

Notes and Observations

VANESSA CARDUI L. AND ALSOPHILA AESCULARIA SCHIFF. IN JANUARY.—I was surprised to see a specimen of *Vanessa cardui* L. flying in my garden at about 12.30 p.m. on Sunday, January 30th. I was able to watch it sunning itself on some stones for some minutes. It was a very pale female in near perfect condition. About an hour later I saw another specimen flying in another part of this town. I presume that there has been a very early migration of this species into this country. I cannot recollect having seen a single specimen of this butterfly in this neighbourhood last year.

I noticed a male *Alsophila aescularia* Schiff. at rest on a tree trunk here on January 29th, which seems an early date for this species.—C. S. H. BLATHWAYT, 27 South Road, Weston-super-Mare. 31.i.1966.

OPORINIA AUTUMNATA BORKH. IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT.—I captured several specimens of *Oporonia autumnata* Borkh. at rest after dark near Shanklin on 15th November 1964. A female deposited a number of eggs from which a series of the moth was reared, the imagines emerging during September 1965. The species was kindly identified by Mr. D. S. Fletcher of the British Museum (Natural History). I record these moths because I have been unable to find a previous record of this species for the Island.—T. D. FEARNEHOUGH, 26 Green Lane, Shanklin, Isle of Wight. 6.ii.1966.

THE IGNIS FATUUS.—In my note on luminous arthropods in the article called "Will-o'-the-Wisp" (*Ent. Rec.*, 77:277-8) I omitted mention of the common centipede, *Geophilus electricus*. There is a note on this by F. G. Sinclair in the *Cambridge Natural History*, vol. 5 at page 34. A longer and more detailed note will be found in *Newman's Entomologist* for 1875 (vol. 8, No. 142, at pp. 115-117), where Erskine Greville's observation of a specimen was supplemented by a longer note by Newman.

In Sinclair's case the animal "left a bright trail of light behind it, which lasted for some time." Greville recorded that the specimen which he observed "shed a light about a quarter of an inch in breadth, much more brilliant than that of the ordinary glowworm, and left a track of light about a foot behind it . . . it left its phosphorescent light on the stones and inequalities of the ground as it passed . . ." In front of the centipede was a *Tipula* which appeared to have been caught by the centipede and to have escaped, which also was "brilliantly phosphoric". Greville took both centipede and *Tipula* into his house and examined them. He found that the *Tipula* "was of nearly equal brightness with its aggressor, which appeared to have the power of leaving its light on everything it touched".—P. B. M. ALLAN.

FLIGHT OF THE MOLE CRICKET.—Further to Mr. P. B. M. Allan's reference to the flight of the mole cricket, although I cannot supply the information he requests, the following is my experience with this species in 1940-42 in Palestine, Egypt and Libya.

Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa L. was strongly attracted to light at dusk and into the night; I have frequently seen it flying round an outside light just like a large moth, for which I at first mistook it. On a particularly warm



Allan, P. B. M. 1966. "The Ignis fatuus." *The entomologist's record and journal of variation* 78, 104–104.

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