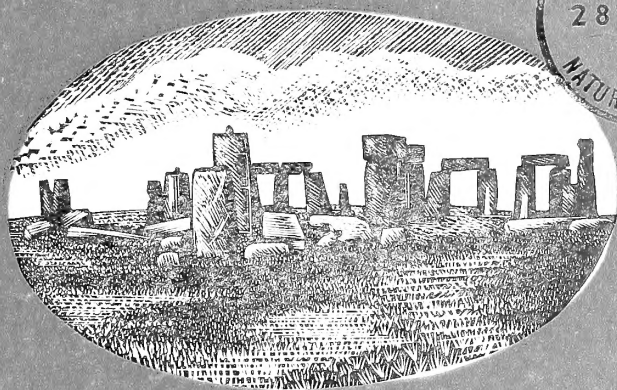


The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine



Volume 65 1970

Part A: Natural History

THE WILTSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The Society was founded in 1853. Its activities include the promotion of archaeological and historical work and of the study of all branches of Natural History within the County; the safeguarding and conservation of the antiquities and the flora and the fauna of the region; the issue of a Magazine and other publications; excursions to places of archaeological and historical interest; and the maintenance of a Museum and Library.

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THE WILTSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND
NATURAL HISTORY MAGAZINE



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1970

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This year the Committee of the Society has decided, as an experiment, to publish the Magazine in two parts. In this way Natural History reports and articles, which are printed first, in Part A, will be in members' hands earlier than heretofore.

THE OLD RABBIT WARREN ON FYFIELD DOWN, NEAR MARLBOROUGH

by N. E. KING and J. SHEAIL

INTRODUCTION

In 1956 six hundred and twelve acres of Fyfield Down in North Wiltshire were leased to the Nature Conservancy as a National Nature Reserve. Fyfield Down is part of the Marlborough Downs and lies between Avebury in the west and Marlborough in the east. It is an extensive area of grassland, rich in plant and animal life, and of great interest to the ecologist. In the valleys there are large numbers of sarsen stones. These weathered blocks of sandstone have created pockets of acidic soils on the chalk down which have been colonized by acid-loving plants. Recently the origin of the stones has been studied by geomorphologists, since their formation may be closely related to the history of the chalkland in the area. Air photographs, showing the distribution of sarsen stones, also show a remarkable layout of ridges which help to indicate the extent of agricultural activity in the past. Since 1958 a research programme has been undertaken by archaeologists on Fyfield and Overton Downs.¹

As if this were not enough, Fyfield Down was used in a distinctive way during the late 19th century. The whole area was turned down to rabbits and the Down was, in effect, a gigantic warren. FIG. 1 shows the area of the warren in relationship to the present-day Nature Reserve. It was full of common-grey rabbits although a few black ones were occasionally seen in one part of the Down. The memories of those days of rabbit-warrening are still very much alive in the mind of Mr. R. Bull, who now lives at Bayardo Farm, in Clatford. In his younger days Mr. Bull helped his father, Mr. Edgar T. Bull, who was headkeeper in the area. Recently he recalled his experiences on the Down and allowed us to piece together the management of the warren at the turn of the century. He remembers how the slopes 'were all in a crawl' at dawn when the rabbits were most active.

During the late 19th century many downland areas were converted from arable and sheep-pasture to game-warrens. Landlords encouraged pheasants and partridges, hares and rabbits to breed in large numbers, and parties of sportsmen were periodically invited to take part in Grand Shoots. It is very difficult to find information on this kind of land-use, largely because records on the management of warrens have been thrown away and burned. This is why the material on Fyfield Down is so valuable: Mr. Bull can remember, with remarkable clarity, how the warren was actually managed, and we hope that these details will be of value in studying other game-warrens in Wiltshire and Lowland England.

THE RABBIT AS A GAME-ANIMAL

Fyfield Down was very marginal farmland in the late 19th century. The soils were poor and the sarsen stones would have been a great obstacle to ploughing and cutting hay. There may have been a warren on the Down at an earlier date and it is clear that by the 1880s the land was being managed primarily for game. Wroughton Copse and Old Totterdown were preserved as game-cover, and lines of larch were planted in order to make the birds rise over the guns during a shoot. On many warrens sheep and cattle were allowed to graze with the rabbits, but on Fyfield Down the game animals had a complete monopoly. It is significant that both the Down and neighbouring farmland were part of the same estate, belonging to Sir Henry Meux of Dauntsey Park near Chippenham. The north Wiltshire estate contained approximately 29,000 acres, and his interest in game preser-

Fyfield Down N.N.R. Old Rabbit Warren

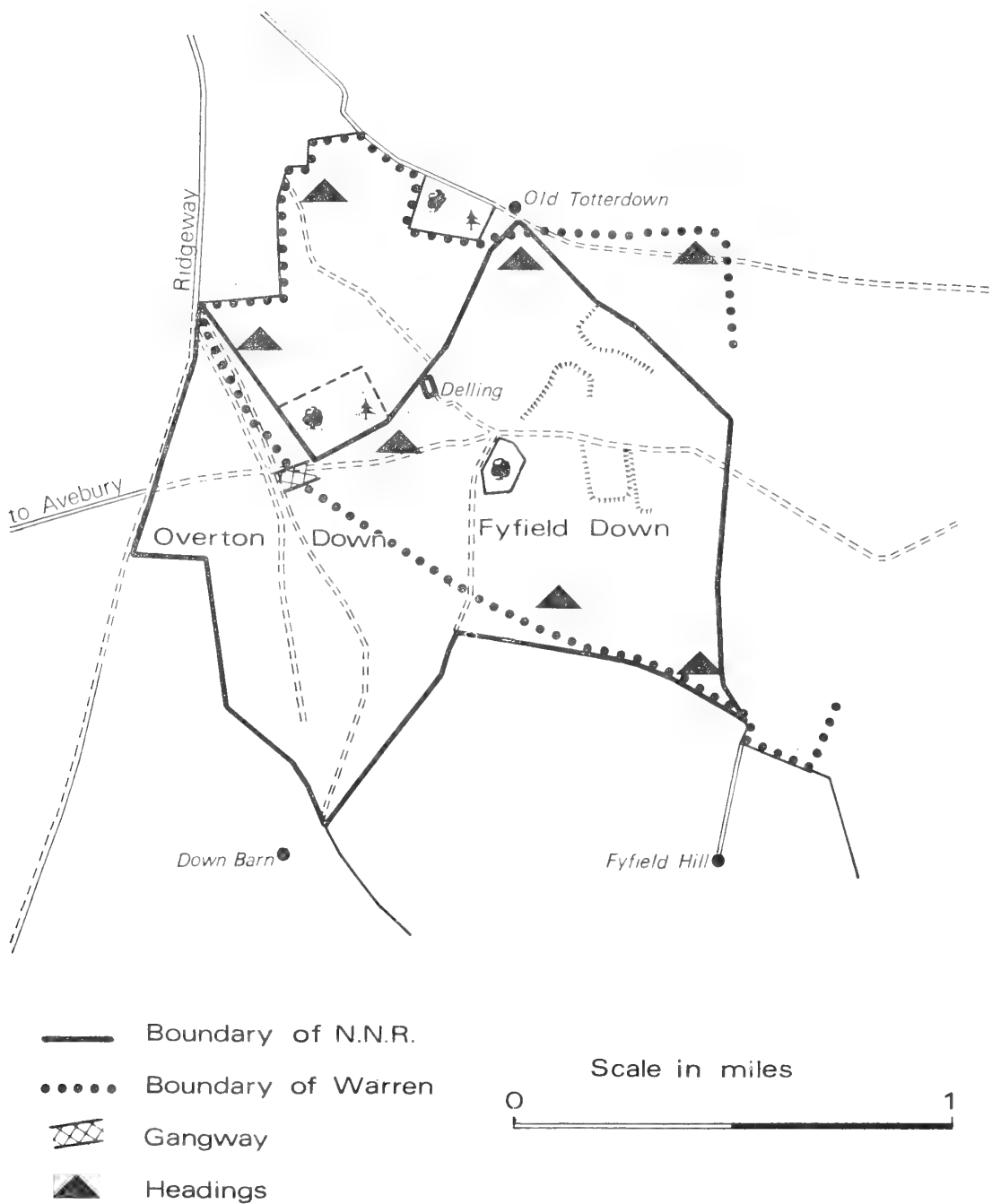


FIG. 1
The old rabbit warren on Fyfield Down National Nature Reserve.

vation was so strong that some farms were let at a low rental of 6s. per acre, on the condition that game was strictly preserved. The tenants were allowed to join in two shoots a year, in which only rabbits and hares could be killed.

Shooting parties were a common event in the life of this estate. Many well-known 'shots' came to shoot winged game and hares. Rabbits were regarded as inferior game, but they were very popular with landowners because they helped to make the game 'go round'. On one occasion, for example, six guns shot 4,000 rabbits on the Down in one day, and usually between 5,000 and 6,000 rabbits were killed each year on the warren.² There were always plenty of rabbits for the sportsmen to kill.

The rabbit carcasses were paunched in a shed near Delling Keeper's House and sent away in hampers to three outlets in London. These buyers have been identified as: James and Benjamin Bridgman, Brooke Brothers and Francis Broome. The three firms are listed in the Post Office Directory for 1902 as poultry and game salesmen in the Central Market of London. The rabbits were usually sold to the retail outlets for about 6*d.* each.

However, many rabbits escaped down their holes when shooting began on the warren. In addition, the rabbits often took it into their heads to lie up in the burrows just as the guns were assembled. From earliest times, warreners tried various ways of keeping them on the ground. On Fyfield Down the keepers perfected one technique of 'stinking them out'. At night, when the rabbits were feeding in the open, the keepers treated the holes. They dipped sticks into a mixture of brimstone and then lit the ends with a lantern which also gave light to the operation. The burning sticks were then thrust into the holes. During the 1890s brimstone was replaced by 'Renardine', which was bought from the local chemist. Brown paper was dipped into the substance and placed in the tunnel entrance. It smelt like a fox and was better than brimstone because the smell did not fade away so quickly. During the day of the shoot, nearly all the rabbits were stranded on the surface and were very unwilling to venture into their revolting holes. Within a few days the smell had gone and the rabbits began to use the tunnels again.

On the night before the shoot, the stranded rabbits found refuge in areas called 'headings'. These were low gorse and elder coverts, about two or three acres in size. On Fyfield Down there were six of these areas distributed in various parts of the warren. Before a shoot, gorse and elder were cut and laid in thin parts of the coverts so as to give dense cover to the stranded rabbits. Thus the animals were protected from the weather, their predators, and poachers. When the guns were assembled, beaters frightened the rabbits out of the coverts into the open downland and into the face of the guns.

The shoots began in early November when the rabbits were at their best. They were fat and had a fine coat of fur in readiness for winter. The shooting parties continued until the end of January, when the rabbits began to breed and the quality of their fur to decline. In addition, the carcasses smelt before they reached the markets during warmer weather. After January, only the keepers hunted the rabbits. They did not shoot them, but released white ferrets into the burrows. The rabbits bolted rather than face these dreaded enemies.

The keepers caught rabbits not so much for sport and sales, but to keep numbers down. It was a great mistake to allow too many on the warren during late winter and early spring. Normally rabbits found enough food but they were badly handicapped in snow. They tend to lie up for long periods in strong winds and after a blizzard they were in poor shape to dig away the frozen snow in search of food. Rabbits will not normally move further from their burrows than necessary, but in very bad weather the straving animals were forced to roam further afield. In 1881, after a very bad snowstorm, when the keepers could hardly move out of their houses, the rabbits were driven by hunger down Clatford Bottom to Clatford. Once the rabbits left the warren, the animals did not often return—even when the weather improved. The complete stock of a warren could be lost in one night. In addition, they caused a great deal of damage in neighbouring farmland. Rabbits could ring-bark saplings in plantations and coverts, and eat any shoots and leaves within reach.

For these reasons, the keepers kept numbers as low as possible during late winter and

early spring, although they had to leave enough for breeding in the following season. Many warreners tried to keep a strict ratio between male and female rabbits in winter. It was wasteful to feed many buck rabbits when a smaller number could 'kindle' the same number of does, but on Fyfield Down it was impossible to regulate the composition of the warren because there were so many rabbits and the keepers had other duties beside keeping an eye on them. Food was specially grown for the rabbits on many warrens in the country. Turnips were given in snowy weather, but for some reason the rabbits on Fyfield Down refused to eat them. Instead, the keepers grew ten acres of swedes every year near Delling Copse. Few warreners gave hay to their animals because it was so easily trampled underfoot and lost in the snow, but the keepers of Fyfield found the rabbits ate all the hay given them. It was distributed along the bottom of the valleys, amongst the sarsen stones.

On three sides of the warren, a wire fence was erected. In addition, the keepers destroyed holes that they found along the edges of the warren. The rabbits were very resourceful in getting over and round obstacles, and the fences had to be four feet high and let into the ground. The fences were expensive to erect and maintain, although the keepers found they lasted a long time. In heavy snow, the men had to go round the perimeter of the warren knocking down the drifts of snow which the rabbits used as routes to escape over the fences. Rights of way across the warren were another hazard: it was difficult to erect a gate or temporary fence where the trackways left the warren. Travellers were careless about closing gates and rabbits could squeeze through the smallest openings. One right of way on the Down was called 'The Gangway' and left the warren on the Avebury boundary. It could not be closed in daytime because so many people used the route, but fortunately rabbits tend to be nocturnal, especially if there is plenty of activity in the area. The keepers were able to erect an obstacle at night. As darkness fell, they placed a string of feathers across the gangway. The feathers were dipped in 'Renardine' and the smell kept the rabbits back.

Rabbits were protected from starvation and prevented from escaping, but there were other hazards. Many rabbits were killed by poachers and vermin. In spite of the remoteness of Fyfield Down, poachers with long-nets took many rabbits. Gangs of men came from Marlborough and navvies in the neighbourhood made forays on the warren. Gypsies were not often seen, but they were known to take a few rabbits along the fences with snares.

Here, unlike many parts of the country, the poachers did not often bring dogs. The keepers did not mind losing a few rabbits because there were more than enough on the warren for most of the year.

They were, however, afraid that, once the poachers and vermin entered the warren in search of rabbits, they would be tempted to take pheasant and partridges instead. Therefore, steps were taken to kill as many vermin as possible. A polecat was caught as late as the 1880s on the Down. At one time, a great many game were being killed in the warren by an animal which seemed to be a stoat. A number of traps were set, and eventually a mongoose was caught. It turned out that a pupil at Marlborough College had brought a mongoose back from India, which had later escaped. Less exotic animals, such as the stoat and weasel, were caught in tunnel-traps. Gin-traps were set on prominences and posts for smaller predators—the traps were never used to catch rabbits.

Buzzards were tolerated by the keepers because they were such good scavengers, taking dead and dying rabbits on the ground. They were never seen preying on healthy rabbits on the Down. Today, buzzards are often seen over Fyfield Down when an outbreak of *myxomatosis* has occurred.

The other hazard on the warren was the chronic danger of disease. Fyfield Down seems to have been remarkably free from serious epidemics: this may be attributed to two factors. The centre of the warren was usually bare of vegetation, but there was plenty of food around the edges and on 'The Gallops'. Consequently, the animals were well fed and their living conditions were reasonably good, so there was less likelihood of disease. Outbreaks of disease were also caused by excessive in-breeding when the rabbits became 'sib'—all brothers and sisters. To guard against this danger, fresh blood was introduced

every year when 50 to 200 bucks were brought from outside Wiltshire and released on the Down. At the same time a number of does was sold to warrens beyond the county—perhaps to recoup the cost of purchasing the bucks. The does were caught by ferrets and nets. There was a tradition at Fyfield that only bucks could be bought and does sold. This measure, together with some luck, saved the warren from serious epidemics caused by degenerate stock.

Fyfield Down was managed as a game-warren for at least thirty years, and in 1910 there were over twenty rabbits per acre. By this date, the Down was owned by Mr. Alec Taylor, a famous race-horse trainer. The horses were exercised on the gallops which the rabbits closely grazed, but Mr. Taylor decided that the rabbit population had to be eradicated. This was because the rabbits also dug 'scrapes' in the turf which made riding dangerous. Mr. Bull agreed to kill the rabbits in six months and buy the skins and carcasses for a pre-arranged price. There were between 13,000 and 14,000 rabbits on the Down and he made a good profit out of the slaughter.

THE ECOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE RABBIT

In view of the lack of detailed scientific information on the fauna and flora of Fyfield Down before its establishment as a National Nature Reserve, it is impossible to measure the ecological effects of the rabbit warren on the area with any degree of accuracy. However, a few suppositions may be made in the light of information provided by Mr. Bull and others who recall the area in the days before the last war.

Rabbits must have had a tremendous impact on the vegetation. They are extremely efficient grazing animals, eating with a close and concentrated bite. Any natural seedling of trees or bushes would be destroyed by such grazing. The efficacy of rabbits in controlling scrub invasion can be clearly demonstrated on many areas of downland where the removal of rabbits in 1954, due to *myxomatosis*, and the absence of other grazing animals has resulted in dense scrub sere development within ten years. D. Grose has also noted this dramatic change in vegetation on certain downlands in Wiltshire after the *myxomatosis* outbreak in 1954.³ Sir Arthur Tansley, in his monumental work on the vegetation of the British Isles,⁴ considered rabbit grazing to be, at that time, the most widespread and effective biotic factor in modifying our semi-natural vegetation. He noted that there was usually a well marked concentric zonation of vegetation radiating from the burrows. This zonation consisted of bare soil in the immediate vicinity of burrows, with vegetation becoming progressively less eaten further out, until at a distance of about 100 yards the effect was negligible. Where the density of rabbits was high, there was an overlap of grazing zones, which produced severe effects on the vegetation. The oblique aerial photograph (PL. I) shows the state of Fyfield Down after the last war, when the rabbit population, after being exterminated in 1910, had risen again to a high level. This emphasizes the severe effects of rabbit grazing described by Tansley, and the many bare areas picked out by the patches of white on the down surface show the extent of burrows and areas of intensive grazing.

The presence of old rabbit burrows can still be detected to the present day on the down. They are revealed by clumps of Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and Nettles (*Urtica dioica*) throughout the area of the old warren.

A close look at these old burrows reveals a vegetational zonation similar to that described by Tansley. Elder grows in the immediate vicinity of the burrows, surrounded by dense Nettle colonization, radiating in many cases to a distance of twenty feet or more from the burrows. This area of Nettle is surrounded on its perimeter by a peripheral belt of vegetation consisting mainly of the following species: Red Campion (*Melandrium dioicum*), Burdock (*Arctium* sps.), Figwort (*Scrophularia* sp.), Creeping, Spear and Musk Thistles (*Cirsium arvense*, *C. vulgare*, *Carduus nutans*), Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*), Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*). Apart from these tall plants, there is an associated ground flora consisting of the following: *Glechoma hederacea*, *Mysotis arvensis*, *Rumex acetosa*, *Ranunculus repens*, *Galium aparine*. The only grasses noted (and these sparingly) were *Holcus lanatus*, *Festuca ovina* and *Helictotrichon pratense*.

In the open areas of grassland surrounding these old burrows the ecological effect of rabbits is less noticeable. However, even here the relatively species-poor composition of the sward compared with normal downland, and the presence of species unpalatable to rabbits shows that rabbit grazing past and present has had a long term effect.

Rabbits deposit a vast concentration of droppings in the vicinity of their burrows. This results in an over-enrichment of the soil, particularly in levels of nitrogen and phosphorus. As a result, nitrophilous plant species such as Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and the Thistles (*Cirsium arvense*, *C. vulgare*, *Carduus nutans*) are the only ones that can flourish in these areas.

With the exception of a few Hawthorns (*Crataegus monogyna*), the Elder seems to have been the only tree species prevalent in the warren; apart from the 'headings', it was probably otherwise bare of tree and scrub cover. Saplings and fresh shoots in the coverts were destroyed unless protected by wire fencing.⁵

CONCLUSION

Since the declaration of Fyfield Down as a National Nature Reserve, the essential character of the area has been conserved and a great deal of research initiated. Ecologists have begun to analyse the downland habitat, and how it evolved. In this work they have sought fresh information wherever it can be found and the information provided by men like Mr. Bull is especially important. They have often lived and worked all their lives in close contact with the plants, animals, and agricultural pattern of the Downs. Without their assistance the most recent changes in the downland might easily be missed. Although the County Record Office and local muniment collections are excellent, a great deal of information survives only in the memories of such men.

¹ Clark, M., Lewin, J., Small, R., *The Sarsen Stones of the Marlborough Downs and their Geomorphological Implications* (Southampton University: Research Series in Geography, 1967), 3-41.

Jewell, P. A. (ed.), *The Experimental Earthwork on Overton Down in Wiltshire, 1960* (1963).

² Wiltshire Record Office, MSS 106.

³ Grose, D., *Flora of Wiltshire* (Wilts. Archaeological and Nat. History Society, 1957), 714-15.

⁴ Tansley, Sir A., *The British Islands and their Vegetation* (1939), 133-39.

⁵ White, Gilbert, *A Naturalist's Calendar* (1795), 93.

THE HERON IN WILTSHIRE

by GEOFFREY L. BOYLE

The Heronries in Wiltshire (FIG. 1) are on the whole of moderate size, made up of less than ten nests each and, as will be seen, only two have reached over 25 nests between 1954 and 1968.

BOWOOD HERONRY, on the Marquis of Lansdowne's estate near Chippenham, was referred to by the Rev. A. C. Smith, in *The Birds of Wiltshire*, as long ago as 1887, as being an old established Heronry, which for many years was the only one recognized in North Wiltshire. It used to comprise 40/60 nests but, owing to persecution, the number of occupied nests dropped to 15 in 1887. It is interesting to note that from 1954 to 1968 the average has remained about the 18 mark, with peaks and troughs in certain years due primarily to weather conditions. Until 1965 the nests were built in elms and oaks on a small island in the lake and in adjoining trees on the mainland. The trees then started to decay, some falling down and large boughs breaking away. It was at this time that Beatrice Gillam noticed a 'break away' site containing three nests in a beech stand on Clark's Hill, some quarter of a mile away from the main Heronry, and this has been used each year subsequently. Prior to this, one pair built a nest for two years in an oak some distance from the main site but did not persist.

GREAT BRADFORD WOOD HERONRY. This Heronry is of more recent origin and is not mentioned in Smith's *Birds of Wiltshire*. The number of occupied nests follows the Bowood pattern to a remarkable degree except that there was a sudden drop in the 1962 breeding season, while the bad winter of 1962/3 did not cause the dramatic reduction in nesting pairs that might have been expected. Bradford now has the largest colony in the County.

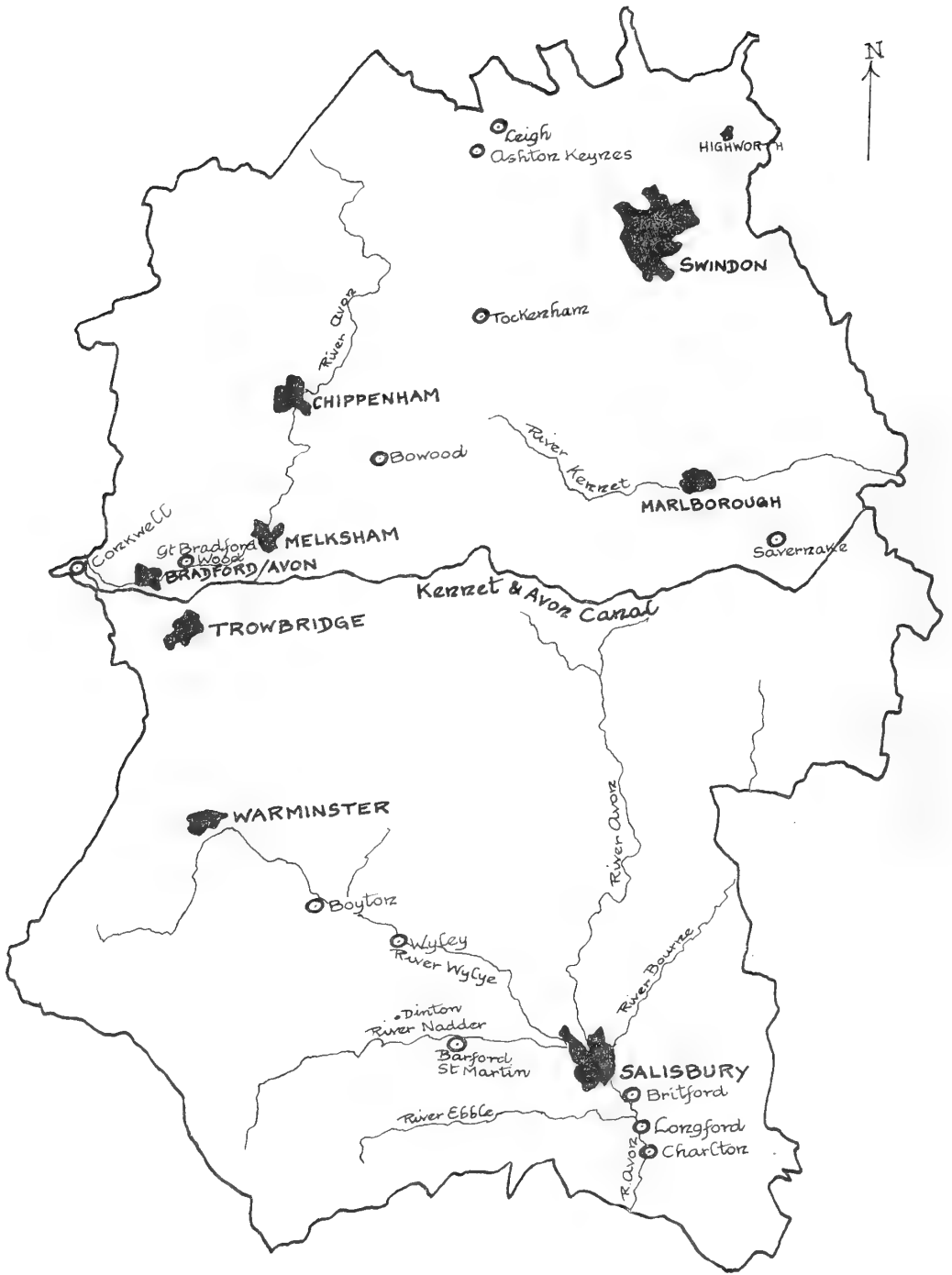
LONGFORD CASTLE, BODENHAM. This was a small colony which, according to Smith, Lord Radnor did not dignify with the title of a Heronry. The nests were situated in a clump of tall beeches between the Avon and the Ebbles. It is not known how long the Heronry has been in existence, but a Rev. A. P. Morres counted 10/12 nests in 1875.

During the 16 years under review, only one nest was occupied in both 1956 and 1957, since when there have been no further records.

LONGLEAT. From 'time immemorial'—up to about 1852 (Smith)—there had always been one or two nests on an island in the lake at the back of the house. A reward of five shillings for every Heron killed ensured the numbers being kept down. This reward was discontinued by the Marquis of Bath in 1852 with the result that nests increased to 20/30. No nest has been known since 1950 when the nesting trees on the island were cut down. The fact that there is now so much disturbance, due to crowds of visitors, makes the chances of any resumption of breeding very remote indeed.

COMPTON PARK, NEAR SALISBURY. Smith states that for 50 years prior to 1887 a Heronry was known in some parts of the park and the nests hardly seemed to vary between 11/15. No breeding records have been forthcoming for this area since the Heronry Census started in 1954.

CROUCH WOOD, HIGHWORTH, NEAR SWINDON. This Heronry was first occupied about 1879 and by 1886 the number of occupied nests had risen to 60/70, making it the largest Heronry



○ Sites of Heronries

G.R.B.

FIG. 1
Heronries in Wiltshire.

in the County at that time. The majority of nests were built in larch and carefully protected. The following year only 20/30 nests were recorded, because the Herons when feeding, particularly on the river Cole, were severely persecuted by keepers. There have been no records for the period under review and I am unable to discover what happened to this Heronry, except that local inhabitants think it ceased to exist about 70 years ago.

FONTHILL. A small Heronry used to be situated near the lower end of the lake and in 1886 eight nests were occupied (Smith). No nesting birds have been reported since the Natural History Section of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society was formed in 1946.

ASHTON KEYNES. In 1968, when this Heronry started, only three nests were occupied but in 1969 the number increased to 12, although two of these were doubtful. A tree preservation order has now been made on the site, so, with the danger of felling removed, there is every hope that the Heronry will become permanent and thrive.

DINTON. For the first time five nests were built here in 1969 and it remains to be seen whether this is merely an offshoot from Hurdcott House or is actually a new colony.

As will be seen from the table of occupied nests, several new colonies have sprung up then petered out, while others are making steady progress. This is typical of a bird which is rather fickle in its nesting habits and can easily be put off by unaccustomed activity in the vicinity such as tree felling or the use of tractors or other farm machinery.

As Frank A. Lowe states in his monograph *The Heron* (1954), there are only two factors which the species has to fear, namely, man and the weather. Fortunately, there seems to be a more enlightened view among keepers as they realize that the Heron's taste is very catholic and, although fish certainly form a proportion of their diet, they are by no means always those beloved by anglers. Many eels are taken in addition to frogs, newts, moles and even weasels, as recorded by Eric Parker, while a certain amount of vegetable matter is also consumed.

Severe winter weather can have disastrous effects on the Heron population, while very cold winds will cause early hatched young to succumb. Such a winter occurred in 1962/3; it was the coldest January in Wiltshire for a century, and the month of February was very little better. Many reports of dead or dying birds came in as the lakes and rivers froze over. Six dead were found in the Marlborough area, one dying at Seagry, while two found dead at Longford were 'skin and bone only'. This had an inevitable effect on the 1963 breeding season. Occupied nests in Bowood were reduced by half and Hurdcott had no nesting birds at all. Strangely enough, as previously mentioned, Great Bradford Wood showed a very small drop in numbers, which may be accounted for by the fact that the Heronry is situated adjacent to the river Avon, where one or two small patches of open water remained, thus allowing the birds to feed to a limited degree. Even so, they seemed desperate for anything to eat and the late Mr. A. Earl of Holt saw a Heron swoop down and snatch a Blackheaded Gull from the surface of one of the open stretches of river at Staverton.

Almost any substantial tree seems to serve as a base for a Heron's nest. In Wiltshire, oak, elm, fir, willow, spruce, alder, pine and poplar have all been used. Lowe does not mention the latter in his monograph.

It is well known that other birds will nest in close proximity to Herons; some small passerines actually use the main structure of the Heron's nest in which to build their own. In 1964 a Mallard was seen by the writer sitting on a nest about 40 ft. above the ground in the middle of the Heronry on the island in Bowood lake.

Proof that occasional birds visit us from the Continent is shown by a Heron, ringed as

Number of Occupied Nests

	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	
Bowood, near Chippenham*	17	15	16	17	22	24	23	27	26	13	13	12	10	8	8	5	GLB, BG
Great Bradford Wood	14	16	24	16	20	24	25	25	17	16	13	13	20	18	26	6	RJS
Warren Farm, Savernake	7	9	5	6	5	5	6		6	6	3	4	5	4	2	4	NWO, MCNHS, CNT
Britford, near Salisbury				1	Nil					3	10	12	12	12	11	9	PR, AJH, HJC
Hurdcott House, Barford St. Martin	12			7		1	1	2	2	10	1			Nil			GFP, RGB, ECB, ML
Home Farm, Leigh Longford Castle, Bodenharn		1		1	1	1	2	2	10	1	3	1					EJMB, RGB, DFC
Tockenham Reservoir, Hillocks Wood		1		1	Nil												IR
Boyton				2	2	3	2	2	5	5	2	2	3	4	5	4	DFC, RWW
Bathampton House, Wylve											3	2	2	4	4	4	ECB, GVF, JRIP
Conkwell**				3	4	Nil	5						4	10	12	11	JRIP
Parish of Downton (Trafalgar)						4	4	4	1	1							CNV
Ashton Keynes																	ECB, RGB, DF, AJH, PR, MKW
Dinton***														3	10	5	GLW, RGB
																	CMRP

*Where two figures are shown, two different sites have been used. Blanks indicate no record for that year.

**Conkwell Wood continues as Warleigh Wood in Somerset and these two records may represent an overspill from Warleigh.

***New Herony.

Odd Nests

1957—1 at Tockenham Manor Pond (DGB); 1957—2 in hedgerow elms near Staverton (RJS); 1964—1 at Stew Close, Chilton Foliat (DAWA); 1967—2 in Colne Park Wood, Slaughtcrford (RF); 1967—1 at Tottens Farm, N. of River Ebbble (OK).

a nestling 19.5.55 at Clairmarais (Pas-de-Calais), Ring No. P.C.A. 1971, which was found dead or dying at Chippenham 3.4.56 (*British Birds*, Vol. LII, p. 483).

The majority of Heronries are situated on the private estates of owners who are interested in their preservation and, unless there is some drastic change in outlook, the future of the Heron in Wiltshire seems fairly well assured.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My grateful thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Hussey-Freke for making enquiries regarding Crouch Wood Heronry.

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DGB	D. G. Barnes	CMRP	C. M. R. Pitman
ECB	E. C. Barnes	GFP	Col. G. F. Perkins
RGB	Mrs. Barnes	JRIP	Brig. J. R. I. Platt
EJB	E. J. Buxton	IR	Countess of Radnor
DFC	D. F. Cox	PR	The late P. Roberts
HJC	H. J. Clase	RJS	R. J. Spencer
DF	Dr. D. Fry	MCNHS	Marlborough College Natural History Society
ROF	R. O. Faulkner	CNT	C. N. Tilley
BG	Miss B. Gillam	CNV	Dr. C. N. Vaisey
AJH	A. J. Horner	GLW	G. L. Webber
JHH	J. H. Halliday	RWW	R. W. Woods
OK	The late Major Oliver Kite		
MKL	Miss M. K. Luckham		

WINTERING BLACKCAPS IN WILTSHIRE

by CYRIL RICE

A cock Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), in good shape, came continually to our garden bird table in Chippenham from 6th January until 20th January, 1969. It fed amicably with other birds, suffering challenge only from the Robin. It ate bread crumbs, cheese and rotten apples, and took berries from a cotoneaster. Although it hawked for insects among the shrubs, it spent more time on the ground than spring and summer Blackcaps appear to do. As I had never previously seen an over-wintering Blackcap I decided to examine the records of the Natural History Section, to discover just how frequently such birds have been recorded.

My search produced the following:

TABLE OF OCCURRENCES

<i>Year</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Month</i>	<i>Sex/Age</i>	<i>Place of occurrence</i>
1946	25	xii	♂	CALNE
1955	19	xi	♀	SEMINGTON
1956	30-31	i	♀	WHITEPARISH
	about 9	ii	♀	SALISBURY
1957	25	ii	♀	SALISBURY
	18	xii	♂	TROWBRIDGE
1959	19	iii	not known	BOX
1962	22	i	♂	AMESBURY
	16	xii	immature (ringed)	PEWSHAM
	31	xii	♂	ALDERBURY
1963	mid-Jan.		♀	CORSLEY
1965	10-14	i	♀	GREAT BEDWYN
1966	14	i	♀	HARNHAM
1967	12	iii	not known	PEWSHAM
1968	9-10	i	not known	GREAT BEDWYN
1969	6-20	i	♂	CHIPPENHAM

This table comprises six males, six females, one immature bird, and three birds whose sex was not recorded: a total of sixteen birds, seen during the twenty-four years, 1946-69. (This total may be increased by records of other birds seen in 1969.)

There were no records in the Wiltshire Bird Reports, 1929-1933.

There is no mention of over-wintering by Blackcaps in *The Birds of Wiltshire* by the Reverend A. C. Smith (1887), although the Reverend J. E. Harting in his *Our Summer Migrants*, published twelve years earlier, states, 'Many instances are on record of Blackcaps having remained in this country throughout the winter, and this has been noticed as particularly the case in Ireland.'

Wintering was known to occur near Bristol before 1840; one Blackcap was shot near Bath on 1st January 1873 (*The Field*), and there is even a record of a Blackcap, singing in a snowstorm in Oxfordshire on 1st December 1850. The *Handlist of the Birds of the Marlborough District* (1939, but retrospective) was edited by Guy Peirson, who makes no reference to over-wintering Blackcaps. During the period March 1939-May 1940 the Editor of *British Birds* was willing to publish records of the occurrences of Blackcaps in winter, including an unusual group of four near Bromsgrove; his willingness to publish

these notes indicates, I consider, that he thought the laggard Blackcaps, occurring in small numbers in Kent, Dorset, Hereford, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Ireland, were evidence of a phenomenon deserving close attention.

In December, 1943, David Lack published his paper on Partial Migration (*British Birds*, No. 7, Vol. xxxvii). Lack had studied the returns of the ringed nestlings of such species as the Song Thrush, Starling, Pied Wagtail, Robin, Blackbird and certain waders and sea birds which were known to exhibit partial migration, i.e. some individuals moving out of the country for winter and others staying in their breeding haunts. He does not refer to the Blackcap, but certain of his statements could apply to it. Dr. J. Stafford published an account of wintering Blackcaps in the British Isles during the period 1945-1954, in *Bird Study*, 1956. He based his account on information obtained from the British Trust for Ornithology; his figures are arranged for vice-counties. For Wiltshire, for the specified winter period for ten years, Dr. Stafford records:

N. Wilts	2	S. Wilts	13
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My search of the Section records for the same period produced:

N. Wilts	1	S. Wilts	2
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I have not been able to discover the sources of the extra records included by Dr. Stafford. I have, however, not included two late March records as I accept the view of H. G. Alexander, expressed in a letter written after the publication of Dr. Stafford's article, that birds seen then are more likely to be early arrivals than genuine over-wintering birds. Dr. Stafford refers to David Lack's paper, which gives a wider background to the case of the Blackcap.

The behaviour of this small but fluctuating, marginal group of Blackcaps which remains in this country for the winter is clearly of more than local interest, raising questions which are very difficult to answer, since there is little evidence available and, as in many field inquiries, some of it is relative to the position and density of observers, and to such incidental factors as the provision of bird tables. In Wiltshire there are more watchers based on Salisbury, Chippenham, Swindon and Marlborough than elsewhere in the county. Moreover, the wooded and sheltered valleys are more likely than the open downs or Salisbury Plain to attract Blackcaps. Certainly, most of the records come from the four areas named. Twelve of the sixteen Blackcaps were seen in gardens, six being definitely linked with bird tables. The provision of food is a lure to birds struggling to survive a severe cold spell. (Incidentally, I could discover no correlation between the weather of the preceding summers and the numbers of Blackcaps seen in the winters, but there is no question that some harsh weather forced them to become more conspicuous.) The Blackcap has shown the ability to extend its range of food, but how often it survives a winter here and goes on to breed in the following spring is not known. The most interesting pertinent record I have found shows the kind of record we need to obtain. A Blackcap (sex not stated) was ringed near Taunton in February, 1955, and re-trapped at the same place in February 1956. This is proof of survival, but the breeding history and the tale of the bird's journeyings remain unknown.

Watchers of bird tables will only occasionally be trained and experienced ornithologists. Less knowledgeable watchers sometimes confuse Marsh Tits and male Blackcaps, so some occurrences of male Blackcaps may be missed. The umber cap of the female may more readily arouse the interest of the kindly feeder of birds, and so females may be given an erroneous balance over males. The mixture of brown and black in the cap of the juvenile may be missed altogether, unless the bird is handled by a competent ringer. We must bear these circumstances in mind when we read what D. Lack and J. Stafford wrote. Lack summarizes his study of the factors of sex and age in the problem of partial migration, thus:

'In all those partially migratory species so far investigated the first year birds migrate more than the adults. Females and juvenile birds have a stronger tendency to migrate to and to continue longer in their winter quarters and males have a stronger tendency than females and juveniles to migrate to and to continue longer in their breeding quarters.'

Stafford shows, although his figures may suffer from the human inconsistencies I

outlined above, that, among the over-wintering Blackcaps he counted, females were more numerous than males in the northern part of the Blackcap's range; in the middle of the country the sexes became equal in number; in the south, and especially along the south coast, males were more numerous. The figures available for Wiltshire appear to fit into the picture created by the statements of Lack and Stafford.

Natural selection produces a variety of survival behaviour among the bird species. Some species are wholly resident; some travel long distances between their breeding haunts and their winter quarters: there are many shades of behaviour between these extremes. It is now possible to map, in general terms, the range of many species. It is interesting to note that the Blackcap's range is more flexible than that of its congener, the Garden Warbler. Whereas the latter winters exclusively south of the Sahara, the Blackcaps winter in the Mediterranean basin as well as south of the Sahara. Moreover, departure dates in autumn are later for the Blackcap than for the Garden Warbler, and recoveries of ringed birds indicate a much earlier arrival for the latter in the Iberian Peninsula. A few years ago these differences, supported by a belief that Garden Warblers did not moult until they arrived in Africa, made a very tidy description of the divergent behaviour of two closely related species, but the recent careful recording of the plumage condition of trapped birds has made it clear, although full knowledge has not yet been attained, that the incidence of moult in the Garden Warbler is by no means sharply fixed. Garden Warblers, ringed in Hertfordshire, and others in Spain, by T. S. Gladwin, showed a variety of plumage changes.

While the basic migratory movements may be fixed, minor adjustments continue to be made. In several other species individual birds lag behind the main body; clearly it is possible for such marginal fluctuations to become part of the specific behaviour pattern. It only requires a small northward extension to bring the southern part of England and the south-west of Ireland within the Blackcap's regular winter range. The wintering Blackcaps we see in Wiltshire could be visible signs of this changing pattern.

But although migration is a massive, rhythmic movement, each year individual birds must be motivated towards migration. Dr. Stafford thought that the failure of some Blackcaps to fly south might be 'due to some mischance'. It is difficult to come to any conclusion about the nature of such mischance. The Blackcap I saw on my bird table was not visibly damaged; it could fly and move, on the ground and in the bushes, normally. It is possible that over-wintering Blackcaps have abnormal pituitary glands, which are believed to be major factors in the control of a bird's migratory impulse, but to prove that their glands are abnormal would necessitate undesirable experiments. This question will have to be left unanswered, unless examination of Blackcaps found dead occurs frequently enough for a significant amount of evidence to be garnered. For solutions to the other problems we must rely on ringing returns, and again, we are involved in a slow process. From 1909-1969, 24,779 Blackcaps were ringed, and, of these, only 122 were recovered. There have been, up to May 1969, just three recoveries of Blackcaps ringed in Wiltshire.

i	Ringed	SWINDON	4.8.64	Recovered La Rede, France, 5.10.69
ii	„	WOODFORD	31.5.66	Found dead, Salisbury, 19.7.66
iii	„	PEWSHAM	19.7.67	Found dead, Tortose, Spain, 1.10.67

Beyond the fact that two of these returns form part of a body of evidence which establishes a route southwards through France and Spain, these returns tell us nothing.

We are left with questions such as these: Where had the Blackcaps travelled before they came into our gardens and, when they leave, where do they go? How many of these out-of-season visitors survive the winters? And how many of the survivors breed in the following season or seasons? The answers to these questions may show that over-wintering,

developing into a permanent extension of the Blackcap's range, is an advantage to the species. We may, therefore be watching an important modification of the Blackcap's migration pattern. We must hope that continued ringing, especially of nestlings whose place of origin will be known, followed by a significant percentage of recoveries, will enable us to answer these fascinating questions.

THE WEATHER OF 1969

by T. E. ROGERS

<i>Month</i>	<i>Temperature</i>	<i>Rainfall</i>	<i>Sunshine</i>
J	○	—	○
F	— —	—	○
M	— —	○	— —
A	○	—	++
M	○	++	— —
J	○	—	++
J	+	—	+
A	+	—	○
S	○	—	— —
O	+++	— — —	++
N	— —	○	+
D	—	○	○
<hr/>			
Totals for 1969	47·7°F	26·52 ins.	1,459 hrs.
<hr/>			
Yearly average figures (Marlborough)	47·8°F	32·79 ins.	1,423 hrs.

N.B. In all three columns: ○ signifies 'average'; — means 'distinctly below average'; — — means 'very much below average'. The + and ++ signs have comparable positive meanings.

While most of Britain experienced a cooler than average year in 1969, the mean temperature for Marlborough was almost identical with the average for the past hundred years. Sunshine was only marginally above the norm, but it was the driest year since 1964.

Winter was undistinguished. Snow fell on three occasions in February, but it did not cover the ground for more than seven days altogether. It is true that both February and March were much cooler than usual, but this was not the result of excessively low minimum temperatures.

With the arrival of April, however, things began to look up. Easter was probably the sunniest of this century, with 72·8 hours of sunshine being recorded over the seven day period which began on 3rd April (Maundy Thursday) and, indeed, the whole month was much brighter than usual, with only June and July being able to boast of more sun.

As so often *seems* to happen, the start of the cricket season was the signal for the skies to open and May can claim the dubious distinction of being the wettest month of 1969. (In fairness, it should be pointed out that the months March–June are the driest on average.) But, if May was wet, the Summer as a whole was much drier than usual. Wiltshire was

spared the storms which brought heavy rainfall to some places in the south and west in July and August, and the period from June to October, inclusive, yielded only 6.86 inches of rain, about half the average. Indeed, October was the most notable month of 1969. It was the driest ever recorded in Marlborough (0.2 inches) and, in addition, although there was quite a lot of fog, October was sunny and very warm, air frost only occurring on the last two nights.

November and December were both cold, with snow coming earlier than usual (18th November), but otherwise there was little else of note.

We cannot consider 1969 to have been a 'classic' year in any meteorological sense.

WILTSHIRE BIRD NOTES FOR 1969

RECORDER: G. L. Webber. RECORDS COMMITTEE: Mrs. R. G. Barnes, M.B.O.U.;
G. L. Boyle, M.B.O.U.; G. J. Bridgman, M.B.O.U.; Dr. E. A. R. Ennion, M.A., M.B.O.U.

I would like to thank all contributors for their efforts in returning completed record slips so promptly.

The early months of the year were undistinguished and produced little of interest. Spring passage began much as usual with a sprinkling of Wheatear and Chiffchaffs in March. This early passage did not continue for very long as wintry conditions returned and persisted well into April, delaying the majority of migrants. Whilst a few individuals of most species arrived about their usual time, the bulk of passage was extremely late.

When migrants did finally arrive they found that growth of vegetation was very retarded, causing a lack of suitable nesting sites.

Sedge Warblers seemed to be in lower numbers than usual and the Whitethroat was an extremely uncommon bird.

Amongst interesting species observed during the spring was a Crane, the first for the county, seen near Trowbridge. A Spotted Crake was killed by a cat at Idmiston; Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits and Ruff were seen on riverside marshes at two sites.

Autumn migration was not very spectacular, probably due to the anticyclonic weather allowing most species to overfly the county. The Kite at Fyfield was of great interest and it remained in the area for at least two months.

The autumn wader records at Swindon S.F. are again treated separately and are listed in tabular form. The most interesting species were Little Stint and Curlew Sandpiper; the latter were stragglers from the large influx into Britain during the autumn. Little Ringed Plover would now appear to be a regular visitor to this S.F.

Towards the end of the year Slavonian Grebe were seen at Wilton Water and Erlestoke Lake and a Black-necked Grebe was at Corsham Lake for several days in December.

The following abbreviations are used in the text: SF, Sewage Farm; GP, Gravel Pit; BB, British Birds.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

C. F. Allan	CFA	H. E. M. Kay	HEMK
T. Andrews	TA	Brig. S. P. M. Kent	SPMK
Mrs. R. G. Barnes	RGB	R. Kersley	RK
D. G. Barnes	DGB	N. King	NK
J. Bowden	JB	Mrs. V. Lawson	VL
G. L. Boyle	GLB	J. R. Lawson	JRL
Mrs. V. E. Brown	VEB	W/O. J. Latham	JL
E. Browning	EB	J. E. Major	JEM
E. J. M. Buxton	EJMB	B. Macdonald	BM
Mrs. D. Bracey	DB	F. W. C. Merritt	FWCM

Miss M. Cobern	MC	J. Pedley	JP
G. Cohen	GC	C. M. R. Pitman	CMRP
J. G. Cookson	JGC	C. Rice	CR
R. Cawley	RC	J. Robinson	JR
Miss B. Cowley	BC	A. J. Rycroft	AJR
Mrs. D. Coaker	DMC	J. C. Rolls	JCR
R. G. Frankum	RGF	J. Sartin	JS
R. Faulkner	RCF	M. H. Smith	MHS
Mrs. E. V. Forbes	EVF	E. G. Smith	EGS
K. G. Forbes	KGF	A. Smith	AS
D. W. Free	DWF	B. M. Stratton	BMS
G. H. Forster	GHF	L. F. Stearn	LFS
M. Foxwell	MF	Mrs. J. Stopford Beale	JSB
D. E. Fry	DEF	Mrs. S. Tyler	SJT
R. Fuller	RF	J. F. Traylen	JFT
J. R. Govett	JRG	P. Toynton	PT
Miss B. Gillam	BG	G. L. Webber	GLW
Mrs. I. Gandy	IG	H. R. Williamson	HRW
K. J. Herber	KJH	Lady Young	RMY
J. N. Hollyer	JNH	I. W. Young	IWY
A. J. Horner	AJH	Marlborough College Natural	
R. J. J. Hunt	RJJH	History Society	MCNHS
G. Hyatt	GH	Salisbury Natural History Society	SNHS

5. **Great Crested Grebe.** 24 at Coate Water, 29th Mar. (GLW). Breeding noted at Ashton Keynes, Bowood, Corsham, Erlestoke and Shearwater (RGB, BG, CR, JCR, PT, GLW).
7. **Slavonian Grebe.** One present at Wilton Water, 22nd Nov.; a detailed description supplied (JGC). Another bird at Erlestoke, 28th Dec., was most probably of this species (JCR, PT).
8. **Black-necked Grebe.** One at Corsham Lake from 21st/31st Dec. Full description supplied, uptilted bill clearly seen (JCR, PT).
9. **Little Grebe.** Breeding reported at Ashton Keynes, Corsham, Erlestoke, on the R. Kennet and the Kennet and Avon Canal (BG, MCNHS, JCR, PT).
30. **Heron.** A new heronry with 5 nests was reported at Dinton (CMRP). There was little change at the other heronries and birds were seen regularly at suitable feeding sites throughout the county.
45. **Mallard.** The following are maximum counts from the major waters: *c.* 120 Braydon Pond., 18th Jan. (RGB); *c.* 900 Bowood Lake, 4th Sept. (JCR); *c.* 320 Corsham Lake, 24th Oct. (JCR); *c.* 300 Fonthill Lake, 2nd Dec. (PT); *c.* 600 Coate Water, 15th Nov. (GLW); *c.* 100 Wilton Water, 6th Dec. (JGC).
46. **Teal.** Ducklings seen on the R. Avon, the first breeding record since 1965 (SPMK). Seen in small numbers at many places in the county, counts at major waters as follows: *c.* 60 Coate, 9th Dec. (MCNHS); 39 Corsham, 8th Feb. (JCR); *c.* 100 Fonthill, 30th Oct. (PT, LFS); present at Wilton throughout the winter with a maximum of 20 (JGC, MCNHS).
47. **Garganey.** A male at Swindon SF, 3rd/8th Apl. (MCNHS, GLW). An eclipse male at the same site, 9 Aug. (GLW); another eclipse male at Corsham, 5th Sept. (JCR).
49. **Gadwall.** Seen regularly at Fonthill Lake, with a maximum of 14 (PT, LFS). Single birds reported during Oct. from Ashton Keynes, Corsham and Malmesbury (EJMB, JCR, MCNHS).

50. **Wigeon.** Few records during the year and these mostly concerned single birds; 18 present at Coate, 25th Dec. (GLW); 5 at Corsham, 2nd Jan. (JCR).
52. **Pintail.** Two on Ramsbury Lake, 16th Feb. (JRL, VL).
53. **Shoveler.** Recorded in ones and twos at Coate during Mar. and a pair stayed until 2nd May (GLW). Up to 9 at Fonthill, during Jan./Feb. and 4 there in Oct. (GLB, PT, LFS). 3 at Corsham, 10th Oct./13th Nov. (JCR).
54. **Red-crested Pochard.** A female at Queens Park, Swindon, from early Jan. until 16th Mar. (BM, GLW); another bird at Wilton Water, 29th Nov. (JGC).
55. **Scaup.** A female seen at Ashton Keynes, 14th Dec. Points noted: darker than female Tufted, prominent white facial patches and no sign of crest (BG).
56. **Tufted Duck.** One breeding record from R. Wylve (SJT). Maximum numbers at major waters: 66 Ashton Keynes, 30th Nov. (BG); 12 Bowood, 28th Dec. (JCR); 24 Braydon, 18th Jan. (RGB); 12 Corsham, 19th Jan. (JCR); 8 Coate, 23rd Feb. (GLW); c. 40 Fonthill, 27th Jan. (BMS); 15 Shearwater, 1st Jun. (MHS); 16 Wilton, 11th Oct. (JGC).
57. **Pochard.** There were no breeding records this year but birds were present in fair numbers during the winter months. Maximum numbers: 200 Ashton Keynes, 14th Dec. (BG); 23 Bowood, 8th Mar. (JCR); 9 Braydon, 18th Jan. (RGB); 44 Corsham, 27th Dec. (JCR); 22 Edington, 24th Mar. (GLB); 30 Coate, 8th Mar. (GLW); 47 Fonthill 7th Dec. (PT); 18 East Town Lake, 18th Jan. (EGS); 13 Wilton, 26th Dec. (JGC, MCNHS).
60. **Goldeneye.** An adult male at Longleat, 14th Feb. (JFT); a female Corsham, 5/15th Feb. (JCR); a pair at Ashton Keynes, 22nd Mar. (GLW); 2 brown headed birds at the same place, 14th Dec. (BG).
70. **Goosander.** A first winter male Corsham, 29th Nov. (JCR).
Grey Geese. Two skeins, c. 200 in total, flying south over Tockenham, 31st Jan. (DGB); 35 in flight over Swindon heading south west, 29th Dec. (BM).
76. **White-fronted Goose.** Two in flight over Corsham, 2nd Jan. (JCR).
81. **Barnacle Goose.** One present at Wilton from 1st Nov. until the end of the year. It was an adult bird, unringed, but this does not preclude the possibility that the bird might be an escape.
82. **Canada Goose.** Present at Wilton throughout the year and breeding attempted. Maximum number there 38, 19th Oct. (JGC, JCR, PT). Other records were a pair at Ashton Keynes, 22nd Mar. and 8 at Coate, 14th Jun. (GLW); 16 flying over Colerne airfield, 26th Nov. (RK).
91. **Buzzard.** There were very many sight records during the year evenly spread throughout the county. Four pairs were known to breed, the localities are not being disclosed in the hope that the slow spread will continue. A pair were seen to attempt a food pass in flight, three times in rapid succession (RCF).
93. **Sparrowhawk.** Sight records very numerous and 5 pairs known to rear young.
94. **Goshawk.** A female seen in flight over Swindon and what was probably the same bird at Ravensroost, 8th Apl. and 23rd Nov. Points noted: very large size, bigger than nearby Crow. Underparts white barred dark with heavier barring on the tail, under tail coverts white. Wings broad based, powerful flapping gliding flight (BM, GLW). This was probably the female that escaped from a falconer near Cirencester early in the year, although jesses were not seen.

95. **Kite.** A bird briefly seen at Fyfield by (NK) on 8th Sept. and thought to be of this species; the same observer had a much better view on 17th Sept. when the bird was well seen in company with two Buzzards. Subsequently the bird was seen by (RF, BG, MCNHS) on dates up to 22nd Oct. Points noted: considerably larger than Buzzard, long angled wings, primaries deeply emarginated, forked tail and prominent white patches on underwing. Generally brown in colour with a much lighter head.
- Harrier sp.** A presumed male Hen Harrier seen very briefly in flight near Woodborough, 24th Nov. (DMC).
100. **Hen Harrier.** A female in flight near Chitterne showing prominent white rump, 15th Feb. (KJH); another female near Great Wishford, 4th Nov. (JCR).
102. **Montagu's Harrier.** An immature near Coombe Bissett, 7th Sept. (CFA). General description: dark brown with streaking above, wings lighter with dark primaries; breast rufous; tailed barred and a white patch on rump.
104. **Hobby.** First seen at Fyfield, 4th May (MCNHS); there were four sight records during the year but only one breeding record. Last seen Corsham, 13th Sept. (JCR).
105. **Peregrine.** Only two records, at Edington, 9th Mar., and Bratton, 26th Dec. (MHS). These may refer to an escaped falconer's bird.
107. **Merlin.** A female seen making an attack on a Linnet flock near Salisbury, 27th Mar. (PT); 1 in flight Marlborough, 27th Dec. (MCNHS).
110. **Kestrel.** Seems to be maintaining its numbers; numerous sight records and 5 definite breeding records. One observer saw 10 birds in the air together at Tan Hill (GLB).
115. **Red-legged Partridge.** A covey of 10 seen at Great Cheverell during Oct. (BG, EGS, MHS). A pair seen at Barton Bottom, 17th May, and a single bird at Man's Head, 21st Jun. (MCNHS). Only 1 breeding record, a nest found containing 9 eggs near Yatton Keynell (JCR).
116. **Partridge.** A melanistic bird seen near Trowbridge, 9th Jul. (EGS, MHS).
117. **Quail.** Although only reported by 4 observers and the (MCNHS), these observations covered a wide area of the central and northern parts of the county. It would appear that at least 30 birds were involved.
119. **Crane.** A single bird in flight near Trowbridge, 11th Jun. The following points were included in the description supplied: crown red, head and neck black with white on sides. Primaries and trailing edge of wing black with the primaries widely separated. Body grey, lighter below (EGS, MHS). This record accepted by 'BB' rarities committee.
120. **Water Rail.** Numerous winter records, but only 1 that might have been a summering bird, at Marlborough, 30th Apl. (MCNHS). The earliest autumn records were 3 at Corsham, in Sept. (JCR).
121. **Spotted Crane.** Two records, one brought in dead by a cat at Idmiston, 7th Jun. (GHF). The other bird was heard calling at Corsham, 13th Aug.; the calls were checked against a recording of this species (JCR).
127. **Coot.** An albino at Coate, 12th Oct.; this bird was white with exception of a small black throat patch and some flecking on the secondaries (GLW).
- The autumn wader passage at the Swindon SF is listed on page 26.
131. **Oystercatcher.** Two in flight Idmiston, 13th Aug. (GHF).

133. **Lapwing.** Several large flocks were noted, including *c.* 3,000 near Wroughton, 26th Jan. (GLW); *c.* 2,000 in flight at Colerne airfield, 6th Aug. (RK); *c.* 600 on plough near Blacklands Golf Course, 23rd Oct. (BG). Several birds were watched attacking a Partridge, striking it about the head and finally knocking it over, 9th Jun. (GLB).
134. **Ringed Plover.** One at Corsham Lake, 5th Sept. (JCR).
135. **Little Ringed Plover.** Two at Seagry GP on 18th Apl. (RGB). This species is one of the commonest waders at the Swindon SF, see table.
140. **Golden Plover.** Large flocks were seen as follows: *c.* 1,100 near Wroughton, 26th Jan. and 262 at Hackpen, 2nd Feb. (GLW); *c.* 500 near Devizes, 23rd Nov. (MHS); *c.* 250 Devizes, 5th Jan. (BG). A flock of *c.* 20 in flight at Winterbourne Stoke, 29th Apl., a late date (GLB). The first records in autumn were 58 at Wroughton, 31st Aug. (GLW); *c.* 50 Colerne, 6th Sept. (RK). *c.* 70 were reported at Little Bedwyn, 28th Nov. (RGF).
145. **Snipe.** *c.* 120 in water meadows near the R. Bourne, 24th Mar. (GLB); *c.* 100 in water meadows at Everleigh, 10/25th Oct. (PT).
147. **Jack Snipe.** One at Wanborough, 1st Mar. (AJR); also seen at Lacock GP, 3, 2nd Feb.; 4, 2nd Mar.; 5, 30th Mar. and 1, 2nd Apl. (JCR).
148. **Woodcock.** A nest with 4 eggs at Somerford, 27th May (IWY). Roding noted at Bowood (JCR); seen during the breeding season in Savernake (MCNHS).
150. **Curlew.** Several sight records during the spring and autumn. No definite breeding records but majority of regular sites were occupied and one new site reported.
151. **Whimbrel.** One seen near Casterly Camp, at close range on the ground and in flight, call heard 27th Apl. (SPMK).
154. **Black-tailed Godwit.** Three in water meadows of R. Bourne, 23rd Mar., and 2 the following day (GLB); 2 at the same site, 25th Mar. (PT).
155. **Bar-tailed Godwit.** One in summer plumage at Leckford Bottom, 3rd Apl., details supplied (JLL). This is only the third record of this species for the county.
156. **Green Sandpiper.** Present at the Swindon SF throughout the year and up to 11 there in the autumn. Single birds were seen as follows: Seagry, 19/10th Apl. (RGB); Corsham, 1st Jul., 15th Aug., 23rd Aug. (JCR); Fonthill, 19th Aug. (GLB); Ashton Keynes, 14th Sept. (BG); R. Avon, Malmesbury, 6th Dec. (EJMB); 4 at Trowbridge, 29th Aug. (JRG).
157. **Wood Sandpiper.** See table.
159. **Common Sandpiper.** First seen at Coate, 24th Mar. (EB); Wilton, 17th Apl. (MCNHS). Last seen Ashton Keynes, 5th Oct. (BG); Chippenham, 12th Oct. (TA).
161. **Redshank.** Four breeding records received and several passage sight records.
162. **Spotted Redshank.** Heard calling during the night over Swindon, 1st Sept. (GLW); 1 at Swindon SF, full description supplied, 9th Sept. (BM).
165. **Greenshank.** Other than Swindon SF, only 2 records: 4 at Fonthill Lake, 19th Aug. (GLB); 1 Corsham Lake, 1st Sept. (JCR).
171. **Little Stint.** One at the Swindon SF with 2 Dunlin, 16th Sept. (BM) and again the following day (GLW).
178. **Dunlin.** Two in water meadows by the R. Bourne, 24th Mar. (GLB).

179. **Curlew Sandpiper.** The only records of this species were at the Swindon SF although large numbers occurred elsewhere during the autumn. Three at Swindon SF, 30th/31st Aug.; 1 at the same site, 1st/2nd Sept. (BM, GLW).
184. **Ruff.** Three in water meadows of R. Bourne, 23rd Mar. (GLB); 1 at the same place, 25th Mar. (PT). Birds were present at a suitable breeding site until late May when a male was killed by a predator (BM).
189. **Stone Curlew.** First seen 1 Apl. near Tilshead (JCR). Only one breeding record, from the south of the county (GHF).
198. **Great Black-backed Gull.** Two near Edington, 26th Jan. (MHS); single birds at Swindon SF, 20th Jul., 24th Aug. (GLW).
199. **Lesser Black-backed Gull.** Seen regularly in ones and two throughout the winter in the Swindon area and up to 120 at the SF during summer (GLW); c. 66 seen near Great Cheverell, 5th Oct. (BG, PT); c. 20 at Bratton, 27th Dec. (PT).
200. **Herring Gull.** Five near Devizes, 5th Jan. (BG); c. 12 at Swindon SF, 24th Aug. (GLW); c. 36 Great Cheverell, 30th Mar. (PT); 4 at Corsham, 30th Mar. and 5 there 27th Dec. (JCR).
201. **Common Gull.** Probably the commonest gull in the north of the county.
208. **Black-headed Gull.** Regular throughout the year in the Swindon area. Very large flock at Bowood, 16th Feb. (BG); c. 300 at Corsham, 6th Dec. (JCR).
212. **Black Tern.** One at Corsham Lake, 4th May and another there 6th Sept. (JCR). Single birds at Coate Water, 6th Aug. and 20th Aug. (GLW); 4 at Ashton Keynes, 14th Sept. (BG).
- Common/Arctic Tern.** One at Ashton Keynes, 14th Sept. (BG).
217. **Common Tern.** One at Corsham Lake, 23rd Aug. and 2 on 5th Sept. (JCR); 1 at Coate Water, 14th Sept. (GLW).
218. **Arctic Tern.** One at Coate Water, 24th May (GLW).
235. **Turtle Dove.** First seen Roundway, 28th Apl. (BG); Shrewton, 29th Apl. (GLB). Late dates: Swindon, 10th Aug., and Fyfield, 5th Sept. (GLW). 18 were seen feeding together at Steeple Ashton, 4th Jan. (GLB).
- Collared Dove.** No new sites reported but numbers seem to be building up in the earlier colonized areas.
237. **Cuckoo.** First recorded at Swindon, 13th Apl. (GLW); Sherrington, 17th Apl. (KGF); Gutch Common, 19th Apl. (JEM); Ludgershall, 20th Apl. (GLB). Late dates: Swindon, 28th Aug. and 6th Sept. (BM, GLW).
241. **Barn Owl.** Only 2 breeding records were received, but sightings of single birds were frequent throughout the county.
246. **Little Owl.** Six definite breeding records and very many sight records, one of which concerned no less than 8 birds (JGC). 2 were found dead on a gibbet near Calne (SJT). Still below 1962 numbers in some areas.
247. **Tawny Owl.** Fewer sight records than usual and no breeding records.
248. **Long-eared Owl.** One breeding record and two sight records, 1 at Chitterne, (SJT); 2 near Roundway mid Dec. (JS).
249. **Short-eared Owl.** Seen regularly at Fyfield between 10 Feb. /3rd Apl. (BG, NK, MCNHS).

252. **Nightjar.** A nest containing 2 eggs found in felled woodland in the south of the county (JEM). Heard calling in Savernake (MCNHS) and at Longleat (EGS, MHS).
255. **Swift.** First seen Clarendon, 20th Apl. (SNHS); Swindon, 22nd Apl. (GLW); Lacock, 25th Apl. (PT). Late records: Chippenham and Neston, 14th Aug. (TA, JCR); Aldbourne, 16th Aug. (BG); Swindon, 18th Aug. (GLW); Cole Park, 26th Aug. (EJMB).
258. **Kingfisher.** No definite breeding records but seen regularly at many suitable sites.
261. **Hoopoe.** One seen near Redlynch on 8th Jun.; it flew from a lawn carrying away food in its bill (JP). Also reported at Ramsbury on 17th Aug. by Lt. Col. W. Kingston. What was probably a bird of this species seen near Fonthill, 10th Jul. (JB).
262. **Green Woodpecker.** More sight records than in recent years; presumably still building up its numbers. Breeding records received from Corsham Park (JCR); Savernake (MCNHS); Tockenham (IWY).
263. **Greater Spotted Woodpecker.** Breeding records received from Steeple Ashton (EGS); Corsham (JCR). Numerous sight records including juveniles in late summer.
264. **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.** Regularly seen but only one breeding record, newly fledged young at Corsham (JCR).
274. **Swallow.** First seen Tockenham, 7th Apl. (DGB); Kellaways, 11th Apl. (BG); Idmiston, 9th Apl. (GHF). 2 albino juveniles at Hilperton (GLB). Late records, Upavon, 12th Oct. (SPMK); Great Cheverell, 12th Oct. (PT); Colerne, 16th Oct. (RK); Chippenham, 23rd Oct. (TA).
276. **House Martin.** Early records: several at Coate Water, 18th Apl. (GLW); Chippenham, 22nd Apl. (TA); Upavon, 22nd Apl. (SPMK). An albino found dying at Devizes (BG). Late dates, Swindon, 11th Oct. (GLW); Chippenham, 12th Oct. (TA); Lavington, 12th Oct. (PT).
277. **Sand Martin.** One at Coate Water, 23rd Mar. (GLW); Chippenham, 28th Mar. (TA). Birds continued to nest in the drainage holes of a street wall in Marlborough (MCNHS). Last seen, Chippenham, 15th Sept. (TA); Corsham, 20th Sept. (JCR); Fyfield, 28th Sept. (BM, GLW).
280. **Carrion Crow.** One seen attempting and finally succeeding in picking up and carrying off a hedgehog that had been killed on the road (GLB).
282. **Rook.** A pair nest building at Seagry, 26th Jan., 3 nests had been started by 28th Jan. All building ceased with the return of cold weather in Feb. (RGB).
285. **Nutcracker.** A bird was still present on the Rushmore estate at Tollard Royal until at least 15th Jan. (RJH).
292. **Marsh Tit.** A pair of birds seen taking thistle seed heads by plucking them from the plant whilst in flight and then carrying the heads off to eat in a nearby tree (GLB).
293. **Willow Tit.** Seen regularly in the Landford area and probably bred there, a new site (RJH). Also bred at Coate and East Knoyle (GLW, JEM).
294. **Long-tailed Tit.** Numerous sight records and more breeding records than in recent years.
296. **Nuthatch.** Only 1 certain breeding record but a few more sight records than usual. The breeding record concerned a pair that used a nest box in a garden at Salisbury. These birds enlarged the entrance hole and then constructed a mud 'porch roof' on the inside of the box (BMS).

299. **Wren.** Heard singing at night Great Cheverell (PT). A bird watched carrying nest material into a disused woodpecker's hole at Bedwyn Common (JGC). Numbers in the Swindon area have at last regained their pre-1962/63 winter level (GLW).
300. **Dipper.** Reported near Stratford Tony (RMY); 1 on the R. Kennet at Marlborough (MCNHS); 3 breeding pairs noted (SJT, LFS).
301. **Mistle Thrush.** *c.* 40 in Roundway Park, 13th Aug. (BG); *c.* 150 Wincombe, 19th Aug. (JEM).
302. **Fieldfare.** Up to 1,000 roosting at Erlestoke during Jan. and Feb. (PT). Last seen: Chippenham, 26th Apl. (TA); Fyfield, 4th May (MCNHS). Early autumn records: Corsham, 16th Oct. (JCR); Chippenham, 24th Oct. (CR, TA); Everleigh, 25th Oct. (GLB).
304. **Redwing.** Last seen, Lacock, 9th Apl. (JCR); 1 found freshly dead at Marlborough, 8th May (MCNHS). First in autumn: Swindon, 10th Oct. (GLW); Corsham, 12th Oct. (JCR).
307. **Ring Ouzel.** A female at Aldbourne, 28th Apl. (IG); a male on the Imber ranges, 7th Sept. (BG, EGS, MHS).
311. **Wheatear.** Early records: Tilshead, 9th Mar. (SNHS); Trowbridge, 15th Mar. (EGS); Overton Down, 27th Mar. (MCNHS). At least 6 pairs known to have bred. Late dates: Clatford Down, 14th Oct. (MCNHS); Colerne, 16th Oct. (RK); Westbury, 24th Oct. (SPMK).
317. **Stonechat.** 50 sight records were received, an increase over recent years; the majority of these were in the winter months. Two successful breeding pairs reported, the first for many years (JL).
318. **Whinchat.** 8 breeding records, an increase over recent years. Only one early spring record, Chippenham, 29th Apl. (TA). Late dates: Beacon Hill, 20th Sept. (CR); Overton Down, 28th Sept. (GLW); Lacock, 9th Oct. (JCR).
320. **Redstart.** First seen at Upper Upham, 12th Apl. (JNH); Coate Water, 13th Apl. (GLW). Late dates: North Wraxall, 16th Sept. (SJT); Chippenham, 13th Oct. (CR).
322. **Nightingale.** Early dates; Bowden Hill, 13th Apl. (TA); Trowbridge, 20 Apl. (MHS). One or two regular breeding sites appeared to be deserted.
327. **Grasshopper Warbler.** Reported regularly during the breeding season with 3 definite breeding records. Early dates: Erlestoke, 20 Apl. (PT); Chippenham, Savernake and Steeple Ashton, 25 Apl. (TA, MCNHS, MHS). Last seen: Swindon SF and Corsham Lake, 13th Sept. (GLW, JCR); Imber, 2nd Oct (MHS).
333. **Reed Warbler.** Only reported from 3 areas: Corsham Lake, 26th Apl. to 27th Sept., 10 pairs bred (JCR); Coate Water, 1st May to 14th Sept., *c.* 26 pairs bred (GLW). At least 2 pairs bred at Erlestoke (PT).
337. **Sedge Warbler.** Early dates: Bowood, 5 Apl. (JCR); Coate Water, 20 Apl. (GLW); Chippenham, 25th Apl. (TA). Breeding numbers were much lower than usual at Coate. Late dates: Chippenham, 15th Sept. (TA); Coate and Corsham, 20th Sept. (GLW, JCR).
343. **Blackcap.** Two wintering males were reported, 1 seen frequently in a garden at Chippenham from 6/28th Jan. (CR). The other bird was present in another garden in Swindon, 18/19th Feb. and had been seen previously nearby (DB). Early passage dates: West Kington, 28th Mar. (CR); Corsham Lake, 7th Apl. (JCR); Steeple Ashton, 17th Apl. (EGS, MHS). Late dates: Steeple Ashton, 13th Sept. (MHS); Corsham Lake, 24th Sept. (JCR); Rockley, 27th Sept. (MCNHS).

346. **Garden Warbler.** Fewer records than usual. Early dates: Coate Water, 4th May (GLW); Cheverell, 11th May (PT). Late dates: Corsham Lake, 22nd Aug. (JCR); Fyfield, 28th Sept. (GLW).
347. **Whitethroat.** This species extremely rare throughout the county and only 3 breeding records received. First seen: Bowood, 19th Apl. (JCR); Brinkworth, 20th Apl. (GLW). Last seen: Roundway, 8th Sept. (BG); Swindon, 20th Sept. (GLW).
348. **Lesser Whitethroat.** Early dates: Bowood, 3rd May (JCR); Coate Water, Chippenham, 4th May (GLW, CR). Last seen: Corsham Lake, 27th Aug. (JCR); Swindon SF, 7th Sept. (GLW).
354. **Willow Warbler.** First heard in song: Corsham, 4th Apl. (JCR), Cole Park, 7th Apl. (EJMB); Upavon, 8th Apl. (SPMK). Late dates: Swindon, 6th Sept. (GLW); 1 trapped Corsham, 20th Sept. (JCR).
356. **Chiffchaff.** Early dates: Erlestoke, 8th Mar. (BG); Bowood and Wilton, 15th Mar. (JCR, JGC); East Town, 18th Mar. (EGS). Last seen or heard: Swindon SF, 4th Oct. (GLW); Chippenham, 5th Oct. (TA); Stonehenge, 20th Oct. (SPMK).
357. **Wood Warbler.** Only 2 records, one of which concerned a nest with young (JEM, BMS).
364. **Goldcrest.** Frequently seen during the winter months but few summer records. A marked influx to the north of the county in mid Nov.
365. **Firecrest.** Two trapped and ringed at Erlestoke, 1 on 22nd Feb. and the other 19th Mar. A full description submitted (JCR, PT).
366. **Spotted Flycatcher.** First seen: Marlborough, 6th May (MCNHS); Upavon, 10th May (SPMK); Corsham, 14th May (JCR). Late dates: Fyfield, 5th Sept. (GLW); Marlborough, 14th Sept. (MCNHS); Bowood, 20th Sept. (JCR).
368. **Pied Flycatcher.** A juvenile at Chippenham, 15/19th Sept. (TA), description supplied.
376. **Tree Pipit.** In song at Weaverv, 7th Apl. (GLW); several breeding records from suitable habitat. No late dates received.
380. **Pied Wagtail.** A large roost reported at Devizes, *c.* 1,000 birds in Typha on the Kennet and Avon Canal, Nov. (BG). Smaller roosts at Coate, Lacock and Chippenham. A probable White Wagtail seen at Swindon SF in Sept. (MCNHS).
381. **Grey Wagtail.** A total of 7 breeding records received, the majority from the west of the county. Many sight records during the winter months more evenly spread.
382. **Yellow Wagtail.** First seen at Chippenham, 20th Mar. (TA); Neston, 4th Apl. (JCR). Bred commonly in the north of the county and 5 pairs were reported at Stratford in the south (AJH). Late dates: Marlborough, 2nd Oct. (MCNHS); Cole Park, 6th Nov. (EJMB).
384. **Great Grey Shrike.** One at Charlton All Saints, 27th Feb. (SNHS).
388. **Red-backed Shrike.** One pair attempted to breed in a central area.
391. **Hawfinch.** In song at Ravensroost, 1st Mar. (BM, GLW); 1 in flight Landford, 3rd Dec. (RJJH).
393. **Goldfinch.** A late spring flock of *c.* 100 flying over Chisbury Wood (JGC).
394. **Siskin.** Up to 4 at Erlestoke, 2nd Mar. (PT, JCR); 8th Mar. (BG); Bowood, 29th Mar. (JCR); 4 at Chilmark, 13th Apl. (SNHS).

397. **Redpoll.** No records of this species during the breeding season. 3 at Swindon SF, 10th Sept. and 11th Oct. (GLW); 5 there, 9th Nov. (BM); 4 at Erlestoke, 16th Feb. and 2 there, 30th Mar. (PT); 2 at Wilton Water, 16th Feb. (JGC). Seen in ones and twos at Marlborough during Feb. and 1, 5th Apl. (MCNHS).
407. **Chaffinch.** *c.* 300 at Yatton Keynell, 12th Nov. (TA).
408. **Brambling.** Fewer than usual; most records of single birds. *c.* 70 Upper Upham, 13th Apl. (JNH); *c.* 50 Savernake, 24th Jan. (MCNHS); *c.* 30 near Salisbury, 21st Mar. (PT); *c.* 150 Pitton, 13th Dec. (AJH, DEF).
410. **Corn Bunting.** A flock of *c.* 100 at Edington, 19th Jan. (MHS). One in song at a height of *c.* 900 ft. on Milk Hill, not normally in song much above the 600 ft. contour (AJR).
415. **Cirl Bunting.** Heard in song at Winterbourne Earls, 20th Jul. (IWY). Bred near Swindon (GH).
423. **Snow Bunting.** A first winter male at Roundway. 11th Jan., present until 1st Mar., when it was joined by a second bird. Two were present until 4th Mar. and then a single bird until 2nd Apl. (FWCM, BG, GLB, RGB, EGS, MHS).
425. **Tree Sparrow.** No large flocks reported; maximum *c.* 40 Great Cheverell, 13th/21st Dec. (PT).

RINGING REPORT FOR 1969

by *Roderick Faulkner*

Key to the initials of ringers who have contributed to this Report, and whose names appear in the test:

D. A. W. Alexander	DAWA	J. J. Latham	JJL
E. J. M. Buxton	EJMB	J. C. Rolls	JCR
J. L. S. Cobb	JLSC	Mrs. S. J. Tyler	SJT
R. Creighton	RC	G. L. Webber	GLW
D. E. Fry and F. J. Horner	F & H	M. J. Wyatt	MJW

After noting the sad decline of ringing in Wiltshire in the last Report, I have to mention a further reduction in activity, except in the case of J. C. Rolls, who ringed over 2,000 birds during the year. The totals are also somewhat reduced as details of ringing have not been received from a few ringers.

It may be of interest to set out the individual totals received:

	<i>free-flying</i>	<i>pull</i>
EJMB	182	70
JLSC	191	—
RC	46	—
JJL	136	—
JCR	1,397	616
SJT	174	99
GLW	426	186
MJW	215	—
Totals	2,767	971

List of Selected Recoveries of Birds Ringed in Wiltshire

Pull=nestling; FG=full-grown; X=found dead or killed; 1Y=first year; Ad=adult; V=found and released.

LITTLE OWL	FG	Grittleton	9.9.69	MJW
ED 86.601	X	Beckington (Somerset)	(15.10.69)	18 SSW
KINGFISHER	1Y	Marlborough	28.8.68	DAWA
SE 30.156	V	Rye Meads (Herts.)	26.7.69	75 ENE
SWALLOW	Pull	Pitton, Salisbury	3.7.68	F & H
HH 65.920	X	Woodstock (Oxon.)	ca 22.5.69	52 NNE
SAND MARTIN	1Y	Calne	24.8.68	JCR
HN 37.822	X	Tolga, Algeria	29.5.69	
REDWING	FG	Erlestoke	2.3.69	JCR
CS 83.027	X	Urbino, Italy	12.10.69	
REED WARBLER	Pull	Coate Reservoir	1.7.68	GLW
HR 13.108	V	Chew Valley Res. (Somerset)	8.6.69	42 WSW
REED WARBLER	Pull	Coate Reservoir	4.6.69	GLW
HP 65.547	V	Combwich (Somerset)	31.7.69	60 SW
REED WARBLER	Pull	Coate Reservoir	30.6.67	GLW
HK 02.107	V	Thatcham (Berkshire)	24.5.69	23 ESE

Selected List of Birds Recovered in Wiltshire

Cormorant	Pull	Bodorgan (Anglesey)	22.5.69	
5031.281	V	Box	4.9.69	150 SE
SONG THRUSH	1Y	Walberswick (Suffolk)	8.8.69	
VX 97.081	V	Cole Park, Malmesbury	15.11.69	165 WSW EJMB

Interesting Local Recoveries

REED WARBLER	Ad.	Coate Reservoir	4.7.63	GLW
AK 49.863	V	Coate Reservoir	22.7.69	
REED WARBLER	Pull	Coate Reservoir	28.6.59	GLW
J 45.560	V	Coate Reservoir	30.7.69	
REED BUNTING	Pull	Coate Reservoir	30.5.65	GLW
AR 37.152	V	Coate Reservoir	25.6.69	

WILTSHIRE PLANT NOTES (30)

compiled by WINIFRED STEVENSON

(All records for 1969 unless otherwise stated)

- Blechnum spicant* (L.) Roth. Hard-fern. 4. Hen's Wood, *D. Grose*.
- Asplenium adiantum-nigrum* L. Black Spleenwort. 6. Derelict station, W. Grafton, *D. Grose*.
- Azolla filiculoides* Lam. 4. 7. Covering the surface of K & A Canal in both directions from Wilcot Green and Horton Bridge, *Mrs. B. Sheppard*.
- Helleborus viridis* L. subsp. *occidentalis* (Reut) Schiffn. Green Hellebore. 9. E. Knoyle, *B. M. Stratton*.
- Delphinium orientale* L. Gay. Eastern Larkspur. 7. Disturbed roadside, Longbarrow Cross (G), *Admiral Sir John Coote, Miss B. Cowley, Mrs. Crichton-Mailand, Mrs. Floyd, Lady Radnor, Dr. J. Wormald!*
- Anemone apennina* L. Blue Anemone. 2. Blue Vein Wood, Box, *Mrs. B. Sheppard*.
- Ranunculus arvensis* L. Corn Crowfoot. 2. Roundway, *Mrs. B. Sheppard*.

- Aquilegia vulgaris* L. Columbine. 9. Semley Common and Lady Down, Chilmark, B. M. Stratton.
- Berberis vulgaris* Barberry. 5. Clarendon, Miss J. Wormald (1968).
- Mahonia aquifolium* (Pursh) Nutt. Oregon Grape. 5. Ruins of Clarendon Palace, Miss J. Wormald (1968).
- Papaver hybridum* L. Round, prickly-headed Poppy. 8. Near Tottenham Wood, Miss H. M. Hughes.
- Papaver argemone* L. Long prickly-headed Poppy. 8. near Tottenham Wood, Miss H. M. Hughes.
- Eschscholzia californica* Cham. Californian Poppy. 5. Waste ground near Farley, Miss A. M. Hutchinson.
- Corydalis lutea* (L.) DC. Yellow Fumitory. 1. K & A Canal between Bath and Trowbridge, J. R. Govett. D.1. Frequent.
- Brassica nigra* (L.) Koch. Black Mustard. 4. Roadside in Yatesbury Village (G), D. Grose.
- Diplotaxis tenuifolia* (L.) DC. Perennial Wall Rocket. 4. Railway bank, Sells Green (G), D. Grose.
- Rapistrum rugosum* (L.) All. Bastard Cabbage. 2. Edge of Council tip at Grittleton, Mrs. J. Swanborough.
- Coronopus didymus* (L.) Sm. Lesser Swine Cress. 1. Bratton, Miss H. M. Hughes, 2. Stone Quarry, Atworth, Mrs. B. Sheppard.
- Cardaria draba* (L.) Desv. Hoary-Cress. 7. Beacon Hill, Miss J. Wormald (1968), 2. Road verge, Shaw, Mrs. B. Sheppard.
- Rorippa amphibia* (L.) Besser. Great Yellow-Cress. 2. River Avon, Chippenham, Mrs. B. Sheppard.
- Erysimum cheiranthoides* L. Treacle Mustard. 6. Cabbage field, Wexcombe (G), D. Grose.
- Sysimbrium officinale* (L.) Scop. var. *leiocarpum* DC. Hedge Mustard. 3. Wanborough Plain, D. Grose.
- Reseda luteola* L. Dyer's Rocket, Weld. 3. Roadside, Ewen (Glos.), Mrs. I. M. Grose. Frequent.
- Viola tricolor* L. Wild Pansy. 10. Odstock, Miss J. Wormald (1968).
- Hypericum maculatum* Crantz. Imperforate St. John's Wort. 5. Hawk's Grove, Dr. P. Wormald. Frequent.
- Silene alba* (Mill.) E.H.L. Krause White Campion x *S. dioica* (L.) Clairv. Red Campion. Weather Hill Firs, Mrs. I. M. Grose.
- Silene noctiflora* L. Night-flowering Campion. 1. Bratton, Miss H. M. Hughes. Frequent.
- Saponaria officinalis* L. Soapwort. 1. Bank of Westbury railway station. Roundabout N.E. of Wootton Bassett wasteland, Miss B. Gillam. 4. Roadside North of Aldbourne, O. Meyrick!
- Sagina apetala* Ard. Common Pearlwort. 4. Track, Cobham Frith, D. Grose (G).
- Chenopodium polyspermum* L. All-seed. 7. Rubbish tip, Salisbury, Miss J. Wormald (1968).
- Chenopodium ficifolium* Sm. Fig-leaved Goosefoot. 7. Rubbish tip, Salisbury, Miss V. Morgan. 261 (1967).
- Atriplex hortensis* L. var. *rubra* Orache (Crantz) Roth. 5. Roadside Winterbourne Gunner, Miss A. M. Hutchison.
- Tilia platyphylla* Scop. Large-leaved Lime. 4. Hen's Wood, D. Grose (G).
- Malva moschata* L. var. *heterophylla* Lej & Court. Musk Mallow. 4. Love's Copse 1936, D. Grose (G). Railway Bank, Crofton, Mrs. I. M. Grose.
- Malva neglecta* Wall. Dwarf Mallow. 1. Roadside Keevil, Mrs. I. M. Grose. 7. Roadside Beechingstoke, Mrs. I. M. Grose (G)!
- Geranium columbinum* Long-stalked Cranesbill. June 1st. retaining wall, Neston Park—9 plants, Mrs. B. Sheppard.
- Geranium rotundifolium* L. Round-leaved Cranesbill. 2. Old rail track, Sells Green, D. Grose.

- Geranium pusillum* L. Small-flowered Cranesbill. 2. Roadside, Cherhill, *N. E. King!*
7. Old rail track between Stert and Patney, *D. Grose* (G).
- Oxalis europea* Jord. Upright Yellow Sorrel. 7. Rubbish tip near Salisbury, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Oxalis articulata* Savigny. 7. Waste ground, The Close, Salisbury, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Impatiens capensis* Meerb. Orange Balsam. 9. Roadside near Wilton Park, *E. G. Gange*.
10. Stream, Harnham, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Impatiens glandulifera* Royle Policeman's Helmet. 2. Lydiard Plain, *D. Grose*. 9. Roadside near Wilton Park, *E. G. Gange*.
- Ononis spinosa* L. Restharrow. 20. Coombe Bissett, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Medicago sativa* L. Lucerne. 5. Railway track, Newton Tony, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
Frequent.
- Melilotus officinalis*. Common Melilot. 1. K & A Canal, *J. R. Govett*.
- Melilotus alba* Desr. Medic. White Melilot. 2. Railway bank, Rodbourne, *D. Grose*.
7. Beacon Hill, Amesbury. Frequent.
- Melilotus indica* (L.) Small-flowered Melilot. 1. K & A Canal, *J. R. Govett*.
- Trifolium fragiferum* L. Strawberry Clover. 2. Foot of Beacon Hill, Heddington, *D. Grose*.
- Trifolium medium* L. Zigzag Clover. 1. Below Bratton White Horse, *Miss H. M. Hughes*.
2. Roadside near Moonsleaze Farm, Somerford, *D. Grose*.
- Galega officinalis* (L.) Goat's Rue. 7. Rubbish tip near Salisbury, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Colutea arborescens* (L.) Bladder Senna. 3. Roadside copse, South of Latton, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Lathyrus aphaca*. Yellow Vetchling. 2. Holt Junction, *Mrs. B. Sheppard*.
- Lathyrus tuberosus* L. Earth-nut Pea. 3. Railway bank near Clay Furlong Farm, Ewen (Glos.), *D. Grose*.
- Lathyrus sylvestris* L. Narrow-leaved Everlasting Pea. 10. Coombe Bissett, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Agrimonia odorata* (Gouan) Mill. Fragrant Agrimony. 7. Railway bank, Beechingstoke, *D. Grose*.
- Sanguisorba officinalis* L. Great Burnet. 2. Canal bank near Martinslade, *D. Grose*.
3. N.W. Ashton Keynes, *Miss B. Gillam*.
- Prunus cerasifera* Ehrh. Cherry Plum. 10. Copse near Coombe Bissett, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Cotoneaster simonsii* Bak. Khasia Berry. 8. A small bird sown plant, Cley Hill, *R. S. R. Fitter*.
- Sedum telephium* L. Orpine. 5. Hawk's Grove, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968). Frequent.
- Tolmeia menziesii* (Pursl) Torr & Gray. 1. Wasteland, Gt. Hinton, *Mrs. M. Haythornthwaite, D. McClintock*.
- Daphne laureola* L. Spurge Laurel. 2. Blue Vein & Ashley Woods, Box, *Mrs. B. Sheppard*.
- Epilobium adenocaulon* Haussk. Willow-herb. 9. Grovely Wood, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Oenothera erythrosepala* Borbas. Evening Primrose. 10. Homington, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Viscum album* L. Mistletoe. 2. Notton—on ash, *Dr. R. C. A. Prior* (115, 1866).
- Berula erecta* (Huds.) Coville. Narrow-leaved Water Parsnip. 1. K & A Canal, *J. R. Govett*.
- Silaum silaus* (L.) Schinz & Thell. Pepper Saxifrage. 7. Lane near Patney, *D. Grose*.
- Heracleum mantegazzianum* Somm & Levier. Giant Hogweed. 6. Tidcombe, *K. Grinstead* (261).
7. Near Stratford-sub-Castle, *Mrs. M. Page Wood*.
- Mercurialis annua* L. Annual Mercury. 1. Roadside, Keevil, *D. Grose*. 2. Canal bank, Martinslade, *D. Grose*. 5. Pepperbox Hill, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968). Frequent D.5.
- Euphorbia lathyrus* L. Caper Spurge. 7. Beacon Hill, Amesbury, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Polygonum aviculare* Lindm. Knotgrass. 1. K & A Canal, *J. R. Govett*.
- Polygonum amphibium* L. Amphibious Bistort. 6. Free Warren, *D. Grose*. Frequent.

- Polygonum convolvulus* L. var. *subalatum* Lej & Court. Black Bindweed. 4. Cobham Frith, (G), *D. Grose*.
- Polygonum cuspidatum* Sieb & Zucc. Japanese Knotweed. 6. Tidcombe, *D. Grose*.
- Oxyria digyna* (L.) Hill. Mountain Sorrel. 9. Lady Down, *B. M. Stratton*.
- Rumex conglomeratus* Murr. Sharp Dock. 1. K & A Canal, *J. R. Govett*.
- Helxine soleirolii* Req. Mother of Thousands. 7. The Close, Salisbury, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Arbutus unedo* L. Strawberry Tree. 10. Garden escape, Peter's Finger, *C. M. R. Pitman* (1967).
- Primula veris* L. x *vulgaris* Huds. Common Oxlip. 3. Little Hinton Copse, *Mrs. I. M. Grose*!
- Anagallis arvensis* Ssp. *foemina* Mill. Blue Pimpernel. 2. Garden at Seend since 1966, *Mrs. B. Sheppard*. 5. Field near Hawk's Grove, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Anagallis arvensis* var. *caerulea* Lüdi. Bridal path Weavertown to Rudloe, *Mrs. B. Sheppard*.
- Buddleja davidii* Franch. Buddleia. 7. Waste ground, Salisbury, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Vinca minor* L. Lesser Periwinkle. 7. Near Wilsford, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Blackstonia perfoliata* (L.) Huds. Yellow-wort. 2. Cherhill Down (049.697), *L. F. Stearn*.
- Symphytum* x *uplandicum* Nyman. Russian Comfrey. 6. Field border, Buttermere, *Mrs. I. M. Grose* (G)!
- Pentaglottis sempervirens* (L.) Alkanet. 2. Still on North bank of Canal, Seend, near Barge Inn, *Mrs. B. Sheppard*.
- Myosotis ramosissima* Rochel. Early Forget-me-not. 8. Yarnbury, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Calystegia sepium* Ssp. *silvatica* (Kit) Griseb. Larger Bindweed. 7. Waste ground, Salisbury, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Atropa belladonna* L. Deadly Nightshade. 10. Track near Coombe Bissett, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Datura stramonium* L. Thorn-apple. 2. St. Edith's Marsh, *A. Harrison* (*Wilts Gazette and Herald*, 11.9.69).
- Antirrhinum majus* L. Snapdragon. 5. Rail track, Newton Tony, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Linaria purpurea* (L.) Mill. Purple Toadflax. 2. Derelict railway station, Seend, *D. Grose* (G).
- Linaria repens* (L.) Mill. Pale Toadflax. 10. Roman road above Broad Chalke, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Kickxia spuria* (L.) Round-leaved Fluellen. 1. Field below Bratton White Horse, *Miss H. M. Hughes*. 2. Cleared woodland on bridal path from Weavertown to Rudloe, *Mrs. B. Sheppard*.
- Kickxia elatine* (L.) Dum. Sharp-leaved Fluellen. 2. as above. •
- Mimulus moschatus* Lindl. Musk. 7. The Close, Salisbury, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Veronica catenata* Penn. Pink Water Speedwell. 3. Streamside, Cricklade, *L. F. Stearn*.
- Euphrasia nemorosa* (Pers) Wallr. Eyebright. 2. Beacon Hill, Heddington, *D. Grose*.
- Lathraea squamaria* L. Toothwort. 1. Devizes Maternity Hospital Grounds, *Miss P. M. Martin*. 2. Norton, *Miss B. Cowley*.
- Mentha spicata* L. Spear-mint. 5. Rubbish tip, Newton Tony, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Mentha alopecurioides* Hull. Large Apple Mint. 7. Rubbish dump, Salisbury, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Origanum vulgare* L. Marjoram. 1. Railway bank, Stert, 7. Railway bank near Patney, *D. Grose*.
- Thymus pulegioides* L. Large Wild Thyme. 4. Among Sarsens, Fyfield Down, *N. E. King* (1968). 9. Mere Down, *N. E. King* and *T. C. E. Wells* (1968).
- Thymus drucei* Ronn. Wild Thyme. 7. Down near Widdington Farm, *Mrs. I. M. Grose*.
- Lamium hybridum* Vill. Cut-leaved Dead-nettle. 7. Cabbage field, Patney, *D. Grose*.
- Lamium maculatum* L. Spotted Dead-nettle. 9. Riverside, Harnham, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Plantago lanceolata* L. Ribwort. 1. Canal bank, Avoncliff. Form with leafy inflorescence, *L. F. Stearn*.

- Plantago indica* B.M. (bird food). East Knoyle, *B. M. Stratton*.
- Campanula rapunculoides* L. Creeping Campanula. 3. Near Coate Water, *E. Browning* (G)!
- Sherardia arvensis* L. var. *hirsuta*, Baguet. Field Madder. 2. Cornfield near Foxley (1936).
D. Grose (G). 3. Ewen (Glos.), *D. Grose*. 2. Retaining wall Neston Park, *Mrs. B. Sheppard*.
- Galinsoga ciliata* (Rafn). Shaggy Soldier. 2. Chippenham, *Mrs. J. Swanborough*.
- Senecio squalidus* L. Oxford Ragwort. 5. Pepperbox Hill, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Senecio viscosus* L. Sticky Groundsel. 2. Holt Junction, *Mrs. B. Sheppard*.
- Petasites hybridus* (L.) Gaertn. Mey. Scherb. Butterbur. 1. K & A Canal, *J. R. Govett*.
- Anaphalis margaritacea* (L.) Benth. Pearl Everlasting. 2. Railway bank, Sells Green. *D. Grose*.
- Solidago virgaurea* L. Golden Rod. 5. Rail track, Newton Tony, *Miss J. Wormald*, (1968).
- Aster novi-belgii* L. Michaelmas Daisy. 2. Canal bank, Martinslade, *D. Grose*.
- Erigeron mucronatus* DC. Mexican Fleabane. 7. The Close, Salisbury, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Conyza canadensis* (L.) Cronq. Canadian Fleabane. 10. Odstock, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968),
Frequent *D.10*.
- Eupatorium cannabinum* L. Hemp Agrimony. 6. West Grafton station, *D. Grose*.
- Arctium lappa* L. Great Burdock. 1. K & A Canal, *J. R. Govett*.
- Arctium minus* Ssp. *pubens* (Bab) & J. Arenes. Lesser Burdock. 1. K & A Canal, *J. R. Govett*.
- Cirsium arvense* (L.) Scop. Ssp. *setosum* (Willd) Sledge. Creeping Thistle. 1. Railway bank.
Westbury, *R. Bennett* (G). 2. K & A Canal, *J. R. Govett*.
- Cirsium acaulon* (L.) Scop. Stemless Thistle. 2. Form with white flowers, Beacon Hill,
Heddington, *Mrs. I. M. Grose*.
- Onopordum acanthium*. Scotch Thistle. 2. Seven plants on Sutton Benger rubbish tip—
old gravel pits, *Mrs. J. Swanborough*.
- Centaurea cyanus* L. Cornflower. 2. More than 100 plants in Spring-sown ley—seed from
Denmark, *Mrs. J. Swanborough*.
- Centaurea nigra* L. Lesser Knapweed. 1. Martinslade and Stert, *D. Grose*. 2. Juggler's
Lane, Cherill and Rodbourne, *D. Grose*. 1. K & A Canal, *J. R. Govett*.
- Centaurea nemoralis* Jord. Slender Hardhead. North Meadow, Cricklade, *L. F. Stearn*.
- Carthamus tinctorius* L. 3. Rodbourne Sewage Farm, Swindon, *G. L. Webber*.
- Picris hieracioides* L. Hawkweed Ox-tongue. 3. Old rail track, Ewen (Glos.), *D. Grose*.
- Lactuca serriola* L. Prickly Lettuce. 7. Rubbish tip, Salisbury, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Cicerbita macrophylla* (Willd.) Wallr. Blue Sow-thistle. 6. Tidcombe, *K. Grinstead* (261)!
10. Coombe Bissett, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Hieracium bladonii* Pugs. 2. Braydon Pond Plantation, *D. Grose* (G). 4. Cobham Frith,
D. Grose.
- Hieracium lachenalii* Gmel. 9. Fonthill Terrace, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).
- Hieracium brunneocroceum* Pugs. 4. Bank at bottom of Marlborough College Playing Fields,
Miss D. M. Scott.
- Alisma lanceolatum*. Narrow Water-Plaintain. 1. K & A Canal, *J. R. Govett*.
- Sagittaria sagittifolia* L. Arrow-Head. 1. K & A Canal, Seend, Clevee, *D. Grose*. 1.
K & A Canal, *J. R. Govett*.
- Butomus umbellatus*. Flowering Rush. 1. Canal at Seend, Clevee, *Mrs. B. Sheppard*. 1.
K & A Canal, *J. R. Govett*.
- Fritillaria melagris* L. Fritillary. 3. Meadow, West of Coleshill, *N. E. King*.
- Ornithogalum umbellatum*. Common Star of Bethlehem. 5. East Grimstead, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968). Frequent.
- Paris quadrifolia*. Herb Paris. 2. Road Hill Wood (803.698), *Mrs. B. Sheppard*.
- Galanthus nivalis* L. Snowdrop. 10. Wood above Ebbesbourne Wake, *Miss J. Wormald* (1968).

- Cephalanthera damasonium* (Mill.) Druce. Large White Helleborine. 6. Weather Hill Firs. G. Webber. Frequent.
- Epipactis latifolia* syn. Broad-leaved Helleborine. 9. North end of Donhead Clift, B. M. Stratton.
- Spiranthes spiralis*. Lady's Tresses. 2. Several plants on steep bank at Long Dean, Mrs. J. Swanborough.
- Dactylorhiza praetermissa* (Druce) vermeul. Fen Orchid. 10. Redlynch, Miss J. Wormald (1968). Frequent.
- Sparganium* (emersum simplex). Unbranched Bur-reed. 1. Canal at Seend, Cleeve, Mrs. B. Sheppard.
- Carex acutiformis* Ehrh. Lesser Pond Sedge. 6. Little Bedwyn, D. Grose.
- Carex pallescens* L. Pale Sedge. 5. Hawk's Grove, Miss J. Wormald (1968).
- Carex hirta* L. Hammer Sedge. 10. Odstock. Miss J. Wormald (1968).
- Carex nigra* (L.) Reichard. Common Sedge. 3. North Meadow, Cricklade, L. F. Stearn.
- Carex otrubae* Podp. False Fox-sedge. 5. Redlynch, Miss J. Wormald (1968). Frequent.
- Carex disticha* Huds. Brown Sedge. 3. North Meadow, Cricklade, L. F. Stearn.
- Sieglingia decumbens* (L.) Bernh. Heath Grass. 6. Remarkably luxuriant 30 cm. Ham Hill (G) D. Grose. Frequent.
- Glyceria fluitans* (L.) R.Br x *G. plicata*. 5. Hawk's Grove, Miss J. Wormald (1968). Frequent.
- Festuca arundacea* Schreb. Tall Fescue. 6. West Grafton Station, D. Grose.
- Festulolium loliaceum* (Huds.) P. Fourn. 3. North Meadow, Cricklade, L. F. Stearn.
- Lolium multiflorum* Lam x *L. perenne* L. 4. Cleared woodland, Cobham Frith, Dr. C. E. Hubbard and D. Grose.
- Vulpia bromoides* (L.) Gray. Barren Fescue. 5. Pepperbox Hill, Miss J. Wormald (1968).
- Poa nemoralis* L. Wood Meadow Grass. 1. Wall, Keevil, D. Grose.
- Melica uniflora* Retz. Wood Melick. 6. Buttermere Wood, Mrs. I. M. Grose. Frequent.
- Avena fatua* L. Wild Oat. 1. Roadside, Keevil, D. Grose (G). 4. Cobham Frith, D. Grose (G). 5. Field near Hawk's Grove, Miss J. Wormald (1968).
- Helictotrichon pubescens* (Huds.) Pilger. Hairy Oat. 3. North Meadow, Cricklade (095.943), L. F. Stearn.
- Arrhenatherum elatius* (L.) Beauv. Form with 3-flowered spikelets. Oat Grass. 3. Wanborough Plain, D. Grose (G).
- Deschampsia cespitosa* (L.) Beauv. var. *parviflora* (Thuill) Coss. & Germ. Tufted Hair-grass. 4. Cobham Frith, D. Grose.
- Deschampsia flexuosa* (L.) Trin. Wavy Hair-grass. 4. Cobham Frith, D. Grose.
- Agrostis canina* L. Brown Bent-grass. 5. Hawk's Grove, Miss J. Wormald (1968). Frequent.
- Agrostis gigantea* Roth. Common Bent-grass. 10. Broad Chalke, Miss J. Wormald (1968).
- Milium effusum* L. Wood Millet. 9. Grovely Wood, Miss J. Wormald (1968). Frequent.
- Phalaris canariensis* L. Canary Grass. 5. Roadside, Pepperbox Hill, Miss J. Wormald (1968).

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G Mr. D. Grose's herbarium.

! Seen by Mr. D. Grose in the locality named.

ENTOMOLOGICAL REPORT FOR 1969

by BOWMONT WEDDELL

It is a most welcome change this year to be able to strike a more cheerful note than has been possible for a number of years. Everybody is reporting a great increase in the

number of butterflies that have been decorating our gardens during the fine Summer and mild Autumn. Any sunny day one could be sure of seeing all the Vanessids on the buddleia and later on Iceplant and Michaelmas Daisy.

They carried on to an exceptionally late date. The last record of the Red Admiral was on 22nd November (CGL), and it is very interesting to have an authentic early record from CMRP of 26th January. This insect must have hibernated in this country, which is an extremely rare occurrence.

A certain amount of movement of insects seems to take place when conditions are favourable and species turn up in new localities. Moths appear at the U.V. light in my garden, often miles from their nearest foodplant. This attempt to increase their range must be the explanation of the wandering Purple Emperor which MET reports having observed at Neston—a most improbable place for it to have bred in.

There have again been unconfirmed reports of the rare Large Tortoiseshell. This butterfly is reputed to go into hibernation almost immediately it emerges in early August, so the likeliest time to see it is when it visits the sweet sallow catkins in the Spring sunshine in April.

The most noteworthy report that has reached me this year was from DB. He phoned to tell me he had taken a specimen of Blair's Shoulder Knot. I was rather sceptical so he agreed to bring it over for confirmation. When he arrived next day, not only was his Blair's Shoulder Knot verified but he had a fresh specimen of Blair's Mocha which had come to his lights the following night. Both these species are relatively newly discovered, very rare, and only recorded on the South Coast. To find them in North Wiltshire is remarkable indeed.

We have suffered a severe loss in the death last September of Captain R. A. Jackson, C.B.E., F.R.E.S., a most experienced entomologist whose meticulous records and generous help were most valuable to me. His enthusiasm and the width of his knowledge were an inspiration to all his friends. One hopes that this tradition will be sustained and enriched by succeeding generations.

Contributors

DB	Mr. David Brotheridge, Wroughton.
EJMB	Mr. E. J. M. Buxton, Malmesbury.
MC	Marlborough College N.H.S.
RH	Miss R. H. Hall, Chippenham.
FM	Mr. Frank Mead, Devizes.
BG	Miss Beatrice Gillam, Devizes.
JNK	Lt. Col. J. N. Kirkaldy, W. Lavington.
MET	Mr. M. E. Tyte, Neston.
BC	Miss Barbara Cowley, Seend.
CF	Lt. Col. Charles Floyd, O.B.E., Holt.
BW	Mr. B. W. Weddell, Trowbridge.
JRG	Mr. J. R. Govett, Trowbridge.
CGL	Maj. Gen. C. G. Lipscomb, Crockerton.
BMS	Mr. B. M. Stratton, East Knoyle.
CMRP	Mr. C. M. R. Pitman, Salisbury.
SNHS	Salisbury and District N.H.S.

PHENOLOGICAL REPORT

	<i>Average</i>	1969	
	<i>Date</i>	<i>Emergence</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Large White	23·4	8·4	+15
Marbled White	24·6	24·6	=
Meadow Brown	15·6	14·6	+ 1
Cinnabar	18·5	14·5	+ 4

	Garden Carpet	28·4	3·5	— 5
	Brimstone Moth	14·5	12·5	+2
Orange Tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	CMRP 30·4, SNHS 24·7, 2nd brood possibly.		
Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>	SNHS 23·7, JNK 17·8, FM 6·8, BW 4·8. Only odd specimens seen.		
Grayling	<i>Eumenis semele</i>	JNK 17·8.		
Purple Emperor	<i>Apatura iris</i>	CMRP 20·7. Increasing satisfactorily in known haunts.		
		MET 3·8, an odd male sighted at Neston.		
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	CMRP 23·1. Must have hibernated. Almost unique occurrence.		
		EJMB 17·8. Peak numbers, CGL 22·11. Latest, JRG 26·10, MC 30·4, 24·10.		
Painted Lady	<i>V. cardui</i>	SNHS 25·5, CMRP 2·11.		
Peacock	<i>Numphalis io</i>	CMRP 23·1, EJMB 8·3, 2·10, MET 30·8.		
Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>	CMRP 23·1, JRG 1·10. Abundant		
Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>	CMRP 23·1, MET 20·9, EJMB 2·10.		
High Brown Fritillary	<i>Argynnis cydippe</i>	FM 18·7		
Dark Green Fritillary	<i>A. aglaia</i>	FM 30·7		
Marsh Fritillary	<i>Euphydryas aurinea</i>	BC 26·5, MC 7·6, BW 14·6.		
White-letter Hairstreak	<i>Strymonidia W. album</i>	EJMB 12·7, CF locally abundant early July.		
Green Hairstreak	<i>Callophris rubi</i>	FM 22·5, MC 10·6, BC 26·5.		
Small Copper	<i>Lycæna phlaeas</i>	FM 24·8, EJMB 5·10, BG 30·9.		
Common Blue	<i>Polycommatus icarus</i>	JNK 17·8 abundant, MC 14·6, JRG 21·8.		
Chalkhill Blue	<i>Lysandra coridon</i>	MC 31·7.		
Adonis Blue	<i>L. bellargus</i>	CGL very scarce both broods.		
Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	CMRP 5·5.		
Small Blue	<i>Cupido minimus</i>	BC 26·5, FM 18·7.		
Lime Hawk	<i>Mimas tiliae</i>	MC 13·6.		
Eyed Hawk	<i>Smerinthus ocellata</i>	MC 3·6.		
Pine Hawk	<i>Hyloicus pinastri</i>	SNHS 6·6.		
Small Elephant Hawk	<i>Deilephila porcellus</i>	SNHS 12·6.		
Large Elephant Hawk	<i>D. elpenor</i>	RH 30·7, CMRP larvae feeding on Evening Primrose, also Himalayan Balsam.		
Hummingbird Hawk	<i>Macroglossum stellatarium</i>	SNHS 9·10, the only sighting.		
Marbled Brown	<i>Drymonia dodonea</i>	SNHS 13·6.		
Large Chocolate-tip	<i>Clostera curtula</i>	DB 22·5, BW 17·7.		
Buff Arches	<i>Habrosyne pyritoides</i>	EJMB 8·7, BW 10·7, plentiful.		
Black-arched Tussock	<i>Lymantria monacha</i>	CF 5·8.		
Small Eggar	<i>Eriogaster lanestris</i>	DB nests of larvae 14··6, 10·7.		
Emperor	<i>Saturnia pavonia</i>	CMRP 5·5. A rarity in Wilts. except in the extreme south where heather grows.		
Red-necked Footman	<i>Atolmis rubicollis</i>	DB 13·7.		

Light Feathered Rustic	<i>Agrotis denticulatus</i>	MC 3·6.
Dotted Rustic	<i>Rhyacia simulans</i>	BW 22·7.
Plain Clay	<i>Amathes depuncta</i>	BW 10·7. I have only seen this moth in Scotland till this singleton. There are a few Wiltshire records, mostly old.
Least Yellow Underwing	<i>Euschesis interjecta</i>	BW 1·8, DB 11·8.
Bordered Orange	<i>Pyrrhia umbra</i>	DB 24·7.
Northern Drab	<i>Orthosia advena</i>	DB 6·5.
Large Wainscot	<i>Rhizedra lutosa</i>	DB 19·10.
Small Wainscot	<i>Arenostola pygmina</i>	DB 5·9.
Twin-spot Wainscot	<i>Nonagria geminipuncta</i>	DB 20·8. As it feeds on Phragmites, what reed-bed did it come from?
Small Mottled Willow	<i>Laphygma exigua</i>	BW 22·7, DB 28·7, 18·8. Rare migrant.
Small Clouded Brindle	<i>Apamea unamimis</i>	BW 23·6.
Large Nutmeg	<i>A. infesta</i>	BW 26·6.
Double-lobed	<i>A. ophiogramma</i>	DB 22·7.
Dusky Sallow	<i>Eremobia ochroleuca</i>	CF 5·8, BW 7·8. Plentiful at Bratton, DB 10·8. Apparently still spreading NW.
Brown Crescent	<i>Celaena leucostigma</i>	DB 11·8. Very rare in Wiltshire.
Orange Ear	<i>Gortyna flavago</i>	DB 2·9. BW 7·9.
Marbled Vert	<i>Cryphia muralis</i>	BW 19·7. Of very rare occurrence in Wiltshire.
Sycamore Dagger	<i>Apatele aceris</i>	SNHS. Larvae found in numbers. Very unusual in this county.
Alder Dagger	<i>Apatele alni</i>	BW 10·6, DB 15·6.
Blair's Shoulder Knot	<i>Lithophane leuteri</i>	DB 16·10. Discovered by the late Dr. K. G. Blair on 26th Oct. 1951 at Freshwater, I.o.W. It has occasionally been taken since along the South Coast from Hants. to Devon.
Black Rustic	<i>Aporophyla lunula</i>	CMRP 29·9. Very few Wiltshire records, the last being by CF 17.10.53.
Brown Spot Chestnut	<i>Anchoscelis litura</i>	DB 11·9.
Herald	<i>Scoliopteryx libatrix</i>	EJMB 17·10.
Blair's Mocha	<i>Cosymbia puppillaria</i>	DB 17·10. Discovered 2nd Oct. 1946 by the late Dr. K. G. Blair on I.o.W. A few subsequent records on South Coast.
Gem	<i>Nycterosea obstipata</i>	DB 14·7, BW 12·10 on ivy bloom. Migrant.
Royal Mantle	<i>Euphyia cuculata</i>	DB 30·7.
Wood Carpet	<i>Epirrhoe rivata</i>	DB 5·7.
Short-clasped Treble-bar	<i>Anaitis efformata</i>	BW 13·6.
Brindle-barred Yellow	<i>Acasis viretata</i>	BW 26·7.
Barred Tooth-striped	<i>Trichopteryx polycommata</i>	CMRP 26·4.
White-pinion Spotted	<i>Bapta bimaculata</i>	BW 12·6.
Lunar Thorn	<i>Selenia lunaria</i>	DB 31·5, BW 10·6. A Northern species that appears to be spreading South.

OFFICERS' REPORTS FOR 1969

REPORT OF THE HON. SECRETARY

Since the Annual General Meeting in 1969 the Section membership has risen by 25 to 395 (370), by 14 more claims from the main Society to 216 (202), and 11 more Section only members to 179 (168).

Plant Recorder. Miss W. M. Stevenson has been appointed to replace Mr. D. L. Grose, who retired early last year.

Mammals of Wiltshire. In 1969 Mr. Noel King, until very recently Chief Nature Conservancy Warden for Wiltshire, asked the Committee to support him in producing a small book on the mammals of Wiltshire. The proposal was welcomed and financial backing assured.

Annual Report. The main Committee has agreed to a trial in autumn 1970 in which the Section Annual Report relevant to 1969 shall be published as Part A of the Magazine.

The main Committee also ratified a proposal, made at the inaugural Meeting of the Section in 1946, permitting two members of the Section to represent it on the main Committee. This has been effective since 1946, though not formally minuted until 1969.

Mrs. C. Seccombe Hett, Hon. Secretary since 1952, has retired and Miss B. Gillam has been elected to the office.

Mrs. S. M. Lee, Hon. Meetings Secretary since 1960, has retired and Mrs. V. E. Brown has been elected to the office.

Junior Section. It was agreed at the A.G.M. to form a Junior Section under the leadership of Mr. A. L. Stonell.

The Wildfowl Count, the Common Bird Census, the Ornithological Atlas project and the Annual Census of Heronries continue.

REPORT OF THE HON. MEETINGS SECRETARY

During the year 27 Field and 4 Indoor Meetings were held and with one or two exceptions were well attended. Six of these were joint meetings, four with the Bath Natural History Society and one each with the Southampton Natural History Society and the Cirencester Branch of the North Gloucestershire Natural History Society.

The most popular meeting of the year, attended by 38 members, was the expedition to the Arboretum at Westonbirt to see the Autumn Colour. This was led by Mr. M. J. Penistan. After this in popularity came the meetings to Porton Down, Highwood and Hazelwood Woodland Park, and Pewsey Down National Nature Reserve, led respectively by Mr. R. A. Titt, Mr. A. Phillips and Mr. Noel King. We went twice to Studland Heath National Nature Reserve, in February at the invitation of the Bath Natural History Society, to see Winter birds and in September when we saw the Marsh Gentian, Dorset Heath, and several dragonflies and bush crickets. Owing to bad weather the Dawn Deer Foray at Alfred's Tower, led by Mr. R. Guy, was attended by only 3 members and only one deer was seen in the distance. Mr. R. Spencer's winter walk on the South Wilts Downs also suffered bad weather with high winds and hail storms, but was nevertheless well attended. Imber was again visited, led by Mrs. Tyler—33 species of birds were seen and the following butterflies: Small Blue, Green Hairstreak, The Wall, Green-veined White and Duke of Burgundy Fritillary. At Fonthill a large colony of *Trachystemon orientalis* was seen but unfortunately not in flower, and two species of bat and cave spiders and their eggs.

Mr. G. Webber led us on two occasions: to the Cotswold Water Park in May and to South Cerney Sewage Farm in December. At the latter expedition Bewick Swans, Green Sandpiper, Jack Snipe and Snipe in large numbers were seen besides many species of duck.

In addition to the previously mentioned Meeting to the Arboretum Mr. M. J. Penistan took us for a Forestry walk in Fonthill Abbey Woods in the Spring. Hazeland disused railway track was again visited and colonization by many new plants was noted.

Plants were listed in four places in Wiltshire. One was at R.A.F. Melksham, where a list of over 70 species was made of plants colonizing the deserted area. Two were for the Nature Conservancy: at Grovely, led by Sir Christopher Andrewes, and at Ford by Mrs. R. Swanborough. The fourth, on a disused railway track at Midford, was led by Miss J. Robinson.

Captain H. Ennion showed us round Wilton Water, where many Little Grebes were seen. We went to the Wild Fowl Trust and were told some of the aims of the Trust and taken round the pens. Blagdon, Long Dean and Ramsbury were visited in search of birds and were led respectively by Mr. Bernard King, Mr. R. Faulkner and Mrs. G. Lawson.

Finally, Mr. R. S. Barron led two meetings on geology, the first to the Corsham area to study building stones and the second to Midford to celebrate the bi-centenary of William Smith. He showed us houses where William Smith had lived and the remains of the canal and locks he had built.

The four indoor meetings were held at the Museum, Devizes. Mr. R. S. Waite gave a lecture on Nature Photography illustrated by his own excellent slides. Mr. K. Grinstead gave a most interesting talk on the life history of dragonflies illustrated by his outstanding transparencies. Some of the late Mr. N. Grudging's excellent transparencies of Wiltshire flowers were shown by Mr. E. Cleverly. Lastly, a meeting was held for Members' Slides which was well attended and most interesting.

Our thanks are due to the Bath Natural History Society for their kind invitation to Section Members to attend their winter lectures.

I end this report by thanking all who have helped me by acting as leaders, etc., during my 8½ years of office and offer my very best wishes to my successor.

PLATE I



The patches of bare chalk show the effects of intensive grazing by rabbits before 1954.

Photograph by J. K. St. Joseph

Natural History Section

The object of this Section is to promote the study of all branches of Natural History in the County by encouraging field observations, maintaining records, arranging field and other meetings and by putting observers in touch with each other. Members and others who wish for particulars of the Section and its activities should write to the Honorary Treasurer of the Section:

Mr. Arnold Smith, 49 Clarendon Avenue, Trowbridge.

Membership of the Section does not entail any further subscription from those who are already members of the Society.

Observations should be sent to the recorders:

BIRDS: Mr. G. L. Webber, 66 Southbrook Extension, Swindon.

FLOWERS: Miss W. M. Stevenson, 14 Broadleas Road, Devizes.

LEPIDOPTERA: Mr. B. W. Weddell, 39 Victoria Road, Trowbridge.

MAMMALS, REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS: Miss B. Gillam, 19 Roundway Gardens, Devizes.

Back numbers of reports can be obtained from Mr. G. L. Webber, 66 Southbrook Extension, Swindon. Prices on application.



