

**BOTANICAL RAMBLES**

Director : REV. H. PUREFOY FITZGERALD, F.L.S.

ON Wednesday, 5th June, 1935, between 40 and 50 members met at Beaulieu Abbey at 11.30 a.m. ; the early morning was most unpropitious, as torrents of rain fell, but it was decided that it was too late for any official postponement. Fortunately, it cleared and remained fine for the day.

It had been hoped that a fair number of entomologists would have joined up with the botanically-minded members, but only Mr. and Mrs. Haines turned up. These natural history rambles should be supported, and it is greatly to be hoped that in future all branches of nature lore may have representatives ; at present there appears to be no co-ordination for records and observations of the various natural history branches.

The party divided into two sections, one going to Bucklers Hard, and the other to explore Sowley Pond. Many of the first party had never made acquaintance with the beautiful spot, Bucklers Hard, on the Beaulieu River, and were delighted to visit the little chapel and the Master Builder's House, with its reminiscences of the old wooden shipbuilding times.

Exploration of the marsh and woods did not yield very much in the way of interesting botanical specimens, owing partly to the exceptionally dry period, and it was also obvious that July would have provided much more of interest.

Sowley Pond, on the other hand, was too wet and boggy, and it was very difficult to get anywhere to hunt for marsh plants. The Abbey Wall provided a few things of interest, but nothing very striking.

After tea at the Montagu Arms, where we saw a beautiful specimen of *Fremontia Mexicana* covering one of the walls, and putting out a large number of the bright yellow blossoms, the party proceeded to Exbury Gardens, by kind permission of Mr. L. N. de Rothschild, and the hour's ramble amongst the really wonderful show of rhododendrons, azaleas and many other uncommon flowering shrubs and trees was of the greatest interest, and a revelation to many of what can be done by hybridising.

There is not very much to record as to finds, but the following are worth mentioning :—Bitter Candytuft (*Iberis amara*), a rare plant, but already recorded for this locality ; Large Bittercress (*Cardamine amara*) ; Lungwort (*Pulmonaria longifolia* Boreau) ; Whorled Knotgrass (*Illecebrum verticillatum*) ; Dewberry (*Rubus caesius*) ; Burnet Rose (*Rosa spinosissima*) ; Gipsywort (*Lycopus Europaeus*) ; Penny Cress (*Thlaspi arvense*) ; Common Scurvy Grass (*Cochlearia officinalis*).

### Silchester District

Directors :

REV. H. PUREFOY FITZGERALD, F.L.S.

MR. G. W. WILLIS (*Local Hon. Secretary*).

On Thursday, 18th July, 1935, a party of 20 flower-lovers met at Basingstoke, where they were met by the Director, Rev. H. Purefoy FitzGerald and by Mr. G. W. Willis who acted as guide during the day. We proceeded to Marnell Dell, a really delightful wild flower sanctuary. The chief finds here were :—Yellow-wort (*Chlora perfoliata*), a large quantity of Marsh Helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*) in full bloom ; Yellow Melilot (*Melilotus altissima*) ; Squinancy-wort (*Asperula cynanchica*) ; Pyramidal Orchis (*O. pyramidalis*) ; Fragrant Orchis (*Gymnadenia conopsea*) ; Tway blade (*Listera ovata*), and very many other and more common plants. The cornfield nearby provided Wild Parsnip (*Peucedanum sativum*), Corn Gromwell (*Lithospermum arvense*), Corn Campanula (*Legousia Durande*), Clustered Campanula (*C. glomerata*), Broomrape (*Orobanche major*).

After the picnic lunch in the dell, the party went to the brickfield at Sherborne St. John in order to look for the Grass Pea (*Lathyrus Nissolia*), but only one was found in flower, the rest having gone to seed, and two belated Bee Orchis (*O. apifera*) were also seen ; the banks of Money-wort (*Lysimachia Nummularia*) were a sight worth seeing, with masses of big yellow blossoms ; the Musk Orchis (*Herminium monorchis*) and Yellow Vetchling (*Lathyrus Aphaca*) were also found.

*En route* for Silchester Common, a halt was made near a stream and, further on, near a roadside pond to find Cow-Wheat (*Melampyrum pratense*), Greater Skull Cap (*Scutellaria galericulata*), Celery-leaved Buttercup (*Ranunculus Sceleratus*), and Gipsy wort (*Lycopus Europaeus*).

The next hunting ground, Silchester Common, although very much dried up, provided a few interesting finds, amongst these were : All-seed (*Radiola linoides*), one of the smallest and the least obtrusive of British plants (it is a member of the Flax family) ; Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*), Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), Dodder (*Cuscuta epithimum*), that curious parasite which climbs all over the heather, with its thread-like stems ; Lesser Skull Cap (*Scutellaria minor*), Bird's Foot (*Ornithopus perpusillus*) ; Petty Whin (*Genista anglica*) ; Dyer's Greenweed (*Genista tinctoria*), Wood Loosestrife (*Lysimachia nemorum*) ; Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*).

At the end of the afternoon we were most kindly entertained at tea by Col. and Mrs. Karlake, and this most pleasantly ended a good and interesting day. Thanks are due to Mr. G. W. Willis who had explored the hunting grounds beforehand.

**CROSSBILLS IN HAMPSHIRE**

By H. PUREFOY FITZGERALD, F.L.S.

IN 1935 there seems to have been a considerable immigration of Crossbills (*Loxia Curvirostra*): "British Birds" (Sept. 2nd, 1935) records them from 17 English counties, from Lancashire in the north to Hampshire in the south. This magazine reports that they were heard at Southbourne, Bournemouth on 5th July, and that parties of them were seen daily from 6th July to the end of August (F. C. R. Jourdain): also at New Milton, 28th July (R. E. Coles), and at Shedfield on 1st August by Miss G. K. Medicott, who writes to me that they returned during November for a few days. Several were for many days in August amongst the pine trees at Cuckoo Bushes, Chandler's Ford, the ground around the base of one tree being littered with emptied fir-cones. Two were caught inside the fruit cage in late October, and were very tame and did not mind being handled. Mr. W. J. Ashford also reports that they were much in evidence amongst the pine trees around Bournemouth. He adds this note: "For a few years following the great Crossbill incursion of 1927, several pairs remained to breed—I found over twenty nests in 1931." Another correspondent states that they were seen at Harestock, near Winchester, during the winter of 1933. It would be interesting to know whether any of the Crossbills that came over to this country in 1935, in considerable quantities, stayed in order to breed, and it is to be hoped that any nests that may have been found will be reported.