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# ORTHOPTERA RECORDING SCHEME FOR GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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As the new organiser of the scheme, my first task is to thank Chris Haes on behalf of all of us for all the work he has done in preparing the atlas and for his Newsletters, which have been so informative.

I have received several enquiries regarding the publication of the atlas and am given to understand that, all being well, it should, at last, be published well before next season. Most records to the end of 1995 should be included, so it should be reasonably current when it appears.

Since taking over from Chris I have received a considerable number of very important new records. There are too many to mention individually but I will summarise the most important.

## SIGNIFICANT BATCH OF RECORDS COVERING PERIOD OF 25 YEARS

Special mention must be made of a batch submitted by Peter Kirby, spanning a period of approximately 25 years, which involved 104 new 10km<sup>2</sup> records, some of exceptional significance.

The most remarkable was of **Cepero's Groundhopper**, *Tetrix ceperoi*, at a recently disused, partly flooded, clay pit near Whittlesey, VC29(Cambridgeshire), in 1995. Incredibly, this was c.140kms north-west of any previous record and well inland. The record is supported by a positively identified specimen. This species has a very southerly distribution in Britain and is usually confined to coastal or near-coastal sites. However, there is a very old reference to a record for Cambridgeshire which has, hitherto, been considered to be erroneous but this new find raises the possibility that it has occurred in the area for a long time, although it is surely a new arrival at this particular site. In any event, I think this record should alert all field workers to the possibility that the species may be overlooked at improbable locations, the similar **Slender Groundhopper**, *Tetrix subulata*, often being assumed without close examination. I would add that records of *T. Ceperoi* from atypical areas will not be accepted without an accompanying specimen which should be sent to me (I will return

if requested but please include postage).

Further excellent finds were **Bog Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera brachyptera*, in a clearing of ancient broad-leaved woodland at Askenbank Wood, VC16 (West Kent), in 1993, which constitutes the first post - 1960 record for that County, **Common Groundhopper**, *Tetrix undulata*, at Clogher Head, South Kerry (H1), Ireland, in 1989, which has the distinction of being the most westerly record for this species in Europe and **Lesser Cockroach**, *Ectobius panzeri*, at Languard Point, VC25 (East Suffolk), in 1988.

Also of special note is that as a result of an intensive survey of Chesil Beach, VC9 (Dorset), in 1994, Peter found the **Scaly Cricket**, *Pseudomogoplistes squamiger*, over a very long length of the beach and extending into a new 10km<sup>2</sup> at SY68. This species was only discovered here in 1949 and has never previously been found outside the 10km<sup>2</sup> SY67 (the eastern end of the East Fleet). Pitfall trapping suggested an extremely high population of this nationally rare insect and this was confirmed by similar trapping carried out by Chris Timmins in 1995.

He also had new records for **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, including four which were most unexpected, being some 100kms north-west of the previously known range of this species. These were from Little Paxton Pits, VC31 (Huntingdonshire), in 1985 - beaten from a small but dense patch of hawthorn and bramble in an area of unmanaged grass and scrub on old gravel workings; Aversley Wood, VC31 (Huntingdonshire), in 1986 - beaten from a hawthorn dominated hedge at corner of ancient woodland; Lattersey Hill, VC29 (Cambridgeshire), in 1986 - found amongst leaf-litter on ballast at the margin of a dense bramble clump at edge of a disused railway; Andrews Quarry, VC32 (Northamptonshire), in 1992 - beaten from dense *Clematis vitalba* on a near vertical bank of rock and soil in scrubby area at base of quarry. There were also second and third post-1960 records of *F.lesnei* for VC1 (Cornwall) from dunes at Gwithian and Kennack sands.

I think it is also appropriate to particularly mention his data for two very under-recorded Counties, i.e. Cambridgeshire (VC29) and Northamptonshire (VC32), in order to illustrate the potential there is to still make significant finds, even of the more common species, in some parts of the country.

For Cambridgeshire, there were new records for **Dark Bush Cricket**, *Pholidoptera griseoptera*, at Welches Dam, Ouse Washes (52/48), **Short-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus dorsalis*, at Wilbraham Fen (52/55), **Slender Groundhopper**, *Tetrix subulata*, at Mepal (52/48), **Common Groundhopper**, *Tetrix undulata*, at King's Dyke Pit (52/51) and Mepal and **Meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus parallelus*, at Caldecote Meadows (52/35). So far as Dermaptera were concerned, **Common Earwig**, *Forficula auricularia*, was found in four new squares and **Lesser Earwig**, *Labia minor*, at Willingham (52/47), the latter being the first post-1960 record of that species in VC29.

For Northamptonshire, the following were new - **Oak Bush Cricket**, *Meconema thalassinum*, and **Speckled Bush Cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, at Buckingham Thick Copse (42/74), **Slender Groundhopper**, *Tetrix subulata*, at Brookfield

Plantation (42/89) and Wadenhoe (52/08), **Common Groundhopper**, *Tetrix undulata*, at Bainton Pits (53/10), Tuarnvaugh Quarry (53/00), Dogsthorpe Star Pit (53/20) and Brookfield Plantation, **Common Green Grasshopper**, *Omocestus viridulus*, also at Brookfield Plantation, **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, at Tanholt Farm Quarry (53/20) and Brookfield Plantation and also **Meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus parallelus*, at Dogsthorpe Star Pit and Southorpe Meadow (52/67). Dermaptera included, **Common Earwig**, *Forficula auricularia*, at Weldon Park Wood (42/98) and **Lesser Earwig**, *Labia minor*, at Bretton (53/10), which was the first post-1960 record for the County.

Other notable records obtained by Peter outside of these two Counties were of **Speckled Bush Cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, from Central Herefordshire (VC36) at Wellington Wood (32/44), well to the west of any previous record in this County. In Glamorgan (VC41), **Slender Groundhopper**, *Tetrix subulata*, was found in 1986 at Oxwich Burrows (21/58) and Whiteford Burrows (21/48) constituting the second and third post-1960 records for this species on the Gower peninsular.

Dictyoptera included **Tawny Cockroach**, *Ectobius pallidus*, from East Kent (VC15) at Castle Hill (61/23) and **Lesser Cockroach**, *Ectobius panzeri*, in Dorset (VC9) at Turlin Moor (30/99) and in East Suffolk (VC25) at Snape Warren (62/45). There were further Dermaptera records of **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, in Dorset from Turlin Moor and in East Kent from Ebbsfleet Valley (51/67) and Dungeness (61/01) and also of **Lesser Earwig**, *Labia minor*, in Cornwall (VC1) at Church Cove (10/62) (which is the most southerly British mainland record for this species), in Surrey (VC17) at Bletchingley (51/35), a first in Huntingdonshire (VC31) at Orton Mawborne (52/19) and the first post-1960 sighting in Derbyshire (VC57) at Peartree (43/33).

## RECORDS FOR 1996

### Species in process of range expansion

Whilst the steady range expansion of **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, over the last few decades has been closely monitored, it came as a great surprise to hear from Robert Cropper that he had found two substantial, well-established colonies in late July at North Petherton (31/23 and 31/33) in South Somerset (VC5). These new County records are over 100kms west of the main population in Southern England which begs the question as to whether it has already colonised the intervening area and perhaps even beyond. Robert has expressed the view that these occurrences may be associated with the M5 and it may well be worth looking for it in long grass elsewhere along or near to this route. Another welcome record came from Richard Becker who reported at least three long-winged males in East Sussex (VC14) at Crawley Down (51/33), this being a first County record. This record is of particular interest because there has been no recent detectable southerly movement which may suggest a new multi-directional phase of expansion is now taking place. The main movement northwards continues and Jeremy Halls found it in Buckinghamshire (VC24) in new 10km<sup>2</sup> at Haversham, near Milton Keynes (42/84), near Amersham (41/99) and Sprigs Alley (41/79). I found it in another new 10km<sup>2</sup> on Therfield Heath (52/34) in the northern-most part of Hertfordshire (VC20). In anticipation of it possibly having

already penetrated deep into Cambridgeshire (VC29), I visited the Ely area on 19 August, and found a single male of the long-winged form (forma diluta) stridulating on Middle Fen Bank (52/58). During September, I also found it in Bedfordshire (VC30) at Biggleswade (52/14). On the basis of evidence so far I think that Cambridgeshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Suffolk can be regarded as probably holding the current forward edge of this northward thrust. It is already known to have entered some of these Counties but remains unrecorded in others and I would urge all those who work these areas to keep a special watch for it. (See further comments regarding isolated Colonies under heading "Possible targets for specific investigative fieldwork".)

The **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, is also undergoing a similar expansion of range, although difficulty in hearing its stridulation without the aid of a bat detector means that it is more easily overlooked. Alan Wake and I were surprised to find a single male of the long-winged form in a most unlikely habitat. It was stridulating from the top of an isolated plant of Creeping thistle, *Cirsium arvense*, in heavily grazed pasture at Kemble (31/99) in north Wiltshire (VC7) (now Gloucestershire). This was no doubt a new colonist, possibly in the process of moving around seeking suitable habitat. I have also found several new Hertfordshire (VC20) sites, including three new 10km<sup>2</sup> records in 42/91, 52/33 and 52/41 and confirmed considerable consolidation and breeding of the species in that County. It has now been recorded in ninety-one 1km<sup>2</sup> in Hertfordshire, which is quite remarkable bearing in mind the first record was only two years ago in 1994. In Surrey (VC17) David Element had a new 10km<sup>2</sup> record at Wandle Meadow Nature Reserve (51/27) and Robert Cropper has also found it in four new 10km<sup>2</sup> in Somerset, these are South Barrow (32/62), Compton Dundon (31/43), East Coker (31/51) and Cricket St. Thomas (31/30). There were other new 10km<sup>2</sup> records from C. Damant at Downley Common, High Wycombe (41/89) and from Steve Prowse at Lower Hundridge Farm, Chesham (42/90), both in Buckinghamshire (VC24). In addition, Richard Becker had new East Sussex (VC14) records at Crawley Down (41/33) and two in Ashford Forest (51/42 and 51/43) and, in West Sussex (VC13), Lisa Hooper and Alan Wake found it in the grounds of Petworth House (41/92).

Other records, summarised by geographical area or Vice County, are as follows:-

#### **Berkshire (VC22) and Oxfordshire (VC23)**

John Campbell of the Oxon BRC has submitted a number of records, which included twenty-two new 10km<sup>2</sup> records - seven for Berkshire (VC22) and fifteen for Oxfordshire (VC23). The most significant of these were, for VC23, **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, at Gatehampton Farm (41/67); **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, at Little Wittenham L.N.R. (51/59) (per Steve Gregory) and **Stripe-winged Grasshopper**, *Stenobothrus lineatus*, at Knollend (41/48). There was also a re-find of a pre-1961 10km<sup>2</sup> record of **Woodland Grasshopper**, *Omocestus rufipes*, at Hills Pit, Tubney (42/40) in VC22. Dermaptera data included VC23 records for **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, at Ardley Reservoir (42/52) and Blackthorn Railway Cutting (42/62) both found by Steve Gregory.

During a survey of Decoy Heath N.R. (41/66), Des Sussex found **Short-winged**

**Conehead**, *Conocephalus dorsalis*, and **Lesser Earwig**, *Labia minor*, both new 10km<sup>2</sup> records. More significant, however, was a first County record for **Lesser Cockroach**, *Ectobius panzeri*, which was discovered on recreated heathland adjacent to Crowthorne Bypass, south of Bracknell (41/86).

#### Norfolk (VCs 27/28)

David Richmond carried out a special search in Norfolk for **Slender Groundhopper**, *Tetrix subulata*, which produced a further seventeen new 10km<sup>2</sup> records. He has found it in a wide range of habitats but always associated with river catchments. These included cowslip meadows, bluebell woods, tractor ruts, cow wallows, seasonally dry ditches, margins of reed beds, riversides and dry breckland meres. Where sites are of heathland origin **Common Groundhopper**, *Tetrix undulata*, has also been found, but in grassland it is normally only *T. subulata* present.

#### Suffolk (VCs 25/26)

Alan Wake and Lisa Hooper recently had post-1960 re-finds of **Meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus parallelus*, and **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, on Aldburgh Marshes (62/45). They also found **Stripe-winged Grasshopper**, *Stenobothrus lineatus*, in a new 10km<sup>2</sup> at East Sheep Walk, Walberswick (62/47), which is only the third East Suffolk (VC25) record.

Mike Edwards came up with a remarkable series of records of **Woodland Grasshopper**, *Omocestus rufipes*, at six sites in East Suffolk, three being in the Walberswick area (62/47), the others at Dunwich (62/46), Blaxhall Common and Tunstall Common (62/35). These important finds were the first post 1960 records for the County involving three new 10km<sup>2</sup> records.

#### Somerset (VCs 5/6)

An excellent series of new 10km<sup>2</sup> records have been received from Robert Cropper. He reports a colony of **Great Green Bush Crickets**, *Tettigonia viridissima*, associated with private gardens at Woodcombe near Minehead (21/94). This colony, which is remote from others, has reportedly been present for many years but knowledge of it has only just come to light. In addition to the four new *Conocephalus discolor* records mentioned earlier, there were new records for **Oak Bush Cricket**, *Meconema thalassinum*, near Bruton (31/73); **Stripe-winged Grasshopper**, *Stenobothrus lineatus*, at Milborne Wick (31/62); **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, at South Moor, Glastonbury (31/53); **Mottled Grasshopper**, *Myrmeleotettix maculatus*, at Hadden Hill (31/62); **Common Groundhopper**, *Tetrix undulata*, at Lady's Edge (31/13), Warren Farm, Exmoor (21/74) and Redlynch (31/63). Dermaptera included three new records for **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, at Felton Common (31/55), Misterton (31/40) and Milverton (31/12) and ten for **Lesser Earwig**, *Labia minor*, at Brent Knoll (31/35), Westonzoyland (31/33), West Coker (31/51), Blackwell Common (31/47), Rolstone (31/36), Chiselborough (31/41), Milverton (31/12), Cothelstone (31/13), Buckland Dinham (31/75) and Stoney Stoke (31/73). There are now more post-1960 10km<sup>2</sup> records for *Labia minor* in Somerset than any other County in Britain and the same almost applies in regard to *Forficula lesnei* for

which only Kent have more records (just!).

### South Wiltshire (VC8)

Whilst working on Salisbury Plain Army Training area for the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Mark Gurney found several colonies of **Lesser Cockroach**, *Ectobius panzeri*, on and around Bulford Ranges (41/14) and also in conifer plantations on Sidbury Hill (41/25). This is the first time this species has been recorded in Wiltshire.

### West Gloucestershire (VC34)

On visits during 1996 I found **Slender Groundhopper**, *Tetrix subulata*, in three new 10km<sup>2</sup>, two near Newent (32/62 and 32/72) and another near Tetbury (31/89) and **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, near Farmington (32/62). Alan Wake and I had new records for **Speckled Bush Cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, and **Common Earwig**, *Forficula auricularia*, at Church End, near Frampton-on-Severn (32/70) and Lisa Hooper and Alan Wake also found **Common Earwig**, *Forficula auricularia*, and **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, near Botloes Green (32/72), which were both new.

### Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (VCs 1/2)

Chris Haes confirms that the colony of **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, is still present at Loggans Moor, near Hayle (10/53) in W. Cornwall (VC1) and he has also obtained new 10km<sup>2</sup> records for **Dark Bush Cricket**, *Pholidoptera griseoptera*, at Wisley Down (20/18), **Speckled Bush Cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, at Hallworthy (20/18) and **Slender Groundhopper**, *Tetrix subulata*, at New Mills (20/28), these latter three being in E. Cornwall (VC2). Also, Adrian Colston carried out a survey in the Scilly Isles (VC1) during which he found *Conocephalus discolor* on Tresco (00/81) and **Short-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus dorsalis*, on St. Mary's (00/91), both new Island records.

### South-East Yorkshire (VC61) and Mid-West Yorkshire (VC64)

There is now evidence of a possible movement of **Oak Bush Cricket**, *Meconema thalassinum*. A report was received of a 1995 discovery of an established population, at a site in Mid-West Yorkshire (VC64) which had been well surveyed in 1989 when it had been absent. In July of this year, the species was also found by W.R. Dolling at Burton Constable (54/13) in South-East Yorkshire (VC61), this being a new Vice County record and a new post 1960 record for the 100km<sup>2</sup> TA (54). It is obviously a species worth searching for in northern counties and more new records are needed to confirm whether it is indeed now expanding its range.

### Scotland

On a visit to Scotland, David Richmond came up with new records for **Common Green Grasshopper**, *Omocestus viridulus*, at Lauder (36/54) in Berwickshire (VC81), Claonig (16/85) in Kintyre (VC101) and, on Islay (VC102), at Kilnaughton (16/34) and Dun Bhoraraic (16/46). Also on Islay, he found **Meadow Grasshopper**,

*Chorthippus parallelus*, at Kintra (16/34) and Dun Nosebridge (16/36), **Mottled Grasshopper**, *Myrmeleotettix maculatus*, at Traigh Bhan (16/34) as well as **Common Earwig**, *Forficula auricularia*, also at Kintra. He also recorded Common Earwig on Colonsay (VC102), which was a new Island record. Also in Scotland, Jim McCleary reports a new post-1960 re-find of **Speckled Bush Cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, at Rocks of Garheugh, Garheugh Port (25/25) in Wigtownshire (VC74) and confirms its continued presence at most of the other sites in the area where it had been previously recorded.

## UNDER-RECORDED AREAS

There are still many areas in Britain where our knowledge of the distribution of the orthopteroid insects is seriously lacking. Northamptonshire (VC32) came within this category but the recent arrival of Adrian Colston as County recorder has resulted in an immediate improvement here. During 1996 he obtained six new 10km<sup>2</sup> records for **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, at Wilsons Pits (42/96), Wellington (42/86), Bulwick (42/99), Kettering (42/88), Weldon (42/98) and Pitsford Reservoir (42/77). He also had new records for **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, at Northampton (42/76) and Bulwick (42/99), **Meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus parallelus*, at Aldwinkle (42/98), **Common Groundhopper**, *Tetrix undulata*, at Pitsford Reservoir (42/77), **Slender Groundhopper**, *Tetrix subulata*, at Wilsons Pits (42/96) and Pitsford Reservoir (42/77) and also **Dark Bush Cricket**, *Pholidoptera griseoptera*, at Twywell Gullet (42/97).

A week's holiday on the Welsh-English border at Hay-on-Wye in September enabled me to look at an area from which, hitherto, there had been little data. This resulted in a total of eighty new 10km<sup>2</sup> records covering Vice Counties 35, 36, 40, 42 and 43, including forty-seven for Herefordshire (VC36) and twenty for Radnorshire (VC43). I will not detail all of these but included were fourteen new records for **Oak Bush Cricket**, *Meconema thalassinum*, involving a first for Radnorshire (VC43), four for **Dark Bush Cricket**, *Pholidoptera griseoptera*, fifteen for **Speckled Bush Cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, twelve for **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, and ten for **Meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus parallelus*. Dermaptera included seventeen new 10km<sup>2</sup> records for **Common Earwig**, *Forficula auricularia*, again, including a first Radnorshire record. There were also first County records for Herefordshire (VC36) for **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, which was found at Ewyas Harold (32/32) and Kentchurch (32/42), these being the most northerly records for the western half of Britain. The sheer number of new 10km<sup>2</sup> records obtained in this area in one week illustrates just how under-recorded some Counties are.

Even on a smaller scale, much can be achieved; for instance, Alan Wake and I targeted just one single under-recorded 10km<sup>2</sup> in North Wiltshire (VC7) (now Gloucestershire) and a two hour walk around the Kemble area (31/99) produced six new square records which, as previously mentioned, included *Conocephalus discolor*.

Other areas/Vice Counties in which much fieldwork still needs to be done are as follows:-

### All Wales (except coastal)

Few Tettigoniidae records - should be possible to find *Meconema thalassinum*, *Pholidoptera griseoptera* and *Leptophyes punctatissima* in many areas, particularly the latter species with aid of bat detector. Also worth beating for *Forficula lesnei* in southernmost Counties (VCs 25,41,42,44 and 45).

### North West Midlands

Tettigoniidae records are very sparse indeed. Staffordshire (VC39) must rank as one of the most under-recorded Counties in the Country - even *Forficula auricularia* is "missing" from most of that County. Large areas of Derbyshire (VC57) and Cheshire (VC58) also similarly under-recorded.

### Nottinghamshire (VC56)

Very few Tettigoniidae records. Both *Meconema thalassinum* and *Leptophyes punctatissima* have been recorded in north Notts and on Derbyshire border but not elsewhere. The south is grossly under-recorded for everything including *Forficula auricularia*.

### North and South Lincolnshire (VCs 53/54)

Major gaps throughout and only a handful of records for Tettigoniidae. *Meconema thalassinum* and *Leptophyes punctatissima* should be fairly widespread, particularly in South Lincs and there is a pre-1961 record for *L.punctatissima* in the very northern part of North Lincs, which is probably worth efforts to re-find. A watch should be kept for any signs of an expansion of the colonies of *Metrioptera roeselii* (see later comments).

### South West Yorkshire (VC63)

Well worth searching for *Meconema thalassinum* which is already present in the south of the County. Several records further north in mid-west Yorkshire (VC64) suggest that it is probably elsewhere. No records yet for *Leptophyes punctatissima* but it is very near the south-west border in Notts (VC56) and may well be worth searching for with bat detector in that area first.

### Mid-West Yorkshire (VC64)

*Meconema thalassinum* only recorded on and around eastern borders of County. Worth looking for elsewhere - nearby record close to south-west border in West Lancashire (VC60). Surprisingly, no record for *Tetrix undulata* which is surely present as it is recorded nearby in adjacent Counties. Very few *Chorthippus brunneus* records in west and also few records throughout for *Myrmeleotettix maculatus*. At least ten 10km<sup>2</sup> where *Forficula auricularia* is "missing".



### South Lancashire (VC59)

Well worth search for *Meconema thalassinum*. The only previous record for this species is a pre-1961 occurrence in the extreme south-east of the County and it may be worth trying to re-find here. However, there are very adjacent post-1960 records just to the south in Cheshire (VC58) and to the north in west Lancs (VC60), so it should be somewhere in the intervening area.

### Suffolk (VCs 25/26)

There are still many gaps for all species in the west of VC25 and also all of West Suffolk (VC26). Only a handful of records for Tetrax species (*T.subulata* probably occurs throughout). *Omocestus viridulus* and *Chorthippus albomarginatus* are "missing" from most areas away from the coast, which is probably not the case. There are even large gaps for *Chorthippus brunneus* and *Chorthippus parallelus* and *Forficula auricularia* in the west of VC25 and much of West Suffolk.

### West Norfolk (VC28)

Many gaps for Tettigoniidae.

### Cambridgeshire (VC29)

Very under-recorded for Tettigoniidae and Acrididae, particularly mid and north Cambs.

### Buckinghamshire (VC24)

In northern half of County (Square SP) there are very few Tettigoniidae records and also several gaps for Acrididae.

### North Devon (VC4)

Only six 10km<sup>2</sup> records for *Meconema thalassinum*. *Leptophyes punctatissima* apparently absent from most central and southern parts but this needs confirmation. Perhaps unlikely to be found on higher moors but they both need searching for in all sheltered places - preferably with bat detector in the case of *L.punctatissima*. Also specially worth beating for *Forficula lesnei*.

### East Cornwall (VC2)

There are twelve 10km<sup>2</sup> where there is no record for *Meconema thalassinum*. And ten for *Leptophyes punctatissima*. Specially worth looking for *Forficula lesnei*.

## POSSIBLE TARGETS FOR SPECIFIC INVESTIGATIVE FIELDWORK

Whilst I suppose the aforementioned summary of under-recorded areas could be regarded as possible targets for fieldwork, the items included under this heading refer to more specific issues.

**Slender Groundhopper, *Tetrix subulata*. Possible confusion between forma *bifasciata* and Common Groundhopper, *Tetrix undulata*, and potential for range expansion from West Lancashire (VC60) site.**

Use of a malaise trap proved to be very productive for Jennifer Newton who trapped good numbers of **Slender Groundhopper, *Tetrix subulata*, var. *bifasciata*** near Silverdale Moss (the most northerly British site for this species). Significantly, she also had a single specimen of the normal long-winged form which has never been seen here before. The occurrence of the long-winged form, which is so mobile in southern counties, raises the possibility of this species spreading into new areas from this site. Moreover, the discovery of a substantial population of var. *bifasciata* here also begs the question as to whether this may be erroneously identified as **Common Groundhopper, *Tetrix undulata***, in other northern localities where this latter species is comparatively widespread. In the circumstances, could I ask all fieldworkers in northern areas to look carefully at *Tetrix* specimens. Key identification features for separating *T. subulata* var. *bifasciata* from *T. undulata* are hind wings extending to near tip of pronotum (considerably shorter in *undulata*) and lack of prominent median keel on pronotum. If any doubts, please send specimen to me.

**Roesel's Bush Cricket, *Metrioptera roeselii*. Evidence sought for expansion of colonies which are isolated from main population.**

Until recently there had been no evidence to suggest any expansion of isolated colonies of this species in Cardiganshire (VC46), North Lincolnshire (VC54), West Lancashire (VC60), South-East Yorkshire (VC61) and also in Waterford (H6) in Southern Ireland. In view of the strong expansion of the main population in Southern England, this is perhaps rather surprising. This may be because these populations are genetically isolated not being capable of producing the long-winged form, forma *diluta*. On the other hand, it could be that climatological conditions are not as favourable in these areas for reasons such as shorter season with average lower temperatures, less sunshine hours (giving less radiant heat) and/or higher rainfall, thus any one or a combination of these factors not creating the conditions for forma *diluta* to develop. A third possibility is that the species is overlooked or has never been searched for outside of these areas. However, there may be signs, albeit rather tenuous at present, of this situation changing. This arises from a communication from Derek Bunn who has reported a marked spread of the West Lancashire colony this year. He says that they have spread "into everywhere that was connected by a reasonable amount of vegetation and wherever the grass was long and thick they were extremely common". He raises the question as to whether they may have spread either by human agency or by wind-blown vegetation (eg. egg-laden dry stems). Whilst this is a possibility, it cannot be discounted that forma *diluta* is being produced in more favourable years and perhaps those of you who have the opportunity to visit these colonies could keep a special watch for it. Derek's observations would also suggest that it is well worth looking for signs of range expansion in the areas surrounding all of these isolated colonies. Obviously, immediately adjacent areas should be targeted but I think any suitable habitat within, say, a radius of 20km should be included (possibly further if the species is found near the perimeter of this area). The best time would be between late July and mid-September. Any new colonies may well be scattered at present and, despite their comparatively loud stridulation, may not be easy to find without some effort. Driving

along a road hoping to hear them without getting out of the car is a very hit and miss affair. It really needs some footwork! A walk along roads, lanes or footpaths for two or three hours should bring one upon several suitable long-grass habitats. If possible, a bat detector is desirable because, in my experience, it increases the distance from which you can hear this insect by at least x4 - possibly an important aid if scattered or small populations are present, especially if temperatures are on the low side when only intermittent and subdued stridulation may take place. Alternatively, taking the car to tour an area along roads or lanes and stopping where it is safe near any suitable habitat and getting out to investigate the area may be productive. As most of the areas involved are very under-recorded for other species of orthoptera, valuable records are probable in any event. Perhaps it would make a good project for students or those who have a spare weekend (or two?) Or who would be interested in spending a holiday in one of the areas. Even negative results would be useful. Any help would be very welcome.

## RECORDING OF FIRST AND LAST DATES

A very cool Spring 1996 resulted in the late hatching of nymphs in many areas. I did not find any instar *Pholidoptera griseoptera* until 14 May, which is about five weeks later than 1995 and *Leptophyes punctatissima* and *Meconema thalassinum* did not appear in Hertfordshire until the first week in June. My first grasshopper nymph was not seen until 5 June. I am under the impression that, normally, hatchings tend to be earlier in the far south-west of Britain, possibly due to milder springs and this is probably also the case in all southernmost Counties. Of course, it is also the case that specific sites which have a warm micro-climate or, conversely, are particularly exposed may also influence the appears of nymphs in any area. It would be of some value to determine the cline of hatching of each species over the whole Country and whether this is changing over a longer timespan and any information in this respect each year would be welcome. Similarly, I think that year on year records of the first and last mature insects, by species, would also be a valuable addition to our knowledge. Data gathered by ornithologists over recent decades has produced some very interesting results showing a steady trend towards earlier first nesting, egg laying and hatching and I think it would be a useful addition to our knowledge to determine such trends, if any, in our insect fauna. So far as I am aware such data for orthoptera has never previously been the subject of long-term monitoring but I am of the view that this is an ideal group for such a study. I would be grateful for any information anybody already holds in this respect and also for future contributions.

For those who may be interested in keeping such records, I have designed a simple form which is attached but, if you wish to use this, you must photocopy and maintain your own supply. Records should be sent direct to me and, providing I get a meaningful response, data will be summarised from time to time in future Newsletters.

## ADMINISTRATION OF SCHEME - SUBMISSION OF RECORDS

It should be understood that the Biological Records Centre who deal with tens of thousands of records covering all of the British flora and fauna must have a manageable

system and it would be no good having records submitted to them in a multitude of different formats or on odd scraps of paper, etc. Therefore, all records must be put onto the official BRC record cards before they go to Monks Wood. It would be helpful if contributors could submit their records accordingly. If you do not do this, I have to put it onto the cards myself in addition to extracting your data for my own records. I am involved with many hundreds, possibly thousands, of records each year and avoidance of such duplication to ensure I only have to extract data once not only makes sense from the point of view of an efficient operation of the scheme but also restricts the possibility of mistakes. BRC record cards are obtainable from:-

Biological Records Centre  
Institute of Terrestrial Ecology  
Monks Wood  
Abbots Ripton  
Huntingdon  
Cambridgeshire PE17 2LS

## STOP PRESS

### Probable Tree Cricket, *Oecanthus pellucens*, at Cambridge.

A tape recording made by a Cambridge resident of an insect "singing" in their garden in mid-October which they thought was a **Mole Cricket**, *Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa*, turned out to be a **Tree Cricket**, *Oecanthus sp.*, - almost certainly *O.pellucens*.

Along with other species, *O.pellucens* has been expanding its range steadily northwards through the continental mainland of Western Europe in recent years and is already just over the English Channel in France and Holland and it is certainly a contender for arriving here naturally or accidentally. Whilst the origin of this insect is unknown, there was another "possible" heard near Bognor Regis in 1995 which raises the possibility that the species has already arrived at other locations. A probable two year life cycle complicates the confirmation, or otherwise, of its presence. A further complication is that it is possible it may be mistaken for the bird, the Grasshopper Warbler.

This species is likely to turn up in southern or south-eastern England and those of you who cover these areas should be aware of the possibility of its occurrence.

### More valuable records from Cambridgeshire

Richard Fowling has submitted some more interesting records for this very under-recorded County. During August and September this year he found the long-winged form of **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, in three new 10km<sup>2</sup> at Upware (52/56), Teversham Fen (52/55) and Aldreth (52/47). The Upware record was a first for the County, superceding, by four days, the previously mentioned record that I

obtained at Ely. He also confirms **Great Green Bush Cricket**, *Tettigonia viridissima*, as being fairly frequent around the Sutton and Aldreth area (52/47), often along the sides of dykes. There are pre-1961 records for this species in adjacent fen localities in 10km<sup>2</sup> 52/36, 52/46, 52/48 and 52/58, so it may well be re-found here also if searched for.

**Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*. Further evidence of strong movement westward.

Piers Mobsby reports a new County record for this species in North Wiltshire (VC7) at Great Bedwyn (41/26) during September. This, plus a further suspected but unconfirmed occurrence in North Devon (VC4), fits well with the Somerset records mentioned previously.

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