

almost always in very good condition and, if not, only slightly worn. Thus, it seems that the predation was distinctly specific, a very real threat which left its mark on virtually every member of the population, yet was unsuccessful on so many occasions.

Considering the prey, the subterfuge of apparently replicating the appearance of head and antennae at the rear end of the butterfly was proving remarkably successful in distracting the predator from attacking the vital part, yet inviting attack in possessing so realistic a resemblance to the insect's vital parts in the tornal area.

In South America I have met with three other *Marpesia* species: *M. petreus* Cram., a more delicate insect than *M. eleucea*, with extraordinarily long, narrow hind wing tails and prominent tornal lobes and with which *M. eleucea* was long confused; the almost black *M. coresia* Godt.; and the orange-brown *M. berania* Haw.. Only occasional specimens were encountered, and always imbibing at damp patches on roads or beside streams. Almost all have been in good condition, emphasising the specific and local nature of the damaged condition of *M. eleucea* at Guardalavaca in Cuba during 1994.

References

Smith, D., Miller, L. & Miller, J., 1994. *The Butterflies of the West Indies and South Florida*. Oxford University Press.

The Purple Hairstreak *Quercusia quercus* L. (Lep.: Lycaenidae): first modern record for Oxleas Wood SSSI, Shooters Hill, south-east London

Burton (1992, *London Nat.* 71: 100) notes this butterfly as "reported to have been abundant in 1858 and 1859 in Shooters Hill Wood . . . apparently not seen since. Fenn (1895) considered it extinct".

I am pleased, therefore, to be able to state that the Purple Hairstreak does indeed survive in the locality, thus showing Fenn's judgement cited above to have been premature. In view of recent finds in the London area I became convinced that the species must still be present in Oxleas Wood. On a visit there, 7 July 1999, I was most agreeably surprised to sweep a female example from herbage more or less under an oak in a ride, which, while lively enough, had all four wings badly crumpled – they must have failed to expand properly – and could not fly. This unlucky circumstance, no doubt, had its fortunate side; for otherwise the butterfly would almost surely never have come to my notice!

As one would expect, little has been seen of this rather elusive insect in Greenwich Borough, above all in the north of the area. In any case a lapse of 140 years without a sighting there, if really a fact, seems remarkable. – A. A. ALLEN, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London SE7 8QG.



Allen, Anthony Adrian. 1999. "The purple hairstreak *Quercusia quercus* L. (Lep.: Lycaenidae): first modern record for Oxleas Wood SSSI, Shooters Hill, south-east London." *The entomologist's record and journal of variation* 111, 274–274.

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