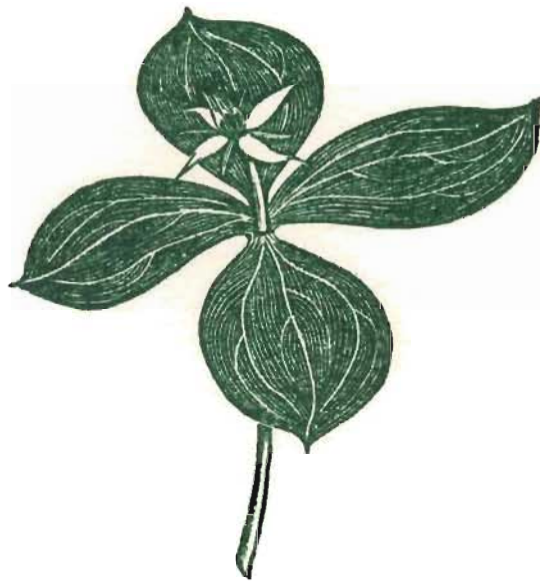


# The Reading Naturalist

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THE READING NATURALIST

No. 32 for the year 1978-79

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## Contents

	Page
Meetings and Excursions, 1978-79	1
Presidential address:	
Let me give you an Illustration	S. Y. Townend 2
The BBONT Habitat Survey	G. C. Bellamy 4
Bird Species related to Habitat	P. R. Cox 7
Winter Walk, 6th January 1979	H. H. Carter 10
Reading's Trees	C. M. C. Olver 11
Moor Copse through the Year	E. M. Trembath 16
Little Brown Ones	A. G. Hamilton 19
Fungi found in Reading area, 1979	A. Brickstock 21
A Fungal Note	J. Andrews 27
Honorary Recorders' Reports:	
Botany	B. M. Newman 28
Vertebrates	H. H. Carter 31
Entomology	B. R. Baker 36
Weather Records	M. Parry 45
Monthly Weather Notes	M. Parry 46
Membership List	47

Meetings and Excursions 1978-79

The Annual General Meeting on 12th October 1978 (attendance 47) was followed by Miss S. Y. Townend's Presidential Address entitled 'Let me give you an Illustration'. Other lectures during the winter were 'Mires of the World, a threatened habitat', by Mr. A. J. P. Gore (41); 'A Biomechanical Approach to Ecology', by Dr. J. Vincent (37); 'The Grey Squirrel - Social Amenity or Forest Pest', by Mr. Alex. Tait (56); 'The Weather is Predictable, but ....', by Mr. R. M. Blackall (22); 'Productivity of the Sea', by Dr. I. Butler (34); and 'Tropical Flowers and their Pollination', by Mr. A. Lack (47). Miss C. Olver, deputising without notice for a snow-bound lecturer, described and showed slides of trees she had seen on holiday abroad (25). Mr. Gordon Langsbury showed and commented on his film 'The Way of the Wader' on 1st March (41), and Members' Evenings of Films, Talks and Exhibits, at which coffee and biscuits were served, were held on 7th December (54) and 15th March (48).

There were winter walks of general interest in the Mapledurham area on 11th November and at Checkendon on 9th December, a Thames-side walk from Reading to Sonning pits for birds on 6th January (3) and a visit to Pangbourne for lichens on 3rd March (12). On 3rd February, a party of 8 went to Pagham to watch birds.

The summer field excursions were to the Mortimer and Silchester area to study mosses, on 14th April (about 30); Aston Upthorpe (BBONT Reserve) with Newbury Field Club, on 28th April (28); Worth Matravers and Durlston Head, Swanage, by coach, for early spider orchids, on 5th May (44); Moor Copse (BBONT Reserve) on the evening of 8th May (15); the Lambourn Valley for fish and riverside flora, on 20th May (14); Theale Gravel pits and Kennet Canal, for waterside flora, birds and bats, on the evening of 23rd May (11); Leygrove's Wood and East Wood, on 2nd June (15); Lough Down and Lardon Chase for chalk flora, on the evening of 12th June (10); Seven Barrows, on 17th June (15); Well Barn Farm on the Berkshire Downs, for moths, on the evening of 22nd June (19); Bramshill Forest to look for woodcock and nightjars, on the evening of 27th June; Frilsham and Crookham areas, with a barbecue, on 30th June (19); Wittenham Clumps, on 14th July (18); the canalside between Kintbury and Benham, for waterside flora, birds and insects, on 21st July (34); King's Mead and New Town, for urban plants, on the evening of 8th August (15); Ashford Hill, for woodland and bog, on 11th August (14); Turville Hill, for cornfield and chalk flora, on 25th August (3), and Hook Common, for marsh gentians, on 8th September (18). Fungus forays were held in Nettlebed Woods on 22nd September (25) and in Wasing Wood on 6th October (24).

Let me give you an Illustration

Abstract of Presidential Address delivered  
to the Reading & District Natural History Society  
on 12th October 1978

by Shirley Y. Townend, B.Sc.,  
School Liaison Officer, Reading Museum & Art Gallery

As with her first presidential address, what follows is a precis of the second address by Miss Townend who chose to talk about another aspect of her work, this time one that came quite outside her job at the Reading Museum and Art Gallery. She gave a survey, really a series of anecdotes with some pictures, of her involvement with biological illustration.

By way of introduction, she contrasted the modern method of using coloured photographs, showing Bramble, Radiolaria and Aurelia as examples, with Durer's painting of 'Grasses' in 1503.

Miss Townend said that while at school she had amused herself by making copies of other people's illustrations, such as a monkey in water colour and pencil drawings of flowers from the only flora her family possessed at the time 'Familiar Wild Flowers' by F. Edward Hulme, which had attractive, useful, coloured plates. Her father was good at printing, drawing plans and doodling, so he gave much encouragement. She then progressed to the use of the Bentham & Hooker flora, though she did not, in fact, ever make copies of the Fitch & Smith or Butcher & Strudwick black and white illustrations.

In the library at University, she came across some fascinating books with coloured plates illustrating ferns which could, practically, be picked off the page. The process used is called 'nature printing' and examples are both rare and valuable.

A longitudinal section of Obelia was representative of the hundreds of drawings any student of Biology had to produce as evidence of course work. By this time she had begun to notice other drawings such as an early woodcut of the Loddon Lily and Edward Lear's flowers like Manypeoplia upsidedownia and Nastycreatia crawluppia. More specialised textbooks came her way, not least the 'Handbook of British Seaweeds' by Lily Newton.

Imagine her astonishment, not to mention trepidation, when she was directed by the Ministry of Labour, to work for Professor Newton as a technician at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. It was wartime. There was much 'make-do and mend and create' which included the production, by Miss Townend, of many wall charts for use by students. There were always odd jobs to be done to help staff with their research like counting Linseed for planting, collecting seaweed, or collecting rabbit droppings to make nice, tasty agar for fungus cultures. One lecturer asked for the drawing of a plate for a casual paper on 'An interesting Variegated Oak in Powis Castle Park'.

Another chance happening occurred the same year. Professor Fritsch wanted a colour plate to accompany his article in the forthcoming edition of Chambers's Encyclopoedia. He was persuaded by Professor Newton to let Miss Townend 'have a go' and a trial run was agreed. With some practical advice and encouragement from one of the lecturers in the Art Department, a pencil sketch, followed by a painting of Ulva lactuca, the Sea Lettuce, was produced. It was acceptable. Six more seaweed paintings followed, on separate pieces of paper which were made into a pre-planned collage.

About this time, Miss Townend discovered Robert Gibbings' attractive woodcuts. Later she found that Reading Museum owned a number of his originals.

Some exercises in pen and ink drawing, through a correspondence course, followed, but lack of application caused Miss Townend to give up trying.

In helping with work on the monograph Professor Newton was preparing with Dr. Orr and Dr. Marshall 'A Study of certain British Seaweeds and their Utilisation in the preparation of Agar', Miss Townend executed a number of the distribution maps and the cover drawings showing range of plant form. In Britain, agar was produced from Gigartina and Chondrus. The work was sponsored by the Vegetable Drugs Committee of the Ministries of Health and Supply.

Following a move to Dale Fort Field Centre came some drawings of seaweeds for a guide to the local Algae.

Peter Ustinov says 'The camera never lies but a photographic memory fades'. Miss Townend could not remember the details of her next enterprise as some items were not used, but 'Seaweed Utilisation' by Lily Newton finally contained several pages of her drawings and a few other minor ones. Another opportunity occurred when the Forestry Commission asked for some illustrations of Welsh flowers. More drawings were done than the two of Welsh Poppies and Double Snowdrops that appeared in their 'Cambrian Forest Guide' and one of those was mis-named 'Daffodils'!

We now came to her opus magnum which started with a request to paint seaweeds, some in colour and some in black and white, for the Collins 'Pocket Guide to the Sea Shore' by John Barrett and C. M. Yonge. While working on these she gradually became able to give up doing preliminary pencil sketches. As she was now working in Reading and rather remote from the sea, kind friends sent specimens. She painted a total of seven coloured and fifteen black and white plates but was not even then 'off the hook' because another artist involved had left for Australia with some colour plates for the worms and slugs undone. Miss Townend, therefore, took on another ten plates, most of which were copied from other illustrations. However, a live Sea Hare did travel by British Rail to be the artist's model. She also did a number of text-figure drawings. The book took about four years to complete. During that time Miss Townend acquired a most useful gadget - a reducing lens which was great for her morale as it disguised the flaws in the paintings and drawings beautifully and gave an indication of how they would appear in print.

There are several plans by Miss Townend in George Boon's book 'Roman Silchester', and she did some drawings for a text book on Invertebrates by Professor A. Graham and Dr. V. Fretter.

As a little light relief, she took on the job of doing some sketches to illustrate the book of poems by Lilian Watts, 'Exile from Eden', which was to be published for National Nature Week, 1966. For this, she returned to her old flower books for Restharrow, Heartease and Feverfew. Also, for the first and only time, she tried a bird or two and did a few freehand sketches. Some of these were used a second time for the 'Guide to Wildlife around Newbury' together with drawings by Robert Gillmor.

The final illustrations shown brought the talk full circle as they were again colour photographs - including one of seaweed!

The original paintings for the Collins 'Pocket Guide to the Sea Shore' and most of the books referred to, were displayed for members to browse over at the end of the meeting.

The BBONT habitat survey. A first step in producing an effective conservation plan

G. C. Bellamy

The Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists' Trust (BBONT) was formed in 1959 and amongst its aims it seeks to own and manage nature reserves for the conservation of wildlife. At present BBONT manages fifty reserves, the area of land that this involves being only 0.11% of the 1.5 million acres of Berks., Bucks. and Oxon. (Horwood 1979).

The Government body concerned with wildlife conservation, the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC), works closely with Naturalists' Trusts providing advisory and financial help. The NCC aims to maintain the national diversity of habitats and species by safeguarding the most important areas of land as National Nature Reserves. Other areas of wildlife importance are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These have little statutory protection from land-use change and agricultural improvement. Voluntary bodies such as Naturalists' Trusts are aiming to purchase SSSI's to ensure their protection.

An up-to-date knowledge of the remaining biological resources of the three counties is considered essential for the NCC to fulfil its statutory responsibilities in the accurate and objective selection of SSSI's and its advisory role. BBONT also needs a knowledge of the location and extent of habitats, communities and species in order to become more objective in the selection of nature reserves. Surprisingly this basic habitat information was largely lacking or

at best out of date. Much information of value on the location of species and habitats is contained in the Floras of the three counties, journals such as the Reading Naturalist, and the notes of local naturalists. Indeed it could have been argued that all sites of interest in an intensively cultivated area like ours with a dense human population would be known by someone and all that was required was to bring this information together. While this was still a very useful method of gathering information, unknown high-grade sites of interest were still to be found by carrying out field work; as shown by NCC surveys of the meadows bordering the River Ray and the Upper Thames in 1978.

Given that new sites of wildlife importance were still to be discovered, how urgent was it to find them? Our area is being subjected to increasing pressure from housing and agricultural land use changes. Out of the 156 SSSI's in the three counties only 40 were not threatened in some way during the last three years (Schofield 1979). The identification and conservation of areas of prime wildlife importance was therefore seen as urgent.

With this background of rapid loss of wildlife habitat and the lack of a comprehensive knowledge of biological resources, BBONT with help from the NCC decided to carry out a survey of semi-natural vegetation remaining in the three counties. With a grant from the Manpower Services Commission, BBONT ran a twelve-month field survey from October 1978. The survey employed up to a maximum of twelve graduates in biology and was carried out in two stages.

Stage 1. Winter, extensive survey. At this stage, all areas with nature-conservation potential were identified by a field by field survey and the area under consideration was reduced by the writing off of large areas of agriculturally improved land of little interest. The survey was carried out using copies of 2½ inch/mile Ordnance Survey maps which show field boundaries and other fine detail allowing the precise location of interesting sites to be recorded. As much of each map as possible was surveyed using cars and aerial photographs from which arable land could be identified and eliminated from further survey. The remaining areas were surveyed on foot.

Owing to the difficulty of site assessment using vegetation in winter, this part of the survey recognised sites of potential wildlife interest at a superficial level recording that a certain habitat type was present. This was necessary because although habitats such as woodland, scrub and wetlands are recognisable as such throughout the year, the grasslands although obvious in the summer are difficult to distinguish from improved grassland in the winter. The grasslands were therefore tentatively identified in winter on the richness of broad-leaved herb species and grasses present, improved pastures being species poor.

Stage 2. Summer, intensive survey. At this stage, the habitats identified at stage 1 were revisited, and a more detailed survey was made to determine the level of interest present. Species lists of plants were collected for each site visited and recommendations made as to which sites were worthy of further in-depth survey before consideration for SSSI status or as nature reserves or other



protected areas.

The winter survey was completed for the whole of the three counties, providing comprehensive information on all major habitat types. In excess of four thousand potential sites of interest were identified. The summer survey, being more detailed, was slower, and 35% of the winter survey sites were looked at again. The area selected for the summer survey included the main river valleys as these included most of the neutral grassland, a habitat that is fast disappearing under modern agricultural practices.

The methods used on a survey such as this are something of a compromise. The ideal survey would record plant abundances from several quadrats within a site, and repeat visits would be made at different times of the year to give a comprehensive coverage of the plant species present. With an attempt to cover so large an area in one season, time was very limiting. Access to sites was also often difficult. The summer visit recorded as much information as possible in the time available, only an hour or so being spent in the larger or more interesting sites. Nevertheless this was the only existing information for many sites and proved to be of sufficient value to enable sites to be ranked for interest so identifying the best sites and enabling recommendations for priorities for further work to be made.

Was the survey successful, and what of the future? Achieving the initial aim of identifying the remaining habitat types throughout the entire three counties is a major event affecting the future of our local wildlife. BBONT, the NCC and each county Biological Records Centre will hold a set of 2½-inch maps showing the results of the habitat survey and a report giving recommendations on site ranking and the need for further work.

The information collected is still being worked on, but already several sites of potential SSSI status have been discovered by the survey. The mass of basic information collected by the winter survey is sufficient for broad nature-conservation evaluations to be made for the entire area, and will be consulted by planning authorities and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in awarding planning permission and grants for the changes in land use that at present can cause the loss of important wildlife habitat.

If used correctly, this information can help to safeguard the remaining areas rich in wildlife in the three counties, both by avoiding site destruction and by producing a conservation plan that will maintain the interest of the important sites through the implementation of management plans.

Much work remains to be done. The remaining winter survey sites need to be looked at during the summer, and for this we are relying on local naturalists. There will still be sites to be discovered. No survey can hope to locate every site. Much help has already been given, particularly by Reading naturalists, more is needed. If you feel you would like to help continue this important work in some way, contact the Conservation Officer, BBONT, 122 Church Way, Iffley, Oxford, who will be pleased to hear from you.

In present times it really is up to the amateur naturalist to safeguard his interest and the wildlife in our area. Financial constraints severely limit the effectiveness of official bodies like the NCC (Schofield 1979), and with rapid changes in land use the need to continue safeguarding our wildlife is urgent.

#### References:

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Horwood, M. T. 1979 | BBONT Bulletin May 1979  |
| Schofield, P. 1979  | 'Wildlife conservation at the crossroads' - Address given at BBONT A.G.M. October 1979 and appearing in November BBONT Bulletin. |

#### A Survey of Bird Species related to Habitat during the Months of January to May 1979

Paula R. Cox

During the early part of 1979, a group of W.E.A. students, led by Mr. Nigel Phillips, decided to look into the fluctuation of bird species in the Reading area. Each week, individual members brought in their check lists of species, assigned to one of four ascribed habitats. The records were correlated, and monthly figures were established and charted to give an overall impression of the months January to May.

Reading is situated within easy reach of a wide range of habitats. For convenience, these were grouped under four headings:- Farmland/Scrub; Aquatic; Woodland, and Garden/Suburban. There is also a small area of acid heathland, characterised by heather and gorse with a climax vegetation reaching a height of about one metre, typical examples being Burghfield Common and Bramshill. These sites were included with the scrub and farmland for the survey.

Areas with vegetation reaching one to three metres were considered as scrub. Some of these occur naturally as neglected sites on the edges of towns and villages. Others arise as a result of management programmes that allow cutting, usually on a two, four or six year cycle. Examples are Aston Rowant, Ridgeway, Ewelme Downs and parts of the Warburg Reserve. These areas are particularly rich in bird life as the canopy is sparse enough to allow good light penetration and a healthy varied herb layer develops. The long grass and rich flora provide nesting cover for many of the warblers. Shrubs, such as hazel, field maple, wayfaring tree, hawthorn and blackthorn, are also present at this stage before their growth is inhibited by lack of light when woodland trees reach a height of more than three metres. This scrub of one to three metres provides

nest sites for finches, pipits, buntings, blackbirds, long-tailed tits, robins, etc. On the heath, nightjar nest in small numbers with chats and wheatear. Wheatear was discovered nesting near a nissen hut at Bramshill during an evening search for nightjar. On the same evening a woodlark was heard singing.

Open arable land offers nesting areas for lapwing, redshank and skylark and provides wintering grounds for large flocks of golden plover. The surrounding hedges offer similar facilities to the scrubland. Both these habitats are sadly at risk as modern farming methods require hedgerow removal, and neglected suburban sites are developed for housing. Also it is a purely temporary stage, in most cases, as woodland climax takes over. In fact, without a concentrated effort of management, this scrubland could vanish altogether, and with it a large number of our familiar, and some rare, countryside birds.

The river and canal are two of Reading's most popular amenities and in summer wildlife has to compete with an increasing number of motor cruisers bringing disturbance and pollution. Riverside development for housing and industry makes the remaining unexploited areas, like Moor Copse, especially valuable. Anglers and holiday-makers by their mere presence preclude nesting by sedge and reed warblers, reed buntings, water rail and other riverside species. Tidying up and concreting of riverbanks makes it impossible for kingfishers and sand martins to excavate burrows.

However, Reading has the 'bonus' of large areas of open water in the flooded gravel pits which are becoming increasingly important as a winter refuge for wildfowl and a stopping-off point for migrants in spring and autumn. Great crested grebes breed, and in their early stages the gravel beds have attracted little ringed plovers. Burghfield, Theale, Dean's Farm and Dorchester pits were visited by members of the group as also were water meadows and riverside at Fawley Court, Shiplake, Goring and Thatcham. Although the pits are subject to surface disturbance from yachting, water skiing and power boats during the summer, in the colder months they are often haunted only by anglers and ornithologists! In fact, last winter many were almost completely frozen over, only a very small area of water being left available for feeding. Large numbers of wildfowl were crowded in, and the harsh conditions meant that many of the shy species could be easily observed.

The flood meadows hold snipe, curlew, widgeon and the ubiquitous Canada goose. This bird is rapidly increasing in number, breeding undeterred by degrees of disturbance that have proved too great for many other species.

The woodland can be roughly divided into two types - deciduous and coniferous. Although mature conifer forests have a very limited appeal for most birds, young plantations attract many species, particularly where open rides and glades let enough light through to encourage undergrowth. Goldcrest, woodcock, hobby, sparrowhawk and long-eared owl all nest, and redpolls and crossbill feed on the seeds from the cones. Beech woods are a feature of the Chilterns, and mixed woods of oak, ash, birch, chestnut, etc. are widespread, oak being particularly valuable on account of the rich insect fauna it

supports. Thanks to enlightened management, some rotten trees and branches remain to offer homes for hole nesters such as tawny owls, tits, woodpeckers, nuthatches and tree creepers. By coppicing in mature woodland, more sites are created to encourage scrub nesters. Windsor Forest, Bix Bottom and Christmas Common are typical areas visited where this has been done.

The garden/suburban habitat was the most easily observed and provided some surprising results. Gardens and parks, even in town centres, offer shelter and nesting sites, and we were delighted to find finches, tits and robins as well as the expected blackbirds and collared doves in the Forbury Gardens at the centre of commercial Reading. The Park Lane School playing field in Tilehurst held up to fifty roosting black-headed gulls until the end of March when they departed for their breeding grounds. Three species of woodpecker and the goldcrest are among birds nesting in Prospect Park and unusual garden visitors included reed bunting, hawfinch, redwing and wintering blackcap. In fact, during the harder winter months more species were found here than in woodland. It appears that some birds, driven partly by harsh conditions, are following the example of the fox and invading suburbia.

Numbers of Species recorded in the different  
Habitat Types in different Months

Month	Farmland/ Scrub	Aquatic	Woodland	Garden/ Suburban	Total Species
Jan	40	38	24	37	96
Feb	31	40	23	30	90
March	24	20	25	23	63
April	32	18	32	23	65
May	46	25	32	27	98

Total number of different species seen = 127

It will be noticed that during the snowy and freezing months of January and February woodland was less popular than the other sites. The gravel pits offered a wealth of opportunity to the hardy bird-watcher. In the shadow of the Power Station at Dean's Farm, we saw flocks of a hundred and fifty wigeon grazing alongside Canada geese, and snipe rose as we passed the four species of gull roosting on the ice. Dorchester pit held goosander, goldeneye, red-breasted

merganser and later Slavonian and red-necked grebe. White-fronted geese were at Theale and short-eared owls quartered the Staines reservoir.

The scrub and farmland offered feeding for large flocks of meadow pipits, skylarks, lapwing, golden plover, yellowhammers, linnets and rooks. The woodland was comparatively quiet as some species moved out to farmland and gardens, and the summer migrants were in warmer climes. The number of species on river and pits reached forty in February, but March saw a halving of the number due to the departure of the wildfowl. Only the breeding population remained, and numbers were down in all areas as many summer visitors did not arrive until early April. In May, the river banks echoed with the songs of sedge and reed warblers, but the water rail became skulking and quiet. The scrublands were filled with warblers and swallows, and swifts and martins wheeled around buildings in town and country. As the flocks of common birds broke up, the numbers in gardens gradually fell as birds moved out to surrounding woodland and scrub, which showed a corresponding increase in species.

In the months surveyed, woodland never supported the variety of species occurring near water and scrub. Obviously some species were seen in more than one habitat, and the total numbers take account of this. The survey was of course limited by the number of observers. and their choice of sites was purely arbitrary. However, it did give a valuable insight into the best places to watch birds at different times of the year, and revealed to some extent the types of habitat that were at risk and that it was worth attempting to conserve.

#### Winter Walk, 6th January 1979

In view of the prevailing weather conditions the intended tour of Burghfield Gravel Pits was abandoned and instead the leader and two others walked the Thames towpath from King's Meadow to Sonning.

##### Birds seen included

Dabchick	(6)	Whooper Swan	(8)
Cormorant	(2)	Water Rail	(1)
Mallard	(c. 200)	Moorhen	(c. 30)
Teal	(4)	Coot	(c. 80)
Wigeon	(not counted)	Greater Black-back	(c. 10)
Tufted Duck	(c. 60)	Lesser Black-back	(c. 50)
Pochard	(c. 15)	Common Gull	(c. 50)
Canada Goose	(c. 40)	Black-headed Gull	(not counted)
Barnacle Goose	(1)	Collared Dove	(5)
Mute Swan	(1)	Kingfisher	(1)

A flock of Blackbirds were seen feeding on fallen apples, but no Redwings and only a single Fieldfare.

H. H. Carter

## Reading's Trees

C. M. C. Olver

There are places in the middle of Reading from which you cannot see a tree. But everywhere is near greenness. From any desk you could find your way to a place so packed with interesting specimens that you could every day eat your sandwiches in an arboretum. And once you have escaped the immediate desert of Broad Street, and Mothercare-to-Marks-&-Spencer's Friar Street, you are in a treed townscape. Clusters and clumps humanise and enrich the town.

There's always something happening. The Kennet alders catkin. The silver maple (Acer saccharinum) behind the International (ex-Mac Markets) flowers in March on the bare twigs. The first spring sun triggers the lombardy poplars round Reading Bridge into producing fat chenille-caterpillar catkins that litter the pavements. One week the entire town is full of minute plane balls covered with a haze of red pistils against snuff new leaves, and then suddenly the Kennet Walk horse-chestnuts have pushed off their sticky scales, unpleated their leaves and exploded in Greek candles. The sequence moves through the cherry and crab-laburnum-may phases to the Forbury limes and the cream sprigs on the Friar Street sweet chestnut. In late summer the catalpa flowers at St. Mary's. Before the last catalpa helmets have fallen, Sargent's cherry is starting to show colour in the Huntley and Palmer's garden. When all the autumn colour is over, there are the Kennet alders again, their winter outline of level branches fuzzed over with fruits, and with tight catkins male and female.

One of the main happenings in recent years has been a municipal planting policy that successfully tucks a tree into every possible patch. The planes by the Yield Hall Lane car park already look permanent, and regularly plane-ball. The blue Atlas cedars in the roundabout will provide foreground for that vista of the Thames valley glimpsed down the length of Friar Street. The new poplars and willows revealed beside the brewery complement the alders. Silver maples flourish. I walk past them as I carry Sainsburys to the Chatham Street car park; and the big silver maple behind the supermarket in Yield Hall Lane is the central Reading tree most commonly queried. Up those steps you are in the tree, and I am constantly observing people relishing the experience. The open space near the Chatham Street car park, furnished by the Rotary Club with pet rocks, seats and young trees, is maturing into a pleasant place to walk through. Norway maples (Acer platanoides) and planes, flourishing as neighbours, demonstrate the similarity of their palmate leaves and the difference of their opposite and alternate buds; while over against them, a robinia and an ailanthus illustrate contrasted forms of pinnateness. One is grey, the other glossy green. Robinia is fine-twigged, brittle, with relatively small leaves. Ailanthus clothes a minimal structure of heavy branches with leaves so big that the rachises become woody to support them, and so persist, bleached sticks, round the tree's base into the winter.

Ailanthus altissima is one of the many plants for which we thank French Jesuit botanists in China. According to Loudon, d'Incarville sent seeds to the Royal Society in 1751. He also sent, to Paris in 1747, the Japanese Pagoda tree (Sophora japonica). Both

joined the new wave of eastern north American introductions - tulip tree, false acacia, swamp cypress - and the two occur regularly in the gardens of spas and eighteenth century suburbs. Both have to be learnt. Ailanthus passes for ash and sophora for robinia. Two good sophoras in the Reading area can be seen, one by Caversham Public Library in Hemdean Road, and the other in Mr. Waldie's arboretum in Upper Redlands Road, now the grounds of Wells Hall. The tree is just by the steps down from the main courtyard. The recognition point is the leaflet, which is rounded in robinia and pointed in sophora. The flowers are cream to robinia's white. The fledgeling ailanthus-viewer grasps first the unsymmetrical leaflet with its gland on the down-side, then the alternateness of the leaves (against ash's oppositeness), then the bark distinctively marked with pale flickering striations, and at last the whole set of the leaves to the tree, stiffly cantilevered from large triangular leaf bases. Ailanthus in Reading's older areas is commonplace. Along the Tilehurst Road (on the north side before Brunswick Hill), in Christchurch Road near the Milk Marketing Board, and in Upper Redlands Road in front of the University Music Department, big specimens flourish. The Christchurch Road tree is male, and when it litters the pavement with green staminate flowers you can test the suggestion in Rehder's Manual of cultivated trees and shrubs, that they 'exhale a disagreeable odour'. Certainly my own unsophisticated reaction was the Bethlehem shepherds' 'whence is this pleasant smell?' Loudon in his discussion of the tree mentions examples at White Knights which were bearing fruit before any others known to him in England. Of the two Whiteknights trees at the corner of Wilderness Road and Pepper Lane recently stripped of their ivy, and freed from their undergrowth, one is demonstratively female. Deep red samaras this year bedecked her. Superficially like ash-keys, they differ in having the seed in the centre of a wing pointed at both ends. They look as if you could tat with them. I have yet to discover the sex of the Pet-rocks gardentree. I hope soon to see it happy enough to flower.

Tree groups contributing more lavishly to the central Reading arboretum can be found in St. Mary's and St. Lawrence's churchyards. Churchyards are always interesting sites for the tree-watcher. As permanent open spaces they retain their trees undisturbed till death; and as places of special honour, they attract the special concern of each generation's parish tree-man. Globe-trotting gentry, amateur gardeners and nurserymen, and above all the educated naturalist clergy, ensure a supply of keen, well-informed tree-people to fill our churchyards with trees. There they plant tulip and judas trees. Young metasequoias jostle old ginkgos. Each generation leaves its arboreal memorial.

Because most of the mature trees we now enjoy are nineteenth century plantings, our Reading churchyards provide good living collections of Victorian funny forms. Weeping deciduous trees contrast with sentinel evergreens in representative groups of churchyard furnishings. The weeping elm in St. Lawrence's churchyard is now reduced to a vigorous sprouting of size 12 leaves coming up round the stump.

The elm in question was not the (formerly) fairly commonly seen bower-forming Camperdown elm. It was Ulmus glabra pendula, which

doesn't really weep, but forms arching flat fans of growth. Both are forms of wych elm. Many members will remember the tree covered for weeks each spring with the big pale green samaras characteristic of the species. Anyone needing to remind himself of the harsh sand-paper roughness of the wych-elm leaf can step off the path for the pleasure of touching the large leaves that are coming up from the stock of the dying tree.

St. Mary's and St. Lawrence's churchyards have a weeping ash each. The main stem of the weeping form writhes like a serpent. A good example is the tree in the garden on Christchurch Road just by the green strip towards Cintra Park. Camperdown elm shows the same kind of knotted twisting; and best of all if you like that kind of thing (and I do) are the main stems of the two examples of Sophora japonica pendula at the old Knap Hill Waterer's nursery, now taken over by Slococks. (They are encouraging visitors to enjoy their historic trees, which include, as well as these two, the biggest willow-leaved oak in the country, a cathedral of weeping beech and a comprehensive collection of swamp cypress variants.)

Reading's most spectacular weeping tree, however, is the weeping beech at Cemetery Junction. I am often asked about it when I go to speak to Reading groups, and it is clearly much loved. On an excursion into the cemetery to look at it more carefully, I discovered within the same viewfinder, in front of the Greek temple, the east iron memorials to Katesgrove Lane iron founders, elegantly finialled and shaped rather like Tortoise stoves without the flanges. They supplied the perfect urn analogue for the willow surrogate of the beech.

St. Lawrence's churchyard by late summer is smutty. The limes are covered with honey-dew and soot. The turkey oak droops. Even in August, however, there is one Victorian garden selection planted there that looks fresh and golden. This is the Thuja orientalis elegantissima planted in front of a tall glossy holly, which sets it off elegantissimally. Normal plants of Thuja orientalis show the tendency towards vertically held branch systems, the exaggeration of which in the golden selection gives it its characteristic flame-shaped branches. There is a good specimen of the type at the edge of the Forbury Garden near the gate opposite the Courts. The pale blue cones have hooked scales (for being extracted from horses' feet). A comparison of the type and the selection is illuminating. The same comparison can be made in Erleigh Road. Two examples of the species stick up over the fence of Reading School near the Craven Road junction, and just up the road by St. Luke's the example of the golden selection provides a pyrotechnic display against a backdrop of purple beech. Fortunately the identification of trees does not preclude an appreciation of them in gardenesque colour plantings.

The tree that provides colour contrast just by being itself, is catalpa. There is a golden form of Catalpa bignonioides, and the tree in the front planting of St. Andrews Hall, at the bottom of Redlands Road, is the golden selection. (The brown-leaved Acer platanoides schwedleri behind it enhances and complements the gold. Not all colour selections of Norway maple are as aggressive in treescape as the purple forms.) But the plain green of the type of C. bignonioides is a green so distinctive as to make the tree



instantly recognisable. The tree in St. Mary's churchyard spreads as a flat foil between the verticals of the churchtower and the gothic horsetrough. The big leaves used to cause Toronto children to call it Elephant's ears. The sparse twig structure associated with exceptionally large leaves supports a series of flat light-catching dishes. View one of these leaf-systems from above, and the leaves can be seen to be arranged in sets of superimposed triangles. Three leaves originate from sets of buds, not opposite as in maple or ash, but initiated in closely-spaced threes. The character runs through the genus. C. bignonioides occurs in the wild in a kidney-shaped blob centred in Alabama. Rehder gives the world distribution of the genus as "ten species in China, the (eastern) United States and the West Indies". This points to an old and varied history. The astonishing hardiness of the plant seems likely to be required for its survival more frequently in China than in Alabama. Reading's other notable catalpa comes from the river valley strips running down the Mississippi and up the Ohio river from their confluence. This is the catalpa in front of the National Benzole garage in the Tilehurst Road, and it is an example of C. speciosa, the Northern (or Western) catalpa. The rounded crown of rather darker green leaves, larger, and with longer points than those of the commoner species, activate the tree-watchers' antennae. The identification is confirmed by flowers individually larger but produced in fewer-flowered panicles, ten days or a fortnight earlier than those of C. bignonioides. The bark is rougher as well, but people who identify by that kind of character know the answer first and are just showing off.

The catalpa in St. Mary's churchyard is a tree widely known and loved, but it is only the front tree of a notable collection. Well selected young trees are being added to the existing giants. The plane and the holm oak formed with the Dispensary and St. Mary's Rooms a piece of townscape as attractive as anywhere in Norwich or York. Young trees following along include a whitebeam, and a tulip tree growing with a vigour and straightness that remind us that in the eastern United States it is an important timber tree. St. Mary's also possesses an old willow-leaved pear, planted long before Sackville-West's white garden at Sissinghurst made this a fashionable tree. And tucked in by the Gun Street peripheral wall, where it passes for a Norway maple, there is an Acer cappadocicum. Superficially it is very like Norway maple, but the leaf-lobes are untoothed, and the flowers come with the leaves instead of well before. Apparently, although its name implies that it comes from a postage-stamp sized province in Asia Minor familiar to us from the map of the missionary journeys of St. Paul, it ranges from the Caucasus through the Hindu Kush and over to China. The tree in high summer has a Lammas shoot, as has oak, but of a translucent ruby red. Excellent autumn colour, in warm yellows and oranges, makes it a maple of exceptional landscape value. Another example, in the grounds of the Royal Berkshire Hospital, faces the motorist turning out of the Acacias car park into Redlands Road; and it is a pleasure to see that A. cappadocicum aureum, the golden selection, is being extensively planted on the Whiteknights site.

Every tree walk, real or imaginary, covers a distance made shorter than intended by the number of points there are to know and notice about each tree. This imaginary tree walk would end as light

faded in St. Mary's churchyard, looking across to St. Giles' vicarage garden and the great hybrid black poplar that dwarfs the Red Cow as you approach the town from Whitley Pump. The conductor would add an outline of the treats in the Forbury Gardens - the Victorian hollies, the Davidia, the oak from Verdun, the variegated Cornus mas, and the mulberry (or mulberries, if you can beat the blackbirds). The potential watcher in the Forbury Gardens could observe also the exciting developments in the grounds of Metal Box. Such rapid growers as balsam poplar are mixed with slower trees such as copper beech and fastigate hornbeam. The instant gardening between them is attractive, and the area promises to be a major addition to Reading's arboretum.

If it is the central Reading trees that we share as a community, the trees we observe daily, and incorporate in our regular natural-history experience, are those we each see on our own personal ant-tracks. The entire Victorian penumbra of Reading and Caversham is rich with mature trees, and we have a wealth of parks and open spaces each of which could occupy an excursion. We are fortunate that so many of the trees of Victorian gardens have survived redevelopment, along the Bath Road or Tilehurst Road; and some of our housing estates give me the impression that the parks department in the 1930s approached an exceptionally good nurseryman and made bulk purchases of slow selling rarities. It cannot be chance that set two specimens of Crataegus orientalis (grey hairy, deeply divided leaves and large coral haws) in Whitley Wood Road; and the presence of examples of several Japanese cherries of varieties other than Kanzan along the Meadway indicates a creative informed planter directing the choice of trees. The pleasures far outweigh the sadnesses of loss and destruction. The best Low's fir in Reading, on Kentwood Hill, has gone. But there are young specimens growing up in a garden on the A4 just past the Sonning roundabout. As long as more people every year start to enjoy trees, there will always be more plantings to enjoy. Trees continue to grow on people.

#### The Fishlock Prize

The Fishlock Prize for 1979 has been awarded jointly to Brian Connell and Richard Gomm for their collection of bones.

Moor Copse through the Year

A Survey compiled from a Warden's Notebook

E. M. Trembath

Moor Copse BBONT Reserve lies in the abandoned valley of the River Kennet. It comprises three blocks of old woodland known as Moor Copse, Park Wood and Hogmoor and a stretch of the River Pang. The Pang, which was a tributary of the Kennet, now drains this part of the valley, flowing through the reserve from south to north on its way to the Thames. The trees of the three woodland blocks grow in the peat and gravel of this old valley. Overall, there are habitats for aquatic and river-bank plants, plants of deep shade, of woodland ride and glade and the sunny borders, with all the creatures dependent on them.

The visitor has access leading down to the river at the southern end. A slow walk along the path, repeated at different seasons, will provide him with much interest from a large variety of plants and their associated creatures. The deep meanders give good viewpoints along the water which is helpful as the banks are fairly steep and the herbage tall.

The water plants vary year by year according to the depth of the water and the rate of flow. This year (1979), the heavy rains caused so much silting that it was not until the end of June that the water cleared, and the flow was then still considerably above normal. The bed-rooted plants River Water-Dropwort (Oenanthe fluviatilis), relished by Moorhens, Narrow-leaved Water-Parsnip (Berula erecta), Unbranched Bur-reed (Sparganium emersum) and Water Crowfoot (Ranunculus pseudofluitans) showed fair growth of submerged leaves, but only the last-named had made aerial flower spikes by mid-July, and that only where flow was slowed by obstruction. In previous years these true water plants, with Water-Cress (Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum) and Water Speedwell (Veronica anagallis-aquatica) bedded on the deposited silt, have provided nesting sites for Little Grebe and Tufted Duck, but this year with no surface weed these two water birds did not stay to breed when they visited in April.

There is always abundant growth of the Pond-Sedges (Carex riparia and C. acutiformis) and Yellow Flag (Iris pseudacorus) and some Reed Mace (Typha latifolia), all of which give ample cover to the breeding Moorhen. Swans can usually be seen with their cygnets, and the Mallard brings her ducklings to the water from the wood where she nests.

In Spring, the sides of the banks are decked with Kingcups (Caltha palustris), Large Bitter-cress (Cardamine amara) and Lady's Smock (C. pratensis) and the tops with Hedge Garlic (Alliaria petiolata) - all these crucifers being an invitation to the charming Orange Tip butterfly and other whites. Later, Water Forgetmenot (Myosotis scorpioides) adds its colour.

As these early plants go over, the banks are covered with familiar riverside herbs. Comfrey (Symphytum officinale), Hemp Agrimony (Eupatorium cannabinum) and Hairy Willowherb (Epilobium hirsutum) are

the most abundant, with Meadowsweet (Filipendula ulmaria), Purple Loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria) and Orange Balsam (Impatiens capensis) occurring often and Yellow Loosestrife (Lysimachia vulgaris) occasionally adding its loose panicles of bright flowers. Several of our handsome umbellifers tower over the already crowded bank. These are Hemlock Water Dropwort (Oenanthe crocata), Wild Hemlock (Conium maculatum), Wild Angelica (Angelica sylvestris) and Hogweed (Heracleum sphondylium). Add abundant stinging nettles and the scene is set for a fair population of butterflies, moths, bees and many other insects. The bumble bees work the Comfrey all through its long flowering season, and this plant also ensures that in July the brilliant Scarlet Tiger moth will delight the visitor. This year was an especially good one for this moth. Some of the seventeen butterflies I recorded here this summer, like Meadow Brown and Ringlet, were attracted to the flowers from the open sunny meadow on the far side along this stretch.

It is certainly not "standing room only" for herbs on the bank. There are many sprawlers and stragglers using the self-standing plants. Hop (Humulus lupulus) and White Bryony (Bryonia dioica) are both attractive in fruit; Large Bindweed (Calystegia sepium) is too heavy to be supported here and as its specific name implies it should be in the hedges. Another plant which not only embraces but smothers is Goosegrass (Galium aparine). The few geese I have seen here have not even noticed it! They stay in the water. The dried fruit is reputed to make good coffee. We do not normally allow collecting in the reserves but a permit could be arranged for anyone keen to try it!

You might be wondering how the visitor manages to get through! There is a grassy path which is kept open by cutting back the invading nettles. Here the less robust Water Stitchwort (Myosoton aquaticum) and Tufted Vetch (Vicia cracca) find the sunlight. The path also provides basking room for the grass snakes. Early in the season it is possible for the wary visitor to get close and watch until the snake becomes aware and flicks out its cleft tongue gathering in the strange scent particles. Then it slowly uncoils and gracefully slides away. I have located the favourite basking sites - on old tree stumps by the path and other such places and I tread quietly. I rarely leave the reserve without having seen one or two. They can also be seen, with luck, swimming downstream between the weeds or crossing from one bank to another, doubtless in search of a meal.

The attractive Greater Tussock Sedge (Carex paniculata) is worth looking for near the edge of the bank. The grasses include Giant Fescue (Festuca gigantea) and False Brome (Brachypodium sylvaticum) in shady parts, clumps of tufted hair grass (Deschampsia caespitosa) at intervals and large stands of the Reed-grass (Phalaris arundinacea) on which I have seen the Drinker Moth larvae feeding.

The path eventually leads to the bridge where the visitor can leave the rest of the river path for another time and wander into Park Wood. It brings a change of mood whatever time of the year it is visited. I always regard the moment of entering a wood as special. It is an intrusion on the life there, especially in early morning or late evening, so caution often rewards the intruder with a glimpse into the private life of the wood dwellers.

These woods are relics of the centuries-old management of 'coppice and standards' when a plentiful supply of different kinds of wood was essential for fuel and for farm equipment, fences, tools and buildings. The relaxation of that policy accounts for the overgrown poles of coppiced alder, ash, willow and poplar which are seen throughout the woods. Hazel has been more recently coppiced but still needs attention to preserve the character of the old wood and the dependent ground flora. Each wood has its own features. Park Wood needs many visits at different seasons. The plants are well established and their choice of habitat is clear to see.

The contours can be mentally drawn by observing the limit of the spread of bluebells, which leave the very low lying areas to Yellow Flag and Enchanter's Nightshade (Circea lutetiana). A wide open area which suggests a gravel island thrown up by the old braided river has been chosen by bracken which prefers to be higher above the water table. As I walk along the ride which borders this I look up to the underside of the bracken and notice how heavily galled it is this year. On the other side of the ride the ground is so low-lying that the water was standing at the end of June. This dell provides a place for a large stand of Valerian (Valeriana officinalis) a strange plant that seems to be happy not only in such damp places but also on dry chalk slopes. Here under the trees it grows tall and the tiny white flowers clustered in umbellifer fashion almost glow in the dim light. Surprisingly the calyx extends in fruit into a pappus-like growth. It has earned its specific name because it has long been cultivated by herbalists for the roots which have sedative properties.

The pH of the soil can be judged by the limits of growth of Dog's Mercury (Mercurialis perennis) and the occurrence of Solomon's Seal (Polygonatum multiflorum) which like basic soil. The water in the reserve is calcareous so acid-loving plants are not common. There is a spread of Wood Sorrel (Oxalis acetosella) in one area only, and Foxgloves (Digitalis purpurea) grow up here and there, notably where a tree has fallen and let in some more light. A small colony of the dainty Lady-Fern (Athyrium filixfemina) shares the shade with Creeping Softgrass (Holcus mollis) instead of Dog's Mercury.

Most of the flowering plants are shade-loving, of course, and make their growth early, but a few choose the rides to give them better light or more elbow room - violets, primroses and Bugle (Ajuga reptans) which succeeds the bluebells with its lovely upstanding flower spikes and sends its long runners across the rides to join the Ground Ivy (Glechoma hederacea). So the plants over a long space of time have sorted themselves out in these old woods according to their physical or chemical needs. There is one exception and that is the bramble which is no respecter of its neighbours (or of the visitor), for if given the chance it sends its sprawling prickly stems to root into the open rides.

We all know well the bluebell woods in this country, but it is still a refreshing experience to step into Park Wood in mid-May. As one visitor said to me, "It is breath-taking. I could smell the bluebells from the bridge. I just stood and gazed." Here their beauty is enhanced by the yellow-green of the Wood Spurge (Euphorbia

amygdaloides) and the brilliant green rides fringed with Stitchwort (Stellaria holostea).

In July the oaks are festooned with Honeysuckle (Lonicera periclymenum) which fills the air with scent. Its leaves nurture the larvae of the lovely White Admiral butterfly which is on the wing in July, and the berries feed the finches and tits in autumn.

Each wood has a special feature. Moor Copse (further on across a five-acre pasture) gives us Wood Anemones under the hazel coppice and Early Purple Orchids (Orchis mascula) which do very well in wet areas where there is no competition. My note book reminds me that these woodlands where the canopy is not too dense and there are so many woodland edges provide a very good habitat for breeding birds. This year I recorded twenty-nine species, both residents and summer visitors, including nightingale and blackcap. Now as I come to my last pages of notes for mid-September I remark on the silence - only the robin sings and the jay scolds. From the bridge I notice how low the water is in the river and how much weed there is. There are still butterflies but not so many, as the flowers are going over. There will be other attractions in the winter season, such as animal tracks in the mud and snow. I might again see the roedeer that left its slots in almost every ride last year. I hope more of our Trust members will visit the reserve and get to know it. I would like to thank Brian Baker who gives up so much time to cutting rides. His pleasure in the reserve must be diminished because of the noise of the cutter which always accompanies this activity. My thanks too to the other wardens who share the duties of looking after our interests and reporting back. We remember also the previous owner, Mr. Trevers, who worked so hard at coppicing, clearing and general maintenance. We miss him now that it is all in our hands, so generously handed over for us to keep for wildlife.

### Little brown Ones

A. G. Hamilton

"This fungus business is just like bird-watching" said an ornithologist friend of mine who was having a try at fungi for the first time. "The big coloured ones are easy, it's the little brown ones that make it difficult." She was quite right, of course. A glance through my fungus notebooks for the past few years shows the same pattern for each foray. The list of species found starts off in a pleasantly scientific fashion with things like Amanita rubescens, Coprinus comatus, Hypholoma fasciculare, or even Oudemansiella radicata (and what could be more scientific than that?). Then it degenerates somewhat, usually halfway through the Russula, with a welter of " ? sp.", " sp. ? - reddish cap" and the like, and there is always a pathetic last line - "plus several little brown ones", or even once "plus one medium brown one".

What are these little brown ones that cause so much trouble? First of all there are those where we can identify the genus but

find ourselves at a complete loss with the species. This is particularly likely with genera such as Cortinarius, or Inocybe, or Hebeloma. Amateurs always tend to assume that the professionals can identify everything on sight, and it came as a great revelation to me to discover that the experts cannot always distinguish one Cortinarius from another in the field. However, there is a motley collection of species that even an amateur should be able to identify without recourse to microscopes and the like, but which season after season I find confusing. Surely I'm not the only person who has trouble with Psathyrella gracilis, or Stropharia semiglobata, or Conocybe tenera or any of that dreadful genus Galerina? It's not really that they are all that alike - it's simply that I cannot remember which is which, or how to distinguish one from the other. Any of these would have been better named the Tawny Deceiver than that much maligned fungus Laccaria laccata. Admittedly poor old L. laccata is somewhat variable in appearance, but one can usually identify it for what it is, unlike that nasty Nolanea cetrata or some of those tricky species of Tricholoma.

Totally failing to identify the little brown ones in the field, I take them home and start going through the books. Begin with the key - the spores must be brown, but are they rusty brown or cigar brown? Perhaps they are clay brown. In one of my books is the pencilled note "fungus clay is greyish" - a remark handed out by someone on a foray at some time. Dr. Hora's book describes five shades of brown. The new book by Kibby is worse - eight shades. Oh well, plough on through the most likely key. "On wood?", "on soil?". By this time I've forgotten where it was growing. Make a guess and go on. "Cap viscid?", "cap dry?" - either it's been pouring with rain for weeks and everything is viscid, or we are having a drought and all the specimens are totally dry. At this stage I abandon the key and start looking at the pictures - that timehonoured last resort for identifying almost anything, flora or fauna. The books are full of pictures of little brown fungi, but here's one just like my specimen. Start reading the description. All is well until the last line "not yet found in Britain". Well, either I've got the first British specimen or it's something else. I must assume the latter, so go on to another book. Another likely picture is soon forthcoming, and again the description goes well until "only found under conifers", when I know that I haven't seen a conifer all afternoon.

This goes on until I've exhausted all the books, by which time the specimen is too tatty to be identified by anybody, having been nibbled and sniffed and had its cuticle peeled and its gills broken. I abandon it and go on to another one, and the same thing happens. By the end of the day I've either got a basket of fungi hitherto completely unknown in this country, or else I've failed to identify them all yet again. Sadly they go down in the record book as "plus several little brown ones".

Fungi found in Reading area, 1979

A. Brickstock

A much more varied collection (227 species and varieties) than last year (134). Particularly noteworthy are the unusual collection of Cortinarius from Sulham and the rare Rhodotus palmatus from Purley.

The names of the Agarics agree with the British Mycological Society's New Check List of British Agarics and Boleti (1960). The nomenclature of other groups is that used by the Biological Records Centre.

I. AGARICALES

LOCATIONS  
(see key)

Agaricus campestris	1 2	8	A	
" langei			A	
" silvaticus			A	
silvicola		6		
Agrocybe cylindracea	2			
Amanita citrina		4 6 7		
" " var alba		5 6 7		
" excelsa		5		
" fulva		4 5	A	C
" muscaria	1	3 4 6 7	A	
" phalloides		4		
" rubescens		4 7		
Armillaria mellea	1	3 4 6 7	A	C
Bolbitius vitellinus	1	3	A	C
Boletus badius		5 7	A B C	
" Chrysenteron	1	7	A	C D
" edulis		5 7	A	
" piperatus			A	
" pulverulentus			A	
" reticulatus		7		
" subtomentosus	1		A	
Cantharellus cibarius		7		
Clitocybe clavipes	1 2	7	A	
" dicolor		7	A	
" flaccida	1	4 7	A	B
" fragrans			A	
" hydrogramma	1			
" infundibuliformis	1	6 7		
" langei		6		
" nebularis	1	6 7		C
" odora	1	7		
" rivulosa			A	
" vibecina	1	6 7	A B	



Collybia	butyracea				6	7		9	A	C
"	cirrhatta					7	8			
"	confluens			4						
"	dryophila	1	2							C
"	erythropus	1		3		6	8		A	B
"	fusipes			3						B
"	maculata			4		7			A	B C
"	peronata	1		3	4	6	7		A	
Coprinus	atramentarius					7			A	
"	comatus					7			A	
"	disseminatus			2						
"	lagopus					7				
"	micaceus	1	2	3			8	9	A	D
"	plicatilis	1	2	3						E
Cortinarius	amarens					6				
"	amoenolens					6				
"	anomalus						7			
"	brunneus						7			
"	castaneus						7			
"	calochrous					6				
"	cedretorum					6				
"	decepiens								A	
"	elatio						7			
"	hemitrichus								A	
"	infractus						7			
"	melliolens					6				
"	multiformis					6				
"	saturninus								A	
"	semisanguineus						7		A	B
"	sodagnitus					6				
Crepidotus	mollis					6				
"	variabilis	1					7	9	A	
Cystoderma	amianthinum						7			
Flammulina	velutipes	1				6				
Galerina	hypnorum						7		A	
"	mutabilis					4				
Gomphidius	roseus						7		A	
Gymnopilus	junonius			3			7		A	
"	penetrans						7		A	B C
Hebeloma	crustuliniforme					6	7		A	
"	longicaudum						7			
"	mesophaeum						7		A	D E
"	sinapizans					6	7		A	
Hohenbuehelia	geogenia					6				
Hygrophoropsis	aurantiaca					5	6	7	A	B

Hygrophorus chrysaspis				6			
" coccineus	2						D
" conicus					A		
" eburneus			4	6	A		
" hypothejus	1	3			A		
" niveus	1				A		
" pratensis	1						
" psittacinus	1				A		
" vitellinus		2					
Hypholoma fasciculare	1		4	6 7	A B C		
" sublateralitium				7			
Inocybe geophylla				5	A		
" " var lilacina						C	
Laccaria amethystea	1			5 7	A		
" laccata	1	3 4		7	A		D
" proxima				5 6 7	A		
Lacrymaria velutina	1	3			A		
Lactarius blennius				4 5 6 7	A		
" camphoratus	1	3					
" chrysorheus				5 7	A		
" deliciosus					A		
" glyciosmus				7			
" helvus	1				A		
" hepaticus				7			
" quietus	1			7	A		
" rufus				7			
" subdulcis	1		4 5		A		C
" tabidus				7	A		
" torminosus				7	A		
" turpis				5 7	A		
" vellereus				7			
Leccinum aurantiacum				7			
" scabrum				4 7	A		
" testaceoscabrum				7	A		
Lepiota clypeolaria				6 7			
" mastoidea	1						
" procera	1		4				
" rhacodes	1				A		C
" sistrata					A		
Lepista nuda	1			7	A		
" saeva				7 8			D
" sordida				6			
Leucopaxillus giganteus		3		6 7			
Lyophyllum decastes		3					
" loricatum				7			
Marasmius androsaceus		3 4		7 8			

Marasmius oreadee	1						A	
" ramealis	1	4						
" scorodonius	1		5	6				
Melanoleuca grammopodia	1							
" melaleuca	1	3					A	
Mycena alcalina							A	
" epipterygia					7			
" fibula	1						A	D E
" flavo-alba							A	D
" galericulata	1		6	7	8		A	
" galopus	1		6	7		9	A B C	
" inclinata	1			7				
" leucogala							A	
" polygramma			6					
" pura			6	7				
" vitilis			6				B	
" vulgaris				7			A	E
Nolanea cetrata					7			
" sericea						9	A	
Oudemansiella radicata	1	3				9		
Panaeolus rickenii	1						A	
Panellus mitis							A	
Paxillus involutus	1		4	5	6	7	A B C	
Pholiota gummosa						7		
" squarrosa		2						
Pluteus cervinus	1	2	3		5	6	7	
Psathyrella conopilea	1				6		A	
" gracilis		2					A	
" hydrophila						7		
" multipedata					6			
" spadiceogrisea	1							
Rhodotus palmatus						8		
Russula aeruginea							A	
" atropurpurea					5	7		
" badia			3					
" cyanoxantha	1		4			7	A	
" densifolia			4					
" emetica		3		5		7	A B	
" fellea			4					
" fragilis						7	A	
" grisea							A	
" laurocerasi			4					
" lepida			4		6			
" mairei						7	A	C
" nigricans			4	5				

Russula ochroleuca		4 5 7	A	C
" parazurea		5		
" puellaris			A	
" vesca			A	
" violeipes		5		
" xerampelina		4		
Strobilomyces floccopus		4		
Stropharia aeruginosa	1	7	A	E
Suillus bovinus		7	A	
" elegans		4 5	A	
" luteus		7	A	
Tricholoma argyraceum			A	
" gambosum	1		A	
" sulphureum		7		
Tubaria furfuracea	1 2		9 A	D

## II APHYLLOPHORALES

Clavulina cristata		7	A	C D
Clavulinopsis Melvola	1			
Coriolus versicolor		5 6 7		
Daedalea confragosa		4		
" quercina		5		
Fistulina hepatica		3		
Ganoderma applanatum		3 4	7 9	
Gloeoporus adustus		3	9	
Grifola gigantea		4		
Heterobasidium annosus		7		
Hydnum imbricatum			A	
Laetiporus sulphureus		5		
Phaeolus schweinitzii		7		
Piptoporus betulinus		7	A B	
Polyporus squamosus	2	8		D
Sparassia crispa		7		
Stereum hirsutum		7		
" purpureum			9	

Thelephora terrestris

7

Trametes abietina

7

" gibbosa

9

" rubescens

3

Ungulina marginata

1

3

8

9

### III GASTEROMYCETALES

Lycoperdon caelatum

A

" depressum

A

" ericetorum

1

6

A

" molle

A

" perlatum

3

5

7

" pyriforme

1

2

6

7

A

Phallus impudicus

4

5

C

Scleroderma aurantium

6

7

A

B

D

### IV HETEROBASIDIOMYCETES

Calocera viscosa

1

2

4

7

A

B

C

D

Exidia albida

2

D

Pseudohydnum gelatinosum

B

### V ASCOMYCETES

Cordyceps capitata

7

Geoglossum fallax

D

Helotium citrinum

7

Leotia lubrica

D

Nectria cinnabarina

A

Peziza aurantia

A

Rhizina undulata

7

Xylaria hypoxylon

4

6

7

A

C

" polymorpha

6

Key to Locations

1. Field/Woodland (Churchend Copse) between top of New Lane Hill and Calcot Golf Course (SU 673727) (Oak, Beech, Birch).
2. Prospect Park.
3. Whiteknights Park (Lake-side).
4. Nettlebed Woods.
5. Mortimer Woods (Mixed) (650657).
6. Sulham Woods (Mainly Beech) (645746).
7. Wasing Woods (Mixed) (575635).
8. Purley (riverside).
9. A garden in Westwood Road.
- A. Restricted site.
- B. Ufton Nervet Woods (Mixed) (633658).
- C. Woodcote Woods (Mixed) (645805).
- D. Garden, Cockney Hill.
- E. Burghfield Gravel Pits.

A Fungal Note

An interesting find on the Fungus Foray in Nettlebed Woods (22.9.79) was a specimen of Lyophyllum fumatofoetens. It is one of a small group of rather uncommon species, formerly placed in Tricholoma, in which the flesh and gills turn blackish when bruised. The fungus was identified by Dr. F. B. Hora.

An uncommon species found locally this year by Dr. P. Andrews was Rozites caperatus. It occurred on a road-side verge at Farley Hill in November.

Joyce Andrews

The Recorder's Report for Botany

1978-79

B. M. Newman

Very few members sent records this year. Those sent in by the following regular contributors are gratefully acknowledged:- Dr. J. Andrews (JA); Dr. H. J. M. Bowen (HJMB); Mr. H. Carter (HC); Miss L. E. Cobb (LEC) and Mrs. E. M. Trembath (EMT).

The nomenclature and order are according to the "Flora of the British Isles" by Clapham, Tutin and Warburg (1962). An alien taxon is indicated by an asterisk (\*). The English names are from "English Names of Wild Flowers", the recommended list of the Botanical Society of the British Isles.

Polystichum setiferum (Forsk.) Woynar  
Conduit Copse and Great Wood. (HJMB)

Soft Shield-fern

Myosurus minimus L.

Mousetail

Reappeared in disturbed soil, Whiteknights Park.

Between Theale and Beenham. R. J. Ford-Williams. (HJMB)

\*Mahonia aquifolium (Pursh) Nutt.

Oregon-grape

Boxwood. NHS walk 30th June. (HJMB)

Brassica nigra (L.) Koch

Black Mustard

Boxwood. NHS walk 30th June. (HJMB)

Rorippa microphylla (Boenn.) Hyland.

Stanford Wood, Bradfield. (HJMB)

Rorippa sylvestris (L.) Besser

Creeping Yellow-cress

River Pang, Tidmarsh. (EMT)

\*Hesperis matronalis L.

Dame's violet

Crookham Common. (HJMB)

Descurainia sophia (L.) Webb ex Prantl

Flixweed

Roadside near Tubney Manor, N. Berks. (HJMB)

Viola odorata L.

Sweet Violet

Reades Lane (Sonning Common) and Coppid Hall (Binfield Heath)

24th April (HC)

Hypericum humifusum L.

Trailing St John's-wort

Crookham Common. (HJMB)

Spergula arvensis L.

Corn Spurrey

Borocourt (Peppard) 15th July. (HC)

Spergularia rubra (L.) J. & C. Presl

Sand Spurrey

Crookham Common. (HJMB)

\*Montia perfoliata (Willd.) Howell

Springbeauty

Persisting in Northcourt Avenue and Elmhurst Road; now also in Warwick Road, Reading. (LEC)

Genista tinctoria L.

Dyer's Greenweed

Ashford Hill, 11th August. NHS walk. (JA)

<u>Ononis spinosa</u> L.	Spiny Restharrow
Meadow near Dorchester. (EMT)	
<u>Medicago arabica</u> (L.) Huds.	Spotted Medick
Playing fields behind Christchurch Road, Reading. (LEC)	
<u>Trifolium micranthum</u> Viv.	Slender Trefoil
Conduit Copse and Great Wood. (HJMB)	
<u>Trifolium striatum</u> L.	Knotted Clover
Conduit Copse and Great Wood. (H JMB)	
<u>Onobrychis viciifolia</u> Scop.	Sainfoin
Boxwood, 30th June. NHS walk. (H JMB)	
<u>*Potentilla recta</u> L.	Sulphur Cinquefoil
Several plants in flower at Abbey Football Ground, Chalkhouse Green, 16th July. (HC)	
<u>*Potentilla norvegica</u> L.	Ternate-leaved Cinquefoil
Waste ground near Sutton's old nurseries, Reading. (HJMB)	
<u>Agrimonia odorata</u> (Gouan) Mill.	
Conduit Copse and Great Wood. (HJMB)	
<u>Aphanes microcarpa</u> (Boiss. & Reut.) Rothm.	Slender Parsley-piert
Conduit Copse and Great Wood. (HJMB)	
<u>*Prunus cerasifera</u> Ehrh.	Cherry Plum
Fruited prolifically in a garden hedge near the "Bird in Hand", Sonning Common. (HC)	
<u>Sorbus torminalis</u> (L.) Crantz	Wild Service-tree
Lodge of Manor House Park, Binfield. (HJMB)	
<u>Saxifraga granulata</u> L.	Meadow Saxifrage
Conduit Copse and Great Wood. (HJMB)	
<u>Viscum album</u> L.	Mistletoe
On poplar, near Bray Wick. (HJMB)	
<u>Silaum silaus</u> (L.) Schinz & Thell.	Pepper-saxifrage
Bartley Heath, Hook. (LEC)	
<u>Polygonum rurivagum</u> Jord. ex Bor.	
Waste ground near Sutton's old nurseries, Reading. (HJMB)	
<u>Salix purpurea</u> L.	Purple Willow
Conduit Copse and Great Wood. (HJMB)	
<u>Vaccinium myrtillus</u> L.	Bilberry
Conduit Copse and Great Wood. (HJMB)	
<u>*Lysimachia punctata</u> L.	Dotted Loosestrife
Kiln Road, Emmer Green, July 1979; Goldfish Pond, near Kate's Cottage, Gallowstree Common, 1978-79. (HC)	
<u>Anagallis tenella</u> (L.) L.	Bog Pimpernel
Ashford Hill, 11th August. NHS walk. (JA)	
<u>*Trachystemon orientalis</u> (L.) G. Don	Abraham-Isaac-Jacob
Edge of rough woodland, Pangbourne. (EMT)	
<u>Myosotis caespitosa</u> K. F. Schultz	Tufted Forget-me-not
Conduit Copse and Great Wood. (HJMB)	
<u>Kickxia elatine</u> (L.) Dum.	Sharp-leaved Fluellen
Boxwood. 30th June NHS walk. (HJMB)	



- Kickxia spuria (L.) Dum. Round-leaved Fluellen  
Lollington Hill. (HJMB)
- Veronica scutellata L. Marsh Speedwell  
Ashford Hill. 11th August, NHS walk. (JA)
- Odontites verna (Bell.) Dum. Red Bartsia  
On grass verge at top of Whitley St., Reading. (LEC)
- \*Lathraea clandestina L. Purple Toothwort  
Flourishing in Prospect Park in 1979, and seen growing on Willow tree roots around the pond every year since 1967 by Mrs. Joyce Emerson. It was recorded from this site in 1959 (see Reading Naturalist No. 12, p. 11). (LEC)
- Acinos arvensis (Lam.) Dandy Basil Thyme  
Lollington Hill. (HJMB)
- Betonica officinalis L. Betony  
Ashford Hill, 11th August. NHS walk. (JA)
- Scutellaria minor Huds Lesser Skullcap  
Bartley Heath, Hook. (LEC)
- Campanula rotundifolia L. Harebell  
Borocourt, 15th July 1979, a very robust plant. On Peppard Common as usual, and a few in Crowsley Park still flowering on 14th October 1979. (HC)
- Cirsium eriophorum (L.) Scop. Woolly Thistle  
Ditch and bank of Iron Age Fort, Dorchester. NHS walk. (EMT)
- Onopordum acanthium L. Cotton Thistle  
On disturbed verge at Tidmarsh. (EMT)  
Waste ground near Sutton's old nurseries, Reading. (HJMB)
- Ornithogalum umbellatum L. Star-of-Bethlehem  
Reported from Arthur Newbery Park by Mrs. Copeland. (HC)
- \*Allium paradoxum (Bieb.) G. Don Few-flowered Leek  
Several clumps in flower on 24th July 1979 at the turning from Blounts Court Road to Fries Farm, Sonning Common. Another observer confirmed that he had never seen the plant here in previous years. (HC)
- \*Juncus tenuis Willd. Slender Rush  
Along paths near Heath Pool, 17th November. (HJMB)
- Juncus bulbosus L. Bulbous Rush  
In Heath Pool, Finchampstead Ridges, 17th November NHS walk. (HJMB)
- Narcissus pseudonarcissus L. Wild Daffodil  
On 11th April 1979 over three hundred plants seen in flower in the Chiltern Beech wood from which we last recorded the species in 1954 (see Reading Naturalist No. 7, p. 10). (LEC)
- Cephalanthera damasonium (Mill.) Druce White Helleborine  
Long Barrow, Seven Barrows, Lambourn. (EMT)
- Epipactis helleborine (L.) Crantz Broad-leaved Helleborine  
Clay Hill, Burghfield, three spikes at the roadside reported in July 1979. SYT and HC found ten spikes still in bud there on 19th July. "There were eight spikes at the Kipping Hill end of Wyfold Copse in August still in bud and two spikes in another part of Wyfold Copse where I found them last year, but these are heavily shaded and never do well." (HC)

<u>Platanthera chlorantha</u> (Cust.) Rchb. Little Wittenham Wood. (EMT)	Greater Butterfly-orchid
<u>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</u> (Druce) Vermeul Little Wittenham Wood. (EMT)	Common Spotted-orchid
<u>Scirpus sylvaticus</u> L. Conduit Copse and Great Wood. (HJMB)	Wood Club-rush
<u>Eleogiton fluitans</u> (L.) Link Heath Pool, Finchampstead Ridges, 17th November. NHS walk. (HJMB)	Floating Club-rush
<u>Glyceria plicata</u> Fr. Conduit Copse and Great Wood. (HJMB)	Plicate Sweet-grass
<u>Helictotrichon pratense</u> (L.) Pilger Lollingdon Hill. (HJMB)	Meadow Oat-grass
* <u>Phalaris canariensis</u> L. Froxfield, July 1979. (BBONT Survey) (HC)	Canary-grass

### The Recorder's Report for Vertebrates, 1978-1979

H. H. Carter

#### FISH

Esox lucius L. Pike

A young fish at the mouth of the Sul brook, 16/4/79 (P.G.).

Barbus barbus (L.) Barbel

A record from Longworth fills in a gap in the distribution of this species as known to the Society.

Gobio gobio (L.) Gudgeon

Recorded from Theale and Shiplake.

Tinca tinca (L.) Tench

Recorded from gravel pits at Wallingford and Dean's Farm.

Phoxinus phoxinus (L.) Minnow

A record from the Thames below Radcot extends the known distribution of this species nearly to the Gloucestershire border.

Leuciscus cephalus (L.) Chub

Recorded from the Thames at Pinkhill Farm near Farmoor and at Little Stoke near Goring, and from the Kennet near Padworth and Theale.

Leuciscus leuciscus (L.) Dace

Recorded from the Kennet near Theale.

Leuciscus rutilus (L.) Roach

Records from the Thames at Longworth, Bablock Hythe and Wallingford, the Kennet at Theale and the Loddon at Stratfield Saye make our knowledge of the distribution of this fish nearly complete.

Abramis brama (L.) Bream

Recorded from the Thames at Radcot and Bablock Hythe and from gravel

pits at Benson and Theale. Future years will show whether the distribution of this fish is genuinely discontinuous, as it appears at present.

Alburnus lucidus (L.) Bleak

Recorded from Eynsham and from Amey's Pit at Theale.

AMPHIBIANS

Rana temporaria L. Frog

As the following records show, the spawning period for this species was even later and more condensed than in 1978. Ten pairs were reported from a garden pond in Emmer Green, 10/4/79 (Mr. Burchell). The Recorder visited the site on 12/4/79 and found three pairs in amplexus and four clumps of spawn. A migrating female was killed in Beech Lane, 8/4/79, adults and spawn were found in Leighton Park, 11/4/79, and tadpoles on 9/6/79, and spawn was seen in the lake at Whiteknights on 15/4/79 (all B.T.P.). Spawn was hatching in the Horse Pond, Gallowstree Common, on 15/4/79. Spawn hatched in a garden pond in Grove Road, Sonning Common, but the tadpoles had been eaten by goldfish by 19/4/79 (Maria Arthur per M.J.C.). An adult and a half-grown (probably second year) frog were in B.T.P.'s garden in Ramsbury Drive during the summer.

Bufo bufo (L.) Toad

Two croaking in Widmore Pond, Sonning Common, 14/4/79. Breeding in the Oval Pond near Padworth, 4/5/79, and at Bearwood, 9/5/79, single adults dead on roads at Ramsbury Drive, 15/4/79, Sonning, 16/4/79, Bishopsland, 12/5/79, Goring Heath, 3/6/79, and Farley Hill (all B.T.P.). Three killed on road at Emmer Green, 17/9/79.

REPTILES

Anguis fragilis L. Slow Worm

One seen almost every year at Chapel Hill, most recently on 12/6/79 (P.G.). This observer comments that apart from Grass Snake, other reptiles seem not to occur in the Sulham-Tilehurst area although watched for.

Natrix natrix (L.) Grass Snake

One in the Warburg Reserve, Bix, on 19/5/75. (P.G.). As in most recent years, most of our records of this species come from the triangle enclosed by the rivers Thames, Kennet and Pang, with many observations by P.G. and E.M.T.

Vipera berus (L.) Adder

Three at Broadmoor Bottom on 14/5/79 (BBONT Survey). Seen at Pamber on 16/5/79 and 12/7/79, two found killed there in August, one at Ufton on 24/8/79 and a cast skin found there on 22/5/79 (all B.T.P.).

Lacerta vivipara Jacquin Common Lizard

One in long heather at Silchester Common on 4/5/79 was very torpid (B.T.P.), due no doubt to the continuance of cold weather.

## MAMMALS

### Talpa europaea L. Mole

One dead at Aldworth on 9/7/79 (P.G.). A mole run crossing a foot-path in woods west of Checkendon on 9/12/78 (RDNHS excursion). Molehills observed at Pangbourne, 9/11/78, and several Chiltern localities, Sonning Common, Rotherfield Greys, Maidensgrove and alongside the road from Nettlebed to Watlington.

### Sorex araneus L. Common Shrew

One dead in Bur Wood, Sonning Common on 29/10/78. One at Peppard Hospital sewage works on 8/11/78. Many records in the Sulham-Tilehurst-Burghfield area (P.G. and E. M. T.) and around Sonning Common, all in April, May, June or (a few) July. Many near Aldworth on 26/5/78, one dead there on 13/1/79 (P.G.).

### Neomys fodiens Pall. Water Shrew

An old record from Theale, 8/9/75 (P.G.). One dead at Binfield Heath on 11/9/79, present at Sindlesham in the winter of 1977-78 (B.T.P.).

### Erinaceus europaeus L. Hedgehog

Recorded from Theale, Pangbourne (both P.G.), Checkendon and Nettlebed, all road casualties. One alive at Wykeham Road, Earley, in September (P.G.). A juvenile at Spencers Wood on the late date of 19/12/78 weighed  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. (about 350 gm) compared with adult weights of 900-1200 gm according to sex and season (S.J.W.). A juvenile in the Forbury Gardens at 1600 on 13/6/79. Four alive, nine killed on roads throughout the year in Sonning Common, Emme Green and Caversham Park.

### Nyctalus noctula (Schreber) Noctule

About ten east of Theale gravel pits on 23/5/79 (RDNHS excursion). Several sightings of up to twelve hunting in the Leighton Park area during May and June (B.T.P.).

### Pipistrellus pipistrellus (Schrober) Pipistrelle

One picked up dead on road at Goring Heath on 3/6/79 (B.T.P.).

### Plecotus auritus (L.) Long-eared Bat

One at Bracknell in late September (S.M.B.).

### Vulpes vulpes (L.) Fox

Three cubs at Hazelmere Pit, Kidmore End, 23/6/79, one there three days later. Three cubs romping in Park Wood, Moor Copse, 8/5/79 (Mr. and Mrs. Holt per E.M.T.), seen again by T. Hutt on 19/5/79. One found killed on a poultry farm at Shurlock Row on 19/5/79 (M.J.C.) - they are said to be frequent visitors there. Seen near Lowbury Hill on 27/11/76 and at Thurle Down on 22/5/77 (P.G.). Many sightings in the area Pangbourne-Bradfield-Upton-Earley (mainly around Sulham) (P.G., G.D.R., B.T.P., M.B., E.M.T.). Foxes heard or tracks and signs seen west of Checkendon on 23/12/78 (RDNHS excursion), at Maidensgrove on 25/12/78, and on twelve occasions with up to three animals involved in the Sonning Common area.

### Meles meles (L.) Badger

One dead at Hare Hatch on 19/10/78 (Mr. Ayres). Several setts in the Sulham area, in use in the early 70's, are now abandoned (P.G.). A badger at Coombe Farm, Whitchurch on 3/9/76 (P.G.). Sett at Stoneycroft Plantation, Whitchurch, much enlarged and adapted, with two to three adults and two cubs seen there in April (E.M.T.). An

albino at Whitchurch (B.L.). One at the Fisheries, Caversham Warren, last seen on 31/8/79 (B.R.B. and M.B.). Active at Kelmscott Close, Caversham Warren, throughout the cold weather (B.K.). Sett in Hocketts Shaw pit, Peppard, in use 4/11/78. A badger abroad in full daylight at Borocourt on 16/6/79 fled pursued by my dog. One found dead in Wokingham on 26/9/79 (a young female, as so often) (Mr. Kettlewell). One dead on road at Cane End (H.J.M.B.).

Mustela erminea L. Stoat

Lowbury Hill on 7/12/74, East Hendred Down (dead) on 23/11/75, Upper Basildon on 31/10/76 and this year at Sulham on 27/8/79 and 1/9/79 (P.G.). One crossing Green Dean Bottom on 15/2/79 (H.J.M.B.).

Mustela eversmanni Lesson Polecat Ferret

One seen at Mays Green on 13/3/79 (K.J.A.).

Mustela nivalis L. Weasel

Up to three at Manor Farm, 1975-77, one between Tidmarsh and the Nautical College on 4/6/77, two at Woolhampton on 4/6/77, two at Ham Wood 31/7/77, one at Aldworth on 6/4/78 and one at Whiteknights in March 1979 (all P.G.).

Mustela vison Schreber Mink

An albino beside the Kennet and Avon Canal at Theale gravel pit on 19/10/75 (P.G.).

Lepus capensis Pall. Hare

Eight at Aldworth on 13/1/79 (P.G.), three at Shiplake (B.T.P.). A leveret feeding on hawkweed flowers at Ufton Nervet on 27/6/79 allowed B.T.B. to approach within five metres. Tracks in snow from Peppard to Crowsley on 1/1/79. Up to eleven seen in fields north of Bishopsland Farm between 18/5/79 and 25/7/79. One in woods at Borocourt on 13/7/79.

Oryctolagus cuniculus (L.) Rabbit

Tracks and signs abundant throughout the Society's area, but actual numbers lower than usual, maximum ten on 9/5/79 at Bishopsland and Chalkhouse Green, eight at Hazelmere Pit, Kidmore End, on 26/5/79, never more than five at Crowsley Park. One case of myxomatosis noted.

Rattus norvegicus Berk. Brown Rat

Four in Sulham Lane on 15/9/79, one dead at Lowbury on 4/7/79 (P.G.). One dead in Gun St. in December 1978, one dead in her garden at Spencer's Wood on 10/12/78 (S.J.W.). One dead at Dunsden on 12/5/79 (B.T.P.). Three dead in November and December 1978 in the Sonning Common area.

Apodemus sylvaticus (L.) Wood Mouse

Two disturbed from a compost heap at Kennylands, Sonning Common, on 7/4/79. One apparently sick juvenile in north Sulham Woods on 8/9/79 (P.G.). One dead in New Copse, Gallowstree Common, on 16/9/79 (Mark Taplin). One dead in E.M.T.'s garden at Pangbourne on 25/7/79 also a nest and signs of feeding on Cotoneaster berries probably by this species.

Micromys minutus (L.) Harvest Mouse

Abandoned summer nests found in Gipsy Lane, Earley, on 21/4/79 by B.T.P. A colony in grassland by Whiteknights Lake (Jane Andrew per P.G.).

Arvicola amphibius (L.) Water Vole

Present but not recorded at Theale gravel pits and Whiteknights Lake, also on Sul brook on 16/6/79 (P.G.).

Microtus agrestis (L.) Short-tailed Vole

Theale gravel pit 20/3/77, Thurle Down 22/5/77, two at Barefoots Copse, Sulham 13/4/79, one dead in Little Heath Road, Tilehurst 15/8/79 (P.G.).

Clethrionomys glareolus Schreber Bank Vole

Seen crossing Reades Lane, Sonning Common, on 26/8/79. Dead on road at Cleeve in August (B.T.P.), Bishopsland on 21/7/79 and Coppid Hall, Binfield Heath, on 25/7/79. Even this handful of records is more than usual for this unobtrusive species which may have been abundant this year.

Sciurus carolinensis Gmel. Grey Squirrel

One seen and tracks found around Checkendon on 23/12/79 (RDNHS excursion). One at Chapel Hill on 1/6/78 after years of absence, common at Whitchurch Hill on 5/7/75, Sulham Woods and Whiteknights (P.G.). Widespread but in small numbers (maximum two) around Sonning Common and in Emmer Green.

Cervus nippon Temm. Sika Deer

Although emanating from Hampshire, persistent reports of a small herd of this species in an area formerly often visited by the Society are of interest and may point to a future colonisation of Berkshire following the footsteps of Roe Deer. One such report from P.G. records twelve or more Sika in Benyon's Enclosure on 9/11/74.

Dama dama (L.) Fallow Deer

A doe crossing the road south of Nettlebed on 14/2/79 (Mrs. Carter). Up to three in Burnt Platt and Greyhones Wood, Highmoor, in February to March 1979 (Mrs. P. Leyland). Up to six seen in and around Crowsley Forest on many occasions (recorder and B.T.P.). The forester here tells me that he has seen as many as twenty-eight together. Four or five near Beech Farm, Hook End, on 14/5/79. Tracks abundant west of Checkendon on 23/12/78 (RDNHS excursion).

Capreolus capreolus (L.) Roe Deer

Peatpits Wood, Sulham on 6/9/75, Clay Copse 13/8/76 to 20/4/78, Vicarage Wood up to three from spring 1978 to 23/3/79, one at Chapel Hill (P.G. et al. per P.G.). One at Bearwood on 1/5/79 and 9/5/79 (B.T.P.). One in Hogmoor Copse on 16/5/79 and two in Park Wood 28/9/79 (E.M.T.). This species is evidently securely established in the Sulham (and probably Bradfield) area. It does not form herds like Sika or Fallow; the buck and doe seen together by E.M.T. are typical.

Muntiacus reevesi Og. Muntjac

Two in Great Bear Wood, Bradfield, on 22/5/76 (P.G.). One on Ashampstead Common, 3/2/79 (Maureen Terry). Two at Crowsley Park on 29/8/79, otherwise only single animals seen or heard on fifteen occasions in woods around Sonning Common. A muntjac approached the recorder within a few yards at night on 4/4/79, and on recognising him turned and fled. On reaching a safe distance it began to utter the series of barks characteristic of this species when disturbed.

The animal seen at the end of August 1979 by Mrs. Thernstrom at Binfield Heath would appear from its description to have been a muntjac.

Contributors:

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The Recorder's Report for Entomology 1978-1979

B. R. Baker

Order Orthoptera (Crickets & Grasshoppers)

Tetrix subulata (L.) Slender Ground-hopper  
Woolhampton, June 22nd.

Order Psocoptera (Book-Lice)

Philotarsus picicornis (Fabr.)  
Crowsley Forest, July 17th (H.H.C.).

Pseudopsocus rostocki Kolbe  
Crowsley Forest, September 20th (H.H.C.).

Trichopsocus dali (McL.)  
Kennylands, May 16th (H.H.C.).

Order Hemiptera (Plant Bugs, Aphids, Scale Insects, etc.)

Legnotus limbosus (Geoff.)  
Chalkhouse Green, September 18th, appears to be the first local record this century (H.H.C.).

Gastrodes grossipes (DeG.)  
Kennylands, April 14th (H.H.C.).

Aphrodes albifrons (L.)  
Crowsley Forest, September 20th (H.H.C.).

Order Neuroptera (Alder-flies, Snake-flies, Lacewing-flies)

Raphidia xanthostigma Schummel  
Moor Copse Nature Reserve, May 27th. Said to be a rare species over S. England.

Osmylus fulvicephalus (Scop.) Giant Lacewing  
Moor Copse Nature Reserve, May 27th. Disturbed from Alders at side of River Pang.

Order Lepidoptera (Butterflies and Moths)

Aphomia sociella (L.) The Bee Moth

A mass of cocoons of this moth was submitted to the Museum by the Health Department on January 25th having been discovered within a derelict settee stored in a garden shed in east Reading. During March and April sixty-six moths emerged. The caterpillars of the Bee Moth feed on the comb of humble-bees and wasps, hence an undetected nest must have been in, or very close to, the shed.

Zeuzera pyrina (L.) Leopard Moth

Langley Hill, Tilehurst, July 25th, a female moth brought to the Museum for identification (A.T.); Caversham, July 17th and 18th, males in light-trap.

Pieris rapae (L.) Small White

Tilehurst, December 4th (S.W.). Mrs. Ward's specimen was very out of season and one can only presume that the chrysalid of the butterfly was in some sheltered position and induced to hatch in the mild weather of early December.

Hamearis lucina (L.) Duke of Burgundy Fritillary

Aston Upthorpe Reserve, June 6th (B.T.P.).

Apatura iris (L.) Purple Emperor

Pamber Forest, August 14th, a female observed clinging to the top of a sallow bush which was being subjected to a strong wind (B.T.P.).

Vanessa atalanta (L.) Red Admiral

Few records of this immigrant this year:- Earley, August 8th (B.T.P.); Caversham Road, September 15th, six specimens on buddleias; Matlock Road, Caversham, October 6th; Caversham Court, October 21st; Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead, November 5th (T.J.G.H.).

Cynthia cardui (L.) Painted Lady

Ramsbury Drive, Earley, August 23rd (J.P.W.); Caversham Road, August 22nd, September 15th (two).

Aglais urticae (L.) Small Tortoiseshell

The second brood seems to have been particularly numerous, six at a time on buddleias in the Town; nine on the wall of a house in Elmhurst Rd., September 14th (L.E.C.). Broods of larvae observed at Woodley, Earley, Kennet mouth and Duke Street, Reading (B.T.P.).

Inachis io (L.) Peacock

Ramsbury Drive, Earley and Leighton Park, April 13th; Bearwood, April 14th; Hardwick, April 27th; Aston Upthorpe, June 6th; Earley on buddleias from August 10th onwards. Larval broods only observed at Bix Bottom and Hartslock (B.T.P.). The warm weather produced some late records:- Upper Warren Avenue, November 28th (H.G.B.); St. Laurence's Churchyard, December 3rd; Blagrove Street, Reading, December 10th.

Polygonia c-album (L.) The Comma

Bearwood, April 14th several; Earley, July 15th, August 15th (B.T.P.); Matlock Road, Caversham, October 12th, 14th and 18th.

Boloria selene (D. & S.). Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary

Watlington Hill, August 28th (T.J.G.H.). At this late date this record can only refer to a second-brood specimen.

Achlya flavicornis (L.) Yellow Horned

Moor Copse Nature Reserve, March 24th (new Reserve record).



Orthonama obstipata (Fabr.) The Gem  
Caversham, June 3rd.

Xanthorhoe quadrifasciata (Cl.) Large Twin-spot Carpet  
Tilehurst, July 10th, 24th; Basildon Park, August 15th; Kintbury,  
August 10th (N.H.).

Chloroclysta citrata (L.) Dark Marbled Carpet  
Caversham, June 24th, July 2nd; Aldermaston, July 27th (G.E-F;  
K.H.P.; P.S.); Kintbury, August 10th (N.H.).

Thera variata (D. & S.) Spruce Carpet  
Aldermaston, October 23rd, 28th (G.E-F; K.H.P.; P.S.).

Catarhoe cuculata (Hufn.) Royal Mantle  
Tilehurst, July 10th (N.H.).

Rheumaptera undulata (L.) Scallop Shell  
Earley, July 19th; (N.H.); Kintbury, July 7th (M.B.).

Philereme transversata (Hufn.) ssp. britannica Lempke Dark Umber  
Southcote, July 19th, 22nd, 23rd; Earley, July 22nd (N.H.).

Eupithecia tenuiata (Hübner.) Slender Pug  
Kintbury, August 10th (N.H.); Earley, July 2nd; Tilehurst, July  
17th, August 6th (N.H.).

Eupithecia insigniata (Hübner.) Pinion-spotted Pug  
Fairmile, June 3rd (P.D.); Fairmile, June 4th (N.H.); Larvae  
discovered in the same locality during July (M.B.).

Eupithecia valerianata (Hübner.) Valerian Pug  
Kintbury, June 29th (N.H.).

Chloroclystis chloerata (Mab.) Sloe Pug  
Maidenhead Thicket, larvae during May (M.B.); Moor Copse Nature  
Reserve, larvae plentiful on sloe, May 5th (new Reserve record);  
Aldermaston, July 4th, 10th (G.E-F; K.H.P.; P.S.); Basildon Park,  
July 5th (N.H.). This Pug was recognised as a species new to  
Britain as recently as 1971, the adult appearing very similar to  
C. rectangulata (L.) the Green Pug. The larvae are very distinc-  
tive and the above records indicate that the species is widespread  
in Berkshire.

Cepphis advenaria (Hübner.) Little Thorn  
Aldermaston, June 17th (G.E-F; K.H.P.; P.S.).

Sphinx ligustri L. Privet Hawkmoth  
Fairmile, Berkshire Downs, June 4th; Watlington Hill, two larvae;  
Shirburn Hill, three eggs; Hartslock Nature Reserve, eggs and  
small larvae (B.T.P.).

Furcula bifida (Brahm.) Poplar Kitten  
Silchester Common, a first stage larva discovered on Aspen (B.T.P.).

Ptilodontella cucullina (D. & S.) Maple Prominent  
Tilehurst, June 27th (N.H.); Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead, July 11th  
(T.J.G.H.).

Clostera curtula (L.) Chocolate-tip  
Bearwood, September, one larva, (B.T.P.).

Leucoma salicis (L.) White Satin  
Caversham, July 1st; Basildon Park, July 5th (N.H.); Kintbury,  
July 7th; Earley, July 6th (N.H.).

Agrotis cinerea (D. & S.) Light Feathered Rustic  
Fairmile, June 4th (N.H.)

Xestia rhomboidea (Esp.) Square Spotted Clay  
Caversham, August 5th; Basildon Park, August 15th, four examples (N.H.).

Hadena compta (D. & S.) Varied Coronet  
Earley, June 23rd, 27th (N.H.); Tilehurst, July 3rd, 10th (N.H.);  
Caversham, July 1st; Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead, July 10th  
(T.J.G.H.).

Orthosia populeti (Fabr.) Lead Coloured Drab  
Maidenhead Thicket, April 8th, several examples (M.B.; N.H.; M.S.).

Mythimna obsoleta (Hübner) Obscure Wainscot  
Kintbury, June 29th, July 7th, a well established colony (N.H.).

Lithophane semibrunnea (Haw.) Tawny Pinion  
Caversham, April 9th, October 19th.

Lithophane leautieri (Boisd.) Blair's Shoulder-knot  
Pinkney's Green, Maidenhead, September 30th (T.J.G.H.); Southcote,  
October 9th (N.H.); Aldermaston, October 18th (G.E-F; K.H.P.;  
P.S.); Emmer Green, October (J.H.F.N.).

Xanthia gilvago (D. & S.) Dusky Lemon Sallow  
Caversham, September 25th.

Ipimorpha subtusa (D. & S.) The Olive  
Aldermaston, July 27th (G.E-F; K.H.P.; P.S.).

Dicycla oo (L.) The Heart Moth  
Aldermaston, July 26th (G.E-F; K.H.P.; P.S.).

Cosmia diffinis (L.) White-spot Pinion  
Caversham, August 30th, September 8th.

Apamea sublustris (Esp.) Reddish Light Arches  
Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead, July 9th (T.J.G.H.).

Oligia versicolor (Borkh.) Rufous Minor  
Aldermaston, July 3rd, 23rd, (G.E-F; K.H.P.; P.S.). This species  
has a variable wing pattern and can easily be confused with  
O. strigilis (L.) Marbled Minor and with O. latruncula (D. & S.)  
Tawny Marbled Minor. Accurate determination can only be made by  
examination of the genitalia. The Aldermaston specimens appear to  
be the first authenticated Berkshire recordings.

Chilodes maritimus (Tausch.) Silky Wainscot  
Kintbury, June 29th (N.H.).

Diachrysis chryson (Hübner) Scarce Burnished Brass  
Kintbury, August 10th (N.H.) September 28th, several small larvae  
on Eupatorium cannabinum (M.B.).

Autographa bractea (D. & S.) Gold Spangle  
Tilehurst, July 16th, a single example in mercury vapour light-trap  
(N.H.). This is a remarkable record and a new one for the County.  
This moth occurs in Scotland, Ireland, the north of England and  
Wales with occasional records of wanderers elsewhere. It is not  
one of the recognised immigrant species.

Parascotia fuliginaria (L.) Waved Black  
Earley, July 22nd (N.H.).

Schrankia taenialis (Hubn.) White-line Snout  
Kintbury, July 7th (A.J.H.).

Order Coleoptera (Beetles)

Mycetaea hirta (Marsh.)  
Reading, January 25th, in a damp house (H.H.C.).

Triplax aenea (Schall.)  
Crowsley Forest, September 7th, on dead birch (H.H.C.).

Order Hymenoptera (Saw-flies, Ichneumon-flies, Bees, Ants and Wasps)

Xiphydria camelus (L.)  
Mortimer West End, July (W.B.). The first record for many years.

Ametastegia pallipes (Spin.)  
Chalkhouse Green, June 12th (H.H.C.).

Priophorus laevifrons Benson  
Kennylands, April 30th (H.H.C.).

Amauronematus fasciatus Kon.  
Crowsley Forest, May 9th (H.H.C.).

Pontania viminalis (L.)  
Kintbury, July 7th, larva (A.J.H.).

Halictus nitidiusculus (Kirby)  
Crowsley Forest, August 29th (H.H.C.).

Sphecodes longulus v. Hag.  
Crowsley Forest, August 29th (H.H.C.).

Nomada hillana (Kirby)  
Wokefield Common Fish Pond, June 12th (J.J.).

Acolobus sericeus Wesm.  
Goring Heath, July 22nd, 1972 (E.B.).

Barichneumon heracliata (Bridg.)  
Chalkhouse Green, September 4th (H.H.C.).

Cratichneumon albifrons Steph.  
Crowsley Forest, June 6th, Chalkhouse Green, June 12th (H.H.C.).

Liposthenus latreillei (Kief.)  
Crowsley Forest, July 3rd (galls) (H.H.C.).

Periclistus brandtii (Ratz.)  
Kennylands, June, emerged from a gall of Diplolepis rosae found there on May 16th (H.H.C.).

Andricus quercus-calycis (Burgs.)  
Mr. Carter's request for reports of galled acorns brought forth an abundant response. Reports, or specimens, were received from the following localities:- Bearwood, April 14th; Whiteknights, October (B.T.P.). Tilehurst, (S.W.). Devil's Highway, October (R.M.). A.W.R.E. Aldermaston; Wellington College, September 9th (G.E-F.). Mortimer West End, Hants; Kennylands, September 27th (H.H.C.). Earley (Pepper Lane, Radstock Lane, Wokingham Road), November 2nd and Reading (Upper Redlands Road) on the same date

(L.E.C.). Nettlebed Woods near A.422, October 18th, November 1st (L.E.C.). At Crowsley Forest where the species has been established for some years, 80% or more of the acorns in infested trees were aborted.

Andricus lignicola (Hartig)

This gall-maker is another newcomer to Britain, first recorded for certain in 1972 and now widespread in the south-east. The gall resembles a small marble gall but has a rough irregular surface with scars left by the bud scales. Found in Crowsley Forest on Quercus robur in 1978, and in College Wood on Q. petraea on December 2nd, 1979 (H.H.C.).

Order Diptera (True Flies)

In the following records of this Order there are a number referring to earlier years. Identifications could not be made at the time due to lack of the relevant keys.

Ctenophora pectinicornis (L.)

Moor Copse Nature Reserve, June 17th (M.C.).

C. flaveolata (Fabr.)

Windsor Forest, June 1st, 1975 (P.J.C.).

Neither species is new to our local records but these splendid and uncommon flies always merit a mention (H.H.C.).

Molophilus occultus Meij.

Pamber Forest, July 10th, 1965 (J.H.C.).

Pericoma avicularia Tonn.

Crowsley Forest, July 3rd (H.H.C.).

Forcipomyia ciliata (Winn.)

College Road, Reading, August 1st, 1973 (E.B.).

F. solonensis Wirth

'Starvale', Wokefield Common, April 16th 1975 (H.H.C.).

Atrichopogon lucorum (Mg.)

Nuney Green, May 18th, 1972 (E.B.).

Cricotopus annulator Goet.

Forbury, April 19th (H.H.C.).

Chaetocladius piger (Goet.)

County Lock, Reading, September 4th (H.H.C.).

Rhagio strigosus (Mg.)

Crowsley Forest, July 10th (H.H.C.). Not a new record but rare enough to be noteworthy.

Laphria marginata (L.)

Pamber Forest, July 10th (P.N.C.). Status as preceding species.

Platypalpus clarandus (Coll.)

Pamber Forest, July 10th, 1965 (J.H.C.).

Leptopeza flavipes (Mg.)

Goring Heath, November 1st, 1968 (E.B.).

Eudorylas jenkinsi Coe

Crowsley Forest, August 21st (H.H.C.).

Magasyrphus annulipes (Zett.)

Windsor Forest, June 8th (C. McL.)

Neoscasia aenea (Mg.)

Tidmarsh, June 23rd, 1963 (J.H.C.).

Pocota personata (Harris)

Windsor Forest, June 4th, 1978 (P.J.C.); June 2nd, 1979 (C.McL.).

Leopoldius signatus (Wied.)

Frilford, September 27th, October 21st (G.V.); Mortimer West End, October 7th (S.R.M.).

Myopa extricata Coll.

Goring, April 17th, 1960; April 29th, 1964 (J.H.C.). Hartslock, April 24th, 1960 (J.H.C.).

M. testacea (L.)

Goring, April 30th, 1960; April 29th, 1964 (J.H.C.).

Psila obscuritarsis Loew

Tidmarsh, June 19th, 1965 (J.H.C.).

Sapromyza obsoleta Fall.

College Road, Reading, July 19th, 1974 (E.B.).

S. quadripunctata L.

College Road, Reading, October 1st, 1970 (E.B.).

Suillia imberbis Cz.

Goring Heath, October 3rd, 1969 (E.B.).

Heteromyza oculata Fall.

College Road, Reading, October 17th, 1973 (E.B.).

Heleomyza dupliciseta (Strobl)

Chazey Heath, April 11th, 1970 (H.H.C.).

Leptocera limosa (Fall.)

Rose Hill Pond, Emmer Green, July 27th (H.H.C.).

Lonchaea fumosa Egg.

Nuney Green, July 6th, 1974 (H.H.C.).

Piophila foveolata Mg.

Chalkhouse Green, May 18th (H.H.C.).

Periscelis annulata (Fall.)

Goring, July 30th, 1964 (J.H.C.).

Psilopa nitidula (Fall.)

Aston Tirrold, April 18th, 1964 (J.H.C.).

Hydrellia obscura (Mg.)

Streathley, July 1st, 1965 (J.H.C.).

H. modesta Loew

Goring, May 20th, 1964 (J.H.C.).

Paracoenia fumosa (Stenh.).

Rose Hill Pond, Emmer Green, July 27th (H.H.C.).

Drosophila helvetica Burla

Kennylands, September 6th (H.H.C.).

Paraphytomyza trivittata (Loew)

College Road, Reading, October 6th, 1974 (E.B.).

- Phania funesta (Mg.)  
Chalkhouse Green, May 25th (H.H.C.).
- Pegohylemyia brunneilinea (Zett.)  
Moor Copse Nature Reserve, June 10th, 1975 (H.H.C.).
- Lasiomma melania Ack.  
Goring Heath, April 19th, 1969; July 17th, 1971 (E.B.).
- L. nitidicauda (Zett.)  
Goring Heath, August 23rd, 1972; College Road, Reading, September 4th, 1970, June 20th, 1975; Wokefield Common, April 10th, 1974 (E.B.), and (H.H.C.).
- L. octoguttatum (Zett.)  
Moor Copse Nature Reserve, June 10th, 1975 (H.H.C.).
- Phorbia curvicauda (Zett.)  
Whiteknights, May 23rd, 1976 (R.G.L.).
- P. securis Tiens.  
Whiteknights, May 23rd, 1976 (R.G.L.).
- Nupedia nigroscutellata (Stein.)  
Tilehurst, May 23rd, 1975 (R.G.L.).
- Emmesomyia villica (Mg.)  
College Road, Reading, May 4th, 1972 (E.B.).
- Pegomya albimargo (Pd.)  
Goring Heath, May 1st, 1972 (E.B.).
- P. caesia Stein  
Goring Heath, May 17th, 1972 (E.B.).
- P. haemorrhoea (Zett.)  
Goring Heath, April 25th, 1972 (E.B.).
- P. interruptella (Zett.)  
Tilehurst, May 23rd, 1975 (R.G.L.).
- P. setaria (Mg.)  
Goring Heath, May 16th, 1974 (E.B.); Tilehurst, May 23rd, 1975 (R.G.L.).
- P. versicolor (Mg.)  
Tilehurst, May 23rd, 1975 (R.G.L.).
- Fannia scalaris (Fabr.)  
Wokingham, October, 1979 (P.P.).
- F. umbrosa (Stein)  
Crowsley Forest, July 10th, (H.H.C.).
- Hydrotaea cinerea Rob.-Des.  
Crowsley Forest, October 2nd. (H.H.C.).
- Phaonia fusca (Meade)  
Chalkhouse Green, April 27th (H.H.C.).
- Coenosia alleni Fons.  
Chalkhouse Green, September 21st (H.H.C.).

Order Siphonaptera (Fleas)

- Paraceras melis (Walk.)  
Kennylands, April 30th. Found on a dog which had picked them up

somewhere in the Sonning Common area (H.H.C.).

Unless the contrary is stated, all the above reports relating to Coleoptera, Diptera and Siphonaptera are of species not previously recorded in the Reading area.

#### The Society's Entomological Evening

This was again enjoyed in the same locality on the Well Barn Estate as visited in 1978 and our thanks are due to the Estate for permission to enter and operate lamps and moth traps. The visit was made on the night of June 22nd and at this earlier date we hoped to record a few species not seen in 1978. With a clear sky temperatures dropped during the night and insect flight was not so marked as on our previous visit. However, Poplar Hawk and Lobster moth paid us a visit, both being unrepresented the previous year.

#### Contributors

The Recorder would like to thank the following members and friends for records received:

Mrs. H. G. Baker (H.G.B.); M. Britton (M.B.); W. Beer (W.B.); Miss L. E. Cobb (L.E.C.); H. H. Carter (H.H.C.); P.N.Crow (P.N.C.); P.J.Chandler (P.J.C.); Mrs. M. Charley (M.C.); J. H. Cole (J.H.C.); P. Davey (P.D.); Lt. Col. G. G. Eastwick-Field (G.E-F.); N. Hall (N.H.); T. J. G. Homer (T.J.G.H.); A. J. Halstead (A.J.H.); J. James (J.J.); R. G. Leeke (R.G.L.); Mrs. R. Morris (R.M.); S. R. Miles (S.R.M.); C. McLean (C.McL.); J. H. F. Notton (J.H.F.N.); B. T. Parsons (B.T.P.); K. H. Pinnock (K.H.P.); P. Parbury (P.P.); P. Silver (P.S.); Dr. M. Shaw (M.S.); A. Taylor (A.T.); Prof. G. Varley (G.V.); Mrs. S. Ward (S.W.); J. P. Warrick (J.P.W.). In addition, several specimens captured by the late Dr. Eric Burt (E.B.) have recently been identified and appear here.

Our thanks are also due to the Director of Reading Museum & Art Gallery for allowing us to incorporate any relevant records from the Museum's collections.

WEATHER RECORDS : 1979

contributed by M. Parry

STATION: READING UNIVERSITY

		JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	YEAR
MEAN DAILY TEMPERATURES °C	MAX.	3.3	3.9	8.4	12.1	15.0	18.2	21.6	19.8	18.4	15.6	10.3	8.7	12.9
	MIN.	-3.3	-1.2	1.6	4.2	6.0	10.0	12.1	10.8	8.9	7.8	3.1	3.6	5.3
	MEAN	0.0	1.4	5.0	8.2	10.5	14.1	16.9	15.3	13.7	11.7	6.7	6.2	9.1
	RANGE	6.6	5.1	6.8	7.9	9.0	8.2	9.5	9.0	9.5	7.8	7.2	5.1	7.6
EXTREME TEMPERATURES °C	E. MAX.	8.0	8.8	12.8	21.7	25.0	25.0	29.2	25.0	24.5	20.2	14.4	14.6	29.2
	DATE	7	27	11	15	15	19	27	30	6	8	3.4	5	July 27
	E. MIN.	-9.8	-5.5	-3.7	-2.1	-0.8	5.7	8.7	3.4	12.8	0.3	-4.3	-5.0	-9.8
	DATE	3	25	24	3	3	1	2.3	28	23	28	13	25	Jan. 3
	E. GRASS MIN.	-16.1	-13.8	-12.1	-8.4	-8.4	-0.7	2.2	-1.8	-3.9	-4.8	-9.7	-11.4	-16.1
	DATE	3	25	24	3	4	1	2	28	23	28	13	25	Jan. 3
DAYS WITH FROST		24	17	6	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	7	6	66
DAYS WITH GROUND FROST		29	28	19	12	11	1	0	1	6	6	19	13	145
SUNSHINE HOURS	SUM.	67.4	53.1	93.2	122.1	199.9	147.5	191.4	179.2	160.7	124.1	67.8	57.5	1463.9
	% POSS.	27	19	25	29	42	30	39	40	42	37	25	23	31
	DAILY MEAN	2.2	1.9	3.0	4.1	6.5	4.9	6.2	5.8	5.4	4.0	2.3	1.9	4.0
PRECIPITATION mm.	AMOUNT	51	47	106	69	103	28	19	34	13	57	53	85	665
	RAIN DAYS	17	15	21	17	21	13	6	13	7	14	16	18	178
	MAX. RAIN IN 1 DAY	8.4	9.2	16.9	12.8	18.7	10.3	7.9	9.6	4.9	14.4	12.7	22.1	22.1
	DATE	9	1	13	23	20	7	28	8	19	25	6	27	Dec. 27
LONGEST RUN OF CONSECUTIVE RAIN DAYS		5	6	10	6	11	4	4	3	2	3	6	6	11
LONGEST RUN OF CONSECUTIVE DRY DAYS		5	4	2	6	4	5	15	6	15	6	3	1	15
SNOW OR SLEET DAYS		9	8	7	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	30
DAYS SNOW LYING		14	7	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23
VISIBILITY	FOG AT 0900 G.M.T.	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	0	16
THUNDERSTORM ACTIVITY	DAYS OF THUNDER	0	0	0	2	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	8
	DAYS OF HAIL	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5



MONTHLY WEATHER NOTES, 1979

M. Parry

January Coldest since 1963 and the third coldest since before 1921 when University records began (1940 was second coldest)  $3\frac{1}{2}$  degrees C. colder than average. Some clear calm days, so sunshine hours higher than usual. On dry side.

February Again, coldest since 1963 (mean temperature  $2\frac{1}{2}$  degrees C. below average. Cold N and NE winds dominated. Average rainfall, rather dull.

March Still colder than normal (by about 1 degree C.), but more westerly disturbed weather. Very wet (wettest since March 1947) and dull.

April Still on the cool side, despite a warm Easter weekend. Rather wet.

May Again cool, but some warm, sunny days around mid-month. Very unsettled and more than twice as wet as usual; 30th was marked by some very intensive downpours, including a fall of 4mm. in 4 minutes.

June Sixth successive month with below-average temperatures, despite a warm spell in the third week. Less than average rainfall, yet much cloud and low sunshine total.

July First warmer-than-average month of the year (and only slightly); provided the warmest day of the year - 29.2 degrees C. (85 degrees F.) on 27th. Very dry but only average sunshine.

August Cool again (1 degree C. below average), with highest day temperature no better than May's, yet rainfall was also below average and sunshine a little above. Severe summer gale towards mid-month gave wind gust of 53 mph (strongest August gust for 17 years).

September Slightly on the cool side, very dry (including a drought period) and sunny.

October Rather mild, though no exceptionally warm days. Drier than average and sunny.

November Average temperatures, but again on the dry side; 6th consecutive month with below-average rainfall;

December Mild and wet, with sunshine also above average. Windy with 64 mph gust on 9th.