

Book reviews — Buchbesprechungen — Analyses

L. G. Higgins & N. D. Riley: Die Tagfalter Europas und Nordwestafrikas. Übersetzt und bearbeitet (transl.) von W. Forster. 2nd edition, 1978. Hardback in cloth, ca. 13 x 20 cm, 377 pp., 60 col. pls (Ill. by B. Hargreaves), figs., maps. Verlag Paul Parey, Hamburg und Berlin, 1978. Price DM 44,—

The new edition of this popular pocket guide in German language, which followed the first after only seven years, is the indication of the great appeal of this kind of natural history book. As the book is generally known a description is hardly required here, except perhaps that the colour plates are in the German editions conveniently collected at the back instead of being scattered through the text pages, as in the English (and other) editions. The main point is that this edition gained enormously from Forster's knowledge and experience and is considerably better than the original — a compliment rarely made of a 'mere' translation. Only the difference in the price of the English and German editions is difficult to understand and, probably, to justify.

O. Kudrna

D. Gray: Butterflies on my mind. Their life and conservation in Britain today. Hardback in cloth, ca. 19 x 25 cm, 125 pp., numerous unnumbered illustrations (mostly in colour) by B. Hargreaves. Angus & Robertson Publishers, Brighton. Price: £ 5.75.

A book aimed at the general public written (this time) by an 'individual member' of the general public — an interesting experiment. The book can hardly be judged on its scientific merits: it would be very unfair to the author who made no false pretensions. The question if such book as this should be written by a scientist in co-operation with a professional non-fiction writer remains hypothetical, but should be considered by the publishers keen to produce yet another pretty book on butterflies. The chief weaknesses of this book are the non-appealing 'near-Victorian' style and above all the disastrous colour illustrations: inaccurate pot boilers, repulsive at times, depicting the butterflies in often their most unnatural habitats, positions and situations (just try to look at illustrations on pp. 24, 30, 47, 57 and 80 to start with). It would be interesting to see how A.D.A. Russworm could cope with this topic. One remains certain: the text is much better than the illustrations, but the book of this kind needs more than that to make a significant contribution to the conservation of British butterflies.

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Artikel/Article: [Book reviews — Buchbesprechungen — Analyses 136](#)