

HUNTINGDONSHIRE  
FAUNA AND FLORA SOCIETY

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**11th**  
**ANNUAL**  
**REPORT**  
**1958**

PRICE (to non-members) 10/6

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE FAUNA AND FLORA SOCIETY

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**Chairman:**

C. F. TEBBUTT, Esq., The Ferns, Eynesbury, St. Neots.  
(Tel.: St. Neots 110)

**Hon. Secretary:**

PROFESSOR ALASTAIR N. WORDEN, Cromwell House, Huntingdon.  
(Tel: Huntingdon 1122)

**Hon. Treasurer:**

D. A. DAVIES, Esq., Darholm, 26, Perry Road, Buckden.  
(Tel.: Buckden 371)

**Hon. Social Secretary:**

MISS E. M. THACKRAY, 7, The Walks East, Huntingdon.  
(Tel. Huntingdon 368)

**Committee:**

1958

G. E. D. ALCOCK  
MRS. ATKINSON  
J. E. H. BLACKIE  
MISS O. D. CLARKE

W. O. COPLAND  
MRS. M. HUDSON  
E. T. LEES  
H. F. TEBBS

**Referees:**

*Flora* - - - J. L. Gilbert, 157, Kew Road, Richmond, Surrey.  
*Mammals* - - - Alastair N. Worden, Cromwell House, Huntingdon.  
*Birds* - - - C. F. Tebbutt, The Ferns, Eynesbury, St. Neots.  
*Macro-Lepidoptera* J. E. H. Blackie, The Bell House, Alconbury, Hunts.

# Annual Report for 1958

(No. 11)

## INTRODUCTION

The Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday, 22nd March, at Huntingdon Grammar School, again held by kind permission of the Headmaster. Following the business meeting, and the election of officers and committee as indicated on the previous page, Miss Janet Kear, B.Sc., of the Ornithological Field Station at Madingley, attached to the Department of Zoology at Cambridge University, spoke on "Animal Behaviour," following which there was a lively discussion.

The following persons have joined the Society during 1958: Mr. P. Banks, The Cottage, Fen Lane, East Harling, Norwich; Mr. J. H. Chandler, 43 Roman Bank, Stamford, Lincs; Mr. K. Cruise, 16 The Hill, Gt. Stukeley; Major C. A. Linton, Stirtloe House, Buckden; Lady McDonald, Water Meadows, Brampton; Mr. T. E. Patston, Peterborough; Mr. D. Ransford, 15 Ingram Street, Huntingdon; Mr. Rogers, Forestry Commission, Brampton; St. Ivo School, St. Ives; Mr. M. A. Standish, 46 Queen's Way, St. Neots; Miss J. E. Taylor, School House, Somersham; Mr. T. J. Taylor, School House, Somersham; Mr. J. A. Vaughan, School House, Holywell.

The remainder of the Society's activities during 1958 have been summarized by the Social Secretary, as follows.

The Cambridge Natural History Society again invited members to attend their Annual Conversazione and Exhibition.

On May 11th, thirty-six members and friends accepted Mr. and Mrs. E. O. Squire's invitation to Basmead Manor, Eaton Socon, and spent an interesting afternoon walking through the gardens and watching the deer, Tasmanian wallabies and Soay sheep in the paddocks, and the many varieties of waterfowl on the stream.

Members from Huntingdon and Peterborough met Mr. J. L. Gilbert at Ramsey Hollow on May 24th, and two drives were botanised, adding a number of records to grid square 38, including the Cut Leaved Dead Nettle.

Cambridge Botanic Garden was visited by about thirty members on Saturday, May 31st. Dr. Max Walters explained the main purpose of the Garden and the development plan before taking the party round, pointing out plants and trees of special interest, and answering very fully the many questions put to him.

Approximately one hundred species of plants were found along the Catworth and Brington roads and by the Brook on July 26th, when Mr. Gilbert met members at The Fox.

Madingley Ornithological Field Station was visited by about twenty members and friends on Sunday, August 17th. Miss Janet Kear conducted the party round the Station, and explained the methods used in the study of bird behaviour, e.g. feeding habits, recognition of parents by their young, predatory response, cross-breeding. Among the birds seen were Canada Geese bred at Madingley, and a family of Gough Island Coots.

On Sunday, October 26th, thirty members and friends took advantage of the Headmaster's invitation to hear Mr. Frank Lowe's lecture on the Heron at Kimbolton School. This was preceded by a tour of the Castle, conducted by Mr. W. O. Copland. The lecture, which dealt fully with the life and habits of the Heron, was illustrated by many unique coloured slides made from Mr. Lowe's photographs, and by his own recordings of the bird's peculiar cry heard above the dawn chorus.

The Peterborough Museum Society invited members to join their excursions to Horsey Toll and Peterborough Sewage Farm (Leader, Mr. J. L. Gilbert), and to Southey Wood and Holme Fen (Leader, Mr. H. F. Tebbs).

## MAMMALS

Records continue to be sparse, but there have been two items of interest reported during the year.

A Coypu (*Myocaster coypus*) was shot at Great Staughton (on the Kim Brook) on 5th December, 1958. Mr. Tebbutt reports that, according to the Engineer of the Great Ouse River Board and the Fishery Officer, one example is known from the Earith area, and that there are many on the Wissey river (below Ely), where they are thought to have come over the watershed from Norfolk.

There have been reports of Chinese Water deer (*Hydropotes inermis*) in Brampton Wood, while carcasses of Japanese Sika deer (*Cervus* or *Sika nippon*) have been on sale at a butcher's shop in Huntingdon. The exact origin of these latter is not, however, known. Neither species is recorded for Huntingdonshire in the *Field Guide to British Deer* (1957).

ALASTAIR N. WORDEN.



## BIRDS

1958 followed 1957 in providing bad breeding conditions. The winter was not particularly severe but there were heavy snowfalls in March after some nesting had begun. The late spring and early summer were constantly rainy and cold and as a result ground nesting birds did badly. Insect eaters were probably also affected as L.A. reports that swallows, nesting in his buildings, had only one brood in place of the usual two or three. In the autumn there seemed to be an unusually large volume of thrush song and more Wood Pigeons than usual nesting in October and November. Near St. Neots a Song Thrush was discovered sitting on 4 eggs on Dec. 10th, and a Moorhen seen with young, about two weeks old, on Dec. 19th.

A new monthly feature, entitled "Recent Reports and News," is now being published in *British Birds*. It is a welcome innovation enabling me to relate some of our reports to national trends and movements, as will be seen below. In order that this county may make its contribution to this heading I shall be glad to receive from members reports of unusual birds as soon as they are seen so that I may pass them on to the editor of *British Birds*.

Notable rarities seen during the year were the Blue-headed Wagtail, a new county record added to the list by Mr. Standish, and the Turnstone, which has not been recorded since Norris' list of 1888.

Dr. Jennings, Dept. Animal Pathology, School of Veterinary Medicine, Cambridge, is still anxious to receive bodies of dead birds in reasonable condition and will repay postage and report on cause of death.

Contributors to this report are G. Alcock (G.A.), L. Angel (L.A.), P. Banks (P.B.), R. Connon (R.C.), W. Garnett (W.G.), E. T. Lees (E.L.), M. Standish (M.S.), and your Recorder.

*Cormorant*. This is the first year since 1949 that none has been reported.

*Shag*. This county figured in the extraordinary drift of Shags that spread inland from Lincoln to Kent from late January and were reported in varying degrees of distress until late February. On Jan. 26/27th 3 were at Hartford G.P. On Jan. 27th 1 was found exhausted near Gt. Gidding, another at Fletton, and another on the 29th at Stanground. On Feb. 13th 1 flew down exhausted from a flock of 6 or 7 near St. Neots and was captured and later released. It bore ring B.M.135048 and had been ringed on the Farne Islands 6/7/57. Incidentally other ringed birds recovered were all of the same or E. Scottish origin and first winter birds. There were 6 on Lt. Paxton G.P. on Feb. 14th, and 1 on the river at St. Neots on the 15th. Having heard that some had settled on the cooling towers of Bedford Electric Power Station, and fallen inside, I visited Lt. Barford and found 2 inside the cooling tower. One was rescued and released. (See *British Birds* March, 1958). (Rec.)

*Heron*. Nests decreased by 6. Hemingsford Park 6, St. Neots 5 (- 2), Hinchingsbrooke 8 (- 4). (Rec.)

*Bittern*. Jan. 7th, 1 found dead St. Ives (R. E. Phipps). On March 26, 27, 28, 30th at least one was heard booming from Fletton pits. (G.A.) Dec. 31st, 1 Gt. Paxton (L.A.)

*Scaup*. March 19th, Lt. Paxton G.P., 2 drakes (M.S.)

*Tufted Duck*. For second year running no record of successful breeding.

*Pochard*. For second year running no record of successful breeding.

*Goldeneye*. Fletton pits 1 f. present March 21st—April 7th and 2 f. on March 27th (G.A.)

*Merganser*. March 27th, Fletton pits 1 f. (G.A.), Dec. 14th, Lt. Paxton G.P., 1f. or im. (Rec.)

*Goosander*. Dec. 7th, Hartford G.P., 1 m. (P.B.), Dec. 28th, Lt. Paxton G.P., 1 m. (Rec.)

*Shelduck*. Oct. 27th, 1 St. Neots (Rec.)

*Grey Geese*. Jan. 12th, Fletton pits 12 (G.A.), March 27th, Gt. Paxton 30 flying N. (L.A.)

*Canada Geese*. March 2nd, Water Newton, 3 on flood water, (G.A.)

*Whooper Swan*. Bury Fen Earith, Jan. 5th 4; Feb. 2nd 13; Feb. 9th 1; Dec. 22nd a pair (Rec.)

*Bewick Swan*. Bury Fen. First of winter were 37 on Dec. 26th, 1957, and some were present until mid March. Highest number 93 on Jan. 11th. Last seen were 3 on March 16th (Rec.) On Jan. 7th, 13 were on Orton settling ponds, (R. L. Jolliffe). This winter 1958/59, none on Bury Fen on Dec. 22nd, but 8 had arrived on 29th (Rec. and P.B.)

*Common Buzzard*. As usual in the S.W. of the county single birds (probably immature) were present at Gt. Staughton in early summer and at Kimbolton in June and December, (Rec.) On Jan. 25th, 1 was flying N. at Eynesbury (Rec.), and on April 4th 1 circling over Butler's Pit, Fletton (G.A.)

*Hen Harrier*. Nov. 29th, 1 f. flew from telegraph pole near Holme Station. Dec. 8th, 1m. seen near Farcet mill, (G.A.)

*Partridges*. Both species had a disastrous breeding season and numbers are now probably lower than at any time this century, (Rec.)

*Corncrake*. None reported this year from former haunts.

*Moorhen*. The bad breeding season perhaps accounted for such an unusual incident as young about 2 weeks old seen on Dec. 19th, at St. Neots, (Rec.)

*Oyster Catcher*. July 28th, 1 on newly ploughed field Woodhurst, (E.L.) Since 1950 3 have been recorded in the county in June and 4 in July.

*Lt. Ringed Plover*. Pairs and single birds were seen on 3 G.P.s during April and May. At one site breeding almost certainly took place but with unknown results. At another, a nest with four eggs, just hatching, was found on June 18th. From this nest 2 young reached flying stage and were last seen on Aug. 15th, (Rec.)

*Turnstone*. May 16th, following strong N. wind, 1 was seen at Lt. Paxton G.P. busily turning over stones. Has not been reported in the county since 1888 (Norris). See *British Birds* June 1958 for others seen inland at this time (Rec.)

*Common Snipe*. A large number (maximum seen 30) at Fletton pits mid Feb. to mid March. Again numbers up to 40 in late Nov., (G.A.) In late Dec. many in St. Neots area including wisps of 20/30, (Rec.)

*Jack Snipe*. Lt. Paxton G.P. Jan. 18th, 1; April 11th, 4; 25th, 1. 1 present Oct. 19th—Dec. 28th, (Rec.)

*Woodcock*. Again an increase, many pairs nesting in woods at Kimbolton, Brampton and Gt. Staughton and in Woodwalton Fen. Still numerous in breeding sites in Nov./Dec., (Rec.)

*Curlew*. Feb. 23rd, St. Neots, 1 flying N. at night. April 7th, Lt. Paxton 1 flying N.N.E., 19th, St. Neots 1 calling at night. May 20th, Lt. Paxton 1 at night flying S.S.E. Sept. 27th, St. Neots 1 calling at night, (Rec.)

*Whimbrel*. July 17th, Lt. Paxton 1 calling at night, (Rec.)

*Green Sandpiper*. Lt. Paxton G.P. July 12th, 1. April 16th, 1. Sept. 10th, 2, (Rec.)

*Wood Sandpiper*. Lt. Paxton G.P. May 20th, 1 after strong N. wind, (Rec.)

*Redshank*. Pairs have in recent years been seen in Spring in a meadow by Alconbury Brook, S. of Lt. Gidding and probably bred there, (Rec.) May 22nd, pair with young near Buckden Station, (E.L.)

*Dunlin*. May 12th, Lt. Paxton G.P. 2 after strong W. wind. May 17th, 1 after strong N. wind, (Rec.)

*Sanderling*. May 12th, Lt. Paxton G.P. 1 associating with Dunlin and Lt. Ringed Plover, strong N. wind, (see British Birds June 1958) (Rec.)

*Gt. Black-backed Gull*. Feb. 9th, Fenstanton G.P. 1 ad. with 1 juv., (Rec.)

*Lesser Black-backed Gull*. Lt. Paxton G.P., April 8th, 1 flying N.E. Sept. 28th, 1 flying S. following river, (Rec.)

*Black Tern*. May 3rd, Fenstanton G.P. 3, (A. C. Morris). St. Ives G.P. May 11th, 1, (E.L.) Lt. Paxton G.P. Aug. 31st, 2, (M.S.)

*Arctic Com. Tern*. Lt. Paxton G.P. April 6th, 1; 15th, 2; July 15th, 2; Aug. 31st, 1; Sept. 28th, 2; Oct. 4th, 2; (M.S. and Rec.) In Fletton area birds were seen on May 3rd, 17th, June 6th, 7th, July 5th, 6th, 13th, some of which may be from a local breeding colony out of the county, (G.A.)

*Long-eared Owl*. March 22nd, Lt. Paxton a pair, (L.A.) May 28th, Lt. Gidding a pair, (Rec.)

*Nightjar*. A possible increase. May 14th, 1 seen Hamerton Grange, 1 seen several times Gt. Staughton, (Rec.) Probably 2 pairs in woods near Alconbury Hill in one of which a nest with eggs was found June 17th, (E.L.)

*Sand Martin*. A letter in "The Field" of Oct. 2nd 1958 described a half-fledged Sand Martin found in the stomach of a trout caught in a Hunts. G.P.

*Hooded Crow*. Dec. 6th, Oldhurst, 4 feeding on a manure heap, (E.L.)

*Rook*. The control rookeries showed generally a steady increase of nests from 1949—1956. In 1957 it seemed that the peak might have been reached and decline started. 1958 confirmed this trend with a general decline as following nest counts show. St. Neots 360 (—11), Lt. Paxton 51 (—51), Diddington 215 (—43), (Rec.)

*Tits*. The Tit Invasion was referred to in the last report and members noticed unusual numbers, including Cole and Marsh Tits (not usually seen), up to, but not after, the end of March. In the Autumn, numbers seemed, if, anything, fewer than usual and with none of the exotic species.

*Wheatear*. Many passed March 27th—29th, (Mrs. Blackie and Rec.), and 4 seen Hemingford April 14th (E.L.) A large autumn migration with odd birds Sept. 17th—21st, until Sept. 24th, when a field at Hail Weston seemed alive with birds, (Rec.)

*Stonechat*. Dec. 21st, Lt. Paxton G.P. a pair, (Rec.)

*Whinchat*. 1 near Kimbolton in May. None seen in usual Diddington site, (Rec.)

*Common Redstart*. Hemingford Park April 28th, pair, May 3rd, 1, (E.L.); May 26th, Holme Fen, 1; Kimbolton Park, at least 4 broods hatched, (Rec.)

*Nightingale*. Reports of birds singing on G.P.s at Hartford and Hemingford shows an interesting colonisation of a new habitat, (P.B. and W.G.)

*Grasshopper Warbler*. Besides usual haunts at Woodwalton Fen, birds were heard singing at Brampton Wood, April 23rd, (R.C.); Perry Wood May 4th, (M.S.) and Stonely Brickyard, (Rec.)

*White Wagtail*. May 18th, Fletton pits 1, (G.A.)

*Blue-headed Wagtail*. May 5th, Meadow Lane G.P., St. Ives. A cock in full plumage was satisfactorily identified by Mr. Standish. A first county record.

*Red-backed Shrike*. June 1st, Gt. Paxton, 1 seen, (E.L.)

*Brambling*. Washingley, March 1st, several (G.A.) Gt. Paxton, March 2nd, 1, (L.A.)

*Tree Sparrow*. At Lt. Paxton a flock of 200/300 in Feb., dwindled to 9 by May 16th, and then disappeared. A flock of 15 first seen on Sept. 21st, were not seen after Nov. 9th. There was breeding at Somersham, (J. Allen), Woodwalton Fen, (Rec.) and probably near Abbots Ripton Station, (G.A.)

Besides birds named in the text the following are believed to have bred in the county :—

Gt. Crested Grebe, Lt. Grebe, Mallard, Mute Swan, Sparrow Hawk, Kestrel, Pheasant, Water Rail, Coot, Lapwing, Snipe, Stock Dove, Barn Owl, Tawney Owl, Lt. Owl, Kingfisher, Green Woodpecker, Gt. Spotted Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Skylark, Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Magpie, Jay, all Tits, Nuthatch, Tree Creeper, Wren, Mistle Thrush, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Blackcap, Garden Warbler, Goldcrest, Hedge Sparrow, Tree Pipit, Pied Wagtail, Starling, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Linnet, Bullfinch, Chaffinch, Yellow Hammer, Corn Bunting, Reed Bunting.

A passage migrant was Common Sandpiper and winter visitors were Teal, Wigeon, and Herring, Common and Black-headed Gulls.

*American Ruddy Duck*. In "British Birds" March, 1958, a warning was given that numbers had escaped and dispersed from Slimbridge. 1 was present Lt. Paxton G.P. Sept. 21st—Oct. 10th. None was then missing from Mr. Squire's collection at Basmead, Eaton Socon, but 2 at Lt. Paxton G.P. Dec. 28th, may have come from there (Rec.)

## MIGRANT DATES, 1958

<i>Turtle Dove.</i>	May 2nd, Hilton (W.G.)
<i>Cuckoo.</i>	April 17th, Gt. Paxton (L.A.), many April 20—22.
<i>Swift.</i>	April 30th, Gt. Paxton (L.A.) May 10th, residents arr. St. Neots. Aug. 16th, residents left St. Neots (Rec.)
<i>Swallow.</i>	April 6th, Lt. Paxton (Rec.) April 21st, residents arr. Gt. Paxton. Sept. 14th, residents left Gt. Paxton (L.A.) Oct. 18th, Farcet, Gt. Paxton (G.A. and L.A.)
<i>House Martin.</i>	May 8th, residents arr. St. Neots (Rec.)
<i>Sand Martin.</i>	March 19th, Fenstanton. April 7th, residents arr. Hemingford (Rec.)
<i>Fieldfare.</i>	April 25th, Huntingdon (R.C.) Sept. 23rd, St. Neots (Rec.)
<i>Redwing.</i>	April 8th, Gt. Paxton (L.A.) Oct. 15th, Farcet (G.A.)
<i>Nightingale.</i>	April 25th, Hemingford (W.G.) April 26th, Brampton Wood (R.C.)
<i>Grasshopper Warbler.</i>	April 23rd, Brampton Wood (R.C.)
<i>Reed Warbler.</i>	May 3rd, Gt. Paxton (L.A.)
<i>Sedge Warbler.</i>	April 25th, Gt. Paxton. Sept. 15th, Gt. Paxton (L.A.)
<i>Whitethroat.</i>	April 29th, Gt. Staughton (Rec.)
<i>Lesser Whitethroat.</i>	May 6th, Gt. Paxton (L.A.)
<i>Willow Warbler.</i>	April 4th, St. Neots (Rec.)
<i>Chiffchaff.</i>	March 29th, Lt. Paxton (M.S.) Sept. 17th, Gt. Paxton (L.A.)
<i>Spotted Flycatcher.</i>	May 10th, St. Neots (Rec.) Sept. 12th, Gt. Paxton (L.A.)
<i>Yellow Wagtail.</i>	April 25th, Lt. Paxton. Sept. 12th, St. Neots (Rec.)

## WOODWALTON FEN

I paid a number of visits with Mr. Mason, the Warden. Woodcock were particularly numerous on May 14th, when 14 were seen roding. Numbers of Grasshopper Warblers seemed to be above average. New additions to the list for the Fen were Tree Sparrow and House Sparrow, both nesting in boxes near the bungalow. Results from the 40 nest boxes, now used for two years, will be published at a later date. I am grateful to Mr. Mason for putting them up and maintaining them.

C. F. TEBBUTT.

## FLORA

Perhaps the most notable feature of 1958 was the spate of important works on British botany. These include two check lists: "List of British Vascular Plants," by J. E. Dandy and "An Annotated List of British Hepatics" by E. W. Jones, and a book on the classification of brambles, "Handbook of the Rubi of Great Britain and Ireland," by W. C. R. Watson. The liverworts will in future be arranged according to Jones's check list.

List of contributors will be found under the various sections. As usual, where no name or initials are given, the records are those of your recorder. Unless otherwise stated all the records are for 1958.

### Flowering Plants and Ferns

All the unsigned records from the following places were made in company with Mr. N. Y. Sandwith, of Kew, to whom I am indebted for considerable help with Distribution Map Scheme work within the county: Little Paxton (including Little Paxton Wood, Meagre Farm and Wood), Great Staughton (including Staughton Moor and Agden Green), Huntingdon (including Sapley), Abbots Ripton, Brington, Offord Darcy, Tilbrook, Coppingford (including Coppingford Wood and Archer's Wood), Riddy Wood (Woodwalton) and Fox Holes Wood (St. Neots Rural). Those records from Great Gransden, Buckden and St. Neots Holts were made in company with Mr. T. Patston.

Once again those plants seen on our outings are marked Exc. Contributors of several records are: R. Fraser (R.F.), Miss P. E. Goodliff (P.E.G.), R. D. Kime (R.D.K.), E. V. Rogers (R.), and J. A. Vaughan (V.)

- 21/4 *Papaver lecoquii* Lamotte Border of cornfield, Little Paxton, 3/8; cornfield, Sapley, 7/9; roadside, Buckden, 19/8.
- 31/4 *Corydalis lutea* (L.) DC. Yellow Corydalis. Naturalised, waste ground nr. rly ridings, Huntingdon, 7/9.
- 61/12 *Lepidium sativum* L. Garden Cress. Frequent in a field of peas, Tilbrook, 3/8. ONLY ONE OTHER RECORD (V.H.C.)
- 96/4 *Silene noctiflora* L. (*Melandrium noctiflorum* (L.) Fr.) All seen in cornfields: Little Paxton 3/8; near Fox Holes Wood, 4/8; near Coppingford Wood, 6/9; Sapley, 7/9.
- 133/2 *Impatiens capensis* Meerb. Orange Balsam. Dyke, Orton Waterville, 6/9 (Mrs. Wilkins). FIRST RECORD FOR THE NORTH OF THE COUNTY.
- 143/1 *Acer negundo* L. (*Negundo aceroides* Moench). Dyke side, Farcet Fen, 28/5. One large tree. Origin unknown. Herb. Kew. NEW COUNTY RECORD.
- 154/2 *Melilotus alba* Desr. White Melilot. Edge of Brampton Wood (R.) Rough ride N. of Tilbrook Grange, 3/8.

- 154/3 *M. officinalis* (L.) Pall. Common Melilot. Rubbish dump nr. Needingworth road, June, 1957 (V.) Nr. Ouse, St. Neots Holts, 19/8. MUCH LESS COMMON THAN *M. ALTISSIMA* THROUGHOUT MOST OF THE COUNTY.
- 155/13 *T. fragiferum* L. Strawberry Clover. Border of Little Paxton Wood and hedgerow nr. Meagre Farm, 3/8; rough ride N. of Tilbrook Grange, 3/8; by a footpath, Brington, 3/8.
- 160/6 *Lotus tenuis* Waldst. & Kit. ex Willd. Slender Birdsfoot Trefoil. Rough ride N. of Tilbrook Grange, 3/8; Fox Holes Wood, 4/8; rough ground nr. airfield, Offord Darcy, 7/9. SAID BY DRUCE TO BE "RARE," BUT RECORDS SUGGEST THAT IT IS LOCAL THROUGHOUT MOST OF THE COUNTY.
- 176/8 *Vicia sepium* L. Bush Vetch. Meagre Wood, 3/8; Riddy Wood, 7/9.
- 176/35 *V. tetrasperma* (L.) Moench Smooth Tare. Hedgerow, Little Paxton and hedgerow, Brington, 3/8; Fox Holes Wood, 4/8; nr. Riddy Wood, 7/9.
- 176/36 *V. tenuissima* (Bieb.) Schinz & Thell. Slender Tare. Pasture, Staughton Moor, 4/8; Fox Holes Wood, 4/8; Gt. Gransden Common, 19/8; Herb. Kew; border of Coppington Wood, 6/9; overgrown road nr. railway, Abbots Ripton, 7/9. SAID BY DRUCE TO BE "VERY RARE" (V.C.H.) BUT RECORDS SUGGEST THAT IT IS LOCAL AND INCREASING IN THE SOUTHERN HALF OF THE COUNTY.
- 178/1 *Lathyrus latifolius* L. Everlasting Pea. Rly embankment between Sapley and Abbots Ripton, 30/7 (P.E.G.) ONLY TWO OTHER RECORDS.
- 178/8 *L. nissolia* L. Grass Vetchling. Needingworth, June (V.)
- 184/12 *Filipendula vulgaris* Moench Dropwort. Frequent in grassland, Gt. Staughton (R.E.) Meagre Wood, 3/8. V.C.H. SAYS "VERY LOCAL."
- 195/15 *Sorbus torminalis* (L.) Crantz Wild Service Tree. E. side of Gransden Wood, 1945 (J. E. Lousley). Herb. Kew. Known there to John Ray. Holland Wood, Wennington, 5/6/55 (Exc.) Archer's Wood. ONLY TWO OTHER RECORDS (V.C.H.)
- 196/1x2 *Crataegus xmedia* Bechst. Common Hawthorn x Midland Hawthorn. Roadside nr. Horsey Toll, Farcet, fruiting 7/6 (J. H. Chandler, Exc.) Herb. Kew.
- 207/1 *Ribes uva-crispa* L. Gooseberry. Wood bordering Gt. Gransden Common, 19/8.
- 241/1 *Sanicula europaea* L. Wood Sanicle. Parkland, Kimbolton Castle, 3/6/55 (O. N. Bishop in K.S.N.H.S. Ann. Rep., 1955, p.3). Spinney, Sapley. SAID TO BE "NOT UNCOMMON" (V.C.H.), BUT FEW CURRENT RECORDS.
- 255/1 *Pimpinella major* (L.) Huds. Greater Burnet Saxifrage. Abundant on banks of a stream, Catworth, 26/7 (Exc.) Border of Riddy Wood, 7/9.
- 287/2b *Sambucus nigra* L. var. *laciniata* L. A cut-leaved variety of Elder. Occurs here and there, Gt. Staughton (R.F.) ONLY ONE PREVIOUS RECORD FOR THIS VARIETY (V.C.H.)
- 377/1 *Chrysanthemum vulgare* (L.) Bernh. (*Tanacetum vulgare* L.) Tansy. Offord Cluny, 1955 (L. W. Angell). Ouse bank, St. Neots Holts, 19/8. Herb. Kew.
- 378/1 *Artemisia absinthium* L. Wormwood. By the Gt. North road, Sibson, 20/8/58. ONLY ONE OTHER CURRENT RECORD. This species appears to have decreased in the county.
- 383/7 *Senecio squalidus* L. Oxford Ragwort. Rough ride N. of Tilbrook Grange, 3/8.
- 391/1 *Carlina vulgaris* L. Carlina Thistle. Fox Holes Wood, St. Neots Rural, 4/8. ONLY THREE OTHER RECORDS.
- 409/1 *Cichorium intybus* L. Succory. Rough ride N. of Tilbrook Grange, 3/8; hedgerow nr. airfield, Offord Darcy, 7/9. Near Grafham roadside and nr. Buckworth roadside (R.)
- 415/2 *Picris hieracioides* L. Hawkweed Oxtongue. Waste, Hartford, 1953 (R.D.K.) Railway embankment between Sapley and Abbots Ripton, 30/7 (P.E.G.) Fox Holes Wood, 4/8. V.C.H. says "RARE." Much less common in the county than *Picris echinoides* L.
- 435/3 *Campanula trachelium* L. Nettle-leaved Bellflower. Little Paxton wood (R.) Meagre Wood, 3/8; Staughton Moor, 4/8; Coppington Wood, 6/9.
- 477/1 *Blackstonia perfoliata* (L.) Huds. Yellow-wort. Rough ride N. of Tilbrook Grange, 3/8; Fox Holes Wood, 4/8.
- 478/4 *Centaureum pulchellum* (Sw.) E. H. L. Krause Slender Centaury. Fox Holes Wood, 4/8.
- 509/1 *Echium vulgare* L. Viper's Bugloss. Rough ride N. of Tilbrook Grange, 3/8. ONLY THREE PREVIOUS RECORDS.
- 511b *Calystegia silvatica* (Kit.) Griseb. American Bindweed. Hedgerow near "The Fox," Catworth, 26/7 (Exc.) Roadside, St. Neots Holts, 19/8.
- 511/1x1b *C. xluccana* Ten. Common Bindweed x American Bindweed. Roadside nr. Claylands Farm, Gt. Staughton, 3/8. Herb. Kew. (Conf. S. M. Walters and D. A. Webb). Near a stream, Sawtry village, 21/8/57.
- 524/1 *Hyoscyamus niger* L. Henbane. Holywell, June (V.)
- 532/2 *Linaria purpurea* (L.) Mill. Purple Toadflax. Hicks Pit, Woodston, Sept. (H. F. Tebbs).
- 543/19 *Veronica agrestis* L. Green Field Speedwell. Deserted garden nr. Riddy Wood, 7/9.
- 566/2 *Salvia horminoides* Pourr. Clary. Roadside, nr. Horsey Toll, Farcet, 7/6 (Exc.)
- 581/4 *Lamium hybridum* Vill. Cut-leaved Deadnettle. Cornfield, Little Paxton, 3/8; Sapley, 7/9.
- 600/1 *Chenopodium rubrum* L. Red Goosefoot. On rich ground and around manure heaps, Gt. Staughton (R.F.) Arable land near Archer's Wood, 6/9; margin of field near Abbots Ripton village, 7/9.
- 600/15 *C. polysperum* L. Many-seeded Goosefoot. Border of Riddy Wood, 7/9; wood bordering Gt. Gransden Common, 19/8.
- 615/32 *Polygonum cuspidatum* Sieb. & Zucc. Well established on waste ground, Huntingdon.
- 618/3x6 *Rumex xacutus* L. Curled Dock x Broad-leaved Dock. Hedgerow near Meagre Farm, 3/8. Herb. Kew. ONLY TWO OTHER RECORDS.



- 618/9 *R. conglomeratus* Murr. Clustered Dock. Hedgerow near Meagre Farm, Herb. Kew, 3/8; streamside, Coppingford, 6/9; pasture, Sapley, 7/9; rough ride N. of Tilbrook Grange, 3/8. Gravel-pits, Stibbington, 20/8. Status in the county not yet known.
- 628/5 *Euphorbia platyphyllos* L. Broad Spurge. Field of peas, Brington, 3/8. THE ONLY CURRENT RECORD FOR THIS RARE ALIEN.
- 651/2 *Populus tremula* L. Aspen. Little Paxton, 3/8.
- 662/1 *Neottia nidus-avis* (L.) Rich. Birds Nest Orchid. Wood at Easton near Grafham (R.) ONLY TWO OTHER RECORDS (V.C.H.)
- 668/4 *Epipactis purpurata* Sm. Violet Helleborine. Several plants, Archer's Wood, 6/9. (Conf. V. S. Summerhayes) Herb. Kew. A NEW COUNTY RECORD.
- 672/3 *Ophrys apifera* Huds. Bee Orchid. Wyton, June (V.) Fox Holes Wood, 4/8.
- 708/4 *Alopecurus aequalis* Sobol. Orange Foxtail. Roadside and dykes near Horsey Toll, Farcet, 7/6. (Miss D. M. Peacock, Exc.) Herb Kew. ONLY TWO OTHER RECORDS.
- 753/10 *Carex pendula* L. Pendulous Sedge. Meagre Wood, 3/8; Riddy Wood, 7/9.
- 775/1 *Milium effusum* L. Wood Millet. Monks' Wood, 13/6 (T. Patston). Meagre Wood, 3/8. Herb. Kew. Coppingford Wood, 6/9; Riddy Wood, 7/9. ONLY TWO OTHER RECORDS.
- 824/10 *Poa compressa* L. Flattened Meadow-grass. Hemingford Grey, 2/6/56 (S. M. Walters). Walls, Gt. Staughton (R.F.) Wall top, Winwick village, 16/6/56 (Exc.) Staughton Moor, 4/8; Fox Holes Wood, 4/8.
- 826/1 *Catapodium rigidum* (L.) C. E. Hubbard. Hard Meadow-grass. Gravel path, Hartford, 1953 (R.D.K.) Fox Holes Wood, 4/8. Herb. Kew.
- 847/1 *Pteridium aquilinum* (L.) Kuhn Bracken. Brampton Wood and West Wood (R.)

### Bryophytes New To Huntingdonshire

The following species have recently been recorded new to the county :—

- 14/4 *Pellia fabbroniana* Raddi Banks of a stream, Monks' Wood, 11/6/55. Herb. Kew.
- 15/1 *Metzgeria furcata* (L.) Dum. Monks' Wood, Aug., 1956 (C.J.)
- 57/3 *Lophocolea heterophylla* (Schrad.) Dum. On rotten wood and on the ground, Monks' Wood, 11/6/55. Herb. Kew.
- 58/2 *Chiloscyphus pallescens* (Ehrh.) Dum. Banks of drive, Monks' Wood, 11/6/55. Herb. Kew.
- 1/13 *Sphagnum recurvum* P. Beauv. Water filled hollows, old duck decoy, Denton Fen, 13/6/56. Herb. Kew. (Recorded in Rep. 9, page 19 in error as *S. nemoreum* Scop.)
- 73/14 *Pohlia delicatula* (Hedw.) Grout Monks' Wood, Aug., 1956 (C.J.)
- 79/10 *Mnium longirostrum* Brid. Monks' Wood, Aug., 1956 (C.J.)
- 135/2 *Isoetecium myosuroides* Brid. Monks' Wood, Aug., 1956 (C.J.)

I am indebted to Dr. D. H. Dalby and Mr. E. C. Wallace for naming the specimens and to Mr. C. Jeffrey (C.J.) for supplying me with a list of his Monks' Wood, Sawtry, records. All those found by myself were collected in company with Mr. T. Patston.

### Slime Fungi and Fungi of Holme Fen

Near Denton Fen :—

- 13/8/56 *Pholiota dura* (Bolt. ex Fr.) Quél.—Among grass.  
*Thelephora terrestris* (Ehrh.) Fr.—On peat.  
*Laccaria laccata* (Scop. ex Fr.) Berk. & Br.—On peat.  
*Hemimycena fibula* (Bull. ex Fr.) Singer (*Omphalia fibula* (Bull. ex Fr.) (Kummer)—Among moss.  
*Mycena galopus* (Pers. ex Fr.) Quél.—On birch stump.  
*Galera calyptospora* Kuhner —Among moss.  
*G. hypnorum* (Schrank ex Fr.) Quél.—Among moss.  
*Russula aeruginea* Lindb. apud Fr.—On peat.  
*R. venosa* Vel. sensu Pearson (*R. nitida*) (Pers. ex Schw.) Fr. sensu Kurner & Romag.—On peat.  
*R. clarostava* Grove —On peat.
- 7/9/56 *Hypholoma fasciculare* (Huds. ex Fr.) Kummer—On birch stumps.  
*Coprinus atramentarius* (Bull.) Fr.—On a living Silver Birch by roadside.
- 29/9/57 *Boletus scaber* (Bull.) Krombl.  
*Amanita muscaria* (L.) Fr.  
*Lactarius glycosmus* Fr.  
*Pluteus salicinus* (Pers.) Fr.  
*Lepiota cristata* (Alb. & Schw.) Fr.  
*Mycena galericulata* (Scop ex Fr.) Kummer

Holme Lode Covert :—

- 10/7/54 *Fuligo septica* Gmelin —On bracken, etc.
- 7/9/56 *Scleroderma vulgare* (Horn.) Fr.—Beneath Silver Birch.  
*Galactinia michelii* Boud.—Beneath Silver Birch.  
*Collybia cirrhata* (Schw. ex Fr.) Quél.—Beneath Silver Birch.  
*Calocera cornea* [Batsch] Fr.—On fallen alder bole.  
*Craterium minutum* Fr.—On alder cones, etc., and Ground Ivy.  
*Coryne sarcoides* (Jacq. ex Fr.) Tul.—Conidial state on alder.  
*Stereum hirsutum* (Willd.) Fr.—On birch stumps.  
*Amanita fulva* [Schaeff.] Sec.  
*Xylaria hypoxylon* (L. ex Fr.) Grev.  
*Hemimycena fibula* (Bull. ex Fr.) Singer

Middle Covert :—

- 27/7/57 *Lepiota brebissonii* Godey —On the ground.  
*Mycena sanguinolenta* (Alb. & Schw.) Fr.—On dead leaves.  
*Tubaria conspersa* (Pers. ex Fr.) Fayod  
*Hemimycena fibula* (Bull. ex Fr.) Singer —On the ground.  
*Peniophora velutina* (Fr.) Cooke —On twigs.  
*Botrytis cinerea* Pers. ex Fr.—On rotten wood.  
*Polystictus versicolor* (L.) Sacc.—On a tree stump.  
*Puccinia obscura* Schrot —On leaves of *Luzula multiflora*.



- 22/8/57 *Fuligo septica* Gmelin —On moss, etc.  
*Amanita fulva* [Schaeff.] Sec.  
*Nolanea juncea* Fr.
- 29/9/57 *Hypholoma fasciculare* (Huds.) Fr.

Jackson's Covert :—

- 27/7/57 *Amanita fulva* [Schaeff.] Sec.—On the ground.  
*Nectria cinnabarina* (Tode ex Fr.) Fr.  
*Mycena sanguinolenta* (Alb. & Schw.) Fr.—On the ground.  
*Tubaria conspersa* (Pers. ex Fr.) Fayod —On dead leaves.

Fungi recorded for 22/8/57 and 29/9/57 were collected by Mrs. D. K. Atkinson, those for 27/7/57 were collected on our outing and the rest were collected in company with Mr. T. Patston. I am indebted to Dr. R. W. G. Dennis and Mr. D. A. Reid for naming the specimens. Other fungi for Holme Fen have been recorded in Rep. 3, page 22; Rep. 6, page 22 and Rep. 7, page 20.

### A Huntingdonshire Fungus New to Science

On 31/7/1956 I came across a small species of *Clavaria* growing among moss on the peaty bank of a dyke at Hod Fen, Yaxley, which had recently been cleaned out. Only one other fungus was found growing with it—*Galera tenera* (Schaeff.) Fr. (*Conocybe tenera* (Schaeff. ex Fr.) Fayod). The *Clavaria* has now been described by Mr. D. A. Reid in the TRANSACTIONS OF THE BRITISH MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY, Vol. 41, part 4 (December, 1958) as a new species and given the name *Clavaria lithocras* Reid, page 438. Mr. Reid states: "This species is well characterized by the small spores and by the fruit-bodies being capped by a hard, orange, resin-like exudate."

### Huntingdonshire Lichens II

With the exception of *Ochrolechia subviridis* only forms not previously recorded for the county in our Report are listed below. These are arranged according to Dr. W. Watson's "Census Catalogue of British Lichens."

Grateful thanks are due to Dr. E. Frey and Mr. A. E. Wade for naming several of the specimens; to Mr. P. W. James (P.W.J.) and Mr. J. R. Laundon (J.R.L.) for both naming specimens and supplying records; and to Dr. T. D. V. Swinscow (T.D.V.S.), who kindly let me have the records made by Mr. James and himself. Those records from Great Gransden and Stilton Fen were made in company with Mr. T. Patston.

- 57 *Parmelia acetabulum* (Neck.) Dub.—Ash by roadside, Ferry West Wood, 1958 (P.W.J. & T.D.V.S.)
- 144 *Squamaria muralis* (Schreb.) Elenk. var. *versicolor* (Pers.) Poets.—On Collyweston slates, Stibbington, 1956.
- 122 *Lecanora dispersa* (Pers.) Rohl. Both forma *dispersa* and forma *albescens* (Hoffm.) J. R. Laundon are abundant on calcareous stone throughout the county according to Mr. Laundon.
- 142 *L. chlorotera* (Ach.) Cromb. f. *crassula* (Magnusson) Poelt.—On apple, Stibbington, 1956 - 1958.
- 152 *L. carpinea* (L.) Ach.—On apple, Stibbington, 1958.
- 166 *L. confusa* Almb. (*L. expallens* (Pers.) Ach. var. *lutescens* (DC.) Nyl.)—Scare on elder, Holme Fen, 1956 (J.R.L.)
- 213 *L. (Aspicilia) calcarea* (L.) Sommerf. var. *contorta* (Hoffm.) Th. Fr.—On Collyweston slates, Stibbington, 1958.  
*Ochrolechia subviridis* (Hoeg) Erichs.—Ash by roadside, Perry West Wood, 1958 (P.W.J. & T.D.V.S.) The second record for the county of this RARE British lichen.
- 223 *Psora ostreata* Hoffm.—Wooden fence, Stilton Fen, 1957.
- 449 *Pertusaria multipuncta* (Turn.) Nyl.—On ash, Brington, 1958.  
*P. leprarioides* Erichs.—On roadside elm, Glatton, 1956 (J.R.L.) Specimen determined by Dr. O. Almborn. NEW TO BRITAIN.
- 679 *Bilimbia sabuletorum* (Florke) Arn. var. *viridis* Wats.—On moss on a wall top, Stibbington, 1958.
- 697 *Xanthoria parietina* (L.) Fr. var. *aureola* (Ach.) Th. Fr.—On bricks of ruined house, Tilbrook, 1958.
- 701 *Caloplaca decipiens* (Arn.) Jatta—On a wall (Lincolnshire Limestone), Stibbington, 1958.
- 737 *C. luteoalba* (Turn.) Th. Fr.—On elm, Kimbolton Park, 1958 (P.W.J. & T.D.V.S.)
- 758 *Physcia tenella* (Scop.) DC.—On piles of bungalow, Woodwalton Fen, 1958 (J.R.L.) On concrete path, Staughton Moor, 1958.
- 762 *P. caesia* (Hoffm.) Nyl.—On concrete path, Staughton Moor, 1958.
- 775 *Rinodina sophodes* (Ach.) Th. Fr.—On elm, Kimbolton Park, 1958 (P.W.J. & T.D.V.S.)
- 829 *Rhizocarpon alboatrum* (Hoffm.) Th. Fr.—Mortar of brick wall, Kimbolton Park, 1958 (P.W.J. & T.D.V.S.)  
*R. alboatrum* (Hoffm.) Th. Fr.—On elm, Kimbolton Park, 1958 (P.W.J. & T.D.V.S.) On a wall (sandstone), Stibbington, 1956.  
*Gladonia coniocraea* (Florke) Spreng. f. *phyllostrota* (Florke) Vain.—On peat, Denton Fen, 1953.
- 995 *Peltigera rufescens* (Weis) Humb.—Nene bank, grounds of Stibbington House, 1954.
- 1062 *Collema tenax* (Swartz) Ach. var. *vulgare* (Schaer.) Degel.—On concrete, Gt. Gransden Common, 1958. Associated with *Nostoc linckia* (Roth) Bornet (det. E. A. George).
- 1075 *C. crispum* (Huds.) G. H. Web.—On liassic clay, Nene dredgings, Stibbington, 1956-1958.
- 1186 *Opegrapha vulgata* Ach.—On oak, Brampton Wood, 1958 (P.W.J. & T.D.V.S.)

- 1225 *Chaenotheca melanophaea* (Ach.) Zwack.—On several oaks, Brampton Wood, 1958 (P.W.J. & T.D.V.S.)  
*C. melanophaea* (Ach.) Zwack. var. *ferruginea* (Sm.) A. L. Sm.—On several oaks, Brampton Wood, 1958 (P.W.J. & T.D.V.S.)
- 1230 *Calicium hyperellum* Ach.—On oak, Brampton Wood and on elm, Perry West Wood, 1958 (P.W.J. & T.D.V.S.)
- 1235 *C. salicinum* Pers.—On elm, Kimbolton Park, 1958 (P.W.J. & T.D.V.S.)
- 1300 *Verrucaria maculiformis* Kremp.—On flint and quartz, Gt. Gransden Common, 1958.
- 1307 *V. muralis* Ach.—On mortar, Nene dredgings, Stibbington, and common on limestone walls, Stibbington, 1958.
- 1308 *V. ruprestris* Schrad.—On exposed chalk nodules of the Boulder Clay, Abbots Ripton, 1958.

JOHN L. GILBERT.

## THE LEPIDOPTERA OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE

### 4. Noctuoidea (continued from 9, p.23)

There is still insufficient information available to make it worth while to deal with the *Caradrinidae*, but it seemed useful to publish what is known about the *Plusiidae*, which includes a number of conspicuous and day-flying moths. Even here the paucity of local observers means that there are whole areas of the county that are scarcely visited.

## 2. Plusiidae

### A. Eustrotiinae.

*Acontia luctuosa*, Esp. (Four-spot). V.C.H. gives "Somersham district, Holme district, Spaldwick and Conington." The only recent record is Brampton 1933-37 (F.S.S.) The food-plant *Convolvulus arvensis* is common but the moth's favourite habitat, rough, heathy slopes and clearings in woods is not and this mainly south-western insect seems unlikely to appear more than occasionally.

*Jaspidia pygarga*. Hfn. (= *fasciana* auctt.) (Marbled White Spot). The Rev. C. H. Raynor in V.C.H. gives "common," and the localities mentioned are Monks' Wood and Warboys. Warboys Wood is cut down and it is certainly not common in Monks. Mr. C. S. Briggs took one there in 1958 so it may be about to stage a return. The only other recent record is from Orton Lodge in 1955 (H.F.T.) Here again the right habitats are now scarce.

*Eustrotia olivana*. Schiff (= *argentula* Hb). (Silver-barred). Whittlesey Mere, formerly (Fenland). Not found nearer than Wicken, though Wood-walton Fen might be expected to harbour it.

*E. uncula*. Clerck. (Silver Hook). Humphreys and Westwood (British Moths 1842) gave "Not uncommon in the marshes and fens of Hunts." It must have been lost to us for many years.

*Rivula sericealis*. Scop. (Straw Dot). V.C.H. gives Brampton, St. Ives and Warboys. I took one in Salome Wood in 1948 and Mr. Pooles one at Holme Fen in 1956. No other records are to hand. I suspect it to be scarce and local rather than over-looked.

*Phytometra viridaria*. Clerck. (Small Purple Barred). V.C.H. records it from Hunts. without locality on the authority of Capt. J. A. Vipan, who lived at Stibbington. Mr. Pooles took it at Holme Fen before 1939. Its food-plant, *Polygala vulgaris*, is a rarity in the county and I doubt whether it occurs regularly anywhere though its size makes it easy to miss.

### B. Gonopterinae.

*Scoliopteryx libatrix* L. (Herald). V.C.H. gives "common," but Hunts. is not now a county of willows and sallows, and I think the moth is now much scarcer than formerly. Recent records are: Brampton '33-'37 (F.S.S.); Holme Fen (pre-39) (S.W.P.P.); Alconbury, hibernating, '48 and '51 (Rec.); Stibbington '49 (J.L.G.); Glatton '51 (H.F.T.); Wood Walton Fen at sugar '57 (F.S.S.)

### C. Plusiinae.

*Polychrisia moneta*. Fab. (Golden Plusia). V.C.H. gives Old Fletton and Ramsey district. I have taken it twice at Alconbury in 1954. Its food-plant, *Delphinium*, is found in every garden and it may be commoner than these sparse records suggest.

*Plusia chrysitis*. L. (Burnished Brass). V.C.H. gives "common." In most years it is abundant in my garden at Alconbury though I did not record it in 1951. Other records are oddly sparse, e.g. Brampton '33-'37 (F.S.S.); Fletton '54 (H.F.T.); Gamlingay on the county border '57 (B.O.C.G.); Holme Fen '58 (S.W.P.P.) The food-plant, *Urtica*, is all too common and one would expect to find the moth about every Hunts. village. More information needed.

*P. festucae*, L. (Gold Spot). Humphreys and Westwood (1842) give "the meres of Hunts. and Cambs," and V.C.H. "Somersham district and St. Ives." I know of no recent records but a careful search of fenny vestiges might possibly reveal it.

*P. iota* L. (Plain Golden Y.) V.C.H. gives "common," but my only recent record from any source is from Alconbury where I took one in my garden in 1952. Mr. B. O. C. Gardiner found it in White Wood, Gamlingay, on the Cambridgeshire border in 1957.

*P. pulchrina*. Haw. (Beautiful Golden Y.) V.C.H. gives it "St. Ives district." There are two recent records from Holme Fen in July, 1957 (S.W.P.P.) and August '58 (H.F.T.)

*P. gamma* L. (Silver Y.) In varying numbers each year. All records are from the north of the county but it doubtless occurs everywhere.

*Abrostola triplasia* L. (Silver Y.) (Dark Spectable). V.C.H. gives "St. Ives district, Somersham and Old Fletton." My only recent record is from Stibbington where Mr. Gilbert took it at light in August, 1955. Probably scarce.

*A. tripartita*. Hufn. (Common Spectacle). V.C.H. gives "St. Ives, Somersham and Old Fletton." Mr. Stanley-Smith found it at Brampton before the war and Mr. Gilbert at Stibbington in 1952, in which year I saw it several times at Alconbury where I had not seen it before 1950. No other records.

#### D. Catocalinae.

*Euclidimera mi.* Clerck. (Mother Shipton). V.C.H. gives "Common but local." It is now scarce, for the rough places that it likes have been ploughed up. I took it in Upton Wood in 1948 and on the skirts of Monks' Wood in 1950. Mr. Tebbs took one at Orton Longueville in 1951 and has not seen it since. It may linger on here and there and perhaps stage a come-back.

*Ectypa glyphica*. L. (Burnet Companion). V.C.H. gives the same as for the last species, and much the same story applies. I took it outside Hermitage Wood twice in 1948 and in Brooklands Wood, Abbots Ripton in 1952. No other records.

*Catocala nupta*. L. (Red Underwing). V.C.H. gives "common," but records nowadays are scattered and infrequent, viz. Brampton '33-'37 (F.S.S.); Holme Fen '39 (S.W.P.P.); Hartford '50 (D. Kime); Alconbury '51 (Rec.); Ramsey 2 in 1951 (N.L.P.); Woodwalton '57, common at light and sugar (F.G.S.) Mr. Tebbs writes: "Though common in the Soke of Peterborough, it never seems to haunt the telegraph poles in North Hunts." The food-plants, *Salix* and *Populus*, are probably much less common than they used to be.

*C. promissa*. Esp. (Light Crimson underwing). Fenland gives "Monks' Wood, formerly in profusion." No later records.

*Lygephila pastinum*. Treits. (Blackneck). V.C.H. gives "common in places. Woodwalton Fen, Holme district." Mr. Stanley-Smith recorded it at Brampton in 1933-37 and Mr. Pooles took it at Holme Fen in 1956. It is probably still to be found and its food-plant, *Vicia cracca*, is not uncommon.

#### E. Hypeninae.

*Laspeyria flexula*. Schiff. (Beautiful Hookwing). V.C.H. gives "Monks' Wood" from which I have no recent records. Mr. Stanley-Smith took it in Bevill's Wood before the war, and Mr. Pooles at Holme Fen in 1956. A careful search would probably reveal it in several places, but lichens on which its larvae feeds are not a great feature of the Huntingdonshire woods.

*Zanclognatha tarsipennalis*. Treits. (Brown Fanfoot). V.C.H. gives "Hunts," with no specified locality on the authority of Major S. Maples. Mr. Pooles records it from Holme Fen. Its favourite food-plant, Wild Raspberry, is not often found in Hunts. as it is in the Cheshire woods where the moth is common.

*Z. nemoralis*. Fab. (= *grisealis*) (Small Fanfoot). V.C.H. gives "Woodwalton, St. Ives and Monks' Wood." I have taken it twice in 1953 and 1954 in my garden at Alconbury and Mr. Pooles found it at Holme Fen in 1956. It is probably commoner than this suggests but Mr. Tebbs reports that all the *Hypeninae* are scarce in North Hunts. and a systematic search is desirable.

*Z. cribrumalis*, Hb. (= *cribralis*). (Dotted Fanfoot). V.C.H. gives nothing but "Whittlesey Mere," which is over 100 years out of date. Mr. Stanley-Smith found it at Woodwalton Fen before the war and the Baron de Worms in 1952 (8b Entom. '43). Presumably it is confined to the fen but its status there is uncertain.

*Herminia barbalis*. Clerck. (Common Fanfoot). V.C.H. gives "common." I have taken it several times in one spot in Monks' Wood and nowhere else. No other records.

*Hypena proboscidalis* L. (Snout). V.C.H. gives "common," which is now far from true. My only personal records are from Alconbury (1948) and Holme Fen (1954). Other records are Holme, 1956 (S.W.P.P.); Ramsey Heights, 1957 (F.C.S.); and Monks' Wood a few, 1958 (C.S.B.) It is surprising that this nettle-eating insect is not more abundant.

*H. rostralis*. L. (Buttoned Snout). Brampton, St. Ives, Somersham district (V.C.H.) No recent records.

*Schranckia costristrigalis*. Steph. (Pinion-streaked Snout). The only record is from Woodwalton Fen in 1957 (F.G.S.) It was found long ago at Whittlesey Mere (Fenland).

Abbreviations: (Rec.), Recorder; (H.F.T.), H. F. Tebbs; (S.W.P.P.), S. W. P. Pooles; (F.G.S.), F. G. Smith; (F.S.S.), F. Stanley-Smith; (B.O.C.G.), B. O. C. Gardiner; (J.L.G.), J. L. Gilbert; (V.C.H.), Victoria County History, Vol. 1.

J. E. H. BLACKIE.

## THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE FLETTON

### CLAY WORKINGS

#### (PRELIMINARY SURVEY)

When Peterborough is approached from the South, whether by road or rail, the most prominent features of the scene are brickyards and their attendant quarries. In the parishes of Fletton, Woodston and Yaxley, with its edges in Farcet and now creeping into Orton Longueville, an area about two miles across has been disturbed for Oxford clay in the last seventy-odd years. Stanground Lode, a tributary of the Nene, flows through its southern part and turning northward skirts the eastern edge of the workings which are no longer active. To the south and west clay is still being quarried and the area of disturbance is still increasing in those directions.

As the industry has progressed the clay has been more and more thoroughly explored until, now, the whole of it is taken out to the top of the boulder clay beneath it, which lies, approximately, at sea level. Some of the pits therefore have been dug to a depth of over sixty feet, of which about forty have been removed and the overburden, some fifteen feet thick, thrown back. Without pumping, all of them would be flooded, probably at least up to the level of the Oxford clay and become lakes about twenty feet deep. This has happened to the older, now disused, workings and at the back-doors of Fletton and Woodston are now ponds or small lakes, dotted with islands, having areas ranging from ten to over sixty acres.

It is owned in great part by the London Brick Co. Ltd., with a small but appreciable area possessed by Eastwoods Ltd.

This survey has confined itself to the main area of these workings, covering an area of over a thousand acres and the estates to the south and west likely to be affected in the near future. It neglects the outlying Norman Cross Pit on the steep slope down to the fen, whose throw-back having been roughly levelled, may drain efficiently and be capable of cultivation within a few years.

Of the area under survey some three hundred acres are definitely flooded :—

L.B.1 Pit	...	65 acres approx. also called 'Bakers.'
Eastwood Pit	...	60 " "
L.B. 2 Pit	...	12 " "
L.B. 3 Pit	...	22 " "
Hicks 2 Pit	...	10 " "
Plowmans Pit	...	35 " "
N.P. 1 Pit	...	30 " " (in two sections)
Crown Pit	...	21 " "
Old L.B. 4 Pit	...	11 " " (wide marshy edges)
Eastwood (Yaxley)	...	20 " "
Farcet (2 parts)	...	19 " "

Two old quarries still have light railways running through them and are therefore kept pumped and three are being actively worked :—

DRY :—

N.P. 2/3 Pit 142 acres approx (8 acres flooded from a shallow pond).

Old Hicks 1 Pit 206 acres approx.

WORKING :—

L.B. 4 Pit } 166 acres approx. These are really one  
Hicks 1 Pit } quarry working two faces.

Belby's Pit, 133 acres approx.

New Pet Pit, 130 acres approx., also called 'Orton Pit.'

Except in N.P. 2/3 Pit the overburden has been thrown back in heaps and ridges; very irregularly in the early days of manual clay-getters, and in long lines of peaks in the later mechanical days. These impervious clayey heaps trap a good deal of rain water and the hollows become more or less permanent pools or marshes that vary from season to season but provide a tremendous number of habitats for plant and beast, fish and fowl.

The spoil heaps, as they are created behind the working faces of the quarries remain bare for anything up to eighteen months; their floral colonisation depending on the time of year when they are thrown up. The first plants to appear are, most often, coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*) but occasionally the last crop of the old ground is not entirely buried and will appear quickly. Thus when Yaxley Lodge Farm was engulfed rape (*Brassica Naus*), field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), goosefoot (*Chemopodium album*) and twitch (*Agropyron repens*) grew first on one line of "callow" and very rarely clover appears with a grass species among the first plants. Once the leaves of the coltsfoot have died down other composites follow quickly, but within two or three years the nature of slope and drainage, together with some variation in the soil, begins to take effect and the flora differs from place to place.

The natural climax, which occurs round the old flooded pits and on the islands in them, appears to be a pure stand of hawthorn (*Crataegus* spp). In places it is already so dense that the herb layer has been blotted out.



Otherwise, as has been hinted, the dominant plants vary from pit to pit. The large area round New Peterborough Nos. 2 and 3 yards has not been filled at all. It drains largely to a shallow pool of about eight acres in extent and the boulder clay floor has a thin coat of grasses. The old Hicks Pit between London Road and the railway has large areas of gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and bramble (*Rubus* spp.) with so many long pools that reeds (*Phragmites*) and reed-mace (*Typha latifolia* and *T. angustifolia*) occupy an appreciable space. Beeby's Pit is largely grass but its pools have willow (*Salix* spp.) in their edges. Willows are rare in Hick's Pit. The old, northern, end of L.B. 4 Pit is almost wooded, with willows dominant but having odd trees of apple and pear that may be the relics of the orchard of Woodston Lodge, a house which has disappeared into the Pit. The overburden at Orton Pit is largely sand which drains easily, gives more water at the base of the spoil heaps and a dryer top.

The tremendous movement of soil and earth means that no reliance can be placed on old botanical records; long-established plants can disappear overnight; but in the scramble of recolonization many corners are made, into which new and interesting plants can find a place. In this upheaval some sites, particularly woodland, have been lost and a few small woods to the southwest are in immediate danger. The old shrub cover at the edge of the flooded pits is constantly being abraded by the tipping of the waste of the yards.

Especially to be regretted would be the destruction of the line of woodland from Moggswell Farm to Orton Gate. Jones Covert and Two Pond Coppice are the county's northern centre for several local butterflies—*Argynnis paphia*, *Limenitis camilla*, *Hamearis lucina*, *Strymonidia pruni* and *Carterocephalus palaemon*. Against the possibility of such a tremendous entomological loss must be set the new planting of the roadsides and undisturbed corners with varieties of Black Poplar which have become parasitised by "Prominent" moths. Along the Peterborough—Yaxley road at least nine species are known to exist, of which several, notably *Cerura hermelinea*, *Notodonta dromedarius* and *Clostera curtula*, can only be described as rare in the rest of the county. It may be noted that when first planted, these trees were very extensively invaded by puss moths (*Cerula vinula*) but in the last two years a balance seems to have been found and it is no longer possible to gather several larvae from every tree and occasionally find three pairs of *vinula* ova on a single leaf. Altogether, I have noted 190 species of lepidoptera in the knotholes.

In the area of nearly two square miles no adequate survey of mammals has yet been possible. Fox earths are known in every pit and rabbits are breeding again. In the northern extremity, L.B.2, L.B.4, Hicks 2 pits, no signs of myxomatosis were seen and the rabbits still hold their own against the guns of various brickyard workers. In 1956 otters colonised L.B.1 pit but were exterminated by the fishing fraternity.

Fishing is a highly organized sport in the hands of the works fishing club and the permanent waters are fully stocked and well watched but this strict preservation unfortunately does little to deter the youths (and others) who use the several public rights-of-way which cross the brickfield as a practice ground for airguns and other heavier firearms. Sufficient to say that the water-bird life seems to have decreased to an alarming extent in the past three or four years.

Up to that time there were at least one pair of Great Crested Grebe on every piece of open water. These have *all* disappeared and the ducks are less than a tenth in number. Swans are now the most prominent water birds and each sheet of water of suitable size carries at least one pair.

The spread of hawthorn gives good cover for the smaller birds; goldfinches have obviously increased but I have not heard the grasshopper warblers for several years. They used to be heard on the islands in the small northern pits, L.B.2, L.B.3, and Hicks 2. The increase in night work or possibly the new intense lighting near these ponds may have disturbed them.

At some future date I hope to be able to report in more detail on the several separate pits in the area.

H. F. TEBBS.