
ORTHOPTERA RECORDING SCHEME FOR BRITAIN AND IRELAND



Newsletter 25 - February 1999

Editor: *John Widgery*
21 Field View Road
Potters Bar
Herts EN6 2NA

Tel: 01707 642708

INTRODUCTION

It seems incredible that another year has passed since the last newsletter (NL24). This current newsletter is intended to update all readers of the most significant developments since then. Of course, those of you who take *British Wildlife* magazine may already be aware, through my 'Wildlife Notes', of some of the information contained herein.

The success of the scheme relies upon your endeavours and, once again, I am indebted to the many of you who have submitted records and also to Paul Pearce-Kelly, Rachel Jones and Bryan Pinchen for their contributions on rare species.

SUMMARY OF HIGHLIGHTS

In comparison with recent years, the summer of 1998 was disappointing, although parts of southern England did have some reasonably warm and dry weather during August and early September which is probably the most important period for the breeding success of many species. It was, perhaps, not surprising that there were fewer records submitted during 1998 as compared with the previous year but, even so, there were still several thousand which involved a total of 349 new 10km squares (including 68 post-1970 refinds). Of these, 195 (including 23 post-1970s) were for 1998, including first ever records for **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, in the Channel Islands, **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, in Cambridgeshire and **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, in Worcestershire and also a national first for this latter species in Ireland. Additionally, we had the most northerly yet records for **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*. There was also a significant record of **Grey Bush Cricket**, *Platycleis albopunctata*, 14kms inland and the finding of the **Short-winged Earwig**, *Apterygida media*, in no less than fifteen new 10k² in Suffolk. However, there is no doubt that the most important event was the discovery, at two sites, of the **Scaly Cricket**, *Pseudomogoplistes squamiger*.

Retrospective, pre-1998, records included first County records for **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, in Bedfordshire and **Short-winged Earwig**, *Apterygida media*, in Surrey.

RARE SPECIES - AN UPDATE

Scaly Cricket, *Pseudmogoplistes squamiger*.

1998 will be remembered as a significant year in the history of the British Orthoptera through two chance finds of the Scaly Cricket, *Pseudmogoplistes squamiger*, a RDBI species of international rarity which, hitherto, had only one British site, at Chesil Beach in Dorset. The first discovery was made in early June by Eileen and Peter Brown whilst they were holidaying on Sark in the Channel Islands, where, in a small bay, they found about a dozen insects jumping and hiding amongst stones in small shingle. Since then, other entomologists have confirmed a strong population here. Remarkably, it was only about ten days later when Christine Ash came across the same species on the shingle beach at Branscombe in Devon where subsequent pitfall trapping by Peter Sutton, Deborah Cooper and Chris Timmins has determined that there is a healthy population stretching along about 1km of beach. I also received news that the insect had been newly found in 1998 on the Normandy Coast of France near Granville but I have subsequently learnt that there is a reference to it at this location in a French publication of 1965 which has gone unnoticed previously. It had been thought that the Chesil Beach site was the only one in northern Europe and that it may have been introduced accidentally there, however, there is little doubt now that it can safely be regarded as native in Britain. I understand that an article by Peter Sutton regarding this species is to appear in the February 1999 issue of 'British Wildlife'.

Field Cricket, *Gryllus campestris*

Paul Pearce-Kelly and Rachel Jones of the Invertebrate Conservation Unit, Zoological Society of London have given me an update on their part in the English Nature recovery programme for this species which they started in 1992. In that year, the first insects were brought into captivity from the sole remaining wild population for breeding. Up to 1995 a varying number of nymphs were released annually at a total of six sites. It appears that at only two of these has the species become definitely established but it remains to be seen whether they will survive here long-term. In the light of a gregarine infection identified in the captive population in 1996 and 1997 no releases were made in those years and all efforts were directed towards eliminating the infection and creating a strictly hygienic environment in isolation from other invertebrates. This has worked well and from just three breeding pairs in 1998 a total of 5412 nymphs were hatched, 4210 of which were released at three sites in Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire. The scale of the 1998 releases has more than doubled the total numbers released in the preceding six years.

Mole Cricket, *Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa*

Bryan Pinchen who is now handling English Nature's species recovery programme for this species has given me the following summary of the current position:-

"In 1994 a research project was set up under English Nature's Species Recovery Programme with the aim of being able to locate colonies and develop an action plan for its conservation. Despite much publicity, and a great deal of cross-country travel by Mike Edwards & Co, no mole crickets were located. There were enough good records of what must have been mole crickets (as well as many that clearly weren't), stretching from Devonshire and Glamorganshire in the south west, Kent and Lincolnshire in the east, and Sutherland in the north, but no specimens or photographs could provide confirmation. The books had always referred to mole crickets inhabiting ditch-sides, marshes and bogs, and for a basically tropical insect, this habitat description seemed somehow wrong. Visits to Guernsey in 1994 and 1998 where the insect is still relatively common provided the missing piece to the ecology jigsaw and for the first time the crickets could be observed in their 'natural' habitat. Their burrows and entrance holes could be found easily in the short turf of lawns, and their feeding damage could clearly be seen amongst rows of vegetable crops. It became clear that the actual habitat of the species was in warm, moist sandy areas where the water table fluctuates, leaving the soil moist enough to burrow, but warm enough to breed in, and not the marshes and bogs that we had been lead to believe. It was also noticed in Guernsey that mole cricket runs, and sometimes the

insects themselves, could be found beneath flat stones or sheets of wood or metal lying around the ground. Areas of Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, Dorset and now Hertfordshire were there are recent records for the insect have been littered with such items, but as yet have not produced the goods. Playing tape recordings of the males song has brought good responses from captive females, but no success with wild specimens yet.

Live specimens have been brought back from Guernsey (under licence) on two occasions now in 1994 & 1998 and we are finally beginning to piece together the autecology of the insect, but captive breeding - the main reason for keeping the livestock - has so far proved to be erratic and difficult, but keeping individuals alive, and in one case an individual for three-and-a-half-years, has not been too difficult. With the autecology largely cracked, all we needed was a British colony to work with, in its natural habitat.

Then, in 1995 came the record that we had been waiting for, a photograph of a living specimen that had turned up in a garden in Macclesfield! The garden habitat was similar to that where the crickets had been found in abundance in Guernsey, but we were, once again, just one step behind. A male was recorded singing in the same garden in 1996, and the garden has been monitored since, but there have been no more sightings here. A few other records have been received, but no live specimens have been seen or photographed.

The search for the mole cricket will continue yet, and hopefully one day soon we will be able to locate a colony, and breed from these so the resultant stock can be released into specially managed areas across its former range, so that once again the mole cricket can become a familiar sight (and sound) to entomologists across Britain.

This summary is the result of four years work by a number of entomologists, most notably Mike Edwards and Dr. David Sheppard. The work has been funded by English Nature's Species Recovery Programme."

SPECIES IN PROCESS OF RANGE EXPANSION

Despite the comparatively poor weather, 1998 still managed to produce twenty new 10k² records for Roesel's Bush Cricket, *Metrioptera roeselii* but eleven of these resulted from a special search I carried out in East Anglia in areas where, I suspect, it had not been looked for in recent years. These new records were in West Essex (VC19) at Elder Street (52/53), Radwinter (52/63), Birdbrook (52/74) and Stanbourne (52/73); in Cambridgeshire (VC29) at Balsham (52/54) and in Suffolk (VC25/26) at Stradishall (52/75), Hargrave (52/76), Ufford (62/25), Snape (62/35), Preston, St. Mary (52/95) and Hartest (52/85). Ralph Hobbs also found it in Suffolk at Hadleigh (62/04) and Richard Fowling got it in Cambridgeshire at Fen Drayton (52/36) and in Oxfordshire at Watlington (41/69). Additionally, David Baldock found it in four new Surrey 10k squares at Brook (41/93), Dunsfold at Painshill (51/03), Guildford (51/04) and Walliswood (51/13) and, in Huntingdonshire (VC31), Brian Eversham got a second record for that County and new 10k² at Grafham Water (52/16). The most significant record, however, was a first for the Channel Islands when Bryan Pinchen found a nymph on Guernsey in the Channel Islands on the very early date of 29 April. There were also ten retrospective new 10k² records which, for reasons of space, I have not detailed here.

For those of you keeping a note of the current position of this species a summary of all new post-atlas 10k² records since the last newsletter is as follows: 40/47, 41/58, 41/69, 41/93, 42/92, 42/93, 42/94, 51/03, 51/04, 51/13, 51/55, 52/04, 52/05, 52/06, 52/15, 52/16, 52/36, 52/53, 52/54, 52/63, 52/64, 52/73, 52/74, 52/75, 52/76, 52/85, 52/95, 62/04, 62/25 and 62/35.

The range expansion of the Long-winged Conehead, *Conocephalus discolor*, seems to have slowed, the apparent northern edge hardly moving in 1998. Certainly, a search I carried out with bat detector in south Suffolk in mid-September proved entirely negative, although it must be said that the weather conditions

were far from ideal and even if the species was present, this must have severely muted the production of any stridulation in which case it would be easily overlooked. However, there were still fourteen new 10k² records more or less within its known range, including a noteworthy appearance in Kent, suggesting a continuing consolidation. There were also two other landmarks worthy of particular note. The first was the discovery, in Hertfordshire (VC20), of the most northerly yet breeding colony just north of Ashwell (52/24) and, the second, a first County record for Cambridgeshire (VC29), near Steeple Morden (52/24). In addition, I had it in Middlesex (VC21) at Harrow-on-the-Hill (51/18), David Baldock found it in Surrey at Richmond Park (51/17) and Andrew Mahon reported a re-find on the Isle of Wight (VC10) at St. Lawrence (40/57), this being the first record of the species in that 10k² since 1940! New records for Kent (VCs15/16) came from Alan Parker who found it near Maidstone (51/75) and also F.A. Booth, K. Friend and R. Moyse who between them had finds at Groombridge Place (51/53), Bidborough (51/54), Yalding (51/64), East Sutton (51/84), near Hollingbourne (51/85) and Newham (51/95). Robert Cropper reported a very slight extension of range in Somerset (VCs5/6) where he found it at five new sites including three new 10k² at West Lydford (31/53), Ashill (31/31) and Norton-Sub-Hamdon (31/41), the latter holding a substantial population. There were also a number of retrospective records received, the most notable of which was from S. Cham who got a first County record for Bedfordshire (VC30) at Luton (52/02) in 1997.

An update of all new post-atlas 10k² records since the last newsletter is as follows: 30/66, 30/69, 30/77, 31/31, 31/41, 31/53, 31/91, 40/47, 40/57, 41/58, 41/59, 41/65, 42/93, 51/06, 51/17, 51/18, 51/36, 51/54, 51/55, 51/64, 51/75, 51/84, 51/85, 51/95, 52/02 and 52/24.

OTHER CONTENDERS FOR RANGE EXPANSION

There are several other species for which there is increasing evidence of impending range expansion.

In the last newsletter, I published the text of a letter received from Michael Skelton, which included evidence of a possible move inland by Grey Bush Cricket, *Platycleis albopunctata*, which had, hitherto, been confined to coastal habitats in southern Britain. Then, Michael reported that, in 1997, he had discovered a colony at Godlingston Hill (40/08) in Dorset (VC9), approximately 2.2kms from the sea. During 1998, he has found the insect approximately 13kms to the west on the same chalk ridge at Povington Hill (30/88), extending at least 2kms inland. Hopefully, this will encourage further searches between these points. However, these records are well and truly eclipsed, again by Michael, who has now found a well established colony of this species on dry waste ground adjacent to an industrial site at Ringwood (41/10) in Hampshire (VC11), an incredible 14 kms from the coast. Unfortunately, the site is scheduled for development, but this new find raises the possibility of this species having reached at least as far inland elsewhere. It is hoped that naturalists will continue to keep a watch for this insect at inland sites, particularly on roadside or railway embankments and on waste ground.

Other species which, on evidence over the past decade, may be included under this category are Oak Bush Cricket, *Meconema thalassinum*, and Slender Groundhopper, *Tetrix subulata*, both of which seem to be moving very slowly northwards, Short-winged Conehead, *Conocephalus dorsalis*, Woodland Grasshopper, *Omocestus rufipes*, and Stripe-winged Grasshopper, *Stenobothrus lineatus*, which are increasingly turning up in new places, at present within their known ranges and, more positively, Lesser Marsh Grasshopper, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, which has been spreading strongly within its range for some years and 1998 saw the most northerly records yet. There is also tenuous evidence regarding other species. For instance, 1998 has seen two quite independent reports from Surrey and Huntingdonshire of expansions of inland colonies of Great Green Bush Cricket, *Tettigonia viridissima*. As we move towards the next millennium all this bodes well for an extremely interesting future for Orthopterists.

COUNTY/REGIONAL ROUND-UP

Cornwall (VCs1/2)

Only a few retrospective records received, the most interesting of which was from Roy Frost who reported a **Migratory Locust**, *Locusta migratoria*, on St. Mary's in the Isles of Scilly on 28 October 1997. This record coincides with the other sightings of this species on the Cornish mainland on 17 October and 21 November 1997, which were reported in the last newsletter.

Somerset (VCs5/6)

In addition to the new finds for **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, mentioned earlier, Robert Cropper got new 10k² records for **Lesser Earwig**, *Labia minor*, at Broomfield (31/23), Aller (31/32) and Chilcompton (31/65) and **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, near Frome (31/74) and at Weston-in-Gordano (31/47).

Dorset (VC9)

Michael Skelton came up with a new 10k² record for **Short-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus dorsalis*, when he found a small, isolated, colony on the coast at Worbarrow (30/87). He also had two new post 1970 records for the same species at West Bexington DWT Reserve (30/58) and Tidmoor Cove (30/67). Michael also found a new site for **Woodland Grasshopper**, *Omocestus rufipes*, at Bonsley Common (31/80).

Isle of Wight (VC10)

1991 data received from John Bowers included new 10k² records for **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, and **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, at St. Catherine's Point (40/47). Also, 1995 records from Bryan Pinchen included a new record for **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, at the same locality. As mentioned previously, Andrew Mahon got the first record for **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, at St. Lawrence since 1940, although it has probably been present here throughout.

Hampshire (VCs11/12)

The only record of note was Michael Skelton's find of **Grey Bush Cricket**, *Platycleis albopunctata*, at Ringwood (41/10), details of which were given earlier.

Sussex (VCs13/14)

In the last newsletter, I reported a new 10k² record for **Bog Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera brachyptera*, at Chailey Common (51/31). It transpires that the location given for this record was erroneous and it should have been Lane End Common (51/42) and consequently did not constitute a new square record.

Kent (VCs15/16)

Eric Philp reports that **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, has at last made advances in the

County and seven new 10k² records were obtained, representing half the national total for 1998. Eric also got a new post 1970 square record for **Rufous Grasshopper**, *Gomphocerippus rufus*, at Wrotham (51/65). M.T. Jennings also found **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, at Ightham Mote (51/55), which was also new.

Surrey (VC17)

A good year with many new records received. New 10k² records reported included finds of **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, in 1997, by Roger Hawkins at Virginia Water (51/06) and Addington (51/36) and, in 1998, by David Baldock at Richmond Park (51/17). David also reported a 1993 find of **Short-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus dorsalis*, near Holmwood (51/14). His four new 10k² records for **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, have already been mentioned. It is unusual to get new square records for **Great Green Bush Cricket**, *Tettigonia viridissima*, but David found it at a new site near Byfleet (51/06) and, encouragingly, Mark Joseph reported that the long-standing colony in the Wraysbury area (also 51/06) has, within the last two years, expanded at least 1.25kms northwards along the west side of Wraysbury Reservoir. Some significant Dermaptera records were also reported. Roger Hawkins got a first County record, in 1997, for the **Short-winged Earwig**, *Apterygida media*. He found it at three sites within about 4kms of each other in the Oxted and Woldingham areas (51/35). During 1997/8, he also discovered **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, in three new 10k² at Blatchford Down (51/14), near Cranleigh (51/03) and at Wanborough (41/95). David Baldock also found this latter species last year on the Hogsback near Compton (41/94) and had two new localities for it at Hackhurst Down, Abinger and Pewley Down, Guildford (both 51/04). David also reported a retrospective 1991 new record for the **Tawny Cockroach**, *Ectobius pallidus*, at White Downs (51/14).

Essex (VCs18/19)

Apart from the four new 10k² records I obtained for **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, no other records were received for this County. This is a pity because I think certain species are definitely under-recorded. We are still awaiting records for **Roesel's Bush Cricket** in squares 52/61, 52/62, 52/72, 52/83(post 1970) and 52/94 and it is surely present in all. Also, I have little doubt that **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, and **Short-winged Earwig**, *Apterygida media*, for which County records are extremely few, are in fact, widely distributed. Long-winged Conehead is now fairly common to the west in Hertfordshire and to the south over the other side of the Thames estuary and Short-winged Earwig is also fairly common to the south in Kent and to the north in Suffolk. It is hoped that Essex naturalists, particularly those in the eastern half of the County, could look out for these species. In my experience, the best method of finding the Short-winged Earwig is by beating ancient hedgerows and associated trees, preferably those that have not been subject to over-management for a number of years.

Middlesex (VC21)

Even Central London is capable of producing some Orthopteran surprises. Roger Hawkins found a male **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, in a take-away food shop at King's Cross (51/38). More surprising, however, was a report from Dan Hackett that he had found **Stripe-winged Grasshopper**, *Stenobothrus lineatus*, in two small London nature reserves at Adelaide Road, Chalk Farm (51/28) and Camley Street, King's Cross (51/38). Initially, I treated this with some scepticism, however, following my enquiries, Dan supplied two superb specimens of males collected at each site. For this species to turn up at one site in the middle of London would have been unusual, but at two sites, each separated by over 2kms of "concrete jungle" was truly amazing and raises the question as to how it got there. There are three possible explanations; (a) they have always been there, or, nearby but overlooked and this is the surviving relic population, but whilst both sites were former railway yards, the absence of

any suitable grassy areas in former times, seems to exclude this, (b) it was introduced accidentally through soil or plants. However, there is no evidence for this and for it to happen at two, quite separate, sites would be unlikely and (c) with climate change this is yet another species which is beginning to move into the much wider range of habitats it occupies on the continent which includes roadsides and waste land, even in towns and cities. It will certainly be interesting to see whether they persist at these sites. Evidence for movement of species into new areas can be well illustrated in large urban conurbations, particularly in a City as large as London as in the examples quoted above, but yet another example of this has come about through a study being carried out involving monitoring of the newly created wildlife garden at the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, London. Previously, this was a formal garden but work started in 1993 to create a wildlife garden consisting of a mosaic of different habitat examples typical of lowland England, including water features. It was officially opened in July 1995 and surveys carried out between then and 1997 have revealed the presence of the following orthopteroids; **Oak Bush Cricket**, *Meconema thalassinum*, **Slender Groundhopper**, *Tetrix subulata*, **Common Green Grasshopper**, *Omocestus viridulus*, **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, and **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*. Whilst, prior to 1995, Oak Bush Cricket may have been there on trees and Field Grasshopper was possibly somewhere nearby, it would seem that the others are new arrivals.

Berkshire (VC22)

A retrospective report of **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, seen by S. Gregory in 1995 at Little Wittenham LNR (42/59) was a new 10k² record as also was Roger Hawkins' find of **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, at Dinton Pastures Country Park (41/77) in 1998.

Suffolk (VCs25/26)

There are still areas where our knowledge of the distribution of orthopteroid insects is very sparse. Inland Suffolk was one such County which came under this category. I decided, therefore, to spend a week's holiday, together with my wife, in central Suffolk in mid-September with a view to filling some gaps. Of course, there are vast tracts of arable farmland in this County but there are always bits of more productive habitat to be found and when searched these turned up all sorts of species. Despite far from ideal weather conditions, the visit was highly successful producing no less than 71 new 10k² records (including post-1970 updates). These included four for **Oak Bush Cricket**, *Meconema thalassinum*, five for **Dark Bush Cricket**, *Pholidoptera griseoaptera*, six for **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, ten for **Speckled Bush Cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, eight for **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, five for **Meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus parallelus*, eleven for **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, and five for **Common Earwig**, *Forficula auricularia*. The most interesting result, however, was the discovery that **Short-winged Earwig**, *Apterygida media*, which, hitherto, has only been subject to occasional finds here, was reasonably common and widespread in old hedgerows and associated trees which had been left reasonably unmanaged. In total, fifteen new 10k² records were produced by beating foliage in and around such habitat. Apart from the previously mentioned record of **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, at Hadleigh from Ralph Hobbs, the only other new 10k² records received were from David Miller, in respect of 1997, when he got the same species plus **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, at Haverhill (52/64).

Cambridgeshire (VC29)

I have already referred to the first County record for **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, near Steeple Morden (52/24). Data submitted by Adrian Colston included a re-find for 10k² 52/56 of **Short-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus dorsalis*, at Upware. Brian Eversham found a new site for **Stripe-winged Grasshopper**, *Stenobothrus lineatus*, on the Devil's Ditch near Newmarket (52/66).

Bedfordshire (VC30)

Kevin Sharpe has submitted a batch of records up to 1997 which included seven new square records for **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, near Risley (52/06), Ouzel Brook (42/92), St. Neots (52/15), Kempston (52/04), near Ridgemont (42/93), Cranfield (42/94) and Thurleigh Road (52/05). He also informs me that S. Cham got a first County record of **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, near Luton (52/02) in 1997 and also a new 10k² record at Eversholt (42/93). Kevin also got three new 10k² records for **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, at Stockgrove Park (42/92), Yeldon (52/06) and Sundon Hill NR (52/02).

Huntingdonshire (VC31)

Whilst specific details are still awaited, Nick Greatorex-Davies has mentioned to me that there has been a marked expansion of the long-standing colony of the **Great Green Cricket**, *Tettigonia viridissima*, which occurs on the railway embankment near Abbots Ripton (52/27). In addition to his find of **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, at Grafham Water (52/16), Brian Eversham has also reported the discovery, in 1996, of **Short-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus dorsalis*, at the same locality.

Worcestershire (VC37)

It was a pleasure to get a whole raft of new records for this under-recorded County. On a short excursion into its southernmost parts in May, whilst beating a young Lawson's Cypress for Heteroptera, I came across **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, at Redmarley D'Abitot (32/73), a new County record. Gary Farmer has come up with eleven new 10k² records in his first two seasons of "Orthoptera-watching", including two for **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, at Ipsley Alders NR (42/06) and Grafton Wood NR (32/95). Pam Copson also supplied a long list of mainly retrospective data, which had hitherto been unknown to the national scheme, and these filled many 10k² gaps for the more common species, including six for **Oak Bush Cricket**, *Meconema thalassinum*, and three for **Speckled Bush Cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*.

Warwickshire (VC38)

Only one new square record reported by Jim Jobe of **Lesser Earwig**, *Labia minor*, at Chinlade (42/33).

Shropshire (VC40)

Once again, it was good to suddenly get records from an under-recorded County which has only provided minimal data for years. Data for 1998 provided by David Williams produced nine new "gap-filling" 10k² records including five for **Common Green Grasshopper**, *Omocestus viridulus*.

Caernarvonshire (VC49)

New data from Wales is virtually non-existent these days, so records received for this County were particularly welcome. Ian Smith and Steve Hind Smith provided three new 10k² records including an important find of a large colony of **Grey Bush Cricket**, *Platycleis albopunctata*, at Pared-marw, Porth Ceiriad (23/32), which is almost at the northern limit of its known British range.

South-east Yorkshire (VC61)

Bill Dolling had a significant find of Slender Groundhopper, *Tetrix subulata*, at Hollym Carrs NR (54/32) which is now the most northerly record in Britain, barring the isolated Cumbrian population at Silverdale, which is composed mainly of the short-winged form. Bill also had the distinction of finding the most northerly yet recorded Lesser Marsh Grasshopper, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, at Hull (54/03 and Tunstall (54/33).

Mid-west Yorkshire (VC64)

Last year I reported the first ever record in VC64 of Speckled Bush Cricket, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, near Harrogate (44/35), which was also the most northerly record on the east side of the Country. I have now been notified of a second sighting of this species in this County by Dr. D. Parkinson who found it about 20kms SW of the former record at Baildon, Shipley (44/13). Jim Jobe has also informed me of a record, from B. Moorland, of Oak Bush Cricket, *Meconema thalassinum*, at Bellflask House (44/27), which is just within a few hundred metres of the most northerly record in Britain at Hackforth Woods (44/235776). It may well be worth searching for this latter species further north in suitably sheltered broad-leaved woodland, or even hedgerows, particularly in the low lying land running north-west along either side of the River Swale towards Northallerton and Catterick.

Midlothian (VC83)

An interesting observation concerning the longevity of populations of introduced species was made by Alex Ramsay. Whilst visiting the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, he was able to confirm the continuing presence, for over 30 years, of the Australian Cockroach, *Periplaneta australasiae*, and Surinam Cockroach, *Pycnoscelus surinamensis*. Upon further investigation, however, I find that W.J. Lucas, in his book 'A Monograph of the British Orthoptera' published in 1920, records the presence of the Australian Cockroach at this establishment since before 1900, so it has survived here for probably well over 100 years!

Clyde Isles (VC100)

Alex Ramsay has reported that, in 1996, he found a new species for the Isle of Arran - namely, Mottled Grasshopper, *Myrmeleotettix maculatus*. This involved three new 10k² records at Blackwaterfoot (16/82), Brodick (26/03) and Sannox (26/04).

Channel Islands (VC113)

The finding of Scaly Cricket, *Pseudomogoplistes squamiger*, on Sark has already been described. A further significant find was made by Bryan Pinchen who came across a nymph Roesel's Bush Cricket, *Metrioptera roeselii*, on 29 April 1998, at La Corbière on Guernsey. As this latter species is common on the French mainland and in southern Britain, it is surprising that it had not been found previously.

Ireland

The first ever record of Lesne's Earwig, *Forficula lesnei*, was achieved by Martin Cawley who found it at Clonea (X/39), Co. Waterford (H06). No other records of note were received.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Difference in stridulation between long and short-winged forms of Roesel's Bush Cricket, *Metrioptera roeselii*

In the previous newsletter I mentioned that Richard Fowling had noticed that the stridulation of the macropterous form of this species seemed louder than the normal form. Following this, David Element drew my attention to similar observations he made in Surrey in 1996. David Ragge has recorded the songs of both forms and he tells me that, whilst oscillograms show no apparent difference, he has not studied the frequency spectrum or loudness of the song and it could well be that careful comparisons would reveal some constant differences, though he doubts they would be very significant. However, a further interesting point made by David Element is that he has yet to see a mixed population of the two forms, which raises the question as to whether there is sufficient song difference to keep them apart for breeding purposes. If this were the case, it would possibly have important implications regarding evolving species.

In my view, particularly where populations are high, it may not be surprising to find both the brachypterous and macropterous forms together but, even in these circumstances, is there any evidence of interbreeding between the two forms? Any further comments or observations would be welcome.

Commercial Intensive Breeding of Orthoptera in Britain

Following my note in Newsletter 24, several readers have sent me information on establishments that breed and sell Orthoptera, principally for the exotic pet trade. It transpires that there are several such businesses in southern England which stock, in addition to the House Cricket, *Acheta domesticus*, at least two, possibly three other species. One of these appears to be Two-spotted Cricket, *Gryllus bimaculatus*, but one stockist also names *Gryllus assimilis*, an American species, of which I am unfamiliar and I have not yet found the opportunity to examine literature or museum specimens to check this out. The other species involved is the Migratory Locust, *Locusta migratoria*, sp. Which, upon examination of specimens I have reared, I have concluded is not any of the European forms. The size and bright markings suggest that it might be the African form, *L. migratoria migratorioides*, which, I understand, does not rely on a diapause and therefore can reproduce quickly and continuously throughout the year but this has yet to be confirmed. Colin Plant informs me that he has actually visited the Cambridgeshire establishment and has noted many escapes of Migratory Locusts in the surrounding hedgerows. However, it is certainly the case that providing these are non-diapausal insects, their existence would be transient, there being no way they could survive our winters (even with global warming!).

All of this means that any record of Two-spotted Cricket, *Gryllus bimaculatus*, in Britain must be considered as to have more likely originated from this source than any other. There is little doubt that natural occurrences of Migratory Locusts in Britain are likely to involve the European races but in view of the strong possibility of occurrences through pet trade escapes, which could occur nationwide, all future records of this insect should be considered suspect unless specimens can be positively identified as belonging to a European race, or, there is good circumstantial evidence to suggest natural immigration.

Early/Late Dates

Reports received for 1998 are very few but some exceptionally late dates have come from John Paul. At Shoreham Harbour in West Sussex (VC13) he found Grey Bush Cricket, *Platycleis albopunctata*, on 4 December and Field Grasshopper, *Chorthippus brunneus*, on 13 December. Although in a different category because small numbers overwinter, the Wood Cricket, *Nemobius sylvestris*, was heard by Margaret Long at St. Martins on Jersey, Channel Islands, on Christmas Eve, 24 December 1998. So far as I am aware, these are the latest dates ever recorded for these species in Britain.

There were also some exceptionally early and late dates recorded in 1997. In Cornwall, Chris Haes found fully mature **Mottled Grasshopper**, *Myrmeleotettix maculatus*, at Upton Towans on 15 May and got a very late record of **Speckled Bush Cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, at Newton Ferrers on 22 November. In Dorset, Michael Skelton got mature **Common Green Grasshopper**, *Omocestus viridulus*, and **Meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus parallelus*, on Ballard Down on 15 May. Once again, I think all these are records.

Possible trip to Northern France

Information received from Peter Stallegger, Co-ordinator of the Orthoptera recording scheme for Normandy, France, has revealed the presence of a rich orthopteroid fauna as compared with Britain. Some species present are as a result of the general movement northwards of species throughout Europe, presumably as a result of a warming climate. Non-British species which occur include *Phaneroptera falcata*, *Meconema meridionale*, *Platycleis tessellata*, *Metrioptera saussuriana*, *Oecanthus pellucens*, *Tetrix bipunctata*, *T.tenuicornis*, *Omocestus haemorrhoidalis*, *Chorthippus mollis*, *C.binotatus*, *C.biguttulus*, *C.dorsatus*, *C.montanus* and *Euchorthippus declivus*. The **Preying Mantis**, *Mantis religiosa*, and the stick insect, *Clonopsis gallica* are also present. There are other, more localised, occurrences, such as *Gampsocleis glabra*, *Psophus stridulus*, *Calliptamus barbarus*, *Parapleurus alliaceus* and, surprisingly, *Uromenus rugosicollis*.

Peter Stallegger has indicated that he is considering organising a meeting in northern France (probably near Mont St. Michel) of orthopterists from NW Europe over the weekend of 28/29 August 1999. The intentions of the meeting would be:-

- (1) to enable contacts between NW European naturalists.
- (2) 1999 will be the last recording year before publication of the Normandy Orthoptera Atlas and a maximum number of orthopterists present could help prospect under-recorded areas.
- (3) exchange of rare species management experiences, e.g. they have lost all former *Decticus verrucivorus* sites.
- (4) visit to some major orthoptera sites in Normandy.
- (5) presentation of the European mapping programme.

Peter has asked me what the level of interest might be from British Orthopterists.

Because of very heavy commitments, I am unable to get involved personally but Dr. Peter Sutton has kindly agreed to explore the practicalities and, if necessary, liaise with Peter Stallegger. In the meantime, would anyone interested in participating please contact Peter Sutton direct at the following address:-

13 Oatlands
Gossops Green
Crawley
W. Sussex R11 8EE

PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS

1. **The Songs of the Grasshoppers and Crickets of Western Europe.** D.R. Ragge and W.J. Reynolds, 1998, 591 pp.

This book will, no doubt, prove to be the definitive work on the subject in Britain and much of Europe for many years to come. It describes, in some detail, the songs of 170 orthoptera covering all of the common and most of the rarer species found in the area covered. Each species is given an English name, some of these being entirely new. Moreover, for each species there are concise notes on recognition which draw attention, with the utmost clarity, to the most important

morphological characters to aid identification. The book, which retails at £65, is accompanied by two Compact Discs of the songs which can be purchased separately at £25 - prices exclude postage. Whilst the costs may seem high, let there be no mistake, this is a master work of international importance and, in that context, is excellent value and an essential requirement for the serious orthopterist who has an interest in all the European orthoptera.

The book and/or the CD's are available from most specialist natural history booksellers or direct from the publisher; Harley Books, Great Horkesley, Colchester, Essex CO6 4YY.

2. A provisional atlas of bush-crickets, grasshoppers and allied insects in 'old' Cambridgeshire. Adrian Colston (1998); *Nature in Cambridgeshire*, 40:20-36.
3. Orthopteroids in Huntingdonshire. Adrian Colston (1998); *Huntingdonshire Flora and Fauna Anniversary Review 1948-1998*.
4. A review of the genus *Metrioptera* (Orthoptera : Tettigoniidae) in Yorkshire. Martin Limbert (1998); *The Naturalist* 123 : 103-111.

Offprints available on receipt of SAE from Martin Limbert, Museum & Art Gallery, Chequer Road, Doncaster DN1 2AE.

5. *Labia minor* (L.1758) (Dermaptera, Labiidae) from the summit of Yr Wyddfa (Mt. Snowden), Cardiganshire. P.F. Whitehead (1998); *Ent. Mon. Mag.* 134 : 30.

This short note describes the unexpected find of this warmth-loving species under a stone in a remote area of exposed upland at an altitude of 1070m.

6. The range expansion of *Metrioptera roeselii*. Hagenbach (Orthoptera : Tettigoniidae) in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. A. Colston (1998); *Ent. Mon. Mag.* 134 : 353.
7. Two exceptionally early dates for adult acridians (Orthoptera : Caelifera) in West Cornwall. E.C.M. Haes (1998); *Ent. Gaz.* 49 : 268.

This is a brief note about the finding of Mottled Grasshopper on 15 May and Meadow Grasshopper on 20 May 1997.

8. Discovery of Lesne's Earwig, *Forficula lesnei*, in Hertfordshire: a new species for the County. John Widgery (1998); *The Hertfordshire Naturalist*, 33 : 266.
9. *Tetrix subulata* at garden pond. D.R. Richmond (1998); *Trans. Norfolk Norwich Nat. Soc.* 32(3) : 337.
10. Roesel's Bush Cricket, *Metrioptera roeselii* (Hagenbach): A new record for Norfolk. J.R. McCallum (1998); *Trans. Norfolk Norwich Nat. Soc.* 31(3) : 338.

This details the finding in 1997 of this new County record which was reported in Newsletter 24.

LATE NEWS

Discovery of Wood Cricket, *Nemobius sylvestris*, in entirely new habitat in Holland.

A large population of this species has been found in dunes near Bergen (Noord-Holland), 60km north west of the nearest known site. It would appear, however, that the colony is not new as a specimen from Bergen

dated 1984 has been found in a collection which was previously thought to be mislabelled. This appears to be the most northerly colony in Europe and is almost at latitude 53°N which is level with the north Norfolk coast. More interesting, however, is the dune habitat which is entirely new and the principal purpose of this note is to alert British orthopterists to the possibility of it turning up in similar terrain here.

The Orthoptera Recording Scheme Newsletter is printed and distributed for the Scheme by the Biological Records Centre, supported by funding from the NERC Institute of Terrestrial Ecology and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

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 name and address held on computer should notify BRC in writing.

ORTHOPTERA RECORDING SCHEME - NEWSLETTER No. 25

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Scaly Cricket, *Pseudomogolistes squamiger*. No longer a British species!

Life is full of surprises! You will have seen from my previous comments under the heading 'RARE SPECIES - AN UPDATE' references to the finding of Scaly Cricket at Branscombe and in the Channel Isles and also mention of the discovery at Granville in France.

I have just had a 'last minute' communication from Peter Stallegger in France that the *Pseudomogolistes* found at Granville has now been named as a subspecies of *Pseudomogolistes vicentae*, i.e. *P. vicentae septentrionalis*. Judith Marshall has also been in contact with Peter and upon checking British material at The Natural History Museum, she has advised me that it would appear that our species is also *P. vicentae* or similar. It has yet to be determined whether this is the same subspecies as in France but I would be surprised if this were not so.

Pseudomogolistes vicentae was first described as a new species in 1996 by Andrey Gorochov based upon specimens collected in Morocco and Portugal. It has been given the vernacular name Le Grillon Maritime Atlantique (The Atlantic Cricket). However, small differences have been found in Granville specimens which has led to the naming of the subspecies *P. vicentae septentrionalis*. (vernacular name Le Grillon Maritime de la Manche which translates to English as The Channel Cricket or The English Channel Cricket).

This leaves *P. squamiger*, together with two other species recently named by Gorochov viz., *P. byzantium* and *P. turcicus*, as having ranges restricted to the Mediterranean region eastwards.

For the information of those interested in the wider scene, Judith Marshall has also examined the Madeiran material of what was formerly thought to be *P. squamiger* held at the Natural History Museum and has confirmed that it is not that species but probably *P. byzantium*.

Further work will be done to determine the specific identity of the British species and I will report the outcome in due course.

Those of you who would like a copy of the paper describing *P. vicentae septentrionalis* which has just been published by Jean-Jacques Morère and Alain Livory in the French publication L'Argiope (it is in French) are requested to write me enclosing stamp for return postage.

John Widgery

