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# ORTHOPTERA RECORDING SCHEME FOR BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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First of all I would like to express my thanks to all those who have sent in records since the last newsletter. Of several thousand 1997 records submitted, 300 were for new 10km squares (including post 1970 refinds). Of these, there were 49 for **Lesser Earwig**, *Labia minor*, as a result of special surveys.

1997 was the third warmest year in Britain since records began. It is rather puzzling, therefore, that the consensus seems to be that populations of most species were down on last year. Conversely, however, the main populations of **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, and **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, continued to flourish, particularly the former species which showed signs of a veritable population explosion on the northern edge of its range.

## RECORDS FOR 1997

### Species in process of range expansion

Last year was significant for **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*. There were twenty new 10km<sup>2</sup> records, the majority involving further movements northwards. Large numbers, including a high proportion of the long-winged form *f.diluta*, appeared throughout much of Bedfordshire (per Kevin Sharpe) and the southern half of Cambridgeshire (per A. Colston, R. Fowling, M. Jennings and M. Shardlow et al). Nick Greatorex-Davies also had a first County record for Huntingdonshire (VC31) near Woodwalton (52/28). Bearing in mind that the first record for this species in Cambridgeshire was only the previous year, the speed and extent of this "population explosion" is remarkable. The range expansion probably extends further than is at present detected and evidence for this comes from two isolated records well south and north of the main population. In August, Richard Fowling found a single male at Kingston near Lewes (51/30), East Sussex (VC14), some 30kms south of the nearest record which is, by far, the longest movement in that direction in recent years. An even more notable sighting, however, was by J. McCallum who found a macropterous male at Warham Greens (53/94) in West Norfolk (VC28), about 50kms north-east of the known current northern edge of the main population. It was most unexpected that this first record for Norfolk should be in the extreme north of the County. Conversely, no expansion whatsoever was noted by Robert Cropper in the Somerset population nor has any movement been reported from the other isolated populations. It is interesting to note that, to date, no long-winged forms have been reported in these populations, which contrasts starkly with the high numbers of this form observed in 1997 in the main population. A further interesting observation was made by Richard Fowling who has mentioned that the stridulation of

the macropterous form seems louder than the normal form. I am unaware of any research to determine whether there are any subtle differences between the songs of the two forms and would like to hear from anyone else who has noticed any such difference.

This species is spreading at an impressive rate, the speed of which now seems to be increasing and many of you may find it useful to be apprised of the current atlas position. All new post-atlas 10km<sup>2</sup> records are summarised as follows: 31/23, 31/33, 41/26, 41/56, 41/57, 41/67, 41/99, 42/81, 42/84, 51/14, 51/23, 51/30, 51/33, 51/34, 51/64 (re-find), 52/14, 52/24, 52/25, 52/28, 52/34, 52/35, 52/44, 52/45, 52/46, 52/47, 52/55, 52/56, 52/57, 52/58 and 53/94.

**Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, also had a good year with twenty new 10km<sup>2</sup> records. However, in contrast to the previous species, there are still no records for Cambridgeshire, although I suspect it is there undetected to date. Nevertheless, considerable consolidation has taken place within its currently known range with new records in South Devon (VC3) (J. Walters); Wiltshire (VCs7/8) (P. Mobsby); East Sussex (VC14) (A. Best, R. Higgins, D. Lawrence, R. Becker); West Kent (VC16) (A. Best, M. Jennings, C. Snell); South Essex (VC18) (D. Miller, R. Hobbs); North Essex (VC19) (R. Ruffell); Hertfordshire (VC20); Middlesex (VC21) and Bedfordshire (VC30) (K. Sharpe). At some Hertfordshire sites it even outnumbered Roesel's Bush Cricket. This species may now be expected to turn up even in gardens. Ashley Best has reported its presence in his own and several of his neighbours large gardens in West Kent (VC16) but, more remarkably, John Tranter found it breeding in his small suburban garden in West Sussex in 1994 when immatures were found on a two metre square clump of Galingale, *Cyperus longus*, and two summers later, in 1996, adult males and females were on about a metre square of ornamental grass contained in a 3m x 1m flower bed. His garden is approximately 1km from open countryside which suggests that the small colony arose by way of a single gravid female rather than a pair turning up and mating at such a site, although this possibility cannot be entirely ruled out.

Once again, this is another species undergoing a marked population expansion and, therefore, it will no doubt be of interest to have an update of the current position. All new post-atlas 10km<sup>2</sup> records are as follows: 00/81, 10/32, 10/53, 20/87, 20/97, 31/30, 31/43, 31/51, 31/62, 31/84, 31/85, 31/94, 31/95, 31/96, 31/99, 41/04, 41/05, 41/14, 41/25, 41/89, 41/91, 41/92, 42/81, 42/90, 42/91, 51/06, 51/20, 51/23, 51/27, 51/33, 51/38, 51/39, 51/42, 51/43, 51/47, 51/49, 51/51, 51/55, 51/62, 51/63, 51/65, 51/72, 51/79, 51/82, 52/33, 52/34, 52/41, 52/43, 52/51 and 52/83.

#### **Other significant records (summarised by geographical area or Vice County)**

##### **Cornwall (VCs 1/2)**

On a visit to the St. Ives area (10/54) in September 1997 Alan Wake and Lisa Hooper came up with new 10km<sup>2</sup> records for **Grey Bush Cricket**, *Platycleis albopunctata*, **Dark Bush Cricket**, *Pholidoptera griseoptera*, and **Speckled Bush Cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*. There were also retrospective new records from Chris Haes for **Grey Bush Cricket** at Constantine Bay (10/87) in June 1996 and from R. Higgins and D. Lawrence for **Lesser Cockroach**, *Ectobius panzeri*, at Porth Nanven (10/33) in July 1995.

##### **Devon (VCs 3/4)**

Few new records advised to date but John Walters did find a new site for **Lesne's Earwig**,

*Forficula lesnei*, at Lannacombe (10/83), a new 10km<sup>2</sup> record. This was in addition to his two new **Long-winged Conehead** records mentioned previously. Simon Grove also found **Stripe-winged Grasshopper**, *Stenobothrus lineatus*, at Woodbury Common DWT, Exmouth (30/08).

#### Somerset (VCs 5/6)

Robert Cropper continues his survey of the County. Two records were of particular interest. In July, he had a new 10km<sup>2</sup> record for **Woodland Grasshopper**, *Omocestus rufipes*, at Wind Down in the Quantocks (31/23) and in August yet another new record for **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, at Newbridge (31/76). His search for **Lesser Earwig**, *Labia minor*, continues to meet with success with nine more new records at Barton St. David (31/53), Stogursey (31/14), Kingsdon (31/52), Stewley (31/31), Shapwick (31/43), Knapp (31/22), Withiel Florly (21/93), Coombe St. Nicholas (31/21) and Farmborough (31/66). In addition, R. Higgins and D. Lawrence also found this species at Berrow (31/25).

#### Dorset (VC9)

Chris Timmins submitted an excellent set of records for 1996 which included new 10km<sup>2</sup> records for **Tawny Cockroach**, *Ectobius pallidus*, at Portland Bill (30/66), Easton (30/77) and near Fortuneswell (30/67); **Lesser Cockroach**, *Ectobius panzeri*, at Portland Bill (30/66), Easton (30/77) and near Fleet (30/68). He also had a first record for **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, at the latter site. Ian Cross also submitted retrospective data dating between 1982 and 1996 which included new records for **Great Green Bush Cricket**, *Tettigonia viridissima*, near Piddlehinton (30/79); **Cepero's Groundhopper**, *Textrix ceperoi*, at Furzey Cliff (30/68) and **Lesser Cockroach**, *Ectobius panzeri*, at Throop Clump (30/89). He also had new post-1970 refinds for **Stripe-winged Grasshopper**, *Stenobothrus lineatus*, at White Nothe (30/78) and at Stubhampton Bottom (31/91); **Woodland Grasshopper**, *Omocestus rufipes*, at Warmwell Heath (30/78) and **Lesser Cockroach**, *Ectobius panzeri*, at Chewton Bunney (40/29).

#### Sussex (VCs 13/14)

A retrospective 1993 record from John Paul of **Dusky Cockroach**, *Ectobius lapponicus*, at Hindleap (51/43) was new. David Murdoch also produced a retrospective 1996 record for **Stripe-winged Grasshopper**, *Stenobothrus lineatus*, at Wolstonbury Hill, new for square 51/12. New records for **Bog Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera brachyptera*, are rare but Ashley Best found it at Chailey Common (51/31). Other new 10km<sup>2</sup> records were from Richard Fowling for **Dark Bush Cricket**, *Pholidoptera griseoptera*, at Kingston near Lewes (51/30) and Richard Becker for **Lesser Earwig**, *Labia minor*, at Crawley Down (51/33).

#### Kent (VCs 15/16)

Eric Philp sent in a whole series of data, collected by himself and others over recent years, which included the following new 10km<sup>2</sup> records, **Grey Bush Cricket**, *Platycleis albopunctata*, Shakespeare Cliffe (61/33); **Short-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus dorsalis*, Knole Park (51/55) and Bewl Water (51/63); **Woodland Grasshopper**, *Omocestus rufipes*, at Chingley Wood (51/63), Upper Halling (51/66) and Westenhanger (61/13) and **Lesser Cockroach**, *Ectobius panzeri*, at Queendown Warren (51/86). There were also new post 1970 records for **Grey Bush Cricket**, *Platycleis albopunctata*, at Dover (61/34); **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*,

at Yalding (51/64); **Rufous Grasshopper**, *Gomphocerripus rufus*, at Trottscliffe (51/66) and **Tawny Cockroach**, *Ectobius pallidus*, at Holborough (51/76).

#### Essex (VCs 18/19)

An important first County record that has recently come to light was that of **Tawny Cockroach**, *Ectobius pallidus*, which was found by Adrian Knowles at Southend (51/88) in October 1995. Another significant find was made by David Miller who discovered **Short-winged Earwig**, *Apterygida media*, at Sturmer (52/64) in the Stour Valley in 1996, this being the first Essex record since 1915. Further interesting retrospective sightings, involving first 10km<sup>2</sup> records, reported by Ray Ruffell were for **Lesser Earwig**, *Labia minor*, at Great Saling (52/62) in 1995 and **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, at Rowhedge (62/02) in 1992. New inland records for **Great Green Bush Cricket**, *Tettigonia viridissima*, are unusual, so a sighting by C. Hazell at Little Baddow (52/70) in September 1997 was particularly welcome.

#### Hertfordshire (VC20)

My own survey of **Lesser Earwig**, *Labia minor*, produced eighteen new 10km<sup>2</sup> records spread throughout the County. I also had a first County record for **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, at Potters Bar (52/20). An adult female **Southern Field Cricket**, *Gryllus bimaculatus*, in pristine condition, was found by Kerry Robinson in a hairdressers' shop in Hitchin (52/12) in June, presumably originating from imported produce from the nearby market.

#### Oxfordshire (VC 23)

John Paul submitted a retrospective new 10km<sup>2</sup> record from 1993 for **Woodland Grasshopper**, *Omocestus rufipes*, at Witchon Green Wood (42/51).

#### Norfolk (VCs 27/28)

A remarkable record of **Dusky Cockroach**, *Ectobius lapponicus*, at Buxton Heath (63/12) found by Alan Stubbs in 1995 has recently been submitted. Not only is this new for the County, but it is the most northerly recorded occurrence by some 60kms and is actually some 140kms north-east of the nearest known site. Among many records sent in by David Richmond, the re-find of **Great Green Bush Cricket**, *Tettigonia viridissima*, at Reedham (63/40) was most significant. His survey of **Slender Groundhopper**, *Tetrix subulata*, continued and this produced a further fourteen new 10km<sup>2</sup> records throughout the County.

#### Cambridgeshire (VC 29), Huntingdonshire (VC 31) and Northamptonshire (VC 32)

In addition to the important new records for **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, Adrian Colston submitted a long list of records which filled in many 10km<sup>2</sup> gaps for these Counties. Whilst there were no real surprises, the effort put in by Adrian and the other observers involved, which produced 59 new records, is commendable.

### Gloucestershire (VCs 33/34)

During a week's stay in the County in July, I carried out a special search for **Lesser Earwig**, *Labia minor*, which resulted in 14 new 10km<sup>2</sup> records. Other notable finds were a new square record for **Dusky Cockroach**, *Ectobius lapponicus*, in the Cannop Valley, Forest of Dean (32/60) and a second County record for **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, on a disused railway line at Tewkesbury (32/83). Alan Wake submitted a list containing ten new square records including **Stripe-winged Grasshopper**, *Stenobothrus lineatus*, at Breakheart Hill (42/02).

### Worcestershire (VC 37)

We do not get many records from this County but, in 1996, M.G. Matthews did find **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, at Ashmoor Common, Kempsey (32/84), a new square on the north-western edge of its range.

### Shropshire (VC 40)

Just one significant new record was from Chris Timmins who found **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, in the Severn Valley Country Park, near Highley (32/78), a new County record and now the most northerly on the western side of Britain.

### Lincolnshire (VCs 53/54)

A week's visit to this under-recorded County in June included four new 10km<sup>2</sup> records for **Slender Groundhopper**, *Tetrix subulata*; twelve for **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*; six for **Meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus parallelus*; five for **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*; four for **Lesser Earwig**, *Labia minor*, and fifteen for **Common Earwig**, *Forficula auricularia*. Despite much searching, I could not find any Tettigoniidae nymphs.

### Rutland (VC 55)

A long list of records, covering the period 1993-97, submitted by the Rutland Natural History Society, produced seven new 10km<sup>2</sup> records. Phil Rudkin found **Speckled Bush Cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, at Lyddington (42/89); **Common Green Grasshopper**, *Omocestus viridulus*, at Rutland Water (43/80); **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, at Burley Wood (43/80) and **Meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus parallelus*, at Lyddington (42/89) and Burley Wood (43/80). G. Worrall found **Oak Bush Cricket**, *Meconema thalassinum*, at Empingham (43/90) and P.R. and Dr. C.P. Jones **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, at Gorsefield Oakham (43/80), the latter, apparently, being a first for Rutland.

### Scotland

There are still many areas under-recorded. A visit by Simon Grove, produced two new 10km<sup>2</sup> records of **Common Green Grasshopper**, *Omocestus viridulus*, one at Glendoll Forest, Glen Clover (37/27), Angus (VC90) and another at Balranald RSPB reserve on North Uist (08/76), Outer Hebrides (VC110), the latter having the distinction of being the first species of Orthoptera

to have been recorded on that Island. David Richmond, who also visited the Country, had new records for **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, at Glen Feshie (28/80), East Inverness-shire (VC96); **Meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus parallelus*, at Slaggan (18/89) and Inveraurie (18/98) and **Common Earwig**, *Forficula auricularia*, at Poolewe (18/88), West Ross (VC105). In addition, Caroline Allen found **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, at Durisdeer (26/80), Dumfriesshire (VC72). An extremely interesting find was made by Derek Whiteley who discovered the rare long-winged form of **Common Groundhopper**, *Tetrix undulata f. macroptera*, on the gravel banks of the River Findhom, near Forres (38/05), Moray (VC95). Superficially, this long-winged form looks very much like **Slender Groundhopper**, *Tetrix subulata*, but can be determined quite easily by close examination of the central keel along the pronotum, this being prominently raised in *Tetrix undulata* but not so in *subulata*.

### Immigrants

During October and November 1997, there were several periods of strong southerly airflows originating from Southern Europe and North Africa. No doubt this was the reason for two Cornish records of the solitary form of **Migratory Locust**, *Locusta migratoria*. One was found at Goldsithney (10/53), West Cornwall (VC1) on 17 October and the other at Cremyll (20/45), East Cornwall (VC2) on 21 November. It is usually the migratory form which appears in Britain and there have only been about a dozen previous records of the solitary form. It is possible that these two sightings only represent a small proportion of the numbers involved and, bearing in mind the species has bred in Northern Germany and Southern Holland in the past, a watch needs to be kept during this year for signs of possible breeding in the West Country.

### New species for Britain

Judith Marshall has drawn my attention to a large colony of the Cockroach, *Loboptera decipiens*, discovered in Virginia Water (41/96), Surrey (VC17). This Southern European species, which is new for Britain, was found in large numbers inside a house and in the adjacent garden. Because the species can be a considerable nuisance within its natural range, pest control measures were instituted. Whilst this colony has presumably been eliminated, the large numbers involved here raise the possibility of it turning up elsewhere, particularly in view of the more favourable climatological conditions now prevailing.

## ORTHOPTERISTS MEETING

For those who may be unaware of it, may I draw your attention to the Annual Orthopterists Meeting usually held in London annually (normally October/November). It is organised by professional Orthopterists but the serious amateur is also welcome. It is usually held on a weekday between about 3pm and 8pm. A charge of approximately £14 is made to cover tea and biscuits in the afternoon and a cold buffet from about 6pm. The contents are varied but, as a rule, there are around three or four 20-30 minute presentations, normally, but not necessarily, on research subjects which can involve any of the world's species. Exhibits are also encouraged. Contributions from any of the attendees, professional or amateur, are welcomed. It is an opportunity to meet like minds in a friendly atmosphere. Would anyone who is not already on the mailing list for this event but who is interested please write to me or telephone.

## PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS

1. **The recent expansion of *Conocephalus discolor* in Western Europe.** Kleukers, Decler, Haes, Kolshorn, Thomas; *Ent. Gaz*, 1996, 47 : 37-49.

A comprehensive exposition on the range expansion across Europe of the Long-winged Conehead, including comments on parallel expansions for other insects including Orthoptera.

2. **Experimental studies on the dispersal of plants and animals on sheep in calcareous grasslands.** Fischer, Poschlod, Beinlich; *J. Appl. Ecol.*, 1996, 33 : 1206-1222.

Remarkable data on the distances over which Orthoptera are carried on and in the wool of sheep in the Schwabische Alb, Germany.

3. **The mechanics of flight in a Slender Groundhopper, *Tetrix subulata*.** P.F. Whitehead; *Ent. Mon. Mag*, 1997, 133 : 259.

This short note contains a fascinating description of the rarely observed flight of this species.

4. **The Grasshoppers and Crickets of Essex by Alan Wake, 1997.**

This softback book has 56 pages plus colour photographs. It is an excellent County Orthoptera which gives a comprehensive commentary on the distribution of all species to be found in Essex. Included are distribution maps and a very detailed historical account, which contains information of national interest concerning the history of Roesel's Bush Cricket in Britain, including the first evidence, in the mid 1940's, of the start of its range expansion away from its ancestral (in Britain) coastal and estuarine habitats.

Available from Colchester Natural History Society, c/o 14 Ryegate Road, Colchester, Essex. Price £6.00 including postage. Cheques payable to 'Colchester Natural History Society'.

5. **De Sprinkhanen en Krekels Van Nederland (The Grasshoppers and Crickets of the Netherlands) by R. Kleukers, E. Van Nieuwerkerken, B. Odé, L. Willemse, W. Van Wingerden, 1997, 415pp.**

This is a high quality, coffee-table size, hardback and probably the best European National Orthoptera to have been published to date. It describes 45 species that occur in Holland, which includes all the British species. It is lavishly illustrated with colour photographs and line drawings accompanied by many figures and diagrams. The keys are excellent. It is also accompanied by a 67 minute Compact Disc with the songs of all the species. Whilst it is in Dutch, it is so well structured that there is much that those unfamiliar with the language can glean from it and, to assist, there are short summaries in English for each species and a longer four page English overview.

Available from: KNNV Uitgeverij, Oudegracht 237, 3511 NK Utrecht, Netherlands. Price DFL (Dutch Guilders) 82.50, including CD, plus DFL 25.00 postage (total approximately £35).

## IMPORTANT LATE NEWS

Because of the importance of its contents and the fact that it was a 'last minute' arrival just before the publication of this newsletter, I have extracted, verbatim, parts of the contents of a letter received from

Michael Skelton, some of which includes strong indications of further species reaction to climate change. My own comments are added:

**Grey Bush Cricket, *Platycleis albopunctata*.** “Again, it is too soon to be certain, but I think it possible that *Platycleis* may be increasing and spreading a little. In the mid 1970s I had recorded it from a single spot on the Boscombe overcliff, but now it is widespread there as well as on the cliffs themselves. Indeed it is present in several of the gardens along the Boscombe Overcliff Drive. In 1996 I found two small colonies of *Platycleis* on the chalk West of the ‘Ullwell Gap’, i.e. where the road from Studland to Swanage runs through the downs. One was at the west end of Round Down (40/016808) and the other on Godlingston Hill (40/014811). As far as I know, it has not been seen this side of the gap before, though possibly overlooked. The Godlingston record is probably the most inland site in Dorset - about 2.2km from the sea! In 1997 I found 2♂ at Townsend DWT reserve, Swanage (40/024783), where the lie of the land slopes to the north.

Another interesting find was at Weymouth, where there is now a colony on a southwest facing embankment in the middle of the town (30/674789). This is new habitat: until recently there was a bridge here, where the disused railway line crossed the road, but the bridge has now gone and in its place is a grassy embankment. This is evidence for dispersal by flight by *Platycleis*. I had wondered if they could manage sustained flight under our climatic conditions. (I also heard a male on urban waste ground near Weymouth station.) With climatic warming on the agenda, this is a species to watch.”

#### Comment

This might be the first signs of an expansion of range for this species, possibly involving a move into inland habitats. Many British orthopterists have considered that a test of really significant climate change would be if *Platycleis* started to echo its continental habitats which are widespread and varied and not confined to coasts. Therefore, I would be grateful if anyone who has the opportunity could keep a look out for signs of population expansion. I have no knowledge of any published data as to exactly how far inland its British coastal populations have been recorded. I have the impression, from my own observations and from literature, that this is, normally, no more than about 100 metres from the shore-line or cliff edge. In the circumstances, I would be pleased to hear from those who have experience of British colonies as to how far inland they have recorded the species. I must stress that it is now particularly important to have such data bearing in mind the possibility of the species being on the move. May I also suggest that it would be a useful exercise for local orthopterists to monitor “distance from sea” observations on a regular basis.

**Heath Grasshopper, *Chorthippus vagans*.** “I have, of course, also been renewing my acquaintance with *Chorthippus vagans*. I have the impression that it is distinctly less common than in the 70s on the main Purbeck heaths, but it is doing very well to the north of Poole Harbour. Even Canford Heath, which has suffered greatly from juvenile arsonists, still supports good colonies. In 1997 I found it in regenerating heather not more than 18 months old. I am unsure to what extent this species has been recorded from pine plantations in the past. At any rate there are now several colonies in Wareham Forest, Hurn Forest and Ringwood Forest. Most of the colonies I have found in Ringwood Forest have been southwest of the B3081, but it is present in at least two places on Boveridge Heath and at Stephen’s Castle, north of Verwood. This is less than 1km from the presumed extinct colony at Cranborne Common. *Ch. vagans* occupies a variety of habitats in these plantations - sunny rides and firebreaks, clear felled areas - sometimes in the absence of heather, and even under mature pines where the canopy is fairly open. Clearly this species is well able to shift its quarters from year to year as the habitat develops and changes, just like *O. rufipes* with which it often occurs. Town Common and St. Catherine’s Hill, Christchurch, is probably the best site in the country for *vagans*. Here all four British *Chorthippus* can be found together



alongside *O. rufipes* - but no *viridulus*. I have not yet checked up on *vagans* in the New Forest - maybe this year. In early September I found a small colony on Brownsea Island - a first for the island."

### Comment

My own experience of British populations and published literature suggests that, in Britain, this species was, hitherto, confined to heathland. Michael's observations suggest a positive move into pine plantations, which echoes its European mainland behaviour. A continued watch needs to be kept for any further signs of this species turning up in such habitat both inside and outside of its present known range.

Further extracts from Michael's letter, which I hope will engender searches elsewhere, are as follows:

**Speckled Bush Cricket, *Leptophyes punctatissima*.** "My experience down here convinces me that it is to a large extent dependent on man for its success. I conclude that the further you go from human habitation the less likely you are to find the species. In the Bournemouth-Poole conurbation I would say that well over half the colonies I have detected have been in hedges or isolated specimens of *Thuja plicata*, Lawson Cypress or Leyland Cypress - sometimes in large numbers. It is clear that this species is susceptible to translocation on shrubs or young trees from nurseries. I suggest it may be present in gardens (or nurseries) in towns outside its known range in G.B. Bat-detector wielding orthopterists should bear in mind that *Leptophyes* is a bit of a social climber and is more likely to be found in the better residential districts - no doubt because the human inhabitants of these parts evince a puzzling tendency to fill their gardens with specimens of these tedious 'conifers'."

### Comment

It is perhaps well worthwhile for those orthopterists in areas outside of the known range of this species, including those in the northern half of England and in Scotland and Ireland, to bear in mind the possibility of coming across this insect in the habitats described. Incidentally, the 'conifers' mentioned are actually quite important for some insects, e.g. Heteroptera and now Orthoptera are apparently using them perhaps they should no longer be regarded as "tedious".

**Lesser Marsh Grasshopper, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*.** "One curious fact about this species that I have noticed in Dorset is that it always seems to be present where the plant Yellow Bartsia (*Parentucellia viscosa*) occurs. I believe this plant is rare east of this area, but is commoner in the southwest and south Wales. I wonder if it might be worth checking out colonies of *Parentucellia* in the southwest in case there might be undetected colonies of *albomarginatus*."

### Comment

The main areas for the occurrence of Yellow Bartsia outside of Dorset are Devon, Cornwall, South Wales and South-West Ireland, areas in which *Chorthippus albomarginatus* is, so far as is known, largely absent. Perhaps anyone resident in these parts or visiting could specially look for this grasshopper wherever they find Yellow Bartsia growing.

Michael also came up with several entirely new or new post 1970 10km<sup>2</sup> records. Included were four for

**Woodland Grasshopper**, *Omocestus rufipes*, one of which involved a sighting, on a grassy embankment of a busy railway car park, at least 1½ miles away from the nearest woodland (is this species another candidate for range expansion?), six for **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, (30/66, 30/69, 30/77, 31/91, 41/58, 41/65) and one for **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, (41/58).

### Commercial Intensive Breeding of Orthoptera in Britain

I could hardly believe what I was seeing on the BBC TV programme "Countryfile" on Sunday 25 January. Farming has always been a major content of the programme.....but cricket farming?? Yes, here was a "cricket" farm in Cambridgeshire rearing huge numbers of various species of cricket principally for the exotic pet market. A sales figure of about 1 million crickets per week was mentioned! Whilst, perhaps, it is not so unexpected for such establishments to exist, what really surprised me were the range of species involved. These included not only the expected **House Cricket**, *Acheta domestica*, and **Migratory Locust**, *Locusta migratoria*, but also Field Crickets which may have been *Gryllus campestris* or *bimaculatus* and what appeared to be **Wood Cricket**, *Nemobius sylvestris*, plus several other unidentifiable species. These are evidently sent by post throughout the land and at one point there was mention of events resulting in escapes whilst in transit.

This obviously has important implications regarding unexpected occurrences of species well outside their normal range, which may well have arisen via this or similar sources.

Certainly, orthopterists in Cambridgeshire and surrounding Counties should be aware of the situation and, to a lesser extent, those elsewhere should bear in mind that this is a possible source of unusual occurrences. If any readers know of any similar establishments, I would be pleased to hear from them with details of location.

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