

BOOK REVIEWS

THE BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS OF HAMPSHIRE AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT (being an account of the whole of the Lepidoptera) by B. Goater. 1974. E. W. Classey, Ltd., Faringdon, Oxon, England. xiv + 439 pp. Price: £6.50, postpaid.

Perhaps nothing so authoritative as this book has been written on so small an area's fauna. The book is annotated with published records, manuscript notes and personal observations on all of the butterflies and moths of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight since the beginning of collecting there. Make no mistake, this book is an historical document, and as a record of what is (and was) in the County, and on the island, it is invaluable.

Goater has drawn records from many contemporary sources, and there are some prominent English entomological contributors to the list: such as D. W. Ffennell, John Heath, E. C. Pelham-Clinton, and the Baron C. G. M. de Worms, names well-known in English lepidopterology. This information provides a regional list unlike any we have seen and the coverage is complete through 1972.

Despite the lovely picture of *Argynnis paphia* on the cover, this is no "coffee table" book. It sticks strictly to business, and those looking for pretty pictures by which to identify British Lepidoptera should be forewarned to stay away from it. As a book of information (isn't that what we *really* need?), it is superb, and from it one can discover when, where and at what time any species of butterfly or moth has been captured in that area, and, if it has been reared, on what foodplant. I suspect that in this alone the book has fulfilled its purpose, and, additionally, it should stimulate the collector in the area to "fill in the blanks".

The nomenclature used is standard perhaps only to the British, since it is derived from the Kloet and Hincks *Checklist of British Insects, part 2, Lepidoptera*, 1972. In this treatment, the Hesperioidea and Papilionoidea directly follow the Pterophoroidea and precede the Bombycoidea. To a North American rhopalocerist this arrangement will seem strange, even incomprehensible, since there are few other classifications that follow this one. Most schemes place the butterflies and skippers above the Noctuidae, the "top" family in Goater's system. If you are interested in the butterflies, by the way, look on pp. 214-245. The sphingids may be found on pp. 307-312, and the saturniid (there is only one) on p. 248, while *Catocala* are on pp. 404-406. This gives a bit of a "road map" to the reader just trying the book for the first time (I confess to a great deal of initial confusion).

As stated before, don't buy this book on the basis of the pretty picture on its cover. Neither is this an identification manual. But if you are interested in a superb compendium of what is known about a limited fauna, by all means get the volume. It sets a fine standard, despite a few typographical errors not alluded to here (they happen to everyone!), for future lists on small faunas.

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BUTTERFLIES OF WEST MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE by W. A. Fleming. 1975. E. W. Classey Ltd., Farington, Oxon, England. Vol. 1: vii-x+64 pp., pls. 1-54; vol. 2: vii-x+92 pp., pls. 55-90. Price: £19.50, postpaid.

This book, effective as it is, is something of an enigma. I find it impossible to rationalize making it in two volumes if the series is only to be sold as a whole, and not broken into separate volumes, if the buyer so desires. The text is identical in both volumes to page 15, so it is only in the plates and the parts following them that the two volumes differ. A little elementary arithmetic shows that if the volumes

were combined into a single one, there would be a very manageable and useful single book of four prefatory pages, 144 text pages and 90 plates. Surely this would have been a better plan. Maybe others will have the problem I did—I would refer to “the” book to identify a Malaysian butterfly, and I almost inevitably selected the wrong volume. The only excuse I can think of for publishing this work in two volumes is economic, and perhaps £19.50 for a single book would put off some buyers, but with the price of books what it is today, I doubt it.

But enough of the complaining. There is a multitude of information in this book, even though the style is such that it takes some acclimation. The nomenclature is up-to-date and applied to the right insects. Species in which the illustrations are not enough for identification are characterized in the text, and in those instances where genitalic dissection is necessary for final determination, the fact is noted, even though the genitalia are not figured. If Fleming had included some bibliographic citations to these problem areas, and to the many included foodplants records, the book would have been more authoritative, and the space these references would have added could not have been that much.

The illustrations, however, are where the books truly excel. All of the photographs of specimens illustrate the salient points well and facilitate the identification of the insects in question. All of the specimens used are not perfect; some are downright tatty, such as the illustrated female of S12, *Lethe europa malaya* Corbet on Plate 24, but these were the best specimens available in collections, and the photographs mercifully have not been “prettied up”. The color fidelity is very high, and at least most of the specimens are fresh, rather than century-old museum relics. Identification of even the difficult Malaysian lycaenids is facilitated by them, though of course it is not made simple—no book could achieve *that!*

I particularly appreciated the accurate citation of the authors of various taxa, even though these names were not bracketed where appropriate. At long last, both of the Felders are cited as the authors of names proposed in the “*Reise Novara*”, not just a blanket “Felder”. This latter practice seems to have dated from “Seitz” where only Cajetan Felder was given credit for the descriptions in the work, even though the authors themselves cited “*nobis*” on every new name, rather than the singular “*mihi*”.

On balance, this is an excellent book, the foregoing criticisms notwithstanding, and one that is remarkably free of typographical errors. The text portions are perhaps a bit too abbreviated, and authority is not given for many statements. I personally would have preferred a single volume about the size of Corbett and Pendlebury’s *The Butterflies of the Malay Peninsula*, but the present book accomplishes some things that the earlier authors could not: Fleming has made the identification of Malaysian butterflies considerably easier than before. No more can be asked of any author! If your interests lie in the butterflies of southeastern Asia, by all means buy this book.

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