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**REVIEW: The Spiders of Great Britain and Ireland 2-part Compact Edition**

by Michael J. Roberts.

Published by Harley Books, Martins, Great Horkeley, Colchester, Essex CO6 4AH (1993).

Price £80.00 (complete); £49.95 (part 1 - text, 7 col. pls, numerous figs); £39.95 (part 2 - 256pp. 236 col. pls); £3.75 (supplement to hardback edition).

It hardly seems five years since the last of the three volumes of the hardback edition of this work was published. In that time, it has become established as an essential tool for those involved in spider identification, and its worth has been widely recognised. This is not the place to recapitulate the many things, mostly praiseworthy, said about it, but to comment on the present publication.

There are two aspects to this new work: one is the re-formatting of the original material, and the other is the supplement. Regarding the former, the original volumes have been re-issued as two; the textual and diagrammatic volumes 1 and 2, together with the supplement as an appendix, are now all together as part 1, and the colour plates of volume 3 are still separate as part 2. Apart from such things as the title pages, the material is identical; this is because the text pages are formed from a run-on set printed at the same time as the original hard-back version. Unfortunately, therefore, it has not been possible for the publishers to correct typographical errors, but most of these are noted in the Supplement. However, it must be said that the publication as a whole is to the high standard that we have come to expect from Harley Books.

For those who already possess the hardback edition, the separately available, modestly priced supplement will have the greatest value. This consists of corrections to the original text, of the description of eight additions to the British spider fauna too late for previous inclusion, and a very useful re-assessment of some members of the genus *Philodromus* which is causing problems at the present time. This process of addition and re-assessment is ongoing and the idea of a regular update along these lines is very attractive. It is to be hoped that the author and the publisher will see their way to considering this.

At little more than half the price of the original edition, the appeal of the softback edition ("compact" seems to be a misnomer since the only reduction in size is in the thickness of the covers) will be mainly to the amateur. Libraries are usually more interested in hardback versions; professionals, although they might be attracted to two volumes being combined, will probably want something more hard-wearing. Most workers currently active will already have the hardback edition and will only require the supplement, but the work should provide an incentive to those people wanting to enter this field of study.

Stanley Dobson