

NOTES ON DERBYSHIRE LEPIDOPTERA, 1937.

By N. BLACKWELL WOOD.

Entomology in Derbyshire at present provides ample scope for new collectors. A number of enthusiastic collectors and reporters have recently died or left the district and few new collectors have come along to replace them. Mr. James Douglas who died early in the year had devoted much time to collecting and observing local insects and in recent years had done some good work with the bees. Micro-lepidoptera seems to be without a devotee since Mr. H. C. Hayward left the district several years ago. Many people form the opinion that Derbyshire is a poor hunting ground for the insect collector, but a review of the insects of all classes recorded from the County would convince the most sceptical that much of the present apparent paucity is due to lack of active workers, and very many insects have been driven away from localities where they had been common by the spread of building operations. This would suggest to us that we must extend our search to fresh parts of the County and there are many such which seem never to have been explored.

The year in review has proved one of very mixed fortunes for entomologists and the writer on a number of excursions in Derbyshire has turned up nothing beyond the most common insects. A long drawn-out winter followed by a wet spring did not help matters and many of the early insects were either very scarce or entirely unrecorded. *Nupta* again appeared in numbers just over the County border but no new specimens has been recorded within the county.

The last few years have been remarkable for the number of *sphingidae* reported and this year *S. populi* and *S. ocellatus* were both taken on a number of occasions at Derby and Repton. The latter seems to be well established in Derbyshire now. *Elpenor* was taken at Normanton and an odd specimen is recorded by Mr. Larkin. Some copies were also taken into the Museum for identification.

Callunae was abundant at Matlock Moor and *Janira* was also more plentiful this year.

Workings at the Via Gellia may be responsible for the scarcity this season of *Geryon* a well established insect on the hillsides there.

At Repton *Dictæoides* proved abundant but *Camelina* and *Ziczac*, although found in some quantity some years, have proved rare this time. *Sordidata* often very plentiful was also a seasonal rarity. This is generally found in its heath form. Another insect reported from Repton by Mr. Larkin is *Leucophæaria* but this also was scarce.

In the year under review it has been the writer's unfortunate experience that a very large proportion of larvae of all kinds taken wild have proved to be stung by ichneumon flies, and one or two interesting specimens of these creatures have emerged. Presumably the conditions were favourable to these parasites.

An expedition to the Derwent Reservoirs in search of the White Letter Hairstreak proved fruitless although this insect was reported from there three years ago by Mr. G. H. Sale.

The variety of *C. phlæas* with extra blue spots so common at Quarndon at one time seems to have died out in that district. A number of specimens captured there this year proved on examination to be absolutely normal.