

***Dendryphantes rudis* (Sundevall, 1832) (Araneae: Salticidae) a New Spider to Britain and a Record of *Cryptachaea riparia* (Blackwall, 1834)(Araneae: Theridiidae) from Liverpool City Centre (VC 59)**

by Tony Hunter

***Dendryphantes rudis* (Sundevall, 1832)**

On 23rd July 2016 several jumping spiders were swept from a group of Black Pine *Pinus nigra* trees (Fig. 1) during a Bioblitz at a public green-space on the outskirts of Liverpool city centre (SJ365864). When examined they were found to be *Dendryphantes rudis*, a species not previously recorded in the UK.

The collection site was formerly occupied by the International Garden Festival which took place between May and October 1984. The site was subsequently redeveloped into residential housing, and a public green-space managed by The Conservation Volunteers charity.

Dendryphantes rudis (Fig. 2) has a trans-Palaearctic distribution, occurring in: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland (Metzner, 2016; Prószyński, 2016).

Pinus nigra is not native to the UK, but has long been planted for ornamental and commercial purposes (Johnson & More, 2004). It occurs naturally across the Southern Mediterranean (Farjon, 2013). The trees at the collection locality are thought to have been planted in 2011 or 2012, but records of the supplier have been lost (McMahon pers. com.).

The spider is thought to place its egg-sacs amongst pine needles (Roberts, 1995). It is therefore possible that *D. rudis* came into the country on imported trees.

***Cryptachaea riparia* (Blackwall, 1834)**

On 21st August 2013, during a biodiversity survey of Chavasse Park, a public green-space in the Liverpool One shopping development, a female spider was collected from under a plastic board in a compound used to store



Figure 1: *Dendryphantes rudis* collection locality, Liverpool, August 2016. © Tony Hunter.



Figure 2: Female *Dendryphantes rudis*. © Richard Gallon.

equipment (SJ343901) (Hunter & Knight, 2013). On examination it was found to be *Cryptachaea riparia*, a heathland species most often recorded in Southern England, East Anglia and South Wales (Fig. 3).

Cryptachaea riparia is normally found amongst roots under overhanging banks, it feeds largely on ants which it snares using sticky threads attached to the ground. It is thought to be declining in the UK and is considered rare in Western Europe (S.R.S. website).

It is not clear whether the population is relict, or if it was introduced with materials used to develop the site.

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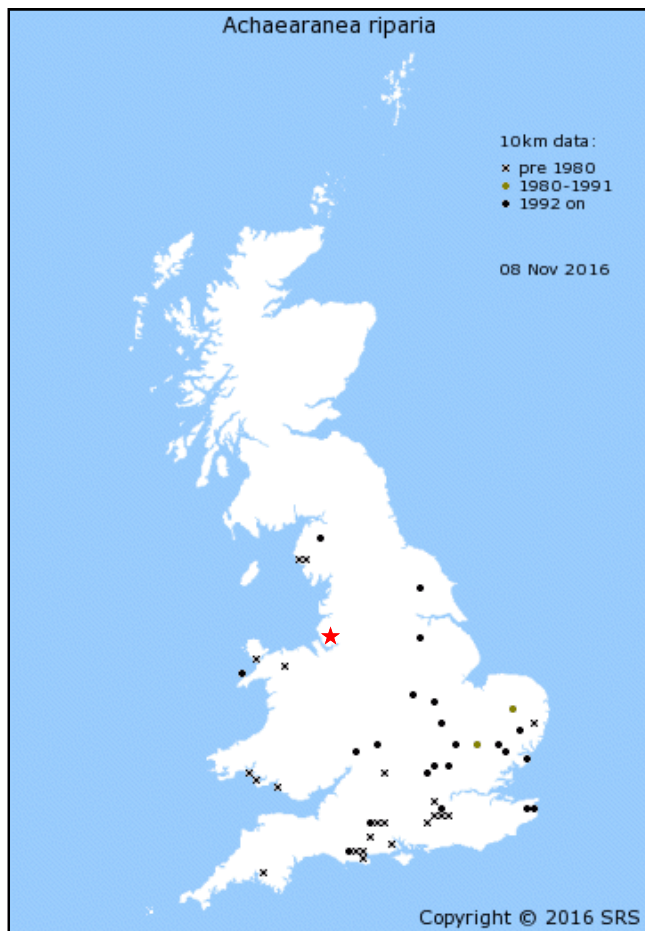


Figure 3: *Achaearanea riparia* UK distribution from the Spider Recording Scheme website (star indicates 2013 record).

Spider and Harvestman Recording Scheme website. <http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/portal.php/p/Summary/s/Achaearanea+riparia> [accessed 9 August 2016]

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Thoughts of an Armchair Arachnologist

by Pip Collyer

Being a county recorder, I am regularly sent spider records by enthusiastic naturalists, usually backed up by a photograph. They vary in quality, but even with the good ones I often find that I am tactfully explaining how difficult it is to identify to species level from a photograph. This is a shame because it seems to me that encouraging people to take photos with their small cameras or mobile phones is an excellent way of widening interest in spiders. Several amateur naturalists have said to me that they don't "do" spiders because they are a "difficult group" but some spider species can be identified from photos, and quite a few to at least genus level.

One that is relatively straightforward is the Mouse Spider *Scotophaeus blackwalli*. Perhaps the most unusual source of a record of this spider came from the head of the

Norfolk Biological Information Service who is responsible for the County's wildlife records. The spider had obligingly crawled across his desk at County Hall one evening!

A long time ago when I first became interested in spiders I went on a course run by John Parker who was Secretary of the B.A.S. for many years. I remember him saying that spiders are basically divided into runners, lurkers and jumpers and can be further sub-divided into the day shift and the night shift. *Scotophaeus* falls into the runners' camp and I guess is largely part of the night shift. I see from the Spider Recording Scheme website that this species has probably spread from warmer parts of the globe, accounting for it mainly being found in houses and sheds. For this reason, whenever one is found by a member of my family, less enthusiastic about sharing our space with spiders, I quietly release it somewhere else in the house where they won't come across it – at least for a while!

The other spiders we share our house with are the Daddy Long-legs Spider *Pholcus phalangioides* and the Large House Spider *Tegenaria gigantea*. Sadly, I don't seem to see *Tegenaria* as often as I used to and wonder whether it is because they come off worse when encountering *Pholcus*. Several times I have found the remains of one in a *Pholcus* web in my garage. I get the impression that *Pholcus* has only become widespread in houses in this county in the last 30 years or so, which is perhaps not good news for *Tegenaria*. I wonder how *Scotophaeus* fares against them as they must come across their webs in their nightly wanderings.

The outside windows of my house are the territory of *Zygiella x-notata*, a member of the lurkers. At the height of the false widow scare two years or so ago, this spider was regularly misidentified as *Steatoda nobilis* by people sending me photos. I imagine that many were destroyed unnecessarily.

The wooden fence alongside my house is occupied by another night-shift lurker, the Walnut Orbweb Spider, *Nuctenea umbratica*. The overlapping planks are an ideal retreat during the daytime for this rather flattened spider. Sometimes I stir from my armchair, usually to fill my glass, but occasionally to go outside with a torch after dark in the summer when these spiders have come out of hiding. It is amazing how many there are, both adults and juveniles, and how close their webs are to each other, often overlapping. Tough if you're an insect trying to go about your business, although I don't have much sympathy for the beetles that attack my asparagus, even if they are very attractive.

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Dendryphantes rudis (Sundevall, 1832) adult female. © Richard Gallon.