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**THE MOTHS AND BUTTERFLIES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND**  
**Volume 7, Part 2**

Editors: A Maitland Emmet and John Heath

*Paperback edition, revised with minor corrections. 400pp. 8 colour plates, 7 figs, 28 maps.*

ISBN 0 946589 42 9. Published by Harley Books, Martins, Great Horkesley, Colchester, Essex, CO6 4AH (1993).

Price £27.50 net.

The publication of this superb long-awaited volume in hardback form, two years ago, was hailed by lepidopterists and naturalists as an invaluable standard reference. Now, in a cheaper stiff laminated paperback form it should reach a wider market, and deservedly so.

The Systematic Section occupies only 60 of the book's 400 pages. It follows the standard layout established in earlier volumes - keys to species followed by species accounts. Nomenclature, description of imago, life history, distribution, including 10 km. square dot maps of high quality, are all masterly reviewed by Barry Goater, one of the most active amateur field lepidopterists in Europe.

As a non-lepidopterist natural history curator, I find the information in this volume (indeed in the series so far) satisfies 99% of my enquiries.

The distribution maps are as up-to-date as possible. I know that Basil Harley (publisher and also Associate Editor) has taken a great personal interest in maintaining accurate modern maps.

Species texts combined with beautifully clear colour plates (by Richard Lewington) will greatly assist all biology curators charged with curating a British moth collection, or answering enquiries from the public.

Volume 7, Part 2 follows on from butterflies in Volume 7, Part 1, and covers some very elegant moths in the Lasiocampidae, Saturniidae, Endromidae, Drepanidae and Thyatiridae (Eggars, Drinkers, Lappets, Emperors, Hook-tips, Lutestrings etc).

The bulk of this volume (243 pages) is a chart showing the life history and habits of all British Lepidoptera. This is nothing short of an epic undertaking. Each species has a two-page spread, including a month by month life history, status, regional distribution, coded principal habitat preferences, flight times of the adult, foodplants and conservation status (Red Data Book categories). This life history chart will prove to be invaluable for those curators involved in ecological, wildlife conservation or habitat management work. A special index to foodplants and other food substances is particularly useful.

For those of us not well-acquainted with the checklist order there are two more special indexes, by English name and scientific names, in addition to the volume's general index.

I wondered why the enormous Life History Chart appears in Volume 7 of an 11 volume series. The editors explain that it seems appropriate at this stage to look back to the Microlepidoptera (we await Volumes 3 to 6 with anticipation) and to look forward to the Macrolepidoptera (Volumes 8 and 11 still to come). So, it seems that Volume 7, Part 2 is the key work to the entire series.

Chapters 1 and 2 in this volume also deserve special remarks. M.J. Scoble's review of lepidoptera classification is very thorough, with a good bibliography. M.W.F. Tweedie and A.M. Emmet's review of resting posture, with 64 colour photos, is absolutely fascinating, and very useful to everyone who spends time in the field recording or observing these beasties.

No doubt the real lepidopterists in BCG will find a few faults here and there, and no doubt the frontiers of ecological and taxonomic knowledge are moving faster than the author's pen and the printer's press. Indeed pages 302 and 303 are provided as a blank template to update the Life History Chart.

For the rest of us, this volume stands as an essential reference and should be in every museum library. For those with dwindling book budgets the paperback edition represents even better value for money. Furthermore, it is worth buying Volume 7, Part 2 as a stand-alone, even if you do not have the rest of this excellent series.

*Derek Whiteley*