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SHORT COMMUNICATION

***Stigmus pendulus* (Panzer) (Hymenoptera: Sphecidae) associated with ancient woodlands in south-east London.**—Since *Stigmus pendulus* was first discovered in Britain by Allen (1987) it has remained rather a mystery. At the time of Falk's review (1991) it was known only from Allen's original East Kent specimen and two more from the other side of the Thames in South Essex. Published records seem few: Uffen (1997, 1998) has recorded it twice from Hertfordshire. However, it is obviously much more widespread and there are many more records from South Essex (P. R. Harvey, personal communication) and Surrey (Baldock, in preparation). I was not, therefore, too surprised to find it at several localities in the London area.

What I did find surprising, or at least ironic, is that here it seems to be associated with ancient woodland! So far *Stigmus pendulus* has been found at four sites.

Sydenham Hill Woods, Dulwich (TQ3472, Surrey), 20.vi.1993, 30.viii.1993, found by D. W. Baldock in 1997 in Malaise trap material which had been stored in alcohol for several years. Sydenham Hill and Dulwich Woods are reckoned to be remains of the "Great North Wood", a series of oak copses and wooded commons extending through south-east London from Selhurst to Brockley. A large number of

acknowledged ancient woodland indicator species have been recorded from the site (Jones, in preparation).

Woodlands Farm, Bexley (TQ4476, West Kent), 9.ix.1998, a single specimen sweeping at the edge of a large field, once arable, but which had lain fallow for about 10 years. Nearby was a patch of old oak woodland and the renowned ancient woodland SSSI Oxleas Wood was less than a kilometre away.

Woodland Walk, Downham, (TQ3871, West Kent) 16.vi.1999, one swept. Woodland Walk is a curious narrow wooded path, zigzagging at right angles between the houses and gardens of the Downham estate, laid out in the 1930s. It is recognizable on maps from the middle of the 19th century and is possibly the remains of an old green lane following ancient hedgerows and field boundaries. Numerous acknowledged ancient woodland "indicator" species were also found on the site (Jones, in preparation).

Mayow Park, Lower Sydenham (TQ3571, West Kent), 9.vi.1999, one found by sweeping. Although primarily playing fields with close-mown utility grass, this small park is dominated by many ancient pollard oaks which predate the landscaping of the park in 1877.

South-east London might not immediately be linked, in most people's minds, with ancient woodland, a scarce and vulnerable habitat, but various of the local open spaces are obvious survivors from the era before urbanization; they contain large mature trees and numerous ancient woodland "indicator" species. It is unlikely that *Stigmus pendulus* has any true association with ancient woodland, and is more likely to be generally associated with woods in general. In Surrey it is known from parks, gardens and commons, often in company with *Stigmus solskyi* (D. W. Baldock, personal communication). It will be interesting to see, as further records of *Stigmus pendulus* appear, whether any wider association with old woodland emerges.

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