

ENTOMOLOGY IN DERBYSHIRE IN 1940.

By N. BLACKWELL WOOD.

The limitations on collecting imposed by the war will have deprived Derbyshire entomologists of some new records in 1940. In many ways weather conditions were good for collectors and the most casual observer could scarcely fail to have noticed the large number of the commoner insects which were to be seen during the Summer. Since any exposed light was a serious offence, night collecting was well nigh an impossibility and the urgency of war work and the number of entomologists serving with the forces resulted in very few records being sent in during the year.

Of primary importance perhaps was the abnormally large number of butterflies of *Pieris* group. The large and small white butterflies swarmed everywhere and notably as an aid to Nature's balance it was noted by several collectors that an exceptionally high percentage of the resulting larvae for second brood were stung by ichneumon. Nevertheless the later brood appeared in great numbers. Mr. G. Hanson Sale says he believes that *Brassicæ* was more abundant at Coxbench than in any year since 1868 and both in its first and second broods. *Cardamines* also appeared at Coxbench and is thought to breed on the low ground near Coxbench station each year.

Another local record of *G. rhamnii* has been made—this one by Mr. H. E. Currey of Little Eaton who saw a specimen at Horsley Carr on April 28th. Two have been recorded in recent years by Mr. Sale from Coxbench.

V. urticae not so common as usual at Coxbench was in abundance in other places and in my garden at Allestree

I counted 20 at one time on buddleia. Mr. C. L. Collenette records it as very common on ragwort in the fields on 31/7/40, when he saw 20 in half an hour but by 9 to 15/8/40, none was seen during the week. It later appeared on Michaelmas daisies at Parwich Hall towards the end of September. The following records supplied by Mr. Collenette for *vanessids*, etc., in 1940 are interesting.

31/7/40. 1 Painted Lady and 2 or 3 Red Admirals at Parwich Hall.

9-15/8/40. 3 or 4 Red Admirals and 2 Peacocks in garden of Flower Lilies.

3/9/40. 1 Peacock at Parwich Hall.

4/9/40. 1 Red Admiral, 2 small Tortoiseshells and 1 male Brimstone at Parwich Hall.

21/9/40. 10 Red Admirals, 4 Peacocks, 1 Painted Lady, 5 small Tortoiseshells, 1 common blue on Michaelmas daisies at Parwich Hall.

23/9/40. 13 Red Admirals, 3 Peacocks, 8 small Tortoiseshells, 1 common blue.

24/9/40. 12 Red Admirals, 3 Peacocks, 8 small Tortoiseshells, 1 Painted Lady.

I did not see a single specimen of Peacock at Allestree and for several years now this butterfly seems to have deserted this once popular locality for it. [I saw quite a number in my garden which is only a short distance from Mr. Wood's, which illustrates the weakness of negative evidence.—Ed.]

Swarms of small coppers appeared on Helleniums at Hazelwood but the blue spotted variety was not in evidence there. The common blue seemed scarcer than usual but the meadow brown appeared in numbers at Allestree and was common in the garden. An unidentified Fritillary of one of the larger species is reported from Flower Lilies on 15/8/40, from which locality Mr. Collenette also reports a specimen of *Sirex gigas* on the

same date. This was a female and gardeners there had never previously seen a specimen.

Mr. Sale reports the Peacock and Red Admiral as plentiful at Coxbench and I saw large numbers of Red Admirals very late in October at Allestree and Darley Abbey. Small coppers also swarmed at Coxbench.

Gamma was less plentiful than usual but a new visitor at Allestree was *atrata* where a large number appeared. The golden *plusia* was also in evidence again on delphiniums.