

AROUND GREECE IN FOURTEEN DAYS - 1988

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HOW DID the Athenians know we were not Greek? Our hired car had Greek number plates and the rental company's label was very small, but as we drove through the busy streets of Athens early on our first morning, cyclists and lorry drivers leant over smiling and asked us if we were British! A few cars and especially taxis were less charitable towards our uncertain sense of direction, but finally we cleared the bleak industrial suburbs around Eleusis and sped along the dual carriageway to the Peloponnese.

Just after mid-day we turned off onto the winding road which climbs up from the gulf of Corinth towards Kalavryta and soon a broad lay-by with a gurgling spring appeared on our right. We stopped to fill our water carrier and a large but ragged female *Charaxes jasius* L. swooped down and landed on the damp ground — and was instantly netted. There were no *Arbutus* bushes anywhere in the vicinity to explain her presence and though we fed her on fermented melon juice (in the hope of sleeving her for eggs after our return), she died unfortunately, on our last day in Greece.

After driving through the impressive Vouvraitis gorge we turned off to explore the steep rocky banks beside the river. *Melanargia larissa* Geyer were common here, along with the three *Gonepteryx*: *G. rhamni* L., *G. farinosa* Zeller (the males distinguished even in flight by their paler hind wings) and *G. cleopatra* L. The last was represented by a fine large race, the females sulphur-yellow, tinged with a faint orange on the hind wings. CJL, with a somewhat superior air, pointed out a fresh example of one of these female *cleopatra* and suggested that Michael Chalmers-Hunt should take it. This he did, and found in his net a superb inter-sex aberration, yellow, with splashes of male colour on the forewing! An interesting form of *Plebicula escheri* Hübn., was taken here; large, with gleaming turquoise wings, ssp. *dalmatica* Speyer. We also spent a considerable time trying to flush out the male *Kirinia roxelana* Cramer from their hiding places among the trees beside a small cliff.

After moderate success with this large Satyrid we drove on through Kalavryta and took the fine new road leading up to Mount Chelmos. The metalled surface now runs right up to the famous Xerocampos plateau, rough dirt roads leading off from there. We camped a few hundred feet lower down among the pines and whilst scouting around for a suitable place CJL captured a female *Cyaniris helena* Staud. flitting around in the early evening sun.

The following day, 19th June, we were up early and at the plateau well before 9 am. The magnificent *Colias aurorina* H.-S. was common even at this hour, the males flying vigorously in the cool windy sunshine. A little later on the females put in an appearance, both the typical yellow form and

the less common white *f. fountainei*. *Colias croceus* Geoffroy, also flying in some numbers, looked positively diminutive beside its larger relative. *Plebejus pylaon* Fisch. was plentiful, particularly around *Astragulus* bushes alongside the stream beds; and here and there a few ragged *Parnassius mnemosyne* f. *athene* Stich were noted, usually favouring the damper areas. The commonest butterfly was undoubtedly *Vanessa cardui* L. with *Issoria lathonia* L. a close second. Other fritillaries such as *A. aglaia* L. and *A. niobe* L. were also present and the skippers were represented by *Spialia orbifer* Hübn. and *Carcharodus orientalis* Rev. Two or three *Pieris ergane* Geyer were taken but it was difficult to find undamaged specimens. Around mid-day we explored one of the rough stony roads leading off the plateau, and wandered along the precipitous bed of a stream encountering *Nymphalis polychloros* L., *N. antiopa* L. and myriads of blues imbibing at the damp sand. The commonest species was *P. pylaon*, but a few *Lysandra bellargus* Rott. and *Plebicula amanda* Schneider were flying and, to our delight one or two *Agrodiaetus coelestinus* Eversm. mostly in excellent condition. A good male *C. helena* was also captured here.

Around 3.30 pm. the sky clouded over Chelmos and we zig-zagged our way back down the winding road to Kalavryta, swerving from time to time to avoid jay-walking tortoises and finally meeting the sun again a few hundred feet above the village. We drove back towards our collecting site of the previous day, but sampled the rocky riparian slopes nearer Kalavryta this time.

As well as the species already mentioned from this lower level we encountered three of the confusing brown *Agrodiaetus* species; *admetus* Esp., *pelopi* Brown and *aroaniensis* Brown. They were by no means common (it being early in their flight period) and we found it almost impossible to distinguish between *admetus* and *aroaniensis* in net or pill-box, though *pelopi* in general was recognisable by its white streaked underside. A large female *Papilio alexanor* Esp, condition rather *passe* at this date, was netted in full flight as we were returning to our car. We had had a most eventful time and it was hard to believe that was only our first full collecting day in Greece.

While we were sampling the hordes of *P. argus* L. flying around our tent the next morning, JMC-H spotted a dark Satyrid flitting amongst some rocks beside the road above us. This turned out to be a *Pseudochazara anthelea* Hübn., the males common along a limited area beside the road. We explored further along the rough track leading off the plateau, striking the same stream bed higher up, and this, though mostly dry, still held an assortment of butterflies. Numerous *Spialia orbifer* and *C. orientalis* and two examples of a fine large *Pyrgus* species were taken, the latter the Greek form of *P. serratulae* Ramb. *C. aurorina* was one of the commonest butterflies. The males, many past their best were flying everywhere along the

hillside and the dimorphic females fluttering in numbers around the *Astragalus* in the side gulleys. CJL took a male *aurorina* with dark purplish scales replacing the usual dusky orange colour. It was a curious-looking insect and although scale defect has been suggested this is probably not the case as the silky body hairs are also tinged with indigo. JMC-H took further *C. helena* in fair order and also found a side gully where female *coelestinus* flew around some low bushes. Several worn males accompanied them, but there was no sign of *Agrodiaetus iphigenia* H.-S. for which we were probably a little early.

We left this delectable spot around 3.30 pm. to start our journey northward. Crossing the Gulf of Corinth by the ferry at Rio we reached the mainland around 6 pm. in a light shower and we decided to pitch camp straight away at a well-appointed site near the shore.

It was dull the next morning as we drove toward the Pindos Mountains through a spectacular gorge where griffon vultures soared in the thermals. The clouds soon dispersed and it became excessively hot and beyond Konitsa in the late afternoon we started to collect near an unusually extensive low plateau — an ancient dried-up river bed. The familiar *Astragalus thracicus* grew here and also Dr T.W. Tolman has found *C. aurorina* — much further west than previously recorded. The butterfly emerges at least a month earlier at this low level however, and we saw no sign of it — only vast numbers of *Vanessa cardui* L. on the flat rocky terrain. Once again the clouds rolled up and there were a few claps of thunder, but in between light showers we found good numbers of *Leptidea duponcheli* Stdgr., on some flowery banks nearby. *P. ergane* was also fairly common, and the blues were represented by *Pseudophilotes vicrama* and *Plebicula thersites* Chapman. A few *roxelana* flitted about among the trees.

There were still occasional showers the following morning as we approached our next collecting site in the northern Pindos. This was a magnificent area of sunny clearings and slopes surrounded by natural pine forests. The first new species was *Coenonympha leander* Esp., ssp. *orientalis* in this area with broad white bands in the underside hind-wing — very difficult, in fact, to distinguish from the numerous *C. arcania* L. that flew with it. The butterfly that we particularly sought soon made its appearance on the edge of the pine forest, *Kirinia climene* Esp. This fine Satyrid was known from Europe only as single examples, until discovered in this area by the Bretherton/Cribb expedition in 1982. We found only males but on one slope they were very common and all in beautifully fresh condition. Other interesting species were *Erebia medusa* D. & S. and finally two further species completely new to us both — *Thersamonia thersamon* Esp. (a very ragged female) and *Pyrgus sidae* Esp. with brilliant orange hind-wing markings.

Heading north for Florina that afternoon we struck the twisting unmetalled road beyond Kastoria which winds between the western Vernon mountains and the Albanian border. The heat was intense, but it was

interesting to see clouds of *Aporia crataegi* L. imbibing at Vipers Bugloss beside the road, sometimes a single spike carrying as many as 15 to 20 examples. Strangely enough they had this nectar source almost entirely to themselves. We reached our destination near Florina in the late afternoon and pitched our tent among the mountain beech forest.

Birdsong awoke us in the morning, as if it were May in an English oak-wood. Cuckoos, usually silent in Britain by mid-June, called incessantly and warblers and thrushes sang with all the vigour of spring in their voices. We lost no time in exploring our surroundings and almost immediately encountered a much-desired butterfly *Melitaea arduinna* Esp. Males of this species were locally quite common but it was difficult to find them in perfect condition. Females were very much harder to come by and when we did they were even more ragged. A few good examples were taken however and CJL sleeved three females over a selection plantain and *Centaureae*, but no ova were forthcoming. The local race of *Mellicta athalia* Rott. was abundant and in fine order. There was the usual minor variation, but most were large and dark, with much plainer undersides than is usual in *athalia* — rather like an enormous *M. parthenoides* Kef.

JMC-H took the first *Colias balcanica* Rebel — a male imbibing from purple vetch in the early morning sun. On reaching a rough clearing in the beech forest however, we soon encountered this splendid butterfly in numbers. They frequented rough slopes with young juniper growth, interspersed with a prostrate *Cytisus* species and clumps of red clover. The latter provided nectar for the brilliant orange males which floated around in the sun like autumn leaves. The larger females were less common but we found numbers of ova on the low-growing broom bushes. Some of these eggs were collected, but the young larvae failed to thrive on any of the *Cytisus* species offered to them on our return. During the morning we saw two of the rare white female *f. rebeli*. One sighting involved CJL in a desperate pursuit over the rough and steep ground. This chase provided his companion with much amusement and himself with the reassurance that his coronary arteries were in good order — but no butterfly! A marshy field in this same area was rich in many species — particularly the Coppers, *Palaeochrysophanus (hippotoe) candens* H.-S., and *Heodes virgaureae* L. *M. trivia* D. & S., in a distinctive variegated form, floated over the Scabious heads and *M. phoebe* and *M. cinxia* were also abundant. An enormous female *M. arduinna* in excellent condition was also taken, seemingly quite isolated from others of this species.

On returning to our car we encountered a German collector, Herr T. Arheilger, who was there with his wife. We stopped to talk for a few minutes but we desperately needed water and provisions and had to take our leave in order to get to Florina in time. A roadside spring provided us with the water and also one or two *P. amanda*, *M. arduinna* and a strange grey form of *Carcharodus lavatherae* Esp. which appears to replace the type in this area. Nearby, the flowering hillsides were seething with

butterflies in the afternoon sun. We recorded 13 species of fritillary alone, including freshly emerged *Pandoriana pandora* L. of which we had seen a few earlier on at the *balcanica* ground. We also found several *H. alciphron* Rott., a few *P. sidae* and two examples of the dark “*obscura*” form of *Maculinea arion* L.

June 24th saw us driving up a rough road through the beech forests into the mountains north-west of Florina. At intervals the road deteriorated alarmingly, but it was so narrow that we could only go on up. We stopped as soon as the beeches thinned and on a small marshy plateau, overlooking a rocky precipice, we took our first *Boloria graeca* Stdgr. Several worn *P. mnemosyne* L. were floating around and a few *Euphydryas aurinia* Rott. — a rare and local butterfly in Greece. Higher up we came out onto open hillsides with occasional lush marshes alongside streams descending the mountain. *Coenonympha rhodopensis* Elwes (a mountain species allied to *C. tullia* Mull), was common, along with many more *B. graeca*. *Coenonympha leander* (of the nominate form) were mostly very ragged, but the few specimens we took looked very different from the *f. orientalis* we had found in the northern Pindos a few days earlier. A little silvery blue flying along the road was *Aricia anteros* Frey., and at one spot we found half a dozen of this local butterfly. *E. medusa* was everywhere and one newly emerged *E. ottomana* H.-S. was taken. In the early afternoon it became overcast and we failed to reach the summit where an interesting race of *E. epiphron* Knoch. flies.

When exploring the *balcanica* locality the following morning we found this fine Clouded Yellow in even better numbers but already some of the males were going over. One or two *Lycaeides idas magnagraeca* Ver. were found and a single female *anteros*, *P. pandora* becoming more frequent on the patches of red clover.

We spent the evening at a taverna beside Lake Prespa where we had arranged to meet Dirk van der Poorten who had turned up the previous day. This huge lake straddles the borders of three countries — Greece, Yugoslavia and Albania. It holds excellent populations of water birds such as brown pelicans and various species of heron. It was a rare pleasure to sit and watch the skeins of pelicans coming off the lake against the sunset and flying over our heads to their night resting places in the marshes nearby. *Lycaena dispar rutilus* Werne. flies in the lakeside marshes, and Dirk kindly directed us to a locality which we surveyed the following morning. Though mist swirled around our camp site in the mountains above Florina it was warm and sunny when we descended to the lake. *Lycaena dispar* flew in small numbers and in mostly worn condition, but we found ova and young larvae on the *Rumex hydrolapathum* growing among the reeds. These resulted in imagines later in the summer; larger second-brood specimens than any others I have seen before — including those that ssp. *batavus* Obth. occasionally produces in captivity.

That same day in the early afternoon we started the trek across Macedonia to Drama in the east of the region. Beyond Florina the road wound over barren hillsides and scattered townships, but there was little point in stopping anywhere as the weather was generally dull in the western hills and only improved as we approached the second city of Greece, Thessalonica. Forewarned about the difficulties of getting through the city we were fortunate in quickly finding the main road leading east to Serres and Kavala. This road leads past two large lakes and in the surrounding fields we frequently saw white storks. On the telegraph wires, large unfamiliar birds, the size of jackdaws but beautifully plumaged in turquoise and rust, were a species new to both of us — Rollers. We eventually found a camp site beside a river where frogs croaked loudly all night but we were far too tired to notice very much.

The following day, 27th June, we reached Drama in the late morning and beyond the town took one of the roads towards the north. At the overspill from a stone water trough by the road clustered dozens of blues and a few skippers. Dominant were *P. escheri dalmaetica*, *L. bellargus* and *P. argus* but there were also a few large brilliant males of *Plebicula dorylas* D. & S. The skippers were nearly all *S. orbifer* but in a nearby dry gully *C. lavatherae* (typical coloration) and *S. orientalis* flitted over the baking hot rocks with some dashing males of *M. daphnis*. Here also *Zerynthia cerisyi* Godt. flew in abundance, the females egg-laying on shaded plants of *Aristolochia clematitis* which grew everywhere along the gully. As well as ova we found half-grown larvae of this species. The gully was also rich in other butterflies such as *Chazara briseis* L., *Hipparchia aristaeus* ssp. *senhes* Frhst, *P. mannii* Mayer, *P. napi* L., *L. duponcheli*, *G. farinosa*, *A. aroaniensis*, *A. admetus*; and one or two wary *Libythea celtis* Laich. Four *Polygonia egea* Cram. were taken flying around a short cliff. The intense afternoon heat eventually defeated CJL who took himself off to recover in what minimal shade there was.

On the 28th we explored further along the roads penetrating the mountains. In one flowery strip of ground *Brenthis hecate* D. & S. flew in worn condition, as well as a rare butterfly in Greece — *Aphantopus hyperantus* L. The scenery changed to sparsely vegetated hillsides shimmering in the heat. We had been directed to a specific area and after a short climb found ourselves on a rugged outcrop. Almost immediately one of the rarer butterflies we sought made an appearance: a little yellow Pierid, *Elphinstonia charlonia* Donzel, fluttering over the steep pavements of rock, and very awkward to net in such difficult terrain. They were not uncommon, but we probably missed as many as we netted. The other species was the fine *Pseudochazara orestes* de Prins and van der Poorten (discovered in 1980 by Jos Dils and Dirk van der Poorten and only known from this area). The butterfly was just emerging — males beautifully fresh and quite frequent, and JMC-H managed to find one female. We left our hotel in Drama the following morning but before heading south again,

sampled another area higher up in the mountains. As we drove up through the pine woods we passed large numbers of butterflies imbibing at damp spots on the banks. These were mainly the Whites *P. mannii* and *P. napi* but also *H. aristaeus* and several magnificent *N. antiopa*. In one clearing we found four of these fine cream-bordered creatures flying amongst the timber. Higher up among the grassy pastures we found *C. rhodopensis* in numbers, rather larger than those we had taken near Florina. At the point at which we stopped our car there was a continuous flight of male *L. celtis*. They slanted down the hillside in a north-easterly direction, crossing the road, and dropped down into the valley below. This apparent local migration continued intermittently all the time we were there. After sampling the *orestes* ground in the early afternoon (where we failed to find more females) we started our southward trek, stopping that night at our frog-haunted camp site near Kavala.

We continued our journey towards Athens the following day driving virtually without a break until the late afternoon. We had been told where to look for the little Blue *Tarucus balkanicus* Frey. near the town of Almiros, but as time was short we were reluctant to make the required detour and decided that only if the scrub covered hillsides approached the main road would we stop to look for it. Eventually a track appeared leading off the main road onto some rough ground and as we were tired and needed refreshment we turned into it. We bumped our way along this for twenty yards, stopped the car, and immediately saw the tiny tailed blues sitting on the mud beside the track. *T. balkanicus* was abundant and in less than half-an-hour we had a small series of fine specimens. The females were more difficult to come by as they flew almost exclusively around, and settled on, the low bushes of *Paliurus spina-christa*. The twigs of this bush which bristle with vicious spines were reputedly used to make Christ's crown of thorns.

That night we stayed in Amphissa and the following morning visited Delphi. The early morning was spent surveying the archeological sites, among which flew *polychloros* and *egea*, but just before mid-day we drove east to Arachova and on up the steep road to Mount Parnassus. Among the pine trees of the plateau below Parnassus *P. pandora* was found settling on the tall road-side thistles alongside numbers of *larissa* and *anthelea*. *P. daplidice* L. was also fairly common and we took the last new species of our trip — *Hyponephele lupinus* Costa, a freshly-emerged male lurking among the trees. In the early hours of the following morning we arrived back at the International Airport (after a horrendous journey through night-time Athens) and were promptly informed of the inevitable flight delay. We thus had plenty of time to review our holiday, which in fourteen days had taken us on a complete circuit of mainland Greece. We had encountered 119 different butterfly species, and, thanks to Dr T.W. Tolman who provided us with detailed information on localities and emergence times, this list

included nearly all those we had particularly hoped to see. We were both completely exhausted but unanimously agreed that it had been our most successful foray yet.

Recent records of three Lepidoptera in Jersey

Dr Julian Clarke, in *Ent. Rec.* **101**: 130, reported the most recent capture of *Thera cypressata* Gey. (Cypress Carpet) in Britain. He also brought together all the published records of this species on the mainland and in the Channel Islands of Guernsey and Alderney, which has prompted me to complete the record with two observations from Jersey. R. Burrow, operating a light in his garden on the outskirts of St Helier, took one on 11.vi.1988, and a second one at the same place on 25.v.1989.

A. Riley speculates (*Ent. Rec.* **99**: 225) on the possibility that *Thaumetopoea processionea* (L.) (Oak Processionary moth) is established in Jersey, on the strength of three specimens including a female, taken at the one site in 1984 and '85. Although not searched for exhaustively, no more were seen until a fourth one was taken at light, also by R. Burrow, a few miles away at Gorey on 22.vii.1989.

On the following day, 23.vii.1989, R. Burrow took a fine specimen of *Polyphaenis sericata* (Esp.) also at light at Gorey. This is the first Jersey record of this European moth, although there were possible sightings of it at the same place in 1985 and '86. This species was known to be established in Guernsey around the 1880s, and R.A. Austin (*Ent. Rec.* **99**: 85) records its rediscovery in Guernsey in 1986. In view of its long-established place in the fauna of Guernsey I should like to support the suggestion of my colleagues in that island that the name Guernsey Underwing is an appropriate one for this species. — R. LONG, Société Jersiaise, 9 Pier Road, St Helier, Jersey, Channel Islands.

Usual second brood emergences in Cornwall 1989

Every year I keep a record of flight times of moths in Cornwall. I illustrate this by a method suggested to me by A.E.C. Aston. Each month is divided into four sections which are shaded in when a particular species is recorded in this period. This provides a quick visual reference. Thus in 1983 I found *Perizoma alchemillata* in late August (23.8.83) as well as in June and July, indicating that in Cornwall at least this species may be occasionally double-brooded. Of course, it can be difficult to differentiate between a prolonged emergence and bivoltinism. In the recording method used, over a long period the gap between the broods of bivoltine species is gradually filled by early or late emergences in particular years or by errant individuals found well outside their usual flight-time. On the Continent, many species have extended flight-times compared with flight-times in Britain and in hot summers in this country emergences may be similarly prolonged.



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