

occasionally strayed then nobody will notice, will they?

One of the most pleasant aspects of being an officer of our Society is receiving the many interesting letters that members send with their subscription renewals. Dr. Yael Lubin included a copy of her latest paper (1983) concerning a thomisid from the Galapagos which is cryptic, nocturnally active and seems to feed exclusively on ants. As the journal in which the paper was published is not readily available in this country. I have sent a copy to the B.A.S. Library, so that it can be more generally available to members.

Every year, undergraduates in the Zoology Department at Manchester University undertake a two-term third year project as part of their degree structure. These aim to introduce students to research and sometimes form the basis for later postgraduate work. This year Mark Hogarth has been looking at *Oonops* (mainly *O. pulcher* which is easier to obtain in large numbers). One of the aspects he investigated was the brief sprints that *Oonops* performs when disturbed. His results, obtained from analysis of high speed film, suggest that this little spider reaches speeds of over 200 mm./sec. (just under 0.5 m.p.h.), an almost unbelievable rate for such a small animal. Another student, Frances Ashton, had the unfortunate experience of being taken into policy custody in Hayfield whilst collecting *Zygiella x-notata* from the window frames of an old mill. She was released after a phone call to the University confirmed that this was a genuine and necessary part of her degree course. At the next town on her itinerary, Glossop, she took the precaution of advising the local police-station of her intentions, but it seems that a message had already been flashed to all local forces: 'Yes, we know all about you: collecting spiders'!

References

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*Whitwell well favoured!

All this town-twinning with places on the continent seems to have resulted in certain towns being left out — Paris for example. So, bold as brass, the town-twinner for little Rutland decided to arrange for the village, nay mere hamlet, of Whitwell to be twinned with Paris! It is quite striking on the road signs as you approach the village on the A.606, and further research at the local pub reveals more. A somewhat decrepit outbuilding (good spider haunt) houses the gent's urinals, and this shack bears a plaque, in English and French, to the effect that it was officially declared re-opened (after refurbishment) by none other than Monsieur le Maire of Paris!

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Lathys nielsenii (Schenkel) Dictynidae. A spider new to Britain

by Dick Jones

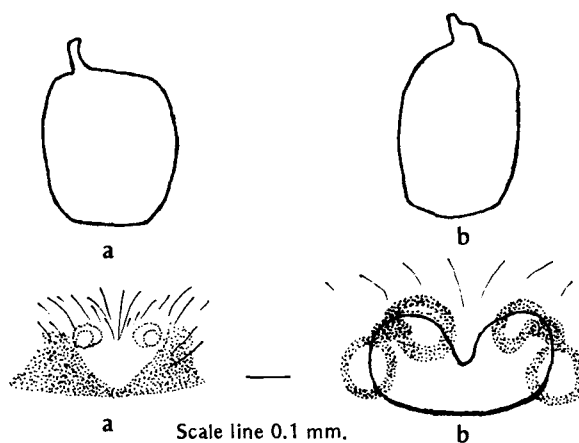
Specimens of this small spider have recently been identified from a few sites in two counties of south east England. This note is intended to alert members to its presence, and to

elicit further site records (if these exist) for inclusion in a more detailed account to be published in the near future.

L. nielsenii is closely allied to *L. humilis*, but differs from this more common species in its paler appearance. The abdomen is pale brown with darker brown chevrons, lacking the black pigmentation and white guanin globules below the cuticle which are to be found in *L. humilis*. Whereas *L. humilis* has clear black annulations on the legs, at both the basal and apical ends of each segment, the legs of *L. nielsenii* are pale yellow-brown with no marks or with very faint rings at the apical ends of the segments.

Figure 1 shows the male left patellae from directly above and the epigynes of both species. It will be seen that the apophysis in *L. nielsenii* is more slender and offset more to the left of the patella than in *L. humilis*. The patella is noticeably broader in *L. nielsenii*.

The epigynes differ in the smaller size of that of *L. nielsenii*, which also lacks the transparent lingula and visible ducts seen in *L. humilis*. The two sexes resemble each other more closely in *L. nielsenii*, the male being only slightly darker than the female. The sizes are as follows: ♂♀ 1.6-1.8 mm.



Lathys nielsenii (Schenkel)

- a. ♂ palpal patella dorsal
 b. ♀ Epigyne

Lathys humilis (Blackwall)

- a. ♂ palpal patella dorsal
 b. ♀ Epigyne

Most of the spiders have been found in moist terrestrial habitats on heathland; for example under stones, or amongst damp, dead *Molinia caerulea* detritus between the tussocks. In April 1984 a number of specimens were found at the base of grass clumps at White Down, Surrey, but previous records known to me were all from acid heaths around the borders of Surrey and West Sussex. Thaler records specimens from Austria and Switzerland at elevations between 700 and 1500 metres, so there appears no obvious reason why this species should be confined to southern Britain. From records in this country, males are adult in April, females continuing until the end of May. I will identify any specimens sent to me.

My thanks are due to John Murphy for the determination of the spiders I found, for records and literature, including a paper and specimens generously furnished by Dr. K. Thaler of Austria and Dr. Peter Merrett kindly provided additional records.

References

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