

NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

Chairman—MRS. A. D. HALLAM.

Secretary—C. A. COOKSON, O.B.E.

Committee—The Chairman with MISS Y. M. KERSHAW, DR. E. G. NEAL, H. W. BOON, G. L. FREWIN, W. A. WILSON, DR. H. M. CHAPPEL, L. A. HALDANE and I. I. JEFFRIES.

Recorders—

Botany—(Vascular Plants) A. D. HALLAM, Taunton Castle.

(Fungi) I. I. JEFFRIES, Rosemary Cottage, Clayhidon, Cullompton, Devon.

Entomology—(Lepidoptera) DR. H. M. CHAPPEL, The Old Rectory, Selworthy, Minehead.

(Coleoptera) W. A. WILSON, 16 Ballfield Road, Minehead.

INDOOR MEETINGS

Illustrated lectures were given by Mr. P. F. Hunt, "A Botanist in the Solomon Islands"; Mr. P. H. Baker on "The Hydrology of Somerset"; and Mr. G. H. Thompson on "Tiger Beetles".

The Autumn Social Evening was again held at the N.F.U. Hall, Taunton, when Dr. Neal spoke on the progress of the Badger Survey and showed some transparencies taken on a visit to the Coto Doñana at the mouth of Guadalquivir River. Several other members also showed coloured slides taken by themselves: they were Mr. and Mrs. Cole (Alpine flowers of Austria); Mr. Haldane (Insects of Tanzania); Mr. Keylock (Close-ups of flowers); Mrs. Hallam (Activities of the Section and of Somerset Trust for Nature Conservation during the year, including slides of the Prior's Park Wood Nature Trail and Langford Budville Common). On display were a collection of mosses by Mrs. Wolseley; a Venus's Flytrap and some stick insects brought by Miss Kershaw; two trays of fungi collected and arranged by Mr. and Mrs. Jeffries; and a number of Mr. Young's beautiful bird photographs.

After the Annual Meeting in March, 1967, Dr. Ernest Neal showed a short film he had recently made of water spiders. This was followed by a film on pollution entitled "The River must live".

FIELD MEETINGS, 1966

Bad weather interfered with several meetings during the summer and one on Exmoor, arranged for August 6th, had to be cancelled altogether. For the first meeting of the season, members met on 23rd April during National Nature Week at Blagdon Hill and were conducted over the nature trail in Prior's Park Wood, which has already been described in last year's *Proceedings*.

10th May. NEWHOUSE FARM, PURTINGTON, CHARD. (Leader: Mr. Paul Smith)

This was an evening meeting held in conjunction with the Somerset Trust for Nature Conservation, the Yeovil and District Natural History Society and the British Naturalists Association. Mr. Paul Smith conducted a party of about 40 across his farm, showing them hazel coppice where *Ranunculus auricomus*, goldilocks, and *Paris quadrifolia*, herb Paris, were to be seen and water meadows in which *Valeriana dioica*, marsh valerian, was growing. Mr. Smith also showed the visitors badger sets in a number of places and had on display some interesting fossils unearthed by the badgers.

It was most heartening to hear from Mr. Smith how he had come to terms with the wild plants and animals on his farm. Foxes, badgers and roe deer live and breed on Mr. Smith's land and many birds — nightingales, barn owls and greater spotted woodpeckers among them — nest in his woodlands and hedgerows. This has been made possible by the small uncultivated pockets which Mr. Smith has left here and there amongst his fields. But he gave warning that pressures on land were very great and the drive for higher production was forcing farm owners to reduce the amount of unproductive land each year.

4th June, DUNSTER BEACH. (Leader: Mr. H. W. Boon)

This meeting was almost completely spoilt by rain, but the few members who did brave the weather for a short exploration of Minehead Warren were delighted to find *Silene conica*, striated catchfly, still in its old station on the edge of the golf course. It was instantly recognized by its prominently inflated calyces and many plants were still showing their bright pink flowers. Other plants noted were *Trifolium arvense*, hare's-foot clover, *T. striatum*, soft clover, *T. scabrum*, rough clover, *Echium vulgare*, viper's bugloss, *Cynoglossum officinale*, hound's tongue, and *Glaucium flavum*, horned poppy.

2nd July, EBBOR GORGE. (Leader: Dr. M. H. Martin)

Mrs. Olive Hodgkinson kindly allowed members to spend the afternoon in this Mendip area of great interest and beauty, which she has since given to the National Trust and which the Nature Conservancy manages as a National Nature Reserve. The route taken led first through ash woods, which are the natural climax vegetation on soil of the Lulsgate series overlying Dolomitic Conglomerate and Carboniferous Limestone, and then through the narrow gorge presumably formed by the collapse of a cavern. The occurrence of *Quercus robur*, oak, and *Ulmus glabra*, wych elm, is probably due to man's interference with the habitat. A good shrub layer is present under the light canopy of ash. *Mercurialis perennis*, dog's mercury, is dominant in the field layer. Dr. Martin pointed

out that this dioecious species makes up for poor germination by having explosive fruits, which are able to shoot seeds to a distance of 13 feet. Wetter patches of soil were seen to support fewer and poorer specimens of dog's mercury, their place being taken by such plants as *Ajuga reptans*, bugle, *Carex remota*, remote sedge, and *Dryopteris filix-mas*, male fern. Other woodland plants noted were *Veronica montana*, wood speedwell, *Campanula trachelium*, bats-in-the-belfry, *Circaea lutetiana*, enchanter's nightshade, *Galeobdolon luteum*, yellow archangel, *Carex sylvatica*, wood sedge and *Milium effusum*, wood millet. In more open glades there was a greater abundance of brambles, privet and ivy, which was also colonising screes.

Among cryptogams seen were the liverwort, *Conocephalum conicum*, smelling of turpentine and orange peel, the mosses, *Ctenidium molluscum* and *Mnium undulatum* and a lichen of the genus *Peltigera*.

Above the ashwoods there was an open space where the turf, formerly grazed by sheep, was still kept short by rabbits. Characteristic downland plants observed here were *Thymus drucei*, wild thyme, *Helianthemum chamaecistus*, common rockrose, *Polygala vulgaris*, self-heal, *Poterium sanguisorba*, salad burnet, *Asperula cynanchica*, squinancy wort, *Galium verum*, lady's bedstraw, *Cerastium holo-stioides*, mouse-ear chickweed, *Veronica officinalis*, common speedwell. Nearby was a small area where the leached soil has a pH of about 4, compared with more than 7 elsewhere, and supports heath plants such as *Calluna vulgaris*, ling, and *Potentilla erecta*, tormentil. On the return journey to Wookey Hole across downland, two thistles, *Cirsium acaulon* and *C. eriophorum*, were noted.

Birds seen included green woodpecker, greater spotted woodpecker, goldcrest and a family of wrens. A grey wagtail flew over the car park at the end of the meeting.

It was a good day for Lepidoptera. Butterflies noted were ringlet, red admiral, painted lady, small heath, green-veined white, speckled wood, large white, small white and meadow brown. Among moths, a clouded magpie was at rest on nettle and a grass emerald on gorse. Other moths observed were large yellow underwing, yellow shell and silver shell.

1st October, BLACKBOROUGH, DEVON. (Leaders: Mr. and Mrs. I. I. Jeffries)

A spell of dry weather had turned what looked like being a good fungus season into a rather disappointing one. Nevertheless something like 50 different kinds of fungi were collected and identified. Among five Boleti found was *Boletus luteus*; the four Lactarii identified included the pink, hairy *L. torminosus* and the coconut-scented *L. glyciosmus*. Among the Cortinari, many of which are

impossible to distinguish in the field, three of the more easily recognized ones, *C. armillatus*, *C. torvus* and *C. turgidus*, were identified.

It was pleasing to see *Lycopodium clavatum*, stagshorn moss, a small patch of which was discovered here a number of years ago, still holding its own.

SOMERSET BOTANY

RECORDER'S NOTES, 1966

VASCULAR PLANTS

The name of each species is preceded by its number in the *List of British Vascular Plants*, 1958, and the nomenclature used in this list has been adopted. Following the locality is the number of the ten-kilometre National Grid square. The bracketed numbers refer to the ten districts into which Somerset was divided by R. P. Murray, *Flora of Somerset* (1896). District and vice-county records are marked * and aliens †.

- 385/4 ***Gentianella anglica*** (Pugs.) E. F. Warburg
vc 6 (6*) Dundon Hill, Compton Dundon, ST43, Miss C. M. Andrews, 1963; *det.* Kew.
- 408/1 †***Nicandra physalodes*** (L.) Gaertn.
vc 5* (2*) In newly grassed field, with *Datura stramonium* and other weeds of cultivation, Selworthy, SS94, Dr H. M. Chappel.
- 423/2 †***Cymbalaria pallida*** (Ten.) Wettst.
vc 5* (3*) Wall, Taunton, ST22. First seen 1964, D. W. Livsey.
- 457/2 †***Prunella laciniata*** (L.) L.
vc 6 (5*) Charlton Mackrell, ST52, with hybrid *P. laciniata* x *vulgaris* (*det.* J. E. Lousley), C. A. Howe. Although this area has been worked by botanists since the 1820's this is the first time that this species has been noted. Was it introduced by trains?
- 470/1 †***Teucrium chamaedrys*** L.
vc 6 (8*) Shepton Montague, ST73, "in fair quantity, with *Calamintha ascendens*, in a perfectly natural state", C. A. Howe.
- 663/14 ***Carex depauperata*** Curt. ex With.
vc 6 (9) Near Cheddar, ST45. A new station, Miss C. M. Andrews.

A. D. HALLAM,

Recorder.

BRYOPHYTES

The following bryophyte records have been contributed by Mrs. J. Appleyard. The name of each species is preceded by its number in the *Census Catalogue of British Hepatics*, 4th Edition, 1965 or the *Census Catalogue of British Mosses*, 3rd Edition, 1963, as the case may be; the locality is followed by the ten-kilometre National Grid square; (*) signifies a vice-county record, except where it immediately follows a *Census Catalogue* number; new county records are marked (‡). All records are Mrs. Appleyard's unless otherwise stated.

HEPATICS

- 14/3 **Pellia neesiana** (Gottsche) Limpr.
vc 5* Staple Common, ST21, 1964.
vc 6‡ Marshy ground, Emborough Lake, ST65, 1963; and several places later.
- 16/1 **Pallavicinia lyellii** (Hook.) Gray ex Trev.
vc 6 On peat road, Walton Heath, ST43, 1965. Only other record Shapwick Heath, ST44.
- 18/1 **Blasia pusilla** L.
vc 6 Near Leigh-on-Mendip, ST64, 1963. Only two other records for vc 6.
- 20/9 **Fossombronina wondraczekii** (Corda) Dum.
vc 6* Boggy field, Emborough, ST65, 1963. Pen Hill, ST54, 1966.
- 27/2 **Ptilidium pulcherrimum** (Weber) Hampe
vc 6 On willow near Charterhouse, ST55, 1964. Nightingale valley, Leigh Woods, ST57, 1966. Only one previous record.
- 33/2 **Calypogeia muelleriana** (Schiffn.) K. Müll.
vc 6 Woodland, Aaron's Hill, near Bruton, ST75, 1965.
- 34/1β **Lophozia ventricosa** (Dicks.) Dum. var. **silvicola** (Buch) E. W. Jones
vc 5‡ Rotting log in woodland beside R. Barle, above Dulverton, SS92, Mrs J. A. Paton, 1961.
- 36/3 **Barbilophozia attenuata** (Mart.) Loeske
vc 6* Wood near Leigh-on-Mendip, ST64, 1961.
- 37/1 **Tritomaria quinquedentata** (Huds.) Buch
vc 6 North slope of Brean Down, ST25, 1966. One previous record for vc 6.
- 47/1 **Plectocolea obovata** (Nees) Mitt.
vc 5‡ Clay cliffs, shore west of Porlock, SS84, Mrs J. A. Paton, 1959, *Trans. B.B.S.* 1966.
- 52/11 **Marsupella emarginata** (Ehrh.) Dum.
vc 6 On igneous rocks, Downhead, ST64, 1966. Only other record, 'near Bristol', c. 1880.
- 62/3 **Cephaloziella subdentata** Warnst.
vc 5‡ Wet peaty ground, Widcombe Moor, ST21, 1964.

- 63/2β **Cephalozia bicuspidata** (L.) Dum. var. **lammersiana** (Hüb.) Breidl.
vc 6* Molinia swamp, foot of Black Down, ST45, G. W. Garlick, 1957; comm. J. A., *Trans. B.B.S.* 1966.
- 63/7 **Cephalozia media** Lindb.
vc 6 Mells Park, ST74, 1963. One previous record.
- 65/1 **Nowellia curvifolia** (Dicks.) Mitt.
vc 6 West Bradley, ST53, 1964; Nightingale Valley, Leigh Woods, ST57, 1966. One previous record.
- 69/3 **Diplophyllum obtusifolium** (Hook.) Dum.
vc 5‡ Sandy bank of track in pine plantation, Ramscombe, Quantock Hills, ST13, Mrs J. A. Paton, 1961.
vc 6* Loamy bank, eastern edge of Rowberrow Warren, ST45, 1966.
- 70/20 **Scapania compacta** (Roth) Dum.
vc 6 On igneous rock outcrop, Downhead, ST64, 1963.
- 78/3 **Cololejeunea minutissima** (Sm.) Schiffn.
vc 6‡ On willow, Catcott Heath Enclosure, ST44, A. J. Willis and N. Y. Sandwith, 1964.

MOSSES

- 1/16 **Sphagnum cuspidatum** Ehrh.
vc 6* Walton Heath, ST43, 1966.
- 8/3β **Fissidens minutulus** Sull. var. **tenuifolius** (Boul.) Norkett
vc 6‡ Carboniferous rocks, Nightingale Valley, Leigh Woods, ST57, E. F. Warburg *et al.* B.B.S. excursion, 1963; Chelynych Wood, Doultling, ST64, 1966.
- 8/9 **Fissidens curnowii** Mitt.
vc 6* Overhung bank of stream, Downhead, ST64, 1963.
- 8/12 **Fissidens celticus** J. A. Paton
vc 5‡ Haddeo valley, near Dulverton, SS92, 1963.
- 10/1 **Archidium alternifolium** (Hedw.) Mitt.
vc 6 Bare ground near stream, West Horrington, ST54, 1966; Penn Hill, ST54, 1966. Only other record, Portishead and side of R. Avon opposite Cooks Folly, before 1874.
- 15/2 **Ceratodon chloropus** (Brid.) Brid.
vc 6 Sand Point, ST36, 1961. Only known previously from ST47.
- 22/1 **Dicranella palustris** (Dicks.) Crundw. ex E. F. Warburg
vc 6* Boggy ground by stream, Downhead, ST64, 1963.
- 22/5 **Dicranella rufescens** (With.) Schimp.
vc 6* By streams, Hunstrete and Woollard, ST66, 1966. Since seen in ST45, ST55, ST63 and ST74.
- 29/7 **Dicranum strictum** Schleich. ex Schwaegr.
vc 6‡ Leigh Woods, ST57, D. Munro-Smith, 1964.

- 31/11 **Campylopus introflexus** (Hedw.) Brid.
vc 5* Fir plantation, Northay, Whitestaunton, ST21, T. M. Taylor, 1966, comm. A. R. Perry; thin humus on boulders, Seven Wells Bridge, Quantock Forest, ST13, H. G. Ward, 1966, comm. A. J. Willis.
- 35/8 **Tortula papillosa** Wils. ex Spruce
vc 6 Previously only recorded from near Burnham, 1916-17. Seen since 1963: on willow, Pawlett Hams, ST24; on old gate, Compton Dundon, ST43; near Ditchat, ST63; on elder, Tellisford, ST85.
- 35/10β **Tortula subulata** Hedw. var. **subinermis** (B. & S.) Wils.
vc 6‡ Base of alder, by R. Brue, Sheephouse Farm near Bruton, ST63, 1961.
- 35/10δ **Tortula subulata** Hedw. var. **graeffii** Warnst.
vc 6‡ Brean Down, ST25, 1966.
- 35/12β **Tortula muralis** Hedw. var. **aestiva** Hedw.
vc 6‡ On shaded boulder, Bathampton, ST76, 1966.
- 35/13 **Tortula marginata** (B. & S.) Spruce
vc 6 On sandstone boulders, King's Wood, Winscombe, ST45, 1965. Only other record, 1874.
- 35/16 **Tortula cuneifolia** (With.) Turn.
vc 6 Redcliff Bay, near Clevedon, ST47, 1965. Only other record 'Portishead 1874'. Indicated in Census Catalogue as requiring confirmation.
- 40/7 **Pottia wilsonii** (Hook.) B. & S.
vc 6‡ Soil among tufts of grass, Brean Down, ST25, A. J. E. Smith, 1959, *Trans B.B.S.*, 1967.
- 41/2γ **Phascum cuspidatum** Hedw. var. **maximum** Web. & Mohr
vc 6‡ Field near Pitney Wood, ST42, 1966.
- 42/1 **Acaulon muticum** (Hedw.) C. Müll.
vc 6* Sandy ground, bare places among bracken NE. of Wrington, ST46, 1962.
- 44/2β **Barbula unguiculata** Hedw. var. **cuspidata** (Schultz) Brid.
vc 6 Field near Clevedon, ST47, 1966; Tor Hill, Wells, ST54, 1966. Only other record 'Bruton', no date.
- 44/6 **Barbula acuta** (Brid.) Brid.
vc 6 Windmill Hill, ST43, 1963; Hurcot Hill, ST52, 1965. Only other record, 'Wells', C. H. Binstead, 1920.
- 44/9 **Barbula spadicea** (Mitt.) Braithw.
vc 6‡ Banks of R. Brue, 1½ miles NE. of Bruton, ST73, 1960.
- 45/1 **Gymnostomum aeruginosum** Sm.
vc 6 Dry limestone rocks near Charterhouse, ST55, 1964. Only previous record Ebbor Gorge, ST54, 1951.
- 49/6β **Tortella flavovirens** (Bruch) Broth. var. **glareicola** (Christens.) Crundw. & Nyh.
vc 6‡ On raised bank by estuary of R. Parrett, near Huntspill, ST24, 1966.

- 49/8 **Tortella inflexa** (Bruch) Broth.
vc 6‡ On oolite, in a wood, Warleigh, ST76, 1962; Friary Wood, Hinton Charterhouse, ST75, 1963; Creech Hill, Bruton, ST63, 1966.
- 52/1β **Weissia controversa** Hedw. var. **densifolia** (B., S. & G.) Wils.
vc 6‡ Soil at site of old lead mines, Charterhouse, ST55, 1964.
- 52/4 **Weissia rutilans** (Hedw.) Lindb.
vc 6* Sandy ground near Wrington, ST46, 1962. Since recorded from three other grid squares.
- 52/6β **Weissia microstoma** (Hedw.) C. Müll. var. **brachycarpa** (Nees & Hornsch.) C. Müll.
vc 6‡ Bare place in field, Gurney Slade, ST64, 1959.
- 53/1 **Leptodontium flexifolium** (Sm.) Hampe
vc 6 Among heather, Priddy Pools, ST55, 1965. Only other record, Brockley Combe, F. A. Leipner, before 1894.
- 55/13 **Grimmia doniana** Sm.
vc 6* On slag from old lead workings, Charterhouse, ST55, 1963.
- 56/4 **Racomitrium fasciculare** (Hedw.) Brid.
vc 6 Rock-face in wood near Leigh-on-Mendip, ST64, 1961. Second record.
- 56/5γ **Racomitrium heterostichum** (Hedw.) Brid. var. **gracilescens** B., S. & G.
vc 6* Rock outcrop, Downhead, ST64, 1966.
- 62/1 **Ephemerum recurvifolium** (Dicks.) Boul.
vc 6 Bare calcareous slopes above Aller, ST42, 1966. Recorded from Cheddar and Brockley, but no specimens traced and W. Watson says 'confirmation desirable'.
- 62/6β **Ephemerum serratum** (Hedw.) Hampe var. **minutissimum** (Lindb.) Grout
vc 6* Sandy ground near Wrington, ST46, 1961. Recorded from several grid squares since.
- 77/28 **Bryum micro-erythrocarpum** C. Müll. & Kindb.
vc 6‡ On path, Inglesbatch, ST76, 1962.
- 77/28* **Bryum bornholmense** Winkelm & Ruthe
vc 5 Hamdon Hill, Stoke-sub-Hamdon, ST41, 1963.
vc 6 Dundon Hill, ST43, 1964.
- 77/29 **Bryum rubens** Mitt.
vc 5 In garden, Porlock, SS84, 1962.
vc 6 In field, Inglesbatch, ST76.
- 77/29* **Bryum ruderales** Crund. & Nyh.
vc 5 Hamdon Hill, Stoke-sub-Hamdon, ST41, 1963.
vc 6 In field, Inglesbatch, ST76, 1962.
- 77/30 **Bryum klingsgraeffii** Schimp.
vc 5 Damp field, Newland, Exford, SS83, 1964.
vc 6 Stubble field, Inglesbatch, ST76, 1962.

- 77/30* **Bryum violaceum** Crund. & Nyh.
vc 5‡ Track in field near Withypool, SS83, 1964.
- 77/31 **Bryum sauteri** B., S. & G.
vc 5‡ Bare places in field near Withypool, SS83, 1964.
- 98/12 **Orthotrichum stramineum** Hornsch. ex Brid.
vc 6‡ On elm, head of Goblin Combe, ST46, 1962.
- 98/14 **Orthotrichum tenellum** Bruch ex Brid.
vc 6* Kingsdon Wood, ST52, 1963. Only previous record, 'Wells', C. H. Binstead, 1887.
- 99/4 **Ulota crispula** Brid.
vc 6‡ On ash, Burrington Combe, ST45, E. F. Warburg, 1963.
- 117/1 **Habrodon perpusillus** (De Not.) Lindb.
vc 5* On elm in field, Monksilver, ST03, 1963.
- 129/1β **Amblystegium serpens** (Hedw.) B., S. & G. var. **salinum** Carr.
vc 6* Bottom of grassy bank on cliff near Clevedon, ST47, 1966.
- 129/3 **Amblystegium kochii** B., S. & G.
vc 6‡ Damp grassy ground by the lake, Mells Park, ST74, 1963. Found in several grid squares since.
- 131/4α **Drepanocladus fluitans** (Hedw.) Warnst. var. **fluitans**
vc 6‡ Shapwick Heath, ST44, 1964.
- 133/1 **Scorpidium scorpioides** (Hedw.) Limpr.
vc 6 Boggy field near Tynings Farm, Rowberrow, ST45, 1966, Second record.
- 141/7 **Eurhynchium speciosum** (Brid.) Milde
vc 5* Swamp at end of disused reservoir, Chard, ST30, 1964.
vc 6‡ Marshy ground by the lake, Mells Park, ST74, 1963.
- 142/4β **Rhynchostegiella tenella** (Dicks.) Limpr. var. **litorea** (De Not.) Rich. & Wall.
vc 6‡ Tree roots by ditch between Somerton and Kingsdon, ST52, 1964.
- 149/5 **Plagiothecium ruthei** Limpr.
vc 6‡ Damp grassy ground, Priddy Pools, ST55, 1962.
- 149/6 **Plagiothecium curvifolium** Schlieph. ex Limpr.
vc 6‡ Creech Hill, Bruton, ST63, 1960. Seen in several grid squares since.
- 154/18 **Hypnum cupressiforme** Hedw. var. **mamillatum** Brid.
vc 5‡ On oak tree, Porlock, SS84, 1962.
vc 6* West Horrington, ST54, 1965. In many places since. This variety is almost certainly widespread, but has been neglected in the past. It can only be identified with fruit at the right stage of development.

FUNGI

Cortinarius cinnamomeoluteus Orton	vc 5*
Ford Street Hill, 30 Oct. 1966, <i>det.</i> Kew	
Cortinarius tofaceus Fr.	vc 5*
Wellington Monument, 14 Nov. 1966, <i>det.</i> Kew	
Dermoloma cuneifolium (Fr. ex Fr.) Sing.	vc 5*
Taunton Castle lawn, 3 Nov. 1966, <i>det.</i> Kew	
Inocybe brunneo-atra (Heim) Orton	vc 5*
Taunton Castle lawn, 3 Nov. 1966, <i>det.</i> Kew	
Cordyceps ophioglossoides (Ehrenb. ex Fr.) Link	vc 5*
Ford Street Hill, 30 Oct. 1966, <i>det.</i> Kew	

I. I. JEFFRIES,
Recorder.

SOMERSET LEPIDOPTERA, 1966

1966 was a fairly good year for migrant butterflies, both Red Admirals and Painted Ladies were seen in May and continued off and on until the autumn. There is an interesting record from Winscombe of a Camberwell Beauty which appears to have come to the light trap of Mr. Silcocks.

Amongst migrant moths **Plusia gamma** (Silver Y) occurred in large numbers and there were exceptional numbers of **Agrotis ipsilon** (Dark Sword-grass) and **Peridroma porphyrea** (Pearly Underwing) throughout the summer.

The year was particularly noteworthy for the number of **Leucania unipuncta** (White-speck Wainscot) which were seen, mainly in the latter half of September. Twelve were seen at Selworthy and two were reported from Shipham at the beginning of the month. This moth, which is a migrant, had only been reported twice before in the county — in 1960. Other notable migrant moths were **Rhodometra sacraria** (Vestal), 3 at Shipham and 4 at Selworthy, **Herse convolvuli** (Convolvulus Hawk) and **Laphygma exigua** (Small Mottled Willow) at Selworthy, and **Nycterosea obstipata** (Gem), 13 at Shipham and one each from Selworthy and Weston-super-Mare.

Mr. C. S. H. Blathwayt reported two **Ectropis consonaria** (Square-spot Beauty) from Weston-super-Mare. This moth has previously only been reported from the Minehead district.

From Shapwick Mr. Blathwayt sends the following interesting list: **Lampropteryx otregiata** (Metcalf's Carpet), several **Apamea ophiogramma** (Double-lobed), also seen at Selworthy, **Lygephila pastinum** (Black-neck), **Pelurga comitata** (Dark Spinach), **Tholomyes turfosalis** (Marsh Oblique-barred), very common, **Zenobia retusa** (Double Kidney), several, **Parastichtis suspecta** (Suspected), several, two also were seen at Selworthy, **Eupithecia tenuiata** (Slender Pug) and **Eupithecia subumbrata** (Shaded Pug), of which there have been no recent records.

From Shipham Mr. T. B. Silcocks reports seeing the following: **Clostera curtula** (Chocolate-tip), 3 in August, **Antitype chi** (Grey Chi), several in August and September, **Tiliacea citrargo** (Orange Sallow), **Eupithecia succenturiata** (Bordered Pug), **Orthonama lignata** (Oblique Carpet), seen, also, at Selworthy, **Perizoma taeniata** (Barred Carpet) and **Lithophane leauterii** (Blair's Pinion). The last named was, also, seen at Selworthy again, but had not previously been reported from any other locality in Somerset.

At Selworthy the following were recorded: **Drepana cultraria** (Barred Hook-tip), **Eilema sororcula** (Orange Footman), 3 in June, **Amathes depuncta** (Plain Clay), **Amathes castanea** (Grey Rustic), **Pyrria umbra** (Bordered Orange), **Coenobia rufa** (Small Rufous), **Apamea unanimitis** (Small Clouded Brindle), **Apamea scolopacina** (Slender Brindle), **Cosmia diffinis** (White-spotted Pinion), **Cosymbia linearia** (Clay Triple-lines), **Rheumaptera undulata** (Shell Scallop), which was also reported from Shapwick, **Bapta bimaculata** (White-pinion Spotted), **Deileptenia ribeata** (Satin Beauty), **Homocosoma saxicola**, **Euzophora terebrella**, **Crambus latistrius** and **Notocelia incarnatana**.

From Cheddar Wood Mr. Alan Kennard reports **Alispe angustella** and **Coleophora trigeminella**, and **Phalonia hybridella** from Saltford.

Mr. N. F. Heal has done a lot of work on the Microlepidoptera during 1966, many of the records being of considerable interest, and a copy of these has been forwarded to the Library where it can be seen.

H. M. CHAPPEL,
Recorder.

STEEP HOLM TRUST, 1966/7

TRUSTEES:

E. L. KELTING, O.B.E., *Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*H. H. DAVIS, *Bristol Naturalists' Society*MRS. M. L. COLTHURST, *Mid-Somerset Naturalist Society*E. J. MASON, *Bristol Folk House Archaeological Club*

This has been a particularly difficult year for those arranging visits to Steep Holm. The members of the Gull Research Station could not get a boat until May 21st, so that the early part of their programme on the gulls and rabbits was very much curtailed; and there was no visit to the Peony glen to clear it of competitive plants. This did not seem to affect the Peony which flowered with its usual profusion — if such can be said of *Paeonia mascula* whose stems have solitary flowers as opposed to the several-flowered stem of *P. lactiflora* from which most of our herbaceous garden types are derived. *P. mascula* is at home in southern Europe, and Steep Holm seems a rocky, windswept outpost on which to find it. It is probable that it had some medicinal use and that it was brought here for that reason as was the Greater Celandine, *Chelidonium majus* — nothing to do with the Lesser Celandine but a member of the poppy family — whose poisonous stem juices were a remedy for warts and eye troubles. Another introduced species is Alexanders, which William Turner included in his *New Herball* of 1558 after visiting Steep Holm. The young shoots of this plant were formerly used as a pot herb resembling celery. It is now dominant over about two-thirds of the island plateau. This dominance appears to have been recent and may possibly be correlated with the rapid increase in the gull colony. In 1901 only 12 pairs of nesting Herring Gulls and 11 pairs of nesting Lesser Black-backed Gulls were counted, whereas in 1957 there were 3,530 nests of the three common species of gull.

The Gull Research Station have also started this year to investigate the rapidly increasing population of rabbits. These also will have an effect on the vegetation and it would be interesting to have a detailed vegetation map on which to record subsequent changes.

The repairs to the roof of the station are complete, but internal renovations have gone on this season. The station accommodated a party of masters and boys from Chew Valley Modern School, who were escorted to the island for a weekend to see some of the ornithological work that was being carried out by the Gull Research Station.

Other visits were restricted owing to the disturbing effect that parties have on the gulls during the breeding season, especially on the mortality rate of eggs and chicks. The latter often get driven out of their own territory to be attacked by a neighbouring adult. It is normally possible to visit Steep Holm only during the breeding season between May and August, and this means that visits have

had to be cut down considerably. It also means that the Priory site has not been excavated this season, although the site was cleared of vegetation to discourage nesting gulls. It is to be hoped that some way round this difficulty will be found in the future.

The Harry Savory Memorial Fund is not yet closed and at present stands at £23. It has not yet been decided how this money should best be spent to commemorate him and all the work that he did for the Steep Holm Trust from 1953 until his death in 1963.

PAT WOLSELEY,
Hon. Secretary.

THE SOMERSET TRUST FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

President: THE RT. HON. THE EARL WALDEGRAVE

Chairman: ERNEST NEAL, M.SC., PH.D.

Chairman of Scientific Committee: COLIN TRAPNELL, O.B.E., M.A.

On both sides of its work, the positive and the preventive, the Trust had an active and successful year in 1966-67. During the year all four Area Committees sent to the County Planning Officer lists of places they considered of important natural history interest, in addition to existing Nature Reserves and Sites already scheduled by the Nature Conservancy.

Officers of the Trust took an active part in the negotiations which resulted in the presentation by Mrs. G. W. Hodgkinson of 115 acres at Ebbor Gorge, near Wookey Hole, to the National Trust and its subsequent lease to the Nature Conservancy for a National Nature Reserve. Ebbor Gorge is a fine example of a Mendip valley carved out of carboniferous limestone by an ancient river and is of both geological and natural history interest.

The Trust were asked to advise on the setting up of a permanent Nature Trail on North Hill, Minehead, by the Exmoor National Park Committee and two members drew up an excellent illustrated guide to the trail.

A Nature Reserves Management Committee was formed and Mr. W. B. Collins, lately Deputy Conservator of Forests in Ghana, was appointed Reserves Officer and Secretary to the Committee.

This Committee has sent a management plan for Langford Budville Common to the Wellington Rural District Council who have been most co-operative throughout and have accepted it. At least seven schools have done field work on the Common and the Trust's Conservation Corps has spent a useful morning cutting brambles, willow and birch scrub.

The Forestry Commission has offered to lease to the Trust 20 acres at Priors Park Wood, Blagdon Hill, to be managed as a Reserve. A management plan has now to be drawn up for the Commission's approval. The Forestry Commission has accepted proposals put forward by the Chairman of the Trust's Scientific Advisory Panel whereby areas of special ecological interest in Leigh Woods, near Bristol, will be preserved.

A 14-year agreement with the owner of Goblin Combe has been entered into by the Trust under which 24 acres of limestone scree in the combe will be managed as a Reserve.

On the preventive side, the Trust was represented at the Crook Peak Inquiry into the appeal against the County Council's refusal to permit quarrying. The turning down of this appeal was a major victory for nature conservation in Somerset.

The Trust joined other organizations in discussions with Bristol Waterworks to ensure that any sailing allowed on Chew Valley Lake would be so controlled as to cause as little disturbance as possible to bird life.

The views of the Trust were requested on an application to extract peat from an area at Walton Heath that had been included in the East Area Committee's list of places of natural history interest, and it was decided to object to the application.

Representations were received by the Trust about a proposal to quarry at Bangle Farm on the lip of the Chantry-Railford Valley near Frome, another site listed by the East Area Committee, and a decision was made to lodge an objection with the County Council against the proposal.

Membership of the Trust still falls short of the 1,000 mark, but as its work becomes better known and appreciated it seems likely that this figure will be achieved before long.

At the beginning of 1967 I took over the duties of Honorary General Secretary from Miss Dacombe who had carried them out as a temporary measure when no one could be found to fill the post.

A. C. M. HINGLEY,
Honorary General Secretary.