

Crickets, Bugs & Ladybirds

David Glover

3rd August 2010

When I arrived Paul & Rosemary Beevers and Chris Burkinshaw, were already waiting. Paul had asked me to conduct a survey for grasshoppers. This was the first of two visits I have now made. Although I thought this would be interesting, I anticipated there would be relatively few species of grasshopper so I suggested that we have a look at Bugs and Ladybirds as well.

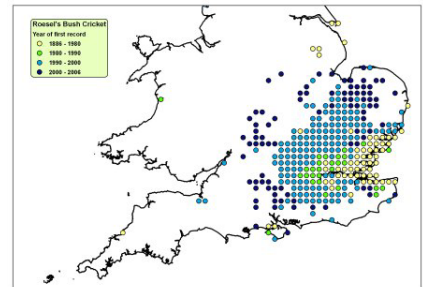
My main interest is in ponds and surveying and identifying invertebrates from this environment. So surveying at Old Down - no ponds in sight - would be quite different.

We settled on sweep netting a patch of meadow just inside the entrance to Old Down on the left side. The weather was kind, warm but not too warm, which is ideal conditions for capturing most invertebrates.



Top: Roesel's Bush Cricket, *Metrioptera roeseli*

Bottom: Long Winged Conehead, *Conocephalus discolor*

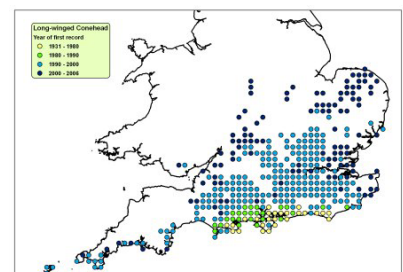


Global Warming?

Thirty years ago both these crickets were considered rare. Roesel's Bush Cricket was confined to the east coast and a few outliers whilst the Long Winged Conehead was restricted to warmer areas of the south coast.

Since then they have expanded their range dramatically. The blue dots on the maps show the expansion since 1980.

Is it global warming that has produced this? Some think so. But whatever the reason these crickets pose no problems as they are both vegetarians.



I did not anticipate that it would be easy to identify in the field because thumbing through books and keys in the field can be surprisingly difficult and time consuming. However one of the first captures was the very distinctive Roesel's Bush Cricket.

Chris identified an Hairy Bug but I was not sure because I could not see the hairs. However Chris was correct in her identification, so full marks to Chris for her keen observation.

So we were off to a good start.

If we had captured a Roesel's Bush Cricket even a few years ago we would have got quite excited. But this previously uncommon cricket has been spreading and has now become quite common in this part of the country.

We were soon netting masses of grasshoppers and other invertebrates. Loads of Flies (Diptera) and beetles (Coleoptera) but we concentrated on Bugs, Ladybirds - which of course are beetles - and Orthoptera. Everything we captured turned out to be common. This is not surprising because the site was so degraded previously and is now in the process of being restored.

It was good to capture 4 species of ladybird. The larger ladybirds should be easy to identify but this is not always the case. Some, such as the 10 spot and the Harlequin can come in many different variations which can make identification a bit more tricky. We did capture a 14 spot where the spots were fused together. Surprisingly we did not capture the foreign interloper, the Harlequin Ladybird which was good but instead caught large numbers of good old British common 7 spot which was even better.

I paid another visit on the 12 August. The weather was less clement this time but it was decided to have a sweep around the tumulus. This time Liam Marsh lent a hand.

It was good to have made the effort. This time we caught a Long Winged Conehead. This is another species which has dramatically expanded it's range.

What was encouraging was the quantity of invertebrates captured. Although all common they were in great numbers. This demonstrates that the site is now productive and therefore probably on the way to recovery. The site now looks more attractive than in the past, but just as important - some would say more important - it now supports large numbers of invertebrates.

I find invertebrates fascinating. They range from the stunningly beautiful to the bizarre. On this page a few pictures of some of the invertebrates that have been caught so far.



Top Right: The diminutive 16 spot ladybird, 3mm, *Tytthaspis 16 punctata*. Most ladybirds feed on aphids but this one feeds exclusively on powdery mildew.
 Middle Right: The bishops Mitre Bug, *Aelia acuminata* Found in tall dry grass and feeds on grass seeds. Local
 Bottom Right: Sloe or Hairy Bug, *Dolycoris baccarum* . This seems to be very common on Old Down. Feeds on a variety of plants.
 Bottom Left. *Notostira elongata* . No common name for this one. Very common on dry grassland.

List Of Grasshoppers, Bush Crickets, Bugs & Ladybirds Captured at Old Down on 3 August 2010 and 12 August 2010

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Taxon	Grasshoppers/Crickets	Stage	Status	Comments
Metrioptera roeselii	Roesel's Bush Cricket	Adult/Male		
Chorthippus parallelus	Meadow Grasshopper	Adult	Breeding	
Omocestus viridulus	Common Green Grasshopper	Adult	Breeding	
Conocephalus discolor	Long Winged Conehead	Adult/Male		
Bugs				
Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale	Hawthorn Shieldbug	Mid instar	Breeding	
Aelia acuminata	Bishop's Mitre Bug	Adult		Dry grassland habitats
Dolycoris baccarum	Sloe Bug or Hairy Bug	Adult	Breeding	Hairs can be difficult to see
Dolycoris baccarum	Sloe Bug or Hairy Bug	5th instar	Breeding	
Myrmus miriformis		Adult	Female	Common bug in dry and damp grassland habitats
Notostira elongata		Adult	Breeding	Common on dry grassland in Southern England
Adelphocoris lineolatus	Lucern Bug	Adult	Probably Breeding	Feeds on legumes
Liocoris tripustulatus		Adult	Probably Breeding	Associated with Nettles
Phytocoris longipennis		Adult	Probably Breeding	On Hawthorn, Hazel & Oak. Widespread
LadyBirds				
Coccinella 7 punctata	7 Spot	Adult	Breeding	Plentiful at Old Down also 1 larvae. An aphid feeder
Propylea 14 punctata	14 Spot	Adult	Breeding	The variation with fused spots was captured. An aphid feeder
Tytthaspis 16 punctata	16 Spot	Adult		Small Ladybird 3mm. A mildew feeder
Subcoccinella 24 punctata	24 Spot	Adult		Vegetarian