

# THE VASCULUM (SUBSTITUTE)

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*Edited by*

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KING'S COLLEGE, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE.

## BY THE WAY

The next issue of the Vasculum will appear in June, 1951, and material for publication in that number should be in the Editor's hands before June 1st, 1951. The attention of the Secretaries of our Societies is drawn to the fact that the present number has been delayed considerably because the necessary accounts of Societies' doings were not received by the Editor before March 1st.

## LOCAL NAMES OF PLANTS

Quite recently, we came across Herb Truelove used as an English name for *Pans quadrifolia* instead of the more ordinary Herb Paris. The name was explained as having arisen from the real meaning of Herb Paris, *i.e.*, the herb of a pair, having been coupled with the arrangement of the four leaves of the plant in the form of a true-lover's knot. Similarly, for the first time, we became acquainted with the use of the appellation. Herb Peter, for the cowslip; in this case, the name takes its origin in the fancied resemblance between the umbel of a cowslip and a bunch of keys.

In view of the great interest attached to these old fashioned names, we should be very glad to receive any such names now current in Northumberland and Durham. We ourselves are cognizant of many still in use in the Team Valley.

## NEEDLESS SLAUGHTER

A couple of weeks ago, we were asked to give information concerning the exact way to get to one of the most prolific localities for the rarer insects of Durham. Our first reaction to this request was to supply the information required. Quite accidentally, however, we learned that the intention was to set up light traps in the area. This at once aroused recollections of the late Dr. F. C. Garrett's pungent remarks concerning the results of an evening's work when he observed such traps in action. Subsequently, an account of more recent collecting on similar lines came to our notice in which it was stated that, as the outcome of the working of two traps, no fewer than 22,615 moths had been massacred. If that is the total of the lepidoptera, what must have been the grand total when all insect orders were included ? The reason

given for this senseless slaughter of so many insects was the impossibility of getting a true idea of the insect population of a particular district if each night's catch was not destroyed ! The further remark was added that, if the insects were only stupefied and let loose at daylight, it was practically certain that they would appear the following night !

Recently, the beautiful green Noctuid *Luceria virens* was discovered for the first time in the British Isles in Co. Clare, Ireland. Unfortunately, the locality was divulged, and we have information that the light trap method employed in the area was " very successful "—a euphemism for the destruction of a considerable number of an insect of supreme biogeographical significance.

We trust that our members will take note of the above facts, and be very careful indeed in revealing the habitats of our own entomological treasures.

#### THE FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN

We note that the Country Pavilion in the Festival of Britain is to be supplied with stocks of living butterflies in order to convey an idea of the extent of the British fauna. In deciding upon this, we hope that the organisers of this section have fully realised the implications of such an exhibit. Almost certainly, the only outcome can be a further step toward the depopulation of our countryside.

Our misgivings are intensified when we see advertisements issued by a professional for live butterflies, " recently awakened hibernators," such as Large and Small Tortoiseshells, Peacocks, Commas and Brimstones, being specially mentioned. This to us seems disastrous when we recognise that, after having been almost extinct in Britain, the Large Tortoiseshell is just beginning to recover lost ground—a remark applicable to some extent to the Comma.

Again, we hope that no local collector will be tempted by a few wretched pence to send females of any of these species, or of the other lepidoptera named in the advertisement, from the northern counties. We cannot spare a single hibernated female when the present position of butterflies in our counties is considered.

#### FROG SPEARS

As these abominations will soon be in action, members of the Northern Naturalists' Union are asked to do all they can to prevent their use. It should be remembered that the police can, and will, take action under certain circumstances.

### THE SOCIETIES

#### NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The Third Field Meeting of the N.N.U. in the year 1950 was held at Gibside on September 23rd. In spite of the doubtful weather, a good number assembled at the Rowlands Gill meeting place whence they set out for Gibside. In the woods, the autumnal

colours were pleasing, but flowering plants were nearly over, although Tormentil dotted the grass in parts. Blackberries were at their best and were sampled in passing. One damp patch of Marsh Violet plants had an unexpected number of ripe fruits.

The chief finds of the excursion were amongst the Fungi of which great quantities were seen. Amongst the toadstools were the poisonous Fly Agaric, *Amanita muscaria*, *Russula emetica* and the edible Blewit, *Tricholoma personatum*. Growing in the grass were the coral-like Clavarias in different colours, including *C. inaequalis*, *C. cinerea* and *C. stricta*. Dead wood proved an exceptionally good source of specimens. The Candle-snuffer Fungus *Xylaria hypoxylon* was very frequent, and bracket fungi covered large areas, mostly with species of *Stereum* and *Polystictus versicolor*. The fallen sycamore leaves provided an abundance of the black patches produced by *Rhytisma acerinum*. Those not interested in fungi had a pleasant circular tour with the monument as its turning point. They also examined with closer attention the decaying beauties of the House, the Banqueting Hall and the Chapel. K.B.B.

The Twenty-sixth Annual Meeting was held, as has now become usual, in the rooms of the Hancock Museum on Saturday, March 3rd, 1951. Once more we have to chronicle the presence of a record number of members and associates.

The reports of the Treasurer, Secretary and Editor were presented, and all bore eloquent testimony to the thoroughly sound position of the Union.

After having heard the reports, the meeting proceeded to the election of officers. Prof. J. B. Cragg was elected President whilst the Vice-Presidents, except for the substitution of Prof. D. H. Valentine for Dr. W. A. Dark, remained as before; nor were any changes made in the other officers of the Union.

After the business meeting was completed. Prof. Valentine gave a useful lecture on the Flora of Durham. He began by comparing the extent of our flora with that of similar areas and emphasised that our county marked the meeting place of northern and southern forms. He then proceeded to analyse our plants on the basis of the elements to which they belonged, dwelling, in particular, on the peculiar assemblage of plants recorded from Upper Teesdale. Next, he demonstrated that the flora was not static for we were losing species, at the same time compensating for this by gaining others.

He closed by referring to critical groups which had been wellstudied in the county, and mentioned others which still called for serious examination by keen workers. In addition, he outlined other lines of research still open to would-be pioneers.

Prof. Valentine was accorded a hearty vote of thanks for his excellent talk,

Tea was taken at 4.30 p.m. after which we examined the various exhibits. Mr. Cook's annual display of spring flowers was set out in the body of the Museum and was just as beautiful and interesting as usual. The rest were on show in the lecture room. Of these Mrs. Gibby's collection of Swedish Arctic-alpine plants were very interesting as were also the Oeland specimens brought by Dr. Clark. Mr. A. E. Hart showed his fine pressed plants preserved by a method of his own devising. Of local plants, Mr. Alker brought a nice series of specimens from Castle Eden Dene and, as we now expect, Mr. J. K. Morton had set out a very important series of critical plants from many sources. A wellmounted collection of local and also southern plants represented Mr. L. Wilcox's contribution. Of the insects, Dr. Burt showed an interesting group of the life history of the bug *Rhodinus prolixus* and Prof. J. W. Heslop Harrison exhibited cases of the smallest British Lepidoptera, the Lithocolletidae, and of *Peronea cristana*.

#### KING'S COLLEGE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The last academic session was marked by an extremely interesting closing event in the form of the Society's Annual Vacation Expedition. This summer seven members spent a week on the island of Caldey which is situated two miles off Tenby in Pembrokeshire. We stayed at the Guest House of the Cistercian Monastery on the island, and it may be said that we profited gastronomically as well as in an opportunity for studying the exceptionally interesting flora and fauna of South West Wales. A general preliminary survey of the island was accomplished, and we hope to publish adequate reports in due course.

Attendance at our meetings this term has been very encouraging, and amongst the high lights have been an address by our President, Dr. E. T. Burt, and a report by members of the summer expedition.

On Saturday, February 10th, 1951, the Second Annual Conversazione was held in the Hancock Museum when Prof. D. H. Valentine gave an interesting talk on the Biological Flora of Great Britain when he outlined the purposes of the new publication and its general plan. Many specimens were on view: these included a combined exhibit in which was set out the results of the Caldey Island' expedition. Many fine photographs of the island were shown with its characteristic plants, marine life and insects. Mr. D. Morgan had on view a fine series of the essential oils of plants whilst Mr. D. Robertson exhibited British and Austrian Lepidoptera as well as algae from S. Devon and Northumberland. Mr. R. Boyce showed local plants, amongst which we included some interesting Dead Nettles. Mr. K. Park produced finely mounted and representative series of British Eyebrights. Mr. L. Wilcox brought a fine collection of plants which he expounded to many questioners. Mr. J. F. M. Cannon's collection of Chalk-down plants attracted attention as did Mr. F. Williams' display illustrating the Essex oyster beds and their associated fauna. Mr. W. Hunt's Bird Photographs, too, were well worth inspecting. On this

occasion, Prof J. W. Heslop Harrison had on view a novel hybrid between the Common White (*Piens rapae*) and the Green Veined White (*P. napi*) whilst Dr. Burt displayed various species of Collembola, gnat larvae, etc. Mr. Stokes, in addition to helping with the general exhibit, had another introducing local shore life. Tea was served at 6 p.m. and the meeting closed half an hour later.

#### CONSETT AND DISTRICT NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB

The last field meeting of 1950. was held on September 16th at Eastgate and Irishope Burn when Dr. S. Tomkeieff of King's College was leader. We inspected Greenfoot quarry where an intrusion of the Whin Sill was being worked. Interesting features observed were the calcite veins in the whinstone and pure calcite crystals. Boulder clay overlying the shales included rocks from the Cheviots. The metamorphosed surface of the limestone beneath the sill was examined by Dr. Tomkeieff, who explained it and the geological configuration of the Upper Wear Valley. Continuing up the valley to Wearhead, we proceeded along the river to West Black Dene. Here the old lead mine is being reopened, and some of the displaced rocks were studied. Fine pieces of galena were discovered as well as fluor spar crystals. A well-marked fossil of *Lepidodendron* was seen when some of the rocks were split. The limestone up the stream yielded fossil shells of the mollusc, *Productus giganteus*. At Burtree Ford, above Wearhead, the river Wear provides a magnificent waterfall which tumbles over the four fathom limestone. The excursion terminated at Copt Hill where whinstone was worked for a considerable number of years. Work has now ceased and the quarry is filled with water.

#### BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

On December 5th we resumed our open discussion on "Old Birtley," the topic again being introduced by Mr. A. McNamara, and carried forward by Messrs. T. H. Ward, H. Soulsby, J. A. Richardson, F. Ross, Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison and others. On December 19th, we welcomed Prof. I. A. Richmond who gave us a splendid illustrated account of the Roman Occupation of the North of England. Mr. H. Soulsby began the New Year for us on January 9th when he dealt with the "Structure of the Human Body, its Diseases and Remedies for the Latter." Our Annual Dinner took place on January 16th, when we had the pleasure of the company of Mr. J. J. Robson who showed us three of his fine films. The next lecture, on January 23rd, was given by Mr. F. Wade who entertained us with a racy account of his various "Tramps Across the Pennines." Mrs. C. W. Heslop Harrison was the speaker on February 6th. She detailed her experiences in Ireland, illustrating her talk with a fine series of coloured photographs of places she had visited. On February 20th. Dr. J. Campbell spoke on "Curiosities of a Medical Practice," when he dealt with such topics as giants, dwarfs, etc., in his own inimitable way. Finally, as our lecturer selected for March 6<sup>th</sup>

could not attend. Prof. Heslop Harrison gave a lecture with the title, " Why We Resemble Our Parents." He showed the general mechanism by means of which this is brought about.

## NOTES AND RECORDS

### NOTES

**X *Spartina Townsendii* (Groves).**—With reference to the note by Mr. J. K. Morion in the *Vasculum*, Vol. XXXV page 31, regarding this species on the Northumberland coast, it is of interest to record that it was planted on the southern part of the estuary at Ainmouth in about 1900 and is now well established all round the estuary. The growth on the mud is not very robust, but in two clumps which I have measured, the spread is at about the rate of one foot in the diameter of the clumps annually. In another clump growing on saltmarsh, the growth is stronger and the spread more rapid.—H. Tully.

**Willows in the Birtley and Lamesley Area.**—On March 4th, I made a journey to a pitfall in this district in order to see what plants had colonized this derelict piece of ground. I was astonished to find on it several species of willows, the chief being *Salix Caprea*, the catkins of which were in the silvery condition, *S. viminalis*, also well-advanced, and *S. fragilis*. However, the predominant species growing in the nearby hedges and on marshy ground was *S. atrocineae* whilst *S. aurita* was distinctly rare, only one bush being seen, although it replaces *S. atrocineae* not a mile away. Along the old millrace leading to the Moor Mill, there was a great quantity of the hybrid *S. rubra* whilst along the Team the parents of this hybrid, *S. viminalis* and *S. purpurea* occurred in small numbers. —J. A. Richardson.

**Wild Flowers of Chalk and Limestone.**—In the *Vasculum* review of the book with this title written by Mr. J. E. Lousley, it was stated that, contrary to Mr. Lousley's opinion, our Magnesian Limestone areas had been well worked. To check up this statement, and to determine to what extent local botanists had studied the area a hundred years ago, I looked up the records of their early excursions with the following result. On September 11th, 1846, the Tyneside Naturalists' Field Club visited Cleadon and Whitburn, on June 16th, 1847, Castle Eden Dene, on June 29th, 1848, Hesleden Dene, on June 22nd, 1849, Hawthorn and Horden Denes, on September 7th, 1849, Ryhope, on September 5th, 1850, Hartlepool, on September 12th, 1851, Roker and Whitburn and on July 16th, 1852, Castle Eden. All of these visits were quite independent of the assiduous labours of such well-known local workers as John Wilson, Stephen Robson, Nathaniel J. Winch, John Thomhill, Richard Waugh, E. Robson, J. Hogg, W. H. Brown, M. A. Lawson, W. Backhouse and others who scoured our limestone areas in the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, and did so much to secure the success, firstly, of Winch's " *Flora* " (1838) and then of Baker and Tale's great " *Flora* " (1868). Furthermore, after the production of the latter work, up to the present day, there has been a continuous succession of competent workers, who, most assuredly, have not neglected the study of the botanically rich Magnesian Limestone tracts of East Durham. Thus, there can be no foundation whatever for a belief that such areas in our counties have been investigated less vigorously and less satisfactorily than similar areas elsewhere in Britain.—J.W.H.H.

**Notes on Some Chickweeds from the North-east.**—*Stellaria apetala* Ucria. A few years ago, I noticed this inconspicuous little chickweed on the dunes on the north side of the Coquet. Last year I looked for it on the greater part of our coast from Holy Island to Saiburn, and found it on the dunes at Holy Island, Ross, Embleton, Ainmouth and at the mouth of the Coquet; also on the rocky coast at Dunstanburgh and on shingle at the mouth of the stream at Sattburn. In all except the last locality it was frequently associated with rabbit burrows on the fixed dunes; at Dunstanburgh there are numerous rabbit holes in the hillside, and around these the plant is abundant.

A careful search was made for *Stellaria apetala* on the dunes at Seaton Sluice, but I failed to find it, though a form of *Stellaria media*, superficially resembling it, took its place on disturbed ground on the dunes. Its apparent absence from these dunes is surprising, but it may be associated with the scarcity of rabbits here. Outside the north-east, I have seen the plant on the dunes at Drigg (v.c. 70), on the Great Orme and the dunes just to the south; always where rabbits are plentiful.

It seems probable that the plant needs a fairly high nitrogen content, and stable ground where competition is low, for its successful establishment. These conditions would be satisfied at the entrance to rabbit holes on fixed and semi-fixed dunes, and at Saltburn the dirty stream could supply the necessary nitrogenous material. This is supported by the great abundance of the plant on places where fires had been lighted on the Drigg and Coquet dunes, though the plant soon disappeared as other vegetation colonized the older burnt off patches.

The description of *Stellaria Boreana* Jord. is essentially the same as that of *Stellaria apetala* Ucria and the two are frequently stated to be synonymous. I have, however, refrained from using the former name, because most of the herbarium material I have examined under it is merely a small form of *Stellaria media* Vill. with reduced flowers and often originating in inland regions: quite distinct from the coastal species. That true *Stellaria* regions; quite distinct from the coastal species. That true *Stellaria apetala* is a distinct genetic unit is shown when it is grown in the garden from seed, for it retains all its important characters, including habit and the cleistogamous nature of its flowers.

*Stellaria neglecta* Weihe. This plant is recorded as frequent in both our counties in "The Three Northern Counties." However, in back numbers of the *Vasculum*, I have only come across one record—in 1916 at Vigo. This year I found it on the banks of the Aln at Ainwick. Plants from this locality have 22 chromosomes in the diploid number, i.e. half the number of *Stellaria media*. Variants of this latter species occur (e.g. in tall grass on the coast at South Shields) which are identical with *Stellaria neglecta* in size and appearance, and seem only to be separable from it by the number of stamens (10 in *neglecta* and 5, rarely 6, or less in *media*) and possibly by the seed.—J. K. Morton.

**The Arrival of the Swallow (*Hirundo rustica rustica* L.) and other migrants in Northumberland and Durham in 1960.**—Fewer reports were received in response to the request for information than in 1950.

*Wheatear (Oenanthe oenanthe oenanthe* L.): First reported at Cheswick (V.C. 68A) on March 18th. On April 12th a pair was in residence on Fenham Flats (68A), but they were not reported in their territories on the Weardale Moors (66D) until May 3rd. Mr. F. Brady supplies evidence of passage in small numbers along the shore at Berwick during the whole of April.

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus trochilus* L): First reported at Fentburn (67C) on April 12th, but does not appear to have been generally distributed in normal numbers until a month later. No accounts of actual movements were received.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica rustica* L): reported at Ewesley (67C) and Whitworth Hall on April 7th. No evidence exists of an early wave on the scale noted in 1949 (*Naturalist*, April—June 1950), but a large wave seems to have arrived about April 16th when ten reports were received. The species, however, was not dispersed generally in its normal numbers until early May.

Mr. H. Tully reported movements of the April 16th contingent when they were flying northward along the coast at Budle Bay (68A), and these are of considerable interest. Moreover, there is additional evidence of movement overland in the same general direction provided by C. J. Gent at Gosforth Park (67B) on April 19th; by C. J. Gent at South Gosforth on May 9th; by Mr. J.M. Phillipson at Haltwhistle (67D) on April 22nd, 27th and 30th whilst Mr. R. J. Elliott

records a bird proceeding NNE. at Killingworth (67A) on April 16th, and another going north at Birtley (66B) on May 2nd. A series of records from Blackhall Mill (66B) by Mr. R. Greener for April 16th, 17th, 19th and 24th are rather puzzling, but, as the Derwent Valley runs east and west at this point, it may be that the birds in taking a westerly course are following the river valley. A report from Mr. D. Luckhurst, Willington (66C), was dated April 26th, and concerned a single bird proceeding north-east. Common Swift *Apus apus apus* L.: This species was first reported from Haltwhistle (67D) and seems to have gradually increased in numbers throughout the area until May 13th when it was generally plentiful. The only reports of movements received were from Messrs. D. Luckhurst and C. J. Gent. The former observer gives an account of a single bird flying north on May 4th at 21 hrs. (B.S.T.) at Willington (66C), there being little or no wind. The second record refers to two birds noted at Gosforth (67B) on May 10th. These were going north in an easterly wind at 8.05 (B.S.T.). My thanks are due to the various observers who sent in records, but, in particular to M. Phillipson (Haltwhistle), C. Greenwell (Spennymoor) and F. Brady (Berwick) who provided me with much valuable information. —C. J. Gent.

## RECORDS

### LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

- Procris statices** L. Forester. 66  
The specimen previously reported in the Vasculum as *I. geryon* from Sherburn Hill is now known to belong to the present species. It was captured on 24th June, 1950.—T. C. Dunn.
- Laotha populi** L. Poplar Hawk. 66  
A beautiful specimen of the var. *suffusa* Tutt of this species was found in the Hospital grounds at Chester-le-Street.—R. Harris.
- Ourapteryx sambucaria** L. The Swallow-tailed Moth. 66  
Several at light at Sharpley, near Sunderland, on 24/7/50.—J.K.M.
- Celaena haworthii** Curt. Haworth's Minor. 66  
Flying in fair numbers over heather and bog near Stanhope to Edmundbyers road at about 4 p.m. (B.S.T.) on 24/9/50.—J.K.M.
- Procris statices** L. The Forester. 66  
A single male taken in tall marshy vegetation near the Billingham Beck below Thorpe Thewles on 18/6/49. Another individual was seen at the same time.—J.K.M.
- Zygaena lonicerae** Esp. Five-spot Burnet. 66  
In tall grass on Sherburn Hill on 17/7/50. At least 2 dozen seen; mostly in fresh condition. Also a number of empty cocoons, and a few full ones were seen on the grass stems. *Vicia cracca* appears to be the chief food plant here.—J.K.M.
- Callimorpha jacobiaeae** L. The Cinnabar. 67  
Very abundant this year on the dunes at Embleton on the 3rd of June. —J.K.M.
- Vanessa io** L. The Peacock. 67  
One sunning itself on flowers of *Mentha piperita* by the North Tyne above Bellingham on 9/9/50.—J. K. Morton.
- Oporinia dilutata** L. November Moth. 66  
A single female forming a transition between the type form and the var. *regressa* Heslop Harrison was taken near Eastgate in October.—J.K.M.
- Cirrhia icteritia** Hufn. Sallow. 66  
A female specimen of the var. *flavescens* of this species turned up near *Salix alba*, and far away from Salices of the Capreae group on which the larvae generally feed, near the Vicarage at Birtley.—J.W.H.H.
- Lophopteryx capucina** L. Coxcomb Prominent. 66  
Larvae of this Prominent were taken on *Salix phyticifolia* at Eastgate on September 14th.—J. W.H.H.



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## BY THE WAY

The next issue of the Vasculum will appear in October, 1951, and material for publication in that number should be in the hands of the Editor by September 15th, 1951. Secretaries of the Societies, in particular, should see that accounts of their Society's doings are brought up to date.

## NEW WORKERS NEEDED

Influenced, no doubt, by the development of biological teaching in the schools, interest in natural history has greatly increased in this district during recent years. In spite of this, however, there seems to be a falling off in the numbers of the younger generation who are definitely engaged in field work designed to extend our knowledge of our flora and fauna. Even in such an obvious direction as the ordinary flowering plants, although there are several outstanding workers amongst our younger members, the number of new recruits is not sufficient to make up for the annual wastage. The position of the mosses, fungi, algae and lichens is even worse. In the case of the last group, it seems a disgrace to have to write that our knowledge is but little in advance of that set out in Winch's Flora written over one hundred and twenty years ago. Can we not produce a group of enthusiasts capable of removing this reproach?

Amongst the animals, the mammals, birds and mollusca are reasonably well known; nevertheless, the number of earnest students they attract is far too limited. As far as the Lepidoptera are concerned, much the same holds true. However, when one considers the position of the Coleoptera, Hymenoptera, Neuroptera, Diptera, Trichoptera, Odonata, Hemiptera and the various minor orders the position is very different; except in the case of certain Hemipterous families, little or no organised work is being carried out.

If the north-east is to maintain its old reputation for producing field naturalists, our deficiencies in respect to workers in these groups, as well as others not specially mentioned, should be made up as soon as possible. We sincerely hope that any naturalist in search of a suitable subject for study will consider seriously taking up some neglected section of our flora or fauna in preference to tackling the more ordinary and favourite groups.

## NEW ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Since 1939, entomologists in Northumberland and Durham have had but few opportunities for meeting fellow workers in the district, for no organisation has arisen to take the place of the old and successful Wallis Club. Although that body did not confine its attention to the study of insects, its hard core was composed of men whose main interests were centred in the Insecta. These workers had no difficulty in supplying material for meetings, both indoors and in the field, suitable for all types of field naturalists. We therefore suggest that, as the time is now ripe, steps should be taken in the very near future to found an entomological club, or society, with its headquarters at Newcastle, but, open to entomologists and others throughout our area. The possibilities of securing satisfactory headquarters are now much more promising than those open to the founders of the Wallis Club, and the conditions to be faced are infinitely more favourable.

## MR. W. H. CAMPION

Members of the Northern Naturalists' Union will learn with the greatest regret of the sudden death on April 10th of Mr. W. H. Campion.

Mr. Campion was born at Ingleby Greenhow in the Cleveland District, and came to Tyneside during the first war in 1916. His kindly, genial manner, and his ever-ready smile, speedily caused him to become one of the most popular of that little coterie of field naturalists which just 30 years ago used to meet informally at various places in Newcastle. He joined first the Natural History Society and then took an active part in the formation of the Wallis Club, at whose meetings he was an unflinching and helpful attender. He also, in his own unobtrusive way, played a considerable part in originating the Northern Naturalists' Union and in its early development.

At first, his chief interests were ornithological, and he made many excursions with the late Wm. Raw to well-known bird haunts like Handa Island and Durness in the remoter parts of North West Scotland. Later, as the Wallis Club progressed, he transferred his interests to the Lepidoptera.

Subsequently, when the Department of Botany, King's College, organised research expeditions to the Hebrides, he joined us and proved a valuable asset not only in carrying out the actual researches but also in the more arduous labours of semi-camp conditions. He accompanied us to the Isles of Raasay, Soay, Rhum, Barra and Vatersay. To such an extent did he fall in love with Raasay that he returned there alone on several occasions.

During the late war, he was bound down by his duties; nevertheless, he managed to make one journey to Rhum.

In 1947, he resumed work with our parties, visiting with us, in successive seasons, the Isles of Coll, Tiree, Lewis, Harris and Erisay. In the course of the last two of these excursions, we noticed

that his strength was failing, and he gave indications that the heart trouble which finally carried him off was developing.

His passing will leave a deep gap in the hearts of his many friends in the natural history world, which they will find it difficult indeed to fill. We tender to his relatives our deepest sympathy in their bereavement.

## THE SOCIETIES

### NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The Sixty-eighth Field Meeting of the Union was held at Apperley Dene on Saturday, June 2nd, 1951, when, favoured by exceptionally fine weather, we had a very large attendance.

We assembled at the entrance of the Dene, and proceeded through the woodlands to Wheelbirks. Throughout our walk, we were impressed by the backward state of the vegetation, insect life, etc. Nevertheless, we discovered many of the usual woodland plants, including the violet, primrose, bluebell, garlic, red campion, wood sanicle, ivy, wood avens, goldilocks, mountain speedwell, wood anemone, greater woodrush, the rarer woodrush, *Luzula pilosa*, wood sorrel, dog's mercury, early purple orchid, but nothing really rare. The canopy of trees consisted mainly of oak, ash, wych elm, and birch whilst the undershrubs included hazel, guelder rose, burnet rose, sloe and blackthorn. On the outskirts we encountered an abundance of bird cherry, just coming into blossom, alongside occasional wild cherries.

In the felled part of the woods, most of these plants still persisted, but, in addition, at certain points, the wood forget-me-not formed sheets of pure blue.

The woodlands produced but little for the entomologists. Still larvae of the two November moths *Oporinia christyi* and *O. dilutata* were obtained with a sprinkling of the Mottled Umber. Oak galls were not very prevalent although specimens of *Andricus curvator*, *Cynips kollari* and *Spathogaster baccarum* were noted. The beating tray also yielded cockchafers and beetles of the genus *Phyllobius*. Outside the wood, very few butterflies were seen, the Small Tortoiseshell, Orangetip, Greenveined White and Small White alone occurring. However, a fair number of Mother Shipton moths skipped about here and there. Queen bumble bees of several species, *Bombus hortorum*, *B. terrestris*, *B. muscorum*, *B. agrorum* and *B. pratorum* were quite plentiful as were also solitary bees of the genus *Andrena* and their parasitic *Nomadas*. In both of the gardens we visited the larvae of the Golden Ear moth, *Plusia moneta*, abounded in spun leaves of larkspur.

Along the stream, we noted many alders and willows of several species and amongst the herbs, the bitter cress, *Cardamine amara*, water mint, brooklime and the beautiful alien speedwell, *Veronica filiformis*. As we neared Wheelbirks, the great hedge bedstraw, *Galium mollugo*, became very plentiful along the hedge banks.

At the close of the excursion, we were welcomed by Mr. Colin Richardson, who very kindly provided us with tea.

A very successful and enjoyable meeting ended" by our President, Professor J. B. Cragg, tendering thanks to all vvho had contributed to making it a success.

#### BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

On March 20th, 1951, Mr. J. A. Richardson, M.Sc., gave a very interesting lecture on the " Biologist and Food Production." The talk, illustrated by many lantern slides, was exceedingly interesting and profitable. The lecturer showed how almost every branch of science had played its part in assisting the biologist to keep up our supplies of food. In particular, the modern technique for locating shoals of fish aroused the greatest interest. At the next lecture, on April 3rd, Mrs. H. H. Clark, M.Sc., was the speaker. Once again she delighted us with an account of her own researches in our local folk-lore. On this occasion, she dealt more especially with singing games, counting out rhymes and the like.

The winter session closed on April 17th, when we had our Annual Meeting and Conversazione. As usual there was a display of flowers, insects, etc., brought by Mr. T. C. Dunn, Prof. J. W. Heslop Harrison and others, a selection of coloured lantern slides and a quiz.

#### NOTES AND RECORDS

##### NOTES

**Notes on the Vapourer Moth (*Orgyia antiqua*).**—The Vapourer Moth is not a common insect in the area. north of Doncaster in my experience, but the ova I obtained were provided by moths which emerged from pupae collected from Golden Privet. The moths appeared in October. In addition, I found larvae, last year's cocoons and egg shells on the same bush. Bred females put outside during September and October failed to attract males although this may have resulted from the bad weather. During the last week in October, I found a female hanging limply from her cocoon on the privet during a heavy morning frost. Three days' of beautiful sunshine followed, and the insect was screened each night from frost. Despite this, she died without attracting a male for I was able to check -this by keeping a regular watch from 11 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. each day when none approached. The locality is now destroyed to make room for a block of prefabricated offices.—A. H. Wright.

**Odd Observations in a Cassop Wood.**—During the course of certain research work, a visit was paid to an ash wood on the Magnesian Limestone near Cassop. Several interesting plants were found of which the most interesting were specimens of the Wood Anemone bearing bright reddish purple flowers. Not far away flourished other plants with flowers intermediate between these and the type; these may have resulted from natural crosteings between the two extreme forms. In the same wood Goldilocks (*Ranunculus auricomus*) was also quite plentiful. It occurred in dense masses bearing numerous flowers many of which were unlike what is usually the case, quite perfect. A further plant, unusual enough in Durham and therefore worthy of mention was the Wood Violet (*Viola Reichenbachiana*) which exceeded in numbers the usually commoner *V. Riviniana*.—G. E. Hardy.

**The Partial Failure of the Earlier Orchids during the Present Season.**—As a general rule, the Early Purple and Greenwinged Meadow Orchids are very plentiful in the pastures near the Black Hall Rocks. This season, a close search revealed the presence of a single specimen of the latter, *Orchis Morio*, and the complete absence of *O. mascula*. In the dens not far away, where the Early Purple Orchid alone grows, and in the cliff hollows, its numbers were very greatly reduced. Near Quarrington Hill, where *O. mascula* flourishes in the wood, amongst the scrub and in the pastures, it occurred in small numbers with the anemones in the wood, but was totally absent in the scrub where it normally abounds. On the other hand, it was present in the pastures in considerable quantity. As usual in that colony, it showed very little variation in flower colour. The whole of the habitats mentioned in this note are on the Magnesian Limestone.—J.W.H.H.

**The Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniculus*) in the Birtley District**—Some years ago, this attractive bird used to breed freely along the course of the Team. When, however, the stream was straightened at many points and seriously interfered with at others, the bird seemed to lessen in its numbers and, in fact, in many seasons it was never seen. This year on April 3rd, a small number of males were observed along the Rowleth Burn between Birtley and Brown's Buildings. During the previous week a single male appeared on the old slag tip overlooking the stretch of water which occupies the disused clay pit near Birtley Station.—J. A. Richardson.

**A Curious Hybrid between the Cowslip and Primrose.**—For some years I have been studying primrose and cowslip colonies in which the two species grow in close proximity with a view to determining the effect their crossing had upon the populations. In one such area, where hybrids are very plentiful, last year's researches showed that, in addition to first crosses, many plants belonging to later generations as well as to back crosses, were present. One of these, possibly a back cross on the cowslip parent, struck me as being so unusual that I dug it up and brought it into the garden. This season, it has flowered well, and has maintained the characteristics which made it so unusual in the field. In appearance, it looks like a glorified cowslip. Its flowers, although very large, approach in colour, shape and posture, those proper to that species.

Other plants in the same colony, studied critically this season, showed very wide variation in flower colour as well as in the vestiture of the leaves and other characters.—J. W.H.H.

**The Coccid, *Orthezia urticae*, still in Greatham Marshes.**—During May as I needed a stock of this species for one of my research students, I proceeded to the only reliable locality for it in our two counties. This is situated on the north side of Greatham Creek amongst the sea lavender and thrift. Careful search showed that the insect, although rather "spotty" in its distribution, was still in its former abundance. This seems remarkable when one realizes that the area has undergone remarkable changes since the Coccid was first discovered forty years ago. As is usually the case, all the specimens, taken were females for the male does not appear until later and does not last long. Perhaps it is worth noting that, until it was taken in this station some years ago, the male was unknown in the British Isles. Here, however at the proper season it may be taken in considerable numbers making short flights over the salt marsh vegetation.—G.H.H.

**The Green Hairstreak Butterfly near Birtley.**—On May 21st. 1924. I had the good fortune to discover the Green Hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi*) for the first time in Northumberland and Durham. Since then it has been detected in several stations in both counties. In Northumberland, it has turned up in Dipton Woods, Corbridge, at Blanchland, and at Ruffside whilst in Durham, it has been noted at Edmundbyers, Shull and Dryderdale. In all these localities it was clearly attached to bilberry as its larval foodplant. In other words, unlike what occurs elsewhere, it seemed to be purely a moorland insect with us. However, this year, on May 22<sup>nd</sup>

just twenty seven years after my original discovery, whilst I was collecting examination material, I observed what appeared to be a brown butterfly fluttering along a railway bankside. Thinking it was a specimen of the Dingy Skipper, I paid but little attention to it until I discovered that, instead of taking short flights near the ground, it was flickering amongst the scrubby hawthorns. *Moreover*, its colour appeared to be brighter than that proper to the "Dingy." I therefore stalked it, and found to my great pleasure, that it was a Green Hairstreak, the first in this area. This suggests that, like the Holly Blue, this -butterfly is also on the move, and that others interested should keep a sharp look-out for it.—J.W.H.H.

**Alchemilla vulgaris agg. in the North East.**—In our area we are fortunate in having nine out of the eleven recognised species confirmed as British. Of these, six are so far confined to Upper Teesdale. *A. filicaulis*, *A. Wichuriae*, *A. glomerulans* and *A. minima* are on the higher Teesdale hills, whilst *A. acutiloba* and *A. monticolo* occur on roadsides, in hayfields etc. Our local record of *A. minima* S. M. Walters depends upon material collected by myself on Widdybank an'd Mickle Fells, and it was identified by Mr. Walters. The possibility of a further species, *A. gracilis*, new to Britain, lies in certain specimens collected in Teesdale by Druce, but its definite inclusion in the British list needs confirmation.

The remaining three segregates of *Alchemilla vulgaris* which occur in the north east, are *A. glabra*, *A. xanthochlora* and *A. vestita*. They are all locally abundant and probably occur scattered throughout the region. *A. glabra* is the most abundant, especially in the hills. It occurs throughout Teesdale from the summits of Mickle, Widdybank and Cronkley Fells, downwards nearly to the coast. Similarly, it is abundant in Weardale, the Browney valley, the valleys of the North and South Tyne down to Wylam; in Whittle and Castle Eden Denes and the Team and Beamish valleys; in Cassop Vale; around the Roman Wall, Rothbury and Otterburn; in the Cheviots and around Hawick (Selkirkshire).

*A. xanthochlora* is more lowland, but occurs in Upper Teesdale by stream and road sides etc., also around Barnard Castle and Bowes; in Weardale around Wolsingham and down to Finchale Abbey; in Castle Eden Dene and around Wynyard Park.

*A. vestita* is another lowland species, common on roadsides etc. I have seen it in the valleys of the North Tyne, Browney, Wear and Team and on Quarrington Hill.—J. K. Morton.

**A Hazel with Intersexual Catkins.**—On April 2nd, I went to the Brooms Wood, Birtley, to examine the state of the various sallows growing along the stream. Incidentally, the hazels occurring with them were inspected when it was observed that many catkins, both male and female, were still at their best. One shrub, in particular, was submitted to very close study for quite a heavy percentage of its male catkins and florets showed varying degrees of femaleness, which, in one example, had become so extreme, that, instead of reaching varying degrees of intersexuality, it had become wholly female and presented a very strange appearance. Previously, I had seen such intersexual catkins from the Cleveland District of Yorkshire and from Wateringbury, Kent.

**Pale Sulphur-coloured Cowslips.**—On former occasions I have drawn attention to the heavy percentage of pale yellow flowers in Durham coast cowslip populations. During May, several fields in the Quarrington Hill area were yellow with the flowers of this plant. Close inspection revealed in one field that a considerable number of the plants present bore sulphur coloured flowers.—J.W.H.H.

## RECORDS

### LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

**Plusia moneta** F. Golden Ear

66, 67

This beautiful insect, which commenced to colonize the British Isles over 50 years ago, keeps turning up in new localities every year. In May, it was discovered on monkshood at Shotton, Co. Durham, whilst early in June it was plentiful in the Apperley Dene and Wheelbirks areas in Northumberland on larkspur.—J.W.H.H.

- Ectropis bistortata** Bkh. The Engrailed 67  
 Twenty five years ago this species was not uncommon in local larch woods in May, and was freely used as material for genetical research. However, the felling of larch woods has reduced seriously the number of known habitats. When, therefore, the species was once more needed for experimental work it was difficult to find a reliable station locally. Finally, it was considered that the larch section of Dipton Woods was likely to produce it. A visit was therefore made to the area in late May. To my horror I found that these woods were being felled, only a few larches remaining. Fortunately, I was able to capture three females and two males of the Scottish form of the desired insect, and from these I now have fertile eggs.—J.W.H.H.
- Earophila badiata** Hb. Shoulder Stripe 66, 67  
 Quite common at sallow catkins near Birtley, and also at rest on larch trunks in Dipton Woods, near Corbridge—a rose feeder in spite of the latter resting place.—J.K.M. and J.W.H.H.
- Alois rhomboidaria** Hb. Willow Beauty 67  
 Although quite a general feeder, this species has not been noted previously on the common heather. Nonetheless, it simply swarmed in the larval condition on that plant in Dipton Woods in late May. A few were taken home and placed on hawthorn. This substitute food was eaten voraciously, and the larvae have now pupated.—J.W.H.H.
- Nymphalis io** L. Peacock 67  
 Although the Peacock butterfly was quite common in September last year, only one record has been made of its presence this season. Mr. J. F. Wood saw it at Stocksfield on Whit Saturday.
- Vanessa atalanta** L. Red Admiral 66  
 During the present year, 1951, I noted this immigrant in the Chester-le-Street area in late April whilst several friends reported to me that they had also observed it.—T. C. Dunn.
- Vanessa cardui** L. Painted Lady. 66  
 This immigrant was very scarce in North Durham in 1950, but a fine, large specimen was observed in the clay-pit near Birtley Station on August 21st.— J.W.H.H.
- V. atalanta** L. Red Admiral. 66  
 During 1950 this insect was much more plentiful than its congener, both as larva and the imago, in the Team Valley.—J.W.H.H.

#### FLOWERING PLANTS

- Carex otrubae** Podf. Fox Sedge. 68  
 The var. *subcontigua* Kukenth was collected at Birtley in July, 1947. Specimens submitted to Mr. Nelmes were determined by him as above. As the variety seems to be new to Britain, sheets as vouchers have been deposited in the Kew Herbarium.—J.W.H.H.
- Mimulus moschatus** Dougl. Musk. 67  
 Abundant by roadside in running spring water, on opposite side of North Tyne to Falstone. Presumably escaped from nearby farms.—J.K.M.
- Saxifraga granulata** L. Meadow Saxifrage. 68  
 A very beautiful form occurs on the coast at Holy Island Priory. It has large flowers and a neat rosette of very thick leaves.—J.K.M.
- Vicia angustifolia** var. **Bobartii** Forst. 68  
 Plants from the dunes on Holy Island and Ross Links appear to be referable to this variety. They are small and have very long narrow leaflets (about 18 mm. x 0.75 mm.), except at the base of the plant where they are broader.—J.K.M.
- Scilla verna** Huds. 68  
 Very fine and at its best on the coastal turf at Cullernose Point and northwards on the third of June this year.—J.K.M.
- Arabis Thaliana** L. Thalecress. 66, 67

On old stone wall near Chollereton and on a rocky outcrop in field between the main road and Cronkley Bridge, Upper Teesdale.—J.K.M.

**Limnanthemum nymphaeoides** Link. 66

Abundant in the lake at Wynyard Park. Presumably planted.

**Polemonium caeruleum** L. 66

Several plants on sand and shingle by the stream in Castle Eden Dene above Gunner's Pool.—J.K.M.

**Poterium Sanguisorba** L. Small Burnet. 68

Found near Embleton, June, 1950

**Coronilla glauca** L. 67

A casual at the Northumberland Docks.

**Cardamine amara** L. Bittercress. 68

Collected near Hedgeley last season.

**Lythrum Salicaria** L. Purple Loosestrife. 68

In small amount at Rugley.—; J.W.H.H

**Nasturtium uniseriatum** Howard and Manton 66 67

This species, new to the British list not so very long ago, has proved to be of rare occurrence with: us. Still it has been collected near Stockton in Durham and at Stakeford in Northumberland.—J.W.H.H.

**Hippuris vulgaris** L. Marestalk 66

Found to occur in considerable quantity in a pond near Shotton Co Durham.

**Polygonum bistorta** L. 66

Also detected in one of the woods near Shotton Hall.

**Typha latifolia** L. Reed Mace 66

This plant is still extending its range in the Team Valley for if is not rare where the burn has invaded the fields between Birtley and Brown's Buildings.—J. A. Richardson.

**Hyoscyamus niger** L. 66

Taken casually near South Shields; of recent years this plant has been very rare in our counties.

**Veronica filiformis** Sm. 67

This beautiful speedwell has already been recorded by me from Northumberland. Still it is well to emphasise the fact that it was discovered during the N.N.U. outing to Apperley Dene. A large patch was noted along the stream side as we walked from Apperley Dene farm to Wheelbirks

**Oenothera biennis** L. Evening Primrose 67

This interesting plant was collected in a disused clay pit at Denton Bum where a fair number of plants was seen.—D. Boyd.

**Helleborus viridis** L. Helleborine 66

Collected near Muggleswick.—E. Hildreth.

**Rosa Sherardi** Dav. Downy Rose 67

It is well perhaps to record the fact that a somewhat remarkable downy rose of the Sherardi group grows in Apperley Dene. It would have been regarded as nearly typical had its leaves not possessed uniserrate margins.—J.W.H.H.

**Salix pentandra** L. Bay-leaved Willow 66

Normally this willow must be regarded as rather rare and local with us. In the Team Valley it has been repeated from Urpeth Woods, near Lamesley. This season it has been found along the Rowletch Burn between Birtley and Brown's Buildings. In this location it supports its characteristic sawfly gall *Euura amerinae*.—J.W.H.H.

**Orchis purpurella** Stephs. Marsh Orchid 66

Last: year I observed that the earlier flowering section of this orchid possessed a lip structure differing from that of the later contingent. This season the differences are very obvious, and one is led to suspect that there is some introgression of *Orchis majalis* "blood" into our local colonies. This implies that they may have to be regarded as hybrid swarms. The position is now being subjected to critical examination for the plant began to flower late in May.—J.W.H.H.



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## BY THE WAY

The next issue of the Vasculum will appear in December, 1951, and material for that number should be in the hands of the Editor by 1st December, 1951. All exchanges and books for review should be sent to the Editor, who will take no responsibility for anything addressed elsewhere.

### NEED COLLECTORS BE HOOLIGANS?

Recently, Mr. N. D. Riley, the Secretary of the Protection Committee of the Royal Entomological Society, published a note under the above title drawing attention to the needless slaughter of insects, and destruction of woodlands, by collectors who have persistently disgraced the good name of naturalists. Similarly, in our March number, we emphasised another phase of the same type of vandalism. In this note, we wish to focus attention on a similar state of affairs in the botanical world in which no protest has been, or is likely to be, made. Our counties are specially affected because of the treasures growing in Upper Teesdale. For instance, not so long ago, we were informed that a certain botanist had interred in his grave of an herbarium more specimens of one of Teesdale's rarities than now existed in the area. Such an occurrence should be rendered impossible. Further, since, the Isle of Rhum has become more open to similarly minded vandals, several of its specialities have been systematically raided. *Thlaspi calaminare* has been rooted out of one of its stations, *Carex bicolor*, in what was once its strongest colony, has been reduced to a few miserable fragments whilst *Arenaria norvegica* has been mercilessly attacked, only two plants being left in one of its habitats. Fortunately, in its original station, where it was really abundant, it may last out some time against depredators although it remains in extreme danger. Again, we have learnt, with dismay, that a raid on *Potamogeton epihydrus*, a very important species restricted in the British area to a lochan on the Isle of South Uist, has been planned for the present season. What anyone can want with a huge stock of this pondweed is beyond understanding. Would it not be more value to science if it were left in its original home to represent the very attenuated American element characterising the British Flora?

We could supply further flagrant cases of sheer cupidity involving other Scottish plants, but these are sufficient to indicate that more areas than Ben Lawers are suffering from the unwelcome attentions of the spoilers.

Both in the case of the insects and plants, the real danger is revealed in the age-old question propounded by Juvenal, " Quis custodiet ipsos custodes ? " for it they indeed who are involved— at least in the overcollecting.

#### A REMARKABLE COINCIDENCE

In 1834, the Wintergreen, *Pyrola secunda*, was discovered at an elevation of 600 feet on Yeaving Bell, near Wooler, by Dr. Johnston and the Rev. A. Baird. Later, in 1866, it was gathered by Dr. Tate in the same station. Since the latter date, repeated searches for the plant there have always ended in failure. This year, as we were in need of the correct English name for this Wintergreen, we consulted Prior's " Popular Names of British Plants " (1870). Our astonishment may be imagined when, on page 257 of that work, we found that the only English name for *Pyrola secunda* known to Prior was—Yeaving Bells. Could anyone conceive a more extraordinary coincidence ? Prior states that the name originates in the resemblance of its flowers to little bells hung one above the other ready to be struck by a hammer. He derives the word " Yeaving " from a Lowland Scots word " yether " meaning " to beat."

#### MR. J. B. NICHOLSON, M.A.

Very many members and associates of the Northern Naturalists' Union learnt, with the greatest regret, of the death of Mr. J. B. Nicholson on Friday, 1st December, 1950, after an illness lasting over four months.

Mr. Nicholson was a native of Darlington and was educated at the Grammar School, where he became Head Prefect. As his career at the school closed, he was awarded a School Leaving Exhibition and gained a Major Scholarship at Caius College Cambridge. There he specialised in Botany.

Subsequently, he took a post in the firm of Pease and Partners, Ltd., and later came, under the National Coal Board as traffic officer.

But it was as a naturalist that " Bert " Nicholson was known, and that far beyond the confines of Darlington. He was, beyond question, the most loyal and devoted of all the members of the Darlington and Teesdale Naturalists' Field Club. In addition, he played a great part in the affairs of the Northern Naturalists' Union, having been President for one session when everyone appreciated his value to the Union, and the efforts he put forward on its behalf. Moreover, he was almost continuously a member of its Council. Whenever possible, he attended its Field Meetings and rendered great assistance to those willing to learn.

Whilst he would probably have claimed that mycology was his special interest, his knowledge of other branches of natural history was deep and extensive, as his many notes and records in the Vasculum testify. Further, as a storehouse of local knowledge, he was quite unique.

He was a man of outstanding knowledge, ability and integrity, and his death at the early age of 49 years was a tragedy.

He leaves a wife and one son of eleven years of age, and to them we extend our sincere sympathy in their bereavement.

## THE SOCIETIES

### NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The Sixty-ninth Field Meeting of the Union was held in Billingham Bottoms on Saturday, July 7th, 1951, when once again we were favoured by a large attendance and fine weather. It had been planned to work the "tips" as well as what remained of the marsh, but, unfortunately, they were quite desolate, the whole of the vegetation having been cleared away. Fortunately, the marsh itself was exceptionally dry, and very many of the plants recorded for the area by Professor Heslop Harrison still existed. Many of our members were astonished at the enormous number of Globe Flowers still left, as well as at the huge banks of the Yellow Rue. Curiously enough, the orchids proved quite disappointing, as two of the specialities of the marsh, *Orchis praetermissa* and *O. latifolia* were totally absent, although, as if to compensate for that, the Marsh Helleborine, just coming into flower, was quite plentiful as were also the Spotted Orchid (*O. Fuchsii*), the Fragrant Orchid and the Twayblade.

Other interesting plants noted included the Small and Large Valerians, Comfrey, Meadow Cranesbill, Marsh Ragwort, Hoary Ragwort, Watercress, Water Avens, Marsh Forget-me-not, Cowslip, Quaking Grass with many sedges, the most important of which was *Carex disticha*, which occurred in some quantity, and formed a welcome addition to the local list.

Very few insects were flying in spite of the brilliant weather, but one was delighted to observe the bee, *Bombus derhamellus*, which disappeared from our counties some years ago. Amongst the Lepidoptera, larvae of the Powdered Quaker (*Orthosia gmcilis*) abounded in spun-up heads of meadow-sweet. Similarly, larvae and cocoons of the Drinker moth were not uncommon on the reeds, whilst a few larvae of the Five-spot Burnet on trefoils made us aware of another colony of this recent arrival. Other Lepidoptera seen were the Latticed Heath, the Silver-ground Carpet, Greenveined White and Small Heath.

On Sept. 1st, our second meeting of the season took place at Riding Mill where we worked the river banks between that place and Corbridge. Again bright sunshine helped us on our way, but the first thing that struck us was the scarcity of butterflies, only odd Tortoiseshells, Small Coppers, Meadow Browns and the three

whites being seen. On the other hand, bumble bees abounded although only the commoner species were represented. As compensation, a series of earnest workers had a rich reward in plants. Amongst these. *Viola lutea* and *V. tricolor*, with their hybrids, were the most striking but others represented were the Greater Skullcap, Viper's Bugloss, Gromwell, Common Mullein Black Mullein, Yellow Loosestrife, Alpine Penny-cress, Clustered Bellflower, Hairy and Square-stalked St. John's Worts, Marsh Forget-me-not, Musk Mallow, Restharrow, Mountain Speedwell Field Mouse-ear Chickweed, Musk, Meadow Cranesbill the Bulrush, and the Reed, *Calamagrostis Epigeios*, here in its Northumberland stronghold. Also worthy of special mention was *Veronica filiformis* which seems to be forming new local colonies at a very remarkable rate. All of the usual birds came under observation and we were exceptionally pleased to see the Kingfisher and the Green Woodpecker.

## NOTES AND RECORDS

### NOTES

**A Thrush Feeds a Young Blackbird.**—In late May, four young blackbirds from a nearby nest settled in our garden for feeding purposes. One morning, when I was watching them, I was surprised to find that one of them was being fed by a hen thrush. This continued for some days when I observed that it was always the same bird that was being fed, the other three being neglected.—T. Hook.

**The Oxford Ragwort (*Senecio squalidus*) in Northumberland.**—Having seen references in the 1950 Vasculum to the presence of this species in Durham and no mention of its occurrence in Northumberland, I wish to report that I have observed a patch of the plant on waste ground near Dinsdale Road, Shield field, Newcastle upon Tyne. As I know nothing of the status of the species in Northumberland, I am forwarding this note in case it may be of some value as a record.—W. A. Wright.

**Ferns in the Upper Derwent Valley.**—For some time, I have been fascinated by the beauty, mystery, and rarity of some of the Ferns. I have searched high and low, waded in rivers, climbed rocks, tramped the fells, wandered up the moor streams, scrambled around waterfalls and grovelled on my hands and knees in bogs — all in search of ferns! Never have I come on anything precious or rare until last Sunday. The usual type of fern like the Male Fern, the Lady Fern, the Bracken and even less striking ones like the Hard Fern, Common Polypody, Wall Rue, and Prickly Shield Fern growing on wet cliff sides, rocks and trees, I had often encountered. Such species as the Maidenhair Spleenwort, Hart's Tongue and Oak Fern always seemed to elude me. On that memorable day mentioned above, I discovered a lovely cluster of Oak Ferns. Whether finding this fern is something to shout about, I do not know. But to me it was a great thrill! The result of many arduous searches gave me deep satisfaction.—A. E. Hart.

**Hybrid Orchids near Ferry hill.**—During the early weeks of August I spent a considerable amount of time studying the conditions of the various orchid colonies known to me. One of these carried heavy mixed populations of *Gymnadenia conopsea*, *Coeloglossum viride*, *Orchis Fuchsii* and *O. purpurella*. In fact, the conditions were such as to favour hybridity, and a sharp lookout was kept for crosses. Almost immediately the investigations were commenced I made a find, for two specimens of the hybrid *Gymnadenia conopsea* X *Orchis Fuchsii* were detected. These grew very

close together. Later, Professor Heslop Harrison discovered another plant with the same parentage, as well as a second and different one resulting from a cross between *Gymnadenia conopsea* and *Orchis purpurella*.—J. A. Richardson.

**Another Hybrid Orchid new to our Counties.**—In our issue for September, 1949, in describing the new hybrid orchid *O. viridella* (*Orchis purpurella* x *Coeloglossum viride*) Dr. J. Heslop Harrison ventured to make a prophecy that it was likely to occur with us. His remarks have speedily been verified for I have discovered two specimens of x *O. viridella* growing in two distinct stations, about four miles apart, in the Ferryhill area. One was collected on 22nd June about four miles from where Mr. Richardson found his hybrids whilst the second, although not in the same station as he worked, grew not far away. The two plants were not identical as one was a somewhat few-flowered, smallish plant, and the second a much sturdier specimen with many flowers. In neither case was the plant taken, care being observed to leave the corm and lower leaves.—J.W.H.H.

**The Five and Sixspot Burnets in Co. Durham.**—As usual, I visited the Birtley station for the Five-spot Burnet in July, and was pleased to find that it was still flourishing. In addition, in one of the claypits a new colony of Six-spots was detected. The same week, on July 2nd, I visited the Blackhall Rocks, and examined the Burnet populations there. One colony was so very strong that I ventured to take eighteen cocoons from the many hundreds available. Of these, sixteen produced the Five-spot Burnet, *Zygaena lonicerae*. The insect, therefore, is well established on the coast. On August 12th, a visit was made to Haswell, where again Burnets were flying freely. In this instance, however, all, without exception, appertained to the species *Z. filipendulae*.—J.W.H.H.

**A Visit to a Clay pit at Tanfield.**—As it was felt desirable that comparisons should be made between clay pit populations at Birtley and those lying to the west, a visit was paid to Tanfield on June 23rd. The claypit inspected contained much the same plants as those seen at Birtley, but in considerably smaller numbers. Of the orchids, *Orchis purpurella* and *O. Fuchsii* were seen as well as their hybrids. In addition, the pools contained a fair amount of *Potamogeton Berchtoldi*, *P. natans*, *Myriophyllum spicatum* and *Typha latifolia*. It should be remarked that the fact that the last-named plant was a recent arrival was perfectly obvious.—J. A. Richardson.

**The Elephant Hawk Moth Caterpillar at Fatfield.**—As I am very interested in trees, shrubs and plants in general, I have wondered at the rapid spread of the Rosebay Willowherb, and have examined the plant at intervals. This year upon it, I found a blackish caterpillar of the Elephant Hawk, all complete with its terrifying eye-spots.—J. A. MacFarlane.

[The species, a comparatively recent colonist in our counties, seems to have had a good year with us as I have heard frequent reports of the moth, and many caterpillars have been brought to me for naming.—J.W.H.H.]

**Another Find of the Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*).**—Last year, Mr. J. Thompson discovered a new station for the Bee Orchid in Durham. The plants there were seen by me and carefully studied. This season search was made elsewhere for the species with the result a small group of three plants was found at Fulwell.—J. A. Richardson.

**Notes on White-flowered Plants.**—This season several species of plants normally possessing coloured flowers have been noted with white flowers. Of these, the most noteworthy was a huge plant of restharrow, *Ononis repens*, seen near Mainsforth. The next detected was a specimen of the Greater Knapweed, *Centaurea scabiosa*, detected on the roadside at Coxhoe whilst the third species was the Centaury, *Centaureum umbellatum*, found not far away by Professor Heslop Harrison, who pointed it out to me. In this case, there was a fairly strong population of Centaury in a ravine, with about 55 per cent. of the plants displaying white flowers, these being well distributed over the area in which the plant grew. Clearly, in this case, we have an illustration of the Sewall Wright Drift effect, for it is difficult

indeed to see how Natural Selection could be invoked to explain the position. —J. A. Richardson.

**Bird Notes from Northumberland.**—The Fieldfare was very plentiful during the early months of the year, a flock of 200-300 being seen at Fawdon on January 13th whilst fair numbers were observed at Hexham during February and March, and also at Shortflatt Tower on April 21st. Near Hexham, too, on March 10th, I noted a male Brambling, and at the same time and place the Magpie was plentiful, one single party containing fifteen birds. On April 7th, one Waxwing came under observation in Plessey Dene. The Green Woodpecker was encountered twice, three or four birds being heard calling in Swallowship Woods on May 5th, and a single individual heard in the Heugh Wood, Ebchester, on May 19th. Of the Titmice, the Long-tailed species nested in High Gosforth Park whilst the Marsh Titmouse was identified at Newbiggin along the Devil's Water on February 24th, in Plessey Dene on April 7th and near Shortflatt Tower on April 21st.—C. J. Gent.

## RECORDS

### FLOWERING PLANTS

- Dianthus deltoides** L. Maiden Pink. 66  
A few years ago the only recent Durham record for this beautiful plant was that of Prof. Heslop Harrison for a Birtley station. To this habitat I can now add a second which I discovered on 7th August this year not far from Mainsforth.—J. A. Richardson.
- Phyllitis Scolopendrium** (L.) Newm. 66  
Two new Durham localities for the Hart's Tongue fern are situated on limestone rocks near Raisby and on a wall near Coxhoe.—J.A.R.
- Cirsium eriophorum** (L.) Scop. Woolly Thistle. 66  
This huge thistle has not been reported from our area for nearly a hundred years. In fact, of the three records given by Baker and Tate for the species in Durham, two date back to the eighteenth century, as they are copies of those supplied by Winch in his Botanist's Guide (1805). We have searched the localities mentioned there (Pittington and Fulwell) without success; nevertheless, we managed to discover a colony near Garmondsway, the only one now known to exist in Durham.—J.W.H.H., J.H.H., J.A.R.
- Bromus erectus** Huds. 66  
Here again we meet a species in a similar position to the preceding, although Winch gives no stations for it whilst Baker and Tate (1867) give one only. This was supplied by the Rev. A. M. Norman, and the locality given is Sedgefield. We have not rediscovered that station, but we have managed to find a new one at Garmondsway, where the plant exists in considerable quantity.—J.W.H.H., J.H.H., J.A.R.
- Trifolium filiforme** L. Least Trefoil. 66  
This likewise has not been recorded by anyone for nearly a hundred years, and again Baker and Tate can cite but little addition to the habitats known to Winch which, like those for the two preceding species, are all on the Magnesian Limestone. The plant was found by me at Pittington on August 31st.—J.W.H.H.
- Viburnum Lantana** L. Wayfaring Tree. 66  
Although Baker and Tate report this shrub as having been planted in Durham, no records of its occurrence as a native in the area exist. Nevertheless, we discovered it in Raisby Woods in a situation where it seems almost impossible for it to have been an introduction. This station, it will be seen lies, on the Maernesian Limestone.—J.W.H.H., J.A.R.

- Anacamptis pyramidalis** L. Pyramidal Orchid. 66  
This beautiful plant has been on the down grade in our counties for many years, the only recent records of its continued existence with us depending upon a few specimens seen at Marsden. This season vain attempts were made to find it in its old localities between Crirndon Cut and the Blackhall Rocks on the Durham coast. On July 5th, however, it was collected in a very sheltered locality not far from Ferryhill. Later investigations there revealed the fact that it occurred in considerable numbers over quite a wide area. In these linked-up stations it seems certain that it will persist for a very long time.—J.W.H.H., J.A.R.
- Galium erectum** Huds. 66  
This plant has previously been reported from Tyneland (v.-c. 67) but not from Durham. It was gathered near Coxhoe on August 28th.—J.W.H.H.
- Crepis taraxacifolia** Thuill. 66  
Another plant not on record for our area, but well distributed in Mid-Durham, near Mainsforth and Bishop Middleham.—J.W.H.H.
- Teucrium Chamaedrys** L. Wall Germander. 66  
In his Botanist's Guide, Winch mentions this plant as having occurred near Gateshead Park Engine—wherever that may have been! No one seems to have seen it since until August 20th, 1951, when I collected it on limestone rocks near South Shields.—J.W.H.H.
- Typha angustifolia** L. Bulrush. 66  
Recently, *T. latifolia* has been spreading very rapidly in the Birtley area, but, despite the fact that the present plant had formerly been the prevalent species in the district, it had not re-appeared. Recently, in one of the newer Birtley localities for the Great Bulrush, one example of *T. angustifolia* was observed.—J.W.H.H.
- Campanula Rapunculoides** L. Creeping Bell-flower. 66  
Very plentiful in two localities on the railway banksides near Bridge station where it carries its characteristic rust.—J.W.H.H.,
- Linaria minor** L. Least Toadflax. 66  
Discovered in enormous quantities on the railway near Coxhoe J.H.H.
- Salix phylicifolia** L. Tea-leaved Willow. 66  
This willow was discovered in a totally unexpected locality Bishop Middleham, where, with absolute certainty, it cannot have introduced. It was also noted in smaller numbers near Raisby.—J.W.H.H. J.A.R.
- S. nigricans** Sm. Dusky Sallow. 66  
With the preceding, but in much smaller numbers, in the first-named locality.—J.W.H.H., J.A.R.
- Orchis latifolia** L. Marsh Orchid. 66  
The typical form of this species, as well as its variety *coccinea*, have been reported for our county already. Now the occurrence of the var *pulchella* at Ferryhill may be placed on record. In addition, there grew with the colony the hybrid *O. latifolia* var. *pulchella* x *O. Fuchsii*.—J.W.H.H.
- Cerastium vulgatum** x **C. arvense** 66  
I have never seen the occurrence of this hybrid in Britain mentioned in any textbook. It therefore, seems desirable to state that the plant may be found along the Wear near Sunderland Bridge, and along the same river in Lambton Park.—J.W.H.H.
- Viola Reichenbachiana** Bor. Wood Violet. 66  
The distribution of this violet in Durham does not seem to be known generally, and this note will help to remedy the deficiency. I have seen it quite commonly in Cassop Vale, at Quarrington Hill, Elemore, Pittington, Seaham Harbour, Coxhoe and on the Magnesian Limestone areas adjoining the Tees.—J.W.H.H.

**Epipactis Helleborine** (L.) Crantz. Broadleaved  
Helleborine.  
Collected in High Gosforth Park on August 4th.—C.J.G.

67

LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

- Procris statice** L. Forester. 66  
The beautiful little insect has not been encountered in our district for almost a hundred years. In 1854, John Sang reported captures near Darlington whilst Wailes records it in his Catalogue of Lepidoptera of Northumberland and Durham (1858) as having been taken at Gidside and Flass. This remained the position for many years, for no specimens were noted from the county until June, 1950, when Mr. T. C. Dunn took the species at Sherburn Hill, and July, 1950, when Mr. J. K. Morton obtained a single example at Thorpe Thewles. During the present season I discovered it on June 30th along a railway bankside near Birtley. I boxed one female which laid a stock of eggs, and saw another. The habitat suits the insect and the foodplant sorrel abounds so that there is every likelihood that the colony will be firmly established.—J.W.H.H.
- P. geryon** Hb. Cistus Forester. 66  
This insect was unknown to Wailes and Sang, but it used to occur very freely wherever its foodplant, rockrose, grew from Easington to the Blackhalls and Crirndon Cut on the Durham Coast. Of late years, chiefly on account of indiscriminate firing and hooliganism generally, its numbers have seriously diminished. This year, I visited one of its stations in search of the Pyramidal Orchid, and found the insect not uncommonly. Elsewhere, in its old stations it was completely lacking, I took one specimen for comparison with *P. statice*, and had the unique pleasure of having Durham examples of the two species alive at one and the same time.—J.W.H.H.
- Nymphalis io** L. Peacock. 66  
Possibly a migrant, but a single specimen was taken at Chester-le-Street on June 18th, 1951.—T. C. Dunn.
- Vanessa cardui** L. Painted Lady. 66  
Immigrants of all kinds have been in very "short supply" this year, but this species was observed at Fulwell on June 28th.—J.W.H.H.
- Ochlodes venata** Br. and Grey. Large Skipper. 66  
This butterfly was recorded for Durham by Wailes in 1858, although he only mentions one station, Darlington, vouched for by an entomologist of repute. There, Sang reports it to have been scarce and local. Robson could add but little to the information supplied by Wailes. Nevertheless, he does say that Wailes (after the publication of his "Catalogue") took the Large Skipper at Castle Eden in 1860. Of recent years, the species has commenced to re-occupy our county, for reports of its capture have been sent in by Messrs. Nowers, Newton, Morton and Dunn. On July 2nd, the butterfly flew in numbers near the Blackhall Rocks whilst on the following day it occurred on a railway bank near Birtley.—J.W.H.H., J.K.M.
- Erymiis tages** L. Dingy Skipper. 66  
Another butterfly now gaining ground with us; found very abundantly in a new locality at Urpeth and also at Ferryhill.—J.W.H.H.
- Euchloe cardamines** L. Orange Tip. 66  
After many years of decadence, produced by the bad seasons of 1902-03 the Orange Tip began to recover lost ground in 1919. One of the last areas to be recolonized was the Blackhall Rocks. However, on July 2nd it was flying in the little dene half a mile south of the Hotel.—J.W.H.H.



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## BY THE WAY

Once again, we ask the Societies to supply us with news of their doings as regularly and as punctually as possible. Such accounts, intended for publication in our March issue, should be sent before 1st March, 1952. Notes and records of general interest may be sent by contributors at any time.

## HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

We have recently been protesting against the evils of vandalism and over-collecting in our two counties. However, a hundred years ago, our predecessors were making precisely the same complaints. For instance, in his Presidential Address to the Tyneside Naturalists' Field Club, delivered on 23rd May, 1855, Mr. T. Sopwith, dealing with the floras of the Magnesian Limestone denes, and referring to the addresses of previous Presidents writes: " They all agree in deprecating the rapacity of collectors as regards some of the rarer species which are found in the deep recesses or rocky banks of the denes." Later, in the same address, he mentions that, even at that early date, the Lady's Slipper Orchid, *Cypripedium Calceolus*, " if not totally extirpated by the rapacity of collectors " might still occur in Castle Eden Dene.

Further, on a similar occasion on 7th April, 1870, the then President, Rev. F. R. Wheeler, states, in describing the Field Meeting at High Force on 21st and 22nd July, 1869: "Near and around Falcon Clints the botanists found much to interest them. Some of those rare plants peculiar to Teesdale were added to their collection—plants, alas, not so numerous now as on former days, for " the Trail of the Tripper " may be detected even in the lonely localities of Upper Teesdale, and with the usual results of mere wanton destruction of whatever is peculiar and valuable." We fear that, to be in harmony with the truth, for " the Trail of the Tripper " we should read " the Trail of the Rapacious Collector." The casual tripper does not usually penetrate to lonely localities; the grasping collector does!

## THE GIANT FLEA FROM GATESHEAD

Very few present day naturalists are acquainted with the comedy of the Gateshead Flea. Its history, as well as the sequel,

is worth repeating now. In 1856, one of the most famous of Northumbrian entomologists, Mr. T. J. Bold, had sent to him an insect which he did not recognise. His own words in recording it read: " A friend of mine, resident in Gateshead, brought an immense flea, which he had found in his bed, for my examination. Not being able to identify it, I forwarded it to J. O. Westwood, Esq., by whom it was described as new under the above appellation (*Pulex Imperator*—the Emperor of the Fleas!) in a paper read recently before the Linnaean Society." And the sequel? The insect was actually a common cockroach folded laterally down the middle! Such was the mistake made by two well-known and competent entomologists.

#### IMMIGRANT LEPIDOPTERA

The present season has been one of the worst on record for immigrant butterflies and moths in our two counties. Only three observers have supplied lists of their observations and their joint total of species amounts to three. In listing the insects seen, Mr. T. C. Dunn, Mr. C. J. Gent and J.W.H.H., all include the Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) and state that it occurred sparsely throughout Northumberland and Durham in April and May and, in the form of a second brood, in September and October. On the other hand, its congener, the Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*) was noted by only one worker (J.W.H.H.), and he records a single example seen at Fulwell on 28th June. The other migratory species was the Silver Y (*Plusia gamma*) observed by Mr. Dunn and J.W.H.H. in scattered localities in Durham during the last week in June. Later, in September and October, it was encountered in considerable numbers from Aycliffe in the South to Birtley in the North. In addition, it was swarming in September on the coast near the mouth of Hawthorn Dene.

No doubt all these three species were much more widely distributed than these records indicate. That they were not recorded from other stations depends entirely upon a paucity of younger workers. In view of the valuable work being carried out under the aegis of the South-Eastern Union of Scientific Societies, with Capt. Dannreuther as secretary, it is to be hoped that new and younger recruits will join us in order to make the records for our district as complete as possible. The work is not arduous, and the older entomologists will be glad to assist in the identification of doubtful specimens.

#### THE BIRDS OF DURHAM

We have just received Vol. IX (New Series) of the Transactions of the Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne (1951) which is wholly devoted to a " History of the Birds of Durham," by Mr. George W. Temperley. The fact that it is from the pen of Mr. Temperley in itself speaks for the high quality of the work. Nevertheless, we have compared it with the late John Hancock's Catalogue of the Birds of Northumberland

and Durham, and we are bound to say that, excellent as the latter work is, Mr. Temperley's book surpasses it in point of wealth of fact and detail.

The book is of a type that renders it impossible for one to indicate its contents in a connected review. We shall content ourselves by asserting that it is just as interesting and important to the general naturalist as it is to the ornithological specialist. We have no hesitation therefore, in declaring that the book is one that should be in the hands of all field workers alike, and we cordially recommend them to buy it; they will not be disappointed by their acquisition.

## THE SOCIETIES

### NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

By the kind invitation of the Consett and District Naturalists' Field Club, the Autumn Meeting of the Union was held at Consett on October 20th, 1951. Once again we were favoured with a large attendance.

Prof. J. W. Heslop Harrison took the chair, and the usual address was delivered by Dr. B. Moss. Her talk was entitled " Seaweeds and their Uses," a subject in which the lecturer has had considerable practical experience.

Dr. Moss commenced her lecture by stressing the importance of brown seaweeds, and showed lantern slides and living specimens illustrating various species and their habitats. Turning to their uses, she stated that, in early times, they were employed as manures, then as sources of soda for glass-making and, later, to produce kelp for iodine extraction. She then detailed the development of more modern processes in which they played a part, starting with cough mixtures, cosmetics, tooth pastes and dried milk preparations. Their value, too, in preparing ice cream, artificial cherries, " lemon " peel, custards and jellies was recounted. From these uses she passed to the role they played in the manufacture of fibres to be employed in weaving taffeta-like fabrics although, as she insisted, such materials were unwashable. This very property, however, rendered them valuable in making swabs and the like. Again, she pointed out, by introducing such soluble fibres into mixtures with wool, cloths could be woven from which the former could be dissolved out to leave a very fine woollen material. Lastly, she described the use of *Laminaria* in making mannitol, paints and varnishes.

After a hearty vote of thanks to Dr. Moss, we proceeded to take tea, kindly arranged for us by the ladies of the Consett Club.

Next, the exhibits were inspected. Amongst these, Mr. A. E. Hart produced a noteworthy display of photographs and of living ferns, whilst Messrs. L. Willcox and L. B. Hird showed pressed plants. Prof. Heslop Harrison interested us with his hybrid roses and pondweeds as well as with a Durham specimen

of *Clematis Vitalba*. Amongst the juveniles. Misses Joan Ayton and Helen Durham brought sets of pressed leaves and plants for our inspection. Worthy of special note, was Mr. J. Williams' exhibit of Canadian Strike tomatoes, which manifested peculiarities in flower and fruit structures.

#### BIRTLEY, NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

We commenced our Winter session on September 25th, when Professor Heslop Harrison dealt with " Darwin and Evolution," a lecture followed on October 9th by an illustrated talk on the " Origin of Man." On October 23rd, Mr. F. Callan gave an interesting lecture on "Forecasting the Weather." Next, on October 30th, we were delighted by Dr. C. W. Gibby's lecture on " Travel in County Durham." The lecturer gave us an account of the evolution of the types of vehicle used in the area and of the development of our road systems, and the reasons for the directions they took. On November 6th, we had a series of films kindly provided by the Central Office of Information. November 20th was marked by a visit from Mr. F. J. Ackfield who gave us an " Introduction to Astronomy." This proved to be a fine discourse, illustrated by slides and apparatus of the lecturer's own devising, dealing with the more important bodies in the Solar System.

#### CONSETT AND DISTRICT NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB

On 28th November, 1951, our Annual Dinner and Conversazione was held in Hanson's Cafe, Middle Street, Consett, when Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison, Mr. and Mrs. W. Ellerington, were our invited guests.

The President, Mr. Ellerington, was in the chair, and, after our meal, proposed the toast of the King. Next, Mr. Hart gave the toast of the guests and Mr. Dixon that of the Club. Professor Heslop Harrison, in replying, paid a tribute to work of the President in the early days of the N.N.U. and related various anecdotes concerning the activities of its past officers. In his capacity as President, Mr. Ellerington replied on behalf of the Club and also in his role as an honoured guest.

After that, we inspected the various exhibits. As we usually expect, Mr. A. E. Hart showed us plant photographs, and, to emphasize his versatility, had on view some fine examples of home weaving. Mrs. Jones showed a number of photographs illustrating the outings of the club, the life of the Muggleswick fawn and various local views. Amongst other exhibits, Professor Heslop Harrison brought pressed plants, including British examples of the American Pondweed *Potamogeton epihydrus* and *P. rutilus*, whilst Mr. Ellerington had set out various natural history periodicals.

The whole closed with a cinema and lantern display, when Mr. J. J. Robson showed three films illustrating the life of wood ants, scenes in the Scottish Highlands and various natural history episodes. Mr. Evans followed with beautiful colour photographs representing many interesting local views.

## NOTES AND RECORDS

### NOTES

**Abnormal Specimens of the Great Reed Mace (*Bulrush*).**—On October 14th, I visited Aycliffe to test the botanical possibilities of the area. My journey was quite productive, and amongst my discoveries were two colonies of the bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), which, as I learnt subsequently, were of comparatively recent origin. In one of the pools I investigated, many of the plants, which were exceptionally fine specimens, bore abnormal inflorescences. Two, for example, when critically examined, proved to have the female florets extending to the tips of the stem, so that the plant was wholly female. Closer inspection revealed further that the whole of the florets were fertile and producing perfect fruits. A few of the neighbouring plants, on the other hand, whilst quite normal in the zones usually female, bore long narrow bands of female florets invading the male areas. In most cases, these bands were longitudinally arranged and quite regular, but, in others, greater or less irregularities in arrangement were displayed. —J. A. Richardson.

**Further Recent Discoveries of the Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*) in Durham.**—Last season, Mr. J. Thompson was fortunate enough to discover the Bee Orchid near Birtley whilst, during the present season, Mr. J. A. Richardson collected it at Fulwell; later, on September 7th, as I was botanizing in the vicinity of Wheatley Hill, I came across a fine clump of the same plant. This did not exhaust my good luck for, on September 12th, when I visited Kelloe, I found another small colony on a dry bank side. A day or two later, when I revisited this locality, I was delighted to detect another plant growing about a hundred yards away.—J.W.H.H.

**Intersexual Catkins of the Hazel and Alder.**—I have read, with considerable interest, Professor Heslop Harrison's remarks concerning intersexual hazel catkins. I have seen hazels bearing intersexual catkins behind Doncaster Greyhound Stadium, but these were not comparable in their degree of intersexuality with those detected by the Professor. As for intersexual catkins of alder, I observed these during the war at Padua in Italy. In their cases, the female cones were borne at the extremity of the male catkins. Needless to say, the cones and catkins fell after the flowering period was over.—Albert H. Wright.

**The Rose Leaf-cutter Bee (*Megachile circumcincta*) and the Leaves of the Common Convolvulus.**—On August 8th, whilst I was working in the Garmondsway area, I encountered a huge mass of *Convolvulus sepium* scrambling over a hedge. The leaves of the plant had received the attentions of very many leaf-cutter bees, for they bore innumerable signs of the work of the bees' mandibles. Whilst I have observed these bees utilizing leaves of very many plant species, I have not seen *Convolvulus* leaves attacked previously.—J.W.H.H.

**Recent Records of the Green Forester Moth (*Procris statices*).**—In the October number of the *Vasculum*, there is a note dealing with *Procris statices* L. In writing it, my record of two specimens taken at Barnard Castle in July, 1946, and reported in the *Vasculum* for December, 1947, has been overlooked. As the fact of the earlier capture may have distributional significance, it seems best to emphasize it.—J. P. Robson.

**The American Pondweed, *Potamogeton cpihydrus* Raf.**—On November 21st, 1951, a speaker on the wireless took for his topic "Recent Additions to the British Flora." Amongst the plants discussed was the American pondweed, *Potamogeton cpihydrus* which he stated he had seen on the Isle of South Uist during the past season. As this may be, and actually has been, taken to imply that the plant was first discovered then, it should be made quite clear that it is on record that I discovered the plant on South Uist as long ago as 1943, and Dr. W. A. Clark in 1944. Subsequently, I studied its general natural history in its original station in 1949, and again in 1950 when Mr. T. Hutton and Mr. J. J. Robson visited the island with me.

Specimens of the plant collected eight years ago, and determined by me, have been exhibited at meetings of the N.N.U., the Consett Naturalists' Field Club and the King's College Natural History Society. Moreover, accounts of the biogeography and ecology of the plant have appeared in the Transactions of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh (1948), Phytion (1950) and the Proceedings of the University of Durham Philosophical Society (1951).—J. W. Heslop Harrison.

**A Hybrid Swarm of Ragworts.**—On August 8th, when I was working the Raisby area in mid-Durham, an enormous ragwort population was encountered in a field through which a polluted stream ran. Along its banks the majority of the plants examined were pure specimens of the Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquatica*) whilst those elsewhere in the open field to the south belonged to the related Common Ragwort (*S. Jacobaea*). Irregularly dispersed between and amongst the pure species were crowds of plants obviously of hybrid origin which constituted a hybrid swarm such as I have seen in various stations where the participating plants were *Orchis Fuchsii* and *O. purpurella*.—J. A. Richardson.

**The Twaybalde in a Bog with Sphagnum Moss.**—A visit was paid on September 3rd to a bog lying along the railway side near Moorsley. There a weird collection of plants was noted, including moorland species like Tormentil, the Marsh Cinquefoil and Sphagnum. Amongst these, however, were several specimens of the Twayblade orchid, *Listera ovata*; this seems a very strange intruder.—J. A. Richardson.

**The Knotted Pearlwort (*Sagina nodosa*) Forming a Carpet near Bishop Middleham.**—This delicate little plant does not seem to be generally distributed in Durham so that when I discovered the plant forming a kind of sward on some waste ground I was quite surprised.—J. A. Richardson.

**The Pebble Prominent (*Notodonta ziczac*) on a Novel Food plant.**—For many years I was accustomed to find the larvae of this insect on sallows of the Capreae group and on the aspen. During the past few years I have seen it on *Salix repens* at Ross Links in Northumberland and in the Isle of Rhum. This year, I found eggs on a new food plant to me, the Tea-leaved Willow (*Salix phylicifolia*), in the Bishop Middleham district.—J.W.H.H.

**Bombus muscorum and B. pratorum Workers at the Flowers of the Carline Thistle (*Garlina vugaris*).**—In general, one expects to see workers of the latter species of humble bee at the flowers of rasp and bramble. On August 8th, however, I saw them, with a sprinkling of *B. muscorum*, working the Carline Thistle near Raisby.—J.W.H.H.

## RECORDS.

### FLOWERING PLANTS

- Clematis Vitalba** L. Clematis. 66  
This interesting plant was found on the Magnesian Limestone near the old windmill at Aycliffe. This appears to provide a new record for Durham.—J.W.H.H.
- Berberis vulgaris** L. Barberry. 66  
The barberry disappeared long ago in most of its recognised Durham stations so that its discovery near Kelloe on September 12th, is worthy of a record.—J.W.H.H.
- Viola odorata** L. Scented Violet. 66  
In enormous masses at one point just west of the railway near Aycliffe.  
—J.W.H.H.
- Rosa mollis** x **R. spinosissima** L. 66  
This interesting hybrid, which has been recorded previously from Quarrington Hill and Birtley was observed just north of Hawthorn Dene. Two huge shrubs, about two hundred yards apart, were discovered on September 21st. They seemed practically identical in general appearance.—J.W.H.H.
- R. canina** Sm. x **Rspinosissima** L. 66  
Another hybrid rose, in this case discovered in a thicket on the roadside near Kelloe. The effects of heterosis were very obviously displayed for the plant covered an area of over 750 square feet!—J.W.H.H.,

<b>Lathyrus sylvestris</b> L. Everlasting Pea.	66
This plant grows, as is usually the case elsewhere, on a waggon way side near Coxhoe.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Astragalus danicus</b> Retz. Milk Vetch.	66
With us this vetch is almost uniformly found growing on sandy ground near the sea. It has, however, been reported inland previously from Quarrington Hill; now it is recorded from Bishop Middleham.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Potentilla procumbens</b> Sibth.	66
In a field near the sea just north of Hawthorn Dene.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Reseda stricta</b> Pers.	66
This plant has not been placed on record for Durham; nevertheless, it was noted on the hillside near Pittington on September 3rd.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Senecio vulgaris</b> L. Groundsel.	66
A year or so ago I recorded the rayed groundsel from Cassop Vale. This season the var. <i>lanuginosus</i> Trow turned up along paths in Hawthorn Village. The specimens, however, were much laxer in habit than those collected previously.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Malva rotundifolia</b> L. Mallow.	66
Quite plentiful around old buildings near Old Wingate.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Petroselinum crispum</b> (Mill.) Nym. Parsley.	66
Fully naturalized on a Magnesian Limestone cliff near Old Wingate.— J.W.H.H.	
<b>Linaria purpurea</b> Mill. Purple Toadflax.	66
An alien, and an obvious escape from cultivation, growing amongst the Pyramidal Orchid not far from Bishop Middleham.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Chenopodium urticum</b> L.	66
This plant was found in great numbers near Aycliffe.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Asparagus officinalis</b> L. Asparagus.	66
An enormous specimen of this plant was found high on a cliff near Aycliffe. It provided a most unexpected find and, undoubtedly, originated in bird-sown seeds. The plant has not been reported before from Durham.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Typha angustifolia</b> L. Lesser Reedmace.	66
In the last number of the Vasculum I was able to supply a recent record of this species in Durham. Now I can give a second station for the plant, for I discovered it in a pool near Aycliffe on September 16th.— J.W.H.H.	
<b>Zannichellia pedunculata</b> Rehb.	66
Also in a pool. not the same as that supporting <i>Typha angustifolia</i> , but also near Aycliffe.—J.W.H.H.	

#### BIRDS

<b>Alcedo atthis ispida</b> L. Kingfisher.	67
Two specimens of this bird were seen at Mitford on the River Wansbeck on August 11th.	
<b>Pyrrhula pyrrhula nesa</b> Math. & Ired. Bullfinch.	67
A pair at Rothbury on August 25th.	
<b>Numenius phaeopus</b> L. Whimbrel.	67
Two occurred on the coast north of Newbiggin-by-the-Sea on September 15th.	
<b>Bucephala clangula</b> L. Golden-eye.	67
A drake and a duck were observed on Gosforth Park Lake, and a drake and seven females or immature birds on Bolam Lake, October 28th.—C. J. Gent.	

#### LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

<b>Tethea duplaris</b> L. Lesser Satin Moth.	66
Larvae were beaten from birch in a wood near Barnard Castle in August.—J. P. Robson.	
<b>Deuteronomos alniaria</b> L. Canary-shouldered Thorn.	66
Larvae of this beautiful thorn were beaten from birch in August in the same wood.—J.P.R.	
<b>Plemyria bicolorata</b> Hufn. Blue-bordered Carpet.	66
I have noted this pretty little moth for many years in Deepdale on the Yorkshire side of the Tees. but this year I found it on the Durham side in the form of a pupa beaten out of a lone alder in the abovementioned birch wood.—J.P.R.	

- Sterrhia aversata** L. Riband Wave. 54, 66  
 In this locality, the common form of this species is the var. *spoliata* which is nearly unicolorous grey. I have taken the banded form on rare occasions and the ochreous form only twice, once in July 1937, and again in August this year. As the latter was a female, I kept it for eggs and now have a brood of young larvae feeding on dandelion. It may be of interest to record that, from a similar brown female, taken in Lincolnshire on August 9th, 1948, I obtained twelve moths, six grey, three grey-banded, two brown and one brown-banded.—J.P.R.
- Zygaena lonicerae** L. Five-spot Burnet. 65, 66  
 To show how this species is spreading in our district, I can record a colony as occurring on the railway side two miles west of Barnard Castle on the Yorkshire side. I first observed it in July this year.—J.P.R.  
 I can also record another colony of the same insect which I saw not far from Aycliffe this season.—J.W.H.H.
- Oxygrapha literana** L. 66  
 It is always a pleasure to see this beautiful green tortrix. It is to be found near Barnard Castle in most years on tree trunks, palings and walls, both in October and, after hibernation, in March, when the green colour looks as intense as it was in autumn. The green pigment must be very different in chemical composition from that of the larger emeralds which lose their beauty in a few days. Both forms of *O. literana* are to be found, the one with short heavy black streaks and the rarer suffused form. It should be noted that this is distinctly a rare species for J. E. Robson in his Catalogue could give but few records of its occurrence with us.—J.P.R.
- Oporinia filigrammaria** H.S. 66  
 Four specimens of this somewhat local moth were taken at light near Chester-le-Street during the last week in August and the first week in September. This is the first local record since Professor Heslop Harrison took the species at Birtley many years ago.—T. C. Dunn.
- Dianthoccia nana** Rott. Marbled Coronet. 66  
 Three specimens of this somewhat unusual species with us were taken in my garden at Chester-le-Street on July 20th-21st.—T.C.D.
- Apamea crenata** Hufn. Clouded-bordered Brindle. 66  
 Of this variable species, examples of the brown forms *combusta* Haworth and *alopecurus* Esp. as well as the var. *intermedia* Tutt were captured at Chester-le-Street in July.—T.C.D.
- Anaitis plagiata** L. Treble Bar. 66  
 A slightly smoky variety of this moth was captured at Sallow near Street on September 9th.—T.C.D.
- Orthosia gracilis** Schiff. Powdered Quaker. 66  
 Numerous imagines of this species were captured at Sallow near Birtley in April whilst larvae abounded in spun heads of meadow sweet at Billingham in July, when the N.N.U. was there.—J.W.H.H., J.K.M., T.C.D.
- Nonagria typhae** Thun. Bulrush Wainscot. 66  
 A single female was found drowned in a pool amongst bulrushes near Aycliffe—J.W.H.H.
- Panameria tenebrata** Scop. Small Yellow Underwing. 66  
 After a lapse of many years, this species, which had never been regarded as otherwise than rare in Durham, turned up in numbers on a bank near the railway station at Ferryhill. The insects were flitting from plant to plant in a colony of the common mouse-eared chickweed (*Cerastium vulgatum*).—J.W.H.H.
- Larentia clavaria** Haworth. Mallow. 66  
 This insect has always been of local occurrence in Durham so that the capture in September of a female in the house at Birtley came as a great surprise.—J.W.H.H.