

## ENTOMOLOGY IN DERBYSHIRE.

Notes on the Season 1943.

By N. BLACKWELL WOOD.

Owing to war conditions, collectors generally have found it impossible to devote any time specifically to Entomology, but there have been nevertheless a considerable number of records of interest during the year.

Weather conditions throughout were somewhat unfavourable; a mild winter followed by very early spring which was checked by some severe late frosts and followed by a rather wet summer gave conditions which were not too good for entomology. A number of insects which are often over plentiful did not seem to appear in great numbers in 1943. One butterfly however which has become more plentiful than usual during the last few years was again extremely abundant during the year. I refer to *E. Cardamines* (orange tip) and I hear from Mr. G. H. Sale that this was abundant at Coxbench on April 14th, and from Dr. J. W. O. Holmes that it was equally plentiful at Langley Mill on May 5th. I observed it in large numbers in the neighbourhood of Derby during late April and Mr. W. O. Binns speaks of it as plentiful in the Repton district on May 5th. I watched a female ovipositing in my garden at Allestree and in about 20 minutes some 5 eggs only were laid, each on a different flower head. Mr. Sale describes his experiences with this insect, when having captured 4 females, one laid thirty eggs, the second although kept alive for twelve days in a cage produced none and the other two died almost immediately; he then searched for ova and in three short excursions in his own neighbourhood found one hundred

and one eggs on *S. officinales* (hedge mustard) on which occasion there was only one flower head with more than one egg and in which instance there were two only. These flower heads had probably each been visited by many females owing to the abundance of the species at this time and therefore there appears to be a natural provision to keep separate these cannibal larvae.

Passing to some of the unusual records, there is one from Dr. Holmes of *D. livornica* (striped hawk) which he captured at rhododendron in his garden at Langley Mill on June 5th. I saw this specimen subsequently on the setting board and record it as one of the best finds of the year.

The Hawk moths seem to have been rather plentiful in Derbyshire during 1943 and I took a specimen *M. stellatarum* (humming bird hawk) at Allestree at valerian on May 5th, another one on July 30th and a third at rest in the porch in the middle of August. I have not seen this insect in this district before but noticed it was unusually plentiful in other parts of the country during the year. *E. elpenor* (elephant hawk) at rhododendron on May 23rd, and *C. porcellus* (small elephant hawk) at valerian on June 17th, both at Langley Mill are recorded by Dr. Holmes who on the 4th of June found eggs of *S. ocellatus* (eyed hawk) in the same district.

A specimen of *M. tiliæ* taken by Canon Shaw in Heyworth St., Derby on May 30 has been added to the type collection for the County.

A pupa of *M. tiliæ* (lime hawk) was brought me from Netherseal by Mr. D. L. Mould and 6 specimens of the perfect insect were assembled at Repton by Mr. W. O. Binns on May 16th-19th. Another elpenor was recorded from Repton on June 4th and several larvae were sent to me by Mr. Thorpe which were brought in by gardeners from various parts of the suburbs of Derby.

Early butterflies reported were *P. rapæ* (small white) on

April 3rd and *P. brassicae* (Large White) on April 4th, seen at Coxbench by Mr. Sale and *C. rubi* (Green Hairstreak) found on Morley Moor by Dr. Holmes. The latter insect appeared at Langley Mill on April 18th and is the first seen by Dr. Holmes in this locality, and two late specimens were taken by Mr. Atherley at Little Eaton on May 30th.

*L. phlaeas* (Small Copper) appeared at Coxbench on April 14th and a very late specimen was flying at Langley Mill on November 18th.

*N. io* (Peacock) was out flying on Morley Moor on April 4th and a freshly emerged specimen was seen on July 31st with *P. icarus*.

The writer had several interesting finds at Allestree including *G. rhamni* (Brimstone) on April 3rd and 4th. *P. cardui* (Painted Lady) captured in perfect condition on June 6th and another on June 13th and a single *P. egeria* (Speckled Wood) on August 1st.

A colony of *A. aglaila* (Dark Green Fritillary) was found by Dr. Holmes on July 23rd a mile or two on the Notts. border side of Langley Mill so it may spread later to the Derbyshire side if not already here.

*A. paphia* (Silver Washed Fritillary) and *L. astrarche* (Brown Argus) are recorded from Via Gellia by Mr. R. W. Atherley on August 1st, whilst *P. Megaera* (Wall) was again much in evidence, as two specimens August 12th, Coxbench, abundant at Langley Mill, August 22nd. One at Coxbench 19th May, one at Melbourne 23rd May, one Little Eaton 30th May, two Little Eaton 31st July, three Repton 22nd August, one Littleover, 18th August, one Milton 16th May, and several at Milton and Foremark on August 15th.

Mr. Atherley records several specimens of *S. W-album* (White Letter Hairstreak) from Ashbourne district on July 3rd. *L. phlaeas* (Small Copper) was numerous at Repton on July 24th, when Mr. Atherley took a specimen of *ab radiata*.

The following records are interesting for dates or locality.

- Feb. 26th. *S. libatrix* (Herald) Repton (hibernated), W.O.B.
- April 4th. *B. parthenias* (Orange Underwing) Morley Moor, J.W.O.H.
- May 13th. *H. tenebrata* (Small Yellow Underwing) Langley Mill, J.W.O.H.
- May 15th. *E. hastata* (Argent and Sable) Repton, W.O.B.
- May 16th. *P. cardui* (Painted Lady) Repton, W.O.B.
- May 16th. *E. dolabraria* (Scorched Wing) Foremark, C.C.
- May 17th. *C. pamphilus* (Small Heath) Coxbench, and second brood in August, G.H.S.
- May 21st. *C. argiolus* (Holly Blue) Coxbench, G.H.S.
- May 23rd. *D. pudibunda* (Pale Tussock) Foremark, C.C.
- May 30th. *A. tages* (Dingy Skipper) Little Eaton, R.W.A.; *Z. grisealis*, Foremark, C.C.
- May 30th. *Z. trifolii* (5 Spot Burnet) Repton, W.O.B.
- June 3rd. *D. falcataria* (Pebble Hook Tip) Repton, W.O.B.
- June 5th. *O. potatoria* (Drinker) pupae at Repton, W.O.B.; *P. festucae* (Gold Spot) 5 pupae Repton, W.O.B.
- June 6th. *L. callunae* (Northern Eggar) Repton, W.O.B.
- June 12th-17th. *A. caia* (Garden Tiger), 30 emerged larvae taken London Road, Derby, N.B.W.
- June 20th. *N. zic zac* (Pebble Prominent) larvae at Repton, W.O.B.
- June 21st. *T. batis* (Peach Blossom) Repton, W.O.B.
- June 24th. *Z. lonicerae* (Narrow Bordered 5 Spot Burnet) Langley Mill, J.W.O.H. and N.B.W.
- June 30th. *N. dromedarius* (Iron prominent) larvae Repton, W.O.B.
- July 3rd. *D. pudibunda* (Pale Tussock) larvae, Repton, W.O.B.
- July 11th. *S. bilunaria* (Early Thorn) Repton, W.O.B.

- July 13th. *N. cuculatella* (Short Cloaked) Willington,  
W.O.B.  
July 18th. *A. megacephala* (Poplar Grey), Willington,  
W.O.B.  
July 26th. *Z. pyrina* (Leopard) Aldecar, J.W.O.H.  
Aug. 8th. 2 *C. nupta* (Red Underwing) at Langley Mill,  
J.W.O.H.  
Oct. 5th. 2 *C. nupta* (Red Underwing) at Willington,  
W.O.B.

Recorders initials used above are:—

- J.W.O.H. Dr. Holmes of Langley Mill.  
W.O.B. Mr. W. O. Binns of Repton School.  
G.H.S. Mr. G. Hanson Sale of Coxbench.  
C.C. Mr. Camden Clarke of Branston.  
R.W.A. Mr. R. W. Atherley of Littleover.  
N.B.W. Mr. N. Blackwell Wood of Allestree. (Recorder  
D.E.S.).

In conclusion mention must be made of the death of Mr. W. G. Sheldon, formerly of Duffield, at the age of 84. Mr. Sheldon who was articled to a Derby architect, first took up entomology in Derbyshire and later concentrated on British micro lepidoptera in which branch he became one of our foremost authorities. Full obituary notices appeared in the local press and in the Entomologists' Monthly Magazine.