

A Spider and Parasite from Button Oak Meadow, Wyre Forest

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On 2nd July 2014 the Wyre Forest Study Group paid a visit to Button Oak Meadow. During the visit an *Araniella* spider was discovered with a maggot clinging to it. The maggot could not be dislodged so I took the spider and its passenger home for a closer look. A quick search on the internet brought up an article from Worcestershire Record volume 34, April 2013, pages 19-20, Ectoparasite *Polysphincta* sp., Hymenoptera: Ichneumonidae, of the spider *Araniella* sp. found at Feckenham Wylde Moor, by Paul Meers, Brett Westwood & Harry Green.

The picture and description matched the individuals that I had collected so we kept them to see what happened.

3rd July, the spider was continuing to feed on small flies introduced to its container.

4th July, the parasite had grown rapidly and the spider's body resembled a deflated balloon. When disturbed the parasite held the hapless spider in the air and waved it violently.

5th July, the spider was dead and the parasite was making a cocoon (it appeared to be recycling the spider's silk to make this).

15th July, the parasite hatched. A male *Polyshincta* sp. We have been unable to get it identified to species but we still have the specimen if anyone can help.

