

## The Entomological Section

<sup>1</sup>President—The Rev. Preb. A. P. WICKHAM, F.R.E.S.

Treasurer—Mr. C. J. PERRENS, 6, Park Road, Bridgwater.

Secretary—Dr. J. V. BLACHFORD, C.B.E., Milverton Ho., Long Ashton, Bristol.

THE Annual Meeting of the Entomological Section was held at Taunton Castle on 13 February 1935, the Rev. Preb. A. P. Wickham, President, in the chair. All the officers were re-elected for the ensuing year.

A field meeting was held at Holford on 14 June: the weather was kind considering what the early summer was like. No outstanding insects were taken, but *bombyliformis*, *hastata*, *aurinia*, *euphrosyne*, and a number of other common species were noted. Few members were able to attend, and the Rev. Preb. Wickham, with Messrs. E. C. Beck and C. J. Perrens, made up the party.

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Mr. C. J. Perrens has very kindly sent the following notes from the Bridgwater district:

Spring came early last year. The shallows were out in sheltered places in February and at Shapwick by 18 March when I took *Polyptoca flavicornis*. Some bushes remained attractive there until 23 April, and *Taeniocampa opima* and varieties of *T. gracilis* were captured.

At the end of April and in early May *Xylomyges conspicillaris* was very plentiful in its usual haunts, and *Cucullia chamomillae* not uncommon. Three specimens of the pale variety of *X. conspicillaris* were taken.

May was a cold month and the frost which blackened the oak leaves must have caused great mortality among larvae.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Edmund Page, M.C., of Ivythorn, Street, was elected President, at the Annual Meeting held on 14 February 1936, to succeed the late Prebendary Wickham.

The night of 30 May was comparatively warm and a sheet on the Polden Hills gave good results. One *Notodonta trepida* was taken, *Drymonia dodonea* and *Agrotis cinerea* were unusually plentiful. Many other species visited the light. Larva beating in June was a complete failure.

There was an unusual scarcity of *Spilosoma menthrasti* and *S. lubricipeda* both at Shapwick and the Bridgwater brick-ponds, although one specimen of *S. urticae* was taken at each locality.

There were very few *Cleoceris vinimalis* at Shapwick where it usually swarms, and no *Orthosia suspecta* which is usually fairly plentiful. *Arctia caja* and *A. villica* were not seen at all, *Spilosoma fuliginosa* was rare, and many usually common insects were scarce.

It is difficult to say if the scarcity of moths at Shapwick was due to the two previous hot summers, or to the extensive flooding of the moor in April.

On the Burnham sandhills *Agrotis tritici* and *Leucania littoralis* were very plentiful, but other common species not so numerous as usual. A few *Mamestra albicolon* were noted, a species I had not seen there before.

Beating shallows at Shapwick in August produced a good number of *Earia chlorana* and a few *Dicranura furcula* larvae, but very little else.

*Vanessa C-album* was plentiful in September in Loxley Wood. Fifteen were taken on the 23rd and many more seen. At ivy the common species were very abundant, but only two *Xylina socia* were seen and no *X. semi-brunnea* or *Dasycampa rubiginea*.

During the season I took two insects of outstanding interest, namely :

- (i) *Collix sparsata* on 9 June at Shapwick, which I believe to be new to the County.
- (ii) *Heliothis peltigera*, also at Shapwick, on 30 August.

I am not sure if *Boarmia consortaria* taken at Butleigh on 4 June is worthy of mention.

A SUGGESTION

For the last year or two the Report of the Section has been rather lacking in interest, due to the fact that there are now few additions to be made to the County List.

It is suggested that members report any unusual captures in their areas, and also study the common species with special attention to :

- (i) variation in numbers in different years.
- (ii) if unusual climatic conditions produce an unusually high proportion of variation in marking, colour, etc., in different species.

They could then send in a brief report and a note on the weather conditions for the season.

From this data it should be possible to obtain a fairly accurate idea of the effect climatic conditions have on insect life.

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Dr. H. Downes sent the following report for Ilminster :

Convolvulus Hawk Moth (*Sphinx convolvuli*), larva on *Convolvulus arvensis*, allotment grounds, bred to perfect insect.

Death's Head Hawk Moth (*Acherontia atropos*), larva on potato in allotments, bred to perfect insect.

Humming-Bird Hawk Moth was extraordinarily plentiful in 1933 and 1934, but scarce in 1935.

Comma Butterfly, although common from 1931 to 1934, seemed scarce in 1935.