

Spider Recording Scheme News

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

S.R.S. News No. 92 will be published in Autumn 2018. Please send contributions by the end of the second week of October at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: grayspeterharvey@gmail.com.

Editorial

Please help future issues by providing articles, short or longer, on interesting discoveries and observations. **The newsletter depends on your contributions!** This SRS News almost failed to appear due to of a lack of content.

Dan Newton has provided details of a 5th British record of *Steatoda triangularis* found near Lincoln (see article on next page), and just before going to press, there has been yet another record of the same species from Mansfield north of Nottingham found by Philip Norris about a week later. This could well be the spider to keep a look-out for somewhere near you in the near future!

Philodromus rufus sens. str. continues to be found in the south-east, with Andrew Keay finding a male in Banstead, Surrey that I was able to confirm. I even found a very rufous male *Philodromus* on my shoulder in my garden in Grays, Essex which on examination under the microscope also turned out to be this species rather than *P. albidus*, a species that has been common and numerous in the county for several decades. *P. rufus* clearly continues to do well and can be expected to continue to turn up more widely. However the difficulty of reliably separating the two species means voucher specimens will require careful examination under a microscope and confirmation.

Another *Philodromus* which can be expected to increase is *P. buxi*. Originally on the British list from a single female taken at Bloxworth by O. Pickard-Cambridge in the nineteenth century (Locket *et al.* 1974), two males were collected in Greenwich in 2014 (Wilson, 2015) and then confirmed records have come from the Lee Valley and Wanstead area and as far east as Thurrock in Essex (Harvey, 2016). Peter Merrett has provided excellent figures of the palp and epigyne from Essex specimens, which are given below. Many thanks to Peter for these and to Rowley Snazell for providing the images electronically.

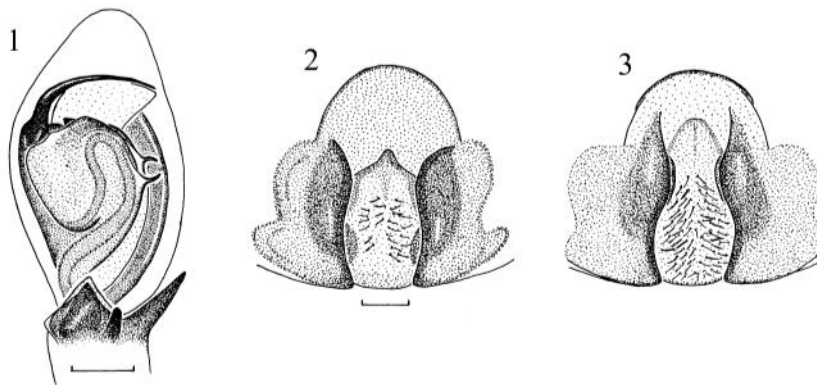


Figure 1. *Philodromus buxi* male palp, ventral view.
Figures 2 and 3. *Philodromus buxi* female epigyne of two individuals.

Figures by Peter Merrett.

References

- Harvey, P. 2016. *Philodromus buxi* and its occurrence in South Essex. S.R.S. News. No. 85. In *Newsl. Br. arachnol. Soc.* **136**: 14-16.
- Locket, G.H., Millidge, A.F. & Merrett, P. 1974. *British Spiders* Volume III. London: Ray Society.
- Wilson, R. 2015. *Philodromus buxi* and *Anyphaena sabina*: two new species records for the UK. SRS News No. 81: In *Newsl. Br. arachnol. Soc.* **132**: 17-19.

Just another spider species seen in the garden?

by Dan Newton

Quick bit of background - I am based near Lincoln, Lincolnshire, and I spend a lot of time looking at invertebrates in the garden. I have a 'Garden List' which has recently just passed 700 species (comprising of moths/beetles/wasps/plants/lichens etc...). The bulk of that is moths purely because they are my key interest, and they are so easy to attract and catch via moth trapping. But I always try to look out for other things, because I find them all fascinating.

On the 6th of June my partner was in the shed re-potting some of her plants, and called me over when she found an interesting little spider. I don't know a great deal about spiders to be honest, but I at least recognised that it was a type of false widow, a *Steatoda* species. It also looked a little different to other spiders I have seen and was potentially a new addition to the 'garden list'. I have regularly seen *S. bipunctata* here. I brought it inside, took a few pictures and then put her back outside in the shed where she had been found. Four weeks later, I finally got round to identifying it and was surprised to discover that it could be a lot more interesting than I first realised. The UK spiders group on FB confirmed my initial suspicions of it being *Steatoda triangularis* and urged me to record it

properly. Contacting Peter Harvey via the SRS website led to it being confirmed as only the 5th UK record since it was first discovered in Leicestershire in 1996!

After a number of years looking at invertebrates, and admiring all of the different shapes, colours and forms, it was a real thrill to see something genuinely rare, genuinely interesting, and it was great to add a new record of a very rarely seen species. But there were two important lessons learnt that day, Firstly; always keep your eyes open and a spare pot in your pocket, there is always new things to discover, and they can come at any moment. These days I never step foot in the garden without a couple of pots on me. And secondly, if you see something potentially new or interesting, then don't release it until you have a solid ID. If I had picked up the Wild Guides Spider Book (literally on the bookshelf in the next room) and looked for the ID there and then, I would have realised I potentially had something really interesting. And I would have then kept her for further study.

It is probably also worth considering that my "5th Sighting" of the species is probably not accurate. It is very likely that *S. triangularis* is much more widespread than we think but it takes a certain 'type' of person to recognise it, photograph it and record it. If I hadn't been at home, my partner would have probably ignored it. If I hadn't been recording a Garden List, I would have probably dismissed it as a type of false widow and left it



Figure 1. *Steatoda triangularis* female in Lincolnshire. Photograph © Dan Newton.



Figures 2-4. *Steatoda triangularis* female in Lincolnshire. Photograph © Dan Newton.

at that. Only because I have a vested interest, and the books and inclination to back it up did I realise what it could be. And depressingly, I am ashamed to admit that if I had seen it 5 years ago, then there is a chance I would have just squashed it. I know the people here at SRS would be understandably upset with that but it is how a lot of the general public views spiders. It is a shame because I have slowly come to realise just how fascinating they can be.

This does mean that that this spider, this beautifully marked *Steatoda triangularis* is very likely to be more common than the records show and slowly spreading to new locations, so pay attention to the corners of your house, keep an eye on your gardens, this species could be coming to a shed near you!

See more of my images at <https://www.facebook.com/dannewtonphotography/>

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