

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, Stawell, Bridgwater.

OUR members increase in number, but we wish they would take more interest in field-days. Our new cabinet is taking shape, and will be found, we believe, to be an advance on anything of the same kind elsewhere in its usefulness to those who consult it, for the range in the County of each species (as so far ascertained) will be visible at a glance. This feature, moreover, gives an opportunity, even to beginners in entomology, of assisting, for we have no notes or specimens from many parts of the County. We shall welcome, from our members or others, donations of specimens of butterflies or moths of which we have none in the collection, or an imperfect series. A series consists of two pairs, except in the case of very variable insects (for which we shall allow more room); the specimens should be well-set on black pins, accurately labelled with locality and date, and, of course, must have been taken in the County.

We are making a start with the supplementary list of insects discovered in the county since the publication of the *Victoria County History*. We hope to extend this to all orders of insects, and are making a commencement with the additions to the macro-lepidoptera.

It is manifestly unfair that our Recorder should have to guarantee, by publication in his own name, the authenticity of

imperfectly identified species ; and we do not wish to have to discount our work by a subsequent list of apologies for errors. We must therefore ask all members to be scrupulously careful in recording their captures, and not to be above having their identifications verified—especially in the case of critical species—by some of the entomological specialists, of whom we all have one or two amongst our correspondents.

As the Secretary found, in his own experience of pupa digging in 1912, that a very large proportion of the pupae unearthed were dead and mouldy, owing to the prevailing wet weather, he thought it best not to try and arrange for an autumn field-day for this purpose.

Our day at Castle Neroche on May 27th (Whit-Monday) only needed the presence of a few more members to make it as successful as it was in every way enjoyable. The Secretary, in arranging for such field-days has hitherto acted on the belief that Bank Holidays are the most suitable days for the purpose (as they are the only possible days for some members). But if they are unsuitable to the majority, he would like to know it.

The Ornithological Section.

President—The Right Hon. LORD ST. AUDRIES.

Recorder—Mr. JAMES TURNER, Burnham, Somerset.

Secretary and Treasurer—Miss AMY SMITH, The Mount, Halse, Taunton.

THE Secretary and the Recorder have both been busy during the past year, and correspondents in different parts of the county have obligingly contributed notes upon rare birds that have been obtained or seen in their several localities.

The Annual Meeting was held at Taunton Castle on June 20, 1912, when there was a fair attendance of local ornithologists.

It should also be mentioned that Mr. Harry Cox, F.Z.S.,

Organizing Secretary for the West of England of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, gave a lantern lecture on "Holidays in Bird-land," to the Taunton Field Club, on Nov. 16, 1911.

The Section now consists of over 40 members.

Some rare specimens have been kindly presented to the Museum, chiefly by the Rev. Father R. Chichester, including a Baillon's Crake, recently killed near Minehead.

It will be gratifying to members to know that the Raven, Peregrine Falcon, Common Buzzard, Merlin, Lesser Redpoll, Marsh Warbler, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Great Crested Grebe, Guillemot, and Manx Shearwater, breed regularly in the county; also the Garganey Duck and the Woodcock have, on clear evidence, nested this season.

Mr. A. F. Luttrell of Dunster Castle has in his collection a specimen of that very rare North American wanderer, the Yellow-shank, shot in February, 1903, on Dunster Beach, by his keeper; and apparently, from the label on the back of the case, the bird was duly identified when set up by a Cardiff naturalist.

On October 26, 1912, one of the party shooting with Lieut-Colonel D. F. Boles, M.P., at Sandhill Park, near Taunton, killed a duck which completely baffled everyone who examined it. The Recorder, with Col. Boles' permission, sent up the skin to the British Museum (Natural History) where the bird was pronounced to be a female Mandarin Duck. This species is not included in the list of British Birds, and it would be interesting to know if any West Somerset resident has missed a bird of this species from his ornamental ponds.

The action already taken by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to make the Brean Down promontory a Wild Birds Protected Area and endorsed by an order of the Somerset County Council is a most generous and valuable step, and they will receive the thanks of everyone who is interested in bird preservation and particularly in Somerset ornithology.

The "Royal Society" now appeals to Somerset bird-lovers for assistance towards the cost of the watchers on the promontory during the coming nesting season.¹

The notes which the Recorder has received are far too numerous to be inserted here, but the details will be issued to members of this Section in due course. The few pounds which the Section have in hand will be required for this purpose.

During the year the Secretary has compiled and published a little book (pocket edition) entitled "The Rarer Birds of Somerset" (The Wessex Press, Taunton). 1/6 net.

The Botanical Section.

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

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

THE Section has suffered a great loss by the death of the President, the Rev. Preb. Gilbert E. Smith, which occurred at Langford, on November 8th, 1912, at the age of 82 years. Genial, cultured and broad-minded, Mr. Smith was well known and greatly respected. He was deeply interested in geology, botany and ornithology, and had done much in a quiet way to promote the love of nature study. For many years his services were in great request at flower shows as a judge of wild flowers. Preb. Smith held the perpetual curacy of Barton St. David, Somerset, for about forty years, and then accepted the living of Brent Knoll, which he held for five years, before retiring and settling down at Langford.

A Meeting was held at the Museum, Taunton Castle, on Thursday, November 21st, 1912, Mr. T. W. Cowan, F.L.S., in the chair, when there were fifteen members and others

1. Any help will be gladly received, and duly sent on, by the Hon. Secretary, or the Recorder.

interested present; and afterwards—by the courtesy of the Taunton Field Club—members were able to attend two interesting illustrated lectures on “The Mosses of Somerset” by Mr. Walter Watson, and “Cleeve Abbey” by Mr. Cuthbert Short.

At the Meeting a sincere vote of sympathy was passed with the family of the late President; and the Rev. E. S. Marshall, F.L.S., Recorder of the Section, was elected to the Presidency thus vacant. Though at the beginning of the year the membership of the Section was hardly strong enough to encourage the idea of systematic and combined work, there are now about twenty subscribing members, and circulars are sent to many other botanists in the county. There is therefore every prospect of arranging field-days in 1913 and otherwise organizing the work of the Section. It was decided to hold a meeting early in March for this purpose.

Botanical notes have been received from Mr. C. E. Salmon, F.L.S., the Misses Sandford, and others, among the most interesting records being *Tulipa sylvestris*, at Wheathill (the Rev. W. G. Paterson), *Polygonatum officinale* at Oare (the Rev. E. S. Marshall), *Callitriche truncata* in the canal near Durston (Professor Glück of Heidelberg) and many new stations.

The Secretary announced that there was a balance of 25/- to credit of the Section, and the meeting authorized the purchase for the Library of Mr. E. W. Swanton's new book on “British Plant Galls,” Mr. C. Tite presenting the fellow-book on “Fungi.”

The need of cabinet room for mounted specimens was urged, and a cupboard in the Great Hall at the Castle has since been suitably fitted up for this purpose, largely at the expense of the Section. This cabinet will be filled with the specimens belonging to the Parent Society, the mounting of which is being carried out by Mr. and Miss Cowan.

It is hoped that there will be from time to time sufficient

funds to enable the Section to incur such desirable expenses as these, and all who are interested in botany are cordially invited to become subscribing members.

The scale of annual subscriptions is as follows:—

Members of the Parent Society and ladies, 2/6. Men—not members of the Som. Arch. & Nat. Hist. Society—5/- (to be reduced to 3/6 for members of two or more other natural history Sections of the Parent Society).