country and abroad, and this may account for the initial introduction of the species. Future renovations will no doubt turn up more specimens and, hopefully, other new records.

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## A Third Scottish Locality for *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer, 1802), the 'Strawberry Spider'

by Duncan Williams

On 9th September 2002 I visited a Forestry Commission forest block near Fort Augustus (East Inverness-shire, VC96) in order to assess a series of permanent vegetation transects as part of an ongoing Forest Research experiment into the influence of commercial conifer plantations, and associated drainage, on adjacent blanket bog.

Remarkably, the site also yielded a single female specimen of *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer, 1802) from within a 1 m<sup>2</sup> vegetation quadrat in which I was working at the time! While assessing the cover of *Myrica gale* within the quadrat, I was immediately struck by the presence of a bright red, strawberry-looking female araneid sitting in a web spun between plants of Bog Myrtle, some 15 m from the forest edge. Having seen the spider previously, in 1999 at Killiecrankie on a field course run by Stan Dobson, I was quite confident that it was indeed the so-called Strawberry Spider. I was equally aware of its presumed rarity, so saw fit to retain the mature specimen as a voucher.

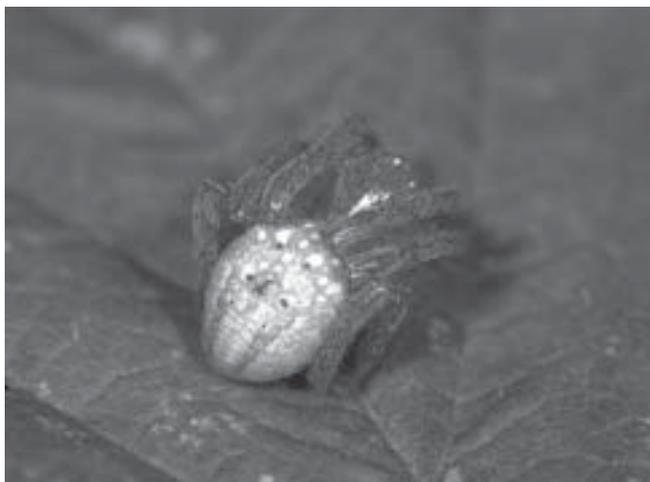


Figure 1. *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer, 1802), female.

The site, Lonmor (NH335067), includes a mosaic of open, unplanted boggy areas within a conifer plantation composed mainly of *Picea sitchensis*, *Pinus contorta* and *Pinus sylvestris*. Crop age and height is variable, with individual stands having been established from the 1920s onwards. In the open area where the spider was discovered, the field layer was dominated by low, ericoid sub-shrubs (*Calluna vulgaris*, *Erica tetralix*), *Eriophorum vaginatum* and *Trichophorum cespitosum*. Short (to 30 cm), sparse *Myrica gale*, was also a significant element in the field layer. *Sphagnum capillifolium*, *S. papillosum* and other bryophytes typical of northern peatlands largely dominated the ground flora.

There are only five post-1979 British records of *Araneus alsine* mapped in the recently published *Atlas* (Harvey *et al.*, 2002) and only two other Scottish sites. Indeed, the presence of this spider at the Corrimony RSPB reserve (Dawson, 2000), also in VC96, would suggest that the spider might occur much more widely in the region. Boggy open clearings in commercial conifer plantations of similar character to Lonmor, and native pine/birchwoods could yield further northern records of this strangely elusive spider.

I would like to extend my thanks to Peter Harvey for confirming the identity of the specimen, and for prompting this short communication.

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## House Spiders (*Tegenaria* species)

by Ian Dawson

As many house spiders appear to be under-recorded in the *Atlas*, the sight of a *Tegenaria gigantea* running across the living room carpet at home in early September prompted me to ask colleagues at the RSPB at Sandy, Bedfordshire to bring in any spiders they found indoors in their homes. Within the first couple of weeks I had been presented with fine males of *T. parietina* from a fairly modern semi at Sandy (TL1649) and a late seventeenth century thatched cottage at Abbotsley, Cambridgeshire (TL2256;VC31, Huntingdonshire). A visit on 28th September to Audley End near Saffron Walden in NW Essex (TL5238), to see the restored walled organic kitchen garden first established there in the 1750s, allowed me to record a few spiders. These included a large male *Tegenaria* on the wall above the entrance to the walled garden, at least 100 m from any building. This too on examination with a lens proved to be *parietina*. Then in the second week of October a fourth specimen of *parietina*, a dead rather dried-up male, was brought in by another colleague from an eighteenth century brick-built house in Potton, Bedfordshire (TL2249). I measured the stretched leg span of this specimen at just under 13 cm, with leg I 69 mm long, and body length just 12.5 mm, though this appeared slightly shrivelled. Three completely new 10-km square records and a first post-1980 record, all within a few weeks for a species recorded from only 25 such squares in the *Atlas*. Is it having a good year, or are most large *Tegenaria* ignored, being assumed to be *gigantea/saeva*?

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## A Cautionary Note to GPS Users

by Stan Dobson

Like many other naturalists, I have acquired a GPS (Global Positioning System) unit to obtain more accurate grid references for my recording. Mine is an Etrex, made by Garmin, which appears to be one of the most popular.

My first attempt was the reading in my garden, and I was a bit disconcerted to find that all the records I had made there over many years had apparently been given the wrong grid reference. Well, I thought, perhaps my map reading isn't up to scratch; but then I found that readings elsewhere didn't agree with other peoples'. Some of you may remember that during the A.G.M. weekend last year at Morfa Dyffryn, I checked it against some other units and found disagreement. When eventually I had the opportunity to check it against a well-defined point on a map and found an error of several hundred metres, even after carefully checking the settings, I decided that it was faulty, but I first rang Garmin's help-line.

When I explained the problem, the operator immediately asked if the error was about 500 metres. When I said yes, he asked me if the datum was set to WGS84 (World Geodetic Survey 1984). Again I said yes and he then told me to change it to 'ORD surv GB'. Having done this, my unit now agrees exactly (within the stated tolerance) with the OS maps.

The point is that I am quite familiar with setting-up procedures, and I followed the instructions in the manual to the letter. In it the default datum setting was given as WGS84 and this should only be changed if using maps that specify a different datum. As I live in the Peak District, the OS maps which I use mostly are the Dark Peak and White Peak 1:25000 Outdoor Leisure Maps: I looked in them and found no mention of a datum. However, after my help-line conversation, I looked in some standard 1:50000 OS maps and found 'OSGB (1936) Datum' in the small print in the legend.

I have no experience of any other units, but I imagine that the situation is similar and it's worth checking that the setting of any unit is correct. The error is particularly relevant if your records are used in mapping, as it can easily move you into the next 1 km, or possibly the next 10 km, square. And don't forget to reset the datum if you go abroad or work on latitude and longitude.

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### *Uloborus plumipes* Lucas, 1846 in Molesey, Surrey

by Clive McCarthy

There is a colony of *Uloborus plumipes* Lucas, 1846 within the local florists on the main shopping street at Molesey in Surrey (TQ146682). Two adult females together with their egg clusters were collected from beneath the small spotlights, located within the window display, about 3 metres from floor level. Several small webs were noted, scattered around the area, from immature spiders and hatchlings.

The two adult spiders were housed in an aquarium used for crickets as no suitable area was available. The spiders soon settled themselves within the plastic cover, where they seemed to adapt well. The tube lighting gave them some resemblance of their former home providing a little warmth.

Small flies and fungus gnats were readily accepted as food, as was a *Lasius niger* ant. If the prey moved, the spider would approach in a comical bouncing manner, like a trapeze artist testing the reliability of his ropes. As has been noted by other observers, copious wrapping and secure bindings were employed before the spider was satisfied and finally bit the prey.

Consequently, one spider grew fat and later produced an egg sac, laid during the night. Some weeks later the baby spiders emerged and they were too numerous to count. Being so minute what may they feed on?

The two adult spiders are continuing to live without any light. They have both moved position several times and do not seem to be affected by the colder temperature or lack of light. One has now laid a second clutch of eggs.

As to the *Ero aphana* spiders reported in the last newsletter, I am left with just two male siblings. Two escaped, two wandered from a new location among the houseplants, three died suddenly and one was slain by a third-instar *Pholcus*. The two remaining spiders live in the same Perspex box in which they were born, and are resting most of the time at this colder winter season.

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### New Welsh Record for *Drassyllus praeficus* (L. Koch, 1866)

by Carl Davies

On 29th May 2002, having recently moved to this area, I ventured out on my first collecting trip in search of an *Atypus* colony on the Great Orme (LNR), Llandudno, North Wales—a coastal headland of Carboniferous Limestone already noted as an important outpost for southern spider species.

Whilst examining rocky outcrops at location SH765825, I took and later identified a mature female of the Nationally Scarce (Notable A) spider *Drassyllus praeficus* (L. Koch, 1866) from a fissure on the underside of a weathered limestone boulder. Looking at the distribution map, this specimen is a new record for Wales and the most northern record to date. Further investigation at the site on the evening of 16th June resulted in taking and confirming identification of a further specimen. A number of specimens that I took to be *D. praeficus* were typically found under rocks of varying size (isolated rocks being the most productive) and always co-habiting with ants.

This is the second occasion on which, having set out in search of *Atypus*, I have come across a rare species. The first occasion was in 1995 on Puffin Island off the coast of Anglesey, North Wales, when I identified *Segestria bavarica* (subsequently discovered on the Great Orme by Richard Gallon). The specimen was confirmed by Stan Dobson and Richard Gallon and is deposited in my personal collection. All my future trips will be on the pretext of finding *Atypus*!

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### *Sitticus pubescens* (Fabricius, 1775) in NW Wales

by John H. Bratton

Publication of the *Provisional Atlas*, and especially the species profile of *Sitticus pubescens* written by Laurence Bee, has prompted me to publish my findings on this species in northwest Wales, which were too late for inclusion in the *Atlas*.

On 22nd August 2000 I found an immature salticid, thought by John Murphy to be a *Sitticus* species, on the top of a large boulder at Porth Llanlleiana, Anglesey (SH388950). Though resting on a shingle beach, the boulder was sufficiently stable for its top to be coated by the black lichen *Verrucaria*, indicative of the upper fringe of the intertidal zone on sheltered rocky shores but extending into the supralittoral on exposed coasts. On 13th July 2001 I found more *Sitticus* on *Verrucaria*, on the rocky coast near the Holyhead breakwater (SH233839) and these two adult females were identified as *S. pubescens*. Three days later the rocky shore east of the beach at Aberffraw (SH358674) produced two males. I am grateful to John Murphy for examining one of these. He tentatively agreed it was *S. pubescens*, albeit unusually dark, and with small denticles along the ventral edge of the tibial apophysis that he had not previously noticed in this species. He recommended sending one to Peter Merrett, who kindly confirmed that it was *S. pubescens*. A further juvenile male salticid with similar markings was taken in the *Verrucaria* zone south of Porth-y-garan (SH258768) on 27th July 2001.

As well as representing a new species for VC 52, these findings add a new habitat to those mentioned in the *Atlas*; and a natural habitat in contrast to the association with buildings described by Bee.

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