

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—(Phanerogams) A. D. HALLAM, Taunton Castle.

(Cryptogams) MRS. E. A. MARRIAGE, Brock Cottage, Clayhidon,
Cullompton, Devon.

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

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

(Other Orders) J. COWLEY, 15 Clarence Road North,
Weston-super-Mare.

LECTURES AND INDOOR MEETINGS

1964

October 17th “Flowers and Vegetation in the Austrian Alps”
Dr. Michael Proctor.

December 12th “The Biology of Spiders”
Dr. J. A. L. Cooke.

1965

February 20th “Flowers of the Eastern Pyrenees”
Mr. A. D. Hallam, M.A., B.Sc.

March 6th Annual General Meeting
Followed by Dr. Ernest Neal’s colour film “African
Safari”.

FIELD MEETINGS, 1964

CHAFFCOMBE WOOD, 9th May (Leader: Miss C. M. Andrews)

Sheets of bluebells were the most striking feature of the ground cover in this mixed wood of pedunculate oak and ash. There were some fine holly trees, and seedlings from these were abundant. The shrub layer consists mainly of hazel, and the parasite, *Lathraea squamaria*, toothwort, was plentiful. The junction of sand with clay gives rise to a very wet area of woodland at the bottom of a steeply sloping hillside. *Paris quadrifolia*, herb paris, and *Orchis mascula*, early purple orchid, were found above the spring line. Other plants in flower were *Sanicula europaea*, wood sanicle, *Galeobdolon luteum*, yellow archangel and *Valeriana dioica*, marsh valerian. On the hedgebanks between Chaffcombe Church and the wood, *Luzula sylvatica*, great woodrush, was noted; this is probably its only Somerset locality east of Exmoor.

BUCKLAND WOOD, 30th May (Leader: Mr. I. I. Jeffries)

This wood is on the steep, north-facing slope of the Blackdown Hills. At the bottom the Keuper Marl gives rise to a clay soil, and here was seen a colony of *Equisetum telmateia*, great horsetail. *Viola palustris*, marsh violet, was flowering on the spring line where downwash from the Upper Greensand overlies the marl. On the edge of one of the woodland rides a few plants of *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, adder's tongue fern, were observed. Among the plants seen in flower were *Neottia nidus-avis*, bird's nest orchid, *Carex sylvatica*, wood sedge, *Galium odoratum*, sweet woodruff, *Lysimachia nemorum*, yellow pimpernel.

ASHCOTT AND SHAPWICK HEATHS, 20th June
(Leaders: Messrs. J. V. Morley and B. Storer)

On the turf moor at Ashcott Heath, *Platanthera bifolia*, lesser butterfly orchid, was flowering abundantly. Other bog plants seen were *Drosera anglica*, great sundew, *Wahlenbergia hederacea*, ivy-leaved bellflower, *Myrica gale*, bog myrtle, and *Potentilla palustris*, marsh cinquefoil. In the rhines were *Rumex hydrolapathum*, great water dock, *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*, frogbit, and three species of duckweed, *Lemma polyrrhiza*, *L. trisulca* and *L. minor*. Other plants on the heath were *Valeriana dioica*, marsh valerian, *Cirsium dissectum*, marsh plume thistle, *Frangula alnus*, alder buckthorn. Near the peat cuttings at Shapwick *Osmunda regalis*, royal fern, was seen, and *Thalictrum flavum*, meadow rue, was plentiful in a neighbouring field. Willow warblers were heard and common white-throats seen.

RODNEY STOKE NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE, 11th July
(Leader: Mr. D. McGregor)

The Reserve consists of downland and ash wood with the characteristic flora of a well-drained and highly calcareous soil.

Below the wood were seen *Verbena officinalis*, vervain, *Origanum vulgare*, marjoram, *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, pyramidal orchid, *Malva moschata*, musk mallow and *Trifolium campestre*, hop clover. *Sorbus aria*, white beam, *Euonymus europaeus*, spindle, *Viburnum opulus*, guelder rose, and *V. lantana*, wayfaring tree, were among the shrubs on the margin of the wood, and *Daphne laureola*, spurge laurel, grew in deeper shade among the ground cover of *Mercurialis perennis*, dog's mercury. Along the paths, where some light penetrates, *Campanula trachelium*, bats-in-the-belfry, was conspicuous. *Lithospermum purpureo-caeruleum*, blue gromwell, was plentiful, but its flowering season was over. A single wood ants' nest was observed. A badger sett near the top of the wood was visited. In the downland above were seen *Ophrys apifera*, bee orchid, *Helianthemum chamaecistus*, common rockrose, *Anthyllis vulneraria*, kidney vetch, *Cirsium acaule*, stemless thistle, *Asperula cynanchica*, squinancy wort. The day was too windy for butterflies to be abroad in numbers, but one of each of the following was seen: marbled white, ringlet and large heath.

BRITTY COMMON, 25th July (Leader: Mrs. A. D. Hallam)

The topography of this area was modified by quarrying in the nineteenth century. Below the old quarry face are three small valley bogs, separated by spurs of comparatively dry soil, where trees have been planted by the Forestry Commission during the past eight years. This planting, together with cessation of grazing, has altered the vegetation of the bogs, and drainage operations followed by more planting are likely to result in further changes in the next few years. The taller species such as *Menyanthes trifoliata*, bog bean, and *Eriophorum angustifolium*, cotton grass, are still widespread, but lower-growing species, such as *Drosera rotundifolia*, round-leaved sundew, and *Pinguicula lusitanica*, pale butterwort, have become less abundant, and neither *Drosera intermedia* nor *D. anglica* could be found. Among other plants noted were *Dactylorhiza maculata* ssp. *ericetorum*, heath-spotted orchis, varying from white to deep pink, *Narthecium ossifragum*, bog asphodel, *Hypericum elodes*, bog St. John's wort, *Succisa pratensis*, devil's bit scabious, *Equisetum sylvaticum*, wood horsetail, *Cirsium dissectum*, marsh plume thistle, *Juncus bufonius*, toad-rush, *Scutellaria minor*, lesser skullcap. In contrast with the patches of acid bog, the soil in the north-western corner of the "Common" is a calcareous clay. Among marsh plants seen here were *Galium palustre*, marsh bedstraw, *Hypericum tetrapterum*, square-stalked St. John's wort, *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, ragged robin, *Pulicaria dysinterica*, fleabane, *Veronica beccabunga*, brooklime.

CROWCOMBE HEATHFIELD, 26th September
(Leader: Mrs. E. A. Marriage)

A search was made for fungi under beech trees by the roadside and in an area of scrub-woodland not far from Crowcombe Station.

Specimens of some three dozen species were collected, including *Amanita citrina*, *Merulinus tremulosus*, *Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca* and *Boletus edulis*. Among the few higher plants still flowering, the most interesting was *Hypericum humifusum*, trailing St. John's wort.
O.M.H.

SOMERSET BOTANY
RECORDER'S NOTES, 1964

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 with an asterisk (*).

- 168/14 **Geranium pusillum** L. Cannington Park, ST24, (3), H. W. Boon.
 192/17 **Trifolium hybridum** L. Specimen with calyx teeth developed as leaflets. Roadside, Abbots Hill, Closworth, ST50, (4), Mrs. Cosh.
 192/20 **Trifolium resupinatum** L. Combwich Common, ST24, (3), H. W. Boon. This alien was first recorded from Combwich in 1929. It was last noted by Mr. Boon in 1955.
 192/24 **Trifolium micranthum** Viv. Combwich Common, ST24, (3), H. W. Boon.
 598/3 **Ornithogalum pyrenaicum** L. Hinton Charterhouse, ST75, (10), J. Cowley.
 602/1 **Colchicum autumnale** L. Long Wood, Cheddar and Cheddar Wood, ST45, (9), J. Cowley.
 627/1 **Spiranthes spiralis** (L.) Chevall. Crook Peak, ST38, (9), and Green Down, Charlton Mackrell, ST52, (5), J. Cowley.
 640/4 **Ophrys insectifera** L. Open hillside, Hinton Charterhouse, ST75, (10), J. Cowley.
 685/1 **Agropyron caninum** (L.) Beauv. Rodney Stoke Wood, ST45, (9), J. Cowley.

A. D. HALLAM,
Recorder.

SOMERSET LEPIDOPTERA IN 1964

After a cold March the summer was on the whole warm and rather dry until September but October was again colder than usual. The rarer migrants were not very plentiful. The **Red Admiral** was fairly common in the autumn and the **Painted Lady** was not uncommon. Several **Clouded Yellows** were seen in the Taunton district.

Heliothis peltigera (Bordered Straw) was seen four times at Selworthy between June 13th and 21st and again at Weston-super-Mare on August 15th. **Nycterosea obstipata** (Gem) was seen at Selworthy on August 12th, at Weston-super-Mare on September 10th and 23rd and at Taunton on October 28th. At Selworthy in August single specimens of **Laphygma exigua** (Small Mottled Willow) and **Margaronia unionalis** were seen. **Herse convolvuli** (Convolvulus Hawk) was taken at Chard and a specimen of **Acherontia atropos** (Death's Head Hawk) was brought in to Taunton School.

From Weston-super-Mare Mr. C. S. H. Blathwayt reported:

Actebia praecox (Portland Moth).

Amathes ditrapezium (Triple-spotted Clay). Several, also, were seen at Selworthy.

Cleora ribeata (Satin Carpet). Seen, also, near Minehead.

Cosmia pyralina (Lunar-spotted Pinion).

From Selworthy the following were reported:

Lophopteryx cucullina (Maple Prominent).

Eilema sororcula (Orange Footman).

Euxoa obelisca (Square-spot Dart). This is a new County record.

Agrotis cinerea (Light Feathered Rustic). Found usually in the limestone districts.

Amathes depuncta (Plain Clay).

Amathes agathina (Heath Rustic).

Amathes castanea (Grey Rustic).

Gypsites leucographa (White-marked). This moth has not been reported in Somerset for many years.

Hadena bombycina (Glaucous Shears). Usually a northern species, but taken in 1963 in Minehead and occasionally at Weston-super-Mare.

Xylena vetusta (Red Sword-grass) (2). One, also, was taken at Chard.

Lithophane leauterii (Blair's Shoulder-knot). This was first reported from Minehead in 1963. Mature *Cupressus macrocarpa*, upon which it breeds, is by no means so common at Selworthy as in the built-up area of Minehead.

Naenia typica (Gothic) (2).

Apamea unanimitis (Small Clouded Brindle).

Apamea scolopacina (Slender Brindle) (2).

Cosmia diffinis (White-spotted Pinion).

Leucania straminea (Southern Wainscot).

Leucania pudorina (Striped Wainscot).

Sterrhia marginepunctata (Mullein Wave) (3).

Euphyia picata (Cloaked Carpet) (2).

Perizoma bifasciata (Barred Rivulet) — several. I suspect this to be breeding nearby in a field where there is a good deal of its food plant, Red Bartsia.

Discoloxia blomeri (Blomer's Rivulet). This is not usually found so far west, but was seen at Minehead in 1963.

Gnophos obscurata (Annulet).

Anagoga pulveraria (Barred Umber) — several.

From Chard were reported:

Cerura bicuspis (Alder Kitten).

Leucoma salicis (White Satin).

From Mr. Heslop of Burnham-on-Sea comes the noteworthy report of the occurrence of **Catacala fraxini** (Clifden Nonpareil).

At Selworthy the following Microlepidoptera were seen:

Salebria palumbella. This was quite common although not reported from Somerset for many years.

Chilo phragmitellus

Mecyna asinalis (2).

Crambus latistrius (2).

Crambus contaminellus — A new County record.

Eucosma foenella

Acleris literana (2).

At Selworthy in the spring **Notodonta anceps** (Great Prominent) was unusually common.

There are two interesting and unreported records to hand from Rev. Guy Ford: **Oria musculosa** (Brighton Wainscot) was seen at Curry Rivel in 1956; and **Hydrelia testaceata** (Waved Carpet) was seen in woods near Taunton in 1954.

I should be glad to receive more reports of Lepidoptera seen during 1965, particularly from the east of the County.

H. M. CHAPPEL,

Recorder.