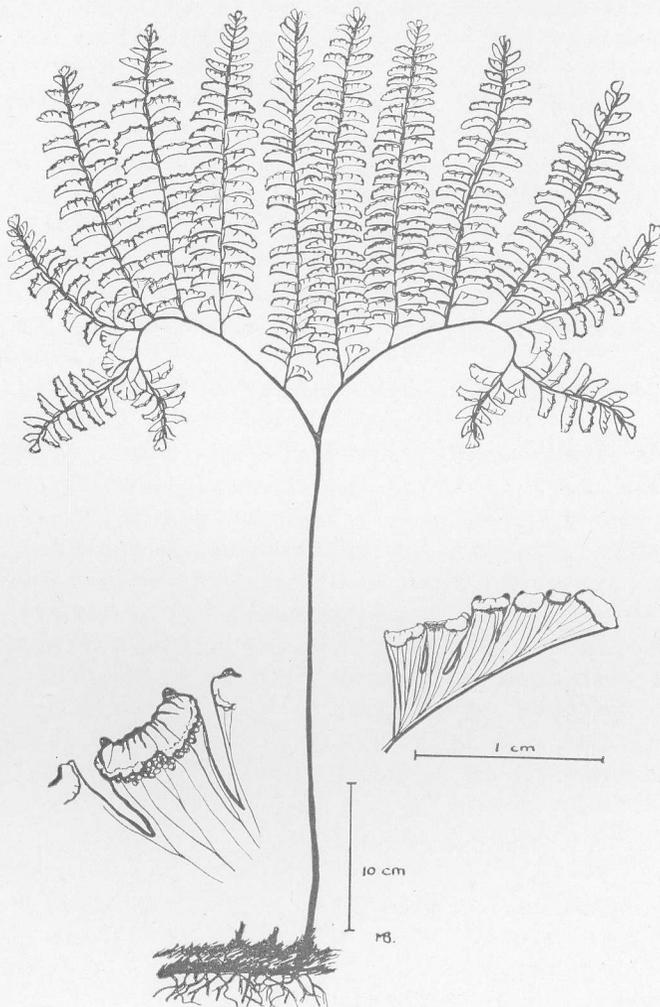


The
**VICTORIA
NATURALIST**

Vol. 14, No. 1

April, 1957



Northern maidenhair.

(Mary Bryant.)

Published by the
VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
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Vol.14, No.1.

APRIL 1957.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Society was held this year in the Museum on March 12th, at which time the officers for the ensuing year were elected.

The President and the Chairmen of the different groups gave a report of activities of the Society during the preceding year, details of which will be found in this issue.

Mr. Ralph Fryer gave a talk on 'Flash Photography', illustrated by photographs by this method.

A reading of the reports for the year will show that the Society has had a successful and useful year, but much remains to be accomplished in the way of conservation in all its aspects.

Also, the numbers of members declined somewhat, resulting in a financial loss for the year.

It is to be hoped therefore that the members will tell their friends of the pleasure and interest that can be obtained by attending the various field meetings and lectures, so that an increase of membership will result, with a correspondingly stronger influence in combatting the undue exploitation of our natural resources.

The officers for the year 1957-58 are as follows:

President:	Mr. P. M. Monckton
Vice-President:	Mrs. G. E. Soulsby
Treasurer:	Mrs. Eleanore McGavin
Secretary:	Miss I. T. Latimer
Editors:	Mr. A. R. Davidson Dr. G. C. Carl
Programme:	Mrs. J. R. Parris
Botany - summer -	Miss M. C. Melburn
- winter -	Miss A. Gorham
Ornithology:	Mr. J. O. Clay
Marine:	Mr. J. A. Cunningham
Audubon Lectures:	Mr. & Mrs. J.A. Berry
Conservation:	Dr. D. B. Turner
Geology:	To be announced.

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

The Society has continued to take an important place in the cultural life of Greater Victoria and Southern Vancouver Island. Its purpose to encourage the study of natural history and conservation, and to act in the interests of the people of British Columbia, has been uppermost in the minds of its members and the members of the executive council have met frequently to discuss how best the Society may further such activities.

While the active groups are especially in the biological and geological sciences, other allied fields are encouraged especially archeology and anthropology, geography and ecology. Conservation is a cross sectional activity affecting all fields, and increased attention is currently being given to this important phase of the Society's work.

The junior members of the Society have met weekly under the direction of Miss Betty Newton. This opportunity for the younger people to receive instruction is most important, and has been well improved. While children may not find time during high school to continue their interest, later on many will return to it with a good background. The success of the future of our Natural History Societies lies in such activities, and the continuation of this work is highly desirable.

The Audubon Screen Tours have been well attended, mostly by capacity audiences, and their interest and appreciation has been generously expressed. This activity has been most rewarding both in the quality of the lectures and also in their financial success.

Your executive has discussed the protection of birds of prey and you sent a letter to the Hon. Robert Bonner, Attorney-General, in April urging British Columbia to join with other provinces in Canada in this worth while action. Continued effort in this direction is needed.

Following the consideration given last year in the preservation of Thetis Lake Park, from undue logging, another letter was sent, after a visit to the park by a few members, to protest using any part of the Park for purposes of a city dump. This plan is not receiving definite action by the city authorities, at the moment, and further action by the Society is desirable.

In July the Vancouver Natural History Society established a camp at Grouse Nest, near Sooke, with 30 members, and several members of the Victoria Natural History Society

joined them, some in Camp, others to act as guides for a number of field trips. Their leader Mr. Stewart Bradley expressed warm appreciation for the friendliness of the members of the Victoria Society. The weather was propitious and everyone had a most enjoyable experience. Mr. Allen R. Wootten, Pres., wrote me his thanks also.

A letter written by Mr. Marrion urging the construction, by the Province, of a suitable Natural History Museum, was endorsed by the Society and sent to the proper authority. Continuing action for this much needed project is desirable.

The Annual Meeting of the Society in March ends the financial year, but the Victoria Naturalist is published and distributed until May, thus confusing the magazine and membership year. To change the date of the annual meeting requires an amendment to the constitution of the Society, and consideration has been given to the problem. Other revisions are needed and with a view to making a satisfactory and thorough study, the matter has had to be postponed. It is well under way and should receive further consideration in the coming year.

The proposal for a Federation of British Columbia Naturalists has come from the Vancouver Natural History Society, and two of their members met on February 20th, 1957, with nine members of the Victoria Society, to discuss the matter. Following this a panel discussion of the Victoria Society members was held on March 5th, 1957, with about one quarter of the membership present. Active interest in the proposal was expressed but details of how to organize such an undertaking could not be decided on short notice, and further consideration is needed to make any decision. Representatives of both Societies should meet and report again to the parent Societies, after a vote is taken to authorize such a move.

The annual social evening under the direction of Miss Perry last May was a decided success, and another such event is looked forward to, this Spring.

With deep regret we record the death of Mr. H.D.R. Stewart on January second 1957. He was one of the Society's editors for several years, and was one of our most faithful members. His wise council and friendliness are greatly missed.

I wish to thank the members of the Executive for their co-operation and constructive work, throughout the year. It is a great satisfaction to have had such willing and effective leadership, not only in council but in every group. Dr. Carl has been generous with his time and support, providing

his office for executive meetings and making the Museum facilities available for our meetings. He not only provided projectors for the use of lecturers but frequently projected the slides with the skill that makes both lecturer and audience get the most out of the lecture.

During the absence of the President and also at times of the Vice-President, Professor Lowe has taken the chair, and has been ready on many occasions to share his views, and one occasion he gave a lecture in the absence of the one placed on the programme. Miss Melburn also shared in this and made the presentation of Aquatic Plants in Relation to their Environment, a memorable occasion.

During the year fifteen excellent lectures have been given before the Victoria Natural History Society, and in addition five Audubon Screen Tours. A rough estimate indicates that about 3500 people have attended these lectures. In addition there have been fifteen field trips and the eighteen meetings of the Juniors, adding 500 more, a total of about 4000.

The Victoria Naturalist has numbered 112 pages and about 126 titles of both longer and shorter items, many of which are serious contributions to the literature of Natural History, some of them outstanding.

This total of 53 meetings and field trips could have been possible only by the devotion of the members and guests of the Society, and a most industrious and able contribution by Mr. A. R. Davidson, editor of the Naturalist.

It is highly desirable that we continue to add to our membership, and I think that each of us can feel confidence in inviting friends to join. Financially we need more income from dues, and I am sure that with the lectures and magazine, we are getting a good deal for the cost of membership. Fortunately the income from the Audubon Screen Tours has helped to keep us in the black, but this is a year to year contract and we should be self-supporting independently of such uncertain sources of income. I therefore urge each one of us to try to bring in more members. We have every reason to be proud of our Society, and of its accomplishment.

I wish to thank Miss Helen Baird for acting as secretary in the absence of Miss Irene Latimer. The work of the secretary is meticulous and precise, and Miss Baird has rendered a real service during the busy part of the year. I also wish to thank the three Past Presidents for serving as a nominating committee for officers for the coming year.

Professor Lowe has given this much time and effort as chairman of the Committee, and we shall all benefit by his contribution, and that of Professor Cunningham and of Mrs. Hobson.

Albert O. Hayes.

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BOTANICAL REPORT, WINTER PROGRAMME, 1956-1957

The winter programme of the Botany Group opened on October 9th when Dr. Adam Szczawinski gave an illustrated address to the whole society on "A Botanical Excursion to Northern B.C., Yukon, and Alaska". The ecological details of many unusual species were given as the pictures were shown. The lecture revealed the large amount of useful work done by a well organized survey.

On November 3rd the thirteenth annual fungus foray took place at Thetis Lake Park under the joint leadership of Miss M.C. Melburn and Mr. C.W. Lowe. A full account of the event prepared by Miss Melburn appeared in the Victoria Naturalist for December.

On January 15th Mr. C.P. Lyons gave a very interesting talk illustrated by colour slides on "Some Plants to Know in British Columbia", and a full report prepared by Miss Melburn appeared in the March issue of the Naturalist.

At short notice a botanical meeting was arranged for February 10th when it was learned that the programme scheduled for that night was postponed. A talk on "Aquatic Plants in Relation to Environment" illustrated by numerous specimens and coloured plates was given by Mr. C.W. Lowe with the able assistance of Miss A. Gorham and Miss Melburn who supplied most of the materials used.

C. W. Lowe.

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TREASURER'S REPORT for Year 1956-1957INCOME

Bank Balance from previous year	- - - - -	\$ 236.42
Membership fees - Senior	- - - - -	263.00
" " Junior	- - - - -	21.50
Receipts: Social Evening	- - - - -	10.50
" Miscellaneous	- - - - -	8.25
Bank Interest	- - - - -	5.71
Audubon Account. Advertising in Naturalist	- - - - -	40.00

\$ 585.38

EXPENDITURE:

(Monks Multigraph Letter Service -		
(Printing and Mailing 'Naturalist'	- - - - -	267.96
Stationery	- - - - -	31.50
Empire Printers: Envelopes	- - - - -	36.40
" Printing Check Lists	- - - - -	31.75
" Paper	- - - - -	4.32
Canadian Audubon Society, Affiliation Fees	- - - - -	10.00
Expenses Social Evening	- - - - -	13.25
Bank Service Charge	- - - - -	.55
Flowers & Telegram of sympathy	- - - - -	16.40

\$ 412.13

BALANCE IN BANK

\$ 173.25

Audited and found Correct: "J. H. Whitehouse"
"C. W. Lowe"

Total paid members including family memberships	115
Ditto, previous year	121

Respectfully submitted
"Gladys E. Soulsby"
Treasurer.

REPORT ON BOTANY FIELD TRIPS

During the 1956 season the Botany Group made four field trips approximately one month apart:-

April 28 - Mt. Douglas; May 26 - Thetis Lake Park;
June 23 - Saanichton Spit; July 21 - Goldstream Park.

Mount Douglas is undoubtedly the best locale for the initial "hunt" of the season and for this jaunt 23 members turned out to look up their old friends among the trees and up on the hillside. Among the 41 species found blooming were two species of camas (*C. quamash* and *C. leichtlinii*), two of miner's lettuce (*Montia linearis* and *M. perfoliata*), two orchid species, fairy slipper (*Calypso bulbosa*) and striped coral-root (*Corallorhiza striata*), along with two species of the Saxifrage Family, early saxifrage (*Saxifraga integrifolia*) and fringe-cup (*Tellima parviflora*).

The Thetis lake trip began under threatening weather but no rain fell and the 14 club members present found 66 species of plants in flower.

Among the more interesting were gilia (*G. tenella*), phlox (*P. gracilis*) and farewell-to-spring (*Godetia amoena*). Near the shallow water area where water-cress (*Nasturtium officinale*) grows so abundantly we found on the bank a fine clump of bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*). In a rocky location there was an exceedingly good showing of one-flowered cancer-root (*Orobanche uniflora*) parasitic on stone-crop.

Of the 66 species, 10 were small trees or shrubs such as cascara, service-berry, false-box and western dogwood.

For the Saanichton spit trip Dr. Carl gave us a letter to the Chief of the East Saanich Indian Reserve, guaranteeing our good intentions.

Along the approach and at the spit 44 species were listed by the 28 members in attendance:- giant vetch (*Vicia gigantea*) and three other members of the Pea Family; yellow sand verbena or abronia (*Abronia latifolia*), beach-knoxweed (*Polygonum paronychia*), beach silver-top (*Glehnia leiocarpa*), beach morningglory (*Convolvulus soldanella*), yellow-rattle (*Rhinanthus kyrollae*) and salt-marsh dodder (*Cuscuta salina*) which was found there on six different hosts.

In many cases, plants on the Spit grow in mass formation permitting no other species in their midst; big-headed sedge (*Carex macrocephala*) and wild rye grass (*Elymus molis*) afford two examples of this habit. Saanichton spit is by no means a 'pretty place' but it is a very interesting one for

plant study.

Our Trip to Goldstream was made two months earlier than in 1955, but we found the same 50 or more plant species in flower, in fruit or both. They are 'at home' there.

False hellebore (*Veratrum eschscholtzi*) bearing large terminal panicles of greenish-yellow flowers is a tall stout plant whose roots contain a powerful poison used in medicine and also as an ingredient in certain insecticides. Two other large plants found were angelica (*Angelica genuflexa*) and western water hemlock (*Cicuta douglasii*) both members of the Parsley Family. In contrast enchanter's nightshade (*Circaea pacifica*) is a delicate perennial bearing racemes of little white flowers which develop into small one-seeded dry fruits, so different from its cousin, the fireweed, whose long pods each open to scatter thousands of parachuted seeds.

The count of 50 included no trees nor any of the grasses and sedges so numerous in that area.

A complete inventory of each of these areas and of the others which we have visited in recent years would be an interesting and worthwhile project for some group of energetic students of Botany.

M. C. Melburn.

REPORT ON BIRD GROUP FIELD MEETINGS: Year 1956-1957 --

Eight field trips of the Bird Group were held during the year, as follows, all of which have been reported in the 'Naturalist':

April 21st:	Ten Mile Point
May 5th:	Metchosin
July 7th:	Boat trip to Balingall Islands
Sept. 22nd:	Esquimalt and Little Lagoons
Oct. 20th:	Sidney and District
Nov. 24th:	Elk Lake
Dec. 29th:	Christmas Count
Feb. 9th:	Clover Point and shore to Oak Bay.

J. O. Clay.

EARLY BIRDS: Swallows were reported this year at Glen Lake on March 5, quite possibly the earliest date on record. Members of the Society saw a flock of about 20 at Swan L. on Mar. 9, and identified them as the violet green.

REPORT OF GEOLOGY GROUP

The Geology Group has had a successful and interesting year, judging by the attendance at the meetings.

On April 17th Mr. George Winkler gave a talk on 'Prospecting on Vancouver Island'. This subject apparently appealed to the general public, as the Museum lecture area was filled with people, about 65 or 70 attending.

On May 12th a large group of about 30 persons enjoyed the afternoon at Towner Point, where exposures of the Nanaimo series of sediments are found.

The Vancouver Natural History Society camp was held at Sooke from July 7th to 14th. I guided the visitors to points of interest. Mrs. Soulsby took a group to the Muir Creek fossil beds, and our President Dr. Hayes and Mrs. Hayes joined the naturalists in an examination of the Jordan River Pot Holes (see Mrs. Soulsby's article in the October magazine).

On Sept. 25th Mr. J. H. Whitehouse gave an interesting illustrated lecture on the fossils of the Cretaceous life of Alberta to a group of about 29 members.

On October 23rd I outlined the history of the Olympic Mountains by the use of diagrams. This subject seemed to appeal to Victorians as an attendance of forty was present.

On October 13th a group of about 20 persons visited the gravel pits at Esquimalt Lagoon. An aerial photograph showed the meanderings of the glacial river that deposited the sands and gravels in the sea at the time of ice recession.

In the October magazine Dr. Hayes contributed an article on 'Post Glacial Uplift'.

On November 13th Dr. H. Sargent of the Mines Department gave an instructive and interesting talk on the geology of Mexico, and the formation of the new volcano. Photos showed the volcano in action and the accumulation of lava about its base. Attendance about 40.

In the November and December issue of the magazine Mr. Whitehouse contributed an article on 'Fossils'.

On February 26th Mr. H. W. Naismith of the Mines Department gave a talk on 'Wells and Well Water'. Illustrations were used in explanation of such terms as 'ground water system', 'water table', 'parched water table' and 'whistling wells'. A report of the lecture will appear later in the magazine. About 20 members attended.

A trip to Island View Beach to examine the sunken tree

roots and logs and the glacial outwash of the cliffs is scheduled for March 23rd.

Members of this group have assisted the Junior Natural History group as follows:-

Mrs. G. Soulsby gave a party;
 Mr. A. H. Marrion: subject 'Volcanoes'
 Mr. J. H. Whitehouse: on Fossils;
 Dr. A. O. Hayes: subjects 'Rocks' and 'Minerals'

A. H. Marrion, Chairman.

FIELD MEETING: -- BIRD GROUP

On Saturday, February 9th, twenty-one members attended a field meeting which met at Clover Point and proceeded along the marine drive by way of Foul Bay, Shoal Bay and Oak Bay to Bowker Avenue.

The weather was cold and windy, making close observation of birds difficult. In spite of which, however, 34 species were seen, including black oyster-catchers, red-backed sandpipers, black turnstones, meadowlarks and a flock of eighteen black-bellied plover. A red-throated loon, close in to shore in front of the Old Charming Inn, gave one group of watchers a thrill, as this species is not particularly common to our waters.

J. O. Clay.

SPRING MIGRANTS

The following are the dates on which the following migrating birds were first seen in Victoria:

April 6th:	Rufous hummingbird
" 8th:	Townsend warbler
" 10th:	Lutescent warbler
" 14th:	Solitary vireo
" 14th:	Savannah Sparrow
" 17th:	Chipping sparrow
" 18th:	Warbling vireo
" 22nd:	Western sandpiper
" 26th:	Goldfinch
" 28th:	Yellow warbler
" 28th:	Barn swallows
" 29th:	Western flycatcher

A.R.D.

JUNIOR NATURAL HISTORY PAGE

British Columbia Turtles
 by Leo Orrico.

The British Columbia turtles are members of the families Emydidae, Dermochelidae and Chelonidae. Emydidae is represented by the western painted turtle and the Pacific terrapin, which has been taken but twice in British Columbia. Dermochelidae is represented by the huge Pacific leatherback turtle taken twice and seen infrequently, and Chelonidae is represented by the green turtle, taken but once.

The painted turtle is fairly common in and around the Osoyoos and Okanagan lake districts. On Vancouver Island it is found near Great Central lake and outlying areas. The Pacific terrapin has been found twice on the mainland; once near Burnaby lake and once near Vancouver. The Pacific leatherback is found in the waters of the Southern Pacific but has been taken twice in British Columbia waters near Nootka Sound.

In nature the painted turtle eats fish fry, tadpoles, fresh-water mussels, water snails, aquatic insects, water lilies, water milfoil, ditch moss (elodea), bullrush and other plants. In captivity it will take earthworms, chopped beef, lettuce and cabbage.

Since the Pacific terrapin has been taken only twice little is known of its habits in this province except that it eats water insects, water beetles and water lily pods. In captivity it takes worms, fish and meat.

The Pacific leatherback appears to exist on jellyfish, crustaceans and seaweed. It may also eat fish. Here this turtle is of no commercial value. In places where it is more numerous its flesh is eaten and its oil is used in certain types of varnish.

The painted turtle has five vertebral shields and four costal shields. There are twenty-four marginal plates plus two caudal plates and one nuchal plate. The general colour of the carapace is olive green with margins of yellow between the plates. The plastron is scarlet, reddish yellow, or yellow with a large dark blotch or intricate lyrate pattern in young specimens. The head and limbs are dark olive with longitudinal yellow stripes. The scale formation is variable. General form is narrow and low, the shell is up to nine and one-half inches long. The Pacific terrapin's carapace is yellow-olive with few or no markings. The plastron is yellow with irregular black or brown blotches.

(cont'd page 12)

NOTICES OF MEETINGS

1957

Saturday AUDUBON SCREEN TOUR: Oak Bay Junior High School
 April 6: 8 p.m. Subject: Hawaii, U.S.A.
 Speaker: Fran William Hall

Tuesday GENERAL MEETING:
 April 9: Provincial Museum at 8 p.m.
 Illustrated Lecture: "The Plant Biotic Zones in
 Speaker: Mr. L. J. Clark. B.C."

Saturday BIRD GROUP:
 April 13: Field trip to Sidney. Meet at Monterey Cafe
 at 9:30, or at Sidney Wharf at 10:30.
 Bring lunch. Leader: Mr. J. Owen Clay.

Saturday BOTANY FIELD TRIP to Mount Douglas.
 April 27: Meet at Blenkinsop & Cedar Hill Cross Roads
 at 1:30 p.m. Those who wish will drive to
 Lookout area. Later all meet at Picnic
 Grounds for tea and to compare notes.
 Leaders: Miss M.C. Melburn & Prof. C.W. Lowe.

Tuesday BOTANY GROUP:
 April 30: Reading Room, Provincial Library, at 8 p.m.
 Illustrated Lecture: "A Botanist looks at
 the Hawaiian Islands".
 Speaker: Dr. T.M.C. Taylor. Head of Department
 of Botany and Biology at U.B.C.

Continued from Junior Page #11

Head, legs and tail are yellowish marked with brown. The general appearance is broad and low. Shell length is from five to six and one-half inches.

The leatherback's carapace and plastron are bluish-black more or less marbled with white. The carapace has seven and the plastron has five longitudinal ridges. The head, which is not retractile, and the limbs are covered with a leathery skin. It has no scales, plates, or claws. It is up to nine feet long with a narrow and low general form. It is the largest of living turtles.

Members Please Note: Annual DUES are payable on March 1st, as follows: Family Membership \$3.00; Single 2.00; Juniors \$1. These fees can be paid to the Treasurer at the Museum.

Victoria Natural History Society

OFFICERS, 1957-58

Honorary Presidents:

HON. L. R. PETERSON,
Minister of Education.

J. W. EASTHAM,
Former Provincial Plant Pathologist.

J. A. MUNRO,
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Telephone 2-6111, Local 694.

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Conservation: DAVID B. TURNER,
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Social: MISS EUGENIE PERRY,
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Marine: J. A. CUNNINGHAM,
Telephone 4-3897.

Geology:

Audubon: MR. AND MRS. J. A. BERRY,
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Juniors:

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Secretary: JOYCE CHOPE.

Vice-Chairman: WALDON DAVIS.

Editor: BRUCE CRAWFORD.

Annual dues, including subscription: Single, \$2; Family, \$3; Junior, \$1.