
ORTHOPTERA RECORDING SCHEME FOR BRITAIN AND IRELAND



Newsletter 28 – August 2002

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HIGHLIGHTS

Another warm year with a very extended season into November resulted in some high populations of some species. Unfortunately, the devastating effects of the Foot and Mouth outbreak restricted fieldwork in some areas. During the year there were 184 new 10 km² records (including 15 post-1970 refinds). In addition, retrospective reports, mainly relating to the previous three years, accounted for a further 125 (including 16 post-1970 refinds). Undoubtedly, the most exciting news of 2001 was the discovery of the **Southern Oak Bush-cricket** *Meconema meridionale*, as the first new breeding species of Orthoptera in the UK for 30 years. This was followed by the first UK breeding record of the **Stick Insect** (Phasmida), *Clonopsis gallica* on Jersey in the Channel Islands. Two other 'firsts' for Britain also turned up as singleton accidental imports, namely, the **Large Cone-head** *Ruspolia nitidula*, and a rare eastern Mediterranean Bush-cricket, *Anadrymadusa albomaculata*. There were new Courty records for **Roesel's Bush-cricket** *Metrioptera roeselii* in Rutland, **Long-winged Cone-head** *Conocephalus discolor* in East Gloucestershire, **Lesser Earwig** *Labia minor* on the Isle of Wight, and for Ireland, **Large Marsh Grasshopper** *Stethophyma grossum* in Tipperary. Also, Suffolk had its first record of **Lesne's Earwig** *Forficula lesnei* since 1931 and in Derbyshire, **Dark Bush-cricket** *Pholidoptera griseoptera* was refound after a gap of 96 years! In summary, it was an excellent year and the record long season augurs well for this, and possibly, succeeding years.

NEW SPECIES BREEDING IN BRITAIN

On 15th September 2001, whilst beating a Birch tree for Heteroptera at Thames Ditton in Surrey, Roger Hawkins noticed an unusual cricket in his beating tray. Upon close examination, he was surprised to find a male **Southern Oak Bush-cricket** *Meconema meridionale* (Plate I). On showing the specimen to other naturalists, it transpired that one, namely Derek Coleman, thought he had seen the species in his garden at Carshalton, 15 km's to the east, and on an after-dark visit in mid-October several females were found on a Sycamore, five of which were seen ovipositing. Soon afterwards, a female was found in Frances Kearsley's garden in Maidenhead, Berkshire, about 35 km's to the west of the original Thames Ditton site. It is quite remarkable that this flightless species, formerly confined to the Mediterranean region, should suddenly turn up at three well-spaced sites covering a distance of 50 km's and one wonders, had it not been so late in the season, whether more might have been found. The Southern Oak Bush-cricket was confined to the Mediterranean region until a couple of decades ago but has since been expanding its range northwards. Since the mid-

1990's it has been turning up in northern France and the Netherlands. Just across the Channel in Normandy it was first noted in 1995 but has now been recorded at over twenty sites. All sites but one are urban or suburban. It is a very similar insect to the **Oak Bush-cricket** *Meconema thalassinum* (Plate II), which is common in the southern half of Britain. However, that insect, in its adult form, has long wings which just exceed its body length, whereas the Southern Oak Bush-cricket has very short wings which are substantially less than half-body length (as shown in Plates I and II).

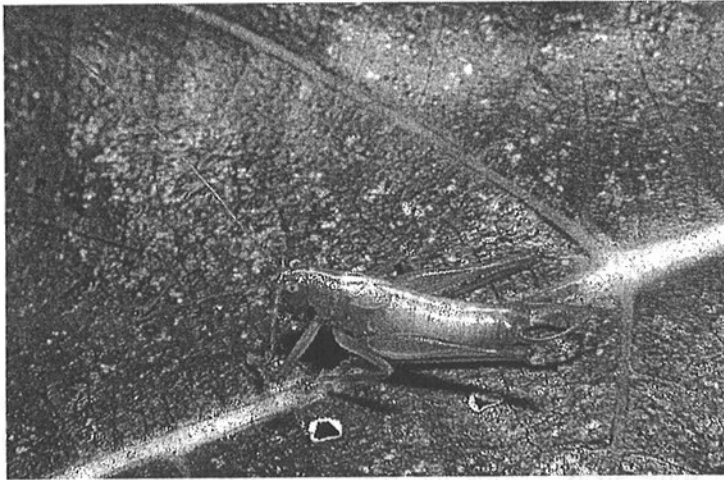


Plate I - Southern Oak Bush-cricket

John Widgery

It can be found in similar habitats, *i.e.* broad-leaved trees and shrubs, and it is more likely to be found in towns and cities and their environs. It has a later season than that of the Oak Bush-cricket, the majority being in adult form in mid-August to late October. Beware of confusion with immature Oak Bush-cricket, which, without fully developed wings, can look similar. The majority of that species, however, should be mature and fully-winged

by mid-August and they become increasingly difficult to find from early September onwards. A well-established breeding colony of yet another flightless species, this time the European Stick Insect (Phasmida) *Clonopsis gallica*, was reported by Margaret Long, as being found in a garden on the northern side of Jersey in the Channel Islands. Enquiries revealed that it had been present at the site since 1987! This is yet another, formerly southern European, species which has been moving northwards on the Continent and is now breeding at several sites in Normandy.

Obviously, the range expansion of these flightless species is by way of some sort of human activity. This could be by way of 'hitching lifts' *via* rail or road transport, accidental introduction on produce or equipment, intentional or accidental release of collected insects, or, possibly, the most likely, introduction of insects or

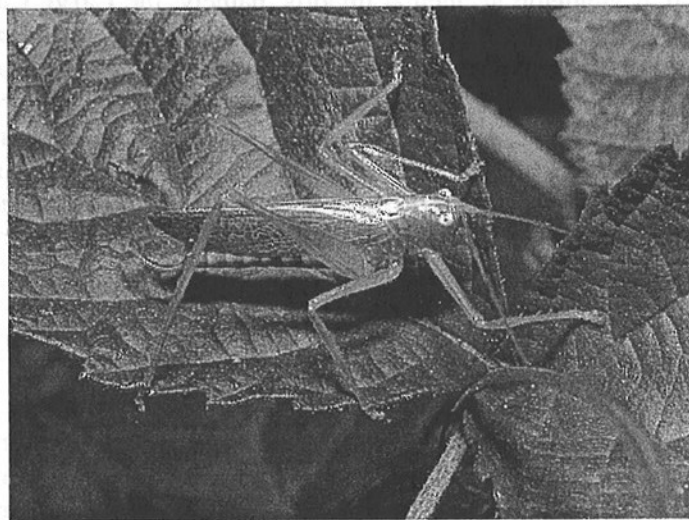


Plate II - Oak Bush-cricket

John Widgery

their eggs on plants. It has become clear that, increasingly, over the last few decades, many plants sold in Britain through garden centres *etc.* are sourced from the Continent, often the far south, and it has also come to my attention that some horticultural establishments have major contracts with Italian growers, particularly for the supply of trees and shrubs. I have also seen advertisements in horticultural publications for trees which may be purchased direct from Italy. The demand for exotic and unusual plants, fuelled by a proliferation of television programmes, has increased markedly in recent years, particularly since the warming climate enables many of these plants to survive outdoors in areas where previously they would not

have done so. This has no doubt resulted in a considerable expansion of trade in horticultural products from more southern climes. This latter hypothesis is supported by several recent recorded occurrences of fully-winged Orthoptera on imported plants. Three of these involved the

Egyptian Grasshopper *Anacridium aegyptium*, and another, the **Large Cone-head** *Ruspolia nitidula* (Plate III). The latter species, in the form of a pristine adult female, appeared in the T.V. programme 'Charlies Gardening Neighbours' on plants which had been brought in from a garden centre and were being planted in a garden at Crick, Northamptonshire (SP57). Given the right conditions, this is probably a species that could well have a chance of becoming established here, it liking the same grassland habitat as



Plate III – Large Cone-head

Peter Sutton

the highly successful Roesel's Bush-cricket and Long-winged Cone-head. It is also another species which is spreading Northwards on the Continent and has recently been recorded as breeding in Normandy.

There is well-documented evidence of insects from other groups being introduced in this way. For example, the **Geranium Bronze Butterfly** *Cacyreus marshalli* was introduced on geranium plants from South Africa and the **Land Bug** *Tupiocoris (Neodicyphus) rhododendri* imported on rhododendrons from the US to name but two, and there are many others. In fact, one piece of evidence which suggests that this might be a relatively common event comes from a paper published 14 years ago in 1988, which draws attention to as many as 15 species of exotic dragonflies (Odonata) emanating from Australasia, America, and South-east Asia, being found on imported tropical water weeds at a single London nursery between 1979 and 1985!

SUGGESTED SEARCH AREAS FOR NEW SPECIES

It is recommended that searches for the Southern Oak Bush-cricket be made in town gardens and parks. Moreover, areas in the vicinity of garden centres could possibly be productive for this, and, maybe, other unusual species.

A RARE ACCIDENTAL IMPORT

The following note; which has been submitted by Bryan Pinchen, describes yet another species which has turned up in the UK, but this time, the source is unknown. It is interesting to note that the insect laid eggs whilst in captivity, but, at this point in time, it is not known whether they are fertile. If they eventually hatch it will be a significant demonstration of how a single gravid female could result in new colonisations (albeit unlikely!):-

Anadrymadusa, in Lyndhurst, Hampshire.

Bryan J Pinchen, 7 Brookland Close, Pennington, Lymington, Hants. SO41 8JE.

"On the afternoon of Monday 10th September, I received a telephone call from Dr Roger Key, Insect Ecologist at English Nature, Peterborough. He had received details of a large brown

cricket, which had been found in a house in Lyndhurst. I was asked if I would be interested in speaking to the finders, and determining what the cricket was.

My first thought had been Mole Cricket *Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa*, which had been the subject of public appeals by the Natural History Museum, London, during the early summer. I discussed the cricket with the finders, Mr and Mrs Dibben, who described it as brown, about three inches long, with a large spike protruding from its rear end. Quite clearly not a Mole Cricket, and too big for a Dark Bush-cricket *Pholidoptera griseoaptera*, my thoughts turned to some of our European Orthoptera. It transpired that the Dibbens run a Bed and Breakfast guest house, and had found the cricket that morning, in a room which had been vacated by an Austrian couple who had been staying over the weekend. I had come to the conclusion from the telephone description that it was most probably a female *Ephippiger ephippiger*.

I met the Dibben's that evening to collect the cricket for identification, whereupon they presented me with the bush-cricket. In a large glass jar before me was an almost three-inch long brown bush-cricket (Plate IV), predominantly russet brown, with an irregular number of pale cream spots on the vestigial wings, and the most bizarre combination of a black band across the frons, and eyes, and a pale sandy coloured face, giving the impression of wearing

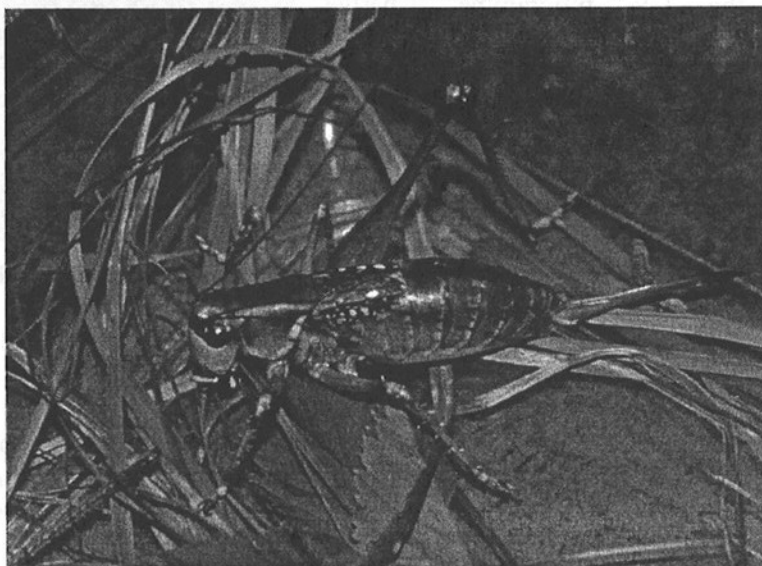


Plate IV - *Anadrymadusa albomaculata*

Bryan Pinchen

a highway-man's mask! *Ephippiger* it most certainly was not. I returned home and re-housed her in a large container with soil and sprigs of various herbs. During the night she fed well, including eating one of her own hind legs which had been damaged at the time she had originally been caught. Once again I checked my European references and could find no matches. I telephoned Judith Marshall at the NHM, but despite describing it as best I could, and without seeing the cricket, Judith was also baffled. I posted a series of small watercolours of the specimen to Judith, who was then able to place the cricket in the *Anadrymadusa* genus. I took many photographs, and was even able to observe the cricket ovipositing in the soil over a period of successive afternoons. On the morning of 5th October, approximately one month after her discovery, she was dead.

I have since been able to compare the specimen with those at the NHM, and both Judith and I have been able to conclude that she is *Anadrymadusa albomaculata* Karabag. The species was described from a single female (currently housed at NHM) in 1956 and is known from Turkey (Karabag 1961). Little appears to be known about this distinctive looking insect.

While in captivity she laid four eggs in the soil, these are a dull grey colour and measure 6 mm by 2 mm (Plate V), and have the general appearance of those of the Wartbiter *Decticus verrucivorus*. I am obviously optimistic that they may hatch



Plate V – Eggs laid by *A. albomaculata* Bryan Pinchen

in spring. Quite how a Turkish bush-cricket came to be in the room of an Austrian couple in Lyndhurst still remains a mystery. My only conclusion being that the couple, who had been

visiting the 'autojumble' sale at Beaulieu, had perhaps just purchased a box of car parts which also contained the cricket. On returning to the warmth of their B+B room, the cricket had crawled out and somehow evaded immediate detection.

The specimen, and full details of her discovery, along with photographs of the living insect and of the eggs have been donated to the British Museum (Natural History), London.

I would like to thank Mr and Mrs Dibben for initially finding and reporting the specimen, Dr Roger Key for passing the information on to me and Judith Marshall for all her help and assistance in identifying the specimen.

Reference: Karabag, T. (1961) Revision of *Drymadusa* Stein and other related genera (Orthoptera:Tettigonidae). *Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History) Entomology*. Vol. 11, No. 1, London:1961.

SPECIES IN THE PROCESS OF RANGE EXPANSION

The range expansion of **Roesel's bush-cricket** *Metrioptera roeselii*, continues in all directions. A whole new batch of retrospective 10 km² records for 2000 were received from Kevin Rylands. These included five for Hampshire, two for Wiltshire and one each for Suffolk and Norfolk. Two further new Sussex 10 km² records for the same year came from Richard Becker and one from the Isle of Wight from Bryan Pinchen. 2001 was the longest season on record for the species with reports of mature insects from before the end of June until well into November. However, there were comparatively few new 10 km² records but those that did materialise were at or near range edge including a first for Rutland at Rutland Water NR; a sighting which also constituted a new 100 km² record for square SK. In summary, new records (including those for 2000) were for squares SK80, SP12, SP32, SP42, SP96, SU13, SU27, SU35, SU43, SU44, SU45, SU53, SU55, SZ68, TF70, TL77, TL79, TL96, TQ02 and TQ22.

2001 saw many new 10 km² records for the **Long-winged Cone-head** *Conocephalus discolor*, including eight for Gloucestershire. In fact, Robert Cropper's record at Leechpool (ST78) was a first for West Gloucs (VC34). All of these, plus three in Bedfordshire, two in Oxfordshire and a singleton at the Biological Records Centre at Monk's Wood (TL27) represented further NW range expansion. Four new Kentish 10 km² records also showed considerable consolidation in that county. For the record, new squares since the last newsletter are: SO70, SP12, SP13, SP20, SP22, SP23, SP32, SP42, SP92, ST32, ST68, ST78, SU41, SU62, SW84, SX25, TL03, TL04, TL27, TM33, TM44, TQ56, TQ66, TQ98, TR04, TR13, TR35 AND TR36.

The **Short-winged Cone-head** *Conocephalus dorsalis* continues to spread to new areas with a further twelve 10 km² records arising in 2001. Some of these showed further movement into atypical habitats. For example, Robert Cropper found a huge colony in rank dry grassland stretching across the whole of Westerleigh Common in West Gloucestershire (VC34)(ST68 and 78) and Brian Milne reported the species along rides in Brampton Wood, Huntingdonshire (VC31). David Richmond also found it in four new 10 km² squares in Norfolk. In addition, retrospective pre-2001 records involved several new 10 km² records and post-1970 refinds in Hampshire. New 10 km² records since the last Newsletter are for: ST28, ST29, ST38, ST68, ST78, SU13, SU62, SU83, SW61, SZ07, TF60, TF81, TG14, TL17, TL37 AND TL69. There were also post-1970 refinds for squares SU41 and SZ57.

COUNTY/REGIONAL ROUND-UP

(All records mentioned are new for the relevant 10 km², except where stated.)

ENGLAND

Cornwall (VC's 1/2)

Chris Haes reports three new 10 km² records for **Long-winged Cone-head** *Conocephalus discolor* at Ruan Pool (SW61), Murrayton (SX25) and Kiggon, Tresillion (SW84). **Short-winged Cone-head** *Conocephalus dorsalis* was also new at Ruan Pool. Other new records included two for **Oak Bush-cricket** *Meconema thalassinum* at Port Isaac Valley (SX07) and Lost Gardens of Heligan (SX04) and one each for **Speckled Bush-cricket** *Leptophyes punctatissima* at Treveal Mill (SW44) and **Lesne's Earwig** *Forficula lesnei* at Loe Bar (SW62).

Devon (VC's 3/4)

Only one new post-1970 10 km² record received for **Lesne's Earwig** at Lyme Regis (SY39).

Somerset (VC's 5/6)

Robert Cropper reports the continued expansion of range of the **Long-winged Cone-head** within the County despite this being translated into only one new 10 km² record at Curry Rivel (ST32). There were also two further new 10 km² records for **Lesser Earwig** *Labia minor* at Meare (ST44) and Lamyatt (ST63).

Wiltshire

Piers Mobsby got a new 10 km² record for **Roesel's Bush-cricket** at High Clear Down (SU27) and Kevin Rylands got a further two at High Post, Salisbury (SU13) and Fosbury (SU35). Also, Bryan Pinchen found **Short-winged Cone-head** at Lower Woodford (SU13).

Dorset

Bryan Pinchen submitted two retrospective records of **Short-winged Cone-head** (1996) and **Common Earwig** *Forficula auricularia* (1999) at Durlston Head CP (SZ07). The latter species was also found in 2001 by Stuart Read at Portland Bill (SY66).

Isle of Wight

More new records from the Island than for several years. Some of the most significant were obtained in 2000 by Adam Wright who got the first **Lesser Earwig** for the IOW at Ventnor (SZ57) and **Lesser Cockroach** *Ectobius panzeri* on Bonchurch Down (SZ57). Bryan Pinchen got another Lesser Earwig at Fishbourne (SZ59) plus **Dusky Cockroach** *Ectobius lapponicus* at St. Boniface Down (SZ57) and **Roesel's Bush-cricket** at Red Cliff (SZ68). 2001 saw more good records from Adam and Bryan. Bryan got **Lesne's Earwig** at Bembridge Forelands (SZ68) and Freshwater (SZ38) and Adam found **Mottled Grasshopper** *Myrmeleotettix maculatus* and **Slender Groundhopper** *Tetrix subulata* at Mottistone Common (SZ48).

Hampshire (VC's 11/12)

Bryan Pinchen produced a large set of retrospective records covering the period from 1995-2000 which included two new records each for **Long-winged Cone-head** at Old Winchester Hill NNR (SU62) and Snakemoor, Eastleigh (SU41) and **Short-winged Cone-head** also at Old Winchester Hill and at Weavers Down Bog (SU83). He also reported both **Dusky**

Cockroach *Ectobius lapponicus* and **Tawny Cockroach** *E.pallidus* at Stanswood Valley near Fawley (SU40). Kevin Rylands reported as many as five new 10 km² records for **Roesel's Bush-Cricket**.

Sussex (VC's 13/14)

Apart from Richard Beckers retrospective 2000 records for **Roesel's Bush-Cricket** at Handcross (TQ22) and Billingshurst (TQ02) there were no new records reported.

Kent (VC's 15/16)

Some significant new records from 2000 included **Woodland Grasshopper** *Omocestus rufipes* found by L.Cremons at Little Cerland Pit (TQ76) and **Long-winged Cone-head** at Lillington CP (TQ56) and Trosley (TQ66) discovered by G.Hazelhurst and Richard Moyse respectively. New 2001 records included four more for **Long-winged Cone-head** at Ashford (TR04), Sellindge (TR13), Sandwich/Deal Golf Course Links (TR35 and 36) found by Eric Philp or Bryan Pinchen. Two new inland records for **Cepero's Groundhopper** *Tetrix ceperoi* came from Richard Moyse at Ham Fen NR (TR35) and Little Burton Farm, Ashford (TR04). A new find of **Short-winged Earwig** *Apterygida media* was made by Eric Philp at Hersden (TR26) and another of **Lesne's Earwig** by Bryan Pinchen at Dover (TR34).

Surrey (VC 17)

The occurrences of **Southern Oak Bush-cricket** at Thames Ditton (TQ16) and Carshalton (TQ26) have already been mentioned. Additionally, Roger Hawkins found **Lesne's Earwig** at Addlestone (TQ06).

Essex (VC's 18/19)

A single new 10 km² record for **Long-winged Cone-head** at Barling GP (TQ98) was reported by Roger Payne. **Slender Groundhopper** *Tetrix subulata* was found at Canvey Island (TQ78) by P.Harvey and at Thorpe Hall, Thorpe-Le-Soken (TM12) by Jerry Bowdrey.

Berkshire (VC22)

The only significant report was of the previously mentioned record of **Southern Oak Bush-cricket** at Maidenhead.

Oxfordshire (VC23)

During short visits to the County, I got new 10 km² records for both **Roesel's Bush-cricket** and **Long-winged Cone-head** at Lower Heyford (SP42) and near Enstone (SP32). **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper** *Chorthippus albomarginatus* was also found at Lower Heyford.

Suffolk (VC's 25/26)

Thanks largely to Stuart Ling, the County Orthoptera Recorder, there were a considerable number of new 10 km² records for the Shire. These are too many to mention in detail, but highlights were **Stripe-winged Grasshopper** *Stenobothrus lineatus* at Sutton Heath (TM34), **Long-winged Cone-head** at Felixstowe Ferry (TM33), **Roesel's Bush-cricket** near Woolpit (TL96) and Cavenham Pits (TL79), the latter being found by Kevin Rylands. Stuart reported a 2000 record of **Lesne's Earwig** at Clare CP (TL74), the first record for the County since 1931. There were six new 10 km² records for **Slender Groundhopper**, and a further six for **Common Groundhopper** *Tetrix undulata*. Also, a batch of records covering the period 1998 to 2001 included seven new 10 km² records for **Lesser Earwig**.

Norfolk (VC's 27/28)

David Richmond got four new 10 km² records for **Short-winged Cone-head** at Weybourne (TG14), Feltwell Common (TL69), Denver (TF60) and Castle Acre (TF81). He also got a new 10 km² record for **Stripe-winged Grasshopper** at North Creake (TF83). Kevin Rylands reported a new 2000 record of **Roesel's Bush-cricket** at Hilborough (TF70).

Huntingdonshire (VC31)

Mark Telfer had a surprise when he found a single **Long-winged Cone-head** on his office window at Monk's Wood near Huntingdon (TL27). The only other new 10 km² square records came from Brian Milne who got two for **Short-winged Cone-head** at Brampton Wood (TL17) and Parsons Drove, St. Ives (TL37) and a new post-1970 record of **Great Green Bush-cricket** *Tettigonia viridissima* at Church End (TL28).

Gloucestershire (VC's 33/34)

2001 proved to be a good year for **Long-winged Cone-head** which is fast becoming more widespread in the County. It was found in new 10 km² squares by myself at Daylesford (SP22), Stow-on-the-Wold (SP12), near Aston Magna (SP13 and 23), near Southrop (SP20) and Frampton-on-Severn (SO70). Robert Cropper also got it at Leechpool (ST78) and Westerleigh Common (ST68). Robert also found a very large population of **Short-winged Cone-head** at the latter site, which is dry grassland, covering the whole common and extending into two 10 km² squares (ST68 and 78). I also found **Roesel's Bush-cricket** at Stow-on-the-Wold (SP12) and **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper** near Aston Magna (SP13).

Monmouthshire (VC35)

Steve Williams produced a long list of new 10 km² records for this, hitherto, under-recorded County. The most significant of these were three for **Short-winged Cone-head** at Llantarnam (ST29), Coedkernew, Newport (ST28) and Newport (ST38), and three for **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper** at Llantarnam (ST29), Cleppa Park, Newport (ST28), and Ponthir (ST39), **Lesser Earwig** at Dingestow Court (SO40) and **Lesne's Earwig** at Cwmbran (ST29) and Ponthir.

Worcestershire (VC37)

John Meiklejohn got **Dark Bush-cricket** *Pholidoptera griseoptera* at Bayliss Hill (SP14) and **Slender Groundhopper** at Cladswell (SP05). The latter species was also found at Wyre Forest (SO77) by K.McGee, and Smite (SO85), by A.Fraser. Gary Farmer had a record of Lesser Earwig at Headless Cross (SP06).

Warwickshire (VC38)

Only one new 10 km² record notified - **Slender Groundhopper** found by John Meiklejohn at Marston Moor (SP14).

Staffordshire (VC39)

E.Brown got the second County record for **Slender Groundhopper** at Aqualate Mere (ST72).

Shropshire (VC40)

Andy Jukes got new records for **Field Grasshopper** *Chorthippus brunneus* and **Dark Bush-cricket** at Upper Arley (SY77). David Williams also found the latter species near Sutton Maddock (SJ70) and Daynesford, Bridgnorth (SO79). He also got three for **Meadow Grasshopper** *Chorthippus parallelus* at Craven Arms (SO48), Much Wenlock (SO69), and Bridgnorth.

Lincolnshire (VC53/54)

Among retrospective records submitted by Bill Ely, three found in 1997 were for new 10km² squares viz. **Oak Bush-cricket** and **Field Grasshopper** at Skendleby Hall (TF46) and **Meadow Grasshopper** at Chapel Six Marshes (TF57).

Rutland (VC55)

J. Wright got a first County record for **Roesel's Bush-cricket** at Rutland Water NR.

Derbyshire (VC57)

Roy Frost reported a really significant find of a large colony of **Dark Bush-crickets** on waste ground at Chaddlesden Sidings, Derby, adjacent to the Derby to Nottingham railway line, the first record for the County since 1905 and about 40 km from any other known site. The colony was first detected in the Autumn of 2000 by Anthony Messenger who heard unidentified Orthopteran stridulation. It was not until October 2001 that Anthony and Roy visited the site together and a voucher specimen was obtained to confirm the species.

Yorkshire (VC's 61-65)

Dr D. Cheshmore had two good records of **Slender Groundhopper**, one at Drax Power Station, Selby (SE62) (1998-2000) and the other at Allethorpe Wood, Pocklington (SE74), the latter being the most northerly record of this species on the eastern side of the UK.

Durham (VC66) and Northumberland (VC67)

It is quite an event to get any records from these counties but Andy Cherrill produced a batch of new 10 km² records for the **Field Grasshopper**. These were, for Durham, at South Shields (NZ36), Souter Point, Whitburn (NZ46) and Seaham/Ryhope (NZ45) and, for Northumberland, at High Weetslade, Wide Open (NZ27), near Higham Dykes (NZ17), near Blyth (NZ38) and Lynemouth (NZ 39).

Channel Islands (VC113)

The undoubted highlight was the first UK record of the **Stick Insect** *Clonopsis gallica* on Jersey, which I have mentioned previously. The island also produced the latest and earliest dates possible for a species of Orthoptera, i.e. 31st December/1st January for **Wood Cricket** *Nemobius sylvestris*.

WALES

Glamorgan (VC41)

Greg Jones submitted a long list of new records, the highlights of which were **Lesne's Earwig** Aberbaiden Colliery (SS88), Nicholaston (SS58) and Merthyr-Mawr Warren (SS87), the latter two being found by Mark Pavitt. Greg also got **Grey Bush-cricket** *Platycleis albopunctata* at Margam Burrows (SS78). S.C.Warmingham found **Lesser Earwig** at Pencoed (SS98).

Pembrokeshire (VC45)

One notable new record of **Grey Bush-cricket** found by S.Evans at Newgale (SM82).

SCOTLAND

Aberdeenshire (VC's 92/93) and Elgin (VC95)

Ian Francis submitted a long list of records including the following which were for new 10km² squares; for Aberdeenshire, **Common Green Grasshopper** *Omocestus viridulus* at Crathie Wood (NO29) and Loch of Strathbeg (NK06) and **Mottled Grasshopper** at Bennachie Forest (NJ61) and Finlets, Forest of Birse (NO59) and, for Elgin, **Common Green Grasshopper** at Lossie Bridge, Birnie (NJ25), and Wood of Ordiequish, Fochabers (NY35), **Field Grasshopper** at Cloddach, Elgin (NJ15) and also **Mottled Grasshopper** at the latter site.

Easternness / Westernness / N.Ebudes / W. and E. Ross / E. and W. Sutherland / Caithness (VC's 96/97 and 104-109)

Ian Evans, on behalf of the Highland Biological Recording Group, submitted a long list of records, mainly for **Common Earwig**, for which there were an incredible 49 new 10 km² records! There was also one for **Common Groundhopper** at Lochan Fada, Assynt (NC13).

IRELAND

Peter Doyle found **Large Marsh Grasshopper** *Stethophyma grossum* near Annagh (N00) which was the first record of this species for Co. Tipperary.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Appeals for Searches

The following "records" all involved good descriptions of species but need confirmation. Two of them were based purely on audio evidence and the other was sighted well but briefly by interested ornithologists. Anyone resident in the relevant areas or visiting naturalists may wish to follow up.

1. ***Tettigonia viridissima* – Robin Hood's Bay (NZ 953 046) - Summer 2000**

Intermittent stridulation heard during the day on two separate occasions for very short period of time by a visiting Orthopterist who is very familiar with the insect. Unfortunately, evening or night visits, when the species is best heard, were not possible. The habitat was a landslip slope facing east or north-east between solid land and the beach. The area was a mixture of rough grass, bare earth and scrub.

2. ***Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa* – Allotments, Old Marston, Oxford (SP50) Summer 2001**

This is probably the most promising report of a natural occurrence of this species that has arisen for some years, particularly as it was in an area for which there are historical records. The unmistakable stridulation was well described by allotment holders and ornithologists, and was heard on three nights in June 2001, although it was very difficult to locate the exact site. Because the species may only call on a few nights it will probably be a matter of luck as to whether it is heard or not. Ideally, it needs local naturalists prepared to carry out listening vigils.

3. ***Platycleis albopunctata* (E) – Otmoor RSPB Reserve Car Park (SP51) Summer 2001**

Seen by two interested ornithologists who were familiar with Roesel's Bush-cricket, which they discounted. Excellent descriptions were received *i.e.* $\frac{1}{3}$ bigger than Roesel's, wings extending just beyond end of abdomen. Overall colour, plain grey with darker mottling and pale green underparts. Ovipositor slightly curved. It was seen on the edge of the Car Park in bramble.

The following item, which has been submitted by Peter Sutton, describes the move by Dumfries and Galloway Council to continue commercial development of internationally important habitat:

Threatened extinction of Scotland's remaining Bog Bush-cricket *Metrioptera brachyptera* Linnaeus population

Dr Peter G Sutton. AES Habitat Conservation Officer. 2 Fir Tree Close, Flitwick, Beds. MK45 1NZ

The waste disposal strategy of Dumfries and Galloway Council is a cause for serious concern, and seems to be in direct conflict with the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

Dumfries and Galloway Council plan to continue the long history of habitat destruction in south-west Scotland by extending their waste disposal operation at Auchinnes Moss, which has already destroyed a large area of raised bog habitat.

Raised bog is a threatened UK BAP Priority Habitat^[1] of National and International importance. Raised bog is listed under the EC Habitats and Species Directive, which allows these habitats to be given enhanced protection as Special Areas of Conservation.

94 % of Britain's Raised Bog habitat has been lost since 1945^[2].

150 years ago, Dumfries and Galloway contained approximately 3000 ha of this habitat across its region. By 1989, only 7 % (210 ha) remained. Nevertheless, this area represents approximately 3.5 % of the remaining UK resource^[3].

If the current planning application is successful, the continued development of this landfill site is expected to lead to the national (Scottish) extinction of the **Bog Bush-cricket** *Metrioptera brachyptera* (Plate VI).

(The Bog bush-cricket is, paradoxically, listed on the Dumfries and Galloway BAP as a priority target species for conservation).

References

- [1] Listed as a Priority Habitat in the UK Steering Group Report, 1995.
- [2] Friends of the Earth statement in: Independent News Press Release 08/04/01.
- [3] Dumfries and Galloway Biodiversity Action Plan, 1999.



Peter Sutton

Plate VI – The Bog Bush-cricket *Metrioptera brachyptera* Linnaeus - a future in Scotland?
(The picture shows a female specimen of the extremely rare long-winged form
f. marginata Thunberg)

Appeal for Orthoptera records at RSPB Reserves

As part of the RSPB policy to gather as much information as possible on the whole ecology of their reserves, Kevin Rylands has been appointed as the lead on Orthoptera for that Organisation. Volunteers are required to survey RSPB Reserves and those interested should contact Kevin, who will advise how to proceed. His address is: 25 Chelston Road, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 2NN. E-mail: Kevin.Rylands@rspb.org.uk

Do species that are expanding their range move at night?

Whilst in recent years **Roesel's Bush-cricket (Plate VII)** and **Long-winged Cone-head (Plate VIII)** have been expanding their ranges, on average about 10 km per year, it is a mystery as to when they actually fly.

Flight is rarely observed, and when it is, it is invariably only at a low level for short distances. Despite the fact that Orthoptera are warmth-loving insects, it is well-known that many crickets are active at dusk and the first part of the night when, inevitably, temperatures are lower. These include, to name but a few, *Meconema thalassinum*, *Pholidoptera griseoptera*, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, and *Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa*. There must surely be a possibility that the 'range-expanders' actually fly at night when conditions are suitable, which may only be on a few occasions. It is interesting to note, that last Autumn, several species of dragonfly, normally thought of as warmth-loving, day-flying insects, were caught after dark in UV moth traps, and evidence points to the majority of these being night-flying migrants.

So far as I know, to date, there is no evidence that species such as Roesel's Bush-cricket and Long-winged Cone-head may possibly move at night. It would be interesting to hear from anyone who has any knowledge of these species coming to light or any other evidence of extra-crepuscular activity.



Plate VII (above) – Long-winged form of Roesel's Bush-cricket *Metrioptera roeselii* f. *diluta* David Browne

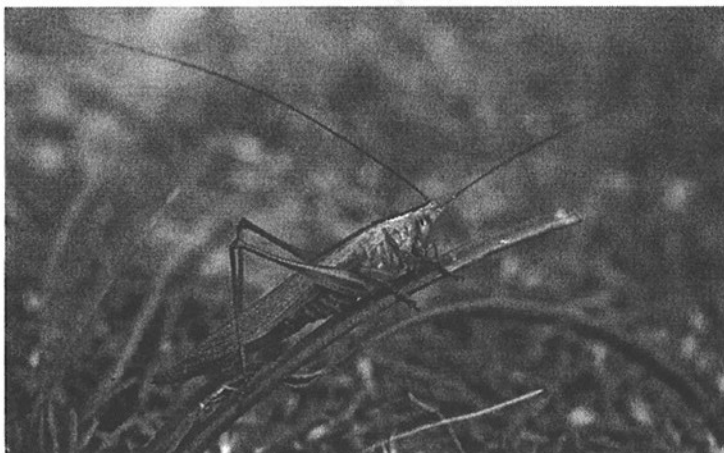
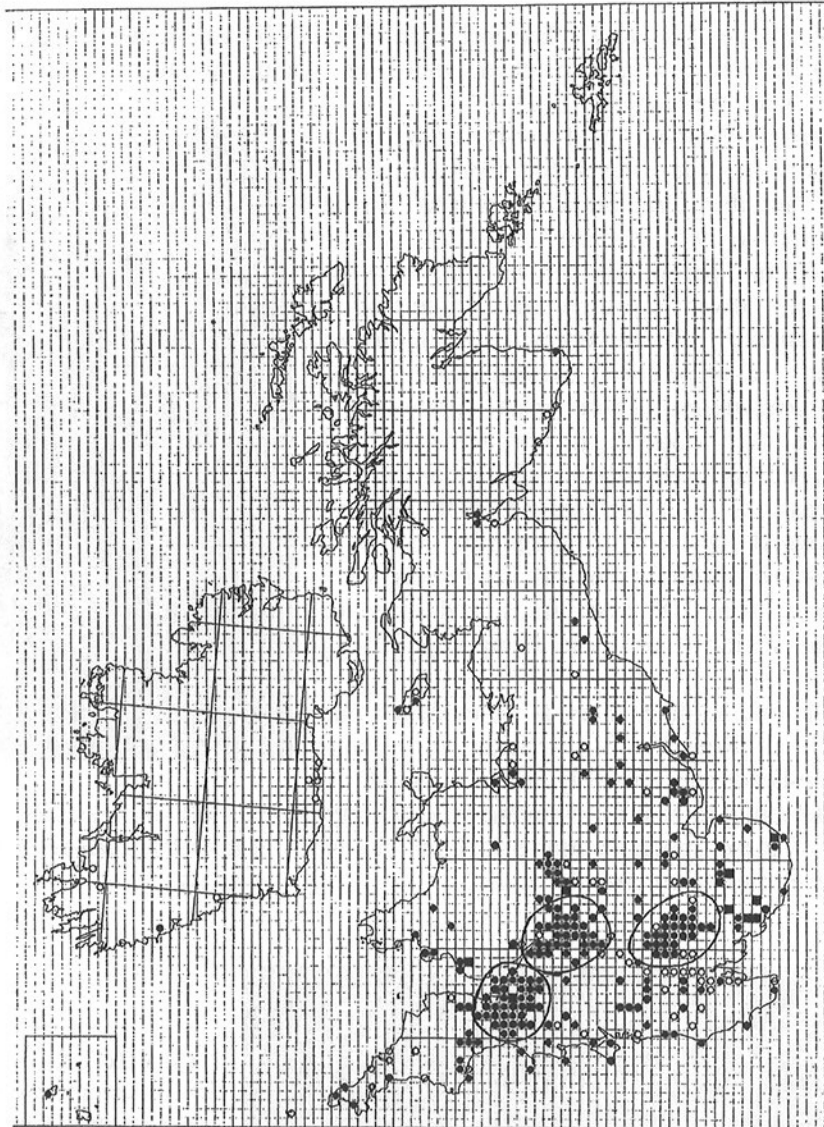


Plate VIII (left) – Extra-macropterous form of the Long-winged Cone-head *Conocephalus discolor*

Peter Sutton

How widespread is the Lesser Earwig *Labia minor*?

Specific surveys for this species have been carried out in just three Counties, namely, Hertfordshire, East Gloucestershire (both by myself) and Somerset (by Robert Cropper). These survey areas are ringed on the distribution map below, and it can be seen clearly that in these specially searched areas, it has been found in nearly every 10 km² square.



I have no doubt that similar searches would produce similar results in many other Counties. To find them you have to be prepared to 'dig' into, or turn over the surface of dung heaps to a depth of about six to twelve inches. Such dung heaps, which are best if composed of horse dung and straw, are commonly found on arable farmland, very often adjacent to roads or footpaths, and at equestrian stables. In my experience the insect is very rarely found in new heaps. A serious survey involves examining those heaps that are accessible whenever the opportunity arises. If circumstances warrant, permission should be sought where there is doubt about accessibility.

EARLY/LATE DATES

2001 was probably the longest season on record for Orthoptera. Fully mature **Roesel's Bush-cricket** were present before the end of June until at least the 5th November and both **Short-winged** and **Long-winged Cone-heads** lingered for several days after that date. On a trip to the Lea Valley Country Park in Hertfordshire on 5th November, I recorded five species of Bush-cricket, namely, **Dark Bush-cricket**, **Short-winged** and **Long-winged Cone-heads**, **Roesel's Bush-cricket** and **Speckled Bush-cricket**, which is quite remarkable for such a late

date. Such a long period of maturity should result in high populations this year, and probable further significant range expansions.

Cepero's Groundhopper was last seen by John Paul on the Isle of Wight on 22nd December, and John also got **Field Grasshopper** on 23rd December, which was probably the latest date for any grasshopper in the whole of northern Europe! However, the latest orthopteroid for 2001 (and the earliest for 2002) was the **Wood Cricket** *Nemobius sylvestris* found by Margaret Long on Jersey (Channel Islands) on 31st December and 1st January.

DIARY DATES

Annual Orthopterists Meeting: 23rd October 2002

The Annual Orthopterists meeting will be held at the Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, on Wednesday 23rd October 2002 from 14.00 to 20.00. The total cost will be £16.00 to cover costs (tea and biscuits, cold buffet with wine). For further details, those interested in attending the meeting should contact:

David Robinson: Department of Biology, The Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA Tel: 01908 653493 D.J.Robinson@open.ac.uk

Papers and Publications

1. Dark Bush-cricket, *Pholidoptera griseoaptera*, re-discovered in Derbyshire. Roy A Frost, (Autumn 2001), *Journal of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Society*, pp. 12-13.
2. *Voorlopige atlas en "rode lijst" van de sprinkhanen en krekels van België (Insecta: Orthoptera)*. Decler, Devriese, Hofmans, Lock, Barenbrug and Maes, (2000), ISBN 90-403-0119-0
3. Orthopteroid Insects in Southern France, Peter Sutton, (2002), *Bull. Amat. Ent. Soc.*, 61, (No 440), pp. 3-10.

FOND FAREWELL

It is with a certain amount of regret that I have decided to relinquish the position of Organiser of the National Recording Scheme. Other commitments and interests have recently meant that I could not give the scheme the attention it deserves (some of you may have noticed the uncharacteristically long delays in replying to your letters recently, for which I apologise). I have really enjoyed my involvement with the scheme for the last six years and would like to specially thank all of those who have contributed records. As a matter of interest, since taking the scheme on from Chris Haes in 1996 I have seen 2365 entirely new 10 km² records added to the national maps. I will continue to act as Orthoptera recorder for Hertfordshire and will keep in touch with national developments. Hopefully, I will continue to see many of you at the annual Orthopterists meeting. Also, I am quite happy to continue to assist anyone who needs guidance on the identification of specimens.

Peter Sutton has kindly agreed to take up the reigns with effect from 1st July 2002. For those of you who don't know Peter, he is a knowledgeable and competent orthopterist and has many contacts in Britain and other parts of Europe. I am sure the scheme will be in good hands. Correspondence and records emanating from 1st July 2002 should be sent to Peter at the following address:

2 Fir Tree Close
Flitwick
Bedfordshire
MK45 1NZ.

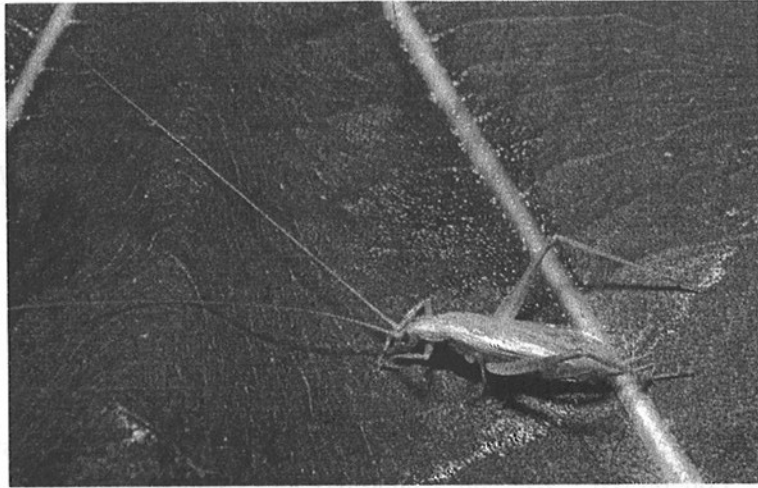


Plate X – Another contender for UK colonisation: the **Italian Cricket** *Oecanthus pellucens* (also known as the Tree Cricket)
John Widgery

COLOUR NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET

To see colour versions of the photographs in this newsletter, visit the Biological Records Centre web-site, www.brc.ac.uk, which is full of useful information and resources for recorders. The newsletter has been added to the web-site as a PDF file which can easily be downloaded and printed off. To navigate direct to the newsletter, use:
<http://www.brc.ac.uk/downloads/OrthopteraNewsletter28.pdf>.

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<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>.

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Data Protection Act 1984.

To assist mailing the Orthoptera Recording Scheme Newsletter and other BRC publications, names and addresses of recipients are held on a computer database; they will not be passed to others without prior permission. Individuals not wanting their address held on the computer should notify BRC in writing.