

On the rediscovery of *Lebia chlorocephala* (Hoffmann, J.) (Carabidae) in Devon

Clive R. Turner

15 Bowers Park Drive, Woolwell, Plymouth Devon PL6 7SH

Prompted by Keith Alexander's (2007) recent record of *Lebia chlorocephala* (Hoffmannsegg) in Devon and convinced I had previously encountered this species in the county I delved into the small component of my material that has been mounted. On 9 June 1996 I had captured one example of this rather charismatic species whilst sweeping the roadside adjacent to the Devon Wildlife Trust reserve of Chudleigh Knighton Heath (VC 03, SX834777). This area has been the source of a number of interesting species for me and the county over the last decade and has remained one of my favourite localities in the region. The roadsides themselves comprise of what appears to be base rich, mixed rough grassland and vary in botanical composition along their length. At that time the roadsides next to the mixed willow and birch woodland were mown in midsummer and the pathways through the copse remained relatively open. This area possessed strong colonies of the wood ant *Formica rufa* which presented

themselves with every sweep of the net. My example's identity was confirmed by John Walters in 2003 when I provided him with all my mounted British carabid material for examination and extraction of records for the national recording scheme. At the time I noted that Hyman (1992) had classified the species as Notable B, but I had failed to recognise its unusual status in Devonshire.

Classically encountered here by sweeping (Lindroth, 1974), this appears to be the first inland record for the species in Devon following the coastal records of Power, pre 1906, and Alexander in 2007 (Alexander, 2007). Luff (2007) noted that *chlorocephala* is widespread in England but coastal in Wales, this new inland record for Devon suggests that perhaps the distribution in the south west may be more akin to the rest of England and therefore without restriction to coastal grasslands. *Chrysolina banksi* (Fabricius) and *Chrysolina polita* (Linnaeus) (Chrysomelidae) were the only members of its considered larval hosts (Lindroth, 1974; Hyman, 1992; Luff, 2007) encountered along the roadsides around Chudleigh Knighton Heath. The former is extremely frequent in the area and the county as a whole (Cox, 2007; pers. obs.) but restricted to the coastal areas of Wales (Cox, 2007) which raises the question whether these two species are linked more closely than previously considered, at least in western Britain. In his notebook held at Plymouth Museum and Art Gallery, J.H. Keys (c.1880-c.1950) did not detail any encounters with *chlorocephala* during his extensive fieldwork in Devon, an unusual circumstance for probably the most prolific coleopterist from the region and perhaps testament to the ephemeral nature of encounters with this species.

References

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