

ENTOMOLOGICAL RECORD FOR DERBYSHIRE, 1938.

By N. BLACKWELL WOOD.

The weather conditions throughout 1938 have not been favourable to entomological work; a very warm fine March which hastened forward many insects was followed by a cold wet Spring. The early part of the year was dry almost to a record degree but late Spring and Summer had more than a fair share of rain and cold and misty nights in the Summer made collecting both unpleasant and unremunerative. Later in the year again September disappointed with unusually cool days and now with the Winter again at hand November has finished with but one night of frost.

Much work has been done by the members of the Derbyshire Entomological Society and the following notes give some of the results of the years collecting and observation.

During the first week of February the Early Moth *rupicapraria* was in evidence at Little Eaton and Allestree but appeared to have only a short life. On 20th February the Spring Usher, *leucophearia* was in fine condition and plentiful at Repton Shrubs and a limited amount of colour variation was evident. The same day three specimens of the Pale Brindled Beauty, *pedaria* were boxed at Repton. One of these was the finest greenish *melanic* var. I have ever seen. This was taken by Mr. F. Larkin who accompanied the writer on many collecting expeditions during the year. During the third week of February I took a series of about 30 specimens of the *micro* *C. fagella* in which individuals ranged from almost pure white to jet black. The black vars. were rather more plentiful than

the very light coloured ones and a month later this insect was still plentiful and in good condition. It was also found in fewer numbers in a little wood near Clay Cross but here the colouring was constant, a dull grey form.

On March 3rd I took a pair of Dotted Border, *marginaria* in Allestree Park, a normal coloured male and a *mel.* female. The body, legs and tiny stumps of wings of the latter were jet black. Towards the middle of the month this insect was taken freely at Little Eaton and Allestree, the males being of very large size and much deeper brown than the normal.

An early record is a female specimen of the Early Thorn which I took at Allestree on March 16th, whilst a male came into the house to light on March 31st. I also saw the first of the White butterflies on March 31st, but considering that at this part of the year the season was abnormally forward there are probably earlier records than this.

The Large Angle Shades, *meticulosa* has appeared very plentifully this year and I took the first in Derby on April 8th, the last at Darley Abbey on October 24th. A female captured at Repton laid freely producing a fine batch of moths the third week of August. The larvae were fed on lupin and developed at an amazing speed. In colour they ranged from a brilliant green to almost black; some were practically uniform colour and others with a considerable amount of marking and pattern. All were from the same female and were kept in the same breeding cage on the same food plant and under identical conditions.

In May the season was nearly normal for emergences and the following were taken or noted at Repton:—The Orange Tip butterfly, females of which were found at night at rest on bluebell flowers, Small White Wave, *candidata*, the Little Emerald, *lactearia*, the May High-flyer, *impluviata*, the Pale Tussock, *pudibunda*, the

Coxcomb Prominent, *camelina*, the Engrailed, *crepuscularia*, the Scalloped Hazel, *bidentata*, the Grey Birch, *punctularia*, the Maiden's Blush, *punctaria*, the Waved Umber, *abruptaria*, the Twin Spot Carpet, *didymata*, the Yellow Shell, *bilineata*, the Pale Emerald, *margaritaria*, one specimen of the Scorched Wing, *dolobraria* and an early specimen of the Clouded Magpie *sylvata* which was exceptionally small although normally marked. Of the above *bidentata* and *crepuscularia* swarmed and *punctaria* was quite plentiful although county records give no captures of the latter for many years. Another insect *petraria* was so abundant that every step at dusk disturbed numbers in any part of Repton Shrubs where bracken was growing. *Dolobraria* was taken by Mr. F. Larkin on one of our joint excursions on May 14th. The catch was good that night and unfortunately the box containing this prize must have been dropped from the haversack so probably the insect and box complete are still somewhere in the Shrubs.

I was fortunate in taking a number of finely marked varieties of *bilineata* at Repton though the finest of all I netted in my own garden, taking it in one sweep of the net with a specimen of *fasiuncula*. The former was a deep rich orange colour with a heavy purple black band and the insect was larger than normal specimens.

In June the Clouded Magpie, *sylvata* was common and other very common insects this month included the Small Rivulet, *alchemillata*, the Argent and Sable, *montanata*, pale Emerald, *margaritaria*, the common Swift, *lupulina*, the Gold Swift, *hecta*, the Wood Swift, *sylvina*, the Map Winged Swift, *fusconebulosa*, and a few specimens of the Ghost Moth, *humuli*. Rarer captures included the Clouded Silver, *temerata*, the Pebble Hook Tip, *furcula*, and three perfect copies of the Green Silver Lines, *prasinana*, all at Repton. At Matlock the Cistus Forester, *geryon* was plentiful in its particular spot and on June 5th.

the small Heath butterfly was also common in the same locality. The Garden Tiger, *caia*, was taken at Borrowash by Mr. Cholerton and this reminds me of the very few specimens of this moth recorded in Derbyshire for some years. It seems to be getting a decidedly scarce insect in the county.

An interesting comparison between North and South country dates is afforded by the following observations of *grossulariata*. On March 5th I took about forty larvae on an euonymus bush at Wallasey (Cheshire). These were reared at Allestree on black currant and produced a fine series of large moths from June 1st to 14th. Many of these paired readily and laid freely the eggs being 100 per cent. fertile. On April 17th I found numbers of larvae of the same insect just coming up from hibernation and feeding on hedge elm at Looe in Cornwall. The elm was then only just breaking into tiny leaf and most of the larvae were on their way up the trees from the hedge bottom. When in the same district during the second week of September I took a number of newly hatched imagines of normal size and colouring. There are two possible reasons for these widely differing dates. One is the possibility of Southern *grossulariata* producing two generations to our one in Derbyshire the other that the life cycle is much later in all its stages in the South of England. Further data on this species would be interesting.

From personal observation the Buff Tip, *bucephala* seems much less common during the last few years but a record supplied by Mr. G. Hanson Sale is interesting. Mr. Sale states that he saw numbers of the larvae of this moth feeding on a tree in the Cathedral yard on September 8th.

Matlock Moor when systematically worked provides many good insects and this year I secured long series of Northern Spinach, *populata*, Chevron, *testata*, True Lover's Knot, *strigula*, and in the middle of August the July Highflyer, *furcata* in a great variety of colouring. The

Scarce Silver Y, *interrogationis* appeared in odd specimens only and probably was plentiful but would not fly on account of the high winds. A really good capture was the Golden Rod Brindle, *solidaginis* which I took at rest. This has been previously reported from the moors but is decidedly uncommon.

Mr. L. Nathan tells me that a specimen of the Camberwell Beauty butterfly, *antiopa* is reported as having been taken in the Ashford district by a Sheffield naturalist at the end of July. Other records sent in by Mr. Nathan include the Painted Lady, *cardui* at buddleia at Bakewell on August 13th, and the Marbled Beauty, *perla* at Youlgreave on the same date. I found one part of the Goyt Valley neat Buxton swarming with the Small Heath butterfly in late August but no sign of the Peacock, *io* which was once so plentiful in this valley. A late *vanessid* record was October 16th, when I saw a number of Red Admiral butterflies and two Small Tortoiseshells flying over the flower beds in Darley Abbey Park.

Larvae of *callunae* were taken freely at Matlock, but I have no record from these moors this year of the Emperor moth in any of its stages.

All the swift moths appeared at Repton or Matlock and the usual varieties were as plentiful as the type. The Silver Y, *gamma*, abounded everywhere and the Golden Plusia, *moneta* was breeding on my delphiniums this year for the first time. This moth is getting plentiful near Derby. At Mill Dale the Wood Tiger, *plantagninis* was again found in some numbers by Mr. R. W. Atherley. The Grey Dagger, *psi* at Repton and the Dark Dagger, *tridens* at Allestree were recorded and the Common Wainscot, *pallens*, the Smoky Wainscot, *impura* and the Purple Bar, *ocellata* were all plentiful. The Common Snout, *proboscidalis* was peculiarly uncommon and the Swallow Tailed Moth, *sambucaria* was scarcer than usual. The Winter Moth, *brumata* swarmed at Allestree as early

as the first week in November and the Northern Winter Moth was out soon after.

A fine specimen of the Barred Red, *prosapiaria* taken by Mr. Larkin at Repton showed a decided green cast over all the wings.

Hawk moths have not favoured us this year although the Elephant Hawk, *elpenor* seems to have been fairly common. I took a female in my garden at valerian and from 22 eggs which she laid have now got a score of pupae. They fed readily on epilobium. Mr. Storer reports a specimen from Bretby on 26th June, but says it was scarce this year in Burton where it is usually a common insect. I have no record this year of the Poplar Hawk, *populi*, nearer than Drakelowe, and no other Hawks have been reported to me, although Mr. Sale told me he had seen the Small Elephant Hawk, *porcellus* most years at Coxbench and often in numbers.

Most of the common Noctuas appeared in normal numbers during the Summer and also the Common Geometers which are not mentioned in this list.

In the Group ODONATA Mr. G. H. Storer, F.Z.S. reports the capture of the following Dragon Flies:—*Aeshna Cyanaea* at Willington and Egginton, in July; *A. Juncea* at Burton and *A. Grandis* at Gresley, on August 30th, *Agrion (Calopteryx) Splendens* over the canal at Stretton and Willington was less abundant than in the two preceding years. *Ischnura elegans* at Willington and *Enallagma cyathigerum* and *Coenagrion puella* both from Repton Shrubs complete the list.

The ORTHOPTERA were represented by *Rhyparobia maderae* (Fabr) received alive at Burton on August 12th and probably introduced with bananas. *Chorthippus parallelus* (Zett) taken at Dovedale at the end of August this year and at Holymoorside Sept. 25th, the previous year. *Gomphocerus maculatus* (Thumb) taken freely on the Derbyshire and Staffs. side of the river at the Stepping

Stones at Dovedale at the end of August. For all these records I am indebted to Mr. G. H. Storer, F.Z.S.

Amongst COLEOPTERA Mr. L. Nathan reports *Strophosomus lateralis* (Payk) at New Mills on August 4th. The Common Cockchafer has been very abundant in all parts this year.

The HYMENOPTERA records include *Syrex gigas* (L) of which two were seen at Ashford and one of them, a female was captured. *Myrmica ruginodis* (Nyl) was taken at Monsal Dale. Both these notes were sent by Mr. Nathan, who also supplied records of the following captures for this year:—

DIPTERA:—*Chilosia pulchripes* (Lw) taken on high ground above Millers Dale on August 27th.

NEUROPTERA:—*Hemerobius lutescens* (F) at Millers Dale on August 27th.