

SOME NOTES ON LEPIDOPTERA, 1933.

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The summer of 1933 will live long in the memory of all who have enjoyed its remarkably consistent fine weather. There have been drier and hotter seasons in the twentieth century, 1911 and 1921 for example, but none that have provided such long unbroken spells of delightful weather. For entomologists the conditions have been ideal and it is not surprising that fresh discoveries have been made and new records established. It seems probable that some of the *Colias edusa* (*croceus*) and *C. hyale* that have been noted in so many places may have reached Derbyshire, but no records have been brought to my notice, and probably none of the twenty or more specimens of *Anosia erippus* (*plexippus*) that have delighted southern observers have penetrated so far inland.

In the early part of the season many exceptionally early appearances were recorded. Perhaps the most striking of these is that of a specimen of *Bupalus atomarius* flying over the high moors of North Derbyshire on April 10, six weeks or more ahead of its normal date at that altitude. *Saturnia pavonia* had been observed some days previously. A number of hibernated *Peronea mixtana* were taken on the same occasion and two specimens of *Philedone prodromana*, which had been the special object of my quest. Though mentioned in old records for the county and frequently sought, these species had hitherto eluded me. From a pupa of *Phragmatobia fuliginosa* found spun up in the heather the moth emerged as early as April 29. *Ectropis punctularia* and *E. crepuscularia* were both well out in April in Repton Shrubs. *Macroglossa stellatarum* was observed at Coxbench by Mr. G. H.

Sale as early as May 6. The season has been a remarkable one for this species, which was most abundant in the south in the months of July and August. The sight of half a dozen or more of these Humming Bird Hawk Moths at once, hovering over a bed of *Karatostigma Wilmotiana*, a very favourite flower with this species, at Swanage, was one not easily to be forgotten, and it was to be seen almost at any time from early morning to evening and almost on any day throughout August. This species was also reported several times from Repton, where it had not been seen for many years.

Specimens of *Gonepteryx rhamni* were reported from Derby by Mr. N. B. Wood and from Burton by Mr. G. H. Storer. This butterfly is now quite a scarce visitant in our county.

In early May two additions to the county list were made from the upland moors, *Laspeyresia cosmophorana* and *Borkhausenia subaquileae*. The latter was present in some numbers, though the locality must be very near the extreme south of its range, which is given by Meyrick as from Cheshire to Sutherland. Other interesting insects taken on the moors included *Plemyria tristata* and *Argyroproct mygindana* in abundance and single specimens of *Laspeyresia coniferana* and the scarce *Evetria posticana*, both of which had only previously been reported from Repton Shrubs. In mid June the various species of *Plusia* were unusually abundant in my garden over blossoms of valerian and sweet-william. *Pulchrina*, *iota*, *chrysis*, *moneta*, *tripartita*, and *triphasia* were all fairly common and in addition to these there was an abnormal number of the beautiful *P. festucae*, of which a fine series was obtained. Meyrick gives August as the date of appearance of this insect and in the south it may often be taken in good condition in that month, but such specimens are, I think, of a second brood. Certainly here, where it is presumably single-brooded, it

is on the wing in June and July, and this year specimens were about as early as the second week in June. It was also reported from Normanton¹ by Mr. F. R. Larkin. *Cucullia umbratica* and *Deilephila porcellus* were also taken over flowers of Delphinium, whilst a number of *Chloroclystis coronata* were taken at the blossoms of Buddleia. This plant was, as always, well patronised by the late summer butterflies and *Vanessa cardui* was observed over it as early as July 15, with *V. Atalanta* and *V. io* a few days later. Two specimens of *Coenonympha pamphilus*, which is so curiously scarce in this neighbourhood, were taken this year near Repton and a specimen of *Amphipyra pyramidea*, in worn condition, was taken in Repton on July 21, a very early date for this species and the first occasion on which it has been noted for many years. Two or three larvae of *Acronycta alni* were taken in Repton village, one, full-fed, crawling across an asphalted yard at the back of my house, but this specimen, though it duly pupated, produced only a couple of dipterous parasites, a disappointment which is only too common in the case of this rarity.

Parasites indeed seem to have flourished exceedingly as well as their hosts. Out of 93 pupae of *Eupithecia albipunctata* obtained last autumn only 27 imagines were bred and over 60 hymenopterous parasites emerged—a most unusual proportion. It may be due to their activity that this year this larva has been scarcer than usual, though there was an abundance of the nearly allied and normally rarer *E. trisignaria*, the larva of which seems to escape the attentions of the parasites, though it occurs on the same plants at the same time and is very similar in size and appearance. About 150 pupae of this insect have been obtained from which I hope to breed some of the recently discovered black

¹ Normanton-by-Derby.

aberrations, of which only three specimens have as yet been obtained in a number of years. By far the most unexpected occurrence of the year was the capture at Repton of a fine specimen of *Catoptria expallidana*, at light in July. This is the third addition to our lists that this exceptional season has produced. Mr. H. W. Daltry records the occurrence in Dovedale of the very pretty Geometer, *Euchoeca Blomeri* and also of *Pseudopanthera obscuraria* and *Peronea aspersana* in some numbers and a single specimen of *Alucita baliodactyla*. Mr. F. R. Larkin records the occurrence of *Epinephele janira* in unusual numbers at Normanton¹ and also of *Melanchra serena*, a species that is apparently becoming commoner in the county, for which it was first recorded from Repton in 1914.

STYDD CHAPEL.

Most of our members probably are acquainted with Mr. George Bailey's sketch in Cox's "Churches of Derbyshire" of the remains of the Preceptory of the Knights Hospitallers at Yeaveley, showing the fragment of the south wall of the Chapel with three lancet windows, covered with masses of ivy. About the year 1912 a storm brought down the masonry of the western window, as a result of which our Society got into touch with the then owners of the property and tried to secure the repair and safe preservation of the ruin. The owners showed themselves friendly disposed but delayed the execution of any work, and 1914 of course put an end to all activities of that kind. Our Society however, to prevent the inevitable fall of the remainder of the building, at their own cost, safeguarded the wall with timber shoring.

After 20 years service the timber was beginning to decay, and as the early collapse of the whole of the wall

¹ Normanton-by-Derby.