

SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME NEWS

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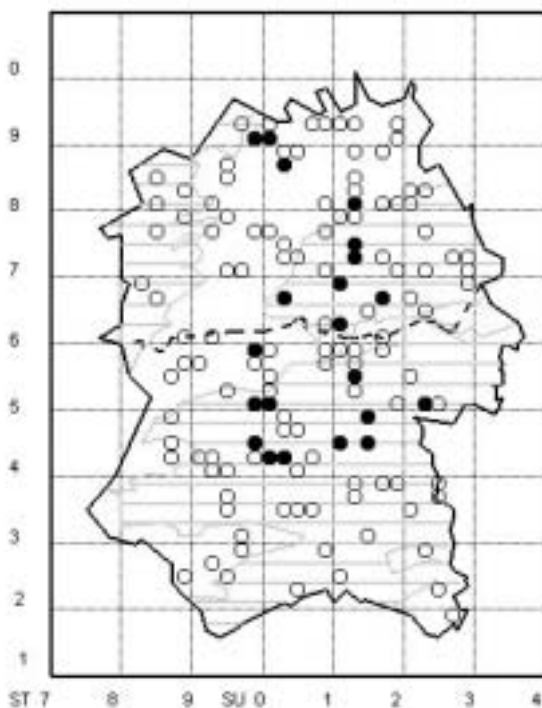
JULY 2004

Enoplognatha latimana in Wiltshire

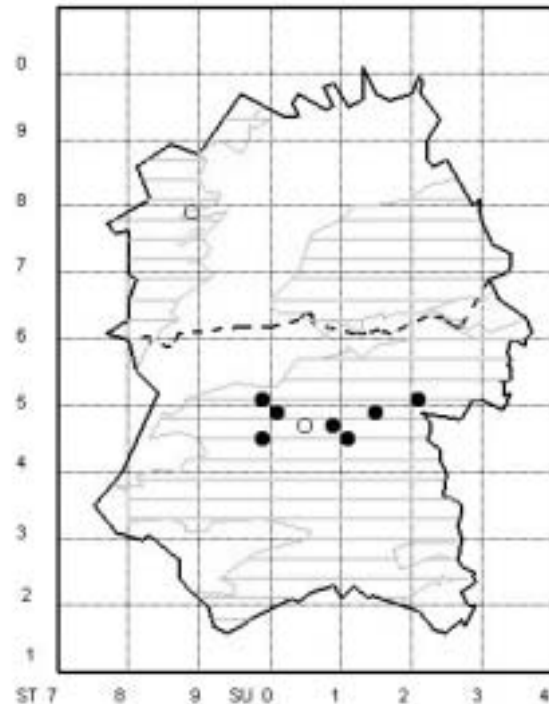
by Martin Askins

Enoplognatha latimana Hippa & Oksala, 1982 was first recorded in Wiltshire on 3rd August 1998, at Stanton Park, Forestry Commission land in North Wiltshire. The specimens, two males, were taken in a cleared area of the park with long grass, some brambles and sporadic saplings (including pine). A return visit, on 5th August 2000, confirmed the species' presence with an adult female. Prior to this confirmation, on 30th August 1999, a second site in Wiltshire was found, this time at West Down near Tilshead on the Salisbury Plain in South Wiltshire, when two females and cocoons were found.

In 2003 several sites on Salisbury Plain were visited over the period from the end of June and into July. *E. latimana* was found at seven of the sites. In general the spiders occurred in areas of grassland with isolated or sparse clumps of taller plants. At the same time several sites on the Marlborough Downs were examined, but no new sites for *E. latimana* were found. The maps show the records for *E. ovata* and *E. latimana* in Wiltshire (filled symbols represent records made in 2003; the lined areas denote underlying chalk or limestone). The records for *E. ovata* give an indication of the sites visited in 2003. Though the sites on the Marlborough Downs were mainly road or pathside and not 'identical' to those on Salisbury Plain, the absence of *E. latimana* is a marked contrast with that on Salisbury Plain.



Distribution of *Enoplognatha ovata* in Wiltshire.



Distribution of *Enoplognatha latimana* in Wiltshire.

It appears that *E. latimana* occurs widely on the Salisbury Plain, but is otherwise more locally distributed in Wiltshire. In S.R.S. News No. 45 Ian Dawson reported recent finds of *Enoplognatha latimana* in Huntingdonshire, wondering whether it was extending its range. Similar areas on Salisbury Plain have been visited before and *E. latimana* not found, but the spiders on Salisbury Plain have not been extensively recorded. Whether *E. latimana* is extending its range, or has just not been recorded before, is not clear.

69, Savill Crescent, Wroughton, SWINDON, Wiltshire, SN4 9JG

Philaeus chrysops (Poda, 1761) in Suffolk

by Tony Irwin

Matt Sharlow's paper on *Philaeus chrysops* (Poda, 1761) (S.R.S. News No. 48: 12-13) notes that recent British occurrences have all been in the London area, so it may be worth recording that this species has now turned up in West Suffolk. On 1st June 2004, I received a call from a plant nursery at Coney Weston (TL9678), to say that they had found a large red and black spider that jumped. The very handsome male had probably been imported from Italy with a recent delivery of plants. When discovered, the spider had just bitten the head off a weevil.



Philaeus chrysops, male. Photograph by Tony Irwin.

I am grateful to Tracy Ellis of RTP Nurseries for contacting me about the spider and to Peter Harvey for further information on the species.

Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, Shirehall, Market Avenue, NORWICH, Norfolk, NR1 3JQ

Separation of Similar Species by Eye-Pattern

by Stan Dobson

In the pages of Locket & Millidge *British Spiders* (1951, 1953), there are plenty of little gems of information which many people are not aware of, or possibly have forgotten. Two of these, which I have found very useful over the years, concern eye-pattern: one of these in the field and the other under the microscope,

Tetragnatha striata L. Koch, 1862

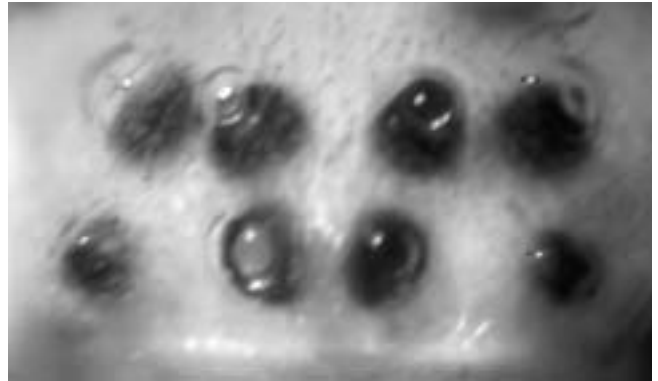
This species used to be considered very rare. The map in *British Spiders III* shows thirteen dots; the Provisional Atlas now shows many more and it is always worth looking closely at *Tetragnatha* species found on waterside vegetation. The separation is remarkably simple and can easily be seen with a hand lens when the spider is in a tube, even with immatures. The photographs show the front view of the heads of *T. striata* (top) and *T. montana* (bottom, which has a similar eye-pattern to all other British *Tetragnatha* species). On either side, the spacing between the lateral anterior and posterior eyes of *T. striata* is greater than that between the median anterior and posteriors (top picture), whereas in all the other species, this spacing is smaller.

Apart from the eyes, it is worth examining the upper surface of leaves of vegetation such as *Phragmites*, growing in water, for the egg sacs which resemble shiny bird droppings.

Lepthyphantes zimmermanni Bertkau, 1890

With clean specimens, there should be little trouble in separating the various species of *Lepthyphantes*; however, with old, damaged or highly pigmented specimens, there is often a problem, especially separating the two commonest species, *L. tenuis* and *L. zimmermanni*. In this case, look at the eyes. With *L. tenuis* and, I believe, all the other species in this group, the anterior eyes are all approximately the same size and equidistant (top photograph).

With *L. zimmermanni* however, the anterior medians are much smaller and set close together (bottom photograph). The photographs were taken from the front, but as the eyes project somewhat, this size difference and separation can be seen from various angles.



Eyes (anterior view) *Tetragnatha striata* above, *T. montana* below. Photographs by Stan Dobson.



Eyes (anterior view) *Lepthyphantes tenuis* above, *L. zimmermanni* below. Photographs by Stan Dobson.



Moor Edge, Birch Vale, HIGH PEAK, Derbyshire, SK22 1BX

Editor's note. *Tetragnatha striata* also looks 'different' in the field, with a body shape and pattern that suggests it is different from the other *Tetragnatha* species. Appearance in the field is often an excellent guide to identification, but mistakes can always be made without careful checking of voucher specimens at home. It is all too easy to make identifications in the field that turn out to be wrong at home!

***Macaroeris nidicolens* (Walckenaer, 1802) (Salticidae) in Surrey**

by Jonty Denton

Adults and juveniles of *Macaroeris nidicolens* (Walckenaer, 1802) were abundant on pine trees, *Pinus nigra*, across a wide area of the old airfield at Brooklands, Surrey (TQ068626-066620). The trees were well established, with abundant male flowers and cones, and had been planted over 10 years ago. The spider was present on virtually every pine tree examined along a shelter-belt alongside the River Wey stretching over 400 m. Males and females appeared to be equally abundant in May and early June, and subadults were not infrequent, with over 40 of each sex, and age group seen to date. Occasional juveniles were seen on deciduous bushes including hazel, but adults were only beaten from pines.

Other local species present on the trees included *Micaria subopaca* Westring, 1861, *Gibbaranea gibbosa* (Walckenaer, 1802) and *Araneus sturmi* (Hahn, 1831), the same pines also yielded two weevils new to Britain!

Kingsmead, Wield Road, MEDSTEAD, Hampshire, GU34 5NJ

Notable Spiders from Woolmer Forest, North Hampshire (VC12)

by Jonty Denton

Woolmer Forest is the largest remaining block of Lower Greensand heathland in Britain, and supports a very rich spider fauna. Mature heath habitats are found close to more disturbed acid grassland areas, with a flora of a 'Breckland' nature, rich in scarce annuals. The west of the forest (SU7832 & 7932) from where all these records were made is the best studied area. In 2003 Brian Armstrong undertook a pitfall trapping exercise to look at the impact of grazing on terrestrial invertebrates; these included several new species for the Forest:

Liocranidae

Scotina palliardii (L. Koch, 1881) 8 males and 2 female were found in pitfall traps set in grazed open heathland in early March and emptied on 16th March. New for VC12, and the first post-1980 record from outside Dorset, clearly Notable A status would appear to be justified!

Gnaphosidae

Drassodes pubescens (Thorell, 1856) several males in pitfall set in ungrazed breckland-like acid grassland on former railway sidings, April–May 2003. New Vice County record. *Haplodrassus dalmatensis* (L. Koch, 1866) several males in pitfalls set in ungrazed breckland-like acid grassland on former railway sidings, April–May 2003. First modern records for VC12.

Linyphiidae

Meioneta beata (O. P.-Cambridge, 1906) several males in pitfall set in ungrazed breckland-like acid grassland on former railway sidings April 2003. New for VC12.

Acknowledgements. Many thanks to the M.O.D. for allowing us access onto the training area, and Brian Armstrong for maintaining the pitfall traps.

Kingsmead, Wield Road, MEDSTEAD, Hampshire, GU34 5NJ

Some Notable Records from Recent Fieldwork

by Ian Dawson

A visit to Cliffe Pools RSPB reserve on 10th June 2003 turned up the RDB2 *Clubiona juvenis*, new to Kent. A male and three subadult females were sieved from damp litter in a small reedbed *Phragmites* with Sea Club Rush *Bolboschoenus maritimus* at the west end of the reserve. The curiously thin elongated abdomen together with large anterior median eyes give the species a rather distinctive appearance, features shown by the subadult females as well as the sexually mature, and therefore unmistakable, male. In Britain this species inhabits a few East Anglian reedbeds but has also been recorded from brackish reedbeds in Dorset and Essex.

An initial survey of the spiders of Farnham Heath RSPB reserve, Surrey, was made on 26th June 2003. Most of the reserve is currently covered with dense conifer plantations and is unlikely to hold much of arachnological interest. However, the long-term plan to return the reserve to heathland is an exciting prospect, and it is to be hoped that at least some of the Surrey heathland specialities colonise in due course. Beating the low branches of ancient oaks with a bracken understorey on the boundary of Tankersford Common produced three males of the very rare theridiid *Dipoena erythropus* (RDB2), recorded in Britain on only four previous occasions, with a grand total of nine or ten individuals. Previous records of *D. erythropus* have been from gorse, heather and pine adjacent to heathland, so its exact ecological requirements can only be guessed at. The last two records came from Hazeley Heath near Hartley Wintney and Thursley Common, respectively, in the adjacent 10-km squares to either side of Farnham Heath. Thanks go to Peter Merrett for confirming the identification.

Pitfalls run through 2003 at RSPB HQ at The Lodge, Sandy, Beds produced some interesting local species including *Hypsosinga albobittata*, *Drassodes pubescens*, *Zelotes electus*, and no fewer than five species of liocranid including both *Scotina celans* and *Scotina gracilipes*, the last together with *D. pubescens* new county records for Bedfordshire. *Z. electus* has been recorded previously from the small remnant of heathland here, the Sandy area and the Brecks being the only inland localities in the UK for this usually coastal species.

A day's surveying at Geltsdale RSPB reserve, Cumbria on 12th August 2003, with Dave Blackledge and Jennifer Newton, turned up two females of the tiny theridiid *Rugathodes bellicosus* among a pile of limestone rocks on a slope above the River Gelt, immediately recognisable by their habit of carrying their eggsacs attached to the spinnerets.

Following a successful request in autumn 2002 for RSPB staff to bring in house spiders (see SRS News, No. 45, March 2003, **In** *Newsl. Br. arachnol. Soc.* **96**: 17) several colleagues continue to supply the occasional spider. Of note were yet more males of *Tegenaria parietina* from houses in Sandy, Willington, and Harlington, all in Bedfordshire, and all from the period 13th to 26th August 2003.

A male and a subadult female of *Phrurolithus minimus* were sieved from a dry mowings' pile in Monks Wood NNR, Huntingdon, on 20th April 2003. This species has previously been recorded no closer than the Chilterns to the southwest, the Essex coast to the southeast, and the Peak District to the northwest.



Liocranum rupicola above and *Rugathodes bellicosus* below. Photographs by Ian Dawson.



A visit to Prawle Point, Devon, on 8th May 2004 produced two male *Acartauchenius scurrilis* under stones, which would appear to be the first records from mainland Devon (though recorded from Lundy), thus filling the gap between Dorset and Cornwall. Although not directly associated with ants, many stones here sheltered ant nests. Also good to find, though less unexpected, was a male *Liocranum rupicola* from coastal rocks near Froward Point to the east of the Dart Estuary, on 6th May.

An interesting-looking small theridiid on the inside wall of an outside gents' toilet at a garden centre at Coton, near Cambridge, on 29th May 2004 proved to be the seldom-recorded *Theridion familiare*, new to Cambridgeshire. The rich orange-brown carapace and legs, conspicuously annulated darker, gave it a distinctive appearance. A

week later, while searching the walls of Little Paxton Church for *Theridion blackwalli* (successfully) (see John Daws' piece in Spider Recording Scheme Newsletter No. **35**, November 1999, pp. 3–5), I also found a very dark small theridiid with a small white patch on the underside in front of the spinnerets which was clearly not *blackwalli* and I thought likely to be *T. mystaceum*. However, checking under the microscope revealed it to be a female *T. familiare*, new to VC31 (Hunts), and quite unlike the bright male.

100, Hayling Avenue, Little Paxton, ST NEOTS, Cambs., PE19 6HQ

New Records of Red Data Book Spiders in Southwest England

by Peter Smithers

Hyptiotes paradoxus (C. L. Koch, 1834)

There is exciting news from Chris Wooley at Seal Hayne who has discovered a mature male *Hyptiotes paradoxus* (family Uloboridae) climbing one of the sticky traps that he had set out in a field of wheat stubble in late August.

This spider is usually associated with evergreen trees and shrubs, but has been predominantly recorded from Yew. It produces a small triangular web that is attached to the vegetation by the base. The spider then grasps the apex of the web and forms a living bridge between it and the vegetation. Once a prey item has hit the web the spider lets go of the vegetation and the triangular web collapses around the prey.

The current status of this species is RDB3. It has been recorded from Hampshire, Southeast of England, the Welsh border, Cumbria, east Devon and Somerset. This is the third, and the most westerly record so far, for the Southwest of England.

Gnaphosa occidentalis Simon, 1878

A female of this species (confirmed by Peter Merrett) was collected from beneath stones in maritime grassland at Penhale, Cornwall in June of this year. This spider is currently designated RDB1 and has not been recorded in Britain since 1935 and then only three specimens from two sites on the Lizard, Cornwall. Nothing is known of its biology. This confirms the continued presence of *G. occidentalis* in the UK and makes the Penhale cliff tops an important refuge for this species.



Gnaphosa occidentalis female. Photo by Peter Smithers.

147, Molesworth Road, Stoke, PLYMOUTH, Devon, PL3 4AJ

Interesting Records from the Biology of Spiders Course at Reading University

by Steve Hopkin

The *Biology of Spiders* course at Reading University has been run on four occasions since Summer 2000 and about 180 undergraduate students have been trained to identify UK spiders. We now have records collected over four years from the Reading area (SU67 and SU77) and several other localities in the region. The course consists of a series of lectures on basic spider biology and ecology, and practical classes in which the students have to prepare a reference collection in Kilner jars of material they have captured. They work in groups of up to four, although a few students work on their own. The course is popular as there are few 'whole animal' modules available, our Department having gone down the molecular route like so many other universities; between 35 and 55 undergraduates register for it each year.

A spin-off from the course is the number of students who decide to carry out their Part 3 research project on spiders. This has led to quite intensive surveys of local nature reserves and some very interesting records, a few of which I would like to highlight in this brief note.

At the beginning of the course, none of the students has any experience of identifying spiders. However, almost all of them climb the learning curve very rapidly. When I check through their reference collections at the end of the course, there are very few misidentifications. Myself, plus two postgraduate demonstrators, are on hand during the practical classes to give advice and help with the keys. We use Mike Roberts's Collins Guide for most species and his Harley volumes for the money spiders (with occasional consultation of Lockett & Millidge). Consistent problems are getting some species to families, particularly Theridiidae and Linyphiidae. Also, many students give the previous or subsequent names to some species in the Collins Guide since in several places, it is not clear to which description the figures refer (see for example pp. 84 and 85 for *Dictyna*). In my copy I have drawn a box around the text of some species and their palp/epigyne illustrations to avoid confusion (not Mike Roberts's fault I know).

Records from the first year of the course appear in the 'Spider Atlas'. Subsequent recording has resulted in the total number of species (including Atlas records made before 2000) for hectads SU67 and SU77 of 125 and 169 species respectively. The combined total for SU67 and SU77 is 190 species. Red Data Book Notable B species that are common and widespread in these hectads are *Marpissa muscosa*, and *Philodromus albidus* (s.s.). Numerous 'Local' species are common including *Achaearanea lunata* (abundant around buildings) and *Zilla diodia*. One interesting feature is the frequency with which we have found *Pholcus phalangioides* in sweep net samples taken some distance from the nearest building. I had suspected that this might be due to contamination of sweep nets within our field course equipment room (see S.R.S. News No. 44: 9), but we now carefully check these for spiders before going out into the field. Several *Pholcus* were found on Yew trees in June 2003 at Hartslock (SU616793) several hundred metres from the nearest dwelling (yet another indication of global warming?). A population of *Hyptiotes paradoxus* was also discovered on Yew trees at the Hartslock site.

A healthy population of *Segestria florentina* exists in the walls of St Mary Butts church in the centre of Reading. A species that is clearly spreading is the pirate spider *Ero aphana*. As reported in an earlier article (S.R.S. News No. 46: 14), this species was found by one of the students in a horse box near Basingstoke in May 2003. One of our students subsequently found a mature female specimen, and a juvenile, in a garden in Tilehurst in Reading (SU675750) in July 2003. Both specimens were captured in a Malaise trap that had been set up to catch flies. It must be present throughout Reading, although attempts at aerial pitfall trapping in my garden have been thwarted by the activities of our local grey squirrels!

Going further afield, Snelsmore Common near Newbury (SU460700) has proved to have a very high diversity of spiders. Most interesting of all the records were two females of *Evansia merens* captured in pitfall traps in June 2003 (checked by Peter Harvey). In the 'Spider Atlas', the distribution is heavily biased towards the north and west. The Snelsmore record extends its range by at least 100 km.

Within houses, *Scytodes thoracica* is very common (like *Pholcus*, *Scytodes* has also turned up some distance from buildings on several occasions). One of the students was enterprising enough to look inside a toilet cistern and discovered a female *Lessertia dentichelis*! Perhaps we should add toilet cisterns to the habitat categories on the recording card.

The course is running again in a new format (compressed into three weeks instead of ten weeks as in the past), and is slightly later in the year (14th June to 2nd July) so we will hopefully be able to extend our species list, possibly even break through the 200 barrier?

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The Discovery of *Steatoda triangulosa* at Sketty, Swansea on 9th April 2004

by G. H. Jones

On Sunday the 11th April 2004 my wife Jennette found a specimen pot containing a spider on our front doorstep. There was no documentation accompanying the specimen and so I initially puzzled over who the sender could be. I phoned Simon Warmingham who knew nothing about it.

It was a species with which I was unfamiliar so I consulted Roberts (1995) and, not wishing to kill the specimen to examine the epigyne, provisionally determined it as a female *Steatoda triangulosa* (Walckenaer, 1802). However, as Roberts states that it is 'absent from Britain', I began to doubt my determination.

Later that evening the identity of the sender was revealed when I received a telephone call from Paul Alton, who asked whether I had identified the spider which he had left on my doorstep when passing through my village earlier that day. My first question was had he been abroad recently... his reply was that he and his partner Sylvie Heralut had returned to South Wales on 1st March 2004 having lived in southern France for the past three years. It transpired that Sylvie had found the spider on a bedroom wall at their home in Sketty, Swansea on the 9th April 2004.

I telephoned Mark Winder, secretary of the South Wales Arachnid Group, and told him the tale outlined above. Mark consulted the 'Atlas' and said that there was one previous record for Britain, of a specimen collected at Leicester in 1996 and therefore, if Sylvie Hérault's spider was indeed *S. triangulosa*, it constituted the second British and first Welsh record of the species.

I took several transparencies of the specimen and showed it to Simon Warmingham who agreed with my determination. I then forwarded it to Mark with a request to pass it on to Peter Harvey for confirmation of its identity.

Details are as follows: Collector S. R. V. Hérault (P. B. Alton). Determiner G. H. Jones. Date collected 9th April 2004. Date determined 11th April 2004.

Sites:

3 Emmanuel Gardens Sketty Swansea SA28EF. UK grid reference SS618914, VC.41.

Village in France where Paul and Sylvie resided from 2001 to 2004. Le Rouret, Department Alpes Maritimes.

18, Heol Maendy, North Cornelly, BRIDGEND, Glamorgan, CF33 4DD



Steatoda triangulosa. Photograph by Peter Harvey.

Micrommata ligurina (C. L. Koch, 1845)—A Mothers' Day Left-Over??

by Doug Marriott

On Monday 22nd March 2004 I was contacted by the nature journalist for the Herts Advertiser, Mr Fred Twilley. He had received a large bright green mature female spider that he thought was *Micrommata virescens*. Apparently this specimen was found in the kitchen of a house in Redbourn, Hertfordshire. I collected the spider and indeed at first glance it did look like *M. virescens*, but a large mature female in March seemed unlikely. Under the microscope several differences were noted when compared with the illustrations and drawings in Mike Roberts's

guides. The epigyne, whilst superficially similar in shape, was significantly different on the anterior margin. Also the markings on the carapace shown in Roberts were missing and the abdomen was also only lightly marked. On each side of the fovea there was a black line consisting of dense black hairs which gave the impression to the naked eye of a small 'equal' sign. These differences made me suspect that this was a foreign importation.

The spider was despatched to John Murphy who quickly came back and identified it as *Micrommata ligurina* (C. L. Koch, 1845). This has a Mediterranean distribution and is found from Portugal to Turkey and beyond and also in North Africa. John commented that he had not seen a female so large or so green. It certainly was a most attractive specimen and its presence in Redbourn was probably the result of a Mothers' Day gift of a plant or flowers the previous day.

My sincere thanks to John Murphy for identifying the spider for me and for providing the information on distribution.

19, Winton Drive, Croxley Green, RICKMANSWORTH, Herts., WD3 3RF

Note from the National Organiser:

When Doug e-mailed me about the *Micrommata*, he mentioned a female record of *M. virescens* shown for December in the Provisional Atlas (Harvey *et al.* 2002). This made me search the original data used to generate the adult season charts, and from the details given it now seems likely that this record is also a foreign import, probably *M. ligurina*, and that the specimen was misidentified. Details of the record are: '12/12/1997. Bosworth Hall Hotel, Market Bosworth SK407034, coll. Sheryl Hilder, det. Jan Dawson. Artificial. On wall of hotel kitchen; at the time, a delivery of foreign fruit was being checked. Released back to site, shrubbery adjoining kitchen.' Unfortunately, since the spider was not kept we are now unable to confirm its true identity.

Reference

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

Silometopus reussi (Thorell, 1871) (Linyphiidae) and *Argiope bruennichi* (Scopoli, 1772) (Araneidae) in Berkshire

by Jonty Denton

The following records appear to be the first for Berkshire (VC22) for these species:

Silometopus reussi (Thorell, 1871) adults were abundant in a large manure heap near the Holybrook near Southcote (SU6871) in July 2003.

Argiope bruennichi females were found in tall neutral grassland near to Theale lake (SU65-6670) in August and September 2003.

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