

## NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

*Chairman*—J. COWLEY, M.A., F.R.E.S.

*Secretary*—C. A. COOKSON, O.B.E., M.A.

*Committee*—The Chairman with MISS C. ANDREWS, H. W. BOON, A. J. DODD, E. G. NEAL, W. E. PALMER, A. H. TURNER, W. A. WILSON, and I. I. JEFFRIES.

*Recorders*—

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

(Cryptogams) A. J. DODD, 9 Fullands Avenue, Taunton.

Entomology—(Lepidoptera) A. H. TURNER, Mariarti, Star Lane, North Curry, Taunton.

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

(Other Orders) J. COWLEY, Holywell House, Edington, Bridgwater.

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### LECTURES

1959

October 3rd "Some Aspects of the Vegetation of Braunton Burrows"

Dr. A. J. Willis, B.SC., PH.D.

November 7th Films of Australian Wild Life including Scenes from the Great Barrier Reef

Introduced by Dr. E. G. Neal, M.SC., PH.D.

1960

February 20th "Flower Structure in Relation to Pollination"  
Mrs. D. V. Sansome, B.SC.

March 12th "The Rivers and Seawalls of Somerset"  
Mr. E. L. Kelting, O.B.E.

## FIELD MEETINGS, 1959

May 2nd*	Quantocks.
May 18th*	Steep Holm.
May 23rd	Priors Park Wood.
June 6th/7th*	Dunkery Beacon.
June 11th	Charterhouse and Cheddar.
June 20th	Braunton Burrows.
July 18th	Banks of River Brue.
August 15th	Acmead Bog, Exmoor.
August 23rd*	Chew Valley Lake.
September 20th*	Portland Bill.
September 26th	Fungus Foray on Quantocks.

\* Arranged by the Ornithological Section.

On November 7th, 1959, a Special General Meeting of the Natural History Section was held at the Wyndham Hall, Taunton Castle, at which it was decided to merge the Botanical and Entomological Sub-sections with the Natural History Section.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Section, held on March 26th, 1960, the Secretary reported that the total membership was 213, of whom 173 were members of the Parent Society and 40 of the Section only. Since January, 1960, £23 13s. 0d. had been expended on the purchase of Natural History books (including part of the library of the late Dr. Watson) for the Section.

Mr. Hallam paid a tribute to Dr. Watson, who had been his predecessor as Recorder of Phanerogams. (An Obituary Notice by Dr. E. G. Neal is printed on p. 148 of this volume).

## SOMERSET BOTANY

RECORDERS' NOTES, 1959

## 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 as used in the Botanical Society of the British Isles Distribution Maps Scheme. The bracketed numbers refer to the ten districts into which Somerset was divided by R. P. Murray in *Flora of Somerset* (1896). District and vice-county records are marked with an asterisk (\*).

To save space, notes on Somerset species in *Bristol Botany, Proceedings of the Bristol Naturalists' Society*, are not included, though any records published there are entered in the card index kept at Taunton Castle. Notes are included which confirm the persistence of some species previously recorded.

- 46/17 **Ranunculus lenormandii** F. W. Schulz. Flowering abundantly on Exmoor (1, 2) in February, A.D. and O. M. Hallam.
- 153/2 **Amaranthus hybridus** L. ssp. **hypochondriacus**. Bridgwater Docks, 31/23, (3\*), E. J. Hamlin (det. F. H. Perring).
- 171/4 **Impatiens glandulifera** Royle. Bury, near Dulverton, 21/92, (1\*). Probably escaped from garden, regenerating, A.D. and O. M. Hallam.
- 341/1 **Quercus cerris** L. Otterford, 31/21, (6\*). Self-sown in hedge, presumably from parent in grounds of Otterford House, A.D. and O. M. Hallam.
- 445/4 x **Mentha x smithiana** R. A. Graham. Nettlecombe, 31/03, (2\*),  
3 x 5 A.D. and O. M. Hallam.
- 503/2 **Galinsoga ciliata** (Rafn.) Blake. Garden, West Monkton, 31/22, (3\*), v.c.5\*, Mrs. D. V. Sansome.
- 577/1 **Potamogeton natans** L. Pinkworthy Pond, Exmoor, 21/74, (1\*), A.D. and O. M. Hallam.
- 628/2 **Listera cordata** (L.) R. Br. One plant seen on Dunkery, 21/84, (1-2), A.D. and O. M. Hallam.

664/1 **Leersia oryzoides** (L.) Sw. This has been discovered growing along the banks of the Taunton-Bridgwater Canal, 31/32, 31/33, (3\*), v.c.5\*, over a distance of 4 miles, Captain R. G. B. Roe, R.N. It is strange that this grass, which occurs sometimes in great quantity, has never been recorded from this station. It has clearly been established here for many years. It was flowering and fruiting freely and in many plants the panicles were fully exerted.

— **Panicum miliaceum** L. Rubbish dump, Bristol Road, Bridgwater, 31/33 (5\*), fruiting, E. J. Hamlin.

A. D. HALLAM,  
Recorder.

## FUNGI

Although some few species of fungi can be found throughout the year, the main fungus season usually begins in July and lasts until the winter frosts, the peak period being September and October. The long summer drought of 1959 resulted in a very marked reduction in the usually abundant autumn crop, many of the normally common species not being seen at all. Those that did appear were often attacked by moulds which seemed to be unusually prevalent. In October, the Earth Ball, *Scleroderma*, which normally makes a fine show, being particularly abundant and large under beeches on the Blackdown Hills, was all mouldy, not a single healthy specimen being seen.

The November rains brought an outcrop of late autumn species, but the season was then too far advanced for many of the common larger toadstools.

### ***Mycena pterigena*** Fr.

This delicate pink toadstool with cap 2 to 6 mm. diameter and stem about 2 cm. long, grows on dead fern fronds in damp places. It was locally common during July 1958 at the edge of a conifer plantation, Blackdown Hills. V.C.5\*.

It was not found in 1959.

### ***Russula xerampelina*** var. ***fusca*** (Fr.) Melz. & Zv.

A distinct variety — dark brown with blood red spots on cap — of a not uncommon polymorphic species. Sept. Holford Combe. V.C.5\*.

**Cortinarius pseudosalor** Lange

Recorded at Crowcombe Park Gate, October 1958, and occurred again in the same area in August 1959. Good groups were also seen at Heddon Oak, Holford Combe and Brown Down in August and September. It may be that dry conditions suit this toadstool, as other species of this large genus were, with one exception, not seen in 1959.

**Psathyrella subatrata** (Batsch.) Fr.

This interesting toadstool out-cropped from July to September at the foot of an oak gate-post. Taunton. V.C.5\*.

Wakefield & Dennis (Common British Fungi, 1950), state "this fungus has appeared at the foot of an oaken gate-post in late summer year after year for about twenty years".

**Panaeolus sphinctrinus** Corda. Cheddar. V.C.6\*.**Puccinia extensicola** Plowr.

On Sea Aster, *A. tripolium*. May. Brean. V.C.6\*.

**Puccinia smyrnii** Corda

On Alexanders, *Smyrnum olusatrum*. May to July. Common near coast. V.C.5\*.

A. J. DODD,

Recorder.

## SOMERSET LEPIDOPTERA IN 1959

The year as a whole was disappointing so far as the moths were concerned, particularly the immigrant species, only **Plusia gamma** (Silver Y) and **Nomophila noctuella** (Rush Veneer) being really common, this in spite of the wonderfully fine and warm summer experienced over the whole district.

The "light-traps" were in operation throughout the greater part of the year at Bickenhall, Minehead, Taunton and Weston-super-Mare, the recorders being A. H. Turner, Dr. H. M. Chappel, Dr. E. G. Neal and Mr. C. S. H. Blathwayt respectively. Species marked \* are new county records.

**Leptidia sinapis** (Wood White). This species is apparently becoming rarer, only one was seen at Bickenhall.

**Colias crocea** (Clouded Yellow). One seen at Kingstone on 7th September. (A.H.T.).

- \***Leucania albipuncta** (White Point). Two at Weston-super-Mare in October.
- Rhizodra lutosa** (Large Wainscot). Several at Bickenhall and Minehead, September and October.
- Dypterygia scabriuscula** (Bird's Wing). One in light-trap at Taunton School in June. This is the first record for the county for 60 years.
- Graphiphora augur** (Double Dart). One at Bickenhall in June.
- Amathes ditrapezium** (Triple-spotted Clay). Two at Bickenhall in June.
- \***Plusia bractea** (Gold Spangle). One at Weston-super-Mare, 10th July: this is mainly a northern species.
- Xylena exoleta** (Sword Grass). One at Weston-super-Mare in October.
- Stilbia anomala** (Anomalous). Common at Minehead.
- Chilodes maritima** (Silky Wainscot). One at Minehead in July, and one at North Petherton in September (W. D. Colthurst).
- Pyrrhia umbra** (Bordered Sallow). One at Minehead in June.
- Hydraecia ophiogramma** (Double Lobed). Taken at Clevedon (C.S.H.B.).
- Tiliacea aurago** (Barred Sallow). At light, Bawdrip (R. Clatworthy). Very common at Bickenhall.
- Cirrhia gilvago** (Dusky-lemon Sallow). In September at Minehead, Bickenhall and Bawdrip (R. Clatworthy).
- Parastichtis suspecta** (Suspected). Common at Shapwick (C.S.H.B.).
- Mythimna turca** (Double Line). One at Bickenhall in June.
- Dasypolia templi** (Brindled Ochre). Common at Minehead.
- Xylomyges conspicillaris** (Silver Cloud). Occurred at Minehead in May: very common at Bickenhall as usual.
- Sterrha sylvestraria** (Dotted border Wave). One at Bickenhall, 30th June.
- Cosymbia trilineararia** (Clay Triple-lines). One at Minehead in June.
- Chesias legatella** (Streak). One at Minehead in October.

- Anaitis efformata** (Short-clasped Treble-bar). At Bickenhall in August.
- Philereme vetulata** (Brown Scallop). Two at Bickenhall, June and July.
- Euphyia picata** (Cloaked Carpet). Three at Minehead in July.
- Mesoleuca albicillata** (Beautiful Carpet). One at Minehead in June.
- Venusia cambrica** (Welsh Wave). At Minehead in July.
- Ectropis punctulata** (Grey Birch). Two at Minehead in July.
- Cleora ribeata** (Satin Carpet). Two at Minehead in July.
- Abraxas sylvata** (Clouded Magpie). Several at Cheddar in June (A.H.T.).
- Gnophos obscurata** (Annulet). One in June at Bickenhall and one in July at Minehead.
- Pachynemia hippocastanaria** (Horse Chestnut). One at Minehead in April.
- Cepphis advenaria** (Little Thorn). On Bilberry at Exmoor in June (H.M.C.).
- Cerura bicuspis** (Alder Kitten). Three at Minehead May and June.
- Lophopteryx cucullina** (Maple Prominent). A male in July at Minehead (was previously reported there in 1936).
- Crambus falsellus**. Several at Minehead.
- Crambus margaritellus**. Common at Culbone in July (H.M.C.).
- Margaronia unionalis**. Occurred at Minehead and Weston-super-Mare.
- \***Scoparia ulmella**. One at Bickenhall in June.
- Platyptilia pallidactyla**. One at Bickenhall in July.
- Adaina microdactyla**. One at Bickenhall in May.
- Fumaria casta**. The cases were common at Cheddar in June (A.H.T.).
- Peronea mixtana**. One at Bickenhall in May.
- \***Spilonota laricana**. Two at Bickenhall in August.
- \***Acroclita subsequana**. One at Bickenhall in June.
- Ancyliis achatana**. Several at Bickenhall in June and July.

**Eucosma foenella.** Taken at Minehead.

**Aristotelia lucidella.** Two at Bickenhall in July. (Not recorded for over 60 years).

**Recurvaria leucatella.** One at Bickenhall in July.

\***Acanthophila alacella.** One at Bickenhall in July.

**Coleophora albidella.** One at Bickenhall in June.

**Nematopogon metaxella.** One at Bickenhall in June.

A. H. TURNER,

*Recorder.*

### COLEOPTERA NOTES, 1959

Generally speaking, 1959 was a very poor year for Coleoptera; the prolonged drought leading to a marked decline in the beetle population. By the time midsummer had been reached, apart from aquatic and sub-aquatic species, it became increasingly difficult to find even insects which are normally abundant. In view of the prevailing dry conditions, attention was concentrated on vegetation associated with ponds and streams with the result that some interesting species came to light.

The following species have been selected from the total captures as being of local or rare occurrence. New County records are marked with an asterisk.

#### HYDROPHILIDAE

\***Hydraena minutissima** Steph. Horner Water, in moss on stones in stream. July. Local.

**Helophorus flavipes** F. Porlock, in moss on stones in stream. September. Rather local.

#### STAPHYLINIDAE

\***Myrmecopora uvida** Er. Alcombe Marshes, one on edge of a dyke near the coast. June. Local.

**Bolitochara bella** Märk. Porlock, in fungoid growth on old log. May. Local. Only once previously recorded from Somerset, V.C.H.

**Lesteva heeri** Fauv. Porlock, in moss on stones in stream. September. Local.



## CRYPTOPHAGIDAE

- Atomaria linearis** Steph. Minehead, in haystack refuse. May.  
Local. Only once previously recorded from Selworthy.

## COCCINELLIDAE

- Halyzia sexdecimguttata** L. Minehead, one in house porch.  
September. Local. Only once previously recorded from  
Blagdon near Taunton.
- Anatis ocellata** L. Minehead, one in house porch, generally found  
on fir trees. May. Local.
- Scymnus rubromaculatus** Goetz. Near Butleigh, one by general  
sweeping. July. Local. Only once previously recorded from  
Burnham.
- Scymnus auritus** Thunb. Minehead, one beaten from oak. August.  
Local.

## BRUCHIDAE

- Bruchidius unicolor** Ol. Near Butleigh, on *Helianthemum vulgare*.  
July. Local.

## CHRYSOMELIDAE

- Ochrosis ventralis** Ill. Allerford, on *Solanum dulcamara*. August.  
Local. Only once previously recorded from Minehead.
- \***Aphthona herbigrada** Curt. Near Butleigh, in abundance on  
*Helianthemum vulgare*. July. Very local.
- \***Mantura matthewsii** Curt. Cheddar, one swept from *Helianthe-*  
*mum vulgare* in the Gorge. June. Very local.

## CURCULIONIDAE

- Phyllobius viridicollis** F. Cheddar, on low vegetation in the Gorge.  
June. Local. Only once previously recorded from Charter-  
house on Mendips.
- Hydronomus alismatis** Marsh. Alcombe Marshes, several on  
*Alisma plantago*. June. Local.
- \***Phytobius quadrituberculatus** F. Horner Water, in moss on stones  
in stream. July. Local.

\***Eubrychius velatus** Beck. Huntworth, near Bridgwater, one found on aquatic plants in pond. August. Very local. (Found by R. Avery, Mid-Somerset Naturalist Society).

**Rhynchaenus salicis** L. Alcombe, several beaten from Salix. May. Local.

**Ceuthorhynchus melanostictus** Marsh. Alcombe Marshes, one swept from *Mentha aquatica*. August. Local. Only once previously recorded from Bridgwater.

W. A. WILSON,  
*Recorder.*

STEEP HOLM TRUST, 1959

TRUSTEES:

E. L. KELTING, O.B.E., *Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*

H. SAVORY, *Bristol Naturalists' Society*

MRS. M. L. COLTHURST, *Mid-Somerset Naturalist Society*

E. J. MASON, *Bristol Folk House Archaeological Club*

Whilst no outstanding events occurred, the season nevertheless proved to be again a satisfactory one in all respects. Requests to visit the Island were received from Schools, Colleges and Societies who had been before, while several others made the visit for the first time, including the West of England Science Teachers' Association. The Society's Ornithological Section paid their usual visit at Whitsuntide. Our thanks are again due to Dursley Grammar School for their good work put in on several occasions during the season.

The Steep Holm Peony continues its good progress despite the fact that its area is persistently invaded by the Alexanders. Here, however, it is possible to continue with systematic clearing, although, owing to the disturbance which would be caused, it is unfortunately not feasible to remove the roots of the Alexanders — the real source of the trouble — from the rocky fissures in which they grow. One viewed with much satisfaction the show of colour during the comparatively short flowering period. On one occasion over fifty perfect blooms were counted on the 'Peony Ledges', while below in the 'Peony Glen' the longer established plants are now in several cases large and robust.