

LEPIDOPTERA ON TIREE

DEREK C. HULME

Ord House Drive, Muir of Ord, Ross-shire IV6 7UQ.

A WEEK WAS spent with the Dingwell Field Club on the Inner Hebridean island of Tiree from 31 May to 7 June 1997. We were based at Hynish with accommodation at the Alan Stevenson House, which was originally a mid-19th century storehouse used during the construction of Skerryvore Lighthouse and restored between 1986 and 1991 by the Hebridean Island Educational Trust for the use of *bona fide* cultural groups.

Tiree, the westernmost of the Mid Ebudes (Vice-county 103), is noted for its beautiful beaches, dune systems and extensive areas of machair and, apart from three humps at its western side – the highest, Ben Hynish rising to a mere 141 metres – the twelve-mile long island is low-lying. Being so exposed to 120mph winter gales this fertile island is practically treeless. The rabbit is absent but the brown hare is common.

The weather throughout our stay was glorious with six days of continuous sunshine – in fact, 3 and 4 June were the sunniest places in Britain with 16.1 and 15.7 hours recorded – only the last day being cloudy with a stiff breeze. Most of the island in the 10km squares NL93, NL94 and NM04 was explored by means of the field centre's fifteen-seater minibus and on foot. The most northerly small portion in NM05 was not examined. Corncrakes were seen and heard along with fifty other avian species. Notwithstanding the fine spell of weather, the total of lepidopterous species recorded numbered just ten.

From three of the books listed at the end of this paper I have ascertained that thirteen species of butterflies have been recorded for Tiree as against eighteen for the neighbouring Coll. There are undoubtedly other records in the literature and unpublished lists unknown to me. The species recorded for Tiree are as follows:

Pieris brassicae (Linn.) Large White – Thomson (1980) map on page 84 (distribution dot for 10km squares NL93 and 94); Emmet and Heath (1989) map on page 105 (NL94); Dennis and Shreeve (1996) on page 94.

P. rapae (Linn.) Small White – Dennis and Shreeve (1996) p.94.

P. napi (Linn.) ssp. *thomsoni* (Warr.) Green-veined White

Polyommatus icarus (Rott.) ssp. *mariscolore* (Kane) Common Blue – Thompson p.122 (NL 93 and 94); Emmet and Heath p.159 (NL94); Dennis and Shreeve p.94.

Vanessa atalanta (Linn.) Red Admiral – Dennis and Shreeve p.94.

Cynthia cardui (Linn.) Painted Lady – Dennis and Shreeve p.94; Tom Weir, the noted mountaineer naturalist, saw two in mid-June 1996.

Aglais urticae (Linn.) Small Tortoiseshell – Thompson p.136 (NL94); Emmet & Heath p.201 (NL94); Dennis and Shreeve p.94.

Inachis io (Linn.) Peacock – Dennis and Shreeve p.94.

- Eurodryas aurinia* (Rott.) ssp. *scotica* (Robson) Marsh Fritillary – Thompson p.162 (NL94); Dennis and Shreeve p.94 (marked as a pre-1960 record).
- Hipparchia semele* (Linn.) ssp. *atalantica* (Harr.) Grayling – Thompson p.186 (NL93 and 94); Emmet & Heath p.265 (NL94); Dennis and Shreeve p.94.
- Maniola jurtina* (Linn.) ssp. *splendida* (White) Meadow Brown – Thompson p.192 (NL93 and 94); Emmet & Heath p.274 (NL94); Dennis and Shreeve p.94.
- Coenonympha pamphilus* (Linn.) ssp. *pamphilus* (Linn.) Small Heath – Dennis and Shreeve p.94 (pre-1960).
- C. tullia* (Müll.) ssp. *scotica* (Stdgr) Large Heath – Thompson p.198 (whole of Tiree and Coll circled); Dennis and Shreeve p.94 (pre-1960).

All the foregoing species have been observed on Coll with the addition of *Colias hylae* (Linn.) Pale clouded Yellow (pre-1960), *C. croceus* (Geoff.) Clouded Yellow, *Callophrys rubi* (Linn.) Green Hairstreak, *Boloria selene* (D.&S.) ssp. *insularum* (Harr.) Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary (pre-1960) and *Argynnis aglaja* (D.&S.) ssp. *scotica* (Watk.). In 1997 I added a fourteenth butterfly species for Tiree: *Anthocharis cardamines* (Linn.) Orange Tip.

Tiree Lepidoptera 1997

On expressing my interest in entomology to the island's doctor John Holliday, following a headlong fall in a rough Lewisian gneiss cliff, he kindly photocopied a note on the surprising discovery of *Periclepsis cinctana* (D.&S.) by Dr Mark Young and Dr Michael Harper in early to mid-July 1985. The north coast locality between Balephetrish and Miodar, in the 10km square NM04, was visited twice but it was obviously too early for this rare tortricoid moth, previously known only from Kent and given the common name of Dover Twist in Heslop's 1961 list.

- Lobesia littoralis* (Humph. & Westw.) Shore Doubtful Marble – Tràigh Hough (NL94) one on *Armeria maritima* in dunes, 2 June. The specimen was as illustrated by figure 2 on plate 27 in Bradley, Tremewan and Smith (1979).
- Bactra lancealana* (Hb.) Dusty Marble – Ceann á Mhara (NL94) fairly common in rushes on coastal hillsides and machair flying in strong sunlight, 4 June. Specimen determined by A. Maitland Emmet.
- Epiblema scutulana* (D.&S.) Larger Blotch-marked Bell – St Patrick's Temple, Balephuill Bay (NL94) two males of the nominate form, 4 June.
- Chrysoteuchia culmella* (Linn.) = *hortuella* (Hb.) Garden Grass-veneer – Port Ban (NM04) common on coastal machair, 3 June.
- Pieris brassicae* (Linn.) Large White – Vaul Bay (NM04) one on dunes, 1 June; Ben Hynish (NL93) one, 4 June; Salum (NM04) one, 5 June.
- P. napi* (Linn.) Green-veined White – Ringing Stone, Vaul Bay, Ben Hynish, West Hynish, Balephuill, Ceann á Mhara *et al* (NM04, NL94 and 93) fairly common throughout the island, 31 May-5 June.

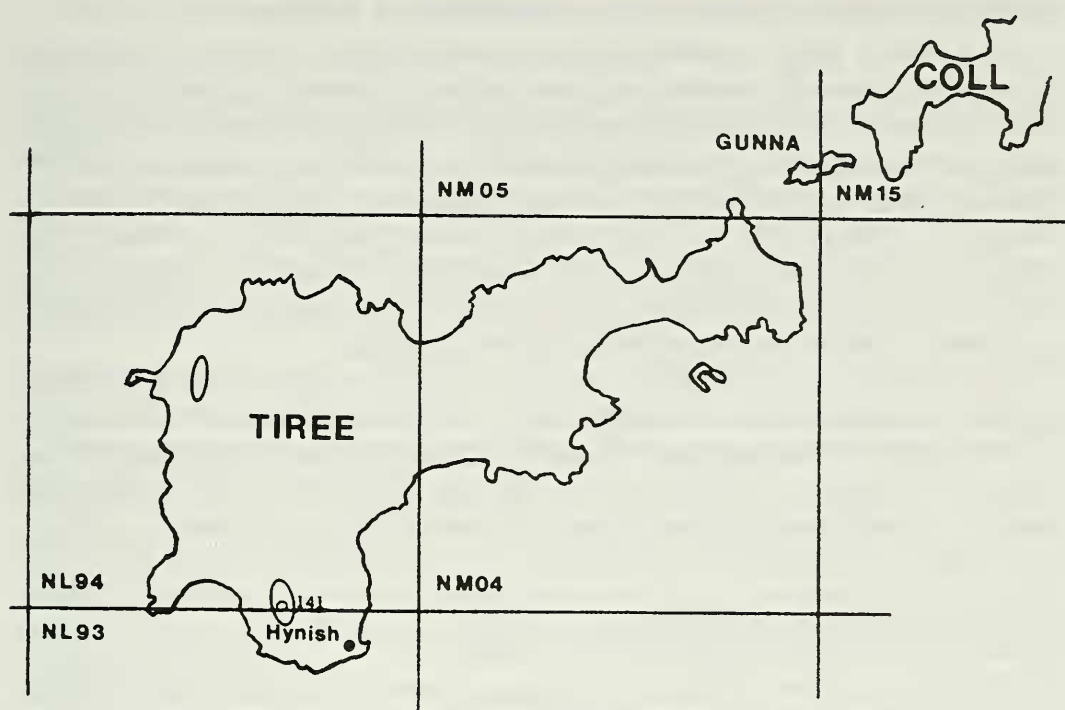


Fig. 1. The ten-kilometre squares of Tiree, Inner Hebrides.

Anthocharis cardamines (Linn.) Orange-tip – Heyipol (NL94) a male at close quarters, 31 May.

Vanessa atalanta (Linn.) Red Admiral – Hynish (NL93) one, 31 May.

Aglais urticae (Linn.) Small Tortoiseshell – singles at Balnoe (NL94) 31 May; Balemartine (NL94), 2 and 3 June; Port Ban (NM04), 3 June; and Salum (NM04), 5 June.

Spilosoma lubricipeda (Linn.) White Ermine – Hynish (NL93) five continually at rest during daylight hours on the entrance door of Alan Stevenson House, 31 May to 5 June and two remaining on 6 June.

It is hoped this short paper will encourage naturalists to record the lepidoptera of Tiree. I can see no reason why this island's butterflies should not equal the number of species observed on Coll.

References

- Bradley, J.D., Tremewan, W.G. and Smith, A., 1979. *British Tortricoid Moths* Volume 2, The Ray Society.
- Dennis, R.L.H. and Shreeve, T.G., 1996. *Butterflies on British and Irish offshore Islands*, Gem, Wallingford.
- Emmet, A.M. and Heath, J., 1989. *The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* 7(2), Harley, Colchester.
- Heslop, I.R.P., 1961. *Revised Indexed Check-list of the British Lepidoptera Part 11 – Tortricodea*. *Entomologists Gaz.* **12**: 97-108.
- Thomson, G., 1980. *The Butterflies of Scotland*, Croon Helm.
- Weir, T., 1996. My Month, *Scots Magazine*. **146** (5).