

HUNTINGDONSHIRE  
FAUNA AND FLORA SOCIETY

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**18th**  
**ANNUAL**  
**REPORT**  
**1965**

PRICE (to non-members) 10/6



# HUNTINGDONSHIRE FAUNA AND FLORA SOCIETY

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Turbellaria & Annelida	MR. I. R. BALL, Huntingdon Research Centre, Huntingdon.
Ants, Myriapods & Woodlice - - -	MR. B. ING, Kindrogan Field Centre, Enochdu, Blairgowrie, Perthshire.

## Annual Report for 1965

(No. 18)

### INTRODUCTION

The Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday, 27 March, 1965, at Cromwell House, Huntingdon, when 43 members and guests were present.

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 April, 1964, were read and confirmed and the Hon. Treasurer's Report was received and accepted. The Annual Report for 1964, containing the Hon. Secretary's Report was distributed.

The election of Officers, Referees and Members of the Committee was dealt with as listed in the present report. Thanks were expressed to the retiring Chairman, Mr. J. L. Gilbert, for his term of office.

Professor Worden reported the advent to Huntingdon Research Centre of Mr. J. H. Cole, and the meeting agreed that he should be asked to assist Mr. H. B. Ginn in the duties of Hon. Social Secretary.

The Society welcomed Dr. N. W. Moore as referee for *Odonata* (Dragonflies) and Dr. R. C. Welch as referee for *Coleoptera* (Beetles).

On later dates, Mr. A. D. Horrill, B.Sc., was welcomed as referee for *Bryophytes* (Mosses and Liverworts), Mr. I. R. Ball, B.Sc., as referee for *Turbellaria* ("Flatworms") and *Annelids* ("Earthworms"), and as referee for *Diptera* (particularly Hoverflies), Dr. B. N. K. Davis.

Suggestions for the 1965/1966 programme were discussed and at later committee meetings, on 17 April and 6 July, the year's field meetings were arranged as shown below.

Professor Worden drew members' attention to the proposed study organised by Mr. Lloyd of Sherborne School, Dorset, of Badger sets, which is incidentally being continued in 1966. Anyone interested in helping should contact the Social Secretaries for further details.

After the vote of thanks to the Chairman, Dr. M. T. Tanton of the Woodland Research Section of the Nature Conservancy, Monks Wood Experimental Station, gave an extremely interesting talk entitled "Nature Conservancy Research on British Mammals," illustrated by a fine series of colour slides showing most of the British species.

## Programme of Field Meetings arranged for 1965

- Saturday, 8 May : First visit to **Hartham Street**.  
Saturday, 12 June : Roadside verges of **Sawtry Way**.  
Friday, 18 June : The disused **Huntingdon-Brampton railway track**.  
Sunday, 27 June : **Weaveley and Sand Wood**, kindly led by the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Crossman. Herb Paris (*Paris quadrifolia*) was not found, but there was, nevertheless, a varied fauna and flora to interest members.  
Sunday, 11 July : **West End Gravel Pits, Fenstanton**.  
Saturday, 17 July : Second visit to **Hartham Street**.  
Saturday, 7 August : **Connington Dump**.  
Sunday, 15 August : **Earith Gravel Pits**.  
Saturday, 11 September : Third visit to **Hartham Street**.  
Saturday, 2 October : Fungus foray at **Monks Wood** at the kind invitation of Dr. K. Mellanby.  
Saturday, 20 November : **Diddington Reservoir**.

Two indoor meetings were held during the year; both were well attended, with about 70 to 80 members and friends being present. The first was held on 30 January at Kimbolton Castle, at the invitation of the Headmaster and Mr. Burton, the biology master, when Mr. Philip Cambridge gave a well-illustrated talk on "The Deserts of the South Western United States."

The second took place on 12 November, in the County Council Chamber, Huntingdon, when Dr. B. N. K. Davis and Dr. M. G. Morris spoke on the results of the Hartham Street survey. After a lively discussion, the films "Wildlife in Trust," describing the work of the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists' Trust, and "Wild Animals of Uganda National Parks" were shown.

During August 1965, the *Hunts. Post* brought to the Society's notice complaints from people living in the vicinity of Diddington Reservoir that their houses were being invaded by swarms of "mosquito-like" insects. As a result, B. N. K. Davis and H. B. Ginn visited Grafham to investigate the complaint. Specimens of the largest and most conspicuous species, which had clearly been the subject of most comment, were taken and later identified by Dr. Davis to be *Chironomus tendipediformis* (Chironomidae) a non-biting "midge" whose larvae feed on decaying vegetation, which would have been plentiful in the newly-inundated area of the reservoir.

## HARTHAM STREET SURVEY

B. N. K. DAVIS, B.Sc., Ph.D., and M. G. MORRIS, M.A., Ph.D.  
(The Nature Conservancy, Monks Wood Experimental Station)

The Hunts. Fauna and Flora Society arranged in 1965 to make three visits to the bridle track running between Eas'on and Grafham known as Hartham Street. The intention was to assess the biological interest of this track, part of which borders Calpher Wood which is a scheduled Site of Special Scientific Interest. The meetings, on 8 May, 17 July and 11 September, were planned to cover the seasonal range of plants and to be suitable for collecting insects, especially Coleoptera and Hemiptera, but several visits were also made by individuals at other times.

Lists are given of the plants and insects so far recorded, but these could probably all be extended by further visits. Since the northern half of Calpher Wood is in process of being cleared for agriculture, future observations on the flora and fauna could in fact prove of considerable interest in recording any changes that may follow.

### A. Flora

Over 100 species were recorded and these probably include most of those associated with an interesting fauna. (Grasses and mosses were not covered.) Quite a number are apparently local in the county, according to J. L. Gilbert's "Flora of Huntingdonshire," and four species, Wood Spurge, Adder's Tongue Fern, Greater Butterfly Orchid and Elecampane, are uncommon or rare. The hybrid False Oxlip is also of interest. Other species worth special mention perhaps as being uncommon on roadside verges or green lanes in this area are Hemp Agrimony, Eyebright, Tway-blade, Gromwell, Lesser Spearwort, Musk Mallow and Milkwort.

Thickets of Blackthorn and Sallow that at one time threatened to choke the track are now kept in check by annual cutting by the county council over the whole length and width of the track. Cutting in 1965 took place during the latter half of September.

The track can be divided into several zones differing in their botanical composition:—

1. **The north-facing east end of the track itself, from the old railway to the bottom of the slope.** (The section south of the railway has not been included.)

This is characterized by a rich calcicole flora including several shrubs such as Spindle and Wayfaring Tree, the grass *Brachypodium*, Fairy Flax, Pepper Saxifrage, Gromwell etc. It also possesses a few species especially characteristic of boulder clay soils such as the Butterfly Orchid and Wood Spurge. Plants such as Bluebell, Primrose and Lesser Celan-

dine, occur at the upper southern end along the woodland edge and there is a large area of Elecampane near the bend at the northern end. Several standard Oak and Ash trees have been preserved.

2. The large bay adjacent to the last area, i.e. between the track and Calpher Wood.

This is characterized by a less well-drained area dominated by Fleabane, Meadowsweet and Hairy Willow-herb. There are several particularly damp pockets with Marsh bedstraw, Lesser Spearwort etc.

3. The zone between the bend and the (former) west end of Calpher Wood.

This was heavily shaded and had a rather lush but not especially rich vegetation including patches of Nettle, Marsh Thistle and Ragged Robin. It is the section most likely to be affected by the clearance of the wood.

4. The western half of the bridle track from the end of Calpher Wood to the Easton-Stonely road.

This has a more typical roadside verge flora including Lesser Knapweed and several Umbelliferae not recorded in the other sections. Grass Vetchling is common at the eastern end and one or two plants of Spurge Laurel occur in the hedge between the track and the old pasture to the south.

<i>Acer campestre</i> L.	Field maple.	Wood edge and hedge.
<i>Achillea millefolium</i> L.	Yarrow.	
<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i> L.	Common agrimony.	
<i>Ajuga reptans</i> L.	Bugle.	
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i> (Bieb.)	Hedge garlic.	
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i> L.	Angelica.	In ditch beside slope.
<i>Arctium minus</i> agg.	Burdock.	Woodland edge.
<i>Arum maculatum</i> L.	Cuckoo-pint.	
<i>Bellis perennis</i> L.	Daisy.	
* <i>Betonica officinalis</i> L.	Betony.	
<i>Brachypodium pinnatum</i> (L.)	Heath false-brome.	Common on slope.
<i>Centaurea nigra</i> L.	Lesser knapweed.	Dominant at extreme west end.
<i>Centaureum erythraea</i> Rafn.	Common centaury	
<i>Cerastium holosteoides</i> Fries	Common mouse-ear.	
<i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i> (L.)	Fireweed.	
<i>Circaea lutetiana</i> L.	Enchanters nightshade.	In patches along wood edge.
<i>Cirsium arvense</i> (L.)	Creeping thistle.	
<i>Cirsium palustre</i> (L.)	Marsh thistle.	
<i>Clematis vitalba</i> L.	Travellers joy.	In hedge.
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.	Hazel.	Wood edge and hedge.
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i> Jacq.	Hawthorn.	Wood edge and hedge.
<i>Daphne laureola</i> L.	Spurge laurel.	One or two plants in hedge, west end.

<i>Daucus carota</i> L.	Wild carrot.	Sunnier parts, west end.
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i> L.	Teasle.	Common (indicating regular disturbance).
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i> (L.)	Male fern.	A few plants on slope.
<i>Endymion non-scriptus</i> (L.)	Bluebell.	Woodland edge at top of slope.
<i>Epilobium adenocaulon</i> Hausskn.	American willow-herb.	
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i> L.	Hairy willow-herb.	Common in places on slope.
<i>Epilobium montanum</i> L.	Broad-leaved willow-herb.	
<i>Euonymus europaeus</i> L.	Spindle tree.	Wood edge and hedge.
<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i> L.	Hemp agrimony.	Bottom of slope.
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i> L.	Wood spurge.	A few plants on slope near hedge.
<i>Euphrasia officinalis</i> agg.	Eyebright.	On slope.
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i> (L.)	Meadow sweet.	
<i>Fragaria vesca</i> L.	Wild strawberry.	Wood edge, track and hedge.
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> L.	Ash.	Damper patches.
<i>Galium palustre</i> L.	Marsh bedstraw.	
<i>Galium verum</i> L.	Lady's bedstraw.	
<i>Geranium dissectum</i> L.	Cut-leaved cranesbill.	
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i> L.	Ground ivy.	
* <i>Hypericum hirsutum</i> L.	Hairy St. John's wort.	
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i> L.	Common St. John's wort.	
* <i>Hypericum tetrapterum</i> Fr.	Square stemmed St. John's wort.	
<i>Inula helenium</i> L.	Elecampane.	Abundant near bend in track.
<i>Juncus inflexus</i> L.	Hard rush.	Damper patches.
<i>Knautia arvensis</i> (L.)	Field scabious.	
<i>Lathyrus nissolia</i> L.	Grass vetchling.	Locally common just west of wood.
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i> L.	Meadow vetchling.	
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> L.	Privet.	In hedge.
<i>Linum catharticum</i> L.	Fairy flax.	On slope.
<i>Listera ovata</i> (L.)	Twayblade.	Several plants on slope.
<i>Lithospermum officinale</i> L.	Gromwell.	On slope.
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i> L.	Honeysuckle.	In hedge.
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i> L.	Birds-foot trefoil.	
<i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i> L.	Ragged robin.	Damper patches near bend.
<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i> L.	Creeping jenny.	
<i>Malus sylvestris</i> Mill.	Crab apple.	Wood edge and hedge.
<i>Malva moschata</i> L.	Musk mallow.	On slope.
<i>Medicago lupulina</i> L.	Black medick.	
<i>Melandrium album</i> (Mill.)	White campion.	
<i>Melilotus officinalis</i> (L.)	Common melilot.	Top of slope.
<i>Mentha arvensis</i> L.	Corn mint.	
<i>Myosotis arvensis</i> (L.)	Common forget-me-not.	
<i>Odontites verna</i> (Bell.)	Red bartsia.	Common along whole track.
<i>Ononis spinosa</i> L.	Restharrow.	On slope.
<i>Ophioglossum vulgatum</i> L.	Adder's tongue.	Several on slope (also occurs in old pastures nearby).
<i>Orchis fuchsii</i> Druce	Spotted orchid.	Several on slope.
<i>Picris echioides</i> L.	Bristly ox-tongue.	

<i>Platanthera chlorantha</i> (Cust.)	Greater butterfly orchid.	A few on slope.
<i>Polygala vulgaris</i> L.	Milkwort.	On slope (unusual for boulder clay soils).
<i>Potentilla anserina</i> L.	Silverweed.	
<i>Potentilla erecta</i> (L.)	Tormentil.	
<i>Primula veris</i> L.	Cowslip.	Common on slope.
<i>Primula vulgaris</i> Huds.	Primrose.	Weed edge at top of slope.
<i>Primula veris x vulgaris</i>	False oxlip.	A few plants at top of slope.
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i> L.	Self heal.	
<i>Prunus spinosa</i> L.	Blackthorn.	Wood edge, track and hedge.
<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i> (L.)	Fleabane.	Abundant on slope off track.
<i>Quercus robur</i> L.	Oak.	Wood edge, track and hedge.
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i> L.	Lesser celandine.	
<i>Ranunculus flammula</i> L.	Lesser spearwort.	Small colony in damp patch near bend.
<i>Ranunculus repens</i> L.	Creeping buttercup.	
<i>Rosa</i> sp.	Briar.	Wood edge.
<i>Rubus caesius</i> L.	Dewberry.	
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble.	
<i>Rumex</i> sp.	Dock.	
<i>Salix caprea</i> L.	Sallow.	Hedge and track.
<i>Sambucus nigra</i> L.	Elder.	Wood edge.
<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i> L.	Figwort.	Woodland edge.
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i> L.	Ragwort.	
<i>Silaum silaus</i> (L.)	Pepper saxifrage.	On slope.
<i>Sison amomum</i> L.	Stone parsley.	West end of track only.
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i> L.	Woody nightshade.	In hedge.
<i>Sonchus arvensis</i> L.	Field sow-thistle.	Indicator of regular disturbance.
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i> L.	Smooth sow-thistle.	
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i> L.	Hedge woundwort.	
<i>Stellaria graminea</i> L.	Lesser stitchwort.	
<i>Stellaria media</i> (L.)	Chickweed.	
<i>Tamus communis</i> L.	Black bryony.	In hedge.
<i>Thelycrania sanguinea</i> (L.)	Dogwood.	Wood edge and hedge.
<i>Torilis japonica</i> (Houtt.)	Hedge parsley.	
<i>Trifolium pratense</i> L.	Red clover.	
<i>Ulmus</i> sp.	Elm.	Wood edge and hedge.
<i>Urtica dioica</i> L.	Nettle.	Large colonies.
<i>Valeriana officinalis</i> L.	Valerian.	On slope.
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i> L.	Germander speedwell.	
<i>Veronica serpyllifolia</i> L.	Thyme-leaved speedwell.	
<i>Viburnum lantana</i> L.	Wayfaring tree.	In hedge.
<i>Vicia cracca</i> L.	Tufted vetch.	
<i>Vicia tetrasperma</i> (L.)	Smooth tare.	
<i>Viola riviniana</i> Rehb.	Common violet.	

\* Species added by Miss P. Goodliff during visits on 9 and 18 August.

#### REFERENCE

J. L. Gilbert, "Flora of Huntingdonshire: Wildflowers" 1965, available from: The Museum, Priestgate, Peterborough; price 7/6.

## B. Hemiptera-Heteroptera (Bugs)

<i>Anthocoris confusus</i> Reut. (Cimicidae)	} Beaten from trees (oak, hawthorn etc.). Both spp. are generally common and abundant. 8/5/65.
<i>Anthocoris nemorum</i> (L.) (Cimicidae)	
<i>Deraeocoris lutescens</i> (Schill.) (Miridae)	Beaten from oak 12/9/65.
* <i>Dicyphus annulatus</i> (Wolff) (Miridae)	Swept from <i>Ononis spinosa</i> (usual hosts are <i>Ononis</i> spp.). Generally abundant where the host plants occur. 1/8/65.
*† <i>Dolichonabis limbatus</i> (Dahlb.) (Nabidae)	1/8/65 & 12/9/65. This bug is a ground-living species but is not infrequently swept, as on these occasions.
* <i>Empicoris vagabundus</i> (L.) (Reduviidae)	In some numbers by beating hawthorn and blackthorn, 12/9/65. Not uncommon, but more usually taken singly.
<i>Heterotoma planicornis</i> (Pallas) (= <i>Capsus meriopterus</i> auctt.) (Miridae)	Beaten from brambles 1/8/65. Generally common on a wide variety of plants.
* <i>Macrotylus paykulli</i> (Fall.) (Miridae)	Swept from <i>Ononis spinosa</i> 1/8/65. Like <i>D. annulatus</i> often abundant on <i>Ononis</i> spp., but appearing slightly earlier in the season.
*† <i>Macrotylus solitarius</i> (M.-D.) (Miridae)	Swept from its host, <i>Stachys sylvatica</i> , 1/8/65. Considered to be a local species.
<i>Megaloceroa recticornis</i> (Geoff.) (Miridae)	Swept from grasses 1/8/65. A widely distributed species.
* <i>Phytocoris ulmi</i> (L.) (Miridae)	Beaten from hawthorn 12/9/65. This is the usual but not the only host; the species is partly predacious.
<i>Tingis cardui</i> (L.) (Tingidae)	A common lacebug on <i>Cirsium vulgare</i> and other thistles 8/5/65.
* No previously published record for Huntingdonshire.	
† Other MS records in existence.	

## C. Coleoptera, Curculionidae (Weevils)

<i>Anthonomus pedicularius</i> (L.)	8/5/65. Beaten from hawthorn, the usual host. Common.
<i>Apion assimile</i> Kirby	12/9/65. General sweeping. Hosts are <i>Trifolium</i> spp. Common.
<i>Apion carduorum</i> Kirby	8/5/65, 1/8/65 and 12/9/65, usually by sweeping <i>Cirsium arvense</i> , the usual host. Common.
<i>Apion dichroum</i> Bedel	8/5/65 by general sweeping. Generally very abundant.
<i>Apion nigritarse</i> Kirby	8/5/65 in some numbers by general sweeping. In my experience one of the least common of the "clover weevils" (subgen. <i>Protapion</i> ) just as <i>A. dichroum</i> is usually the commonest.
<i>Apion onopordi</i> Kirby	1/8/65 by general sweeping. Feeds in various thistles. Common.

<i>Apion pisi</i> F.	12/9/65, general sweeping. Common. Associated with various Leguminosae.
<i>Apion subulatum</i> Kirby	8/5/65. General beating of hedgerows. Host is usually <i>Lathyrus pratensis</i> , but many <i>Apion</i> spp. are to be found in trees in autumn and spring—the reasons for this are unknown.
<i>Apion viciae</i> (Payk.)	1/8/65, general sweeping. Host is usually <i>Lathyrus pratensis</i> .
<i>Apion violaceum</i> Kirby	Swept from <i>Rumex</i> sp. (usual hosts), 8/5/65.
<i>Apion virens</i> Herbst	8/5/65, general sweeping. Hosts are <i>Trifolium</i> spp.
<i>Apion vorax</i> Herbst	8/5/65, beaten from hawthorn, etc. (see under <i>A. subulatum</i> ). One of the less common species recorded.
<i>Caenorhinus germanicus</i> (Herbst)	Beaten from hawthorn 8/5/65. Usual hosts are rosaceous herbs. Fairly common.
<i>Ceuthorhynchus assimilis</i> (Payk.)	General sweeping 1/8/65. Generally abundant on various Cruciferae.
<i>Ceuthorhynchus contractus</i> (Marsh.)	General sweeping 1/8/65. Also generally very common on Cruciferae.
<i>Ceuthorhynchus litura</i> (F.)	1/8/65. Swept from the usual host, <i>Cirsium arvense</i> . Generally common, but not usually taken in numbers.
<i>Ceuthorhynchus quadridens</i> (Panz.)	1/8/65, general sweeping. Another common species on Cruciferous plants.
<i>Ceuthorhynchus pollinarius</i> (Forst.)	8/5/65, swept from <i>Urtica dioica</i> , the host plant.
<i>Cidnorhinus quadrimaculatus</i> (L.)	As <i>C. pollinarius</i> . Usually very abundant.
<i>Cionus hortulanus</i> (Geoff.)	1/8/65, general sweeping. I was unable to find this species on 8/5/65 by searching its food plant <i>Scrophularia nodosa</i> .
<i>Coeliodes dryados</i> (Gmel.)	} Beaten from oak, the food plant, 8/5/65. Both species are common.
<i>Curculio pyrrhoceras</i> Marsh.	
<i>Rhynchaenus alni</i> (L.)	Swept under elm trees (the host), 8/5/65. Common.
<i>Rhynchaenus pilosus</i> (F.)	} Beaten from oak, 8/5/65. The larvae mine in the leaves of the tree. Both spp. are common, <i>R. pilosus</i> more local.
<i>Rhynchaenus quercus</i> (L.)	
<i>Rhynchites caeruleus</i> (Deg.)	Beaten from hawthorn and blackthorn 8/5/65. This 'twig cutting weevil' is associated with arboreal Rosaceae.
<i>Sciaphilus asperatus</i> (Bons.)	12/9/65, beaten from hawthorn/blackthorn. Larva is a root feeder.
<i>Sitona lineatus</i> (L.)	General sweeping 1/8/65 and 12/9/65. The very common 'pea and bean weevil', the larvae feeding on roots of Leguminosae.

#### Other Coleoptera Recorded.

The most notable species was *Osphya bipunctata* (F.) (Serropalpidae). Huntingdonshire is a noted locality for this uncommon species, especially Monks Wood. Larvae are said to feed in rotten wood, but the adults may be beaten, as on this occasion (8/5/65) from hawthorn in bloom and also other trees.

#### D. Hymenoptera, Symphyta (Sawflies) and Hemiptera, Auchenorrhyncha (Leafhoppers)

Most of the species of these groups which were collected have not yet been identified. One sawfly taken is *Pamphilius sylvaticus* (L.) (8/5/65), the larvae of which feed on rosaceous shrubs such as hawthorn. The leafhoppers include such common species as *Philaenus spumarius* (L.) (Cercopidae), and *Cicadella viridis* (L.) and *Evacanthus interruptus* (L.) (Cicadellidae).

#### E. Diptera, Syrphidae (Hoverflies)

Most of the collecting for hoverflies was done during 1964 and only two species were added during 1965. The Umbelliferae along section 4 and the Compositae (Ragwort and Fleabane especially) in sections 1 and 2 were the best sites. All the species found are of common or frequent occurrence in Britain generally but several provide useful county records.

* <i>Cheilosia albitarsis</i> Meig.	1 specimen (caught by spider) 13/6/65.
<i>Cheilosia illustrata</i> Harris	Occasional.
<i>Cheilosia proxima</i> Zett.	Very common.
* <i>Cheilosia variabilis</i> Panz.	1 specimen, 19/7/64.
<i>Chrysogaster L. metallina</i> Fab.	1 specimen. One of two Hunts. localities. 13/7/64.
* <i>Chrysogaster O. splendens</i> Meig.	1 specimen, 19/7/64.
<i>Eristalis arbustorum</i> L.	Very common.
<i>Eristalis tenax</i> L.	Common.
<i>Eristalis sepulchralis</i> L.	Common, on Fleabane.
<i>Helophilus pendulus</i> L.	Common.
<i>Melanostoma mellinum</i> L.	Common.
<i>Melanostoma scalare</i> Fab.	One of only a few Hunts. records.
<i>Neoscia podagrica</i> Fab.	Common.
<i>Platychirus manicatus</i> Meig.	Common.
<i>Pyrophaena granditarsa</i> Forst.	Occasional, one of two Hunts. localities. 16/8/64.
<i>Rhingia campestris</i> Meig.	Common.
<i>Scaeva pyrastris</i> L.	Occasional.
<i>Sphaerophoria menthastris</i> L.	Common.
<i>Sphaerophoria scripta</i> L.	Common.
<i>Syrphus balteatus</i> Deg.	Common.
<i>Syrphus cinctellus</i> Zett.	1 specimen, one of two Hunts. localities. 8/64.
<i>Syrphus eligans</i> Harr.	Occasional, on hawthorn in May.
<i>Syrphus labiatarum</i> Verr.	1 specimen, one of three Hunts. localities.
<i>Syrphus ribesii</i> L.	Very common.
<i>Syrphus vitripennis</i> Meig.	Very common.
<i>Xylota segnis</i> L.	1 specimen, on bramble.
* Only Huntingdon vice-county record to date.	

## NOTES ON THE PLANTS FOUND ALONG THE DISUSED RAILWAY TRACK RUNNING FROM BRAMPTON TO HUNTINGDON

T. C. E. WELLS, B.Sc.  
(Monks Wood Experimental Station)

An evening's excursion along the disused railway track running from Brampton to Huntingdon was organised by the Society on 18 June, 1965. No attempt was made to systematically record the plants growing along the track and in surrounding habitats, but the records which were made do show that interesting communities are found in the wet meadows on either side of the track which merit further study. For the purpose of recording, the area was divided into four fairly well-defined habitats.

### 1. The Railway Track.

The bed of the track consists of limestone rubble mixed with varying quantities of clinker, with local variations caused by later additions of other materials such as sand and gravel. Floristically the track was poor, only 11 species being recorded along about one mile of track. The most interesting feature was the abundance of *Vulpia bromoides* along the whole length of the track, although this species was especially prominent around the old Brampton Station. This grass is a freely seeding annual, frequent throughout the British Isles on roadsides which are disturbed and especially on open, sandy or stony ground where competition from other species is small.

*Arrhenatherum elatius* and *Dactylis glomerata* were frequent on the edges of the track, especially where soil had washed down from the embankment, while in contrast, *Holcus lanatus*, *Arabidopsis thaliana* and *Carex hirta* were more frequent in crevices between the stones and sleepers. The annuals *Chaenorrhinum minus*, *Viola arvensis* x *tricolor* and *Arenaria leptoclados*, all characteristic of railway tracks and other similar habitats were scattered along the track. Less expected was the occurrence of the perennials *Chrysanthemum leucanthemum* and *Knautia arvensis*. *Lactuca virosa*, a tall composite with a reddish stem was conspicuous near the old signal box.

### 2. The Embankment.

The railway track was bounded on its northern side by a steep earthen embankment on which the grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* was dominant. *Trisetum flavescens*, *Agrostis stolonifera* were constant associates and the list of herbs found in this deep, light-starved habitat were all characteristic of the rough grassland type of environment. These were:—  
*Knautia arvensis*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Sonchus asper*, *Achillea*

*millefolium*, *Tragopogon pratensis*, *Pastinaca sativa*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Taraxacum officinale*, and *Crataegus monogyna*.

Small patches of sandy soil yielded a more interesting collection of plants; *Aphanes arvensis*, *Valerianella locusta*, *Filago germanica* and *Aira caryophyllea* being found here and nowhere else. Locally, *Bromus sterilis* formed almost pure stands while *Poa compressa* was an interesting record from the edge of the embankment.

### 3. Wet Ditch and Old Gravel Workings.

A wide ditch, with as much as two feet of water in it in places, ran along the southern side of the railway track. *Phragmites communis* formed pure stands in places, but here and there, other societies rich in species were found. *Epilobium hirsutum*, *Urtica dioica* and *Solanum dulcamara* with small amounts of *Lamium album* and occasional small shrubs of *Salix cinerea* formed a fairly uniform society along the length of the ditch. More interesting were the stretches where the bright yellow Cyperus Sedge (*Carex pseudocyperus*) grew with the Fox Sedge (*Carex otrubae*), *Galium palustre* and *Phalaris arundinacea*.

Behind the ditch in old gravel workings, *Salix carr* had developed in which *Salix alba* and *Salix atrocinerea* formed a dense and almost impenetrable stand. This area was not investigated in detail, and would repay further study. *Eupatorium cannabinum*, *Typha latifolia* and *Carex riparia* were the most prominent species around the edge of the pits. *Nasturtium officinale* and *Lemna minor* grew in the small ditch leading into the old gravel workings.

### 4. Meadow on South of Railway Line.

This area was the last habitat visited and although only a few hurried notes were made, it was in some ways the most interesting part of the excursion. A small stream runs through this meadow and the water-table at the time of recording was almost at ground level.

*Glyceria maxima* and *G. fluitans* were frequent in the stream with *Veronica beccabunga*, *Lemna trisulca* and *Lemna minor*. Of special interest was the occurrence of Frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*), a species which occurs infrequently in Fen waterways but which is generally considered rare in the county. The wetness of the meadow was indicated by the following species noted in a small area to the south of the stream:—

<i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i>	<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	<i>Carex riparia</i>
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>
<i>Juncus conglomeratus</i>	<i>Galium palustre</i>
<i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>	<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>

*Rumex hydrolapathum*      *Lathyrus pratensis*  
*Caltha palustris*        *Iris pseudacorus*  
*Filipendula ulmaria*    *Cirsium palustre*

Wet, alluvial meadows with a flora resembling that of the mixed Fen community, are becoming rare in all parts of southern England because of agricultural drainage and it is suggested that the attention of the Beds. and Hunts. Naturalists' Trust is drawn to this excellent example near to Huntingdon.

B. N. K. Davis and E. T. Lees helped in the recording of the plants during the excursion.

#### FURTHER BOTANICAL NOTES

J. L. GILBERT

(The Herbarium, Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew)

Undoubtedly, the most useful book on British wild flower identification to be published during the year was *The Concise British Flora in Colour* by the Rev. W. Keble Martin. With the superabundance of books on British flowering plants it is pleasing to hear that this book was a best-seller of 1965.

On our outing to the roadside verges of Sawtry Way, Wyton, on 12 June, species recorded included: Dame's Violet (*Hesperis matronalis*), Cotton Thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*) and Wild Celery (*Apium graveolens*). It was too early in the year to see any of them flowering.

Mr. C. F. Tebbutt came across a patch of Elecampane (*Inula helenium*) flowering on 15 August at Ellington Thorpe Farm in the hedge which divides the mediaeval earthworks of the Manor of Sibthorpe. Probably it is the only living survival of the Manor as Elecampane was formerly much cultivated for medicinal purposes.

Mr. D. H. Warren found Crested Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum cristatum*) between Huntingdon and Abbots Ripton where he first saw it 40 years ago. He also records having seen, some years ago, Thorn-apple (*Datura stramonium*) and Round-leaved Fluellen (*Kickxia spuria*) at Abbots Ripton.

Mr. T. E. Patston informed me that he saw Butcher's Broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*) growing near Water Newton Lodge on the roadside verges outing of 17 July, 1964, and Hound's-tongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*) by the bridge at Earith during May 1964.

Dr. Brian Davis reports that Caper Spurge (*Euphorbia lathyris*) was located in Monks Wood National Nature Reserve during 1965, for the first time since the establishment of the experimental station. The species was however recorded as being present there, in the Victoria County History, and in subsequent years.

Ten acres of Waresley Wood are being cleared for agriculture. A good patch of Oxlips (*Primula elatior*) is threatened by these operations and it is hoped that it will be possible to transplant a large proportion of these plants to another area.

#### ADDITIONS TO HUNTINGDONSIRE DIPTERA

B. N. K. DAVIS, B.Sc., Ph.D.

##### Syrphidae (Hoverflies)

Fifteen species have been added to last year's list (reported in the Hunts. Fauna and Flora Society report for 1964 and Entomologists Gazette Vol. 16 with fuller details). These bring the total for the vice-county to 91 and for Monks Wood National Nature Reserve and Bevills Wood to 71. In the majority of cases only single specimens were obtained.

<i>Cheilosia albitarsis</i> Meig.	13/6/65.	Hartham Street, caught by spider.
<i>Cheilosia honesta</i> Rond.	9/5/65.	Monks Wood. Phytophagous larvae.
<i>Cheilosia vulpina</i> Meig.	1/6/65.	Monks Wood, in water trap.
<i>Criorhina berberina</i> Fab.	3/6/65.	Monks Wood, in water trap. Larvae associated with rot-holes of trees.
<i>Helophilus lineatus</i> Fab.	19/6/65.	Ouse Valley, Brampton. } Associated with marshy places.
<i>Helophilus versicolor</i> Fab.	11/6 & 19/6/65.	As above and Holme Fen. }
<i>Pipiza luteitarsis</i> Zett.	21/5/65.	Monks Wood. Aphidophagous.
<i>Pipizella varipes</i> Meig.	7/8/65.	Connington Dump. Aphidophagous.
<i>Platychirus angustatus</i> Zett.	28/6/65.	Monks Wood. Aphidophagous.
<i>Sphaerophoria rueppellii</i> Wied.	14/6/65.	Monks Wood. Aphidophagous.
<i>Syrphus auricollis</i> Meig.	11/6/65.	Holme Fen, roadside. Aphidophagous.
<i>Syrphus compositarum</i> Verr.	11/6/65.	Holme Fen, roadside. Aphidophagous.
<i>Syrphus laternarius</i> Mueller	29/6/65.	Bevills Wood. Aphidophagous.
<i>Syrphus vittiger</i> Zett.	11/6/65.	Holme Fen, roadside. Aphidophagous.
<i>Volucella inflata</i> Fab.	1/6/65.	Monks Wood. Associated with nests of bumblebees.

The following conspicuous representatives of four other families have also been recorded.

##### Stratiomyidae (Soldier flies)

<i>Chloromyia formosa</i> Scop.	Monks Wood and Easton. Not uncommon on Umbelliferae.
<i>Geosargus flavipes</i> Meig.	Monks Wood. August 1964.
<i>Microchrysa polita</i> L.	Easton, beside pond. June 1965.

##### Tabanidae (Horse flies)

<i>Tabanus bisignatus</i> Jaennike.	Woodwalton.
<i>Chrysops relictus</i> Meig.	Earith. August 1965.

##### Bombyliidae (Bee flies)

<i>Bombylius major</i> L.	Monks Wood and Hartham Street. Common in March.
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##### Conopidae (Thick-headed flies)

<i>Conops flavipes</i> L.	Monks Wood, Aug. 1964 } Parasitic on bees & wasps.
<i>Phyocephala rufipes</i> Fab.	Monks Wood, July 1964 }

## LEPIDOPTERA 1965

J. E. H. BLACKIE, C.B., M.A., F.R.E.S.

Your recorder was abroad or otherwise occupied during the summer and was able to do little field-work. It was another poor year for butterflies—no 'fritillaries', no 'blues', no 'coppers', no skippers and even Meadow Browns in singles. Peacocks were the commonest Nymphalids, Small Tortoiseshells apart, migrants being very scarce.

The sad and not easily explainable decline of butterflies was not altogether paralleled by the moths. The Rev. E. A. Bawtry once again showed what can be done by constant systematic work in a small area. He recorded a lot of common moths and some less common, including a 'first county record'. This was *Acasis viretata* Hb., the Brindle-barred Yellow, a widely-distributed but local moth, the larva of which feeds on Dogwood, Privet and Ivy. There are very few if any old records from the Hemingford area and it may well have been there all the time. If we had more observers, we might add a lot more to the county list. Mr. Bawtree also records *Chesias legatella* Schiff., the Streaked Carpet, rather a surprising occurrence especially on the date recorded, October 12th. The larva feeds on Broom which is rare as a wild plant in Huntingdonshire, and the moth is unlikely to be more than a 'casual'.

Other moths recorded by Mr. Bawtree include :—

81. *Sphinx ligustri* L. (Privet Hawk Moth). 27 July. Not often recorded.
118. *Habrosyne pyritoides* Hufn. (= *derasa* L.) (Buff Arches). 4 August.
304. *Hadena bicolorata* Hufn. (= *serena* Fab.). 14 July. An unusual occurrence.
310. *Tholera popularis* Fabr. (Feathered Gothic). 27 August.
370. *Brachionycha sphinx* Hufn. 1 November. Never common.
381. *Hydraecia micacea* Esp. (Rosy Rustic). 16 September. Increasing.
383. *Gortyna flavago* Schiff. (Frosted Orange). 2 October.
466. *Tiliacea aurago* Fabr. 14 October
647. *Cidaria fulvata* Forst. (Barred Yellow). 10 July. Not now very common.
715. *Lyncometra ocellata* L. (Purple Bar). 16 July.

### ADDENDUM

Since the above was written, Mr. H. J. Berman, F.R.E.S., has sent me information concerning the operation of a light-trap at St. Ivo School, St. Ives, during the months of April to November 1965. This is the first Huntingdonshire light-trap of which I have received notice and as might be expected, the results are of great interest. It is to be hoped that St. Ivo School will continue this interesting operation and that some other schools will take it up. The results, after a year or two, will be analysed. In the meantime, the following records are worth noting :—

118. *Habrosyne pyritoides* Hufn.
140. *Trichiura crataegi* L. (Pale Eggar).
193. *Eilemda* (= *Lithosia*) *lurideola* Zinck (Common Footman).

265. *Ochropleura plecta* L. (*remutaria* Hubn.) (Flame Shoulder).
276. *Lampra fimbriata* Schreber (Broad Bordered Yellow Underwing).
300. *Euchesis cucubali* Fuessl. (Campion Coronet).
345. *Apamea ophiogramma* Esp. (Double Lobed Moth).
387. *Nonagria geminipuncta* Haw. (Twin Spotted Wainscot).
457. *Omphaloscelis lunosa* Haw. (Lunar Underwing).
606. *Scopula floslactata* Haw. (Cream Wave).
828. *Deuteronomos fuscantaria* Haw. (Dusky Thorn).
850. *Lycia hirtaria* Chrck. (Brindled Beauty).

## COLEOPTERA

H. J. BERMAN, F.R.E.S., St. Ivo School, St. Ives.

Notes on some of the Coleoptera (Beetles) found during 1965 by members of the St. Ivo School Entomology and Natural History Society for their personal reference collections.

### Carabidae — (Ground Beetles)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Carabus granulatus</i> L.                           | Seen in large numbers at Earith in rotten logs. |
| <i>Carabus nemoralis</i> Müll.                         | Specimens found in St. Ives and Wyton.          |
| <i>Brachinus crepitans</i> L. (Bombardier)             | Quite common under stones.                      |
| <i>Nebria brevicollis</i> F. (Short necked —)          | Quite common under stones.                      |
| <i>Notiophilus biguttatus</i> F. (Common Big Eyed —)   | Quite common running on paths.                  |
| <i>Agonum dosale</i> (Red Hipped Green —)              | Quite common under stones.                      |
| <i>Amara aenea</i> Deg. (Common 'Rain' —)              | Common running on paths.                        |
| <i>Harpalus rufipes</i> Deg. (Strawberry Seed —)       | Common under stones.                            |
| <i>Harpalus aeneus</i>                                 | Quite common, all colour varieties.             |
| <i>Pterostichus melanarius</i> Illig. (Black Garden —) | Quite common.                                   |
| <i>Pterostichus madidus</i> L. (Common Garden —)       | Quite common.                                   |

### Lagriidae

*Lagria hirta* L. Very common in low herbage.

### Pyrochroidae

*Pyrochroa serraticornis* Scop. Common April/May.

### Lucanidae

*Dorcus parallelipipedus* L. (Lesser Stag —) Found in large numbers St. Ives, Ramsey, Hemingford Grey, in rotten logs.

### Scarabaeidae — (Dung & Chafer Beetles)

*Melolontha melolontha* L. (Cockchafer —) Odd specimens found in area.

*Amphimallon solstitialis* L. (Midsummer Chafer —) Many specimens found, Wyton and Hemingford Grey.

*Geotrupes stercorarius* L. (Dor —) Quite common.

*Aphodius fossor* L. Quite common.

*Aphodius rufipes* L. Very common.

*Aphodius fimetarius* L. Several found at Earith.

### Dytiscidae

*Dytiscus marginalis* L. (Great Diving —) Six specimens in various parts of area.

**Staphylinidae — (Cocktail or Rove Beetles)**

- Ocypus olens* (Devil's Coach Horse) Common in September, as in past years.  
*Paederus littoralis* Grav. (Rainbow Rove —) Specimens found in various parts of St. Ives.  
**Silphidae — (Carrion Beetles)**  
*Phosphuga atrata* L. (Black Snail Eater) Very common under stones, etc.  
*Necrophorus humator* F. (Black Sexton) One found under rabbit hutch, Wyton.  
**Cantharidae**  
*Cantharis rustica* Fall. (Common Sailor —) Common on flowers—Summer.  
*Rhagonycha fulva* Scop. (Common Soldier —) Common on flowers—Summer.  
**Melyridae**  
*Malachius bipustulatus* L. Quite common on flowers.  
**Cleridae**  
*Opilo mollis* L. One found at Earith.  
**Coccinellidae — (Ladybirds)**  
*Chilocorus bipustulatus* L. One, St. Ives.  
*Coccinella septempunctata* L. (7 spot) Very common.  
*Adalia bipunctata* L. (2 spot) Very common Red to Black varieties.  
*Propylaea 14-punctata* L. (14 spot) Very common.  
*Thea 22-punctata* L. (22 spot) Very common.  
**Cerambycidae — (Longhorns)**  
*Agapanthea lineatacollis* Don. Quite common on flowers, St. Ives, August.  
**Chrysomelidae — (Leaf Beetles)**  
*Donacia* spp. (Reed Leaf —) Common along riverside.

**ARACHNIDA, ARANEIDA**

H. J. BERMAN, F.R.E.S.

Notes on some of the Araneids (Spiders) found in St. Ives and district during the Spring and Summer of 1965 by P. and H. J. Berman.

We are very grateful to Dr. E. Duffey, O.B.E., B.Sc., Ph.D., of Monks Wood Experimental Station and Mr. D. J. Clark, British Museum (Natural History) for helping us identify specimens.

**Dictynidae — (Mesh-Webbed Spiders)**

- Dictyna arundinacea* L. Very common in grassheads and umbellifer tops.  
*Ciniflo fenestralis* Stroem. Quite common in walls of old houses, St. Ives.  
*Ciniflo similis* Bl. Very common in walls of old and new houses.  
*Ciniflo ferox* Walck. Several found near St. Ives Priory.

**Oonopidae**

- Oonops pulcher* Templ. One taken in house, St. Ives.

**Dysderidae**

- Dysdera crocata* C.L.K. (Common Woodlouse Eater). Common under stones.



G. E. FERRITT

Plate III  
Adult Common Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) Paxton Heronry, Huntingdon.

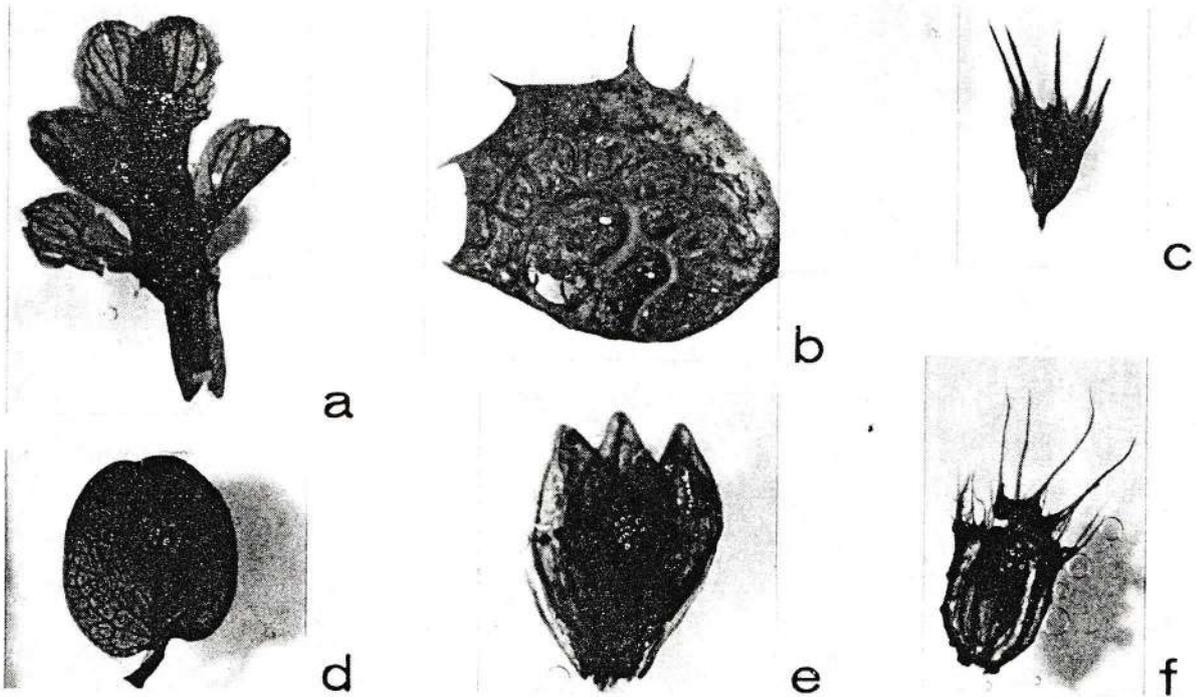


Plate I: Macroscopic plant remains from Earith.  
 Magnification:  $\times 10$

F. G. BELL

Legend

- a) *Saxifraga oppositifolia*, leafy shoot.
- b) *Salix polaris*, leaf.
- c) *Armeria maritima*, calyx.

- d) *Onobrychis vicifolia*, pod.
- e) *Helianthemum canum*, capsule.
- f) *Scabiosa columbaria*, fruit.



- Segestria senoculata* L (Adder pattern Spider). Under bark, not common.
- Harpactea hombergi* Scop. Quite common in houses
- Gnaphosidae**
- Drassodes lapidosus* Walck. Very common under lumber and builders' materials.
- Herpyllus blackwalli* Thor. (Common Mouse Spider). Quite common in houses.
- Micaria pulicaria* Sund. (Ant-spider). One found running with ants, St. Ives.
- Micaria scintillans* O. P. Camb. (Ant Spider). One found running with ants, St. Ivo School.
- Clubionidae**
- Clubiona brevipes* Bl. Very common under bark.
- Clubiona terrestris* Westr. Very common under bark.
- Cheiracanthium erraticum* Walck. Quite common in houses and low herbage.
- Thomisidae — (True 'Crab' Spiders)**
- Misumena vatia* Clerck. One taken Warboys Wood, May '65.
- Xysticus cristatus* Clerck. Very common.
- Xysticus erraticus* Bl. Quite common.
- Tibellus maritimus* Menge. Very common in low herbage.
- Salticidae — (Jumping Spiders)**
- Salticus scenicus* Clerck. Very common on walls and fences.
- Salticus cingulatus* Panz. Several on bark of trees in area.
- Sitticus pubescens* Fabr. One on house wall, St. Ives.
- Heliophanus cupreus* Walck. Several, Thicket, St. Ives.
- Ballus depressus* Walck. Under stones, spinney, Ramsey Road, St. Ives.
- Marpissa pomatia* Walck. A number found in the area.
- Euophrys erratica* Walck. One, Thicket, St. Ives.
- Evarcha falcata* Clerck. One, Thicket, St. Ives.
- Lycosidae — (True 'Wolf' Spiders)**
- Pirata piraticus* Clerck. Quite common on ponds.
- Lycosa agrestis* Westr. Very common.
- Trochosa ruficollis* Degeer. Quite common under stones.
- Trochosa terricola* Thor. Quite common under stones.
- Pisauridae — (Long-bodied 'Wolf' Spiders)**
- Pisaura mirabilis* Clerck. Very common on low herbage. Dark and light varieties.
- Agelenidae — ('House' Spiders)**
- Agelena labyrinthica* Clerck. (Labyrinth Spider). Very common.
- Tetragnatha dentata* Oliv. Several in rotten tree, Hemingford Grey.
- Tegenaria atrica* C.L.K. (Large Dark House Spider). Very common.
- Tegenaria parietina* Foure (Cardinal Wolsey Spider). Old houses, Hemingford Grey and St. Ives.
- Tegenaria domestica* Clerck. (Common House Spider). Very common.
- Theridiidae — (Comb-footed 'Widow' Spiders)**
- Episinus angulatus* Bl. One, waste ground, St. Ives.
- Steatoda bipunctata* L. Very common.
- Theridion vittatum* C.L.K. In grass, St. Ives.
- Theridion denticulatum* Walck. Common in houses.
- Theridion sisyphium* Clerck. One in hawthorn, St. Ives.
- Theridion bimaculatum* L. One near railway embankment near Holywell.
- Theridion ovatum* Clerck. Very common in bushes. Many colour varieties.
- Theridion varians* Halm. One near railway embankment near Holywell.
- Tetragnathidae — (Long-bodied Orb-web Spiders)**
- Tetragnatha extensa* L. Common along the riverside.
- Tetragnatha montana* Simon. Quite common.

Argiopidae — (True Orb-web or Garden Spiders)

*Meta segmentata* Clerck. (Common Hedge Orb-Web). Very common, summer.

*Meta segmentata menzei* Bl. Dwarf variety of the above, quite common.

*Meta merianea* Scop. In rotten logs, Thicket, St. Ives.

*Araneus diadematus* Clerck (Common Garden Spider). Very common.

*Araneus quadratus* Clerck. Still found in low herbage—habitat shrinking with housing development.

*Araneus marmoreus* Clerck. One taken on hawthorn, St. Ives.

*Araneus marmoreus pyramidatus* Clerck. In low herbage, St. Ives.

*Araneus cornutus* Clerck. Quite common along the riverside.

*Araneus sclopetarius* Clerck. Quite common on houses near the river, St. Ives.

*Araneus umbraticus* Clerck. (Shadow Orb-Web Spider). Very common on buildings and fences.

*Araneus redii* Scop. Several, St. Ives.

*Araneus cucurbitanus* Clerck. Very common in rolled leaves.

*Zygiella x-notata* Clerck. (House 'Cake' Web). Very common on window frames.

*Zygiella atrica* C.L.K. (Field 'Cake' Web). Very common on bushes and fences.

Linyphiidae — ('Money' Spiders)

*Linyphia triangularis* Clerck. Very common on hedges.

*Linyphia montana* Clerck. Quite common.

*Linyphia clathrata* Sund. One taken Woodhurst—St. Ives footpath.

*Labulla thoracica* Wid. Quite common in houses.

## SURVEY OF BRITISH AMPHIBIA AND REPTILIA

F. H. PERRING, M.A., Ph.D., F.L.S.

(Monks Wood Experimental Station)

A survey at the present time of the distribution of the British reptiles and amphibians would be of considerable help in studies being made by the Toxic Chemicals Division at Monks Wood on the effects of certain persistent organochlorine pesticides on wild vertebrates. There is a widespread belief that the frog is disappearing in Eastern England, but there is no real evidence against which to test this belief.

To arrive at a more accurate understanding of the distribution of the reptiles and amphibians of this country it is proposed to carry out an intensive survey during the next five years. All members who are interested are asked to collect, and encourage others to collect, information on the presence or absence of the reptiles and amphibians which are found in the 10 km. squares of the national grid.

In particular, anyone who would be willing to take part in an organised survey of local ponds and lakes as one of the Society's field outings is asked to contact the Social Secretary so that plans can be made.

## AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

H. J. BERMAN and MARTIN THOMAS

(St. Ivo School)

### Common Frog (*Rana temporaria* L.)

No common frogs were seen by club members last season at Ramsey, Houghton, the Hemingfords, St. Ives, Fenstanton, Needingworth, Earith or Colne. In past years, they had been found quite commonly at Houghton.

**Common Toad** (*Bufo bufo* L.), **Black Newt** (*Triturus cristatus* Laurent) and **Common Newt** (*Triturus vulgaris* L.)

All still quite commonly found in St. Ives area although many of the breeding ponds have been filled in for housing development.

### Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix* L.)

Not as many specimens found as in past seven years but several two to three foot specimens taken and released in St. Ives, Houghton and Earith.

### Viviparous Lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*, Jacquin)

One taken, Sawtry Way near Wyton R.A.F. camp; one seen on railway embankment near Holywell and one caught in a bedroom, St. Ives.

## BIRDS

C. F. TEBBUTT, O.B.E.

On 1 April, 1965, the County of Huntingdon was amalgamated with that of the Soke of Peterborough and the Society decided that it would accept the boundaries of the new county as its own. We therefore give a special welcome to Mr. Collier's article on the new area.

Again we have a separate special report from St. Ives whose records are generally not included in those given below.

Houghton Grange Bird Club have continued their Bulletins, the latest being Part 6, and we advise all those interested in the county's birds to subscribe to this worthwhile effort of topical news.

It seems hardly possible that each year can still bring new county records, but it happens without fail. 1965 has added Barnacle Goose, Black-winged Stilt, Pratincole and White-spotted Bluethroat, and second occurrences of Little Gull, Black Redstart and Ring Ousel.

Diddington Reservoir has been filling all this year and is now almost complete. Its margins will not, in future, provide newly flooded farm land whose rich feeding value has probably been the attraction to the amazing list of birds recorded, mainly by Mrs. Lovell. As your Recorder is leaving the county early in 1966 to live in Sussex, this is his last report. He would like to thank all the contributors who have made the Society's first seventeen reports so successful. He is hoping to have the leisure to prepare for publication a hand-list of Huntingdonshire birds.

Contributors identified in the text below by initials are:—

G. Alcock (G.A.), L. Angel (L.A.), R. Collier (R.C.), F. Dickens (F.D.), G. Forster (G.F.), Houghton Grange Bird Club (H.G.B.C.), G. Mason (G.M.), and your Recorder (Rec.).

5. *Gt. Crested Grebe*. A census of adults present during the breeding season showed that 12 waters held 93-100 adults. In the last census (1955), 16 waters held 60 adults.
7. *Slavonian Grebe*. Jan. 30th, 1 Lt. Paxton G.P. (Rec.)
30. *Heron*. Nests. Priory Park, St. Neots, 5 (+-0). Hinchingsbrooke, 0 (-1). Hemingford Park, 15 (+7). (Rec.)
56. *Tufted Duck*. 7 broods hatched at Lt. Paxton G.P. (Rec.)
82. *Canada Goose*. Pair nested unsuccessfully, Lt. Paxton G.P. (Rec.)
84. *Mute Swan*. A brood of 3 at Godmanchester included one of the white "Polish" variety. (H.G.B.C.)
86. *Bewick's Swan*. Feb. 2nd, 14 (including 3 juv.), Bury Fen. (Rec.) Dec. 1st-18th, many seen Earith-Houghton with maximum of 18 on 30th. (H.G.B.C.)
91. *Com. Buzzard*. Sept. 14th, 1 Gt. Stukeley (H.G.B.C.) For several weeks in Oct., 1, and probably 2, resident Kimbolton Woods. (F.D.)
93. *Sparrow Hawk*. The published record of successful breeding of a pair in Woodwalton Fen in 1963 is now known to be an error.
104. *Hobby*. Sept. 16th, 1 among roosting Swallows, Lt. Paxton G.P. (Rec.)
110. *Kestrel*. 3 young fledged from nest Kimbolton Park and another pair nested Tilbrook Bushes. (F.D.) Very scarce in breeding season, but migrants started to arrive early August and remained evenly spread until end of year. (Rec.)
- 115 & 116. *Partridges*. Both species still scarce and barely maintaining numbers at a low ebb. (Rec.)
135. *Lt. Ringed Plover*. 13 pairs estimated to have nested in the county. (H.G.B.C.)
140. *Golden Plover*. April 3rd, Holme Fen, c.250, many in full breeding plumage and of both N. and S. races. (Rec.) Dec. 19th, 400 Bluntisham Fen. (H.G.B.C.)
148. *Woodcock*. More than ever-before nesting in Gt. Staughton and Kimbolton Woods. (Rec.)
- Collared Dove*. Breeding presumed at Godmanchester where juv. seen with 2 adults. (H.G.B.C.) First record of breeding in county.
248. *Long-eared Owl*. Jan. 11th, 1 found dead Monks Wood. (H.G.B.C.)
249. *Short-eared Owl*. Jan. 10th, c.20 near Diddington Reservoir. (F.D.) 16th, 1 Abbotsley Downs. (Rec.) Early Dec. at least 2 Woodwalton Fen reserve and still present end Jan. 1966. (G.M.)

252. *Nightjar*. A pair Ash Wood Perry. (Rec.) Nest found Bevills Wood. (H.G.B.C.)
258. *Kingfisher*. After almost total absence for 3 years reports of sightings come from Lt. Paxton, Kimbolton, Gt. Paxton, St. Ives, Wyton and Stibbington. (Mr. Packer, F.D., L.A., R.F., H.G.B.C., Rec.)
262. *Green Woodpecker*. An increase reported from several localities.
278. *Golden Oriole*. Spring, 1 Hunts. border near Luddington. (G.A.) May 21st, Pair Castor Hanglands. (R.C.)
282. *Rook*. In June, birds noticed all along A.1, feeding in "lay-by" litter bins. (Rec.) Nest count of sample rookeries, St. Neots 19 (+6). Lt. Paxton 100 (+5). Diddington 105 (-46). (Rec.)
284. *Magpie*. Very scarce in west. Pair nested successfully Gt. Paxton. (L.A.)
295. *Bearded Tit*. The autumn irruption is recorded in the St. Ives and Diddington reports. Other records were, 3 Castor Hanglands and 2 Stibbington about Oct. 15th. 4 Overcote Dec. 19th. (R.C., R.F., H.G.B.C.)
299. *Wren*. A further increase brings numbers probably up to the 1962 level.
321. *Black Redstart*. Feb. 11th-15th, 1 Monks Wood Experimental Station (H.G.B.C.). First record since 1951 and 2nd county record.
- White-spotted Bluethroat*. April 3rd. A male identified at Hemingford Abbots by Rev. Bawtree. A 1st county record.
357. *Wood Warbler*. April 14th, 3 singing Holme Woods. (G.A.)
368. *Pied Flycatcher*. May 1st, a male Leighton Gorse. (Rec.)
383. *Waxwing*. The autumn invasion was represented by the following: Oct. 24th, 4 Castor Hanglands. Nov. 8th, 15 Hartford. 11th, 40 near Peterborough. 18th, 4 Huntingdon. 29th, 1 St. Ives. Dec. 5th, 3 Stibbington. (R.C., H.G.B.C., R.F.)
397. *Redpoll*. Late Nov., Flock 25, Houghton (H.G.B.C.)
423. *Snow Bunting*. Dec. 26th, male Woodwalton Fen. (Rec.)
424. *House Sparrow*. A great increase in last few years.

## ST. IVES GRAVEL-PITS

B. S. MILNE

(Houghton Grange Bird Club, 3 The Quadrant, St. Ives, Huntingdon)

The intensive study of Meadow Lane (M.L.) was continued throughout the year. The steadily falling water level at Fenstanton resulted in a lush growth of vegetation rendering much of the pit unsuitable for ducks, waders and terns. This now makes the series of pits at Meadow Lane, by far the most important in the

St. Ives group. Given below are details of some of the more interesting records for the year:—

8. *Black-necked Grebe*. 1, September 12th–18th (M.L.).  
 9. *Little Grebe*. Autumn flocking (M.L.). Maximum count 25, October 17th.  
 47. *Garganey*. 1, July 3rd–4th. 1–5, many dates August 15th–September 18th (M.L.).  
 53. *Shoveler*. An exceptional flock of 100, December 12th (M.L.).  
 54. *Red-crested Pochard*. 1 male, March 13th (M.L.). The possibility of this bird being an escape cannot be ruled out.  
 55. *Scaup*. 1, January 3rd, 3 on 9th (M.L.).  
 56. *Tufted*. Maximum count (M.L.) 130 on March 14th. Nine pairs bred successfully.  
 57. *Pochard*. Maximum counts (M.L.) 251 March 31st, 232 November 13th. One pair bred successfully.  
 58. *Ferruginous Duck*. 1 male, March 7th–14th, November 28th–December 5th, 26th–27th (M.L.).  
 60. *Goldeneye*. 1, October 9th, 1–4, November 20th–December 12th (M.L.).  
 73. *Shelduck*. 2, March 23rd, Woolpack.  
 82. *Canada Goose*. Recorded in every month, maximum 17, January 20th. One pair bred successfully.  
 86. *Bewick's Swan*. Recorded on many dates January 3rd–17th and again November 21st–December 18th, maximum 22 on December 5th (M.L.).  
 134. *Ringed Plover*. Single birds on several dates in July and August (M.L.) and Fenstanton.  
 135. *Lt. Ringed Plover*. Six pairs bred at three sites.  
 147. *Jack Snipe*. 1, many dates January 3rd–March 6th, and on November 27th (M.L.).  
 150. *Curlew*. 1, January 10th, April 6th; 2, September 1st. Birds calling after dark at 00.15 hrs. July 15th, 02.30 hrs. August 17th (M.L.).  
 151. *Whimbrel*. A flock calling 23.50 hrs. August 3rd, 2 on 6th (M.L.).  
 156. *Green Sandpiper*. The wintering bird at Meadow Lane was last seen on January 2nd. 1–3, June 26th–July 1st; 1–7, July 21st–October 10th.  
 159. *Common Sandpiper*. 1–4, April 10th–May 19th. Up to 12, July 3rd–October 10th.  
 162. *Spotted Redshank*. 1, August 21st (M.L.).  
 165. *Greenshank*. 1, July 17th; 6, August 3rd; 1–3, August 14th–September 26th (M.L.).  
 178. *Dunlin*. 1–4, occasionally March–May and Aug.  
 181. *Sanderling*. 1, May 17th, Fenstanton.  
 184. *Ruff*. 1, August 29th; 9, September 9th (M.L.).  
*Pratincole*. 1, August 22nd (M.L.). The bird was thought to belong to the race *pratincola*.  
 212. *Black Tern*. 1, May 14th (M.L.).  
 217/8. *Common/Arctic Tern*. Numerous records, May 15th–September 12th.  
 258. *Kingfisher*. 1, November 14th–28th (M.L.), was the first record for this locality since December 1962.

293. *Willow Tit*. One pair bred successfully (M.L.).  
 295. *Bearded Tit*. Three parties, totalling 21 birds, arrived in the space of seven minutes at Meadow Lane on October 10th.  
 307. *Ring Ouzel*. 1 male, October 3rd; 1 female imm. on 9th (M.L.).  
 337. *Sedge Warbler*. An exceptionally early bird in full song on April 4th (M.L.).  
 381. *Grey Wagtail*. 1, October 2nd (M.L.).  
 397. *Redpoll*. Many records, January 16th–April 25th, maximum 11 at Meadow Lane.

#### DIDDINGTON RESERVOIR (Grafham Water)

H. B. GINN, B.A., M.B.O.U.

Mrs. Lovell continued her almost daily watches on the area since 1963. As the acreage of water has increased, so has the volume of her records which have now reached such proportions as to make any summary extremely difficult. However, the following notes taken from her field notebook have been chosen as being of most interest and serve to show how the county's ornithology has been revolutionised since 1964.

2. *Great Northern Diver*. A diver, possibly of this species, March 6th. However, 5 days later, a Red Throated Diver was found dead on the A.1 at Stibbington, and the possibility that it was the same bird cannot be ruled out.  
 5. *Great Crested Grebe*. First seen on the reservoir, March 7th. Maximum counts, 27, May 2nd; 23, May 15th, and 37, May 30th. Four broods were hatched, although it is known that other pairs attempted breeding.  
 7. *Slavonian Grebe*. Singly, Feb. 10th, and Dec. 8th.  
 8. *Black Necked Grebe*. Singly, Aug. 30th and 31st and Sept. 5th.  
 9. *Little Grebe*. Singly, on various dates from Mar. 25th to April 11th; 2 on April 5th; 3 on the 13th. Up to 4 or 5 pairs on April 22nd. Up to 8 broods hatched.  
 28. *Cormorant*. 9, March 28th; 1, 31st; 2, April 5th; 1, April 23rd, 25th, May 23rd and August 30th.  
 45. *Mallard*. Monthly counts were:—January, up to 200; February, 460 on 14th; March, up to 340; April, 190 on 7th; May, about 400 (mainly drakes) on 25th; June, up to 300; September, up to 400, October, 3,000 on 10th; November, 5,000 on 14th; December, 5,000 on 12th. At least 20 broods hatched.  
 46. *Teal*. Monthly counts were:—January, up to 130; February, 250 on 3rd, 300 on 14th; March, 150 on 3rd, 260 on 14th and 150 on 29th; April, 50 on 7th, with up to 8 during the rest of the month. Up to 2 pairs during May and June. September, 50 on 23rd; October, 20 on 17th and 200 on 29th; November, 300 on 8th, 650 on 14th; December, 1,000 on 12th. Breeding suspected, but not proved. Up to 2 pairs were present throughout the summer and larger counts of 6 on July 6th and 12 on August 15th were made.  
 47. *Garganey*. Maximum count, 20 from July 22nd to August 1st. First recorded April 1st, and last recorded Sept. 26th. 3 broods raised.  
 49. *Gadwall*. One pair present Jan. 9th and 10th; also May 3rd and various dates from May 16th to 23rd. Two pairs, May 25th; one pair from May 30th to June 4th. A single bird on July 16th and 22nd, and again Aug. 24th and Nov. 12th. May have bred.

50. *Wigeon*. Monthly counts :—January, 110 on 19th; February, 220 on 10th and 250 on 14th; March, 2-300 on 3rd, 180 on 14th, 100 on 29th; April, 74 on 7th, 15-20 on 22nd. Recorded up to May 3rd. Up to 4 birds were seen from August 20th to October 15th; October, 20 on 21st; November, 70 on 4th, and 250 on 14th; December, 500 on 12th.
52. *Pintail*. A gradual increase from Jan. 10th to 31st, when 25-30 were present. Counts up to at least 40, 2nd week of Feb.; 80+, Feb. 25th; 100+, Feb. 28th. Up to 100, many dates, early March, decreasing to 30 by 29th. Present throughout April, counts of 25-30, 1st; 20, 6th; 11, 7th; 8, 21st; 4, 22nd; 2 pairs on 22nd and 1 pair on 25th and 27th.  
No summer records except 3 on July 29th (possibly escapes). 1965/6 winter.—First seen, Oct. 15th; numbers then gradually increasing with 20 on Nov. 4th and 14th; 50 on 26th; 50 on 10th and 65 on 12th of Dec.
53. *Shoveler*. 3 on Jan. 12th; 2, Feb. 2nd. Up to 11 on many dates during March and April. Present throughout summer, maximum counts :—40 on Aug. 15th, 60 on 31st. October counts :—70 on 5th, 30 on 26th. November, 30 on 4th. Up to 10 present during December. Probably 3 broods raised.
- 56/57. *Tufted Duck/Pochard*. Numbers gradually built up during the early part of the year as the water level rose. Sample counts : Feb., 180 on 1st; 300 on 9th/10th; 500 on 25th; March, 600 on 3rd. Numbers declined after the 2nd week in March. Counts up to 40 or 50, several dates during the summer. Sept., 150 on 23rd; October, 100 Tufted and 400 Pochard, 17th; November, 45 Tufted and 150 Pochard on 14th. Maximum counts of Tufted during December, 75 on 12th/13th; 60 on 19th; 30 to 40 on 26th. Pochard counts, 250 on Dec. 10th; 300 on 12th; 500 on 19th; and 300 on 26th. 3 broods of Tufted known to have been hatched. Pochard probably bred also.
58. *Ferruginous Duck*. 1 on Oct. 10th and Dec. 19th.
60. *Goldeneye*. Singly, on Feb. 14th/16th. A juvenile, Nov. 18th, 24th, 29th and 30th. Up to 9 present on various dates during December.
64. *Scoter*. 3 on March 23rd.
70. *Goosander*. Singly, November 4th and 12th.
73. *Shelduck*. 1, Feb. 27th/28th; 2, Mar. 8th; 3, 12th. 1-3 from April 13th to June 4th, with 6 on April 23rd. Summer counts :—6, and 5 (including juveniles), Aug. 3rd and 5th respectively. 2 on various dates during Aug.; 1, Oct. 19th and 6, Nov. 14th.
81. *Barnacle Goose*. 6 on Nov. 14th.
82. *Canada Goose*. Up to 4, odd dates, March and June. 8 from Aug. 15th to 18th; 7 on Oct. 14th and 1 on Dec. 19th.
86. *Bewick's Swan*. Up to 16, most days in Jan., increasing to 22 by end Feb. Last seen Mar. 7th.  
1965/6 winter.—First record, Nov. 14th. The maximum was 27 on Dec. 19th.
91. *Buzzard*. Singly, Oct. 19th and 26th.
- 100/102. *"Ring-tail" Harrier*. 1, almost certainly Hen Harrier, Nov. 18th.
104. *Hobby*. Singly, Aug. 23rd/24th; Sept. 11th/12th.
105. *Peregrine*. Singly, Oct. 25th, Nov. 23rd/24th.
110. *Kestrel*. 1 or 2 throughout most of the winter. Seen also occasionally during the summer.
127. *Coot*. Largest counts :—250+, July 2nd; 1,000+, late Aug.; 2,000, Nov. 14th; 3,000, Dec. 12th; 13-1400, 26th.

131. *Oyster Catcher*. Singly, April 18th, 24th, 29th, May 21st, June 2nd, July 1st, 25th, Aug. 8th, 9th, 24th, and Sept. 14th. 2, Aug. 8th.
134. *Ringed Plover*. Up to 3, many dates, March 14th to Aug. 15th. Maximum counts during autumn passage :—11, Aug. 22nd; 7, 24th; 12, 27th. Up to 9 present until Sept. 12th.
135. *Little Ringed Plover*. Probably 3 broods raised.
139. *Grey Plover*. Singly, May 3rd, 14th to 16th, Sept. 19th. 2, May 13th, and 3, April 30th.
140. *Golden Plover*. Present throughout winter.
143. *Turnstone*. Maximum count :—12, Aug. 30th; Up to 4, May 4th to 10th; 3, July 25th; 1, Aug. 3rd to 6th; 1-2, Sept. 4th to 9th.
147. *Jack Snipe*. Singly, Jan. 27th, April 4th and 13th.
150. *Curlew*. Singly, many dates, March to Aug.; 2-3, March 25th/26th.
151. *Whimbrell*. 3, April 30th; 4, May 2nd; 1, July 25th, and 2, Aug. 20th.
154. *Black-tailed Godwit*. 6, March 29th.
156. *Green Sandpiper*. 1, March 29th; 1-2, many dates, Aug. to Sept.
157. *Wood Sandpiper*. Singly, Aug. 15th-18th, 29th and Oct. 3rd.
159. *Common Sandpiper*. Up to 4 during May; 1-3, many dates, June and July, with maximum of 6-10, July 25th/26th. Up to 4, throughout Aug. with 25 on 27th. Between 2 and 10 during Sept. Last record, 21st.
162. *Spotted Redshank*. 1-2, odd dates during April, May and Aug. Up to 7, during Sept. 1, Oct. 3rd.
165. *Greenshank*. Up to 4, May to July. 2-5, Aug. 13th to 17th, and then 1-2, many dates until Sept. 27th.
171. *Little Stint*. 1, Sept. 2nd and 8th; 2, Sept. 4th/5th.
178. *Dunlin*. At least 1, most dates March 30th to Sept. 14th; maximum counts, 20+, April 30th; 21, Aug. 27th.
181. *Sanderling*. Singly, Feb. 12th, May 15th, 18th, 20th and 25th, July 25th; 2 on Aug. 31st.
184. *Ruff*. 1, Jan. 10th-14th. Numbers built up from March 9th to 25 or 30 on 29th, 50+ on 31st. Up to 40, until April 9th. A second peak towards the end of April with maxima of 20+ on 29th/30th, and 14, May 1st; 1-3 during the rest of May. Variable numbers up to 19 during Aug. and Sept. Largest counts—12, Aug. 15th; 10, 20th; 10, Sept. 7th; 19, 12th, and 12 on 19th. Last recorded, singly on Oct. 3rd.
186. *Black-winged Stilt*. 1, various dates, Aug. 17th to 24th.
207. *Little Gull*. 1, Aug. 23rd/24th, and 2, various dates, Sept. 27th to Oct. 3rd.
208. *Black-headed Gull*. A roost of 1,500+, Nov. 24th. One pair bred and raised two young.
211. *Kittiwake*. 3, June 8th; 1 juv., Sept. 5th.
212. *Black Tern*. Up to 7, many dates, May to September. Maxima : 7, May 13th, July 24th; 11, Sept. 18th; 17, 19th; 11, 20th; 10, 21st, 22nd and 26th; 1-2 present up to Oct. 2nd.
- 217/8. *Common/Arctic Tern*. Singly, odd dates in April, May and July. 2, July 22nd and 30th; 8, Aug. 12th; 4, 13th; 12, Sept. 2nd, and 2 on 9th.
222. *Little Tern*. 2 on Sept. 8th.
235. *Turtle Dove*. Flock of 80, May 30th.
295. *Bearded Tit*. 3, Oct. 10th.
- 380b. *White Wagtail*. 1, May 2nd.
397. *Redpoll*. 4, Oct. 12th.

The following rather exotic species were also recorded during the year :—

*Green Winged Teal.* 1, Feb. 9th/10th.  
*Red-billed Pintail.* 1, June and again Nov./Dec.  
*Red-crested Pochard.* Singly, Aug., Nov. and Dec.; 5, Dec. 12th.  
*Chiloe Wigeon.* 1-2 present, many dates Nov./Dec.  
*Mandarin Duck.* 1, Nov. 12th.  
*Bar-headed Goose.* 1, June 21st.  
*Flamingo.* 1, June 11th.

## BIRDS AT CASTOR HANGLANDS NATURE RESERVE 1961-1965

R. V. COLLIER (Warden)

### INTRODUCTION

The reserve lies some five miles west of Peterborough and as it now falls within the new county boundary of Huntingdon and Peterborough, a review of my studies over the last five years seems appropriate. The reserve covers an area of 220 acres and is considered under four habitat types as follows:—

#### 1. Woodland. (100 acres.)

The woodland is classed as Oak (*Quercus robur* L.)/Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior* L.) but is very variable owing to extensive felling around 1950. The shrub layer is largely coppiced Hazel (*Corylus avellana* L.) with Dogwood (*Thelycrania sanguinea* L. Fourr), Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare* L.), Hawthorn (*Crataegus* sp.), etc. Other common tree species are Maple (*Acer campestre* L.) and Birch (*Betula pendula* Roth.). The felling left gaps in the canopy, many of which persist today and support a rich herb layer giving great diversity through the woodland as a whole. A ride system intersperses the area.

#### 2. Ailsworth Heath. (100 acres.)

This area of grassland, grazed by common right up to the 1930's, is partly covered by scrub in all stages of succession and the scrub is now being controlled by clearing and this state will be maintained by future grazing. At present, the general effect is a patchwork of scrub and grassland.

#### 3. Limestone Quarry. (3 acres.)

An old quarry with large areas of Gorse (*Ulex europaeus* L.), some grassland and a mixture of scrub.

#### 4. Pond Leg. (ca. 4 acres.)

A marshy peninsular off the heath, bordered by woodland. A spring-fed pond supplies permanent water.

There is also an outlying copse called 'Blacklands' of some 11 acres in which there is a mixture of woodland, scrub and grassland. The land bordering the reserve is mainly Forestry Commission property with the Spruce (*Picea* spp)/Oak or Beech (*Fagus sylvatica* L.) plantation forming three quarters of the boundary and arable land the rest.

### GENERAL

The presence of much scrub on the heath makes it difficult to separate the breeding birds into woodland or heath species as parts of the advanced scrub succession provide habitats similar to the woodland. Consequently characteristic species of the woodland area such as Jay, Wood Pigeon, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Nightingale and Tits have colonised the heath area. Conversely the woodland margin provides a habitat similar to the scrub area and common to both these are such species as Bullfinch, White-throat, Dunnock and Yellow Hammer. However there are some species which are at present confined to the woodland. These include the Woodpeckers, Tree Creeper, Redstart, Spotted Flycatcher, Chiffchaff and Woodcock.

Two species whose presence is attributable to the scrub/grassland or woodland/grassland combination, are the Tree Pipit and Grasshopper Warbler.

The grassland itself supports only the Skylark as a breeding species. Short-eared Owl and Hen Harrier have been seen hunting these areas of grassland. It is interesting to note that the poet/naturalist John Clare records Wheatear breeding on this heath a hundred years ago which gives some idea of its former character.

The pond leg is important not so much in the breeding season when Mallard, Sedge Warbler and Moorhen breed but in the autumn and winter, when many birds are attracted to the pond, but predominantly flocks of Linnets and Redpolls. In 1962 the pond outlet was dammed and while the resulting increase in marshy conditions was primarily for botanical reasons it created ideal conditions for Snipe and Woodcock to feed. In the quarry, Sand Martins were seen in 1962 and were presumed to be looking for nest sites but none bred. The Gorse provides ideal nest sites for Linnets and the occasional Long-tailed Tit. The scrub in the quarry supports a similar selection of birds to that found on the heath scrub.

#### I Breeding.

The majority of species have been listed in this section, since nests or young have been located, but in a few species, e.g. Grasshopper Warbler, singing birds or the distribution of records through the summer have been accepted as evidence of breeding.

#### SPECIES IN STATUS GROUPS

##### (a) Probably less than 10 pairs

Mallard	Gt. Spotted Woodpecker	Redstart
Woodcock	Willow Tit	Lesser Whitethroat
Green Woodpecker	Mistle Thrush	Reed Bunting
Magpie	Garden Warbler	Moorhen
Tree Creeper	Redpoll	Long-eared Owl
Sedge Warbler	Wren	Swallow
Tree Pipit	Partridge	Long-tailed Tit

Greenfinch	Tawny Owl	Grasshopper Warbler
Red Legged Partridge	Skylark	Spotted Flycatcher
Cuckoo	Marsh Tit	House Sparrow

Before the 1962/63 winter the Wren would have been listed under category 'b'.

<b>(b) Probably between 11 and 100 pairs</b>		
Pheasant	Blackbird	Tree Sparrow
Great Tit	Dunnock	Jay
Song Thrush	Yellow Hammer	Whitethroat
Nightingale	Blackcap	Chiffchaff
Chaffinch	Robin	Bullfinch
Turtle Dove	Willow Warbler	Linnet
Blue Tit	Starling	
<b>(c) Probably over 100 pairs</b>		
Wood Pigeon		

The following species have been suspected of breeding but have not been included in the above lists for lack of evidence.

Common Snipe	Barn Owl	Little Owl
Hawfinch		

## II Recorded.

Sight records are listed below. In the majority of cases, the Passerine species have been ringed.

Heron	Sand Martin	Brambling
Kestrel	Coal Tit	Bearded Tit
Jack Snipe	Goldcrest	Sparrow Hawk
L. Spotted Woodpecker	Goldfinch	Hen Harrier
Jackdaw	House Martin	Green Sandpiper
Reed Warbler	Buzzard	Rook
Pied Wagtail	Lapwing	Redwing
Swift	Short-eared Owl	Marsh Warbler
Teal	Crow	Corn Bunting
Water Rail	Fieldfare	Golden Oriole
Stock Dove	Waxwing	

## III Passing Over.

These are included for the sake of completeness although they are not as such connected with the area.

Shoveler	Gt. Blk. Backed Gull	Common Tern
Redshank	Black Headed Gull	Curlew
Common Gull	Golden Plover	Herring Gull
Mute Swan	L. Blk. Backed Gull	Raven

Records of Common Terns are frequent as birds from a colony north of the reserve flight to the River Nene to feed on a stretch south of the area.

## INDIVIDUAL SPECIES STUDIED

### Nightingale.

This species is generally distributed over the area although there is some concentration where the Woodland is adjacent to the advanced scrub such as at the north-west corner of the heath. Counts of singing males have indicated a steady population as follows:—

1961, 20; 1962, 22; 1963, 20; 1964, 20; and 1965, 23.

It is interesting to note that in three of the years, two pairs were indicated in Blacklands Copse which is 11 acres in size and surrounded by arable land.

### Grasshopper Warbler.

This species is more abundant in the plantation around the reserve but two pairs regularly breed on Ailsworth Heath. During the next few years the plantation will probably become unsuitable because of tree height and the reserve's population may change.

### Long-eared Owl.

Two areas of woodland have developed from grassland and are characterised by an abundance of mature Hawthorn with relatively few standards of Oak or Ash. This had created suitable habitat for the Long-eared Owl and one pair has bred for three of the years under review and in each case used squirrel dreys in this Hawthorn area. As this species is reputed to take more birds than other owls a close watch was made in 1961. Unfortunately few pellets were found and those that were, contained mainly small mammal remains. At the nest three birds were found, a Nightingale, a Starling and a Song Thrush.

### Blue Tit and Great Tit.

The distribution of these two species was studied in 1961 and 1962. Large-scale felling has caused a lack of natural holes suitable for breeding and it was found that their distribution corresponded with that of Elder (*Sambucus nigra L.*), which is widespread on the reserve particularly around old rabbit warrens. It has not been affected so much by the felling and forms natural holes at an earlier stage than such species as Oak or Ash.

The discovery of this lack of nesting holes prompted the writer to erect a series of nest-boxes in the hope of attracting such species as Redstart whose numbers are possibly low as a result of competition with Tits. However the nest-boxes were at first dominated by Tits and subsequently by Tree Sparrows. This year a sample of nest-boxes will have the entrance holes blocked as it may be that the Tits and Tree Sparrows have claimed them before the Redstarts start establishing territories.

### Wood Pigeon.

In 1962, on July 22nd and 23rd, a census was carried out of 100 nests in Blacklands as part of an investigation into the control of Wood Pigeons by nest poking. The majority of the nests were in Hawthorn and the following results were obtained:—

Nests with eggs	18	Nests with young	4
Broods flown	10	Unoccupied (old or new)	68

### Effects of Management on the Reserve.

During the winter of 1964/65 several acres of scrub were removed from Ailsworth Heath and the result was a large open expanse of grassland. Two species of birds were affected by the change, namely the Skylark and Woodcock.

The Skylark, previously a doubtful breeding species on the heath with one pair nesting in the quarry in 1962, was now frequently seen displaying over the heath and from evidence in the summer, two pairs bred.

During November and December 1965, Woodcock were frequently flushed from the cleared area, and on one occasion five birds were seen on roughly two acres.

#### Ringling.

This has been used not so much for its value in migration studies but to yield data on various aspects such as Marsh/Willow Tit ratio, relative abundance of species and weights and movement of young ringed in nest boxes. It has of course been valuable in forming the records as two or three species would have gone unnoticed.

During the five years, 48 Marsh Tits and 17 Willow Tits have been ringed and although there are complications it would seem that this is a reasonable way of estimating the ratio between two species that are difficult to separate in the field.

Perhaps the most interesting findings from a migration aspect have been with Redpolls. The influx in the autumn appears to correspond with the dispersal of Northumberland birds and of 191 ringed, 10 have been recovered in Belgium. Of these, four were recovered in different parts of Belgium within 14 days of being ringed.

From a population aspect, the number of Bullfinches in the autumn was well indicated by the presence of 56 from a catch of 168 mixed birds on a day in 1962.

While the declaration of Castor Hanglands as a National Nature Reserve in 1954 was primarily for entomological and botanical reasons nevertheless its ornithological interest is noteworthy.

### MAMMALS

H. B. GINN, B.A., M.B.O.U.

Records, unfortunately, as in other years, remain very sparse. Perhaps the most interesting record, from Mr. J. B. Pendlebury, B.Sc., of Monks Wood Experimental Station, is of a Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*, Lönnerberg) present in Monks Wood from early March until early July. The species is not recorded for Huntingdonshire by Taylor-Page in his "Field Guide to British Deer."

No records were received for the Harvest Mouse (*Micromys minutus* Hermann) during 1965, but the following reports for other years are worthy of note. Dr. N. W. Moore recorded the species from Woodwalton National Nature Reserve during the autumn of 1964; C. Durrell from the fields around Monks Wood during the same period and Dr. E. Duffey from the stubble fields beside Diddington Reservoir during December 1964.

### THE GALLEY HILL PITS, NEAR ST. IVES, HUNTS.

P. CAMBRIDGE

Owing to my absence in Aden on duty it has not been possible to continue work on the large amount of material already collected from these pits. However, just before leaving England in August 1965, a fragment of jawbone was picked up at the West End pit. This compared well with recent mandibles of bear. Later it may be possible to identify the species but meanwhile it is interesting to record the presence of this animal.

The Laboratory at Kew Gardens was kind enough to examine samples of wood from the same pit and report the following trees being present:—

Common Maple	— <i>Acer campestre</i>
Oak	— <i>Quercus rober</i> type
Ash	— <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>

### PLANT REMAINS FROM EARITH, HUNTINGDONSHIRE

F. G. BELL, B.A.

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Gravel workings in Huntingdonshire have often exposed fossiliferous gravels formed during the last glaciation of the Pleistocene Ice Age, perhaps 15–50,000 years ago. The following account refers to a pit still being worked to the north of Earith (Grid Ref. 388765), which has been studied in detail. The general features of the pit can be seen in other pits in the area, but this one is especially interesting in having plentiful plant remains.

The sides of this pit show a succession of about fifteen feet of fluviatile deposits including current-bedded gravels, sands and subsidiary clays. These deposits lie on an uneven surface of Jurassic clay and are covered by Post-glacial peat, and as mentioned above are thought to belong entirely to some part of the last glaciation. The lower part of the gravels contains the plant remains which are discussed below. Above them, towards the top of the gravel, are ice-wedge casts which can also be seen on aerial photographs of adjacent fields as a polygonal network. Ice-wedges are formed in cracks following contraction of the ground in very cold climates, as in northern Alaska and Siberia today. Their presence is direct evidence of a periglacial climate with permanently frozen ground at least in the upper part of the gravel succession.

Animal bones belonging to two extinct species associated with glacial periods have been found in the gravels. These are the Mammoth and the Woolly Rhinoceros. It is possible that these relatively indestructible fossils are derived from earlier deposits and from distant localities so that little importance can be attached to them.

The plant remains on the other hand can be seen in a number of shallow clay basins at the same level around the pit. Layers of closely-packed organic debris are separated by, and thin out into, clay and sand. From them macroscopic plant remains such as leaves, fruits and seeds can be washed out. Some of these are illustrated in Plate I. They are often so well preserved, especially the thin leaves, that the plants must have been growing in the immediate neighbourhood of the deposit.

Water plants are well represented, as might be expected in a riverside environment. They range from the fairly deep-water species Grassy Pondweed (*Potamogeton obtusifolius* L. Mert. & Koch) and other aquatics including Spiked Water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum* L.), Mare's Tail (*Hippuris vulgaris* L.) and Opposite-leaved Pondweed (*Groenlandia densa* L. Fourr), to marsh species such as Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris* L. Roem. & Schult.).

The land flora consists of dwarf willows, grasses, sedges and other herbaceous plants, and mosses. There are no macroscopic remains of trees. This general aspect is similar to vegetation above the treeline on mountains and in the arctic and there are species characteristic of these areas such as Opposite-leaved Saxifrage (*Saxifraga oppositifolia* L.), *Polygonum viviparum* L., Red Alpine Catchfly (*Lychnis alpina* L.) and Alpine Meadow Rue (*Thalictrum alpinum* L.). These plants have an arctic-alpine distribution pattern in Europe, and in Britain are confined to cool and mountainous parts of the north and west. One of the dwarf willows, the Least Willow (*Salix herbacea* L.) follows this pattern but *Salix polaris*, a similar plant also only a few inches high, no longer grows in Britain but in the mountains of Scandinavia.

Other species grow in East Anglia today, generally in treeless habitats such as chalk grassland and the coast besides man-made habitats of roadsides and cultivated fields. Examples of species growing in the latter habitats are Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* L.), Silverweed (*Potentilla anserina* L.) and Chickweed (*Stellaria media* L. Vill.). These were part of the natural flora of glacial Britain together with Rockrose (*Helianthemum canum* (L.) Baumg.) and Small Scabious (*Scabiosa columbaria* L.) which now grow on limestone grassland, and Sea Milkwort (*Glaux maritima* L.) and Mud Rush (*Juncus gerardii* Lois.) now nearly confined to the coast.

The plant remains at Earith thus show that a large and varied flora was present in Huntingdonshire in the last glaciation, the components of which are now scattered in very different places. Some species are found in cold climates such as may have occurred in Huntingdonshire at this time while others are tolerant of a warmer climate provided that they do not have to compete with dense vegetation.