THE VASCULUM
(SUBSTITUTE)

MARCH, 1958

Vol. XLIII, No. 1 Price 3/6 per annum; post free.

Edited by
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BY THE WAY

Once again, we ask the Secretaries of our Societies to supply us with accounts of their various activities. In 1957, we received promises of the punctual arrival of such material, but, up to the present, none has been received.

THE NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

At the Annual General Meeting of the Northern Naturalists' Union, held at Newcastle upon Tyne on March 1st, 1958, one could not help feeling greatly impressed by the large and enthusiastic gathering. However, one striking fact was equally obvious. Absent from the meeting were the professional biologists who, not so long ago, formed the backbone of the Union, and did so much to further its aims. On March 1st, in such an unusually large audience, one could count the number of professionals present on the fingers of one hand! Very different was the position of the amateurs who have also done so much for us in the past; they were present in full force. For the Union's welfare, the two, amateur and professional, are complementary; both are necessary for our continued existence. Is it not possible for us once again to see the trained biologist present at all our meetings and willing to guide those who have joined the Union with the expectation of receiving assistance?

The lack of necessary help was painfully obvious at our field meetings in 1957 which were so well-attended and so successful otherwise.

RED ADMIRALS

In the early months of most years, we are accustomed to read reports in the newspapers of the early appearance and capture of the Red Admiral butterfly. This year was no exception for in the "gossip" columns of some newspapers there were records of the occurrence of the butterfly in January and February. In all cases, these accounts refer to the Small Tortoiseshell. That butterfly

emerges from the chrysalid in July and August, flits about sipping the nectar of Michaelmas daises, hawkweeds and the like and then retires into suitable winter quarters for hibernation. Such positions are found in crevices in walls, in holes in trees, in the corners of bedrooms, in outhouses and so on. In these places, the butterflies are often disturbed or prematurely stirred into action, with the result that we have the always erroneous accounts of early " Red Admirals ".

Normally, the butterfly ceases its hibernation in April and begins the life-cycle again by laying its eggs on nettles.

The Red Admiral has a very different life history. In Britain, it is an immigrant from North Africa, reaching this country, in general, in May, June, July and, occasionally, in other months. Such immigrants lay eggs which produce butterflies in late summer and early autumn. These butterflies, however, cannot survive our winters with the result that we see no more Red Admirals until the supply is replenished by a new immigration.

It is quite possible that, very rarely, an odd specimen may persist until later in the year than its brethren. Still, it is certain that the "Red Admirals ", reported so regularly for January and February, are nothing more than Small Tortoiseshells disturbed during hibernation.

HOOLIGANISM

Last year, several pairs of swans appeared on two large sheets of water marking the sites of old claypits near Birtley. On the lesser sheet, obviously the more suitable of the two on account of the presence of beds of " bulrushes " and other water plants, a pair built their nest and duly laid eggs. These were promptly destroyed by hooligans throwing stones at them. Almost immediately, a second nest was constructed to suffer the same fate as the first. Still the birds persisted and a third nest was made-and destroyed.

Despite all this, the swans remained on the pool, and, weeks after, were observed sitting on the remains of the first nest which, however, contained no eggs. As we watched the birds, a miner coming from the nearby pit loosened his "bait" and shouted "Howay lad ! " Our surprise may be imagined when we state that, most solemnly, the two swans left the nest, swam across to the miner and took slices of bread from his hands !

Surely something ought to be done to prevent the destruction the nests and eggs of such noble and trusting birds.

RARE PLANTS

Last year, and even once this year, we have received requests from "botanists" asking to be shown Durham localities for of our rarer plants. In the cases of some of these, the divulging of their habitats will, almost inevitably, end in the destruction of colonies. As was stated at the last meeting of the N.N.U., the Derwent Valley station for the Royal Fern, *Osmunda regalis*, was

communicated under a pledge of secrecy to one person. This individual broke the promise, and now, as a result, the Derwent Valley lacks one of its finest plants.

The moral is obvious, and we ask our members to be very careful indeed in the matter of communicating plant localities, either to collectors or to people who "just want to see rare plants growing in their native haunts".

THE SOCIETIES

NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

By the kind invitation of the Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne, the Thirty-fourth Annual Meeting of the Union was held in the Hancock Museum, on Saturday, March 1st, 1958.

The President, Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison, took the Chair, and once again we were favoured with a very large and keen audience, representative of all the areas covered by the Union.

Our Treasurer, Mr. T. C. Dunn, B.Sc., was able to give us a very satisfactory account of our financial position, and, in doing so, urged the necessity for utilizing some of our balance for publication purposes. The report of the Secretary, Mrs. A. N. Gibby, was deemed equally satisfactory, and to both of these officers a hearty vote of thanks was tendered.

Next, the President placed before the meeting the proposed localities and dates for our Field Excursions. For the Junior meeting in May, it was agreed that the whole of its arrangements should be left in the hands of Dr. Moss. For the Senior outings, as usual, a woodland walk was proposed for May, the locality suggested being Apperley Dene and the date May 31st. In July, a complete break in tradition is to be made in the selection of Richmond for an excursion on July 19th, whilst for Saturday, September 13th, our choice fell on a walk along the Bedburn and over the adjoining moorlands.

On the conclusion of the business, Mrs. Hickling urged that the claims of the Farne Islands seals to protection should be pressed-as vigorously as possible. She also gave an account of a new organisation concerned with the advance of Natural History studies generally. Like the Council, the meeting insisted that, in connexion with the latter, the claims of the North should be kept well to the fore.

Following this was the election of officers, when Mr. T. N. Scaling of Darlington was elected President, the new Vice-President to replace him being Mr. A. Ball. The other Vice-President chosen was Mr. Weldon Watts.

After the business was concluded, Prof. J. W. Heslop Harrison gave his Presidential Address which bore the title " A Naturalist

looks at the Scottish Western Isles", This was illustrated by a long series of lantern slides, and dealt with the Isles of Lewis, Harris, Great Bernera, Scarp, Taransay, and the islets dotted over the Sound of Harris. Commencing with Stornoway in Lewis, the lecturer considered the origin of the town, castle and the surrounding woods. In dealing with the woods, he referred to their plants and animals. Thence he took us, via the Eye Peninsula and Tolsta, to Loch Geirhaha, drawing special attention to its water lilies, the surrounding machair land and the relict woodlands on the bold cliffs above it. Incidentally, he considered the relict woodlands along the Creed River and compared the two series. These, and other relict woodlands, in the Inner and Oouter Hebrides were first recognised and studied by the speaker. Next, the area around the Butt of Lewis was examined, and its natural products, especially the Vernal Squill and the Hebridean bee, *Bombus smithiana* mentioned.

Here, we were taken southward past Barvas, and Bragor to Dun Carloway and the famous Callernish Standing Stones. These having been considered, we were shown the scenic beauties of Uig and Great Bernera. Amongst the plants, the occurrence of such alpine plants as the Viviparous Knotgrass and the Cushion Pink, found almost at sea level, was emphasized. The account of the west of Lewis halted at Mealasta Island, where special mention was made of the old nunnery nearby, the wealth of orchids in flower and the numbers of Red Admiral caterpillars on the nettles.

Next, we were introduced to the Shiant Islands, when an account was given of its butterflies, birds, wild roses and its wonderful red campions, The mountains of North and South Harris were then reviewed with illustratious demonstrating their wide range of alpine plants. Again, the wealth of orchids was stressed and with them the marvellous Hebridean moss, *Myurium hebridarum*. The lecture closed with an account of the islets in the Sound of Harris and of their plants, birds and insects. In particular, the presence of machair land and of a well-marked relict woodland in a gorge on Killegray received special notice.

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to Professor Heslop Harrison, not only for his lecture, but for all his long-continued services to the Union.

Tea was served at 4-30 p.m., and the various exhibits inspected. On this occasion, we missed Mr. R. B. Cooke's exhibit of spring flowers. However, we had brought for us by Miss D. B. Blackburn a wonderful array of poppy species, varieties and hybrids. Mr. L. P. Hird showed the Alpine Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla alpina*) and the English Stonecrop (*Sedum anglicum*), from the Castle Rock, Holy Island. Again, Mrs. Gibby delighted us with her beautifully preserved set of Irish plants. Dr. Todd produced a beautiful

exhibit of photographs in natural colours of local plants, all interesting and some rare. Professor Heslop Harrison had on view a series of melanic moths concerned with induced melanism and its inheritance.

BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

On Dec. 4th, we were shown two films in colour illustrative of the title "Northumbria at Work and Play". In the New Year, we began, on, on January 7th, with a lecture by Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison dealing with" Curious Facts about Butterflies and Moths." The speaker concerned himself with such topics as migration, melanism, antennae, glands, the symbiosis between the caterpillars of blue butterflies and ants, and so on. On Jan. 21st, Dr. J. Phillipson lectured on " Zoological Topics" when he gave us a very interesting description of the biology of harvestman spiders. On Feb. 4th, Col. Watson of the Caterpillar Co. Ltd., showed us two films descriptive of the Company's work. The actual title was "They put Birtley on the Map". One of these films, that dealing with the construction of the new St. Lawrence Canal, and the various difficulties encountered there, proved exceptionally interesting. Then, on Feb. 18th, Mr. James Alder gave us a splendid talk on "Colourful Birds". This impressed his hearers greatly, both on account of his actual talk and for the wonderful command of technique his slides displayed.

NOTES AND RECORDS

NOTES

Some Notes from the Ouseburn Tip.-A few years ago, I recorded the Oxford Ragwort *Senecio squalidus*, from the edge of the Ouseburn Tip (67). This station is now completely destroyed, but the plant has become established on the tip proper not far away on the earth bank adjoining the Municipal Sports Stadium. This tip seems a very poor place for wild life observations. Still, I found a coltsfoot in flower there on January 12th, 1958-a very early date indeed for this season. On January 8th, a wild rabbit was noted dodging amongst the dead clumps of mugwort. In early February, I was pleased to see a Dock of thirty snow buntings.-W. A. Wright,

Gentiana verna in Alston Moor, Cumberland.-Notebooks of the Northumberland ornithologist George Bolam came into my possession for a short time a few years ago, and among many interesting comments were five distinct sitings of *Gentiana verna* in Alston Moor, Cumberland. The extraordinary part of Bolam's notes is the dating which, in almost all cases, is in June, or even July or August. Indeed, so incongruous is this point that one suspects a wrong identification, but this would be particularly odd in the light of the profound knowledge which was Bolam's. However, in May 1956, and again in May 1957, I was able to confirm one of the sites with the aid of a Garrigill man, Mr. Green. Several plants flourish on this site. I believe another site has been confirmed by students stationed at the Moor House Nature Conservancy, and the place mentioned is also in Bolam's list. Naturally, this contribution is not intended to be helpful in describing the exact location of the plants.

In view of these discoveries, it is especially interesting to know that Bolam claimed to have found G. *verna* on the north side of Gilderdale, which is in Northumberland. I have not been able to confirm this so far.-W. E. Richardson, Alston.

Induced Melanism in the Early Thorn Moth, Selenia bilunaria.-Some years ago, my colleague, the late Dr. F. C. Garrett, and I, working with my material, were able to induce melanism (blackening) in an ordinary wild strain of the Early Thorn Moth, *Selenia bilunaria.* The material obtained as the result or these experiments has been exhibited recently on two occasions at meetings of the Northern Naturalists' Union. It was placed on view simply because there has been a renewal of interest in it. Further, completely erroneous accounts of my views about it have been put into circulation. Let it be known, once and for all, that Dr. Garrett did hold the opinion that the results provided a case or a simple Lamarckjian effect. On the other hand, I regarded the matter as oneof an induced mutation. This opinion concerning the origin of melanism I put forward as long ago as 1920, and have repeated on many occasions since. In nature I believe that melanism is similarly induced by a definite melanogen existing in a smoke-polluted atmosphere.

Once again, I reiterate the simple fact that, never at any time, have I put forward or supported the view that the experiments planned by me resulted in the bringing into being a genuine Lamarckian effect. Any statement to the contrary can only be made to confuse, if possible, the issue, and to draw attention away from the obvious fact that Natural Selection does not account for the origin of melanism, but only for its perpetuation, under certain conditions, when once it has appeared. The real problem is to determine by what agency, and how, melanism is developed. That problem Garrett and I set out to solve. -J. W. Heslop-Harrison.

A Tale of a Tragedy.-During the recent snow storm, I observed, in the grounds of the Isolation Hospital at Chester-le-Street, the foot prints of rat. Anxious to learn whither the rat was proceeding, I followed its tracks around the fence. They were quite uninterrupted until I came to a point when a cat had obviously rested. Then came a depression indicative of the pouncing of a cat, next the disappearance of the rat's footprints-and a single red drop on the snow! After that the cat's footmarks were continuous, whilst those of the rat were absent !-R. Harris.

Notes on some plants of the Rothley and Cragside Lakes.- The two Rothley Lakes and the surrounding marshy ground (67) support an interesting range of species, of which the following may be mentioned: *Littorella uniflora, Hydrocotyle vulgaris, Nymphaea alba, Polygonum amphibium, Scutellaria galericulata, Sparganium ramosum,* S. *simplex, Typha latifolia, Rumex hydrolapathum, Potentilla palustris, Veronica scutellata, Apium inundatum, Orchis Fuchsii, Ranunculus peltatus, Eleocharis palustris, Carex acutiformis,* C. *paniculata,* C. *rostrata, Potamogeton polygonifolius, P. natans x P. nitens, P. perfoliata, P. gramineus, P. berchtoldii, P. pusillus, P. crispus,* and *Myriophyllum alterniflorum.* In the woods near the Lakes *Listera cordata* grows and *Oxycoccus palustris* occurs in a near-by peat bog.

A flat area, which at times is submerged and at other times uncovered by water, around the head of the Font Reservior (67) is interesting botanically. Here occur *Rorippa islandica, Littorella uniflora, Gnaphalium uliginosum* and *Veronica scutellata.*

Of the lakes in Cragside grounds (68), Nelly's Moss Lakes support *Typha latifolia, Sparganium simplex, Alisma plantago-aquatica, Potamogeton natans,* and *Carex rostrata.* On the flat between these two lakes grows *Littorella uniflora, Apium inundatum, Gnaphalium uliginosum,* and *Eleocharis palustris Sparganium ramosum, Glyceria maxima* and *Potamogeton berchtoldii* are found in the Tumbleton Oake, while S. *ramosum* and *Myriophyllum alterniflorum* grows in the Debden Lake. *Typha latifolia* occurs also in the Blackburn Lake.- G. A. Swan and M. Swan.

Notes on some plants of the Yetholm District.- The area around Yetholm (80), lying on the north side of the Cheviots, has an interesting flora, affording some species which are uncommon in Cheviotland (68). In or near Yetholm Loch the following, as well as many other, species are found:

Ranunculus lingua, Cicuta virosa, Lycopus europaeus, Lythrum salicaria, Schoenoplectus lacustris, Senecio aquaticus, Butomus umbellatus (perhaps not native), *Menyanthes trifoliata, Polygonum amphibium, Iris pseudacorus, Potentilla palustris, Scutellaria galericulata, Typha latifolia, Alisma plantago-aquatica, Hydrocotyle vulgaris, Valeriana officinalis, Sparganium ramosum, Carex acutiformis,* C. *rostrata, Salix alba,* S. *atrocinerea,* S, *aurita,* and S. *pentandra.*

Near the summit of Yetholm Law, overlooking the Loch, *Cerastium arvense, Scleranthus annuus, Helianthemum chamaecistus, Anthyllis vulneraria,* and *Saxifraga granulata* occur.

The banks of the Bowmont Water and the adjacent areas near Yetholm afford *Rorippa islandica, R. sylvestris, Trifolium arvense, Filago germanica, Orchis purpurella, Gnaphalium uliginosum, Veronica filiformis, Erodium cicutarium,* and *Myrrhis odorata. Ranunculus peltatus* occurs here as well as in the tributary, Halter Burn, where *R. trichophyllus* is also found. Higher up the Bowmont Water, *Agrimonia odorata, Verbascum thapsus, Viola lutea* and *Salix purpurea* occur and *Pentaglottis semperivirens* is naturalised.

On hedge banks near Cherry trees, *Allium paradoxum* and *Viola odorata* are found, presumably as escapes, together with *Arum maculatum. Rosa rubiginosa* also occurs near Yetholm, in the neighbourhood of which (as also near Wooler) *Thlaspi arvense* is a common weed of arable land. On dry banks *Carex pairaei* is also found.- G. A. Swan and M. Swan.

RECORDS

BIRDS

Mergus merganser L. Goosander 67
A female was observed on Gosforth Park Lake on January 12th.

Parus atricapillus L. Willow-Titmouse 67
One was heard in Gosforth Park on January 12th; this was the first seen for some time.

Carduelis carduelis L. Goldfinch 67
A single bird was seen plucking thistle down in a field near the lake Lodge, Gosforth Park on January 12th. This is the first example of this species I have recorded from the Gosforth Park area.-C. J. Gent.

FLOWERING PLANTS

Dactylorchis purpurella T. and T. A. Steph. 66
This orchis occurred in enormous quantities on the Raisby Quarries spoil-heap.-J. W. H. H

Brachypodium pinnatum (L.) Beauv. 66
This grass, so recently added to our county list, is more widely spread in the Merryknowle area than was supposed. An additional station for this species, discovered this year, is Castle Eden Dene, where two large patches exist near its mouth.

Salix aurita x repens 66
Found, quite unexpectedly, on the Magnesian Limestone near Hurworth and Trimdon Grange, where both parent species are distinctly uncommon.

S. atrocinerea x repens 66
On the Magnesian Limestone near Hurworth.

S. atrocinerea x phylicifolia 66
Growing on shingle near Wolsingham along the Wear: cuttings from the plant have rooted readily.

Senecio vulgaris x squalidus 66
In the birch wood near Hurworth where the Oxford ragwort is very common.

Geum rivale x G. urbanum 66
In a hedge near Eastgate in Weardale,

Rosa villosa X spinosissima 66
The plant, resulting from a cross between white-flowered *R. villosa* and *R. spinosissima*, found in a hedge near Quarrington Hill, has been very seriously damaged by hedge trimming operations this year. However, for the first time, it has produced hips-two in number!

R. sherardi x spinosissima 66, 67
Another plant with this parentage was detected in Crimdon Dene. 1'bII hundred year old plant growing on the bankside at the foot of Dipton Bank was in flower on July 2nd.

Melandrium album x M. rubrum 66,67
This hybrid campion occurs in several places near Birtley, generally in the habitats of the former species.-J. W. H. H.

Carex paupercula Michx. 67
In a peat bog near Chartner's Lough, with C. *curta*, C. *rostrata*, *Andromeda polifolia*, *Oxycoccus palustris* and *Narthecium ossifragum*.

Scirpus sylvaticus L. Wood Club-rush 67, 68
On the banks of the Back Burn, near Snitter, along with *Orchis purpureu.* (68). On the banks of the Coquet near Pauperhaugh (68) and near Harehaugh (67). On the banks of the Rede near Otter burn (67).

Blysmus compressus (L.) Linq. 67
On the banks of the Rede near Elishaw Bridge and of the Elsdon Bum near Elsdon.

Nuphar lutea (L.) Sm. Yellow Water-Lily 67
In the Elsdon Burn near Monkridge.

Epilobium pedunculare A. Cunningham 68
By the College Burn near Hethpool and by the Harthope Burn near Skirl Naked.

Melandrium noctiftorum (L.) Fr. Night-flowering Campion 67
In a field about half a mile S.E. of Rothbury.

Allium oleraceum L. Field Garlic 68
On the banks of the Coquet near Pauperhaugh.

Peplis portula L. Water Purslane. 67
At the edge of a pond near Otterburn, along with *Veronica scutellata*, *Gnaphalium uliginosum*, and *Callitriche intermedia.*

Agrostemma githago L. Corn Cockle 67
Near farm buildings at Greenchesters near Otterburn.-G. A. Swan and M. Swan.

Vaccinium uliginosum L. Bog Whortleberry 68
One small patch growing on the peat hag on the north side of Cheviot.

Carex pairaei F. Schultz. Prickly Sedge 68
Dry grassy places in the College Valley near Hethpool and in the Harthope Valley near Skirl Naked.

Galium pumilum Murr. Slender Bedstraw 68
In the Bizzle Ravine of Cheviot, growing near *Rosa nigricans* and *Mercurialis perennis.*

Euonymus europaeus L. Spindle-tree 68
Still surviving in Humbleton Dene.

Chamaepericlymenum suecicum (L.) Aschers, and Graebn. Dwarf Cornel 68
In addition to the long-known stations on Long Crag and at the head or the Lambden Burn and the more recently discovered station in Henhole *(Vasculum,* 1949, 34, 31) we have found this species in considerable amount on the slopes of the Mid Hill of Cheviot.

Arum maculatum L. Lords-and-Ladies 68
This, uncommon in Cheviotland, occurs near Middleton Hall.

Stellaria neglecta Weihe. Greater Chickweed. 68
On a wooded bank of the Wooler Water near Haugh Head.

Lilium martagon L. Martagon Lily 67
Naturalised in a wood near Netberwitton.

Helliborus viridis L. Green Hellebore 67
Naturalised in a hedgebank near Netherwitton.-G. A. Swan and M. Swan.

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BY THE WAY

MR. WM. ELLERINGTON

On May 10th, 1958, a memorable event took place in the rooms of the Consett and District Naturalists' Field Club. This was a special meeting called to make a presentation to Mr. Wm. Ellerington marking his retirement as honorary secretary—a position he had held for twenty years.

The chairman was Mr. J. J. Robson who, in his introductory remarks, paid a fitting tribute to the excellence of Mr. Ellerington's work on behalf of local natural history, but the actual gift, consisting of a fireside chair and a folding table, was handed over by Mr. Ellerington's lifelong friend, Mr. Surtees Armstrong, who also spoke very highly of Mr. Ellerington's labours. The recipient made a suitable reply, and traced the development of his interest in nature study in his early days and later, when he was headmaster at Huntanworth, and an official of the Northern Naturalists' Union and the Field Club.

Further expressions of esteem were made by Mr. T. Hutton and Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison, who dealt more particularly with the part played by Mr. Ellerington, and therefore the Consett Naturalists' Field Club, in the establishing and expansion of the Union. Professor Heslop Harrison also referred to Mr. Ellerington's election as an honorary vice-president of the Union—a unique honour.

A final tribute was paid by Mr. J. Atkinson who spoke in glowing terms of Mr. Ellerington's great value in stimulating natural history research locally.

At the close of the meeting, tea was served, and opportunities given to all who wished to thank Mr. Ellerington personally.

ENTOMOLOGY LOCALLY

Since the disbandment of the Wallis Club, an event entirely due to the outbreak of war in 1939, there has been a steady decrease in the ranks of active amateur entomologists in our counties. Formerly,

at meetings of that Club, workers in many branches of entomology played a dominant part as was demonstrated by the useful series of talks given by so many members. Now, at a field meeting of the Northern Naturalists' Union, the number of entomologists present has sunk to a level which would have shocked the devotees of the science who worked so hard in the period between the wars.

It is quite true that there has been but little change in the numbers of professional entomologists in this area. Unfortunately, their labours are often directed toward the solution of specific problems only rarely connected with local field natural history.

Again, within the Union itself, instead of covering, as formerly, a wide range of insect and arachnid groups, the amateurs now working restrict their efforts, for the most part, to a study of Lepidoptera and their problems. Not so long ago, these counties were famous throughout the country for the work done here on the more obscure orders. At the present time, not a single amateur seems to be interested in the very groups in which steady work would yield a speedy return.

The Northern Naturalists' Union, and our Societies, were established to encourage investigators in our local flora and fauna. Further, there are still members of these organisations who can, and will, give help to younger and ambitious workers who wish to assist in the filling of gaps in our knowledge of local natural history. May we therefore appeal to the Societies to urge such potential entomologists to appeal to those in a position to assist and direct ?

The Northern Naturalists' Union itself, through a few of its more active members at its field meetings, does try to solve difficulties and give help on such occasions. However, it need not be emphasized that two or three persons can give but little assistance when seventy people are present; it remains for the Societies to stimulate enthusiasm amongst their own members and to put recruits into contact with entomologists likely to give advice in any special group favoured.

INSECT IMMIGRANTS

Every year, in this country, as well as in others, irruptions of many insects take place with greater or less regularity. The insects chiefly concerned are butterflies and moths, although dragonflies, beetles and others are also involved. For quite a number of years, such movements have attracted considerable attention and investigations, directed from Harpendon on behalf of an Insect Immigration Committee, have become widespread. As a result, every year, a report, in which all the known occurrences of each individual species are set out, has been published in the *Entomologist*. At one time, our counties held honourable positions in such reports. Indeed, so extensive was local work that the late Dr. F. C. Garrett acted as a local secretary to deal with it. At present a few wretched records represent the yearly output from our area!

The insects to be observed are, in general, quite ordinary. The chief are the Large Garden White butterfly, the Red Admiral, the Painted Lady, the two Clouded Yellows, the Silver Y, the Death's Head Hawk, the Convolvulus Hawk and the Humming Bird Hawk. There are others, of course, which a would-be helper will learn to recognize very easily, but this list is sufficient to indicate that good observations may be made by a tiro.

The only trap in the recognition of the above-named species is the uniform desire of novices to apply the name " Red Admiral " to the Small Tortoiseshell—a mistake made every spring when the Tortoiseshell leaves its winter quarters.

Already, this season, the Painted Lady and Silver Y have appeared amongst us, and work can begin at once. If anyone wishes to assist, we shall be very glad to send his, or her records, under their own names, to Harpenden to be incorporated in the final report.

DRAWINGS OF BRITISH PLANTS

The eleventh part of this beautiful work, which we have just received, includes the Natural Orders, Droseraceae, Hippuridaceae, Haloragaceae, Callitrichaceae, Lythraceae, Onagraceae, Cucurbitaceae and Ficoidaceae. It easily reaches the high standard set by the earlier parts. In particular, we have, for the first time, complete and correct figures of the more difficult Onagraceae. We have no hesitation in recommending this publication to our readers.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The Council of the Northern Naturalists' Union has decided to publish a new part of its *Transactions* during 1958. The Editor, Prof. J. W. Heslop Harrison, will therefore be glad to consider suitable articles for publication. In view of the huge increases in the cost of printing, contributions should not exceed six printed pages. It should be noted that, in all cases, preference will be given to articles dealing with local natural history, and that, under no circumstances, will papers dealing with areas outside the British Isles be accepted.

THE SOCIETIES

NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The First Field Meeting of the season, arranged by the Northern Naturalists' Union, was held on Saturday, May 31st, at Apperley Dene and Wheel Birks, with Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison as leader. The attendance was excellent, and representative contingents from all parts of the two counties were present.

The party assembled near Apperley Dene and began work in the woods which were of the typical oak-wych elm type. Vegetation was very backward, but many interesting plants were observed. Amongst these were the bluebells, primrose, violet, garlic, wood avens, water avens (with their hybrid), woodruff, wood sanicle,

anemone, lesser celandine, goldilocks, wood sorrel, dog's mercury, bitter cress, tormentil, crosswort, earthnut, tuberous-rooted bitter- vetch, mountain speedwell, ivy-leaved speedwell, red campion, cuckoo pint, cuckoo flower, strawberry, barren strawberry, sweet cicely, herb-robert, forget-me-not, cleavers, great hedge bedstraw, field wood-rush, great wood-rush, hairy wood-rush and cowslips.

The canopy of trees was chiefly composed of oak, wych elm, birch, ash and alder whilst the undershrubs included hazel, sloe, hawthorn, guelder rose and three species of sallow. In the more open spaces toward the wood edges, the bird cherry and wild cherry made a lovely display of blossoms. At suitable points, halts were made when our guide gave brief talks about the plants and animals seen, and answered numerous questions. Advantage was taken of the latter opportunity by the numerous G.C.E. candidates present.

Similarly, in the case of the insects, Mr. T. C. Dunn and Prof. Heslop Harrison supplied the necessary information. Mr. Dunn worked assiduously with but meagre results, although larvae of the two November moths (including *Oporinia christyi*—attached to wych elm), the mottled umber, light emerald, July high-flier, dotted border, and the common winter moth were beaten out. However, as a sort of compensation, just before the party broke up, a single juniper was detected which yielded larvae of the juniper pug, a rare insect locally. Burrows of the strange hornet clearwing moth were seen, not far away, in the trunks of the sallow *Salix caprea*.

Mr. C. J. Gent gave explanatory talks about the birds noted. He reported hearing the songs of the curlew, skylark, wren, song-thrush, blackbird, robin, garden warbler, whitethroat, willow warbler, dunnock, tree pipit, chaffinch and yellow hammer. Other species he saw were the pheasant, lapwing, wood pigeon, swallow, house martin, carrion crow, rook, great tit, blue tit, gold crested wagtail, starling, linnet and house sparrow.

After we left the woods and has explored the banks of the burn, the party proceeded to Wheel Birks where, thanks to the kindness of Mr. Colin Richardson, we examined his wonderful herd of Jersey cattle and the various operations carried out before the milk is passed on to the housewife. The outing ended when we emerged from the dense pinewood, carpeted at points with huge masses of the hairy woodrush, on the road leading to Branch End and Whittonstall.

NOTES AND RECORDS

NOTES

Black-headed Gulls near Alston.—Whilst carrying out work for the 1958 census of black-headed gulls, I determined to check the condition of the long-known site at Whitfield Lough (67), about five miles north of Alston. It is usual to approach this breeding ground from Baraugh Burn to the west, but, for a change, I motored to the top of Whitfield Pass and walked directly across the moor. By so doing, I located a gullery which justifies separate mention by virtue of its

numbers, and its distance from the lough. It lies on open moorland on Willyshaw Rigg, and amongst eroded peat some 600 birds were in evidence whilst over two hundred nests could be claimed for the colony on May 16th when it was first visited. At Whitfield Lough itself, the gulls are very numerous and five distinct centres can be plotted, giving at least another 300—400 nests. This remarkably healthy condition is greatly in contrast with the 1919 report of only 12 nests and that of 1938 when it was classed as a doubtful colony. In the 1938 report, no mention was made of Willyshaw Rigg, and I have never heard local people refer to this out tier of the main colony. It is probably of recent origin.— W. E. Richardson.

[The Whitfield Lough colony was quite strong when I visited it in 1916. Unfortunately, I made no count of its population then.—J.W.H.H.]

Ferns in the Derwent Valley.—In response to the request for records of ferns in the Derwent Valley, I can report the following : Adder's Tongue *(Ophioglossum vulgatum)*, the Maidenhair Spleenwort *(Asplenium trichomanes)* in two localities. Wall Rue *(A. ruta-muraria)* very local, the Hard Fern *(Blechnum spicant)* not rare, common Polypody *(Polypodium vulgare)* in a few stations, Male Fern *(Dryopteris filix-mas)* plentiful. Oak Fern *(Thelypteris dryopteris)* more or less common. Hart's Tongue Fern *(Phyllitis scolopendrium)* sparingly. Prickly Shield Fern *(Phyllitis scolopendrium)* sparingly. Prickly Shield Fern *(Polystichum aculeatum)* local and the Bracken *(Pteridium aquilinum)* plentiful in many stations. —L. P. Hird.

Old Records of Drosera anglica in Northumberland (v-c. 67).—Recently, whilst working through a series of old records made by Mr. Thomas Robson, long ago schoolmaster at Burradon, and once a resident at Harnham, I discovered that he had collected *Drosera anglica* in two localities in v.-c. 67. In view of the fact that, except for one station, this sundew is regarded as extinct in Northumberland, I think it wise to make known Mr. Robson's localities. There is just a chance that his colonies still exist, more especially as few botanists have visited the areas in question recently. His plants were collected on Harwood Fells and Bradford Bogs. Bradford is, of course, in Northumberland, and near Harnham. —J.W.H.H.

Female plants of the Butterbur in Durham (v. **c.-66).**—As is well-known, although the butterbur *Petasites hybridus*, is common enough with us, most of the colonies consist of male plants only. However, this year I discovered a station for the plant on the Wear at Chester-le-Street in which only female plants were to be found. As far as I know, less than a half a dozen stations exist for the female plant in Durham and Northumberland.—R. Harris.

The Flowering of Spring Plants.—This season has been characterized in most parts of Co. Durham by the wonderful displays given by our spring-flowering shrubs and herbs when they burst into flower. The first plant to attract attention was the blackthorn which produced masses of flowers so dense that the bushes looked as if they were covered with snow.

Succeeding the blackthorn, was the bird cherry which made a very striking show with its long, drooping racemes of pure white.

Everywhere the hawthorn continued the same story. A bank near Kelloe, on which a hawthorn thicket grew, can be singled out for special mention ; there the effect of the massed blossoms was so remarkable that it caused me to imagine that I had discovered a new limestone cliff !

Our other shrubs, the crab, rowan and white beam followed suit ; only rarely have they produced such an effect.

Amongst the herbs, the most outstanding was the sweet cicely, *Myrrhis odorata.* At every suitable point in the Tyne, Wear, Tees and Team Valleys its plants were smothered in flowers to an extent never seen before. Even in the lower-lying areas, along the Skeme, and elsewhere on the Magnesian Limestone, the same held true.

In the garden, when the various trees and shrubs came into flower, similar tales were told ; apple, pear, cherry, lilac, weigelia and laburnum all producing unprecedented masses of flowers.

It will be interesting to see, when the wild roses, brambles, guelder rose, honey- suckle and the like flower, whether they are equally prolific.

A Strange Blackbird.—On June 17th, when I was studying the orchid population in one of the claypits at Birtley, my attention was attracted to a strange- looking bird, which, at first sight, I thought might be a ring ouzel which had strayed from the upland haunts. However, when I approached nearer, I was amazed to discover that the bird was a blackbird with a pure white head and neck, the rest of its body being normal. I followed it several times and had a close look at it and heard its cry.

Trees and Shrubs on Pitheaps.—Recently, I have had abundant opportunities of examining the vegetation on pitheaps and waggonways which I had not visited previously. The presence in many cases of the white beam struck me as very remarkable because the trees were flourishing vigorously. Not only was this so but, in addition, the plants were producing abundant crops of seedlings and saplings ; pitheap conditions, therefore, seem to favour the white beam. Clearly, it ought to be included in any project aimed at establishing vegetation on old heaps.

Two other plants have been observed to be quite at home in such situations ; these are the flowering currant and *Cotoneaster simmonsii*. The latter shrub I have seen self-sown in many out-of-the-way stations, but this is the first occasion on which I have flowering currant succeeding on pitheads.

Notes on Orchids in the Team Valley and Adjacent Areas.—The earliest known local colony of the Marsh Orchid, *Dactylorchis purpurella* was detected over sixty years ago along the Vigo railway, and, until recently, it has always been regarded as a strong one. However, fourteen years ago its numbers began to decrease to an alarming extent.

Strangely enough, even in its best days, the orchid was confined to the south side of the railway banks, not even a single plant having been observed on the north side. During the present season, changes have been observed, at least ten specimens having occurred on the north side, *i.e.*, on the slopes facing south.

Orchid populations often seem to display huge fluctuations in numbers which are not real ; very often, varying numbers of individuals lie dormant for one or more seasons. This colony has displayed this phenomenon in the past. Nevertheless, the diminution recorded above is a real one, depending upon an actual loss in individuals.

Another peculiarity the colony has shown lies in the circumstance that only once has any hybridity with *D. fuchsii* been observed amongst its members ; one such hybrid was noted in 1954. Furthermore, no pure stands of *D. fuchsii* are known in the vicinity.

Elsewhere in the Birtley district, *D. purpurella* colonies invariably include huge hybrid swarms of *D. purpurella* x *fuchsii* crosses as well as numbers of normal *D. fuchsii.* On June 17th, this was especially obvious in the most southerly claypit where, in a circular depression, not a yard in diameter, I observed a single *D. fuchsii* plant surrounded by 26 hybrids.

A Black Larva of Erannis marginaria.—Twenty-six years ago, in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, B, **111,** pp. 188-200, I gave an account of an evolutionary movement in the colours of the larvae of certain Lepidoptera leading to the development of wholly black forms. Amongst the species so affected were *Selenia bilunaria* and *Erannis marginaria.* However, the black varieties of the larvae of these two species did not occur in the same wood, those former being found in the alder-birch wood on Waldridge Fell, and those of the latter in an oak-elm wood near Birtley. Since 1932 I have discovered no new stations for melanic larvae of *S. bilunaria* On the other hand, quite accidentally, I picked up a jet-black larva of *E. marginaria* in the same habitat as that producing the melanic examples of *S. bilunaria* larvae.

RECORDS

LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

Hydrocampa nymphaeata L. China Mark 62

Taking into consideration the renewal of interest in melanic varieties of Lepidoptera, it seems advisable to record the fact that blackish forms of the present insect occur around a pond at Acklam not far from Middlesbrough.—J.W.H.H.

Phigalia pedaria Fab. Pale Brindled Beauty 66

The black form of the male of this species was taken at light near the Infectious Diseases Hospital, Chester-le-Street.—R. Harris.

Panemeria tenebrata Scop. Small Yellow Underwing 66

In his *Catalogue* (1899) Robson gives several Durham stations for this beautiful little species, but states that it has not been recorded for Northumerland. However, most records supplied are very old. Since the publication of that work, *P. tenebrata* has only been found in one locality, Ferryhill, where I took several in 1951. On June 18th of the present year, I once more encountered it, on this occasion on the pitheap of East Hetton Colliery near Kellloe. Robson recommends searches for it where *Cerastium arvense* grows. In my opinion, that advice is wrong for in both localities worked by me the food plant of the larva is C. *vulgatum*. Moreover, most of his stations are not likely places in which to search for C. *arvense*. I therefore think that an error in identifying the plant has been made.

Pammene regiana Z. 66

Meyrick in his *Revised Handbook* gave the range of this species as " England to York ". In spite of this, Robson gives two stations for the county ; Hesleden Dene and Eggleston. I took it twice last week in my garden here at Birtley.— J.W.H.H.

FLOWERING PLANTS AND FERNS

Dryopteris spinulosa Presi. Narrow Buckler Fern 66

In 1868, in their *Flora*, Baker and Tate record this species from Waldridge Fell, the reference they supply being " J. Mitchinson, *fide* Moore ". Similarly, in a " Guide to Durham " by J. R. Boyle, F.S.A., the same locality is mentioned Although these records refer to investigations made over a hundred years ago, I determined to make a close search on the Fell for the plant. To my great pleasure, I had no difficulty in finding the fern in a colony of over twenty in- dividuals. It seems in every way likely that other groups exist,.—J.W.H.H.

Aquilegia vulgaris L. Columbine 66

Another station for this plant on the Magnesian Limestone is at Kelloe where it grows with *Sesleria caerulea.*

Hypericum montanum L. Mountain St. John's Wort 66

Near East Hetton Colliery, Kelloe.

Viola reichenbachiana Jord. Violet 66

Plentiful with *V. riviniana* under hawthorn and other shrubs between Kelloe i and East Hetton Colliery.—J.W.H.H.

Veronica filifonnis Sm. 66

On the shingle along the Wear near Wolsingham.

Lathyrus montanus (L.) Bernh. Bitter Vetch 67

Several plants with white and nearly white flowers were noted near Apperley Dene.

Rhynchospora alba Vahl. Beaked Rush 66

This plant was recorded by Winch in his *Flora* (1838) as occurring on the heath at Prestwick Carr in Northumberland, and on Beamish Moor in Durham. Later, in 1868, Baker and Tate report it from " swampy heaths, rare ", giving the same two localities as Winch,but adding Muckle Moss for Northumberland. Beamish Moor is now gone, and Prestwick Carr has been drained so that these areas no longer support the plant. Nevertheless, it may still grow on Muckle Moss. In any case, it has not been observed in Durham for over 100 years. Fortunately, on May 31st, 1958, we discovered two small patches of the plant on Widdy Bank Fell, a most unlikely place for making new records.—J.W.H.H.

Zerna erecta (Huds.) Panz. Upright Brome 66
This fine grass has now been found in abundance along roadisdes near Kelloe and Trirndon—J.W.H.H.
Carex riparia Curt. Great Pond-sedge 68
In a ditch near Humbleton Buildings.
Equisetum telmateia Ehrh. Great Horsetail. 67, 68
In woods near Pauperhaugh, near Forestburn Gate (67) and near Powbum (68)
Dianthus deltoides L. Maiden Pink 68
On dry grassy banks near Skirl Naked and near Old Middleton, in both cases along with *Helianthemum chamaecistus.* On the the slopes of the Bell, near Hethpool, together with *Clinopodium vulgare.*
Symphytum tuberosum L. Tuberous Comfrey 68
In a wood near Coldgate Mill. On waste ground near Snitter.
Hordeum murinum L. Wall Barley 68
Uncommon away from the coast in 68 ; but occurs near Akeld and Wooler.
Sparganium simplex Huds. Unbranched Bur-reed 68
In a pond near Hethpool, along with *S. ramosum, Senecio aquaticus* and *Typha latifolia.*
Festuca gigantea (L) Vill. Tall Brome 67
By the Sills Burn, near Rochester.
Genista anglica L. Petty Whin 67, 68
Near the path between Goldscleugh and Broadstruther at about 1350 ft. (68) On the slopes of Easter Tor towards Commonburn House (68). On the northern slopes of Simonside and the slopes to the S.W. of Lordenshaw (67). In the Grasslea area, on the N. side of the Keenshaw Burn (67). On the moors near Debden, N. of Rothbury (68).
Potamogeton berchtoldii Fieb. Small Pondweed 68
In the Coquet near Pauperhaugh.
Trollius europaeus L. Globe Flower 67, 68
In the Bizzle (68). In a wood two miles from Eisdon and by a stream in the Greenleighton area (67).
Andromeda polifolia L. Marsh Andromeda. 67
North of Greenlee Lough near Bell Crags and also near Blackabum Lough, together with *Oxycoccus palustris,*
Lycopodium alpinum L. Alpine Clubmoss. 67, 68
Between Knowsgate and Woodbum near Stiddlehill. Common at about 800 ft. (67). On the Widdy Hill of Cheviot at about 2,300 ft. (68).
Polypodium vulgare L. 68
Among rocks on the Standrop Rigg spur of Hedgehope above 1,700 ft.
Hypericum humifusum L. Trailing St. John's Wort 67, 68
By the Dargues Burn, W of Otterbum and by the Grasslees Burn near Grasslees (67). In the Harthope Valley near Skirl Naked (68).
Chaemorrhinum minus (L) Lange. Small Toadflax 67, 68
On railway near Brinkbum Station (67) and near Humbleton Buildings (68).
Lysimachia vulgaris L. 67, 68
Near Coldgate Mill and in a ditch near Humbleton Buildings (68).
On the banks of the Coquet near Pauperhaugh (68) and near Harehaugh (67). At the latter station it is very profuse and is accompanied by *Senecio aquaticus,*
Junipenis communis L. Juniper 67, 68
Much less common in Northumberland than in Durham. Sparingly on the slopes of the Harthope Valley ; but flourishing near the Common Burn at a point to the W. of Wooler Moor (68). In the Grasslees area near the Billsmoor School (67).
Listera ovata (L) R. Br. Twayblade 67
In a wood near Bagraw, between Otterbur nand Rochester, with *Orchis fuchsii.*
Antennaria dioica (L) Gaertn. Cat's Foot. 68
Near the mouth of Henhole. On the moors near Debden, N. of Rothbury. G. A. Swan and M. Swan.

THE VASCULUM
(SUBSTITUTE)

OCTOBER, 1958

Vol. XLIII, No. 3 Price 3/6 per annum ; post free.

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BY THE WAY

THE DIAMOND-BACK MOTH

Earlier in the year, we drew attention in these columns to the falling off of interest in insect immigrants in our counties. On June 29th, before our note could appear in print, one of the most remarkable invasions of our counties by moths took place. On that date, immense clouds of the Diamond-back Moth *(Plutella maculipennis)* came into our district from the sea. They were so abundant that their presence was observed by many who normally take little interest in the wanderings of insects. As a result, local newspapers began to publish extraordinary accounts of the invading hordes ; in many cases these were hopelessly unreliable. Even the name of the insect, when its species was finally recognized, was incorrectly given!

In due course, the females of these swarms laid eggs on all kinds of cruciferous plants, i.e., those related to the common cabbage. These included stocks, wallflowers, Arabis, Alyssum, charlock, shepherd's purse, perennial wall-rocket *(Diplotaxis tenuifolia)*, turnip and so on. In a few instances, the damage done by the resulting larvae was negligible, but, in others, exceedingly great. Nevertheless, a partial recovery was made by many of the plants so attacked.

The invasion affected the whole of our counties from the Fame Islands to the Tees whilst, inland, its affects were noted beyond Hexham in the Tyne Valley, and higher up the dale than Stanhope in Weardale.

Such an occurrence in our area was not unique, for similar mass irruptions have been reported from Northumberland and Durham in former years. Moreover, the incidence of the invasion was felt as far north as Aberdeenshire, and well to the south in England.

AUTUMNAL FRUITS

In our July number, attention was drawn to the wonderful dis- plays of blossom provided by our spring-flowering shrubs. In the case of many species, these have been followed by enormous crops of

fruits. Nevertheless, in certain localities, no fruits have been produced, and, let it be emphasized, this lack is not a consequence of the bad season, for it occurs with unfailing regularity every season in the same districts.

In the Team Valley, the blackthorn, or sloe, although plentiful, has never been known to produce a single fruit. On the other hand, in the Butsfield area, and even on Falcon Clints, fruits are of regular occurrence. Similarly, also in the Team Valley, the crab-apple has only been seen in fruit, and that on a single tree, on one occasion. Yet, near Fishburn and in many other habitats, its fruits regularly in profusion. Another species, the bird cherry, displays similar vagaries.

It will be of considerable interest, and value, if these local peculiarities can be listed, and we therefore invite our readers to let us know the position in respect to fruiting of the blackthorn, crab-apple and bird-cherry in their districts.

If anyone has observed other trees or shrubs manifesting the same shyness in fruiting, we should welcome a note about them.

MR. J. P. ROBSON

Our readers, especially those interested in Entomology, will learn with regret of the death of Mr. J. P. Robson of Barnard Castle.

Mr. Robson specialized in the Lepidoptera.and of these he had a wonderful collection of beautifully mounted specimens. Although one would describe him primarily as a collector, he devoted a considerable amount of attention to the problems of heredity and variation as exhibited in his favourite groups. In such pursuits, he reared some marvellous and instructive broods. The outcome of his work with the November Moths was seen at the October Meeting of the Union held at Darlington in 1954. He had on view long series of bred *Oporinia autumnata* and *0. christyi* from his own area, and similar sets of *0. dilutata* var. *aurata* and *0. dilutata* var. *regressa* which he had bred from Team Valley ova supplied by Prof. Heslop-Harrison. To his daughter we tender our deepest sympathy on the occasion of her great loss.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The proposed new number of our *Transactions* has not yet gone to the press. The Editor, therefore, is still able to consider suitable articles of local interest for publication. These should not exceed in length six printed pages. Will readers please note : (1) that all enquiries about the loss of numbers, or about similar matters, should be directed to Mrs. A. N. Gibby, B.Sc., Prebend's Gate, Quarry Heads Lane, Durham City, and (2) that, in case of all letters sent to the Editor requiring a reply, or the return of specimens, return postage should be enclosed.

THE SOCIETIES

NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The Second Field Meeting of the season was held on Saturday, July 19th, 1958, when about fifty members and friends met at Richmond, Yorks., to enjoy a ramble with fine and warm weather.

Led by members of the Darlington and Teesdale Naturalists' Field Club, the party walked westwards from the old town along Westfield, continuing along the farm track for some distance and then climbing the hill through a number of fields to the top of Whitcliffe Scar along which is situated Willance's Leap. From this point, a fine view of the Swale Valley is seen, as well as the wooded slope of Hudswell Bank, the distant tops of Wensleydale and eastwards the Hambleton Hills. Whitcliffe Scar is composed of lime- stone, and therefore provides a habitat for many interesting plants.

At Willance's Leap a picnic tea was taken, and an opportunity given to admire the view and to enjoy a social chat with members of other clubs.

From the " Leap ", we crossed the rough pastures in a northerly direction to Reeth Old Road, which was followed for a short distance. Then we proceeded down the valley known as Deepdale which intersects the Scar at right angles. Walking in an easterly direction, we passed through rough pastures which support many species of calcicole plants, and then through Whitcliffe Wood and along the track back again to Westfield and Richmond town.

Our ramble was in essence a circular tour, full of natural beauties, and because of its botanical interest the time spent on the journey was somewhat longer than anticipated. All the participants appeared to enjoy the expedition, inasmuch as to many it broke new ground, full of natural features unspoilt by man.

Plant hunting, in particular, was very profitable and yielded plants of varied affinities. In addition to limestone plants, we met with those proper to hedgerows, dry pastures and marsh land.

In the marshes and ditches, we encountered the Marsh Ragwort, the Marsh, Square-stemmed and Great Hairy Willow Herb, the Marsh Thistle and its white form, the Lesser Spearwort, the Water Crowfoot, Brooklime, Ragged Robin and Watercress. On the limestone, we noted the Viper's Bugloss, Musk Thistle, Rock Rose, Thyme, Marjoram, Woodsage, Hoary Plantain, Mullein, Biting Stonecrop and Musk Mallow. Other plants of interest examined included the Mountain Pansy (all yellow-flowered). Common Speed- well, Thyme-leaved Speedwell, Parsley Piert, Lamb's Lettuce, Sherardia, Herb Robert, Dove's-foot Cranesbill, Small Teasel (here at the northern limit of its range) Black Bryony, Hairy Violet, Yew, Good King Henry, Common Figwort, Three-nerved Sandwort, Thyme-leaved Sandwort, Heath and Ladies' Bedstraw,

Tormentil, Strawberry (with ripe fruit). Meadow Sweet, Agrimony, Centaury, Burdock, Wood Avens, Ladies' Mantle, Poppy and many grass species.

The roses received special attention, and forms of *Rosa dumalis, R. dumetorum, R. canina, R. obtusifolia* and *R. sherardi* were pointed out and their peculiarities discussed. The bramble, *Rubus dumetorum,* also received attention..

Insect-life was little in evidence, but we did see two rather rare moths, the Chalk Carpet, *Ortholitha bipunctaria,* and the Thyme Plume, *Alucita tetradactyla.* Other Lepidoptera observed included the Common Blue butterfly, the Small Heath, the Meadow Brown and the Yellow Shell.

We were fortunate in having Prof. J. W. Heslop Harrison as a member of the party. With his scientific and practical knowledge, he rendered excellent service in identifying species and offering much information of great help to us.—T. N. Scaling.

The Ninety-first Field meeting of the Union, and the third of the season, took place in the Bedburn area on Saturday, 13th September, 1958, under the leadership of Mr. A. Ball. The party, a very large one, assembled at Bedburn Mill about 3 p.m., when Mr. Ball gave an interesting account of the mill and its former activities. Then he led us to the upper road where we halted to listen to his description of the moors and woodlands stretching around us for many miles. He also pointed out the results of the recent work of the Forestry Commission.

Next he took us to the Grove where Mr. K. Lewin conducted us over the beautiful grounds in which many exotic trees had been planted and, in most cases, with success. All of the usual forest trees were likewise represented, but we were sorry to note that the Lombardy poplars had been killed by disease. Leaving these lovely gardens, we admired the beauty of the doves flying around and also the various water fowl on the lake, and then proceeded to a suitable point to rest for tea, and to discuss matters with our colleagues from other Societies. When tea was finished, we passed through the young plantation of coniferous trees back to the burn where the entomologists vigorously beat the birches and sallows for larvae. At the same time those whose interests lay in plants studied the vegetation growing on the rocks along the stream. The most important plants noted were the Juniper and the Cow-berry.

Naturally, under the various conditions we encountered, many other plant species were observed on our walk. These included the Rowan (one tree with yellow fruits), the Monkey-musk, the Marsh and Common Ragworts, with hybrids, the Common Heather, Bil- berry, Tormentil, Heath Bedstraw, Wood Avens, the Bush Vetch, the Purple Deadnettle, the Henbit, Water Mint, Small Stitchwort, the Broad-leaved Helleborine Orchid, the Great Woodrush, the

Iris, the Bulrush and an abundance of ferns amongst which were the Wall-rue, the Black Spleenwort, the Hard Fern, the Common Polypody, the Beech Fern, the Male Fern, the Lady Fern and the Bracken.

Insects were rather more common than appeared to be the case elsewhere in the county. The Red Admiral, the Painted Lady and Green-veined White butterflies were seen on the wing whilst the larvae beaters, headed by Mr. T. C. Dunn, secured from various plants caterpillars of the Cock's-comb Prominent, the Grey Dagger, the Peppered moth, the Brimstone, the White Wave, the Heath Rustic, the Ling Pug, the Common Pug and the Fox moth. From oak, few larvae were procured, but we did see upon them numerous spangle galls of the genus *Neuroterus, N. numismatis, N. lenticu- laris, N. laeviuscula,* as well as *Dryophanta folii.* Similarly, on willows and sallows, galls of *Pontania pedunculi* and *P. proximo* occurred alongside various mite galls and those of the gall gnats, *Perrisia rosaria* and *Oligotrophus major.* On the spruces, too, galls occurred ; these were the pineapple structures produced by plant lice of the genus *Chermes (Adelges).*

Other Hymenoptera noted, in addition to those occurring on oak and sallow, included the common wasp, *Vespa Vulgaris,* and also the wood wasp, *V. Sylvestris,* and the two bees, *Bombus agrorum* and *B. hortorum.*

Only too soon our outing came to its end, and, after thanking Mr. Ball most heartily for what had been a most enjoyable and varied experience, we wended our various ways homeward.

CONSETT AND DISTRICT NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB

On the occasion of the Club's field meeting on June 14th, 1958, a party, led by Mr. L. P. Hird, visited Juniper Valley, the River Derwent and Coombe Bridges. Amongst the interesting things seen were Bird's Nest Orchid, the Twayblade, the Adder's Tongue Fern, near Coombe Bridges, and the Round-leaved Sundew and the Butterwort in Juniper Valley. In Juniper Valley, too, a nest and five young of the Willow Warbler were noted whilst Coombe Bridges produced a nest and young of the Green Woodpecker and a nest with four eggs of the Yellow Hammer.

NOTES AND RECORDS

NOTES

Immigrant Butterflies in Durham (66) **in 1958.**— During the sunny period which occurred at the beginning of September, several Painted Lady and Red Admiral butterflies frequented the Buddleias in a Sunderland garden.—T. W. Jefferson.

On many days in the first week in September Red Admirals were seen regularly at various plants in the Chester-le-Street Isolation Hospital Grounds.—R. Harris.

At Birtley, on September, qpth, 11th and 12th Red Admirals were common at the flowers of Buddleias.—Ann Richardson.

Red Admirals were not uncommon early in September in the Chester-le-Street area.—T. C. Dunn.

Birds Noted at Richmond.— A hot summer in mid-July is not conducive to bird song, the volume of which is in any case declining at this season of the year, and only the Yellow Hammer, Meadow Pipit and Skylark were heard in song at the top of Whitecliffe Scar whilst in the woods below only those of the Song-thrush, Chaffiinch and Wren were noted.

A large colony of Jackdaws frequented the limestone cliffs, and other species recorded were the Linnet, Greenfinch, Pied Wagtail, Carrion Crow, Lapwing and Lesser Black-backed Gull.

These observations were made on the occasion of the Northern Naturalists' Union's visit to Richmond.—C. J. Gent.

Willance's Leap.—So many of those who attended the Richmond outing of the Northern Naturalists' Union expressed a desire to learn more about Willance's Leap that I am satisfying their wishes now.

Robert Willance was a Richmond merchant who, in the year 1606, was hunting on the northern banks of the Swale. The hunting party was surprised by fog, and Willance was mounted on a young and fractious horse. To his horror, it ran away with him and made for the precipitous rocks known as Whitcliffe Scar. The horse, no doubt, as it neared the edge became conscious of its peril, but the danger that paralysed the rider only made the steed more fearless. As soon as it left the level ground above, three bounds, each covering twenty four feet, brought it to the brink of the cliff down which it sprang. The animal, with its rider, fell some hundred feet to the ground below ; the horse was killed and Willance's leg broken. He disentangled himself from the dead horse, and drawing a clasp knife, he slit open the animal's body and placed the fractured leg within it to protect if from the cold until help arrived.

This precaution, no doubt, saved his life. His leg was amputated, and tradition says that it was buried in Richmond Churchyard. As a memorial of his wonderful escape, he marked the spot where the accident occurred by erecting a stone inscribed " 1606. Glory be to our merciful God who miraculously preserved me from the danger so great ". This spot has been known locally for a long time as " Willance's Leap ". Willance later became an alderman in Richmond. He died on 12th February, 1616, and was buried beside his leg.— T. N. Scaling.

The New Zealand Willow-herb, Epilobium pedunculare, in Co. Durham and Elsewhere.—In our October issue of 1954, Mr. W. A. Wright announced that he had discovered this New Zealand Willow-herb in the Upper Vale of Derwent, two miles south of Hunstanworth; several plants were seen growing in a ditch bordering the moorland road. To this station, another may be added, for on July 25th, 1958, I observed the plant in immense quantities along the Bollihope Burn just where the road approaches it. The Willow-herb seems to favour shallow, somewhat damp, sandy hollows.

Later, in the first week in September, when I was in Co. Kerry, S. Ireland, near Killamey, an examination was made there of the colonies of the Cornish Money-wort, *Sibthorpia europaea*, in order to compare the Irish plants with those from the Isle of Lewis. To my surprise, I found that alongside the Money- wort were flourishing masses of *Epilobium pedunculare.* In fact, it looked as if the Money-wort was fighting a losing battle with the Willow-herb.—J.W.H.H.

More about the Speedwell, Veronica filiformis.—In our July number the occurrence of *Veronica filiformis* along the Wear banks at Wolsingham was noted. From the plants found there, as a kind of experiment, two small tufts were transplanted to my garden. When I returned home on September 11 th, I was horrified to find that one of these tufts had formed a huge mass of closely intertwined threads covering an area of almost two square feet. Needless to say, the plant was quickly destroyed.

In August, when I was in Co. Wexford, Ireland, my attention was drawn to a lawn near a house at Fearns. This was so permeated with V. *filiformis* that the grasses composing it had been, in many places, completely ousted by the speedwell. This had taken place in spite of the vigorous efforts made to prevent it.

Subsequently, in Co. Down, not far from Donaghadee, I observed that one roadside was completely covered with the speedwell, other plants having been destroyed by it. It seems, therefore, that *Veronica filiformis* is a plant that should be ruthlessly exterminated, and, under no circumstances, encouraged.—J.W.H.H.

A Note on the Fennel-leaved Pondweed, Potamogeton pectinatus.—In Baker and Tate's *Flora*, this pondweed is listed as occurring in a number of coastal areas in our counties, as well as in Crag Lough. For Durham, no inland localities are mentioned. Moreover, very few are known ; in fact the only one with which I am acquainted is the engine pond near the ' New " Pit at Birtley. Nevertheless, when I was investigating the plants in the Great Usworth area on September 21st, I came across a large sheet of water which seemed likely to support numbers of water-plants. To my surprise, only three species were detected. These were the Celery-leaved Crowfoot, *Ranunculus sceleratus,* the Spiked Rush, *Eleocharis palustris,* and *Potamogeton pectinatus.* The last-named existed in enormous mats, stifling all other vegetation except the rush, which managed to maintain itself in shallower water near the pond edges.—J. A. Richardson.

Immigrant Silver Y's at Chester-le-Street.—This season, as usual, I have attempted to make as many observations as possible on immigrant butterflies and moths. These have been few although I have seen the Silver Y, *Plusia gamma* and the Red Admiral, *Vanessa atalanta.* The Silver Y began to appear in mid- June and was observed frequenting various flowers in the garden. This batch seems to have laid eggs which resulted in another lot of moths in September. These also were taken at flowers. However, on September 18th, I detected a single example at light.—R. Harris.

A Few Notes from the Fame Isles.—On July 17th, I accompanied a party from the Lambton Castle College for Adults on a visit to the Fame Isles. Although a sharp look-out was kept for insects, very few species were seen. Of the Lepidoptera, *Crambus perlellus* var. *warringtonellus* and the Nettle Tap, *Simaethis fabriciana* were quite common. The larvae of the latter had covered the nettles with their webs. Another moth noted was the Diamond-backed, *Plutella maculipennis,* obviously a detachment of the invaders of a fortnight ago.

Of other insect groups, only the Seven-spot Ladybird, *Coccinella septempunctata,* and a Carabid beetle, *Carabus.violaceus,* attracted our attention.— J. K. Morton.

Bird Notes for 1958.—The Reed Bunting, *Emberiza schoeniclus,* is a species which is maintaining its numbers in the Gosforth (67) area. There has always been a strong colony in the reed bed on Gosforth Park Lake, but the bird is also to be found in the marshy corners of fields, rough railway banksides and in many similar habitats. During the severe weather in March this year, a cock on two occasions visited my garden for crumbs. Other birds seen on Gosforth Park Lake were the Garganey, *Anas querquedula,* of which a pair were on the lake on April 12th, and the Oystercatcher, *Haernatopus ostraligus,* also noted as a pair on April 21st,—C. J. Gent.

The Hybrid Campion, Melandrium rubrum x M. album.—The idea has been spread recently that the white campion is restricted in its distribution in Northumberland and Durham, and that therefore the. hybrid between it and its red relative is very rare. Both of these notions are incorrect, for the white campion occurs in almost every possible locality, and the hybrid between the two species may be found wherever they come into contact.

Curiously enough, in general, the hybrid tends to occur in colonies of *M. album,* and, very rarely indeed, in the habitats of *M, rubrum.* Even when *M. album* grows far away from *M. rubrum,* hybrids are often present. Thus, on the slag-tip near Birtley, where the white campion has flourished for many years, the hybrid is not really rare. Nevertheless, the nearest plants of *M. rubrum* are to be found a considerable distance away in Urpeth Bottoms. Obviously, the insects responsible for pollinating M. *album* must be capable of long-distance flights. As these are moths of the genus *Plusia,* that condition is satisfied.

This year, on July 23rd, I detected several hybrid plants at Sparty Lea (67). In spite of this, a careful search failed to reveal colonies of either species in the vicinity. In that case, the hybrids must have been due to accidental circumstances which brought together, in the same spot, at least one male and one female plant of hybrid composition. As the hybrid is fertile, the range of variation in the colony is readily explicable on a Mendelian basis.—J.W.H.H.

A New Colony of the Brown Argus, Aricia agestis, near Mainsforth (66), Co. Durham.—This season, despite the bad weather, I spent a considerable amount of time in determining the range of variation in the inland colonies of *Aricia agestis.* Compared with that shown in coastal colonies, this proved to be very small.

On the occasion of one of my expeditions, I penetrated a dense wood until I came to a rough bankside thickly covered with the Brome Grass, *Zerna erecta.* Mere curiosity, rather than the hope of finding anything of importance, caused me to examine the slopes a little more carefully than usual. My astonishment may be imagined when I state that, although I had observed no rockrose, several specimens of *A. agestis* were flitting about. I therefore subjected the ground vegetation to further examination, and thus demonstrated the presence of straggling plants of rockrose. Further, I had abundant opportunities for observing the mating habits of the butterfly.

The variation of the species in this colony was remarkably small, although it approached that exhibited in the Quarrington Hill, West Cornforth and Bishop Middleham localities for the species.

The Apparent Decadence of the Wormwood, Artemisia absinthium, in Co. Durham.—The common mugwort, *Artemisia vulgaris,* and its ally, the wormwood, *A. absinthium,* have, until recently, been very plentiful in waste places in the Team Valley and elsewhere in Co. Durham.

This year, as I wished to inspect the galls of the gall-gnat, *Rhopalomyia baccarum,* on the mugwort, and the Aphalara proper to *A. absinthium,* I made a careful search for them in several Team Valley habitats. To my surprise, I found that, whilst *A. vulgaris* was as abundant as ever, I could only find one plant of *A. absinthium.* Elsewhere in the county, in the Wear Valley between Fatfield and Sunderland, I likewise found that *A. vulgaris* was maintaining its position whilst *A. absinthium* had practically disappeared.

It will be interesting to learn whether the wormwood has shown similar tendencies to vanish elsewhere.

I did not discover the two insects for which a special search was being made.

A Bud Mutation in a Hybrid Burnet Rose.—For many years I have kept close observation on a hybrid rose arising from a cross between *Rosa spinosissima* and *R. rubiginosa.* It has always been a profuse flowerer, but this season it has excelled itself in that respect. In June it was clad in a mantle of flowers. This caused me to examine it more closely when I discovered that, whilst most of the tufts bore their flowers singly, one tuft invariably produced them in groups of three. This happening I have never noticed previously, and can only look upon it as an instance of bud mutation.

The hybrid rose has the habit of the Burnet Rose, *Rosa spinosissima,* although signs of the influence of its other parent, the Sweet Briar, *R. rubiginosa,* are not lacking. It is interesting to note that, although its parents are in different sections of the genus *Rosa,* it can, on occasion, produce good seeds. From such seeds I have reared a series of third generation hybrids.

RECORDS

Gymnadenia conopsea (L) R. Br. Fragrant Orchid 67
By the Fallowlees Burn in the Greenleighton area and by the Dargues Burn near Otterburn.
Myriophyllum spicatum L. Spiked Water-Milfoil 68
In a pond near Haugh Head and in the Coquet near Warton.

THE VASCULUM
(SUBSTITUTE)

DECEMBER, 1958

Vol. XLIII, No. 4 Price 3/6 per annum ; post free

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BY THE WAY

NEED OF NEW SOCIETIES

Although the Northern Naturalists' Union itself is in a very healthy condition, since it was founded, several societies of long standing in the two counties have ceased to function. The effects of these losses cannot be minimized for they leave considerable gaps in our area in which there are few, or no, efforts being made to keep our knowledge of local natural history up-to-date. In our opinion, most of these old societies could be resuscitated if only a very few enthusiasts would take up the work again.

In addition to this, another source of regret exists ; several of our most flourishing societies seem to be concentrated in very limited areas. This circumstance leaves huge blanks in Northumberland and Durham in which organizations devoted to the study of natural history have never existed. Such districts are those around, and including, Morpeth, Blyth, Belford, Tynemouth, Whitley Bay, Hartlepool, Bishop Auckland, Barnard Castle and so on. Is it not possible to establish societies in such promising places as these? Quite a small number of energetic workers could do it !

YOUNGER NATURALISTS

At the present time, the younger generation in our schools of all types is receiving biological tuition to an extent that was never considered possible years ago. In spite of this, very few field naturalists result from the labours of our teachers. What is the explanation of this anomaly?

Year after year, one sees pupils of both sexes joining our Societies for the years during which they are preparing for their G. C. E. examinations. For the same period, they attend our field meetings more or less faithfully, but only with the hope that they may pick up information likely to prove available for examination purposes. Some may persist with biology as a University subject, and, in all probability, gain a degree, finally to become teachers in the schools. But how many of them remain in the Societies to add to our knowledge of local natural history in general, and of field work in particular?

One must confess that the numbers of such instances remain disappointingly low.

Perhaps the excuse that field naturalists are born, not made, may be put forward as an explanation. This, however, does not alter the fact that years ago, even before biological teaching reached its present volume, the number of youthful field naturalists was very much greater than it is today. There must be a reason for this falling off, and one speculates about what it is. Can it be that the teaching and preparation for examinations in school is of such a formal type that it stifles rather than encourages field work ? If that is indeed the case, then it may imply that the training of the teachers themselves has been biassed in the wrong direction, and that field observations are checked, and not stimulated, at the Universities. If that is really the cause, the remedy is obvious and needs no emphasis from us.

A CHANGE

In our March issue, attention was drawn to the acts of hooliganism perpetrated in 1957 on a pair of swans which had attempted to nest on the large sheets of water adjacent to the railway at Birtley. Then, although the birds built no fewer than three nests, and laid three clutches of eggs, all were destroyed in continued acts of wanton barbarism.

This season, a very different picture has been developed. It is true that two nests were constructed in June, and almost immediately destroyed with their contents. Nevertheless, the birds persisted in their efforts, and with success, for in August and September the parent swans could be seen proudly leading six cygnets in the open stretches of water amongst the bulrushes.

This was not all, for they seemed to have made friends with the crowds of children who could be seen every day engaged in catching a supply of " tiddlers ". Instead of shunning the children, the birds, young and old alike, kept coming repeatedly amongst the fishers in search of scraps of bread which had been brought for them.

The change in attitude was most striking and welcome. Whether it was spontaneous one could not determine, but, in any case, it was remarkable.

THE MOVEMENTS OF CERTAIN WATER PLANTS

In our last number. Dr. J. A. Richardson drew attention of the monopolizing of a large sheet of water near Great Usworth by the Fennel-leaved Pondweed, *Potamogeton pectinatus.* This plant also forms similar masses in the engine pond of the New Pit at Birtley where it was first detected over thirty years ago.

In the Team Valley station, it has to struggle for its existence with its congener, *P. natans.* Although on one occasion it was almost ousted by this rival, in general, the two species succeed in ripening

and dispersing their seeds in abundance. In September and October of the present season, for instance, both species were strikingly successful.

In both of the habitats just mentioned, the seeds and small tubers of *P. pectinatus* which originated the colony have, most certainly, been bird-borne. Despite this, at Birtley, the species has not colonized the large sheets of water available in close proximity.

In view of the absence of the Fennel-leaved Pondweed in Durham generally, records of the species in inland waters in the county would be very interesting—and welcome !

Another water plant which has occupied new areas in our counties recently is the " bulrush ", *Typha latifolia*. This plant now abounds in every possible pool of water in the Team Valley, and most of its stations have been gained in the past dozen years. Can anyone supply information of similar movements of the bulrush into their area recently?

THE SOCIETIES

NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The Annual Autumn Meeting of the Union was held, by the kind invitation of the Darlington and Teesdale Naturalists' Field Club, in the Lecture Hall, Bondgate Methodist Church premises, on Saturday, October 23rd, 1958. The President, Mr. T. N. Scaling, was in the Chair, and there was an excellent attendance.

The President began by giving an account of the meeting of the Council held earlier in the afternoon. He announced that it had been decided that, as several of our member societies had heard nothing about a proposed " Council for Nature " and its possible functions, any action by the Union should be delayed for at least two years. This would enable us to determine whether the work of our organisation would, in any way, be affected by the activities of the new body.

He then called upon Dr. J. Phillipson to give his lecture on the " Natural History of the Harvest Spiders ".

Dr. Phillipson commenced by pointing out that, whilst we had had locally many well known students of ordinary spiders, the Harvestmen had been comparatively neglected. He proceeded by demonstrating the structural differences between the common spiders and the Harvestmen. Necessarily, he spent most of his time in dealing with his own group. From a consideration of their habitats, he showed how, in their case, habitat and structure were correlated. Next, he dealt with their feeding habits generally, adding freely comments on their general ecology.

Following this section of his talk, he gave a very interesting account of the various life-histories of the Durham species and, in particular, of their breeding habits.

The whole lecture was illustrated by a wonderful series of lantern slides in colour.

Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison was asked to move a vote of thanks to our speaker. He did so in terms that made it abundantly clear that we had listened to an exceedingly useful discourse, presented in such a way as to make the facts assimilable by all our members.

At the lecturer's invitation, many questions about spidery were asked and answered.

After the lecture, we proceeded to take the excellent tea which our Darlington friends had provided for us. We also appreciated the way in which small tables, each capable of accommodating several members, had been prepared. As our President declared, this enabled members from different areas, interested in the same subject, to discuss matters of common interest. After tea was finished, Mr. Scaling asked us to adjourn to the next room to inspect the varied exhibits arranged for us.

Chief amongst these was a remarkable display of living spiders and harvestmen for which Dr. Phillipson was responsible. These aroused great interest. As usual, Mr. L. P. Hird had on view a long series of local plants. Professor Heslop Harrison had brought many specimens of males, queens and workers of the three carder- bees, *Bombus agrorum* (from Northumberland), *B. muscorum* (from Upper Teasdale) and *B. smithianus* (from South Uist). In addition, he showed many examples of immigrant hawk moths, and living specimens of the " Gallant Soldier " *(Galinsoga parviflora)* from Westmoor (67). Mrs. A. N. Gibby brought various pamphlets and notes referring to the Glasgow Meeting of the British Association whilst our hosts had set out for inspection literature more immediately connected with the Darlington Club.

CONSETT AND DISTRICT NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB

On November 19th, 1958, a large company assembled in the Free-masons' Arms, Consett, on the occasion of the Annual Dinner and Conversazione of the Consett and District Naturalists' Field Club.

The Chair was taken by the President, Mr. Wm. Ellerington. After an excellent dinner had been disposed of, he proposed the health of the Queen. Immediately after this, Mr. T. Hall, in an appreciative speech gave the toast of our guest. Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison. Professor Heslop Harrison, in his reply, recounted his long-continued and enyoyable relationships with the Club, and also described humourous incidents concerning naturalists who had explored the Derwent Valley with him fifty years ago. In addition, he added a few felicitous words in praise of the President, and his valuable work on behalf of the Northern Naturalists' Union and the Club. Next followed the toast of the Club, and this was proposed by Mrs. Evans ; to this the President made a suitable reply.

This contained interesting remarks concerning the Society and its more energetic members. Well-deserved thanks to Mrs. Dixon and the General Secretary, Mr. F. Bell, for their contribution to the success of the present function, with a reply from Mrs. Dixon, concluded this portion of the evening's proceedings.

Finally, we had a wonderful display of films and lantern slides for which Mr. G. Evans, Mr. J. F. Ashworth and Mr. Horn were responsible. Mr. Evans showed a film depicting various meetings and outings in districts ranging from the Northumberland Coast to Scotland and the Cotswolds. Moreover, he managed to show local shots made during various field meetings. Mr. Ashworth's slides again brought back reminiscences of glowing days of glorious sunshine in the Italian Riviera, along Lake Geneva and in the Jura Mountains generally. His set of slides also included a goodly number of the Exhibition at Brussels. Mr. Horn, as usual, manipulated the lantern, and displayed slides of more personal interest. Councillor J. W. Wilkinson added a further tribute of well-deserved praise in his thanks for all that had been done to make the evening an enjoyable one, in closing the meeting.

BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Our Winter Session commenced on September 23rd, 1958, when our President gave an illustrated lecture on " Sex and Inheritance ". He described the ordinary mechanism of Sex Determination and then discussed sex-linked inheritance as exemplified by colour- blindness and haemophilia. He ended by considering the phenomenon of twinning in human beings and other organisms. On Octtober 7th, Mr. M. Masterman interested us with an excellent talk on " Travels with my Camera ". This was illustrated by many beautiful slides of the Lake District and elsewhere. In addition, he displayed slides of the Jubilee Celebrations at George Street Schools. Mr. F. Wade followed on October 21st with a first-rate account of " Inns and Inn Signs " as they exist today in North-west Durham and South-west Northumberland. Next, on November 4th, Mr. T. W. Wanless spoke on " A Naturalist at Lambton ". This covered, in a lively and interesting way, the speaker's stay in Lambton Castle and an excursion by the Castle party to the Fame Islands and Bamburgh Castle and dunes. After this, on November 18th came a lecture by Mr. lan Laurie on " Changes in the Durham Landscape ", also illustrated by many coloured slides. In his talk, the lecturer referred to all the various changes Durham had undergone through mining, quarrying, the building of new factories and so on. In the course of his remarks, Mr. Laurie indicated methods by means of which it is hoped to minimize the effects of such operations and to restore lost beauties.

NOTES AND RECORDS

NOTES

The Hop (Humulus lupulus) in Co. Durham, (66).—Baker and Tate, in their *Flora*, make the remark that the hop occurs in hedges, but is not native in

Durham; this is undoubtedly true. In North Durham, the plant grows in hedges on the edge of the Black Fell, on the roadside just west of Lamesley Vicarage, along the Team and near Swalwell Station. On October 20th, I came across great masses of it climbing over oaks and other trees near Watergate Colliery. These were the largest examples of the species I have ever seen, for some attained a height of thirty feet.—T: W. Wanless.

Relict Plants of the Mat Grass, Nardus stricta, in South Northumberland (67).— On October 22nd, whilst I was studying the flora of an area near Gosforth Park, quite unexpectedly I came across a strong colony of the Mat Grass near Westmoor. This, of course, added significance to the last syllable of the place name. Further, it recalled to my mind the fact that, thirty years ago, heather had flourished in precisely the same place.

Clearly, these examples of *Nardus stricta* represented the remains of the old moorland.

I should add that, in all probability, they have now been bull-dozed out of existence.—T. W. Wanless.

Immigrant Lepidoptera in 1958.—In September, at Birtley (66), although no specimens had been observed earlier in the year, the Red Admiral appeared in considerable numbers. These may have been the progeny of unnoticed June immigrants, but, on the other hand, they may have been members of a late migratory swarm. In the same period, the Silver Y became abundant both in the Team Valley (66) and in South Northumberland. The last examples of this species were seen at Westerhope (67) and Westmoor on October 22nd.— J.W.H.H.

The Red Admiral Butterfly *(Vanessa atalanta)* was not noticed near Gosforth (67) until September 14th, when nine were found on *Buddleia*, Odd specimens were also seen at Newton-by-the-Sea (68) and Dunstanburgh (68) on September 21st.

A single Silver Y Moth *(Plusia gamma)* was noted at Spindleston (68) on June 22nd. In September and October, small numbers were seen at Killingworth (67), Gosforth Park (67) and Newton-by-the-Sea (68).—C. J. Gent.

Whilst bird watching on September 6th at the North Gare, Teesmouth (66), I saw three specimens of the Red Admiral, and a single Painted Lady, amongst the sand hills. All of these butterflies were within a few yards of the sea. Later, on September 28th, another Painted Lady was observed at Cockle Park (67), in Northumberland.—R. Marston Palmer.

Red Admiral butterflies persisted until late September in the Isolation Hospital Grounds near Chester-le-Street (66) whilst the Silver Y moth was observed until the middle of October.—R. Harris.

In spite of the huge masses of the Diamond Back moth which invaded this area in May and June, and were responsible for the countless larvae which wreaked such havoc on many species of cruciferous plants, the resulting brood appeared in very small numbers. Moreover, many of the plants damaged in July and August recovered to a very great extent. It seems very unlikely that further damage will b3 done by any succeeding batches of larvae in 1959.—G.H.H.

The Crab Apple, Sloe and Bird Cherry in the Team Valley.--All of these three shrubs are plentiful in the area (66) in question, and may be found in woods and hedges and even on pit heaps. Nevertheless, they rarely, if ever, fruit with us. Of the three, during all of my years' experience with our local flora, I have never seen fruit on either the sloe or bird cherry, although both, as a general rule, flower well. This season has proved no exception for, in spite of the fact that the quantity of flowers produced in April and May was far above the average not a single fruit resulted on either shrub.

On the other hand the crab apple, which also blossomed profusely, did produce fruit in the case of one tree in Ravensworth Woods. This occurrence is not unique for many years ago, I found apples on a tree growing in a hedge near Birtley. Besides, I was told by a reliable informant that one tree, growing on a pit heap in the same vicinity, fruited more or less regularly. It is quite possible that it had been planted on the heap many years ago.—J.W.H.H.

Swans on Old Claypit Pools.—As was recorded in the March *Vasculum*, swans made an unsuccessful attempt to nest on such pools near Birtley in 1957. This year, after initial checks, they have reared a brood. However, over and above this, early in November, no fewer than 36 adult birds took up a more or less temporary residence there, and so far, have remained unmolested.—A.H.H.

A Note concerning the Soapwort, Saponaria Officinalis.-This plant, regarded be Baker and Tate as a denizen, and recorded by them for stations in the Wear Valley, still flourishes in its lower portions. It is quite common on the banks at Chester-le-Street, and grows in abundance at many points between Washington and Cox Green. In Lambton Park, scattered groups exist in several stations. Near Birtley, the plant may still be found on the railway banksides where it was discovered by Professor Heslop Harrison many years ago. In these various habitats it displays a considerable range of variation in flower colour and form.—J. A. Richardson.

A Curious Assemblage of Bedstraws.—In recording the vegetation of the Team Valley recently, a visit was made to Ravensworth Woods. Naturally, one expected, and found, tremendous changes in their general appearance. Trees had been felled, buildings demolished, and the familiar sheets of water drained. Of the pleasant lake which helped to build up the beauty of the Arboretum, nothing appeared to have survived except great masses of the commoner rush species, and a very small amount of the Marsh Bedstraw, *Galium palustre*. The presence of the latter plant caused us to continue our exploration of the lake bed a little longer, and more closely, than we should otherwise have done. In the course of our examination, in the south-west angle, no fewer than four species of bedstraw were found intermingled. These were *G. verum*, *G. palustre*, *G. aparme* and G. *hercynicum*—a most unexpected assemblage. The presence of *G. verum* was the most anomalous as the plant is not known to grow nearer than Urpeth where it occupies a short stretch of the roadside near the site of the old sand pit.—J.W.H.H.

Late Lepidoptera in the Team Valley (66).—This year, which has been so disastrous for Lepidoptera generally, has been remarkable for the late dates on which certain species were seen. Thus on October 10th, second-brood examples of the Small Copper butterfly were noted mating on the flower-heads of asters. With us the second brood is usually on the wing in early September. Nearly three weeks later on October 29th the Small Tortoiseshell was busily engaged in extracting nectar from belated flowers of *Hieracium boreale.* The November moth, too, was delayed. Despite its name, it is an October insect with us. Males were still present on November 23rd.

Variation in Fruit Colour in the Mountain Ash.--When the Northern Naturalists' Union visited Bedbum, we observed rowans bearing goodly crops of bright yellow fruits. Again, when I was in Ireland in late August, I noted several rowans at Brniclody, Co. Wexford, decked with berries of exactly the same colour. In addition, one tree was seen resplendent with berries intermediate in colour to those of the typical and yellow forms.—J.W.H.H.

RECORDS

CECIDIA—GALLS

Eriophyes nudus Nal. Gall Mite 66
The first record of the British Isles for this species was made by Bagnall and myself on the basis of specimens collected near Lanchester, in 1917. I never saw the species again until July 30th, this year, when I found it on the Wood Avens, *Geum urbanum* in great abundance in Raisby Quarry.

E. artemisiae Can. Gall Mite 66
Another species added to the British list by Bagnall and myself ; now recorded from *Artemisia* growing along the Wear banks near Washington.

E. plicator Nal. Gall Mite 66
Another form new to the British list when Bagnall and I took it in the form of its variety *trifolU* on white clover. It produces a viresecent mass on the flowers of the plant : collected on the Wear banks in September, 1958.

Perrisia fraxini Kieff. Ash Gall Gnat. 66
This species of gall gnat had not been seen locally for many years before the present. However, it was discovered in plenty in Cassop Vale in September galling ash leaves.

LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

Coenonympha tuUia Mull. Large Heath 68
This local butterfly was found in numbers east of the Crowstone on the Otter- bum Artillery Range on July 25th by Lt.-Col. J. N. Kirkaldy.
Nonagria typhae Thun. Bulrush Moth 66
Larvae were found in May 1958 when they were very tiny and later, in August, almost full grown at Birtley.—J.W.H.H.
Aphantophus hyperantus L. Ringlet 68
In some plenty on the sand dunes below Bamburgh Castle on July 17th. J.W.H.H. and J.K.M.
Perizona affinitata Steph. Rivulet 66
Not uncommon amongst campion on June 24th in the Elemore woods.
Euphyia bilineata Yellow Shell 66
A form with the central area almost as dark as in Hebridean specimens was taken at Bishop Middleham in July.
Parasemia plantaginis L. Wood Tiger 66
A spent female was noted at West Comforth on July 8th.—J.W.H.H.
Anthocaris cardamines L. Orange-tip 66
This butterfly was very scarce this year although a female was found at rest on flowers of an umbellifer at Elemore on June 28th.—J.W.H.H.
Xanthorhoe designata Hufn. Flame Carpet 66
One taken in a moth-trap on August 31st at Chester-le-Street.—T.C.D.
Diarsia rubi View. Small Square Spot 66
A single specimen in each of the two nights, Sept. 2nd and Sept. 3rd ; in the moth trap.—-T.C.D.
Arenostola pygmina Haw. Small Wainscot 66
One captured in trap on Sept. 11th.—T.C.D.

BIRDS

Podiceps ruficoUis Pallas Little Grebe 67
A permanent resident on Killingworth Mere, sometimes in numbers. On October 4th, and adult was accompanied by three fledglings.
Spatula clypeata L. Shoveller 68
A flock of about 30 was seen at Newton Bog on Sept. 21st.
Chelidonias niger L. Black Tern 68
One was observed at Dunstanburgh on Sept. 21st.
Asio flammeus Pontoppidan Short-eared Owl 67
One at Holywell Ponds, Oct. 11th.
Apus apus L. Swift 67
A belated bird was observed flying south at Seaton Sluice shortly before dusk on Oct. 11th.
Turdus viscivorus L. Mistle-thrush 67
This species seems to have been more plentiful than usual this year. A party of eight was noted flying overhead near Low Gosforth Park on September 10th. The bird was unusually numerous in Holywell Dene on October 11th.
Muscicapa striata Pallas Spotted Flycatcher 67
On July 27th, a pair was seen feeding young in a nest which had been placed in a space in the outside stonework of one of the windows of Ponteland Church -C.J.Gent