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BOOK REVIEW

A Recorder's Log Book or Label List of British Butterflies and Moths

by J.D. Bradley and D.S. Fletcher, 136p, Curwen Press, London, 1979
(Price £2.00)

As a label list, the type is distinct with judicious use of various faces to distinguish the categories of family, genus, species and English name. On receipt of this 'book' measuring 190 x 110mm, one may feel disinclined to cut it up for cabinet labels.

The layout is essentially designed to be used to record the presence of a particular species in the locality to which the log book is assigned. It appears to me that it is unusable for recording information from a collection in a museum context but is for the comprehensive survey of a relatively small area. In these circumstances, the recorder fills in the details required of the Lepidoptera recording scheme and forwards his completed book to BRC, Monkswood, who will extract relevant data for their mapping schemes and return the book.

For a biological curator what function will this book fulfil, apart from being a label list? Firstly, at a worthwhile site (nature trail, SSSI, etc.) in which field work is uncovering a considerable faunal diversity within the Lepidoptera this log book will be many times more useful than the standard BRC field card. It has all species represented including the micros. Secondly, I can envisage it being used to record old literature records for the area which the museum's local collecting policy covers, as a starting point to filling gaps in the knowledge of the local fauna.

At £2.00 it clearly could not be used (at the necessary ratio of one book to one site or 10km square) for all the sites in most museum's areas and in this respect is obviously designed to encourage the amateur entomologist to send in his records to Monkswood for his 'home square'. However, whereas the log book function has limited application in museums, the label list aspect is undoubtedly useful and up to date. Also, the inclusion of doubtful, adventitious and extinct species occurring in the British Isles increases its value in this latter respect; museums are quite likely to be the repositories of examples of these species.

E. G. Hancock.