

BRITISH LICHEN SOCIETY

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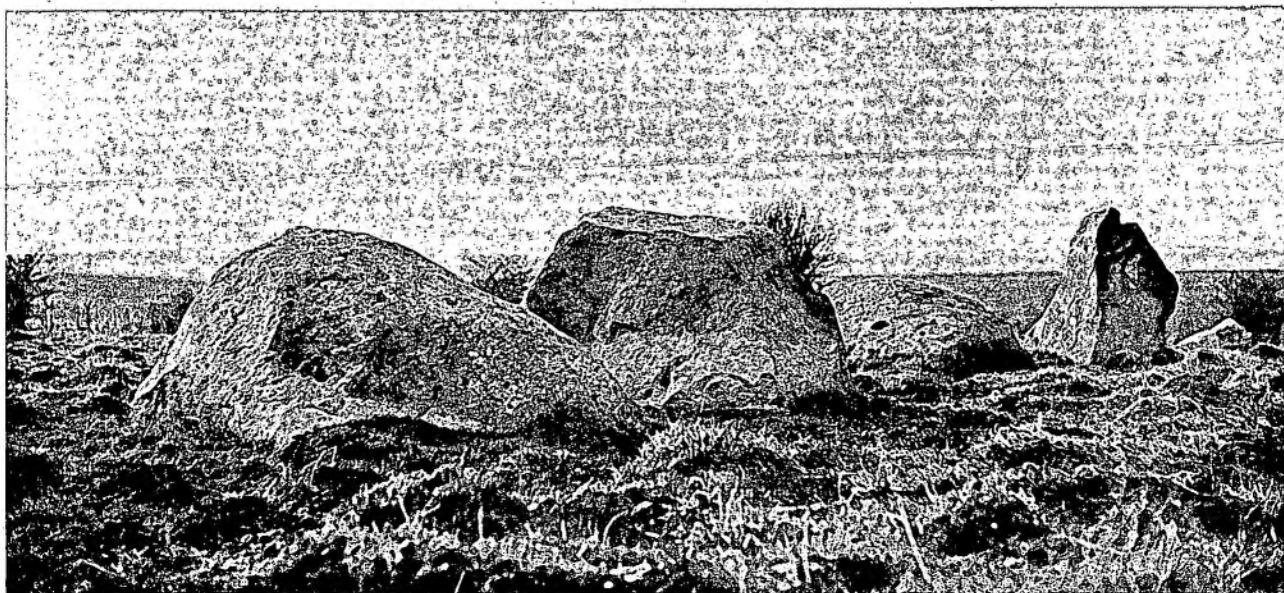
President: O. L. Gilbert, Ph.D.

Sarsen lichens at risk

In the vicinity of the Marlborough Downs in Wiltshire and the Lambourn Downs in Berkshire there are several groups of sarsen-stones in their natural environment lying in grassland. The sarsens are very hard rounded sandstone boulders, generally projecting above the ground to a height of below one metre. They are also called grey-wethers, because of their resemblance to grazing sheep when viewed from a distance. The sarsens are either the eroded remains of a former sandstone deposit overlying the chalk or they were deposited by ice from an early glaciation. The areas of sarsen-stones have been depleted by their use as building material from the Bronze Age onwards.

These sarsen-stones carry a unique lichen flora. Growing on them are many species (e.g. Lecanora gangaleoides, L. rupicola, Lecidea cyathoides, Parmelia conspersa, P. omphalodes, Rhizocarpon geographicum) characteristic of the highland zone of Britain rather than of the lowland zone in which they are situated. Even more remarkable are the presence of a group of species (e.g. Anaptychia fusca, Ramalina siliquosa, Rinodina atrocineria) generally associated with maritime habitats, which reach their furthest inland localities on the stones. One lichen, Buellia saxorum, appears to be confined in Britain to sarsens, yet is one of the most common species, and the local Candelariella coralliza is more abundant on them than elsewhere in the

Sarsen-stones in their natural environment at Parkfarm Down SSSI, Lambourn, Berkshire, in the area near Knighton Bushes. Characteristic rock pools occur in the third stone from the left. This is the easternmost inland locality for Buellia saxorum, Candelariella coralliza, Pertusaria pseudocorallina, Ramalina siliquosa and Rinodina atrocineria in Britain. Lichens must not be collected from this site. Photograph: J. R. Laundon 1976.



British Isles. The great prehistoric monuments of Stonehenge and Avebury were built mainly of sarsens and carry a similar lichen flora. With this unique assemblage, the sarsen areas merit effective conservation measures.

In Wiltshire the most important areas of sarsens are well protected. Fyfield Down is the major site and this is a national nature reserve administered by the Nature Conservancy Council. The smaller sarsen areas at Lockeridge Dene and Piggie Dene (both in West Overton parish) are owned by the National Trust. Unfortunately the more limited Berkshire/Oxfordshire sarsen areas in the vicinity of the Lambourn Downs enjoys no such measures of protection, although all of them have been scheduled as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by the Conservancy, and the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Trust has an agreement with an owner over the land-use of the areas of sarsens on his property. Even so, the lichen flora of the Lambourn sarsens is clearly at risk, because the conservation bodies have no direct control over any of the vital areas. This is a matter of concern, as several lichens reach their most easterly inland localities here, occurring in lichen vegetation which is less luxuriant and healthy than that found in Wiltshire.

The dangers facing the sarsen lichen flora arise from increasingly efficient agricultural methods in which all land is put to maximum economic usage. Most of the Lambourn Downs have already been ploughed up, so that undisturbed grassland survives only on the important archaeological sites, such as Seven Barrows. This ploughing has resulted in the removal of a number of sarsens from the grasslands to their present positions alongside the downland trackways; here they lie, bare and gaunt, their lichen cover having been unwittingly destroyed, never to return in its primary form. The sarsens which remain in their original fields are mostly on pasture and are subjected to treatment by artificial fertilisers and herbicides so that many stones are now almost bare; they are also subjected to rubbing by grazing animals as well as hypertrophication (i.e. nutrient-enrichment) from the same source. The turning over of stones has also taken place, denoted by a hard chalk deposit on the sarsen's surface. One area has been planted with young conifers so that the lichens on the boulders will soon be destroyed by increased shade. The lichen flora on the sarsens will survive only if disturbances of these kinds are drastically reduced.

Autumn field meeting at Lancaster 1976

The autumn field meeting based on Lancaster will be held under the leadership of Dr Oliver L. Gilbert from Friday evening 15 October 1976 to Monday afternoon 18 October. This is the last weekend in the year when members can enjoy the full benefit of British Summer Time and the opportunity has been taken to make it a long weekend so that as many records as possible can be collected for the mapping scheme.

The Royal King's Arms, King Street, Lancaster, will be the headquarters hotel; members must book their own accommodation either here or elsewhere, then complete the form at the end of this Bulletin and return it to Dr Gilbert. The programme will be as follows:

Friday 15 October. 20.00. Headquarters hotel. Short talks on various aspects of the area, its lichens and lichen habitats.
Saturday 16 October. 09.30. Meet outside Royal King's Arms. Field excursion. Bring packed lunch.
Sunday 17 October. 10.00. Royal King's Arms. Field excursion. Bring packed lunch.
Monday 18 October. 09.30. Royal King's Arms. Field excursion. Bring packed lunch.

Some accommodation in Lancaster is as follows:

Royal King's Arms, King Street (telephone: Lancaster 2451) 25 single, 31 double.

£3.95 bed & breakfast; evening meal c. £2, not available Saturday & Sunday.

Black Bull Hotel, Church Street (Lancaster 66909) 2 single, 5 double. £3.00.

Fairfield Hall Hotel, Westbourne Road (Lancaster 63107) 2 single, 8 double. £4.50.

Farmers Arms Hotel, Penny Street (Lancaster 2995) 2 single, 5 double. £2.50.

Mrs Anderton-Taylor, 1 Bellvue Terrace (Lancaster 67751) 1 single, 1 double. £2.50.

Mrs Cardiff, 25 South Road (Lancaster 63607) 3 single, 3 double. £2.00.

All the above are within 10 minutes walk of the headquarters hotel. Anyone having difficulty over accommodation or queries of any kind, please contact the leader. If members would like to bring along coloured slides of lichens an evening slide show can be arranged. It is hoped that transport on the excursions can be by members' cars.

O. L. GILBERT

Meetings 1977

Provisional arrangements for the Society's meetings in 1977 include the annual general, lecture and exhibition meeting on 8 January at the British Museum (Natural History), London, the spring meeting of two weekend excursions in April, one to Buckingham or Wendover and the other to Louth in Lincolnshire, the summer meeting in the Lake District and at Kelso, and the autumn weekend meeting in Northamptonshire.

St Andrews meeting

A field meeting of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh (Cryptogamic Section) to St Andrews on 22 May 1976 will have a lichenological interest; coastal rocks will be studied. For details contact Mr B. J. Coppins, Royal Botanic Garden, Leith Walk, Edinburgh EH3 5LR.

PAULINE B. TOPHAM

Professor Degelius elected to honorary membership

The Annual General Meeting on 3 January 1976 elected Emeritus Professor Gunnar Degelius to honorary membership of the Society. This was in recognition of Professor Degelius's outstanding contribution to lichenology over many years, culminating in his prodigious monographs of the genus Collema.

Subscriptions

All membership subscriptions should be sent to the Assistant Treasurer, Mr P.W. Lambley, Castle Museum, Norwich, NR1 3JU. The 1976 subscriptions are £5 for ordinary members, and £1 for junior associate members. Reading Circle subscriptions are £1 per year. The subscription in dollars is \$12.50 at present. Please note that acknowledgments are not sent unless requested because of postage costs.

Further grant application to World Wildlife Fund

An application has been made to the World Wildlife Fund for a third grant to help with lichen conservation and mapping work. The stated purpose of the application is "to survey underworked parts of Britain paying particular attention to sites which are thought likely to hold rich and important lichen communities ... to provide the information on which a sound and comprehensive study for the conservation of lichens in Britain can be based." Autecological work, transplant work, and other conservation orientated projects are also covered. Some very valuable work was financed by the previous grants including surveys in Devonshire, Dorset, Inverness-shire, Perthshire, Somerset, Sutherland, Wiltshire and the Irish Republic. These added eight lichen species to the British list and several sites of national importance were discovered.

O. L. GILBERT

National Vegetation Classification

Since the work of Sir Arthur Tansley, there has been no attempt to produce a comprehensive and systematic account of the vegetation cover of the British Isles. The need for such an account is great. Accurate descriptions of vegetation and a standardised terminology are basic requirements for a wide range of ecological investigations. Yet the increasing volume of such investigations continues without an overall framework to which results may be referred. Workers in related fields, such as animal ecology, land-use planning and conservation, have no up-to-date synopsis of information in a readily available form. Exchange of information between British and continental ecologists still remains difficult.

The aim of the National Vegetation Classification is to provide an accurate and comprehensive inventory of vegetation types in the form of a list and description of named and systematically arranged associations. The survey will cover all natural, semi-natural and major artificial habitats of Great Britain (excluding Northern Ireland). The units will be characterised on floristic criteria from samples collected in the field. Data on selected environmental factors will be used to provide insight into the distribution of the vegetation types and inter-relationships between them.

The classification is a five-year project financed by the Nature Conservancy Council. A co-ordinating panel of experienced ecologists, under the chairmanship of Professor C.D. Pigott (Lancaster University) and with Dr D.A. Ratcliffe as nominated officer of the NCC, will guide the work. The project is based on four centres under the supervision of Dr A.J.C. Malloch (Lancaster University), Dr H. J. B. Birks (Cambridge University), Dr H. C. F. Proctor (Exeter University) and Dr D. W. Shimwell (Manchester University), each working with a research assistant. Dr J. Rodwell, Department of Biological Sciences, The University, Lancaster LA1 4YQ, is co-ordinator and will supply further information on request.

The project will draw upon the impressive resources of ecological research already in existence in this country and elsewhere and hopes for the co-operation of those engaged in current studies.

NATIONAL VEGETATION CLASSIFICATION

Death of Professor des Abbayes

Professor Henry des Abbayes, an honorary member of the Society for many years, died in May 1974. He was born on 15 July 1898 at Vihiers, Maine-et-Loire, France. He worked in the Faculté des Sciences at Rennes from 1931 onwards, at first in the zoological section, but in 1933 he managed to transfer to botany. From here he published many important papers on lichens, especially the part of his doctoral thesis La Végétation Lichénique du Massif Armoricaïn (1934) and the standard review work Traité de Lichénologie (1951). Taxonomically, his most important work was the Revision monographique des Cladonia du sous-genre Cladina (1939) (in Bull. Soc. scient. Bretagne 16), a revision which is still followed in its essentials by all botanists today, and which has formed the solid foundation for all the later work on the "reindeer lichens".

Lichenologist published

Part 2 of volume 7 of The Lichenologist was published on 7 November 1975. Any paid-up ordinary member for 1975 who did not receive a copy should inform the Assistant Treasurer, Mr P. W. Lambley, Castle Museum, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 3JU.

A. Plymouth power-station deferred

The Central Electricity Generating Board have announced that the start on the power-station at Inwork Point, across the Tamar from Plymouth, has been deferred. The Government gave their consent for the building of this plant in 1973 despite opposition from the British Lichen Society and many other bodies (see Bulletin 33:8 (1973)), because of the likely effect of sulphur dioxide pollution from the chimneys on the internationally important epiphytic communities on Dartmoor.

Also deferred is the new station at Killingholme, near Immingham in Lincolnshire, for which consent was given in 1972 (see Bulletin 31:1 (1972)). This oil-fired station will rival coal-fired Drax near Selby in Yorkshire for generating capacity (4,000 megawatts) if indeed it is ever built. It is clear that the oil crisis, with the enormous rise in oil prices since the autumn of 1973 and the consequential effect of this rise on Britain's balance of payments, is responsible for the lack of any progress at either Inwork Point or Killingholme. However this crisis has pushed the CEGB into going ahead with its programme of nuclear power-stations, despite the dramatic fall of over 10 per cent in electrical consumption in Britain over the past year. Thus plans for Dungeness C, designed to produce 3900 megawatts, are already well-advanced, although the adjacent advanced gas-cooled reactor, Dungeness B, is still unfinished (it was started in 1965) and its completion date has now been put back to 1978. Dungeness C will be situated next to the two other plants on Denge Beach, on an area of shingle which is designated as being of international importance for its lichen flora. A new power line carrying 400,000 volts will need to be built across Kent and parts of Sussex and Surrey in connection with the new power-station.

B. Britain's oilfields splutter into production

Britain's first commercial oil was piped from a well in the Argyll field in the North Sea into a tanker on 11 June 1975, and this tanker offloaded its cargo on to the British Petroleum refinery on the Isle of Grain, Kent, on 18 June. This start to the flow of Britain's North Sea oil was several months behind schedule. The tanker brought ashore 14,000 tons of oil worth more than £500,000 for Hamilton Brothers, an Anglo-American consortium. Mr Tony Benn, the then Energy Secretary, said that Britain would be one of the top seven oil producers by 1980 and that the occasion was "in its own way exactly as significant as the first run of Stephenson's Rocket" and that he had a "peculiar sense of security and satisfaction that comes from knowing that the United Kingdom has at its disposal the first trickle of oil supplies in which so much of our future is locked up".

C. Dutch plan industrial island in North Sea

The Netherlands Government is considering plans to build the world's first off-shore industrial island 50 km (30 miles) from Hoek van Holland and 110 km (70 miles) from Lowestoft in Suffolk. The island would be 10 x 5 km and would house a large nuclear power-plant as well as many factories which are hazardous or cause dangerous pollution, as well as two soccer fields, a bowling-alley, two cinemas, a library, theatre and shops. There would be no cars. The island would cost £1,103 million, and 12,000 people would work on it on a three-day shift. The object is to isolate dangerous and offensive Dutch industries as far away from the Netherlands as is possible.

Second International Mycological Congress 1977

The First Circular for the Second International Mycological Congress is circulated with this Bulletin. Dr E.G. Simmons, Chairman of the Congress, wishes to point out that the date 15 December 1975 for the return of preliminary registration forms should be ignored; they may be returned at any time in order to receive further details.

Measures to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions

Lichenologists will be pleased to hear that U.S. Industry is taking sulphur dioxide pollution very seriously. The immediate spur to do this has been the suggested legal maximum of 650 parts per million sulphur dioxide in stack gases from power-plants, smelters, etc., put forward by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It is well known that much U.S. coal remains unmined and unburnt because of its high sulphur content, which may be 8 per cent or more (most British coals have 1 - 3 per cent sulphur).

Chemical engineers have produced a number of strategies to reduce gaseous sulphur emissions by 85 - 95 per cent. These are:

1. Oxidise sulphur dioxide to sulphuric acid. This is suitable for inputs containing more than 4 per cent sulphur dioxide; outputs can be kept below 500 ppm sulphur dioxide.
2. Reduce sulphur dioxide to solid sulphur with hydrogen sulphide. This has similar limitations to method 1.
3. Reduce all forms of sulphur to hydrogen sulphide. This can be achieved at high dilution with cobalt molybdate catalysts, and the hydrogen sulphide can either be absorbed in ethanamines or converted to sulphur with sodium metavanadate. Output gases have less than 1 ppm hydrogen sulphide.
4. Absorb the sulphur dioxide. This is suitable for gas streams containing very little sulphur dioxide. Reagents used include sodium carbonate, sodium sulphite, sodium citrate, ammonia, calcium hydroxide and absorbent charcoal, most of which can be made to regenerate the sulphur dioxide in concentrated form.

It is not yet clear which is the best buy among these absorbents. We should press for tougher legislation in Britain, since the reduction of sulphur dioxide concentration in gas effluents is technically feasible. In addition too little research is currently directed to removing the sulphur from fuel before burning it.

Reference. PFEIFFER, J. B. (editor) 1975. Sulphur Removal and Recovery in Industrial Processes. American Chem. Soc., Washington, D.C.

H. J. M. BOWEN

Data on lichen sites wanted

The Conservation Committee of the Society would be grateful for reports on sites of lichenological importance. The data on many sites are very meagre and it would be most valuable if detailed additional information could be made available for the Society's records, especially as the status of lichen sites is to be reviewed next year. Such information should be sent to the Secretary of the Conservation Committee, Mr F. H. Brightman, Education Section, British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD. Forms for proposing new sites for consideration by the committee are also available from Mr. Brightman.

Reprinting of articles in Bulletin

No. 1 - 29 of the Bulletin are now out-of-print. If any member considers that a particular article which appeared in one of these old issues would again be useful, please could they kindly inform the Editor, Mr J. R. Laundon, Department of Botany, British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD. The question of reissuing the article concerned will then be studied.

International Congress urges strengthening of botanical research

The 12th International Botanical Congress, held at Leningrad in July 1975 urged in its final resolutions, all governments to strengthen the training of taxonomic botanists and research in taxonomic botany, so that as much as possible of the richness of the plant world can be explored, saved from extinction where threatened, and utilised for improvements in agriculture, forestry, and rational land use in general. The Congress considered that this was vital because all food for man is directly or indirectly derived from the plant world.

Bibliography of British Lichens

A project to compile a Bibliography of British Lichens was started in about 1968 by Dr Hawksworth and Dr Seaward with the intention of providing a list of all papers including localised records of lichens in the British Isles. The format will be comparable to that in Dr M. E. Mitchell's Bibliography of Irish Lichenology (1971) with papers cross-referenced by vice-county. Ireland is excluded because of Mitchell's book, but Irish publications appearing after 1970 or omitted from Mitchell's work will be listed in a separate section. In addition to articles published in books and journals, manuscripts preserved in museums, universities, etc., are being covered as far as possible. This data will eventually be published as a book which will include two further features: a history of the development of lichenological recording in the British Isles and a list of the locations of the lichen herbaria of authors of papers including British records.

Through a contract from the Nature Conservancy Council, a Research Assistant, Mr D. G. Reid, was appointed to work under Dr Hawksworth's supervision on this bibliography from 1 December 1975 until 31 March 1976. With this help many journals still remaining to be abstracted have been examined and many floras and other books requiring checking have now been seen.

In order to make the work as comprehensive as possible the co-operation of not only lichenologists but also of museum and library staffs would be much appreciated. If you know of any local lists included in local society or other scarce journals, floras or general natural history texts, or know of the whereabouts of relevant manuscript material or herbarium collections it would be helpful if you could please inform Dr Hawksworth, Commonwealth Mycological Institute, Ferry Lane, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AF. Replies by the end of June 1976 would be particularly welcome.

For information, about 2,300 titles (articles, books, theses and manuscripts) have so far been checked in the original and indexed. A limited number of draft copies of the bibliography will be available for circulation by late April 1976; if you would like to see one of these please inform Dr Hawksworth.

D. L. HAWKSWORTH

Ordnance Survey maps fail to meet requirements

The Council of the Society wrote early in 1975 to the Ordnance Survey Committee of the Royal Society, the function of which is to ensure that the services provided by the Ordnance Survey meet the requirements of scientists. The Council considered that the new 1:50 000 Second Series maps did not meet botanical expectations in four respects, and they suggested that alterations be carried out to make them satisfactory. The four suggestions were, in order of priority:

1. Broad-leaved and coniferous woodlands should be distinguished by symbols as they were on, for example, the Popular Edition of the One-Inch maps. This would be of benefit for field surveys as these two woodland types carry a very different flora. It would also indicate the extent of conversion of woodland to coniferous plantation.
2. Parish boundaries should continue to be shown, as in the 1:50 000 First Series. Locality data can only be fully and accurately presented when one can record in which parish a particular specimen was collected.
3. Numerals should replace letters in national grid references. This would mean that the grid references could be used for punched cards without the necessity of conversion.
4. Field boundaries should be included appropriate to scale.

The Committee considered the suggestions but were unable to lend their support because three of the items were already displayed on the 1:25 000 maps, and there would be insufficient use made on the 1:50 000 maps to warrant the costs involved of the drawing in of this information. The Committee replied that "the specifications for the Ordnance Survey maps are designed to meet the requirements of as wide a range of users as possible compatible with considerations of cost." The Lichen Society therefore regrettably sees no prospects of the 1:50 000 Second Series maps ever fully meeting our requirements.

List of regional experts

The following members have kindly agreed to act as regional experts. They are willing to act in a liaison capacity, and to provide information on lichens in their respective areas; they will try to deal with any local problems which may arise. These regional experts are not those concerned with distribution mapping or the identification of specimens. The addresses of the persons concerned appear in the list of members in this Bulletin. The names/areas of additions should be sent to the Editor, Mr J. R. Laundon, Department of Botany, British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, for inclusion in a future number of the Bulletin.

Geographical areas

England, southern: F. Rose
Irish Republic: M. R. D. Seaward
Scotland, western: P. W. James

Fens: J. R. Laundon
Scotland: B. J. Coppins

Counties/Vice-counties

Angus(Forfar) Ursula K. Duncan
Buckinghamshire: H. J. M. Bowen
Cambridgeshire: P. W. Lambley
Cornwall: J. D. Guiterman
Devonshire: D.L.Hawksworth; T.D.V.Swinscow
Essex: K. L. Alvin
Gloucestershire: R.T.Ashby; R.H.Bailey
Hunts: P. M. Earland-Bennett
Kent: F. H. Brightman
Leicestershire: D. L. Hawksworth
London: J. R. Laundon
Norfolk: P. W. Lambley
Northumberland: O. L. Gilbert
Pembroke: P. W. James
Staffordshire: D. L. Hawksworth
West Yorkshire: P.M.Earland-Bennett;M.R.D.Seaward
Wiltshire: Alice M. Burnet

Berkshire: H. J. M. Bowen
Caernarvonshire: A. Pentecost
Channel Islands: P.W.James; Mrs.B.J.Ozanne
Derbyshire: D. L. Hawksworth
Dorset: H. J. M. Bowen
Glamorgan: A. E. Wade
Herefordshire: R. H. Bailey
Isle of Man: P. M. Earland-Bennett
Kincardine: Ursula K. Duncan
Lincolnshire: M. R. D. Seaward
Monmouth: A. E. Wade
Northamptonshire: J. R. Laundon
Oxfordshire: H. J. M. Bowen
Somerset: Mary Hickmott
Suffolk: P. W. Lambley

Quarter of elms now dead

The Forestry Commission has reported that by the autumn of 1975 more than a quarter of all elm Ulmus trees in the south of England were dead. In England south of a line from Chester to the Wash about 6 million trees have died as a result of Dutch elm disease, out of a total of 23 million elms. The disease is still spreading, 2 million trees having become infected during 1975, and it has now reached as far north as Glasgow, where an isolated case has been reported. 52 per cent of all hedgerow English elm Ulmus procera are now dead or dying. Injecting techniques to safeguard elms do not always meet with success, and it is uncertain as to how long such trees will remain free from injury. The present outbreak is caused by a new strain of the fungus Ceratocystis ulmi which can be spread by the shared root system, as well as by the bark beetle Scolytus.

Books on lichens - 6

Copies of Dr O. L. Gilbert's illustrated booklet Wildlife Conservation and Lichens, issued as a supplement to the J.Devon Trust Nat.Conserv., are available for £0.25 each plus 8p. post and packing from the Assistant Treasurer, Mr P. W. Lambley. They may be ordered on the form at the end of this Bulletin.

Copies of Dr M. E. Mitchell's A Bibliography of Books, Pamphlets and Articles Relating to Irish Lichenology. 1727 - 1970 (1971) are available for £2.50 plus £0.30 post and packing from the Richmond Publishing Company Ltd., Orchard Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4PD. Stocks are very limited.

Letters to the editor

Pollution in Denmark

Sir, - In Bulletin 31: 2 (December 1972) there is a statement that "some countries (e.g. Denmark, The Netherlands) are now completely devoid of any entirely natural epiphytic vegetation (i.e. communities unaffected by air pollution)." While this statement may well be true of most of the Netherlands today, in view of observations by Professor J. J. Barkman and myself in recent years, it is certainly quite untrue in relation to Denmark. There is certainly a large area around Copenhagen badly affected by air pollution from that city, and in many rural intensively agricultural areas of that country, agricultural chemicals have modified the epiphytic vegetation of free-standing trees considerably in comparison with unaffected areas. However, over considerable areas, including most of Jutland, I was able to find what appeared (by British standards) to be completely "normal" epiphyte communities of a rather continental type. This is particularly true in old woodland and forest areas in many places in central and north Jutland, where not only are communities with Lobaria pulmonaria well-developed in a number of sites, but Usnea spp. are not uncommon, and even such species as Lobaria scrobiculata and the moss Antitrichia curtipendula still occur, locally in some abundance in the latter case. These last two occur only in zone 10 of the Hawksworth-Rose sulphur dioxide pollution scale.

It is also very significant, I think, that Lecanora conizacoides, while common in and around Copenhagen and other large towns, is very rare in much of the Jutland countryside and forests. For example, at Hald Egeskov near Viborg in 1975 (the year of all these observations) L. conizacoides was very rare in the woodlands and only seen on lignum and on Betula; young Quercus twigs there and elsewhere carried a richly developed Graphidion. In Rold Skov forest south of Aalborg it was only seen on conifers; in oak-woods near Engesvang (west Jutland) it could not be found at all.

Yours faithfully,

F. ROSE

St Mary's Road, Liss, Hampshire.

Lichen maps

Sir, - While preparing the distribution maps of Solorina which appeared in a recent Lichenologist I made a salutary discovery. Having consulted all major herbaria, abstracted records from national and county floras, journals, etc., emptied the society's data bank and asked around among members I had reason to believe the maps were up to date - but not so. To net any stray records 20 active lichenologists (not all members of the society) were sent provisional maps and asked for additions. This personal approach resulted in a 39 per cent increase in grid square records (58 new dots and circles for Solorina saccata alone).

If this is a typical genus it suggests that our knowledge of lichen distribution in this country could be increased immediately by around 40 per cent if members would commit what is in their heads and in their notebooks to mapping cards and feed these into the society's data bank. It also highlights the benefits which can follow if clear notice is given of species maps in final stages of preparation.

Yours faithfully,

O. L. GILBERT

Department of Landscape Architecture, The University, Sheffield.

Medieval trees

Sir, - While agreeing wholeheartedly with the plea for the preservation of old trees in Bulletin 37: 6 (December 1975), I would query the view that old trees were necessarily very rare in medieval times. This would certainly seem to have been true in many East Anglian coppice-with-standards woodlands, as Dr O. Rackham has shown. But it is true today that old standards are rare even in those coppices still managed in the traditional way. It was the deer-parks and old royal forests that would have contained the ancient trees. There have of course never been many royal forests in East Anglia, but elsewhere in England they were numerous until the 18th century, though today only parts of the New Forest still retain their ancient character.

I would not question that it would have been very difficult to find huge oaks in the 14th century within a reasonable wagon journey of Ely, but I doubt if this problem would have arisen in the Weald, or in Hampshire, for example, at that period.

It is very likely that many lichens today associated with old trees have been largely confined as they are today in lowland England to ancient parklands and to old royal forests for some considerable period of time. However, one must remember that in a countryside free of drainage and pollution (like parts of western Scotland today) lichens were able to colonise younger trees more rapidly than in present-day environmental conditions in lowland England.

Yours faithfully,

F. ROSE

St Mary's Road, Liss, Hampshire.

Report on lecture and exhibition meeting, 1976

The lecture and exhibition meeting, held after the Annual General Meeting on 3 January 1976 at the British Museum (Natural History), London, was attended by 50 members. The following exhibits were displayed:

- DOBSON, F. S. Photographs of British lichens.
GILBERT, O.L. Wildlife Conservation and Lichens. (Booklet)
HAWKSWORTH, D. L. Bibliography of British Lichens.
LAMBLEY, P. W. A new lichen for Britain: Ramonia chrysophaea.
LAUNDON, J. R. Interesting lichens from church walls.
MILLAR, R. O. Spring Foray Gregynog, Powys, 7 - 14 April 1976.
RICHMOND PUBLISHING COMPANY. Bookstall.
ROSE, F. Little known, unknown, or new lichens to the New Forest and S.E. England.
SWINSCOW, T. D. V. Dermatocarpon psoromoides (Borr.) DT. & Sarnth. an overlooked British species.
TOPHAM, P. B. The genus Umbilicaria in Scotland.
WALLACE, E. C. Congress photographs.
WORTHINGTON, T. S. Lichens - Family Parmeliaceae.

In the afternoon Mr P. W. James spoke on lichens on acid bark, dealing with the species which occurred on Pinus and Betula. He mentioned the various factors (e.g. evergreen nature, low pH, resin, low water capacity, scaling, etc.) which caused pine boles to have a rather specialised flora. Dr F Rose spoke next on the status of the corticolous Xanthorion in Europe, concluding that this was the climax community in the lowland forests of the Mediterranean area, due to high levels of sunshine and the nutrient-enriched bark brought about by dust. As a result of human activity the Xanthorion had spread to Britain and elsewhere (where the Lobarion was the natural climax), but was now declining in the face of the extensive use of artificial fertilisers, etc. Following the tea interval Mr J. Skinner spoke on lichen communities on dolerite in northern England, giving an account of the species making up these. The new President, Dr Gilbert, thanked all concerned for a most rewarding meeting.

The Church

"But ere you enter, yon bold tower survey,
Tall and entire, and venerably gray,
For time has soften'd what was harsh when new,
And now the stains are all of sober hue;
The living stains which Nature's hand alone,
Profuse of life, pours forth upon the stone;
For ever growing; where the common eye
Can but the bare and rocky bed descry;
There Science loves to trace her tribes minute,
The juiceless foliage, and the tasteless fruit;
There she perceives them round the surface creep,
And while they meet, their due distinction keep;
Mix'd but not blended; each its name retains,
And these are Nature's ever-during stains."

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Report of the Conservation Committee for 1975

The Council have decided that the Chairman of the Conservation Committee should report each year on the activities of the committee in the Society's Bulletin. This, the first report, tries to describe the way this committee works and what it has been doing since its inception two years ago.

The Conservation Committee of the society has now been running for two years under its new constitution, meeting three times each year. It inherited from the old Lichen Site Committee a list of important lichen sites in Britain and these were re-classified to conform to the grading employed by the Nature Conservancy Council in the reappraisal of its own sites. Details of the long-awaited gradings given by the NCC to its sites are due to be made public this summer. Since the Conservation Committee first made its list a lot of fieldwork into lichen distribution has been undertaken both for our own mapping scheme and in response to enquiries from the Conservancy. The time is approaching when we also will need to review our list and it has been decided to undertake this early in 1977. In anticipation the committee has already given thought to the areas in which a knowledge of the lichen vegetation is either lacking or scanty. Obviously the Conservation Committee share an interest with the mapping scheme and we have been fortunate to secure grants not only for the administration of the mapping scheme but also to support fieldwork which will be of use to both committees. The administration of funds for fieldwork has now been passed to the Special Funds Committee but it is still one of the tasks of the Conservation Committee to suggest areas in which fieldwork ought to be pursued.

The activities of the Conservation Committee cover a much wider field than just the listing of sites of special interest. Its concern is with the conservation of lichens as a group and with the habitats in which they occur. On this more general level, the activities have ranged from providing information on the lichens of areas likely to suffer a change of management, to the establishment of lichen cover on new buildings. Very often it is in fulfilling such commitments that the society gains useful and free publicity in the press. Churchyard lichens and pollution have been examples in the past and lichen dyeing may well prove an example in the future.

Finally the committee serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas on conservation. Its constitution is not restricted to lichenologists but includes members of the Nature Conservancy Council and representatives of the Bryological, Phycological and Mycological Societies and it sends one of its members to represent lichenological interests in the Conservation Committee of the Botanical Society of the British Isles. For a small society devoted to the study of a large but often overlooked group of organisms obtaining public recognition of the importance of its organisms is difficult. It might be thought that the efforts of the Conservation Committee to gain this recognition is its most important function.

F. N. HAYNES

Lichen mapping scheme: urgent requests

The lichen mapping research programme at Bradford University is now well under way with the transfer of records from existing cards on file into the computer via our newly developed data handling sheet, listing 700 species, and based mainly on the society's 1968 field card. Additional cards, however incomplete, are still urgently required from field workers.

We are at present compiling two preliminary lists which tentatively enumerate the names of recorders and mappers for vice-counties and lichens respectively. We would be most grateful for your help in the production of more definite lists and therefore request that you write to us at the School of Environmental Science, The University, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD7 1DP, as soon as possible.

M. R. D. SEAWARD (Mapping Recorder)
C. J. B. HITCH (Research Fellow)

Secretary's report for 1975

The membership is now 460, in comparison with 439 at the end of 1974, an increase overall of 21. However, only 34 new members joined during the year, which is the smallest total since 1963. It is difficult to account for this low recruitment, because the Society has apparently received more publicity than in the past. It does not appear to be due to the subscription of £5, because last year when this rate came into effect there were nearly twice as many new members. Perhaps the general economic situation is the cause. We regret to note the death of one of our most distinguished honorary members, Professor Emeritus Dr Asahina of Tokyo.

The Society's meetings went according to schedule and were successful. Mr F. H. Brightman, Mr B. J. Coppins, Dr D. L. Hawksworth, Mr P. W. James and Dr F. Rose are thanked for arranging and leading these events.

Two separate parts of The Lichenologist were published, thanks to the editor, Mr James, and Assistant Editor, Dr Hawksworth, and to the publishers, Academic Press. Two numbers of the Bulletin were issued; I regret that the printing of the December issue took seven weeks compared with the usual four, and page two was blank so that members knew neither the date or place of our most important meeting. When this was arranged, Mr Brightman requested that the Society should adopt a "low profile"; well, you couldn't get much lower than that. Fortunately the printers quickly made amends, issuing at their own expense a new first sheet within a week.

It is a pleasure to record the notable achievements in the obtaining of the substantial grant from the Natural Environmental Research Council for the development of the Society's mapping scheme, and the inclusion of lichens in The Conservation of Wild Creatures and Wild Plants Act 1975. We are indebted to those officers who brought these matters to a successful conclusion. Indeed, I thank all members for their great help in the running of our affairs.

J. R. LAUNDON
Honorary Secretary

(This report was presented at the Annual General Meeting on 3 January 1976)

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