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# ORTHOPTERA RECORDING SCHEME FOR BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many contributors that it is not practicable to name them individually but I would like to convey my thanks to all those involved, without whom our knowledge of the British Orthoptera would be impoverished.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Whilst 1999 turned out to be the warmest year on record this was not due to any particularly prolonged spells of hot and sunny weather but largely because of consistently above average night and winter temperatures. Certainly, it was a tremendously successful year for the Orthoptera and records submitted involved an incredible 560 new 10km squares (including 46 post-1970 refinds). Of these, 278 (including 25 post-1970 refinds) were found in 1999. Many were of considerable significance, including a host of new County records. Firsts were for **Roesel's Bush-cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, in Northamptonshire, East and West Gloucestershire and **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, in West Suffolk, Huntingdonshire, East Gloucestershire and Glamorgan, the latter being the first ever for Wales. There was also the first **Short-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus dorsalis*, for Warwickshire. Another significant discovery was that of **Speckled Bush-cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, found in a garden at Warton, a few miles north of Lancaster. Not only was this new for West Lancashire (VC60) but it was a new 100k<sup>2</sup> record and only the second record on the Western side of England north of the Colwyn Bay area. Additionally, the other colony at St. Bees Head was found to be present in much greater abundance than had been previously realised.

Also, quite a lot was happening in the Channel Islands where **Common Groundhopper**, *Tetrix undulata*, was a first for Guernsey and **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, was entirely new for the Islands. **Scaly Cricket**, *Pseudomogoplistes vicentae*, which in the previous year had been found for the first time on Sark, was discovered on two more beaches, this time on Guernsey.

In Scotland, there was also a first ever record for Banffshire of **Meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus parallelus*, which, presumably, reflects severe under-recording in the area rather than any rarity value.

However, the most amazing record was that of **Stripe-winged Grasshopper**, *Stenobothrus lineatus*, found at Budby South Forest, Nottinghamshire, which was new to the County and to the 100k<sup>2</sup> and was 130kms NW of the nearest known colonies in East Anglia.

## RARE SPECIES

### Scaly Cricket, *Pseudmogoplistes vicentae*.

The new discoveries of this species in Britain and northern France during 1998 have stimulated naturalists to search other likely spots. In 1999, Charles David found two further sites in the Channel Islands, both on Guernsey. Also, in northern France, another site has been found near Saint-Brieux, 45kms west of St. Malo. There are also strong rumours of an even more amazing find of this species in Wales but, at this stage, this is subject to further investigation - watch this space!

This species is probably far more common than previously thought and further searches of any potentially suitable pebble beach, certainly in England, Wales and even southern Ireland, may produce results. Because the species is so elusive, particularly if small, localised, colonies are involved, even beaches previously searched with negative results should not be discounted.

### Mole Cricket, *Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa*

There was considerable national publicity regarding the finding of a live Mole Cricket in the Vauxhall Car Factory in Luton, Bedfordshire. First reactions were that it would probably have been accidentally introduced via imported goods from the Continent and, although this cannot be entirely ruled out, enquiries have suggested that this may not necessarily be the case. Almost simultaneously, a very recently deceased Mole Cricket was found in a small shop in York, close to the River Ouse. The type of shop involved makes it highly unlikely that it arrived on imported goods and potentially suitable habitat is nearby. Further unconfirmed reports dated up to the mid 1990's have come from central Hertfordshire. These latest accounts are typical of those received of this elusive and rare insect over recent years, tantalisingly suggesting that it may still be breeding somewhere but, to date, not leading to any positive evidence.

### Large Marsh Grasshopper, *Stethophyma grossum*.

The 1998 report of the English Nature Species Recovery Programme for this species compiled by Val Brown and Oliver Cheeseman is summarised as follows:-

#### Dorset

Work, to date, suggests that this County represents one of only two surviving centres for *Stethophyma grossum* in the UK, the other being the New Forest. About a dozen separate colonies have been confirmed, all from sites with historical records for the species. Whilst the local distribution of wetland habitats means that the County cannot support the density of colonies to be found in the New Forest, it is considered likely that unknown populations do exist.

#### Hampshire

It is apparent that the New Forest represents the largest stronghold for this species in the UK. It is difficult to provide an accurate estimate but the Forest clearly contains a considerable number of more or less isolated colonies, some of which are very small. There are undoubtedly colonies yet to be recorded or confirmed from historically known sites. However, some colonies have been lost from some previously occupied sites, which is cause for concern.

### Somerset

Lack of recent records suggests the species is now locally extinct. However, the possibility of rediscovery should not be entirely ruled out.

### Surrey

The background to the occurrence of *Stethophyma grossum* in Surrey is somewhat unusual, in that the species has only ever been recorded from two sites, both of which probably involved deliberate introductions. There have been no recent sightings, although the possibility remains that it still exists in suitable habitat on difficult to access M.O.D. land.

## SPECIES IN PROCESS OF RANGE EXPANSION

Records received for **Roesel's Bush-cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*, over the past twelve months suggest that the pace of its range expansion is increasing. Over that period there have been 42 new 10k<sup>2</sup> records, 28 of these relating to 1999. The most significant involved new County records for East Gloucestershire (VC33) where I found four stridulating males at Sherborne Park (42/11) and West Gloucestershire (VC34) where a single macropterous male was stridulating at Nupdown Farm (31/69). Henry Stanier got a first for Northants, near Ashton (52/08) and stirling work by Adrian Colston produced a whole series of new 10k<sup>2</sup> records for Cambridgeshire stretching northwards almost to the Wash and to the borders of West Norfolk and South Lincolnshire. In fact it now looks as though two new sites recently discovered by Brian Redman in South Lincolnshire at Kirkby Underwood and Bourne (53/02), which were originally thought to have been previously overlooked isolated populations, could now be part of the main expanding population. Even if not, this dynamic main population will surely soon join with those long-standing isolated populations now just to the north. See map appended which gives up to date distribution.

The slowing of the range expansion of **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, reported in the last Newsletter has been dramatically reversed. Since then, there have been 30 new 10k<sup>2</sup> records, 25 of which were for 1999. These included first County records from Stuart Read for West Suffolk (VC26) near Great Cornard (52/84), from Jeremy Milne for Huntingdonshire (VC31) at St. Ives. I found a large well-established colony at Sherborne Park (42/11), a first ever for East Gloucestershire (VC33) but the most significant discovery was a first national record for Wales by Linda and Rob Nottage et al who found a substantial colony around junction 32 of the M4 at Cardiff. See map appended which shows latest position.

1999 also saw a considerable increase in the number of reports of **Short-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus dorsalis*, with 12 entirely new 10k<sup>2</sup> records, approximately double the number achieved over the previous five years. These included a new County record for Warwickshire (VC38), reported by Gary Farmer, at Ipsley Alders Marsh N.R., Redditch (42/06). Interestingly, it is also turning up, sometimes in good numbers, at sites where habitat is apparently atypical. I found it in the first non-estuarine habitat for Gloucestershire at Sherborne Park (42/11) albeit together with, and outnumbered by, Long-winged Conehead. I also discovered a large colony in roadside grass adjacent to the A11 just north of Thetford, habitat more associated with Long-winged Conehead. Moreover, Derek Richmond found two males stridulating from Bracken, *Pteridium aquilinum*, in dry breck grassland at least 1km away from the nearest wetland. On the basis of these events it would appear that this species can now be firmly placed in the category of species definitely undergoing a range expansion, albeit slower than the foregoing species because of more specialist habitat requirement. It will be interesting to see whether the dry grassland occurrences are only transitional.

## OTHER CONTENDERS FOR RANGE EXPANSION

As mentioned previously, probably the most significant event of 1999 was the discovery of a good colony of **Stripe-winged Grasshopper**, *Stenobothrus lineatus*, at Budby South Forest (43/66), Nottinghamshire (VC56). This was a real surprise, the nearest known colonies being approximately 130kms to the south-east in East Anglia. Whether this colony has previously been overlooked (it is on M.O.D. land and therefore not readily accessible) or whether it represents a true recent movement is open to conjecture. There has been some tentative evidence over the past decade or so of this species moving, albeit short distances hitherto, and it is surprising that, if the colony is long-standing, it had not been found by naturalists earlier this century before the land had been taken over by the military, particularly as the insect is distinctive and is not usual in the area. Perhaps further records, or the lack of them, will lead to more positive conclusions in due course.

## COUNTY/REGIONAL ROUND-UP

### ENGLAND

Overall, a highly satisfactory year with a significant increase in the number of records submitted, including some covering areas from which records have previously been sparse. Southern England, approximately south of a line stretching SW from the Wash to the Severn Estuary, is now covered fairly comprehensively (although there are still a few niggling gaps from which few records have been forthcoming over the last decade, e.g. North Devon and Essex). However, north of this line, apart from a few notable exceptions, records are virtually nil. Hopefully, if the more dynamic species that are expanding their ranges get into these areas it will stimulate greater interest.

### Cornwall (VCs 1/2)

Chris Haes reported colonies of **Great Green Bush-cricket**, *Tettigonia viridissima*, in three new 10k<sup>2</sup> at Penjerrick (10/73), Seaton (20/35) and King Harry Ferry (10/83). He also had two new 10k<sup>2</sup> records for **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, at Abercorn, Lizard (10/61) and Goonhilly Downs (10/72).

### Devon (VCs3/4)

Maurice Edmonds and Dave Smallshire reported a major spread of **Long-winged Conehead** in South Devon, even though only one 10k<sup>2</sup> record was involved at Exminster (20/98). Dave Smallshire also reported **Bog Bush-cricket**, *Metrioptera brachyptera*, from Little Bradley Ponds DWT Reserve (20/87) which is believed to have been accidentally introduced from its known site at Chudleigh Knighton Heath, in heath brashings scattered to create heathland. It is unfortunate that, in recent years, records from North Devon have been virtually non-existent. It would be particularly interesting to know whether **Long-winged Conehead** has penetrated this area and I would not be surprised that, if looked for, it would be found.

### Somerset (VCs 5/6)

Thanks largely to Robert Cropper this important County continues to get good coverage. Roberts' wide ranging field work resulted in new 10k<sup>2</sup> records for several species. He found several new sites for **Long-winged Conehead** including new 10k<sup>2</sup>s at Downhead (31/64), Bab Cary (31/52) and Hengrove Park, Bristol (31/52) plus two new square records for **Short-winged Conehead** at South Moor/Kennard Moor (31/53) and Dunster Beach (21/94). He also got new records for **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, at Cheddar (31/45) and **Lesser Earwig**, *Labia minor*, at Chipstable (31/02) and Mark

(31/34). On the downside, Robert also reports the apparent disappearance of **Woodland Grasshopper**, *Omocestus rufipes*, from several sites at which he found it in the early 1990s, possibly due to forestry activities. However, to compensate, reports were received from John Martin and David Gibbs of a new site for the species at Dolebury Warren (31/45).

#### Wiltshire (VCs 7/8)

Data from Piers Mobsby covering the past three years included new 10k<sup>2</sup> records for **Dark Bush-cricket**, *Pholidoptera griseoptera*, at Broad Town Hill (41/07) and Salisbury Plain M.O.D. (31/94). He also got **Stripe-winged Grasshopper**, *Stenobothrus lineatus*, at High Clear Down (41/27). Most significantly, he found two new colonies of **Great Green Bush-cricket**, *Tettigonia viridissima*, at Stockton (31/93) and Upper Chicks Grove (31/92), the latter being a new 10k<sup>2</sup> record. I also found **Long-winged Conehead** in a new 10k<sup>2</sup> at the Cotswold Water Park near South Cerney (41/09).

#### Dorset (VC9)

The only record of note was of the casual, **Egyptian Grasshopper**, *Anacridium aegyptium*, at Wareham (30/98), reported by Brian Pickess.

#### Sussex (VCs 13/14)

Few records received but Richard Becker had two new 10k<sup>2</sup> records for **Roesel's Bush-cricket** at Pulborough Meadows R.S.P.B. Reserve (51/01) and Ashurst Wood (51/43). These are the first records for this species in the more southerly parts of the County and it is possible that, if specifically searched for, it will be found to have spread elsewhere. It is surprising that there are still at least nine 10k<sup>2</sup>s for which **Long-winged Conehead** has not been recorded (see map appended).

#### Kent (VCs 15/16)

Data submitted covering the last three years included new 10k<sup>2</sup> records for **Roesel's Bush-cricket** from David Walker, near Folkestone (61/23), Lynne and Peter Flower, at Teston Lock (51/75), Bore Place (51/54) and Winkhurst Green (51/44). Sandi Bain also found it at Biggin Hill (51/46). New square records for **Long-winged Conehead** came from David Walker near Hamstreet (51/93) and Dungeness (61/01) and D. Bennett at Darland Banks (51/76). Eric Philip came up with a new record for **Short-winged Earwig**, *Apterygida media*, at Folkestone (61/23). Eric also reported an abundance of **Cepero's Groundhopper**, *Tetrix ceperoi*, in and around ditches at Iwade near the Swale (51/96). This is another County for which there are still a number of gaps for both **Roesel's Bush-cricket** and **Long-winged Conehead** (see map).

#### Essex (VCs 18/19)

Very few records received. However, P. Harvey got the second County record for **Short-winged Earwig** at Great Easton (52/62) and Peter Kirby got the third at Felstead (52/72). In view of the regular occurrence of this species in Kent and Suffolk, it is surprising that there have not been more records from Essex but it will surely be found elsewhere if specially looked for. Peter Kirby also found **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, at Stebbing (52/62).

#### Middlesex (VC21)

Sandi Bain got two new 10k<sup>2</sup> records for **Long-winged Conehead** at Hampstead Heath (51/28) and Fray's

Farm Meadow N.R. (51/08).

### Suffolk (VCs25/26)

Stuart Read's **Long-winged Conehead** near Great Cornard (52/84) was a first for West Suffolk (VC26) and only the second record for the County as a whole. Stuart Ling submitted a whole host of new records, some quite significant. New 10k<sup>2</sup> records included **Roesel's Bush-cricket** near Ipswich (62/14) and Rushmere Heath (62/24), **Short-winged Conehead** at Nacton (62/14) and a post-1970 at Castle Marshes (62/49). However, his most significant contribution was the discovery of several new colonies of **Great Green Bush-cricket**, *Tettigonia viridissima*, this included a new 10k<sup>2</sup> record of a good population north of Euston (52/88) which just extended over the County border into Norfolk. There were also two post-1970 10k<sup>2</sup> finds at Woodbridge (62/24) and Bramford (62/14), both involving good sized colonies; in fact Stuart reports that this species is widespread in north-west Ipswich and nearby Bamford.

### Norfolk (Vcs27/28)

Apart from a single record of an isolated macropterous male near the North Norfolk coast in 1997, there had been no evidence of the arrival of **Roesel's Bush-cricket** from the main expanding population. However, in 1999, David Richmond found another isolated long-winged male at East Wretham Heath (52/88). A few days later, on a visit to the very southernmost parts of the County, I located several stridulating males at nearby Santon Downham. The adjacent County of Cambridgeshire has seen a large movement northwards nearly up to the Wash, just west of the Norfolk border, and it now looks as though the next few years will see a significant spread of this insect through the County. David Richmond, with the help of Clive Sheppard and Paul Cobb, made a particular effort to fill in some County gaps for **Speckled Bush-cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, and this resulted in an impressive fourteen new 10k<sup>2</sup> records including one post-1970. It was also a good year for finding new colonies of **Short-winged Conehead**. New 10k<sup>2</sup> included a find by myself at Brandon (52/88) and a discovery by Clive Sheppard at Sennowe Park, Guist (53/92) and R. Baker got a post-1970 re-find at East Harling Common (62/08). In addition, I found a large colony in dry grassland habitat adjacent to the A11 near Thetford (52/88). David Richmond also found two males on bracken amongst dry breck grassland at East Wretham (52/88) at least 1km from the nearest wetland. Mention has been made previously of the newly found colony of **Great Green Bush-cricket**s near Euston just spilling over the border from Suffolk.

### Cambridgeshire (VC29)

Adrian Colston produced a multitude of new records including a large number for **Roesel's Bush-cricket**, suggesting that it is now well established over much of the County. Adrian also found **Long-winged Conehead** at Swaffham Prior (52/56), the second record for the County, and he had a new 10k<sup>2</sup> record for **Short-winged Conehead**, near Prickwillow (52/68). Moreover, he got new square records for **Dark Bush-cricket**, *Pholidoptera griseoptera*, near Cottenham (52/46) and near Wimbington (52/49), plus, **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, near Snailwell (52/66) and at Dullingham (52/65).

### Bedfordshire (VC30)

Apart from the **Mole Cricket** at Luton, mentioned earlier, no records have been received.

### Huntingdonshire (VC31)

Jeremy Milne found a good colony of **Long-winged Coneheads** at St. Ives (52/37), a first for the County and the most northerly British record to date.

### Northamptonshire (VC32)

Henry Stanier got a first County record for **Roesel's Bush-cricket** near Ashton (52/08). This was shortly followed by second and third records from Adrian Colston and C. Gerrard near Stoke Bruerne (42/74) and Weldon (42/98). Phil Rudkin also had a single male **Great Green Bush-cricket**, *Tettigonia viridissima*, stridulating regularly at Wothorpe near Easton (53/00) for most of September. This is the first record for 53/00 since before 1920 when it was recorded at the former Walton station north of Peterborough, presumably on or near the railway embankment.

### Gloucestershire (VCs 33/34)

A significant year with first County records for both **Roesel's Bush-cricket**, in small numbers at Sherborne Park (42/11) and a single macropterous at Nupdown Farm (31/69) and **Long-winged Conehead** which was found in large numbers at Sherborne Park (42/11) plus singles near Quenington (42/10) and Little Barrington (42/21). **Short-winged Conehead** was also found at Sherborne Park, the first non-estuarine record for this species in the County. Additionally, **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, is now being found more frequently in dry grassland habitats, often along roadsides and three new 10k<sup>2</sup> records came from Sherborne Park, Stoke Orchard (32/92) and Bourton-on-the-Water (52/66). There were also five new records for **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, at Strand (32/71), English Bicknor (32/51), near Whelford (41/19), Dymock (32/63) and near Tredington (32/92).

### Worcestershire (VC37)

A batch of records from the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre submitted by John Meiklejohn included several new 10k<sup>2</sup> records previously unknown to the National Scheme. Gary Farmer came up with two significant records. He found **Short-winged Conehead** at Ipsley Alders Marsh N.R., near Redditch (42/06). Not only was this a first for Worcestershire but is the most northerly record of the species on the western side of Britain being about 50kms north of the nearest known occurrence. He also found **Lesne's Earwig** at Windmill Hill (42/04), only the second record for the County.

### Staffordshire (VC39)

Jonathon Webb provided some very welcome records from one of the most under-recorded Counties in England. He got new 10k<sup>2</sup> records for both **Common Green Grasshopper**, *Omocestus viridulus*, and **Meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus parallelus*, at Wryley Common (43/00), Oak Pastures N.R. (43/12) and Berryhill Fields, Stoke-on-Trent (33/94). Jonathon also reported a retrospective 1997 record for **Oak Bush-cricket**, *Meconema thalassinum*, by M. Deegan at Weston Park (33/81).

### Shropshire (VC40)

This is another County from which we rarely receive any records, so it was good to get contributions from Jennifer Newton and David Williams to help fill in a few more gaps, albeit of the more common species. Jennifer got **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, on Wenlock Edge (32/58 and 32/59) and also at Long Mynd (32/49) and David got the same species at Merrington Green N.R. (33/42) and Haughmond Hill (33/51). At this latter site he also found both **Meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus parallelus*, and **Mottled Grasshopper**, *Myrmeleotettix maculatus*.

### Lincolnshire (VCs 53/54)

Brian Redman's discoveries of new colonies of **Roesel's Bush-cricket**, both in woodland rides, at Kirkby

Underwood and Bourne (53/02) were mentioned previously. Brian also produced new 10k<sup>2</sup> records for **Oak Bush-cricket**, *Meconema thalassinum*, at Rigsby (53/47) and **Speckled Bush-cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, at Helpringham (53/14). Paul King also got **Oak Bush-cricket** at Great Carlton (53/48). A. and A.E. Binding found **Slender Groundhopper**, *Tetrix subulata*, at Stanton's Pit (53/01) and Bagmoor (44/91) plus **Common Groundhopper**, *Tetrix undulata*, at Stapleford Woods (48/85) and Stanton's Pit (53/01).

#### Nottinghamshire (VC56)

Mention has already been made of the important discovery by Jim McCleary of **Stripe-winged Grasshopper**, *Stenobothrus lineatus*, at Budby South Forest M.O.D. (43/66).

#### West Lancashire (VC60)

I have already described the significant discovery of **Speckled Bush-cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, made by Jill Blackburn in her garden at Warton (34/47), a few kilometres north of Lancaster.

#### Mid-West Yorkshire (VC64)

Reference has been made previously of the discovery of a recently deceased **Mole Cricket**, *Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa*, in a small shop in York (44/65).

#### Westmorland with North Lancashire (VC69)

Jennifer Newton discovered a further colony of the short-winged form of **Slender Groundhopper**, *Tetrix subulata*, *forma bifasciata* at Hale Moss CLA Reserve (34/57) which just constitutes the most northerly in Britain.

#### Channel Islands (VC113)

Thanks to Charles David's sterling field work it was another significant year for the Islands, particularly Guernsey. There were two new records for **Scaly Cricket**, *Pseudomogoplistes vicentae*, and one for **Common Groundhopper**, *Tetrix undulata*, both firsts for Guernsey. Also on that Island, John Paul came up with a new 10k<sup>2</sup> record for **Ceperoi's Groundhopper**, *Tetrix ceperoi*, and **Lesne's Earwig**, *Forficula lesnei*, the latter being a first for all the Channel Islands.

#### WALES

Appeals for more records from Wales following the arrival of **Long-winged Conehead** in the Country have started to bear fruit and quite a lot of interest has been stimulated in the south, but there are still large areas in mid and north Wales where our knowledge of distribution is sadly lacking. However, it is extremely encouraging to get a whole batch of new records totalling more than we have had for all of Wales over the past five years. Particular thanks is due to Greg Jones, the new recorder for Glamorganshire (VC41), who is doing much to promote a wider interest in south Wales and also to Steve Williams who submitted a number of records for Monmouthshire (VC35). A summary of records involving those Counties from which data was received is given as follows:-

##### Monmouthshire (VC35)

New 10k<sup>2</sup> records came from Greg Jones for **Oak Bush-cricket**, *Meconema thalassinum*, and **Speckled Bush-cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, at Wentwood (31/39) and Steve Williams for

**Dark Bush-cricket**, *Pholidoptera griseoptera*, at Cwmbran (31/29) and near Llanfrechfa (31/39) and **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, near Talywain (32/20). A further record of **Speckled Bush-cricket** came from June Irwin at Llangattock (32/31).

#### Glamorgan (VC41)

No doubt the highlight was Rob and Linda Nottage's find of a large colony of **Long-winged Conehead** at Cardiff - a first for Wales - which has been mentioned earlier. Greg Jones submitted many records including the following for new 10k<sup>2</sup>s; **Dark Bush-cricket** and **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, at Kenfig Burrows (21/78 and 21/88), **Speckled Bush-cricket** at North Cornelly (21/88) and Llantrithyd Lake (31/07) plus the short-winged form of **Slender Groundhopper**, *Tetrix subulata* f. *bifasciata*, at Treoes Pond (21/89). R. Wistow found **Short-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus dorsalis*, at Llantwit Fadre (31/08) B. Stuart and S. Turner came up with a further new record for **Speckled Bush-cricket** at Llangland (21/68) and B. Stuart also found another new site for **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, at Penclawdd (21/59).

#### Carmarthenshire (VC44)

A new 10k<sup>2</sup> for **Oak Bush-cricket** at Cyngordy (22/83) came from Ian Morgan. Apart from this, the only record of note was of an accidental - the **Egyptian Grasshopper**, *Anacridium aegyptium*, - at Llangennech Pallet Works (22/50).

### SCOTLAND

An encouraging year with many more records than usual for this most under-recorded Country. Dan Watson of the Scottish Borders Biological Records Centre submitted a batch of records, covering Vice Counties 79,80,81 and 83, i.e. Roxburghshire, Berwickshire and the Lothians, which included ten new 10k<sup>2</sup> records for **Common Green Grasshopper**, *Omocestus viridulus*, six for **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, and one for **Mottled Grasshopper**, *Myrmeleotettix maculatus*. Ian Francis came up with even more new records, covering North-West Scotland (VCs 91-5 : Aberdeenshire and surrounding Counties), including twelve for **Common Green Grasshopper**, seven for **Meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus parallelus*, and two for **Mottled Grasshopper**. Jennifer Newton also got several new records on the eastern side of the Country.

There is still much to find in Scotland with a great deal of the Country never having been surveyed. The Highland Regions and central and northern Counties are particularly unknown but even much of the low lying coastal or near coastal areas, more so in the northern half, have never been properly looked at.

### IRELAND

No records received. There is a tremendous amount of potential in Ireland, particularly in the South, for extending our knowledge of the distribution of Orthopteroid insects, which at present is rather sparse. Most records we have are from coastal areas with comparatively few from inland. There are several species to be looked for eg **Dark Bush-cricket**, *Pholidoptera griseoptera*, **Short-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus dorsalis*, and Lesne's Earwig, *Forficula lesnei*; to date there is only one record of each in the far south but surely there must be more. **Roesel's Bush-cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii*; once again, only one record but are there more and is it spreading as in the UK? **Oak Bush-cricket**, *Meconema thalassinum*, and **Speckled Bush-cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*; very few records to date but no doubt very under-recorded. Will **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, turn up? Also, in view of its possible presence in South Wales, it may well be worth searching pebble beaches, particularly south-facing in the south, for **Scaly Cricket**, *Pseudomogoplistes vicentae*.

## MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

### Early/Late Dates

There is no doubt that the Orthoptera season is getting longer and that this is probably one of the main factors in the success and spread of some species in recent years. The longer season was well illustrated last year in Hertfordshire where I found a first instar **Roesel's Bush-cricket** on the exceptionally early date of 19 April, which is about five to six weeks earlier than the emergence date perceived in the late 1980s by Marshall and Haes in their publication "Grasshoppers and Allied Insects of Great Britain and Ireland". Adults were still relatively common on 27 October when on a walk covering an area of approximately 3 square kilometres I located nine stridulating males. **Long-winged Conehead** was also still to be found in good numbers on 31 October when, over a similar area, ten males were located. John Paul also reported some extremely late dates for **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, at Shoreham on the Sussex coast where he found two females on 12 December and one on 15 December. John also had a freshly deceased **Oak Bush-cricket**, *Meconema thalassinum*, on 11 December. So far as I know these are the latest recorded dates in the UK for these latter two species. Another, apparently latest ever date, is from Robert Cropper in Somerset who had **Speckled Bush-cricket**, *Leptophyes punctatissima*, in his garden up to the night of 8/9 December. In Norfolk, Derek Redmond had, what are probably very late dates for Eastern England, for **Meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus parallelus*, on 28 October and **Field Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus brunneus*, on 3 November.

I would not want these extreme dates to discourage others to submit their earliest/latest records even if they do not come anywhere near the above. There are sure to be variations over different parts of the UK and Ireland, presumably with a cline of progressively shorter season from south to north and according to altitude and it is equally important to get data covering a whole range of localities in order to see the wider picture.

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

In the previous two Newsletters (NL 24/25) I have drawn attention to observations which suggest that the stridulation of the macropterous form of **Roesel's Bush-cricket** is louder than the normal short-winged form. This led to further questions as to whether the difference in song was sufficient to keep the two forms apart for breeding purposes. I have since received a communication from Jean-François Voisin of the Museum National D'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, who has drawn attention to some research he carried out more than 20 years ago and observations made in the Massif Central and a few years later in the Alps. The most surprising finding was that the long-winged form was considerably less fertile with the gonads often malformed causing the insect to be more or less sterile. However, despite this he did observe copulation between both forms and he considers the main role of the macropterous form is to assure some gene flow between populations, even if they are less fertile than the normal form.

In view of the more recent strong range expansion of this species, which now seems to involve high proportions of the long-winged form, it would be interesting to determine whether this malformity applies to the current British population and, even if it does, to what extent this affects fertility.

References: J-F. Voisin; 1982. "Sur les formes macroptères de *Metrioptera bicolor* Et de *M. roeselii*".

L'Entomologiste, 38(1)

J-F. Voisin; 1982. "Observations écologiques et biogéographiques sur Les Orthoptera du Massif Central, 3: Metrioptera bicolor et *M. roeseli*".

Bull. Soc. Ent. France 37: 337-345

#### Normandy Orthoptera Conference, 27-29 August 1999.

The meeting in northern France mentioned in the last Newsletter was duly organised by Peter Stalleger, the Normandy Orthoptera Records Co-ordinator. The conference was well attended by groups from France, Belgium, Holland, Germany and a small contingent from the UK brought together by Peter Sutton. This provided an excellent platform for an exchange of information. Peter Sutton gave a presentation outlining management strategies implemented for the UK Red Data Book species and a progress report on the species expanding their ranges in Britain. Species found on field excursions involved most of the British species including the rare (in Britain) **Wood Cricket**, *Nemobius sylvestris*, **Field Cricket**, *Gryllus campestris*, **Large Marsh Grasshopper**, *Stethophyma grossum*, and **Blue-winged Grasshopper**, *Oedipoda caerulescens*. Also found were **Water-meadow Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus montanus*, **Bow-winged Grasshopper**, *C. biguttulus*, **Brown-spotted Bush-cricket**, *Platycleis tessellata*, **Tree Cricket**, *Oecanthus pellucens*, **Sharp-tailed Grasshopper**, *Euchorthippus declivus*, and **Praying Mantis**, *Mantis religiosa*.

#### Common Earwig, *Forficula auricularia* : Is more than one species involved in the UK?

Genetic studies recently carried out in France have shown that there are actually two, as yet unrecognised, sibling species involved in Europe. The study was carried out on the basis of specimens collected from several populations in France and Italy (and from introduced populations in North America). One species, which has two clutches annually, apparently lives predominately in lowland and oceanic European habitats and another species with one clutch a year - except in the Mediterranean area where it has two clutches - lives predominately in highland and continental European habitats. They both invaded North America during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, respectively, from the west and east coasts, with no apparent mixing of their populations. The two species can occur in sympatry in Europe and are reproductively isolated by nearly complete failure to produce F<sub>1</sub> hybrids. In recent decades, the general view has been that the British Common Earwig has only one brood, laid in the winter, but there has long been tenuous evidence to suggest that it is possible that different sibling species or subspecies exist here. One has only to read the very detailed accounts of W.J. Lucas in his tome "A Monograph of the British Orthoptera", published in 1920 in which he mentions very early and very late nymphs and questions whether this situation can arise from a single brood. Lucas also drew attention to the long known fact that there is a great variation in adult insects in colour, body size and size and shape of callipers, which may also raise suspicions that we have more than one species or subspecies.

It is not known whether both of the species identified through the French research or, indeed, any others occur in Britain, but as Earwigs are easy to rear in standard laboratory conditions, perhaps some British entomologists may be encouraged to carry out studies of live samples, firstly, to determine number of broods and, secondly, if we do have samples showing different breeding strategies, to see whether any morphological differences can be identified. It would be particularly interesting to compare examples from localities which have the opposite extremes of climate found in Britain, ie from warm, lowland places in southern England and from comparatively cool, high altitude or northern areas, although this should not preclude sampling different populations from the same area. See reference under Papers and Publications.

## New alien Stick Insect breeding in Britain

Paul Brock has reported the 'accidental' establishment of the Stick Insect (Phasmida), *Bacillus whitei*, in his garden at Slough, Berkshire. Paul keeps various species of Phasmids and although he normally takes care when cleaning them out, he feels he must have accidentally thrown away eggs or nymph(s) when rearing this species which he collected from Canicattini Bagni, Sicily (Italy) in October 1989. In the summer of 1991 a neighbour returned an adult female to him but, apart from isolated instances, it was only in 1998 that he noticed several specimens in two main locations in his garden, although another neighbour mentioned seeing them in his garden in 1997. On 5 May 1999, he found an adult *Bacillus whitei* which had clearly overwintered. Third instar nymphs have been found as early as March 1998 and these reached maturity by May of that year. 70-100mm long adults have been seen in various colour forms ranging from plain green or brown to mottled grey, and some were still alive in October 1998. They seem to have several food plants include *Leptospermum scoparium* (Myrtaceae) and *Rhamnus alaternus* (Rhamnaceae) but the favoured species is Bramble, *Rubus fruticosus* (Rosaceae). As Paul has not reared *B. whitei* since 1991, it must have been established in his garden for at least seven years.

This is the first breeding record for the species outside of Sicily.

## Earwig remains in bird pellet

Readers may be interested in the following note submitted by Bryan Pinchen. Any comments on similar observations would be welcome:-

"Whilst carrying out some general survey along the private stretch of pebble beach at Beaulieu in Hampshire on 11 October 1999, I noted large numbers of **Common Earwigs**, *Forficula auricularia*, beneath the assorted pieces of driftwood and other debris. On a higher and permanently drier area of pebble, I discovered a bird pellet measuring approximately 2.5cms long, which was comprised entirely of the cerci and abdominal segments of Earwigs (presumably *F. auricularia*). At a rough guess, I would estimate that there were the remains of well over one hundred Earwigs in the pellet. My initial thought was that the pellet had been regurgitated by a Little Owl, *Athene notuca*, a species which is common in the area, although on second thoughts, I suspect that it had been produced by a wading bird, probably a Turnstone, *Arenaria interpres*, which, I expect, would probably be one of the few bird species capable of finding earwigs, by virtue of their feeding behaviour in turning stones, seaweed and debris on beaches.

I am wondering whether any other readers have recorded similar instances of large scale predation on this species."

## Website

I am not computerised but Adrian Colston, who is, has created a Website which mainly includes information regarding Orthopteroids in Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Northamptonshire. It also includes full details of the National Recording Scheme, including a copy of the Newsletter. The address is: [www.wicken.org.uk/grasshoppers](http://www.wicken.org.uk/grasshoppers).

If any readers have any information about any other website concerning the Orthopteroid insects, primarily relating to Britain and Ireland or Europe but not excluding others worldwide, please let me have details and I will publish these in a future Newsletter.

## NEW COUNTY RECORDERS

Since the last Newsletter, the following have taken over as Recorders for their respective Counties:

**Hampshire** (VCs 11/12): Bryan Pinchen, 7 Brookland Close, Pennington, Lyminster, Hants SO41 8JE.

**Sussex** (VCs 13/14): Dr. John Paul, Downsflint, High Street, Upper Beeding, West Sussex BN44 3WN.

**Middlesex** (VC21): Sandi Bain, 232A Brecknock Road, Tifnell Park, London N19 5BQ.

**Glamorgan** (VC41): Greg Jones, 19 Heol Maendy, North Cornelly, Bridgend, CF33 4DD.

**Lincolnshire** (VCs 53/54): Brian Redman, 31 Garfits Lane, Boston, Lincs. PE21 7EU.

There are still many Counties for which we have no recorders and hence very few records. The vast majority of Counties in the Midlands, Northern England, Scotland and Wales are lacking and I would be pleased to hear from anyone from these areas who is willing to volunteer. Basically, all that is required is keeping the County records and taking part in, as well as encouraging others, in field work. This does not compromise the function of Local Biological Records Centres.

## ORTHOPTERISTS MEETING

I have previously drawn attention to the Orthopterists Meeting usually held in London annually (normally October/November) and I thought I should now do so again as a reminder to those whose circumstances may previously have precluded their involvement and for the benefit of new participants to the Scheme.

The meeting is organised by professional entomologists from the Open University. It is usually held on a weekday between about 3 pm and 8 pm. A charge of approximately £16 is made to cover tea and biscuits in the afternoon and a cold buffet from about 6 pm. The contents are varied but, as a rule, there are about 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. **Butterflies, dragonflies and Orthoptera in London's East End - population changes 1987-1992.** D.A. Murdoch (1993); *The London Naturalist* 72 : 69-84.
2. **Notes and Records; Slender Grasshopper (*Tetrix subulata*) new to Cumbria.** Jennifer Newton (1998); *The Carlisle Naturalist* 6 : 7.
3. **Molecular and Reproductive Characterization of Sibling Species in the European Earwig (*Forficula auricularia*).** Wirth, Le Guellec, Vancassel and Veuille (1998); *Evolution* 52(1) : 260-265.

Some background regarding this paper is described in a previous item.

4. **Alien Grasshoppers Acrididae in Yorkshire.** Martin Limbert (1999); *The Naturalist* 124 : 65.
5. **A working checklist of the orthopteroid insects of Watsonian Yorkshire.** Martin Limbert (1999); *Bulletin of the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union* 32 : 26-27.
6. **The Scaly Cricket in Britain. A complete history from discovery to citizenship.** Peter Sutton (1999); *British Wildlife* 10 : 145-151.
7. **Grasshoppers and Crickets of Surrey.** ISBN 0-9526065-4-2. David Baldock (1999).

This hardback book has 111 pages plus 16 plates, which include colour photographs of all the species involved. It is, without doubt, the best County Orthoptera to be published to date. In addition to species descriptions and distribution maps, there are fascinating accounts of the history of recording in Surrey, which started in 1761, and on the fossil record back to the Early Cretaceous, some 121-131 million years ago - I doubt whether any other British Orthoptera could cover such a period! There is also a useful section on the use of the ultra-sonic sound detector. It is thoroughly recommended.

Available from: Surrey Wildlife Trust, School Lane, Pirbright, Woking GU24 0JN. Price £14, including postage.

8. **Orthopteroid Insects of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly: A Revised Provisional Atlas.** ISBN 0-9534613-1-9. E.C.M. Haes (2000).

At the time of writing I had only seen a draft of this publication. It is the most comprehensive atlas of this group of insects for the County to have been published, based on 1km squares. It contains the usual species descriptions, etc., plus photographs of most species involved. This is a highly desirable book, not only for Cornish naturalists, but for all those likely to visit the County, or, those interested specifically in the Orthoptera and their distribution.

Available from: E.C.M. Haes, 6 Hatch's Hill, Angarrack, Hayle TR27 5HY. Price £6 including postage.

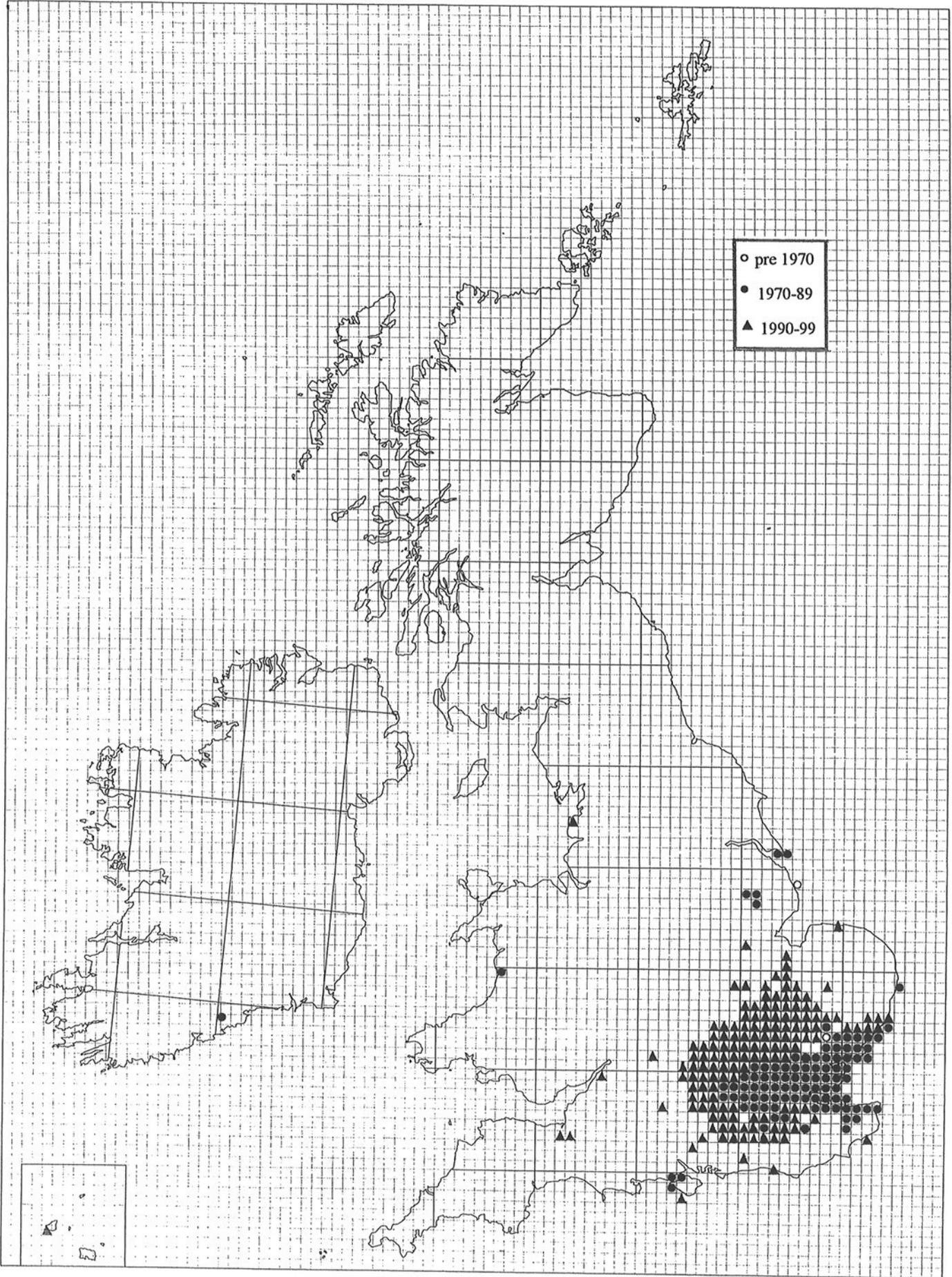
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*Metriopectera roeselii*



Conocephalus discolor

