

Collecting Lepidoptera in Britain during 1975

By C. G. M. DE WORMS, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.E.S.*

As mentioned at the end of my account for 1974, the year 1975 opened with a quite phenomenal spell of mild weather bringing out the early geometers such as *Erannis leucophaearia* Schiff. and *Theria rupicaprararia* Schiff. by the end of December and even *Orthosia stabilis* Schiff. and *O. gothica* L. in the first days of January which saw daffodils in bloom by the middle of the month. Most vegetation was equally precocious too with the early *Prunus* and almond blossom out by early February. These amazingly mild conditions persisted virtually throughout the first two months of the year with the daytime temperature seldom less than the upper 40's or above 50°F. *Achlya flavicornis* L. first appeared near Woking on February 17th together with the first *Apocheima hispidaria* Schiff., *Orthosia incerta* Hufn. and even *Panolis flammea* Schiff. March opened with some very congenial weather with most of the willows well in bloom by the first week. The sloe blossom too was showing signs of just breaking at this early date. *Eupithecia abbreviata* Stephens was seen on the 3rd, a very early appearance of this small geometer. But on March 12th a real touch of winter set in which, except for a brief respite in the third week of the month, persisted right to its end. In fact it turned out to be one of the coldest Easters on record with heavy snow over the holiday during the last days of March. This inclement spell put back the season very considerably.

The first week of April too was far from springlike with the thermometer in the 40's almost daily and it was not until the 11th that much more congenial conditions started to set in. On April 13th several Brimstones were flying on Horsell Common in company with *Archiearis parthenias*, still on the wing. In the Chiddingfold area that day the sloe blossom was fully out, though it had started to bloom in early March, such were the vagaries of this extraordinary start to the year. During this period I had been in touch with the Highlands to enquire if the great post-Easter blizzard was giving way to thaw and was pleased to get reassurance that this was so.

Accordingly, early on the morning of April 14th, about 7 a.m., the Rev. Anthony Harbottle called for me in his Renault and we were soon speeding up the M1 and M6 in heavy rain which did not prevent us from reaching Carlisle by lunchtime. Proceeding along the new dual carriage route through the Lowlands and by-passing Glasgow and Stirling we made a halt at Crieff and were having tea in the Dunalastair Hotel on Loch Rannoch after covering 540 miles. On the moors above Rannoch we were delighted to see a company of Whooper Swans all trumpeting away in a small loch. On arrival we were told that a few nights earlier Mr. Denis O'Keeffe and another collector had had facilities for plugging in their m.v. trap at the Loch Rannoch Hotel on the edge of the large birch wood.

* Three Oaks, Shore's Road, Woking, Surrey.

The hotel, which was being redecorated, was empty so that we were able to connect up from one of the bedrooms to very good advantage as conditions had turned very mild. Next morning some 70 moths had come to the trap, including both Swordgrasses (*Xylena exoleta* L. and *X. vetusta* Hübn.) as well as a fine assortment of *Orthosia incerta* Hufn. in its red and yellowish forms, also lots of *Trichopteryx carpinata* Borkh. with many banded examples. *Orthosia stabilis* Schiff. was in good numbers with a few *O. cruda* Schiff., about its most northerly limit. But there were hardly any *O. gothica* L. and only one *Achlya flavicornis*. However, several of the large form of *Lycia hirtaria* Clerck were present. But a disappointment was the absence of *Brachionycha nubeculosa* Esp. which we had also hoped to see that night on the north side of the loch where it had been so plentiful in 1958. But none of this fine moth were forthcoming here. The only visitors to sugar were a few *O. incerta*, *O. gothica* and both Swordgrasses. The morning of the 15th saw a dead calm on the loch and we were treated to the fine sight of three Golden Eagles sailing round the heighis of Schiehallion. Shortly afterwards we set out further north reaching Struan about midday, but here again no *Nyssia lapponaria* Boisd. were to be found on the fences bordering the road by the small chapel where they had been abundant about this date in 1969. The only insects at rest were a fine female of the handsome form of *A. flavicornis* and a single female of *A. parthenias* which we hunted in vain in a wood at Kinraig that afternoon. Later we reached our haven, the Lynwilg Hotel, just south of Aviemore, which I had not visited since 1969. En route there was plenty of snow by the roadside over the Drumnochter Pass, while the Cairngorms were alive with skiers at this late date. In the later afternoon we paid a short visit to Granish Moor, north of Aviemore, but nothing was to be seen on the railway posts. However, we were treated to a grand sight of seeing several skeins of wild geese flying north which was a very good omen.

That evening sugar on posts by the main road near Kinrara yielded once more both species of Swordgrass, but the tallows which were just at their best only provided a few variegated *O. incerta*. The morning of the 16th saw us once more on Granish and this time *A. parthenias* was very active about midday and my companion with much agility caught several, one of which had very pale orange hindwings. Some fresh *A. flavicornis* were found at rest and we saw the first male *Endromis versicolor* L. careering over the heathland. But birch sap runs provided nothing at Kinrara after dark that evening. A further visit to Granish Moor on April 17th produced a few more Orange Underwings on a very sunny and mild day, but heavy rain set in after dark which did not prevent some large *L. hirtaria* visiting our Heath lamp on the lower road leading to Kinrara, together with some *A. flavicornis* and *O. incerta*. There was still no sign of any Rannoch Sprawlers which may well have come out in the fair spell before Easter.

We fortunately had facilities for running our large m.v. trap from mains at the Lynwilg Hotel. It shone over fields at the back overlooking the small loch. The three nights produced just over 100 insects and a dozen species, most of them coming on the 17th when there was quite a flood of some 50 *A. flavicornis*. The *Orthosias* too were well to the fore with some extreme *gothicina* forms of *O. gothica* as well as quite a lot of *O. incerta* in its many shades, with plenty of *O. stabilis*, equally variable. We were pleased to see the local form of *O. populeti* Fab. and singles of *X. exsoleta* and *Scoliopteryx libatrix* L. also appeared. Among the geometers were *Chloroclysta miata* L., *Colostygia multistrigaria* Haworth, *T. carpinata* and *L. hirtaria*.

Wet set out south again on the morning of April 18th, and once more drew a blank at Struan. After a halt in Dunkeld we retraced our route south via Crieff to Carlisle and on to near Kendal where we put up at the very comfortable Heaves Hotel which had also been a haven in 1969.

That evening after calling at the well-known Derby Arms, we penetrated the upper woods at Witherslack where we searched the small ashes in vain for *Trichopteryx polycommata* Schiff. *Earophila badiata* Schiff. was the only geometer that put in an appearance at light, while the sallows were equally unproductive. However, our m.v. light back at the hotel did attract some 80 insects comprising all the regular *Orthosias*, including several well-marked *O. munda* Schiff. as well as a very smoky example of the local form of *Trichopteryx carpinata* Borkh. There were also single specimens of *Anticlea derivata* Schiff., *Colostygia multistrigaria* and *Biston strataria* Hufn. The following morning, April 19th, we set off southwards again and following the motorways, were back in Surrey in the afternoon to find the temperature in the upper 50's. On the 20th it was above the 60°F. mark when I went over to the Chiddingfold area to find quite a lot of sloe still out, but beating it assiduously failed to provide any larvae of *Eupithecia chloerata* Mab. There was some very springlike weather for the rest of April and on the 22nd over 70°F. in the shade was registered. It was equally fine when I motored to Dorset to stay with my relatives near Blandford, on April 25th, and there was almost a heat-wave the next day when we visited Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour. But in spite of the warmth no butterflies were observed. However, several Brimstones were seen on the 26th in the Bridport area. It was again over 70°F. on April 28th when I set out for the New Forest. At Holt, near Wimborne, I was joined by Mr. and Mrs. R. Hatton and during lunch we saw the first *Pieris rapae* L. and *Anthocharis cardamines* L. but on a walk over the local heath in the afternoon we only flushed a few *Ematurga atomaria* L. I then went on to Sway to stay with Rear-Admiral D. Torlesse, but a thick mist prevented any night operations. However, his m.v. trap run in his garden had a few welcome visitors, including a fresh *Odontesia carmerlita* Esp. together with some very

pale *Chaonia ruficornis* Hufn. Other insects comprised *Noto-donta trepida* Esp., *Cucullia chamomillae* Schiff., *Earophila badiata* and *Lycia hirtaria*. I returned to Surrey on the 29th in much cooler conditions.

May opened with a fairly cool spell which continued for the first half of the month. On the 4th I went over to the woods near Durfold and was surprised to see a Wood White already on the wing. *Pieris rapae* L. and *P. napi* L. were already well out in my garden at Horsell. A week later on May 11th, I visited Alice Holt Forest where Orange-tips were well to the for. After several days of heavy rain with low temperatures at the middle of the month a distinct improvement set in on the 19th with just over 70°F. in the shade the next day which saw *Ematurga atomaria* L. in plenty on Chobham Common. May 23rd saw me again in the Durfold area, this time with Dr. John Holmes, but virtually no butterflies were forthcoming in spite of fairly promising conditions. On May 24th, I travelled to the Costwolds to stay with friends near Stroud, and the next day went on to visit Mr. Ronald Demuth at his home near Bisley in that region, but it was far from favourable for any night operations.

The Bank Holiday, May 26th, he drove me and his wife up the M5 to Cannock Chase where it was fine and quite warm but of course full of the populace. The searching of some of the older birch trunks failed to reveal any cocoon of *Harpyia bicuspis* Borkh. A few Whites and Orange-tips were the only lepidoptera seen, nor was anything on the move in the fir area near Rugeley. The fine spell only lasted another day and gave way to some very cool days to see the month out, especially when I went to stay with Mrs. Hawley at Bodenham, near Salisbury, on the 31st. There was not much let-up on June 1st when we went over to Martin Down, near Cranbourne. Apart from a few Whites we noted *Erynnis tages* L. and flushed *Electrophaës corylata* Thunb. from bushes. The next day, the 2nd, saw me in the New Forest, where I motored through Wood Fidley enclosure seeing only a few Brimstones. However, the very unspringlike conditions had a very marked change for the better on June 6th when the thermometer stood in the upper 70's and this was the start to the remarkable summer period that lasted into September. On the 7th I accompanied Mr. Russell Bretherton and Mr. J. L. Messenger to the Durfold Woods where Wood Whites were by now in numbers with quite a lot of both Pearl-bordered Fritillaries. Butterflies were in fact now emerging fast with the sudden warmth. There were plenty of Brimstones with *Pararge egeria* L., *P. megera* L. and *Coenonympha pamphilus* L., as well as Commas. Among moths flushed from the herbage were the tiny noctuid *Panemeria tenebrata* Scop. with the geometers *Cepphis advenaria* Hübn., *Eupithecia lariciata* Freyer, *Anagoga pulveraria* Y. and *Perconia strigillaria* Hübn. The next day, the 8th, another very warm one, I went to Duncton Down, south of Petworth, but little was flying except late *Callophrys rubi*

L. and a few *Pyrgus malvae* L. I was once more in the Chiddingfold area on June 9th, this time with the Rev. Anthony Harbottle and his son Charles, with the temperature in the high 70's. Wood Whites and the smaller Fritillaries were again much in evidence with quite a number of the small geometer *Minoa murinata* Scop. among the wood spurge. In the afternoon we went on to the Sheepleas, near Horsley, which I had not visited for many years, but there was no sign of *Hamearis lucina* L. for which these downs used to be famous. However, *Polyomatus icarus* Rott. was well out with a few female Orange-tips and Green Hairstreaks. We also found at rest a newly-emerged *Deilephila porcellus* L.

The very warm weather continued without a break until the 14th and on June 12th the thermometer reached 82°F. in the shade in Surrey. My next outing took me on the 15th over to Dr. John Holmes, near Bordon, in rather cooler conditions. His m.v. trap at his house had a lot of visitors, including *Tethea fluctuosa* Hübn., *Hadena w-latinum* Hufn., *Plusia pulchrina* Haworth, *P. chrysitis* L. and *Celama confusalis* H.-S. We then went on to Noar Hill, near Selborne, arriving about midday in rather duller weather. Common Blues were in fair plenty flying in the chalky hollows with *Erynnis tages* L. Those two day-flying noctuids *Euclidera mi* Clerck and *Ectypa glyphica* L. seemed to be everywhere. The latter half of June saw a return of the heat-wave with just 80°F. on June 21st when I was on Chobham Common where *E. atomaria* was still in force. On the 27th I set out for Kent to pay my customary midsummer visit, but the weather had taken a turn for the worse and it was far too windy to venture forth that night. However, I tried my m.v. light in the Hamstreet Woods, but it became very cool and there was only a handful of visitors, including *Diarsia festiva* Schiff., *Plusia pulchrina* and *Spilosoma lutea* Hufn. June 28th was fine after early rain, but scanning posts at Dungeness yielded nothing of note nor was anything special on the wing. I returned to Surrey the last day of the month.

The first days of July were once more bathed in sunshine and summer warmth. On the 1st *Plebeius argus* L. was already well out on Chobham Common and the common Whites were now quite abundant. It was a very sultry evening when I ran my m.v. light on the edge of the Common with a large oak wood in the vicinity. One of the first visitors was a female *Drymonia dodonaea* Schiff., which is seldom seen in the wild. Of some 20 other species seen up until midnight *Habrosyne pyritoides* Hufn., *Diarsia brunnea* Schiff., *Apamea crenata* Hufn., *Lithacodia fasciana* L., *Laspeyria flexula* Schiff., and the geometers *Comibaena pustulata* Hufn., *Hemithea aestivaria* Hübn., *Electrophaës corylata* Thunb., *Hydrelia flammeolaria* Hufn., *Hydriomena furcata* Thunb., *Chloroclystis rectangulata* L., *Bapta temerata* Schiff. and *Ellopiopsis fasciaria* L. It was again very warm when I joined Dr. J. Holmes in Alice Holt Forest, but nothing of note was seen up until midday, except the first *Limenitis*

camilla L. and a few Large Skippers. That afternoon Silver-studded blues were in plenty on Chobham Common. The following day, July 7th, I left for Southern Spain returning some two weeks later on July 23rd.

During my absence there had been quite a break in the fine spell which soon was back when I revisited Alice Holt Forest on the 25th. By now *L. camilla* was fairly numerous and even *Argynnis paphia* L. was on the brambles. But there was no sign of *Apatura iris* L. that day, though several had been seen there from about July 10th onwards and also in a large wood in the Woolmer Forest area which I visited on the 27th meeting Dr. Holmes there. White Admirals, Peacocks, Speckled Woods and Purple Hairstreaks were to be seen flitting among the oaks in the great heat, but no Purple Emperors obliged. However, I caught sight of this fine insect the following day, the 28th, in the Durfold district where apparently it had been fairly prevalent. The second brood of *Leptidea sinapis* L. was well out already. The temperature soared to the upper 80's the last days of July. On the night of the 30th quite a concourse of moths came to my m.v. light, again near Chobham Common, with 37 species up until 11.30 p.m. One of the earliest was a female of *Clostera pigra* Hufn., followed by *Drepana binaria* Hufn. and *Phragmatobia fuliginosa* L. Among the few noctuids were *Coenobia rufa* Haw. and *Parascotia fuliginaria* L. The geometers were predominant, including *Hemithea asetivaria* Hübn., *Sterrhia subsericeata* Haw., *Xanthorhoe quadrifasciata* Clerck, *Mysticoptera sexalisata* Hübn., *Pseudoterpna pruinata* Hufn., *Lygris testata* L., *Hydrelia flammeolaria* Hufn., *Eupithecia absinthiata* Clerck, *E. haworthiata* Doubleday, *E. nanata* Hübn., *Chloroclystis rectangulata* L., *Cleora rhomboidaria* Schiff. and *Pachynemia hippocastanaria* Hübn.

It was decidedly cooler when I set out on a brief tour of East Anglia on August 1st. My first halt after visiting the Breck, was to stay with Mr. Tony Palmer at his delightful house near Saxthorpe, north of Norwich. The heat-wave had returned on the 2nd when we motored over to Catfield Marsh, bordering Barton Broad. We were pleased to see *Papilio machaon* L. on the wing at this somewhat late date, together with several almost full-grown larvae, but the only other butterflies both in this region and later near Horsey Mere were a lot of *Maniola tithonus* L. with a few *Coenonympha pamphilus* L. The next day, the 3rd, which was equally hot, we explored some wooded areas, the Holt Lows, in the morning and Buxton Heath in the afternoon. Here again *M. tithonus* seemed to be the predominant species besides a few Peacocks and Whites. I had run my m.v. trap in the garden of my host for three nights with quite interesting results. Of 56 species of the macro-moths noted and a total of over 300 individuals, the only sphingid seen was *Laothoe populi* L. The prominents were represented by *Pheosia tremula* Clerck, *P. gnoma* Fab., *Pterostoma palpina* Clerck, *Notodonta dromedarius* L., *N. ziczac* L., and *Lophopteryx capucina* L. The commonest noctuid was *Eremobia ochroleuca*

Schiff., with *Arctia caja* L. almost equally numerous; *Philudoria potatoria* L. was also plentiful. Other noctuids noted included *Euschesis interjecta* Hübn., *Euxoa tritici* L., *Apamea ophiogramma* Esp., *Procus literosa* Haworth and *Plusia iota* L. Among eleven species of geometers were *Geometra papilionaria* L., *Euphyia unangulata* Haworth, *Perizoma alchemillata* L., *Deuteronomos erosaria* Schiff., *Crocallis elinguaris* L. and *Abraxas grossulariata* L.

On the morning of August 4th I set out from Norfolk in quite tropical heat. In fact, the next five days proved one of the warmest spells of the century with shade temperatures above 90°F. daily over most of England. After skirting Norwich I travelled southwards into Suffolk, halting near Frostenden in the possible hope of seeing *Nymphalis polychloros* L. which had been so prevalent in that vicinity in the late 1940's, but none were apparent. After putting up at the Crown Hotel in Southwold, I went on to visit Mr. D. Chipperfield at Walberswick. With him was staying Mr. B. W. Weddell from Trowbridge. They told me of the big harvests obtained the previous week in the marshes which we tried that night. They placed two Heath strip lights among the reeds, while I had my large m.v. apparatus on the edge of the reedbed. Insects began arriving soon after dusk, but the temperature fell fairly fast with a very pronounced dew on the foliage with the result that only 26 species came to my m.v. light up until midnight. These included *Leucania straminea* Treits., *Arenostola phragmitidis* Hübn., *Phragmatobia fuliginosa* L., *Eremobia ochroleuca* Schiff., *Thalpophila matura* Hufn., *Eilema complana* L., *Philudoria potatoria* L. and the geometers *Lygris pyraliata* Schiff. and *Perizoma flavofasciata* Thunb. But no *Nonagria neurica* Hübn. appeared here or at the reedbed lights, which did, however, attract such marshland species as *Simyra venosa* Borkh., several *Arenostola brevilinea* Fenn and *Chilodes maritima* Treits., including f. *wismariensis* Schmidt as well as *Cucullia asteris* Schiff. The intense heat on August 5th was relieved only by bathing in the sea. It was almost too hot for the butterflies in the Thorpeness area that afternoon. A few *Inachis io* L. were flying near the seashore. However, the night operations proved one of the most prolific in all my collecting experience. I accompanied Mr. Chipperfield and Mr. Weddell to a specially selected spot in Dunwich Forest and as soon as we illuminated the thick woodland with the same apparatus as the previous night, insects started coming in almost a flood and by the time we packed up at about 12.30 a.m. we found we had recorded no less than 120 species of the macros. One of the earliest arrivals was quite a spate of *Eilema deplana* Esp. It was the first time too that I had seen both the Magpies *Abraxas grossulariata* and *A. sylvata* Scop. together on the sheet, also the two Hooktips *Drepana cultraria* Fab. and *D. binaria* Hufn. Four species of the Hawkmoths were recorded, *Laotoë populi* L., *Hyloicus pinastri* L. and both Elephants *Deilephila elpenor* L. and *D. porcellus* L. A. welcome visitor among the Prominents

was *Lophopteryx cucullina* Schiff. together with *P. tremula* Clerck and *P. palpina* Clerck. Both *Tethea ocularis* L. and *T. duplaris* L. were present, also a huge female *Gastropacha quercifolia* L. The Arctiids included many *Arctia caja* L., also *Eilema griseola* Hübn., *E. complana* L. and *Miltochrista miniata* Forst. There were a couple of *Pseudoips bicolorana* Feussl. and several *Lymantria monacha* L. Among the Noctuids were *Apatele leporina* L., *Agrotis vestigialis* Hufn., *Amathes ditrapezium* Clerck, *Euschesis interjecta* Hübn., *Cosmia pyralina* Schiff., *Coenobia rufa* Haworth, *Zenobia subtusa* Schiff., *Laspeyria flexula* and *Zanclognatha nemoralis* F. Among a good many species of the geometers were *Pseudoterpna pruinata* Hufn., *Scopula imitaria* Hübn., *Xanthorhoë quadrifasciaria* Clerck, *Mesoleuca albicillata* L., *Melanthia procellata* Schiff., *Euphyia unangulata* Haworth, *Thera firmata* Hübn., *Perizoma alchemillata* L., *Eupithecia succenturiata* L., *Semiothisa notata* L., *Selenia tetralunaria* Hufn., *Deuteronomos erosaria* Schiff., *Eupalus piniaria* L., and quite an incursion of *Deileptinia ribeata* Clerck, altogether a most remarkable concourse of insects.

During my couple of nights in this rich area Mr. George Baker kindly let me run my static m.v. trap in his garden at Reydon, just outside Southwold, as he did for my 1970 visit. This time again I was not to be disappointed, especially on the night of August 5th with just over 220 individuals and 60 species of the macros, the largest of which by far was a huge *Sphinx ligustri* L. *Lophopteryx capucina* L. was the only Notodont. The noctuids were in plenty, including several *Agrotis vestigialis* Hufn., also *Euxoa cursoria* Hufn. in its large ochreous form. *E. nigricans* L. seemed to be having a good year. Both the Spectacles (*Unca triplasia* L. and *U. tripartita* Hufn.) were present together with *Arenostola phragmitidis* Hübn., *Cosmia diffinis* L., *Plusia iota* L., several *Cucullia asteris* Schiff. and *Eustrotia uncula* Clerck, a surprise visitor. Among the geometers *Chesias rufata* Fab. appeared at this date with *Eupithecia centaureata* Schiff., *Itame wauaria* L., *Ellopija fasciaria* L., *Pelurga comitata* L., *Crocallis elinguaris* L., as well as a few *Hepialus sylvina* L.

Intense heat persisted the next day, August 6th, when I made my way further along the East Coast via Ipswich and Manningtree to the holiday resort of Walton-on-the-Naze, swarming with populace, and then on to stay with Mr. Ben Fisher at Beaumont-cum-Moze. After dark we ran our m.v. light in one of the localities for *Gortyna borelii* Mab., but with no sign of larvae. However, insects flooded to the illumination with 60 species of macros up until midnight. The only hawk-moth was *Laotoë populi* L.; *Malacosoma neustria* L., *Euprocotis chrysorrhæa* L. and *E. similis* L. were fairly late arrivals with the two Footmen (*Eilema complana* L. and *E. lurideola* Zinck.). There was no lack of noctuids and geometers. Among the former were *Cerapteryx graminis* L., *Eremobia ochroleuca* Schiff., *Thalophila matura* Hufn., *E. nigricans*, *E. tritici*, *A. phragmitidis*, *C. rufa*, several *Nonagria dissoluta* Treits., *Celaena*

leucostigma Hübn., *Apamea lithoxylaea* Schiff., *Procus furuncula* Schiff., *Euschesis interjecta* and *Amathes sexstrigata* Haw. Among many geometers were *Sterrha interjectaria* Boisdl., *S. dimidiata* Hufn., *S. biselata* Hufn., *Scopula imitaria* Hübn., *Ortholitha chenopodiata* L., *Eupithecia subnotata* Hübn., *E. icterata* Vill., *E. absinthiata* Clerck, *Crocallis elinguaris* L., *Deuteronomos alniaria* L., *A. grossulariata*, *Biston betularia* L. and *Chiasmia clathrata* L. We also saw *Zanclognatha cribrumalis* Hübn. and *Hypena proboscidalis* L.

I left this part of Essex early on August 7th in sweltering heat (90°F. in shade) and after visiting relatives en route, got back to Woking fairly late with the thermometer still in the 80's. On the 8th it was even hotter at 92°F. as a shade temperature. There was a short break in the heat-wave for the next three days. However, quite a number of insects came to m.v. light again on the edge of Chobham Common on August 10th. Among 27 species, these included an influx of at least ten *Notodonta dromedarius* L., also several *Coenobia rufa*, *Cryphia perla* Schiff., as well as *Drepana falcataria* L., *D. lacertinaria* L. and *Plusia gamma* L. Geometers were mainly presented by *Cosymbia punctaria* L., *C. albipunctata* Hufn., *Semiothisa alternaria* Hübn., *Eupithecia absinthiata* and *P. hippocastanaria*, *Hepialus sylvina* was also among the visitors. That afternoon I had visited Pewley Down on the outskirts of Guildford to find the many Chalkhill Blues already well past their best. The second brood of *Polyommatus icarus* Rott. was well out. After several more very hot days it was decidedly cooler on August 15th when I revisited the Durfold area to find the Wood Whites still in fair plenty with some late *Argynnis paphia* L. and a glut of Brimstones. My m.v. light run in my sister's garden at Virginia Water on the 16th provided *Hadena rivularis* Fab., *Hydraecia nictitans* L., *Cosmia trapezina* L., *Perizoma alchemillata*, *Eupithecia icterata* and *Ophisthograptis luteolata* L. In spite of continuance of the warmth nothing was on the move on White Down, near Gomshall, on the 17th. It was rainy and quite cool on August 20th, also on the 21st when I flew to the south of France returning on the 28th.

The temperature was back in the lower 80's even on August 29th, but dropped back to the 60's by the 31st. However, it warmed up considerably on September 1st when Mr. J. L. Messenger and I set out for Wales, travelling by the M4 over the Severn Bridge and then on by the Brecon, Llandeilo and Carmarthen route, reaching St. Davids in Pembroke during the early evening. Our haven was the Whitesands Bay Hotel, which overlooks the large bay of that name. We were fortunate in putting up in one of the annexes situated on the low cliff, especially as we were able to have facilities for running our static trap from it. We set out early on the morning of the 2nd to explore southwards along the rocky coast which reminded us of Cornwall. Passing through Broadhaven we halted at Marloes which is one of the embarkation havens for the offshore islands of Skomer and Skokholm, though we did not venture

on to them. Butterflies were flying in good numbers in the warm sunshine with a lot of *Aglais urticae* L., *Pieris napi* L., a few Small Heaths, Walls and Small Coppers. After making our way to the edge of Milford Haven, which I had not seen before, we returned by the inland route via Haverford West. Most of September 3rd was spent at the delightful little cove at Solva where Tortoiseshells were again abundant as they were also on the rough ground between our hotel and annexe where we saw a few *Pyraeneis atalanta* L. as well. The 4th saw us to the north of St. Davids in the direction of Fishguard where we visited Porthgain and another charming small bay at Abereiddy where *P. rapae*, *P. napi* and Common Blues were again flying. On the 5th, another fine day, we saw the first Painted Lady on valerian at Solva. We spent the whole of September 6th on an expedition to southern Pembroke, travelling first to Saundersfoot then in the afternoon via Tenby to Manorbier where, on a walk down to the bay, we again saw many Whites and Tortoiseshells. We returned through Pembroke town over the fine bridge now spanning Milford Haven to Broadhaven and back by the coastal route. The next afternoon, the 7th, we explored on foot the cliffs towards St. David's Head where matts of *Silene maritima* failed to reveal any larvae or pupae of *Hadena barrettii* Doubleday which is quite prevalent in this region.

Unfortunately the weather broke on the 8th when I took Mr. Messenger to catch the London express at Fishguard on his way back to Surrey. The ground windows of the big hotel overlooking the harbour where we had lunch, were smothered with *Plusia gamma* L., evidently quite an invasion. I stayed on at White Sands Bay until the end of the week, September 13th, but conditions during the whole period were very unpropitious and unproductive both by day and night. Several further visits to Abereiddy yielded nothing of note as here too were plenty of matts of *Silene maritima*, though we did not venture out with the portable generator. We ran our m.v. light trap for 11 nights at the annexe. It provided some 525 individuals, comprising 39 species of the macros. The first nights were by far the best with 100 insects on September 3rd. The predominant ones were *Euxoa tritici* L., *Agrotis vestigialis* Hufn. in a very bright form, *Luperina testacea* Schiff., *Amathes xanthographa* Schiff. (some very richly coloured individuals), *Gortyna micacea* Esp. with several *Gortyna ochracea* Hübn., *Stilbia anomala* Haworth, *Arenostola pygmina* Haworth, *Tholera cespitis* Schiff., and *T. popularis* Fab. The first *Antitype xanthomista* Hübn. put in an appearance on September 6th in a slightly paler form than those prevalent in Devon and Cornwall. The same date saw the first *Amathes castanea* Esp in both grey and red insects. Other species mostly seen in singles included *Aporophyla nigra* Haworth on the 5th, also *Plusia festucae* L., *Amathes sexstrigata* Haworth, *A. glareosa* Esp., *Schrankia costae strigalis* Stephens, with the geometers *Anaitis plagiata* L., *Scopula promutata* Guen., *Lyncometra ocellata* L. and *Crocallis elingaria* L.

Early on September 13th I left this delightful part of Wales

and travelling by the same route as we came, I reached the Wye Valley in the late afternoon putting up at the Beaufort Hotel at Tintern which had been a haven for me on several previous occasions. But again a night of heavy rain brought the temperature down considerably and it was very cool but sunny on the 14th when I visited Dr. and Mrs. Michael Harper at their new home set in the country just outside Ledbury. But only a few late Whites, mostly *R. napi* L., were on the wing as there were on the 15th when I was with Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Demuth, near Bisley, just outside Stroud. Their buddleias also attracted a number of Large Whites and Small Tortoiseshells. That evening I returned to Surrey.

On September 19th I was once more on the road southwards to stay with my relatives near Blandford. The following day with the temperature still in the low 70's I scaled Hod Hill where there were still a good many Small Tortoiseshells and Whites, mainly *P. napi*. I also met up with these butterflies later while visiting friends at Childe Okeforde and also that afternoon with Mr. N. Wykes at his home at Uploders, near Bridport. His buddleias were very well attended too. On the 21st, *Heodes phlaeas* L. was also flying in the garden at Winterborne Stickland where I was staying. On my way home on September 22nd the New Forest was my venue with visits to several friends including Mr. L. W. Siggs, at Minstead, Mr. Gilbert Nixon, at Rhinefields, and finally Mr. D. Russwurm on the outskirts of Brockenhurst. It was a grand day and the buddleias in each garden were alive with insects and in the last of the three were several Red Admirals and two Painted Ladies. I was back at Woking again that evening.

Fairly mild and congenial weather saw out the end of September and it was particularly pleasant when I visited Mr. Denzil Fennell at Martyr Worthy, near Winchester, on the 28th, but only a few Whites were to be seen either there or in Alice Holt Forest en route. The first ten days of October were very mild and fairly sunny with the 60's still about the average daily temperature. A cool spell set in the middle of the month, but a certain amount of warmth returned during the final ten days with 65°F. in the shade on the 30th. Autumn moths were reasonably numerous, especially *Aporophyla nigra* Haworth. The very pleasant conditions continued well into November, but a distinct change for late autumn weather was prevalent when I set out for Kent on the 14th in thick fog. However this lifted when I reached Forest Row, and Ashdown Forest was looking at its best for this time of year with leaves changing. Later that day the downs at Westwell presented a similar picture but with no lepidoptera. When I reached Folkestone the fog returned followed by a gale when I visited Mr. G. Youden at Dover on November 16th. This had hardly subsided on the 17th when I called on Mr. M. Tweedie, near Rye, and I had a very stormy and wet journey back that day to Surrey with an empty collecting bag.

The rest of November was on the whole very mild with the temperature reaching the lower 50's almost daily. On the

25th I went to the downs at Oaken Grove, between Guildford and Dorking. It was a favourable night for *Ptilophora plumigera* Schiff., but none appeared at m.v. light which however attracted a lot of *Poecilocampa populi* L. as well as a few *Conistra vaccinii* L. and the first *Operophtera brumata* L. But for a cold snap for a few days in the middle December, the year ended once more on a very mild note especially at the Christmas period, though insects were not as plentiful or precocious as a year previously.

So ended a year which will certainly be long remembered as producing one of the longest and hottest summers of the century. It certainly brought out quite a spate of the lepidoptera, though migrants were not very forthcoming until near its end in late August which saw an amazing invasion of several species in the south-western areas with a record number of the noctuid *Mythimna loreyi* Dup. 1975 was indeed a most memorable year compared with its immediate predecessors.

Butterflies on the Isles of Scilly during August 1975

By I. C. BEAVIS*

From 17th to 30th August, 1975, while staying on St. Mary's, I also visited several of the other islands; namely, Tresco (25th), St. Agnes (18th), St. Martin's (20th), Bryher (23rd), Samson (27th), Tean (21st) and Great Ganilly (26th).

The following are a few notes on the species recorded.

Pieridae

Colias croceus (Geoff. in Fourc.)

A few specimens on St. Mary's. One f. *helice* Hübn. taken on the south side of the island on the 30th.

Pieris brassicae (L.)

Fairly common. Noted on St. Mary's, St. Agnes, Tresco, St. Martin's and Bryher.

Pieris rapae (L.)

Common. Noted on St. Mary's, Tresco, St. Agnes, St. Martin's, Bryher, Samson, Tean and Great Ganilly.

Pieris napi (L.)

Uncommon. St. Mary's only.

Lycaenidae

Lycaena phlaeas (L.)

Uncommon on St. Mary's, St. Martin's and Great Ganilly.

Polyommatus icarus (Rott.)

Common on St. Mary's, Tresco, St. Agnes, St. Martin's, Bryher, Tean and Great Ganilly.

Nymphalidae

Vanessa atalanta (L.)

Common on Tresco. Fairly common on St. Mary's and Bryher. A few specimens noted on Samson, Tean and Great Ganilly.

* 104 St. James' Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.



Worms, C. G. M. de. 1976. "Collecting Lepidoptera in Britain during 1975." *The entomologist's record and journal of variation* 88, 183–194.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/93925>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/196823>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Smithsonian

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

Rights Holder: Amateur Entomologists' Society

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Rights: <https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.