October 7th 1944.

My dear Ron,

Please forgive the delay in answering your splendid letter of the 29th. I had a small operation last month: nothing serious but it did not go well, and I had to go into the nursing home here again. I only came out four days ago and spent a day or two to dispute with you had written, particularly as I was not feeling very bright! However, all is a complete success now, and
S. shall be back in Oxford this coming week, I fully expect.

I really do feel quite overwhelmed by all the care and trouble that you have taken over these data, and all the time that you have given them. I want you to know how grateful I am for your interest in the problem. So obviously I could never have made anything of it myself; and, you know, it is really the expert analysis of data this counts - almost anyone can collect the facts.
I now have the feeling that I must make a special effort to explore what happens at the end of the emergence next year and before publishing. That seems to be the critical phase which will remain somewhat mysterious. But, I should greatly value your views on this point, and wish to be guided by them.

On the other hand, it is at least suggestive that the two years with the maximum are those with high abundance.
Moreover, the experience gained this year does suggest that there is a quite sudden fall from a high value, and that the curves are not cut off at a high value merely because collecting was not carried on long enough (apart from general experience indicating the same thing). It is then possible that if next year we can get any relevant data, but in contrast a situation similar...
...that represented by 1942 and 1943, in which the curves seem to fall off in a more reasonable manner.

I do think it a triumph on your part to have got all the information out of these data! But you have done. You must now test Scilly with data provided the first numerical stimulus of any butterfly population, and this is the first comparison of different seasons. Apart from the practical importance of your method as a whole, I believe it should be of particular interest to entomologists...
to have an indication of the numerical difference involved between years in which a species is "scarce" and one in which it is "abundant". One could give a general description of the situation which could be understood by any experienced collector: but I cannot suggest that anyone until now could venture to guess what is involved (whether 4-fold or 20-fold, I would really not have liked to say).

There is something in the neighborhood of a 10-fold difference in abundance between 1943 and 1944 does seem
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To me an exciting fact to know. I am so glad to have the particularly full analysis for 1942 which, as you say, is in some ways the best set of observations, being well spread along the curve.

Would you like your curves back (I can take a copy of them), or may I keep them? You have managed to make it all wonderfully clear.

Yours truly,

[Signature]