

# The Reading Naturalist

No. 13



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THE READING NATURALIST  
No.13 for the Year 1959-60.

The Journal of  
The Reading and District Natural History Society

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### Editorial

The growing membership and wider activities of the Reading & District Natural History Society are reflected in the greater length of this part of its Journal, in which is represented the work of a complete cross-section of the Society, from some of the youngest in years, years of membership, or both, to some of the most senior. Several members have responded to our invitation to submit observations and papers, and we hope still more will do so for the next part.

In thanking all our contributors for their support, we take the opportunity of expressing our gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Parry, who, though not a member, has for ten years kindly provided us with meteorological data. This task has now been taken over by Mr. A. E. Moon, whom we welcome among our ranks. We also thank the Director of the Museum and Art Gallery, Mr. T. L. Gwatkin, for granting production facilities, the Cultural and Entertainments Committee of the Reading County Borough Council for a generous grant towards the cost of the Journal, and all who have helped with the work of publication.

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### A PRELIMINARY LIST OF BERKSHIRE MICRO-FUNGI.

By Harold Owen  
(Department of Agricultural Botany, University of Reading)

This considerable paper, which was published at the end of 1960 as a supplement to "The Reading Naturalist" No.12 and occupies 30 pages, is available at 1s.3d. per copy to members and 2s.6d. to non-members.

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Any members with observations of general or topical interest that do not, by their subject or nature, fall within the scope of the Recorders' Reports, are invited to submit accounts (typed, with double spacing, if anyhow possible, please) for consideration for the next part of the "Reading Naturalist" before 1st January 1962. Offers of longer articles would also be welcomed.

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### Meetings and Excursions 1959-60

The winter programme of evening meetings opened with the Annual General Meeting (attendance 37), and at the next meeting Professor H.L. Hawkins gave his Presidential Address on the subject of "Change and Decay" (40). Apart from two evenings set aside for Members' Exhibits (both with an attendance of 40), the remaining meetings were devoted to lectures. The speakers and their subjects were Dr. F. Baronyovits, "Desert plants and citrus orchards in California" (60), Dr. K.H. Mann, "Animal life in rivers" (27 - a snowy evening); Dr. Winifred Page, "The flora of a rabbit pellet" (34); Mr. D. Leatherdale, "The study of plant galls" (35); The Earl of Cranbrook, "Small British mammals" (76); Professor O.V.S. Heath "Stomata" (41). Unfortunately, fog prevented Mr. Maxwell Knight from coming to give a promised talk, and his place was taken by Dr. J. Townrow, who spoke about "A trip to the Shetlands and the Faroes" (45).

An innovation this winter was a programme of outdoor meetings on the first Saturday of each month, which got off to a flying start in November, when 12 enthusiastic members walked from Dunsden Green to Emmer Green in thick fog. Other walks were to Aldermaston gravel pits in December (10); from Pangbourne through Sulham Woods to Tilehurst in January (8); to Aborfield in February (12); and to Coley Park heronry in March (22).

The summer excursions were as follows:- April 9th Beenham for spring flowers and birds (8); April 23rd, Stoke Row for cherry blossom; May 7th, Nuney Green for woodcraft (13); May 21st, Aldermaston Court, by kind permission (about 30); June 1st, Wokefield Common, for plants and freshwater biology (15); June 11th, Bix for orchids (29); June 25th, Wellington College, by kind permission of the Grand Master (35); June 29th, Reading University Agricultural Botanical Gardens (20); July 9th, Blewbury Hill, for chalk flora (11); July 13th, Dunsden Green (6); July 23rd, Pamber Forest, for plant galls; a meeting open to the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists' Trust (31); August 6th, Heckfield Heath and Riseley Mill, for water plants (8); August 11th, Hazeley Heath, for Sphagnum bog (9); August 20th, Henley to Sonning Common (6); September 3rd, Swallowfield Park, by kind invitation of Sir Arthur Russell (17); September 17th, Bradfield (8); October 1st, Kingwood Common, Fungus Foray (morning 14, afternoon 32).

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### Publications Received

South-eastern Naturalist

Middle-Thames Naturalist

Journal of the North Gloucestershire Natural History Society

Bird Report of the North Gloucestershire Natural History Society

Report of Bradfield College Natural History Society

Report on the Young Naturalists' Evening held on 23rd March 1960

The Young Naturalists' Evening held in 1959 was such a success that it was decided worth while trying to make this an annual event. So on the 23rd March the Town Hall was well filled with Reading's Young Naturalists.

The first part of the programme again took the form of a Nature Brains Trust, with Mr. Maxwell Knight, Professor H.L. Hawkins, Mr. J. Ounsted and Mr. K.E.L. Simmons kindly serving on the panel and Mr. W.A. Smallcombe as Questionmaster.

The reponse of Reading school children to the request for questions was even greater than in 1959 for 511 questions were submitted. Unfortunately there was time to answer only 11 of these.

Two book prizes were given by Mr. Maxwell Knight and six by the Natural History Society. These were presented by the Right Worshipful the Mayor of Reading, Alderman A. Haslam as follows:-

Best question by a boy:

Ian Briggs, Norcot Primary School (10½ years).

Best question by a girl:

Christina Tozer, The Hill Primary School (11 years).

Other prizes:

Mary Belcher, Battle Junior School (11 years); Jennifer Curtis, Alfred Sutton Secondary Girls' School (13 years); Brian Woods, Redlands Primary School (8 years); Marian Davies, St. Michael's Primary School (11 years); Gillian Papworth, Kendrick School (13 years); Alison Johnson, Whitley Park Junior School (8 years); Janette Cameron, Westwood School (11 years, 11 months); and Roberta Foster, The Abbey Junior School (9 years).

The colour film "Journey into Spring", showing the natural history of Selbourne, was then screened.

It was again a very successful evening with everyone concerned determined to repeat the venture in 1961.

Shirley Y. Townend.

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We congratulate one of our young members, Paul Reiter, on winning the Laffan Prize for Natural History (Junior Section) with a study on toad migration and a well-known member, John Hodgson, on being highly commended in the same section with a study of clovers in a small area in Tilehurst. We also congratulate Huw P. Thomas, a pupil at one of our member schools (Reading School) on winning the Prize in the Senior Section with a study of spiders of a suburban house and garden.

### The Council for Nature

In 1960 our Society joined the Council for Nature, an organisation founded in July 1958, and by so doing we are now in the company of 47 national societies, 176 local societies, 11 county naturalists' trusts, 9 school and college societies and 13 museums. All these comprise the wide body of naturalists to which the Council for Nature extends its several services. It is in essence a central consultative body linking amateur, specialist and popular interest in natural history.

Among the aims of the Council for Nature we find:

"To provide a standing advisory service, available to member bodies and others. On appropriate occasions to organise public opinion and to make representations to Local Authorities and Government Departments, and if necessary to Parliament, in respect of any matters properly the concern of the Council or its member bodies. To assist the work and development of member bodies, and generally to arouse and stimulate public interest and to educate public opinion in natural history and the need for the conservation of nature and natural resources".

The Council also organises a Conservation Corps of some 700 young volunteers who devote short periods of their spare time to such work as scrub clearance, drainage, tree felling and planting, mainly on sites in which the County Naturalists' Trusts have an interest. Tasks lasting for a day or week-end to up to two weeks have been undertaken at such well known places as Wood-walton Fen and Askham Bog. The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust has made a generous grant enabling the organiser of the Conservation Corps to meet costs of accommodation and to help towards the fares of the working parties. Should work be required on sites with which our own Naturalists' Trust is associated then the Conservation Corps could rightly be approached to assist. The Intelligence Unit of the Council, under the directorship of Mr. R.S.R. Fitter, collects and indexes information on the work being undertaken by societies, groups and individuals in the whole field of natural history and conservation. Any members of our Society wishing information on a particular natural history topic can seek the aid of the Intelligence Unit. Taking one of the many requests published in "News for Naturalists" (copies of which we as a member society receive) as an example, we read - "The August Syrphid invasion of the South East Counties - R.A. French, Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden, Herts, would like to know whether the purposive flight or presence of unusually large numbers of syrphids (wasp-like black and yellow flies) has been noted in other parts of the country than in the south east". We have fairly recently had a very full paper on syrphids published in our own Reading Naturalist and it is therefore easy to appreciate how such a request for information as the one mentioned above could have effective results from members of a natural history society who would not by any means be specialist entomologists.

Finally the Films Officer of the Council will give advice to those wishing to try their hand at cinematography, or what might, perhaps, be of more immediate use to us, a list of films which can be borrowed by societies for showing to their members.



The Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire  
Naturalists' Trust

The Trust has now been in existence for fifteen months and for most of this period its activities have been guided by a Provisional Executive Committee.

On January 22nd, 1961 the first meeting of the Council of the Incorporated Trust took place at Oxford and we now look forward to a year of increased activity during which it is hoped to commence a re-surveying of the many Sites of Special Scientific Interest (S.S.S.I's) which fall within our area.

During the first year we have had to consider what action might be taken on a number of sites scattered over a wide area, but members of this Society will doubtless be most interested in the activities of the Trust which have a bearing upon places within the Reading district.

For instance, some concern was felt by the residents in the Woodley area over the proposal to acquire land, consisting of gravel pits and surrounding woodland much frequented by birds, for use as refuse disposal sites. This natural bird sanctuary has been the subject of a report by the R.O.C. The Trust supported the Woodley Parish Council in their efforts to retain part of the land as a bird reserve, and an agreement was reached in November whereby about 10 acres of ground will be left undisturbed.

An agreement has also been made between the Trust and the owner of one of the two sites on the Berkshire Downs where the Pasque Flower grows. We have been granted permission to fence off a small area, enclosing the largest patch of the plants, in order to investigate the cause of lack of flowering of the Pasque Flower in this locality.

In the Crowthorne area the setting up of a bird sanctuary at a well-known lake is being investigated by one of our members, and in the Kennet Valley we hope it may be possible to lease a marshy area where, as recent work has shown, a number of very uncommon insects are known to breed.

We would welcome any reports from members of this Society of instances where important natural habitats or uncommon animals and plants are threatened by development.

Further bulletins will be issued to members during the year and any information on Trust matters may be obtained from the Hon. Local Secretary Berkshire (Mr. B.R. Baker), or from the Membership Secretary (Miss S.Y. Townend) both at Reading Museum.

The membership to date for the 3 counties is:-

351:	Berkshire	99
	Buckinghamshire	111
	Oxfordshire	141



NATURAL HISTORY OF THE CHILTERN

Arthur G. Bourne. Hon. Secretary  
Chiltern Research Committee.

The Chiltern Research Committee was formed to encourage and co-ordinate research and field-work in the Chilterns, a large natural region, relatively unknown to, but of great interest to the naturalist.

The Committee, made up as it is of natural history societies in or adjoining the region, launched its first year with five research projects, each organised by an expert and designed to stimulate the interest of naturalists in the member societies.

Table 1. C.R.C. Projects launched in 1960

<u>Group</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Organiser</u>
Birds	Status of the woodlark and wood-warbler	Mr. R.A.F. Gillmor
Insects	Clifden blue butterfly, linked with its food plan, the horseshoe vetch	Mr. Ernest Taylor
Plants	<u>Vicia cracca</u> - aggregate distribution Juniper distribution	Mr. D.A. Jones Mr. R.S.R. Fitter
Geology	Drift Deposits over the Chalk	Professor H.L. Hawkins FRS.

In 1961, the Committee is introducing six more projects, bringing the total to eleven and thereby increasing the scope to suit the wide variety of interests of the members.

Table 2. C.R.C. Projects launched in 1961

<u>Group</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Organiser</u>
Mammals	Distribution and status of the muntjac	Mr. T.J. Pickvance
Birds	Distribution and status of the nuthatch	Mr. A.G. Bourne
Reptiles & Amphibians	Distribution and status of the reptiles and amphibians	Lt.Colonel Taylor
Molluscs	Distribution of colour forms of <u>Cepaea nemoralis</u>	Dr. A.J. Cain
Plants	Distribution of Candy-Tuft	Mrs. V. Paul
	Distribution of Fungi	Dr. S.B. Hora

The Chiltern Research Committee is a novel venture in joint research among natural history societies, and enables naturalists to join in a rewarding and worthwhile programme of research, thus enriching his own experience of the Chilterns and their natural history.

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Congress of the South-Eastern Union of Scientific Societies,  
1961

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The next Congress of the S.E.U.S.S. will be held at Haslemere, Surrey, from 26th to 28th May 1961 and its theme will be "The changing Countryside". The Presidential Address, on "The land and Man in the Western Weald", will be given by Professor S.W. Wooldridge, C.B.E., D.Sc., F.R.S., at 8.15 p.m. on 26th May. The remaining programme of lectures and excursions is as follows:-

- |          |                                  |  |
|----------|----------------------------------|--|
| 27th May | 10-11 a.m.                       | "Invertebrate life in south-east England",<br>by J.H.P. Sankey, B.Sc.  |
|          | 11.30-12.30                      | "The changing flora of south-east England"<br>by J.E. Lousley.   |
|          | 2.15-6 p.m.                      | Excursions<br><br>Selborne - Natural History (chalk flora).<br>Leaders, Mr. J.E. Lousley and<br>Mr. C.R. Northcliffe.<br>- Archaeology and general. Leader,<br>Rev. G.E.C. Knapp.<br>Blackdown, Fernhurst, Woolbeding, Midhurst -<br>Wealden geomorphology. Leader, Prof.<br>Wooldridge. |
|          | 9.15-10 p.m.                     | "Birds in a changing world", by Miss P.M. Bond   |
| 28th May | 10 a.m.                          | "Problems of managing Nature Reserves", by<br>Dr. J.F.D. Frazer.   |
|          | 10.30 a.m. - 6 p.m.<br>(approx.) | Excursion to Juniper Hall Field Centre, Box<br>Hill. Leader, J.H.P. Sankey.  |

Limited hotel accommodation, 27/6-30/- per night; private accommodation, £3 inclusive for whole period.

Further information can be obtained from the Society's Secretary, Mrs. A. Fishlock.

# Weather Records in 1960

By A. E. Moon

The data refer to Reading University Meterological Station except for a period in April when there was an unavoidable break and for which figures for Sutton's Seed Trial ground (shown in brackets) have been used. A "rain-day" is a day on which rainfall exceeds 0.01 in. The averages for temperature refer to the period 1921-50, those for amount of precipitation to 1916-50, and those for number of rain-days to 1881-1915.

STATION - READING UNIVERSITY

HEIGHT ABOVE SEA LEVEL - 148 FT.

YEAR 1960

		JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUN.	JUL.	AUG.	SEP.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	YEAR
MEAN DAILY TEMPERATURES OF	MAX.	43.8	45.7	50.3	(57.4)	64.9	71.9	68.1	68.1	64.5	57.3	52.0	44.4	57.4
	MIN.	35.2	34.9	39.3	(41.3)	48.3	53.3	53.3	52.8	50.2	46.5	40.3	35.9	44.3
	MEAN	39.5	40.3	44.8	(49.3)	56.6	62.6	60.7	60.5	57.3	51.9	46.1	40.1	50.9
	RANGE	8.6	10.8	11.0	(16.1)	16.6	18.6	14.8	15.3	14.3	10.8	11.7	8.5	13.1
	GRASS MIN.	30.8	28.5	34.3	(33.0)	39.9	45.8	48.6	46.3	43.2	40.8	33.7	30.5	38.0
EXTREME TEMPERATURES OF	E. MAX DATE	54 1,22	60 28,29	58 15	66 20	77 8	83 5	73 5,28	75 5	74 11	67 2	61 1	54 1,3	83 Jun,5
	E. MIN. DATE	24 14	24 18	32 9	32 18	40 3	45 1	46 1	45 13	44 24,25 27,28	31 13	31 8,19	29 13,14	24 Jan.14 Feb.18
	E. GRASS MIN. DATE	19 10	15 17,18	24 9	21 18	28 30	32 1	39 1	37 13,19	31 27	22 13	21 8	19 28,29	15 Feb.17 & 18
DAYS WITH	FROST	14	10	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	5	35
	GROUND FROST	18	18	8	13	4	0	0	0	0	3	7	17	88
SUNSHINE HOURS	SUM	40.8	81.7	78.9	(158.7)	180.9	257.3	143.6	161.0	134.2	75.7	75.5	54.3	1442.6
	% POSS.	16	28	22	38	38	52	29	36	35	23	28	22	32
	DAILY MEAN	1.32	2.82	2.55	(5.29)	5.83	8.57	4.63	5.19	4.47	2.44	2.52	1.75	3.94
PRECIPITATION INS.	AMOUNT	2.63	2.14	1.33	0.43	1.68	1.10	2.75	4.05	3.27	6.87	3.61	3.20	33.06
	RAIN DAYS	22	17	12	(13)	9	12	20	19	13	24	26	25	212
	MAX. RAIN IN 1 DAY	0.71	0.38	0.43	(0.12)	0.50	0.30	0.53	1.25	0.77	1.20	0.82	0.71	1.25
	DATE	23	12	28	(2)	19	22	22	11	6	26	25	3	Aug.11
	LONGEST RUN OF CONSECUTIVE RAIN DAYS	8	5	7	(8)	3	4	8	6	3	11	21	14	
	LONGEST RUN OF CONSECUTIVE DRY DAYS	5	5	13	13	8	6	4	3	7	3	3	1	
	SNOW OR SLEET DAYS	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	10
	DAYS SNOW LYING	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
VISIBILITY	FOG AT 0900 G.M.T.	6	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	4	21
THUNDER-STORM ACTIVITY	DAYS OF THUNDER	0	0	0	0	2	2	5	6	0	2	2	0	19
	DAYS OF HAIL	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	6
AVERAGES	MAX.	45.2	46.3	51.8	56.9	63.7	69.2	72.3	71.5	66.8	58.8	50.2	45.7	58.2
	MIN.	34.3	34.5	36.1	40.1	44.8	50.5	54.1	53.4	49.9	43.8	38.3	36.3	42.9
	MEAN	39.8	40.4	41.0	48.5	54.3	59.9	63.2	62.5	58.3	51.3	44.3	40.5	50.6
PRECIPI-TATION	AMOUNT	2.41	1.78	1.69	1.9	1.86	1.61	2.53	2.2	2.1	2.6	2.74	2.3	25.72
	RAIN DAYS	15	13	13	12	10	10	12	13	11	15	15	15	153

Change and Decay

(Being a summary of the Presidential address, November, 1959)  
by Professor H.L.Hawkins, D.Sc., F.R.S., F.G.S.

In the early days of philosophy our ancestors, with child-like egotism, believed that the world (and indeed the Universe) was constructed solely for the convenience of mankind. Faced with phenomena that were too large and too durable for comprehension by the trivial and transient human mind, they concluded that everything around them had been created once and for all time and that (supernatural intervention apart) all was stereotyped and everlasting. We, their descendants, have gradually become conscious of our limitations; and, although the pageant of Nature is still awesomely beyond our comprehension, we realise that no part of the physical universe is static, and that creation and recreation is a perpetual process.

Although the hills seem "everlasting" to minds with a span of observation limited to less than a century, we can actually watch their destruction in progress - usually slow and piecemeal, but occasionally catastrophic. Every shower of rain, even the passage of a cloud over the sun, disrupts and dislodges fragments of the rocks, and every river is a one-way conveyor-belt transporting the debris from the land to the sea. The fate that befalls a sandcastle when the tide comes in is, on a minute scale, the same as that under which even the proudest mountains must yield. The effect of the weather destroys the form of the land, but does not destroy its substance. The minerals broken from the rocks may undergo chemical change, but their material still persists, in a new texture and in a new location. These transported relics are sorted and collected, usually on the floor of the sea, and accumulate as the raw material for a new set of rocks. Subterranean forces may cause upheaval of new land to replace the old, but the materials of which this is composed have already been used in previous rounds of the recurrent cycles of change. Decay of the land is an essential preliminary to its reconstruction - there is nothing permanent in Geography.

Similar cycles are manifest in the organic world, and here some of them are speedy enough to be evident to all. Perhaps the most familiar case is that of the foliage of plants, where the growths of one season wither and decay to provide nourishment for those of future seasons. In all living creatures death and decay is a prerequisite of growth and regeneration. Worn-out tissues must die and be discarded to make room for new ones, which are themselves constructed from the decayed relics of others. It may seem a somewhat nauseating thought that our bodies are built from the decayed (or digested) carcasses of animals and plants, but that is the way of things. And if our bodies were not perpetually dying and discarding surplus matter the effect would be even more disconcerting. All through life, from cradle to grave, perpetual changes occur; and these changes are brought about by the replacement of worn-out tissues by fresh ones that are not quite identical. Life includes death - we stop dying only when we are dead.

The processes of decay and change that determine individual life are an illustration in miniature of those in the longer cycles of racial history. New generations are never exact replicas of their parents; but unless the parents die to leave room for their descendants there will be neither space nor material for the offspring to develop. Medical science, by reducing infant mortality and in-

creasing longevity, contributes disastrously to problems of population that threaten the very existence of our species. This may sound a harsh and unsympathetic statement; but the fact remains that there is only a certain amount of potential organic matter in the world, and unless this is kept in constant circulation, no healthy life is possible. Each new generation must climb over the dead bodies of the past; thus and thus only can the changes that it brings come to full development.

It is the same on the more extended scale of specific and generic changes. Evolution (which is another name for Life) needs extinction of the effete quite as surely as inception of the new. There was little chance of success for the Mammals until the Reptiles had relinquished their monopoly. The record of Palaeontology is one of the old order dying out, giving place to new.

In fine, the whole Universe, and all its parts, is in a state of perpetual flux. In that respect it may be said to be "alive", for change is one of the attributes of life. It seems to be an everlasting law of Nature that no thing can last for ever. And so we can close this painfully morbid essay on a note of confidence. Though the hills may melt, and the stream of time may bear everything away, behind all the change and decay the eternal verities endure.

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### The Recorder's Report for Entomology.

1959 - 60

By B. R. Baker.

The entomological report is, of necessity, very much a summary of the field observations of a number of keen workers. As the Recorder's own observations for the period under review are almost entirely confined to those made in the Kennet reed-bed area at Woolhampton, he acknowledges with grateful thanks assistance from J.E. Cooper, Mr. A. Price, Miss L.E. Cobb, Miss E.M. Helmes and Mrs. A.M. Simmonds. The Director of Reading Museum has again kindly made available the relevant insect records kept at the Museum.

#### Early Appearance of Hibernators

- 21st February      Wormsley Valley, Stokenchurch. In this Chiltern valley numbers of Seven-Spot Ladybirds, Coccinella 7-punctata L., were observed together with Hive Bees, Apis mellifera L., a Mirid tentatively identified as Stenodema calcaratum (Fall.) and numerous unidentified Diptera.
- 28th February      Bramshill. Wood Ants, Formica sp., actively working.  
Crowthorne. Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly, Aglais (Vanessa) urticae (L.).
- 7th April          Caversham. Peacock butterfly, Nymphalis io (L.), observed in a garden in Hemdean Road.

19th April Lower Warren. Brimstone butterflies, Gonepteryx rhamni (L)., and Small Tortoiseshells flying on a warm, sunny day.

# Notes on Individual Insect Orders

## Order Plecoptera (Stone-flies)

During the course of a seven-month survey of certain nocturnal insects made at Woolhampton, Berkshire, it was very apparent that an attractant such as a mercury-vapour light-trap could not be used to assess the relative abundance of such insects as stone-flies. These are but weakly flying creatures and of many thousands of insects examined over the seven months from April to October only 2 stone-flies were noted in the light-trap, viz:

### Night of

9th/10th April Nemurella inconspicua (Pict.) 1 female

4th/5th May Isoperla grammatica (Poda) (Yellow Sally) 1 female

Examination after dark of a wooden bridge over the river Kennet revealed, however, that stone-flies were to be found if searched for close to the water. The large species Perlodes microcephala (in which the male has much reduced wings) was recorded as follows:-

<u>Night of</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Notes</u>
6th/7th April	12	(not recorded)		At 00.25 hrs. a male specimen commenced to emerge from its nymphal skin. Complete release took 10 minutes. This newly emerged stone-fly was bright yellow in colour - this would change to a subdued brown, with orange and black as the cuticle hardened.
9th/10th April	15	11	4	
13th/14th "	2	1	1	
16th/17th "	3	2	1	
20th/21st "	1	1	-	
23rd/24th "	2	1	1	
30th/1st May	1	-	1	
4th/5th "	1	1	-	
7th/8th "	1	1	-	
No others observed after this date	26	18	8	

I. grammatica, another fairly large species, was also regularly found after dark on the same bridge:

4th/5th May            3            These specimens were emerging at 22.30 hours and were bright green in colour on leaving the nymphal skin.

<u>Night of</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Nos. of Isoperla grammatica</u>
7th/8th May	-	6
11th/12th "	23.30 hrs.	1
14th/15th "	23.30 "	1
18th/19th "	22.30 "	-
21st/22nd "	02.00 "	1
25th/26th "	01.45 "	1

No further specimens observed after this date.

Order Odonata (Dragon-flies)

Agrion splendens (Harris), Banded Agrion.

A nymph of this very common species was observed on the bridge at Woolhampton, It had crawled up the woodwork until about 3 feet above water level, and was ready for the final change into the winged adult dragon-fly. Close by was an empty skin (by its condition very recently tenanted), - these observations were made at 01.45 hrs. on the night of 25th/26th May. Late May and throughout June is the usual time to see these beautiful dragon-flies in swarms on the banks of slow flowing rivers. I was therefore very surprised to observe a female A. splendens on the river bank at Woolhampton on 4th September - surely a very late date.

Cordulegaster boltoni (Donovan), golden-ringed Dragonfly.

A specimen was captured in a woodland ride near Broadmoor reservoirs on 21st July.

Aeshna grandis (L.), the Brown Aeshna, and A. cyanea (Muell.), the Southern Aeshna.

These were both observed on 11th September at Wokefield Common - both are common in our district and may be seen on the wing from mid-summer to early autumn.

Order Trichoptera (Caddis-flies)

New to our county list is Hydroptila forcipata (Eaton), one of the smallest of the British caddis. This specimen was recorded at Woolhampton on 7th/8th May. Also from Woolhampton, and not previously recorded there:-

Limnephilus luridus Curt., (29th/30th June, 2nd/3rd & 9th/10th July)

Melampophylax mucoreus (Hag) (19th/20th: 26th/27th October)

A very large number of caddis-flies taken at Woolhampton still await naming



Order Lepidoptera (Butterflies and Moths)

Migrant Species

Apart from Red Admiral butterflies, Vanessa atalanta (L.), a species which became fairly numerous with us in late summer, there is little to report on migrant butterflies. However, on the 11th September a solitary Clouded Yellow, Colias croceus (Fourc.), was observed along the Icknield Way at Watlington, Oxfordshire.

By comparison, migrant moths were more in evidence:

Herse convolvuli (L.) Convolvulus Hawkmoth

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 1 Female, High Street, Reading                          | 25th August    |
| 1 Male, Baynes Timber Yard,<br>Berkeley Avenue, Reading | 20th September |
| 1 Female Woolhampton                                    | 2nd October.   |

Plusia gamma (L.) Silver Y moth, was generally common in the Reading area.

Nycterosea (Nyctosia) obstipata (F.), The Gem. A single specimen 26th/27th October, Woolhampton.

Margaronia unionalis (Hb.), Scarce Olive-Tree Pearl. A single specimen 24th/25th September, Woolhampton.

Resident Species

The Comma butterfly, Polygonia c-album (L.), was noted in Pamber Forest on 24th July - this species was subsequently seen on a number of occasions during the autumn in town gardens.

The Holly Blue butterfly, Celastrina argiolus (L.), seems to have had a good year. On 29th July a female was seen in a garden at Northcourt Avenue, and specimens were noted in other gardens in the town during May and August. It was also recorded as abundant in Garrick Wood, Crowthorne.

A larva of the Death's Head Hawk-moth, Acherontia atropos (L.) was found on an allotment at Woodley on 13th September.

The Sallow Clearwing moth Aegeria flaviventris Staud. Larvae of this most recently discovered of the British clearwing moths live within sallow stems for 2 years, the only visible sign of a tenanted stem being a pear-shaped gall which is produced during the second winter. It is interesting that these galls are only to be found in odd/even winters. From Owlsmoor, near Crowthorne, a dozen or so stems were cut on 19th March. From these a single moth resulted on 2nd July, ample evidence that this species, suffers badly from parasitization, as does the whole family.

Waved Black moth, Parascotia fuliginaria L. Larvae were found in some numbers at Sindlesham on 7th May feeding upon fungi which were growing on a fallen trunk. The adult moths were bred through and emerged from 22nd June to 4th July.

This Sindlesham record is very interesting - Sindlesham is well away from the celebrated localities for this moth in our district, such as Crowthorne, Sandhurst and Camberley.

Order Coleoptera (Beetles)

- 20th January Anisandrus dryographus (Ratz.) (Scolytidae)  
Several specimens found in West African timber, Abura (Mitragyna ciliata), in the woodwork shop at Redlands Senior School.
- 21st February Dorcus parallelelipedus (L.) (Lucanidae)  
Abundant in a decaying oak log at Little John's Farm, Reading. The dimorphism of the male and female was very marked. (In the same log some 24 queens of Vespa sp. were hibernating in the old feeding holes of Dorcus larvae.)
- 6th March Rantus grapii (Gyll.) (Hydradephaga)  
A single example (male) found at Earley Power Station.
- 6th March Cychrus caraboides var. rostratus (L.) (Carabidae)  
Four specimens found in cells beneath the loose bark of an elm log at Sonning.
- 20th March Xestobium rufovillosum (Deg.) Death-watch beetle (Anobiidae)  
Dead adults and living larvae were found in an infested beam which had been thrown on to a rubbish dump at Tilehurst.
- 21st March Nacerdes melanura (L.) The Wharf Borer (Oedemeridae)  
A single specimen found in a cubicle at the heated Arthur Hill swimming bath. The normal time of emergence of this beetle is from July to September.
- 29th April Pyrochroa serraticornis (Scop.) (Pyrochroidae)  
A single example bred from a pupa found in wood at Redlands School.
- 12th June Coelambus confluens (F.) (Hydradephaga)  
Six examples found in a gravel pit near the Newbury Sewage Works at Thatcham.
- 10th July Oreodytes rivalis (Gyll.) (Hydradephaga)  
Twenty four (in teneral condition) found in the Sul stream at Sulham.
- 25th September Necrodes littoralis (L.) (Silphidae)  
As the specific name suggests, this beetle is normally found on the sea shore, though known from riversides at inland localities. A male and female were taken in a light-trap at the Museum Field Station, Woolhampton.

1960 was reported to have been a very good year for Melolontha melolontha (L.), the Cockchafer, (Melolonthinae) at Crowthorne, where the leaves of oak trees were eaten bare.

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Class Crustacea

14th February      Niphargus aquilex      The Well Shrimp.      A single specimen found in a gravel pit near the Oval Pond, Padworth.

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Hirudinea      Leeches

1st May              Trocheta bykowskii      An example of this uncommon leach was found beneath a brick at the water's edge in Earley Power Station swamp. This species is normally found in or near running water - the river Thames is not far distant from this swamp.

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The Recorder's Report for Ornithology,  
1959-60

By E. V. Watson

I propose this year not to draw on records already published in the R.O.C. Report for 1959 (obtainable from Hon.Sec. Reading Ornithological Club, price 2/6d.), but to confine myself to notes sent in by members, together with my own observations and some records kindly supplied by Mr. Robert Gillmor. The method adopted will be to pass the year in review, season by season.

The winter period, November 1959 - February 1960 inclusive, furnished few records. Mr. Gillmor, however, reported a pair of Gadwall at Theale gravel pit on January 10th, 1960. All references to Theale are to the 'new' pit (now about seven years old), unless otherwise stated. The same observer saw three Sheld-duck at Burghfield gravel pit on 7th February and on the same date a drake Ferruginous duck at Theale. These are three rare duck for the Reading area.

The most outstanding winter record among other birds to come in was that of a female Black Redstart, seen by Mrs. Skinner in her garden at Upper Basildon on February 29th. It stayed for four days and the identification was corroborated by Miss Wigan. There are a few notes of our more ordinary winter residents. The Skylark population in a large arable field at Cleeve (Goring) was estimated by me at about 250 birds on January 10th. Mrs. Simmonds wrote of two Gold-finches feeding among lavender bushes, Hemdean Road, Caversham, on February 5th.

They are always attractive birds to see, especially when one comes on them by surprise at close quarters in a town setting. Mr. Gillmor was fortunate to see the much more elusive Hawfinch in Northcourt Avenue on February 24th. Bullfinches, sometimes up to ten together, were prominent in and about my garden at home, but I can report a much larger apple crop than usual. Admittedly they were seen mainly near mid-winter, whilst the heaviest depredations on fruit buds are a spring event. Mr. K.E.L. Simmons reports a Greater Spotted Woodpecker frequenting his bird table at Roslyn Road, Woodley, during late autumn, 1959. It ate varied 'scraps' and visited the coconut. Miss Nelmes commented on the great size of Woodpigeon flocks during February - amounting to several hundred together on each occasion - in the Burghfield, Stokenchurch and Wokingham areas. A Grey Wagtail frequented the tiny pond on Senior Common Room lawn, University of Reading, more or less regularly from early December until the end of January.

On suitably mild days, song began to be noticeable very early in the year, especially of course the Missel Thrush which is always conspicuous vocally in January. I noticed a cock Linnet singing well on Streatley golf course on January 5th. A Blackbird, individually recognisable to me because of its peculiar phrasing of the song, began to sing outside the University Botany Department on January 28th. On March 3rd, I heard a Starling giving a remarkably good 'imitation' of a Lapwing outside my University window.

A Natural History Society visit to Coley Park Heronry (March 5th) was reported by Mrs. Simmonds and by Miss J.M. Watson. Seventeen nests were found to be occupied and nearly thirty birds were seen. Mrs. Simmonds records eight Rooks' nests in Forbury Gardens, which she believes to be a new Rookery site. On March 11th, a Carrion Crow was revisiting its own old nest at the top of a large Platanus in the University. On February 24th, I noticed two Goldcrests in the University grounds chasing one another from bush to bush in an excited state. Short "tinkling" notes were uttered all the while but never the true song. The crests were not seen to be fanned, as sometimes happens in Goldcrest courtship. A record by Miss Nelmes of two Gird Buntings in a chalk pit near Newbury is of interest. Although present for most of the year at Cleeve (Goring), the species is very local in the district as a whole.

The earliest Spring arrival record is that of a Chiffchaff seen by Miss Nelmes on March 13th. Mr. Brian Baker reported Nightingale and Grasshopper Warbler, both on April 7th, and Cuckoo on April 8th, from the reed beds at Woolhampton. These are early dates and illustrate what can be done when one is called upon (as Mr. Baker is with his entomology) to spend much time in a favoured spot; especially if some of that time is in the early hours of the morning. My own first dates for some other species were: Swallow, April 14th (Aldermaston), Yellow Wagtail and Sedge Warbler, April 16th (Theale) and Lesser Whitethroat, April 22nd (Cleeve). Mrs. Fishlock saw the first Swifts on May 4th; it is astonishing how, year after year, the main influx of this species is within the same few days in early May. On May 5th, the first Turtle Dove had arrived at Cleeve. On May 11th, I saw my first Spotted Flycatcher, although Sir John Wolfenden noted it a couple of days earlier in his garden in Upper Redlands Road. My last "arrival" was Garden Warbler, singing at Cleeve on May 15th.

Visits to gravel pits can be productive in April and May for, although most non-breeding duck have gone by the end of March, there are breeding populations to study and sometimes birds of passage, waders and others, to be seen. On April 16th at Theale, I noted three Pochard, about sixteen pairs of Tufted Duck and some six to ten pairs of Great Crested Grebe. A further visit to Theale, May 14th, showed two pairs of Pochard and eight to ten pairs of Tufted Duck were estimated. On May 27th at least one pair of Great Crested Grebes had well-grown young (in stripey plumage). Meanwhile, a visit to Sonning Eye gravel pit on May 11th had revealed a pair of Canada Geese with six fair-sized goslings. No important spring passage waders were reported but Black Terns were noted by me (two) at Sonning Eye on May 11th, by Mr. Gillmor (five) at Burghfield on May 12th, and again at Sonning I saw a single one on May 13th. This one narrowly escaped being "run-over" by a speed-boat with water-skier in train! On May 12th, Mr. Gillmor also saw five Common Terns and one Little Tern at Burghfield. Little Ringed Plovers were again to be seen on certain of the pits in May. I noted a passage Lesser Black-backed Gull at Theale on May 27th. On the same day both Yellow and Grey Wagtails appeared to be in territory there, the latter a pair attracted to the weir on the canal behind the gravel pit.

High summer saw the outstanding event of the ornithological year in our area. This was the single Red-necked Phalarope which frequented a small village pond at Marsh Baldon, near Newnham Courtenay, for fully a week at the end of June. I saw it on the evening of June 28th and it had certainly been in the area since the 25th. It was tame, or perhaps one should say indifferent to the presence of observers, to the extent that Phalaropes are reputed to be; and hence it allowed all who visited it (and they were many) to approach as close as the water made possible, to sketch and to photograph. A full account will no doubt appear elsewhere and it will suffice here to stress that a Red-necked Phalarope is a rarity at any time in such a site in southern England, and at this mid-summer season probably without precedent.

August was marked by three remarkable days, August 19th - 21st, for Mr. Gillmor. On each of these days he visited Englefield Park (Cranemoor Lake) and each time he saw the following four waders (the numbers seen are given in brackets after each species):- Greenshank (3,2,3); Wood Sandpiper (2,5,3); Green Sandpiper (14+,13,7); Common Sandpiper (12,2,1). The mud at the east end of this lake is always an attraction, but a record such as this is quite exceptional. On September 5th, I noted a Common Sandpiper at Burghfield, and on September 24th, Mr. Gillmor heard a Curlew flying over Northcourt Avenue at 10.55 p.m. Mrs. Fishlock comments on about a hundred Canada Geese at Heckfield Place on August 23rd.

According to a recent report in "British Birds", many summer species tended to stay late this past autumn. No outstanding date has come to my notice for our own area, but on October 3rd I noticed that Sand Martin, Swallow and Chiffchaff were all still present at Aldermaston, and October 4th, a rather misty morning, produced a Wheatear on the fringe of cultivated fields on the outskirts of Caversham. On October 24th, Mr. Brian Baker wrote to report the massing of considerable numbers of Pied Wagtails in the reed beds at Woolhampton.

By this time the numbers of duck on the pits and other inland waters were beginning to push up again, and on October 5th I counted twenty Pochard at Theale

and about sixty Teal at Englefield. At Theale at least one pair of Great Crested Grebes still had stripey-headed young that were being fed by the parents on the above date. In early November passage Lesser Black-backed Gulls began to mingle with Black-heads and Common Gulls (and an occasional Herring Gull) in Christchurch Meadow, just west of Reading Bridge. I recorded ten to fifteen on November 11th, but by November 28th the remarkable total of about sixty Lesser Black-backed Gulls was registered.

This Report can scarcely close without mention of a signal event, the holding of a fairly comprehensive exhibition of contemporary bird art in the Reading Art Gallery, from November 26th until December 24th, 1960. The Exhibition owed its inception to Mr. Robert Gillmor; its success to him, and to many others, not least to Mr. T.L. Gwatkin, Director of the Museum and Art Gallery. The Opening by Field-Marshal Lord Alanbrooke will remain a memorable occasion for all who were privileged to attend it.

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The Recorder's Report for Botany,  
1959-60

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By K. I. Butler

The nomenclature followed is mainly that of Clapham, Tutin and Warburg, in "The Flora of the British Isles", supplemented by J.E. Dandy's "List of British Vascular Plants". As last year, the radius of the area covered is a rough twenty miles from Reading.

During the past year, botanical observations have been carried out over a wide area. From within the borough itself, where Mrs. A. M. Simmonds recorded over 200 species of flowers and grasses and one fern, to as far afield as the West Woodhay Downs, just within the Berkshire boundary, where Mrs. Simmonds found Herminium monorchis (L.) R.Br. (Musk Orchid), and Coeloglossum viride (L.) Hartm. (Frog Orchid).

Many of the Society's Field Excursions during the year proved of great interest to the botanists.

BEENHAM, April 9th. Chrysosplenium oppositifolium L. (Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage); Adoxa moschatellina L. (Moschatel); Equisetum telmateia Ehrh. (Great Horsetail). All have been recorded here for several years.

NUNEY GREEN, May 7th. A large patch of well grown specimens of Orchis mascula L. (Early purple Orchid) was seen in the woods.

ALDERMASTON COURT, May 21st. Scrophularia vernalis L. (Yellow Figwort). It will be remembered that this was previously recorded in 1955, between Woolhampton and Bucklebury, on the occasion of one of the Society's Field Excursions.

BIX BOTTOM, June 11th. After reading Mrs. V. Paul's "A Three Kilometre Square" in "The Reading Naturalist" No. II, it was a treat for members to see so many of the plants recorded by her for Bix Bottom, including many fine specimens of Ophrys insectifera L. (Fly Orchid) and Platanthera chlorantha (Cust.) Richb. (Greater Butterfly Orchid), 2 plants of the much rarer P. bifolia (L.) L.C. Rich (Lesser Butterfly Orchid), O. apifera Huds. (Bee Orchid), Listera ovata (L.) R. Br. (Twayblade), Cephalanthera damasonium (Mill.) Druce (White Helleborine), Alchemilla vulgaris agg. (Ladies Mantle), growing plentifully on the edge of a road, a small amount of Helleborus viridis L. (Green Hellebore), and great quantities of Paris quadrifolia L. (Herb Paris), near which Mrs. Paul was pleased to find the leaves of one plant of Aquilegia vulgaris L. (Columbine), this being a second site for this area.

WELLINGTON COLLEGE, June 25th. Typha latifolia L. and T. angustifolia L. (Great and Lesser Reedmace); Potamogeton polygonifolius Pourr. (Bog Pondweed); Juncus bulbosus L. (Bulbous Rush); Eleogiton fluitans (L.) Link. (Floating Scirpus); Geranium phaeum L. (Dusky Cranesbill), well established in a wood. On a previous visit, Mrs. Simmonds saw Potentilla argentea L. (Hoary Cinquefoil) growing in the spot recorded by Druce.

BLEWBURTON HILL, July 9th. Thesium humifusum DC. (Bastard Toadflax); at the edge of a cornfield, Lithospermum arvense L. (Corn Gromwell) and Avena fatua L. (Wild Oat).

SPAN HILL and DUNSDEN GREEN, July 13th. Avena ludoviciana Dur. (Wild Oat), distinguished from A. fatua by the tufts of hairs extending up two-thirds of the lemma instead of only one third; Melandrium noctiflorum (L.) Fr. (Night-flowering Campion) at edge of cornfield, a new record; Picris ecboides L. (Bristly Ox-Tongue), recorded some years ago and persisting even after ploughing.

RISELEY MILL, August 8th. A most successful excursion. Plants found included Pulicaria vulgaris Gaertn. (Small Fleabane), which was located by Mrs. Simmonds growing plentifully around a pond at Springwater Farm, Branshill and may well constitute a new record for Hants; Silene anglica L. (Small-flowered Catchfly), found by Miss J. Tobias at the edge of a cornfield; Anthemis nobilis L. (Chamomile), on wayside between Springwater Farm and Riseley Mill; Chenopodium rubrum L. (Red Goosefoot), by edge of arable field; and Alopecurus aequalis Sobol. (Orange Fox tail), with orange stamens, which was last recorded in 1953 by Dr. L. Williams from a pond at the top of Sulham Hill, that occasion being the first on which it was recorded for Berkshire.

HAZELEY HEATH, August 10th. Genista anglica L. (Needle Furze).

BRADFIELD to YATTENDON, September 17th. Geranium columbinum L. (Long-stalked Cranesbill), near Stanford Dingley; Solidago virgaurea L. (Golden-rod), near reservoir in Great House Wood.

HOOK COMMON was visited by some members on September 10th, when nine flowers of Gentiana pneumonanthe L. (Marsh Gentian) were seen, also Serratula tinctoria L. (Saw-wort) and Silene silaus (L.) Schinz & Thell. (Pepper Saxifrage).



FUNGUS FORAY. 102 species were found, including 33 not represented in the Society's previous list from Kingwood Common.

MEMBERS' RECORDS

Ceterach officinatum DC. (Rusty-back Fern). On a wall between Goring and South Stoke, Sept. 18th (Mrs. Simmonds and Miss L. Cobb); doing well in its old haunt at Kingwood Common on the wall along the road to "Brackenfell"; just surviving on a wall at Bix Bottom - one plant only.

Ophioglossum vulgatum L. (Adder's Tongue). Abundant on football field at Stoneham School (J. Hodgson); barren fronds only, in hawthorn scrub off the footpath from Henley to Lower Herries Farm, (Miss Cobb); Watlington Hill on May 22nd (Mrs. Simmonds); Bix Bottom.

Myosurus minimus L. (Mousetail). Two or three Small specimens in field at Lower Earley - an old locality; many more specimens this year in Mr. Smallcombe's garden in Reading.

Arabis hirsuta (L.) Scop. (Hairy Rock-cress). Watlington Hill, May 22nd. (Mrs. Simmonds).

Minuartia tenuifolia (L.) Hiern (Fine-leaved Sandwort). Wantage Fair Mile (Mrs. Hodgson).

Arenaria serpyllifolia L. (Thymed-leaved Sandwort). Watlington Hill, May 22nd (Mrs. Simmonds).

A. leptoclados (Rchb.) Guss. (Lesser Thyme-leaved Sandwort). Watlington Hill, May 22nd. (Mrs. Simmonds).

Montia fontana ssp. chondrosperma (Fenzl) Walters. Several plants on Heckfield Heath (John Hodgson).

Atriplex hortensis L. Several plants at Wargrave (Mrs. Hodgson).

Geranium lucidum L. (Shining Cranesbill). One plant by roadside near Stonor (J. Hodgson).

Genista anglica L. (Petty Whin) with Ulex minor Roth (Dwarf Furze). Abundant in field at Sulham (J. Hodgson).

Alchemilla vulgaris agg. (Lady's Mantle). Wormsley Valley, June 6th. (Miss Cobb).

Peplis portula L. (Water Purslane). Bramshill, July 10th. (Miss Cobb).

Moenchia erecta (L.) Gaertn., Mey., Scherb. (Upright Chickweed). Sandy heath at Padworth (Mrs. Paul).

Polygala calcarea F. Schultz (Chalk Milkwort). Aston Upthorpe Downs (Mrs. Simmonds).

Senecio integrifolius (L.) Clairv. (Field Fleawort). Aston Upthorpe Downs (Mrs. Simmonds).

Linaria repens (L.) Mill (Purple Toadflax). Growing freely on railway bank near Little John's Farm, off Oxford Road, Reading (Mrs. Simmonds).

Iberis amara L. (Wild Candytuft). Bald Hill, near Watlington, August 20th (Miss E. Nelmes).

Gentianella germanica (Willd.) E.F. Warburg. Between Shirburn and Bald Hall, near Watlington, September 11th (Miss Nelmes).

Stachys arvensis L. (Field Woundwort). Abundant in arable field at Padworth (Mrs. and J. Hodgson); two plants in field by Nunehide Lane (J. Hodgson).

Hottonia palustris L. (Water Violet). Persisting at Waltham St. Lawrence (Miss L. Cobb); flourishing at Grazely (Miss Cobb).

Taraxacum laevigatum agg. (Lesser Dandelion). The chalk form of T. officinale (outer ray-florets brown, and achenes toothed  $\frac{1}{4}$  way from tip) Watlington Hill (Mrs. Simmonds).

Torilis nodosa (L.) Gaertn. (Knotted Hedge-parsley). Several plants on roadside bank near Caversham Bridge (Mrs. Hodgson).

Hypericum montanum L. (Mountain St. John's Wort). Three plants at Tilehurst; two plants near Lower Basildon (J. Hodgson).

Astragalus glycyphyllos L. (Milk Vetch). Mrs. Simmonds reports that the site of the Old Bath Road near Twyford - one of Druce's localities - has been destroyed in consequence of the construction of a footpath. The plant is maintaining itself on the piece of waste land on the opposite side of the road.

Neottia nidus-avis (L.) L.C. Rich, (Bird's Nest Orchid). Maiden's Grove Scrubb (Mrs. Simmonds).

Platanthera chlorantha (Cust.) Rehb. (Greater Butterfly Orchid). Near Pamber Forest, June 12th. (Mrs. Simmonds).

Ophrys insectifera L. (Fly Orchid). A small number at Hardwick, June 4th. (Miss Cobb).

Orchis militaris L. (Soldier Orchid). Was visited on June 3rd by Mrs. Simmonds, who reports that a certain amount of clearing has been done in the woods. Fewer plants were counted in flower, but one or two new plants were noted.

Orchis simia Lam. (Monkey Orchid). Miss Nelmes and Miss Cobb found one specimen, nearly 9" high, on the original chalk slope on May 21st. This was good news, as the site was destroyed by the plough in 1949, and with one possible exception had not been seen there since. The Recorder saw the flower and photographed it on May 26th, but when Mrs. Simmonds visited the slope on June 4th, it had been picked. The Orchid has not been recorded from the newer site this year.

O. ustulata L. (Dark-winged Orchid). Twenty plants seen in flower, Aston Up-  
tonge Downs (Mrs. Simmonds).

O. morio L. (Green-winged Orchid). Miss Cobb reports seeing it at Aborfield on  
May 8th - she noticed that several had evidently been picked by children and  
thrown on a path by the Whitewater near Riseley. A search of neighbouring  
meadows failed to reveal growing plants, although the flowers found were fresh  
and probably from quite close at hand.

C. strictifolia Opiz. and O. praetermissa Druce. These two Marsh Orchids were  
seen in a field near Nunehide Lane by Miss K. Watson and the Recorder.

Gymnadenia conopsea (L.) R.Br. (Fragrant Orchid). Wormsley Valley, June 6th  
(Miss Cobb).

Coeloglossum viride (L.) Hartm. (Frog Orchid). Two plants, Watlington Hill,  
August 27th (Miss Nelmes).

Epipactis helleborine (L.) Crantz (Broad Helleborine). Wood near Fair Mile on  
October 10th (Mrs. Simmonds); a large number of flowering plants were seen at the  
edge of a wood near Harpsden by Andrew Isherwood, one of our junior members, to  
whom credit is due for not picking a single specimen, but reporting his find to  
Mrs. Simmonds and showing her the locality.

#### INTRODUCED PLANTS

Impatiens glandulifera Royle (Policeman's Helmet). Riseley Mill, August 6th  
(Miss Cobb); near junction of River Enborne and River Kennet, Woolhampton (Mr.  
B. Baker); seen growing freely at edge of wood near Kingwood Common, on the  
occasion of the Fungus Foray.

Galingsoga parvifolia Cav. (Gallant Soldier). Still a troublesome weed at  
Suttons Trial Ground (Mrs. Simmonds); Elisha Hicks Rose Gardens (Mr. Bowden and  
the Recorder); Elm Road Nurseries, Reading (the Recorder).

G. ciliata (Raf.) Blake. One plant outside yard at Harpsden, August 15th (Mrs.  
Simmonds); in a garden, Southampton Street, Reading, growing with G. parvifolia  
(Mrs. Simmonds).

Euphorbia virgata Waldst. & Kit. After a lapse of years has reappeared inside  
the railings of the Southern Region Goods Yard (Mrs. Simmonds).

Barbarea intermedia Bor. (Intermediate Yellow Rocket). Riseley (J. Hodgson);  
growing plentifully by the side of a track at Grey's (Mrs. Paul); about six  
plants on rubbish tip at Woodcote (Mrs. Paul); on side of road from Woodcote  
to Wallingford (Mrs. Paul).

B. verna (Mill.) Aschers (Early-flowering Yellow Rocket). In quantity at  
Whitchurch (Mrs. Hodgson); a very fine specimen on the bank of Mrs. Paul's house  
at Peppard.

Sisymbrium orientale L. (Eastern Rocket). Waste ground at Woodley, where it was first observed in 1945 by Mrs. Simmonds.

Melissa officinalis L. (Balm). Well established along river bank between Earley Power Station and Sonning Lock (Mrs. Simmonds).

Tragopogon porrifolius L. (Salsify). One plant at Cockney Hill (J.Hodgson)

Allium paradoxum (M.Bieb.) G.Don. Established itself on a piece of land at Peppard Common (Mrs. Paul).

Tetragonolobus maritimus (L.) Roth. Plentiful by roadside, Hanover Hill, Fingest, flowering between August 12th and September 17th. Locality first found in 1956 (Miss Nelmes).

Erigeron annuus (L.) Pers. A native of N. America was found by Mrs. Simmonds in Reading, and identified by Dr. Warburg - see separate note by Mrs. Simmonds.

Mrs. Hodgson and John Hodgson have been particularly interested in alien plants, with special reference to some local rubbish tips, on which they have recorded the following:-

HAZELEY HEATH. Sisymbrium altissimum L. (Tall Rocket); Onopordum acanthium L. (Scotch Thistle, Cotton Thistle), many plants; Solanum sarrachoides Sendtn.; Chenopodium polyspermum L. (All-seed).

PANGBOURNE Hyoscyamus niger L. (Henbane), one plant; Amaranthus retroflexus L., one plant.

THEALE Datura stramonium L. (Thornapple), one big plant.

THAMES-SIDE, READING Lolium temulentum L. (Darnel); Sisymbrium altissimum L. (Tall Rocket); S. orientale L. (Eastern Rocket); Coriander sativum L. (Coriander), one plant; Cannabis sativa L. (Hemp), one plant about 9 ft.; Linum usitatissimum L. (Cultivated Flax), several plants; Echinochloa crus-galli (L.) Beauv. (Cockspur); Setaria viridis (L.) Beauv. (Green-Bristlegrass).

Some plants occurring as garden weeds have also been recorded by Mrs. and John Hodgson:-

Fumaria capreolata var. babington determined by Kew, one plant, Tilehurst; Rorippa islandica (Oeder) Borbas (Marsh Yellow-cress), pavement, Tilehurst; Chenopodium polyspermum L. (Allseed), abundant in flower beds on Reading Promenade; Lamium hybridum Vill. (Cut-leaved Deadnettle), pavement weed, Tilehurst; Mercurialis annua L. (Annual Mercury), male and female plants abundant in a garden in London Street, Reading; Stachys arvensis L. (Field Woundwort), several plants in a garden, Tilehurst.

The Recorder wishes to thank all those who contributed to this Report.

Fungi at Kingwood Common

(Supplementary List)

At the Society's Foray in 1960, which was honoured by the presence of both Dr. F. B. Hora and Dr. J. Ramsbottom, over 100 species were collected and identified by them, including those recorded below, which did not figure in the list of species found in 1945-57 published in No.12 of the Reading Naturalist.

<u>Bispora (moniloides)</u>	<u>Mycena amoniaca</u> <u>galopus</u>
<u>Cantherellus cinereus</u>	<u>Nectria sp.</u>
<u>Clavaria fumosa</u> <u>stricta</u>	<u>Nolanea sp.</u>
<u>Collybia erythropus</u>	<u>Panus stipticus</u>
<u>Coprinus cinereus</u>	<u>Peziza badia</u>
<u>Cortinarius albo violaceus</u> <u>bolaris</u>	<u>Polyporus fragilis</u> <u>giganteus</u>
<u>Coryne sarcoides</u>	<u>Psathyra gossypina</u>
<u>Dacrymyces deliquescens</u>	<u>Psathyrella disseminata</u>
<u>Entoloma sp.</u>	<u>Russula densifolia</u>
<u>Fomes annosus</u>	<u>Schizophyllum commune</u>
<u>Inocybe asterophora</u>	<u>Stereum purpureum</u> <u>rugosum</u>
<u>Lycoperdon hyemalis</u> <u>saccatum</u>	<u>Stropharia semiglobata</u> <u>squamosa</u>
<u>Marasmius erythropus</u>	<u>Trichoderma (viride)</u>

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## OBSERVATIONS

### A Rare Alien in Berkshire

Erigeron annuus (L.) Pers. is of such rare occurrence in Britain that it would be more correct to designate it a casual. Seven plants appeared and flowered in a small area of sown grass-land near Reading in June 1960. Presumably the seeds were among the mixture of imported grasses and clovers which had been sown in 1959. The plants survived mowing and flowered again in August. Unfortunately, the land was ploughed in early September before any seeds could develop.

E. annuus resembles E. acris L. (Blue Fleabane) to the extent that its generic relationship is unmistakeable but the ray-florets are white and the leaves a very fresh green. The plant is a native of northern U.S.A. and Canada where it is most frequent in the eastern states, and occurs as a widespread weed in moist ground and waste places.

As far as can be ascertained there is no previous record for either Berks or Oxon. It is not recorded in the County Floras of adjoining counties, although there may be subsequent records.

A. M. Simmonds.

### Crown Galls on Daphne and Bramble

On 18th February 1960 I received from Mr. B.R. Baker, Reading Museum, a specimen of mezereum (Daphne mezereum L.) that had been sent in by Suttons, the seedsmen, for identification of the galls upon it. The specimen came from a garden in Reading.

The stems bore nearly spherical, woody galls ranging in diameter from 2 mm. to 12 mm., and as many as 14 were present on a piece of stem 15 cm. in length. A tentative identification of crown gall was made, but attempts to confirm that by isolating the bacterium on potato agar were unsuccessful, for only woody tissues were available and green tissue is recommended for such work.

Subsequent reference to the literature confirmed that the crown-gall organism, Agrobacterium tumefaciens (Smith & Townsend) Conn., does gall D. mezereum (Stapp, 1956, Bakterielle Krankheiten. Handb. Pflkrankh. 2. (2): 342-343, 6 Aufl.). Dowson (1949, Manual of bacterial plant diseases. London) does not list daphne as a host-plant, and it is probable that the only previously published record of crown gall on D. mezereum is that of Stapp (1940, Der Pflanzenkrebs und sein Erreger Pseudomonas tumefaciens. IX Mitt. Daphne mezereum L. als weitere neue Wirtspflanze. Zbl. Bakt. (Abt. II) 102:295-300), who found it in the late autumn of 1938 in north-western Germany. In Stapp's material, the galls were restricted to the lower parts of the plant, particularly the collar.

A number of larger crown galls, about 2 cm. in diameter and rougher on the surface, were found on a bramble (Rubus sp.) at Pamber Forest during the Society's field meeting on 23rd July 1960. They occurred on arched stems, some four feet

above the ground, at intervals of about two inches. Although the occurrence of A. tumefaciens on bramble is not rare, it is sufficiently unusual to warrant recording.

D. Leatherdale.

Crematogaster scutellaris - an unusual record

This species has been recorded many times from the British Isles, where it usually arrives with a consignment of cork. It has also been known to establish itself and breed indoors in hot-houses and similar places.

The ants which form the subject of this note are therefore unusual in nesting out of doors in an unprotected site.

My attention was first drawn to them on June 2nd. of this year (1960), when they were running busily to and fro on the hand-rail of the wooden bridge crossing the mill-leaf of Caversham Mill. In the bright sunlight the red head and thorax, contrasting with the black abdomen, caught my eye and I captured three for closer examination later on. Some of the ants were carrying aphids which they had found on the willow trees that overhang the end of the bridge. These were evidently homeward bound and I was able to trace them to their nest in the crevices of the wood-work at the foot of a supporting post. Under the microscope, my captives refused to be identified as any British species. Accordingly I went back to the nest for more live specimens, which were identified by Dr. Yarrow at the British Museum as Crematogaster scutellaris Olivier, an ant which is common in the Mediterranean area. Presumably the founders of the colony were imported by the cork factory which now occupies the buildings of Caversham Mill.

Some weeks later, and quite by chance, I came across a reference to the genus Crematogaster in a work on African insects, from which I learned that they have the English name of "Cocktail Ants." This is apparently an allusion, not to their in-temperate habits, but to the fact that when disturbed they tilt their abdomens upwards and emit a foul-smelling secretion. At the time when I read this, I had not myself observed this behaviour, but on a later visit to the nest, which had now been removed to more commodious quarters at the top of the post, I attracted the attention of two interested small children. Before I could stop her, the younger of the two began to stir up the inmates with a grass stalk, and they at once responded in the proper manner. The smell was not perceptible in the open air, but the paired glands which produce it were visibly extruded at the tip of the abdomen.

At the time of writing the colony still flourishes, in spite of the discouraging weather they have experienced. / It remains to be seen whether they will survive the winter.

H. Carter.

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/ The ants remained active until the end of October, but on 7th November had not been seen again.



SMALL MAMMALS OF THE READING AREA

By H.H. Carter and C.H. Johnson

This paper records the results of investigations into the small mammal populations of three localities near Reading, carried out by the authors during the summer of 1960.

AREAS WORKED

Area I - Woolhampton. This is a part of the proposed Nature Reserve in the Kennet valley near the village of Woolhampton. It comprises the narrow strip of land between the River Kennet and the Western Region main railway line from Reading to Newbury, and extends from Wickham Knight's Bridge upstream to the brook which comes in from the village, a distance of 400 yards.

The ground here is very wet and intersected by numerous drainage ditches, and the vegetation varies from willow and alder at the western end of the strip to reed bed at the eastern end. The Reading Museum field station is situated here, on the tow-path 100 yards west of Wickham Knight's Bridge.

Area II - Mapledurham. This in effect falls into two sub-areas lying close together on Gravel Hill, north of the Warren and 150 yards east of the edge of Chazey Wood. Here the soil is dry and well-drained, with a strong slope to the south, and the vegetation is mainly close-cropped pasture. This proved to be so exposed that it was impossible to set traps without running the risk of disturbance by passers-by, so trapping was concentrated in the two sub-areas mentioned. A small copse of mixed deciduous trees, with a patch of dense brambles and nettles to the north of it, formed the northern sub-area. The southern was 100 yards to the south on the rim of an old chalk pit and including part of a conifer plantation on the steepest part of the slope.

Area III - Playhatch. It was decided to conduct a trapping survey on the agricultural site of Mr. E.W. Low, of 31 Anglefield Road, Reading, which he has taken over as a smallholding of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres. This lies north of the Henley Road and east of the road to Playhatch, and is roughly 100 yards square. Two cottage gardens abut on to the centre of it. It borders on a barley field to the north, has thick bushes along the eastern edge, and across a gravel track to the west are gardens of five more houses. It is divided into three strips. There is a small haystack in the centre piece, a well and some iron sheds. The natural vegetation consists of nettle, dock and thistle, with dandelions and couch grass which are due to be sprayed and cultivated for humus. When Mr. Low took over the land, the weeds were over three feet high and it was "Over-run with vermin." It is now well manured and the weeds sprayed. The middle strip is a rough pig ley and the other two are cultivated for hay and swedes. Mr. Low, along with the keeper, poisoned rats with "Warfarin" last year, and the second author was interested to see how this had affected the various species, especially rats.

Some traps were later moved across the Henley Road and set along the side of Berry Brook, between Marsh Lane and Sonning Old Gravel Pit.