

The Botanical Section

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Committee—The above, with N. G. HADDEN, E. J. HAMLIN, Cmdr. R. D. GRAHAM and Mrs. CROKER FOX.

THE thirty-seventh Annual General Meeting was held at Taunton Castle on 10 April 1947. The Hon. Treasurer reported a balance of £10 16s. 8d. as at 31 December 1946. Mr. H. St. George Gray stated that the Botanical Fund now stood at £10 19s. Mr. F. K. Makins kindly presented to the Library a copy of his recent book, *British Trees in Winter*.

Six field meetings were held in 1947, the weather being fine on every occasion. On 29 May, a party of twenty-seven, led by the President, met at Burnham. It was too early in the season to see the dune-flora at its best. *Ornithogalum umbellatum* was noted on the landward side. The remarkable increase of the Sea Buckthorn during the past twenty-five years is worth noting. Interest was shown in the colonization of the foreshore by land-plants. This reclamation has been described by Mrs. Boley in *Proc. Bristol Nat. Soc.*, IX, Part IV, 1942. On Wednesday, 18 June, fifteen members visited woods and scrub-land at Thurlbear. Six species of orchid were found, including the Bee and the Bird's Nest. The Lesser Butterfly Orchid, which was found there in 1946, was not seen. On Saturday, 5 July, seven members walked over Shute Shelve, through Cheddar Wood, to Axbridge. *Hypericum montanum* was noted near Winscombe. *Spiræa filipendula* was abundant on the top of the hill. In Cheddar Wood, a large and increasing patch of *Lithospermum purpureo-cæruleum* was found. *Tilia cordata* was the dominant tree over a considerable area. A party of eighteen met at Bruton Station on 24 July. *Arenaria tenuifolia* was observed on a patch of gravel adjoining the platform. The Deptford Pink was well established on the churchyard wall at Bruton. The party proceeded to Creech Hill, where Mr. Makins gave a short talk on the ecology of this area. *Campanula patula* was not seen. *C. glomerata* was found on the downland. On 13 August, twenty-one members met at Ashcott Station. Commander Graham led the party. The typical fen-vegetation of the moor near the station was observed. *Bidens tripartita* was common. The Lesser Water Plantain was noted. The party afterwards drove to Street Heath

to visit a plot which is apparently a raised bog, and showed completely different vegetation. *Calluna vulgaris* and *Myrica gale* are co-dominant on the drier parts, while *Sphagnum spp.* are abundant in the pools. Among the more interesting plants found here were *Narthecium ossifragum* (not common on the peat moors), *Drosera longifolia* (as abundant as *D. rotundifolia*), *Utricularia minor*, *Rhynchospora alba*, *Sparganium minimum*, *Habenaria bifolia* and *Carex lasiocarpa*. On 6 September, seven members, led by the Secretary, visited Widcombe Moor, near Churchstanton. Proceeding eastwards, upstream, a number of distinct plant-associations was observed within quite a small area. Where the soil was most acid, typical bog plants were found, including *Sphagnum spp.* and *Narthecium ossifragum*. In the next plot *Molinia cæruleum* was dominant, with patches of *Myrica gale* and *Erica tetralix*. Farther on, where there was better drainage, *Erica cinerea* became dominant, and, still farther up the valley, birch scrub took its place. No trace was found of the cranberry, which had been noted here some years ago. Later, the party proceeded to Prior's Park Wood to observe the change in vegetation occurring at the junction of the Upper Greensand with the Lias clay.

A flower-table was maintained at the Museum during the spring and summer.

RECORDER'S NOTES

The bracketed numbers refer to the ten divisions into which Somerset was divided by Murray. Where plants are recorded by members of the Committee initials are used. Divisional or vice-county records are starred.

For non-vascular plants (bryophytes, lichens, algæ and fungi) only vice-county numbers are used: v.c.5 for South or West Somerset and v.c.6 for North or East Somerset; asterisks similarly indicate new vice-county records.

Murray's county divisions are as follows:—(1) Dulverton district drained by the rivers Barle and Exe. (2) Minehead district drained by the streams running into the Bristol Channel west of the river Parrett. (3) Taunton district drained by the river Tone and the small streams emptying themselves from the west into the river Parrett north of Langport. (4) Ilminster and Yeovil district drained by rivers running into the Parrett south of Langport, its northern boundary being the river Yeo. (5) Somerton district drained by the streams running into the Yeo and Parrett from the northern or eastern sides. (6) Axe district drained by the streams running from the Blackdown Hills in the south of the county into the English Channel. (7) Wincanton district drained by the streams from the south-east of the county which run into the English channel. (8) Glastonbury district drained by the river Brue. (9) Mendip district drained by the Axe, Yeo and other streams in the north-east of the county running into the Bristol

Channel. (10) Bath and Bristol district drained by the Avon and its tributaries.

Aconitum napellum Stapf. This was segregated by Stapf in 1926 from *A. napellus* L., largely because of its earlier flowering time, May to June; otherwise it is doubtfully distinct from *A. napellus* which sometimes occurs as an escape, as at Whitestaunton and Buncombe.

Lychnis flos-cuculi L. A double-flowered form was collected in a marsh at Stapley near Churchstanton by *Wing-Commander Godfrey* and sent to me by *Miss Dorothy Webb*.

Trifolium medium L. Near Park Wood, Milverton (3). Shute Shelve Hill, near Axbridge (10).

Vicia gracilis Lois. Peat moor (8). *C. I. Sandwith*.

Alchemilla minor L. Croford (3).

Ribes rubrum L. By stream-side, Croford (3).

Valeriana sambucifolia Mikan. This has been considered as specifically distinct from *V. officinalis* L. The leaflets were supposed to be fewer in number and to be toothed all round. For many years (dating from the time of the *Rev. E. S. Marshall*) so many intermediate forms have been noted that it seems advisable to include all our Somerset plants under one species and *V. officinalis* is the older name. The peat moor plant has usually been put under *V. sambucifolia* and the Mendip limestone plant under *V. officinalis*, but intermediates are plentiful in both habitats.

Centaureum pulchellum Krause. On a raised grassy bank between Shapwick and Ashcott (8). *C. I. Sandwith*.

Datura stramonium L. One or two plants seen at Cannington. *N.G.H.*

Amaranthus retroflexus L. 'A fine plant came up in my garden.' *Bridgwater* (3). *E. J. H.*

Rumex hydrolapathum Huds. \times *obtusifolius* L. In abundance on Walton Heath (8). *C. I. Sandwith*. This hybrid is not mentioned in Murray's *Flora* or Marshall's *Supplement*.

Spiranthes spiralis Koch. Lilstock (2). Cothelstone, near the Vicarage (3).

Neottia nidus-avis Rich. 'An interesting occurrence for 1947 was the reappearance of this in the wood behind Porlock. I saw several plants in 1923, then an odd one or two till 1926, after that none until one appeared in June, 1947. All were within a few yards of one another. A curious thing is that when first found they grew in soil disturbed by laying a drain-pipe; this year the plant came where a horse had trod on the edge of the track and broken away the soil.' *N. G. H.*

Platanthera chlorantha Reichb. A flower with two spurs was collected and sent for inspection by *Mr. E. F. Payne*.

Luzula forsteri DC. Park Wood near Milverton (3).

Blysmus compressus L. Panz. ex Link. Plentiful in a boggy

- meadow on the east side of Windsor Hill, near Shepton Mallet (8).
J. C. M. Brenan, Bristol Botany in 1946.
Carex polyphylla Kar. et Kir. (*C. leersii* Schultz). Tickenham (9).
C. I. and N. Y. Sandwith. Near Axbridge (9). *E. Nelmes, ibid.*
 New for v.c. 6.
C. pallescens L. Ham Woods, Croscombe (8). *J. P. M. Brenan, ibid.*
C. distans L. \times *extensa* Good. With the parents, Berrow salt-marsh (9). *J. E. Lousley and C. West, ibid.*
C. vesicaria L. In rhines, Axbridge (9) leg. *W. B. Waterfall* in 1877 and recently confirmed by *E. Nelmes, ibid.* A new record for v.c. 6.
C. divulsa Stokes \times *contigua* Hoppe. Cotford (3). Pyrland, near Taunton (3).
Milium effusum L. Park Wood (3). Shute Shelve Hill (10).
Brachypodium sylvaticum Roem. and Schult. A number of fairly mature plants were noticed on Watchet Hill with spikes which were not drooping.
Phragmites communis Trin. Owing to the spread of this plant the character of Porlock Marsh has changed greatly during the last ten years. *N. G. H.*

CRYPTOGRAMS

- The following non-flowering plants have been noted.
Pallavicinia lyellii (Hook.) Gray. A liverwort new for the county found by *Mrs. Sandwith* at Shapwick and sent to me for verification.
Lepidozia setacea (Web.) Mitt. This minute hepatic was noted on the peat moor by *C. I. Sandwith.*

LICHENS

- Acarospora murina* Sandst. On shingle, Blue Anchor and new for Britain.
Collema pulposum form *granulatum* Ach. A form of this common lichen on wall, Pyrland, near Taunton (5*) is merely a state of little importance.
Rhizocarpon chlorophæum (Leight.) Mull-Arg. On more or less fixed shingle, Porlock.
Verrucaria peloclitata Nyl. Winsham (5*). Ebbor Gorge (6*), leg. *J. P. M. Brenan.*

FUNGI

- Clitocybe albocinerea* Rea. In pasture on west of Happy Valley, Upper Cheddon, near Taunton, is new for Somerset.
Coleosporium euphrasie Wint. A rust on *Euphrasia* collected at West Buckland in 1944 and previously on *Bartsia* at Watchet.
 The following fungi occur as parasites on lichens:
Celidium varians Arn. On *Lecanora helicopis* (Wahl.) Ach. (= *Lecania prosechoides* Oliv.). On more or less fixed shingle, Porlock (5*).

- Discothecium squamarioides* (Mudd.) Keissl. On the thallus of *Phlyctis*, Cleeve (6*).
- Phæospora epicallopisma* (Wedd.) Fl. Bad. On thallus of *Placodium murorum*, Thurlbear (5*).
- Pharcidia punctilla* Wint. On thallus of *Biatorina cyrtella*, Broomfield (5*).
- Phoma lecanoræ* Vouaux. On apothecia of *Lecanora subfusca* (aggreg.), Taunton (5*).
- Lahmia fuistingii* Krb. On thallus of *Bæomyces*, Britty Common (5*).
- Vouauxella lichenicola* (Wint.) Pet. and Syd. Shute Shelve Hill, near Axbridge (6*).

Mrs. Sandwith has contributed her usual valuable notes on *Bristol Botany* in 1946 to the *Proc. Bristol Nat. Soc.*

Two interesting type-written copies on the Clifton College Natural History Society and of the Taunton School Natural History Society have been compiled, the former by our former Secretary, Dr. J. H. Davie, and the latter by Mr. E. G. Neal.