

*Abundance of Peronea variegana, Schiff.*—Has an excessive abundance of the common *Peronea variegana* been generally noticed in the country during the past season? Here I never remember to have seen it in anything approaching the numbers of this year. Beginning to emerge in August, it continued right through September and into October; and in suitable weather it could almost always be seen flying leisurely about even in the daytime in my garden, whilst the hawthorn hedges adjoining must have harboured thousands of the moth. At first the almost unicolorous bluish-black form was most noticed, but when the species got thoroughly well out, the more ordinary form with the basal half white, and the outer half brown or bluish-black, seemed largely to predominate, the walls and palings indeed often looked as if white paint spots had been splashed on them, the dark parts of the moth not being visible, to me at any rate, even at a very short distance, though possibly younger eyes would have seen them well enough. Other varieties occurred, and any one specially interested in Tortrices could no doubt have secured a wonderfully varied series.—GEO. T. PORRITT, Elm Lea, Dalton, Huddersfield: *November 9th, 1909.*

*A large colony of Formicoxenus nitidulus, Nyl., and microgynes of Formica fusca in the New Forest.*—On an afternoon last July, while collecting along the New Park fence, facing Butt's Lawn, my attention was attracted to a small winged insect crawling over the surface of a large nest of *Formica rufa*. This proved to be a ♀ of *Formicoxenus nitidulus*.

Although I scratched a few inches of the surface of the nest, I saw no other examples. Realising the difficulty of distinguishing such a small insect amongst the thousands of *rufa* workers, which were running all over the nest, for it was a very hot day, I decided to go again the next day to the spot with a sieve.

Armed with this instrument and a piece of white cloth I was astonishingly successful. Within the space of an hour and a half I had got over six dozen examples, including six apterous queens, and three males. The nest was a very large one, the portion composed of bents, above the sandy surface of the bank, being about 3 ft. × 2 × 1. However, this large number was taken in about a cubic foot of siftings, the portion in which they were most numerous being the deep part where the galleries commenced in the sand.

It was while I was sifting this nest that the example of *Myrmecoris gracilis* was obtained, which is now in Mr. Saunders' possession.

On August 12th, in company with Mr. Hamu, I again sifted a portion of this nest, and also of two or three others only a few yards away, and we succeeded in obtaining about four dozen examples, and of these over a dozen were obtained from the original nest. Altogether then, this one nest alone furnished more than seven dozen examples, and probably, had we sifted it completely from end to end, that number would have been doubled, showing that this was an exceptionally large colony.

Another interesting record for this year is the capture of several microgyne queens in nests of *Formica fusca*. These were obtained in three distinct nests, all in different localities. I am not aware of this form having been taken before in

this country. They are about one-third smaller than the normal queens of *fusca*, and differ also in having the abdomen pubescent like the workers. In all these nests only microgyne insects were to be seen, and I do not know to what cause the production of these microgynes can be ascribed; but it may be worth mentioning that in one nest an example of *Atemeles emarginatus* was found. The first nest which I found was a very small one, containing only ♀s and ♂s, with some larvæ and pupæ. The other two nests, however, were crowded with examples of all sexes, as well as larvæ. The ♂s obtained from these did not differ in the least from the normal type *fusca*.—G. ARNOLD, University, Liverpool: November 15th, 1909.

*Aculeate Hymenoptera in the London District.*—Collecting in two localities of the above district, Herne Hill and Wimbledon Common, in such fitful sunshine as there was during the past summer, a total of 110 species of *Aculeata* was met with. Among those worth mentioning, the localities being possibly so far unrecorded for them, were two ♂♂ of *Crabro gonager*, captured in the garden here (Herne Hill), also a ♂ of *C. podagricus* and five *C. varius*, two curious dark varieties of the ♂ with the normal type. In a small hole in one of the wooden posts enclosing the railway I found in June a ♂ *Sapyga quinquepunctata*.

I think the most productive parts of Wimbledon Common are to be found, roughly speaking, on the golf links; with the exception of *Erica*, bramble and hawthorn blooms in their seasons, it is practically destitute of flowers, so attention was chiefly paid to such pits and more or less bare patches of sand where the insects breed; a large one of the latter at the windmill end of the links was all the season very full of the burrows of a number of species.

Among the 17 species of *Andrena* found were *A. clarkella*, a colony of *A. cineraria*, confining themselves to a space of a few feet, both sexes of *A. angustior*, fairly common, and *A. similis* and *A. nana* in May; of this last I took a modified ♀ having three *Stylops* under the 4th abdominal segment.

Two *A. argentata* ♂♂ were taken on *Erica* in August and a pair of *Nomada jacobææ* also. I believe too that Wimbledon is an unrecorded locality for *Sphecodes longulus*, of which I got one ♀. Odd ♀♀ of *Diodontus luperus*, *Gorytes tumidus* and a ♂ of *Nysson dimidiatus* were also obtained and several specimens of both sexes of *Crabro panzeri*.

In two places on the Common, one being the bare sandy patch before referred to, *Mimesa shuckardi* and *M. bicolor* were fairly plentiful, as was also *Myrmosa melanocephala* ♀♀, more abundant after the sun began to lose power about 4 p.m., only one ♂ was caught. In both places the *Myrmosa* confined themselves to a small area, with them I took two ♀♀ of *Methoca ichneumonides* about 11 a.m., on separate days, one of these as compared with the other being very small and dark, almost black.

I found *Halictus punctatissimus* in the garden here, and also at Wimbledon.

I am indebted to Mr. E. Saunders for much kind help with the identifications.  
—RUPERT STENTON, Herne Hill: November 6th, 1909.