

Book Review

Emmet, A. M. & J. R. Langmaid (eds.) 2002. The moths and butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland. – Harley Books, Great Horkesley (Colchester, England)

Volume 4, Part 1 comprising Oecophoridae, Ethmiidae, Autostichidae, Blastobasidae, Batrachedridae, Agonoxenidae, Momphidae, Cosmopterigidae, Scythrididae. 326 pp., 7 pls. ISBN 0 94 65 89 66 6. Price: £ 80.00.

Volume 4, Part 2. Gelechiidae. 277 pp., 6 pls. ISBN 0 94 65 89 67 4. Price: £ 80.00.

Hardback set of volume 4, part 1 and 2: ISBN 0 94 6589 63 1; Price: £ 150.00. (A paperback edition will be published later this year).

Though the ‘Micro’-lepidoptera comprise the majority of Lepidoptera, only a minority of lepidopterists is focusing on these smaller moths still leading to a lack of literature for their identification. It is therefore highly appreciated that a further volume of “The moths and butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland” dealing with smaller moths has been published now. The two parts comprising this volume cover many of the least familiar families of the Gelechioidea. No comparable British work exist on these ‘micro’-lepidopteran families, which in terms of identification indeed comprise the most difficult species. Moreover, also continental entomologists are in want of this literature since many of these taxa (e.g. Agonoxenidae, Autostichidae, Batrachedridae, Cosmopterigidae) occurring in Britain are not treated in other recent literature. But continentals will again regret not to find all ‘their’ species in this book series.

Unfortunately, Arthur Maitland Emmet (1908–2001) who was instrumental in starting this book series since 1975 and contributed by himself as an author for many chapters, did not live to see the fourth volume published – which in his eyes is the most needed. Therefore, part one of this volume starts with a tribute to Maitland Emmet.

The introductory chapter by Jens Rydell & Mark Young deals with the ecology and evolution of Lepidopteran defences against bats. It is a fascinating reading to get know about a world beyond human experience: the echolocation by bats, moth hearing, and how hearing and deaf moths avoid the predators. Rydell & Young write in great detail on this topic, and everybody who wants to know more will find a quite complete bibliography at the end of the chapter.

It follows the systematic section in the familiar arrangement of the family introduction, key to species, the treatment of the species including a comprehensive morphological description, the description of the life history and distribution, underlined by a map showing the records in Britain and Ireland. The text is accompanied with line drawings of morphological features (head, wing venation, genitalia) as well as images on typical life forms of pre-imaginal stages. Colour plates of the moths conclude the work. The illustrations are valuable, highly accurate and very esthetical throughout the book. Text and illustrations are well suitable to identify the species treated. Authors and publisher of volume four of “The moths and butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland” doubtless contributed much to a better understanding of the identification and life history of the Gelechioidea in Europe. This volume certainly will influence faunistic and systematic work on these smaller moths not only in Britain and Ireland, but also on the European mainland.

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