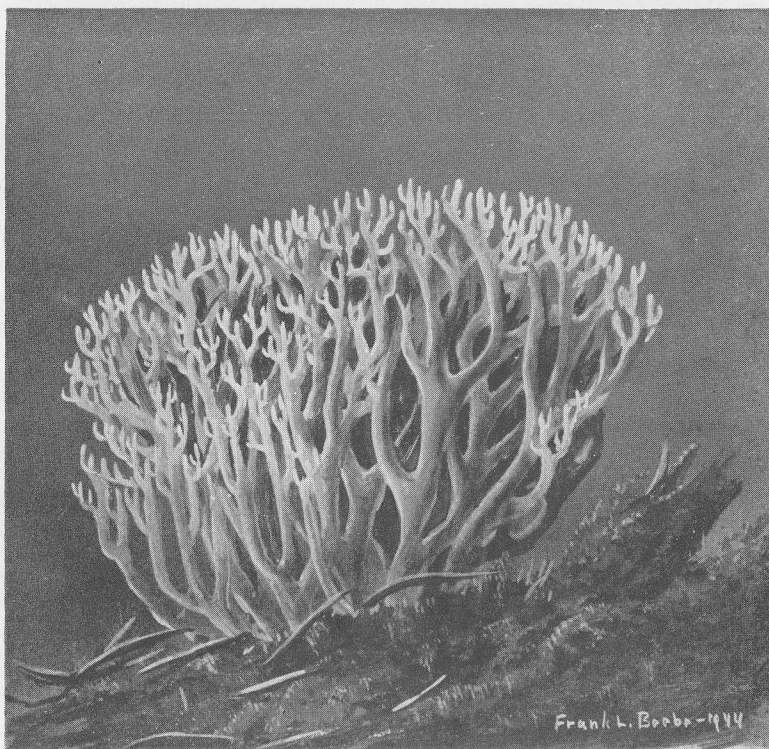


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(F. L. Beebe)

Dryads Broom

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DRYAD'S BROOM

(*Clavaria abietina*)

This coral fungus will be found growing on the ground under coniferous trees where it forms a close and many-branched tuft about 3 inches high. The basal part of the plant is stout and covered with short, white down and from this trunk rise the numerous dull-yellow branches which, when cut or bruised, soon show a greenish tinge.

It has a strong odour and a bitter taste but, like all the *Clavarias*, is quite safe to eat if you feel like trying it. For this purpose be sure the plants are young and free of insects or insect larvae which so quickly tunnel into practically all our fungi.

Dryads were supposed to have been the nymphs of the trees, so this whimsical name, "Dryad's Broom", obviously indicates that the plant was housekeeping equipment used by the nymphs to keep the forest floor tidy.

Some other species of this family (*Clavariaceae*) are club-shaped or trumpet-like instead of being branched like coral. All are attractive and vary greatly in colour -- white, ivory, buff-pink, pale yellow, bright yellow, fawn, red or ash-gray. All of them grow on the ground but at least one of our local coral species will be found with its mycelium feeding in rotted wood partially or wholly buried in forest debris. A walk in the woods in search of these plants will prove quite rewarding.

M. C. Melburn.

PLEASE NOTE:

To reach Thomas Francis Park, where the fungus foray will be held on November 4th, turn right from the Trans-Canada Highway on to Burnside Road, then turn right again on Prospect Lake Road. About one mile up turn left on Munn Road and proceed for about a quarter of a mile when you will see the little white house where the caretaker lives.

REPORT FROM THE SOUTH SEAS

The Fiji Islands being so far from Canada (5100 miles) would be expected to have no similarity to bird life in Victoria. However, after living in Suva for two months we were pleased to find many old friends of the northland.

Upon our arrival here August 8th, the first shorebirds we saw on our beach were Wandering Tattlers (the Victoria Naturalist cover, September 1961). These numbered from four to six birds, possibly having summered over in this area as is the practice of some shorebirds. We saw only one tattler in New Zealand where it is not too common. As the days passed and with the fall migration from the north in full swing we watched our shores with anticipation of more shorebirds to arrive. On August 19th two Ruddy Turnstones showed up in almost full breeding plumage and the next day we were watching one Golden Plover in a rice paddy 20 miles from Suva. Three weeks later on September 9th we saw our first good numbers - 26 Golden Plovers and with them 28 Ruddy Turnstones, both species being in partial breeding plumage. The plovers were extracting large worms from the short-cropped grass near the sea.

Curlews are always a thrill to us, and when we watched a Whimbrel approaching in flight we became excited as we had not seen any since photographing the two regulars at Oak Bay. It flew on past us and along the coastline out of sight. We are keeping a careful lookout for the Bristle-thighed Curlew which winters in the South Pacific.

On September 19th we observed a sight that we have never seen before - 172 Wandering Tattlers in a group waiting for the tide to recede from their feeding grounds. To make things more interesting, three Bar-tailed Godwits with their flight feathers well tattered and worn from the long oceanic flight just settled in near the now feeding tattlers.

We have observed shorebirds in transient during the seasonal migrations in Victoria and now we are living with them in their winter home. Some day we hope to complete the picture - to observe and photograph these hardy migrants on their Arctic breeding grounds.

Barry & Joanna Morgan

Box 333,

Suva, Fiji.

On September 16th last year, Mr. and Mrs. Barry Morgan left us for New Zealand, where they stayed until the beginning of August this year. During their eleven months in New Zealand they covered both the south and north islands, studying and photographing birds. Now, as will be noted, they are at Suva. They are both expert birders, are unexcelled in bird photography, and continue to be members of our society. We are delighted to be able to publish their report of Victoria birds seen on the Fiji Islands.

A.R.D.

INSECT INNINGS

by George A. Hardy

To use a well known cricket phrase, some kind of insect is always having its innings, no matter what the season of the year. A walk into the country by woodside border or in a grassy field, not to mention our gardens, will readily give evidence of this fact.

Just now, at the close of summer, the all too familiar wasp, or yellow-jacket, is subconsciously preparing for the dormant state in which it will pass the winter season. After a busy social period during which as many as three thousand individuals may have arisen from the one queen that initiated the colony early in the spring, its numbers are not only becoming less from wear and tear, but the workers are being augmented by drones and future queens of another year. Usually in October, just before the cold rains and frosts have become the normal part of the weather, the drones may be seen on leaves or flowers awaiting the advent of the virgin queens. The drones may be distinguished from the workers by their longer feelers and absence of a sting, but be sure of the first before attempting to demonstrate the second on your finger.

Eventually all the wasps of the year, the old queen, workers and drones will die at the onset of winter, the only survivors will be the young fertilized queens which will hibernate during the inclement weather. Selecting some sheltered nook or cranny and taking a firm hold with their jaws, they will remain motionless until the warm sunshine of spring arouses them to action.

With the advent of favorable weather the young queen will make the first small paper nest containing a few cells in which she will lay her eggs, one to each cell. She will

feed the ensuing brood until it reaches maturity, after which she will remain in the nest for the rest of her life, doing nothing but lay eggs in the cells built by her progeny. These remarks apply to one of the eight or nine species of wasp recorded for Vancouver Island, members of the Family Vespidae.

Among other insects to be seen in the late summer are several butterflies, each of which has its own particular way of passing the coming winter. A common little butterfly occurring in September is the Vancouver ringlet, a light ochre or orange tinted species that flits among the grasses, settling anon on some aster bloom or other seasonal flower. It will lay its tiny eggs, one at a time, at the base of a grass stem. These will hatch in about ten days, when the young caterpillars feed for a while and then, though very small, will hibernate, to resume feeding the following spring.

Another common butterfly is the woodland skipper, a small brown kind frequenting grassy places in fields and gardens, skipping about with bewildering rapidity from flower to flower, or sunning itself on leaves and grass blades. It lays its eggs, singly, at the base of a grass stem, but in this species, the egg will remain throughout the winter. Emerging in the spring, the caterpillar will complete its growth without interruption, concealed from prying eyes in a light cubical formed by joining some grass blades together with a few strands of silk.

Some butterflies pass the winter in the chrysalis stage, the well known cabbage white being an example. After sampling our cabbages to its hearts content, the full grown caterpillar seeks out some dry place, under the eaves and coping of buildings for instance, where the ensuing pupa will remain until the springtime, looking for all the world like a sliver of the wood on which it is resting.

The mourning cloak adopts still another method of overcoming the vicissitudes of the winter season by braving it out in the adult stage, simply by creeping into a sheltered nook in a woodshed or under loose bark. Here it folds its wings over its back and remains motionless until awakened by a warm spell, which may be during the winter, in which event it resumes its former stance as the cold returns. This is the large butterfly with white-bordered black wings to be met with where the willows, its food plant, abounds. Only after hibernation are the eggs laid in a broad band that encircles the stem of the shrub.

Among the most noticeable of the late summer insects are the grasshoppers, or, properly speaking, locusts, that abound in dry fields and waste places. For present purposes four species can be distinguished by the colour of the hind wings. First, those with colourless and transparent wings. This is the smallest and possibly the most abundant locust, especially in over-grazed pastures that expose the bare ground. Second, the yellow-winged one; a large insect that makes a loud clacking noise with the fore-wings as they strike against one another in flight. Third, a still larger kind, with white-bordered, almost black, hind-wings. The last two frequent gravelled roads and drive-ways, where they may be seen engaged in ovipositing in the hard dry ground. Fourth, a smaller species than the last two, possessing red wings. It is to be found in dry grassy places, but is not usually so common as the first species mentioned.

All these locusts lay their eggs beneath the surface of the ground by means of a stout ovipositer at the tip of the body.

Another insect that attracts attention at this time of year is the termite in its winged phase, looking like a tiny aeroplane as it careens along in steady flight, often to alight at our doors or windows where its wings seem to suddenly collapse and break off. This is the female of the species about to found a new colony in some damp log, or even the foundations of our buildings if they are not damp-proofed.

So, in various ways, insects are among the most successful of all living things in ensuing the continuity of their species, no matter what the hazards of climate, locality, or even the hostility of man may present.

#### PURPLE MARTINS

by David Stirling

Purple martins are rather scarce and local on Vancouver Island but pairs and small colonies are found in summer along the eastern coastal plain from Victoria to Campbell River.

In August of this year an unusually large number of these birds appeared over Florence Lake to feed on an abundant hatch of aquatic insects. Mr. T. Briggs, who lives near the lake, counted as many as forty birds in

the air at one time.

The purple martins' choice of nesting sites is interesting, and demonstrates that the ability to change a habit of long standing is the key to survival. Before the destruction of the great forest which covered most of the eastern part of the continent, martins nested in holes in trees. To-day these birds nest in houses provided by man. Allen and Nice (1952 Amer.Midl.Nat.47:614-616) state that in the east purple martin nests in natural cavities have not been reported since the early years of the 20th century. In the west suitable sites in city buildings are sometimes used. They nest in downtown Seattle where their far-carrying "chirrup" can be heard above the roar of the traffic. In 1960 a pair nested in the Times Building on Fort Street, Victoria. Here again they were discovered by their distinctive call note. For several years a number have nested at H.M. Dockyard - at least one nest was under the turn table of a giant crane!

Probably most of the western birds still nest in holes in trees. At Comox and Oyster Bay they prefer old pilings near the edge of the sea. I have found martins nesting in tall dead snags in north-central Alberta, the extensive logged-over lands of the Quinsam west of Campbell River, and near Munns Road in the vicinity of Victoria.

#### FALL NOTES

by Alan Poynter

Eight species of gulls were seen in only a few minutes at Clover Point early in October.

At least five black-throated gray warblers were identified in the Victoria area. This makes four consecutive summers they have been seen. This is a bird which had not been noticed on Vancouver Island until some of our more observant bird watchers were in the field.

First year Heerman gulls have been seen in goodly numbers this fall, in that almost black plumage with the two-toned bill.

Lapland longspurs, golden plover, white-fronted geese and Franklin gulls turned up again on the Oak Bay golf course.

For the sixth consecutive year a pair of whimbrel (Hudsonian curlew) have returned to winter in the Oak Bay area, and were first seen this year at the foot of Bowker

Avenue on October 6th in the company of one knot, one ruddy turnstone, one black-bellied plover and a greater yellowlegs.

The beautiful western tanager was noted in increased numbers moving south during September.

A pair of long-billed marsh wrens are in the slough at the end of Telegraph Bay Road, where we hope they will stay for the Christmas count.

#### JUNIOR JOTTINGS

by Freeman King

The trip to the Thunderbird Cave at Mount Newton gave us an insight in to the shelters used by the Indian tribes of a past age.

We noted a 'drowned out' area, and saw how it was being reclaimed by the newer growth of shrubs. The pond area was explored, and snail and slug eggs were found.

The exploration trip to the newly-developed power line right-of-way on the western edge of Francis Park was more than rewarding. Fourteen different species of plants were found, which had established themselves on the recently cleared forest land. This area has now become a new hunting ground for many of the seed-eating birds that did not inhabit the territory before because of the dense bush.

The Leader section have had a real busy time. They all went to Westholme, to pile and stack a quantity of wood for Mrs. Janet Goodall, who is expecting to turn her property over to the Provincial Parks Branch. (Many thanks to the car drivers for this trip).

The exploration trip into Iron Mine Bay, East Sooke, was profitable in that we discovered a large number of fungi and liverworts. This area is one between a rain and a climax forest, taking one out to a beautiful open beach. The little islands off shore were explored. All members of the party cooked their lunches on the beach. Yes, this group do not need an electric stove to put up a real good meal.

We are planning a nature display for all members during the month of January. It is hoped to hold the display in the Douglas Building Cafeteria.

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Remember the Fungus Foray on November 4th at Thomas Francis Park, and the correlating lecture in the museum on the subject of fungi in the museum on November 7th.

AMPHIBIAN MIGRATION

by G. Clifford Carl

Mrs. A. B. Cross of Lands End Road reports seeing "several hundreds of salamanders" crossing a half-mile stretch of road adjacent to her home on the morning of October 9th. Numbers of the travellers had been squashed by traffic; others seemed to be unusually sluggish in their movements.

From her description it seems that the salamanders were Pacific Coast newts (*Taricha granulosa*), a species in which the females sometimes make mass migrations to and from the spawning area.

In this instance they were probably spreading out from a local pond into the neighbouring woods where they normally spend the winter under rotting logs and other forest floor litter.

Their slow movements were probably the result of the rather low temperature at the time they were observed. This particular amphibian is never speedy on land, anyway, and like other members of this "cold-blooded" group its activity is regulated by temperature. This often proves fatal when these creatures set off to cross a busy highway; their chances of reaching safety on the far side of the road are rather slight.

Another man-made hazard to newts appeared in Vancouver's Stanley Park some years ago when the approaches to the Lions Gate Bridge were completed. Large numbers of migrating individuals were killed by traffic, as might be expected. Survivors which reached the comparative safety of the gutter were then confronted with an insurmountable concrete curb. The thwarted newts then travelled along the gutter until they fell through gratings to the storm sewer beneath, which then swept them into the sea.

"UNMADE AS YET"

by Alan Poynter

On my map, Lochside Drive is marked simply as "unmade as yet". A few of us know that this was the right-of-way of the old Canadian National Railway linking Victoria with Patricia Bay, now unrecognizable as such except for the almost straight and level path left behind, which in places is completely overgrown, and shortly will be inundated by several inches of muddy water.

Far from being merely an unmade road, as I realise

every time I walk on any part of it, it is an artery of natural history rarely excelled in our dwindling local habitats, having most of our plant, animal and bird life within the bounds of its dilapidated fencing or in the adjacent countryside along its remaining eight-mile route.

I walked one mile in from Sayward Road on Thanksgiving week-end. The leaves were falling and the berries were ripe. A flock of band-tailed pigeons flew noisily out of a native crab-apple tree, while a watery 'plop' indicated a ditch beneath the tangle of blackberry and snowberry brush, a ditch with enough water to support many families of muskrat and afford escape for the elusive frog and what else?

Robins and flickers were bathing noisily. A new winter arrival engaged in preening turned out to be a fox sparrow, sitting on a small saskatoon bush almost bare of leaves, to be joined by a song sparrow, a white-crowned, golden-crowned and a lincoln; five species of sparrows all in one bush, with two savannah's alongside on the fence wire, a sure sign of the changing seasons.

I picked a 'horse tail' to pieces sitting under a broad-leaf maple as a skein of Canada geese flew overhead outlined against a clear blue sky, and it was easy to see that the last one in line was a white-fronted goose. I seemed to be the only creature out this morning that was idle.

A flock of minute bushtits flew into a flowering red currant bush in which an old robin's nest was leaning crazily. Last year this bush had in its branches a family of yellow warblers, and a short three years ago I had sat and watched a pair of bushtits work on a half completed nest amongst its bright green foliage of early spring.

I walked back, taking care not to tread on the hoof prints of an adult deer and fawn that had passed very recently, and jumped when a pheasant flushed close by, setting off a chain reaction of snipe, Cooper hawk, squirrel and a multitude of blackbirds.

This is Lochside Drive, the "unmade" road.

MEMBERSHIP

At the present time our society is comprised of 5 life members, 131 single members, 52 families and 37 juniors. Many more juniors are included in the family memberships. A total of 250 copies of the 'Naturalist' will be mailed this month.

## THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF A NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

In the spring of 1923 four Vancouver men commenced spending weekends and holidays in pursuit of their respective interests in nature study. In course of time others joined the group, which, by 1925, numbered twelve. In the autumn of 1925 the BURREARD FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB was founded. It was agreed to limit membership to sixteen for the time being, but this was later extended, and in 1928 the membership reached twenty-nine.

Applicants for membership had to be sponsored and possess a working knowledge of the subject in which he was interested. Femines were excluded throughout the existence of the club. The annual fee was \$2.00.

The members were composed of professional men, merchants, tradesmen, artisans, etc., and were all amateur scientists and authorities on their subjects, which included marine and fresh-water biology, botany, entomology, conchology, geology, ornithology, anthropology, astronomy, palaeontology and photography. Their explorations took them as far afield as Lytton, the Okanagan, Lillooet, Bridge River, Chilcotin, Garibaldi, etc.

This club was affiliated with the Vancouver City Museum, and the pages of 'Museum Notes', published by the Art, Historical and Scientific Association bear testimony regarding the success of their excursions. Their activities continued until 1948, when the club ceased to exist.

The above notes are compiled from a review of the history of this club written by Mr. W. Mackay Draycot, who was one of its members, and whose particular subjects included geology, conchology, mineralogy and palaeontology. Mr. Mackay Draycot is a member of our society and a valued contributor to our magazine.

We can echo his final words - "Since our day there have been many changes in the landscape. Gone are the shoreline salt-marshes and estuary swamp land, a botanist's and ornithologist's delight. During the years of the Club's activities there were virtually no restrictions, we wandered about as we pleased. These freedoms were never abused, for the naturalist had one desire - to preserve this worldly paradise for himself and posterity".

It would be presumptuous to venture an opinion as to why this club ceased to function, but one cannot help wondering if the exclusion of the ladies, the purely scientific outlook and the lack of younger members hastened its end.

A.R.D.

## A TRIP TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by Joyce Chope (Junior Member)

How often have I heard the tune "When Its Spring-time in The Rockies". Truly, that must be a beautiful sight to see. Not that there would be much change in the general scenery, as the trees are mostly evergreens, but if one were able to stop and look closely at the new plant life forcing its way up between the snow banks, it indeed would be a thrilling experience.

When we went camping in that famous range of mountains, it was well into summer, and perhaps fall was already beginning to appear on the higher places. An interesting thing about the plant life was that, to my mind, everything was in miniature - tiny azaleas, rhododendrons, etc. For instance, the michaelmas daisy was usually little more than ten inches in height. Also, there was a great deal of Englemann spruce, which, compared to our trees on the coast, appear very small and scraggly. Finally, at an altitude of about 7,500 feet, we saw a few specimens of anemones and penstemon.

As for the animal life, we were greatly disappointed in it. All we saw were two elks, some Rocky Mountain big-horn sheep, several chipmunks, and, of course, some of the bears which frequent the Banff garbage dump. The animals we did see were quite tame. Due to the steady stream of tourists one had a good opportunity of taking their pictures.

Bird life was not very prolific, and all we saw were a few very friendly whiskyjacks, which ate out of our hands.

I feel I should also mention the "Hoodooos". These strange geological formations are carved out of the soft sandstone by the constant action of rain and wind. Their shape resembled hooded female figures, and some, we thought, possessed close resemblance to the statue of Queen Victoria.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS1961

Saturday

ENTOMOLOGY:

Nov. 4th:

Meet at the Monterey Cafe for a Field Trip from 9 a.m. to 12 noon with Dr. John A. Chapman. Adults and children.

Saturday

BOTANY FIELD TRIP:

Nov. 4th:

Meet at the Monterey Cafe at 1:30 p.m. for a Fungus Foray to Thomas S. Francis Park, Munn Rd. Bring tea.  
Leader: Miss M. C. Melburn.  
(see front page)

Tuesday

BOTANY:

Nov. 7th:

A meeting will be held in the Museum at 8 p.m.  
Speaker: Professor C. W. Lowe.  
Subject: Discussion on Fungi.

Saturday

BIRD FIELD TRIP:

Nov. 11th:

Meet at the Monterey Cafe at 9:30 a.m., or at Esquimalt Lagoon at 10 a.m. Bring lunch.  
Leader: Mr. T. R. Briggs.

Tuesday

GENERAL MEETING:

Nov. 14th:

At the Douglas Building Cafeteria on Elliot Street at 8 p.m. Slides on Bonaventure Island and Arizona by J.M. Barnett and D. Stirling.

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The Juniors will meet each Saturday at the Monterey Cafe at Hillside and Douglas Street, at 1:30 p.m. for Field Trips.

Leader: Mr. Freeman King.

Anyone who would like to join these trips is very welcome.

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### *Editors*

A. R. DAVIDSON  
825 Monterey Avenue  
Telephone EV 4-9595

G. CLIFFORD CARL  
410 Queen Anne Heights  
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