

entomologist at that time who had found the caterpillars (near Frankfurt am Main, cf. also Zeller 1854, *Linn. ent.* 9: 322-324), and who no doubt sent one or more caterpillars to Stainton to be figured in his book. Up till now Stainton's description of the larva and its biology is the only one available and it is copied more or less literally by all subsequent writers. The only author who added something new is, as far as I can see, A. Grabe, who writes that the caterpillar pupates on the ground but when bred often in its spinning (1955, *Kleinschmetterlinge des Ruhrgebietes, Mitt. Ruhrlandmus. Stadt Essen* nr 177: 90).

Stainton's assertion that one specimen of unknown locality had been taken in England is repeated by Meyrick (1895, *Handb. Br. Lep.*: 627, 1928, *Revised Handb. Br. Lep.*: 681) and by Jacobs (1951, *The British Oecophoridae II (Proc. Trans. S. Lond. ent. nat. Hist. Soc., 1949-1950)*: 197). However another Dutch lepidopterist directed my attention to F. O. Morris, *A Natural History of British Moths* (1872). This author writes (vol. 4: 62): "Localities for the species are near Warrington. . . . For information about, and a beautiful drawing of this species, I have to thank C. S. Gregson, Esq.". A description of the species is not given and the figure is worthless.

Gregson's name is of course well-known to those who are acquainted with the older English entomological literature. But as I wanted more information I asked Mr. Chalmers-Hunt. He answered that Gregson was a superb field worker and that he had no positive evidence that he was ever untrustworthy. "One would like to be able to trace the fate of many of his micros and to check if *emeritella* really was among them, but after such a lapse of time (he died in 1899), this could be very difficult. Gregson's first collection was incorporated in that of Sydney Webb about 1888, and Webb's collection was sold by auction, that part containing the micros on 9th April 1920. The *Depressarias* were included in lots 190, 191, 236 and 237, all of which were bought by F. Whittle except 190 which went to L. W. Newman. Newman's stuff could have gone anywhere, but Whittle left his collection to the B.M. However, Mr. D. Carter told me there appear to be no *emeritella* there from Gregson and no British examples with locality labels".

So far our Editor. The whole matter depends on the question whether Gregson knew Stainton's description and figure, for in that case a mistake with such an easily recognizable species by such an excellent collector would seem to be practically impossible. But I fear that this puzzle cannot be solved. — B. J. LEMPKE, Oude Yselstraat 12 III, 1078 CM Amsterdam.

STILPON NUBILUS COLL. (DIPT.: EMPIDIDAE) NEW TO KENT. — This tiny but distinctive fly is seldom recorded; Collin (1961, *Brit. Flies*, 6 (I): 58) knew of only five British specimens, from Dorset, Lancs., Bucks., and, in Ireland, Co. Meath. Chvála (1975, *Faun. ent. Scand.*, 3: 294) referring to northern Europe states that it is widespread but everywhere uncommon, occurring in grasses but mainly on sandy coasts, and that M. Ackland took specimens on a stone path in his

garden at Oxford. I.F.G. MacLean (1978, *Ent. Rec.*, **90**: 325) records it as found commonly in a greenhouse in Norwich, "running over gravel-covered benches and amongst pots containing grass".

On 15th July 1967, I took three examples of a *Stilpon* (2 ♂♂, 1 ♀) in my former garden at Blackheath, only this year securely identified as *nubilus*. They were in debris accumulated under a tile placed as a beetle-trap against a wall of the house, where the soil was a little gravelly. Like others of the genus, the fly is usually of retiring habits and more likely to be encountered by coleopterists than by dipterists. This should be the first Kent record of *S. nubilus*.

Hitherto the name *Stilpon* has for some reason been treated as feminine; but Mr. MacLean is correct in making it masculine, as shown by its derivation. It is a rare dialect word for a dwarf, which the late Greek author Athenaeus tells us was in use among the Sybarites, and is, of course, a masculine noun. There can be no question therefore that we should write *S. nubilus*, *S. lunatus*, etc. — A. A. ALLEN.

ALMOST ANYWHERE . . . RATHER THAN ESSEX. — My friends are pulling my leg and telling me that I should let Mr. Wykes' onslaught on the entomological credentials of Essex pass without response; but as I agree with everything, or almost everything, he says both about butterflies and land usage, I can answer only by changing the subject. He is incorrect in claiming that we are completely without heathland and sand-dunes, though the little we have is nothing to boast about. He is more wrong about our woods which are much better and more plentiful than he supposes as a glance at Map 13 entitled "Forest and Woodland" in Jermyn's *Flora of Essex* (1974) will show. Their quality improves as you go north-westwards and examples like Great and Little Bendysh Woods, Rowney Wood, Hales Wood and Little Hales Wood, woods well administered by the Forestry Commission, are entomologically very good indeed. However, butterflies are Mr. Wykes' theme and he is dead right when he says that Essex is not the county for them: even the north-western woodlands boast relatively few species.

Happily, the same does not apply to our moths; for them Essex, although neglected, is one of the best counties in the south of England. For the sake of the incredulous and the prejudiced I shall quote figures to prove it. Mr. Wykes lived at Leighton-Sea, which is situated in the 10 x 10 kilometre square TQ 88; 45% of this square is salt water and "the all-consuming tentacles of the Greater Southend Octopus" grasp most of the remainder. Yet 628 species of Microlepidoptera are recorded from the square, which is 60% of the Essex total. I do not know the figure for the Macrolepidoptera but the proportion should be higher because of the late Harry Huggins' light-trap; but at the same 60% we get a grand total of nearly 1,050 species from, let me remind you, an incomplete and densely populated square. The late Denzil Ffennell reached 1,000 species at Martyr Worthy in Hampshire and this is



Allen, Anthony Adrian. 1980. "Stilpon nubilus Coll. (Dipt., Empididae) new to Kent." *The entomologist's record and journal of variation* 92, 26–27.

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