

grass feeders, and one feeds on trefoils; the only "weed" eater, the small copper, is on sorrel, and a selective weedkiller should only have destroyed this last-named plant.

To me, the whole matter seems to be the result of the great food-chain upset following the myxamatoxis disaster and the wave of extravagant use of the now proscribed insecticides; I would appreciate readers' views on the factors causing the alarming loss of such a huge proportion of our insect numbers.—S.N.A.J.

Obituary

WILLIAM JAMES KAYE (1875-1967)

On 5th May 1967, within a fortnight of his 92nd birthday, there passed away one who might well have been termed the 'doyen' of British entomologists. For William Kaye had been a fellow of the Royal Entomological Society since 1896 and was also its 'father' by virtue of age, too. His father, who was the manager of the Hongkong Bank in London, sent him in his early years to Harrow School, where he was a contemporary of Sir Winston Churchill. He well remembered that great man as a none too promising schoolboy. After obtaining an engineering degree at King's College, London, he went for a time to Leicester. But when his father died at 60 he abandoned this vocation. The lure of the wilds and the love of collecting overtook him. He made his first expedition to the West Indies in 1898 and thereafter for nearly forty years, until 1937, he paid successive visits to South America, often accompanied by his wife and two daughters. But Trinidad was probably his favourite venue. Already in 1904 he published his first list of the butterflies of that island. His net was in use over a wide area of those regions, mainly in south Brazil and the environs of Rio de Janeiro, also in British Guiana, Venezuela, Costa Rica and Jamaica. From all these territories he amassed a very big and valuable collection of their Rhoplocera, embodying many new species, types and undescribed races.

About his travels and his rich harvest from them he wrote up almost annually important papers which appeared in the leading journals. We owe to him a vast source of information about the lepidoptera of that vast subcontinent. In 1927 he published in collaboration with Sir Norman Lamont a catalogue of the moths of Trinidad. Though he did not wield his net much in Europe, he had visited South Africa and Ceylon and, above all, the British fauna was very dear to him. He had collected in most parts of the British Isles and just before the last war, in company with the late C. N. Hughes, he went to Kerry where he claimed to have beaten the larvae of the White Prominent, but did not breed them out.

Willie Kaye was ever eager to talk about his odysseys and to exhibit some of his glorious collection, especially in former days at the South London Entomological Society of which he was president in 1911. But the lepidoptera was not his only pastime. At his lovely home on the downs near Guildford he had a hothouse full of superb orchids which he tended himself and, in his latter years, was greatly assisted by his second wife. Always of the most kindly disposition, he was full of vigour of mind and body to the very end of his long and most active life. Every sympathy is conveyed from his many friends to his widow and surviving daughter in their bereavement.—C.G.M.deW.



Worms, C. G. M. de. 1967. "William James Kaye (1875-1967)." *The entomologist's record and journal of variation* 79, 266–266.

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