

Column in *The Countryman* magazine (82 (1977): 179), about a wasp *Vespula* sp. attacking a Southern Hawker *Aeshna cyanea* (Müller) with a damaged wing which I had repaired one day in August, 1976, placing the dragonfly on an unused bird table to recover.

Also by chance, when searching through my natural history journals for something else, I came upon another forgotten observation of mine; this time of a wasp *Vespula* sp. which attacked a fresh Silver Y moth *Autographa gamma* L. which was feeding from ivy blossoms in the grounds of Broadcasting House in Bristol on 17th September 1982. In the space of five minutes, it removed all the moth's wings, except for one of the hindwings, and then cut it up and flew off with the whole of its head and thorax, leaving only the abdomen. By the time it had completed its butchery, the wasp was almost entirely covered with the moth's greyish-brown scales.— JOHN F. BURTON, Wasserturmstrasse 53, W-6904 Eppenheim, Germany.

**The Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon*) and Large Copper (*Lycaena dispar batavus*) at Wicken fen.**

I fear that in his interesting reminiscences in the March/April issue of *The Record*, Mr E.P. Wiltshire was either singularly unfortunate in not coming across either of these butterflies when he visited Wicken Fen between 1928-32 or he has confused the locality or dates he visited, for both species were then present on the fen during the 1930s and there was certainly no need to go off to the Norfolk Broads for Swallowtails at that time. In 1927, the year before he came up from Cambridge, Swallowtails were "in considerable numbers" on the fen and "flying in the cottage gardens" (Demuth, 1984 *Entomologist's Rec. J. Var.* 96: 264-272).

I first visited Wicken Fen in 1941, ten years later than Mr Wiltshire, and at this time Swallowtails were still on the fen and in the cottage gardens but, like so many other things then, they were rationed. The allowance, stated on my permit, being six specimens (of any stage) per year. Armed with this permit I found plenty of larvae, but having then no means of supplying them with food back at my "digs", I confined myself to catching a couple of adults, which was no easy task.

When I again visited the fen in 1946 Swallowtails were still to be seen and found as larvae but after the great floods of 1947 they were gone by 1950. It was in 1954 that the first re-introduction attempt was made.

The Large Copper subspecies *batavus* was introduced to Wicken in 1930 and survived there until 1942. It seems very probable that its demise then was due to the disturbance of ploughing and draining part of Wicken for wartime food production. I do not remember seeing it there in 1941, but this would not have been easy in any case, for it was largely confined to the southern area known as Adventurers Fen, accessible only by boat or swimming for it.— BRIAN O.C. GARDINER, 2 Highfield Avenue, Cambridge CB4 2AL.





Gardiner, Brian O C. 1991. "The swallowtail (*Papilio machaon*) and large copper (*Lycaena dispar batavus*) at Wicken Fen." *The entomologist's record and journal of variation* 103, 200–200.

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