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Edited by

W. HESLOP HARRISON, D.Sc., F.R.S.
KING'S COLLEGE, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

BY THE WAY

PROPOSED TEESDALE RESERVOIRS

As is now well-known, the plan of constructing a reservoir in Teesdale on the Cow Green area has been abandoned on account of unforeseen engineering difficulties revealed by the trial bores. An alternative has now been suggested in what is being designated the Dine Holm site ; this lies below Falcon Clints. Opinions have been invited about its suitability and desirability from the natural history standpoint.

It is quite clear that many nationally important industrial projects in the lower Tees area must have additional water supplies, and that such supplies must be drawn from Upper Teesdale. These facts constitute a threat to the botanical treasures of the area. Consequently, various people have been requested, or have volunteered to give advice in the matter. However, it is noteworthy that many of those so approached have little practical or really sustained acquaintance with the district. Moreover, by some strange perversity, only botanists have been asked for advice. This seems to ignore the fact that Widdy Bank Fell and its neighbourhood possess a striking arthropod fauna including such species as *Carsia paludata* amongst the Lepidoptera (here in its only Durham station), *Pontania pustulator* and *P. phyllicifolia* (here in their first known British habitats) amongst the sawflies, *Eriophysis kochii*, amongst the gall-mites (here in its only known British locality), and so on. Surely, therefore, entomologists and general zoologists should have been allowed to have a say in the matter.

In spite of all objections, it seems that the Dine site will satisfy most of the thinking naturalists because it entails a minimum of disturbance to plants and animals, and ensures that the Teesdale rarities will be preserved. This was the weighed opinion of the Council of the Northern Naturalists' Union, the advice of which, by some extraordinary oversight, was not sought, and also of most of Union members generally.

In the construction of the reservoir and dam, it is to be hoped that the necessary heavy lorry traffic across the moors will be adequately controlled so that any resulting damage is minimized. Further, it should be made clear that the public rights of access to Falcon Clints and other important habitats will not be disturbed. There is a distinct chance that such interference may take place just to the east of the Clints, and even that damage may be done there whilst the work is in progress.

VISIT OF PROFESSOR W. H. PEARSALL, F.R.S.

On Friday, February 22nd and Saturday, February 23rd, two important lectures were delivered in King's College by Prof. W. H. Pearsall, F.R.S. One, open to the general public, dealt with the topic of " Bogs and Moorlands ". This was given under the auspices of the University of Durham Philosophical Society, and attracted a very large audience from many points in the two counties. It was illustrated by copious lantern slides and sketches, and demonstrated how, by various postglacial happenings, our presentday system of bogs and moorlands had been developed.

The second, organised by the King's College Natural History Society, dealt with the Lake District. In the course of his talk, the lecturer demonstrated, by means of lantern slides and informative blackboard sketches, how its characteristic scenery had originated as the outcome of a combination of agencies working in the past.

OUR FIELD MEETINGS

During the past season, our field excursions have been characterized by an obvious growth in the numbers of our members taking an active interest in the natural history of the areas visited, rather than in the walk itself. Unfortunately, most of the increased interest displayed has been centred around the plants, especially the rarer species encountered. As far as entomology is concerned, only a few enthusiasts did any real work, and most of their efforts were directed to the study of the butterflies and moths. Only casual attention was paid to the other insect groups and to birds, mammals, etc. The plant groups, other than flowering plants, as exemplified by the fungi, bryophytes and lichens, received no attention. Will no one undertake to stimulate work in such groups ? We do not lack people with the necessary knowledge, but such rarely attend our meetings and, still more rarely, display willingness to help and encourage new workers. Surely, they cannot disregard the primary reasons for the Union's origin and existence?

The records of the old Gateshead Teachers' Natural History Society, and of the Wallis Club, demonstrate what results it is possible with the aid of willing helpers.

NEWSPAPER SCIENCE

In the *Sunday Post* for March 3rd, 1957 a real gem is printed. Apparently it is a tale of two friends who go out to shoot wild ducks. Whilst they were waiting, one of them, a banker, suddenly developed a strange swelling of his face, and was taken to the local doctors for treatment. In the words of the *Post* : " The doctor's wife knew the banker quite well, but she could not believe that the owner of the face was him. The doctor was equally taken aback. He led the man into the surgery and examined the face that had taken on the appearance of a balloon. The doc, said that either the man was allergic to something that had been in the thicket, or he had been stung by a dead-nettle. This gives a sting that is not felt at the time. The doc. had had similar cases, but none quite so bad. "Two other doctors examined the banker and endorsed the first doctor's verdict, although they said no one could be completely sure about the cause".

MR. J. P. SOUTTER

Recently, we encountered a number of very useful papers by Mr. J. P. Soutter of Bishop Auckland. These dealt mainly with botanical subjects although general natural history occasionally formed his topic. As we had never heard of this gentleman before, the value of his papers tempted us to accumulate further facts about him.

In 1882, he was on the Editorial Board of the *Young Naturalist*, and in 1883 contributed eleven articles to Vol. 6 of that periodical. Later, in 1890, he occupied a similar position on the Board of Vol. 1, First Series, of the *British Naturalist* which had preplaced the *Young Naturalist*. In 1894, a new series of the same magazine was introduced, and once again Mr. Soutter was allocated a place on the Editorial panel.

In addition to his numerous articles in the journals just named, Mr. J. P. Soutter published independently a useful pamphlet bearing the title " Introduction to Botany ".

Except that I have been told that he was a bookbinder in Bishop Auckland, I have no further information about him. Can anyone supply such facts? It seems a pity that nothing should be known about a man who was clearly a botanist of more than local repute.

THE SOCIETIES

NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The Thirty-third Annual Meeting of the Union was held, by the kind invitation of the Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne, in the Hancock Museum, at 3-15 p.m. on Saturday, March 2nd, 1957.

The President, Dr. A. Todd, was in the Chair, and the growth and importance of the Union were amply shown by the size and enthusiasm of the audience.

Mr. T. C. Dunn, our Treasurer, and Mrs. A. N. Gibby, our Secretary, were able to present once again reports, recognized by all as being exceedingly satisfactory. To all the officers concerned, including the President, the cordial thanks of the Union were tendered.

After this, the President gave an account of our proposed summer activities, both of our senior and our junior members.

Following this, the election of officers for 1957-58 took place when Prof. J. W. Heslop-Harrison was elected President, and Dr. A. Todd as Vice-President in place of the retiring member. In addition, Mr. Wm. Ellerington, as a mark of his long-continued services to the Union, was elected an Honorary Vice-President.

After the business meeting, Dr. Todd gave his Presidential Address, illustrated by a long series of photographs in colour, entitled " Wild Flower Scrap Book. In the course of his talk, he led us step by step through the area around, and in, Cassop Vale, showing us slides of its more interesting flowering plants. In particular, he displayed a fine slide of *Epipactis atrorubens*, an orchid new to Durham and quite recently discovered by Prof. Heslop-Harrison, Dr. J. A. Richardson and, himself. Next, he produced views of scenery in North Wales and the Scottish Highlands. When his lecture concluded, Dr. Todd answered a series of questions about his plants and his photographic technique.

Tea was served at 4-30 p.m. when members from various societies met to discuss points of common interest, after which we proceeded to examine the exhibits arranged for our inspection. Once again, foremost amongst them was Mr. Cooke's exhibit which, in the opinion of many, exceeded in beauty and interest those of previous years. It included a wide range of spring-flowering shrubs and herbs, most important of which were various Rhododendrons, Viburnums, Daphnes, Flowering Currants, Witch Hazels, Prunus, Primulas, Crocuses, Snowdrops, Winter Aconites, Cyclamens, Saxifrages, etc. Miss D. B. Blackburn showed a fine array of wild flowers collected at North Berwick whilst Mr. Hird interested us with his flower illustrations and diary. As before, Mrs. A. N. Gibby had on view an astonishing number of botanical periodicals covering a wide range of topics. Prof. J. W. Heslop-Harrison exhibited a case of melanic Thorn Moths (*Selenia bilunaria*) reared during certain experiments concerned with the induction of melanism. He also showed wild red primroses and cowslips, a century-old map of Upper Teesdale, showing the distribution of Teesdale rarities, and drawings of pollen grains and seeds made a hundred and fifty years ago.

BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

On December 4th, 1956, we had a visit from Miss M. H. Oates, who gave a very entertaining and useful lecture, illustrated by lantern slides and fresh specimens, on " Common Toadstools ". This was enthusiastically received and provoked numerous questions. After the Christmas recess, on January 8th, 1957, Prof. Heslop-Harrison talked about a " Trip across Canada ", aided by a long series of lantern slides. On January 22nd he discoursed on the " Birtley Dialect " in which he described its grammar and usage. Following this, on February 5th. Dr. H. A. F. Mackay gave us a medical lecture on " Two Steps forward and One back " in which he described modern medical progress and its checks. On February 19th, Dr. G. H. Banbury talked about " Biology and Radiation ". This was a greatly appreciated change from our usual topics, and proved of great value to his hearers. On March 5th, we welcomed Dr. A. Todd, President of the Northern Naturalists' Union, who gave us a very useful talk on " Collecting and Photographing Wild Flowers ". On March 19th, our winter session closed with the Annual Meeting, when reports on the season's work were received, and officers elected. When these activities were finished, the President gave us a lecture, illustrated by slides in colour, on his recent visit to Ireland. Next we were entertained by Mr. Bert Soulsby. The evening closed with a " Brains Trust ", the speakers on the panel being the President, Colonel Perry and Mr. T. C. Dunn. B.Sc.

For the excellent refreshments served during the evening, and on our behalf, we have to thank our lady members who put so much work into making the meeting a success.

NOTES AND RECORDS

NOTES

An Early Specimen of *Selenia bilunaria*—On March 11th a single specimen of the Early Thorn moth was seen at Cleadon (66). This is a remarkably early date for this species, in spite of its name, in Co. Durham. In our counties, unlike what holds in the south, the insect is single-brooded, the single emergence taking place in May and June. It has, however, been captured in July when again the moth taken was of the spring brood type.—R. Boyce.

Vagaries of Insect Emergencies in 1957.—So far, this season have been a very poor one for insects although some moths have been observed which have created great surprise. Thus, during the first week of March, male examples of the Mottled Umber (*Erannis defoliaria*) were captured as was also an odd example of the bright-line Brown-eye (*Diataraxia oleracea*). Normally, the former should have been on the wing in the October and November of 1956 whilst the proper time for the appearance of the second ought to have been the month of June. Similarly, on March 10th, I found a male example of the Common Winter Moth (*Operophtera brumata*), also a hang-over from November and December. These observations were made at Chester-le-Street (66).—R. Harris.

A Durham Record for the Tissue Moth (*Triphosa dubitata*).—According to Robson's statements made in his *Catalogue*, this rare species has not been seen in Co. Durham for eighty-five years although he supplies a few odd records for

years before 1875. The position is worse in the sister county, Northumberland, for only a single record exists for that area. That depends upon Wailles' capture of an odd example at Tynemouth (67) many years ago. However, recent records have been made for v.-c. 68 by R. Craigs who reports taking half-a-dozen specimens in Redesdale. Last year, a female, captured on Sept. 20th, was reported by me as having been taken in the area between Birtley and Chester-le-Street (66). This means that, in all probability a colony, attached to blackthorn as its food plant, exists in that district.—R. Harris.

Notes from the Brooms, Birtley.—This area (66), marked on the Ordnance Survey maps as Walter's Wood, is always spoken of locally as the "Brooms " on account of the abundance of that shrub there. On March 31st, tempted the unusually fine weather that had prevailed during the last weeks of the month, we made an excursion to the vicinity to determine to what extent vegetation on the pitheaps had advanced. Plants proved to be unexpectedly backward although both sexes of the willows *Salix aurita*, *S. atrocinerea* and *S. caprea*, with their hybrids, were fully out. Nevertheless, the only additional flowers observed were those of the lesser celandine, the stitchwort, the chickweed, the coltsfoot, the common daisy, the dandelion and the field woodrush. However, an important observation was made in respect to the foxglove which has established itself on the almost bare shale of the old pit heap. This colony was detected quite recently, and seems not only capable of maintaining itself, but also of gaining ground. Two other plants, of considerable interest, were found at the base of the heap ; these were the grass, *Nardus stricta*, and the heath bedstraw, *Galium saxatile*—both obvious relics of heath conditions.—J. A. Richardson.

The Sandpits near the Brooms.—Not long ago, there existed several sandpits about a quarter of a mile away from the area with which Dr. Richardson has dealt. These were of exceptional interest inasmuch as they used to support a flora recalling that of sand dunes. A dozen years ago the plants present included the field mouse-ear chickweed (*Cerastium arvense*), the stork's-bill (*Erodium cicutarium*), the stone-crop (*Sedum acre*), the sand spurry (*Spergularia rubra*), the red-fruited dandelion (*Taraxacum laevigata*) and the dove'sfoot crane's-bill (*Geranium molle*). In the oldest one, that on the south side of the Urpeth road, was the only known Durham station for the American rush, *Juncus tennisi*. Now the whole of these pits have been filled up, and the only plants remaining of those just listed are the red-fruited dandelion and the dove'sfoot crane's-bill.

Perhaps it should be noted here that, in the most westerly of these pits a burial cist, in good preservation, was dug out some years ago. Both the contents and the cist itself were wilfully destroyed.—J.W.H.H.

Waxwings in the Team Valley.—During the first week in March a group of fourteen waxwings was observed in Ravensworth Woods (66). These were noted on several occasions. In addition, two individuals were seen separated from the rest in the same woods. Later, odd birds were encountered lower in the valley and also on the eastern side.—A.N.

Winter Moths in the Vicinity of Gateshead.—In this area, the various winter moths, more especially the winged males are quite abundant. The wingless females, concealing themselves quite successfully, are seen much less frequently. The species taken are the Mottled Umber (*Eranthis defoliaria*), the Scarce Umber (*K aurantiaria*), the Dotted Border (*E. marginaria*) and the Spring Usher (*E. leucophaearia*). Of these by far the rarest is the Spring Usher.

E. defoliaria exhibits a wide range of variation, including diverse melanic forms whilst *E. marginaria* produces a heavy percentage of its black variety *fuscata*.

Inside the town, I have captured *E. aurantiaria* in Durham Road and in the grounds of the Children's Hospital. The Spring Usher (*E. leucophaearia*) occurs in the Wishing Well woods, a few miles away in somewhat small numbers; there it produces some very pretty forms.

The latest date I have for any of these is December 28th, when I have taken specimens of *E. defoliaria*. Curiously enough, I have captured the Pale Brindled

Beauty (*Phigalia pedaria*) on the same date, also on lamps along Durham Road. The specimens so taken were quite pale types.

Of the two Winter Moths proper, the Common Winter Moth (*Operophtem brumata*) swarms everywhere. The Northern Winter Moth (*O. fagata*) is met with only in the birch woods south of Ravensworth Castle.

The Range of the Lilac Beauty Moth (*Apeira syringaria*) in North Durham and South Northumberland.—Of this beautiful insect, Robson, in his *Catalogue* was able to record two specimens only, one from Meldon Park in Northumberland and the other, a female, taken at Thornley, Co. Durham, by Hedworth, 1876. The species, however, is much more plentiful with us than these records would show.

My first capture of it locally took place in Chopwell Woods (66) in May, 1930, when I beat half-grown larvae from honeysuckle. In the following season, on April 23rd and 27th, I took three small larvae in the same habitat. Later, I discovered the insect in Gibside Woods (66) on May 12th when five small larvae were knocked out of honeysuckle on a very wet afternoon. However, subsequent visits to Gibside Woods demonstrated that the Lilac Beauty was quite common there.

In Northumberland, the species occurred in some numbers along the road running parallel to the river near North Wylam (67) and also in Styford Woods (67) on the opposite bank of the Tyne to Riding Mill. In every instance the larvae proved very healthy and fed up speedily and well to yield a fine handsome series of specimens in June and July.—J.R.J.

The Brown Argus (*Aricia agestis*) in Durham.—Last year, the possibilities of establishing a sanctuary for the Brown Argus populations in Co. Durham were explored. Many of its stations were examined critically, and a short report concerning the earlier investigations appeared in the *Vasculum* for July, 1956. Later in July and August, further attempts were made to discover new and untouched colonies. These researches were partially successful for a new locality on the coast was detected by Mr. Jefferson, Dr. J. K. Morton and myself. A week or two later, two additional inland stations were discovered in a very secluded area in the neighbourhood of Cassop Vale. The importance of our colonies of this insect lies in the fact that they provide an excellent example of a genetical experiment carried out by wild populations under natural conditions.

In connection with the work now being planned and carried out in the genetics of the butterfly and its local races and populations, it seems clear that many workers, both inside and outside our area, fail to realise the extent of the literature that exists concerning *Aricia agestis*, its subspecies *artaxerxes* and the numerous forms formerly grouped under the so-called variety *salmacis*. A list of the more important and useful papers is greatly to be desired and is therefore set out here.

The first really valuable paper, in which it was demonstrated that the Scottish, Durham and southern English forms were specifically the same came from the pen of George Wailes in his *Catalogue of the Lepidoptera of Northumberland and Durham* (1858, *Trans. Tyneside Naturalists' Field Club*, Vol. 3, pp. 211-223. The second, which amplified the account given by Wailes and gave many additional details, was written by Mr. J. E. Robson. It appeared in the *Young Naturalist* (1887, Vol. 8, pp. 81-87) and was entitled " *Lycaena Agestis* W. V.". The same worker discussed the insect further in his *Catalogue of the Lepidoptera of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne* (1899, *Nat. Hist. Trans. Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne*, Vol. 12, Part I, pp. 9-11. Finally, Heslop-Harrison and Carter published a paper, attacking the problem from a genetical angle, in the *Transactions of the Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne*, 1924, (New Series), Vol. 6 pp. 89-107. This paper bore the title "British Races in *Aricia Medon* Esp. with Special Reference to the Areas in which they overlap Although the conclusion reached' there, that our populations resulted from the interbreeding of the

English and Scottish races, have been repeated in many more recent publications, the last being in Ford's *Moths*, this paper was the first to demonstrate the composition and origin of the Durham colonies.

RECORDS FLOWERING PLANTS

Linurn anglicum Mill. Perennial Flax.	66
A strong colony of this plant is to be found on the eastern side of Downhill, Marsden.	
Foeniculum vulgare L. Fennel	66
No doubt introduced, but growing on the cliff tops near Marsden.—R. Boyce.	
Calluna vulgaris L. Heather	66
Following may record of the var. <i>hirsuta</i> , S. F. Gray in the December issue, I should like to state that the first time I came across this variety was in the Comsay district of Co. Durham, some twelve years ago. There was very little of it.—A. N. Gibby.	
Aster tripolium L. Sea Aster	66
Commonly found with us in salt marshes, but now reported from an inland locality along a stream some distance west of South Shields.—J.W.H.H.	

LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

Biston betularia L. Peppered Moth	66, 67
In view of the importance of the study of this species in connection with industrial melanism, it should be made clear that both of us have found the type form, as well as the melanic form, in every locality examined, even in Newcastle itself.—J.W.H.H., T.C.D.	
Apamea lithoxylea Schf. Light Arches	66
Singly in Cassop Vale.—J.W.H.H.	
Euptthecia linariata Schf. Toadflax Pug	66
At rest on a wall near Chester-le-Street, the first specimen seen in the neighbourhood.	
E. subfulvata Haw. Tawny-speckled Pug	66
Taken on the same day, July 28th as the preceding.—R. Harris.	
E. indigata Hb. Ochreous Pug	66, 67
Taken sparingly in Dipton Woods, Chopwell Woods and near Prestwick Carr.	
E. abbreviata Steph. Brindled Pug	66
Larvae beaten from oak in the Derwent Valley near Rowland's Gill.	
E. albipunctata Haw. White-spotted Pug	66
Larvae beaten from Angelica seeds in a lane near Hookergate School, on Sept. 22nd.	
E. trisignaria H.-S. Triple-spotted Pug	66
Larvae from Angelica in the lane between the woods at Chopwell.	
E. assimilata Dbid. Current Pug	66
Beaten plentifully as larvae from hop near Swalwell station and near Lamesley.—J.R.J.	
Laspeyresia nigricana Stp.	66
Taken in the Browney Valley ; only known previously from Coniscliffe.	
Argyroploca salicella L.	66
A single specimen at Beamish, Aug. 10th.	
Coleophora salinella Stt.	66
Captured at Greatham on Aug. 8th, 1955 flying over <i>Atriplex portulacoides</i> .—J. Newton.	
Xylena vetusta Hb. Red Swordgrass	66
Robson, in his <i>Catalogue</i> , describes this as a scarce species in Durham, and asserts that only three specimens have been taken there. However, on April 3rd, I captured one at shallows near Waldrige.—T.C.D.	

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BY THE WAY

We earnestly request Secretaries of our Societies to supply us with accounts of their various activities by September 10th for inclusion in our next issue. Notes and records may be sent to Professor Heslop-Harrison at any time.

THE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

Information about past natural history activities in this neighbourhood is always interesting, and in this issue of the *Vasculum* we are able to add some facts to our knowledge of the Entomological Society of Newcastle upon Tyne. This body was established on February 1st, 1870, at a meeting, held in Mr. Johnston's house, 48 Dean Street. About 20 members were enrolled, and Mr. W. M. Hamilton of 13 Union Street, was elected Secretary.

The Society held its first exhibition on January 17th, 1871. Amongst the exhibitors were Messrs. Hedworth, Crossling and Hamilton who showed British butterflies ; Messrs. D. P. Morrison and F. Barkas who brought drawers of butterflies and moths ; Mr. Johnston and Mr. J. Hamilton showed cases of silk moths ; Mr. Maling had on view a case of Swiss Lepidoptera ; Mr. Johnston and Mr. Henderson displayed Coleoptera and Diptera, with fine varieties of *Amphidasys betularia* and *Arctia caja*, and Mr. C. Eales a case of Tineina.

The exhibition was a great success, and attracted many visitors. During the course of the evening, the Rev. W. L. King delivered a very interesting address. Attention is drawn to the array of names of well-known entomologists of the past who placed Tyneside on the map of the entomological world eighty years ago.

" THE CHEESE AND BREAD "

When the *Vasculum* was founded, one of its declared aims was to collect information about the folklore of this area. Lately, we were reminded of this aim by seeing a little girl given a daintily-trimmed

parcel by a proud mother carrying her baby to the Church to be christened. This parcel contained " The Cheese and Bread " which was, by custom, presented by the mother to the first little girl she met after she left her own house if her baby was a boy, and to the first little boy should the infant be a girl.

In the instance just mentioned, as was the case in the past, the parcel contained several kinds of fruit loaf, cakes, cheese and half-a-crown.

The happening was rendered the more striking by the fact that we ourselves had never seen the custom carried out since we received a similar gift seventy years ago, and also by the circumstance that the little girl, whom we saw receiving the parcel a few weeks ago, had a second given to her within half-an-hour !

Can any of our readers give us further facts about this custom, and let us know to what extent it is still carried out in their own neighbourhood?

DRAWINGS OF BRITISH PLANTS

The tenth part of the " Drawings of British Plants " by Miss Stella Ross-Craig, published by G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., at 8/6 net, has just appeared. It deals with the Saxifragaceae and the Crassulaceae, and includes thirty three plates, each portraying a single species.

The figures reach the very high standard set in the earlier parts of the work, and thereby render the task of determination a very easy one. However, they fill one's mind with the desire that there should be a modern descriptive text-book in English of such excellence as to form a fit companion for these drawings.

The price (8/6), for the part, seems very small for a work of this nature. We cordially recommend it to our readers.

THE SOCIETIES

NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The eighty-sixth Field Meeting of the Union was held in Lumley Castle Woods, on Saturday, May 4th, 1957. The party, which was a record one from the standpoint of numbers, assembled under the leadership of Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison near Chester-le-Street Parish Church. Proceeding down the Mains, and crossing the iron bridge over the Wear, it entered the woods just above Ford Cottage.

Our work began here with the examination of the elms and white poplars along the stream-side. We looked in vain for the large colonies of the toothwort which used to grow on the roots of the elms, but discovered only three miserable specimens. The rest had been destroyed by vandals during the preceding week. As we

passed into the main wood, we also searched for the huge group of plants attached to the elms near the entrance gate, but without success. However, as we proceeded, we were very pleased to find amongst the hazels several quite new and flourishing contingents, nearly always growing on elm, but occasionally on ivy and bramble.

Amongst the trees was the usual ground flora of an oak-ash wood, although very few of these native trees were seen, their places being taken by planted elms, limes, beeches, sycamores, rhododendrons and the like. Still we were glad to see an odd oak, ash, birch or mountain ash to remind us of what the wood once supported.

The undergrowth of shrubs, whilst not very rich, included large quantities of alpine currant, elder, hazel, hawthorn, bramble, raspberry, flowering currant and honeysuckle. Of these, it was difficult to determine the status of the alpine currant. It is probably a relic of past planting.

The ground vegetation was much more typical, and, for the most part, certainly native. It included the usual garlic, bluebells, wood anemones, dog's mercury, woodruff, wood avens, common violet and primroses. It was abundantly clear to us that the primroses cannot last much longer in the wood owing to the wanton ravages of trespassers.

As we advanced between the garden wall and the rhododendrons, we discovered a well-grown patch of the wall-rue, a fern practically extinct in the lower regions of Co. Durham. Of very great importance also was the huge mass of the yellow deadnettle (*Galeobdolon luteum*) which we encountered. Except for a recently discovered colony at Rushyford, this is the only Durham station for the plant. In the Lumley Woods it seems perfectly at home and grows vigorously.

Two other plants which attracted our attention on the way were the mountain speedwell and the three-nerved sandwort. Both occur only sparingly in our area generally, but here are exceptionally plentiful. Other plants were, of course, examined, and these included the lesser celandine, bugle, angelica, cowparsnip, meadowsweet, chervil, figwort, nettle, moneywort, red campion, sweet cicely, enchanter's nightshade, the large woodrush, the hairy woodrush, the melic grass, the false brome grass, the male fern, the lady fern and a few horse tails. Insects were exceedingly scarce, the "take" comprising only a few stone flies, the brown lace-wing and some queen humble bees of the species *Bombus hortorum*, *B. lucorum* and *B. agrorum*. Not a single butterfly or moth was taken, or seen, on the wing although quite a number of larvae of the November moth was beaten from elm and oak. Birds, too, were seen in disappointing quantity for we saw only the blackbird, thrush, robin, chaffinch, willow warbler, tree-creeper, rook and crow. This weakness in birds and insects has always characterized this wood.

It seems worthy of mention that we were astounded at the huge masses of foam banked up on the stream as a result of the detergents draining into it from the houses higher up.

This meeting was one of the most successful we have ever had, with crowds of new and young members anxious to be taught the art of the naturalist. The best was done for them, and they appeared to be perfectly satisfied. Nevertheless, there was an obvious absence of those whom our novices expect to assist them. We trust that such of our members as are able to help will put in an appearance, at least occasionally. If they fail to do so, what is the use of younger members joining the Union? The Union exists for them, and not for the benefit of the more experienced.

NOTES AND RECORDS

NOTES

Lepidoptera in Teesdale.—This season has not been very productive of much in the way of butterflies. However, on May 31st the Green-veined White, *Pieris napi*, was observed flying at an elevation of 1,800 ft. on Widdybank Fell, Upper Teesdale (66). With it were numbers of the Heath Moth, *Ematurga atomaria*. On the same day, larvae of the Grey Mountain Carpet, *Entephria caesiata*, were beaten fairly freely from heather. Both the red and the green forms of this larva were obtained, the former predominating. On the following day, Egglestone was visited. Here again *Pieris napi*, evidently attached to the cuckoo flower, abounded in the alder wood lying along the burn. On the nearby bankside *E. atomaria* flew in small numbers. Beating the alders and birches yielded larvae of the Autumnal Moth (*Oporinia autumnata*), the Light Emerald (*Campaea margaritata*), with a remarkably small number of the Common Winter Moth and none of the Northern Winter Moth. At the same place, the sawfly, *Salix caprea*, produced odd larvae of the Autumnal Moth and of the July Highflyer Moth, *Hydriomena furcata*. Imagines captured included the May Highflyer, *H. coeruleata*, the Common Carpet, *Epirrhoe altemata*, and the Silver-ground Carpet, *Xanthorhoe montanata*.—J.W.H.H.

Violets in Cassop Vale in May.—On May 22nd, we visited Cassop Vale (66) which we approached by walking from Shincliffe. What astonished us most was the great quantities of violets and violet species we had the pleasure of seeing. Perhaps the most numerous of these was the Wood Violet, which we found on the roadside. Growing near it was the Common Violet, *Viola riviniana*, which seemingly is a much later species in its flowering than its close relative. Although the ground occupied by the two species was not precisely the same, they overlapped both in the scrub and in the woodland. As a result, two or three plants of hybrid origin were detected, but the usual numbers of plants of such a parentage had not yet revealed themselves. In all probability, they tend to synchronize in flowering period with *Viola riviniana*.

On the other side of the valley, where we halted for our meal, we came across a populous colony of the Hairy Violet, which was apparently just past its best so far as flowering was concerned. In the woods, this species was quite ordinary. However, on the barer ground, forms which have been called the Chalk Violet, *Viola calcarea*, were examined. These plants seemed to pass imperceptibly into the more usual form of *V. hirta*. It is perhaps worth pointing out that many of the flowers on the more exposed plants were blotched with more or less irregular patches of white.—R. Harris.

An Emperor Moth from Upper Weardale.—Last October I was given a very beautiful caterpillar of the Emperor Moth which had been picked up as it was feeding on heather near Cowshill (66). It was a bright green in colour, with

black bands crossing the green. It also possessed a number of pink spots with tufts of black hairs. These made it look just like a lot of heather flowers and helped to protect it from the attacks of birds.

As I could get no heather, I fed it on hawthorn, which it ate very readily. After a few days, it formed a broad bottle-shaped cocoon composed of closely spun brown, silken threads. This was fastened to the twigs upon which the caterpillar had fed in its cage. The cage was placed for the winter in a cool room. On May 2nd the moth, a beautiful female, hatched out. After a while, it laid a large number of tiny, pale-blue eggs.—Ann Richardson.

A Curious specimen of the Broad-leaved Willow-herb.—On Friday, 24th May, I found a rather unusual willow-herb growing near the railway bridge in the Hermitage, Chester-le-Street (66). Its leaves were shortly petiolate, but, instead of being opposite, they were in whorls of three, each succeeding whorl being at right angles to the whorl below it. In spite of its aberrant phyllotaxy, the plant is almost certainly a specimen of *Epilobium montanum*.—R. Boyce.

A Note on Newts.—A short while ago, in altering the structure of a lily pond in Birtley (66), I drained all the water off. To my surprise, although the pond is situated in an area surrounded by houses, and far away from any other sheet of water, I captured six smooth newts, four males and two females in the last few inches of water. These were liberated some distance away. However, two days later, five of the animals were found lying on the dry cement bottom of the pond. One of them was killed accidentally, but the others were supplied with water, and now seem quite at home again.—R. Harris.

The Flowering of Early Orchids this Spring.—On May 20th, in order to photograph the Green-winged Meadow Orchid (*Orchis morio*), a visit was made to the Blackhill Rocks (66), where a strong mixed colony of the Early Purple Orchid (*O. mascula*) and *O. mono* exists. To our surprise, not a single example of the former species was observed, and only one of the latter. However, lower down the coast, in one of the gills, the Early Purple was present in its usual numbers.

Inland, along the Egglesthorpe Burn (66), not a single example of *O. mascula* was detected in a locality where they usually occur in abundance. Quite the reverse was the case near Quarrington Hill (66), where numerous Early Purples used to grow in a hawthorn-ash scrub. This had been ploughed out. Despite the drastic effects of the ploughing, thousands of magnificent specimens came into flower simultaneously to produce a splendid effect. This colony included plants with flower-colours ranging from white to deep-purple. J.W.H.H., J.K.M.

Variation in Flower Colour in the Red Campion (*Melandrium rubrum*).—In the middle of May, I examined the Ravensworth Woods (66) for female specimens of the red campion carrying the campion smut (*Ustilago violacea*). This smut proved to be very rare, but a number of plants was found varying greatly in the depth of their flower-colour. One of these, bearing pink flowers of a medium shade, interested me greatly as the stems, leaves and calyces were of a very pale green colour. This type of plant I have only observed previously on the Isle of Eigg (104).

Amongst the plants transplanted to my garden in former seasons, I have numerous examples with flowers of varying shades of lilac. One female plant is extraordinary, inasmuch as its flowers are of a very deep violet colour almost approximating blue. This plant originated in material collected in the woods near Shotton Hall.

Last year, quite a number of my experimental plants was transplanted in the garden to conditions of deep shade. Amongst these were individuals of the sea-cliff ecotype brought from the Isles of Rhum (104) and Tiree (103). Normally, these plants produce flowers of a very deep-rose hue. In shade, they have developed flowers of a very much lighter colour. Very similar is the position with the flowers of plants from the Shetland Isles (112)

It should perhaps be added that I have plants with pure white flowers from many Durham (66) and Northumberland (67) stations, as well as from the Isle of Scalloway (112).—J.W.H.H.

The Rayed Form of the Common Groundsel and its Crosses with the Type.—Some years ago, I reported the existence of numerous examples of the rayed form (var. *radiatus* Koch) of the Common Groundsel low down in Cassop Vale. More recently, I have recorded the same plant from a station on waste ground by the wayside at Cassop. During the present season this colony was carefully re-examined when it was found to be extending considerably. Moreover, growing with it were numbers of the more typical form, as well as a great number of what were obviously crosses between the common and the rayed forms. Amongst these, every stage of transition between the two varieties was observed. In all probability, in addition to first generation crosses, there were plants present representing later generations and back-crosses.

A Few Notes from Embleton (68).—Tempted by the prevailing fine weather, we spent much of June 2nd working the dunes and basaltic outcrops at Embleton. Immediately we reached the dunes, we found the Burnet Rose in flower, the first occurrence, as far as we were concerned, this season. Conspicuous likewise was *Astragalus danicus* which appears to be very tolerant of the constant mowing it receives on the golf links, where abundant flowers were visible on the closely-cropped sward. Plentiful, too, was the Lyme-grass (*Elymus arenarius*) recorded from Embleton by Baker and Tate. Also on the dunes we saw *Viola hirta*, *V. riviniana*, *Vicia angustifolia*, *Cynoglossum officinale*, *Sherardia arvensis*, *S Sedum acre*, the White Campion and the hybrid between the red and the white species, and most interesting of all, *Allium vineale*.

On the basalt, we found masses of rockrose growing alongside sturdy examples of *Senecio sylvaticus*. Typical, too, of basic soils was the Salad Burnet, *Poterium sanguisorba*. More than usually important were the frequent tufts of *Sedum anglicum*, here almost at the limits of its southern distribution in the east of England. It should, however, be noted that we have recorded the plant on a previous occasion from Longhoughton.—J.W.H.H., J.K.M.

The Abundance of the Cowberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*) along the Euden Beck (66).—On April 13th, we visited the Bedburn area, and pushed our way as far west as the Euden Beck. Here we were astonished at the huge quantity of *K vitis-idaea* which grew along its south bank. It was not only conspicuous for its abundance, but also for its sturdy growth. Although there were present equal quantities of *V. myrtillus*, a search for possible hybrids ended in failure. On May 31st, the same combination of the two *Vacciniums* was seen on rocks on Widdybank Fell and on Falcon Clints, but the quantity of *K vitis-idaea* fell far short of that encountered along the Euden Beck.—J.W.H.H., J.K.M.

Notes on the Bird's-eye Primrose, *Primula farinosa* L.—Normally, this beautiful little plant flowers extremely freely, with the Upper Teesdale colonies, in general, coming into flower much earlier than those on the coast and in the lower-lying areas in Durham on the Magnesian Limestone. On May 16th, the Quarrington Hill contingent was just beginning to flower as were those on the coastal cliffs on May 20th. On May 29th, the Sedgefield group, consisting of about 30 plants—a number that has remained steady since the colony was first detected—was also just beginning to flower. In its case, despite its paucity in numbers, the whole range of flower colour proper to the species was exhibited.

In Upper Teesdale, on May 31st, there was a goodly display of flowers in the colonies below Langdon Bank Hotel. Contrary to this, on Widdybank Fell, there were very few plants indeed which seemed to be going to flower at all. This supplies a violent contrast to the state of affairs one has observed on a similar date in previous years. A careful examination gave one the impression that, in addition to this failure in flowering, there were markedly fewer examples in the area than one usually encounters.

A Visit to a Wood at Haswell.—On May 25th, in the course of an examination of certain areas on the Magnesian Limestone, a very attractive-looking wood near Haswell (66) was investigated. The trees growing in it included birch, alder, ash, willow, hazel, and hawthorn with an odd oak or two, whilst the ground vegetation revealed nothing of note except *Viola riviniana*, which was noteworthy because of its unusual abundance. Beating the trees for larvae proved a complete waste of time. It had been expected that the birch and alder would have yielded larvae of the Autumnal Moth for use in experimental work. The birches and alders failed to produce either that species or *Operophtera fagata*. In fact, the only species of larvae beaten were the Pale Brindled Beauty (*Phigalia pediaia*) and the Common Winter Moth (*O. brumata*). The winter moths of the genus *Erannis* generally accompanying the last named were entirely absent.

Starlings and Caterpillars.—Toward the end of May, a visit was made to Urpeth Woods (66) to obtain larvae of the November Moth (*Oporinia dilutata*). A direct trial had shown that these and other caterpillars were common enough on the east side of the valley. In the west, the larvae, although not rare, were very backward. They were therefore left untouched. On June 3rd, when I was once more in the woods, this time in search of smutted red campion, I found that the trees were almost defoliated owing to caterpillar attacks. However, this outbreak was being dealt with by the hordes of starlings which were devouring the larvae wholesale. So intent were they on this pursuit that it was only with difficulty that one could scare them away. The larvae concerned were those of *Oporinia dilutata*, *Operophtera fagata*, *O. brumata*, *Erannis defoliaria*, *E. marginaria*, *E. aurantiaria*, and *Tortrix viridana*. Strangely enough, not a single *O. autumnata* was obtained although the species was plentiful on the birches and alders on the east side near the keeper's cottage.—J.W.H.H.

The Status of the Black Rat (*Epimys rattus*) on Tyneside.—As writers of modern books on mammals give the impression that the Black Rat is extremely rare in the British Isles, I was interested to learn from a conversation with a North Shields rat catcher that he still captures this species regularly on Tyneside, and had taken several this year. On March 11th, he showed me one which had been caught in a trap in Newcastle Central Station. The black rat is more of a climber than the brown rat (*E. norvegicus*), and at one time used to be regularly taken in traps set in upper stories of offices in the Central Station.—C. J. Gent.

RECORDS

BIRDS

Larus melanocephalus Temminck Mediterranean Black-headed Gull 66

On March 23rd I visited Hartlepool with Mr. P. J. Stead when he was able to show me a Mediterranean Black-headed Gull which had been in the vicinity since the previous October. While we were having lunch the bird flew past giving us a close-up view, when we were able to observe its more extensive black (not brown) head. It also appeared very white due to the absence of any black on its wings.—C. J. Gent.

Oenanthe oenanthe L. Wheatear 67

The wheatear arrived early this year. Members of the and Durham Branch of the British Naturalists' Association observed a single bird flying north on March 16th when watching from the point at Seaton Sluice.—C. J. Gent

Botaurus stellaris L. Bittern 67

A bittern has been present in the reed-bed at Gosforth Park Lake this spring, and has been heard booming on a number of occasions.—C. J. Gent.

- Asio flammeus** Font. Short-eared Owl 67
 When the members of the B.E.N.A. visited the Featherstone Park Burn on June 1st, there was much evidence that a large bird was using a stone wall on the nearby moor as a perch, and at one point castings were found. The party was eventually delighted with a close view of a short-eared owl which flew away over open country, with characteristic low wavering and rolling flight.—C. J. Gent.
- Fulmarus glacialis** L. Fulmar 68
 The colony on Dunstanburgh Castle Point appears to suffer severely from the depredations of youths. On May 19th, the eggs were in the process of being removed from every accessible site.—C. J. Gent.
- Phalacrocorax aristotelis** L. Shag 68
 About 20 were observed in the vicinity of Dunstanburgh on May 19th. Two birds were sitting on a ledge on the cliffs as if at a nesting site.—C. J. Gent.
- Numenius phaeopus** L. Whimbrel 68
 Two birds were observed flying north at Dunstanburgh on May 19th.—C. J. Gent.
- Larus ridibundus** L. Black-headed Gull 68
 The colony in Newton Bog continues to flourish. When examined on May 19th, it was estimated to contain in the neighbourhood of 200 nests.—C. J. Gent.

ODONATA—DRAGONFLIES

- Pyrrhosoma nymphula** Suiz. Red Damsel-fly 66
 This species was first seen this year along the Team in Urpeth Bottoms, on May 24th. A week later, on May 31st, it was taken on Widdybank Fell at an elevation of over 1,800 feet.—J.W.H.H.
- Aeshna juncea** L. Common Aeshna 66
 This dragon-fly was flying in fair numbers along the Hisehope Burn from Juniper Valley almost to Castleside.—R. A. Knott.

COLEOPTERA—BEETLES

- Silpha quadripunctata** L. 66
 In the County History of Durham only one record of this species is given for the county. It is reported as being rare in Gibside, and Perkins is mentioned as its captor. I can now supply a further station for it as I beat a single specimen from birch near the Riding Farm, Urpeth on May 24th.—J.W.H.H.

LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

- Erynnis tages** L. Dingy Skipper 66
 The Dingy Skipper was observed first on May 29th at Bishop Middleham, where it was plentiful flying over its foodplant bird's-foot trefoil. On June 12th, it was observed along the Hisehope Burn. This supplies a furthest west record for Co. Durham.
- Ochlodes venata** Br. & Grey Large Skipper 66
 This species likewise was observed on a steep bankside along the Hisehope Burn. Again we are dealing with a "first" record for the west of the county.
- Argynnis euphrosyne** L. Pearl-bordered Fritillary 66
 Common enough on the same ground as the two preceding species
- Cheisia legatella** Schf. Streak 66
 Larvae were beaten in abundance from broom near Birtley on June 3rd, and more sparingly from the same shrub along the Hisehope Burn on June 12th.—J.W.H.H.
- Xanthorhoe ferrugata** Cl. Barred Twin-spot Carpet 66
 A far from common species in Durham and given with some hesitation by Robson as occurring in Upper Teesdale; one specimen on Widdybank Fell.J.K.M.

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Edited by

J. W. HESLOP HARRISON, D.Sc., F.R.S.
KING'S COLLEGE, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

BY THE WAY

Material intended for inclusion in our December number should be in the Editor's hands before November 22nd.

MR. WILLIAM CARTER

Many of our older members will regret to learn that Mr. William Carter passed away on June 15th, 1957. Mr. Carter was a keen entomologist, and gained - much of his knowledge of the science in Germany. On his release from that country after the first war, he settled down firstly in Sunderland and then in Newcastle. In the latter town, he took a great interest in the affairs of the Natural History Society. Later, he became a foundation member of the Wallis Club and of the Northern Naturalists' Union.

As an officer of the Wallis Club, he had much to do with its development and policy. Thus he contributed greatly to its success. He began by being a general entomologist, but, in his later days, he confined his attention to elucidating the problems presented by the local races of the Brown Argus butterfly, *Aricia agestis*. Of this species he possessed a remarkable aberration which he called *A. agestis* var. *cuneata*. He never tired of exhibiting this specimen or of discussing its beauties.

Many interesting articles, written by him and dealing with his favourite species, appeared in the columns of the *Entomologist* and the *Vasculum*,

IMMIGRANT LEPIDOPTERA

This season has been very unproductive of immigrant lepidoptera in this area, for only three such species have been observed, *Pieris brassicae*, *Vanessa atalanta* and *Plusia gamma*. Although not so strong in numbers as in some other counties, a fairly strong wave

of Large White butterflies struck this district in late June and early July. Later, the Red Admiral, *V. atalanta*, was observed by T. C. Dunn and J. W. Heslop Harrison on July 6th in Castle Eden Dene, and on July 7th at Bamburgh and on Holy Island. On September 14th, a larval tent of the butterfly was noticed in Upper Weardale, whilst R. Harris saw the insect on the wing at Chester-le-Street on September 20th. *Plusia gamma* appeared at Seaton Carew, June 17th, Raisby, July 2nd and in Crimdon Dene on September 10th (J.W.H.H.), and Mr. Dunn took it in some numbers in his moth trap during the same month at Chester-le-Street.

CRIMDON DENE

We have frequently drawn attention to the conduct of hooligans and litter-louts in various beauty spots, including Crimdon Dene, but we never saw such a scene of desolation as that presented by that area on September 10th. To the north of the burn, the sand dunes had been stamped flat and litter spread everywhere giving the impression that the former luxuriant vegetation had gone for ever. Toward the mouth of the Dene, bull-dozing operations had effectually replaced a rich sward of flowers and banks of wild roses by a dismal stretch of bare, yellow clay. In the Dene, itself, certain areas were in good order, and a few people were enjoying themselves. However, many of the seats had been grossly misused whilst, in the woods, the random penetrations of irresponsible youths had created a labyrinth of meaningless tracks. At these points, the vegetation had been utterly destroyed. Amongst the rarer plants affected, the sand leek, *Allium scorodoprasum*, could not be found although it cannot be extirpated entirely. However, the gromwell, *Lithospermum officinale*, here in its only known Durham station, must be regarded as lost.

Can nothing be done to preserve and, if possible, restore the once attractive dunes, and to retain what used to be a very beautiful and characteristic ash-wych elm wood?

NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION FIELD MEETINGS

This season our field meetings have been extremely successful. Moreover, those who attended were, for the most part, young people anxious to acquire field knowledge. In fact, they include the types of people the Union was intended to encourage. However, those who possessed the requisite knowledge for aiding novices seemed to be almost lacking. In general, only two or three people had to bear the burden of giving the information so often sought.

May we appeal to those who could assist to take part in the work next season? Past generations of local naturalists considered it a duty to pass their knowledge on and so must we.

POSTAGE

Frequently, we receive requests for information concerning local natural history, or for the identification of plant, insect and other specimens, in the latter cases, the return of the specimens is invariably expected, but very rarely indeed is the necessary postage sent. May we ask those utilizing our services to enclose it in future ?

THE SOCIETIES

NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The Eighty-seventh Field Meeting of the Union took place in Castle Eden Dene on Saturday, July 6th, 1957, when our members assembled near the Church. The attendance was excellent, and it was particularly gratifying to note that a considerable contingent from Middlesbrough was present, and that, once again, most were intent on doing serious work.

Under the leadership of Professor Heslop-Harrison, we entered the dene to follow the old path down to the sea. On our way, we were struck by the peculiarities of the vegetation which was characteristic of a woodland on the Magnesian Limestone, the chief trees being ash and wych elm. In this connexion, the enormous numbers of self-sown sapling ashes growing everywhere seemed worthy of special remark.

Other trees encountered were the field maple, the small-leaved lime (here, in spite of the pronouncement of Clapham, Tutin and Warburg, a genuine native), oak, rowan, sycamore, beech, birch, alder, crack willow and, of special importance, magnificent examples of native yews. The shrubs observed included three willows (with *Salix andersoniana*, generally regarded as a sub-alpine plant), hazel, elder, blackthorn, bird cherry, spindle, dogwood, privet, many species of wild rose and juniper. The presence of the wild privet in quantity needs special emphasis, more especially as Clapham, Tutin and Warburg, quite mistakenly, state that the plant is not native in Durham. :

We were interested to see that many nests of the Small Ermine Moth disfigured the bird-cherries. Other insects noted were the green-veined white butterfly, the meadow brown, the common blue, the small tortoiseshell and the red admiral.

As we proceeded, we were impressed by the richness of the ground flora, many lime-loving plants appearing in numbers. Of these the small burnet, the rock rose, the lily of the valley, the hairy violet, majoram, thyme, wall lettuce, the giant bellflower and the bristly ox-tongue were the most unusual although other plants seen, like the enchanter's nightshade, the water avens, wood sanicle, the hairy and perforate St. John's wort, the marsh crepis, the golden saxifrage, the wood forget-me-not, hemp agrimony, wild strawberry,

London pride and many commoner species, were not without interest. In view of the reputation the Dene has for wild orchids, a close look-out was kept for such plants. However, only the common spotted orchid was seen.

Amongst the grasses, the melic grass and the false brome grass were the most unusual although the latter was plentiful enough, and impressed upon us its liking for calcareous soils. Of the ferns, the hart's tongue was locally abundant as was also the giant horsetail.

It seems proper to mention that we examined no fewer than three species of butterbur along our path, one being our own too-plentiful native plant, and the other two being *Petasites albus* and *P. fragrans*, both of which have been noted as garden escapes in other parts of the county.

One especially important observation was made in the fact that the red squirrel still lingered in the Dene although it has disappeared from many of its old Durham habitats.

Although we have elsewhere drawn attention to the absence of many of our senior members who could have helped in the labour of assisting younger aspirants to a knowledge of natural history, an exception must be made in the case of Mr. C. J. Gent who so enthusiastically undertook the task of instructing members in the recognition of birds and their songs. He explained the characteristic notes of the blackcap, whitethroat, willow warbler, song thrush, blackbird, robin, hedge-sparrow, wren and yellow hammer. Other species seen were the woodpigeon, stockdove, rook, jackdaw, carrion crow, spotted flycatcher, blue tit and goldfinch.

The outing throughout was favoured with very fine weather, and seemed to have been of special value to the considerable numbers of the younger generation who took part in its activities.

For our Eighty-eighth Meeting, in view of the difficulties arising when an attempt was made to arrange for a visit to the saltmarshes at the Teesmouth, we visited Shincliffe Woods and Butterby Marsh on Saturday, September 7th, 1957. We met at the Rose Tree Inn, and worked our way through the woods from the Shincliffe entrance.

Naturally, many of the plants usually observed in these woods were over, but we did see an abundance of wild roses at the very best time for their determination. These included several species like *Rosa arvensis*, *R. tomentosa* and *R. obtusifolia* regarded as quite rare in Durham. Other forms, typical of the rose flora of a northern county, were *R. mollis*, *R. sherardi*, *R. dumalis (glauca)* and *R. conifolia*. Other shrubs seen were the usual hazel, elder, bird cherry, hawthorn, blackthorn and bramble. Again, the bird cherry carried webs of small ermine moth larvae.

The trees examined were oak, ash, wych elm, with a sprinkling of holly, rowan and birch. All were beaten vigorously by the ento-mologists seeking for insect larvae. Some success attended their efforts, and larvae of the peppered moth, the clouded magpie, the clouded border, the scalloped hazel, the brimstone, the white wave, the common pug and green-silverlines were obtained. Similarly, caterpillars of the spectacle moth were beaten from nettle, and of the small rivulet from hempenettle. Only one butterfly, the small copper, was seen on the wing. As we were searching for larvae, one very important capture was made amongst the Hemiptera Heteroptera; this was *Acanthosoma dentatum*, not previously recorded for Durham. Also taken at the same time were the brown lacewing fly, *Hemerobius nervosus*, and the seven-spot, two-spot and variable ladybirds. On oak leaves we found several kinds of spangle galls and on twigs the marble gall. Sallows provided galls of *Pontania viminalis*, *P. bridgmanii* and *P. puellae*. Again from tree trunks we took the coccids, *Fonscolombia fraxini* and *Cryptococcus fagi*. Those studying the wild roses also found bedeguar galle, *Rhodites rosae*, and pea galls, *R. eglanteriae*, on rose leaves; these produce tiny cynipid wasps.

In the woods, owing to the previous bad weather, flowering plants made a poor show. Still we did collect the figwort, the two common St. John's worts, the wood stitchwort, the black horehound, the red and white campions with their hybrid, balsam, mountain and thyme-leaved speedwell, hempenettle, angelica, wood sanicle, ground ivy, hemp agrimony, yellow pimpernel, field geranium, bramble and raspberry. After leaving the wood, we worked our way down to Butterfly Marsh where Dr. B. M. Griffiths carried out his well-known researches.

There we saw the reedmace, the bulrush, sweetflag, iris, yellow water-lily, the marsh forget-me-not, the hemlock water-dropwort, the great waterdock, the reed *Phragmites*, the ribbon grass and the marsh-loving horsetails, with masses of Potamogetons. Here the party broke up, for our homeward paths led us in widely different directions.

NOTES AND RECORDS

NOTES

Abundance of Broom Moth Larvae in Co. Durham (66).—After a rather lengthy period during which the insect has been rather rare, larvae of the Broom Moth, *Ceramica pisi*, have been quite common this season throughout Co. Durham. In former years, when such an abundance has occurred, a year of heavy rainfall has seemed to accompany it; can it be that for a really successful season the Broom Moth depends upon moist conditions?—T. C. Dunn.

Variation in the Flowers of the Spotted Orchid, *Dactylorhiza Fuchsii*—On July 2nd, in order to extend my knowledge of the distributors of certain plants on the Magnesian Limestone, I made a long walking expedition in the

Trirndon Grange—Raisby area. In the course of my work, I came across many colonies of the Spotted Orchid including several near Trirndon Grange. In these colonies, the flowers were in colour of a pinkish purple hue and possessed strongly curved margins in the lateral lobes of the lips. In fact, they were forms of the plant I have called *Dactylorhiza Fuchsii* ssp. *dunelmensis*.

As it happened, at one and the same time, I had in my possession fresh flowering spikes of *D. Fuchsii* from Broomley Fell Wood, South Northumberland (67), Birtley (66), Trirndon Grange (66) and Luskentrye, South Harris (110). Of these the Birtley and Broomley Fell plants were practically identical, and were clearly typical representatives of *D. Fuchsii*. On the other hand, I could perceive very little, if any, difference between the plants from Trirndon Grange and those from South Harris. As the latter belonged to the subspecies *hebridensis*, this occurrence points to some relationship between ssp. *dunelmensis* and ssp. *hebridensis*—a fact I had recognised when I carried out prolonged studies on ssp. *hebridensis* some years ago.—J.W.H.H.

The Red Squirrel in Castle Eden Dene.—Whilst sitting taking my tea during a visit to Castle Eden Dene (66) on July 7th, 1957, with the members of the Northern Naturalists' Union, I became detached from the rest of the party. Then I had the pleasure of seeing a red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) suddenly run up an ash tree and leap to an adjacent tree where I lost sight of it. The last time I saw the red squirrel was near Ford Castle, Northumberland (68) in 1952.—L. P. Hird. . .

The Tineid Moth, *Dasystoma salicella*, near Birtley.—This Tineid is quite rare generally, and very few stations are known for it in the north, and even generally. In 1908, we discovered the larvae in great abundance feeding on bramble growing over the low stone wall along the Long Bank leading to Wreckenton from Birtley. Then the moths bred showed only slight tendencies to melanism. Later, however, toward the end of the first war, the moth, which still remained very plentiful, began to develop melanic individuals, a few blackish specimens being reared. For some unknown reason, after that period the insect proved difficult to breed, whole cultures becoming infected with polyhedral disease and dying. Now many changes have taken place in the area in which the colony exists, with the result that the district which it inhabits has been greatly lessened. Nevertheless, the larvae seem to be as numerous as ever. Furthermore, those collected and placed in breeding cages seem to be flourishing, for no dead, deliquescent examples have been noted so far. It is hoped that the work on melanism begun with this species some years may now be completed.

It should be realized that although Meyrick gives "*Myrica*", *Potentilla anserina* and probably other plants" as its food, the chief foodplant with us is bramble. Still it has been found on a score of other plants of which one is the silverweed.

The Nesting Place of a House Martin.—About 35 years ago, the house martin was common as a nesting bird in Birtley. The their chief nesting site was the Police Station in Durham Road although an odd pair used to favour this house. However, about 1927, the nests on the Police Station were destroyed with the result that the old sites were both deserted. In 1956, in late June, a pair returned to their old location on my house, and brought up a brood of young successfully. This season, once more a pair came back in late June, and took possession of their old dwelling place. I am glad to be able to say that they reared their young quite safely.—J. A. Richardson.

The Viability of Poppy Seeds.—In 1918, I observed in the old Belgian village, Elizabethville, near Birtley, amongst a vast population of ordinary red poppies, a single plant producing grey-blue flowers.; From this I procured seeds which

provided me with a stock which I kept going until 1930. In that year, I planted the old poppy beds with shrubs, chiefly willows, for experimental purposes. As a result the poppies ceased to appear almost at once. Last year (1956), I had the trees and shrubs cut down, and the ground well dug over. This season, countless poppies have made their appearance with flowers in many cases of the common red type. However, flowers of the old grey-blue hue were present in reasonable numbers as well as other very beautiful forms. The latter were chiefly reds and pinks often fringed or sprinkled with white. From some of the best forms seeds are being saved and tested next year. It will be clear that, since no poppies have been allowed to grow in the garden for 21 years, the seeds have remained in the ground dormant for the whole of that period.

The Dark-red Helleborine, *Epipactis atrorubens*, in Co. Durham.—This fine orchid, of which we made the first record for Durham in 1956, had a very bad season that year in its Cornforth station; not a single plant could be found on the calcareous slopes which normally support it. However, this year, it was far from rare on the bank side upon which we detected it originally. Curiously enough, all the plants bore red flowers this season, no plant with a yellow inflorescence being observed. We must point out that no correction of the wrong localization of the Shadforth specimens, which were recorded after ours, has yet appeared. So far as we know, no Cassop station for the species exists.—J.W.H.H. and J.A.R.

A Note about the Honeysuckle and the Foxglove.—On June 27th, a long walk was undertaken from Riding Mill via Broomley Fell Plantations to Dipton Bank foot. Not far from Riding Mill, we were surprised to find a bank completely covered by foxgloves, many of which bore white flowers. When we reached the Broomley Fell Plantations, we found the walls and low shrubs smothered by honeysuckle. This attracted our attention, not only by the quantity present, but also by the variability of the flowers. Many were more or less reddish in colour whilst others differed in respect to the lengths of their corolla tubes. On a bankside, in a field near Dipton Bank, we found a foxglove with a head of flowers massed in the form of a club. This was obviously the result of a greenfly infestation. Recently, similar inflorescences have described been in a popular weekly as mutations. The flowers in this colony were all of the usual pinkish purple colour.—R. A. Knott.

RECORDS

BIRDS

- Tadoma tadorna** L. Sheld-duck 67
Two were observed on Gosforth Park Lake on September 8th.
Chlidonias niger L. Black Tern 67
One was observed flying over a pool north of Cresswell on September 7th
Phylloscopus collybita Viell. Chiff-Chaff 66
In view of the rather restricted distribution of this species in our area, it may be of interest to record a bird in song on June 29th on the Durham bank of the Derwent at Ebchester.—C. J. Gent.

COLEOPTERA—BEETLES

- Melolontha vulgaris** F. Cockchafer 67
A single specimen on a fence near Riding Mill.
Meloe violaceus Marsh. Oil-beetle 66
Quite common in early spring on grasses along the Team near Urpeth.
Adalia obliterata L. 67
Beaten from conifers near Allenheads. None of the usual ladybirds were obtained.

HYMENOPTERA—BEES, ETC.

- Bombus sylvarum** L. 66
Once a common species in Northumberland and Durham, this insect has now become very rare. However, a queen was seen probing flowers of *Geranium pratense* in Hawthorn Dene on July 13th.
- Euura amerinae** L. 66
This is the sawfly which produces large galls on the twigs of *Salix pentandra*. It is very erratic in its distribution with us. On Waldrige Fell it is not rare, but is entirely absent from most Durham lowland stations for the plant. In Upper Weardale, its occurrence is equally strange. Along the Kilhope Burn, most of the trees are free from galls, but three of them bear thousands.
- Pontania viminalis** L. 66
Common enough wherever *Salix purpurea* occurs in Weardale and elsewhere. The galls may also be found on the hybrid *S. rubra*=*S. purpurea* x *S. viminalis*.
- P. phyticifoliae** Forsius 66, 67
Plentiful in Weardale, but very rare indeed near Allenheads and along Rookhope Bum.
- P. pustulator** Forsius 66, 67
Although this species may be plentiful enough locally, as in Upper Teesdale, it is rare in many places where its foodplant, the tea-leaved willow, grows. The gall was found sparingly near Allenheads and near the Rookhope Burn.
- P. femoralis** Cameron 66, 67
Found rather freely with its food plant everywhere in Upper Weardale and Allendale. In these areas it is attached to *Salix phyticifolia*. In Tynedale it feeds on and galls *S. andersoniana*.
- Platycampus luridiventris** Fall 66, 67
Common everywhere on alder in Weardale and Allendale.
- Pristiphora erichsoni** Hart. 66, 67
This is the larch sawfly which sometimes occurs in great numbers. It was beaten from larch at Hurworth Burn in Durham, and at Allenheads in Northumberland. In both stations it was very rare.

LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

- Notodonta ziczac** L. Pebble Prominent. 66
Sparingly as larvae along the Rookhope Burn and near 66 67
Hurworth Burn. **N. dromedarius** L. **Iron Prominent**
Larvae were beaten from birch near Hurworth Burn and Rookhope but from alder at Ninebanks.
- Pheosia gnoma** Fab. Lesser Swallow Prominent 67
This " Prominent ", which seems to be becoming much rarer in our counties, was obtained from birch near Ninebanks.
- Entephria caesiata** Schf. Grey Mountain Carpet 67
Not rare in Broomley Fell Plantation on June 27th, when a fine specimen of the banded variety *annosata* Zett. was captured.
- Lygris pyraliata** Schf. Barred Straw 67
Also taken in the same woods, but only as a single specimen.
- Thera finnata** Hb. Pine Carpet 67
In all the well-established pinewoods south of the Tyne.
- T. variata** Schf. Spruce Carpet 67
In one of the pine woods between Riding Mill and Broomley Fell.
- Epirrhone tristata** L. Small Argent and Sable 66, 67
Near Castleside, Broomley Fell Plantations and Dipton Woods in considerable numbers.
- Ochlodes venata** Br. and Grey. Large Skipper 66
New localities discovered for this species in Durham during 1957 are the Brooms Wood, Birtley, and a quarry near Trirndon Grange.

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J. W. HESLOP HARRISON, D.Sc., F.R.S.
KING'S COLLEGE, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

BY THE WAY

LAMBTON CASTLE RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE

Many of our readers will have heard of the Lambton Castle Residential College for Adult Education, which has been established in the Castle in Lambton Park. Very few, however, seem to be aware of the fact that tuition in natural history subjects is given there with an emphasis placed strongly on field work. Under such surroundings, it is not surprising that the classes have attracted a considerable number of keen students.

Each course lasts over a week end or, alternatively, for a similar period in the middle of a week. During these periods, students have accommodation in the Castle, and take their meals there.

During the past season, three courses have been given in which the bulk of the lectures, and the whole of the guidance in field work, were supplied by members of the Northern Naturalists' Union. These courses were spread over the year, one taking place in Spring, the second in June and the third in early November. Favoured both by the weather, a goodly number of eager students, and the personal interest taken by those responsible for the teaching, these courses have been unqualified successes. As a consequence, a further series is to be arranged for 1958, and we recommend them strongly to our members.

FERNS IN OUR COUNTIES

Except for one or two enthusiasts in the Consett Naturalists' Field Club, very few botanists have made any reports about our local ferns for quite a number of years. Perhaps this neglect originates in the marked decrease in fern populations growing in our more low-lying districts.

Throughout most of such areas, even outside the industrial zones, the Spleneworts, the Common Polypody, the Hard Fern and

others seem to have disappeared, or to occur in greatly reduced numbers. To that list may perhaps have to be added the Moonwort and Adder's Tongue, although, in their cases, the apparent decadence may result from their being overlooked by observers not so keen on ferns as earlier workers. Similarly, the Sea Spleenwort, once deemed a great rarity, although quite wrongly, still lingers in sheltered cliffs on our sea coasts, and careful inspection often leads to its detection.

In the case of the Hart's Tongue Fern, the position seems to be quite different, for it still maintains its enormous populations in Hawthorn and Castle Eden Denes. Moreover, it has established itself recently in localities from which it was not recorded fifty and more years ago.

May we appeal to our readers to let us have records of ferns, no matter how common, still to be found in their neighbourhood or elsewhere?

MAPPING THE DISTRIBUTION OF PLANTS

In the current number of *New Biology* (No. 24, pp. 92-108), there appears an article by Mr. S. M. Walters dealing with the scheme for mapping the distribution of British Plants. In it he emphasizes the need for maintaining accuracy and reliability in the data supplied by many observers of varying degrees of competence and reliability. In this connexion, we should like to raise the old question propounded by Juvenal long years ago : *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* We, and others, have gazed with amazement on an individual, high up in the hierarchy of such mappers, place a plant, not at all a rare one, in the wrong natural order and under a wrong name ! Moreover, several of us have seen others not regarded as much less competent, making similar blunders in marking their lists. How is it proposed to deal with such cases as these? They reduce the scheme in many cases to little less than a farce.

Again, take the map illustrative of the article, and purporting to give the British distribution of *Astragalus danicus* Retz. ; it appears as Fig. 3. In the legend accompanying it, we read : " In its Southern English range it (*Astragalus danicus*) occurs inland principally in chalk and limestone grassland. In North-East England and East Scotland, however, it frequents sand-dunes". This, as far as our area is concerned, supplies a very incorrect picture, for the plant occurs at several points inland in calcareous grassland and on the Magnesian Limestone escarpment at its western limits. Even near the sea in Durham, the plant is to be found on cliff tops away from the dunes. The records of such habitats are quite accessible, and how they have been overlooked in the construction of the map passes one's comprehension.

Perhaps, too, in drawing attention to " its most remarkably disjunct Irish station on the Aran Island " in Galway Bay, the author

should have deemed it equally necessary to insert on his map (and to draw attention to the fact) the important outlying station for the species on the sand-dunes in the extreme west of the Isle of Tiree in the Inner Hebrides.

FIELD STUDIES COUNCIL

Through the generosity of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, the Field Studies Council is able to offer a certain number of bursaries to facilitate the attendance of members of local scientific societies at courses organised by the Council. The amount of the bursary will generally be 2 1/2 guineas for a course lasting a week (or proportionally less for a shorter period) which would naturally reduce the normal charge from 6 1/2 guineas to 4 guineas.

Should any members of the N.N.U wish to take advantage of these bursaries they should mention this to the Wardens of the respective Field Centres when applying for a booking in the course. Particulars of the Courses may be obtained from the Secretary of the Field Studies Council, Balfour House, 119-125 Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C. 2.

THE SOCIETIES

NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

By the kind invitation of the Consett and District Naturalists' Field Club, our Autumn Meeting was held in the Carlton Cafe, Consett, on Saturday, October 12th, 1957. The President, Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison, F.R.S., was in the Chair and, as is usually the case at Consett, there was a large and enthusiastic attendance.

Miss M. H. Oates, B.Sc. was our Lecturer and her subject " Toadstools and Truffles".

She began by considering old, discarded theories of their origin, and then proceeded to discuss their methods of growth, structure and reproduction. In particular, she demonstrated how the white threads or hyphae appeared, and progressively gave rise to the pileus or cap. This, in turn, led to an illustrated description of the development of the reproductive spores. In giving this, she produced interesting spore prints, and explained how these, by their colour and general characteristics, could be employed in the classification of toadstools.

Next she told how some fungi were parasitic whereas others were saprophytic, and fed on organic material by breaking it down. Following this, she dealt with their division into poisonous and non-poisonous forms. These likewise were illustrated by appropriate lantern slides. The lecture ended with a brief account of truffles, their method of growth and occurrence.

Professor Heslop Harrison thanked Miss Oates on behalf of the audience for an exceedingly useful and interesting lecture.

At the close of the lecture at 4-30 p.m., we took tea, and then examined the various exhibits.

Chief amongst the exhibits was a long series of fresh fungi collected locally by the lecturer, and brought for our inspection. Mr. Hird, as usual, brought pictures of flowers, and pressed plants obtained during his rambles. From Mr. R. Boyce, B.Sc., we had a group of nature photographs in colour, illustrative of flowers, lichens, ferns, insects, etc., whilst Miss N. Taylor had on view pressed specimens of the Royal Fern, *Osmunda regalis* from Fort William. On this occasion, Mrs. Gibby's contribution included a number of well-preserved plants characteristic of the flora of the West of Ireland. Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison brought a number of specimens of a new form of the November Moth which he had named *Oporinia dilutata* var. *regressa*.

The plants he showed included *Rosa agrestis* from a new Durham station, specimens of the gynodioecious sea rocket, *Cakile edentula*, with examples of the sterile hybrid between it and *Cakile maritima*, Mr. C. J. Gent's contribution consisted of photographs of many sea birds from the Fame Islands.

CONSETT AND DISTRICT NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB

The Annual Dinner and Conversazione of the Consett Naturalists' Field Club took place on November 6th, 1957, in the Freemasons' Arms, Consett. The attendance was very large and probably constituted a record. Mr. L. P. Hird was in the Chair, and after we had partaken of an excellent dinner, he proposed the toast of the Queen. Next, in well-chosen words, Mr. Parry gave the toast of our guest, Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison. In his reply, Prof. Heslop Harrison congratulated the Club on its continued success, and also stressed the necessity for collecting and preserving facts concerning the once important, but now defunct, Vale of Derwent Naturalists' Field Club. He also indicated the great value of the Club's loyal support of the Northern Naturalists' Union. The toast of the Club followed, and to it Mr. L. P. Hird and Mr. Wm. Ellerington replied.

After a brief interval, we examined the exhibits brought by Mr. R. Pirt and Mr. C. R. Tyerman. The former's contribution consisted of a number of plants from North Africa and fossils from the Coal Measures, whilst the latter brought an elephant's tooth and a double coconut in its husk.

Finally, we were shown several magnificent series of slides with appropriate descriptions. Of these, Mr. G. Evans reminded us of the pleasures of our summer outings whilst Mr. J. F. Ashworth made us long for sunshine when he threw on the screen views of his holidays in Spain and North Africa. As usual, Mr. J. J. Robson produced two nature films of birds whilst the slides of Mr. J. Horn also recalled enjoyable episodes of our summer expeditions.

The evening closed with Mr. L. P. Hird's thanks to those responsible for the slides, and to Mrs. Dixon for organizing the dinner.

BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Our winter session opened with a lecture, on September 24th, 1957, with the title " Was there a Missing Link ? " The lecturer, Prof. J. W. Heslop Harrison, dealt with the various finds of human remains made in various deposits, and showed how the men they represented were related to modern man.

On Oct. 8th, Dr. T. Shier interested us with a careful account of the navigation of small yachts. Following this, on Oct. 22nd, the Vicar of Birtley, Rev. H. S. Horobin, gave us a talk on " Hardest and Sharpest ". In it he described the discovery of carborundum, and the various uses to which it has been put.

Next, on Nov. 5th, we had a visit from our old friend Mr. J. W. Oxberry, who once again proved his versatility in his talk on " Tyne side Tales—Old and New ". This, as has always been the case when Mr. Oxberry spoke, aroused the greatest possible interest and appreciation. Mr. G. A. Cowan, M.F.H. was our speaker on Nov. 19th. He supplied us with first-hand accounts of all our local mammals. As he spoke exclusively from his own experiences, his talk was of the greatest value to our members.

NOTES AND RECORDS

NOTES

The Red Helleborine, *Epipactis atrorubens* in Co. Durham (66).—This rare and interesting orchid has been reported recently from two localities in Durham. I wish now to record the discovery of a third station in the county. On July 28th, 1957, I found about twenty flowering specimens growing in Kelloe Parish in an area of open calcareous grassland. The chief associated species was *Helianthemum chamaecistus*.—Alan Peat.

The Destruction of the Unique Hybrid *Rosamollis x dumetorum* at Birtley.—This rose, which I have called *x R. molletorum*, grew on the old pit heap, known as Heslop's Heap, which existed just east of Birtley. It escaped all the bulldozing operations which led up to, and marked the development of an open cast coal-mining site near Portobello. However, when the excavations were filled in, the bulldozers squashed it flat.

Fortunately, throughout the years I have studied this plant, it has always shown a limited fertility by producing 1—6 fruits to the hip. When these have been planted, some have grown so that I have young plants of an F2 generation. As the fruits were produced apomictically, these plants are identically the same as their parent. I intend, if possible, to plant one of these on the remains of the heap in a position as close as possible to that of the original plant.—J.W.H.H.

More about the Tineid Moth, *Dasystoma salicella* in the Birtley Area.—This interesting apterous Tineid, which is nearly always scarce and local everywhere, was, as is stated in the October *Vasculum*, found in some numbers near Wreackenton (66) in 1908. However, when I examined its stations this year they were much more restricted than formerly, although *salicella* larvae were still far from rare.

In early October, I had to make some investigations in various scattered localities in the Team Valley (66), all within a three mile radius of Birtley. Naturally,

I kept a sharp look-out for larvae of any sort. To my great surprise, I discovered *D. salicella* larvae on bramble everywhere down Featherbed Lane, Lamesley, at an elevation of 600 feet at Ravensworth, between Birtley and Urpeth, in a hedge near the Brooms, on Birtley Black Fell near Northside, and finally on the waggon way which takes coal waggons up the bank from the E pit, Birtley to Jarrow. In the whole of these stations *D. salicella* larvae were not at all rare, and seemingly healthy.—J.W.H.H.

A Few Notes on Chester-le-Street Lepidoptera.—This season, for various reasons, I have taken very few Lepidoptera at Chester-le-Street (66). However, those I have seen have not been without interest. On July 11th I took the Small Angle-Shades (*Euplexia lucipara*) whilst later in the same month the Swallow Tail Moth (*Ourapteryx sambucaria*) turned up in the Hospital grounds, Chester-le-Street. This is the first time I have ever seen this fine insect which has always been regarded as very rare in North Durham, although Mr. J. R. Johnson and Professor Heslop Harrison have captured it at Gateshead and Birtley, respectively. Of immigrant butterflies, only the Large White has occurred commonly. However, the Red Admiral was observed on September 20th and October 2nd. Finally, a single example of the Flounced Chestnut (*Ancholelis helvola*) was found at rest on October 4th. This likewise, is a somewhat rare insect with us.—R. Harris.

The Demolition of Carthagea, Birtley.—The old block of buildings at Birtley, formerly known as Carthagea, and latterly as Atkinson's Buildings, has at length been demolished. These houses have always been of considerable interest to natives of the village as various legends have been centred around them. They were built of old bricks of a continental gauge, and, unlike all other Birtley houses, were in three storeys. From their general appearance, and their name Carthagea, most of us who have thought about their age at all, have regarded them as dating from the earlier years of the eighteenth century.

They were alleged to possess priests' hiding places, and to have secret passages leading to all conceivable places. However, when they were pulled down, no such things were discovered. On the other hand, there was a well-known story that, in the middle years of the eighteenth century, Mass was said in a room within them entirely without windows. Such a room was found, and for that, and other reasons, that particular tradition is regarded as being well-founded.

Indicative of an early date for the buildings was the discovery of a half-penny of William IIIrd, dated 1699. It was found when one of the rooms collapsed, and had apparently been lying concealed within its walls.—J.W.H.H.

The Convolvulus Hawkmoth (Herse Convolvuli L.) at Chopwell (66).—The other day, September 5th, 1956, some children brought me a reasonably good specimen of the Convolvulus Hawkmoth. Northumberland, of course, has done well with records of the species, but I have no idea how Durham stands in the matter. At Belford, I had specimens from Lowick and Fenwick (68), but this specimen is the first I have seen in the sister county. If the insect has laid eggs and bred, as it once did at Shiremoor in Northumberland, there is plenty of *Calystegia* about.—J. E. Hill.

Another Durham (66) Station for the Yellow Deadnettle, Lamium Galeobdolon.—On May 4th, 1957, on the occasion of the Union's excursion to Lumley Woods, attention was especially drawn to the strong colony of the Yellow Deadnettle existing there. This, for a long time, had remained the only Durham locality for the plant. Later, a second was discovered in the woods at Rushyford. Now, I am able to report an extremely well-established colony growing on each side of the stream on Captain Salvin's estate, near Sunderland Bridge Village, near Croxdale.—A. Eggleston.

A Curious Example of the Green Carpet, Colostygia Pectinataria, at Chester-le-Street.—On July 2nd, a strange specimen of the Green Carpet was taken at light in my garden. It lacked the usual dark points of the pattern almost completely. It is very light, indeed, in its ground colour, and appears to be white,

with a very pale brown pattern. One could almost call it an albinistic form.—T. C. Dunn.

Stenoptilia Zophodactyla Dup. in Co. Durham.—On July 1st, 1953, I captured on Cronkley Fell, a plume moth which completely baffled me as to its species. I therefore sent it to Mr. S. A. A. Jacobs, of the *Entomologists' Record*, for examination, and he has been good enough to look at it for me. He thinks it is *S. zophodactyla*, but there is still some doubt in the matter. He writes: "I think it is pretty safe to describe your moth as *S. zophodactyla*, and in this Mr. J. D. Bradley of the British Museum agrees with me. He suggested a dissection of the genitalia to make the matter certain, but I thought you would rather have your specimen returned intact. The only query was the possibility that it was a specimen of *S. pneumonanthes*". In my opinion, the only thing to do is to try to get up to Teesdale some time in July, and to collect a series of the moth. The only difficulties are getting the opportunity, the weather and the correct date all at the same time. In any case, the insect forms a new county record for Yorkshire v.-c. 65. Its occurrence on Cronkley Fell suggests that it might possibly be found in the Durham side of the Tees.—T. C. Dunn.

RECORDS

BIRDS

- Charadrius squatorola** L. Grey Plover 68
On the shore near Boulmer on September 29th, 1957.
- C. apricarius** L. Golden Plover 67, 68
This species was quite plentiful, and parties were observed on September 29th, near Little Benton, Dudley and other points near the Main Line North. A flock of more than 60 was observed near Longhoughton Village, and several on the seashore north of Alnmouth. A small group came under observation near Killingworth on October 5th.
- Cahdris minuta** Leisler. Little Stint 68
Two of these birds were observed feeding in a freshwater runnel on the shore at Bulmer on September 29th. Their presence was resented in the first place by a Dunlin, and later by a Ringed Plover.—C. J. Gent.

LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

- Abraxus sylvata** Scop. Clouded Magpie 66
Larvae of this species were quite common on wych elm in Castle Eden Dene as late as October 20th.
- Oporinia autumnata** Bkh. Autumnal Moth 66, 67
On previous occasions, coal-black examples of this species have been captured in Dipton Woods and on Prestwick Carr. During the past few years, several have been obtained from a birch wood in the Team Valley. In the earlier specimens, the melanism, when tested, behaved in heredity as a Mendelian recessive. Experiments with the later examples show that, in their case like wise, melanism is recessive.
- Plusia pulchrina** Haw. Beautiful Golden Y 66
A specimen taken in the greenhouse is the first seen at Birtley for many years.
- P. iota** L. Plain Golden Y 66
Observed in Castle Eden Dene.
- P. gamma** L. Silver Y 66
Not very common in Durham this season, but one was found in Crirndon Dene on Sept. 10th. This, no doubt was a descendant of an earlier immigrant.
- Tethea duplaris** L. Lutestring 66
Larvae in small numbers were beaten from birch near Hurworth Burn.
- Bena fagana** Fab. Green Silver Lines 66
Larvae were not uncommon in the woods at Shincliffe feeding on oak.
- Vanessa atalanta** L. Red Admiral 67
A single example at Gosforth, Sept. 27th.—C. J. Gent.

Aricia agestis Schf. Brown Argus 66
 Little of this butterfly was seen in 1957, but half-a-dozen more or less typical forms were seen in its Cornforth colony. One specimen was also noted in a bare patch in Hawthorn Dene on July 13th. No rockrose was seen there.—J.W.H.H.

FLOWERING PLANTS

Ranunculus heterophyllus Weber Water Crowfoot 66
 In a ditch near Haswell.—J.K.M.
R. sceleratus L. Celery-leaved Crowfoot 66
 Rare enough on the Magnesian Limestone, but occurring near the Hare and Hounds, Cornforth.
Trollius europaeus L. Globeflower 66
 In very great numbers in a field in a wood along a tiny stream flowing into the Hisehope Burn.
Allium vineale L. Crow Garlic 68
 At the base of the dunes at Embleton.—J.W.H.H.
Rosa agrestis Savi 66
 This rose, of which an outlying colony has been known in Durham for some years, has turned up in a wood along the Wear at Eastgate. The Eastgate rose shows a very slight pubescence along the midrib of the leaves, and might be assigned to var. *arvatica* Rouy.
R. micrantha Sm. 66
 Odd bushes along the railway banks near Raisby Quarries.
Lactuca muralis Less. Wall Lettuce 67
 Not uncommon on a wall near Ninebanks at an elevation of 1000 feet, Baker and Tate give the upper limits of this plant as 150 yards at Hamsterley.
Antennaria dioica L. Mountain Everlasting 66
 This upland plant was discovered in a new station on the Magnesian Limestone near Trirndon on July 2nd.
Senecio squalidus L. Oxford Ragwort 66
 Plentiful amongst heather near Hurworth Burn, and also on banks near Seaton Carew.
Cirsium heterophyllum (L.) Hill. Melancholy Thistle 66, 67
 Common enough along the Rookhope Burn and near Nenthead and Alienheads.
Hippuris vulgaris L. Marestail 66
 In Mucky and Toddler's Fleets near Greatham Creek.
Echium vulgare L. Viper's Bugloss 66
 A very beautiful white form of this species was discovered in a large colony of the typical plant at Raisby on July 2nd.
Campanula persicifolia L. 66
 Found growing in the same locality as the preceding.
Hypericum montanum L. Mountain St. John's Wort 66
 Observed for the first time this year on the Magnesium Limestone near Blackhall Rocks.
Galium pumilum Murr. Slender Bedstraw 66
 Found sparingly with *Linum anglicum* in calcareous grass land near West Cornforth. This seems to provide the first lowland station for the species in Durham. New to our Magnesian Limestone lists.
Ancampsis pyramidalis L. Pyramidal Orchid 66
 Detected in 1957 in a field near Raisby Quarries.—J.W.H.H.
Filipendula vulgaris Moench. Dropwort 66
 Two well-established colonies of this species have been discovered on the cliffs at Marsden. It has not been recorded for our counties for a long time.—R. Boyce.
Zerna erecta (Huds.) Panz. Upright Brome 66
 Found in old quarries, and along the paths leading to them, at Trirndon Grange; this, so far, seems to be the furthest east station for the grass in Durham,