

The Entomological Section.

President—Mr. GERALD B. CONEY, The Hall, Batcombe.

Recorder—Mr. A. E. HUDD, F.E.S., 108, Pembroke Road, Clifton.

Treasurer—Mr. W. A. BOGUE, F.E.S., The Bank House, Watchet.

Secretary—Mr. H. H. SLATER, Brooke House, Cannington.

THERE is not much to report for the past year, the principal event being that four of our keenest workers are away in khaki—our President (Mr. Coney), Col. Jermyn, and Messrs. Troup and Perrens.

Our winter meeting was held at Taunton Castle, as usual, on February 11th, 1915. All the officers were re-elected, and our balance in hand was £3 9s. 3d., with a dozen subscriptions to come in (which have since been paid). Five pounds, afterwards increased to £6, was voted for a new insect cabinet, for which the Parent Society paid the balance.

We had three field-days (the first and last, unfortunately, wet days):—

June 3rd. King Alfred's Tower; Bruton.

July 1st. Otterhead and Culmhead (in conjunction with the Botanical Section).

August 5th. Brockley Combe; Yatton.

We only averaged an attendance of eight! Ten of our members have never attended a meeting of any sort, and their faces are unknown to most of us! The experiment of a joint meeting on July 1st was most successful, and we hope to meet the Botanical Section in the field again. Why not yearly?

Considerable disappointment has been caused by the meagre assistance given by members to Mr. Charbonnier, our honorary member, who is writing the list of additions to the County list of Hymenoptera and Diptera—and to whom our warmest thanks are certainly due. Only four members, as far as is known, sent any material in 1914 and 1915. Surely members might scrape up sufficient energy and public spirit to collect flies and bees in their own gardens! There is no possibility of the distribution of species in the County being worked out at the present rate.

Two new members were elected at the Brockley meeting, who bring our membership up to thirty-three, with three honorary members.

Three notable additions to the County list have been:—

Argynnis Paphia. Var., *G. Valesina*, Cogley Wood, Bruton, 1915.

Sesia andreniformis, Weston-super-Mare.

Crambus uliginosellus, Culmhead, July 1st, 1915.

And several new localities for scarce species already recorded.

The Ornithological Section.

President :—The Right Hon. LORD ST. AUDRIES.

Recorders :—Miss AMY SMITH, The Mount, Halse, Taunton; and Dr. J. WIGLESWORTH, Springfield House, Winscombe.

Secretary and Treasurer :—Mr. GEORGE HISCOCK, Cyprus Terrace, Taunton.

THE Annual Meeting of the Ornithological Section was held at Taunton Castle on February 18th, 1915, when Dr. J. Wiglesworth was elected Joint Recorder (for the northern part of the county). The other officers were re-elected. It was decided to have four cases of birds belonging to the W. A. Sanford Collection set up afresh; these included a specimen of the Rose-coloured Pastor (*Pastor roseus*), shot at Shapwick, Somerset, in 1850. It was also decided to repair a few of the exhibits in the John Marshall Collection of Albino Birds. It was reported at this meeting that a large part of the cases forming the Bidgood Collection of Birds would be ticketed during the year.

During the spring and summer an excellent beginning was made to form a collection of Somerset Birds' Eggs, to which Mr. A. W. Turner, Miss Smith, Mr. W. H. Rendall and Mr. G. Hiscock have contributed. They include a clutch of uncommon Blackbird's eggs, pale blue in colour and of a peculiar shape; also a pale blue Peewit's egg. The Section has purchased four eggs of Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygargus*) taken on Exmoor, June 5th, 1890.

On June 10th the Section had a successful field meeting, in conjunction with the Botanical Section. At Spring Grove, Milverton, Mr. C. R. Gawen showed the members of the Section his aquatic and other birds, including a pair of Crested African Cranes, two Barnacle Geese (sitting), and Egyptian Geese with their young. The two Sections were afterwards kindly entertained to tea at Bathealton Court by Major-General and Mrs. Moysey.

Through the kindness of the Rev. J. A. Smart, of Porlock, we have acquired a specimen of the Ruddy Sheldrake (*Casarca rutila*), shot (with another) on November 13th, 1915, on the marshes, Porlock Manor Estate. These birds are so rare that

it leads us to fear they may have escaped from some pond in the locality, but we must hope they are *bona fide* visitors to the county.

The Misses Smith when out for a walk with their dogs in a field near Halse flushed no less than eighteen Snipe, and it appears that Woodcock are plentiful in the neighbourhood of Fitzroy, Norton Fitzwarren.

A report has been received that a Buzzard has recently been shot near Cothelstone. It seems a pity that such rare birds should be shot directly they are seen. These birds should be encouraged to come here oftener, and when observed a note should be made and sent to the Recorders of the Section.

The Brean Down bird sanctuary, under the protection of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, continues to justify the aims of its founders. Last season four young Ravens were reared and two young Peregrines. It is very pleasing to find that these noble birds are being retained as members of the county fauna.

A Little Owl, observed on Brean Down last May, marks an extension of the range of this introduced alien.

It is gratifying to find that the Great Crested Grebe now breeds freely at Blagdon Reservoir. Mr. Donald Carr estimates that eighteen to twenty young were hatched there last season. A female Gadwall was shot on the Reservoir on December 22nd, 1915, and is now in Mr. Carr's possession.

A Quail was seen by Mr. Carr at Ubley last May, and was heard calling on several occasions afterwards; so that it is possible the bird may have bred in the district.

The Botanical Section.

President and Recorder—The Rev. E. S. MARSHALL, F.L.S.,
West Monkton Rectory, Taunton.

Secretary—Mr. W. D. MILLER, Cheddon, Taunton.

THE spring business meeting was held at Taunton Castle on Tuesday, February 9th, 1915, the Rev. E. S. Marshall, President, in the chair. There was a fair attendance

of members. The accounts for the preceding year were passed, showing a balance in hand of £3 19s. 6d. Mr. J. W. White, F.L.S., author of *The Flora of the Bristol Coal-Fields*, etc., was unanimously elected an honorary member. The following field-days were arranged:—June 10th, Milverton District; July 1st, Otterhead District; July 29th, Blue Anchor to Minehead. Various other business was transacted at the meeting.

During the summer the above programme of field-days was duly carried out, and interesting localities and fine weather promoted three pleasant days and some useful work. On June 10th members of the Ornithological and Botanical Sections had the pleasure of visiting, under the owner's guidance, the grounds of Spring Grove, Milverton, belonging to Mr. C. R. Gawen, where the extensive rockery and the collection of foreign water-fowl and other birds were objects of interest. Langford Common and surrounding lands were then examined. Unfortunately some weeks' drought had somewhat affected the flora, and only a few interesting plants were recorded, among them being *Viola lactea*, Spring Grove (E.S.M.). General and Mrs. Moysey provided a very welcome tea at Bathealton Court, and further field botany on the way home closed a pleasant day.

The expedition to Churchstanton and Otterford on July 1st was a very successful one, and we were joined on this occasion by some active members of the Entomological Section. The Parish of Churchstanton has only belonged to Somerset for some twenty years, and was new botanically to most of the visitors. It is rich in subalpine and marsh species, and would repay closer working. The marsh and heath lands of Widcombe Moor, Trickey Warren, and Ring Down, came under observation; and the party were afterwards entertained at tea by Mr. and Mrs. Black at Otterhead House,—returning to Taunton by motor.

The most interesting plants observed included a considerable patch of cranberry (*Oxycoccus quadripetala*), thought by Murray, twenty years ago, to be possibly extinct in the county, and two new Somerset plants:—*Eriophorum gracile*, a very rare cotton-grass, and a sundew, *Drosera obovata* (*D. anglica*

× *D. rotundifolia*). Other plants were *Drosera anglica*, and *D. longifolia* (the latter in profusion on the flank of Ring Down), *Pinguicula lusitanica*, *Myrica Gale*, *Eriophorum latifolium*, *Orchis incarnata*, and *Scirpus caespitosus*.

The field-day to the coast beyond Blue Anchor was poorly attended, and the flora has been so well worked that little of importance could be expected. However some ten members spent a pleasant day, and took pleasure in the beautiful beach flora. Among other interesting plants *Polygonum Raii* was noticed. Earlier in the season the somewhat rare clovers *Trifolium scabrum* and *T. striatum* were noted in quantity beside the new road at Blue Anchor. It may be worthy of mention that the patch of *Lepidium Draba* near Minehead Station seems to be spreading. *Silene conica* was also noticed among the beach huts, some 300 yards from its main station on the golf-links.

Much interesting work has been done by individual members, particularly by the President and Mr. Watson, and a host of new vice-county records are reported. It is probable that if botanists would report their finds more consistently, the season's results would have been even more remarkable.

Particularly interesting additional notes have been as follows:—

Silene annulata (casual), and *Crocus vernus*. Milverton. Miss Falcon.

Agrimonia odorata. Mendip and Farrington Gurney. H. S. Thompson. Also Court Hill, Clevedon. Miss Roper.

Callitriche truncata, and *Sparganium neglectum*. Cannington brook. The Rev. E. S. Marshall.

Epilobium Lamyi. Kingweston. The Rev. E. S. Marshall. New for that part of Somerset.

Limnanthemum peltatum. Cannington brook. H. Slater. Probably an escape.

Verbascum Blattaria. Milverton. The Rev. C. Q. Knowles.

Rhinanthus major var. *platypterus*. Near Edington and Shapwick Stations. The Rev. E. Ellman, Mrs. Sandwith and the Rev. E. S. Marshall. Not recorded since 1892.

Wolffia arrhiza. Near Ashcott and various stations thence by Brent to Lympham. Mrs. Sandwith, Mr. C. Bucknall and Miss Roper.

Carex lasiocarpa × *riparia*. Ashcott and Walton. H. S. Thompson. This hybrid sedge is new to Britain, and must be looked upon as the most interesting Somerset discovery of the year.

Lycopodium Selago. Above Blagdon. H. S. Thompson.

It has also been established that crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) occurs on other hills near Porlock in addition to Dunkery. Under its local name of "heath-worts" it is well known to the residents, and children are warned against it as poisonous!

The thanks of the Section, for permission to visit their land, are due to various owners in addition to those whose kind entertainment has been mentioned above: to Colonel Sanford, Lady Mellor, and Messrs. A. F. Luttrell, W. J. Patterson, R. Brooks-King, and others.

The President and a few friends have paid several visits to Braunton Burrows and Dawlish Warren, both of which localities at almost all seasons of the year are crowded with botanical treasures. In connection with the former, it may be of interest that the West of France plant *Linaria arenaria*, discovered on Northam flats some seven or eight years ago, was found recently at Saunton. Its appearance on our sand dunes, in the same situations as *Viola Curtisii* is possible.

For complete Somerset notes for 1915, members are referred to the *Journal of Botany*, for which the President prepares annually a somewhat exhaustive list.

Seven new members have joined, and—in spite of a few withdrawals—the numbers are now 44, and there would no doubt be a large increase under happier conditions.

Mr. H. Stuart Thompson, F.L.S., has presented some dried specimens to the Castle Herbarium, which is beginning to assume very tangible proportions, and something like order, thanks to the work of Mr. T. W. Cowan, F.L.S.

Mr. W. Watson has done much work this year on the bog-mosses of Somerset, and a paper on this subject, with illustrations, will appear in the present volume of the *Proceedings*.

It is hoped next year that one or two papers may be forthcoming; and, in addition to field work,—systematic contributions in kind to the county Herbarium might well be organized.