

THE VASCULUM (SUBSTITUTE)

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Edited by

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BY THE WAY

Secretaries of our Societies, and other contributors, should send all material intended for publication in our June issue to the Editor before June 1st, 1953.

PROTECTING OUR RARER FLOWERS

In our issue for October, 1952, we published under the above title a short note drawing attention to the present position of the Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) and the Butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*) on Waldrige Fell. In writing it, no reference to Mr. T.C. Dunn of Chester-le-Street, or his pupils, was intended, for we are fully acquainted with the fact that Mr. Dunn is just as anxious as we are to protect the plants of Northumberland and Durham. It gives us considerable pleasure, therefore, to strengthen our pleas by quoting those of Mr. Dunn :

"The *Vasculum* warnings about protecting interesting plants on Waldrige Fell remind me of another species for which I should like to submit a case. This is the red rattle, or lousewort (*Pedicularis sylvatica*). I know it is a common enough plant, but, whilst it used to be quite plentiful in the alder-willow carr on the Fell, it is now reduced to a few small patches here and there. I no longer allow this to be collected by my students, and have not done so since 1947, but I well remember passing by the colonies after a party of " botanists " (I have no idea who they were, or where they came from !) had passed that way two years ago. Not a single lousewort flower was left growing, and whole plants had been pulled up by the roots. Worse still, many had been thrown down—I presume that they were surplus to requirements. This sort of thing is quite senseless. At the time, I was in fear and trembling for the few remaining butterwort plants which are quite near the lousewort stations. Fortunately, it seems that the leader of the party did not know their position, shielded as they were by the willows. I am pleased to report that the butterworts are on the increase again. Four years ago, I could count only four plants. Last summer, I counted 32 in a rather compact colony, but only 13 of these bore flowers. The other plants were very small. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, very definitely, the species is increasing in numbers".

THE POLLINATION OF RUSHES

In our review (*Vasculum*, October 1952) of Clapham, Tutin and Warburg's *Flora of the British Isles*, we emphasized the need for caution in accepting their statements concerning the general biology of British plants. In connection with the pollination of the *Juncaceae* they remark : "A natural family resembling the *Liliaceae* in flower-structure, but wind-pollinated, and with a characteristic vegetative habit." The statement, as far as the pollination of the plants is concerned, is very far from being correct as a glance at Mr. T.C. Dunn's note in this number discussing his captures of Lepidoptera at rush flowers will show. In fact, in many districts, collecting insects at the flowers of *Junci* is a recognized method of procuring many rarer species in plenty. Moreover, Knuth in his *Handbook of Flower Pollination*, whilst supplying information about anemophily in the *Juncaceae*, states that insects are attracted by the considerable size and vivid colouring of the flowers, and also by their abundant pollen and their shining turgescient tissue. He adds that they (the insects) convey pollen to other flowers of the same or another plant of the same species, and refers specifically to Alpine *Junci* and those from the Himalayas.

In England, one of our best entomologists, the late J. W. Tutt, says in his well-known *Practical Hints for the Field Lepidopterist* : "Of the value of rush and sedge flowers as an attraction on certain nights, one cannot speak too highly. Skepper states that during the last fortnight in July, on the low marshy ground near Lowestoft, he went out with a lantern every night, and found the moths swarming from 9—10 p.m. ; so much so as to make the rushes (*Juncus effusus*) look full of variously coloured flowers. Hundreds could have been taken every evening, for they sat perfectly still extracting something from the heads of the rushes".

Lastly, on the Isle of Raasay, we, ourselves, have taken the rare *Hydraecia crinanensis* and *Procus versicolor* and many commoner species like *Dysstroma citrata* from the heads of various species of *Juncus*.

The evidence that the rushes, in part at least, are insect-pollinated is thus exceeding strong.

THE SPREAD OF THE FOXGLOVE

In the last number of the *Vasculum* (December, 1952), Mr. J. A. Richardson drew attention to the fact that the foxglove was invading pit heaps in the Team Valley, and suggested that the movement into such habitats was from the west. However, pit heaps are not the only stations now being colonized. Early in the present century, although foxgloves were not at all rare on the western slopes of the Team Valley, careful searches failed to reveal their presence on the east side. To-day, the plant occurs in the Square Wood, near Lamesley Station, in the hedges of the Grange Farm, Birtley, and in the Folly Plantation, Birtley.

It seems very probable that the movement depends upon heavy felling of trees in the west opening out suitable habitats for foxgloves in the immediate vicinity of old colonies. This, as one can readily see, has led to an enormous increase in foxglove populations in the west. Thus, with westerly prevailing winds ready to drive masses of foxglove seeds before them, the stage was set for the establishment of new colonies to the west of Birtley and Lamesley.

It would be interesting to learn if such increases in foxglove populations have been observed elsewhere in our two counties, and if so, whether similar favourable conditions for the rise and spread of the plant were available.

WATSONIAN VICE-COUNTY NUMBERS

The first number of the *Vasculum* was issued in June, 1915, and from that date we have always adopted the plan of supplying vicecounty numbers with every record we have published. In doing so, we have been alone amongst the various natural history periodicals. Recently, in order to expedite the work of those engaged in making abstracts of biological papers, we have been requested to provide appropriate vice-county numbers in the case of our *Notes* also. This we are very glad to do, and the figure following the names of localities mentioned in notes represents the number of the vicecounty concerned.

THE SOCIETIES

NORTHERN NATURALIST'S UNION

By the kind invitation of the Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne, the Twenty-ninth Annual Meeting of the Union was held in the Hancock Museum on Saturday, March 7th, 1953.

The Treasurer's report was read by Mr. J. E. Ruxton, and that of the Secretary by Dr. K. B. Blackburn. Both demonstrated that the affairs of the Union were in an exceedingly flourishing condition.

Next followed the election of new officers : Mrs. H. H. Clark, M.Sc., was elected President, whilst the retiring Vice-Presidents were replaced by Mrs. Gibby, Miss G. Watt and Mr. A. Steele. The Secretary informed the members that, after almost thirty years of continuous service, Mr. Ruxton wished to give up the Treasurership. After our appreciation of Mr. Ruxton's great services to the Union had been expressed, Mr. T. C. Dunn, B.Sc., was chosen to fill his place. Another change made was that Mrs. Thompson succeeded Dr. E. Elliot as Assistant Secretary.

After these preliminaries had been completed, Mrs. Gibby delighted us with an excellent Presidential address, entitled "A Botanical Excursion to Northern Lapland". She began by explaining that the visit was organized when the International Botanical Congress Week was held at Stockholm, and then continued by tracing the route followed from Stockholm to Abisko, afterwards describing the scenery of the district in which the camp was situated.

Following this, she showed us a lovely series of lantern slides illustrating many beautiful and rare Arctic plants and their special habitats. She also gave an interesting account of various journeys undertaken to study noteworthy species and their general ecology. She closed her talk by giving us a very instructive description of the inhabitants, the Lapps, of the area they occupied as well as of their abodes, modes of life and customs. After she finished, Professor Heslop Harrison moved that a hearty vote of thanks should be given to Mrs. Gibby, not only for her fascinating lecture, but also for the hard work she had done for the Union during her term of office.

Next, we adjourned for tea, and, in taking it, we seized the opportunity of renewing acquaintances with old friends from the various Societies represented at the meeting. The proceedings ended with an examination of the various exhibits. Amongst these, pride of place was taken as visual by Mr. R. B. Cooke's display of spring flowers from his garden. This comprised nearly eighty species, including Barberries, Rhododendrons, Daphnes, Heaths, Primulas, Crocuses, Tulips, Daffodils, Grape Hyacinths and many others. Mrs. Gibby had on view a large number of pressed plants, illustrating her lecture, whilst Dr. K. B. Blackburn brought interesting continental floras, and Japanese school-books dealing with biological subjects. Amongst insects, Dr. Burt showed the Mediterranean Fruitfly which feeds as larvae in oranges, Mr. W. Ellerington had on view a little book depicting British Columbian plants, and Miss Dowling a fine series of photographs forming a life history of the Small Ermine moth (*Yponomeuta evonymellus*) which feeds on bird-cherry. Prof. J. W. Heslop Harrison interested us with a series of rare orchids which included the Durham speciality, *Dactylorchis*, *Traunsteinerioides*, with many hybrids involving the frog orchid and the various marsh orchids, and also a hybrid between *D. Traunsteinerioides* and *D. FuchsU* (= *xD. gracilis*), a second between *D. ericetorum* and *Platanthera chlorantha* and a third, a triple hybrid, probably of parentage *D. latifolia* x *D. purpurella*) x *Coeloglossum viride*.

CONSETT AND DISTRICT NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB

Our Annual Dinner and Conversazione were held in Hanson's Cafe, Middle Street, Consett, on December 12th, 1952. Mr. Ralph Pirt, our President, was in the Chair. Just as was the case last year, Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison was our guest.

After an excellent meal, the President proposed the toast of the Queen, and Mrs. Dixon that of the Club and absent friends. To the latter, Mr. J. J. Robson made a suitable response. In replying to the toast of our guest, Prof. Heslop Harrison drew attention to the valuable work of the Club, not only in developing natural history interest locally, and in exploring its own recognized territory,

but also in stimulating the work of others by its magnificent support of the Northern Naturalists' Union and by the enthusiasm of its members.

After these proceedings, we examined the exhibits brought by various members. Amongst others, these included a number of Nigerian curios brought by Mr. Pirt, a series of fossils shown by Mr. Scott, a lovely collection of Derwent Valley flowers, the work of Mrs. A. Robson, another set from the same area assembled by Colin Bell (aged 13) and a number of insects, resulting from experiments designed to show the effects of selection in moths, brought by Prof. J. W. Heslop Harrison.

The *Conversazione* ended, as is customary, with a display of films and slides. On this occasion, Mr. Robson produced films illustrating the lives of swans and ravens, whilst Mr. Evans exhibited interesting local views. The slides, made over 50 years ago in the district, which Mr. Dixon had brought, provoked considerable interest.

BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

On December 2nd, Mr. J. Walton gave an illustrated lecture, in his own inimitable style, on "A Gamekeeper's Life". This was derived in the main from his experiences in Lambton Park and elsewhere in our area. On December 16th, we had a visit from Mr. O. Jeune, who delighted us with his description of smugglers and their various tricks, both in ancient and in modern times.

We began work in 1953, on January 6th, with a lecture entitled "What is an Orchid ? " given by Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison and Mr. J. Thompson. Professor Heslop Harrison dealt with the general structure of an orchid plant and its flowers, whilst Mr. Thompson showed a long series of lantern slides in colour of his own making. These depicted orchids collected in the Birtley district and elsewhere in Co. Durham. Mrs. H. H. dark visited us on January 20th to give us a very interesting talk on "Words and Names". On February 3rd, Dr. H. Mackay brought us up-to-date by a very important talk with the title "Modern Progress in Medicine". For our meeting on February 17th we had an interesting, lecture on a "Journey across Canada". This was illustrated by a long series of lantern slides. On March 3rd, Mr. R. G. Carruthers delighted us with an entrancing talk, with lantern illustrations, concerning "Mammoth Hunting in Siberia". By special request he gave a lecturette on "Birtley Clays". This called forth a long and instructive discussion in which many members took part.

NOTES AND RECORDS

NOTES

Moths at Rush Flowers.—On the night of July 3rd, 1952, I had the best "*Juncus*" night on Waldrige Fell (66) that I can remember. The flower heads were laden with moths, and in the light of the torch the clumps of rushes looked to be one seething mass of moths with the bright pin-points of their eyes showing up in the beam, whilst countless others hovered nearby waiting for a place on which

to sit and feed. In one hour I noted the following : *Philudoria potatoria*, *Plusia chrysitis*, *Amathes baja*, (the commonest moth present), *Graphiphora augur*, *Amathes c-nigrum*, *A. triangulum*, *A. sexstrigata*, *A. xanthographa*, *Diarsia festiva*, *Ochropleura plecta*, *Triphaena comes*, *T. pronuba*, *Bombycia viminalis* (dark form), *Phalaena typica*, *Apamea ypsilon*, *A. sordens*, *A. monoglypha*, *A. secalis*, *Leucania pollens*, *L. impura*, *L. lithargyria*, *L. conigera*, *Caradrina morpheus*, *Ortholita chenopodiata*, *Dysstroma truncata*, (black variety), *Epirrhoe alternata*, and *Euphyia bilineata*. T. C. Dunn.

Notes on *Rosa arvensis*.—In our July number, I reported that a colony of this rose, so rare in our counties, had been discovered in Shincliffe Woods (66) near Durham. Being desirous of studying the colony at leisure, I returned to the wood on October 12th, 1952, and collected a number of seeds and cuttings. The former were planted in ordinary garden soil immediately, whilst one half of the cuttings were placed in water and the other in a light soil. Although some of the cuttings have not yet rooted, all are expanding their leaves to-day (March 2nd). Of the cuttings now possessing roots, those placed in water rooted in December as did, no doubt, those planted in soil, for at least one of the latter has sent up a new shoot. The seeds began to germinate on February 22nd, 1953, and there are now numerous seedlings in the pan. This speedy germination of seeds, and rooting of cuttings, characterizes the diploid roses of which *R. arvensis* is a representative. Seeds of *R. mollis* (tetraploid) and of *R. Sherardi* (pentaploid), planted at the same time as those of *R. arvensis*, show no signs of germination. In fact, 1950 seeds of *R. Sherardi*, in many cases, are just beginning to show their cotyledons. — J.W.H.H

Two Rare Northumberland Algae.—Two rare algae, of a very pleasing appearance, have been detected recently on the coast of Northumberland : these are *Codium tomentosum* Stackh. and *Colpomenia sinuosa* (Roth.) Derb. and Sol. The former was discovered in rock pools at Beadnell (68) in fairly large quantities. There were twenty-four plants more than two inches in length in a single pool at Newton-by-the-Sea (68) on January 19th, 1953, a day after the detection of the plant at Beadnell. *C. sinuosa*, a Mediterranean seaweed, has been recorded previously from Boulmer (68). It has invaded our shores in comparatively recent years, and is still spreading. On November 4th, 1952, many plants were seen growing on two reefs at Beadnell, whilst, on November 19th, 1952, a large number of specimens was found washed up at Cresswell. The species has also been observed amongst drift cast ashore on Fenham Flats near Holy Island.—A. J. Lacey, D. A. Robertson.

The Early Appearance of the Seven-spot Ladybird.—On Sunday, March 1st, whilst I was examining the vegetation in an old quarry near West Boldon (66), I noticed two specimens of the Seven-spot Ladybird (*Coccinella septempunctata*), sunning themselves on grass stems. The day was fine and warm, and this had, no doubt, tempted the insects to emerge from their winter quarters. I believe that this date is the earliest I have observed over-wintering examples of the species.—G. E. M. Hardy.

Rabbits and Holly Bark.—In the first week in February, after a long succession of night frosts, I was walking through a wood on the banks of the Wear (66). Almost at once I perceived that many trees had been "barked" for several inches above the ground, but it was not for a considerable time that I perceived that the trees affected were uniformly hollies. This seems difficult to understand when one realizes that many trees and shrubs, generally regarded as more readily attacked by rabbits, were available.—J. Thompson.

Female Plants of the Common Butterbur at Billy Mill.—As is fairly well known, this plant exists in two forms, one male and the other female. Whilst the male plant is fairly generally distributed in the British Isles, the female plant seems to have its headquarters in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire and Cheshire. It has, however, been reported as occurring sporadically in the Tyne Valley. To the known stations in that area can be added another, not far from Billy Mill (67) in Northumberland.—H. Brewis

The Pupation Habits of the Cowparsnip *Depressaria*, *D. heracleana*—On July 7th, on examining the flowering umbels of the cowparsnip, J found that many heads contained larvae of the Tineid moth, *Depressaria heracleana*. Two of the infested umbels were cut off and brought home. On examination, I discovered that the larvae they contained were from one half grown to full fed. One of the full-grown larvae I placed in a pill box but, on the night of July 9th, I observed this caterpillar wandering outside the box. An examination revealed the fact that a round hole had been bitten in the box walls, and that through this the larva had made its exit. On July 10th, I put several full-grown and nearly full-grown larvae upon a potted umbel of the food plant, selected because it possessed a stout stem and well-developed sheathing leaves. The latter afforded excellent shelter for the larvae whilst they were piercing and entering the stem. Very quickly, they found their way into the bases of the leaf sheaths, and at 8 a.m., July 11th, I noted that at least one hole had been eaten into the hollow stem, and that all the larvae but one had disappeared through it for pupation inside. Later, on July 13th, early in the morning, I perceived that one hole of exit, for the use of the perfect insect in emerging, had been eaten through the walls of the stem from within, about half way up the internode. This hole of exit was filled up by a fairly complete barricade formed of clean pellets of pith, bound together by silken threads. By the end of the third week of July, the whole of larvae used in the experiment had pupated.—C. R.

Earwigs and the Larvae of *Depressaria heracleana*—On September 16th, at several points some distance apart, near Lamesley (66), I collected eight cowparsnip stems, which, from the presence of exit holes, I regarded as containing larvae or pupae of *D. heracleana*. In several of these, the occupants were dead and dying. Invariably in such cases, the hollow stems were full of the common earwig, both sexes being present. Most of these insects, however, were full grown, and the females contained eggs. Undoubtedly, the earwigs had fed upon the larvae and pupae of the moth, as well as on the pith-like walls of the stems.—C. R.

Birtley Orchids in January—In order to continue my work on the ecological requirements of our local orchids, I proceeded on January 17th, 1953, to one of the claypits in the Birtley (66) neighbourhood to determine in what condition the plants were on that date. Early as it was in the year, with the dried heads of last year's flower spikes to guide me, I was able to detect many plants of *Dactylorhiza purpurella*, *D. Fuchsii* and *D. purpurella* x *D. Fuchsii*. In all instances, the new shoots for 1953 were about an inch above the ground. A very disquieting feature was forced upon me as I made my investigations. During the winter, many thousands of both species and their hybrid had been destroyed by the passage of bull-dozers over the colonies. In addition a similar fate has befallen most of the new colonies of the bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) I have recorded recently, and also the only specimen of the frog orchid seen locally for many years.—J. A. Richardson.

Early Lepidoptera in the Vicinity of Baroard Castle (66). The unusually mild weather in the last week in January and the beginning of February this year brought out a considerable number of spring insects well ahead of their ordinary time at Bamard Castle. The first male of the Pale Brindled Beauty (*Phigalia pendaria*) was seen on January 15th, 1953, whilst the corresponding date last year was February 20th. The Spring Usher (*Erannis leucophaearia*) appeared on January 24th, and last year on February 10th. Of these, the latter species occurred in great numbers, but the Pale Brindled Beauty was represented by a, very small contingent. The Dotted Border (*Erannis marginaria*) was first observed on January 30th, and the March Moth (*Alsophila aescularia*) on February 18th not much earlier than February 22nd, the first date upon which I captured the species last season.—J. P. Robson.

RECORDS

HYMENOPTERA—BEES, WASPS, ETC.

***Bombus lapidarius* L.**

This bee was once very widely distributed in our counties, but, for many years, it has been decreasing in numbers. However, after an apparent absence in Durham, it has been captured recently at Raisbv. Wingate and Bishop Middleham.

66

- B. jonellus** Kirby. 68
No record for this species seems to be available for Cheviotland. It was taken on the Fallowless Moors on July 30th probing the flowers of the two species of lousewort, the same plants as are favoured by the ssp. *hebridensis* in the Outer Hebrides.
- B. ruderarius** Mull. (= *derhamellus* K.) 66
This bee, which used to be quite plentiful in North Durham, vanished completely in the early years of the century from many of its Durham stations. This year it has occurred quite freely at Haswell, Wingate, Raisby, Greatham, Billingham, Aycliffe, Blackhall Rocks and Hawthorn. At Hawthorn it was taken at the flowers of the greater knapweed (*Centaurea Scabiosa*).
- B. muscorum** L. 66,68
This species is wide-spread with us, although it seems to prefer our moorlands. Taken at the flowers of the marsh thistle on the Greenleighton Moors and at saw-wort (*Serratula tinctoria*) at Hawthorn.
- B. pratorum** L. 66,67,68
Well-distributed in our counties, and its workers are the commonest bees at raspberry flowers in May and June. They were, however, captured at heads of the carline thistle at Raisby.
- B. hortorum** L. 66
A black worker of this species was taken near Pitlington.—J. W. H. H.
- Pontania phylicfoliae** Fors. 66, 67
Galls of this rare alpine species of sawfly are not uncommon in Upper Teesdale, Weardale and Allendale on the Tea-leaved Willow (*Salix phylicfolia*). They are, nevertheless, rarely observed on the plant in its lower stations. This season they occurred at Wylam.—J. W. H. H.
- LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS
- Lampropteryx suffumata** Schiff. Water Carpet. 66
A blackish specimen was taken at dusk, on May 15th, flying along a hedge near Waldrige Fell.—T.C.D.
- Perizoma flavofasciata** Thog. Sandy Carpet 66
In Broomyholme Marsh ; this is not uncommon at dusk.—T.C.D.
- Enchoeca nebulata** Scop. Dingy Shell. 66, 67
Last year I recorded two odd specimens of this species, and this caused me to make a special search for it this season. It proved to be abundant wherever alder grew in quantity as on Waldrige Fell and in Broomyholme Marsh.—T.C.D.
Also plentiful enough in similar habitats near Shotley Bridge and Ebchester.— J.W.H.H.
- Semiothisa liturata** Cl. Tawny Barred Angle. 66, 67
I found specimens of this species sitting on the undersides of hollyhock leaves near to, and in, the light of my dining room window at Chester-le-Street.— T.C.D. This insect was not rare in the pine woods south of Corbridge, but the recent felling of three trees must have seriously reduced the insects numbers there.— J.W.H.H.
- Abraxas grossulariata** L. Currant Moth 66
This insect is, of course, only too plentiful in our counties, for it defoliates our currants and gooseberries every season. This note is made to draw attention to the fact that two colonies attached to the alpine currant (*Ribes alpinum*) occur near Birtley and Chester-le-Street.—J.W.H.H.
- Ellopija fasciaria** Schiff. Barred Red. 66, 67
One specimen was taken at light at Chester-le-Street on July 21st, 1952. T.C.D. Larvae plentiful in the younger plantations of pines west of Corbridge.— J.W.H.H.
- Lampra firnbriata** Schreb. 66
The first specimen of this beautiful insect appeared at light in the garden on July 20th. Altogether, I have seen 30-40 examples this summer, which is a huge increase on the usual one or two, and many colour varieties have been set up.— T.C.D.
- Thalophila matura** Hufn. Straw Underwing. 66
A single example at light in the garden.—T.C.D.

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BY THE WAY

Our October number goes to press on October 1st, 1953. All material intended for that issue should be in the Editor's hands before September 13th, 1953.

WEARDALE NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB : TRANSACTIONS ILLUSTRATED

Quite recently, there came into our possession a copy of Part I, Volume I, of a publication bearing the above title. From internal evidence, it had been published at Bishop Auckland, late in the year 1900, under the Editorship of Mr. W. M. Egglestone of Stanhope. Its contents included most of the papers read before the Club in the session 1899-1900, and dealt with natural history topics in their broadest sense. In addition, there was a series of interesting notes much the same as we are accustomed to in the *Vasculum*.

Obviously, from the statements made in the Editor's Preface, it was intended to continue with "future issues as circumstances permitted". Can any reader let us know whether such further issues ever appeared? If so, it would be of considerable value to students of the natural history of Durham if a whole run could be presented to some central library, university or otherwise, so that the publication could be consulted by local field workers.

Furthermore, in our copy, there is an announcement concerning a work "to be issued at an early date" under the title "First Volume of Records of the Blackhill and District Naturalists' Field Society". Was this volume ever published? If so, any information about it would be very welcome. In particular, we should like to know where it may be consulted.

IMMIGRANT LEPIDOPTERA

Last year, the numbers of immigrant butterflies and moths reported as reaching our counties was very small, just as was the case in most British districts. However, it must be emphasized that during the past few years, both in favourable and unfavourable seasons, the number of records of such insects sent to us has steadily fallen. We should like to see this state of affairs remedied in 1953, and invite all entomologists to let us know what they can about the occurrence of immigrants in their own vicinity.

Further, as is well known, many insects are rapidly increasing their ranges in Northumberland and Durham, or are recolonizing lost ground. In particular, in this connexion, we should like to mention amongst the butterflies, the Large Skipper, the Dingy Skipper, the Holly Blue, the Green Hair-streak, the Peacock, the Comma and the Fritillaries. Records of such insects should be sent to the *Vasculum* as soon as possible after the observations are made.

RED PRIMROSES AND RED COWSLIPS

The question of the distribution of the red forms of the primrose and cowslip in the north has once more been raised, and we shall be glad if botanists in our counties acquainted with these varieties in a wild condition would supply information likely to assist the necessary investigations. In the case of the primrose, red-flowered plants are not uncommon in the south-west of England and in Wales, more especially in Pembrokeshire. With us, they have been detected on Kilhope Law, near Hexham, Haltwhistle, Birtley (Co. Durham), on the Northumberland coast and in Longridge Dene in Berwickshire.

As far as the cowslip is concerned, the British headquarters of its red-flowered forms are likewise located in Pembrokeshire, although plants with red or rust-coloured flowers have been collected in the north near Corbridge, Bywell and Middlesbrough.

In recording these forms, care should be taken to avoid confusion with hybrids resulting from crosses between the garden polyanthus and ordinary wild primroses and cowslips. Such hybrids have been encountered in a field near Chopwell Woods and in a wood near Riding Mill.

In sending records, the presence or absence of white-flowered forms of both plants should be emphasized inasmuch as there seems to be some genetic connexion between the occurrence of the red and white forms in affected colonies.

THE STUDY OF BRITISH WILD ROSES

Since the war, as a result of the interest taken in wild rose hips as a source of Vitamin C, the study of the group has received a new lease of life. However, just as was hinted at various times during the war, attempts are now being made to magnify the inherent difficulties of the genus *Rosa* by treating all kinds of Canine forms as phenhybrids, the putative parents being set forth with a deceptive appearance of confidence.

The *Caninae*, as a group, are undoubtedly composed of ancient cryptohybrids but, as an outcome of our own long-continued investigations in the genus in the field, we must protest against the confusion introduced most unnecessarily by superimposing doubtful modern hybridity upon that which must have occurred thousands of years ago. In doing so, we should like to point out that

“explanations” of the variability of the *Caninae* based on recent hybridity have been advanced freely in the past, only to be abandoned later by their authors. Present-day hybrids within the *Caninae* most certainly occur, but they are exceedingly rare and are almost invariably characterized by their sterility and other salient features. Besides, some of the alleged hybrids flourish in areas which do not produce one or both of the supposed parents. This, of course, is not an impossible position ; nevertheless, in our opinion, it is not a very likely one.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

We are glad to be able to announce that, after the long delay caused by the war, the first part of the second volume of our *Transactions* has now appeared. Any help members of the Union can give in increasing its circulation will be greatly appreciated.

THE SOCIETIES

NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

For our first Field Meeting of the year, after a long absence, we returned to Plessey Woods on Saturday, May 9th. The day was exceptionally fine, and a goodly crowd assembled at Hartford Bridge under the leadership of our President, Mrs. H. H. Clark, to explore the woods along the River Blyth.

Although the entomologists were well represented, they saw very little indeed, only the commonest of the spring butterflies being on the wing. Moreover, the larvae usually beaten from the oaks and other trees early in May had just hatched. Even these were present in very small numbers.

On the other hand, the botanists were much more fortunate. In particular, we were greatly surprised to discover that the Dusky Sallow, *Salix nigricans*, was quite abundant. This is a plant which one usually associates with subalpine districts. Obviously, it had been passed over previously, after cursory examination, as *Salix Caprea* which likewise abounds in the wood. Worthy of mention, too, were the hornbeams, most of which were flowering, although only a few bore leaves. A very interesting hybrid rose of the parentage *Rosa Sherardi* x *R. spinosissima* was detected by Professor Heslop Harrison growing along the stream. Amongst the specialities of the wood is the Wood Vetch (*Vicia sylvatica*) which occurs locally in considerable quantities. Dr. K. B. Blackburn took care that all interested were introduced to this rare Northumbrian plant. Another plant equally rare in the county, the Spindle Tree, was observed growing on crumbling bank sides, whilst the discovery of a colony of Hart's Tongue ferns added a new station to those already known in the two Northumberland vice-counties. Other plants noted included the Wood Stitchwort, the Wood Forget-me-not, the Tuberous-rooted Bitter-vetch, the Hemlock Waterdropwort, the Hairy St. John's Wort, the Golden Saxifrage, the Bird

Cherry, the Downy Rose, the Woodruff, Goldilocks, the Mountain Speedwell, the Guelder Rose, the Water-Wood Avens hybrid, the Melic Grass and numerous commoner species.

The birds observed were mostly of the usual kinds, but the occurrence of the Grasshopper Warbler must be emphasized.

BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

On March 17th, Mr. D. Morgan, B.Sc., gave us a very entertaining lecture in which he described the work of the King's College expedition to Morocco in the summer of 1952. His talk was illustrated by a long series of excellent slides in colour.

Our winter session ended on March 31st, with our Annual Meeting and Conversazione. After the election of officers and general business, we sat down to an excellent dinner which had been prepared by our lady members. Next followed an examination of the various exhibits which included a miniature rock-garden, constructed by Miss Alison Campbell, a beautiful series of melanic moths captured in the Chester-le-Street neighbourhood by Mr. T. C. Dunn, pressed specimens of local plants prepared by David Harris and a number of hybrid primroses, one of which was of the mixed parentage (*Primula Juliae* x *P. vulgaris*) x (*P. elatior* x *P. amoena*), bred by Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison. The evening then continued with a display of lantern slides in colour during which Mr. J. Thompson showed the results of his work with our local rose species and hybrids. These included forms as yet unknown to other botanists, and all were greatly admired. Professor Heslop Harrison showed slides illustrating the various types of exotic orchids from all parts of the world, and also the melanic moths discussed by Mr. Dunn.

The meeting closed with a hearty vote of thanks to all those, but more especially the ladies, who had worked so hard for its success.

NOTES AND RECORDS

NOTES

Larvae of *Depressaria assimilella* Treits. at Urpeth.—On April 4th, whilst on a walk in the Brooms, near Urpeth (v.-c. 66), I noticed that in some cases the shoots of the brooms were spun together. On close examination, I discovered that, in such cases, two shoots had been brought together and fastened in that position by dense patches of white silk. Within the shelters thus formed were feeding the brown caterpillars of *Depressaria assimilella* which had hibernated there.—David Harris.

Intersexual Catkins of the Creeping Willow, *Salix repens*, on Birtley Fell (66). During April, I have visited the willow colonies on Birtley Fell in search of material for photographic purposes. In spite of the tremendous destruction which has taken place on the Fell during the past twelve months, I discovered several female bushes which had escaped the general uprooting owing to their proximity to the whins. Amongst these was a bush on which the terminal portion of each catkin bore intersexual and male florets. Professor Heslop Harrison informs me that, although he had previously detected intersexual male catkins in the original colony, he had never encountered female intersexes there. Encouraged by this success, we paid a visit to the colony of *Salix repens*

existing on Birtley Little Fell. Although these plants were in much the same condition as they were years ago, no intersexes were discovered. However, there was sufficient evidence to indicate that some plants represented hybrids between *Salix repens* and *S. arenaria*.—J. Thompson.

The Occurrence of *Dactylorchis Traunsteineri* Saut. in Durham (66). Many years ago, I realized that the orchids growing at the Blackhall Rocks, and up to that time, regarded as *Orchis purpurella*, did not in reality belong to that species. However, pressure of other work prevented my pursuing the matter further until I began to collect *O. majalis* in the Outer Hebrides. Careful comparisons suggested that the Durham plants, whilst not true *O. majalis*, formed part of the *majalis* complex. In the end, I decided that, in all probability, they should be assigned to Pugsley's *Orchis Traunsteinerioides*. For several reasons, that position failed to satisfy me, and after bringing together Durham examples from as many stations as possible, I worked through the lot on the basis of A. Fuchs' "Monograph of *Orchis Traunsteineri* Saut." which was published at Augsburg in 1919. My weighed opinion now is that the Durham plants fall well within the range of variability given for *O. Traunsteineri* Saut. by Fuchs. Utilizing the appropriate generic name, their correct appellation, therefore, is *Dactylorchis Traunsteineri*.

This work necessitated an examination of many orchid colonies in Durham, Northumberland and elsewhere which led to two conclusions: (1) that in many stations, throughout the northern portions of the British Isles, *D. Traunsteineri* had been overwhelmed by hybridity with *D. purpurella* and (2) that it was quite probable that *D. purpurella* itself had originated in crosses between *D. Fuchsii* and some form of *D. latifolia* L. The latter point in turn suggests that here we have a basis for future research work in the group.—J.W.H.H.

Rare Northumberland Algae.—This note is inspired by that appearing in the March, 1953 issue of the *Vasculum* under the heading "Two Rare Northumberland Algae". On April 30th 1953, when I was at Bamburgh, I observed a scattered colony of small plants of *Colpomenia sinuosa* (Roth.) Derb., in a rock pool at mid-tide level on the Monk's House Rocks (68). The plants were extremely buoyant owing to their very distended vesicles. It would seem that *Colpomenia* is establishing itself along this section of the N. E. Coast.

The plant is not specifically Mediterranean, for it is to be found down the Florida coast, in other localities along the coast of Western North America and in the warmer waters of the Atlantic and Pacific. There exist allied tropical forms.—D. Morgan.

Another Durham Station for the Green Hairstreak Butterfly.—During the first week in May, whilst we were out botanizing, my grand-daughter spotted this butterfly in a locality near Chopwell. This was not a difficult matter, for there were plenty of them flitting about the blueberry.—J. E. Hull.

The Durham Colony of *Cirsium eriophorum* L.—Early in April I was introduced to the newly discovered station for this fine thistle at Garmondsway but almost immediately, I was struck with dismay for, in order to comply with recent instructions to plough out additional land, much of the area occupied by the plant seemed doomed. However, a careful examination of the rougher areas upon which the plant grew, and which could not be ploughed, revealed the fact that the colony was in no great danger. In fact, along a portion of a bankside, just 12 yards long, 53 plants were counted. It cannot be denied, however that many growing on the leveller ground cannot escape destruction.—J. Thompson.

Cleistogamous *Lamium amplexicaule* L. at Wylam (67).—On April 5th, at Wylam, I came across a considerable amount of the cleistogamous form of this species of red deadnettle. Curiously enough, later in the week, the same plant turned up at Birtley, but in every instance the corollas of the plants were normal and fitted for insect pollination in the usual way.—J. Thompson.

A Colony of the Common Cabbage, *Brassica oleracea* L. at Wingate (66). On April 18th, when we were investigating the vegetation in the old quarry at Wingate,

I discovered a flourishing colony of this plant on ledges of the limestone cliffs. Clearly, the colony must have originated in cultivated forms from gardens. Nevertheless, the whole of the numerous plants seen were of the usual wild form. —J. A. Richardson.

Sparrows and Aspen Catkins.—For many years we have been seriously troubled by sparrows destroying the flowers of our primroses and oxlips in the garden at Birtley (66). This season, the latter plants flowered very early, but, for some unknown reason, the birds took no notice of them. The primroses also were neglected. However, later, when the catkins of the male aspens were developing all were destroyed by the sparrows.—J.W.H.H.

The Elephant Hawkmoth in Claypits near Birtley.—Last year, caterpillars of this fine moth were plentiful on the Rosebay Willowherb in the Birtley claypits. One caterpillar was taken which pupated safely to yield the moth on May 16th, 1953.—R. Harris.

Notes on the Alpine Penny-cress, *Thiaspi alpestris* L.—Recently I have had numerous examples of *Thiaspi alpestris* (agg.) from many sources in cultivation. Of these, as determined from their greenish leaves, the proneness of the latter to develop anthocyanin pigments, their short, compact flowering spike, the shallow notch of the silicula, and the long style, the plants from the Isle of Rhum (104) Can only be regarded as *T. virens* Jord. Very close to these in every respect, except that the style, whilst exceeding the notch, is shorter than in the Rhum examples, are representatives of the population growing along the South Tyne at Staward. On the other hand, plants from Wylam (67) agree substantially with the description of *T. sylvestre* Jord. These differ from Staward individuals in their lax, elongate fruiting raceme. Moreover, whilst the siliculae in Staward plants are more than twice as long as broad, those from the Wylam colony are less than twice as long as broad. Again, the siliculae of the latter plants have much more rounded margins. At Wylam, a second form occurs, with a height rarely exceeding three inches, leaves rounder and less glaucous, a fruiting raceme very compact, siliculae less than quarter the size of the prevalent form, the notch slight and style protruding. This form is apparently nondescript. Of the plants from Weardale (66), some may be assigned safely to *T. occitanicum* Jord. ; still the silicula shape in others shows considerable variation. According to my views, these various forms can not be regarded as ecotypes, for, except in the Rhum station, the habitats are practically identical. Taking all the facts into consideration, I think it best to regard the Rhum plants as forming a distinct subspecies (*T. alpestre* L. ssp. *virens* (Jord) Heslop Harrison), to hold the status of the Staward population in suspense and to regard the others as varieties evolved by the joint action of isolation, mutation and genetic drift.— J.W.H.H.

RECORDS

ARACHNIDA—SPIDERS, ETC.

- Euarcha arcuata* Clk.** 66
A single female on heather in Chopwell Wood in June, 1945.
- Goniatium ensipotens* Sim.** 66
In October 1946 I took an adult female from fallen beech leaves in Chopwell Wood which I identified with this species as set forth in Simon's "Arachnides de France", but did not record it hoping that the male would turn up to make the identity quite certain. Three years later, both sexes were found in a collection made near Wivenhoe, Essex. Not yet recorded from anywhere else in Britain
- Philodromus elegans* Bl.** 66
Adult females were found on Scots pines in Chopwell Wood, May 1952 sub-adult females on the same trees in the first week of May, 1953.

Daysocylus simonii Berland 67
 Taken by Mr. J. R. Parker in the cellar of the Conservative Club, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne. First found by Borland in caves of the Sorbonne, Paris, and recorded by him in 1911. Captured by Bristowe in cellars at Cambridge and Bury St. Edmunds in 1932, and since then reported from cellars in various parts of England and Scotland.—J. E. Hull.

LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

Sesia formiciformis Esp. Ruby Clearwing. 66, 77
 Larvae in *Salix phyticifolia* at Eastgate in Durham, at Kelloe, Durham in *S. atrocinerea* and at Wvlam in *S. viminalis*. *S. purpurea* and *S. nigricans*.—J. W. H. H.

Trochilium crabroniforme Lew. Hornet Clearwing. 66
 Larvae in *Salix Caprea* at Bishop Middleham ; in many species of *Salix* and *Populus* in my garden, but not in stems of *S. daphnoides*.—J. W. H. H.

Erynnis tages L. Dinky Skipper 66
 On the old slag-heap at Birtley on May 5th, the earliest date I have ever seen this insect. Later, it occurred on the railway banks at Vigo, on May 16th. —J. W. H. H.

Adela viridella Sc. 66
 In the wood adjoining the Vigo railway on May 16th.—J. W. H. H.

Incurvaria muscalella F. 66
 On a door in The Avenue, Birtley, May 22nd.—J.W.H.H.

Mormo maura L. Old Lady 66
 Of this fine insect one specimen was boxed from a curtain in the house at Chester-le-Street.—T. C. D.
 Odd specimens have been taken in similar places at Birtley, and I have seen pupae under willow bark on the flats adjoining the Derwent at Swalwell.—J.W.H.H.

Tholera cespitis Schiff. Hedge Rustic. 66
 One at light at Chester-le-Street on August 28th, 1952, and a second on the 30th —T C D

T. popularis Fab. Feathered Gothic 66
 At light in the garden on August 25th.—T. C. D.

Rusina umbratica Goeze. Brown Rustic. 66
 Taken at Chester-le-Street on June 17th.—T. C. D

Amathes castanea Esp. Neglected Rustic. 66
 One taken at rush flowers at midnight on Waldrige Fell on July 30th.—T.C.D
 This species is a far from common insect with us, and the only previous Durham records are from Upper Teesdale made long ago by Dr. Lees. This record is the first made from low-lying areas in the county, and is therefore of considerable importance.—J. W. H. H.

Anaplectoides prasina Schf. Green Arches. 66
 Bred from a single larvae collected on the roadside just south-west of Lady Park. The species is uncommon with us.—J. W. H. H.

Xylocampa areola Esp. Early Grey 66
 Workers of the Darlington Club report the capture of this moth at Darlington on April 22nd. This find is of considerable interest as the moth was reported from that town many years ago by Mr. Backhouse. Although the insect seems so rare in Northumberland and Durham, we believe that it would prove much commoner if honeysuckles were beaten for its larvae in early June. Its presence, in considerable numbers, in the Inner and Outer Hebrides was demonstrated by that method of collecting.—J. W. H. H.

Antitype chi L. Grey Chi. 66
 This moth, with its varieties *langei* and *olivacea*, used to be extremely plentiful on trees and walls in August and September. For many years its numbers have been diminishing steadily as the result of the persistent destruction of road-side plants. This season has a distinct increase in both the type and the varieties in Durham.—J.W.H.H.

FLOWERING PLANTS AND FERNS

- Corydalis claviculata** (DC) L. Climbing Fumitory. 66
 In our December number, we recorded the presence of this pretty plant near the Mill Pit, Birtley. Recent felling operations in the Target Wood in Urpeth Bottoms have reduced its numbers seriously there, but, across the Bottoms in the birch wood, near the Riding Farm, it still maintains itself in large numbers.—J. W. H. H.
- Rubus laciniatus** Willd. Cut-leaved Bramble. 66
 Amongst whins near the footpath leading past Johnson's Farm, west of Birtley, to Lamesley ; also on the railway at Birtley and in a little dene, north of that
- Rosa obtusifolia** Desv. 66
 In South Durham near Old Cleathorne as the var. *tomentella* ; and just outside the southern extremity of Shincliffe Woods as var. *Borreri*—J. W. H. H.
- R. Sherardi** Davies 66, 68
 The var. *suberecta* was found along Hawthorn Burn, Durham, and near the Fallowlees Burn, Northumberland.—J. W. H. H.
- Poterium Sanguisorba** L. Salad Burnet 68
 Abundant on rocks, at one point only, along the Fallowlees Burn.—J. W. H. H.
- Alchemilla glabra** Neyg. Lady's Mantle. 68
 Not uncommon along the Fallowlees Burn.—J. W. H. H.
- A. vestita** (Buser) Raunk. 68
 Also in the same stations but rarer.—J. W. H. H.
- Senecio squalidus** L. Oxford Ragwort. 66
 On the waste heaps near Greatham Saltworks where the hybrids with *S. viscosus* and *S. vulgaris* also occurred.—J. W. H. H.
- Andromeda polifolia** L. Marsh Andromeda . 68
 On the Greenleighton Moors with the cranberry, *Oxycoccus palustris*,—Y. H. H.
- Viscum album** L. Mistletoe. 66
 I have examined specimens of this plant collected in Hawthorn Dene. Of its status there I have no information.—J. W. H. H.
- Asplenium Ruta-muraria** L. Wall-rue. 66
 In crevices in Magnesian Limestone rocks on the Cleadon Hills.—G. E. M. H.
- Thelypteris Dryopteris** (L.) Slosson. Oak Fern. 68
 In shady places along the Fallowlees Burn.—J. W. H. H.
- Botrychium Lunaria** L. Moonwort 66
 In the rough pasture at Quarrington Hill.—J. A. Richardson.
- Trollius europaeus** L. Globe Flower 67
 The fact that this plant, which seems to be decreasing in numbers with us, still occurs at Belsay seems worthy of a record.
- Viola calcarea** (Bab.) Gregory . 66
 This violet, characteristic of pastures and hedgebanks on the Magnesian Limestone, appears to be common enough at Pitington, Sherburn Hill, Shadforth, Strawberry Hill, Bishop Middleham and Garmondsway. According to Clapham, Tutin and Warburg, the northern limits of this form are N. Lancs. and Yorks. As in many other cases they have missed pertinent records.
- Lotus corniculatus** L. Bird's-foot Trefoil 67
 The very striking variety *microphyllus* Meyer, with very tiny leaves, occurs at Hauxty.
- Melilotus alba** Desr. White Melilot 67
 An introduced plant to be found sparingly near Holywell Dene.

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BY THE WAY

All matter intended for publication in our December issue should be sent to the Editor, at the above address, before December 1st, 1953. In the case of notes and records, it will save much inconvenience if these are cast in the form usually adopted in the *Vasculum*. Exchanges for both the *Vasculum* and the *Transactions of the Northern Naturalists' Union*, should be directed to the same address.

WEARDALE NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB : TRANSACTIONS ILLUSTRATED

In reply to our enquiry about the publications of the Weardale Naturalists' Field Club, Mr. E. J. Clark, the Durham County Librarian, and Mr. James Crawley, Director of the Sunderland Public Libraries, Museum and Art Gallery, have very kindly supplied the desired information ; for this we tender our heartiest thanks. The former gentleman acquaints us with the fact that a second part of the Field Club's *Transactions* appeared in 1904, and that copies of both Parts I and II are in the possession of the County Library. He also adds that the Library includes in its Local Collection, Vol. 2 (1892), Vol. 4 (1903), Vol. 5 (1905), Vol. I (New Series), Part 1 (1908) and Vol. I, Part 2 (1913), of the *Transactions of the Vale of Derwent Naturalists' Field Club*, which succeeded the Blackhill and District's Field Society. It would be of great help to local naturalists, and others, if some good friend would fill the gaps in the County Library's series. Mr. Crawley states that his library possesses Vol. I of the Weardale Club's *Transactions'* and notes that the Durham County Library and the Newcastle Public Library hold both parts and, further, that the Natural History Society, at the Hancock Museum, possesses Part 2. Both gentlemen inform us that no further issues of the *Transactions* appear to have been published after the first two parts.

PROTECTING OUR RARER PLANTS

For some time, we have been conducting campaigns intended to protect our rarer plants and animals, and to check the vandalism which threatens so many of our natural treasures. On this occasion, we wish to direct attention to an additional menace which is injuring

our plants. It is the custom for candidates at the examinations for the General Certificate of Education to present collections of pressed plants as evidence of field work. This procedure is admirable, and greatly to be commended. Unfortunately, the idea has become prevalent that the rarer the plants displayed, the greater will be the value of the collection. Although such is far from being the case, candidates persist in wholesale displays of the Spring Gentian, the Bird's Eye Primrose, the Toothwort, Orchids and similar plants. As a result, in many areas, several orchids, like the Early Purple, the Greenwinged Meadow and the Bee Orchids, with the Toothwort, are showing clear symptoms of rapid decadence. If this is to be checked, any further inclusion of these and similar species should be ruthlessly banned by teachers. In the case of the Teesdale rarities, so-called "botanists" do enough damage by their rapacity without additional aid from examination candidates. Here, again, the remedy is obvious, and should be applied equally to botanists from outside, and to pupils in schools.

MERCURY VAPOUR LAMPS

Of recent years, the cult of the Mercury Vapour lamp as a means of capturing lepidopterous insects has increased to such an extent that it has become a distinct menace to our fauna. When one realizes that some wholesale slaughterers boast of catches of 20,000 insects, it will be plain how great the threat is. In our counties, the method has been practised sparingly, and with caution. Moreover, those of us who are acquainted with the habitats of our rarer moths have refused to communicate these to "Mercury Vapour" exterminators. "Recently, Mr. T. C. Dunn sent us a circular, received by him, which emphasizes a further danger of the method to lepidopterous populations. It reads : "I have a ' Light ' Moth Trap in operation nightly, and can supply, on approval, in papers, the rarer species, selected from captures, in the Spingids, Bombyces, Noctuids and Geometers,' at low rates during the next few months. Orders will receive careful attention". The document may be left to speak for itself.

" BUTTERFLY DOUBTS "

Eldon in his interesting *Gossip* in the *Evening Chronicle* for August 11th, 1953, remarks, in a paragraph with the above title "Last year gave us few butterflies and our 1953 Spring did not lead me to expect more. So I have been pleased to find Chalk Hill and Common Blues flitting along the dry bank beyond the woods which border the old Tyneside Tramways track. The Small Copper was there poised upon a tuft of clover". In his choice of title, Eldon was undoubtedly inspired, for the occurrence of the Chalk Hill butterfly in Northumberland is very much more than doubtful.

In reality, it is impossible, for the British foodplant of the caterpillar, the Horse-shoe Vetch, does not grow in the county. What Eldon saw were, respectively, the female and the male of the Common Blue. Of recent years, the only "blues" we have seen in Northumberland or Durham are the Common Blue, the so-called Castle Eden Argus and the Holly Blue although, early in the century, the late Mr. J. R. Johnson and myself were accustomed to take the Little Blue near Corbridge, and in the Derwent Valley. Other students of our butterflies used to report it from the Coast and from the Wear Valley. It may yet linger in remote places on the Magnesian Limestone.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

As we recorded in our last issue, the first part of the second volume of our *Transactions* has now appeared. Copies may be obtained from the Editor, or from Dr. K. B. Blackburn, King's College, Newcastle upon Tyne,

THE SOCIETIES

NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The second Field Meeting of the season took place on June 13th, when we visited Hawthorn Dene and Hawthorn Hive. Unlike our experiences when we worked the area in 1946, we were favoured with a fine day, and a goodly attendance.

Assembling at Hawthorn Village, we proceeded down the margin of the Dene to the grounds proper where we halted for our meal, and to take advantage of Mr. David Robson's kindly permission to explore the Towers. There, many points of interest attracted us. Curiously enough, in several of the rooms, we encountered quantities of Small Tortoiseshell butterflies which had died during hibernation, whilst in another we found a swarm of bees which had obtained entrance, but had failed to get out and had perished. After leaving the house, we scrambled down the steep slopes to the beach when we noted the usual orchids (with an addition in the form of the Early Purple), the Bloody Crane's-bill, Herb Robert, Sand Rue, Greater Knapweed, Yellow Loosestrife, Ground Ivy, Thyme, Rockrose, Hairy Violet, Strawberry, Marjoram, Privet, Black Bryony, Hazel, Red Campion, Dame's Violet and Salad Burnet.

Insects proved to be very scarce, but assiduous work on the part of Mr. Dunn revealed the presence of the Plume Moth, *Adaina microdactyla*, here at the northern limits of its range, and attached to Hemp Agrimony.

A very interesting observation, made on the cliffs, demonstrated that the Fulmar Petrel was nesting there.

On our return journey we made the difficult passage up the Dene where, once again, we admired the magnificent sheets of Hart's Tongue ferns on the cliff face. Moreover, we had the pleasure of seeing the Martagon Lily, which is now naturalized amongst the trees. Most of the plants recorded for the scrub on the sea banks were observed here although there were additions in the form of the Spindle Tree, Yew, Guelder Rose, Mountain Ash, Mountain Speedwell, Wood Sanicle, Garlic, Enchanter's Nightshade, Pellitory on the Wall, Woodruff, Wall Lettuce and Arum Lily. However, especially attractive was the profuse display of the wild roses of which we discovered many species including various varieties of the two Dog Roses, *Rosa canina* and *R. dumetorum*, with more noteworthy forms like *Rosa glauca*, *R. coriifolia*, *R. obtusifolia*, *R. Sherardi*, *R. mollis* and *R. pimpinellifolia*. On this occasion, too, we managed to detect two hybrids, *R. pimpinellifolia* x *mollis* and *R. pimpinellifolia* x *R. dumetorum*.

Insects continued to be very disappointing in the woods although the Clouded Magpie, which feeds here on the Wych Elm, was plentiful enough as was also the Silver Ground Carpet.

After emerging from the Dene, we noted the rayed form of the Common Groundsel growing along the road side, with other plants proper to such habitats. Here, too, the sight of the Wild Privet, covered with festoons of Black Bryony, as a natural constituent of a hedge seemed a great novelty to many.

Our third Field Meeting for 1953 was held on the moors, and in the woodlands around, and below, Juniper Valley. Thanks to our Consett friends, the whole of a large party was safely deposited near the Moorcock Inn from which, skirting the Waskerley Reservoir, we passed across the moorland down one of the streams to the Hisehope Burn. As we proceeded, we noted all the usual moorland plants like the Heather (including the white form) the Cross and Fine-leaved Heaths, Bogbean, Sundew, Bilberry, Crowberry, Tormentil, Milkwort, Heath Bedstraw and the usual sedges and rushes. In areas where sphagnum flourished, we were delighted to discover the Cranberry in abundance. From the heather, the entomologists secured larvae of the Beautiful Yellow Underwing, the Fox Moth, the Ling Pug, the Narrow-winged Pug and the True Lovers Knot. As we neared the burn, junipers began to appear in quantity, but they were beaten in vain for caterpillars. Other trees and shrubs encountered were the Birch, Alder, Hazel, Oak, Holly, Hawthorn, Bay-leaved Willow, Grey Sallow, Eared Sallow and the Mountain Ash. From these, larvae of the Iron and Coxcomb Prominents, the May High Flyer, Lunar Thorn, the Brimstone Moth and the Welsh Wave were obtained. The birches, in particular, yielded larvae of the casebearing moth, *Coleophora fuscedinella*, a near relative of which *C. caespitiella*, abounded everywhere on rush seeds. In addition, several larvae of sawflies

belonging to the genera *Cimbex* and *Trichiosoma* were beaten from *Betula* and *Sorbus*. On barer patches of ground, both along the burn and on the moor, numerous Small Copper butterflies, with occasional Small Heaths, Small Tortoiseshells, Chevrons, Silver Y's and Dark Marbled Carpets, fell to the net.

On the banks of the burn occurred other interesting plants like the Butterwort, Grass of Parnassus, Water Blinks, the Mud Crowfoot and Marsh Bedstraw. Lower down the vegetation assumed the character of an ordinary woodland, and here we met with the Tuberous-rooted Bitter-vetch, the Broad-Leaved Helleborine, Golden Rod, Wood Sanicle, Tall Fescue, False Brome Grass, the Wood Sedge with other trees and shrubs represented by the Wild Cherry, Bird Cheery, Bay-leaved Willow and various roses, mostly of a northern type. Further, there were many planted trees like the Larch, Scots Pine, Spruce, etc. Attempts to beat larvae from these proved fruitless except that, to the astonishment of some the entomologists, the Larches produced examples of the Peppered Moth and the Scalloped Hazel, species much more at home on birches, alders and hawthorns.

After a somewhat tedious walk over heavy ground, we reached Castleside, there to take the Consett bus and finally, to proceed homeward just as night was setting in.

BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY.

We commenced our Winter Session on September 22nd with a lecture by Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison who took for his subject the "Great Ice Age." He gave a general account of that event and discussed its possible causes. After that, with the aid of suitable lantern slides, he described various changes in land configuration brought about by ice action during the Glacial Period. In particular, he dealt with such things as the moraines, occurring locally, the Durham Glacial lakes, and the Birtley laminated clays. He concluded by describing briefly how this country was repopulated by its animals and plants when the ice disappeared finally. A hearty vote of thanks, proposed by Mr. George Hunter, ended the meeting.

NOTES AND RECORDS

NOTES

Colour Varieties of the Musk Thistle.—As I was working the Magnesian Limestone outcrops near Coxhoe (v.-c. 66), I came across a plant of the Musk Thistle (*Carduus nutans*) bearing white flowers. This is the first time I have noted such a form in this species although I have observed them in the Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and the Marsh Thistle (*C. palustre*). Later a pale mauve variety of the same plant was detected on the sand dunes near Crimdon Cut (v.-c. 66). J. A. Richardson.

The Orange Underwing at Barnard Castle.—Tempted by the very fine weather on March 25th, 1953, I made an early visit to a Barnard Castle (v.-c. 66) birch wood where I was surprised and pleased to find the Orange Underwing (*Brephos parthenias*) flying in some numbers. The only record given in J. E. Robson's local list for this moth is an old one for 1874, when the late John Sang captured the species at Wolsingham.—J. P. Robson.

(The late J. R. Johnson used to take this insect both as larva and imago, in Chopwell Woods, whilst I myself have seen the imago in Gibside Woods (v.-c. 66), and beaten the larvae in Swallowship Woods (v.-c. 67), near Hexham.—J.W.H.H.

A Curious Specimen of the Moonwort.—On June 10th, whilst we were examining the old pitheap near Haswell (v.-c. 66), I observed that the Moonwort (*Botrychium Lunaria*) was flourishing at many points on the heap. Amongst the plants noted was one in which what should have been the fertile panicle was asymmetrical. One side was quite normal whilst the other half was exactly the same as one half of the sterile blade.—J. Thompson.

The Adder's Tongue Fern on the Fame Islands.—On June 21st, a visit was paid to the Fame Islands, and a careful examination made of the vegetation on Staple Island and the Inner Fame (v.-c. 68). One of the plants detected on the latter island was the Adder's Tongue Fern (*Ophioglossum vulgare*). However, the remarkable fact was discovered that the specimen's taken for study belonged to the subspecies *polyphyllum* (A. Br.) E. F. Warburg. This is the same subspecies as occurs in the Outer-Hebrides (v.-c. 110) in the islands of Harris, Grimsay and Baleshare. In fact, throughout the Outer Isles, whenever a sufficiently strong colony can be submitted to critical study, its members are found to belong to this subspecies.—J.W.H.H.

A Few Notes on Plants Occurring on a Magnesian Limestone Ridge near Marsden (v.-c. 66)—For some time, I have been conducting a survey of the vegetation on a restricted area near Marsden. Of the plants observed, *Crepis taraxacifolia* seems to be the most important as this locality provides a second station for a plant recorded for the first time in County Durham two years ago. Other interesting plants noted included *Caucalis nodosa*, *Trifolium striatum*, *Sagina subulata*, and *Poa rigida*. The occurrence of *Sagina subulata* should be emphasized as the plant is much more at home on the higher ground in the west of the county than it is here near the sea coast.—D. Walker.

An Inland Station for the Sand Sedge (*Carex arenaria*) at Birtley (v.-c. 66).—In early August, in the course of experimental investigation on one of the pitheaps at Birtley, I came across a strong colony of the Sand Sedge growing at the base of the heap. All of the spikes carried a bountiful supply of good fruits. Outside the main area of occupation odd plants were found at several points.—J. A. Richardson.

The Spread of the Hoary Ragwort (*Senecio erucifolius*) in Durham.—Of recent years, this species has been moving steadily westward in Co. Durham, and it has now appeared off the Magnesian Limestone in the Team Valley. Not so long ago, the only ragwort in the Birtley claypits was the common *Senecio Jacobaea*: in Scott's brickyard, the only species represented now is *S. erucifolius* although an odd hybrid of parentage (*S. Jacobaea* x *erucifolius*) has been detected. Immediately to the north of this claypit, the Hoary Ragwort ceases abruptly, with the commoner species taking its place, so that in Blyth's claypit only the latter species is represented. In my opinion, the route traversed by the Hoary Ragwort during the migratory movements has been along the Sunderiaid—Consett mineral lime, on the banksides of which it abounds. Apparently accompanying it in its movements, although not on such an extensive scale, is the Greater Knapweed (*Centaurea Scabiosa*). Close watch is being maintained in the area for further developments.—J.W.H.H.

A Nest of the Carder Bee (*Bombus muscorum* var. *pallida* Evans) near Healeyfield (v.-c. 66).—On September 5th, when the Northern Naturalists Union visited the Hisehope area, I observed a worker belonging to this species fly into a mass of grass at the base of rushes on some damp ground near Healeyfield. As the insect did not come out again, I disturbed the grass. Immediately a loud buzzing sound was heard, and I knew that the tuft contained a nest of the bee. The buzzing was followed by a vicious rush of a large number of bees determined to put any intruder to flight. The site chosen for nesting purposes, and the pugnacity of the insects, recalled quite vividly, similar facts concerning the Hebridean Bee, (*Bombus smithianus* B.-White), of which I have examined many nests.—J.W.H.H.

Lepidopterous Immigrants in 1953.—This season has been an exceptionally poor one for immigrant insects. Of the Painted Lady, one early example was observed near Chester-le-Street, whilst the early horde of Red Admirals was represented this season by a few specimens seen late in May. However, in September, the latter species has been widely, but thinly, dispersed throughout the districts. On the other hand, the Silver Y has been common enough everywhere. Again, on August 28th, a Death's Head Hawkmoth female was brought to me from Pelton Fell whilst a full-grown larva, collected from potatoes in a garden in the Blind Lane, Chester-le-Street, was given to me on September 17th. This fed for one day, then rested and finally went down in a plant pot full of soil on September 20th. When I exhibited this caterpillar at school on September 18th, information about the occurrence of two other larvae in Chester-le-Street gardens was supplied by children.—T. C. Dunn.

RECORDS

FLOWERING PLANTS ETC.

Equisetum pratense Ehrh. Shade Horsetail	66
Not seen recently in our area, but collected along the Egglesthope Beck on September 9th.	
Brachypodium pinnatum (L.) Beauv. False Brome Grass.	66
A grass that has eluded detection for many years, collected at Fishburn on August 26th ; a new v.-c. record.	
Hordeum secalinum Schreb. Meadow Barley.	66
Another plant not observed in Durham recently; in dry grassland near Sedgefield on August 26th.	
Phleum nodosum L. Cat's Tail.	66
In the same field as the preceding ; a new v.-c. record.	
Bromus erectus Huds.	
New stations for this local grass are Fishburn and Comforth	
Poa nemoralis L. Wood Poa	66
Not reported for many years in Durham; collected near Mainsforth September 9th.	
Carex pendula L. Great Pendulous Sedge.	66
Not uncommon along the Hisehope Burn ; a furthest west station in Durham.	
C. diandra Schrank.	
On boggy ground near Sprucely Farm and on the cliff tops north of Crirndon Dene ; a new v.-c. record.	
Juncus subnodulosus Schrank Blunt-flowered Rush.	66
Also very rarely seen in Durham ; in the same bog near Sprucely Farm as the preceding.	
Taxus baccata L. Yew	66
Jutting from cliffs in the gorge of Egglesthope Beck ; a new local station.	
Ranunculus Lenonandi F. Schultz.	66
Amongst mud near the Hisehope Burn not far from Healeyfield.	
Fumaria micrantha Lag. Fumitory.	66
A very rare plant in Durham ; Mainsforth, September 16th.	
Geranium rotundifolium L. Round-leaved Cranesbill	66
This is a new county record; a single plant was found in the same corn field at Mainsforth as the preceding.	
Linum anglicum Mill. Perennial Flax.	66
Now nearly extinct in Durham, but discovered in some numbers near Cornforth on September 13th.	
Primula farinosa L. Bird's Eye Primrose.	66
A new station for this plant was discovered just north of Sedgefield on August 26th.	
Rosa spinosissima x villosa.	66 67
A fine example of this hybrid rose was found at Blanchland on August 23rd and a second in Hawthorn Dene on September 2nd. In both cases the bulk of the hips was falling, although odd empty ones seemed to be swelling.	

- Rosa dumalis** Bechst. 66
The var. *stephanocarpa* Desegl. of this wild rose, although common enough in the Scottish Highlands, is rare with us ; collected in a lane near Castleside.
- Rosa Sherardi** Dav. x **R. spinosissima** L. 67
A single well-grown bush, showing great heterosis, was noted in Plessey Woods along the stream.
- Jasione montana** L. Sheep's-bit 67, 68
Baker and Tate, whilst supplying records of several stations in Tyneland (v.-c. 67), state that this species is not known in Cheviotland (v.-c. 68). However the plant grows at Longframlington, which provides a new county record for the latter vice-county. An additional station in v.-c. 67 is Ponteland. Can anyone supply recent Durham records?
- Serratula tinctoria** L. Saw-wort 66
Although the numbers of this plant have greatly increased recently in our coastal areas, very few inland stations are known. We have seen it from Birtley and Ryton, the former station being on the main road between Birtley and Chester-le-Street.
- Veronica filiformis** Sm. Slender Speedwell. 67, 68
Another introduced species which is increasing rapidly in our counties; found often in considerable numbers, near Haltwhistle, Riding Mill, Wylam and Rothbury.—J.W.H.H.
- Pyrola minor** L. Lesser Wintergreen 66
This plant, which seems to be vanishing from Durham, was collected near Muggleswick.
- P. media** L. Wintergreen 70
Found at Garrigill.
- Rumex maritimus** L. Golden Dock 67
Baker and Tate record this dock from three Durham localities, but supply no Northumberland stations. The plant grows near Tynemouth ; this supplies a new county record for v.-c. 67.—J.W.H.H.
- Salix nigricans** Sm. Dusky Sallow 66, 67
This subalpine sallow has a very curious distribution in Durham, for its range extends from the coast to the hills. A recently-discovered Durham station for it lies along the Team at Urpeth. In Northumberland, lowland colonies seem to be of rare occurrence although it has been noted in Plessey Woods and in Newham Bog. Mixed colonies with *S. phyticifolia* are to be found along the Tyne from Wylam westward.
- Salix phyticifolia** • L. x **S. Caprea** L. 66
North of the stream in a wood along the River Wear at Eastgate.
- S. repens** L. x **S. atrocineria** Brot. 66
On the waggon way banks west of Kibblesworth.
- Convallaria majalis** L. Lily of the Valley 67
Baker and Tate supply four Northumbrian stations for this plant ; to these can be added a fifth in the woods along the Devil's Water near Corbridge. Further, we have recently examined plants collected in 1953 near Fourstones, probably from the locality recorded by Baker and Tate as Warden Mills.
- Sesleria caerulea** Scop. Blue Grass 66, 68
Although of common occurrence, both on the Magnesian and Mountain Limestones in Durham, in the guise of the ssp. *calcareo* (Opiz.) Hegi, this grass has never been placed on record from v.-c. 67, and only once from v.-c. 68. In the latter vice-county Baker and Tate reported it as growing on Ratcheugh Crag. To this we can add a further station near Rothbury. In Durham the variety *luteo-alba* Opiz has been noted near Quarrington Hill.—J.W.H.H.

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BY THE WAY

May we remind Secretaries once again of the necessity for sending us reports about their Societies activities as regularly as possible ? Recently, there has been a very obvious falling-off in the supply of such details, and the value of the *Vasculum* to our members has been diminished correspondingly.

Reports and other material intended for publication in our March issue should be sent before March 1st, 1954.

THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE ROSEBAY WILLOW-HERB.

When Baker and Tate produced their "*New Flora of Northumberland and Durham*" in 1868, they indicated that the Rosebay Willow-herb (*Chamaenerion augustifolium*) occurred on the "banks of all the hill streams," and supplied a list of stations which fully justified their statement. Significantly, too, they qualified their Teesdale remarks by adding "descending to Barnard Castle."

Such was substantially the position fifty years ago, and even until the close of the 1914-1918 war. Subsequently, with the enormous increase in the number of bare waste places when the war ended, the plant became a veritable pest everywhere, capable of ousting, as it did on many pitheaps, the very aggressive bramble. It should, however, be emphasized that the plants now so conspicuous are not the same in flower colour, structure of leaves and other details as those to be found on rock ledges and other upland habitats. This becomes very obvious when one grows Hebridean examples alongside ordinary lowland plants originating in Durham. In our opinion, the differences are due to the fact that the invaders are of American origin and have not been derived from native British populations.

Although the introduction of these details seems necessary, the main purpose of this note is to draw attention to the fact that, very definitely, a period of decadence has set in as far as Birtley populations of the intruding plant are concerned. On several pitheaps, which carried on almost impenetrable tangle two or three years ago, it was quite easy to carry out investigations this season. We should be glad to learn if other observers have detected a similar weakening in Rosebay Willow-herb colonies in their own district.

THE ENGLISH NAMES OF ADOXA MOSCHATELLINA

Not long ago, when we were examining collections of plants presented to satisfy some of the requirements in Biology at the General Certificate of Education, we were surprised to find that, almost for the first time, candidates at one girls' school were producing specimens of the Moschatel. Further, these specimens were uniformly labelled with the English name "Townhall Clock." As we had never encountered this quite appropriate name previously, the candidates were asked for information concerning its origin. All, with out exception, pleaded ignorance of the matter. Later, when the adjoining boys' school was examined, once again candidates produced specimens bearing the same name. When they were questioned about the source, they all stated that it had been derived from the girls' school! Subsequently, we discovered that the name appears in Clapham, Tutin and Warburg's *Flora*. However, this does not throw light on the time and place of its origin. Can any of our readers help on the matter ?

The ordinary English name of the plant, Moschatel, is of course, derived immediately from the Italian "moschatellino" which, in turn, goes back to the Late Latin "muscus" which was occasionally used to mean "musk."

The Moschatel has a faintly musky odour.

THE CHOICE AND USE OF FIELD-GLASSES

In our issue for December 1950, we drew attention to a publication of the British Trust for Ornithology entitled "*How to choose and use Field-glasses*" We have just received a revised and greatly improved edition of this little work which has been issued recently. It bears the same title and costs one shilling. We can heartily recommend it as supplying practical and reliable advice on every problem one can encounter in the purchase and use of field-glasses.

MR. W. J. DIXON

It is the greatest regret that we have to record the death on July 19th, 1953, of our old friend Mr. W. J. Dixon.

Mr. Dixon was a member of long standing of the Northern Naturalists' Union and of the Consett and District Naturalists' Field Club. In both organisations he played a prominent part, both as an officer and as an ordinary member. Moreover, he was a regular attender at the Indoor and Field Meetings of the Union. Every member of the latter body will remember his genial smile, his humorous remarks and his constant endeavours to be helpful to everyone. If this is the case with the Union, one can easily understand what his loss means to the Field Club, the members of which knew him much more intimately. As far as his natural history interests were concerned, Mr. Dixon was no specialist for, to our personal knowledge these extended

from birds to daddy-long-leg grubs and orchids. In this connection, some of us will remember with pleasure the notes he contributed from time to time in the *Vasculum*. To Mrs. Dixon and Margaret we tender our deepest sympathy on the occasion of their great bereavement and register this appreciation of the loss the Union has sustained in Mr. Dixon's passing.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

We wish to emphasize the fact that copies of the first part of the second volume of our *Transactions* may still be obtained from the Editor, or from Dr. K. B. Blackburn, King's College, Newcastle upon Tyne.

THE SOCIETIES

NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION.

For our Autumnal Meeting, we visited Birtley for the first time where, at the kind invitation of the Birtley Natural History Society, we met in their rooms. The President, Mrs. H. H. Dark, M.Sc., was in the Chair, and there was a very large attendance.

On this occasion our lecturer was Mr. G. W. Temperley, M.Sc., and he took for his subject "Thomas Bewick and his Work."

Mr. Temperley began by outlining Bewick's career, including in his remarks an interesting comparison of his life at Cherryburn and Stocksfield. He then described his work under Beilby, who undertook general engraving, and showed how Bewick's eminence in wood-engraving was entirely due to his own efforts. Mr. Temperley discussed the sources of Bewick's *Quadrupeds*, and concluded by showing a series of slides illustrating Bewick's technique and style, emphasizing in particular, the delicacy and accuracy of the minutest details which, as the lecturer demonstrated, admitted of the greatest possible enlargement without loss of value.

The lecture closed with a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Temperley for an excellent and instructive talk, after which we proceeded to take tea and to inspect the exhibits.

Amongst the latter there was an interesting series of melanic moths and an imago and living pupa of the Death's Head Hawk brought by Mr. Dunn, whilst Mr. R. Harris had on view subfossil hazel nuts and oak from Birtley claypits. His son David displayed a collection of local plants and Robert some British cowries and pectens. Mrs. Gibby produced a nice copy of Thornton's *Herbal*, and Dr. Blackburn engravings of birds etc. Very interesting, too, was Mr. J. A. Richardson's set of Birtley *Senecio* which included living examples of *Senecio erucifolius*, *S. Jacobaea*, *S. squalidus* and *S. viscosus*. On this occasion, Prof. Heslop Harrison showed a number of new Durham rose hybrids, plants new to Co. Durham and the Outer Hebrides, a collection of grasses made at Gateshead a hundred and thirty years ago, with sets of moths illustrating various genetical experiments, Dr. Todd's exhibit included fox and badger skulls and skins of the badger.

The meeting closed with an appreciative vote of thanks to the Birtley ladies for the excellent tea they had provided.

BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The Winter Session of the Society began on September 22nd with an illustrated lecture by Prof. J. W. Heslop Harrison on "The Great Ice Age and how Animals and Plants came back to Britain after it passed." In this talk the speaker discussed the possible causes of an Ice Age, described the various oscillations during the Glacial Period and showed slides depicting the most striking phenomena characterizing glaciation. Following this, on October 6th and October 20th, we had two lectures dealing with Heredity, one entitled "Why we are like our parents" in which simple Mendelian principles were outlined and explained, and the second, with the title "The Actual Mechanism of Heredity," concerned with the structure of cells and chromosome behaviour. On November 3rd we had a talk on "Birtley a Hundred Years Ago" when a long series of interesting historical facts about the village and its development was set out. This provoked a very helpful discussion in which many of the older inhabitants of the village took part. For our lecture on November 17th, we had once more the pleasure of hearing Mr. J. W. Oxberry, who gave another of his delightful talks on the "River Tyne." So far the Society has experienced its most successful season, for large attentive audiences have listened to the lectures provided. This success has been due, in no small measure, to the help we have had from our lady members.

DARLINGTON AND TEESDALE NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB

The Club has continued its usual activities during the summer of 1953. No fewer than nineteen field excursions have been undertaken and these were well supported by members.

Many of these outings were to places we visit periodically at least once a year; in this way we are able to note changes and check up any variations from season to season, or year to year.

To continue our botanical studies, we explored Upper Teesdale on 16th May, the Aysgarth District on 6th June, and Greatham Creek and Seaton Dunes on the 20th June. In addition, we went to the Northern Horticultural Society's Gardens near Harrogate on 4th July. During this season the Fungus Foray took place in Raby Park on 19th September.

Outings planned for bird investigations took us to Brignall Banks on 30th/31st May in order to study the dawn chorus, whilst we proceeded to the Fame Islands on 13th and 27th June and to Aske Park on the 11th June.

Our main geological expedition took us to the Buttertubs Pass and Hardrow Force on 18th July.

For archaeology we visited Jervaulx Abbey and Middleham

Castle on the 9th May, Escomb Church and Binchester on 11th July, Stanwick Brigantian Fortress on 1st August, and Brancepeth Castle and Church on 26th September.

The Brancepeth visit was organised as a joint meeting with the Consett Naturalists' Field Club and there we shared a very enjoyable fellowship and a happy occasion.

In addition, more informal local rambles have been undertaken when, with other interests, attention was given to entomology, freshwater life, and local footpaths and rights of way.

Our enthusiastic Junior Section had arranged for it a programme of its own. Many of the Juniors are doing useful work, and making definite contributions to natural history knowledge.

Our Autumn doings are being concentrated upon weekly lectures given by our own members, or by guest speakers, although several nights have been assigned to discussions of the reports for the year. Any useful observations from these reports will appear in the *Vasculum* later.—T. N. Scaling.

NOTES AND RECORDS

NOTES

Collecting the Slender Pug Moth (*Eupithecia tenuiata*).—Larvae of this species can easily be obtained in this district, for it occurs freely in the Tyne (v.-c.67), and Derwent Valleys (v.-c.66); in addition, have secured it in Dipton Woods, south of Corbridge. They feed in willow catkins, preferably the male catkins of *Salix Caprea*, although those of *S. aurita* and *S. atrocinerea* are not neglected. The catkins should be gathered from various trees, those growing by road sides and wood edges being best.

After collection, they should be placed in bags in a cool place; these may be made of cotton or paper. At the end of a fortnight, the catkins should be examined by turning them out upon a large sheet of white paper, when the larvae are easily detected by their movements. Incidentally, noctuid larvae, like those of the Sallow, the Pink-barred Sallow and the Brick, will also be found. These should be removed and placed in suitable receptacles with dock as a foodplant.

When the examination is completed, whether successful or not, nothing should be thrown away; everything should be retained for future inspection. I can state that out of a large bag of catkins taken in Dipton Woods in April, and left undisturbed after the original overhaul, over 100 pupae were secured. The insects from these pupae emerged between June 28th and July 6th.—G.N.

The Cinnabar Moth (*Callimorpha jacobaeae*) in Co. Durham.—This pretty moth, although still common on the dunes in North Northumberland, has rarely been seen of recent years in Durham. In fact, even Robson in his "Catalogue" (1899) could give no stations for it in the sister county. He remarks that, in Durham, the insect "appears to be almost entirely a thing of the past," and adds "On the sand dunes and ballast hills beyond Hartlepool, it was very abundant when I commenced to collect, but, except for one specimen I took in 1892, I have not seen or heard of it for twenty years."

The, most recent record for the Cinnabar in Durham was made early in the present century when Prof. Heslop Harrison took an odd example at light near Chester-le-Street. On the basis of this capture it has been assumed that, since the moth has never been found inland, either as larvae or imago elsewhere in the two counties, it occasionally appeared in the role of an immigrant. The fact that I took a single specimen in my moth trap at Chester-le-Street (v.-c. 66), would seem to lend support to that view for I had never previously seen the species in any stage in the county.—T.C. Dunn.

A New British Fungus.—In the course of studies planned to determine the conditions favouring the establishment of flowering plants on colliery waste heaps in County Durham, special attention was directed to the case of *Calluna vulgaris*. The possibility existed that incoming plants depended for success on the presence in the soil of specific fungi with which symbiosis could be established. Attempts were made, therefore, to isolate and compare the fungi present in the roots and stems of heather plants with those found in the soil. Using a new method of extraction, no less than twelve different species of fungi were isolated from the soil at Washington Moor (v.-c. 66) Old Pit. One of these was sent for further study to the Commonwealth Institute of Mycology where it has now been identified as *Gelasinospora retispora*. This is a new record for Great Britain. The species was first described by R. F. Cain in 1950 on the basis of material derived from a Canadian locality. The genus *Gelasinospora* was erected in 1933.—J. A. Richardson and C. E. Metcalfe.

The Yellow-flowered Form of *Vicia sepium* L.—Many years ago, the late Mr. Chas. Robson of Birtley discovered the plant known as *Vicia sepium* var. *ochroleuca* Bast. on the old pit-heap on the Long Bank, Birtley (v.-c. 66). Quite recently, on June 17th, 1953, I detected a second station for this variety on the railway bankside south of Birtley railway station. Further I can report the same plant as occurring near Blyth (v.-c. 67). Of these plants, that growing at Blyth was much the finer, as its flower colour was almost as clear a yellow as that seen in the Laburnum.—J.W.H.H.

In studying the vegetation of the dunes between Seaton Sluice and Blyth, and nearer the Seaton Sluice (v.-c. 67) end, I discovered on the grey dunes a specimen of the yellowish-flowered form of *Vicia sepium* which is known as var. *ochroleuca* Bast. This locality is not the same as the Blyth station known to Prof. Heslop Harrison.—W. B. H. Sowerby.

The New British Sea Rocket, *Cakile edentula* (Bigel.) Hooker.—In the *Vasculum* issue for December, 1952, I announced that I had discovered a new British species of Sea Rocket in the Outer Hebrides. During the present season I have endeavoured to extend my knowledge of both the European and the American plants, and, as a result of my researches, I had on view at the Autumn Meeting of the Union in October specimens of *Cakile edentula* from several localities in the Isle of Harris and the smaller islands adjoining it, as well as of *C. maritima*, the ordinary European form, from County Durham and the Isle of Harris. With the latter, I was able to exhibit a novel hybrid of the parentage *Cakile edentula* x *maritima*. It was totally sterile and displayed great heterosis. I detected it growing on the beach not far from Seilebost where it was conspicuous owing to its great size. The Durham plants collected, and shown, were all representatives of the common Sea Rocket ordinarily found on British shores.—J.W.H.H.

RECORDS

FLOWERING PLANTS ETC.

Ranunculus Lingua L. Great Spearwort. In a pond near Wallington.	67
R. arvensis L. Field Crowfoot. This species has been decreasing with us for many years; found this season in a cornfield near Earsdon.	67
Helleborus viridis L. Green Hellebore. Collected at Wodencroft near Barnard Castle.	66
Viola hirta L. Hairy Violet. Found at Redworth, the furthest west we have seen the species in Mid-Durham.	66
Trifolium arvense L. Haresfoot Clover. Still occurs at Wooler.	68
Saxifraga granulata L. Meadow Saxifrage. Occurs sparingly near Finchdale Abbey but more commonly at Barrasford.	66, 67

Chrysosplenium alternifolium L. Golden Saxifrage.	66
Collected near Winston.	
Rosa dumalis Bechstein. Northern Dog Rose.	66
Glandular forms of <i>R. dumalis</i> (<i>glauca</i>) are somewhat rare in Durham. However, both var. <i>stephanocarpa</i> R. Kell. and var. <i>oenensis</i> R. Kell. grow near the Winch Bridge, Teesdale.	
R. Sherardi Dav. Downy Rose.	67
A white-flowered form of this rose, with the usual pinkish purple blotch on the backs of some of the petals, and possessing uniserrate leaves, was collected in Holywell Dene.	
R. canina x Sherardi	66
A novel hybrid combination, apparently not on record for the British Isles, was observed along a stream side near Healeyfield on September 12th. The plant, as is usual in rose hybrids, display considerable heterosis, and many hips were ripening although the majority contained nothing but chaffy scales.	
R. canina x coriifolia.	66
Collected just off the road in Hawthorn Dene on September 2nd. This plant which also displayed marked heterosis, might have had the parentage <i>R dumetorium</i> x <i>R. dumalis</i> , assigned to it, but, in view of its neighbours, that given above seems more likely. It, likewise, showed abortion of some of its fruits, although occasional achenes seemed plump enough.	
R. villosa x Sherardi var. suberecta	66
Hybrids of this origin have been collected at several points on the outskirts of Birtley, and plants of the same parentage were observed along the lower reaches of the Hisehope Burn near Castleside.	
Potentilla erecta L. (Hampe). Tormentil.	66
The curious var. <i>sciaphila</i> Zimm. of this species was also noticed along the burn near Castleside.	
Petroselinum crispum Mill. Parsley.	66
Growing on Magnesian Limestone rocks with Pellitory-on-the-wall, at East Thickley.	
Oenanthe fistulosa L. Water Dropwort.	66
Plentiful in a pond near Sedgefield.	
Pimpinella major (L.) Huds. Greater Burnet Saxifrage.	66
On a wood edge just west of Fishburn.	
Lathraea Squamaria L. Toothwort.	66
Additional localities for this curious plant are Bishop Auckland, Butterby and Winston.	
Galeobdolum luteum Huds. Yellow Deadnettle.	66
This plant, only known previously in Durham from Lumley woods, can now be reported from woods near Rushyford.	
Phyllitis Scolopendrium (L.) Newm. Harts.-tongue Fern.	66
A single plant was found growing on a wall near Chester-le-Street.	
Poa nemoralis L. Wood Poa	66
Sparingly in woods near Lumley.—J.W.H.H.	
Desmazeria rigida (L.) Tutin. Hard Poa	66
Found not uncommonly on Magnesian Limestone near Bishop Middleham.—J. A. Richardson.	
Polygonum minus Huds.	66
Old workings of claypits near Birtley.—J. A. R.	
Arabis hirsuta Scop. Hairy Tower Cress.	66
Very common on the Magnesium Limestone at various points near Pittington, Cassop and Bishop Middleham.—J. Thompson.	

LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS.

Acherontia atropos L. Death's Head Hawk.	66
Captured on a window pane at Marsden.—W. Brown.	
Pararge megera L. Wall Brown.	66
Two seen at the mouth of Crimdon Dene on August 18th. These are the first living examples I have seen in Durham as the insect vanished from our area 90 years ago.	
Argynnis aglaia L. Dark Green Fritillary.	66
In Garmondsway Quarry on August 26th.—J.W.H.H.	
Nymphalis io L. Peacock.	66
Observed at Chester-le-Street (T. C. Dunn), and on the Egglesthope Beck (G.H.H.).	
Aricia agestis Schf. Brown Argus.	66
A very strong and new inland colony was discovered near Comforth this season. This is the most westerly inland station yet detected. Larvae were present in great numbers, and in beating the foodplant, rockrose, larvae of the Brown Argus and the Common Blue came down together.—J.W.H.H.	
Ochlodes venata B. & G. Large Skipper.	66
This species was found flying fairly commonly in a damp rough field near Barnard Castle on July 3rd, 1953.—J. P. Robson.	
Apatele leporina L. Miller Moth.	66
In the light trap at Chester-le-Street, July 7th.	
Hydraecia petasitis Dbld. Butterbur Moth.	66
Not uncommon on the river banks at Chester-le-Street at dusk during the second and third weeks in August.	
Amathes ditrapezium Schiff. Triple-spotted Clay.	66
One at ragwort on the river banks, Chester-le-Street.—T.C.D.	
Diarsia brunnea Fab. Purple Clay.	66
Half a dozen taken at light in a wood at Bamard Castle on June 30th.	
D. rubi View. Small Square Spot.	66
A single specimen taken in the same wood.	
Orthosia eracilis Fab. Powdered Quaker.	66
I found a single larvae of this Quaker on sallow in July, 1952, and this season it abounded in the same area at Barnard Castle on meadow sweet. One also occurred on silver weed.—J. P. Robson.	
Venusia cambrica Curt. Welsh Wave.	66
Larvae on mountain ash along the Hishope Burn and Egglesthope Beck. —J.W.H.H.	
Lygris pyraliata Schf. Barred Straw.	66
Not uncommon at Chester-le-Street on <i>Galium Aparine</i> in June and July (T.C.D.) ; one, which laid eggs, on July 2nd in the same area (R. Harris).	
Geometra papilionaria L. Swallow-tail Moth.	66
One female at Sedgfield.—R. Harris.	
Selenia lunaria L. Lunar Thorn.	66
A male at Chester-le-Street.—R.H.	
Aporophylla lutulenta Schf. Deep Brown Dart.	66
Also as a single specimen at Chester-le-Street.—R.H.	
Opistographis luteolata L. Brimstone.	65
A white specimen (ab. <i>lacticolor</i> Heslop-Harrison) was taken on the railway side between Lartington and Bowes on July 2nd, 1953. The type specimen of this rare form was captured at Birtley fifty years ago.	
Nola confusalis Hubn. Least Black Arches.	66
A single specimen on a fence post at Barnard Castle in early July, 1953.	