

RAILWAY GLASTONBURY.  
TELEPHONE: STREET 33.

OVERLEIGH HOUSE,  
STREET, SOMERSET.

October 7<sup>th</sup> 1944.

My dear Ron,

Please forgive the delay  
in answering your splendid letter  
of the 29<sup>th</sup>. I had a small  
operation last month: nothing  
serious but it did not go  
well, and I had to go into  
the Nursing Home here again. I  
only came out four days ago  
and wanted a day or two  
to digest what you had written,  
particularly as I was not feeling  
very bright! However, all is  
a complete success now, and

.T3883

I shall be back in Oxford this coming week, I fully expect.

I really do feel quite overwhelmed by all the care and trouble that you have taken over these data, and all the time that you have given them. I want you to know how grateful I ~~am~~ feel for your interest in the problem. So obviously I could never have made anything of it - myself; and, you know, it is really the expert analysis of data that counts - almost anyone can collect the facts.

RAILWAY GLASTONBURY.  
TELEPHONE: STREET 33.

3.  
OVERLEIGH HOUSE,  
STREET, SOMERSET.

I now have the feeling  
that I ought to make a special  
effort to explore what happens  
at the end of the emergence next  
year ~~in~~ before publishing. That  
seems to be the critical feature  
which still remains somewhat  
mysterious. But I should  
greatly value your views on this  
point, and wish to be guided  
by them.

On the other hand, it is  
at least suggestive that the two  
years with late maxima are  
those with high abundance.

.73683

Moreover, the experience gained this year does suggest that there is a quite sudden fall from a high value, and that the curves are not cut off at a high value merely because collecting was not carried on long enough (apart from general experience indicating the same thing). It is thus possible that if next year we are one in which the species here are, we might not get very relevant data, but in a similar situation similar

OVERLEIGH HOUSE,  
STREET, SOMERSET.

to that represented by 1942 and 1943, in which the curves seem to fall off in a more reasonable manner.

I do think it a triumph on your part to have got all the information out of these data that you have done. You took on the Scilly Isles data provided the first numerical estimate of any butterfly population, and this is the first comparison of different seasons. Apart from the pre-eminence of your method as a whole, I believe it should be of particular interest to entomologists

to have an indication of the numerical difference involved between years in which a species is "scarce" and one in which it is "abundant". One could give a general description of the situation which would be understood by any experienced collector: but I cannot suppose that anyone until now could venture to guess what is involved (whether 4-fold or 20-fold, I would really not have liked to say!). Now there is something in the neighborhood of a 10-fold difference in frequency between 1943 and 1944 does seem

RAILWAY: GLASTONBURY.  
TELEPHONE: STREET 33.

OVERLEIGH HOUSE,  
STREET, SOMERSET.

to me an exciting fact to know.

I am so glad to have the particularly full analysis for 1942 which, as you say, is in some ways the best set of observations, being well spread along the curve.

Would you like your curves back (I can take a copy of them), or may I keep them? You have managed to make it all wonderfully clear.

Yours truly,  
Henry