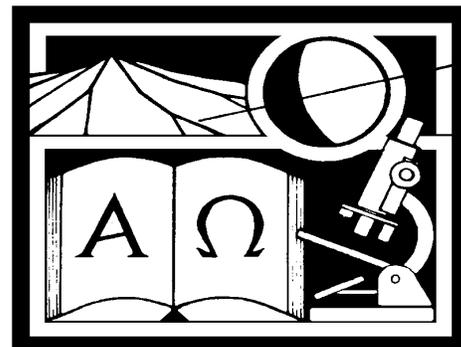


# Origins Insights

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
CREATION SCIENCE FELLOWSHIP



TM

May 2002

## I con #6, Peppered Moths

by Bob Harsh

We are going to continue with a discussion of Jonathan Wells' book, *Icons of Evolution*. Peppered moths on tree trunks show how camouflage and predatory birds produced the most famous example of evolution by natural selection.

In 1859 Charles Darwin wrote a book, *On The Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection* that changed the worldview of millions of people. The theme of the book is that all of the modern species evolved from distant ancestors that were different species altogether. Species exist as they are in nature for the same reason that the varieties of farm animals exist after centuries of on purpose selection. There is a selection for good traits and against poor traits.

**Big problem for real science. Darwin had no observable evidence!**

Darwin relied on a couple of "imaginary illustrations". Not much has changed in 142 years.

### THE STORY OF THE PEPPERED MOTHS

According to British scientists in the late 19th Century, only one version of *Biston betularia* existed before the mid-19th century: a white variety, peppered with black spots. During the Industrial Revolution its numbers declined because

it became easy prey for birds as it rested on the pollution blackened trunks of trees. The claim was made that a mutant, black variety of peppered moth began to thrive. It could blend in while it was rest on tree trunks. This was the first popular "empirical evidence" that supported Darwin's theory of natural selection. The "fitter" black mutant moths rapidly outnumbered the white version, reaching 100 per cent levels in some industrial areas.

By the 1950's, an interesting thing happened. Naturalists discovered a resurgence of the white variety. The Clean Air Acts had cleaned up, not only the air, but also the vegetation. Lichen returned to lighter colored trunks and the white moths regained their numerical dominance, while the population of the, now more visible, black variety declined.

Kettlewell observed through binoculars that melanics [black variety] seemed

### MEETING INFORMATION

**TOPIC:** Irreducible Complexity: Case in Point: How Bacteria Get Around: The Flagella

**PRESENTER:** Bob Harsh

On Tuesday, May 21, Bob Harsh will present a Power Point enhanced discussion that should help you to understand a powerful argument against the validity of neo-Darwinian evolution. Evolutionismists teach that life suddenly appeared on Earth in the form of "primitive" microorganisms. Those "simple" microorganisms probably resembled modern-day bacteria. That "primitive and simple" life evolved into "advanced more complex" life that, in turn, evolved into human beings.

Bob will help us understand that there is no such thing as "simple" life. He will show that just one part of a bacteria cell, the flagellum, is an example of an irreducibly complex system and could not have evolved one part at a time.

Invite a friend who would like to see some compelling evidence that evolution is scientifically inept.

**DATE:** Tuesday, May 21, 2002

**TIME:** 7:30 PM

**PLACE:** Mars Alliance Church, 997 Route 228, Mars, PA, 16046

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less conspicuous than typicals [white variety], and that birds took conspicuous moths more readily than inconspicuous ones. That night he recaptured 27.5 percent of the melanics, but only 13.0 percent of the typicals, suggesting that a much higher proportion of melanics had survived predation. [H.B.D. Kettlewell, "Selection experiments on industrial melanism in the Lepidoptera," *Heredity*, 9:323-342, 1955.]

Kettlewell later repeated this experiment in an unpolluted woodland near Dorset, England, where the recapture percentages were the opposite of those obtained in Birmingham. He concluded that "birds act as selective agents, as postulated by evolutionary theory," and that industrial melanism was "the most striking evolutionary change ever actually witnessed in any organism." [H.B.D. Kettlewell, "Further selection experiments on industrial melanism in the Lepidoptera," *Heredity*, 10:287-301, 1956.] Industrial melanism in peppered moths quickly became the standard textbook example of natural selection in action.

Doubts about the classical story, however, began to emerge soon after Kettlewell's experiments, and it is now clear that those experiments were fundamentally flawed. This icon of evolution is the subject of a critical study in a book, *Melanism: Evolution in Action*, by Michael Majerus, Oxford University Press, 1998. Majerus wrote, "Not much of Kettlewell's interpretation survives!"

Scientists are beginning to concede that the white variety flourished again well before the return of pollution-free trees, while the black type continued to thrive in areas unaffected by industry. [Robert Matthews, Science Correspondent, *London Telegraph* 14 March 1999] It is now clear; Kettlewell's methods were flawed. He captured the moths by attracting them into traps in the forest either with light, or by releasing female pheromones.

### **They only flew in at night!**

Peppered moths don't fly during the daylight and they don't rest on tree trunks!!!!!!

So where do they spend the day? British scientist Cyril Clarke, who in-

vestigated the peppered moth extensively, wrote: "But the problem is that we do not know the resting sites of the moth during the day time. ... In 25 years we have found only two betularia on the tree trunks or walls adjacent to our traps (one on an appropriate background and one not), and none elsewhere." [C.A. Clarke, G.S. Mani and G. Wynne, 'Evolution in reverse: clean air and the peppered moth', *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society* 26:189-199, 1985; quote on p. 197]

Michael Majerus, a Cambridge University expert on the moth reported that, "Dr. Kettlewell tried to confirm the standard story simply by pinning dead moths on to parts of the trees where they could be seen easily by birds." [Robert Matthews, Science Correspondent, *London Telegraph* 14 March 1999] "He stuck them on low branches because he wanted to sit in his hide and watch them being eaten. They actually seem to rest in the shadows under branches, which makes even the black ones difficult to spot by birds." [M.E.N. Majerus, *Melanism: Evolution in Action*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998.]

### **BUT I HAVE SEEN PICTURES OF THE MOTHS ON TREES**

One paper described how it was done — dead moths were glued to the tree. [D.R. Lees & E.R. Creed, 'Industrial melanism in Biston betularia: the role of selective predation', *Journal of Animal Ecology* 44:67-83, 1975] University of Massachusetts biologist Theodore Sargent helped glue moths onto trees for a NOVA documentary. [J.A. Coyne, *Nature* 396 (6706):35-36]

"Since biologists have known since the 1980s that peppered moths do not normally rest on tree trunks, not to tell students that the pictures were staged (in many cases by gluing or pinning dead moths to desired backgrounds) constitutes as clear a case of scientific fraud as any on record. Yet I'm aware of no sincere efforts by Darwinists to inform students of this -- despite their pious declarations of good intentions." [Wells, 2000]

### ***More recent evidence.***

Black moths were probably the

originals. The white variety probably result from mutation

"Genetically, the difference between the light and the melanic forms [of the peppered moth] has been shown to be due to a single gene, the allele for melanism being dominant to that for lighter coloration." [D.R. Lees et al., "Atmospheric pollution and industrial melanism," *Heredity*, 30:227-32, 1973]

"Other studies have shown a very poor correlation between the lichen covering and the respective moth populations. And when one group of researchers glued dead moths onto trunks in an unpolluted forest, the birds took more of the dark (less camouflaged) ones, as expected. But their traps captured four times as many dark moths as light ones — the opposite of textbook predictions!" [D.R. Lees & E.R. Creed, 'Industrial melanism in Biston betularia: the role of selective predation', *Journal of Animal Ecology* 44:67-83, 1975 see Carl Wieland]

If industrial melanism is such a powerful selective force, we would expect to find the black variety to be dominant in other polluted forests. [J.A. Bishop, L.M. Cook, "Industrial melanism and the urban environment," *Advances in Ecological Research*, 11:373-404, 1980.]

"In heavily polluted areas such as Manchester, this never happened. This indicates that factors other than selective predation must be affecting melanic frequencies." [G.S. Mani, "Theoretical models of melanism in Biston betularia—a review," *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*, 39:355-71, 1990.]

In rural East Anglia, where there was little industrial pollution and white moths seemed better camouflaged, black moths reached a frequency of 80 percent, prompting D.R. Lees and E.R. Creed to conclude that "either the predation experiments and tests of conspicuousness to humans are misleading, or some factor or factors in addition to selective predation are responsible for maintaining the high melanic frequencies." [R. Berry, "Industrial melanism and peppered moths (Biston betularia [L.])," *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*, 39:301-22, 1990.]

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“Almost all recent (1998-2000) biology textbooks use photos of peppered moths resting against alternate backgrounds without any indication that they were staged. As a scientist, I find this absolutely inexcusable. If dogmatic Darwinists were as smart as they pretend to be, they would be actively campaigning — for their own good! — to rid textbooks of this fraud. Acquiescence in scientific misconduct will not look good on their resumes.” [Jonathan Wells, Ph.D. Center for the Renewal of Science & Culture, Discovery Institute, Seattle]

Yet textbooks continue to present the classical story of industrial melanism in peppered moths as an example of evolution in action. Clearly, this is misleading. In particular, it is misleading to illustrate the story with photographs showing moths on tree trunks where they do not rest in the wild. Our students deserve better [Jonathan Wells. May 24, 1999. Second Thoughts about Peppered Moths. *The Scientist* 13 [11]:13]

**Why has so little research been done to validate this important icon of evolution?**

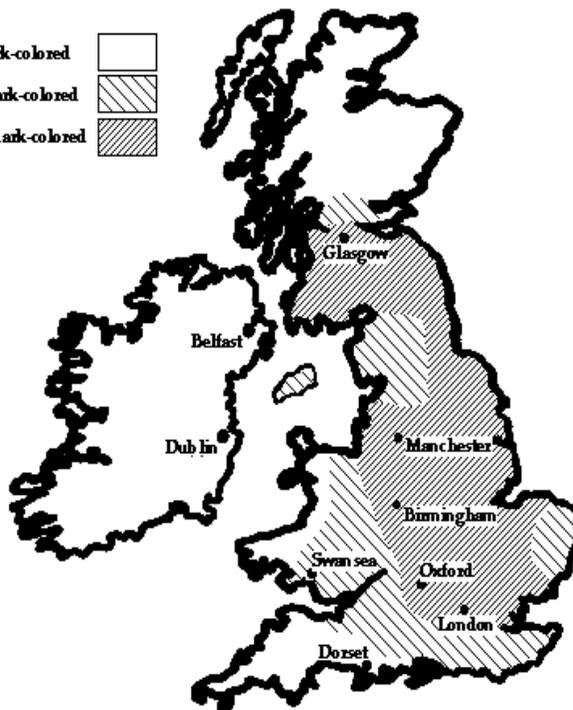
*Philosophical agenda first... ..  
... Scientific understanding second*

## The Roots of Each of the ICONS of Evolution are in philosophy rather than in science!

“Evolutionary theories cannot be allowed to have a monopoly on permissible interpretations! We are seeing here an example of variation in nature—a characteristic that God has designed to bring robustness to ecosystems and which facilitates the survival of the organisms he has created. Natural selection is a key element of ecological thinking—but only dogma extrapolates its relevance to the realm of origins.” [David J. Tyler, June 1999]

**[M] Manchester - Should be mostly black/not so**  
**[EA] East Anglia - Lichen=white/mostly black**  
**South of 52°N Blacks increased after pollution control**  
**[W] Wirral Peninsula - Blacks increased before return of lichens**

0-33% of moths dark-colored   
33-67% of moths dark-colored   
67-100% of moths dark-colored 



## The 2003 ICC Volunteer Dinner

The 2003 International Conference on Creationism (ICC) held at Geneva College is an exciting and unique opportunity for leading thinkers in the field of creation science to gather and share new research that will help build the creation model of origins. Our local creation group, Creation Science Fellowship will host this important conference in August, 2003 and we will need many volunteers to help fill numerous positions.

The Board of Directors of CSF will host a volunteer dinner in support of the 2003 ICC on Friday, May 31st. This specially catered dinner and dessert begins at 6:00 at the Mars Alliance Church on Rt. 228 in Mars, PA.

The evening will also include past ICC Coordinator, Robert Walsh speaking about how our previous ICCs have contributed to the creation model of origins. There will also be a preview of the many excellent papers that will be published in the 2003 Proceedings. ICC Coordinator, Reid Moon will close the evening with a call for volunteers to fill important positions for the upcoming conference. All members of CSF are welcome to attend and can RSVP to Reid at [reiddm@juno.com](mailto:reiddm@juno.com).

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**MEETING TOPICS  
FOR 2002**

**JUNE 18, 2002**

The State of the Creation Model:  
Where are we? -  
Bob Walsh

**JULY 16, 2002**

Yet to be determined

**AUGUST 20, 2002**

How Shall We Then Live -  
Discussion of Chuck Colson  
Book - Reid Moon

**SEPTEMBER 17, 2002**

The State of Creationist Radio-  
metric Dating - Charles Danley

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