The Brad Ashby Memorial Lecture. In place of the advertised speaker, Dr Philip Sterling spoke on the Microlepidoptera of Dorset, where he has been employed for the last three years as county ecologist. He noted that although the Dorset coast and some noted inland sites had been well recorded by entomologists, there has been little recording effort in recent years for Lepidoptera outside these popular areas. He has set up a network of county moth recorders and currently has about 130 contributors, with about 40 people running lights on most nights.

Dorset has a largely undeveloped coast that is rich in wildlife and the county has good areas of nationally scarce habitat types. The Dorset heathland is much reduced in area since the last century but some good areas remain, such as at Canford Heath and Studland. Dorset heaths are a stronghold for the large heather-feeding bagworm, *Pachythelia villosella* (Ochs.). This has a strong colony at the nudist beach on Studland but is also found on relic heathland, such as by a roadside near Poole.

*Coleophora genistae* Staint. feeds on petty whin but this plant has declined since grazing stopped on the heaths and it is now known from only one site. On the rabbit-grazed heather at Studland, caterpillars of *Scythis empetrella* Karsholt & Nielsen can be found. These live within silk tubes mixed with sand grains which extend from the soil surface up to young shoots on the plant. The plume moth, *Capperia britanniodactyla* (Gregson) occurs on woodsage at the edge of the heathland areas.

On areas of chalk downland there are several species of case-bearing caterpillars, including *Coleophora discordella* Zell. on bird’s foot trefoil, *C. lixella* Zell. on thyme and grasses, *Metriotes lutarea* (Haw.) on stitchwort, *C. anatipennella* (Hüb.) and *C. siccifolia* Staint. on hawthorn and blackthorn. Dr Sterling showed slides of the larval cases and explained how they were constructed. *Coleophora hemerobiella* (Scop.) also occurs on hawthorn and is a biennial species.

The Dorset coast has many interesting habitats including land slips, chalk cliffs and Chesil beach. *Coleophora ochrea* (Haw.) occurs there on rock rose. Parts of the Dorset coast are noted sites for intercepting migrant moths. 1996 has been a good year for migrants and the speaker noted that the rush veneer, *Nomophila noctuella* (D. & S.) had been exceptionally abundant.

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**SHORT COMMUNICATION**

*Dolichovespula saxonica* (F.) (Hymenoptera: Vespidae) reaches Gloucestershire.—A single male of this species was taken from an angelica flowerhead in a large clearing in the bottom of the well-wooded Frome valley near Sapperton in E. Glos., 25.viii.1996. Since its discovery in Surrey in 1987, it has spread from the south-east of England westwards as far as Dawlish, Devon, and northwards into East Anglia (Else, pers. comm.). This is the first report from Gloucestershire.

My thanks to George Else both for confirming my identification and for providing me with an up-to-date report on its progress across the country.—K. N. A. ALEXANDER, 14 Partridge Way, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 1BQ.