The Botanical Section

President and Recorder—W. WATSON, D.SC., A.L.S.,
Cedene, Cheddon Road, Taunton.
Committee—H. DOWNES, M.B., F.L.S., N. G. HADDEN, E. J. HAMLIN
and H. S. THOMPSON, A.L.S.

THE twenty-sixth Annual Meeting was held at the Wyndham Hall, Taunton Castle, on 30 May 1936, Dr. Watson, President, in the chair. The Secretary was unfortunately absent through illness. The minutes of the last meeting having been read and confirmed, the President spoke of the loss the Section had sustained by the death of Miss Roper and a vote of sympathy was passed. It was found that a suitable revolving stand to exhibit dried plants could be obtained for about £20, and it was decided to make the purchase. After all the officers had been re-elected *en bloc*, the President reported that the accounts for 1935 had not been prepared, but there appeared to be a balance of about £8, out of which 10*s*. was granted towards the upkeep of the Sharpham Plot. It was reported that last year's excursions were all carried out and fairly well attended. The Fungus Foray was a great success, 120 species being observed. Five field days were arranged and several members brought fresh or pressed specimens for exhibition.

The first excursion, led by Mr. Corder to Brean Down, was a successful, if an uneventful one to this well-known locality. The White Rock-rose was in good condition at the top of the Down. There the party was met by Mr. Cox, the bird-watcher, who was already engaged with a school party from the London district. At his suggestion some of our members assisted them in their study of the local flora. It was too late in the season to find *Carex humilis* in flower for it blooms in March and April. The party had tea at the Fort and afterwards spent some time among the rocks and cliffs at the west end.

From 29 May to 1 June the South-Western Naturalists' Union held its annual conference at Bristol. Five of our

members attended some of the excursions to Stanton Drew, Vallis Vale, Wookey and Leigh Woods. Geologists and archæologists were well catered for, and botanists were interested in seeing *Aconitum Napellus*, *Meconopsis cambrica*, *Helleborus viridis*, *Bromus madritensis* and the *Sorbus bristoliensis* recently described by Wilmott.

Twenty members and friends were present on 6 June for the attractive walk, led by Dr. Watson, from Combe Row, Roadwater. By the kind permission of Mr. H. Nethercott the gates of the Mineral Railway were opened so that cars could be driven to Combe Row. The walk through the beautiful vale was much appreciated and the views of the picturesque combes with their wooded slopes were delightful. The waterfall is the best in Somerset, and a fair amount of water was falling over the moss-laden rocks. The rare foliose liverwort, *Jubula Hutchinsia*, was noted amongst the wealth of bryophytes at the top of the fall, this being its only known station in Somerset. Near the waterfall the Great Wood-rush (*Luzula silvatica*) was very abundant. Amongst other interesting plants noticed were Corn Crowfoot, Rough-headed Poppy (*Papaver Argemone*), Bistort, Butterfly Orchid and the two species of Mud Crowfoot (*Ranunculus Lenormandi* and *R. hederaceus*).

On 25 June ten members met at Shipham, whence, on a very hot afternoon, they were led by Mr. H. S. Thompson to the Mendip plateau and Tyning's Farm. In the old mining ground close to Shipham, *Thlaspi alpestre* was still lingering in its southernmost station in England. On the walk towards Blackdown and Tyning's Farm (where tea was taken) the usual bog and heath plants were noticed. In the high pastures just beyond Tyning's there were few plants of the beautiful white or mauve Vetch (*Vicia Orobus*) and these were small and flowerless. This is doubtless accounted for by the fact that these pastures are now grazed by cows, whereas formerly they were mown in suitable seasons. Orchids are less numerous in these pastures than they were formerly. A few flowering plants of the Vetch were seen by some of the members in rougher ground. The party had a pleasant and interesting walk back towards Shipham by the road below Longbottom Farm.

About a dozen members met at East Quantoxhead on 26 July with Mr. Bartlett as leader. The coast flora was chiefly examined. One field was crowded with the elegant Spiny Restharrow (*Ononis spinosa*), and Madder was plentiful in the hedges. The exploration of a pool yielded the Crisped and Horned Pondweeds with Wild Celery at the margins. On this Liassic soil the Foetid Iris was no surprise. The Wavy Dock of the shingle was, as usual, *Rumex crispus* var. *trigranulatus* and the Orache by its side was often *Atriplex Babingtonii*. *Anthemis Cotula*, which is a much rarer plant in Somerset than Murray's *Flora* would lead one to imagine, and *Rosa stylosa* were also seen. A short time after tea was spent in Smith's Combe where the usual heath vegetation was noticed.

A Fungus Foray in the woods around Porlock was conducted by Mr. N. G. Hadden on 3 October. Owing to the coldness of the season the spawn of many fungi had not developed, though a large number were still able to be collected and these were displayed on a table at the Ship Inn, Porlock Weir. Mr. Hadden's remarks on their names and qualities were much appreciated. Geasters, or earth-stars, are present in the district, but owing to insufficient heat to develop their mycelia, they were not found this year. The Death-cup and the Yellow Reptile were two of the most poisonous fungi found, whilst among the edible species Chanterelles were frequently seen. A Giant Puffball, sent by Mr. Beck, was shown and its large size (over a foot in diameter) and its frequent puffings created much interest.

During the past year Dr. Watson has devoted a large amount of time to the examination of the herbarium at Taunton Castle. The naming and numbering has been brought into conformity with the last edition of the London Catalogue. many errors have been rectified and some old records of Somerset plants have been noted. Some of the latter are mentioned in the following notes which refer chiefly to the more interesting plants observed in 1936. When the observer's name is denoted by initials his name can be obtained from the headings to this Report. The county is divided for floristic purposes into ten divisions as in Murray's *Flora of Somerset*. An asterisk denotes a new record for the division.

Papaver Argemone L. (2)* Roadwater. *E. J. H.* and *W. W.*

Silene Armeria L. (4)* Marston. *H. F. Parsons*, 1869.

Radiola linoides Roth. (2) Luccombe. *Miss Rawlins.*

Erodium Lebelii Jord. (9)* Weston-super-Mare. *W. W.* New to the county.

Malva sylvestris var. *lasiocarpa* Druce. (2) Porlock Weir. *W. W.*

Rhamnus catharticus L. (2) Cliff near Blue Anchor. *H. D. Badcock.*

Vicia angustifolia var. *Bobartii* Koch. (2)* Minehead. *W. W.*

Galium verum L. With flowers altogether green at Lilstock (2). *E. J. H.*

Gnaphalium sylvaticum L. (4)* Combe Wood, Combe St. Nicholas. *C. Parish*, 1844. Not noticed recently in this locality.

Cichorium Intybus L. (1)* Simonsbath. *C. M. Bedford* and *W. W.*

Anagallis coerulea Schreb. (3) Rowford near Taunton. *W. W.*

Centunculus minimus L. (2) Luccombe. *Miss Rawlins.* Much more robust than the plant found on the ' slacks ' of sand-dunes.

Marrubium vulgare L. (10) West of Twerton near Bath. *H. S. T.*

Melittis Melissophyllum L. (2) Several patches occur around Bossington and Porlock. *D. Ellen* and *N. G. H.*

Zannichellia palustris var. *pedicellata* Fr. (9) Worle. *J. A. Fenton*, 1850, in herb. Taunton.

Polygonatum multiflorum All. (2)* Roadwater. *H. D. Badcock.* This divisional record is a doubtful one as there is only one patch and the plant is probably an accidental introduction.

Luzula Forsteri D.C. (2) Copse near Washford Ry. Station. *W. W.*

Triglochin palustre L. (6)* Buckland. *C. Parish*, 1847.

Scirpus fluitans L. (6)* Blackdown, *C. Parish*, 1847. Neither of these two last have been noticed recently in this division, but they probably still occur there.

Carex disticha Huds. (4)* Hatch Beauchamp. *C. Parish*, 1849.

Milium effusum L. (6)* Buckland St. Mary. *C. Parish*, 1848. The plant probably still occurs there.

Ophioglossum vulgatum L. (2) Leigh Wood. *Mrs. Hamlin* and *Miss Olive.*

The next four notes are taken from Mrs. Sandwith's paper in *Proc. Bristol Nat. Soc.*, 1936.

Ranunculus sardous var. *inermis* Babey. (10) Waste ground, formerly meadow-land, Ashton Gate, 1932.

Valerianella eriocarpa Desv. (8)* Slopes above Cheddar, 1935, but probably of recent introduction. New for v.c. 6.

Mercurialis perennis var. *ambigua* (L.). (10) Twerton.

Alisma lanceolatum With. (10)* Canal near Bath, and between Claverton and the Aqueduct, 1935.

Mosses and Lichens

All collected and named by Dr. W. Watson. The divisions in Murray's *Flora* are not used for these non-vascular plants. The numbers 5 and 6 refer respectively to the botanical vice-counties of South(West) Somerset and North Somerset.

Orthotrichum cupulatum Hoffm. (5)* Bossington. New to v.c. 5.

Pottia recta Mitt. (6) Purn Hill and Uphill.

Tortula marginata Spruce. (5) Rag Hill near Taunton.

Placodium dissidens Nyl. (5)* On limestone wall, Bossington. New to the county.

Lecanora galactina var. *dissipata* (Nyl.) B.de Lesd. (6)* On walls in Cheddar village. New to v.c. 6.

Biatorina erysiboides (Nyl.) Th.Fr. (5) On oak, West Monkton (form *pallida* Nyl.).

Arthonia didyma Krb. (5)* Cricklease near Chard. (6)* Cleeve Combe. New to the county.

Arthopyrenia stigmatella (Sm.) A.L.Sm. (5)* Cricklease near Chard. New to v.c. 5.

The following articles and notes referring to Somerset botany or written by our members are among those published in 1936.

Mrs. Sandwith. 'Bristol Botany in 1935', *Proc. Bristol Nat. Soc.*, 117–120. This is a welcome continuation of plant

records and observations in the area around Bristol. Some of the plants mentioned are given above.

H. S. Thompson. '*Bromus madritensis* at Bristol', *J. of Bot.*, 240. This refers to the great profusion of this rare grass in 1935 and 1936. 'Obituary notice of Miss Ida M. Roper', *Proc. Bristol Nat. Soc.*, 26.

W. Watson. '*Plantago lanceolata* var. *anthoviridis* Wats.', *J. of Bot.*, 22. 'British Bryological Society', *ibid.*, 80–81. 'Daniel Angell Jones (1861–1936)', *ibid.*, 351–352, and *Nature* 1936, 871. These refer to the noted botanist whose work during his excursions into Somerset has frequently been mentioned in our recent Reports. 'The Bryophytes and Lichens of British Woods, Parts 1 & 2', *Journ. of Ecology*, 139–161 & 446–478. These papers are the result of an enormous amount of observation and research, much of which has been in Somerset woods.

In the last Report, owing to the deletion of other plants which were mentioned in the draft Report, *Barbarea intermedia* inadvertently appeared as *Brassica intermedia*.

Dr. H. Davie, Taunton School, Taunton, has kindly consented to act as Secretary and Treasurer for the Section.