

# THE VASCULUM (SUBSTITUTE)

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## BY THE WAY

### OUR FIELD MEETINGS

This year, as usual, the Council has arranged an interesting series of excursions. The areas to be visited have not been chosen at random, for considerable care has been taken to spread them as widely as possible over our counties. Moreover, the types of localities suggested, and the plants and animals they produce, have also received careful consideration for similar reasons.

It is well-known that, in spite of the fact that we are primarily an organisation built up to increase our knowledge of local natural history, many attend our field meetings chiefly to enjoy the country- side. On the other hand, and this applies more especially to the younger generation, others attend to study various branches of natural history for examination and other purposes. For our more juvenile members, special meetings have always formed a conspicuous feature of our annual programmes, and the success of these has been abundantly demonstrated. In the case of members who are preparing for examinations, much depends upon themselves. Many are too diffident to ask for information. May we urge these, and also their teachers, not to hesitate in asking questions about any points of difficulty or interest? There will always be present at least a few specialists, not only willing, but anxious to help. It is true that there has been a falling-off recently in the number of such volunteers. Nevertheless, whilst this has been quite obvious amongst professionals, the number of competent amateurs seems to be rising steadily.

A further matter of importance to which attention is now drawn is the fact that those responsible for arranging our field excursions will welcome information about promising, and easily accessible, localities which have not been worked in the past. Further, suggestions about possible ways of improving our outdoor meetings themselves will also be of great value.

The appearance of this note should not be taken as indicating any diminution in the numbers attending our excursions. On the

contrary, viewed from that angle, they have been more successful than ever. What is aimed at is an increase in their value to our members as a whole.

#### LICHENS

In 1920 (Heslop Harrison, *Journal of Genetics*, 9, page 236), in connexion with investigations designed to determine the causes of the development of progressive melanism in our local Lepidoptera, we published the first statement ever made about the relations existing between the disappearance of lichens in our urban and certain rural areas and the incidence of melanism. It was stressed, too, that this decadence of our lichen flora was quite obvious many miles away from the point of origin of the smoke which was responsible for it.

Since the appearance of the paper just cited, our melanism researches have continued without a break. However, they have been influenced by one serious handicap. No up-to-date lichen flora of Northumberland and Durham has appeared. Nor, except for casual records, may one consult any pertinent literature for the period between 1838 and 1959. Although Winch's account of these plants (*Flora, Trans. Nat. Hist. Soc. Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne*, 2, pp. 81-94, 1838) is very useful from the historical standpoint, it is quite useless as far as our lichen flora of today is concerned. Clearly, both from the points of view of the pure botanist and of the geneticist, there is an urgent need for some- one to take up the study of our lichens ; will anyone volunteer to do so?

Here one may, with profit, mention similar needs in connexion with our mosses, liverworts, algae and fungi, although in the case of the last-named group a solid foundation has been laid by the work of Prof. M. C. Potter and Mr. A. W. Bartlett.

#### TIPCAT ONCE AGAIN

When the *Vasculum* first appeared in 1915, it was made clear that articles dealing with local folklore would find a place in its pages. Such notes have often appeared, and amongst the topics discussed on more than one occasion have been the game of tipcat and its variations within our counties. Not long ago, we learnt that, in some areas, the game has been regarded as the modern representative of certain fertility rites. Has anyone knowledge of the survival of such ideas in our own district ? If so, we should be glad to put them on record in our pages.

#### TELEVISION AND LOCAL PLACE NAMES

On the evening of Friday, March 6th, we happened to see and hear a programme on the Tyne-Tees Television in which a number of place names in Durham was mentioned. As we listened, no fewer than half a dozen of these names were given ludicrous

mis-pronunciations. Surely we can expect better treatment than that from an organization which labels itself Tyne-Tees Television? Just as a corrective, let us state that we have, on many occasions, heard equally erroneous and ridiculous attempts by B.B.C. speakers to pronounce Northumberland and Durham place names !

#### THE RED AND THE GREY SQUIRRELS IN OUR COUNTIES

We have received a circular from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Infestation Control Division), asking for help in determining the distribution of the red and the grey squirrels in Northumberland and Durham. Although records from both counties are needed, information about the range of the grey squirrel in Northumberland is a special desideratum. The only reported occurrence of that species in Northumberland is a fairly old one from Gosforth for which we have good authority from a biological teacher there.

Records must refer to squirrels seen between October 1958 and October 1959 only, and the county and parish concerned should be carefully given. If possible, closer geographical references to the exact habitat would add to the value of any observations made by readers.

All records should be sent to the Editor (address above) who will forward them to the Ministry, under the observer's own name.

#### THE SOCIETIES

##### NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

By the kind invitation of the Council of the Natural History of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne, the Thirty-fifth Annual Meeting of the Union was held in the Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne, on Saturday, 7th March, 1959.

The President, Mr. T. N. Scaling, was in the Chair, and once again there was a large and representative audience.

The Treasurer, Mr. T. C. Dunn, gave, on the whole, a very satisfactory account of our finances, but suggested that, as we were losing money in publishing the *Vasculum*, its price should be raised to 5/- per annum. This recommendation was accepted.

Our Secretary, Mrs. A. N. Gibby, in her report, was able to state that our operations during the year, more especially the outings, had been very successful. Both outings and indoor meetings had been well-attended.

Mr. Scaling then announced the field excursions suggested by the Council for 1959.

As usual, the arrangements for the Junior outing were placed in the hands of Dr. Moss. The field meetings proposed for our senior members were as follows : Pigdon Banks, May 30th. Winch Bridge to High Force, July 4th, Riding Mill area, September 12th. By

the kind invitation of the Annfield Plain and Stanley Naturalists' Club, our Autumnal meeting will be held at Annfield Plain on Saturday, October 24th, 1959.

The next item taken was the election of officers for 1958-59. Mr. Welldon Watts was elected President to the great satisfaction of all our members. As Vice-Presidents, Mrs. Grace Hickling, Mr. T. N. Scaling, Mr. G. W. Temperley and Mr. T. W. Wanless were chosen. No changes were made in the case of other officers.

At the conclusion of this preliminary business, Mr. Scaling gave us his Presidential Address in which he dealt with " North Yorkshire : its Moors and Dales ". Mr. Scaling began by giving a useful exposition of the value of the Union and of Natural History Societies generally, before he took up the main topics of his lecture. He emphasized their real constructive value in bringing together people of varied interests and outlooks, living at widely-separated points in our area, not only to bind them together by common likings but also to cement lasting friendships. He also demonstrated the various ways in which townspeople gained from membership of a field club, in particular stressing how readily expert guidance could be obtained from specialist members of a Society or Union.

Next, although he chose two beautiful views of Roseberry Topping for his starting points, he took us, with the aid of his wonderful coloured slides, through all the little towns and villages lying on the coastal fringe of the moors, Runswick Bay, Hinderswell, Staithes, Whitby, Robin Hood's Bay all, with others, receiving mention. Then he proceeded to a consideration of the well-preserved stone crosses scattered here and there over the Cleveland Moors. At this point, too, he reminded us of past pleasures when we heard repeated such delightful names as Rosedale, Farndale, Basedale, Bilsdale, Bransdale, Kildale, Glaisdale, Commondale and so on. Other beautiful places were recalled when the speaker mentioned Helmsley, Kirbynoorside, Lastingham, Hutton-le-Hole and similar beauty spots. In connection with Farndale, he showed a splendid slide of its daffodils, once threatened with extinction, but now protected by the North Riding County Council.

After this, our attention was held by fine views of the Cistercian Abbeys for which Cleveland is famous. A glance at the Hambleton Hills, and a quick passage to Grassington, Wensleydale and Richmond were taken next. In dealing with Grassington, Mr. Scaling told us of the fate of the last Lady's Slipper Orchid there.

His talk ended with a display of lantern slides of such local plants as the Bird's Eye Primrose, Mossy Saxifrage, Hybrid Oxiiip, Bistort, Globe Flower and Rowan.

For a thoroughly satisfactory and useful talk Mr. Scaling was awarded a rousing vote of thanks.

Tea was served at 4-30 p.m. when old friends were able to meet and when new friendships could be made with members from all parts of Northumberland and Durham. After this, the exhibits were examined and discussed. Everyone missed, once more, Mr. R. B. Cooke's display of spring flowers. In general, too, the exhibits were rather scanty in numbers although of considerable interest. Mr. L. P. Hird showed us a large selection of the more interesting of our local plants and even some of our specialities. Mr. C. J. Gent, on behalf of Mr. Alan A. Neevey, Royal Australian Museum, had on view photographs illustrative of the birds and mammals of Macquarie Island. Mrs. Gibby brought for our inspection a large number of postage stamps, from various countries, depicting plants and animals. Mr. Scaling had set out for inspection a vast amount of literature concerned with the Cleveland District and its charms. Dr. Todd's exhibit included a series of slides in colour of many interesting plants and animals. Professor Heslop Harrison brought two portfolios of photographs of our local wild roses and orchids. In addition, he had arranged sheets of pressed rose leaves illustrating F2, F3 and F4 generations of hybrids between *Rosa spinosissima* and *R. sherardi* and between *R. spinosissima* and *R. rubiginosa*.

#### ANNFIELD AND STANLEY NATURALISTS' CLUB

Our Annual Meeting and Social Evening were held on January 24th, 1959, in the Co-operative Hall, Annfield Plain, when there was an attendance of over 100.

Mr. Vernon Richards presided, and referred to the pleasure he felt in seeing such a turn-out. As a founder member, he was very gratified with the great success of the Club.

The Secretary, Mr. F. Wade, reported a very successful year's work. Fourteen outdoor meetings, were arranged, and, although six were held in very adverse weather, attendances were good. Our excursions took us as far north as Coldringham Bay on the Berwick-shire Coast, and as far south as Roseberry Topping in the Cleveland Hills.

Similarly, fourteen indoor lectures were given, six by our own members ; they covered a wide range of subjects and were well patronised by our own members and the general public.

Mr. J. H. Atkinson, Treasurer, also recorded a good credit balance as also did our excursion secretary, Mr. A. Reay.

After these reports had been accepted, the election of officers followed. Except for changes amongst the Committee, the former officers were re-elected.

From 33 suggestions for outdoor meetings a long representative series was chosen lying between Castleton and Danby Dale in the Cleveland Hills to Tweed-dale in the North.

On the conclusion of the business, the company sat down to an excellent tea. This was followed by films made by four of our members. Mr. G. Evans showed coloured views of our summer rambles, and those who participated in them. Mr. R. Jackson displayed a film of Upper Weardale, and also a second, taken in Annfield Plain Park, featuring the flower beds. Mr. J. Hall entertained us likewise with a "talkie" entitled "The Story of Cumberland". It depicted the efforts to develop a coal-field beneath the Irish Sea off Whitehaven. Mr. A. Reay brought two films, one dealing with wild life in Australia, and the second illustrating the evolution of farming methods from those in vogue in early times to the mechanised farming of today.

The meeting closed with votes of thanks to the officers of the Club, and to others who had contributed to the success of the meeting.

### BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

On Dec. 2nd, 1958, we had the second of our series of talks covered by the title "They put Birtley on the Map". This was arranged by the British Oxygen Co. Ltd. In addition to the main film illustrating the preparation and handling of oxygen and acetylene, there was on exhibition various types of plastic and other ware made by the Company. Incidentally, we were shown such interesting features as the mercury hammer, liquid nitrogen, grapes and chrysanthemums, frozen solid and powdered. On Dec. 16th, Dr. W. D. Corner gave us a very informative talk on "A Journey into Space". This, for the most part, dealt with the prospects of man reaching the moon, the general geography of the lunar landscape and its method of evolution. Instead of giving the lecture in celebration of the Darwin Centenary, advertised for Jan. 13th, 1959, Professor Heslop Harrison gave an account of recent investigations into the history of Birtley. On Jan. 27th, we broke new ground, when Mr. G. M. Atkinson, in a first-rate talk, introduced us to the "Art of Angling". He restricted himself almost entirely to the salmon. Nevertheless, there were very few tricks of the trade which he failed to mention. On Feb 10th, Mr. A. Rix gave an excellent account of the "Work of a Forester". He showed us two films, that illustrating the afforestation of the Culbin Sands on the Moray Firth being especially noteworthy. For the succeeding lecture, on Feb. 24th, our old friend Mr. J. J. Robson visited us again to give us a delightful talk on "Protective Coloration in Birds", illustrated by his own inimitable photographs of the birds on the Fame Islands, the May Isle and elsewhere.

### NOTES AND RECORDS

#### NOTES

**Notes on Birds.**—During December 1958 and January 1959, a flock of snow buntings frequented the Town Moor at Newcastle (67). These reached a maximum of about 150 birds on January 28th. A few of these birds were

already displaying beautiful white spring plumage which contrasted with the dark herbage on which they were feeding.

From January 19th to 23rd, a flock of about 80 golden plovers were present on the Town Moor, Newcastle, following the strong weather.—R. Marston Palmer.

Early in December, a number of waxwings was seen in the Team Valley in the Ravensworth Woods (66).

I have never seen a pied starling before, but, during February, I have had the pleasure of examining one in Mount Pleasant, Birtley (66), on many occasions. Its coloration would perhaps be described best as blackish and dull grey.—R. Brown.

**Notes on some plants of the Limestone in Northumberland.**—At the Greenleighton lime quarry (67) the following still survive, although seriously threatened by quarrying operations ; *Gentianella amarella*, *Poterium sanguisorba*, *Scabiosa columbaria*, *Helictotrichon pratense* and *H. pubescens*.

Around the lime quarries to the N. of Fourstones (67), some of the more characteristically lime-loving plants include : *Gentianella amarella*, *Poterium sanguisorba*, *Scabiosa columbaria*, *Desmazeria rigida*, *Polygala vulgaris*, *Plantago media*, *Cynoglossum officinale*, *Helictotrichon pratense*, *Primula veris* and *Ononis repens*.

At the Waterfalls quarry in the Carrycoates area (67), *Coeloglossum viride*, *Listera ovata*, *Poterium sanguisorba* and *Anthyllis vulneraria* occur.

The Scremerston Shore area (68) yields many interesting plants, but the species which are perhaps more characteristic of calcareous soil include : *Gentianella amarella*, *G. campestris*, *Desmazeria rigida*, *Plantago media*, *Cynoglossum officinale*, *Anthyllis vulneraria* and *Carlina vulgaris*.

*Poterium sanguisorba* occurs also at the Bureland Fell quarry near Reedsmouth (67) and on the railway embankment near Campfield, S. of Cornhill (68).

*Plantago media* occurs also near Grasslees in Billsmoor Park (67), near Craster (68), near Oxford in the Ancroft area (68) and W. of Wark on Tweed (68).—G. A. Swan and M. Swan.

**The Origin of the Word, "Caterpillar"**.—The meaning and origin of the word, "caterpillar" is often asked. In all probability, it is a folk corruption of the Old French, "chatepeleuse", which should mean a "hairy she-cat", "chate" being Old French for a she-cat and "peleuse" derived ultimately from the Latin "pilosus", hairy. This explanation should be considered alongside the English name "woolly bear" often applied to the larvae of the tiger moths and their allies. The current French name for a caterpillar is "chenille", derived from the word "chien" meaning a dog. Thus, a caterpillar has suggested at various periods resemblances both to cats and dogs.—J. W. H. H.

**A Curious Example of the Black Bryony, *Tamus communis* L.**—During August, Tunstall Hill (66) was explored in an endeavour to rediscover some of the rarer plants once recorded from that locality. Little of importance was seen except for a very strange specimen of the black bryony. It possessed very short, broad leaves, rounded at the tip and somewhat cupped.—J.K.M.

**The Black Crowberry, *Empetrum nigrum*, on Waldrige Fell.**—Of recent years, as in the case of the juniper, the extent of the area in which the crowberry can be found on Waldrige Fell has been diminishing rapidly, especially in its eastern portions. However, this year, an examination, carried out in the remoter south-western parts of the moor on January 31st, revealed that the plant existed there in considerable quantities. Thus the fear we felt about its possible extermination has been considerably reduced. In the course of the search for *Empetrum* much evergreen bilberry was observed.

**Notes on the Small Clouded Brindle Moth, *Apamea unanims* (66).**—Robson, in his *Catalogue*, states of this moth that it is generally distributed over our two counties, but is not common. The former statement is quite correct whilst the latter is not in accord with the facts. The discrepancy arises from the specialized food habits of the insect. Although its larvae feed on grasses, the species is limited in its choice of food plant. It is restricted, in nature, to the reed grass,

*Phalaris arundinacea*. Even when one is acquainted with this plant, the larvae have peculiar feeding and concealing habits.

If it is desired to secure a supply of its larvae, most patches of *Phalaris* will yield it in September and October. Look for leaves displaying jagged and eaten margins. Then pass the forefinger along a leaf to its tip. Very often a cylindrical tube will be felt. This is formed of a leaf blade spun together at the margins longitudinally. In such tubes, the larvae hide during the day and are easily discovered.

In the evening, just about dusk, the larvae leave their shelters to feed openly. They may be beaten then, in the ordinary way, into a beating tray. This is in all probability the best way to collect them.

If fed on *Phalaris* or the striped ribbon grass of gardens, they eat freely and attain full growth before winter sets in. They are not easy to winter, but if, when fullgrown, they are placed in a flower pot provided with sterile dead leaves, a suitable pupating medium and a muslin cover, most will pupate successfully.

Although the larvae will nibble the blades of many grasses possessing broad, stiff leaves, for real success the food plants chosen in the wild should always be employed.

In nature, the larvae are hard to find in winter and spring; nevertheless, odd ones may be discovered hibernating under the bark of trees growing near *Phalaris* beds and in similar places.

In Durham, I have seen the species at Bishop Middleham, Norton, along the Skeme, near Fishburn, Birtley, Chester-le-Street, Cox Green, Usworth, Wash-ington, Ravensworth, Beamish, Blaydon, Swalwell and so on.—J.W.H.H. **The Great Horsetail in Urpeth Bottoms.**—Local botanists have always known that the Great Horsetail, *Equisetum telmateia*, was extremely plentiful in the woods lying between the Riding Farm and the old flour mill on the west side of the valley. Recently, extensive developments have taken place in the gravel beds adjoining the mill. As a result, numerous settling tanks, necessary for dealing with gravel, have come into being. Last year, these displayed enormous populations of the Great Horsetail, no doubt originating from spores blown in from near-by woods. On the eastern slopes of the Bottoms, *Equisetum telmateia* is quite a rare plant—J. A. Richardson.

## RECORDS

### BIRDS

**Motacilla cinerea** Tunstall. Grey Wagtail 67  
On October 11th, a pair was observed at the Seaton Sluice end of Holywell Dene.  
**Carduelis carduelis** L. Goldfinch 67, 68  
Two examples of this charming bird were seen at Waren Mill on June 22nd and two at Barrasford on September 8th.—C. J. Gent.

### LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

**Phigalia pедaria** Fab. Pale Brindled Beauty 66  
Melanochroic forms of this moth have been coming to light at Chester-le-Street throughout February.—T. C. Dunn  
Similar forms, with the wholly black variety *monacharia*, have been bred during the same month from larvae beaten at Urpeth.—J. W. H. H.  
A single pale male was noted at light at the Isolation Hospital, Chester-le- Street.—R. Harris.  
**Oporinia dilutata** Schf. November Moth 66  
A beautiful, wholly black male of this species, utterly unlike the usual *obscurata* forms, was reared from Lambton larvae. It bore no transverse lines on its wings. —J. W. H. H.

### FLOWERING PLANTS AND FERNS

**Asplenium viride** Huds. Green Spleenwort 68  
In the Brizzle.—G. A. Swan.

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## BY THE WAY

### DERELICT PIT HEAPS

In mining areas in Northumberland and Durham, derelict pit-heaps provide the worst sources of disfigurement to the countryside, and all recent efforts to abolish them, or to camouflage them, must receive some degree of commendation. However, one would have thought that scientists generally, and botanists in particular, should have been consulted much more freely in search of solutions to the problem.

As a result of such failures, we learn of the choice of trees and shrubs, to be employed as a cover, which are wholly unsuitable for the purpose. For example, we are told of grandiose schemes for planting wild roses on the heaps for commercial use without the faintest display of knowledge that many wild rose species are far from suitable. In fact, the position is just as deplorable as the plan of planting acres of the Chinese rose, *Rosa moyesii*, on heather moorland !

Again, very little attention has been given to the fact that quite a number of pitheaps locally have developed spontaneously a floral covering which effectually hides their inherent ugliness. In this connexion, by the studies of the plant ecologists, links are forged leading, by way of plant physiology, to the necessity for invoking the aid of the chemist and physicist. The very important question of the physical conditions prevailing in heaps of all ages has been, except for pioneer experiments of Dr. J. A. Richardson, tacitly passed over.

It seems to us that a coordinated attack on the problem, with suitable personnel derived from all the pertinent sciences, would do much more to make our landscapes bearable than all the clouds of words which have appeared recently, and possess but little practical value.

### ROAD VERGES

For several years past, a prolonged attack has been conducted in our counties on the vegetation growing by the road side, or even forming an integral portion of the hedge. As was obvious at the commencement of these operations, many quite rare and pleasing

plants have been cleared out completely. For instance, not so very long ago, the attractive *Rosa mollis*, with its beautiful flowers and hips, was completely eradicated from many of our country paths, and with it, many equally desirable plants. This, in itself, is bad enough, but the sequel is even worse. Practically in all such cases the verges are now covered with dense, ugly masses of cock's-foot grass, which have stifled many favourite plants like the violet, speed-well and wild strawberry.

It seems to us that a little more thought, and much more control, should be exercised by those responsible for initiating such indiscriminate clearances.

#### VANDALISM AGAIN

From time to time we have drawn attention to the destructive acts of vandals and litter louts. In doing so, we have always felt that Waldrige Fell, except along the road side, remained wonderfully free from such pests. This year our hopes of its remaining so have been rudely shattered. On the south side, areas previously left unspoilt, are now regularly covered with sweet packets, paper bags, cigarette boxes and the like which appear like mushrooms every week-end and holiday.

In addition, when we were last on the Fell, huge bonfires had been made, which, passing out of control, were igniting dry moorland grasses and thus endangering the colonies of that very rare Durham butterfly, the Green Hair-streak. Further, the lighters of these fires were busily engaged in chopping down birch trees, and, when asked to desist, seemed very hurt at an interference with their "sport"

Vandals of another sort at work on the Fell are those who periodically lead parties to the area for study purposes, and fail to do their duty in preventing the removal of rare plants. Owing to this form of activity, the butterwort has been wiped out completely, and other plants, which it is best not to name, are following it. The remedy here is obvious.

#### THE PLUMAGE OF THE BLUE TIT

Whilst carrying out a study of the Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus* L.) in Flintshire, Mr. D. H. Coggins found that some birds had a dark blue line on the chest, 1/4 inch wide and 1 inch long. Subsequently, birds with similar markings were reported from Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Ross-shire. The marking is said to be absent from birds observed in Essex.

Information regarding the occurrence or absence of this variation is required from other parts of the British Isles, and it would be helpful if Northern Naturalists' Union members would send in reports showing whether the variation occurs, or is absent, in various parts of Northumberland and Durham.

The shortest reports will be welcome, but, if possible, they should show : (1) Number of birds seen without any marking on the chest ; (2) number of birds seen with a thin line on the chest ; (3) number of birds with a thick (1/4 inch wide) line on the chest. It is suggested that this investigation would be an ideal one to be taken up by School Natural History Societies.

Any reports should be addressed to Mr. C. J. Gent, 30 Berkeley Square, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne 3.

It has already been reported in the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, as a result of a request appearing in that journal, that birds bearing thick markings have already been observed at Gosforth and Wylam.

## THE SOCIETIES

### NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The ninety-second Field Meeting of the Union was held near Pigdon Banks, Morpeth, on Saturday, 30th May, 1959 when a large, number of members assembled under the leadership of our President, Mr. Weldon Watts. The weather was exceedingly favourable, and the locality promising.

Work began at the wood edge when we encountered a beautiful bird-cherry, laden with its pendulous blossoms, and free from the green-fly which disfigured the tree elsewhere. As we passed into the wood, we found that the canopy of trees was predominantly birch, although oak, wych elm, beech and ash were included.

The undershrubs were in the main, sloe, hawthorn, hazel, bird cherry, guelder rose, several species of wild rose, the eared and the common willow. Although the common dog-roses were present, we examined specially the northern species *Rosa dumalis* and *R. comfolia*.

A form, *R. obtusifolia* var. *borreri*, new to the Northumbrian flora was also detected.

The ground flora was that proper to an oak-birch wood, and it proved exceedingly rich. Our most exciting find was herb Paris which occurred abundantly, although it is now vanishing from many of its former strongholds with us. The most plentiful species was the bluebell, but many others were common enough. These included the woodruff, goldilocks primrose, cowslip, violet, bugle, honeysuckle, water avens, wood sanicle, wood sorrel, wood anemone, wood geranium, wood forget-me-not, dog's mercury, heath beds- straw, march crepis, mountain speedwell, germander speedwell, thyme-leaved speedwell, common speedwell, angelica, earlnut, sweet cicely, enchanter's nightshade, cuckooflower, bitter cress, bitter vetch, bush vetch, lady's mantle, tormentil, strawberry, herb Robert, golden saxifrage, figwort, columbine, melancholy thistle, red campion, wood club-rush, field wood-rush, great wood-rush,

hairy-rush, cuckoo pint. Amongst these, the water avens received most attention because of the many variable hybrids between it and the wood avens we encountered.

Of the orchids, only the early purple was in flower. Nevertheless, last year's spikes of the bird's-nest and the spotted orchids were noted. We saw likewise expanding inflorescences of the former, as well as of the broad-leaved helleborine ; these should be in full flower in due course.

Throughout our walk, the entomologists worked hard, chiefly concerning themselves with beating the trees for lepidopterous larvae. As the trees were in full leaf, these operations met with great success for many species were obtained. Amongst these were the light emerald, the common November moth (from hazel, oak and birch), the autumnal (from birch), the dotted border, the scarce umber, the mottled umber, the winter moth, the northern winter moth, the pale brindled beauty, the mottled beauty, the July high-flier, the feathered thorn, the common quaker, the clouded drab and the Hebrew character. Amongst these the northern winter moth was the most interesting so rarely have we seen it on N.N.U. excursions. Of the smaller species the small white ermine *Hyponomeuta evonymella*, which disfigured the bird cherries with its larval webs, *Nemophora swammerdammella* and *Cerostoma xylostella* were the most striking.

Insects on the wing were, for the most part, quite scarce, the commonest species amongst the Lepidoptera being the green-veined white butterfly and the small argent and sable. Other species netted were the common carpet, the silver-ground carpet, the cream wave, the riband wave the white wave, the broken-barred carpet, the red twin-spot carpet and the green silver-lines.

When the trees were beaten, although the bulk of the insects coming down were green fly and psyllids, there was a sprinkling of beautiful, golden-eyed, lace-wing flies and two species of scorpion flies to be noted on the tray. Throughout our walk, we looked for wasps and bees. Not a single wasp was observed, and the bumble bees were few in numbers, only *Bombus lucorum*, *B. agrorum* and *B. muscorum* being captured.

Nothing very striking came under observation amongst the birds, but these did include the great tit, thrush, blackbird, robin, wagtail, chaffinch, white throat, hedge sparrow, willow warbler, yellow-hammer, tree pipit, cuckoo, starling, jackdaw and pheasant. A very successful and interesting walk ended where it began— where the road crossed the Font.

## NOTES AND RECORDS

### NOTES

**Notes on Local Birds.**—On January 6th, a flock of about 40 waxwings was present at Cockle Park in South Northumberland (67), five miles from the sea. At this time, the Northumberland coast was crossed by large numbers of this species. On April 9th, a party of six examples were still to be seen in this area, and again, as late as April 11th, a flock of fifteen birds was observed.

On the evening of April 3rd, I watched a short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*) "quartering" the marshes around the Tanfield Ponds, Stanley (66). Later, it flew away to the west.

From April 16th to April 22nd, three golden-eyes (*Bucephala clangula*) were present on Seaton Burn Ponds (67) in South Northumberland.—R. Marston Palmer.

**Reports on Local Birds.**—A large immigration of waxwings (*Bombycilla garrulus*) into Northumberland North (68), was reported in early January, 1959. From South Northumberland (67) I have several reports: two at Killingworth, January 25th (A. D. Richardson), 22 at Haltwhistle in March (R. Clementson), one at Fawdon, March 15th, (I. C. Gent), two at Morpeth, April 12th (R. Clementson).

A drake, and two ducks of the golden-eye (*Bucephala clangula*) appeared on Killingworth Mere on March 21st and remained for several weeks.

Once again a small flock of whooper swans (*Cygnus cygnus*) frequented various sheets of water in South-East Northumberland during the winter. A maximum of 16 was observed on Killingworth Mere on December 27th.—C. J. Gent.

**A Noteworthy Capture in North Durham** (66).—On July 2nd, 1958, just when the invasion of the diamond-back moth was at its height, I caught a moth in my mercury vapour trap which I could not name. This was sent, with a number of other difficult specimens, to the British Museum for determination. It has just come back with the information that it is a specimen of the rare species *Ithame brunneata*, the Rannoch Looper. For this identification I have to thank Mr. D. S. Fletcher.

It is worthy of note that a very old record for its capture on Muckle Moss (67) is in existence.—T. C. Dunn.

**The Occurrence of Black-marked Forms of Two Plant Species.**—Although the celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*) exists in two forms, one with spotted and the other with immaculate leaves, I have only seen the former variation in a colony near Blanchland (67). The cuckoo-pint (*Arum maculatum*) varies similarly. A colony of the spotted form was detected near Quarrington Hill (66) whilst further similar colonies were noted in Hawthorn Dene (66).

As will quickly emerge if one examines a series of colonies, the majority of the plants bear plain green leaves. During a recent journey from Durham to Cornwall and back, a note was made of the spotted colonies observed; these amounted to seven only out of several hundreds examined.—T. W. Wanless.

**Limestone Plants on Isolated Scars in Fields near the Durham-Hartlepool Road.**—The first large scar, separated from the road by the hedge only, produced *Sesleria caerulea*, as the dominant grass, with *Centaurea scabiosa*, *Poterium sanguisorba*, *Ononis repens*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Fragaria vesca*, *Viola reichenbachiana*, *Plantago media*, *Primula veris*, *Gymnadenia conopsea* and the Hart's Tongue Fern (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*), the latter occurring under an overhanging rock.

A series of secondary scars produced in addition, *Betonica officinalis*, *Thymus drucei*, *Helianthemum chamaecistus* (common on all the scars), *Orchis mascula*, *Geranium molle*, *Polygala vulgaris*, *Silene cucubalus*, *Hieracium pilosella*, *Plantago mairianum*, *Campanula rotundifolia*, *Gentiana amarella* and *Galium verum*.

In the hedges near the scar, odd plants of *Ilex aquifolium*, *Galium cruciata*, *Sanicula europaea* and *Hypericum montanum* were found occasionally.—T. W. Wanless.

**The Petty Whin (*Genista anglica*) still on the Nun's Moor.**—On April 21st, 1959, I was astonished to discover this plant within the city boundaries on the Nun's Moor. I came across about a dozen straggling specimens almost evading detection amongst the rough grasses which cover the fairly "wild" part of the moor. The old cultivation "rig" system does not encroach on the hummocky ground where these plants occur, and upon this their survival depends.—W. A. Wright.

**The Foodplants of the Green-veined White (*Pieris napi*).**—On May 12th, after an absence of many years, I made a pilgrimage to Greatham Creek (66) and its salt-marshes. There, I was astonished to find an abundance of this butterfly flitting in the sun. Naturally, I speculated about their possible foodplant, and decided from the actions of the females that they were ovipositing on the common scurvy grass (*Cochlearia officinalis*)—a plant favoured by the species on the Isle of Muck (104). Leaving the Creek, we went on to Seaton Carew where the insect was equally plentiful. There it was obviously attached to the cuckoo-flower (*Cardamine pratense*).

Although the Green-veined White is not a garden species, I have found its larvae on the mignonette, and have reared its larva on that plant although their parents had fed on crucifers.—J.W.H.H.

**Plant Notes from Barnard Castle.**—Whilst on an outing to Barnard Castle (66), I went through Paradise Woods on the Durham side of the Tees. There I observed a fair quantity of the toothwort growing on elm. Interesting to me also were goldilocks (*Ranunculus auricomus*), the meadow saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*), the scented violet (*Viola odorata*), the alpine currant (*Ribes alpina*), the lung wort (*Pulmonaria officinalis*), which was most likely an escape (like the nearby Solomon's seal), hart's-tongue fern (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*). Commoner plants seen were the primrose, wood sorrel, herb Robert, lady's smock, lady's mantle, wood anemone, barren strawberry, strawberry, golden saxifrage and garlic. L. P. Hird.

**The Word "Caterpillar"**—, It will probably be of interest to readers of the *Vasvulum* to learn that the Dutch name for a catkin is "katje" which equals in English "a little cat" or "kitten". The same idea of a little hairy thing appears in this trivial name.—(Dr.) G. Kruseman, Amsterdam.

Dr. Kruseman's note reminds me of an incident which occurred on the Galway coast not far from Clifden. There, when I was studying the distribution of several plant and animal groups in Ireland, I met a fisherman who was very anxious to talk, and to learn what I was doing.

During the course of our conversation, I asked him the meaning of the Gaelic word "bratag". This, in the Gaelic dialect spoken in the Isle of Barra in the Outer Hebrides, is the name applied to any kind of hairy caterpillar. To my surprise, my fisherman friend replied that it meant "a little lady wrapped in a fur coat." Again, it will be obvious that precisely the same idea is involved.—J.W.H.H.

**The Fate of Seeds from the 1950 Harvest of *Illecebrum verticillatum*.**—In 1944, I discovered a strong colony of the rare British plant, *Illecebrum verticillatum* L. growing on sandy soil near the confluence of the Akenshaw and Lewis Burns in the Kielder area (67), not far from the Scottish Border. Seeds were taken, and plants grown from them and their descendants until 1950, when the seeds were collected, but not planted. This season I came across them and sowed them. To my surprise, within eight days, nearly hundred per cent. germination took place. Influenced by this result, seeds harvested in 1946 were also sown, but not a single seedling has been obtained. On the other hand, the plants from the 1950 lot are now growing vigorously and flowering well.—J.W.H.H.

**Typical and Red-flowered Primroses.**—Some years ago I carried out a series of experiments with the coloured forms of the common primrose when I was able to list several stations in Northumberland and Durham where red-flowered forms grow. Recently, I have discovered other stations in Durham for I collected such forms amongst the huge primrose populations in Lambton Park, in the woods near Elemore Hall and in a wood near Mainsforth. In Elemore Woods, two plants with white flowers were observed.—J.W.H.H.M.

## RECORDS

### FLOWERING PLANTS

<b>Viola canina</b> L. True Dog-violet	67
A very fine colony of this species was found near Colwell growing with <i>V. riviniana</i> . One well-grown clump of the hybrid between the two species was also present.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Galinoga parviflora</b> Cav.	67
This alien, popularly known as the " Gallant Soldier", was found in some quantity growing in a turnip field near Woosington. This appears to be the first record of the species in the two northern counties.—T. W. Wanless.	
<b>Senecio erucifolius</b> L. Hoary Ragwort	66
Found commonly in a field near Cox Green.	
<b>S. squalidus</b> L. Oxford Ragwort	66
Plentiful by the roadside at Saltersgate, in the valley of the Wear between Washington and Coxgreen, and between Frosterley and Stanhope, also at Raisby.	
<b>S. squalidus x vulgaris</b> Hybrid Ragwort	66
In the Raisby station for <i>S. squalidus</i> .	
<b>Erigeron acris</b> L. Blue Fleabane	66
This plant occurred this season in extreme abundance in Raisby Quarry.	
<b>Filago germanica</b> L. Cudweed	66
Also very plentiful on bare slopes facing south at Raisby.	
<b>Verbascum thapsus</b> L. Mullein	66
Along the Wear from Stanhope to Wolsingham.	
<b>Origanum vulgare</b> L. Majoram	66
On sandy places along the Wear above Frosterley.	
<b>Arabis thalianum</b> (L.) Heynh. Thale Cress	66
Not rare on walls in Snaisgill, also near Langdon Beck.	
<b>Sagina apetala</b> L. Pearlwort	66
Not as common as usually thought ; found at Wolsingham and Raisby.	
<b>Plantago media</b> L. Hoary Plantain	66
By the roadside between Eastgate and Westgate.	
<b>Rubus idaeus</b> L. Raspberry	66
The plant with typical fruit is common enough in Elemore Woods where the yellow-fruited form occurs much more rarely.	
<b>Malva moschata</b> L. Musk Mallow	66
Along the Wear below Washington.	
<b>Potentilla anglica</b> Laich.	66
Not rare at Eastgate, Weardale.	
<b>Hypericum humifusum</b> L. Creeping St. John's Wort	67
On a bankside between Wheel Birks and Apperley Dene.	
<b>Euonymus europaeus</b> L. Spindle-tree	66
Scattered here and there in the woods around Elemore Hall,—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Myriophyllum alterniflorum</b> DC. Water-Milfoil	
In the Rede near Elishaw Bridge.	
<b>Berula erecta</b> (Huds.) Coville. Water-Parsnip	68
In the Humbleton Burn near Wooller Golf-course.	
<b>Filago minima</b> (Sm.) Pers. Slender Cudweed	67, 68
On dry gravelly patches by the Coquet near Warton (68) and near Hare- haugh (67).	
<b>Ranunculus trichophyllus</b> Chaix	68
In the stream near Low Trewhitt.	
<b>R. aquatilis</b> L. emend.	67, 68
The subspecies <i>pseudofluitans</i> (Baker and Foggitt) Clapham, occurs in the Coquet at various points between Hepple and Rothbury and the subspecies <i>pelatus</i> (Schränk) Syme emend, in the Harthope Burn near Skirl Naked, in the upper part of the Humbleton Burn, in a pond near Humbleton and in the Coquet near Hepple.	
<b>Desmazeria rigida</b> (L.) Tutin. Hard Poa	67
In a limestone quarry to the north of Fourstones.	
<b>Ornithopus perpusillus</b> L. Birdsfoot	68
On a gravelly hillside 12 m. N. of Ingram.	
<b>Galium mollugo</b> L. Great Hedge Bedstraw	67, 68
Uncommon in Cheviotland, but growing near the above, along with <i>Carex pairaei</i> (68). Also, by roadside near Rothley Lakes (67).	
<b>Cerastium arvense</b> L. Field Mouse-ear Chickweed.	68
On an old wall, not far from the <i>Ornithopus</i> .	
<b>Crepis mollis</b> (Jacq.) Aschers. Soft Hawk's-beard.	67

W. bank of the Rede at Evistones, near Rochester.	
<b>Scrophularia umbrosa</b> Dum*	68
Banks of the Tweed, near Homelike ; and also near its junction with the Willow Burn, not far from Comhill.	
<b>Carex lepidocarpa</b> Tausch	67, 68
By the Chatlehope Bum (near Catcleugh) growing with <i>Parnassia palustris</i> (67) ; and also near Coquet Head (68).	
<b>Lycopus europaeus</b> L. Gipsy-wort	68, 80
Pawston Lake near Mindrum (68) and Hoselaw Loch (80).	
<b>Cicuta virosa</b> L. Cowbane	80
Hoselaw Loch.	
<b>Ophioglossum vulgatum</b> L. Adder's Tongue	66
On waste ground on S. bank of the Tyne, near Bill Quay. <i>Listera ovata</i> was also growing not far away.	
<b>Stellaria neglecta</b> Weihe. Greater Chickweed	68
Banks of Till near Chillingham.	
<b>Spergularia rubra</b> (L.) J. & C. Presi. Sand-Spurrey	68
On an old wall W. of Ingram ; and on sandstone crags near Berryhill, N.E. of Etal.	
<b>Phalaris canariensis</b> , L. Canary-Grass	67, 68
Old quarry near the Mile, between Glanton and Great Ryle (68). Near Blakehopebunhaugh in Redesdale Forest (67). On N. Bank of Tyne near Haydon Bridge Station (67). <i>Melilotus officinalis</i> (L.) Lam. Common Melilot 68	
Old quarry near the Mile, between Glanton and Great Ryle. <i>Sparganium simplex</i> Huds. Unbranched Bur-reed 68	
In a small pond S. of Beanley, along with <i>S. ramosum</i> .	
<b>Valerianella locusta</b> (L.) Beteke Lamb's Lettuce, Corn	68
Salad	
On waste ground at Hedgely station.	
<b>Melandrium noctiflorum</b> (L.) Fr. Night-flowering	67, 68
Campion.	
Cornfield on W. bank of the Wooler Water near Haugh Head (68). Field near Etal (68). Field near where the Willow Burn and road cross in the vicinity of Pressen (68). Field near Oxford, N. of Ancroft (68). Field on N. Bank of Tyne S. E. of Fourstones Station (67).	
<b>Coeloglossum viride</b> (L.) Hartm. Frog Orchid	67
On W. bank of East Alien near the old lead mine, 12 m. S. of Sinderhope. At Reedsmouth Station.	
<b>Gymnadenia conopsea</b> (L.) R. Br. Fragrant Orchid	67
Growing with the above on the W. bank of the East Alien.	
<b>Dianthus deltoides</b> L. Maiden Pink	80
On the banks of the Bowmont S. of Yetholm.	
<b>Origanum vulgare</b> L. Marjoram	68
Lickar Dean, W. of Lowick. Extremely fine (including white-flowered form) on the banks of the Tweed near Horncliffe.	
<b>Carex acuta</b> L. Tufted Sedge	68
Tweed near Horncliffe.	
<b>Ranunculus lingua</b> L. Great Spearwort	68, 80
Hoselaw Loch (80). Still in " the fosse of Dunstanbro' Castle " as recorded by Baker and Tate ; but seems to have disappeared from a place near Ingram where it grew a few years ago, apparently on account of drainage (68).—G. A. Swan and M. Swan.	

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## BY THE WAY

### OUR FIELD MEETINGS

Favoured by the exceptionally fine weather, our field meetings during 1959 have been uniformly successful in spite of the difficulties which arose in respect to transport. Still, once again, we are sorry to have to record an almost total absence of professional help. However, this was more than compensated for by an influx of really keen amateurs, and an increasing number of junior members preparing for various examinations. Noteworthy, too, was the contingent of photographers, intent on securing pictures of the interesting plants, which, from time to time were pointed out to them.

One trend, noted amongst new members, which appears satisfactory in certain respects, causes some anxiety in others. This is the tendency in all age groups to concentrate on the botanical side. Not many years ago, entomologists exceeded the rest in point of numbers. Now the insect hunters are represented by two or three individuals at the most.

Even amongst the botanists there is much cause for a certain amount of apprehension. As far as one can see, no one now studies the mosses, liverworts, fungi and algae. As a result, there is no up-to-date knowledge of such plants locally. This position contrasts badly with those reported by other Unions.

In view of these serious shortcomings amongst local naturalists, it is to be hoped that volunteers will come forward to undertake the work necessary to give our local lists a really modern look. Only if such are forthcoming can we hope to make progress in the neglected groups like that seen elsewhere.

### THE DURHAM COUNTY NATURALISTS' UNION

In our numbers for December 1946, April 1947, and December 1955, we supplied a number of facts concerning the history of the now defunct Durham County Naturalists' Union. At the same time we appealed for information concerning the sudden collapse of what was a really powerful organization. In doing so, we suggested

that the deaths of the Rev. W. J. Wingate and Mr. J. Bidgood, two of the Union's most important officials, had much to do with its disappearance. However, no additional information in respect to that point has reached us.

Nevertheless, a few facts about the origin of the Union have come to light. Late in 1902, the Rev. W. J. Wingate, then at Stephen's Vicarage, Bishop Auckland, sent out an appeal for the names and addresses of residents in Co. Durham, whose interest in natural history would be sufficient to induce them to become members of such a Union. Mr. Wingate undertook to deal with the necessary preliminaries leading to its formation. As we know, the outcome of his appeal was a striking success.

In 1903, the Union came into action with the result that, in its third field meeting of the same year, held on July 11th, no fewer than 68 members braved very unfavourable weather to visit Stanhope and Wearhead.

It is very significant that this meeting was planned for geological purposes and that the members visited Burtreeford, Cophill Quarry and the Sedling Mine in the early part of the day, and examined Rogerley and Frosterley Quarries in the afternoon.

This meeting closed with the reading of a paper by Mr. W. M. Egglestone on the rocks of the area. He dealt, in particular, with the Whin Sill.

We wonder what would happen if suggestions to have such papers read at the N.N.U. meeting of today were put forward!

#### FASCIATION

This season we have been deluged with requests for explanations of the extraordinary way in which certain plants have developed stems formed by the coalescing of several to build up a broad ribbon-like growth. This phenomenon is known as "Fasciation", and it appears to have been extremely prevalent this year. The temptation is great to look for its cause in the abnormally sunny summer we have experienced.

In general, its incidence has been greatest in the Primulas of the Candelabra group, and, amongst these *Primula bulleyana* has been the species affected most. However, it must not be supposed that only garden plants have shown fasciated stems. We have observed them in various species of thistle, daisy, dandelion, rib-wort plantain etc. The phenomenon also extends to trees and shrubs, for we have examined such monstrous growths in ash stems and those of roses. In the case of a strange specimen of *Rosa sherardi* we came across an extraordinary fusion of a fruiting stem and one of the ordinary type.

Again, fasciation is not restricted to dicotyledons, for we have observed it in the spotted and fragrant orchids. Moreover, we have

encountered it in two ferns, the moonwort and the adder's tongue. In the latter case, a very bizarre effect was produced.

#### RATCHEUGH CRAGS

Recently, owing to the fact that several local workers have become interested in the distribution of the Blue Moor Grass, *Sesleria caerulea*, in our two counties, it was arranged that two of us should explore Ratcheugh Crag, given by Baker and Tate as the sole Northumberland station for the plant. (Perhaps it should be noted here that it is common enough in very many suitable localities, both lowland and upland, in Durham.)

When we reached the rocks, we were struck by their massive appearance, and thought that a very short examination would produce the plant. We worked the Crag from every side and covered a considerable area beyond them. They were even climbed at a very difficult point. All of our efforts proved fruitless, for not only did the object of our special search fail to turn up, but the same held true of the other desirable plants reported from the rocks. In fact, after a very careful inspection of the ground, we decided that it neither produced limestone plants nor was it likely to do so.

Further, other botanists with whom we have discussed the matter, have had precisely the same reward for the labours as we had.

Can anyone supply the reasons for our failure? It is difficult, indeed, to imagine error on the part of Baker and Tate, for the grass, and the other important plants the Crag is alleged to have produced, are unmistakable.

### THE SOCIETIES

#### NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

For their ninety-third Field Meeting, the members of the Northern Naturalists' Union visited Upper Teesdale in the Winch Bridge area on July 4th, 1959. Throughout the outing they were favoured with ideal weather. As soon as we reached our chosen ground, the party broke into two sections, one half working down the river on the Yorkshire side, and the other proceeding in the opposite direction on the Durham bank. On the return journey, these two positions were reversed although the two contingents came together at the Winch Bridge to have tea, and to explore that area somewhat more intensively.

At once we were struck by the riotous display of flowers to be seen, some almost restricted to this spot so far as England is concerned. Chief amongst the rarities were the Viviparous Knotgrass, the Shrubby Cinquefoil, the Alpine Penny Cress, the Tea-leaved Willow, the Dusky Sallow, the Northern Bedstraw, the Alpine Rush (here in its only English station), the Blue Moor Grass, the Sawwort, the Mountain Everlasting, the Melancholy Thistle, the Mountain

Pansy and the Lesser Butterfly Orchid. Amongst these, the last named, with the Grass of Parnassus and the Butterwort, proved very attractive to the photographers. Of the trees and shrubs we noted a long range of species, some again quite local. These comprised: Wych Elm, Mountain Ash, Aspen (quite rare in Durham), the Bay-leaved Willow, the Oak, Ash, Beech, Birch, Alder, Bird Cherry, the Yew and the Juniper. Underneath these trees, and alongside them, were numerous flowering plants, in particular practically all of the rarer British wild roses being represented. Other flowering plants duly recorded included five orchid species, the Twayblade, the Common Spotted Orchid, the Heath Orchid, Stephenson's Marsh Orchid and the Fragrant Orchid, with the Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*), the two common Burnets, the Bog Asphodel, the Wood and Meadow Geraniums, Angelica, the Tuberos-rooted Bitter Vetch, Meadow Vetch, Harebell, the Lady's Bedstraw, the Heath Bedstraw, the Marsh Bedstraw, Red Campion, Raspberry, Elder, Sloe, Melic Grass, Betony, Sneezewort, Brooklime, Primrose, Valerian, Hairy and Beautiful St. John's Wort, Wood and Water Avens, Golden Rod, Honeysuckle, Foxglove, Figwort, Marsh Crepis, Bilberry, Lousewort and other commoner forms.

Insects proved quite scarce for, of the butterflies, we only saw the Small Copper, the Common Blue, Small Heath, Meadow Brown and the Green-veined White. Amongst the moths were taken the Latticed Heath, the Silver-ground Carpet, the Chimney Sweep, the Grass Rivulet and the Small Ermine, the latter covering the Bird Cherries with dense silken webs spun by numerous batches of larvae. On the sallows were detected galls of many kinds of sawfly, the rarest being *Pontania phyllicifoliae.*, attached to *Salix phyllicifolia*. Other galls present were those of *P. femoralis*, *P. pedunculii* and *Cryptocampus medullarius*, the last on *Salix pentandra*. Frequenting the various flowers were the bees *Bombus pratorum*, *B. muscorum*, *B. agrorum*, *B. lucorum*, *B. terrestris* and *B. hortorum*.

On this occasion, we lacked the services of Mr. Gent. Still we observed a really interesting lot of birds comprising the Missel Thrush, the Blackbird, the Robin, the Wren, Willow Warbler, Meadow Pipit, Swift, Swallow, House Martin, Sand Martin, Starling, Green Finch, Chaffinch, Pied Wagtail, the Whitethroat and Rook.

After we left the banks of the Tees, we went up the road to the High Force Hotel, noticing as we walked enormous masses of the Rose-bay Willow Herb on waste land. Here were parked many of the conveyances destined to take us home. The party broke up with the uniform opinion that we had held one of the most delightful and successful of our outings.

By the kindness of the Passionist Fathers, our ninety-fourth Field Meeting was held at Ministeracres on Saturday, September 12th, 1959. On this occasion we were very pleased to have Mr. J. J. Robson as leader.

We assembled at Ministeracres Lodge at 2 p.m. and almost immediately entered the grounds to examine, and have explained to us, the nursery where many thousands of young trees, chiefly spruces of various species, Scots pines and larches, were being grown for private replanting in the woods, or for sale.

Here we met our first butterflies in the form of larvae of the Large White (*Pieris brassicae*) and of the Small White (*P. rapae*) defoliating cabbages growing alongside the little trees. Not far away, on a large patch of nettles, tents of the caterpillars of the Red Admiral, resulting from spring immigrants, were pointed out.

Leaving the nursery, the main party proceeded to study the aquatic vegetation in the lakes, passing, as they did so, through a beautiful avenue of well-grown Wellingtonias. The lakes proved very disappointing as they seem to have been spoiled by the presence of numerous cattle.

In spite of that, we fished from the lakes the Yellow Water Lily, the Floating Pondweed, the Branched Bur-reed, the Water Starwort, Iris and the Marsh Cinquefoil. On the shores we noted the Water Mint, Water Cress, the Marsh Bedstraw, the Royal Fern and various willows—*Salix purpurea*, *S. alba*, *S. atrocineria*, *S. caprea*, *S. viminalis* and the hybrid *S. atrocineria* x *purpurea*. The purple Osiers carried heavy populations of the galls of the sawfly *Pontania salicis*, whilst several had been killed by larvae of the Hornet Clearwing Moth *Trochilium crabroniforme*.

Next we turned our attention to the Arboretum, observing on our way numbers of oaks and silver birches, clearly the relics of former planting. Amongst the other plants observed there we collected Elder, Portugal Laurel, Ragwort, Aneghca, Cleavers, Tormentil, Wood Sanicle, Mullein, Dog's Mercury, Figwort, Bugle, Common Violet (*Viola riviniana*). Meadow Sweet, Harebell, Primrose, Ground Ivy, Selfheal, Sneezewort, Yarrow, Burdock, Convolvulus, Raspberry, Bramble and Millet Grass. At one point we discovered the Mat Grass *Nardus stricta*, and the False Brome Grass *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, the former indicative of past moorland and the second of woodlands tending to alkalinity.

In the Arboretum were cedars, cypresses, Cryptomerias, more Wellingtonias and a vast array of spruce species and their allies.

Insects, once again, proved few in numbers although Mr. Dunn reported taking the Pine Carpet, the Garden Carpet, the Marbled Carpet, Green-veined White, the Dark Sword Grass, the Silver Y and the tineid *Eucosma turbidana*. In addition to the *Pontania* galls on Salices we found galls of *Neuroterus lenticularis* and *Trigonaspis renum* on oak, both the products of Cynipids. Other insects seen were larvae of the beetle *Cionus scrophulariae* on figwort whilst noted on the wing were the Common Wasp, *Vespa vulgaris*, and large numbers of the humble bees, *Bombus pratorum*, *B. agrorum*, *B. muscorum*, *B. terrestris* and *B. hortorum*.

Birds, too, were far from being of free occurrence, but we did see the Coot, Snipe, Greenfinch, the Yellow Hammer, Robin, Sedge Warbler, Pied Wagtail, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Rook, Crow, Jackdaw, Wood Pigeon, Thrush and Blackbird.

We thoroughly enjoyed this excursion, although we all felt sorry that more money was not available for bringing about the rehabilitation of the grounds, woods and lakes.

## NOTES AND RECORDS

### NOTES

**The Gallant Soldier, *Galinsoga ciliata* (Rafn.) Blake in Northumberland.**—In the June issue of the *Vasculum* there appeared a record of *G. parviflora* Cav. at Woolsington (67), Northumberland. A week or two ago, the occurrence of *G. ciliata* growing as a weed at Birtley (66) with *G. parviflora* has brought about a further examination of the Northumberland plants. They are without any doubt examples of *G. ciliata*.—T. W. Wanless.

**Immigrant Lepidoptera in 1959.**—Immigrant butterflies and moths have not been much in evidence during this summer. I saw a single Red Admiral near Ponteland (66) on June 13th, and a second at Gosforth (67) on July 8th. September has only brought two further records, these being of single insects. My son, Iain, reported an odd Red Admiral at Staindrop (66) on August 29th.

On September 21st at the Silver Y (*Plusia gamma*) was fairly plentiful in the Blyth (67) area, 21 being recorded during a brief visit, some half dozen actually in one garden in the centre of the town.—C. J. Gent.

The Red Admiral was seen first during the summer at Newham Bog (68) and Bamburgh (68) on June 30th. Later during the last week in August, it was noted in numbers at Birtley (66) and finally on September 27th at Westgate (66). Odd examples of the Silver Y (*Plusia gamma*) were observed at Vigo (66) on June 19th, on Ratcheugh Crags (68) on June 30th, at Bishop Middleham (66) on July 7th, two miles north of Wark (67) on September 8th, at Sunderland (66) and Birtley (66) on September 10th, at Raisby (66) Coxhoe (66), Fishburn (66) and Galley Law Plantation (66) on September 22nd and at Westgate (66) on September 26th.—J.W.H.H.

The Red Admiral first came under observation at Chester-le-Street (66) on August 27th, when it was quite plentiful in the Isolation Hospital grounds. It has appeared quite regularly throughout September.—R. Harris.

**A Note from Staward Peel (67).**—On Saturday, June 20th, when I was out with the Consett Naturalists' Field Club at Staward, I discovered a plant which is so rarely encountered in our area that I think it worth recording. That was the Wood Vetch (*Vicia sylvatica*). It is quite ten years since I saw this plant. In addition, I found no fewer than three species of St. John's Wort in the same vicinity *Hypericum perforatum*, *H. hirsutum* and *H. pulchrum*. Not far away, I collected five different bedstraws, *Galium verum*, *G. mollugo*, *G. saxatile*, *G. aparine* and *G. cruciatum*.—L. P. Hird.

**A Plant Note from the Borders.**—Recently, whilst I was rambling on the Scottish side of the Borders, I met with two plants new to me, the Maiden Pink, *Dianthus deltoides* found on the banks of the Witchcleugh Burn, west of Kirk Yetholm (80) and the Hemp Nettle, *Galeopsis speciosa*, seen on the Curr Burn, North of Kirk Yetholm.—Fred Wade.

**A Mixed Bag.**—The Ivy-leaved Toadflax *Cymbalaria muralis*, seems to be an enterprising plant for I observed it on a ruined wall between the two Byker Bridges (67).

Near the site of Spencers' Steelworks (66) at Newburn, is a colony of the Oxford Ragwort, *Senecio squalidus*, a plant now pushing west up the Tyne Valley.

At Wylam (67), where road-widening operations are making drastic changes, the Spurge Laurel, *Daphne laureola* is being threatened. Still I managed to find a single specimen of the Clustered Bellflower *Campanula glomerata*.

Finally, I can report the discovery of two pure white flowered examples of the Rose Bay Willowherb, *Epilobium angustifolium* at Gateshead (66). Surely such an occurrence must be very unusual.—W. A. Wright.

(I have seen such plants on one occasion only. This was on the Isle of Rhum (104).—J.W.H.H.).

**Vegetation on Limestone Scars in Thornley Vale.**—In the Vale (66) there is a series of dry cliff-like scars, some of which have been anciently quarried, whilst others are in their natural outcrop formation. The vegetation included *Veronica arvensis*, *Thymus drucei*, *Galium verum*, *Centaurea scabiosa*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*, *Poterium sanguisorba*, *Sanicula europaea*, *Viola hirta*, *V. riviniana*, *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, *Fragaria vesca*, *Primula officinalis*, *Sesleria caerulea*, *Prunella vulgaris*, *Plantago media*, *P. lanceolata*, *Hieracium pilosella*, *Campanula rotundifolia*, *Luzula campestris*, *Linum catharticum*, *Helianthemum chamaecistus*, *Arenaria trinervia*, *Spirea ulmaria*, *Ajuga reptans*, *Cerastium arvense*, *Stellaria media*, *Galium cruciata*, *G. aparine*, *Senecio jacobaea*, *Silaum silaus*, *Tussilago farfara*, *Valeriana officinalis*, *Potentilla reptans*, *P. sterilis*, *P. anserina* var. *concolor*, *Lamium purpureum*, *Lapsana communis*, *Geranium robertianum*, *Veronica chamaedrys*, *Arctium minus*, *Helix hederia*, *Stachys sylvaticum*, *Ranunculus ficaria*, the latter in both the normal green and the white spotted forms. A point of particular interest was that *Sesleria caerulea* was to be found in large colonies growing in the shade in woodland conditions. *Betonica officinalis* was noticeably absent among the vegetation.—T. W. Wanless.

**Notes on Birds in North Durham (66)**—A visit to the Brasside ponds, not far from Durham City, during May resulted in the detection of no fewer than fourteen pairs of Tufted Ducks. Here also two pairs of Pochard were present, whilst on May 23rd, the female of one of these pairs was observed sitting on a nest. These two pairs seem to be the only known representatives of the species resident in Durham, and attempting to breed. This summer, a pair of the Common Sandpiper nested on the Tanfield Ponds (66) and were successful in rearing a single young one. This is the first time the bird has been reported as breeding near these sheets of water. Another interesting bird seen in the same area was the Dunlin of which species a single example was observed on June 27th, and later on July 4th.—R. Marston Palmer.

**The Red-backed Shrike near Blyth.**—Mr. C. J. Gent has recommended me to let you have a note concerning the occurrence of the Red-backed Shrike near Blyth (67). On May 22nd, I first saw this bird (a cock) on the waste land between the coal staithes and the houses at North Blyth. There, on two small hawthorns, I found a humble bee and two mice impaled. After watching the bird for two days, I began to feel confident that his mate would be sitting on eggs in a nest amongst the nearby bramble patches. Alas, for my hopes; on Sunday, May 24th, he had cleared out his larder and was gone.—Ronald Clementson.

**Wild Roses producing a Second Crop of Flowers.**—On September 15th, we visited Blanchland (67) in order to study its flora generally, and certain rose hybrids in particular. In doing so, we encountered an example of *Rosa canina* carrying both hips and flowers. Similarly on September 26th, when I was investigating the rose flora along the Middlehope Burn (66) near Westgate in Weardale, I discovered an example of *R. villosa* bearing hips and pink flowers as well as a specimen of *R. villosa* var. *relicta* bountifully supplied with its characteristically small, spherical, bristly fruit and an array of pure white blossoms.—J.W.H.H.

## RECORDS

### FLOWERING PLANTS

*Acaena anserinifolia* (J. R. & A. Forst) Dr. New Zealand Burr

66

Apparently established in the quarry at Bishop Middleham and clearly spreading. It has, of course, been reported previously from Holy Island (68).

<b>Lotus tenuis</b> Waldst. & Kit. Slender Bird's Foot Trefoil	66
On a limestone scar in a field adjacent to the Durham—Hartlepool road.	
<b>Euonymus europaeus</b> L. Spindle Tree.	67
On a bankside in a wood two miles north of Wark.	
<b>Hippuris vulgaris</b> L. Mare's Tail.	67
This plant seems not to have been recorded from Crag Lough; nevertheless, it is common enough on its fringes.	
<b>Salix phylicifolia</b> L. Tea-leaved Willow.	66, 67
Discovered recently in the quarry at Old Wingate and around a rather large sheet of water at Stillington in Co. Durham. Common and very variable around Crag Lough, Northumberland.	
<b>Listera cordata</b> (L.) R. Br. Lesser Twayblade.	66
Sparingly under heather on Widdy Bank Fell.	
<b>Paris quadrifolia</b> L. Herb Paris	68
Found in the willow thickets around Newham Bog.	
<b>Potamogeton pectinatus</b> L. Fennel-leaved Pondweed	66
In some quantity in a large pond near Evenwood Gate.	
<b>P. alpinus</b> Balb. Reddish Pondweed.	67
Certainly not so plentiful as formerly in Crag Lough, but still to be found there; also in a new station in a reservoir, on the Brown Moor, drained by the Settlingstones Burn.	
<b>Festuca vivipara</b> Sm. Viviparous Fescue	65, 66, 68
This interesting grass, now reported for the first time from v.-c's 65, 66, 68, has been found in 65 near the Winch Bridge; in 66 on Falcon Clints, in the gorge of the Egglestope Burn and along the north bank of the River Tees at Winch Bridge; in 68, it was detected on Ross Links.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Potentilla argentea</b> L. Hoary Cinquefoil.	81
Coldstream, near the Leet Water.	
<b>Filago germanica</b> (L.) L. Cudweed.	68
Sand quarry S. of East Learmouth with <i>Erodium cicutarium</i> and <i>Gnaphalium uliginosum</i> . Quarry near West Kylee, <i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i> , <i>Ononis repens</i> , <i>Vulpia bromoides</i> and <i>Reseda lutea</i> . At about <i>i</i> m. N.E. of Roddamrigg House.	
<b>Filago minima</b> (Sm.) Pers. Slender Cudweed.	67, 68
Near Blakehopeburnhaugh in the Catcleugh area (67). On the Bowmont gravels near Bowmonthill (68) along with <i>Trifolium arvense</i> , <i>Papaver argemone</i> , <i>Thlaspi arvense</i> , <i>Verbascum thapsus</i> , <i>Linaria vulgaris</i> , <i>Reseda luteola</i> and <i>Montia fontana</i> .	
<b>Oenanthe lachenalii</b> C.G. Gmel. Parsley Water Dropwort.	68
Craster.	
<b>Torilis nodosa</b> (L.) Gaertn. Knotted Hedge-Parsley.	68
Scremerston <sup>hort</sup> : and Craster.	
<b>Carex dioica</b> L. Dioecious Sedge.	67
By the Chattlehope Burn and by the Dargues Burn in Redesdale. By the Spylaw Burn, S. of Simonside.	
<b>Schoenoplectus lacustris</b> (L.) Palla. Bulrush.	68
Pond near Oxford. N. of Ancroft.	
<b>Centaureum minus</b> Moench. Common Centaury.	67, 68
Lickar Dean, W. of Lowick (68). Sand quarry on S. side of road between Apperley Dean and Scales Cross, along with <i>Gnaphalium sylvaticum</i> , (67).	
<b>Hippuris vulgaris</b> L. Mare's Tail.	67
Grindon Lough; and in a pond near Greenhaugh in the North Tyne Area.	
<b>Claytonia alsinoides</b> Sims	68
In the woods by the Swine Burn near Thrunton Mill.	
<b>Selaginelle selaginoids</b> (L.) Link. Lesser Clubmoss	67, 68
Debdon Burn near Debdon, along with <i>Hydrocotyle</i> , <i>Eleocharis pauciflora</i> , <i>Triglochin</i> , <i>Parnassia</i> , <i>Pinguicula</i> , <i>Drosera rotundifolia</i> , <i>Pedicularis palustris</i> , <i>Carex demissa</i> and <i>C. pulicaris</i> (68). Newbiggin Burn in the Fallowlees area (67). —G. A. Swan and M. Swan.	

# THE VASCULUM (SUBSTITUTE)

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## BY THE WAY

### BILLINGHAM MARSHES

In 1918, in the *Transactions of the Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne*, New Series, Vol. V, Part I, we published a paper with the title, "A Survey of the Lower Tees Marshes and the Reclaimed Areas adjoining them." As was stated then, the most pressing of the reasons for undertaking the work described in the article was the obvious need for determining the flora and fauna of this section of South East Durham before the projected industrialization of much of this area had exterminated everything. Amongst the plant habitats dealt with then were the Billingham Marshes; these lay in a long narrow strip of land just north of Billingham Beck toward the western limits of Billingham Parish.

They supported a well-developed fen flora unequalled in extent and richness elsewhere in County Durham. Influenced by these facts, and the hope of increasing our knowledge of the area, the Northern Naturalists' Union held there the second field meeting it ever organized on June 13th, 1925. That meeting not only verified most of the existing records, but added several important plants like *Orchis mono*, *Triglochin maritimum*, and *Menyanthes trifoliata* to our lists for the area.

In 1950, a scouting group inspected the Marshes with the intention of arranging for another field outing to be held there. We were horrified to find that the ground it planned to work was being used as a tip for town refuse, and that many of its former floral treasures were buried feet deep in ashes. Nevertheless, the Globe Flower, Meadow Rue, the Marsh Helleborine Orchid and others were still surviving in quantity. An expedition, the sixty-ninth of the Northern Naturalists' Union, therefore set out on July 7th, 1951, to re-examine the marsh. This further exploration was unexpectedly successful. Most of the usual plants were found, and a rarity, *Carex disticha*, noted in some numbers, helped to swell our former lists. Still, it was clear from the huge masses of earth

being deposited that the end was in sight, and that the marshes and their flowers would soon have vanished for ever.

On October 6th, 1959, practically nothing was left. Where once a beautiful expanse of reeds, intermingled with a unique array of interesting plants, swayed in the breeze, was now a stretch of green fields in which cows were grazing placidly. The only plants reminiscent of former years were huge masses of purple-headed *Phragmites communis*, relieved by a few examples of hemp agrimony, *Eupatorium cannabinum*, marshalled along the main drainage lode.

Nonetheless, it can be recorded that, along the Beck, and in the old mill race, most of their old tenants were still to be found, even if in a very bedraggled condition.

#### THE SPREAD OF THE BULRUSH IN OUR COUNTIES

Although Baker and Tate give no exact stations for the Bulrush, *Typha latifolia*, in our counties, it was no doubt widespread in them. However, in the 1880's, it began to disappear from many of its old habitats owing to the destruction of mill-dams, and changes brought about by industrial developments. Thus, in the Team Valley, whilst we were acquainted with two localities for it fifty years ago, just after the first war there were none.

However, since the end of the second war, a very different picture has been painted for the plant has spread everywhere. It has been observed in every claypit in the Team Valley, and there it is still increasing. In addition, it has been seen in numerous localities from which it was absent not so very long ago. Such localities are along the Bollihope Burn, in Aycliffe Quarry, in swamps near Thornley, Stillington, Sherburn Hill and so on. In Northumberland, in 1959, it was detected on Ross Links in a habitat where it was certainly absent when the British Association visited Ross Links in 1949.

It would be interesting if our members will supply information about new colonies known to them in Northumberland and Durham.

#### THE THORNAPPLE

Most of our members will have read the various "scare" letters and notes which have appeared in the press recently concerning the Thorn Apple, *Datura stramonium*. This is far from being the dangerous plant pictured by the writers of such statements. Moreover, it is anything but a rarity. Many of our readers see the plant on waste places every year. In this number of the *Vasculum*, Mrs. Gibby mentions it in a note, whilst our President, Mr. Weldon Watts, had a magnificent specimen on view at our Autumn Meeting at Annfield Plain. Further, when the race course in Lambton Park was ploughed out during the 1939-45 war, a great number of

*Datura* plants appeared—and the list could be extended readily. In the case of the race course, it is almost certain that, if it was disturbed again, *Datura stramonium* would reappear at once.

#### DRAWINGS OF BRITISH PLANTS

We have just received the thirteenth part of this beautiful work. It contains drawings of the Umbelliferae, Araliaceae and Cornaceae by Miss Stella Ross-Craig, and is published by G. Bell and Sons, Ltd. The drawings of the Umbelliferae can only be described as excellent, and form an easy road to the determination of a very difficult order. The figures of the Araliaceae and Cornaceae are likewise up to the high standard of the work. It is one which, if possible, our members should obtain.

### THE SOCIETIES

#### NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

By the kind invitation of the Annfield Plain and Stanley Naturalists' Club, the Annual Autumn Meeting of the Union was held in the Carnegie Library at Annfield Plain on Saturday, October 24th, 1959. There was, once again, a very large attendance.

After a few words from Mr. Richards welcoming the Union, the President, Mr. Weldon Watts, F.R.C.S., took the chair, and asked Mr. L. P. Hird to give us his lecture on "Our Local Wild Flowers."

Mr. Hird, who has the great advantages of having gained his knowledge of the wild flowers of Northumberland and Durham in the field, led us through the two counties from habitat to habitat, and from mountain and moorland to the sand dunes. Adding to the value of his talk was a wonderful series of lantern slides, made by himself to illustrate the various species mentioned.

Mr. Hird received a well-deserved vote of thanks for his excellent address.

After the lecture, we had tea which had been arranged for us by our Annfield Plain friends. Next, we proceeded to inspect the exhibits set out for us. Of these, the Library itself was responsible for a number of local fossils, some exotic butterflies and an interesting wooden, shovel taken from a seam near Stanley worked two hundred years ago. Our President brought a living example of the Thorn Apple whilst Mr. Hird showed pressed specimens of the plants he had referred to in his lecture. Dr. Todd, as usual, interested us with another selection of his transparencies of the rarer Durham plants, and Mr. T. C. Dunn had arranged for examination a number of our smaller moths. Mrs. Gibby produced a flowering example of the Pyrenean Star of Bethlehem, and Mr. Wm. Ellerington showed various publications dealing with natural

history investigations in the Derwent Valley. Prof. J. W. Heslop Harrison's exhibit on this occasion included fresh specimens of the two "Gallant Soldiers" (*Galinsoga ciliata* et *G. parviflora*), the Ivy Broomrape, *Illecebrum* from Kielder, the Round-leaved Geranium and the Field Rose, *Rosa agrestis*.

Hearty thanks to our hosts of the Annfield Plain and Stanley Club for their efforts on our behalf brought a very successful meeting to a close.

#### CONSETT AND DISTRICT NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB

The Annual Dinner and Conversazione of the Club was held in the Freemasons' Arms, Consett, on Monday, November 16th, 1959. Once again, for the fourteenth consecutive time, our guest was Prof. J. W. Heslop Harrison.

The President, Mr. J. W. Horn, was in the chair, and, after we had partaken of an excellent dinner, he proposed the health of the Queen. Immediately after this, Mr. Parry, in a very happy way gave the toast of our guest during which he detailed the services of the Professor to the Union, the Club and the individual members thereof. In his reply, our guest began by thanking the Club for all the kindnesses they had shown him in the past, and continued by emphasizing the success of the Consett Club and its great value in making its field meetings of the Northern Naturalists' Union the value they were. He told too, the history of the Club's connection with the Union, and pointed out that two Consett members and himself were the sole survivors of those who had met in the first place to form the Union.

In the absence of Mr. Surtees Armstrong, the toast of the Club was introduced by Mr. Wm. Ellerington, and to it various members made suitable replies. Mrs. Dixon was also singled out for special thanks in recognition of her valuable organizing work; she, too, replied.

At this stage, the hall was cleared, and re-arranged for a display of lantern slides. The first series was shown by Mr. J. J. Robson, and was a well-chosen set depicting scenes in the West of Scotland and the Western Isles.

Mr. Ashworth followed with a very interesting talk dealing with his holiday in Corsica. He, likewise, illustrated his lecture with a number of slides in colour.

As usual Mr. Horn manipulated the lantern.

#### BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Our Winter Session began later than usual on October 20th when the President lectured on "A Visit to the Scottish Western Isles." In this talk, he dealt in the main with the Isles of Lewis

and Harris and the little " offshore " group known as the Shiant Isles. In addition to giving an account of the scenery and the natural history of the area concerned, he discussed the tweed trade, and its position at present in the whole of the Outer Isles. Mr. W. E. Gladstone, M.A., visited us on November 3rd when he spoke on " Digging for History." He demonstrated how planned digging was even more valuable than the written word in revealing the secrets of past history. He explained, likewise, the methods by which the ages of many well-known sites had been determined, and ended by describing local operations carried out by himself and others in Northumberland.

On November 17th, we were shown a series of travel films in colour brought by members of the staff of the Northern General Transport Co. Ltd. Two of these were the results of the work of the firm's bus drivers who had been responsible for the tours described. The third was a German official product. All three both amateur and professional, were voted by the audience to be excellent. Hearty thanks were given to the firm's employees both for the films and for their talk.

## NOTES AND RECORDS

### NOTES

**The Squirrel in Allendale.**—During the past season, we have had abundant opportunities for observing this beautiful little creature in Allendale near the Chapel House Farm, Keenley. On one occasion, we found two dead individuals which looked as if they had been destroyed wilfully. On November 15th we had the pleasure of seeing one come down from an oak tree to the road so that we could readily observe its movements. After that, we watched it ascend the tree, and proceed to eat acorns which are unusually plentiful this year.—W. L. Burn.

**Waxwings at Chester-le-Street**—During the last week of October, I noticed a number of unfamiliar birds in the grounds of the Isolation Hospital, Chester-le-Street (66). Close inspection revealed that they were waxwings. Their numbers increased steadily until November 1st when there were nearly forty in the flock. However, these were reduced by accident. Two were found dead near glass windows in a passage; they had evidently thought that there was no obstacle to their flying through, and had broken their necks by flying into the glass. At the end of a fortnight all of them had left us.—R. Harrison.

**Immigrant Lepidoptera in Durham during 1959.**—On October 17th, I observed a specimen of the Clouded Yellow butterfly, *Colias croceus*, flying amongst the dunes which border Seaton Carew (66) golf course. In spite of a fairly strong southerly breeze which carried it away from me, I was twice able to examine it at my leisure when it settled. During the season, I have taken two Painted Lady butterflies at Roker (66), one on August 22nd, and the second on October 17th. These I did not consider important, but Mr. T. W. Jefferson tells me that not many have been recorded this year, and that I should publish my information.—R. H. Lowe.

**A Second Brood of *Polyommatus icarus* Rott. in County Durham.**—This has been a remarkable year for the appearance of the second brood of the Common Blue butterfly. Down the coast, from Hawthorn to Hart (66),

the insect was out in numbers during the first week in September and at Stanhope on September 5th fresh specimens of both sexes were plentiful. Normally, only odd ones representing a second brood are seen, and in some years none at all.—T. W. Jefferson.

**Bird Notes from North-west Durham in 1959.**—From August 5th to August 8th, three immature examples of the Shelduck were observed inland at the Tanfield ponds, Stanley; these ponds are 13 miles from the sea. Autumn passage specimens of the Ruff, in the form of single individuals, were seen at the same ponds in the period July 3rd to September 1st. Of the Green Sandpiper, throughout July, August and September, autumn passage birds were frequently seen at the Greencroft ponds near Annfield Plain, with a maximum of four on September 2nd; two examples were also seen at the Tanfield ponds on July 31st. Lastly, from July 27th to August 17th, a party of five Dunlins were noted inland on a mud flat adjacent to the Tanfield ponds.—R. Marston Palmer.

**The Thorn Apple in Durham City.**—All of this correspondence in the Press concerning the Thorn Apple has made me look up my old records. I see that I found the plant within the city in 1942 on waste ground. In 1943 it appeared in some quantity in our own garden, also in the city, and has continued to do so ever since. This year it has spread to our neighbour's garden.—A. N. Gibby.

**Ratcheugh Crag and *Sesicria caenilea*.**—It seems unfortunate that botanists examining the Ratcheugh Crag (68) to study its specialities have been unable to find the spot where *Sesleria caemlea* grows. The plant is restricted to a small limestone ledge at the extreme southern end of the Crag, just before the whin slopes away in that direction. The best approach to it is along the cartroad which leaves the Aimmouth road to the left as one looks eastward. Some distance along this road, a gate is reached. Proceed about 30 yards beyond that, keeping to the road which leads to the cottage now in sight. Then strike left through the trees, over a wire fence and at the edge of the Crag will be found the ledge. It only covers a few square yards, and one can step down a foot or two to stand on it. Growing there with the *Sesleria* will be found rock rose and salad burnet.—J. E. Ruxton.

**Another Station for the Mountain Cranesbill *Geranium pyrenaicum*.**—Early this season, I had the pleasure of making an acquaintance with this pretty plant on two banksides near Wolsingham (66). Now I am able to record a Northumberland station for it as I found a strong and increasing colony of more than seventy plants growing along the road near Barrasford (67)—T. W. Wanless.

**A Freak Poppy Flower.**—On the sand dunes near Crirndon Dene (66), I discovered a specimen of the Corn Poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*) bearing a twin-ovary flower amongst its normal examples. The stem is quite ordinary, and the flower consists of eight petals inside of which are two complete and separate ovaries, with functional stigmas. There appear to be the normal number of stamens which surround and separate the two ovaries. The size of the flower calls for no remarks, except that it should be pointed out that the ovaries are half the size of an ordinary single ovary. T. W. Wanless.

**Observations on the Spring Migration of Birds in 1959.**—Although there was only one spell of snow during the winter from 17th to 19th of January, cold north and east winds prevailed during April. However, two wheatears were seen near Delaval Hall on March 28th. On April 4th, chiffchaffs were heard singing at three places in Plessey Dene (67), also in the Morpeth-Bothal: (67) area on April 18th, and at Bywell (67) on May 2nd. The Willow Warbler was first heard on April 18th when it was well distributed near Bothal. About a dozen were in song in Gosforth Park (67) on April 21st.

Two sand martins were seen on the outskirts of Morpeth, and, later, parties of 3 and 4 birds were noted flying high, following the line of the Wansbeck on the afternoon of April 18th. A swallow was seen in Gosforth Park on April 21st and another, going south-east, near Brunton Park (67). One was seen at Ovington (67) on May 2nd, and several at Ebchester (66) on May 9th. They were abundant in the Gosforth area throughout the month.

Several sedgewarblers were in song near the reed-bed around Gosforth Park Lake on May 1st.

Whitethroats were fairly well distributed and in song in the Ovingham- Ovington district on May 2nd. The species was not observed at Gosforth until May 8th.

A wheatear was in the fields north of Fawdon (67) on May 3rd — apparently on passage—and another near Gosforth Park on May 8th.

On May 8th, a cloudy but warm day with haze, three swifts were circling over their breeding site at Gosforth, 11.30 G.M.T., later twelve were present. A cuckoo was heard calling the same evening.

On May 9th, tree pipits were scattered and in song in the Ebchester- Whittonstall area where a grasshopper warbler was heard. Near Chopwell, several whinchats were observed. A hen redstart was seen to enter and leave a hole in the sandstone cliff of Broad Oak Quarry.—C. J. Gent.

**Notes on the Vegetation of the Egglesthorpe Burn (66).**—This burn, which varies from an open moorland stream to a gorge-enclosed valley, was explored from the moorland down stream. It gave a rich yield in plants. In the highest reaches. Rowan was the only tree, but present were *Viola riviniana*, *V. palustris*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Prunella vulgaris*, *Thymus drucei*, *Linum catharticum*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum* amongst the herbs. Also noted as we descended were *Digitalis purpurea*, *Epilobium palustre*, *Tussilago farfara*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Euphrasia micrantha*, *Galium palustre*, *Luzula pilosa*, and *Sagina procumbens*. Where the stream was dammed up were *Ranunculus hederaceus*, *Potamogeton polygonifolius* and *Montia fontana*. Other species worthy of note were *Blechnum spicant*, *Carex echinata* and *C. pulicaris*, the latter being very plentiful. Lower down, where the burn flows through a steep-sided ravine, trees were much more plentiful; they included *Taxus baccata*, *Salix phylicifolia*, *Betula pubescens*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Ulmus montana* and *Fraxinus excelsior*. Also represented were *Corylus avellana*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Rosa dumalis* (glauca) *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Hedera helix*, *Erica cinerea* and *Calluna vulgaris*. The herbs, too, were rich in species including *Caltha palustris*, *Veronica beccabunga*, *Stellaria alsine*, *Cardamine flexuosa*, *Epilobium parviflorum*, *Equi- setum palustre* and *E. fluviatile*. Also not rare were *Myosotis caespitosa*, *M. repens*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Galium cruciata*, *Veronica officinalis*, *Galium saxatile* with *Luzula campestris* and *L. sylvatica*. In smaller numbers were *Primula vulgaris*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Urtica dioica*, *Veronica serpyllifolia*, *Cerastium vulgare* and *Teucrium scorodonia*.

One stretch of the cliff-enclosed gorge was particularly productive for it yielded *Alchemilla vestita*, *Lactuca muralis*, *Solidago virgaurea* var. *cambrica*, *Pinguicula vulgaris*, *Campanula rotundifolia*, *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, *Potentilla sterilis*, *Fragaria vesca*, *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*, *A. trichomanes*, *Cystopteris fragilis*, *Thelypteris phegopteris*, *Polystichum lobatum* and *Polypodium vulgare*. The grasses noted were *Deschampsia caespitosa*, *D. flexuosa*, *Aira praecox*, *A. caryophyllea*, *Bvzia media* and, worthy of special remark, *Festuca vivipara*.

Scattered irregularly on the slopes and sometimes reaching the moorlands, etc., were *Sagina nodosa*, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Polygala vulgaris*, *Stellaria graminea*, *Hypericum pulchrum*, *Drosera rotundifolia*, *Carex nigra* and *C. echinata*.—T. W. Wanless.

**November Moths in Pigdon Woods.** — In May, when the Northern Naturalists' Union visited Pigdon Woods, the entomologists beat a goodly number of larvae from oak, birch, etc. Amongst these were representatives of the Geometrid genus *Oporinia* which were regarded as appertaining to the two species *O. dilutata* and *O. autumnata*. Now, after the imagines have been reared, those from birch turn out to be *O. autumnata* and *O. christyi*. Thus a third Northumberland locality for *O. christyi* has been discovered, and, so far as that county is concerned, a new larval foodplant. The *christyi* specimens call for no comment except that one is melanic, and belongs to var. *nigra*; the *autumnata* could, except for one individual, be assigned to var. *intermedia* dark; the single exception represents my variety *similis* in which the elbowed line is similar to that in *dilutata*.—J.W.H.H.

## RECORDS

### CECIDIA — GALLS

<b>E. rosalia</b> Nal.	66, 68
On rockrose on the Durham coast from Hawthorn to Crirndon Dene; also at Embleton.	
<b>E. macrochelus</b> Nal.	66
Castle Eden Dene, Hawthorn and Cornforth.	
<b>E. peucedani</b> Can.	66
On <i>Pimpinella saxifraga</i> on the Magnesian Limestone.	
<b>E. similis</b> Nal.	66
Very common on sloe along the Middlehope Burn.	
<b>E. thomasi</b> Nal.	66, 68
Plentiful on thyme on the coast of Durham and Northumberland; also on the Magnesian Limestone.	
<b>E. minor</b> Nal.	66, 68
Sparingly on thyme on Ross Links; also on Falcon Clints.	
<b>E. gain</b> (Karp.) Nal.	66, 67, 68
Very common on <i>Galium aparine</i> in all three vice-counties.	
<b>E. centaureae</b> Nal.	66
Everywhere on <i>Centaurea scabiosa</i> on the Magnesian Limestone.	
<b>E. Hoproctus</b> Nal.	66
Rare on <i>Senecio jacobaea</i> in the lowlands of Durham.	
<b>E. lionotus</b> Nal.	66, 67
On birch everywhere in Durham and South Northumberland when the trees are well-established.	
<b>E. gemmarum</b> Nal.	66
Not rare on <i>Salix aurita</i> in Durham.	
<b>Pontania collectanica</b> Forst.	66, 68
The galls of this sawfly were noted on <i>Salix repens</i> on Ross Links, and, in Durham, on the coast and along the Wear.	
<b>P. femoralis</b> Cam.	66, 67, 68
Heathery Cleugh, Harwood Beck, Eastgate, Wolsingham in Durham; along the Tyne above Wylam, at Kielder and in Newham Bog on <i>Salix phylicifolia</i> .	
<b>P. harrisoni</b> Benson	66, 67
Along the Wear and Team; also on the Tyne above Wylam on <i>Salix purpurea</i> .	
<b>P. phylicifoliae</b> Forsius	66, 67
Along the Rookhope Burn, on the Wear, in Upper Teesdale and in Allendale on <i>S. phylicifolia</i> -J.W.H.H.	