

## THE VASCULUM

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*Edited by*

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### BY THE WAY

#### OUR LOCAL PONDWEEDS

The pondweeds of the genus *Potamogeton* form one of the important groups demanding special research efforts from local botanists, inasmuch as our knowledge of their real distribution in our area is somewhat slight. This position results in the main from the lack of interest shown in the genus in the past. However, in Northumberland, matters are distinctly better than in the sister county—a circumstance depending chiefly upon the greater availability of suitable habitats there. Further, quite recently, planned investigations by Dr. K. B. Blackburn, Dr. G. A. Swan, Mr. T. W. Wanless and ourselves have produced noteworthy additions to the *Potamogeton* flora of Northumberland.

As far as Durham is concerned, the *Potamogeton* list still remains very feeble. Nonetheless, it has been increased lately not only in species like *P. berchtoldii* and *P. lucens*, but also in known distributions as in the case of *P. alpinus* and *P. pectinatus*. Almost certainly, a systematic examination of sheets of water, both natural and artificial, will add materially to the number of species reported from Co. Durham.

Another factor that has played its part in discouraging would-be pondweed students is the fact that the list, as set out in Baker and Tate, includes serious errors in identification. Thus their *Potamogeton pusillus* is built up of two species, *P. pusillus* and *P. berchtoldii*, their species *P. gramineus* of the two species *P. compressus* and *P. obtusifolius* whilst their Crag Lough *P. lucens* is actually *P. praelongus* and their *P. praelongus* from the Tweed is almost certainly *P. lucens*.

May we plead, therefore, for some attention to be paid to this neglected genus during the season of 1960? An apparent lack of suitable habitats should not discourage botanists; old brickyards and colliery ponds and the like are all workable and often productive.

#### EVOLUTION

We have just received from Professor H. Graham Cannon F.R.S.,

of the Department of Zoology, University of Manchester, a book with the title *Lamarck and Modern Genetics*. This courageous work forms a kind of sequel to the same author's *The Evolution of Living Things*, and we leave it to speak for itself to readers. However, we cannot refrain from quoting some pertinent and timely remarks appearing on the cover of the work.

They read: Professor Cannon remarks that even those who noticed this (the former) book refrained from taking up the argument, and that he, and distinguished members of the Royal Society, past and present, who share his general standpoint, have been largely ignored. The public (and also scientists in other fields) are thus being misled into the belief that the orthodox theory commands a unanimity amongst biologists which does not exist.

With this pronouncement we associate ourselves, and would add a few further pertinent remarks with which Professor Cannon also agrees. There has been set up by some whole-hog Darwinians a sort of "closed-shop" whereby the names of geneticists, quite orthodox in their Darwinism but still venturing to express opinions of their own, are removed from the lists of those entitled to receive reprints. Is that sort of behaviour scientific? And is it creditable to science in general?

MR. K. J. F. PARK

Many naturalists in the North of England will have learnt with the greatest regret, of the death of Mr. Kenneth Park. Mr. Park was the officer in charge of the Moorhouse Substation, Garrigill, attached to the Nature Conservancy established at Merlewood, Grange-over-Sands. Amongst his duties was patrolling the upper stretches of Teesdale, and, clearly, he was carrying these out when, by some means which will never be known, he fell into the swollen Tees near High Force and was drowned. Mr. Park, with his quiet, unassuming manner, was a general favourite with naturalists locally and elsewhere. We ourselves first made his acquaintance when he became a student in Agriculture at King's College. However, his zest for field natural history caused him to transfer his studies to pure Botany, in which subject he took an Honours Degree.

During his period as a student, he formed a member of that group of workers from the Department of Botany, King's College, which investigated so successfully the flora and fauna of the Inner and Outer Hebrides. On our excursions he was one of the most useful and popular of our team, undertaking every task necessitated by our work, from chopping wood to climbing cliffs and mountains. At first, his own interests tended to be narrow, but a little gentle teasing from his companions in the end deflected him from his favourite eyebrights to more general fields of study. Nevertheless, his researches in the eyebrights were greatly appreciated by the specialist, Mr. H. W. Pugsley.

After completing his period of National Service with the Air Force, Mr. Park undertook research work with a view to taking the Ph.D. degree, but he accepted the Moorhouse post before that project reached fruition. Doubtless, he deliberately postponed the degree work until he felt that work in his station was running smoothly. All of his many friends in the natural history world will feel the gap made by his passing—a gap which they will find it difficult to fill. All, too, join in tendering to his bereaved parents their deepest sympathy.

### **THE DURHAM NATURALIST**

Our attention has just been drawn to the fact that a manuscript journal with the title "*The Durham Naturalist*" was published in 1913-14 under the Editorship of Mr. J. W. Fawcett of Satley, Tow Law, Co. Durham. Are any of our readers able to tell us when this little magazine ceased publication and where its pages can be consulted?

## **THE SOCIETIES**

### **NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION**

The Thirty-sixth Annual Meeting of the Union, through the kindness of the Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne, was held in the Hancock Museum on Saturday, March 5th 1960. The President, Mr. Weldon Watts, was in the Chair, and again we had an exceptionally large attendance.

The Treasurer's report was presented by Mr. T. C. Dunn, and although it was, on the whole, regarded as satisfactory, Mr. Dunn had to point out that we had encountered an actual loss arising from the fact that the bus hired for the Winch Bridge excursion had not been filled. The Report of the Secretary, Mrs. A. N. Gibby, was very satisfactory indeed for it had nothing to record except steady progress.

In the election of new officers, there were no changes except that on the retirement of Mr. Weldon Watts, Mr. T. C. Dunn was elected President.

After the completion of the business, Mr. Weldon Watts gave his Presidential Address, taking for his title. *Holy Island and Some of Its Plants*.

This was illustrated by a series of very beautiful slides in colour depicting the scenery of the island and its flowering plants. Beginning with slides of the approaches, the speaker proceeded to place before us many fine views of the island's buildings. Some of these, like those of old lime kilns and coal workings, formed a

complete surprise to his audience, as did those of various geological features.

From this general account, we were taken around the island when we were introduced to the most interesting of the local plants. Noteworthy amongst these was the little tomato, *Solanum triflorum* and the New Zealand Bur, *Acaena anserinifolia*., both, of course, being intruders. Of the true natives, the orchids attracted most attention; these included the Early Marsh Orchid, *Orchis incarnate* Stephenson's Marsh Orchid, *O. purpurella*, with hybrids involving the Spotted Orchid, *O. fuchsii*. Another pair of beautiful slides portrayed the March Helleborine, *Epipactis palustris*.

Further, figured and described were the plants found on rocks, dunes and in the Lough. These included a surprising number of species.

After the lecture, Mr. Weldon Watts was awarded a hearty vote of thanks for his interesting and lucid talk.

Tea followed, and on this occasion, we have to thank Mrs. and Miss Dunn, Mrs. R. Harris and Mrs. Hickling for producing such an acceptable result. Advantage was also taken of the " tea interval " for members belonging to the various societies to renew old friendships.

Lastly followed the usual examination of the exhibits, chief of which was Mr. R. B. Cookers magnificent display of spring flowers. This included Crocuses, Snowdrops, Snowflakes, Tulips, Daffodils, Primulas, Heaths, Witch Hazels, Daphnes, Barberries and so on. Other exhibits included a collection of Holy Island plants mounted by Mr. L. P. Hird, a series of sketches by Mr. C. J. Gent illustrating his method of capturing and releasing starlings, a collection of British lady birds and a unique set of Brown Argus butterflies from the Durham Coast brought by Prof. Heslop Harrison, a map of Holy Island by Mrs. Gibby, a number of pamphlets dealing with the work of the Consett Club by Mr. Wm. Ellerington and a new British Lady's Mantle *Agrimonia lyttiflora* belonging to Dr. M. E. Bradshaw. Worthy of special note were the Lepidoptera captured at Chester-le-Street by Mr. T. C. Dunn; the species involved were *Pyrausta martialis*, *Apotomis sauciana*, *Itame brunneata*, *Deuteronomos alniaria*, *Hadena bombycina*, *Zenobia subtusa*, *Hydraecia petasites*, *Griposia aprilina*, *Diarsia rubi*, *Aporophyla lutulenta*, *Griselda myrtillana* and *Depressaria conterminella*.

#### ANNFIELD PLAIN AND STANLEY NATURALISTS' CLUB

The annual meeting and social evening of the Club were held on Saturday, January 16th, in the Free Church Schoolroom, Annfield Plain.

The President, Mr. Vernon Richards, in his remarks, said that the 100 members present formed a very gratifying turn-out. In

following him, the Secretary, Mr. Fred Wade, reported that 1959 had been a very successful year for thirteen rambles were held; these took the Club as far south as Castleton and Danby Dale, and as far north as Berwick and Tweed Dale. Further, the lectures had been well-attended, not only by members but also by the general public; most of these, illustrated by films and lantern slides, provoked interesting discussions. Mr. Wade further recorded that our numbers now stood at 214.

When the Secretary concluded his remarks, the election of officers took place. Mr. V. Richards became President, Mr. F. Wade, Secretary, Mr. Jack Hall, Assistant Secretary, Mr. J. H. Atkinson, Treasurer, and Mr. A. Reay, Excursion Secretary.

Next, possible summer rambles were discussed, and from the suggestions put forward ten were selected.

The company then sat down to an excellent tea after which films illustrative of "Present-day Mechanical Mining" were shown by Mr. J. Hall. Mr. J. Evans and Mr. R. Jackson followed with coloured films of beauty spots, some local and some in Scotland. Unsuspected shots, taken of members during summer outings, caused much amusement. Other slides shown depicted birds, butterflies, fish and the like. In addition, Mr. Jackson had on view cases of Malayan butterflies and also carvings from the East.

To conclude, Mr. V. Richards thanked all who had contributed so much to make the evening such a success.

### **BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

For our meeting of December 1st we had a visit from Mr. A. T. Winder of Henley's Telegraph Co. Ltd. He gave us an extremely valuable account of the making of cables and their manipulation. The talk was rendered the more important by the illustrative material he brought. Dr. G. G. N. Philipson followed on the 15th with a fascinating description of the life history of various species of eel.

The first meeting of 1960 brought us Mr. G. Evans and his friend Mr. Bell. Between them, they kept us enthralled with coloured slides of beauty spots on the Scottish Borders and also of episodes in the life of a salmon. Next, on January 26th, Mr. Jack Thompson had on view fine slides portraying many British plants, recounting as he did so their uses and, occasionally, their abuses.

A change occurred on February 2nd, when we held, after a lapse of many years, an extremely successful Annual Dinner. This was followed by a Brains Trust and a talk dealing with local and other objects of archaeological interest. Much of the success of this function, depended upon our member Mr. E. Hall. On February 9th, many members took part in a display of lantern slides; in this Messrs E. Burns, W. Thompson, J. Thompson, T.C. Dunn,

P. Aitchison, R. Harris, T. W. Wanless and Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison participated.

February 23rd also provided a considerable departure from our usual routine for we had a visit from members of the Latter Day Saints led by Elder Hunter. They not only showed us a fine film of Utah scenery and its more striking birds, but also answered many pertinent questions put to them by their audience. March 8th brought us a visit from Mr. James Alder who gave us a wonderful lecture on the Natural History of the Dipper. This was illustrated by a fine series of coloured slides of Mr. Alder's own making. He richly deserved the vote of thanks awarded to him.

## NOTES AND RECORDS

### NOTES

**Notes on Birds.**—On October 17th, 1959, two Ruffs, on autumn passage, were seen at the Tanfield Ponds, Stanley (66); one was still present on the following day.

On October 16th, I observed a single Red-Breasted Snipe (*Limnodromus griseus*) at Killingworth Mere in S.W. Northumberland (67). It was identified by its very long straight bill, and white lower back, rump and tail, the white extending up the back in a long point. A white stripe on the rear margin of its wings was noted. Its distinct call-note was characteristic. This is the first record of this rare North American species in Northumberland or Durham although there are upwards of 40 records for Great Britain. This Northumberland example was observed by other bird watchers.

A flock of 14 Whooper Swans was seen on Killingworth Mere on November 19th, one of 13 birds on Seaton Burn ponds on November 12th, and a third of five birds on Hack Hall pond on December 30th near Dinnington Village.

Later, on January 22nd, about 45 common Pochards were noted on Seaton Burn ponds (67). On the same ponds, from October to Mid-January, a flock of Tufted Ducks, exceeding fifty in number, was present while a party of 14 birds were on Hebburn Hall (66) lakes during December.

On December 24th, a single Jack Snipe was noted at the Tanfield ponds, Stanley (66).

Finally on February 27th, a concentration of 129 Teal was discovered on the Smiddyshaw reservoir, near Waskerley (66).—R. Marston Palmer.

**The White Bryony and its Insect Visitors.**—Over a hundred and sixty years ago, a colony of the White Bryony, (*Bryonia dioica*) was discovered in hedges down Lamesley Lane in the Team Valley (66). This constituted, in all probability, the last northward station in which the plant grew wild in Britain. After many vicissitudes, occasioned by road widening and trimming operations, the plant still persists near Long Acre farm.

On August 23rd, an examination of these plants showed that both sexes were present and being freely visited by bees. Amongst the humble bees, workers of *Bombus pratorum* were by far the most plentiful although examples of *B. agrorum* and *B. terrestris* were not rare. In addition, quite a large contingent of hive bees were partaking of the feast the Bryony flowers provided.

Perhaps it should be noted here that, not far away down the lane, the Woody Nightshade, *Solanum dulcamara*, was being patronised by the same group of species.

**Abnormal Plants of the Twayblade.**—On July 3rd, in an old meadow in the Team Valley (66) I came across a specimen of the Twayblade, *Listera ovata*, bearing three leaves instead of the usual two. These were equal in size, and sprung from the same point in the stem which they sheathed. Later, in the same field, when mowing was taking place, the plant was found to be abundant.

and I collected a large number of examples, including three with an additional leaf higher up the stem than the normal pair. These extra leaves, although smaller in size than the normal set, resembled them in shape. Like them, too, they sheathed the stem. In spite of their abnormalities, these three plants were fully-flowered, healthy and strong.

Perhaps it should be remarked here that, abundant as the Twayblade was, Adder's Tongue ferns, growing in the meadow alongside the orchid, exceeded it in numbers.—C. R. Wild

**Roses flowering twice in 1959.**—Occasionally, I have observed wild roses flowering twice during the same season. Such observations were repeated in 1959. During September 1959, when wild roses were at their best for determination purposes, I spent a considerable amount of time testing the fruiting powers of their hybrids in Northumberland and Durham. In particular, on September 15th, I made a series of observations on the hybrid *Rosa villosa* x *spinosissima* growing at Blanchland (67); these simply confirmed my original views that this hybrid is completely sterile. However, not far away from the object of my studies, I discovered a dog rose, *Rosa canina* var. *biserrata*, bearing a goodly number of fully expanded flowers as well as the usual hips.

Later, on September 20th, in the company of Dr. J. K. Morton, I tested the possibilities of the rose population growing along the Middlehope Burn near Westgate (66) in Weardale. This proved to be rich, both in numbers of bushes, and of species. Again, all were in full fruit, and again I detected bushes carrying flowers as well as hips. In this case, the species involved were typical plants of *Rosa villosa* and also examples of its variety *relicta* which, unlike the typical plant, produces white flowers.—J.W.H.H.

## RECORDS

### FLOWERING PLANTS

<b>Typha latifolia</b> L.	67
Widespread; in Gosforth Park Lake, Holywell Ponds, Prestwick Carr, pool near Six Mile Bridge, Seaton Burn—C. J. Gent.	
<b>Hieracium aurantiacum</b> L.	66
On a dry bank at the base of a pit heap. High Spen.	
<b>Senecio squalidus</b> L.	66
Oxford Ragwort	
Between the rails on the waggon way. High Spen, and increasing rapidly.—J. E. Hull.	
<b>Thlaspi arvense</b> L.	66
Field Penny-cress	
On waste land north of Birtley.	
<b>Lycopsis arvensis</b> L.	66
Bugloss	
in an oatfield near Birtley.	
<b>Populus tremula</b> L.	66
Aspen	
Along the old mill race at Norton.	
<b>Apium graveolens</b> L.	66
Celery	
Amongst the few plants surviving on the site of the old Billingham Marshes was wild celery.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Dryopteris aernula</b> (Ait.) O. Kuntze.	68
Hay-scented Buckler fern	
Although stated to be extinct in Northumberland (G. W. Temperly, <i>Vasculum</i> , 1932, 18,86), this still occurs in Rugley Wood, near Alnwick.	
<b>Dryopteris spinulosa</b> (Mull.) Watt.	67
Narrow Buckler fern	
In a peat-bog by Blackaburn Lough, with <i>Andromeda polifolia</i> .	
<b>Paris quadrifolia</b> L.	67, 68
Herb Paris	
Woods on the N. bank of the S. Tyne near Allerwash House (67), woods by the Allen near Plankey (67), woods by a stream near Preston (Chathill) (68).	
<b>Lemma trisuica</b> L.	67, 68
Ivy Duckweed	
Bolam Lake (67), quarry ponds near Fleetham (Chathill) (68) and near Goldenhill (Lucker) (68). Pond at Howick (68).	

<b>Pyrola minor</b> L. Common Wintergreen	67
Woods by the Alien, near Plankey, and near old lead workings, S.W. of Acomb Fell.	
<b>Trollius europaeus</b> L. Globe Flower	67, 68
In a meadow on the W. bank of the N. Tyne, opposite Reedsmouth (67). By the Coquet, near Barrowbum (68).	
<b>Zannichellia palustris</b> L. Homed Pondweed	67, 68
In the most northerly reservoir at Whittledean (67). In the Waren Burn at Waren Mill and also near the Old Windmill (68). In the Newlands Burn to the S.W. of Bradford (68). In the Aln near Alnwick (68).	
<b>Ranunculus sardous</b> Crantz. Hairy Buttercup	68
In a field to the N. of Waren Mill.	
<b>Eleocharis multicaulis</b> (Sm.) Sm. Many-stemmed Spike-rush	68
On the shore to the N. of Waren Mill.	
<b>Eleocharis uniglumis</b> (Link) Schult.	68
Quarry pond at the Snook, S. of Seahouses.	
<b>Ranunculus lingua</b> L. Great Spearwort	67, 68
By the reservoir on the Cowey Sike, N. of Haydon Bridge (67). Pond near Wallington (67). In a small pond near the E. end of Spindlestone Crags (68).	
<b>Lathraea squamaria</b> L. Toothwort	67, 68
In the woods by the Allen near Plankey (67). Boathouse plantation, near Coldstream (68).	
<b>Euonymus europaeus</b> L. Spindle-tree	67
In a wood on the N. bank of the Tyne near Styford.	
<b>Chrysanthemum segetum</b> L. Corn Marigold	68
At Chathill Station.	
<b>Oenanthe lachenalii</b> C.C.Gmel. Parsley Water Dropwort	68
On marshy ground near the mouth of the Swinhoe Burn, S. of Seahouses. In Newham Bog.	
<b>Oenanthe fistulosa</b> L. Water Dropwort	67
Pond between Anick and Hexham.	
<b>Desmazeria riguida</b> (L.) Tutin Hard Poa	68
On old quarry heaps at the Snook, S. of Seahouses.	
<b>Biysmus rufus</b> (Huds.) Link. Narrow Biysmus	68
Near the mouth of the North Low, Goswick. On marshy ground near the mouth of the Swinhoe Burn, S. of Seahouses.	
<b>Biysmus compressus</b> (L.) Link. Broad Biysmus.	67
E. Bank of N. Tyne above Falstone. Near the junction of the Whickhope Burn with the N. Tyne. N. Tyne near Plashetts. Warks Burn at Stonehaugh.	
<b>Zostera hornemanniana</b> Tutin	68
On the shore between Budle and Waren Mill. At the mouth of the Black Low, near Fenham.	
<b>Crepis biennis</b> L. Rough Hawk's Beard	67
Roadside between Catton and Allendale Town.	
<b>Gymnadenia conopsea</b> (L.) R.Br. Fragrant Orchid	67
Old quarry by Oakeydean Burn, E. Allendale. Lime quarry above Fourstones. S. Bank of the N. Tyne, S.W. of Thorneyburn Station.	
<b>Platanthera chlorantha</b> (Cust.) Rchb. Greater Butterfly Orchid	67
Old quarry by Oakeydean Burn, E. Allendale.	
<b>Carex pendula</b> L. Pendulous Sedge,	66, 67, 68
Wooded banks of the Derwent between Rowlands Gill and Winlaton Mill (67). By the Wansbeck at Chapel Wood (67). Woods near Wallington (67). Wooded bank of the Waren Burn below the Old Windmill (68). Wooded stream entering the Coquet near Warkworth Station (68). Old quarry near Guyzance (68).	
<b>Carex extensa</b> Good. Long-bracted Sedge	68
Salt-marsh around the mouth of the Black Low, near Fenham. G. A. & M. Swan	



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## BY THE WAY

### THE UNION

Thirty years ago, when the Northern Naturalists' Union held its annual meeting at Sunderland, our then Secretary, Dr. F. C. Garrett, gave a brief account of the work and progress of the Union since its foundation. During the course of his address, he emphasized the disparity between the numbers of full members and those of associates. He also urged that the Union was destined to grow more active and useful as it grew older. This, he insisted, demanded in turn a much greater income at its disposal than previously. Such an increase could only be brought about by securing a greater number of paying members; he, therefore, appealed for a substantial number of associates to change their status by becoming full members.

Although the response to his appeal was regarded as adequate then, the Union has much greater obligations to face now. It must, therefore, have a much larger income, and, necessarily, many more full members. The cost of everything has increased enormously. In particular, the cost of our publications, cards, circulars etc., which the Union must supply, has soared to fantastic heights.

In this connection, it is useless to point to the huge numbers attending our outdoor and indoor meetings for these are composed in the main of associates who, personally, constitute no source of revenue.

If it is asked what full members gain by paying the subscription, the answer is simple. In the first place, they have helped to strengthen the Union; secondly, they are entitled to receive the *Transactions of the Northern Naturalists' Union* and the *Vasculum*; thirdly, they are qualified to serve in any capacity as officers of the Union and, lastly, they may vote at the Union's meetings. For none of these privileges are associates qualified.

We, therefore, like Dr. Garrett in 1926, invite our associates to join as full members, and hope for the same generous response as he received.

## CONCERNING CERTAIN BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

For a considerable number of years, a small group of local naturalists has been interested in certain butterflies and moths which, as far as our counties are concerned, are recognised as regular immigrants from abroad. With such visitors, this appeal is not concerned. However, there is a certain assemblage of butterflies and moths which, after having disappeared from our area, or greatly diminished in numbers therein, have regained a foothold with us. Some of these species have maintained this newly-won ground, but others have lost it. The insects concerned are the Peacock (*Nymphalis io*), the Grayling (*Satyrus semele*), the Ringlet (*Aphantopus hyperantus*), the Comma (*Polygonia c-album*), the Holly Blue, (*Celastrina argiolus*), the Dark-green Fritillary (*Argynnis aglaia*), the Large Skipper (*Ochlodes venata*) the Fivespot Burnet (*Zygaena lonicerae*) and the Forester (*Procris stacies*). Of these, the Grayling, Ringlet, the Dark-green Fritillary and the Large Skipper appear to have become permanent members of our butterfly populations whilst the Five-spot Burnet figures similarly amongst the moths; their exact ranges however, have not been determined. The other butterflies, and the Forester, seem to have vanished again.

Mr. T. C. Dunn, The Poplars, Chester-le-Street, will be glad to receive Northumberland and Durham records of any of the species listed above. Information concerning such moths as the Latticed Heath (*Chiasma clathrata*), which has increased so greatly in numbers with us recently, would also be welcome.

## THE "NORTHERN NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION"

We have received many enquiries about the relationship, if any, existing between an organization bearing the above designation, and the Union. The answer is, of course, that there is none. Moreover, it must be made perfectly clear that the Northern Naturalists' Union has no responsibility for, or connection with, the new series of reports concerning the mythical Loch Ness monster which are now being circulated. Here, too, we are entitled to ask how the name chosen for this mushroom association happens to be almost the same as that of the long-established Northern Naturalists' Union.

## REPORTS OF SOCIETIES

Our next number goes to press on October 10th, 1960. Secretaries of our Societies are reminded, therefore, that, if they wish reports of their summer activities to appear in our October issue, material should be in the Editor's hands before October 3rd, 1960. Notes and records of general interest may be sent by contributors at any time.

## THE SOCIETIES

### NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The 95th Field Meeting of the Northern Naturalists' Union was held at the Sneap on May 21st, when we had a record attendance of over a hundred, led by our President, Mr. T. C. Dunn.

The Derwent in this area, has cut deeply into the rocks, with many winding stretches, thus forming a magnificently wooded gorge of great length. The Sneap, itself, is a long, narrow, fingerlike ridge, lying just west of the Crooked Oak Farm and almost encircled by the meandering river. The difficulties of the ground and its approaches were much lessened by the maps which Mr. Bell of the Consett Naturalists' Field Club so kindly distributed.

Utilising this map, the party assembled at Castleside Church, and then proceeded through the woods. On our way, we observed 140 species of flowering plants, many of which were in full flower. Most interesting of these were the violet, primrose, garlic, enchanter's nightshade, wood forget-me-not, hybrid oxlip, sweet cicely, burnet saxifrage, melancholy thistle, tuberous-rooted bitter vetch, valerian, woodruff, wood stitchwort, marsh crepis, great burnet, black horehound, cowwheat, wood and water avens with their hybrid, mountain speedwell, vernal whitlow grass, hairy and great woodrush and the early purple orchid.

In the woods, the canopy of trees varied from point to point. The wood in which we commenced our observations was wholly coniferous, with spruce and larch predominating, although Scots pine was present. Elsewhere, the prevailing trees were oak, birch, alder, ash, beech, aspen, wych elm, and sycamore whilst the undershrubs represented were the bird cherry, hazel, holly, crab apple, sloe, guelder rose and three species of *Salix*. Well-distributed everywhere were wild roses, most of which were northern forms like *Rosa dumalis*, *R. corifolia*, *R. sherardi* and *R. villosa* (*mollis*). On all these kinds, the brilliant scarlet rose rust, *Phragmidium subcorticium*, was quite common.

As we journeyed, the entomologists worked assiduously although insects were quite scarce. However, they did obtain larvae of the usual winter moths from oak, birch and elm. On the wing, they noted the dingy skipper, the green-veined and common white butterflies, the small tortoiseshell, and the orangetip. Of greater interest was the beautiful purple and gold moth, *Pyrausta purpuralis*, which was not uncommon as it skipped over beds of thyme.

Queen bumble bees, too, were out in force, although we only observed four species *Bombus horforum*, *B. terrestris*, *B. muscorum* and *B. agrorum*. We also encountered on a sandy bank a colony of solitary bees of the genus *Andrena* with their parasitic *Normada* in attendance.

The oaks, in all the glory of their pendulous golden catkins,

were well-searched for oak galls, but all we noted were examples of the berry gall, *Spathogaster baccharum*, although we also found the damaged remains of last years marble galls, oak apples and artichoke galls.

The alders, likewise, attracted our attention as they were covered by white, waxen masses secreted by the larvae of the alder psyllids, *Psylla alni* and *P. forsteri*. Amongst the beetles, the seven-spot ladybird abounded, but the two spot was much less common. Odd tiger beetles, an oil beetle and dung beetles also appeared in our captures.

Birds were quite common, and amongst the species observed were the blackbird, thrush, tree pipit, meadow pipit, blackcap, wood warbler, willow warbler, hedge sparrow, the pied flycatcher, swallow, martin, swift, cuckoo, great spotted woodpecker, woodcock, wood pigeon, curlew, blue tit and long-tailed tit. Mr. Hird was so lucky as to find, and photograph, a nest of the last species; he also reported seeing a dead adder.

Of mammals, only the hare, rabbit and field mouse were seen. The party broke up at Dene Howle, and its members went their various ways, all agreeing that we had held one of our most interesting and productive outings.

### **BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

Our annual meeting was held on March 22nd, in the George Street Modern School. The President, in a few sentences, emphasized the flourishing state of the Society, and our Treasurer, Mr. R. Harris, gave a very satisfactory report on its finances. Following this, the election of officers took place. Except that Mr. T. W. Wanless became Secretary, the list of officers was unchanged.

Next, various exhibits were examined and discussed. Amongst these, the President and Dr. J. A. Richardson had on view twigs from many catkin-bearing trees. Messrs. R. Harris and E. Burns brought numerous fossils. Mr. Harris also showed photographs of a Red Admiral butterfly on a flower whilst Mr. Jack Thompson exhibited others depicting local orchids.

Our first outdoor meeting was held in Lumley Woods on May 29th. We observed the usual plants, birds, and insects including the yellow deadnettle. In addition, we noted the dogwood, the yellow rue (*Thalictrum flavum*) and the three ferns, harts' tongue, wall rue and black spleenwort. On June 19th, we visited the Fame Islands, where the gray seal and great assemblages of sea birds proved of special interest. A week later, on June 26th, we had a very successful day on Waldrige Fell, seeing four plants species very rarely reported in Co. Durham. Next, on July 3rd, we explored Holy Island, examining its historic treasures, and studying

its plant and animal life. We were able to add two new butterflies, the dark-green fritillary and the grayling and one plant, the sweet briar, *Rosa rubiginosa* var. *echinocarpa* to its lists.

## NOTES AND RECORDS

### NOTES

**Notes on Durham Fungi in 1959.**—The late summer and autumn of 1959 were too dry for a really good crop of fungi. Nevertheless, some interesting species were encountered. Near Shincliffe I observed the common stinkhorn (*Phallus impudicus* Pers), *Clavaria fusiformis* Sow., the brown grisette (*Amanitopsis fulva* W.C.Sm.) and *Hygrophorus virgineus* Fr. not far away, I also collected *Stropharia aeruginosa* Quel. This is one of the very few green fungi which, when young, may readily be recognised by the concentric rings round the outer edge of the cap. Also in a Shincliffe pasture, I found three specimens of *Cordyceps militaris* Fr. This bright orange-coloured, club-shaped species parasitizes moth pupae. Another attractive form, found in a ruined building near Beamish Forges, was *Crucibulum vulgare* Tul. which resembles a small bird's nest, complete with a clutch of half-a-dozen eggs; it is about half an inch in diameter. A colony was also found at Shincliffe some years ago, growing on fallen snowberry twigs. Other species examined were *Collybia velutipes* Quel. (Barnes Park, Sunderland), *Lepiota procera* Quel. (under trees near Croxdale), and *Polyporus giganteus* Fr. (on a dead tree stump, Houghall).—Jack Thompson.

**The Royal Fern, *Osmunda regalis*, in Co. Durham.** (66).—On 16th June, 1960, I was so fortunate as to find a single example of this very rare fern in a boggy wood near Chester-le-Street where it had every appearance of being truly wild. Also growing near the same place, was the narrow buckler-fern, *Dryopteris spinulosa*.—Judith Dunn. (In the case of the latter fern, this is the same locality as that given for *Dryopteris spinulosa* in the *Vasculum*, Vol. XLIII, p. 15 (1958). Ed.)

**Roses and Pitheaps.**—On many occasions I have drawn attention to the fact that the Downy Rose (*Rosa villosa*), and the Dog Rose (*R. canina* and its allies), will grow quite readily on the shale of pitheaps. However, in none of these species is any tendency displayed to form a complete cover for, in chosen habitats, the bushes are dotted about irregularly.

In view of the fact that the Field Rose has a trailing habit, it seemed likely that it would find no difficulty in building up a close cover on derelict heaps. Nevertheless, before it could be used on a large scale, its powers in this respect had to be subjected to experimental tests. In making such experiments, I was brought up against the rarity of the rose in Durham; in our county, the only certain locality supporting *R. arvensis* appears to be the wood near Shincliffe. However, the difficulty in obtaining growing material was more than compensated for by two circumstances, (1) that *R. arvensis* grows readily from cuttings, and (2) that its seeds germinate in a year less than the period required for *R. canina* and similar species.

Suitable twigs, chosen to act as cuttings, were therefore collected at Shincliffe, rooted in water and then planted out on a heap which seemed to be a "difficult" one. Now not only have the cuttings maintained themselves, but, in addition, they have flowered and fruited. Besides, the presence of many trailing shoots demonstrates conclusively that this species possesses great covering powers.

Another rose, planted on adjacent ground, was a second generation hybrid of *Rosa spinosissima* x *rubiginosa*. This has proved extremely floriferous under such conditions. Further, it, likewise, tends to clothe bare areas although at a much slower rate than *R. arvensis*. Nevertheless, for our purposes it must be rejected in favour of the pure species on account of its great sterility.—J.W.H.H.

**Bees at Sallow Catkins.**—In early May, a sharp lockout was kept for queen

humble bees at the catkins of the Creeping Willow (*Salix repens*) growing near Wreckenton (66). For a long time, the only species seen was a single specimen of *Psithymus vestalis*, a somewhat uncommon bee hereabouts, which acts as an inquiline in the nests of *Bombus hortorum* and its allies. Later, odd examples of the latter species probed catkins of both sexes alongside the hoverflies (*Eristalis intricarius* et *E. tenax*). The latter insect seemed very "hive-bee-like" in its flight. A few hivebees were likewise patronizing the same lot of catkins and the adjacent whin flowers.

Not far away, on belated catkins of *Salix atrocinnerea*, several queens of *Bombus terrestris* and *B. hortorum* were observed. In this case, the bees seemed to have a definite tendency to favour the female flowers, although this may have been due to the better condition of the latter. One queen of *B. hortorum* kept quartering over the ground of a rough pasture in such a manner as to suggest that it was searching for a nesting site. Hive bees were present at the same catkins whilst a queen of *B. terrestris* alighted upon some male catkins of *Salix caprea* I was carrying in my hands.—C.R.

**Bird Notes.**—During the last winter, a very large starling roost was established in a fifteen acre copse, consisting mainly of hawthorns, near Sherburn Village, Durham. On January 2nd, it was estimated that between a half a million and a million birds were using the roost, and birds were noted flying thither from Burnopfield, fifteen miles away. A dead bird, found in this roost on January 2nd, was carrying a ring showing that it had been ringed in the Moscow area of Russia.

A second starling roost, estimated to house forty to fifty thousand birds, exists at Consett Iron Works.

Several winter flocks of ducks came under observation. In March, there was a large concentration of the common pochard on Seaton Burn (67) ponds; this contained a peak of about 245 birds on March 22nd. This is the largest flock of the species over to be recorded from Northumberland and Durham. There were 119 tufted duck at Seaton Burn ponds on March 29th, five whooper swans on Killingworth Mere on April 7th and also a party of seven shovellers at Palmersville pond, near Forest Hall, on April 6th.—R. Marston Palmer.

**The Position of the Spurge Laurel, *Daphne Laureola*, at Wylam (67).**—In the *Vasculum*, Vol. XLIV, p.33, Mr. W. A. Wright reports that, as a result of roadwidening operations the Wylam colony of the spurge laurel is in danger of destruction. Recently, I have had an excellent opportunity for estimating the position of the plant there. Without hesitation, I can assert that many more well-grown examples can now be seen in those woods than one ever expected. In my opinion, the interference with the wood, on both sides of the road, has acted as a sort of release for the species so that much more light will reach the plants than previously. Perhaps I should add that some of the plants now accessible are exceedingly fine specimens.—T. W. Wanless.

## RECORDS

### FLOWERING PLANTS AND FERNS

<b>Rosa micrantha</b> Sm. Briar	66
Not plentiful along the Amerston Beck.	
<b>R. rubiginosa</b> var. <b>echinocarpa</b> Gren. Sweet Briar	68
On the sand dunes on Holy Island.	
<b>Thalictrum flavum</b> L. Common Meadow Rue	66
On the edge of Lumley Woods.	
<b>Viburnum lantana</b> L. Wayfaring Tree	66
In a hedge near Quarrington Hill.	
<b>Arabis hirsuta</b> (L.) Scop. Hairy Rock-cress	66
Along the Middlehope Burn near Westgate.	
<b>Phyllitis scolopendrium</b> (L.) Newm. Harts' Tongue Fern	66
A few very fine specimen in the Lumley Woods.	

<b>Lamium amplexicaule</b> L.	66
On waste ground in Lambton Park.	
<b>Stachys sylvatica</b> L.	66
This species, with the hybrid <i>S. x ambigua</i> , occurs on Waldrige Fell. The other species involved in the cross was not found.	
<b>Melandrium album x nibrum</b>	68
Although the white campion was noted at many points on Holy Island, the red campion seemed to be absent. Nevertheless, the hybrid between the two species was noted several times.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Lathraea squamaria</b> L. Toothwort	66
On wych elm along the Middlehope Burn, also on the same tree and hazel in Lumley Woods.	
<b>Stellaria palustris</b> Retz. Marsh Stitchwort	66
In some abundance in a bog near Hurworth Burn.—J.W.H.H. & T.W.W.	
<b>Dactylorhiza incarnata</b> L. Marsh Orchid	66, 68
This orchid abounds in the dune slacks on Holy Island, but only the typical form was seen. In Durham, at the Blackhall Rocks, the subsp. <i>coccinea</i> prevails although mixed with the type.	
<b>Polypodium vulgare</b> L. Common Polypody	68
On the dunes at Bamburgh, and on a wall on Holy Island.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Acaena anserinifolia</b> (J.R. and G. Forst) Druce	68
In great quantity on the sand-dunes around Goswick.	
<b>Carlina vulgaris</b> L. Carline Thistle	67, 68
Lime quarry above Fourstones (67). On the links at Bamburgh (68).	
<b>Clinopodium vulgare</b> L. Wild Basil	67, 68
On the N. bank of the S. Tyne near Allerwash House (67). On the E. bank of the N. Tyne at Wall Station (67). Near the junction of the Whickhope Burn with the N. Tyne (67). On the bank of the N. Tyne opposite Tasset (67). By the Coquet near Barrowburn (White-flowered variety) (68).	
<b>Lepidium smithii</b> Hook. Smith's Cress	68
On a dry bank near the mouth of the stream to the S. of Howick.	
<b>Geranium pyrenaicum</b> Burm.f. Mountain Cranesbill	68
Roadside near Ratcheugh.	
<b>Impatiens parviflora</b> DC. Small Balsam	67
On the Coquet gravels opposite Sharperton.	
<b>Lythrum salicaria</b> L. Purple Loosestrife	67, 68
Pond near Wallington (67). By the stream which joins the Cawledge Burn just before the latter enters the Aln (68). Pond in wood E. of Spindlestone (68).	
<b>Galium mollugo</b> L. Great Hedge Bedstraw	67, 68
On the railway at Falstone (67). In a hedgebank, W. of Pauperhaugh (68).	
<b>Carex acuta</b> L. Tufted Sedge	68
Around the mouth of the Long Nanny.	
<b>Apium graveolens</b> L. Wild Celery	68
By the Long Nanny at Tughallmill.	
<b>Catabrosa aquatica</b> L. Water Whorl-grass	68
By a small stream on Bamburgh Links. By the Newlands Burn at Belford Station. By the Fenham Burn, near Fenham Lowmoor.	
<b>Hyoscyamus niger</b> L. Henbane	68
Near the mouth of the Ross Low.	
<b>Hypericum dubium</b> Leers. Imperforate St. John's Wort.	67
On the banks of the N. Tyne opposite Tasset and also at Lewiefield Halt. G. A. & M. Swan	
<b>Smyrniolus satrum</b> L. Alexanders	66
There have been no recent records of this plant from Co. Durham. However, on April 21st, I discovered it in quantity on the slopes at the mouth of Hawthorn Dene.	
<b>Galanthus nivalis</b> L. Snowdrop	61
Naturalised in the woods along Hawthorn Dene.	
<b>Campanula rapunculoides</b> L. Creeping Campanula	66
Two large patches on the railway banks at the mouth of Hawthorn Dene.	

<b>Geranium pyrenaicum</b> Burm.	66
Several groups found not far from the preceding.	
<b>Brachypodium pinnatum</b> (L.) Beauv. False Brome	66
A considerable amount of the original Durham station for this plant has been destroyed near Merryknowie during road-widening operations. However, to compensate for this, it has been found on banks in a wood near Cornforth.	
<b>Saxifraga granulata</b> L. Meadow Saxifrage	67
In very large quantities on the crags at Colwell in the compact dwarfish form usually found on basalt ; the plant flowered very early in this station in 1959.—J.W.H.H.	

#### LEPIDOPTERA—BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

<b>Callophrys rubi</b> L. Green Hairstreak	66
Not so very long ago, this interesting butterfly was thought to be absent from Co. Durham. However, I was so fortunate as to detect a strong colony on Waldrige Fell; next it turned up at Shull, then at Ruffside and Hunstanworth. Later, I saw a single individual on railway banks near Birtley. Finally, quite unexpectedly, I discovered it in some numbers, attached as usual to bilberry, near Beamish—not four miles from this house !	
<b>Operophtera fagata</b> Scharf. Northern Winter Moth	66, 67
Wide-spread, but local in Durham and Northumberland ; noted at Birtley, Beamish, Chopwell, Hurworth, Dipton Woods, Shotley Bridge, Pigdon, Netherwitton, Staward, Newbiggin, etc.	
<b>Lithina chlorosata</b> Scop. Brown Silver Line	66, 67
Not very common but taken at Urpeth and along Hisehope Burn in Durham, and on Harnham Crags in Northumberland.—J.W.H.H.	
<b>Archicaris parthenias</b> L. Orange Underwing	66
Larvae beaten from birch at Beamish with the usual crowds of winter moths. —T. C. Dunn.	
<b>Lampropteryx suffumata</b> Schf. Water Carpet	67
This insect was recorded by Robson in his <i>List</i> as being very common ; this has never been the case in my experience. However, I took a female at Netherwitton on June 2nd.	
<b>Epirrhoe tristata</b> L. Small Argent and Sable	66, 67
Listed by Robson as locally plentiful. In my experience it tends to be western in its distribution. It occurs in the Upper Derwent Valley (66), in Dipton Woods (67), Pigdon Woods (67), on Rothbury Crags (67) and similar stations.	
<b>Xanthorhoe spadicearia</b> Schf. Red Twin-spot Carpet	62, 66, 67
This usually common carpet moth was regarded by Robson as almost nonexistent in Northumberland and Durham. I took it upon Widdybank Fell and Mr. T. C. Dunn captured it in Pigdon Woods. However, I have seen it in great numbers in Lonsdale in Cleveland.	
<b>Colotois peimaria</b> L. Feathered Thorn	67
Some years ago I reported in the <i>Transactions of the Royal Society</i> that the larvae of many of our moths were " going " melanic. On June 2nd, in the woods at Pigdon, I beat a black larva of the present species from birch ; this gives a new locality and a new species displaying this phenomenon.	

#### CECIDIA—GALLS

<b>Biorrhiza pallida</b> Oliv. Oak Apple	66
Inserted here to draw attention to the enormous number of galls occurring in May on an oak near Waldrige Fell.	
<b>Lasioptera rubi</b> Heeger	66
On brambles in Crirndon and Hawthorn Denes.	
<b>Eriophyes dolichosoma</b> Can.	66
Plentiful on <i>Geranium sanguineum</i> on the cliffs from the Blackhall Rocks to Crirndon.	
<b>E. tuberculatus</b> Nal.	66
Varying greatly in abundance from season but not rare this year on tansy growing on the old slagheap, Birtley.	



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## BY THE WAY

### LEPIDOPTEROUS IMMIGRANTS

In a normal season, we have to record the presence in our counties of many species of butterflies and moths of North African origin. These, for the most part, set out from their birthplace in spring, and reach us in May and June. This year, very few such insects have been encountered. In fact, this has been the worst season for butterfly wanderers for over fifty years. In spite of that, two species, the Red Admiral butterfly and the Silver Y moth, have occurred in the usual numbers.

It is especially important to note that there was no immigration of the Large Garden White locally. In consequence, cabbages, Brussels sprouts and their allies have been spared the usual mass attacks to which they are subjected. However, it should be pointed out that this immunity did not extend everywhere in the British Isles, for we ourselves saw an invading horde of Large Whites reach North Harris, in the Outer Hebrides, in June.

It will be helpful if our readers can add any records of other immigrants in Northumberland and Durham for 1960. By doing so, they will help materially those who compile lists of such Lepidoptera.

### THE WHITE CAMPION

On two separate occasions during the 1960 Field Meetings of the Northern Naturalists' Union we have been asked to explain the meaning of the word "campion" as applied to *Melandrium album*, *M. rubrum* and their allies. It is derived from the Latin "campus", meaning a "field", by way of a mediaeval Latin word "campio". From this simple meaning, it came to imply a battlefield, or a field or plain in which public games were held. In such encounters, the champions were crowned with chaplets of flowers; these garlands frequently contained white campions.

Once such a name was attached to the white campion, the formation of the other names like "red" campion, "bladder" campion, "corn" campion, was inevitable.

After we had been asked about the word "campion", another question was profounded: Has anyone observed the corn cockle (==corn campion) in the two counties recently? Answers to this enquiry will be very welcome!

#### THE RANGE OF EROPHILA VERNA

Concerning the Vernal Whitlow Grass, *Erophila verna* (==*Draba verna*). Baker and Tate remark "Common on walls and dry banks, ascending to the Main Limestone scars of Kilhope and Bleak Law (600 yards)." They also add that it is of "Range 1 and 2 thereby indicating that the plant grows in the lowlands. With the upward limits so given, we have no wish to cavil for we have encountered the plant on Widdy Bank Fell, in Kilhope, in Heathery Cleugh, near St. John's Chapel, high up the Middlehope Burn, along the Alien, etc. However, repeated searches for it in lower areas, both in Northumberland and Durham, have proved uniformly unsuccessful. The lowest stations in which we have detected the plant have been near Whittle Dene, along the banks of the Tyne and on adjacent areas near Wylam.

Is anyone able to report low-lying colonies? Or can they give any reason for its disappearance in such zones? It seems scarcely possible for Baker and Tate to be in error in recording the range of such a common plant.

#### OUR ROSA VILLOSA POPULATIONS

Some years ago there appeared an article in the *Vasculum* (XXIV, p.73, 1938) in which the disappearance of *Rosa villosa* (*mollis*) from many of its old habitats was deplored. At that time, the cause of this happening was thought to lie in the drastic, and often wholly unnecessary, trimming of roadsides, aided, to a certain extent in some areas, by the presence of a grossly polluted atmosphere. This state of affairs persisted for some time. Now, however, except in expanding industrial areas, our *Rosa villosa* colonies are, if anything, more prosperous than ever. The amount of blossoms, and subsequently of hips, displayed this season has been phenomenal. Not only is this so, but, in addition, some bushes have flowered twice. Furthermore, the species has manifested aggressive tendencies, and, on some pitheads and railway banksides, it has commenced to oust its commoner relations.

Another point deserving emphasis is the fact that one can realize now its wide spread of variability, both in flower colour and hip shape. The white-flowered form *van relictæ*, decked with a blotch of red on the back of one petal, has often proved dominant over fairly extensive areas. Again, elsewhere, as in Upper Weardale, its flowers have exhibited a very wide range of red coloration. This, as in certain bushes in Heathery Cleugh, has taken the form of a basal ring of red followed by a similar circle of white.

In the fruit, bushes have been observed to carry a range of fruit shapes varying from globular in the more typical forms to lagenoid (= elongate ellipsoid) in the van *lagenoides*.

Secretaries' reports intended for our December number should be in the Editor's hands before November 30th.

## THE SOCIETIES

### NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The ninety-sixth field meeting was held at Embleton and Newton on July 16th under the leadership of Mr. T. W. Wanless. Helping him were Mr. Jack Thompson, Mr. C. J. Gent and Mr. T. C. Dunn, who dealt respectively with the plants, birds and insects. Prof. Heslop Harrison kept a roving eye on various points of interest.

Some of the party set out early to explore the dunes and marshes where they saw the Burnet Rose, the Spotted Orchid, the Pyramidal Orchid, the Scarlet Geranium, Rest Harrow, Stork's Bill, Thyme, (occasionally with white flowers), the Sea Rocket, Gray Sallow, the Burnet Saxifrage, Centaury, the Sand Sedge and the true Dog Violet. Later in the day, working south of the dunes, the botanists reported taking, with common species, the English Stonecrop, the Greater Spearwort, Henbit, Field Madder, Wood Groundsel, Lyme Grass, Salad Burnet, Water Speedwell and the Sweet Briar Rose. Amongst the ferns were seen the Wall Rue, the Black Spleenwort and the Common Polypody.

Dealing with the birds, Mr. Gent pointed out that the Blackheaded Gulls had left their breeding haunts in Newton Bog although a female Shoveller, with four young, and a Coot with three, were present on the pool over which Sandmartins were hawking.

Sandwich Terns were flying to and fro over the Bay in search of sand eels. Arctic Terns, with young birds, were fairly numerous, but only one Common Tern was identified. On Emblestone Outer Carr, an Oyster Catchers' nest with one egg was noted whilst on the same rocky islet nests of the Arctic Tern, with two and three eggs respectively, were seen. It was too early for wading birds to be numerous, but two Dunlins and one Turnstone were present.

Kittiwakes were in full force on the basalt cliffs at Dunstanburgh, many of the nests containing young birds. Nearby were about a dozen Fulmars whilst a Shag was seen feeding two wellgrown young. Not far away, two Guillemots and a Puffin were diving, with a party of female Eiders to add variety.

Other birds recorded included the Wigeon, Mallard, Sheld-duck, Kestrel, Pheasant, Moorhen, Redshank, Greater Black-backed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Common Gull, Black-headed Gull, Skylark, Swallow, Song Thrush, Wheatear, Sedge-Warbler, Whitethroat, Meadow Pipit, Rock Pipit, Pied

Wagtail, Yellow Wagtail, Greenfinch, Linnet, Yellow Hammer and Reed Bunting.

A party of about ten Gray Seals was observed on rocks near the Emblestone Outer Carr.

The insects examined were not a very inspiring lot for Mr. Dunn and his helpers recorded only the following; the Meadow Brown Butterfly, the Common Blue, the Large White, the Yellow Underwing, the Least Minor, the Common Carpet, the Twin-spot Carpet, the Cinnabar (as larvae on ragwort) the Drinker (eggs on marram grass), the Six-spotted Burnet and the Five-spotted Burnet, the last named for the first time in Northumberland.

Whilst the dune insects were being examined some attention was paid to the mollusca. These comprised, for the most part, numerous *Helix nemoralis*, found at "thrush" stones although *H. aspersa* *H. caperata* and *H. itala* were collected occasionally.

The outing closed with an inspection of Dunstanburgh Castle which had to be abandoned when heavy rain fell.

For its ninety-seventh outing the Union broke entirely new ground when we visited the Slit Wood near Westgate-in-Weardale. This beautiful wood lies along a very picturesque gorge in the lower portions of the Middlehope Burn; through it the stream runs sometimes over waterfalls and at other points more placidly. The party, led by Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison, included large contingents of members from Annfield Plain, Consett, Birtley and Chester-le-Street. As it ascended the woodland path, it was clear that the natural vegetation was that proper to an upland wood flourishing on limestone.

The chief trees were Rowan, Birch, Ash, Wych Elm, the Goat Willow and Alder. With these flourished as undershrubs, Sloe, Holly, Hazel, Bird Cherry, Hawthorn, Crab Apple, Guelder Rose and at least five species of willow. Of the latter, two, the Tealeaved Willow and the Dusky Sallow, are typical of subalpine conditions, and, normally, do not descend to lower-lying districts. Wild roses were abundant, and included the two northern downy roses, *Rosa villosa* and *R. sherardi*, and the two northern dog roses, *R. dumalis* and *R. coriifolia*, with *R. obtusifolia*. The usual English dog roses were almost absent.

Those keen to study the prevalent wild flowers saw many rarities, both of northern and southern predilections. In all, over 165 species were listed. These, with others, included the Mountain Pansy, Marjoram, the Beautiful St. John's Wort, the Imperforate St. John's Wort the Marsh Crepis, the Early Purple orchid, the Tuberos-rooted Bitter Vetch, the Shining Crane's Bill, the Wood Crane's-bill, the Rue-leaved Saxifrage, the Golden Saxifrage, the Greater Woodrush, Butterwort, Burnet Saxifrage, Marsh Arrowgrass, Melancholy Thistle, Giant Bellflower, Hairy Rock-Cress,

Knotted Pearlwort, Vernal Sandwort, Hoary Plantain, Whitlow Grass, Melic Grass, Giant Fescue, False Brome Grass. Of the ferns and fern allies, the wood contained the Common and Wood Horsetails, the Lady Fern, the Male Fern, the Bladder Fern, the Hard Fern and the Common Polypody.

Amongst these, we were especially interested to see that the Vernal Sandwort was confined to "deadheaps" from abandoned lead mines.

Insects proved to be very scarce, no doubt as a result of the recent bad weather. We only saw a few species of mayflies and caddisflies. Beating shrubs for moth larvae was very unprofitable, for only the Scalloped Hazel, Coxcomb Prominent, the Ruddy High-flier, the White Wave and the Small Ermine appeared on the tray. On the wing, we saw hosts of all three species of white butterfly although the Green-veined White interested us most as it was busily engaged in oviposition on the Water Cress. In addition, odd examples of the Chevron, Heath Autumnal, the Marbled Carpet and the Twin-spot Carpet were seen on the wing.

Humble bees were somewhat scarce although a newcomer in the form of *Bombus soroensis* was encountered. For the first time for many years, some of the workers paid attention to galls, their bag including *Rhodites rosae* and *R. eglanteriae* on rose, *Pontania pedunculi* on sallow and many mite galls on Hawthorn, Sloe, Bird Cherry, Sallow and Sycamore.

Birds observed were quite disappointing although we did see immense numbers of martins, sand martins and swallows massing together for migration. Most of the common birds came under our notice, but we failed to see the dipper which nests here.

When we finally emerged from the gorge, we found ourselves on the moorlands upon which we saw the usual plants like Heather, Bilberry, Milkwort, Tormentil, Heath Bedstraw, Lousewort with grasses like the Matgrass, Purple Moor grass, Sheep's Fescue. Here, quite unexpectedly, we found plantations, doing reasonably well, containing such trees as Scots Pine, Larch and Sycamore; with them were odd examples of the Primrose, apparently lacking in the Slit Wood.

Retracing our steps, we passed much the same plants as seen on the outward journey. One noteworthy addition, however, was made to our lists; this was the very beautiful Grass of Parnassus. Similarly, we found numerous frog tadpoles in the swift-flowing burn; how they maintained themselves there we could not determine.

The day closed, as it began, in brilliant sunshine, and opinions were passed that the outing was one of the most successful we have ever had.

#### BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

In order to suit as many of our members as possible, we determined,

firstly to make two long excursions to the Fame Isles and Holy Island, and secondly to arrange a series of outings to work wooded localities as close to Birtley as possible.

On May 29th, we visited Lumley Woods where we were pleased not only to see once again the Yellow Deadnettle, but also to find there the Meadow Rue, the Dogwood, the Adder's Tongue Fern, the Harts' Tongue Fern and the Black Spleenwort. A week later, we journeyed to the Fame Islands where we saw the usual Terns, Shags, Cormorants, Puffins, Eider Ducks, Kittiwakes, Oyster Catchers and Gulls of various species as well as two lots of Gray Seals. On June 26th, the bogs on Waldrige Fell were examined when we saw the Royal Fern, the Narrow Buckler Fern, *Carex laevigata*, *C. paniculata*, the Dusky Sallow, *Scirpus sylvaticus* and commoner things. Rain marred our walk along the Cong Burn on July 10th; still we found a badger's set, and a few flowering plants like the Greater Skullcap and the Panicked Sedge.

On our excursion to Holy Island, we included in our work an examination of the Bamburgh sand dunes. We admired all the usual plants and insects usually occurring there, but were especially pleased with the numbers of Ringlet Butterflies flitting about. On Holy Island itself, we had good luck in detecting the Dark Green Fritillary Butterfly in a dune slack full of orchids, *Orchis incamata* and *O. purpurella* being exceptionally plentiful. We also admired the Small Centaury, the Viper's Bugloss, and Knotted Pearlwort with which they were intermingled. Of great interest here, too, was the presence of the Sweetbriar. Sept. 18th saw us in Beamish Woods where we secured all the usual plants and insects, with odd rarities like the Broad-leaved Helleborine Orchid, the Climbing Fumitory, Sweet Cicely, the Wood Stitchwort, and Enchanter's Nightshade, with many northern rose species. On this occasion, we noted many plant galls, including the rare *Oligotrophus lemeei* on Wych Elm. Finally, on October 2nd, we walked through Urpeth Woods, finding the November Moth, the Pinkbarred Sallow and the little moth, *Depressaria nervosa*, attached to *Oenanthe crocata*. Two plants, especially noteworthy, were the Willow-leaved Poplar, *Populus angustifolia* and Gipsywort, *Lycopus europaeus*, overlooked for a very long time.

The same galls turned up as at Beamish, but, in addition, we detected pineapple galls on the Common and Blue Spruces, and *Pontania bridgmani* on *Salix atrocinerea*. Perhaps to close, it should be stated that, on all our home expeditions, we found the Red Admiral Butterfly and the Silver Y moth.

#### NOTES

**Birds on Brasside Ponds (66).**—A pair of Great Crested Grebes nested on these ponds in 1960, and they were seen with a brood of two young on July 23rd. On the same date, three pairs of Common Pochards, with broods of eight, four and two young, respectively, were also present on the ponds. Also observed at

the same time and place, were about twenty adults and four broods, with a total of 19 ducklings, of the Tufted Duck. Unusual at that time of year were two Goldeneye, likewise at Brasside. Another interesting bird, the Heron, was watched fishing on the same sheet of water.—R. Marston Palmer.

**Miscellaneous Bird Notes.**—A pair of Pied Flycatchers was noted on July 2nd in a wood near Tunstall Reservoir (66). Not far away in the same vicinity four pairs of Redstarts were seen. On April 9th a single House-Martin was observed travelling north along cliffs north of Hartley (67). On the same date, likewise, a single Sand-Martin was seen following the cliff edge north of Hartley.

Observations made on the Lapwing in connection with the B.T.O. Habitat Enquiry suggest that, whilst this species is still plentiful as a breeding species in the hill country, its numbers have decreased in the lowland areas of Northumberland and Durham (66, 67, 68).—C. J. Gent.

**Siskins in Beamish Woods** (66).—On September 18th, whilst our Society was exploring the woods near the old Middle Forge on the Team, we had the good fortune of being able to examine a comparatively large flock of Siskins—a bird many of our party had never seen previously.—(Miss) H. Johnson and R. Harris.

**Along the Euden Beck** (66).—This stream, which flows into the Bedburn Beck through a picturesque valley recently planted with conifers by the Forestry Commission, has now lost much of its moorland character. In the meadows where the two burns meet immense groups of the Marsh Thistle came in for special attention as white and intermediate forms predominated. Here, too, the Cudweed and the Greater Bird's Foot Trefoil were plentiful. Amongst the trees and shrubs encountered were the Aspen, Rowan, Birch, Alder, Barberry, Gelder Rose, Tea-leaved Willow (with hybrids between it and *Salix aurita* and *S. atrocinerea*), outstanding amongst the herbs were the Columbine, the Tuberous-rooted Bittervetch, the Bog Pimpernel, the Wall Lettuce, Trailing St. John's Wort, the Yellow Loosestrife and enormous masses of the Spotted Orchid.

At one point we found, and admired, a very fine large female adder, newly sloughed, with its old skin stretched on a nearby rock. The snake's colour and pattern stood out resplendent in the sunshine. After watching us for some moments, it glided away into the long herbage.

On our return journey, the usual plants were noted with the addition of the two sedges, *Carex echinata* and *C. pallescens*, and the Club Moss, *Lycopodium selago*. The masses of Blue Moor grass and the Giant Horsetail flourishing not far away were very impressive. In the woodland near the Bedburn, we found the Black Spleenwort and the Wall Rue ferns, both now tending to vanish for Durham. Here also we found the Viper's Bugloss, rarely met with at such an elevation, the genuine Monkey Musk (*Mimulus moschatus*), the Monkey Flower (*M. guttatus*), and the Broad-leaved Helleborine orchid. Our last find, an important one, was the Mountain Melick (*Melica nutans*)—a striking grass not found in Cheviotland (68) and of very sparse occurrence in Durham (66).—T. W. Wanless.

**A Recent Find of *Silene Noctiflora* in Durham.**—On my return from my holiday a fortnight ago, I found a plant of this species growing with other casuals, near my doorstep at Durham.—Mrs. J. O. Cobham.

(This is the first representative of the species that has been reported from our area in recent times. Baker and Tate, in their *Flora* (1868), stated that, when they wrote, the plant was not unfrequent as a weed of cultivated fields, and supply a lengthy list of stations in which it had been found. We, ourselves, last saw it growing in a cornfield between Birtley and Chester-le-Street about 45 years ago. The history of the Corn Cockle (*Agrostemma githago*) is very similar. Fifty years ago, it was common enough amongst corn: now it has vanished.—J.W.H.H.

**The Flowers of the Black Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*)**—Concerning the flowers of the Black Knapweed Baker and Tate remark in their *Flora* that the radiate

form is frequent in the upper part of Teesdale and Weardale. In this variety, the marginal florets are enlarged and sterile. Recently, whilst exploring the area near East Buttsfield (66) Mr. T. W. Wanless and I discovered that this form was dominant in the Buttsfield Quarry, and occurred in a very large number of individuals. It must not be supposed that this interesting variant is confined to our western areas for there used to be a strong colony on the north side of the Long Bank between Birtley and Wreckenton. Perhaps it should be added that in the possession of this radiate variety the the Black Knapweed falls into line with the allied species of the genus.

**The Willow Scale Insect, *Chionaspis salicis* L.**—On September 13th, a considerable amount of time was spent in the Satley area (66) in studying gall insects of various groups when, naturally, the coccids, or scale insects, also received attention. The most prevalent of these proved to be the willow scale, *Chionaspis salicis* L. Despite its specific name, the insect is much more general in its choice of foodplants than to restrict itself to *Salix* species, for we found it doing great damage to young ashes, and also extending its selection to alder.

However, a very curious observation was made in respect to its preferences amongst the Salices of the Capreae group. In one lane, in which *Salix aurita*, *S. atrocineria* and *S. caprea* grew closely intermingled, the last-named two species were completely neglected whilst every representative of *S. aurita* was very seriously damaged. In many instances the damage was so great that the trees were dead, or dying.

About 200 yards away, examples of *Salix caprea*, damaged to an extent equalling the worst cases in *S. aurita*, were not uncommon. Moreover, in the same vicinity, ashes equally badly damaged were observed. In all the stations examined, the attacks of the insect on *Salix atrocineria* could only be regarded as relatively trivial.

**The Small Wainscot Moth (*Arenostola pygmaea* Haw.) in Northumberland and Durham.**—Robson, in his *Catalogue*, describes this species as occurring in most places where there is rough ground and plenty of Carices and grasses. Further, he adds a remark about it being very found of damp places. In spite of these statements, his list of habitats for much of Co. Durham is quite insignificant. Amongst the localities for which no habitats have been recorded are many areas in North West Durham. Nevertheless, late in September, we found the insect quite plentiful on a stretch of damp ground on the roadside not far from Burnhill where it was flying in bright sunshine in the middle of the afternoon. This is quite contrary to Robson's finding that it does not appear generally until early dusk although he does quote Maling's pronouncement that he had seen it flying by day at Sweethope (67).

In the Burnhill district, the range of variation of the species is quite great, several reddish and yellowish forms being captured. Another interesting variety seen was var. *neurica* St. In this variety the wings are brownish-red with a row of small dusky dots beyond the middle of the wing. The apical veins are slightly brown and the hindwings ashen.—J.W.H.H.

**A search for a Lost Plant.**—The Gipsy Wort (*Lycopus europaeus*) has always been regarded as rare in our counties, and Winch, in his *Flora of Northumberland and Durham*, (1838) stated that it occurred in Durham only on the banks of the Team, near Urpeth Mill, Team Bridge and Lamesley. These remained the only records for the county for a very long time. In fact, the plant was lost sight of until 1918 when it was rediscovered in Urpeth Wood not far from the Keeper's Cottage. However, almost immediately, it was lost again, and many close searches for it proved fruitless. An organised search for it was made therefore in the woods for October 2nd This, fortunately, proved successful for I detected a fairly strong colony flourishing in the wood to the east of the original locality. Perhaps, after this discovery, the plant will turn up in other localities elsewhere in the county, and also along the Team.—Jack Thompson.



# THE VASCULUM

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## BY THE WAY

### THE WALLIS CLUB

Recently, we have had several requests for information about the Wallis Club—an organisation which did so much for local Natural History in the period 1922-39. This club originated in a meeting, held in Armstrong College in April 1922, at which it was decided to found a "Northern Entomologists' Club". Subsequently successful field excursions were arranged at once, and, later, a series of indoor meetings.

However, definite action in establishing such a club was postponed until later in 1922. The outcome of this delay was the discovery that the proposals had attracted attention from naturalists other than entomologists. Thus, when the Club finally took shape in October 1922, it was named the "Wallis Club" in honour of the Rev. John Wallis, A.M., the first great Northumbrian naturalist whose work covered the whole field of Natural History. Its first President was Dr. W. J. Fordham, the well-known coleopterist.

From the very beginning, its declared aims were: (1) to bring workers in different fields into closer contact and (2) to stimulate interest in field work generally.

At first, the Club's evening meetings were held in Armstrong College, and, occasionally, by the kind invitation of the Natural History Society of Northumberland and Durham, in the Hancock Museum. Nevertheless, in the end, for "social" reasons, the Wallis Club took rooms of its own in Ellison Place. It is worthy of note that, throughout the years of its existence, its field meetings were open to, and often held jointly with, members of the Natural History Society.

Almost immediately after its inception, the Club began to grow in importance with the result that, by the direct action of its officers, the Northern Naturalists' Union came into being in 1924. This proved a very fortunate happening for the outbreak of war in 1939, with "black-out" and other restrictions, deprived the Club of its rooms and compelled it to suspend its activities; these have never

been resumed. The Union, unaffected by the absence of a home has maintained intact the principles for which the Wallis Club was founded.

#### BLACK LARVAE OF THE CURRANT MOTH

In many gardens in North Durham and South Northumberland, currant and gooseberry bushes are stripped regularly by caterpillars of the Currant Moth (*Abraxas grossulariata*). For the most part, these larvae are gaudy creatures decked as they are in black, ochre and red. However, in many localities, Currant Moth populations include fairly large percentages of larvae wholly or partially black. The cause of this type of variation has never been ascertained nor has its range in our two counties. It is now proposed to collect information about this latter point in order to determine, if possible, the cause or causes of the appearance of this strange colouration, and to find out whether any correlation exists between the occurrence of abnormal larvae and the prevailing local conditions. It will, perhaps, be of interest to mention that the first references to these melanic caterpillars date back to the early 1880's. Any readers wishful to help should write to Mr. T. C. Dunn, The Poplars, Chester-le-Street.

#### DRAWINGS OF BRITISH PLANTS

We have just received Part XV of the "Drawings of British Plants" by Stella Ross-Craig, published by George Bell and Sons, Ltd. These include the first section of the Compositae. They are quite up to the usual standard one expects to be reached in this publication. In our opinion, they are by far the best now available to British botanists both in beauty and general accuracy. We can, therefore, with safety recommend them to our readers.

#### OBITUARY NOTICE

REV. JOHN EDWARD HULL (1863-1960)

On October 22nd, 1960, the Rev. Dr. J. E. Hull passed away at the age of 97 in his home at High Spen.

Dr. Hull's life was quite a varied one for he commenced his life's work as a pupil teacher at Perkinsville School from which he proceeded to St. Bede's Training College, Durham. Thence he went as a student to Hatfield Hall, University of Durham, where he obtained his B.A. degree in 1888, and, later, his M.A., taking Holy Orders a little while later.

His first important post was that of Vice-Principal at Bede College where he himself had been trained. Next, he held curacies at South Shields, Bedlington and Haltwhistle. From the latter port he was appointed Vicar of Ninebanks in 1905 which he left when

he was appointed to a similar post at Belford. He resigned the latter appointment in 1944.

Throughout his long life, Dr. Hull was an enthusiastic field naturalist, his first love being the flowering plants. However, no doubt influenced by the famous arachnologist, Rev. O. Pickard-Cambridge, who worked at our local spiders, he transferred his energies to that group. His success was startling, for he discovered many species new to science, and others novel to the British list. As a result of his investigations, at one time our local spider lists were amongst the most extensive in the British Isles. In dealing with his chosen field, much of his success depended upon his keenness and his introduction of new techniques, with his ability as a field worker to crown all.

When the possibility of making new discoveries amongst the spiders progressively lessened. Dr. Hull turned his attention to the mites. Here, again, his work had rich rewards as a glance at lists of British mites will reveal.

His greatest prize in life, upon which he loved to dwell, was the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science conferred upon him in 1933 by the University in recognition of the importance of his arachnological researches.

Dr. Hull had other interests which he took up as a kind of relaxation; these were studies in the Tyneside dialect and local place names.

Many useful papers from his pen dealing with these topics are to be found in the *Vasculum* of which he was Editor from 1916-40. Of this periodical Dr. Hull was one of the founders, the other three being Dr. R. S. Bagnall, George Bolam and Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison.

## THE SOCIETIES

### NORTHERN NATURALISTS' UNION

The Autumn Meeting of the Union was held in the Science Buildings of the University of Durham on Saturday, October 29th, 1960. The President, Mr. T. C. Dunn, B.Sc., was in the Chair whilst we were so fortunate as to have Professor J. B. Cragg as our lecturer. For his topic he took "Biologists in the Antarctic". His lecture was copiously illustrated by films and slides.

Prof. Cragg began by describing the Falkland Islands. He told us how the scene was dominated by treeless moorland. The plant species were characteristically southern, and included such species as the grass, *Cortaderia*, and the red-fruited crowberry. The giant tussock grass, *Poa flabellata*, has almost disappeared from the major island owing to the effects of sheep-grazing; it still remains impressive an spectacle in the smaller isles. Its fate points unmistakably to the disappearance of the native flora, and its replacement by man-brought introductions.

Amongst the birds, seen and photographed on the Falkland Islands, were the rock-hopper penguin, the kingshag, the kelp goose and the sheathbill, the last named being the only bird without webbed feet that has managed to invade the Antarctic continent.

Turning to conditions in South Georgia, Professor Cragg stated that it possessed huge colonies of seabirds but only two land species, the South Georgian teal and the South Georgian pipit, both related to South American forms. In this area, too, the lesser islands carry great groups of albatrosses, the chicks of which are fed by their parents throughout the long Antarctic winter.

He next gave an account of the mammals of South Georgia, and emphasized that they occurred in numbers, South Georgia being the centre of the whaling industry whilst both the elephant seal and the fur seal are to be found there in increasing numbers.

Concerning the South Orkneys, our lecturer told us that they only supported two species of flowering plants, one of which is the grass *Deschampsia antarctica*; on the other hand, mosses and lichens may be found in relative abundance.

Of the birds, penguins are plentiful whilst other birds noted there were the adelic, the chinstrap and the giant petrel. Of the last, some were ringed in 1946 as chicks, one turning up nine weeks later in Australia, 10,000 miles away.

The lecture closed with a vote of thanks, moved by Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison. to Professor Cragg for an excellent and exceedingly instructive talk.

After tea, members inspected a useful array of exhibits, which were very varied in scope. They include postage stamps depicting plant species brought by Mrs. Gibby, local plants of considerable interest by Mr. L. P. Hird, transparencies figuring rare plants by Dr. A. Todd, microlepidoptera from Waldridge Fell by Mr. Dunn, life histories of marsh orchids by Mr. M. S. Harvey, specimens of the Alpine foxtail grass from various stations by Mr. A. R. Radcliffe and Mr. A. Eddy, lycopods from Newfoundland and a long range of *Dryas octopetala* forms by Mr. T. T. Elkington, *Viola rupestris* by Professor D. H. Valentine, lichens by Mr. R. Lofthouse, and immigrant lepidoptera. Northern Carder Bees and the ivy broomrape by Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison.

#### BIRTLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

For our last field meeting of the season, we investigated the oakbirch wood near the Riding Farm, Urpeth. Very early it was obvious that the vegetation, in general aspect, approximated that of the wood north of the old Oil Mill. We did, however, see several additional species of moths; the Streak, the Autumnal and the November Moth. Of the plants, novelties occurring in the wood were the Holly, the Broadleaved Helleborine Orchid, the Climbing Fumitory,

the Millet Grass, the Common Valerian, and the Oakleaved Honeysuckle whilst of the birds, the jay and heron were new to our list.

In the stubble of an adjoining field we collected the Bugloss, the Field Madder, the Field Pansy, Parsley Piert and the Scarlet Pimpernel. On bankside between the field and the path, we detected the Creeping Tormentil, the Wood Groundsel, the Heath Bedstraw and the Woodsage.

Our indoor meetings commenced on September 20th when Professor Heslop-Harrison gave a talk on "Butterflies and Moths". Mr. T. W. Wanless followed on October 4th with a very interesting account, illustrated by lantern slides, of his holiday in the Bernese Oberland. Next, we had a very fine lecture on October 18th on Durham Cathedral by an old friend. As we had been promised a year ago, on November 1st we had three travel films provided by the Northern General Transport Co. Ltd., one depicting the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, the second dealing with Central Europe and the other with the Isle of Man. Once again, on November 13th, Dr. A. Todd gave an excellent account of "Wild Plants at Home" illustrated by slides in colour of his own making.

#### CONSETT AND DISTRICT NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB

On Wednesday, November 30th, 1960, the Annual Dinner of the Field Club was held in the Trades' Union Memorial Hall, Consett, when nearly 80 members were present.

The President, Mr. H. H. Lynn, was in the Chair and, after dinner, he proposed the toast of the Queen. Then Mr. F. Hattersley, in a witty, very appropriate speech, performed the same duty in respect to our guest, Professor J. W. Heslop Harrison. To this, Professor Heslop Harrison replied, pointing out that his happy connection with the Club dated from 1922, when the Northern Naturalists' Union was founded. He emphasized the part it had played in the development the Union and of natural history generally in the two counties. Further, he congratulated members on the spirit of goodwill that prevailed amongst them, and thanked them for their kindly feelings towards himself.

Mr. Pickering introduced the toast of "The Club" making references by name to members who had worked, and were working, so hard to secure the Clubs' success. To this the President, Mr. H. H. Lynn, made a suitable reply. A special vote of thanks was awarded to Mrs. Dixon for all the work she had done on organizing the Dinner and otherwise.

The evening closed with a display of Lantern slides by Mr. J. W. Horn illustrating various points of interest seen on the Club's outings, and a fine series, shown by Mr. J. F. Ashworth, made on the occasion of his and Mrs. Ashworth's holiday in Andorra and on the Costa Brava.

## NOTES AND RECORDS

### NOTES

**Autumn Bird Migration in 1960.**—On August 13th, about 20 Swifts were seen circling their breeding sites at Gosforth (67); by the 17th their numbers had fallen to 4, the last date any were observed. Meadow Piptits were more numerous than usual on September 11th in the Fawdon-Brunton area suggesting that some movement was about to take place. Two were noticed flying west near West Brunton, and at 8 a.m. on September 22nd, two passed over Gosforth. On October 1st, a Housemartin and a Greenshank were observed at Ellington, and a female Redstart and a female Wheatear at Cresswell (68). A Swallow flew over at Gosforth on October 8th whilst, on the 16th, a Whooper Swan came in from the west. At night, in slight mist, the call of a Redwing was heard. At 8 a.m., on October 26th, a mixed flock of about 150 Redwings and Fieldfares flew over Gosforth travelling south.—C. J. Gent.

**The Migration of Waders in 1960.**—A single Ruff on spring passage was seen on April 8th, and another on August 28th, at the Tanfield ponds. From September 18th to September 26th, many Ruffs were present each day, with a maximum on September 19th.

On September 20th and 21st, three Little Stints were at Seaton Burn (67); on August 28th two were at the Tanfield Ponds (66), two at the same point on September 18th and four on September 19th.

Of the Curlew Sandpiper, two were seen at Tanfield on August 31st, September 1st and September 18th and four on September 19th.

A single Wood Sandpiper occurred at the Greencroft ponds, Annfield Plain (66) on July 14th.

From July 29th to August 3rd, two Green Sandpipers were seen at the Tanfield ponds, and a similar number were at Greencroft ponds from July 9th to 14th.

A single Ringed Plover, on spring passage, was noted at Seaton Burn (67) ponds on May 3rd.

Of the Turnstone, a single bird occurred inland at Tanfield, 13 miles from the coast.

In the same vicinity, from July 13th—29th, five Dunlin were observed.

From July 7th to August 31st, the Common Sandpiper was frequently present at Tanfield.

Finally, I saw a single Black Tern at Seaton Bum Ponds on September 20th. —R. Marston Palmer.

**Two Interesting and Unusual Fungi.**—Whilst on an outing with the Birtley Natural History Society in the Beamish Forge area (66), I found the Bird's Nest Fungus (*Crucibulum vulgare* Tul.) growing on rotting timber. This species, about a quarter inch in diameter, bears a close resemblance to a minute bird's nest, complete with a clutch of about 5 eggs. The same fungus was noticed at Shincliffe (66) growing on fallen twigs of Snowberry.

In late October, a friend and I were in the Oxclose area near Fatfield (66) where we detected a close relative of the above, *Cyathus striatus*. Although this also is called a Bird's Nest Fungus, it would be better described by its Latin name which means a Wine glass, although it has several "eggs" in the bottom. Both of these plants should prove to be common enough if looked for systematically.—J. Thompson.

**The Range of the Vernal Whitlow Grass (*Erophila Verna*).**—This plant grows extensively on Holy Island (68). It occurs on the Heugh which is 50ft. high, and also on the north east shore about 10ft. above high-tide mark. In the early spring, in this area, it is very obvious as it gives a white colour to the sward. —Weldon Watts.

**Does the Soft Crepis (*Crepis Mollis* Ascher.) occur in Upper Weardale?**— This plant is recorded by Baker and Tate as being common around Stanhope and St. John's Chapel. Careful search in the localities mentioned by Baker and Tate, and in other suitable places in Upper Weardale, has failed to reveal it although *Crepis paludosa* is abundant. Furthur, I have been unable to trace

herbarium material from north eastern herbaria in the national collections a Kew and in the British Museum. Have any of our readers seen this plant in Weardale, or do they know of the existence of any Weardale specimens? The plant has been found in Upper Teesdale and in several Northumberland localities, but I have not seen, or heard of, any recent collections. Again, any information which our readers may have would be most welcome in determining the present status of the species in our counties.—J. K. Morton.

In 1959 and 1960, Mr. T. W. Wanless made a close examination of likely places in the same general area with the hope of finding this plant. His efforts, like those of Dr. Morton, proved fruitless.—J.W.H.H.

**The Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris* L.) in Northumberland and Durham.**—Whilst I was exploring the Ridley Woods near Bardon Mill (67) on June 11th, I disturbed an adult squirrel from a drey twelve feet up in a hazel. Later, on July 2nd another was seen in a Scots fir beside Tunstall Reservoir (66) C. J. Gent.

**Water Plants in a Pond near Evenwoodgate (66).**—As we were returning from a botanizing excursion into West Durham, we were attracted to a large expanse of water near Evenwoodgate. Our visit was not unprofitable, for we discovered the Fennel-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton pectinatus*) and the Lesser Pondweed (*P. pusillus*), of which few stations are known in Durham. The Common Floating Pondweed (*P. natans*) was also present. Other plants observed in considerable numbers included the Marsh Marigold, Water Plantain, Brooklime, Water Horsetail (*Equisetum limosum*), the Lesser Duckweed, the Water Crowfoot (*Ranunculus trichophyllus*) and the Amphibious Bistort. Along the margin the Forget-me-not (*Myosotis caespitosa*), the Fox Sedge (*Carex otrubae*), and the Lesser Spearwort were scattered irregularly.

There is a considerable amount of tipping taking place into this stretch of water, and this means the eventual disappearance of the pond, and the loss of a station for two of our more local Potamogetons.—T. W. Wanless.

**A New Melanic Moth bred in Co. Durham.**—As is well known to local entomologists, many of the moths occurring in the Team Valley (66) have "gone" melanic. In other words, in colouration they have assumed a black, or blackish, garb. The first species to display this tendency locally was the Peppered Moth of which black forms were first captured in the 1880's. Now a new melanic variety has appeared in the form of a coal-black wingless female of the Common Winter Moth (*Cheimatobia brunata*), bred from larvae feeding on hawthorn on an old pit heap at Birtley.

This species, is, of course, very plentiful, with its larvae feeding upon almost tree or shrub. Up to the present, it has displayed but few signs of variation although brownish forms of the male, assignable to *myricaria* Cooke, have been obtained from birch and heather on Prestwick Carr.—J.W.H.H.

**Another Locality for the Gypsy Wort (66).**—In the October issue of this publication, I reported the rediscovery of the Gypsy Wort, (*Lycopus europaeus*), in Urpeth Woods. Another new station for this plant may now be recorded for Co. Durham. Whilst working a swamp near Brasside, I located several well established patches, each covering more than a square yard. Other plants flourishing in the same area included the Giant Dock (*Rumex hydrolapatium*) and the Marsh Speedwell (*Veronica scutellata*).—J. Thompson.

**Still Another Station for the Gypsy Wort (66).**—With reference to Mr. Thompson's note in the October issue of the *Vasculum* concerning this species in Co. Durham, I can record its occurrence in some quantity not far from the railway station at Swalwell (66).—L. P. Hird.

**Galingale (*Cyperus longus*) in Northumberland.**—On a short visit to Otterburn Hall (68), I took the opportunity to examine the somewhat overgrown pond in the grounds. There I found a colony of Galingale (*Cyperus longus*) J. Thompson

## RECORDS

### LEPIDOPTERA — BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

**Argynnis aglaia** L. Dark Green Fritillary

This butterfly, which has been recolonizing many localities in Northumberland and Durham, is now reported as occurring on the sand dunes on Holy Island.

68

<b>Nymphalis io</b> L. The Peacock .	66
This fine insect has once more put in an appearance in Co. Durham as a batch of larvae was found in a hedge south of Hawthorn Dene.	
<b>Aphantopus hyperantus</b> L. Ringlet .	68
This butterfly still maintains its position on the sand dunes just north of Bamburgh Castle.	
<b>Zygaena lonicerae</b> Esp. Five-spot Burnet	66, 68
The Five-spot Burnet was excessively abundant last season in all its known stations in Durham, especially on the area south of the mouth of Hawthorn Dene. At last, after many searches, the species has been turned up in Northumberland where it was found in relatively small numbers. It should be noted that this discovery was made at Embleton which is in v.-c. 68. No records exist yet for v.-c. 67. In view of the occurrence at Embleton, the Burnet is bound to exist in the intervening area.	
<b>Sterrhia fuscovenosa</b> Goeze Dwarf Cream Wave	66
This wave is not recorded for areas north of Yorkshire by Meyrick. Nevertheless, Robson listed it for several stations in Durham, and one in Northumberland. This season it turned up in prodigious numbers on the railway bank side south of Hawthorn Dene. The Five-spot and the Six-spot Burnet occurred with it.	
<b>Hydriomena ruberata</b> Frey. Ruddy High Flier	66
Quite rare, but to be found as larva amongst Sallows along the Middlehope Burn.	
<b>Colostyia olivata</b> Schf. Beech-Green Carpet	66
Not very plentiful anywhere in the two counties, but now recorded as coming freely to light near Westgate, Weardale.	
<b>Oporinia filigrammaria</b> H.-S. Small Autumnal	66
Not at all common near Westgate, and now extinct in its locality on the Black Fell, Birtley.	
<b>Citria lutea</b> Strom. Pink-barred Sallow	66
The spotless form was found on sallow along the Wear at Wolsingham, and the type insect at Birtley and on the Bollihope Burn.	
<b>Perizoma alchemillata</b> L. Small Rivulet	66
Larvae on <i>Galeopsis</i> along the Team.—J.W.H.H.	

#### FERNS AND FLOWERING PLANTS

<b>Rosa rubiginosa</b> L. Sweet Briar	68
The form <i>echinocarpa</i> was found in hedges near Embleton and on the sand dunes on Holy Island. The latter seems to be the first record for the island.	
<b>R. obtusifolia</b> Desv.	66, 67, 68
In hedges at Colepike Hall, Newbiggin and Embleton.	
<b>Rubus fissus</b> Lindl. Bramble	66
In a rough pasture near East Butsfield.	
<b>Potentilla anglica</b> Laichard	66
Common near Urpeth Riding and Fishburn.	
<b>Clinopodium vulgare</b> L. Wild Basil	66
In a hedge west of Birtley; the first station in the area.	
<b>Carlina vulgaris</b> L. Carline Thistle	66
Near West Butsfield, apparently a furthest west in Co. Durham.	
<b>Linaria minor</b> (L.) Desf.	66
Small Toadflax On a railway line at Burnhill and Westgate.	
<b>Desmazeria rigida</b> L. Hard Poa	66
On stony ground in the quarry along the Bollihope Burn.	
<b>Calamagrostis epigejos</b> Bush Grass	66
A huge mass in the old quarries near Fulwell, Sunderland; apparently the only known locality for the grass in Durham at the present time.	
<b>Carex paniculata</b> L. Panicked Sedge	66
On Waldrige Fell, along the Cong Burn and in Urpeth Woods.—J.W.H.H.	