

Some Notes on Lepidoptera, 1931.

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IF the season of 1931 has been an odd one meteorologically it has no less had its peculiarities from an entomological point of view. With the late spring and unusually wet and cold summer, it was only to be expected that most insects should be scarce and late. What was not to be expected was that it should prove a really remarkable year for some migrants. Most noteworthy among these, and perhaps the only one to reach our county, is *Phryxus livornica*. A remarkable number of occurrences of this fine hawk moth has been recorded from all parts of the country and Derbyshire can claim at least two of them. On the 2nd of June a specimen was found at rest in the Garth of Repton Priory in such perfect condition that it seemed almost impossible that it should have flown at all, much less the long distances that it must have covered if the view is accepted that all these occurrences in May and June must necessarily be migrants; and another specimen was taken at Donington Hall on June 26 by Mr. F. J. Harper. These are the first records of this species in the county.

In the early spring several attempts were made to rediscover *Philodene prodromana* at Breadsall Moor and on the moors above Matlock, but without success. At Breadsall *Brephos parthenias* was flying freely on March 22, and this species was also noted at Repton Shrubs on April 6, when *Tortricodes tortricella* was flying in profusion and in very fresh condition, an indication

of the general lateness of the season. No *Pammene fimbriana* were taken there this year, despite careful search. As late as May 11 *Saturnia pavonia* was flying in some numbers on the Matlock moors and it was still about even on May 26. *Thecla rubi* was in great abundance on the earlier of these dates and the pretty little *Gelechia longicornis* was common and in fine variety. On May 26 two specimens of *Eulia politana* were secured in very fresh condition. This species is presumably single-brooded with us, as it is in Scotland, though in the south of England it produces two broods, in April and August; Meyrick seems to be in error in giving the time of appearance for it as June and July. The lateness of the season was further exemplified by a visit to the Via Gellia on June 7, when only one specimen of *Procris geryon* was observed and none of *Chlidonia subbaumanniana* whilst *Scoparia dubitalis*, *Pyrausta cingulata* and *P. aurata* were only just beginning to appear. All these species were, however, to be taken there in fair numbers a week later, *geryon* in particular being more abundant than usual. But if most species were late, a few rather unusually early occurrences were noted. Empty pupae of *Plusia moneta* were found on June 10, *Cucullia umbratica* was taken on June 5 and *Hecatera serena* on June 15.

A good deal of attention has been paid this year to the moorlands, particularly to those near Matlock and some interesting insects have been taken. In late June *Plemyria tristata* was common and in beautiful condition and *Argyroploce mygindana*, a species only recently added to our lists, was found to be abundant wherever its foodplant occurred. *Laspeyresia coniferana*, hitherto only recorded very rarely from Repton Shrubs was also taken, and on June 26 *Vanessa atalanta* was observed, in remarkable condition for so late a hibernated specimen. At the end of July *Plusia interrogationis* was not uncommon, *Eustroma populata* was just beginning to appear

and the pretty tortrix *Philodone gerningana* was flying freely together with *Argyroploce sauciana*, *Euxanthisa angustana*, *Acrolita naevana* var. *geminana*, *Cnephasia osseana* and others. One new tortrix was added to the Derbyshire list, *Peronea caledoniana*, of which a couple of specimens were taken. At Repton a specimen of *Eucestia plagiata* was taken on June 3. This species occurs sporadically in many parts of the county but had not previously been recorded for the Repton neighbourhood and the same is true of *Deilephia elpenor*, of which no less than four specimens were taken this year at honeysuckle in July. The year proved, at Repton, singularly useless for sugar. During the greater part of the summer the weather may have been responsible for this, but towards the end of September there was a spell of weather of the type that is generally considered ideal, with warm, dark, quiet evenings of the sort that, a week or so before, in South Devon, had produced insects in bewildering profusion. Sugar was tried regularly for about a fortnight, at first in the hopes of improving series of such things as *Orthosia litura*, *O. gilvago*, etc., and afterwards as an experiment to see how long an unbroken record of blank nights could be preserved. During the whole of that period one species only was attracted, *Miselia oxyacanthae*, with the curious exception of one *Agrotis saucia*, a rare visitant to Derbyshire which had not been noted here since the prolific "sugar" year of 1906, except for a solitary specimen in 1913. All the normally abundant species were entirely absent—a really unaccountable occurrence.

Mr. H. W. Daltry sends me one new record for the county, a pupa of *Agrotis lucerneae* having been found by him in Dovedale, from which the moth duly emerged. This species might reasonably be expected to occur in the more rugged parts of our hill districts, but it had hitherto escaped notice.