

***Apeira syringaria* (L.) (Lep.: Geometridae): a second generation specimen at Dartford, Kent in 1999**

On 31 August 1999, a somewhat smaller than normal male specimen of *A. syringaria*, in perfect condition, was recorded at my garden m.v. light. Although obtaining second generation specimens in captivity is relatively easy, it is evident that wild examples are rare. Chalmers-Hunt (*Butterflies and Moths of Kent*, 1975, Supplement in *Ent. Rec.* **88**) gives no examples, but Collins (*Larger Moths of Surrey*, 1997) quotes two records for the period 1976 to 1996, one of which refers also to the London area.

Although the reporting the “out of season” records has always been a feature of entomological journals, it has become a more prominent feature since the widespread use of m.v lights, and static ones in particular. Despite the use of such lights for some fifty years, reference to suspected second generation *A. syringaria* seems to have been confined to the last eleven years. Those records which I have been able to track down are as follows:

- 27.viii.1989    Wiltshire, P. Waring (*Ent. Rec.* **102**)
- 5.x.1989        Wiltshire, P. Waring (*Ent. Rec.* **102**)
- 29.viii.1989    Addington, Surrey, B. Skinner (Collins, *op. cit.*)
- 21.ix.1989     Long Wittingham, Oxfordshire, D. Owen (*Ent. Rec.* **102**)
- 4.ix.1992       Milford, Surrey, D. Baldock (Collins, *op. cit.*)
- 26.ix.1994     Rothampsted, Hertfordshire, A. Riley (*Ent. Rec.* **110**)
- 1.x.1995        Binstead, Isle of Wight, S. Knill-Jones (*Ent. Rec.* **108**)
- 31.viii.1999    Dartford, Kent, B.K. West

Such sporadic “out of season” specimens are worth recording. During the 1970s, three supposedly second generation specimens of the univoltine *Campaea margaritata* (L.) attended my garden m.v. light; they were portents of change – in the 1990s, the light has attracted over seven hundred! – B.K. WEST, 36 Briar Road, Dartford, Kent DA5 2HN.

**The Yellow-legged Clearwing *Synanthedon vespiformis* (L.) (Lep.: Sesiidae) in Greenwich Park**

As there appears to be only a record “prior to 1900” of *Synanthedon vespiformis* for the Greenwich area (Plant, 1993. *Larger Moths of the London Area*. LNHS), it is worth reporting that on 24 August 1980 I observed an example flying about the base of a rather old, but sound, sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* in the “Wilderness” in Greenwich Park, south-east London. Most likely, this moth occurs widely in the locality where, besides rather few oaks *Quercus* spp., sweet chestnuts (some of very great age), are the principal tree. Doubtless, however, it generally prefers stumps in which to breed; these are scarcely to be found in the park, for the chestnuts are very wind-resistant and virtually never get blown down, or felled. Clearly this moth is by

far the most polyphagous of our clearwings, though oak is normally the preferred pabulum. At Blackheath, also in the Greenwich district, I found it breeding in woody cankers on the trunk of a wych elm *Ulmus glabra* in 1972 (Allen, 1975. *Ent. Rec.* **87**: 47 - 49).— A. A. ALLEN, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London SE7 8QG.

***Lasius brunneus* (Latr.) (Hym.: Formicidae) in Hertfordshire and its occurrence on Norway Spruce *Picea abies***

The ant *Lasius brunneus*, known in Britain since 1923, was first recorded in Hertfordshire in 1971. By the end of 1999, a gathering stream of records, most of them originating from a few observers and often not the result of systematic searching, had brought the Hertfordshire total to nearly twenty discrete localities. Most reports have been from the expected semi-natural woodland, parkland or hedgerow sites, but also included records of domestic infestations at Berkhamsted and in the house of the present writer's parents at Garston, near Watford.

*L. brunneus* is known to utilise a wide variety of deciduous trees for nesting, at least eleven different genera being quoted in Donisthorpe (British Ants, 1927). In 1996, trails were discovered on the trunk of a mature *Picea abies* in Whippendell Wood, near Watford, and later in the same year I located further trails on a similar specimen at Bricket Wood. Both localities are ancient woodland sites graded as SSSI status, and in both cases apparently suitable mature deciduous timber was present nearby. On 5 May 1999, at the Bricket Wood site, workers were present on all the mature *P. abies* trees that I examined, either on trails on the trunk or beaten from foliage. It is likely, although not certain, that nesting was taking place in at least one tree.

There seem to be few records of *L. brunneus* utilising coniferous trees, despite the presence of both ant and spruce in the Scandinavian countries, where such an affiliation might be expected to occur: Collingwood (*Fauna Entomologica Scandinavica*. vol 8, 1979) reflects other sources in stating "old trees, chiefly oak". In view of the growth in records of *L. brunneus* recently, both in Hertfordshire and elsewhere in southern England, those interested in the species should not confine their attentions solely to deciduous trees, and mature *Picea* in suitable habitat should be searched for its presence.— C. M. EVERETT, Wolfson College, Cambridge CB3 9BB.

**Steve Church**

The entomological community was saddened to receive the news of the sudden death of Steve Church from a heart attack on 11 January 2000, at the age of only 51. Steve's endless optimism and positivity served as an inspiration to all who came into contact with him. Although he contributed little to this journal (he always said that writing was something he planned to do in retirement), he made an outstanding contribution to entomology through his field work. Almost never going to known sites to collect rare species, he made constant searches for such moths at new sites and was constantly seeking moths presumed to be extinct by visiting their former sites and similar habitats nearby. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him and our sympathies go to Lucy and other members of his close family.

Colin W. Plant



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