

## THE BOTANICAL SECTION

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*Committee*—The above, with E. J. HAMLIN, E. F. PAYNE, Cmdr. R. D. GRAHAM, Mrs. MORTEN and Mr. A. J. DODD.

1951

The forty-first Annual General Meeting was held at Taunton Castle on 1 March, 1951. Twenty-one members were present. The statement of accounts shewed a balance of £7 4s. 2½d. as at 31 December, 1950. The President announced the death of Mr. C. J. Bartlett, who had been Hon. Secretary in 1944 and 1945 and Hon. Treasurer in 1946. The Hon. Secretary announced that he had been appointed Hon. Local Secretary, Vice-county 5, for the Botanical Society of the British Isles. It was decided that the Section should become an Institutional Member of that Society.

The South Western Naturalists' Union held their annual conference during Whitsun week-end in Taunton at the invitation of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. All the Natural History Sections co-operated in arranging the programme, the Hon. Secretary of this Section acting as Local Secretary for the occasion. Excursions were arranged to Prior's Park Wood and Britty Common on Saturday, 12 May; to Porlock Marsh, Horner Woods and Watchet on Sunday, 13 May; and to Thurlbear on Monday, 14 May.

Co-operation between the Sections was continued in connexion with exhibits shown at Bridgwater Agricultural Show on 19 July and at Taunton Flower Show on 9 and 10 August, Mrs. Colthurst acting as organiser of all Natural History Exhibits at the former and Mrs. Hallam at the latter. The Geological and Botanical Sections were responsible for the construction of a model, fifteen feet long, representing the geology and the vegetation of a section of country from Hurley Beacon on the Quantocks to the coast at Stolford. On one side of the model were displayed rock specimens and characteristic plants from the siliceous soil of the north-western end of the Quantocks, the gravel, marl and clay soils of the cultivated land and the salt marsh and shingle at Stolford. On the other side of the model birds characteristic of the various types of country were arranged in natural settings by members of the Ornithological Section.



In addition to the excursions in connexion with the South Western Naturalists' Conference seven other field meetings were held. On Saturday, 19 May a small party, with Mr. E. F. Payne as leader, visited Park Wood, near Wells. Part of this oak wood had recently been devastated by bulldozers. The rest of the wood has been grazed by cattle and horses, and to this may be attributed the relative scarcity of bluebells and primroses. A few patches of herb paris and the common solomon's seal were observed. Another wood, north of the road from Wells to Shepton Mallet, on Carboniferous Limestone, provided a contrast in flora. The dominant tree was ash and spurge laurel was frequent. King's Castle Hill, above this wood, was occupied by hawthorn scrub, bracken and open pasture. On the Wells side of the hill was a small wood of ancient yews, occupying a steep slope, at the bottom of which was seen an outcrop of Dolomitic Conglomerate.

On Saturday, 2 June, the Entomological Section arranged an excursion by motor coach to Hod Hill in Dorset and invited the Botanical and Geological Sections to join them. The underlying rocks on Hod Hill are Lower and Middle Chalk, the junction between them being about half way up the hill. Members were glad of the opportunity of seeing the chalk flora, which is so poorly represented in Somerset. The lower slopes were occupied partly by beechwood and partly by mixed woodland of oak, ash and sycamore, with a shrub layer of hawthorn, dogwood and wayfaring tree, with occasional spindle and purging buckthorn. The woods were fringed with open scrub of hawthorn, rose and bramble. This passed upward into grassland which was being colonised by oak, ash, sycamore and occasional yew, signs, perhaps, of reduction in pressure of sheep grazing. Yew was not common on Hod Hill, but there was pure yew wood on the steep slope of the neighbouring hill. Bird's nest orchid and white helleborine occurred in patches in the beechwood. On the grassland the horse-shoe vetch was locally abundant. *Carex humilis*, common rockrose, salad burnet, purging flax and carline thistle were frequent and *Gentiana praecox*, green-winged orchid and saw-wort occurred occasionally. A single plant of *Senecio campestris* was found. Time did not allow of any detailed examination of floristic differences due to the earthworks of the Iron Age hill-fort on the downland at the top of the hill. Members were much indebted to Mr. Graveson, whose local knowledge contributed so much to their enjoyment of the day.

The Botanical Section invited the Entomological Section to join in an excursion to Braunton Burrows on Saturday, 16 June. The motor coach stopped near Bampton to allow members to see *Valeriana pyrenaica*, which was well established in a hedgebank. On arriving at the Saunton Sands Hotel, a short time was spent in looking for the rare sea-stock, which still grows on the cliffs, though it is no longer to be found on the Burrows. The scotch thistle (*Onopordon acanthium*) was also seen on the cliff path. The coach



took members along the rough track which led to the inland side of the dunes, south of the golf course. Here were found *Bartzia viscosa*, *Scirpus holoschoenus*, *Juncus acutus*, *Viola curtisii*, *Linaria arenaria*. Owing to the wet season the dune slacks were still full of water. Shoots of *Teucrium scordium* were seen, but it was too early for it to be seen flowering. It was interesting to note how many species occur at Braunton which are not found at Burnham, the most striking of these absences being the sea buckthorn. Members were most grateful to Mrs. Cadell, a local botanist, who very kindly led the expedition.

On Thursday, 5 July, Commander Graham was leader at Shapwick Heath. The golden dock was seen by the side of a rhine near the station. Several plots on the turf moor were visited and great variation in flora due to differences in acidity of the soil were observed in adjacent plots. Neither *Cladium mariscus* nor *Rhynchospora fusca* could be found. Among the most interesting species seen were *Schoenus nigricans*, lesser water-plantain, lesser butterfly orchid, fragrant orchid, marsh helleborine, ivy-leaved campanula and *Drosera anglica*. The last species had not previously been found by the leader in this locality.

Mr. Makins was leader at a meeting at Bruton on Wednesday, 1 August. The fine-leaved sandwort was seen on the edge of the station platform and the Deptford pink on a wall near the church. The main purpose of the meeting was to examine the woodland and downland on Creech Hill, which is on oolitic limestone. A plantation of conifers on the top of the hill was felled during the First World War, and since then a wood has developed by natural regeneration. Ash is dominant, but there are signs of its gradual replacement by oak. A well developed shrub layer is composed mainly of hazel, elder, maple and wayfaring tree. Ragwort and spear thistle were conspicuous outside the wood on the south-east slope. The downland on the north-western side of the hill top is closely cropped by rabbits. Among the plants found here were autumn gentian, clustered campanula, squinancywort, carline and stemless thistle.

Geologists and Entomologists joined with Botanists in a meeting at Uphill on Saturday, 15 September. *Aster linosyris* was flowering in a restricted patch on the hill side. The leaves of honewort were still to be seen. Among late-flowering species on the slope of the Carboniferous Limestone hill were autumn ladies tresses, small scabious, pepper saxifrage, wild carrot and field garlic. Vervein was seen at the bottom of the hill. The salt marsh nearby provided a complete contrast in flora and a few plants of *Spartina townsendii* were observed here for the first time. Sea aster, sea milkwort, sea plantain, stag's-horn plantain, glasswort and thrift were among the characteristic plants seen. *Bupleurum tenuissimum* could not be found.

On Saturday, 6 October, a fungus-foray was held on the Tetton



Estate, by kind permission of Mr. Mervyn Herbert. Mr. G. A. Usher, who acted as leader, first showed specimens of *Bulgaria polymorpha* in his garden. On the way through the fields the commonest fungi were *Panaeolus campanulatus* and *P. papilionaceus*. Several species of *Hygrophorus* were seen, including *H. ceraceus*, *H. psittacinus*, *H. puniceus* and *H. virgineus*. In the first wood visited larch trees were badly affected by the larch canker. *Boletus edulis* was seen here. The second wood visited was a mixed plantation, where a fine specimen of the beef-steak fungus was seen on a fallen oak tree. Other species noted during the afternoon were *Lepiota procera*, *Tricholoma rutilans*, *Pleurotus ostreatus*, *Hypholoma fascicularis*, *Coprinus micaceus*, *Panus stypticus*, *Clavaria vermicularis* and *Tremella mesenterica*. *Polystictus versicolor*, *Stereum hirsutum* and *Auricularia mesenterica* were abundant on dead wood.

A joint standing committee representing all the Natural History Sections of the Society drew up a joint programme of indoor meetings for the Autumn. The first meeting was an evening conversation held on 15 October at the Castle Hotel, Taunton, at which Mr. Palmer presided. He also gave a short talk on the flora of Teesdale. Among exhibits brought by members of the Botanical Section were a collection of named fungi, herbarium specimens, photographs and paintings of wild flowers.

Mrs. Hallam and Mr. Dodd collected for and undertook the arrangement of the flower table in the Museum during the season.

A. D. HALLAM,  
Hon. Secretary.

#### RECORDER'S NOTES, 1951

The bracketed numbers refer to the ten divisions into which Somerset was divided by Murray. Where plants are recorded by members of the Committee initials are used. Divisional or vice-county records are starred.

For non-vascular plants (bryophytes, lichens, algae and fungi) only vice-county numbers are used: v.c.5 for South and West Somerset and v.c.6 for North and East Somerset; asterisks similarly indicate new vice-county records.

*Fumaria boraei* Jord. 'Sparingly in one spot on ruins of Glastonbury Abbey' (8), *C.I.* and *N.Y. Sandwith*, *Bristol Botany*, 1950.

*Cochlearia anglica* L. Lower Lighthouse March, Berrow, (9), in *spartinetum*, *O.M.H.* This species was not recorded by Mrs. G. M. Boley, *Proc. Bristol Nat. Soc.*, 4 ser. IX (1942-3), 430, 516.

*Lepidium draba* L. (*Cardiaria draba* (L.) Desv.). Docks at Bridgwater (3), *E.J.H.*; Weston-super-mare (9), *E.J.H.*

*Polygala calcarea* L. x *vulgaris*, F. Schultz. At the annual exhibition meeting of the Botanical Society of the British Isles, 20 October, 1951 Mr. P. F. Yeo showed a putative hybrid between these

- two species from Somerset. J. E. Lousley, *Nature*, 168 (1 Dec., 1951), 935.
- Cerastium tetrandrum* Curt. Mobile dunes near shore, Burnham (8), *O.M.H.*
- Geranium pratense* L. Huish Champflower (3), *F. House*.
- Erodium maritimum* (L.) Ait. Crook Peak (9), *C.I.* and *N.Y. Sandwith, Bristol Botany*, 1950.
- Impatiens capensis* Meerb. In our 1950 Report the locality was given wrongly; it should have been Keynsham (10). This Keynsham plant was at first identified from foliage alone as *I. parviflora*, but Mr. Evans later found it was *I. capensis*. The Leigh Wood plant is *I. parviflora* DC.
- Comarum palustre* L. was reported for Berrow (9) in *Bristol Botany*, 1950, but was later discovered to be an error, though too late to stop its printing.
- Bupleurum tenuissimum* L. Salt marsh, Stolford (2), *O.M.H.* and *E. G. Neal*.
- Heraclium spondylium* L. var. *angustifolium* Huds. Frequent at Priston (10), *Mrs. Bell, Bristol Botany*, 1950.
- Sambucus ebulus* L. Increasing on both sides of the canal at Bridgwater (3) *E.J.H.*; Garden hedge near High Ham (5), *E.J.H.*
- Dipsacus pilosus* L. Poundisford (3), *A.D.* and *O.M.H.*; one plant seen near High Ham, (5), *Mrs. Colthurst* and *E.J.H.*
- Bidens tripartita* L. var. *integra* Koch. Near Mudgley (8), *C.I.* and *N.Y. Sandwith, Bristol Botany*, 1950.
- Senecio cineraria* DC. This was reported by Mr. Hadden in the 1924 Report as establishing itself at Porlock (2). Judging by the amount seen on Porlock Marsh during the South West Naturalists' Union meeting on 13 May, it is now very well established.
- Arctium majus* Bernh. x *minus* Bernh. and *A. majus* Bernh. x *pubens* Bab. are both recorded as occurring on Westbury Moor, near Wookey (9), *Bristol Botany*, 1950.
- Cirsium eriophorum* (L.) Scop. subsp. *britannicum* Petrak. Near Tickenham (9) and Long Ashton (10), *C.I.* and *N.Y. Sandwith, Bristol Botany*, 1950.
- Leontodon leysseri* (Wallr.) Beck. This is equivalent to *L. taraxacoides* of the London Catalogue. 'A single specimen with creamy-white flowers was found by us last summer on Crook Peak (9)', *C.I.* and *N.Y. Sandwith, Bristol Botany*, 1950.
- Statice vulgare* Mill. var. *pyramidalis* Druce occurs near the mouth of the Parrett (8) and a specimen from there was collected by Gapper so long ago as 1823.
- Lysimachia vulgaris* L. var. *klingsgraeffii* Abromeit. 'A slight form with the base of the corolla lobes brownish-red', Shapwick Moor (8), *C.I.* and *N.Y. Sandwith, Bristol Botany*, 1950.



- Centaureum capitatum* (Willd.) Borbas. A long reference to the discovery of this plant by Mr. Makins on Crook Peak (9) is given in *Bristol Botany*, 1950.
- Gentiana amarella* L. A white flowered form was found at Priddy (9) by Mrs. D. H. Perrett, E.J.H.
- Solanum nigrum* L. Several places in Bridgwater (3), E.J.H.
- Linaria minor* (L) Desf. (*L. viscida* Moench.) Bridgwater (3), E.J.H.
- Verbena officinalis* L. Bridgwater (3), E.J.H.
- Euphorbia lathyris* L. Waste ground, Bridgwater (3), E.J.H.
- Himantoglossum hircinum* (L) Spreng. Dunes, Burnham (8), E.F.P.
- Leucojum vernum* L. has been noticed near Blagdon (3), but must have been a recent introduction.
- Allium oleraceum* L. Uphill (9), E.J.H.
- Scirpus holoschoenus* L. In a leading article in *Nature*, during the early part of the year, about Braunton Burrows, this species was stated to be extinct on the Somerset coast, but, so far as I am aware, it still occurs in its old place, though I have not seen it for a few years. Its survival is confirmed by E.F.P.
- Carex paniculata* L. Several groups of large tussocks measuring up to 50 ins. to the base of this year's leaves occur near the head of a valley, Blackdown escarpment, near Mount Fancy Farm (3), O.M. and A.D.H.
- Setaria viridis* Beauv. Waste ground, Bridgwater (5), E.J.H.
- Phalaris canariensis* L. Waste ground, Bridgwater (5), E.J.H.
- Equisetum variegatum* Schleich. This still grows near the railway station, Weston-super-Mare (9), E.J.H.

## CRYPTOGAMS

There has been little activity, as far as the cryptogams are concerned, except in respect of the fungi. During the autumn of 1951 fungi have not been conspicuous; the common edible mushrooms have been infrequent and *Marasmius oreades*, which forms the fairy rings in fields, lawns and even on cricket-fields, has been much rarer than it has been for many years.

*Lepiota erminea* Fr., which was found near Upper Cheddon (v.c.5) some years ago, has been found again and confirmed. Probably some species new to Somerset or rare in the county were noted during the fungus foray near Kingston, I have not seen a complete list, but the following may be mentioned:

*Bulgaria polymorpha* Wetts. (*B. inquinans* Phil.) is a common fungus, but I had only one previous record for Somerset, and that was from Dunster.

*Panaeolus papilionaceus* (Bull.) Fr. has been noticed in my garden, but otherwise there are few records.

BRYOPHYTES

*Dicranum scottianum* Turn. Hawkcombe, near Porlock (v.c.5),  
R.D.G. New record for Somerset.

The following papers by members have recently appeared :

C.I. and N.Y. Sandwith, *Bristol Botany in 1950. Proc. Bristol  
Naturalists' Society*, xxviii, pt. II (1950), 169 ff.

W. Watson, The species of *Usnea* in Great Britain and Ireland.  
*Trans. Brit. Mycological Society*, xxxiv, pt. 3, 368-375.

W. WATSON,  
Recorder.