

first visited Central Park in East Ham. *Leucographella* was almost instantly located but the greater interest lay in the five Holly Blue butterflies which were all sitting on the *Pyracantha* bushes having the appearance of being freshly emerged. There was no ivy, holly, snowberry or any other known foodplant nearby. Intrigued, I determined to visit a few other *Pyracantha* patches in East Ham and to my surprise, of seven patches visited (including Central Park) five had *argiolus* either flying in very obvious association with them or else had the adult insects, again all apparently freshly emerged and nowhere near recorded foodplants, sitting in the bushes. The visits were all made from 13th to 15th September 1989.

Though this evidence is purely circumstantial, it does seem to indicate that *Pyracantha* may be implicated as a foodplant of the larvae of the first brood *argiolus* and, given the dates of my visits, that insects bred on *Pyracantha* are slower to develop and will emerge slightly later than insects bred on the more conventional holly.

It would be most interesting indeed to see if my East London findings are repeated elsewhere. — COLIN W. PLANT, Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, Stratford, London E15 4LZ.

Late records of summer moths, and an appeal for information

A female Lilac Beauty, *Apeira syringaria* (L.) at Long Wittenham, Oxfordshire, on 21st September 1989, and a male Swallow-tailed, *Ourapteryx sambucaria* (L.), at Headington, Oxford, on 5th October 1989 are remarkably late records of species that normally appear in June and July. Both specimens came to m.v. light and both are fresh-looking.

The warm, dry summer may have produced numerous records of species "out of season". It is tempting to think of them as being a partial second generation, but the possibility of delayed emergence in response to summer drought must also be entertained. In collaboration with Paul Waring of the Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough, I would like to assemble and analyse all out of season records of macro-moths for 1989. This should enable us to determine which of the above possibilities is likely to be correct. Please send records to me. — DENNIS F. OWEN, 2 Shelford Place, Headington, Oxford OX3 7NW.

Is the population of *Mythimna pallens* (Linnaeus) (Lep.: Noctuidae) sometimes reinforced by immigration?

None of the standard text-books suggests that this species is ever a migrant. It was, as in certain years, common from mid-August to mid-September, 1989 in Saffron Walden, nightly numbers in the light-trap ranging from two or three to about 50. However, on the one night 6/7th September the number certainly exceeded 1,000. I have 15 egg-trays in the trap and the count on a typical tray was between 70 and 80 (the moths were too lively to be more precise); added to these were scored on the sides of the

trap, the wall of the house and adjacent vegetation. This is an arable district and other grass-feeding species such as *M. impura* (Hübner) are relatively uncommon. If recorders in other parts of the country encountered a similar influx of *M. pallens* on the same night, immigration will have been the most likely cause. — A.M. EMMET, Labrey Cottage, Victoria Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3AF.

Wing function in the brachypterous female of *Diurnea fagella* (D. & S.) (Lep.: Oecophoridae)

The males of both British species of *Diurnea* i.e. *D. fagella* (D. & S.) and *D. phryganella* (Hübner) are fully alate and fly vigorously especially at night. The females of both species are brachypterous, the foreshortened wings are held over the abdomen and are just about body length. Neither is known to fly and examination of wing surface area to body mass confirms my belief that neither could fly. However, I have observed on four separate occasions, the effects of disturbance on females of *D. fagella* at rest on trunks of trees. On each occasion the dislodged moth went into a controlled slow drop similar to a parachute drop with one important difference; this being that the slow descent was not vertical, sometimes achieving 75 degrees in dead calm air conditions. Closer observations demonstrated that the wings are outstretched on each occasion. The moth sometimes managed to grab onto a basal buttress projecting from the tree, thereby saving a longer walk back up. It would not however be strictly accurate to describe this as true gliding. — Dr M.W. HARPER, Bullen, Cherry Orchard, Ledbury, Hereford.

***Maruca testulalis* Geyer (Lep.: Pyralidae) in Kent**

A specimen of this moth was attracted to my garden m.v. light 6.viii.1989; perhaps this the fourth feral imago to have been noted for the British Isles, and the first for Kent. Bretherton and Chalmers-Hunt (*Ent. Rec.* 96: 149) observe that the capture of two specimens in 1983, one in Cornwall and the other in Surrey, coincided with an immigration of rare species suggesting that *testulalis* might occur as an immigrant, and not only as an artificial introduction as was previously supposed. The date of the Dartford specimen coincided with a similar period of immigration; the same light attracted a fine pale grey male *Eurois occulta* L. on July 27th for example, suggesting that this *testulalis* was not merely an escape which had developed in some imported plant material, but had arrived by flight from overseas. — B.K. WEST, 36 Briar Road, Dartford, Kent DA5 2HN.

A note on the differences between *Perizoma affinitata* Stephens and *Perizoma alchemillata* L. (Lep.: Geometridae)

In his book (1984), *Colour identification guide to moths of the British Isles*, Bernard Skinner gives the main difference between *P. affinitata* and *P.*



Emmet, A. M. 1990. "Is the population of *Mythimna pallens* (Linnaeus) (Lep.: Noctuidae) sometimes reinforced by immigration?" *The entomologist's record and journal of variation* 102, 43–44.

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