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REVIEW: The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland. Volume 7 Part 2.

Editors A. Maitland Emmet and John Heath.

Published by Harley Books.

Price £55 (hardback).

How could the **Lasiocampidae**, **Saturniidae**, **Endromidae**, **Drepanidae** and **Thyatiridae** fill a whole book? The answer is that they do not! The last sixty pages cover the identification, distribution and life history of each species to the same high standard as that achieved in other volumes. The colour plates, so often criticised in early volumes in this series, now seem to have achieved a consistent high standard.

The rest of the book contains three other sections. First is a summary of the classification of the Lepidoptera. The relationships between families and superfamilies and the history of these divisions is discussed. It is set in a worldwide context with useful notes explaining the characteristics of each division.

The second chapter discusses the resting postures of Lepidoptera. Unfortunately, many families of **Microlepidoptera** are omitted from the excellent colour photographs depicting moths at rest. I remember well how long it took me to 'get my eye in' to the extent that I could reorganise moth families by their resting poses. Many people complain that it would be much simpler to identify moths if the books did not at all show them in set poses!

The bulk of this volume contains an extensive series of life history charts for all species of Lepidoptera recorded in Britain and Ireland. Details of the annual life cycles are provided showing which stages of development each species will have reached for each month. General distributional notes and habitat preferences are given and note of the flight time (as in 'Afternoon' or 'Sunrise') are listed. This section is fully indexed to species and foodplants. Abbreviations are used extensively, but an excellent laminated reference key avoided repeated flicking back to find the main key. The level of information provided is not as detailed as that of Emmet's *A Field guide to the Smaller British Lepidoptera*, but provides a useful checklist with plenty of room for annotations! It is extremely useful to have a full index to the foodplants of all species of British Lepidoptera.

Another classic volume in the series.

Steve Garland