

## The Botanical Section

*President*—W. WATSON, D.SC., A.L.S.

*Committee*—H. DOWNES, M.B., N. G. HADDEN, E. J. HAMLIN,  
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THE twenty-third Annual General Meeting was held at the Wyndham Hall, Taunton Castle, on 20 April 1933, Dr. Watson, President, in the chair. Thirteen other members were present. After the minutes were read and the accounts, showing a balance in hand of £5 6s. 6*d.*, passed, the usual 10s. was voted to the upkeep and drainage of the Sharpham Moor Plot. Dr. Watson presented the Report, with some remarks on its contents, and it was adopted.

The Secretary appealed for notes on the extinction of previously recorded stations in Somerset of comparatively rare plants, with a view to the revision of Somerset entries in Druce's *Comital Flora*.

The arrangement of field days was left to the president and secretary, places suggested being Somerton, Porlock, Bruton and the Quantocks. Mr. Hadden's suggestion to hold a fungus foray in the autumn was cordially received. Some interesting fresh specimens were brought by Mrs. Barnard and Dr. Watson for inspection.

After Mr. W. D. Miller's long and severe illness it was a great pleasure to see him at the 1933 Annual Meeting, but his death on November 8 came as a great blow to his many friends and to the Section. Elsewhere in this volume an obituary notice by Dr. Watson will be found. Therefore on this page it is unnecessary to say more than that we have lost one who from the formation of the Section in 1910 had not only filled the important office of Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, but who for years kept Somerset plant records and latterly a card-index in the most painstaking manner. In every way his zeal and enthusiasm were ever helpful and encouraging, and it has already been realized how difficult it will be to fill his place.

The Society has gratefully accepted from the late Miss Livett's executors her herbarium containing so many Somerset specimens of phanerogams and ferns.

*Sharpham Moor Plot.* On July 18 when Messrs. H. S. Thompson and J. E. Lousley explored this enclosure it was observed that *Carex evoluta* had considerably extended its hitherto known range, but only vegetative shoots were seen. In order to let in rather more sunlight on that small portion of the jungle a little judicious thinning of branches was subsequently decided upon. The clearance of the two long ditches has been carried out in a thorough manner, so as to prevent the trespass of stock from two adjoining fields. The clearing of the front and back rhines is regularly undertaken by the drainage authority. The long ditch on the n.w. side is the only one on the plot owned by the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves. This Society has kindly given £2 towards the cost of the ditching.

On June 3 to 5 the South-Western Naturalists' Union held its Annual Conference at Exeter. A popular botanical lecture by Mr. J. L. Sager, M.A., of University College, Exeter, and several excursions made the meeting a very interesting one. Only three members of our Section attended. As the Section is affiliated to the Union, our members consequently become members of the Union, and it is hoped that they will take the opportunity to attend the 1934 Conference, which will be held at Bath, May 18-21.

On May 27 fifteen members and friends met at Dunster Station and walked to Minehead by way of the Warren. The interesting rarities of the shingle and sandbanks were noted. Henbane was particularly in good condition. The smooth-fruited form of the Maple, *Acer campestre* var. *leiocarpon*, was noted at Dunster, and the rare fungus *Tulostoma mammosum* was seen on the Warren.

A delightful excursion was made on June 8 to Britty Common and Castle Neroche, twenty-six members and friends taking part. The Bird's-nest Orchid was found, but it is feared that the cutting of the wood will cause its disappearance. Several other orchids including *Habenaria bifolia* were plentiful in a marshy field in which *Carex helodes* played a subdominant part

in the plant-association. A pure white-flowered form of Ragged Robin was noted in the same field.

Eleven members attended the field-day at Copley Wood, near Compton Dundon (permission having been given by Mr. Neville-Grenville), and Pedwell. Many plants of *Althaea hirsuta* were seen, and it appeared to be more abundant than previously. Other interesting finds were *Anagallis fœmina*, *Hippuris vulgaris*, and white-flowered forms of the Bee and Pyramidal orchids.

Owing to bad weather only eight people attended the Ashcott meeting, but the conditions did not prevent those present from seeing the interesting flora of the Turfmoor.

On July 29 Mr. Hadden led a small party of thirteen through the combes of Horner. Though the party got mixed up with the stag-hunters some very interesting finds such as *Sibthorpia*, *Scutellaria minor*, *Mentha rotundifolia*, *Peplis*, *Scirpus Savii*, *Lastrea aemula* and *L. Filix-mas* var. *paleacea* were made, but even the well-watered Horner valley was suffering from the drought.

A company of twenty-one met on August 10 in Holford Combe. The *Sibthorpia* here survives even in so dry a season. The erratic *Hypericum humifusum*, so local in Somerset, was observed close to the village, where also *Epilobium roseum* and other Willowherbs are abundant and sometimes hybridize. Other plants observed include *Sagina subulata*, *Scutellaria minor*, *Peplis*, *Radiola*, Musk, as usual without any scent, and *Agrostis setacea*, an abundant grass on the higher ground. The dominant oak in the combes is *Q. sessiliflora*, but Dr. Watson also noted its hybrid with *Q. Robur*, which Thos. Clark found there in 1850. Some of the party accompanied Mr. Corder and were shown *Lastrea aemula* in a new locality.

Owing to the very dry conditions the proposed fungus foray in September had to be abandoned, as it was useless to search for such plants.

Dr. Watson reports that the dry effects of the summer were particularly noticeable in the flora of arable land. In a field near Taunton the Corn-spurrey and Knawel are usually in flower before August. Last year it was September 20 before the former bloomed, and even then there were no flowers on

the Knawel (*Scleranthus*) which did not flower until October 10. This field is usually spotted over with little rosettes of the two liverworts, *Riccia commutata* and *Anthoceros crispulus*, but none were to be seen last year. Holly berries were abundant in the middle of November on the flanks of the Quantocks. After the severe frosts of November and December 1933, not a single berry could be seen. No hips or haws could be found. The birds had stripped all plants of their ripe fruits and seeds, and even attacked the unripe ivy berries.

A table in the Tite Library room at the Museum is now used for showing fresh wild flowers. Mrs. Gray superintends it, and it is a source of interest to school-children as well as to adults.

Mr. H. S. Thompson made during the autumn various excursions to the reservoirs at Chew Magna, Blagdon and Barrow Gurney to investigate the interesting vegetation on the dried up areas. Some published account of the salient features observed, and comparisons with the vegetation during previous droughts is in course of preparation. Suffice it to say here that at Blagdon Lake on the last visit, October 13, much of the normal *Stellaria aquatica*, up to a foot high and beginning to blossom, was intermingled with plants (from two-inch seedlings upwards) with leaves blotched with dark purple.

The following notes refer to some of the more interesting plants observed. \* New to the division.

*Cerastium viscosum* var. *apetalum* (Dum.). (3) Near Milverton.

W. W. (9) Near Brean Down. W. W. Tickenham. C. Sandwith.

*Hypericum humifusum* L. (5) Great Breach Wood. W. W.

Near Somerton. C. J. Bartlett.

*Acer campestre* var. *leiocarpon* Wallr. (2)\* Dunster. W. W.

*Ilex aquifolia* var. *laurifolia* L  j. (2) Horner Combe. W. W.

*Trifolium squamosum* L. (9) On pure sea sand in the strand zone at Berrow. Only one clump seen. H. S. T.

*T. repens* var. *rubescens* Ser. (2) Greenaleigh Point. W. W.

*T. fragiferum* L. (8) Ashcott. E. J. H.

*Anthyllis Vulneraria* L. (2) Between Greenaleigh and Hurlstone Points, the most western station on the coast of Somerset. W. W.

- Sorbus pinnatifida* Ehrh. (10) A small tree was discovered by C. and N. Y. Sandwith in 1932 on the Avon bank below Leigh Woods. Probably new to V.C. 6.
- Pyrus malus* var. *acerba* DC. (3) Above Higher Blagdon. W. W.
- Hippuris vulgaris* L. (5) Pedwell. Mrs. Parry.
- Cirsium eriophorum* Scop. subsp. *britannicum* Petrak. (5) Great Breach Wood. Mrs. Parry. This is the ordinary British form, which the monographer of the genus made a subsp. on the receipt of a large series from Somerset in 1922.
- Statice Limonium* L. (3) Parret bank near Combwich. Only one clump seen. H. S. T. New to V.C. 5.
- S. binervosa* G. E. Smith. (9) Brean Down. This was recorded in 1929 from the n. cliff by H. Corder. Last summer L. C. Luckwill of Bristol saw on the s. cliffs a large colony of about 100 plants, but he was unable to descend nearer than 6 ft. from the uppermost plant.
- Cynoglossum officinale* L. (5) Great Beach Wood. W. W.
- Symphytum tuberosum* L. Alien. (10) Enclosure in Leigh Woods. C. and N. Y. Sandwith.
- Myosotis palustris* var. *strigulosa* (Reichb.) (8) Ashcott. W. W.
- Cuscuta Trifolii* Bab. (2) Near Lilstock. E. J. H. Col. Wolley-Dod previously recorded this 'between Stolford and Lilstock'.
- Linaria spuria* Mill. (5) Great Breach Wood. W. W.
- Veronica agrestis* L. (10) Chew Magna. This species so uncommon in N. Somerset, was plentiful and very polymorphic in a vegetable garden near Chew Magna. H. S. T.
- Orobanche minor* Sm. (2) Burgundy Chapel. W. W.
- Mentha gentilis* (L.) var. *cardiaca* (Baker) Briq. (8) Enclosure on Sharpham peatmoor. New to Somerset. C. & N. Y. Sandwith.
- M. arvensis*. var. *agrestis* (Sole). (2) Aisholt. W. W.
- M. arvensis* var. *nummularia* (Schreb.). (3) Cothelstone. W. W.
- Amaranthus retroflexus* L. Alien. (9) Potato field by Brean Down. E. J. H.
- Populus nigra* L. var. *viridis* Lindley. (9) Nailsea, 1932. New to Somerset. C. Sandwith.
- Populus regenerata* Schneid., one of the hybrids of so-called Black Italian Poplars. (10) Near Keynsham, 1932. New to

- Somerset. *C. Sandwith*. Determined at the Imperial Forestry Institute, Oxford.
- Ceratophyllum submersum* L. (9) Pond, Kingston Seymour. *C. & N. Y. Sandwith*.
- Iris tuberosa* L. (4) Naturalised at Seavington, near Ilminster. *D. Lowe*.
- Carex extensa* Good. (9) Kingston Seymour. *C. & N. Y. Sandwith*.
- Spartina Townsendi* H. & J. Gr. (9) A few clumps observed at Sand Bay. *W. W.*
- Festuca bromoides* L. (5) Great Breach Wood. *W. W.*
- Lolium temulentum* L. Through a misunderstanding this plant was recorded from Edington in the last report.

Dr. Watson supplies the following list of cryptogams. Numerals indicate the botanical vice-counties. C.R. and V.C.R. respectively mean a county record and a vice-county record. One of the lichens is new to the British Isles.

## BRYOPHYTES : MOSSES

- Racomitrium sudeticum* B. & S. (5) Exmoor and Brendons. C.R.
- Weisia tortilis* C.M. (6) Brean Down. (Previously doubtful for Somerset.)
- W. crispera* Mitt. (6) Brean Down. *D. A. Jones* and *W. W.* C.R.
- Orthotrichum cupulatum* var. *nudum* Braithw. (6) Brean Down. *D. A. Jones* and *W. W.* C.R.
- Phascum cuspidatum* var. *piliferum* H. & T. (6) Clevedon Castle.
- Brachythecium glareosum* B. & S. (5) Watchet.
- Eurhynchium circinatum* B. & S. (6) Purn Hill.

## HEPATICES

- Riccia sorocarpa* Bisch. (6) Purn Hill. *D. A. Jones* and *W. W.*
- Scapania irrigua* (Nees) Dum. (6) Shapwick.
- Metzgeria conjugata* Lindb. (5) Horner Wood.
- Lophozia floerkii* (W. & M.) Schiff. (5) Dunkery. *H. H. Knight* and *D. A. Jones*.

## FUNGI

- Hymenochaete rubiginosa* (Dicks.) Lév. (6) Worlebury Camp.  
*Tulostoma mammosum* Fr. (5) Minehead. N. G. Hadden.

## LICHENS

- Aspicilia calcarea* var. *Hoffmanni* (Ach.) (5) Hestercombe.  
 V.C.R.  
*Lecidea subkochiana* Cromb. (5) Greenaleigh Point. C.R.  
*Pertusaria lactea* f. *cinerascens* Nyl. (5) Greenaleigh Point.  
 C.R.  
*Pertusaria ceuthocarpa* (Sm.) Turn. (5) Greenaleigh Point to  
 Burgundy Chapel. C.R.  
*Placodium medians* Nyl. (6) Weston-s.-Mare. V.C.R.  
*Rinodina Bischoffi* (Hepp.) Krb. (6) Clevedon. Purn Hill.  
*Leptogium biatorinum* (Nyl.) Leight. (5) Volis Hill. C.R.  
*Leptogium fragile* (Tayl.) Nyl. (6) Ebbor Gorge. C.R.  
*Dermatocarpon insulare* (Mass.) Migula. On limestone rocks,  
 Sand Bay and Purn Hill. New to the British Isles.  
*Allarthonia lapidicola* (Tayl.) Zahl. (6) Sand Bay. C.R.  
*Thelidium mesotropum* (Nyl.) A.L.Sm. (6) Sand Bay and Purn  
 Hill. C.R.  
*Verrucaria parva* Deak. (6) Worlebury. Sand Bay, Purn Hill.  
*Verrucaria macrostoma* f. *aphanostoma* S. & H. (6) Purn Hill.  
 C.R.  
*Micropiale diluta* (Pers.) Zahl. (6) Among old moss on ground,  
 Brean Down. V.C.R.

The following articles and notes referring to Somerset Botany or written by our members are among those published in 1933.

W. D. Miller. 'A Note on Extinct and Rare Species of the County of Somerset.' *Report Bot. Soc. & Exch. Club* (1933), pp. 268-276. 'A Note on the Southern Distribution of *Listera cordata*.' *Idem* pp. 223-227.

C. I. Sandwith. 'The Adventive Flora of the Port of Bristol.' A very useful and careful piece of work, occupying pp. 314-363 in *Report Bot. Soc. & Exch. Club* (1933). Many short notes on Somerset Phanerogams appear in reports of both the Exchange Clubs.

W. Watson. 'Lichenological Notes, VII.' *Journ. of Bot.*, 1933, 314 and 327. 'The Evolutionary Aspects of some Xerophytic Adaptations in the Bryophyta,' (Presidential Address to the British Bryological Society, delivered in Minehead). *The Bryologist*, xxxvi, 1933.

I. M. Roper. S.W. Naturalists' Union Conference. *Journ. of Bot.*, 1933, 229.

R. Bracher. 'Spartina Townsendi on the Portishead Salt Marshes.' *Journ. of Bot.*, 1933, 233.

L. H. Matthews. 'Denny Isle.' *Proc. Bristol Nat. Soc.*, 1933, 371. This is an interesting account of the natural history of the small limestone island  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Portishead pier. Among the plants mentioned are 'about twenty strong plants of the Tree Mallow'. A good photograph of several of these is given. *Festuca rubra* and *Triticum pungens* form 'the main plant association of the island'.

H. S. Thompson. 'Does *Juncus trifidus* occur in Ireland?' *Journ. of Bot.*, 1933, 263. Obituaries of J. W. White and S. H. Bickham in *Proc. Linn. Soc.*, 1932-33.