

# THE VASCULUM (SUBSTITUTE)

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*Edited by*

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KING'S COLLEGE, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

## BY THE WAY

All material intended for publication in our July issue should be in the Editor's hands before June 15th, 1955. Exchanges for the *Vasculum* and the *Transactions of the Northern Naturalists' Union* should be directed to the Editor at the above address.

## FIELD MEETINGS

During the past season, the Field Meetings of the Union proved extremely successful in every respect. The weather was good, and the attendances excellent. Noteworthy, too, were the facts that, in our visits to Pittington, Elemore and Crindon Dene, we broke entirely new ground. Even at Blanchland, which we had worked on previous occasions, new and profitable areas were explored. However, the most pleasing feature marking the whole of these excursions was the increased enthusiasm of our members, and the zeal with which all, more especially our younger associates, combined to do really useful observational work. The extent of this may be realised by a glance at the reports of these meetings, and the lists of records they yielded.

This very successful year affords us a good jumping-off point for 1955, and prompts us to ask our members for further help. If anyone is acquainted with suitable districts for visiting, like those enumerated above, we shall be glad if he or she will get into communication with us immediately. In addition, any suggestions concerning our meetings, likely to add to their value, will always be welcomed.

## THE STATUS OF THE RED ADMIRAL LOCALLY

In Northumberland and Durham, we look upon the Red Admiral Butterfly (*Vanessa atalanta*) as quite a common species although few of us speculate about its origin in the two counties. Recently, in a local newspaper, we observed a short article in which the butterfly was treated as an ordinary element of our butterfly populations

exhibiting the peculiarity of passing the winter as an imago. In the discussion, quite circumstantial accounts were given of the detection of the insect laid up in its winter quarters. From time to time such accounts have been supplied to us personally, and, uniformly, whenever we have been able to examine the butterflies concerned, they have turned out to be hibernating specimens of the Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*). Further, we have often heard unskilled observers applying the name Red Admiral to Small Tortoiseshells taken under other conditions. We have no hesitation, therefore, in stating that the insects referred to in the newspaper article were also Tortoiseshells.

To put it plainly, although there has been a small number of cases reported in the entomological magazines in which the Red Admiral has been alleged to have been found hibernating, trained entomologists treat the whole with a considerable amount of scepticism.

Actually, the gorgeous beauties we see on Michaelmas Daisies, Sunflowers, Thistles and the like in September are the progeny of spring and early summer immigrants originating in North Africa. These, without exception, like their allies the Painted Ladies (*Vanessa cardui*), are killed off by early frosts. During the following seasons except in very unusual years, the stocks of both species, both here and elsewhere in the British Isles, are replenished by hosts of new immigrants arriving, as a general rule, in May and June.

#### MASS PRODUCTION

Recently, we were approached by one of our members who wished to know what was meant by the " Small Kingfisher Butterfly." He explained that he had encountered this name in one of his text-books, and had been completely baffled by it. The book in question was one of those mass-produced volumes which purport to deal with natural history topics for amateurs. A glance at the figure so labelled showed that the butterfly concerned was the White Admiral (*Limenitis Camilla*). Underneath the illustration was the name of a German photographer.

Acting upon this hint, we looked up pertinent German text-books, and discovered that one of the German popular names for *L. Camilla* was the " Kleiner Eisvogel"—a name which when translated means the Smaller Kingfisher. Clearly, both the figure and name had been extracted in an unintelligent fashion from some German work.

Other illustrations supplied with the same article were equally misleading. For instance, the Dark Green Fritillary (*Argynnis aglaia*) was figured twice, one figure being correctly named whilst the other bore beneath it the legend " Mother of Pearl Butterfly ", the appellation being again a translation of a German original—an original certainly not concerned with *Argynnis aglaia*! Many other objections could be raised, but enough has been written to demonstrate the dangers lurking in these much-advertised compilations.

Surely, interested amateurs, who are often compelled to derive their entomological and other knowledge from such works, deserve much more consideration than some publishers give them. This implies that these books, before publication, should be carefully "vetted" by someone adequately equipped for the purpose.

#### LOCAL ORCHIDS — AN APPEAL

During recent years, in many areas of the British Isles, orchid populations have greatly increased, although all groups of these interesting plants are not affected equally. Fortunately, the *Dactylorhiza*s and their allies, many of which occur with us, are included in this expansion. In our counties not only have the actual number of individuals in the species affected been increased, but, in addition, many of the species have expanded their ranges. As a result, our local orchid lists, produced more than thirty years ago, are sadly out of date. Will members of the Union interested in these beautiful plants assist in remedying this state of affairs by reporting to us the positions of the various species in their own neighbourhoods? Should there be any doubt about names we should gladly deal with critical species.

We hope that many problems would be solved by such efforts. For instance, the exact Durham range of the new British marsh orchid, *Dactylorhiza Traunsteineri* is doubtful. At present, with us, it is only known from two or three adjacent stations; it must exist elsewhere. Again, no recent records exist for the Bog Orchid, *Hammarbya (Malaxis) paludosa*. There is very little likelihood of its being extinct, and careful searches on our moorlands should reveal new and widely-separated stations. Much the same holds true of the Fly Orchid, the Sword-leaved Helleborine and others, not found on moorlands, but in diverse habitats. Similarly, the Burnt Tip Orchid, *Orchis ustulata*, seems now to be really extinct with us, but, in view of the northward trend of orchid species, it is quite possible that it may attempt to recolonise our counties.

In addition, there is always the chance that species new to our area will turn up. Amongst such species is the Lizard Orchid, for it is coming northward, and has already been discovered in North Yorks. This possibility is increased when one recalls the recent detection of the Dark Red Helleborine, *Epipactis atrorubens*, in Upper Teesdale. It is sincerely hoped that this appeal will receive an adequate response from our members—and from others who have not joined us.

### THE SOCIETIES

#### NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

On Saturday, March 5th, 1955, by the kind invitation of the Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne, the Thirty-first Annual Meeting of the Union was held in the Hancock Museum.

In the absence of the President, Mr. J. E. Ruxton, owing to an unfortunate accident, Mrs. H. H. Clark, M.Sc., took the Chair. The audience was large, and its first act after the Minutes had been signed was to direct that our sympathies be conveyed to Mr. Ruxton.

The Treasurer's report was read by Mr. T. C. Dunn, and the Secretary's by Dr. K. B. Blackburn. Both reports were regarded as extremely satisfactory.

In the election of officers, Mr. J. A. Richardson, M.Sc., was chosen as President, whilst Messrs. Ashworth and Scaling replaced Prof. J. B. Cragg and Mr. J. W. Wilkinson, who were both due to retire, as Vice-Presidents. As far as the rest of the officers were concerned, no changes were made.

After the business meeting was concluded, in the absence of Mr. Ruxton, Mrs. Hickling, at a very short notice, gave us an illustrated lecture on the "Fame Islands". She began her lecture by describing the islands as a group, and their individual topography. From this she passed to a consideration of their history, dividing this into three sections, firstly, that of the Hermits, lasting from the seventh to the thirteenth century, secondly, the Monastic from the thirteenth to the sixteenth and lastly, that from the sixteenth almost to the present time during which the Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral held sway. Then followed a delightful account of St. Cuthbert and his activities. In particular, the speaker drew attention to his relations with the wild life of the isles, especially those with the Eider Duck. Emphasised, too, was the work of the hermit Bartholmew in King Stephen's reign.

After this we heard a pleasing account of the general scenery of the islands, made the more interesting by the excellent series of lantern slides which accompanied it. Then followed a history of the various light-houses which had been established in the group. Next, our lecturer proceeded with a vivid description of the numerous sea-birds which have their homes on the Fames, all again being illustrated by magnificent lantern slides of the birds, their nests and their nesting sites.

At the close of the lecture, a hearty vote of thanks was given to Mrs. Hickling for a lecture which we agreed was one of the best we have ever had.

Afterwards, we took tea, during which, as is usual, opportunities were given to all for meeting representatives of other societies, and for renewing old friendships. After this function, we examined the various exhibits which had been set out in the room adjoining the lecture room. These included a fine series of pressed wild flowers from Wales, brought by Miss D. B. Blackburn. Mr. L. P. Hird had on display a collection of flowers from our own area. Other botanical exhibits were Northumbrian specimens of the sundew, *Drosera anglica*, shown by Dr. W. A. Clark, a set of Durham wild roses, illustrating our special forms and their hybrids for which Prof. J. W. Heslop Harrison was responsible, and a very fine group

of water colour drawings of British wild flowers, the work of Miss M. R. Dickenson. Of interest, too, was a copy of the second edition of Winch's " Geographical Distribution " shown by Mrs. Gibby. Of other exhibits. Dr. K. B., Blackburn had on view two series of the shell *Hydrobia jenkinsii*, one set sub-fossil from the Roman baths at Bath, and the other modern from Clumber, Notts. Except that the former were a trifle smaller, there was little to differentiate the two lots. Prof. Heslop Harrison also produced two cases of insects, one containing specimens of the two British species of Beehawks, and the two Hornet Clearwings, intended to illustrate the phenomenon of mimicry, and the other including representative series of our Red Underwing moths and of the Clifden Nonpariel.

#### BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

On Dec. 14th 1954, Dr. J. Bosanji gave us an extremely interesting lecture illustrated by lantern slides on " Harvesting the Sea " in which he dealt with a very large number of the ways in which the sea yields food and other necessities to Man. Our own member, Mr. G. G. Deering, followed on Jan. 11th, 1955, with a lecture entitled " Gooseberries, Gorgonzola and Good Health ", in which he gave us an excellent account of the development of penicillin and similar antibiotics. Next, on Jan. 24th, we had a lecture by Dr. N. Thorley on " All about Atomic Energy " which was illustrated by a series of lantern slides and appropriate experiments. This useful talk was greatly appreciated. On Feb. 8th. Prof. J. W. Heslop Harrison filled a gap by talking about the " Isle of Raasay and its Neighbours ". During the course of his remarks, the lecturer described the island, its history and natural history, and also dealt with the Isles of Scalpay, Longay, Pabbay and South Rona.

After this came a lecture on Feb. 22nd on " Curious Insects and their Life-histories ", also illustrated by numerous lantern slides.

#### NOTES AND RECORDS

##### NOTES

***Alopecurus alpinus* Sm. in Upper Teesdale.**—The discovery of *Alopecurus alpinus* in Upper Teesdale adds another plant to the already extensive list of Arctic-alpine species growing in that area. It also adds another species to the list of English plants ; all the other British records being from north of the Border. The species was discovered in a collection of grasses made by the writer in Upper Teesdale in 1945, and identified recently by Mr. Hubbard. The specimens are now housed in the herbarium at Kew. They were growing on sheep-cropped mounds of short, green turf in boggy ground near the Tees, at an altitude of about 1,500 ft., on the Durham side of the river. They belong to the awned variety, of the species.—J. K. Morton.

(The above record of the Alpine Foxtail is of extreme phytogeographical importance. In the *Vasculum*, Vol. 2, pp. 49-51, 1916, I put forward for the first time the theory that the plant specialities for which Upper Teesdale is famous had persisted there, on ice-free areas throughout the Glacial Period. Later, (*Trans. North. Nat. Union*, Vol. 2, pp. 1-28, 1953) I modified these views by suggesting that these interesting plants had possible colonised their Upper Teesdale strongholds during the last Interglacial Period, or even during one of the

Interstadial phases of climate amelioration which interrupted the Upper Pleistocene Glaciation. However, Dr. Morton's discovery restores the possibility of the earlier opinion being the correct one, as the plant is essentially an Arctic species in its distribution; it is not found in the Alps, Pyrenees and Scandinavia.

A very different point raised by Dr. Morton's note needs mention. When we received it, we were informed that it had been sent elsewhere for publication a considerable time ago. Nevertheless, in spite of its being well-authenticated and its great importance, it had not been published. This action seems inexplicable unless some sort of a "closed-shop" exists in respect to botanical records.—J.W.H.H.)

**Melanic Lepidoptera in Northumberland and Durham.**—In September, 1953, I beat a number of larvae of the Peppered Moth (*Biston betularia*) from various trees and shrubs in the Waskerley-Healeyfield (66) area. The whole of the larvae so obtained gave rise to the black variety *carbonaria*. This has been my experience whenever I have bred from local larvae of the species. It would be very interesting to discover to what extent the typical white form of *B. betularia* still exists in Durham. The same remark holds true in the case of the intermediate form. Will any collector in Northumberland and Durham who takes the species let me know the position in his district? I should be glad also to have particulars about the occurrence of melanic forms of any other species he may have collected. My address is: The Poplars, Chester-le-Street—T. C. Dunn.

**The Early Marsh Orchid, *Dactylorchis incarnata* L., in Northumberland and Durham.**—Almost certainly, the orchid listed by Baker and Tate in their *Flora* as *Orchis latifolia* is the marsh orchid known to us as *Dactylorchis purpurella*. About twenty years ago, however, the name *O. latifolia* was applied by Pugsley to the plant formerly called *O. incarnata*—a species not recorded by Baker and Tate. Recently, the wheel has spun round with the result that the specific appellation "*incarnata*" has once more come into use for the same plant. Making the necessary change in the generic name, the present Latin name for the Early Marsh Orchid becomes *Dactylorchis incarnata*.

Notwithstanding Baker and Tate's failure to mention this species, it does occur in our two counties. Moreover, it is to be found in several recognisable varieties. In its typical guise, with pale pinkish flowers, we have collected it at Seaton Sluice (67) in Northumberland and near Langdon Beck (66) in Durham. Again the variety *coccinea*, with indian-red flowers; often, but mistakenly in my opinion, regarded as being of subspecific rank, has been collected on Holy Island (68) in dune slacks. Such localities are supposed to be its preferred habitats. Nevertheless, we have discovered it in Upper Teesdale (66) far from dune slacks, and also in damp hollows in smaller Durham coastal dunes. Another well-marked variety, var. *pulchella*, with deep purple flowers of the same hue as those of *D. purpurella*, has only been detected at Ferryhill (66) in Durham where it hybridizes with *D. Fuchsii*. Most remarkable, however, is the form growing in Billingham Bottoms (66), and on the damp ground along Billingham Beck, on both sides of the railway. This possesses small flowers of a very pale mauve colour, with the tips strongly three-lobed. This plant does not seem to have been reported previously from any other northern locality. In its Durham station its variability both in flower colour, form and size is at a minimum.—J.W.H.H.

**The Chrysalid of the Meadow Brown Butterfly, *Maniola jurtina*.**—On June 28th, 1954, as I was studying the wild roses growing on the Old Target Heap at Birtley, (66) my eye caught sight of an unusual looking chrysalid which was attached to a leaf of the northern hawkweed, *Hieracium boreale*. From its size and general appearance, I decided that it was a pupa of the Meadow Brown. However, it was very differently coloured from normal chrysalids as it was of an almost unicolorous green hue. In general, in chrysalids of this species the wing-cases are tinged with brown as are also the points on the body. On the other hand, the thorax is black-spotted.—J.W.H.H.

**An Alien Geranium in Durham City.**—At the Water Gate end of Prebend's Bridge, Durham, there are two large clumps of the Dusky Crane'sbill (*Geranium phaeum*). In addition, not far away on the Banks, several smaller plants are to

be found. Boyle's *Guide to Durham* gives only two localities for the plant in Co. Durham, the nearer being in Lumley Woods.—M. E. Richardson.

(Although the Lumley colony of this plant persisted for over one hundred and fifty years after it was first detected, it has now vanished. Still it existed in 1935, and the plant may appear again.—J.W.H.H.)

**The Foodplants of the Slender Pug, *Eupithecia tenuiata*.**—In our July, 1954, number, I gave a list of the stations now known for this pug in our counties. In doing so, I mentioned that Mr. T. C. Dunn had beaten its larvae from *Salix Caprea* and *S. atrocinerea* at Hunstantworth. On the Isle of Rhum it is restricted to *S. afrocinerea*, but here it prefers the Goat Sallow (*S. Caprea*) as its food. However, I have reared it on *S. viminalis*, *S. repens* and *S. ambigua*.—J.W.H.H.

#### RECORDS

##### LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS .

- Cerura hermelinea*** Goeze. Poplar Kitten. 67  
Taken in 1954 at Riding Mill. The specimen, a large female, but with its wings almost denuded of scales, was found resting on a window curtain on which it had deposited a number of ova.
- Apatele megacephala*** Schf. Poplar Grey. 67  
One at light in 1953, at Riding Mill.
- Eurois occulta*** L. Great Brocade. 67  
A single specimen was found at Riding Mill in 1954 : it was wedged into a crevice in the bark of a lime tree during a high wind.
- Orthosia munda*** Schf. Twin-spotted Quaker. 67  
Not observed at Riding Mill prior to 1951, but taken there in that and subsequent seasons.
- Calocaipe undulata*** L. Scallop Shell. 67  
This striking insect has not, so far as I am aware, been recorded from this part of the country. Several were taken in a Northumberland locality in 1951 and 1952. By dint of much searching in August, I obtained two larvae, one of which produced an ichneumon.
- C. cervicalis*** Scop. Scarce Tissue. 67  
One captured at light at Riding Mill.
- Euchoeca nebulata*** Scop. Dingy Shell. 67  
In the past, I have not found more than single specimens of this species in the Tyne Valley area, and they have been of the typical brown coloration. Last summer, however, it occurred quite freely, and it was noticeable that the moths were distinctly grey in colour.
- Eupithecia valerianata*** Hb. Valerian Pug. 67  
Another insect exhibiting a similar diversity in colour. Moths bred last year from Riding Mill larvae are grey, whereas those taken in the past at Prestwick Carr are brown.
- E. linariata*** Schf. Toadflax Pug. 67  
A pug which came to my light some years ago appeared to be *linariata*, but it was so worn as to leave a little doubt as to its identity. A fresh specimen, obtained last year in the same way, confirms its occurrence in Northumberland. —F. W. Gardner.
- Carsia paludata*** Thun. Manchester Treble Bar. 66  
No recent records exist for this species in Durham, although Robson quotes a single capture at Shull many years ago by Mr. W. Backhouse. We found it to be of common occurrence on Widdy Bank Fell on September 6th, where it was flying with males of *Oporinia filigrammaria*.—J.W.H.H., T.C.D.

##### CECIDIA—GALLS

- Eriophyes kernerii*** Nal. 66  
This very interesting gall-mite occurs on various gentians ; taken on *Gentiana campestris* at Garmondsway, Bishop Middleham and Widdy Bank Fell.
- E. minor*** Nal. 66  
This mite galls the leaves of thyme, causing them to assume a dark purple irregular mass ; collected on Widdy Bank Fell on September 6th.—J.W.H.H.

- Rhopalomyia tanaceticola** Karsch. 66  
This rare gall was first discovered in Durham some thirty years ago, but has rarely been seen since ; noted galling tansy florets at Harraton.—G.H.H.
- Perrisia persicariae** L. ' 66  
Abundant on *Polygonum amphibium* at Spruceley.—J.W.H.H.
- Distrophus rubi** Hartig. 66  
For many years, I have failed to observe this very curious Cynipid gall. However, in 1953, I discovered it on the stems of brambles growing in deep shade in Hawthorn Dene. In this station, it was far from rare. Then again, in September, 1954, it was noted on the same plant in Crirndon Dene, but in much smaller numbers. The gall appears as an elongated swelling on the twigs, and it can attain a length of three inches. Its surface possesses a series of papillae, each of which corresponds to a spherical chamber containing a larva.
- Rhodites spinosissima** Gir. 66, 67  
This Cynipid has also undergone a period of scarcity, for it has occurred very sparingly for several years. In 1954, it abounded on the Burnet Roses which flourish on the sand-dunes at the mouth of Crirndon Dene. Although these plantg grew intermingled with hybrid plants resulting from a cross between *Rosa spinosissima* and *R. Sherardi*, the insect had completely ignored the hybrids.— J.W.H.H.
- Rhodites eglanteriae** Hartig. 66  
This gall was noted likewise in some numbers in Crirndon Dene, but it was much more catholic in its tastes than its congener, for it was collected from *Rosa Sherardi*, *R. caesia*, *R. dumalis* and the hybrid between *R. Sherardi* and *R. spinosissima*. It was also detected on *Rosa mollis* and a hybrid of parentage *Rosa canina* x *Sherardi* found in the woods at Healeyfield in N. W. Durham.
- Aulacidea hieracii** Bouche. 66  
Abundant everywhere on pitheaps upon which the usual foodplant *Hieracium boreale* grows. The galls of this species are rounded, but slightly elongate and smooth. They are multilocular, each cavity contains a single yellowish larva. On pitheaps where more than one species of *Hieracium* occurs, the gall has been collected from *ff. umbellatum* and *H. murorum*.

#### FLOWERING PLANTS

- Centaurea Scabiosa** L. Large Knapweed. 66  
On November 2nd, the var. *incisa* C.E.B. was collected in Cassop Vale.— J.W.H.H.
- Trifolium repens** L. Clover. 66  
Several patches of the var. *rubescens* Ser. at the base of the pit heap, West Auckland.—J.W.H.H.
- Malva moschata** L. Musk Mallow. 66  
This species, which is definitely a diminishing plant with us, turned up this year in Lambton Woods.
- Myosotis sylvatica** (Ehrh.) Hoff. Wood Forget-me-not. 66  
This plant occurs in enormous numbers in Lambton Woods, more especially on the paths along the riverside and on the rides. The form with white flowers is far from rare. In May, 1954, I found a plant in which the flower-colour was a deep red—not the reddish hue noted in plants on which the flowers are just expanding.
- Petasites fragrans** (Vill.) C. Presi. Winter Heliotrope. 66  
This plant has, unfortunately, become naturalised in Castle Eden Dene. It should, if possible, be extirpated.
- Centaurea Scabiosa** L. Large Knapweed. 66  
Plants with white flowers were noted in August near West Cornforth.
- Salix pentandra** L. Bay-leaved Willow. 66  
Although this station is not its furthest west in Durham, this willow may be found along the Hisehope Burn.— J.A.R.



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## BY THE WAY

Once again, we ask the Secretaries of our Societies to send us punctually accounts of their work. Only by a regular supply of material so provided can the Union bring its members into that close contact which was declared to be one of its major aims when it was founded. In addition, the information given will assist the Union to maintain a measure of co-ordination in respect to current work within the area.

Readers are invited to contribute notes and records dealing with natural history subjects at any time. These should be written on one side of the paper and in the usual form adopted by the *Vasculum*.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

Recently, we have been requested by several members about the origin of the Union, and we think it best to give the required information by means of quotations from the Minutes of the Wallis Club.

Jan. 14th, 1924. *Annual General Meeting* :

" The following instructions to the Council were adopted unanimously :

(1) To endeavour to arrange for the formation of an Association of Natural History Societies in the North ".

Feb. 4th. *Council Meeting*.

" The proposal that an Association or Union of Northern Natural History Societies might be formed was considered, and the Secretary was instructed to invite each Natural History Society in Northumberland, Durham and Cumberland to send two representatives to a conference in Newcastle.

April 14th. *General Meeting*.

" The Secretary reported that a conference of representatives of local Natural History Societies had agreed that it was desirable that

there should be some central body to which local societies could be affiliated, and had defined the aims of the Union in general terms. It was unanimously resolved ' That this Society approves the scheme outlined, and pledges the Club to support such a Union ' " .

May 12th. *General Meeting.*

" The Secretary reported that a further conference had been held at which it had been decided to form an association to be called the ' Northern Naturalists' Union \ and handed round copies of the proposed rules. Mr. Carter proposed, and Mr. E. M. Harrison seconded, and it was resolved unanimously ' that this Club approves the scheme and gives its representatives full powers to act for it at the next conference ' " .

" The Secretary reported the progress which had been made in the formation of the Northern Naturalists' Union, and Dr. J. W. Heslop Harrison was appointed to represent the Club on the Council of the Union " .

*Note.*—The Conferences of representatives were held on April 12th, May 10th and May 24th, 1924.

#### CASTLE EDEN AND CRIMDON DENES

In view of the importance of the subject, naturalists generally will pardon us for returning once more to the topic of our coastal denes. Quite recently, we have paid two visits to Castle Eden Dene, one in an official capacity, and the other planned to extend the observations made on the earlier occasion. We were extremely pleased with what we saw. The whole dene bore a picturesque and fresh-looking aspect brought about by the care taken to make all changes considered necessary blend with conditions in those areas still in a more or less primitive state. Some visitors, no doubt, will object to the somewhat free use of barbed wire, but this is absolutely essential if extensive landslips are to be prevented, and wild life preserved. Although the beds of the exotic *Primula pulverulenta* force themselves upon one's sight by their incongruity, these are to be removed at the end of the season. Moreover, the planting of non-British trees is to be stopped, and native trees substituted for them. Another pleasing feature lies in the fact that the spread of the Rosebay Willow-herb has been checked.

As miles of pleasant woodland walks are to open the public, we trust that, not only will advantage be taken of the opportunity, but also that the privilege will not be abused.

Very different is the report we are compelled to make about the banks and sand dunes lying between the old rifle-range target and the mouth of Crimdon Dene. The conditions there are deplorable,

and the damage infinitely greater than that foreshadowed in the *Vasculum* note of our October, 1954 issue. Practically the whole of the rarer plants have been destroyed ; even the tougher Burnet Rose is on its last legs. Furthermore, the whole area is a chaotic mess of litter of every conceivable kind with occasional erections, permanent and otherwise, thrown down without the simulation of a plan, adding to the grotesqueness of the scene.

Needless to say, the whole of the important insects have been wiped out likewise. These insects were not only famous for their rarity but, in addition, for the light they threw on British biogeographical and genetical problems. That such vandalism is possible in these enlightened days (?) seems incredible, more especially when Government-sponsored organisations devoted to Nature Conservancy seem to have endless sums of money to spend on projects much less desirable than the protection of such unique areas as exist on the Durham coast. Moreover, the responsible local authorities cannot be exonerated from blame in the matter.

Once again, we urge that protection should be given to some selected area on our coast, more especially one in which the Castle Eden Argus butterfly and the Least Minor moth still persist.

#### THE SPREADING OF THE BLUEBELL

Of recent years, many writers have drawn attention to the extensions of range and the increases in numbers exhibited by several of our local orchids. However, not until the present season has it become apparent that the common bluebell (*Endymion nonscriptus*) is likewise colonizing new localities.

In the Team Valley and adjoining areas, the plant has been detected in various stations in which .most certainly, it did not occur a few years ago. Can any of our readers supply similar facts about the plant in other districts?

#### A REQUEST FOR FUNGI

Prof. E. R. H. Jones, Professor of Chemistry at Manchester University, is carrying out important researches on the bracket fungi, and he has asked the Dept. of Botany, King's College, to help him in the collection of specimens. The species required are *Polyporus hispidus*, *Daedalea quercina* and *Daldinia concentrica*. Dr. P. G. Fothergill is acting on behalf of Professor Jones in this area, and specimens would be gratefully received by him at the Botany Dept., King's College.

### THE SOCIETIES

#### NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

After a lapse of many years, a Field Meeting of the Union was

once more held in Bothal Dene, on Saturday, May 14th, 1955. This Field Meeting was our eightieth.

The party came by various routes and assembled near Bothal Mill at 2-30 p.m., where some considerable time was spent in exploring the immediate neighbourhood after which we turned upstream on the north bank of the River Wansbeck ; this we followed for about two miles. Then we sat down for our meal.

The day was fine, and the attendance good. However, plants and animals alike were very backward. Moreover, the " crop " of insects, both in the adult and larval stages, proved very disappointing owing to the unfavourable season of 1954. Only the Green-veined White butterfly was seen on the wing although some larvae fell into the beating tray of Mr. Dunn and his helpers. Amongst these were the Brick, the Willow Beauty, the Mottled Beauty, various Winter moths and Christy's Autumnal Moth, *Oporinia christyi*. The larvae of the latter species came from wych elm and provided the furthest north station in our two counties. In addition, larval burrowings of the Hornet Clearwing were observed in trunks of *Salix Caprea* upon which were also detected specimens of the scale insect, *Lecanium capreae*. Amongst the Hymenoptera, only one bumblebee was seen; this was *Bombus pratorum* which probed garlic flowers. We were interested, too, in the nests of the Horse ant, *Formica rufa*, which we were able to examine at one stage of our journey.

With regret we encountered examples of rabbits afflicted by Myxomatosis. The callous cruelty of the whole business struck all who saw the animals.

Of the plants noted, perhaps the most important were the toothwort ;found by Ann dark, and the Hairy Violet collected by David Harris. The presence of the Oak fern and masses of the sedge *Carex pendula* were also noteworthy.

The canopy of trees consisted chiefly of oak, ash, wych elm, sycamore and alder, with odd birches, geans, white beams, sallows and rowans. Amongst the shrubs, the sight of the bird cherry in flower was very pleasing whilst the guelder rose, hazel, elder, blackthorn and various wild roses were not uncommon.

In spite of the late season, we observed numerous other woodland plants including goldilocks, violet, wood and water avens, primrose, brooklime, mountain speedwell, thyme-leaved speedwell, common speedwell, cow-wheat, enchanter's nightshade, figwort, golden saxifrage, bugle, celandine, wood anemone, bilberry, wood sorrel, sweet cicely, wood geranium, cuckoo-flower, dog's mercury, whin, broom, bluebell, garlic, early purple orchid, greater woodrush, the rarer *Luzula pilosa*, melic grass and the wood sedge. Just before

we left the wood for Morpeth, we observed the tuberous-rooted bitter vetch and a plant of *Viola Riviniana* with white flowers.

#### BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The Winter Session of the Society ended on March 22nd, 1955, when we held our Annual Meeting for the election of officers, and a discussion of a programme for 1955-56. Then followed a display of films depicting various natural history activities. The meeting closed with an annual supper, provided, as usual by the ladies, and they received our heartiest thanks for it. Thus concluded a very successful meeting and a satisfactory session.

On June 5th, a goodly number of our members visited Bamburgh, Craster, Dunstanburgh Castle and Warkworth. The day was completely spoilt by a dense fog although some work was done. There was an almost complete dearth of insects, but the Cinnabar moth was seen on the wing, and larvae of the Drinker moth taken from marram grass on the dunes near Warkworth. Both at Bamburgh and at Dunstanburgh Castle, quite a large number of fulmar petrels was observed nesting; this remarkable bird had not been seen previously by most of those present. On the dunes at Bamburgh we saw several unusual plants like the Star of Bethlehem, Sea Campion, Hound's Tongue, the Field Mouse-ear Hawkweed, and, not far away, Pellitory-on-the-Wall, the Wall Flower and White Stonecrop. At Warkworth, along the river-side we noted the usual woodland plants and in the river an unusual watercress-foot, *Ranunculus fluitans*. Further, we detected an interesting wild rose hybrid of parentage, *Rosa Sherardi* x *spinosissima* as well as the yellow-flowered *Oxalis stricta*. Proceeding to the dunes, we collected the Burnet Rose, with its cynipid gall *Rhodites spinosissimae*. Rest Harrow, Milk Vetch, Rue, Bloody Cranesbill, Sand Sedge and the usual commoner plants. Behind the dunes we found the Hairy Tare, Stephenson's Marsh Orchid (*Dactylorhiza purpurella*). Sea Arrowgrass, Comfrey, Hemlock, etc.

Near Dunstanburgh, we were lucky enough to discover the wellknown colony of the Vernal Squill, and, on the rocks about the Castle, the Bluebell, Honeysuckle, Primrose, Dove's-foot Crane-s' bill. Ivy, etc.

#### NOTES AND RECORDS

##### NOTES

**A Hibernating Peacock Butterfly at Southwick.**—In view of the scarcity of recorded *Vanessids* in the North-East last year, it is of interest to note that a female *Nymphalis io* was found by Mr. J. Chariton, a member of the Sunderland Parks Department Staff, in the Southwick Cemetery (66) here. It was noted in an outhouse on January 20th, 1955, and had been awakened from hibernation

by the firful sunshine, and the rise in temperature after the recent severe frosts. Mr. Chariton reported his find to the local press, and when I called upon him today to verify his identification of the insect, I found it very lively. — T. W. Jefferson.

**Geranium phaeum in Durham City.**—In the March number of the *Vasculum* Miss M. E. Richardson records the presence of two clumps of the Dusky Cranesbill as growing in the vicinity of Prebend's Bridge, Durham (66). I regret to have to report that only one exists now for the other was destroyed when barberries were planted on the site it used to occupy.—A. N. Gibby.

**Extermination of Plants on the Wear at Wolsingham (66).**—During the post-war year period, the writer has noted the wholesale disappearance of many riverside plants due to gravel bed operations between Wolsingham and Frosterley. Amongst the many common species we must report the loss of *Arenaria verna*, *Mimulus guttatus*, *Turritis glabra*, *Ononis repens* and *Elodea canadensis* between the railway station and for three quarters of a mile upstream. *Mimulus guttatus* has spread up the Waskerley for another 220 yards since 1944. Perhaps this tributary will preserve both this and other local riverside species now that the riverbed has been left in a disreputable condition.—D. Morgan.

[ On June 19th 1955, we studied the plants on the stretch of gravel to which Mr. Morgan refers. We found that *Mimulus guttatus* existed in great variety there, and could only be described as being exceedingly abundant. It is just possible, however, that we worked an area slightly to the west of that described by Mr. Morgan. Of the other plants he mentions, we encountered only *Ononis repens*.—J.W.H.H. ]

**The River Lamprey (*Petromyzon fluviatilis*) in the River Wear.**—Quite recently, specimens of the river lamprey have been taken from the River Wear above Wolsingham. Many local inhabitants of the district have mistakenly considered this cyclostomate to be the common eel. This organism is a predator on salmon and brown trout upon which it causes more damage than on the perch.—D.M.

**Spring Flight of the Water Beetle, *Dytiscus marginalis*.**—A *Dytiscus marginalis* was captured in a Stanhope garden on toward dusk by Mr. C. Ayre. Does this imply that there is a ment of the species?—D.M. male specimen of April 19th, 1955. late spring move

**The Toothwort in the Upper Derwent Valley.**—On May 15th a friend of mine found the toothwort, *Lathraea squamaria* at Lead Mills near the Sneap. She brought it to me on the Monday. I was greatly interested in the plant as I had never seen it before. The specimen was handed to Freda Bell to be pressed. No recent record for this area has been made, and this renders the present one all the more important.—Mrs. Jones, Blackhill.

**The Flowering of Certain Plants.**—Although this season is a very late one, it has so far been characterized by the enormous display of flowers produced by many plants. In the south, in the case of the cowslips, the phenomenon has been so obvious that attention has been drawn to it in some of the more important newspapers. However, in Durham, this abundance has not been general. Nevertheless, on the Magnesian Limestone (66) the calcareous grasslands have been yellow with cowslip blossoms as have also many railway banksides.

Another plant which has been even more floriferous than the cowslip is the Sweet Woodruff (*Aspenla odorata*) which at Quarrington Hill (66), Staward (67) and elsewhere, has been smothered with white flowers. Similarly, on the south side of the mouth of Crimdon Dene (66), the Bumet Rose (*Rosa spinosissima*) bore such masses of flowers that the dunes at points were masked by them.

Amongst the orchids curious differences have been noted. This season the Marsh Orchid (*Dactylorhiza purpurella*) has had a very poor flowering season as also had the Spotted Orchid (*D. Fuchsii*). On the other hand, in some woods like those in Hawthorn Dene (66), where the Early Purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*) has not been subjected to systematic depredations, it likewise has made a very noteworthy display of flowering spikes. The same holds true of the Frog Orchid of which I have never encountered so many flowering plants and such dense flowering heads.—J.W.H.H.

**The Cowslip-Primrose Hybrid in Upper Weardale**—Although the false oxlip, the hybrid between the cowslip and primrose, is known to be of free occurrence in some stations on the Durham coast, it only turns up occasionally elsewhere in the county. However, in Upper Weardale, near Heathery Cleugh (66), the plant can be described as really common. Probably, both in the coast and in Upper Weardale the cause is the same. It undoubtedly originates in the delayed flowering of the primrose causing it to flower simultaneously with the cowslip.—G.H.H.

**The Times of Flowering of Various Wild Roses.**—This year has been remarkable for the lateness of the flowering of many plants, and this has been very obvious in the case of the wild roses. In an ordinary season, the Burnet Rose, *Rosa spinosissima*, flowers first, for its first blossoms generally appear during the last week of May. This year the earliest flowers observed must have been those taken on June 18th, on the coast south of Crirndon Dene (66) which, clearly, had been produced during the second week in June. In Northumberland, the first flowers of the same species were collected near Linnold's Bridge (67) on June 19th. Obviously, the bushes there would not reach the peak of their flowering period until late in June.

Of other roses, the earliest species, as usual, was *Rosa villosa* of which the first flower was observed at Staward (67) on June 17th. On June 19th, it was just coming into flower at Wolsingham (66) and on June 21st at Birtley (66). In general, this rose flowers early in June. During the past week (June 21st—28th) not a single blossom has been seen on the numerous *R. villosa* bushes examined, both inland and on the coast, in East Durham.

Of the Northern dog roses, *Rosa dumalis (glauca)* was seen in flower at Riding Mill (67) on June 19th whilst its ally, *R. caesia (comfolia)*, put in its first appearance at Birtley (66) on June 23rd. In each case only single blossoms were detected.

Up to the present, no flowers of *R. Sherardi*, *R. canina*, *R. dumetorum*, *R. obtusifolia*, *R. rubiginosa* and *R. micrantha* have appeared, for these are usually the last to flower.

Amongst hybrid roses, flowers have been examined on *Rosa rubiginosa* x *spinosissima*, *R. Sherardi* x *spinosissima*, *R. villosa* x *dumetorum*. On the other hand, none have been seen on *R. dumalis* x *spinosissima* or *R. villosa* x *spinosissima*.—J.W.H.H.

**Black Caterpillars of the Currant Moth (*Abraxas grossulariata*).**—This year larvae of the Currant Moth have been exceedingly scarce. In fact, in many gardens where they usually abound, none have been present. In spite of this, an endeavour was made to determine what proportion of the population in one garden was black. This garden produced a reasonable number of individuals for counting. As a result, it was found that 81 per cent. were melanic and 19 per cent. typical. However, amongst those classified as melanic, some showed greater or less approaches to the typical form and may well be described as intermediates of varying grades.—R. Harris.

**A Curiously-coloured Blackbird.**—On April 7th, 1955, a very strangely marked blackbird was seen on the waggon way which runs past Birtley (66) Churchyard. It was irregularly streaked and blotched with white, and probably bore more

white than black. On the wing it seemed to be of a grey hue. Later, it was still present on June 16th and June 21st. In my opinion the bird was almost certainly a female.

**A Chaffinch captures a Dragonfly.**—On May 30th, whilst I was examining the vegetation in a pond near Winterton (66), a hen chaffinch caught a specimen of the dragonfly *Pyrrhosoma nymphula* which was hawking over the pool. However, after capturing its prey, instead of flying away, the bird alighted in the shallow water and began to walk steadily toward me. Only when it was less than a yard away did it fly into a nearby hedge with the insect in its mouth.

**Scilla verna with White Flowers.**—On June 5th, 1955, when a party of members of the Birtley Natural History visited Craster and Dunstanburgh Castle, we examined one of the patches of the Vernal Squill flourishing between the two places. Most of the plants seen, and there were many, bore flowers of the usual pale blue colour. One, however, had flowers of a pure white hue. After we had reached the Castle, and were studying the plants there, a common bluebell, also with beautiful white flowers, was discovered.—J.W.H.H.

## RECORDS

### FLOWERING PLANTS AND FERNS

<b>Thalictrum montanum</b> Waller. Rue.	66
Found in a copse on calcareous grassland on June 12th, at Kelloe.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Chrysosplenium alternifolium</b> L. Golden Saxifrage.	68
Collected in a little wooded dene near Rothbury.—P. Rowland.	
<b>Trientalis europaea</b> L. Chickweed Wintergreen.	68
On the moors near Rothbury.—L. Aitchison.	
<b>Erinus alpinus</b> L.	67
This plant has long been known from stations on the Roman Wall. It is now recorded from a wall near Blanchland. \	
<b>Geranium pyrenaicum</b> Burm. f.	66
It was with considerable pleasure that I discovered this naturalized in a little copse near Wolsingham. This is the observed the plant in our area.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Euphorbia esula</b> L. Spurge.	66
Noted near Newfield and, doubtless a garden escape.—A. Ball.	
<b>Allium vineale</b> L. Crow Garlic.	66
This plant is described by Baker and Tate as occurring rarely in grassy places, and two Durham stations are given for it. It was collected on May 23rd on the hill at Pitington. This record is the first for recent times.	
<b>Ornithogalum nutans</b> L. Star of Bethlehem.	68
Several patches of this alien plant were observed on the dunes at Bamburgh. _	
<b>Alisma lanceolatum</b> With. Water Plantain.	66
Last year this plant was found by me in one of the canals at Leek in Staffordshire, and this discovery provided the first record for v.-c. 39. Since then I have searched for it in many localities in Durham, but without success until recently. It has been detected in the Carr near Mainsforth, and it seems likely that it will yet exist in the remains of Morden Carr. This provides, of course, the first record for this county.	
<b>Melica nutans</b> L. Mountain Melick.	66
In Long Acre Dene woods in Lamesley Parish.	
<b>M. uniflora</b> Retz. Wood Melick.	66. 67
In woods at Staward in Northumberland and in Castle Eden Dene, in Durham. J.W.H.H.	



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## BY THE WAY

### VANDALISM AND LITTER

In the July number of the *Vasculum* we described the hideous devastation caused by the " development " of the sand dunes on the Durham coast north of Crirndon Dene. Further, attention was drawn to the colossal masses of litter which increased the general picture of ruin. Now, an additional desecration of the area has taken place. Just above the Blackhall Rocks, the whole of the sea banks have been fenced in almost down to the high water mark, and cattle driven in. The terrible condition of the area, and the wholesale destruction of the rare plants and insects, can scarcely be imagined.

In Durham, only three stations for the Marsh Helleborine Orchid, *Epipactis palustris*, were known. That within the barbed wire is now, like the Billingham Bottoms colony, totally destroyed. Thus, only one Durham station for this lovely orchid remains. Similarly, the cattle have completely uprooted the plants of the Round-leaved Wintergreen, *Pyrola rotundifolia*, growing within the fence. This leaves only one Durham locality for the plant. Fortunately, in that station, this very rare plant is doing much more than holding its own. Another interesting plant that has suffered enormous damage is the Dusky Sallow, *Salix nigricans*, of which the former immense colony, with important hybrids, has been reduced to a few scraps.

Turning now to the topic of litter, we regret to state that, in this respect, the grounds around Finchale Abbey are in an appalling state. In fact, we have never seen anything worse than the condition of this favourite beauty spot. Much the same holds true of such a remote point as Holy Island, more especially in the vicinity of the Castle, and along the road leading to it.

We suggest that the time has now come for the Northern Naturalists' Union to deal with organised vandalism and the litter menace. A committee should be appointed, with representatives from each

Society, to discuss and report to the Union about threatened areas important from the standpoint of their floras and faunas, and about beauty spots overwhelmed with litter. The Council should then take action, by every means within its power, to counter both types of destruction.

#### THE SPINY RESTHARROW, *ONONIS SPINOSA*

Dr. J. K. Morton (The Manse, The Avenue, Birtley, Co. Durham) has been working for some time at the distribution of the two restharrow in Durham and Northumberland. During the course of his studies, he has discovered that, in all probability, all records for *Ononis spinosa* from Northumberland are erroneous. He will, therefore be very glad to receive any specimens or information about the species in that county.

#### BOOK REVIEW

"DRAWINGS OF BRITISH PLANTS", by Stella Ross-Craig, published by G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 8/6d. net.

We now welcome the eighth part of this important work. In it Miss Ross-Craig portrays various species belonging to certain genera of the Rosaceae; these genera are *Prunus*, *Filipendula*, *Rubus*, *Dryas*, *Geum*, *Fragaria*, *Potentilla* and *Sibbaldia*. Whilst she deals with all the British species of most of the genera, in *Rubus* she confines herself to seventeen microspecies. These forms have been carefully selected so that the figures give a reasonable notion of the characteristics of the various groups within the genus.

In all cases, her drawings are excellent, and maintain the high standard set up already in earlier parts of the work. Used in conjunction with modern text-books, they supply the best set of illustrations published in modern times in Britain. Even a novice would find it difficult to make mistakes in identification if he relies on these figures. For these reasons we strongly recommend the work to our readers.

The price (8/6) is remarkably low for a publication of this type.

#### THE SOCIETIES

##### NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The eighty-first Field Meeting of the Union was held on Saturday, July 2nd, 1955, at Dryderdale and Shull. By the kind permission of Mrs. J. E. Hodgkin and Mrs. W. A. Mounsey, we were able to work the woods and moorlands in the neighbourhood.

The party assembled at the main entrance to Dryderdale and almost immediately entered the birch wood to the east of the road. The day was fine. And owing to the weather conditions prevailing

during the previous month, animals and plants alike were at their best. The entomologists in particular were greatly pleased at the quality and quantity of the insects encountered. These, in general, occurred in the larval condition. However, the large dragon fly, *Cordulegaster boltoni* was captured on the wing along the burnside whilst the humble bees, *Bombus pratorum*, *B. terrestris* and *B. agrorum*, were not uncommon everywhere as was also the wasp, *Vespa sylvestris*. Whilst the insect hunters were busy beating for lepidopterous larvae from birch, alder and pine, they were astonished to see hosts of lady-birds falling into the tray. These included the Seven-spot, the Two-spot, the Eyed, the Eleven-lined and the Variable lady-birds. Of the Two-spot lady-bird several well-marked varieties were obtained. Other beetles taken included beautiful green species, representatives of the genus *Phyllobius*, and also some small longicorns. From the alders were beaten the Psyllids, *Psylla aim* and *P. forsteri*. These proved a nuisance as they covered the trays with white waxy filaments. The alders also provided crowds of saw-fly larvae belonging to the species, *Croesus septentrionalis*, *Platycampus luridiventris* and *Cimbex femoralis*. The *Croesus* was also found on birch from which we also secured the beautiful plant bug, *Calocoris sexguttatus*.

However, the Lepidoptera yielded the most exciting of our finds, for we were able to collect several species not seen for some time in Durham. Amongst the more important species knocked out were larvae of the Orange Underwing, the December Moth, the Yellowhorned, the Pine Beauty, the Bordered White, the Pine Carpet, the Spruce Carpet, the Grey Pine Carpet, the Early Moth, the March Moth, the Northern Winter Moth, the Autumnal Green Carpet, the Pale Brindled Beauty and the Early Tooth-striped. The commoner fry comprised almost all the common species of winter moth and various Taenioctenipids. Only the Gold Swift, *Hepialus hectus*, was captured on the wing.

Although, on the whole, the plants observed included but few rarities, we were very pleased to see the Lesser Skull Cap *Scutellaria minor*, for which so very few Durham records exist. Also new to us on our excursions, was the White Butterbur, *Petasites albus*. The orchids proved very dis-appointing for only the Heath Orchid, *Dactylorhiza ericetorum* was noted. Of the trees and shrubs we saw the oak, sycamore, birch, alder, gean, birdcherry, rowan, grey willow, wych elm, beech, sloe, elder with the roses, *Rosa mollis* var. *relicta*, *R. caesia* (*coriifolia*), *R. dumalis* (*glauca*) *R. obtusifolia*, *R. Sherardi* and many forms of the dog-roses, *R. canina* and *R. dumetorum*.

All of the usual moorland plants were very common, but amongst them the foxglove occurred freely where the birches invaded the heather. Several plants of the Tuberos-rooted Bitter Vetch were

noteworthy as they belonged to the narrow-leaved variety *tenuifolia*. Interesting, too, was a curiously-fasciated Marsh Thistle.

Several of our party visited the Iron Age Fort known as " The Castles ". They discovered to their amazement that a charge of 1/- was now levied for every person examining the site.

Our leader, on this occasion, was Mr. A. Ball, and to him our thanks are due.

On Saturday, September 10th, 1955, the eighty-second Field Meeting was held in the Edmondbyers neighbourhood. The party was in the charge of Mr. J. J. Robson and Mr. G. Evans.

Unfortunately, on this occasion, the weather was bad, and to avoid soaked clothes, we had to keep strictly to the paths running parallel to the Bumhope Burn and across the moorland. We made the return journey down the Stanhope road. One detour was made to enable us to examine the vegetation on one of the mine dead heaps.

Under the circumstances, but little serious work was possible. Nevertheless, the plants observed, on the whole of moorland proclivities, were not without interest. They included, in addition to the more usual moorland forms, the Petty Whin, the Black Crowberry, the Maretail, the Golden Rod, the Beautiful St. John's Wort, the Monkey Musk, Butterwort, Betony, Brooklime, Aspen, Bird Cherry, Oak, Bay-leaved Willow and Mountain Ash. Another important find was the Carline Thistle which grew abundantly on the refuse from the old lead mines. In all probability, it reaches its western limits in our counties at this point.

Insects were rare, but larvae of the Angle Shades, the Common White Wave and the Fox Moth were collected from various plants. In addition, odd specimens of the Mountain Grey Carpet were captured as they were disturbed amongst the heather. These included the banded form of the insect. Amongst the " micros ", cases of the larvae of the case-bearer *Coleophora caespitiella*, swarmed on the seeds of the rush, *Juncus squarrosus*. From oak, too, were taken larvae of *Chimabache fagella*, with their curiously clubbed feet. A few hymenopterous galls were seen; these included the common bedeguar, *Rhodites rosae*, and the rarer *R. rosarum* on several species of dog-rose. Similarly, the oak yielded the sherial galls of *Dryophantes divisa*.

#### BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The Winter Session of the Birtley Natural History Society commenced on Tuesday, September 27th, when the President delivered a lecture entitled "Theories of Evolution other than Darwinism".

The lecturer began by giving a brief account of the Darwinian Theory of Natural Selection, and then outlined theories propounded by other workers. In doing so, he demonstrated in what respects the latter differed from the views put forward by Darwin.

The talk was illustrated by a series of lantern slides, some of which portrayed conditions in local woods, and insects dwelling in them which exhibited evolutionary movements.

## NOTES AND RECORDS

### NOTES

**Tenacity of Life in a Rose-leaf Cutter Bee (*Megachile circumcincta*).**—At 3 p.m. on June 13th, I boxed a male example of this bee as it was probing illegitimately the flowers of the Meadow Vetchling. In doing so, I accidentally caught it between the lid and edge of my chip box and severed the insect's head from the body. At 4-30 p.m., the decapitated body was still quite lively whilst the head likewise showed vigorous movements. In particular, the oral apparatus, exclusive of the mandibles, was especially active, the antennae only showing slight vibrations. Fifteen hours later, the bee was still lively, freely moving its limbs and expanding the wings. However, its clinging powers were definitely impaired. As for the head, only a slight motion of the labrum was perceptible, although by artificial stimuli I was able to set the whole oral apparatus in motion.

At 4 p.m. on June 14th, the bee was still alive for, under disturbance, the limbs and abdomen moved tremulously. Again, on June 15th, 48 hours after decapitation, some vitality still remained for, when disturbed, the abdomen palpitated fairly vigorously. On the other hand, the thorax seemed to be quite devoid of life. Finally, on June 16th, after the lapse of 64 hours, no part of the insect exhibited any signs of movement even under stimulus.—C.R.

**Notes on the Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly, (*Aglais urticae*).**—Last season was such a disastrous one for this insect that one could scarcely hope for a very successful season for it in 1955. However, the butterfly came out of hibernation early, and in goodly numbers in the Chester-le-Street (66) district. Later, the autumnal brood put in an early appearance, and the insect has swarmed everywhere. Early in September, it began to go into hibernation for I observed six examples laid up for their winter sleep in the stokehole of Chester-le-Street Isolation Hospital. Two days later, I observed one butterfly coming out of the building, and, on counting the remainder, I found only five in their original positions. Subsequently, the number was restored to six although what I presumed to be the returned wanderer had not taken up its former resting place. At present (October 2nd), only four are to be seen. Undoubtedly, the recent high temperatures are responsible for the others emerging from hibernation.—R. Harris.

**A Remarkable Aberration of the Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*).**—This insect was observed as it was probing King George V Michaelmas daises at Roker, Sunderland, on September 25th, 1955. Basally, the forewings were black, but the ground colour passed successively through brown, salmon and cream until the apical area was reached. There was a broad cream patch which merged imperceptibly into the normal white spot following the third black costal blotch. Just above the tornus were two large orange spots with black centres; these stood out conspicuously on the unusually pale ground colour. Terminally, the forewings were quite black, no blue at all appearing in the terminal band. On the hindwings, the coloration and pattern were normal except that three or four irregular dark brown spots preceded the terminal band.

The insect was very dark on the undersides of the wings except for the usual paler patches, and others, of a similar coloration, corresponding to the pale blotches on the upper sides of the forewings.

The butterfly was very lively and was accompanied by five others—all very handsome and of a brilliant orange red hue except for the apical white blotch on the forewings. One sat on a trellis in the sun, with its wings fully expanded, for twenty minutes or more.—M. E. Richardson.

**Notes on Galls observed in the Alwinton District of Northumberland.**—Recently, I had to carry out some research work near Alwinton, and was struck by the enormous numbers of sawflies there. Naturally, I examined them for galls and found that these abounded, although the species represented were few. Of the Cecidomyiid species, the most unusual was *Rhabdophaga dubiosa* Kieff., but it was accompanied by those of *R. rosaria* F. Loew and *R. heterobia* F. Loew, all occurring on *Salix aurita* and *S. atrocinerea*. On *S. Caprea*, *Iteomyia capreae* Winn., and *I. major* proved not uncommon. On oak, *Macrodiplosis dryobia* F. Loew was also far from rare. Of hymenopterous galls, *Pontania bridgmanii* Cam., now recorded for the first time from v.-c. 68, abounded on *Salix atrocinerea*. Other Pontanias noted were *P. pedunculi* Hart. on all the Salices of the Caprea group and *P. viminalis* L. on *S. purpurea*. In addition, *S. aurita* produced a gall somewhat resembling that of *P. pedunculi*, but bearing irregular projections. This gall, the originator of which is unknown, has been reported previously only from the Inner and Outer Hebrides. From oak, except for the single Cecidomyiid mentioned above, only the Cynipid galls of *Neuroterus lenticularis* and *Andricus ostreus* were collected.—J.W.H.H.

**Plants on the Wolsingham Gravel Beds.**—In the July number of the *Vasculum* Prof. Heslop Harrison and Mr. D. Morgan discuss the plants growing on the gravel beds along the Wear at Wolsingham (66) and refer, in particular, to the Monkey Flower, *Mimulus guttatus*. On September 30th, this plant grew abundantly along a wide stretch of these beds. With it flourished a group of other interesting plants of which the mints seemed to be the most important. They included *Mentha aquatica*, *M. arvensis*, *M. spicata* with two hybrids,  $\times M. gentilis$  and  $\times M. verticillata$ . Of the genuine natives, some of which had, in all probability, been washed down the stream were *Cochlearia alpina*, *Barbarea vulgaris*, *Ononis repens* and a small prostrate form of *Veronica Beccabunga*. One other hybrid, seen in some quantity, was *Senecio Jacobaea*  $\times$  *aquatica*. The chief aliens observed were the two balsams *Impatiens Roylei* and *I. parviflora*, *Solidago canadensis* and several species of Aster.—J. K. Morton. (To Mr. Morton's list may be added *Senecio squalidus*, *Malva neglecta* and *Verbascum thapsus*.—J.W.H.H.)

**Plant Distribution in Coquetdale.**—Recently, in carrying out my investigations in Coquetdale (68), I made a few observations about the distributions of some plants which seem of considerable interest. Normally, as one ascends river valleys in Durham and Northumberland, amongst the wild roses *Rosa dumetorum* forms thin out much more rapidly than do varieties of *R. canina*. Moreover, forms of the collective species *R. dumalis* (*glauca*) tend to replace even *canina* forms in the higher zones. However, near Alwinton (68), the segregates ascending highest were the two *dumetorum* forms, var. *semiglabra* and var. *urbica*. Still, it should be noted that the rose ascending highest up the dale was *R. villosa* var. *mollis*.

Two other plants which attracted attention because of their distributions were *Campanula latifolia* and *Carduus crispus*. Baker and Tate describe the Giant Bell-flower as "ascending in Coquetdale to Rothbury". I collected it much higher up the dale at Alwinton. The Welsted Thistle they report as reaching Linn Shiels (Linsheles) in Coquetdale. The highest station in which we observed the plant was near Harbottle.—J.W.H.H.

## RECORDS

### FLOWERING PLANTS AND FERNS

**Thalictrum montanum** Waller. Rue.  
On grassy slopes near Sherburn Hill.

66

<b>Aquilegia vulgaris</b> L. Columbine.	66
Found in some quantity on Sept. 29th on the roadside near East Buttsfield.	
<b>Coronopus squamatus</b> (Forsk.) Aschers. Swine Cress.	68
Still abundant on Holy Island.	
<b>Nasturtium officinale</b> x <b>microphyllum</b> . Hybrid	66
Watercress.	
In a tunnel along the railway side, Vigo.	
<b>Thiaspi alpestre</b> L. Alpine Penny-cress.	66
In a new locality along the Kilhope Burn in Upper Weardale.	
<b>Arabis hirsuta</b> (L.) Scop. Hairy Rock-cress.	66
Near West Cornforth and also Heathery Cleugh, Upper Weardale.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Cerastium arvense</b> L. Field Mouse-eared Chickweed.	70
By the Tweed at Castle Hills, Berwick.—J.K.M.	
<b>Linum anglicum</b> Mill. Perennial Flax.	66
A further station for this Durham species is on the roadside between Bishop Middleham and West Cornforth.	
<b>Geranium pyrenaicum</b> Burm. f.	67
Near Bardon Mill.	
<b>Rosa villosa</b> L. Northern Downy Rose.	66
The variety <i>relicta</i> H. Harr. of this northern rose occurs abundantly near Heathery Cleugh, Upper Weardale. Normally, the variety has white flowers. However, in this new locality, some of the bushes bear flowers flushed with pink at the bases of the petals.	
<b>R. obtusifolia</b> Desv. Dogrose.	66, 68
Not uncommon near Beal and in Durham at Muggleswick.	
<b>R. rubiginosa</b> L. Sweet Briar.	68
Not rare on the roadside near Thropton, in the form of var. <i>rotundifolia</i> Ran.	
<b>R. canina</b> L.	66
The var. <i>Blondaeana</i> (Rip.) Ran was collected near Muggleswick	
<b>Veronica catenata</b> Pennell.	68
Locally not rare on Holy Island.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>V. anagallis-aquatica</b> L. x <i>catenata</i> Pennell.	68
This hybrid was found growing in abundance around the lough on Holy Island. The plants were appreciably larger than either of the parents and completely sterile.—J. K. Morton.	
<b>V. Beccabunga</b> L. Brookline.	66
The variety <i>repens</i> Bosch, occurs plentifully on the mud left by the drying up of the reservoir north of Wolsingham, and on the Wear gravel beds near the same place.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Dactylorhiza Traunsteineri</b> Saut.	66
This season, this rare orchid flowered very sparsely in its old station on the Durham coast, only nine specimens being noted although five hybrids between it and <i>D. FuchsU</i> occurred. On the other hand, a new station for the species was discovered near West Cornforth. There the plant was hybridizing with <i>D. purpurella</i> .	
<b>Phyllitis Scolopendrium</b> (L.) Newm. Hart's Tongue Fern.	68
Concerning this fern. Baker and Tate make the remark " Very rare in Cheviotland ", and follow this by mentioning a locality near Warkworth. On October 2nd, I discovered it in two distinct stations on Holy Island.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Ophioglossum vulgatum</b> L. Adder's Tongue Fern.	66, 67
On the Magnesian Limestone in a large guise near Hawthorn Dene (66) and in a very small form in a field at Staward. In both cases the plant was common.	
<b>Botrychium Lunaria</b> (L.) Sw. Moonwort.	66
A single specimen was found on a limestone pasture at West Cornforth. 66 68	

**Rosa micrantha** Sm. Briar. 66  
 This calcicole rose is, as is well-known, very rare in Durham. However, it grows very sparsely along the railway west of Fishburn. In its oldest and best station at the mouth of Crimdon Dene, it has been "improved" out of existence by bull-dozers.

**Dactylorchis purpurella** Sph. Marsh Orchid. 66  
 New colonies for this fine orchid were discovered on the Fell near Shadon's Hill, Birtley, along the Hisehope Bum, near West Cornforth and Fishburn. The station on the Hisehope Bum was exceptionally interesting, for the plant grew alongside *D. Fuchsii* and *D. ericetorum*. As a result, hybrid swarms involving all three species had developed.—J.W.H.H.

#### LEPIDOPTERA BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

**Selenia bilunaria** Esp. Early Thorn. 66  
 Captured in a greenhouse at Birtley on June 7th.

**S. lunaria** Schf. Lunar Thorn. 66  
 Taken on a window sill at the Isolation Hospital at Chester le Street.—R. Harris.

**Oporima christyi** Prout. Christy's November Moth. 66, 67  
 Beaten as larvae from Wych Elm at Stanhope, Staward and Bothal. The preference for this tree is noteworthy.—T. C. Dunn, J.W.H.H.

**Colotois peimaria** L. Feathered Thorn. 67  
 Larvae from birch at Staward—a furthest west locality in Northumberland.

**Crocallis elinguaris** L. Scalloped Oak. 67  
 Larvae beaten from hawthorn, oak, etc., also at Staward.

**Theria rupicaprararia** Schf. Early Moth. 67  
 This moth, owing to its early emergence, is but rarely seen. Few records, therefore exist for our counties, and none of these refers to the west of Northumberland. However, larvae abounded on hawthorn in all the hedges at Staward on June 17th. With it were obtained larvae of *Erannis defoliaria* and *E. marginaria*.

**Operophtera fagata** Scharf. Northern Winter Moth. 66, 67  
 This species was also plentiful as larva at Birtley, Blanchland and Staward. Although taken from birch, the larva took readily to hawthorn as food.

**Polychrisia moneta** Fab. Golden Plusia. 66  
 Larvae noted on monkshood at Birtley and in Gateshead.

**Poecilocampa populi** L. December Moth. 67  
 Formerly, I used to take larvae of this moth from alder in Chopwell Woods, but have not seen it anywhere for a long time. However, I beat it from hawthorn at Staward on June 17th.

**Eulia mimstrana** L. 66  
 This very variable Tortricid has been captured this year in the Urpeth and Long Acre Dene Woods in the Team Valley.

**Lophopteryx capucina** L. Coxcomb Prominent. 66, 68  
 This species has been unusually common as larvae in our area. Larvae were obtained at Birtley, Lamesley, Wolsingham, Butsfield, Muggleswick and in Coquettale at Alwinton.—J.W.H.H.

**Cilix glaucata** Scop. Chinese Character. 66  
 Taken at Chester-le-Street.—R. Harris.

**Acherontia atropos** L. Death's Head Hawk. 66  
 A specimen of this fine hawkmoth was brought to school on Monday, Sept. 12th. It had been captured in a garden at Gilesgate Moor, Durham.—Charlotte Bramwell.



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## BY THE WAY

### THE DURHAM COUNTY NATURALISTS' UNION

In our issues for December, 1946 and April, 1947, we drew attention to the former existence of a Durham County Naturalists' Union, which, no doubt, inspired the formation of the Northern Naturalists' Union. In those notes, we asked for additional information concerning the D.C.N.U. and its activities. However, this request provoked but little response. Nevertheless, a few facts have been discovered.

Although the Gateshead Teachers' Natural History Society and Field Club was not a foundation member, at its meeting on September 13th, 1902, it decided to join. Very soon after, the Quarterly Meeting of the Union was held at Durham on October 4th, and the Gateshead Society duly admitted. Prior to this, a well-organised scheme for investigating the natural history of the county had been drawn up by the Union. In it the county had been mapped out into definite areas for which the constituent societies were made responsible. Necessarily, the Gateshead Society determined to play its part in carrying out the scheme, and to it was allotted the surveying of the lower Derwent Valley and the Team Valley.

In 1903, the first Quarterly Meeting of the D.C.N.U. took place at Durham on February 28th, when the year's programme was arranged. As a result, an Outdoor Meeting, planned also to act as the Union's Annual Meeting, was held at Stanhope on July 11th, 1903. During the same year, the Gateshead Society, in carrying out its obligations, made frequent visits to Gibside Park.

A rather curious fact concerning the Union is the fact that its affiliation fee was the modest sum of 5/-.

It will be noted that details concerning the collapse of this once powerful organisation are still lacking, although we strongly suspect that the death of the Revd. W. J. Wingate, who was primarily responsible

for the formation of the Union, had much to do with it.

Our personal knowledge of the D.C.N.U. ceased in 1905 when we left the district temporarily, and joined the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union. However, we do know that Mr. W. H. Young, M.Sc., who was the pioneer of biological teaching in the schools of our counties, was President in 1908, when the Union met at Whitley.

#### CABBAGE BUTTERFLIES AND VIRUS DISEASE

As many readers are no doubt aware, during the present year there has been a strong immigration of cabbage white butterflies (*Pieris brassicae*) into this country so great in numbers that their ravages amongst cabbages and turnips have extended to the Outer Hebrides. This fact in itself is remarkable, but still more remarkable has been the publicity given both in the press and over the wireless, to the virus disease which attacks the caterpillars.

This disease formed the subject of a note in the *Newcastle Chronicle* headed "Virus liquidates caterpillars". In it appears the statement that "scientists at Cambridge have discovered a virus which liquidates caterpillars". Such viruses, even that attacking the larvae of the Pieridae, have been recognised by scientists for many years, and experiments designed to "liquidate" caterpillars of the Black Arches Moth in Germany and the Gipsy Moth in the United States have been carried out on a large scale without "wiping out" the insects concerned. Even in this country we have worked with virus diseases on the Vapourer Moth, the Clothes moth, the Buff Ermine—and the Cabbage White! Our results were spectacular in closed cages, but disappointing when more extensive work was undertaken.

The last paragraph in the *Chronicle*, which states that the disease could "wipe out" the cabbage butterfly in the same way that myxomatosis wiped out rabbits is completely fallacious for whoever is responsible for it seems utterly unaware of the fact that the bulk of our huge cabbage white populations depends upon annual immigration from North Africa. Obviously, even if the butterfly were exterminated one season, its numbers would be restored by immigration in subsequent years, and destruction continued.

This year, neither Northumberland nor Durham has been free from the virus affecting the cabbage white, and we beat an affected larva from an oak tree far from any cruciferous crops.

#### OUR LOCAL BUMBLE BEES

Bold, in the *Natural History Transactions of Northumberland and Durham*, Vol. III, Part 1, was able to supply a goodly list of the members of the genera *Bombus* and *Psithyrus* occurring in our counties. Since his time, the complexion of our bumble bee population has changed considerably, mainly for the worse. Still, Mr. J. E.

Ruxton has added *Bombus lapponicus* to the old list. However, Bold's *B. fragrans*, now known as *B. distinguendus*, has vanished from some areas, and become very rare in others. Even worse is the plight of *B. sylvarum*, for no one has reported it for many years in spite of the fact that Bold recorded it as "found throughout our district and by no means rare." *B. ruderatus*, after a period of decline, seems now, in restricted districts on the Magnesian Limestone, to be on the road to recovery. However, as recent records exist for *B. soroensis* or *B. jonellus*—the latter known to Bold as *B. scrimshiranus*.

In the case of the genus *Psithyrus*, the position is even more disturbing. During recent years, no one has attempted to differentiate the various species or to ascertain their actual ranges in the two counties although Bold describes three as common with us, and one *P. rupestris*, as "somewhat rare". It should be remarked here that much the same held true at the close of the 1914—18 war.

It seems that the bumble bees form a not too difficult and compact group to which anyone, not slavishly attracted to the usual Lepidoptera, could profitably direct his energies.

## THE SOCIETIES

### NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

After a lapse of a considerable number of years, by the kind invitation of the Cleveland Naturalists' Field Club, the Autumn Meeting of the Union was held at Middlesbrough on Saturday, October 29th, 1955. The attendance was excellent, and the audience appreciative.

The Chair was taken by the President, Mr. J. A. Richardson, M.Sc., and our lecturer was Mr. J. E. Ruxton, now happily recovered from the accident which prevented his giving the Presidential Address at our March meeting. For his subject, Mr. Ruxton talked about "Some Birds of our own District". He gave a fascinating account of the birds he had studied and photographed. Most of our members found it difficult to decide what they appreciated most in his lecture for the beauty of the photographs, the patience of the photographer, and the wide range of species which he had managed to catch in their most characteristic attitudes, were all outstanding. Perhaps those slides which combined a glimpse of the scenery of the area with his feathered subjects attracted most attention. These covered such species as the flycatchers, the wagtails, the various tits, the dipper, the snipe, the woodcock, the nightjar, the ring ousel and the owls.

The heartiness of the usual vote of thanks in itself spoke eloquently of the esteem in which our past president and treasurer was held, and of our appreciation of his lecture.

After the talk, we partook of the excellent tea provided for us, and then proceeded to examine and discuss the various exhibits.

Amongst these, we were glad to see the collection of local and other butterflies and moths brought by Mr. P. J. Stead and also the interesting plants shown by Mr. I. C. Lawrence. The latter included many collected in the Cleveland District and others from Central France. Mrs. A. N. Gibby had on view an exhibit including living twigs of the two British oaks, the Turkey oak and the American red oak. Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison contributed a collection of his season's discoveries in local wild roses, and also a whale's rib, cut to form a weapon of offence, found in an early Iron Age settlement in the Isle of Lewis. Fossils formed the exhibit of Mr. O. C. Hill. Outstanding also were Dr. Todd's fine array of photographs in colour of many of our Magnesian Limestone plants which had been set up for our inspection. Of great interest were Mr. R. H. Lofthouse's extraordinary collection of portions of tree and other roots which bore a grotesque resemblance to many natural objects. As usual, Mr. J. P. Hird had brought some rare ferns and interesting photographs.

For a very successful meeting our best thanks are due to the President and Secretary, Miss M. Ablett, of the Cleveland Naturalists' Field Club.

#### BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

On Tuesday, October 11th, the President, Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison, F.R.S., gave a lecture entitled "Reminiscences, Grave and Gay", in which he recounted various happenings in his own life both at home and abroad. These, in general, had a natural history bias, and most were of a humorous nature. Following this, on October 23rd, we had a very interesting talk on "The Farmer goes to School" by Mr. C. W. Percy, B.Sc. This was illustrated by an excellent film depicting all aspects of life at the County School of Agriculture at Houghall. The lecturer answered a long series of questions arising from his lecture. Next, on November 8th, Professor T. S. Westoll, F.R.S., of King's College, gave us a very instructive lecture on "Fossil Man—Facts and Hoaxes". This talk was accompanied by a long series of lantern slides of the fossil remains of man and of the anthropoid apes from diverse stations and of various ages. In particular, Professor Westoll spent a lengthy and useful period supplying facts concerning the discovery of the so-called Piltdown Man and of the events leading up to its being discredited. Last, but certainly not least, on November 22nd, we had a very interesting and noteworthy lecture by Mrs. Grace Hickling, M.A., on the "Fame Islands". She divided her talk into three parts; firstly she dealt with the ecclesiastical history of the group; then she described, with the aid of a magnificent series of lantern slides, the general scenery and build of the islands, ending by entrancing us with a first-hand account of the birds haunting the isles and of the gray seal colony.

## NOTES AND RECORDS

### NOTES

**Lepidoptera on Holy Island (66).**—The species given in the following list were caught whilst flying at dusk or after dark when resting on flower heads of the common ragwort. This plant is particularly abundant on the lee of the dunes on Holy Island. The afternoon of August 18th, 1955, was cloudy with occasional drizzle and a cool breeze. The evening, however, was mild and dry, with a fresh breeze and a mainly overcast sky. Moths were flying in numbers, and the following species were collected between dusk and 2 a.m., B.S.T. :—*Amathes xanthographa* Schf., *A. sexstrigata* Haw., *Agrotis vestigialis* Hufn., *Euxoa tritici* L., *Tphaena pronuba* L., *Hydraecia ocryulea* L. (*nictitans* L.), *H. micacea* Esp., *Apamea secalis* L., *A. monoglypha* Hufn., *Caradrina clavipalpis* Scop., *Tholera popularis* Fab., *Actebia praecox* L., *Euphyia bilineata* L., *Epirrhoe alternata* Mull., *Crambus culmellus* L., *C. tristellus* Schiff., *C. geniculens* Haw., *C.falsellus* Schiff., *C. perlellus* Scop. var. *warringtonellus* (the dominant form in this locality), *C. pratellus* L., *Scoparia lineola* Curt., *Depressaria ocellana* Fabr., *D. zephyrella* Hubn., and *D. subpropinquilla* Stainton.—J. K. Morton and J. Newton.

**A Typical Peppered Moth (*Biston betularia*) caught at Chester-le-Street (66).**—On July 7th, 1955, after working a mercury vapour moth trap for four years I saw, for the first time, a typical example of the peppered moth, *Biston betularia*. The prevalent form here, and in the area generally., is the melanic variety *carbonaria* Jord. However, other workers have seen odd typical moths on Prestwick Carr (67) and near Chopwzil Woods (66), some miles away. Moreover, Prof. Heslop Harrison has bred an intermediate insect, with many melanics, from larvae beaten from oak in Long Acre Dene, near Birtley (66). T.C. Dunn.

**The Foodplants of *Biston betularia*.**—I am reminded by Mr. Dunn's note about some observations we have both made concerning the foodplants of the Peppered Moth larvae. My friend, Mr. P. B. M. Allan, C.B.E., M.A., in his very useful book on "Larval Foodplants," makes the following statement : " Has been found on almost every species of native deciduous tree and shrub ". Usually, in this area, the larvae are procured from oak, although hawthorn, wych elm, birch, etc., are not despised. However, in the larch woods along the Hisehope Burn (66), in N. W. Durham, both Mr. Dunn and I have taken the larvae from larch, a deciduous tree of course, but not native, and a conifer. In the Outer Hebrides (110), the larvae show definite preference for birch and alder for I have never beaten them from any other tree or shrub although many are available.—J. W. H. H.

**Hedgehogs in the Birtley (66) District.**—I have been told on good authority, that in Birtley Parish hedgehogs have always been considered very rare or absent. Whatever may have been the case in the past, the statement holds true no longer. This is in harmony with information I have received to the effect that, in spite of the heavy mortality the animal has to undergo from heavy motor traffic, it has increased greatly in numbers in Durham generally.

My garden is situated well into Birtley, and only a very short distance from the Monument. Nevertheless, it supports a colony of hedgehogs and has done so for some time. In fact, they bred there this season and, no doubt, have done so for some time. Moreover, they have become exceedingly tame, for they approach to the back door and make their presence felt by the sounds they make. We feed them regularly on bread soaked in milk, and they come for it every evening. In approaching the spot where the saucer is placed, they have to cross a board. Upon this they will rest, and allow it to be raised for inspection without making any attempt to escape. Similarly, if lights are allowed to fall on them from the house, they take no notice but continue feeding.—(Mrs.) M. W. Perry.

**A Few Lepidoptera Noted near Chester-le-Street.**—During the past summer, I have seen the usual butterflies and moths in the grounds of the Isolation Hospital,

Chester-le-Street (66). Amongst these, descendants of early immigrants, Red Admirals persisted until late autumn. However, an interesting addition to my list was the Sword Grass *Xylena exsoleta*, which I took on a window pane on October 10th. A fortnight later a second was found drowned. As usual, the Herald, *Scoliopteryx libatrix* appeared in the stokehole whilst the Feathered Thorn, *Colotois pennaria*, an insect new to me, was captured on November 4th.—R. Harris.

**A Visit to Tunstall Reservoir (66).**—On September 25th. Dr. J. K. Morton and I proceeded to the reservoir near Tunstall House, just north of Wolsingham, with a view to testing the possibilities of the birch woods near its northern extremity. Our quest was far from successful so far as Lepidoptera were concerned, for all we took were a few larvae of *Notodonta dromedarius*, *Tethea duplaris*, *Bupalus piniaria*, *Gonodontis bidentata*, *Cabera pusaria*, *C. exanthemata*, *Eupithecia lariciata* and odd specimens of *Amathes glareosa* and *Citria lutea*.

We were, however, more than compensated for our long journey by the sight of the reservoir itself. Normally fifty feet deep, for large stretches it was quite dry whilst, at the deepest points, it contained not more than five feet of water. Over the dry areas the view was amazing for they were covered by dense masses of *Gnaphalium uliginosum*, *Polygonum Hydropiper*, *P. lapathifolium*, *P. amphibium*, *P. persicaria*, *Lysimachia nummularia*, the creeping form of *Veronica Beccabunga* and, in the hollows, *Equisetum limosum*. Very obviously, almost the whole array had originated in masses of seeds which had lain dormant on the bed of the reservoir until the long-continued drought had exposed them.

The impressions created by these dense masses of vegetation were so intense that it will be long before one can forget them.—J. W. H. H.

## RECORDS

### LEPIDOPTERA-BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

<b>Notodonta dromedarius</b> L. Iron Prominent.	66
Taken at light in my garden on August 4th, 1955.	
<b>Pheosia gnoma</b> Fab. Lesser Swallow Prominent.	66
Captured at light in the garden at Chester-le-Street for the first time on August 1st, but beaten as larva previously from birch on Waldrige Fell.—T. C. Dunn	
<b>Plusia gamma</b> L. Silver Y.	68
This common immigrant was plentiful everywhere in Northumberland and Durham this season. It is, however, worthy of special note that it was abundant on Holy Island on October 2nd and, later, on the Fame Islands in November.—J. W. H. H.	
<b>Plusia bractea</b> Schf. Gold Spangle.	66
This rare species came to light in my garden at Chester-le-Street on August 10th. This gave me my first acquaintance with the insect.—T.C.D.	
<b>Hydraecia lucens</b> Freyer.	66
Captured at the flowers of sea lavender at night in Greatham Marsh on August 28th.—J. Newton.	
<b>H. petasitis</b> Dbid. The Butterbur.	66
At mercury vapour light in the garden on August 17th, but known to be present feeding on butterbur along the Wear banks a mile from my house. Although I took it in this station two years ago, this in the first occasion on which it has occurred in the garden.—T.C.D.	
<b>Sterrhia dimidiata</b> Hufn. Single-dotted Wave.	66
Also attracted to mercury vapour light at Chester-le-Street. Although widely distributed in the two counties, this insect is quite rare, and few records exist for it in the Wear and Team Valleys.—T.C.D.	
<b>Cidaria fulvata</b> Forst. Barred Yellow.	66
Recent captures of this insect have been few, but one specimen came into moth trap this season.—T.C.D.	

<b>Dysstroma truncata</b> Hufn. Marbled Carpet.	66
A single coal-black individual was taken on the Vigo railway on September 28th—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Agrochola macilenta</b> Hb. Yellow-line Quaker.	66
Several beaten from birch along the Hisehope Burn.	
<b>Panolis flammae</b> Schf. Pine Beauty.	66
Larvae not rare on Scot's Pine in the woods near Dryderdale.	
<b>Archicaris parthenias</b> L. Orange Underwing.	66
Taken as larvae from birch, and even rowan, at Dryderdale in fair numbers.	
<b>Eupithecia subfulvata</b> Haw. Tawny Speckled Pug.	66
The dark aberration <i>oxydata</i> occurred this season at Birtley.	
<b>Ortholitha umbrifera</b> Prout. June Belle.	66
Not at all rare on Waldrige Fell ; this species was formerly confused with <i>O. mucronata</i> .— J.W.H.H.	
<b>Entephria caesiata</b> Schf. Mountain Grey Carpet.	66
Not rare on the heather along the Bumhope Burn with its banded variety <i>annosata</i> Zett.—T. C. Dunn.	
<b>Mesoleuca albicillata</b> L. Beautiful Carpet.	66
Found for the first time in the Team Valley amongst wild raspberries. It was taken in the woods near the Riding Farm.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Hepialus velleda</b> Hubn. Northern Swift.	66
Taken at rest near the Isolation Hospital at Chester-le-Street.—R. Harris.	
<b>Alucita tetradactyla</b> L. Thyme Plume.	66
This plume, for which Robson gives but few stations in his <i>Catalogue</i> , was observed amongst thyme near West Cornforth.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>A. pentadactyla</b> L.	66
This season this beautiful white plume moth swarmed amongst grass and weeds near the Isolation Hospital, Chester-le-Street.—R. Harris.	
<b>Cheimophila salicella</b> Hubn.	67
Here we have a species, exceedingly rare in Northumberland and Durham generally, which abounds near Birtley and Lamesley. It is now reported from Whittonstall where it was distinctly rare as larvae feeding on bramble.—J.W.H.H.	

#### PLANT BUGS—HEMIPTERA-HETEROPTERA

<b>Acanthosoma tristriatum</b> L.	66
This shield-bug is recorded by Saunders as having been taken long years ago by Waiels near Newcastle. However, it is wanting in Bold's list. Several specimens were captured near East Buttsfield on September 21st and on September 24 <sup>th</sup> near Wolsingham—J.W.H.H.	

#### HYMENOPTERA—ANTS, BEES, WASPS, ETC.

<b>Mutilla europaea</b> L. Solitary Ant.	66
In the north, this is an exceedingly rare insect, but still it occurs at the Blackhall Rocks, and Mr. Ruxton records it from the Derwent Valley. Saunders lists it solely from the extreme south of England.	
<b>Vespa austriaca</b> Panz.	62, 66, 67
This wasp, first proved to be a parasite by the late Mr. Charles Robson of Birtley, has been taken at Great Ayton in the Cleveland District, at Ebchester and Winlaton in Durham, and at Shotley Bridge and Killingworth in Northumberland.	
<b>Psithyrus rupestris</b> Fab.	66
Never at any time a common bee in our counties, the insect has become distinctly rarer in recent years. A new locality for it however, is Ravensworth.	

<b>Pontania harrisoni</b> Benson ,	66
Along the Wear between Durham and Shincliffe, and galling <i>Salix purpurea</i> and the hybrid <i>S. rubra</i> .	
<b>P. phyllicifoliae</b> Forsius.	66
On <i>Salix phyllicifolia</i> by the roadside near Muggleswick, and on the same shrub near Heathery Cleugh high up Weardale.	
<b>P. pustulator</b> Forsius.	66
Rarer than the preceding, but on the same species of willow along the Kilhope Burn not far from Cowsgill.	
<b>P. femoralis</b> Cameron.	66
Much more widely spread than the two preceding species but occurring on <i>Salix nigricans</i> as well as on <i>S. phyllicifolia</i> .	
<b>P. bridgmanii</b> Cameron.	66, 68
On Salices of the Capreae group in Upper Weardale and near Alwinton, Northumberland.—J.W.H.H.	

#### ODONATA—DRAGONFLIES

<b>Libellula depressa</b> L.	66
This dragonfly, although not uncommon in some of the southern thins out rapidly as one passes to the north ; taken at Greatham, S. E. 66 counties, Durham.	

#### FLOWERING PLANTS

<b>Kentranthus ruber</b> (L.) (DC. Spur Valerian.	68
Plentiful on the Castle Rocks on Holy Island. The plants bear flowers varying in colour between white and deep red.	
<b>Cymbalaria muralis</b> Baug. Ivy-leaved Toadflax.	68
Naturalised on walls on Holy Island.	
<b>Pimpinella major</b> (L.) Huds.	66
One large patch in Castle Eden Dene on the side of the path by which one enters.	
<b>Rosa spinosissima</b> L. Burnet Rose.	66
Abundant in a field near East Busfield where it carries its characteristic gall, that of <i>Rhodites spinosissimae</i> ; this gall is rarely found inland with us.	
<b>R. verticillacantha</b> Mer.	66, 68
In hedges to the west of Beal Station and at Wolsingham.	
<b>R. Deseglensei</b> Bor. Dogrose.	67
Quite rare in the area between the Devil's Water and Dipton Woods, near Corbridge.	
<b>R. incerta</b> Desegl. Dogrose.	67
In the same district and well distributed.	
<b>R. Borreri</b> Woods. Dogrose.	67, 68
As usual only as single bushes near Slaley, Riding Mill and Beal.	
<b>R. sclerophylla</b> Scheutz.	67
Plentiful in hedges near Stagshaw Bank, Linnold's Bridge, Slaley, etc.	
<b>R. tomentella</b> Lem.	67
Along the Devil's Water in the vicinity of Linnold's Bridge.	
<b>R. dumalis ssp. dolomitica</b> H. Harr.	66, 67
Forms closely approximating this new subspecies have occurred at various points in the area between Corbridge and Slaley, although some of the bushes bear leaves much more deeply biserrate than those seen near Fishburn, Quarrington Hill and Cassop Vale.	
<b>R. caesia</b> Sm. Downy Northern Dogrose.	67
This rose, to which the name <i>R. coriifolia</i> is generally given, is not rare in Tynedale, but so far the very interesting form, var. <i>subcoriifolia</i> , has only turned up in ahedge between Wheel Birks and Whittonstall.	