

# PRESIDENT'S LETTER



One of the long-time hobbies since childhood of your President has been collecting botanical postage stamps. I amassed a large collection and it doubled in 1985 when Dr William C. Steere, the former President of New York Botanical Garden, gave me his lifetime collection. It now occupies 50 volumes taking up 3 metres of shelf space. My aim has always been to keep it together and not be divided because it is indeed a remarkable documentation of botany around the world. Early this year I deposited the collection in the Library of the Linnean Society of London so that it can be used for research and education long into the future. I have kept just a small collection of duplicates of some of the stamps in the main Linnean Society collection. The largest volumes in the collection are from countries where I have lived or worked such as Brazil, Japan, the UK and the USA, but it is a world-wide collection generally dating back to stamps of about 1950, but with a few much older examples. Over the years the UK has issued several

stamps depicting our wild flowers and the attached picture shows some of them that you might remember, including one of the almost extinct Lady's-slipper. That is a species that was rescued from extinction by propagation and re-introduction work by Kew.

If there are any collectors of wild flower stamps among our members I still have two packets of duplicates available for the asking. See my contact details at the end of this magazine.

GHILLEAN PRANCE



Copy date for Autumn magazine  
1st August 2022

## EDITORIAL

Due to a change in my personal circumstances I plan to stand down from my role as editor next year and the Society is looking for a successor. I have now edited the magazine for five years and it is time for some fresh blood and new ideas. The task is made much easier by the excellent contributions I have received from Branch Secretaries, people who attend the meetings and write reports, and members of the Society who contribute articles and photographs. In all of my time as editor I have never been short of copy and I'm sure the same will be true into the future.

With four issues a year there is now a well established pattern to the magazines but a new editor would be free to make the magazine their own.

I am happy to produce the next three issues but will not be able to produce the equivalent of this issue next year. I would be happy to work alongside someone for these three issues so the new editor can gain an understanding of what is involved and learn to use the software, should they wish to continue with Publisher.

If this is a job that you feel you would like to undertake please do get in contact with either Sheila Wynn or myself. I am happy to answer any questions on the process of editing a magazine.

I hope you enjoy reading this current magazine and learning of the exploits of fellow members during the last year.

ANNE KELL



Photo: Nick Sturt

Richard Robinson leading a walk in Arundel Park with the prospect of a good day's botany in good company. Obituary on page 51.

## NOTICES

### AGM and Members' Weekend

With this magazine you should also find details of the 2022 AGM and Members' Weekend to be held at Preston Montford Field Centre, Shropshire in September. If you plan to attend please can you make sure you read the insert with care and respond to Sheila Wynn, letting her know whether you plan to stay at the field centre, any transport requests/ability to share transport with others and which meetings you hope to join, plus any other specific requirements.

### Photographic competition

The photographic competition has always been an integral part of the Members' Weekend although you do not have to attend the AGM to participate. Full details can be found on pages 28 - 29 of the Yearbook.

As a reminder the categories are:-

**Habitat:** A photograph of a plant or plant community within its environment or locality.

**Plant Portrait:** A photograph of a plant that illustrates its uniqueness while at the same time revealing something of its 'character' - whatever that character might be.

**Close-up:** A photograph that reveals in a more scientific way the uniqueness of a plant by a close-up photograph.

**Foreign Fields:** A photograph of a plant or plant community that is **clearly seen** to be growing in a foreign country.

**Human Element:** A photograph that concentrates on botanical personalities and/or their activities. Please ask any person involved for their permission, before submitting the picture.

In addition there is the 'Shoot and Show' competition for those attending the AGM. If you don't want to enter the main competition but would still like to share your photograph(s) with others, then bring your prints along to the AGM. Members attending the AGM will be asked to vote for their favourite picture in this section on a voting slip provided. The winner will receive a small prize from the organiser of the competition.

Printed photograph(s) and digital (jpeg) entries must be submitted to Ken Southall, the Photograph Competition organiser no later than **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2022**. Ken's address is Aspen Cottage, Nettlestead, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP8 4QT; Email: ken.southall@btinternet.com

### Richard Robinson's Thanksgiving Service - 10<sup>th</sup> September 2:30 pm St. Michael's Church, Amberley

This will be followed by a reception with light refreshments at Oak Tree House, Church St, to which all are invited. If you are able to join us, please RSVP to slhorner@hotmail.com, letting us know how many people will be in your party. In the case that there are more attendees than will fit in the church, the service will be transmitted to the reception venue.

# BRANCH REPORTS FOR 2021

## JUNIORS

Alice Coutts	169
Rachel Coutts	169
Carolina Dent	102
Joshua Duller	56
Anais Harvey	50

I was excited to receive five diaries from junior members this year, with a mixture of Beginner's Diaries, Field Botanist's Record Books and electronic records.

Alice and Rachel continue to find some lovely plants around Shetland. Rachel's favourite was Primrose *Primula vulgaris* and Alice's favourites included Field Gentian *Gentianella campestris* and the water plants Marsh Cinquefoil *Comarum palustre*, Water Forget-me-not *Myosotis scorpioides*, Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata* and Marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris*. Plants in their list that they had not seen in the previous year included Water Lobelia *Lobelia dortmanna* for Alice and Round-leaved Sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* for Rachel. Alice and Rachel found the hybrid orchid *Dactylorhiza x formosa* along with both parents, Northern Marsh-orchid *D. purpurella* and Heath Spotted-orchid *D. maculata*. They also found a hybrid Monkeyflower, the Coppery Monkeyflower *Erythranthe x burnetii*. They found several grasses and ferns, including Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and Marsh Horsetail *Equisetum palustre*.

Carolina was keen to beat her own previous totals and earn a 100 Plants badge. She achieved this partly by finding no fewer than 14 plants on the 'green and brown' page of the Beginner's Diary: the less colourful flowers can be easy to overlook but these are still interesting and important plants, including grasses and many trees. A trip to Cumbria gave Carolina some new finds including a different Hybrid Monkeyflower *E. x robertsii* by the River Lyvennet and spring woodland plants like Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa* and Blue Anemone *A. apennina* at Maulds Meaburn. She also found new plants closer to home including Ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea* and Wood Avens *Geum urbanum* in the garden.

Joshua sent his first diary this year, starting with Lesser Celandine *Ficaria verna* and Colt's-foot *Tussilago farfara* near his home in Somerset. On a Spring trip to Devon, he found some woodland plants such as Ramsons *Allium ursinum* and Early-purple Orchid *Orchis mascula*. Back at home, he found Wood Avens *G. urbanum*, White Dead-nettle *Lamium album* and Yarrow *Achillea millefolium* in the garden. He also

visited some nearby nature reserves, finding Red Campion *Silene dioica* at Wapley and White Campion *S. latifolia* at Brean Down. He also noted some of the habitats where plants were growing, such as Sherpherd's-purse *Capsella bursa-pastoris* by a roadside and Yellow Iris *Iris pseudacorus* in a pond.

Anais completed the main Field Botanist's Record Book for the first time this year. This means looking up plants by their Latin names. Anais also included grid references with the plants' locations. She found some lovely coastal plants on a trip to Cornwall, including Thrift *Armeria maritima*, Golden-samphire *Limbarda*

*crithmoides* and Rock Sea-spurrey *Spergularia rupicola*. She visited some nature reserves closer to home too, finding Southern Marsh-orchid *D. praetermissa*, Enchanter's-nightshade *Circaea lutetiana* and Common Hemp-nettle *Galeopsis tetrahit*, but she still noticed the common flowers in everyday places, like Daisy *Bellis perennis* and Dandelion *Taraxacum* agg. in the playing fields.

I'm always happy to hear from junior members, whether it's sending in a full Diary or plant list, identification queries, or just a quick update on a favourite find.

NICHOLA HAWKINS

## BRANCH A, KENT

Cumulative	New	Total
Jill Abery	42	385
José Gibbs	52	451
Pam Smith	40	409
<b>Cumulative - Valhalla</b>		
Doug Grant	4	1893
Sue Poyser	4	1930
Susan Pittman	1	1255

Jill enjoyed the benefit of a stay in Cornwall, which enabled her to attend a plant identification course at the Wildlife Trust's Upton Towans nature reserve. The sand dune habitat here is special and the introductory talk noted the invading species which indicated the effect of nitrogen deposition, blissfully ignored by passing dog-walkers whose charges may have had responsibility

for this. The Towans gave her sightings of Musk Thistle *Carduus nutans*, Southern Marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* and Ivy Broomrape *Orobanche hederæ*. A very different habitat, the Grand Union Canal near Leicester, gave her Orange Balsam *Impatiens capensis*; much of the early spread of this North American plant was attributable to the canal system.

In addition to her 1 km square studies, reported on elsewhere, José boosted her main Diary totals, with over half of her new plants deriving from a visit to Shetland. She searched for arctic-alpines, finding Trailing Azalea *Kalmia procumbens* above the heather line in the small, ice-shattered stones of the 'fell field' at Ronas Hill. Arctic Mouse-ear *Cerastium nigrescens* was present on the serpentine rocks of the Keen of Hamar at Unst, recorded by her at the species level, but here probably the endemic var. *nigrescens*. Back in Kent, she visited the Woodland Trust's Denge and Pennypot Wood, where some former chalk grassland, reverting to scrub and woodland, holds an orchid flora: here she found Greater Butterfly-orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*, Lady Orchid *Orchis purpurea* and Common Twayblade *Neottia ovata*.

A third of Pam's total comprises trees – things are looking up, one might say – and these included three different oaks at Wittersham. Also at Wittersham, she got to a steep-sided gill valley (not an easy place to access), where she was able to update the county rare plant register records for Hay-scented Buckler-fern *Dryopteris aemula*. Other sightings included wet heath species from Beaulieu in the New Forest; Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix* was noted here. The Dungeness specialities were visited in July: Spring Vetch *Vicia lathyroides* found surprisingly late in flower and the timing better favoured recording the grass Hare's-tail *Lagurus ovatus* and Nottingham Catchfly *Silene nutans*, the latter being spread over vast areas of Dungeness.

Doug's Valhalla list and that of Sue Poyser are identical, all plants non-native. Tree Spinach *Chenopodium giganteum* at Holborough looked as though it had arrived with imported soil; it is grown as purportedly edible, although I'd regard it as more of an ornamental, with its magenta-flushed leaves. They also saw Spring Sowbread *Cyclamen repandum* as an escape near Larkfield and Crimson Clover *Trifolium incarnatum* ssp. *incarnatum* at Wouldham where this annual may well have been a descendant of verge sowing with road construction some years back.

Susan Pittman added one plant to her total, which was Bilbao's Fleabane *Erigeron floribundus*, arriving with her unbidden and probably originating from a garden centre, although the propagules are well capable of spreading long distances by wind.

Devina Ellis shared her spring and summer records (not totalled above); which included some from Devon, but mostly from Kent. These included Crosswort *Cruciata laevipes*, a county rare plant register species, from Hucking and Woodruff *Galium odoratum* from Bicknor. Milton Regis Country Park at Sittingbourne, for which the ranger was able to provide a plant list so she could compare her own, was a particularly interesting site and she found Globe Artichoke *Cynara cardunculus* which has somehow made its way here, first reported in 2017, and which appears to be spreading on its own account – one of only a handful of Kent records for this species.

GEOFFREY KITCHENER



# BRANCH M

## HAMPSHIRE, ISLE OF WIGHT, CHANNEL ISLANDS, SURREY, SUSSEX

	New	Total
<b>Annual</b>		
Karen Ford		105
Sarah MacClennan		593
<b>Cumulative - Valhalla</b>		
Nick Aston **	14 + 59 = 73	1640
Janet Blizzard	61	989
Richard Coomber	34 + 101 = 135	996
Helen Dignum *	202	1019
Pippa Hyde	1	1681
Peter Whitcomb	2	1030
** two years' records    * readjusted total		

Karen's interesting finds included Yellow Pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum*, Yellow Archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*, White Helleborine *Cephalanthera damasonium*, Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera* and Common



Sketch of Bee Orchid from Davina Ellis

Broomrape *Orobanche minor*. I would encourage her to start a full Diary now and build on her knowledge. Good luck.

Sarah missed the early spring flowers due to lockdown but made up for it later with trips to Dorset and Scotland. At Langstone she found Bay *Laurus nobilis* and the wonderful Fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*, a joy to behold. Other spring flowers included Spring Starflower *Tristagma uniflorum* and Balkan Anemone *Anemone blanda*. Later in the year she noted Juneberry *Amelanchier lamarckii* and the unusual stonecrop Colorado Stonecrop *Sedum spathulifolium*, an excellent find. Late summer rewarded her with Narrow-leaved Helleborine *Cephalanthera longifolia*, the spiky Milk Thistle *Silybum marianum* and Dorset Heath *Erica ciliaris*. What a lovely collection of plants. I look forward to your cumulative Valhalla diary next year.

In 2020 Nick visited Northumberland and Scotland where he found Isle of Man Cabbage *Coincya monensis* ssp. *monensis* and the rare Cut-leaved Teasel *Dipsacus laciniatus*. While at Alnmouth station he spotted Italian Everlastingflower *Helichrysum italicum*, which smells of curry, and in Kent he recorded Kangaroo-apple *Solanum laciniatum*. In 2021, with travel easier, he found an array of fascinating plants including African Lily *Agapanthus praecox* and the rare and attractive Orange Foxtail *Alopecurus aequalis*. A trip to Catfield Fen was very lucrative with the hybrid fern Narrow Buckler-fern *Dryopteris carthusianum* x Crested Buckler-fern *D. cristata* = *D. x uliginosa* and Fen Orchid *Liparis loeselii*. In Kent he noticed Tree Spinach *Chenopodium giganteum*, a plant on the increase. His best plant of all goes to Sticky Catchfly *Silene viscaria* at its classic site at Stanner Rocks.

Janet went to the AIGAS Field Centre in Inverness for her botanising. Plant finding in Scotland is always very rewarding. Her more unusual finds were Alpine Lady's-mantle *Alchemilla alpina*, Mountain Everlasting *Antennaria dioica*, with separate male and female plants, plus the stately Melancholy Thistle *Cirsium heterophyllum*, a northern speciality. Few plants can compare with the beauty of Mountain Avens *Dryas octopetala*, Twinflower *Linnaea borealis* and Mountain Melick *Melica nutans*. Creeping Lady's-tresses *Goodyera repens* is easy to find in woods close to Inverness Airport! Perhaps the prize should go to Serrated Wintergreen *Orthilia secunda*. This is a dream list for most of us down south.

Richard's new species for 2021 included the hybrid Silver Ragwort *Jacobea maritima* x Common Ragwort *J. vulgaris* = *J. x albenscens*, Treasureflower *Gazania rigens* and Thorow-wax *Bupleurum rotundifolium*, a rare plant indeed. At Gosport he recorded the lovely Italian Catchfly *Silene italica* and at Port Solent Small Cleavers *Galium murale* and Giant Bugloss *Echium pininana*, the latter increasing in the southern coastal areas of Britain. As he is in Valhalla he can now add any plant recorded in previous Diaries. Where to begin? This is a bucket list to dream of. Here are just a few of the 101 'goodies' - Scot's Lovage *Ligusticum scoticum*, Water Lobelia *Lobelia dortmanna*, Oysterplant *Mertensia maritima*, Magellan Ragwort *Senecio smithii*, One-flowered Wintergreen *Moneses uniflora* and Scottish Primrose *Primula scotica* in Scotland. Further south he saw Spotted Rock-rose *Tuberaria guttata* on Anglesey. An incredible list, unbelievable!

Helen made the most of WFS meetings to visit new habitats. Pevensy Levels enabled her to record many new aquatic species such as Water Fern *Azolla filiculoides*, Water-violet *Hottonia palustris* and the unusual Brookweed *Samolus valerandi*. A trip to Priddy Mineries in Somerset was very rewarding with Moonwort *Botrychium lunaria* one of her favourite finds and easily overlooked. She also saw a hybrid Spotted-orchid, Heath Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata* x Southern Marsh-orchid *D. praetermissa* = *D. x hallii* plus the rare Somerset Hair-grass *Koeleria vallesiana* and Ivy Broomrape



*Orobanche hederæ* which is common in western Britain. Other interesting records were a hybrid Skullcap, Skullcap *Scutellaria galericulata* x Lesser Skullcap *S. minor* = *S. x hybrida*, Henbane *Hyoscyamus niger* and Bog Orchid *Hammarbya paludosa*. As usual, an unusual and interesting list. I suggest that next year she chooses another habitat to explore. What about Snowdonia!

Pippa was being very careful in lockdown and therefore only added one new plant Shining Crane's-bill *Geranium lucidum*, an attractive and increasingly more common plant.

Peter recorded two new plants Great Wood-rush *Luzula sylvatica* and Water-violet *Hottonia palustris* both uncommon and a delight to see.

GARETH BURNSNELL

## BRANCH N1 YORKSHIRE, CLEVELAND, HUMBERSIDE

Annual	New	Total
Trish New		368
<b>Cumulative - Valhalla</b>		
Katherine Adams (Glover)	250	1010
Anthony & Rita Grainger	38	1745
Carmen Horner	51	1877
Kerry Morrison	22	621
Susan Simcock	103	1161
Thomas Simcock	111	1184
Mary Sorsby	49	879

This was Trish's first year with WFS, joining when she retired last year and says it has been a lovely way to spend the first year of her retirement. She says she has been really surprised at how many flowers she has found and come to recognise. Her favourite flower was the Fly Orchid *Ophrys insectifera* which she found at the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust site at Ellerburn Bank. She has regularly visited two nature reserves at Nosterfield and Marfield Wetlands, the latter having a wide selection of orchids which she is hoping to be

able to identify and get to know much better this year. Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera* grows on both sites. At another site that she visits Few-flowered Garlic *Allium paradoxum* seems to be rampant and is overpowering Ramsons *Allium ursinum*. Trish is an enthusiastic new member who has made a very promising start and contribution to both the WFS and the BSBI in her first year.

Katherine hasn't sent in any records since 2018. She has had a busy year

getting married and moving home to Dewsbury so was pleased with her total of 250 for this year giving her a total of 1010. She found Salmonberry *Rubus spectabilis* and Round-leaved Crowfoot *Ranunculus omiophyllus* while on honeymoon in the Lake District and was pleased to see Sulphur Clover *Trifolium ochroleucon*, Hoary Cinquefoil *Potentilla argentea* and Annual Beard-grass *Polypogon monspeliensis* in the Brecks. Dune Fescue *Vulpia fasciculata* was another good find at Morfa Dyffryn NNR. An interesting year for Katherine.

The majority of Anthony and Rita's new finds were when they were out with the Bradford Botany Group around Halifax and Dewsbury. These included Argentine Needle-grass *Nassella tenuissima*, Beggarticks *Bidens frondosa*, Austrian Whitebeam *Sorbus austriaca* and Broad-leaved Whitebeam *Sorbus latifolia*. They were pleased to find Marsh Sowthistle *Sonchus palustris* in full flower at Blacktoft Sands on Humberside, apparently brought in with extra reed from Norfolk when the RSPB reserve was remodelled. The Purple x Pale Toadflax *Linaria x dominii* and Buckwheat *Fagopyrum esculentum* had long been eluding them so were nice finds. Jesse Tregale identified Armerian Crane's-bill *Geranium psilostemon* and Caucasian Campion *Silene schafta* in their local area. A good year's botanising.

Carmen started the year off early looking for several of the spring flowering crocus, snowdrops and daffodils which she had failed to record in earlier years. She has

continued recording for the Wharfedale Naturalists Society and one of their interesting finds was Prickly Sedge *Carex muricata* ssp. *pairae* near Appletreewick. Two others were Hairy Dog-rose *Rosa corymbifera* and Chinese Ragwort *Sinacalia tangutica*. Interesting finds with the Bradford Botany Group (BBG) to Wales included Narrow-leaved Ash *Fraxinus angustifolia* and Siberian Violet-willow *Salix acutifolia*. A joint meeting between BBG and WFS at Wirral Country Park proved amazingly diverse with Spiny Cocklebur *Xanthium spinosum* being one of the highlights. Nearer home her outings took her to Littondale where she found nice specimens of Moonwort *Botrychium lunaria* and Spring Sandwort *Sabulina verna*. An interesting year for Carmen.

Kerry managed a few field trips with Harrogate and District Naturalists although many of their usual flower surveys were cancelled. She managed to do her twice yearly survey near a sand and gravel quarry in the Ure valley and is waiting for Thistle Broomrape *Orobancha reticulata*, which grows locally, to creep back into her quadrat. Interesting finds at Birk Crag, which is adjacent to RHS Harlow Carr (and some plants escape down the beck which flows through it), included Caucasian Penny-cress *Pachyphragma macrophyllum*, Abraham-Isaac-Jacob *Trachystemon orientalis*, Aconite-leaved Buttercup *Ranunculus aconitifolius* and American Skunk-cabbage *Lysichiton americanus*. The Asian Skunk-cabbage and its hybrid with the American one both occur further down Oak Beck so she will have to

go back and look for them in the future.

Susan and Tom also got the year off to a good start with some of the snowdrops that they hadn't recorded in earlier years. They also benefit from being members of the Bradford Botany Group and particularly enjoyed the field trip to North Wales where they saw a fantastic array of species new to them which included Bird's-nest Orchid *Neottia nidus-avis* on the Great Orme, Tufted and Alpine Saxifrage *Saxifraga cespitosa* and *Micranthes nivalis* at Cwm Idwal and the rarer White Rock-rose *Helianthemum apenninum* and Field Fleawort *Tephrosia integrifolia* on Anglesey. Nearer home they enjoyed finding many garden escapes and Knapweed Broomrape *Orobancha elatior*. It was interesting to see Gmelin's Willow *Salix gmelini* on their list. It isn't in Stace but checking name changes on the Kew website it was originally called *S. x dasyclados* which is mentioned in Stace as an old name for *S x calodendron*. Perhaps we are a little wiser on name changes after Chris Metherell's zoom meeting. A successful year's botanising.

Mary managed to travel more than many people in the last year, visiting Cornwall with Naturetrek and Jersey on a Ramblers' holiday. Nearer home she was pleased to find Chickweed-wintergreen *Lysimachia europaea* on Houndkirk Moor, near Sheffield, after reading an interesting article about it



in the Sorby Newsletter which thought there might be up to 30,000 plants growing amongst the Bracken. The Bracken must make it hard to estimate how many there really are. It is good to know it is doing so well near its southern limit of growth. Another plant mentioned in the Sorby Newsletter was Few-flowered Garlic *Allium paradoxum* which seems to be spreading in the area and, interestingly, it was mentioned by Trish as being a rapidly spreading non-native plant in her area. On the WFS field trip to Glasson Dock the highlights were Lax-flowered Sea-lavender *Limonium humile* and its hybrid with Common Sea-lavender *L x neumanii*, demonstrated and keyed out by Sheila. On Jersey Mary saw the rare Cape Cudweed *Pseudognaphalium undulatum*, native to the Channel Isles and, of course, the Jersey Lily *Amaryllis belladonna*, amongst many other lovely flowers. Another interesting and varied year for Mary.

JUDITH COX

Photo: Carmen Horner

## BRANCH N2 NORTHUMBERLAND, CUMBRIA, TYNE AND WEAR, DURHAM, I.O.M.

	New	Total
<b>Annual</b>		
Elizabeth Elliott		251
Mel Rocket		515
<b>Cumulative - Valhalla</b>		
Terance Rodbard	184	487
Kevin Storey	68	342

Elizabeth had a number of interesting field visits. At Helmsley, with the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union, she saw a variety of spring flowers including Fairy Foxglove *Erinus alpinus* in full bloom. Sadly the Ash trees were showing signs of die back. At Teesmouth she found heavy industry and wildlife side by side with saltmarsh plants including Sea-milkwort *Lysimachia maritima*. Bishop Middleham Quarry on a hot summer's day was full of colour with a wide variety of species in bloom. The Dark-red Helleborines *Epipactis atrorubens* were prolific along with Marsh-orchids *Dactylorhiza* spp. but she could not find any Bee Orchids *Ophrys apifera*. The Coastal Gumplant *Grindelia stricta* was in full bloom near Whitby looking most attractive. Lesser Sea-spurrey *Spergularia marina* inland was nice too merely because it was the result of parking in a gateway for a moment. She mistook Wood Vetch *Vicia sylvatica* for Bithynian Vetch *V. bithynica* and was put right - but still entranced by the pale blue flowers with the sea as a backdrop, on a field margin near Port Mulgrave. Elizabeth is now feeling more confident because, from faltering steps, she has managed a few new records for the county.

Having joined the society not long before Covid struck this is Mel's first report. He writes, 'Like many of us 2021 time was spent largely close to home and much of my time was spent on Northumberland Wildlife Trusts' Nature Reserves as I spend a few days a week volunteering with them. Possibly my fondest memory is of finding Bird's-nest Orchid *Neottia nidus-avis* at the foot of a Beech tree at Briarwood Banks in the Allen Valley. Nearby I came across a very good patch of Common Cow-wheat *Melampyrum pratense*. During the summer months we were delighted to find that our local farmer had left some wide margins to his arable fields and had seeded these with some unusual arable 'weeds' which we haven't seen before in the local area. These included Crimson Clover *Trifolium incarnatum* ssp. *incarnatum*, as well as Alsike Clover *T. hybridum* and Chicory *Chicorium intybus*. In March I paid a visit to Scots Gill Wood in Morpeth to check out a patch of Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem *Gagea lutea* and was delighted to find over 30 plants in the usual place. I was also rewarded with my first identification of Spurge-laurel *Daphne laureola*. Even better was the discovery of an even larger colony, well over 100 plants, of Yellow



Star-of-Bethlehem on the south bank of the Tyne, near Corbridge. We did manage to sneak in a week in Cornwall in May where I was pleased to identify a few more firsts, including Rosy Garlic *Allium roseum* and Balm-leaved Figwort *Scrophularia scorodonia*. In July a long trek to the top of Whitelee Moor on the Scottish border brought the sight of acres of Bog Asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* in full bloom and several plants of Round-leaved Sundew *Drosera rotundifolia*. And as an addendum, probably pre-empting the 2022 report, I have just recorded my first Green Hellebore *Helleborus viridis* at the bottom of a steep, wooded valley in Teesdale (as a result of losing my way - it was worth it).'

The highlights for Terence this year were the orchids found on Lindisfarne, including Coralroot Orchid *Corallorhiza trifida*, Lindisfarne Helleborine *Epipactis sancta* and Marsh Helleborine *Epipactis palustris*. Other highlights include Seaside Centaury *Centaureum littorale*, Grass-of-Parnassus *Parnassia palustris* and Brookweed *Samolus valerandi*.

Kevin identified a number of new records for VC 66 - Trailing Bellflower *Campanula poscharskyana* new to hectad NZ33, Swine-cress *Lepidium coronopus* and Spear-leaved Orache *Atriplex prostrata*. There were some unexpected finds this year but he also recorded a number of common species which he had seen many times before but quite inexplicably failed to enter in the Diary. They included Ivy *Hedera helix*, Juniper *Juniperus communis*, Holly *Ilex*

*aquifolium*, Lousewort *Pedicularis palustris* and a few members of the *Ranunculaceae*. Borage *Borago officinalis* was found in classic field margin habitat with the North Sea for a backdrop and was quite stunning. It really is a beautiful flower. Finding the salt marsh plants in the estuary at Ravensglass in glorious weather was his stand out day of the season. It took him back to far off days of youth and a pretty boozy biogeography field trip there from Plymouth Polytechnic in 1973.

LIZZIE MADDISON



Borage

Photo: Kevin Storey

## BRANCH N3 MERSEYSIDE, LANCASHIRE, CHESHIRE, GREATER MANCHESTER, NORTH WALES

Annual	New	Total
Emma Graney	62	62
<b>Cumulative – Valhalla</b>		
Barbara Allen	34	1351
Susan Bowden	0	952
Pauline Grimshaw	0	1410
David Morgan	106	932
Jean Richardson	0	610
Sue Riley	24	1166
Dorothy Ross	3	961

It was pleasing to receive 11 new members to the Branch during 2021. The North West meetings, which took place on the Sefton Coast, Sandside Cumbria and Glasson Dock, were all well attended but unfortunately the Spring Hunt had to be cancelled this year due to the atrocious weather conditions.

Emma joined us during 2021 and I am so pleased to receive her first Diary together with photographs for identification. A good many plants were seen in Hampshire. Hedge Bedstraw *Galium album* was spotted on Hayling Island on a disused railway called The Billy Trail, Tamarisk *Tamarix gallica* at Port Solent and Golden-samphire *Limbaria crithmoides* at Havant. In Dobbies Garden Centre car park, Liverpool she spotted Narrow-leaved Ragwort *Senecio inaequidens* and Marsh Woundwort *Stachys palustris* along the canal at St. Helens. She also comments that on the Nettle *Urtica dioica* she noticed full of Peacock butterfly caterpillars.

Barbara enjoyed several meetings during the year. She is a member of the Liverpool Botanical Society and on their visit to Marford Quarry she added Wild Liquorice *Astragalus glycyphyllos* and Fairy Foxglove *Erinus alpinus* to her list. Henbane *Hyoscyamus niger* was a nice find at Burton Marsh in the Dee Estuary, again with L.B.S. Our meeting at Glasson Dock gave her the hybrid Sea Lavender *Limonium vulgare* x *L. humile* = *L. x neumanii*. Near home she found Greater Musk-mallow *Malva alcea* in Sutton Manor Country Park.

With the easing of restrictions Dave and his wife Val took their camper van to Scotland stopping at various places en-route where, without doubt, he found his botanical highlights. His best day was on the steep slopes of Meall Ghaordauth going from Glen Lyon. Here he recorded Lesser Twayblade *Neottia cordata* and Russet Sedge *Carex saxatilis*. His favourite plant on Arran was Dwarf Willow *Salix herbacea* forming large



canopies for such a tiny plant. Ben Lawers just has to be visited and here he saw Purple Saxifrage *Saxifraga oppositifolia* and Alpine Mouse-ear *Cerastium alpinum*. Driving back south he stopped off at the Solway Mosses to find endless swathes of White Beak-sedge *Rhynchospora alba* dotted with the delicate pink flowers of Bog-rosemary *Andromeda polifolia*. Back home on the exposed shores of Bosley Reservoir were Shoreweed *Littorella uniflora* and Mudwort *Limosella aquatica*.

Jean is in the throes of moving to be near her family in Somerset and I have suggested that she sends her finds to her new Branch Secretary Ro FitzGerald. She is certainly looking forward to exploring new grounds during 2022.

Sue was able to join us on the Wirral meeting. The Wirral Country Park was the first Country Park to be established in Britain which included an old railway line and pasture areas down to the shore. Here Pepper-

saxifrage *Silaum silaus* and Dyer's Greenweed *Genista tinctoria* were two new finds. At Crosby she couldn't miss Greater Sea-kale *Crambe cordifolia* it being over 2 metres tall. Slender Borage *Borago pygmaea* was seen on a grassy slope in Silverdale, the paler blue corolla is not reflexed as in Borage *B.officinallis*. Recording a monard for VC 60 she came across Marsh Spurge *Euphorbia palustris* spilling out of a garden and onto the roadside. As it isn't in Stace, she will have to save the record until she reaches Parnassus.

A visit to Dungeness gave Dorothy Rough Dog's-tail *Cynosurus echinatus* – a nice find, one I have only seen on the Isles of Scilly. Locally Water Figwort *Scrophularia auriculata* and Argentine Vervain *Verbena bonariensis*, a garden escape, were found growing by a stream in Darwen.

I enjoyed reading your finds for 2021. Enjoy 2022 but keep safe.

JULIE CLARKE



Photo: Dennis Kell

# BRANCH O

## BEDFORDSHIRE, BERKSHIRE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, HERTFORDSHIRE, OXFORDSHIRE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Annual	New	Total
Angus Bentall		302
Mary Bentall		304
Christina White		239

### Cumulative - Valhalla

Susan Grimshaw	8	1195
Roger Heath-Brown	24	1942
Sue Kightly	3	1944
Barbara Spence	82	997
Diana Stroud	3	1966

Angus has sent me another interesting diary, with a healthy increase on last year's total. Many of his records are from the Cotswolds, where he saw Downy Woundwort *Stachys germanica* and Meadow Clary *Salvia pratensis*. But he also had holidays as far afield as Pembroke and Southwold, producing some lovely seaside flowers. Mary naturally has a rather similar list and I found it interesting to spot the differences! She records Fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris* from Ducklington Meadow, where the population has been estimated at 100,000. That must have been quite a sight!

Christina's record book, is largely confined to her home patch near Northampton. She has quite a lot of plants from along the Grand Union Canal, which looks to be a very productive area. She managed a short trip to the fens, where she spotted her two favourite plants of the year, Fine-leaved Water-dropwort

*Oenanthe aquatica* and Soapwort *Saponaria officinalis*. The latter was growing by a pond, which reminded her of its former use for washing clothes!

Three of Susan's new plants were found on a short holiday to Dorset, where she was particularly pleased to see Yellow Vetchling *Lathyrus aphaca*, with odd leafy stipules and true leaves reduced to tendrils. Also noteworthy among her new records was Spotted Spurge *Euphorbia maculata*. Stace describes this as 'scarcely naturalised', but she found it 'crawling around the pavement nicks in a quiet cul-de-sac', which sounds wild enough for me.

Next in alphabetical order is myself and at this point I should record my thanks to John Swindells, who checked my list for me. The WFS Cotoneaster meeting made a big addition to my list and taught me that I need to put more work into the

genus! Many of my other records were also from WFS meetings and I was particularly pleased with Sticky Catchfly *Silene viscaria* from the Stanner Rocks trip. Another favourite this year was Dark-leaved Willow *Salix mysinifolia*, whose leaves produced the characteristic blackening when left in the freezer.

Sue did her botanising with Diana Stroud. They attended quite a few field meetings, seeing lots of nice plants, but they were almost all 'old friends'. However they have two new records that I am envious of – Tree Medick *Medicago arborea* and Giant Viper's-bugloss *Echium pininana*, both from a trip to Somerset.

Barbara has had another very successful year, adding 82 to her list. She has been helping with surveys of the Corallian Limestone ridge in Oxfordshire and this has contributed many new species. However, her favourites include Early Spider-orchid *Ophrys sphegodes* and Pink Shepherd's-purse *Capsella rubella* on a holiday to Dorset. She also found a self-sown Caucasian Bladdernut *Staphylea colchica*, but as this is neither in Stace nor Kent she will have to wait until she reaches Parnassus to include that one!

ROGER HEATH-BROWN

## BRANCH P

### GLOUCESTERSHIRE, HEREFORDSHIRE, WILTSHIRE, WORCESTERSHIRE, SHROPSHIRE, SOMERSET, SOUTH WALES, IRELAND

This was a peculiar and sometimes difficult year for many (most ?) of us. Another Covid year with ever-changing restrictions meant that we had to establish our own rules of behaviour. Many had vulnerable friends or family to consider, as well as their own health, and I believe we are all giving more consideration to environmental issues and thinking about our own 'delivery miles' as well as keeping a beady look for 'country of origin' on supermarket labels. So botanical outings were often still restricted and one of the elements of the pre-pandemic world which I most grieve for is the ability to make impulse plans to visit favourite plants or sites.

I have been delighted that so many members have managed to keep quite local botany as a pleasure (and possible sanity-saver). I've been sent quite a variety of emails, letters, Record Books, lists and pictures and have been able to welcome keen new members. I hope some of us will be able to meet during 2022. This report as usual gives names in alphabetical order. Because this big branch incorporates a wide range of experience and many ways of keeping records it's impossible to give a table of results, but the new total number for accumulative lists, as well as annual scores for Record Books or Beginner's Diaries, are given in brackets where appropriate.

Richard Brooks wrote to me in June describing a climb up Honister Crag in the Lake District where he saw some good mountain plants such as Roseroot *Rhodiola rosea* and it seems that botany is adding an enjoyable dimension to his professional life as a geologist. I can imagine his practised sharp eyes quickly spotting what is growing on rocks as well as the stones themselves. At home in Glamorgan

*Epipactis x schulzei*



he has been trialling 'responsibly sourced' native species in his garden and having a concentrated look at his local flora – a popular activity when members are affected by local lockdowns and always rewarding!

Monica Davis reported a 'much better year', sending a list with more than

60 species which were special sightings for her. She had seen some quite elusive plants like Rough Hawk's-beard *Crepis biennis* and her personal highlights included Stone Parsley *Sison amomum* because she was pleased to learn its distinctive 'petrol smell' and Shaggy-soldier *Galinsoga quadriradiata* because of its appealing name. She couldn't help enjoying introduced Yellow Pitcherplant *Sarracenia flava* at a site in the Somerset Levels 'even though it should not be there' and I felt quite in awe of her record of a special orchid hybrid *Epipactis x schulzei* (parents are the reasonably common Broad-leaved Helleborine and the rarer Violet Helleborine). Monica visited a known site for Violet Helleborine *E.purpurata* where they happened to meet a member of the Hardy Orchid Society who was able to demonstrate the characters of the hybrid. This was a marvellously lucky chance with a glamorous wild plant, but she also sent a warning - beware of a rampant garden escape, the climbing composite German-ivy *Delairea odorata*. Don't let it into your garden if you find it naturalised – it's fiercely invasive!

Ruth Dawes has done my reporting job for me this time! She writes 'The botanical highs for me were with WFS' as she went to 'Scilly, Somerset and Gower and saw a wonderful array of ferns, lime-loving plants and coastal species'. She contributed to all these reports (see magazines Autumn 2021 and Winter 2022), so as she says 'there is no point in repeating myself other than to thank all the leaders and organisers for putting in such excellent work'. Thank you Ruth – and for your good

accounts of some wonderful days.

Judy and Richard Gosnell reported unusual weather patterns in North Wiltshire – their local meadows are on clay which only warms up slowly and the cold spring, with a particularly dry spell following a very wet one, seemed to delay the usual lavish flowerings which they usually enjoy as coarser grasses made use of the advantage. Their account is interesting though, as we are likely to see more and more unpredictable weather effects. They kept carefully to pandemic good behaviour, never wandering far, but were rewarded at times with special displays of orchids (Bee and Pyramidal), and finding the less common Round-leaved Fluellen *Kickxia spuria* which can be so much more difficult to locate than *K. elatine*.

Some members make me want to establish an annual award for the corresponding member who makes life easiest for their Branch Secretary and Ruth Harding would always be in the running! Her Record Books are a model of good presentation and, as she works in conservation, I know the care she takes with identifications and habitat notes. Covid restrictions limited her botany somewhat in 2021, but she became a volunteer recorder for the Ceredigion Rare Plant Register – an undertaking which included visiting a rich-sounding SSSI with excellent marshy habitats. She added a good number of sedges and horsetails to her former list and saw quite elusive species such as Fen Bedstraw *Galium uliginosum*, a dainty plant which actually feels really prickly to touch! Her total for the year was 125.

Anne Hercock put her considerable energies into recording a 1Km Square for that Study. Her usual home ground is in the Wye Valley, but the monad near Lydney offered rather different habitats. She chose a churchyard with good 'old' grassland (inspired by volunteering with the Carmarthenshire Meadows Group Big Meadow Search) establishing a good relationship with the churchwardens which could keep them managing things well in the future. I look forward to seeing more details in the 1 Km report.

Stephen Law had a very active first year in the society and sent me his Beginner's Diary with 105 entries which I could confirm. He had filled them in with useful 'crib' notes on characters of the genus or species which I thought was an excellent way of helping the plants to become fixed in memory. He recorded Few-flowered Garlic *Allium paradoxum* in Cirencester where I had seen it for the first time in my life in 1963! I'm glad to know that it is still there. He is clearly a keen spotter as, in the autumn, he sent me a 'what's this?' photo of a curious little twig-like toadstool, which was eventually identified by an expert from the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust as the Candlesnuff Fungus, so I learned something too!

Steve Little always dedicates plenty of energy to his botany – he and his good friend David Albon often attend Somerset WFS meetings and we are always delighted to have their company. In 2021 Steve exceeded all previous efforts and found a plant new to the entire West Country! This find (at the Exmoor meeting in June)



was reported in the Autumn magazine, but Graham Lavender and I are still glowing, so I must say again how alert he was to notice the very inconspicuous hybrid *Sagina subulata* x *S.procumbens*, adding a remarkable achievement on a meeting which proved the importance and fascination of really tiny plants. Steve also reports some dizzy adventures with Ian Green in the Cairngorms 'risking life and limb' to see rarities such as Issler's Clubmoss *Diphasiastrum x issleri* and a visit to the Llyn Peninsula in North Wales where he found the enchanting alien Slender Borage *Borago pygmaea* on the same damp cliff path where I first saw it (already long-established) in 1982!

Georgina Milway sent a Beginner's Diary with lots of excellent additions, adding up to a total of 251. Most of her botany was near home in the Tewkesbury area, but she too attended meetings and botanised further away. A visit to Bossington and Lynmouth added some Somerset records and a Wiltshire Wildlife Trust reserve where she went with Pauline Wilson had the now so-threatened Green-winged Orchid *Anacamptis morio*. She saw plenty of nice calcicole plants such as Meadow Saxifrage *Saxifraga granulata* and several uncommon beauties such as Pasqueflower *Pulsatilla vulgaris* and Fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris* – the latter in one of its old heartlands at Iffley, near Oxford.

Andrew Phillips, based near Port Talbot in South Wales, submitted a most accurately filled in Diary recording 468 plants. This impressive total came mostly from places near

home where he visits both coastal and inland areas with varied damp and dry habitats. He made the best of local nature reserves and found both the Wildfowl and Wetlands Centre at Llanelli and the lake at the National Botanic Garden at Lyn Mawr rich sources of wild and naturalised species. He also had an exciting trip to Hampshire, visiting the New Forest and some good chalk grasslands such as Danebury Hill. His own highlights included Greater Butterfly-orchid *Platanthera chlorantha* in the hay meadow at the Botanic Gardens, Marsh St John's-wort *Hypericum elodes* in the New Forest and the delightful peas, Grass vetchling *Lathyrus nissolia* and Narrow-leaved Everlasting-pea *L.sylvestris* at a local reserve at Parc Slip. I can't resist picking out another highlight the rare and beautiful Sea stock *Matthiola sinuata*, which was long believed extinct in Glamorgan until its rediscovery in 1964.

Eliza Sackett explained that her botany year was restricted by both being careful in the Covid world and by family commitments (a daughter's family moving to Somerset and needing lots of help) but she remains aware of plants whatever happens. I could feel her enthusiasm from a brief highlight list she sent me, mentioning Musk Thistle *Carduus nutans* at Dunster Beach looking 'spectacular and I love the smell', and Pink-headed Persicaria *Persicaria capitata*. This has long been established as a pavement weed just outside her front door and she reports that it 'keeps reappearing despite people getting rid of it' and 'was in flower every month of 2021 - it deserves a medal for persistence!'



## Hoary Plantain

Sally and Alec Thomson live in Wiltshire and had a most active first year as members. Sally contacted me regularly about new (and sometimes unfamiliar) finds from a whole range of habitats. We worked on sorting out various garden weeds and she sent me more unusual records from precious outside trips to Goodrich Castle on the Welsh borders and to lovely local chalk grassland sites. I especially enjoyed photographs from Kook Hill of the downland view and that sweet plant Squinancywort *Asperula cynanchia*. Sally also cheered me in the middle of winter by sending a list of plants in flower on the first of December, January and February in their garden and village – I can see that she will become a dedicated Winter Months Hunter!

In spite of the difficult world Janet Vernon reports her 'most prolific year' in numbers of finds. Their annual trip to Northumberland was possible, seeing 'hundreds of Common Spotted-orchids *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*' and, to my delight, she described a display of Hoary Plantain *Plantago media* flowers as 'looking like delicate pale pink orchids and just as enchanting'. We share this liking – I sometimes try to persuade garden clients to introduce this to their lawns! Another favourite proved to be Hound's-tongue *Cynoglossum officinale* with 'deep red flowers and fabulous nutlets' which 'captured her heart'. Most dramatic was Henbane



*Hyoscyamus niger*. She notes that some books call this 'evil-looking' because of its highly poisonous properties, but Janet scorns this attitude and says it could only come from someone who 'does not recognise exotic beauty'. She certainly recorded this in a fine photograph. Other highlights included time by the Montgomery canal with water plants looking 'reminiscent of a Monet painting' and a day trip to a quarry near Wrexham with her 'former botany teacher Ruth Dawes' who is so well known to us all!

Pauline Wilson and her husband Richard are dynamic botanists and involved with many activities concerned with recording and conservation, leading U3A meetings, encouraging a local Chipping

Photo: Janet Vernon

Sodbury church to achieve Eco Church status by increasing Cowslips and Yellow Rattle in the churchyard. Pauline had a horrid event in June, breaking a small bone in her leg, but she must have been indomitable as Richard took her to sites where she could 'hobble around'. His projects included organising planting of native trees and orchard species on former Network Rail land now owned by their parish. Pauline keeps a cumulative list and her total is now 1099 as she added three new species - Gallant-soldier *Galinsoga parviflora* which she used to see when they ran a tree nursery in London (where it has long been a common weed), but had never entered; Common Amaranth *Amaranthus retroflexus* (our member Clive Lovatt, BSBI Recorder for S. Gloucestershire, helped confirm this find from a difficult genus); and yet another member, Monica Davis showed Pauline Sweet-briar *Rosa rubiginosa* in a forest park in outer Bristol.

Aaron Woods always concentrates on botanising in or near his own part of Worcestershire and manages to add new common species to his cumulative list every year as well as making good records of more uncommon plants. His total is now 968. He reports one 'away' trip in 2021, to visit a friend in Oxfordshire, and was pleased that this outing added that most enchanting of crane's-bills Long-stalked Crane's-bill *Geranium columbinum* (also a great favourite of mine) and Dark Mullein *Verbascum nigrum* which sometimes makes striking displays on road verges of the Oxfordshire/ Gloucestershire Cotswold borders. His 16 completely new plants this

year included one of my favourite 'escapes' – the tall, lovely Milky Bellflower *Campanula lactiflora* which makes such a good back-of-border garden plant but can thoroughly establish itself in wilder habitats. I first saw it on a disused railway line by the River Spey in Scotland and can appreciate how thrilled Aaron must have been with his Herefordshire find.

Branch P, large as it is (88 members at latest count!) to my delight went on adding new people in 2021. Among them Shirley Payne who moved from Essex to Bromyard having spent some years in Branch Y and knowing members such as Sue Grayston and Stephen Clarkson. So she is familiar with our ways and I look forward very much to being in touch with her, and other new members, during the year. Let's hope the weather is kind even if our new world remains tricky and I look forward to news, views and questions as often as possible.

RO FITZGERALD



Hound's-tongue

Photo: Janet Vernon

## BRANCH T CORNWALL, DEVON AND DORSET

Annual	New	Total
Emma Baker		192
Ed Dolphin		372
Chrissy Marshall		189
<b>Cumulative - Valhalla</b>		
Suzanne Jones	33	330
Sally Maller	52	479
Lesley Philpott	3	1026

Emma only moved to Devon in late 2020, so this is her first Diary in Branch T. She took advantage of her new location to visit some coastal sites and saw a good variety of species typical of that habitat, including the lovely Spring Squill *Scilla verna*. She saw a good variety of orchids, amongst which was Green-winged Orchid *Anacamptis morio*, a species with rather limited distribution in Devon and Cornwall. A trip to Chesil Beach in Dorset added Sea Pea *Lathyrus japonicus* to her list and, also in Dorset, one of the highlights of her year was a visit to Kingcombe Meadows where she remarked that she had never seen so many wild flowers in one place.

Ed has been busy recording his local flora with the Sid Valley Biodiversity Group. They have come across a local flora based on an 1849 survey conducted by a local doctor, amateur botanist and meteorologist, WH Cullen. Ed has produced a fascinating report looking at the changes that have occurred over the last 170 years – if you're interested in reading it, let me know and I'll put you in contact. Given this, it's perhaps not

surprising that Ed has an impressive total of 372 species in his Diary. It's difficult to pick out highlights when there are so many great species there, but I did particularly note the striking Purple Toothwort *Lathraea clandestina*. He found Musk Stork's-bill *Erodium moschatum* in Exeter, a species I see more and more frequently as part of our pavement flora in Plymouth. The increasingly common Hoary Mustard *Hirschfeldia incana* also featured in his list. Ed will be taking part in the Winter Hunt and next year will be moving on to ferns, grasses, and rushes.

After a good start to the year Chrissy was hit by mobility problems in the summer, which brought her botanical activity to a rather abrupt halt. Nevertheless, she managed a respectable total of 189. She found a good variety of sedges, including the diminutive Spring Sedge *Carex caryophyllea*, not the easiest of species to identify. Bastard Balm *Melittis melissophyllum*, a bit of a south-west specialty, was recorded by her and she was able to distinguish the two commonest Dog-violet species in this part of the world,



Fairy Foxglove

Common and Early *Viola riviniana* and *V. reichenbachiana*. She made good use of the Dartmoor 'Open Meadows' events, where privately owned wild flower meadows are thrown open to the public, to add to her total. Anyone visiting this part of the world who wants to see the best of what Dartmoor has to offer would be well advised to check these out – see [moormeadows.org.uk](http://moormeadows.org.uk) for further details.

Suzanne is keeping a cumulative diary and has added 33 new species to her list. These have come from Devon and from some trips out of the county. There are both natives in her list, such as Bog Pimpernel *Lysimachia tenella* and Harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*, as well as some non-natives, including the delightful Fairy Foxglove *Erythronium alpinum*. Now her grandson is three she is telling him the names of the plants that they come across when out together, so hopefully he's a future WFS member in the making!

Sally had an excellent year, adding 52 new species. As well as visiting some of the best sites in Devon and Cornwall, she also took advantage of

trips to the New Forest and the South Downs, where she was struck by how different the chalk downland flora is to our own here in much of the south-west. She had a bit of a blitz on trying to see some rare flowers growing locally, including Plymouth Campion *Silene vulgaris* ssp. *macrocarpa*, Plymouth Thistle *Carduus pycnocephalus* and Heath Lobelia *Lobelia urens*. Increasing a total this impressive becomes more of a challenge, but I think there is still plenty of scope to see additional species and I've provided a few suggestions, including some more species of grass I hope she'll be able to find without too much trouble.

Lesley added three species to her cumulative list, amongst which were Sea-buckthorn *Hippophae rhamnoides* and Meadow Saffron *Colchicum autumnale*, both from a trip to Lincolnshire.

In addition to those members keeping Diaries, I also heard from David Caals. David keeps his own personal life list and sent me some beautiful images of alpine plants from a trip to Austria in the autumn.

TIM PURCHES



# **BRANCH U** **STAFFORDSHIRE, WEST MIDLANDS,** **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, WARWICKSHIRE,** **DERBYSHIRE, LEICESTERSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE**

<b>Annual</b>	<b>New</b>	<b>Total</b>
Martin Godfrey		560
Nicki Mottram		656
David Pinney		142
Sue and David Rogerson		292
Jenny Severn		140
Jenny Timmins		134
Irene Wilkinson		346

## **Cumulative - Valhalla**

Patricia Cox	2	528
Jackie Ellis	29	975
David and Sue Emley	6	1058
Dorothy Evans	24	1776
Richard Fenn Griffin	40	409
Alison Gregory	1	1457
Jackie Hardy	27	1040
Judith Lee	139	534
Richard Pykett	12	846
Marjorie Shepherd	0	955
Mary and Claire Smith	6	1528
John and Monika Walton	193	1261

Branch U were incredibly busy in 2021 and have shown a lot more motivation than we did! We received a number of first time Diaries and our regular recorders have visited many new and different areas, which put up some members' totals quite considerably. Congratulations and thanks to you all.

We cannot resist starting our report with two of Martin's wonderful Scottish finds. On Handa Island in May Martin had Roseroot *Rhodiola rosea*. October went one better with Holy-grass *Hierochloe odorata* at Caerlaverock NNR. Those who are familiar with Martin's areas of expertise or attended his meeting at Wetton Mill won't be surprised that he had excellent fern finds. These included Beech Fern *Phegopteris connectilis*, which is rare in central England, and *Polypodium x mantoniae*, the hybrid between Polypody *P. vulgare* and Intermediate Polypody *P. interjectum*. Martin anticipates doing a microscopy session at the AGM that he assures us will enable the attendees to identify all the tricky things that he can. Mmm!

Nicki has been observing wild flowers since she was a child, which goes some way to explaining how she has achieved such a magnificent total for a first Diary. Catching up with family after the lockdowns took her to many interesting parts of the country and she carefully planned holidays to see further species. Unusually for a first Diary Nicki recorded from upland areas and we were struck by Yellow Saxifrage *Saxifraga aizoides*, Bog-rosemary *Andromeda polifolia* and Bog Pimpernel *Lysimachia tenella*, all

from Cumbria. Nicki's target plant here was Dark-red Helleborine *Epipactis atrorubens*, which she found successfully. She describes her first year of doing a Diary as 'great fun'. We couldn't agree more.

One of the notable records in David's first Diary was Tufted Forget-me-not *Myosotis laxa*. The smaller flowered Forget-me-nots often cause problems and it was good to see a record for it. David accurately recorded two further species that members shy away from, Annual Wall-rocket *Diplotaxis muralis* and Hoary Ragwort *Jacobaea erucifolia*. Derbyshire is very proud of its abundance of Sweet Cicely *Myrrhis odorata* and David's pertinent comment is 'masses of it'. It is often detected by its aniseed smell long before it comes into sight. A visit to the prehistoric Cresswell Crags gave David Common Calamint *Clinopodium ascendens*.

White umbellifers were quite a highlight of Sue and David's second Diary. Seen as confusing lookalikes by most people it was a delight to see Fool's Parsley *Aethusa cynapium* boldly listed. The very obvious narrow bracteoles hanging down from the flower head should make it stand out but, alas, not to everybody, so well done to Sue and David. Pignut *Conopodium majus* was another nice find. Later in the season they identified Upright Hedge-parsley *Torilis japonica* when 'umbellifer fatigue' is starting to take over for most beginners. A bonus was attending a WFS meeting where they saw Greater Burnet-saxifrage *Pimpinella major*. Amongst the prettier flowers they encountered was



the always beautiful Flowering-rush  
*Butomus umbellatus*.

Jenny Severn virtually wrote her own report on her Diary by choosing as her highlights of the year the same three plants that we would have picked out too. Firstly, Common Blue-sowthistle *Cicerbita macrophylla* which, to quote Jenny, is 'not so common'. True enough in our area. Secondly, the sometimes elusive Dwarf Thistle *Cirsium acaule*, seen in a well-known spot in Long Dale. Her final choice was Grass-of-Parnassus *Parnassia palustris*. The beauty of the five, green-veined, white petals set off by the five, yellow-glanded stamens must surely delight anyone who sees it. On a more defeatist note Jenny records Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* in 'Where and When Found' as 'all through summer - especially in my lawn!'

Jenny Timmins is another first time Diarist and she surprised us with a record for Heath Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*. All became clear when we realised that she had been to the Shetlands where it is more abundant than in the English Midlands! New diarists usually shy away from water and waterside plants but Jenny carefully recorded Water Mint *Mentha aquatica* with its rounded, congested terminal flower head. A very different habitat was encountered by Jenny when recording Heather *Calluna vulgaris*. Instead of the usual Dark Peak moorland she saw this at Carvers Rocks SSSI, one of the last remaining areas of lowland heath in Derbyshire.



Amongst some excellent orchid finds Irene's highlight records must be Frog Orchid *Coeloglossum viride* and Fly Orchid *Ophrys insectifera*. Alongside the latter she was fortunate to have Lily-of-the-valley *Convallaria majalis* also. We will forgive her for asking tricky questions about Whitebeams *Sorbus* spp. as her next record, of Alexanders *Smyrniololus atrum* at Stonehenge, conveys the hilarious impression of a garden designer's splendidly staged architectural moment. Welled Thistle *Carduus crispus* is frequently overlooked or ignored by diarists so it was good to see it in Irene's Diary.

Luckily both of Patricia's new finds were by the side of footpaths, which is extremely helpful when walking starts to prove more difficult than in our younger days. Southern Marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* was finally seen at a Warminster nature reserve after many years of fruitless

Photo: Dennis Kell



Fritillary meadow

visiting. Finding Apple-mint *Mentha x villosa* proved much easier. It wasn't the mid-green, soft and downy leaves and the mid-pink flowers on branched spikes that Patricia eloquently describes that gave it away. It was the lovely smell as her husband boldly trod ahead of her and trampled all over it!

Jackie Ellis can always be relied upon to add a number of 'glamorous' species to her list, which this year included Cape Daisy *Osteospermum jucundum* and Rhodostachys *Fascicularia bicolor* from the Scillies. But her most joyous moments came in Cricklade where, for the first time, she saw the Fritillaries *Fritillaria meleagris*. She says "What a spectacle, thousands of mauve and white nodding heads over a huge expanse". She returned there in July to see swathes of Great Burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*. Both species had been on her wish list for a while. Our favourite of her records was Scilly pigmyweed *Crassula decumbens*.

Post retirement, Dave and Sue have been able to return to their recording and sent us their new additions for the first time as Valhalla is no more. They also sent a lovely email delighting in plants which, although not new, they enjoyed seeing again. They did well with water plants, finding Greater Duckweed *Spirodela polyrrhiza* in Staffordshire and Eelgrass *Zostera marina* in Caernarvonshire. They confess that, despite their many visits to the area, they only found out about the Eelgrass because it was on 'Countryfile'! A further surprise was to find Galingale *Cyperus longus* growing by a small pond near home and then seeing Pale Galingale *C. eragrostis* shortly after in the gutter of a small town in Wales.

Four species of Glasswort *Salicornia* spp, seen at the AGM, were an important addition to Dorothy's list. She has never tackled them before and was pleased to have been shown examples of such a difficult group. Another excellent addition, from Nash Point, was Tuberous Thistle *Cirsium tuberosum*. Early in the year Dorothy

had found Jersey Cudweed *Laphangium luteoalbum* and was surprised that it was so easy to recognise, even in February. But she did return in the summer to confirm the flowers. As our second diarist with a lovely list from the Scillies we shall cherry-pick Blue Corn-lily *Aristea ecklonii* and Hedge Ragwort *Brachyglottis repanda* as our featured species.

Despite a very busy year on the personal front Richard Fenn Griffin managed to get to a few good sites which gave him plants of note. He highlights Newborough Warren on Anglesey where his plants to love included Round-leaved Wintergreen *Pyrola rotundifolia*, Hare's-foot Clover *Trifolium arvense* and abundant Broad-leaved Helleborine *Epipactis helleborine*. We were drawn to other records by where they were found. Wallflower *Erysimum cheiri* in the old monastery wall at Evesham Abbey conjures up a picture of bygone days when life was peaceful; Mexican Aster *Cosmos bipinnatus* at Junction 23 of the M1 does not!

Alison anticipated another year of no new records and resigned herself to admiring the flourishing wild flowers, i.e. weeds, in her garden! Fortunately she noticed that an Oak tree at the edge of her village had extremely large leaves. She sent us samples and we were pleased to confirm that it was the hybrid of Sessile Oak *Quercus petraea* and Pedunculate Oak *Q. robur* which is *Q. x rosacea*. Looking in detail at the vegetative characteristics of the two leaf samples Alison sent, the variations randomly favoured either

one parent or the other as would be expected.

Wireplant *Muehlenbeckia complexa* has been fiercely promoted in every garden centre in our area over recent years so we have been anticipating its appearance in someone's records and Jackie Hardy duly obliged. It was noted in a church wall so it is safe to assume it was unplanted. A very good local find was Venus's-looking-glass *Legousia hybrida*, rare anywhere, but very much so for Branch U. Jackie had a lovely list from the AGM in Wales with the anticipated saltmarsh specialities and Thistles *Cirsium*, both species and hybrids. So False Virginia-creeper *Parthenocissus inserta* leapt out somewhat unexpectedly.

An FSC Grasses, Sedges and Rushes course helped Judith tick off some of these difficult species and made it easier to spot others nearer home. So Sea Club-rush *Bolboschoenus maritimus* at Port Talbot with the FSC was followed fortuitously a month later by Wood Club-rush *Scirpus sylvaticus* in Derbyshire. Judith sent in her records in early December as some others do, presumably trying to clear the decks before Christmas. But we had an urgent email later in the month to say she had been alerted by a flash of black berries in a hedgerow and could she please add Buckthorn *Rhamnus cathartica* to her list. This we were pleased to do as it is a shrub so easily overlooked.

On what has become a regular, annual visit to Wales Richard Pykett made two good finds in Milk Thistle *Silybum marianum* and White

Horehound *Marrubium vulgare*. Neither of these plants is common, with Stace describing the former as 'scattered in the BI' and the latter merits an 'RR' rating. But, curiously, nobody ever mentions them and certainly not as a 'must see' plant. So well done to Richard for keeping his wits about him. A good one to get resolved and listed was Lesser Bulrush *Typha angustifolia*. A sighting causes much anguish when seen by a group as everyone tries to estimate the height, leaf width and size, or not, of the gap between the male and female flower of a plant that is usually well out of reach in fairly deep water.

Although Marjorie managed a short break at Ullswater' disappointingly, nothing new turned up for her Diary. She is hoping for better things in 2022.

Our own Diary efforts were rather pathetic and relied a great deal on garden escapes. But our favourite find was Bohemian Knotweed *Reynoutria x bohemica*, the hybrid of Japanese Knotweed *R. japonica* and Giant Knotweed *R. sachalinensis*. We were advised to look out for it as

it was known to be in the monad we were recording in VC58. Gosh, a hybrid, how would we recognise it? Quite easily, it was HUGE! Not only was it very, very tall, considerably taller than either parent, it grew in massive thickets. Nevertheless we carefully keyed it through in Stace to confirm, and Bingo!

John and Monika made full use of WFS meetings and botanical day trips to catch up with interesting plants. Slender Bedstraw *Galium pumilum* at Cheddar was particularly impressive. It is an endangered plant and is rapidly decreasing. Another unusual record, spotted in Cambridgeshire, was Dutch Elm *Ulmus x hollandica*. This has never been commonly recorded in our area and most of us simply don't look for it as we never expect to see it since Dutch Elm disease took a hold. Perhaps John and Monika's greatest triumph was in seeing both subspecies of Field Wormwood *Artemisia campestris* ssp. *campestris* and *A. campestris* ssp. *maritima* within a month of each other. And both on WFS meetings!

MARY AND CLAIRE SMITH

## BRANCH V GREATER LONDON

Annual	New	Total
Clare Million		551
<b>Cumulative - Valhalla</b>		
Jane Lowe	360	967
Robin Blades	11	1278



Having taken on the London Branch from David Bevan I had no inkling of the pleasure to come in the dead of winter as the records from my three branch members arrived. The travels of Clare, Jane and Robin have taken me the length and breadth of the UK and it has been a privilege to share in the enjoyment of their discoveries. Clare's travels in search of flowers and birds included a trip to Orkney in June where she was excited to find Mountain Everlasting *Antennaria dioica* but disappointed to be between flowering periods for Scottish Primrose *Primula scotica*, although her discovery of One-flowered Wintergreen *Moneses uniflora* on the way back home made up somewhat for that. Clare remarks that finding and identifying new plants by herself is very satisfying. In the New Forest, she came across Coral-necklace *Illecebrum verticillatum* near Beaulieu and then Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina* in Shropshire, both of which were new to her. The delightful Rue-leaved Saxifrage *Saxifraga tridactylites*, neither rare nor spectacular, was an early highlight close to home and a nice example of a local plant that had previously puzzled her. A Field Studies Council course in North Wales, which Clare describes as a botanical odyssey, provided her with many new species on the Anglesey dunes, the Great Orme and upland bogs. Clare is clearly making great progress with her botany, having completed a Record Book for five years and I agree that keeping a cumulative total from now on will allow her more time to get to grips with some of the trickier groups.

In spite of restricted travel in 2021



Robin managed to record new plants from three countries, clearly an achievement and one which was in fact demonstrated by all three Diary-keepers. From open spaces near home Robin added well-established garden escapes Pencilled Crane's-bill *Geranium versicolor* and Dusky Crane's-bill *Geranium phaeum*. In July, he spent a few days in Edinburgh where he identified Large-leaved Avens *Geum macrophyllum* growing along the edge of a grass verge, noticing that it had larger leaves and its flowers were differently arranged from those of Wood Avens *G. urbanum*. The WFS members weekend in South Wales gave him the bulk of his new additions with Dune Gentian *Gentianella amarella* ssp. *occidentalis* the star attraction at Oxwich Burrows. At Nash Point in Glamorgan, near the foghorn, Tuberous Thistle *Cirsium tuberosum* was new and he was able to add its

Photo: Anne Kell

two hybrids *C. x medium* and *C. x semidecurrens*, the first a cross with Stemless Thistle *C. acaule* and the other a cross with Marsh Thistle *C. palustre*.

Jane was keen to get out more in 2021 and joined a lot of WFS meetings. Her particular highlights (and who would disagree?) were Twinflower *Linnaea borealis* and One-flowered Wintergreen *Moneses uniflora* seen near Grantown-on-Spey after the Cairngorms meeting. On WFS meetings in North Wales Jane added Maiden Pink *Dianthus deltoides* from a nature reserve near Llandudno, Garden Alkanet *Anchusa azurea* in Denbighshire and Perennial Knawel *Scleranthus perennis* at Stanner Rocks, Radnorshire. Near home she joined meetings with Surrey Botanical Society and London Natural History Society and enjoyed an excellent clovers walk at

Blackheath adding the rare native Clustered Clover *Trifolium glomeratum* and the casual Woolly Clover *T. tomentosum*. Eastern Rocket *Sisymbrium orientale* was Jane's 'essential 2021 plant seen on the way to the vaccine centre'. She was also amused by pavement weeds, Cape-gooseberry *Physalis peruviana* in London SW2 and Chinese Hound's-tongue *Cynoglossum amabile* in Rye, Sussex. On a visit to my home county Jane recorded a classic Kent species, Lady Orchid *Orchis purpurea* from Denge Woods and in Sussex, Early Spider-orchid *Ophrys sphegodes* on Castle Hill.

I wish all my Branch members a very happy botanical year. I look forward to hearing more about your discoveries and I'd love to have some new record keepers please.

SUE BUCKINGHAM

## BRANCH W, SCOTLAND

WFS members are themselves rare species in Scotland, but I was especially sad to hear from only three people this time. Dealing with the new Covid world does take a lot of energy and attention and I think that many members throughout Britain and Ireland found that botany had to come lower down the life list than usual. I just hope that plants are still interesting and comforting to all Branch W members and that 2022 may be an easier year with more news to send to your ever-hopeful secretary!

The list may be short, but the quality and interest of what I received is

excellent! Jim Blackwood at Lochwinnoch in Renfrewshire is his mother's carer and supporter, so does much of his botany in the early mornings close to home (though he manages to record for the Renfrewshire Botany Network at times, chasing old records). He writes most evocative emails, mentioning 'exquisite wildlife encounters' as well as finding very good plants. I've felt I could hear the buzzards and skylarks above him on his walks and even the curious buzzing of a grasshopper warbler and the 'comical frantic calls of stoats'. In 2021 he especially enjoyed finding new sites for Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina*. This





sweet plant is a favourite with many, but even more exciting has been Jim's success with Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium alternifolium* 'finding sizable populations in new monads'. This led us into a fascinating exchange of emails, because the plant seems to be declining without a clear reason in many areas. In West Somerset it has always been scarce, but in recent years most of its known sites have been carefully searched without success. The places look fine – often steep valleys with flood-plain habitat beside a central stream. Flushes above the stream usually show a slight trace of calcareous influence (Jim mentions Woodruff *Galium odoratum* being nearby at some of his locations). But my own hunts have produced flourishing masses of the Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage *C. oppositifolium* and even

Thin-spiked Wood-sedge *Carex strigosa* which I used to see as a faithful species in Dorset sites, but no *C. alternifolium*. A theory is beginning to circulate that water-pollution is to blame – this is very plausible in over-farmed Somerset where every water source must be affected by fertiliser and herbicide run-off and Jim has told me of a site in his area where this is a likely reason for a lost population. I wonder if other members have come across similar situations where more tolerant species survive but the rarity vanishes without clear reason? I believe the plant is still rated Low Concern on the England Red List, but our experience in VC5 shows it to be extremely threatened. Jim's finds being a plus not a minus for Renfrewshire is therefore wonderful news. He also delighted me by sending lovely photographs of *Trollius europaeus* Globeflowers – he

had found 'a large swathe in full bloom' in what sounded like a delicious 'species-rich mire' just on the Renfrewshire side of the Ayrshire border, so this was a 'specially notable morning' indeed! These flowers have such a magical presence – any sighting of them is memorable.

Hilary Blyth sent in a good Diary with most records as usual coming from near home in Stirlingshire where she keeps a close eye on the comings and goings of plants. In 2021 for instance she noted Viper's-bugloss *Echium vulgare*, not usually seen locally, near a depot where hardcore for roads is loaded, making a very likely introduction source. She enjoyed visits to the famous beauty spots round Culzean, one of which gave the good find of Lesser Water-parsnip *Berula erecta*; to Argyllshire where she saw the rare and elusive Small Cow-wheat *Melampyrum sylvaticum*; and way down south to Sayers Croft in Surrey for warm weather and a different flora, and a sighting of a Spear Thistle *Cirsium vulgare* 'along with a hornet'! Her Diary was accompanied by several printed-out photos, including one of Northern Dead-nettle *Lamium confertum*. This was most helpful as this species is confusingly close to Henbit Dead-nettle *L. amplexicaule* but I could clearly see the diagnostic flattened bracts in her picture. Her total came to 205 in spite of me not counting a number of attractive but very confusing primrose hybrids which had come up round her garden!

Helen Jackson has been a (probably *the*) central member of branch W for

many years and I remain humbled to be continuing her dedicated work as Branch Secretary. Communication with her is always a pleasure – we not only share a taste for good postcards, but her beautiful handwriting on an envelope makes me brighten up at once in anticipation of interesting botanical news. 2021 began with just this. A recent challenge among inconspicuous plants has been trying to find the accidental introduction New Zealand Bitter-cress *Cardamine corymbosa* which is hard to spot as few of us yet have a 'search image' filed in our brains. Typically, Helen's careful, dedicated way of botanising got the better of such difficulties when in March she was examining 'a local gutter full of little white flowers'. Most of us would have made a quick mental checklist of common ephemeral weeds, including the ubiquitous Hairy Bitter-cress, and walked on, but Helen also spotted 'a few small plants almost stemless and leafless in the mud' of 'bigger, four-petalled flowers, very white'. Eventually they grew tiny leaves and could be identified as this new species. Even the possible introduction vector was noted – a parked van labelled 'Plants and Flowers'! I intend to follow Helen's example by paying more attention to pavement gutter weeds and to use her notes to help me identify this unfamiliar little plant. Later building work disturbance up her road produced Black Bent *Agrostis gigantea* and Cockspur *Echinochloa crus-galli*, while during the Spring Week Hunt she had added Balkan Anemone *Anemone blanda* to her cumulative list after typically careful consideration of its introduced status,

hoping that 'however it got [to a rough road verge] it's countable now'. Sadly, however, her botany year was cut short by ill health and weeks in hospital – I'm sure we all wish her a very good recovery for the new summer season. Midlothian would feel short of good records without her additions!

I hope the 2022 botany year proves easy and rewarding and please, Branch W members, keep in touch with me when you can. I'm not travelling myself until my cottage is rebuilt so I need reminding of Scotland as often as possible!

RO FITZGERALD

## BRANCH Y ESSEX, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, NORFOLK, SUFFOLK

Annual	New	Total
Gillian Beardsworth	88	88
<b>Cumulative – Valhalla</b>		
Marilyn Abdullah	190	533
Barbara Mathews	0	1512

2021 was our second year living with this COVID-19 pandemic with its various rules and restrictions governing what we could or were not advised to do. Our breakthrough day was May 17<sup>th</sup> when we were allowed to meet outside with up to 30 people. Before then one could still be outside by oneself or in the company of one other person.

Gillian records from her home area of around Leiston in Suffolk together with a Suffolk Wildlife Trust Reserve at Foxburrow Farm, near Woodbridge. She hasn't recorded many species but has dipped into many genera to get common or garden stuff such as Daisy *Bellis perennis*, Horse-chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* and Common Stork's-bill *Erodium cicutarium*. She comments that she has an extensive garden mainly laid out to grass in which there are many species and

she would like some help in identifying them. I strongly urge her to come out on our arranged walks for this year around the area to enjoy Mother Nature and to see her at all stages of growth and development and to enjoy the social contact as well (if the Spring Hunt was anything to go by there was a constant chatter amongst friends throughout the day!).

Marilyn managed to get around her home county of Norfolk but also had a couple of forays to Kent and Dorset. She's a member of the Breckland Flora Group who are busy finding and re-finding our wonderful Breckland plants and has joined up with the Norfolk Flora Group too, as well as BSBI. She admitted last year that she was unsure of her grass, sedge and rush identity skills. Well she more than made up for that this year to include Purple-stem Cat's-tail *Phleum phleoides* to be found in the



Photo: Anne Kell

Brecks along with Proliferous Pink *Petrorhagia prolifera* and Spanish Catchfly *Silene otites*, all of which had a good summer. She had a good spread of orchids which included

## Green-winged Orchid

Monkey Orchid *Orchis simia* and Fly Orchid *Ophrys insectifera* at a site in Kent and the profuse swathes of Green-winged Orchid *Anacamptis morio* at New Buckenham Common in Norfolk. As I have said, she had a good range of some unusual plants but a strange lack of common ones such as Silver Birch, the Oaks and some Willows. I can't imagine what her tally will be for 2022.

Barbara sent me a card to say hello and to keep in touch and, although she kept up her walking around Felixstowe, there was nothing else to add to her total. She still bemoans the fact that she can't find the Stinking Chamomile *Anthemis cotula* at nearby Landguard Fort. Fingers crossed for this year, Barbara.

STEPHEN CLARKSON.

## PARNASSUS 1

Jan Armishaw	93	2608
Gareth Bursnall	46	2610
Rodney Burton	53	2585
Marion Chappell	33	3020
Julie Clarke	21	4211
Stephen Clarkson	122	3138
Heather Colls	20	2667
Judith Cox	17	2737
Paul Harmes	91	2707
Carol Hawkins	23	3316
John Hawksford	1	3010
Graeme Kay	1	3041
Alan Leslie	28	3355
Ron Parker	10	2910
Chris Pogson	14	3360
Ted Pratt	35	3175
Jesse Tregale	61	3727

Highlights of Jan's list were the subspecies of Honey Garlic *Allium sicutum* ssp. *dioscoridis*, which she had watched growing for about six weeks at the edge of woodland near Stelling Minnis. With the help of Sell & Murrell, she had great fun tracking down the three sea-lavenders of the East Kent coast, Kent Sea-lavender *Limonium cantianum*, Tall Sea-lavender *L. altum* and St Margaret's Bay Sea-lavender *L. santamargaritense*. She was delighted to find Clary *Salvia sclarea* in pavement cracks in Rye.

A propos *Viola x scabra*, the natural hybrid of Hairy and Sweet Violets, seen with the parents at the Sussex Devil's Dyke, Gareth comments on the usefulness of the BSBI *Viola* handbook. Also in Sussex, a field churchyard produced a varied collection of back-crosses of *Primula juliae* x *P. vulgaris* = *P. x pruhonicensis* and Primrose *P. vulgaris*. In the churchyard, the parents might well have been deliberate introductions, but the hybrids have occurred naturally and could be collectively counted as *P. x pruhonicensis*; alternatively any which could confidently be matched with photographs of named cultivars could be counted separately. Gareth gives as his favourites for 2021 ssp. *pachyrachis* of Maidenhair Spleenwort *Asplenium trichomanes* at Tintern and the well-known Yellow Whitlow-grass *Draba aizoides* on Pennard Castle in the Gower peninsula.

My first great botanical thrill of the year was the hundreds of plants of Grass-poly *Lythrum hyssopifolia* which Sue Buckingham took me to

see on the site of Betteshanger Colliery in East Kent just before the surface was broken up to be built on. Also there was Panicked Willowherb *Epilobium brachycarpum* which in a few years has become fairly common thereabouts. Next was Chupalla (a native Chilean name) *Eryngium paniculatum* shown to me by Matthew Berry at the top edge of the beach shingle at Eastbourne, self-sown from the steep garden above the esplanade; this is the correct identification of the plant which has previously been listed from here as *E. agavifolium*. Half under a hedge by the road above and a little to the west Matthew pointed out a Daisy-bush *Olearia solandri*, a name which appeared wildly mis-heard in a list sent to me for this branch a couple of years ago. It is very difficult to decide which to mention of the 24 plants new to me shown to me by Alan Leslie in two days in Cambridgeshire, but I have settled on Cambridge Milk-parsley *Selinum carvifolia*, in the exact spot on Chippenham Fen where I had seen it about 63 years earlier, before I had heard of the BSBI and WFS. Without the help of those three kind friends, the Somerset WFS meeting in June, the WFS AGM excursions and old records retrieved from earlier years' notes, my 2021 total would be three

I want to single out two of Marion's plants for mention. A name has at last become available for the sand-dune version of Common Broomrape *Orobanche minor* var.

*pseudoamethystea*. Marion saw it in the WFS meeting at Crosby, but I have seen it only at Sandwich, at least twice, but always too long ago to be in my cumulative list. On the



edge of the sea-wall at Grange-over-Sands she photographed a self-sown plant of Tall Eryngo *Eryngium giganteum*. This was listed as *E. giganteum* 'Miss Willmott's Ghost', as if that was a cultivar name, but in fact it got that common name (which Stace prefers not to use) after Ellen Willmott of Warley Place secretly scattered seeds of the species in other people's gardens. The plant in the photo with silvery bracts is *E. giganteum* 'Silver Ghost'.

Two white-flowered variants in Julie's list have names which she has been seeking for many years. *Cirsium arvense* f. *albiflorum*, seen on a meeting at Nob End Country Park in 1995, was published in Proc. Boston Soc. Nat. Hist. 36: 390 (1922) and for *Erodium cicutarium* var. *albidum* the reference is *Picard New York Botanical Herbarium*. The latter reference is incomplete; I guess that it is a catalogue of one of the constituent collections in the herbarium of the *New York Botanical Garden*, but it would take some research to confirm this, which I cannot undertake.

Stephen made a special effort to go on all the WFS meetings he could and also went on Norfolk Flora Group days with bramble, elm and rose experts, but he was surprised by the size of his eventual total. A Recurved Thorn-apple *Datura innoxia* appeared in a plant pot outside his front door; it would be in keeping with the behaviour of solanaceous casual plants if the seed had been lurking in compost put into the pot years before. Of the half-dozen first-class Parnassians who were there, only Stephen recorded the dwarf var.

*pumila* of Chalk Knapweed *Centaurea debeauxii*.

Heather's most thrilling find in 2021 was undoubtedly Irish Lady's-tresses *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* at Borth Bog, Cardiganshire, on a trip with the Brecon Botany Group, where it was



discovered only two years earlier – it has now increased to 40 plants. Her list also includes three Willowherb *Epilobium* hybrids. Most of these are not difficult to identify *in situ* if you are already familiar with the species and carry a hand lens. You need to consider proximity of potential parents, petal size, stigma shape, leaf shapes and hair-types on all

Photo: Marion Chappell

parts from sepals down. If you want to collect a specimen for identification, it is essential that you can report on petal and stigma characters, because they can only be observed on the living plant. Stace ed.4 has further advice on page 378.

Almost all of Judith's plants are from around Yarm' where she lives or northern Cumbria' where she has family. I don't think I have seen before in Parnassus lists Joseph Rock's Rowan *Sorbus rockii*, which was in a hedge in Yarm Road. Five of her Spring records, including *Primula pruhonicensis* 'Wanda' (see earlier) were from churchyards, which prompts me to make a slight expansion to Peter Llewellyn's article 'Is it wild?' in the Autumn 2019 Magazine, in relation to *Narcissus* and other bulbous plants. Single plants seen in churchyards, commons, public parks or by roads and tracks have almost certainly been put there by somebody who cannot bear to put excess material from their garden into the dustbin.

The great majority of Paul's numerous 'new' records are actually retrieved from old notes going back to 1986 not previously counted for Parnassus, but there are also some good 'new' ones. It is clear from his photo that Broad-leaved Anemone *Anemone hortensis* is naturalised in the churchyard at Glynde, Sussex; there are several plants of this species with wind-dispersed achenes scattered about in the grass. Half of Paul's 2021 records are from a trip to Scotland in July. I was particularly impressed by the great rarity Chestnut Rush *Juncus castaneus* high on Ben Lawers, one of many

target plants of a previous attempt which had to be aborted because of appalling weather.

Carol can still find interesting plants in Norfolk. Her list is the first I have seen to include Kidneyweed *Dichondra micrantha*, naturalised near Holkham, but it will no doubt soon be in many more, as the publication announcing its discovery (BSBI News 149: 48) gives a grid reference accurate to 10x10 metres. We didn't notice it in August 2013 when Bill and Carol led a large number of us along the same path; perhaps it wasn't there then. Inland Club-rush *Bolboschoenus laticarpus* was found on a pool edge at Beeston Regis Common near Sheringham. After a long and diligent search, Carol eventually found Nursery Bittercress *Cardamine occulta* in a large stone municipal planter in Wymondham, in November.

John's only new plant was Hairy Dog-rose *Rosa corymbifera* in the hedge by a steep minor road at New Mills, Derbyshire, but this belies the extent of his activity. In spite of the infrequent, unreliable and poorly connecting bus services, he managed to collect records from 58 monads in north Staffordshire.

In a double coincidence, Graeme also added only one record, and that was *Primula pruhonicensis* 'Wanda', in a scattered colony by a narrow lane near Wilmslow, not near habitations.

Alan's records in 2021 are all from Cambridgeshire, though the Royston bypass where he found his greatest discovery is now administratively in



Photo: Paul Harnes

Herts. This, which was among those he showed me, was the Mediterranean subspecies *tournefortii* of Square-stalked Willowherb *Epilobium tetragonum*, together with two of its hybrids. Alan was also excited by the hybrid of Annual Beard-grass *Polypogon monspeliensis* and Water Bent *P. viridis*, in the company of other *Polypogon* hybrids in a former chicken farm at Cottenham. An extraordinary casual plant was a seedling of Ginkgo *Ginkgo biloba* in a pavement crack in Cambridge, not far from a profusely fruiting female tree.

## Broad-leaved Anemone

This is a rare sight because the ripening seeds have a strong unpleasant smell, so male trees are preferred. The plant is strictly dioecious, so there must be a male around somewhere.

Ron's ten additions are all from the meeting to the Sefton coast in June and the AGM excursions, so there are none which were not found by others in this report, with the exception of *Salicornia x marshallii*, the hybrid of One-flowered Glasswort *S. disarticulata* and Purple Glasswort *S. ramosissima*, which I missed because I spent too long trying in vain to find Beaked Tasselweed *Ruppia maritima*.

Without the help of a local contact, Chris would never have got to see Scarce Tufted-sedge *Carex cespitosa* at Braughing, Herts. Later, on Cairngorm, he saw two hawkweeds and ssp. *arctica* of Fir Clubmoss *Huperzia selago*, but after twelve miles of tramping over Scottish heather to get to *Diphasiastrum x issleri*, the hybrid of Alpine Clubmoss and a continental species, the final 500 metres was too much to attempt. I think I am about the same age as Chris, but two miles of Scottish heather would be enough for me. This year he is settling permanently in Languedoc, where he will be able to study the rich local flora making full use of his electric bicycle.

All of Ted's new plants are from Dorset, mostly from the Isle of Purbeck, especially from soil dumped on verges, and especially from a rough verge at Smiths Farm, where they were all ornamental garden

plants except Spinach *Spinacia oleracea*. He found Yellow Fox-and-Cubs *Pilosella caespitosa* north-east of the Roman Villa, Dorchester and *Cardamine occulta* at Leckenbury Fruit Farm, Stoborough, both of which still elude me.

No-one has more assiduously than Jesse searched through local floras, websites etc. for named varieties and formae, which he indexed so that he can provide the reference if he finds them himself. In 2021 he added five more sources, bringing the total number up to 114; they included the BSBI handbook of broomrapes, which many others in the branch have found useful, and a source for the name of white-petalled Common Stork's-bill, *Erodium cicutarium* f. *albidum*. In Bath Street, Halifax he found the two-leaved Four-leaved Allseed *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* var. *diphyllum*, and several other lists

from north England mention this species, which is evidently increasing there. Not all of them mention the variety, however, but should do so in case var. *tetraphyllum* is found later. The two-leaved character is not always clearly expressed, as it may only affect a few nodes at the top of the plant. In my experience, var. *diphyllum* is a branchy plant forming small dense low patches on or near pavements, whereas var. *tetraphyllum*, in Britain is only in a few places on loose sandy or stony places on the coast of south-west England and is of much laxer growth, though still small.

Thank you all for your forbearance of my pedantry. I now turn you over to Alan Leslie, who has been helpful to me in many ways and I am sure will be helpful to you too.

RODNEY BURTON

## PARNASSUS 2

Cumulative	New	Total
Dorothy Bullock	11	2047
Everard Ellis	0	2189
Ro Fitzgerald	7	2084
Peter Jepson	1	2199
Geoffrey Kitchener	12	2273
John Martin	65	2213
Dawn Nelson	0	2246
Priscilla Nobbs	28	2505
Ted Phenna	6	2034
Janice Reynolds	25	2393
Richard Robinson	19	2129
Sheila Wynn	61	2505



I would like to begin by offering sincere thanks to Ted Pratt for his tenure as Secretary of the Branch, and to hope that he has a botanically enjoyable retirement from the role.

In 2009 I handed over the secretarial reins of the 10KM Square (South) Branch to Pat Verrall, sadly no longer with us, citing the massive increase in recording taking place in Sussex towards the publication of a new Flora of the County. In my capacity as BSBI Recorder for VC 14 (East Sussex), it was my responsibility to manage this data increase. Since the Flora of Sussex appeared in 2018, and my subsequent retirement as Recorder after twenty-seven years, I had no excuses when Sheila Wynn approached me, asking if I would take over from Ted. So, here goes!

At least 2021 has been an improvement on 2020, as Covid-19 restrictions were eased further, enabling those of us who wished, to travel further afield in pursuit of as much of Britain and Ireland's flora as possible.

Dorothy has benefitted from spending time with fellow diarist Ted Phenna and his wife, putting in some miles it would appear from the scattered locations they visited. She reported the Pink Scarlet Pimpernel *Lysimachia arvensis* ssp. *arvensis* f. *carnea* above gardens on the Great Orme. She also found Upright Spurge *Euphorbia stricta* at Earby, Lancashire and the Glandular Globethistle *Echinops sphaerocephalus* on sand dunes at Bamburgh, Northumberland.

Ro's botanical forays were curtailed

by what I can only describe as 'major surgery' to her cottage, which appears to have been practically rebuilt! However, she has still managed to track down some notable records in the last twelve months. For her, best of all was the Hybrid Pearlwort *Sagina x micrantha* (*S. subulata* x *S. procumbens*) found on the WFS Exmoor meeting in some numbers on the gravelly floor of an old quarry, with both parents. In addition, she lists Fern-leaved Beggarticks *Bidens ferulifolia* as an established pavement weed in Wiveliscombe and, finally, the rather attractive Sharp-flowered Signal-grass *Urochloa panicoides* at Lilstock.

Peter's botanical excursion plans were somewhat curtailed by Covid-19 measures, after a planned trip to Scotland in May was cancelled by the Scottish Parliament. However, he did manage a day out with our Society's Chairman, where he recorded his solitary addition Perfoliate Alexanders *Smyrnum perfoliatum* in urban amenity woodland at Formby, South Lancs.

Geoffrey has some rather splendid and varied additions for last season. I will begin with a taxon close to his heart, *Epilobium*. Specifically, Square-stalked Willowherb x Hoary Willowherb, *E. tetragonum* ssp. *tournefortii* x *E. parviflorum*, found near Royston. Meanwhile, in his own area, he reports a colony of some 22,000 plants of Mousetail, *Myosurus minimus*, from a field margin near Hoo St. Werburgh and a new County record for Parnassus Dandelion *Taraxacum pannassicum*, confirmed by John Richards.



Following a fairly sedentary year in 2020, John ventured far and wide during 2021, accumulating a substantial list. Although, he recorded in his western patch, he also made it to Sussex, Kent, Yorkshire and Anglesey, as well as two visits to the Isles of Scilly. He too was one of a number of members to benefit from Ian Green's meeting in the Cairngorms in July, adding the hybrid Issler's Clubmoss *Diphasiastrum x issleri* (*D. alpinum* x *D. complanatum*), at '660 metres on an unremarkable heathery slope' and Hare's-foot Clubmoss *Lycopodium lagopus* on the west slopes of Geal-charn, south of Aviemore. In north-west Wales, he found three Whitebeams, the pick of which was the single fruiting specimen of the Menai Whitebeam *Sorbus arvonicola*, on a low cliff on the south side of the Menai straits near Bangor.

Priscilla sends a well ordered, thoroughly researched and referenced list. She has spent time in the field with Julie Clark, Bob Ellis and Stephen Clarkson and has some lovely records to show for it. I will start with the Hybrid Glasswort *Salicornia disarticulata* x *S. ramosissima* from the saltmarsh at Llanrhidian. Naturalised Knotted Crane's-bill *Geranium nodosum* was found on a road verge in Storth, Cumbria and lastly, Hybrid Marshwort *Helosciadium x moorei* (*H. nodiflorum* x *H. inundatum*), seen at Catfield Fen in Norfolk.

Ted's botanising has not been restricted to his local patch, but his new records have all arisen within a

shortish distance of his home. The Deganwy Hawkweed *Hieracium deganwyense*, at Vardre, and the Undivided-leaved Hawkweed *Hieracium holophyllum*, on the Great Orme, caught my eye. He also saw the Kangting Cotoneaster, *Cotoneaster pseudoambiguus*, also on the Great Orme.

Janice tells me that she has not been away to find new plants for a number of years, so has decided to 'have a go at varieties!' locally. She has certainly been busy in the relatively small area between Lewes, Newhaven and Eastbourne. She found three varieties of Hairy Violet: *Viola hirta* var. *lactiflora*, *V. hirta* var. *oenochroa* and *V. hirta* var. *variegata*. In addition, she also recorded Russian Sage *Perovskia* 'Blue Spire' in Eastbourne, which in my experience is an occasional escapee. Add to this six *Narcissus* and four *Tulipa* cultivars, among others, and it becomes obvious just how busy she has been.

Meanwhile, Richard joined Alan Leslie for a visit to Cherry Hinton chalkpit, where most of his new plants came from. On that day, seven Cotoneasters were recorded, together with Chinese Bramble *Rubus tricolor* and the hybrid between Welled Thistle and Musk Thistle *Carduus x stangii* (*C. crispus* x *C. nutans*), among others. In Sussex, some escaped and spreading ferns attracted his attention, the pick of the bunch being Japanese Shield-fern *Polystichum polyblepharum* and a potential hybrid, for which confirmation is awaited.

Another meticulous and well referenced list comes from Sheila and is full of splendid and sought-after native taxa, as well as many escapes, varieties and forms. It is difficult to know what to choose to highlight. Firstly, I will select Tuberous Thistle *Cirsium tuberosum*, from Glamorgan, together with two of its hybrids. This is more readily accessible than in Wiltshire, where access is at the agreement of the Military. She also attended Ian Green's Inverness / Cairngorm meeting, adding Small Cranberry *Vaccinium microcarpum* from a heathery hillside at Strath Nethy and the tricky hybrid Deer-grass, *Trichophorum x foersteri* from the

lower slopes of Geal-Charn.

I have thoroughly enjoyed going through your diaries and sharing your excitement. I hope you all have a much easier season this year, with many notable finds along the way.

Congratulations to Priscilla and Sheila who have both reached the dizzy heights of the '2500 Club', and so move on to Parnassus 1 at the end of the 2022 season.

I look forward to reading your diaries again in early 2023

PAUL HARMES

## 1KM SQUARE STUDY 2020

José has added records to the two north Kent coastal monads and, although her TR4069 total increased by only one, this was Man Orchid *Orchis anthropophora*, the second most easterly record in the British Isles (the first being at Sizewell, Suffolk) and so a rather special find. The five TR3370 additions included Ground-elder *Aegopodium podagraria* inherited in her garden, for which she deserves commiserations; this may fairly be regarded as wild within the WFS definition of unplanted and uncultivated, especially in that her actions to extirpate it have been the reverse of cultivation, in spite of which an overlooked root achieved flowering.

GEOFFREY KITCHENER

Monad NZ 4211 is on the southern edge of the urban area and is mainly

housing estate and the edge of the countryside. I started earlier this year so managed to see some of the early flowering bulbs and spring flowers and was pleasantly surprised by a large clump of Colt's-foot *Tussilago farfara* in a front garden. A gift of the RHS *Hedera - the complete guide* led to a closer look at some of the ivies in the area and *Hedera rhombea* 'Creme-de-Menthe' and *Hedera helix* 'Parsley Crested' were two interesting finds. Both Cut-leaved Blackberry *Rubus laciniatus* and Red Currant *Ribes rubrum* appear to have been bird-sown in shrubbery in a green area.

Anthony & Rita did their first two monads again this year and also started a new one. Their interesting finds in SE 2338, which is mainly woodland and meadow were Small-flowered Crane's-bill *Geranium*

Name	Branch	Monad	Location	Year	New	Total
Jose Gibbs	A	TR3370	Westbrook, Margate	2	5	97
	A	TR4069	North Foreland, Kent	2	1	52
Judith Cox	N1	NZ4211	S. edge Teeside	2	20	191
Anthony & Rita	N1	SE2338	Horsforth, Leeds	2	36	277
Grainger	N1	SE2339	Horsforth, Leeds	2	35	242
	N1	SE2438	Horsforth, Leeds	1	-	197
Barbara Allen	N3	SJ5391	St. Helens, Liverpool	2	36	271
	N3	SJ5491		1	-	206
Graeme Kay	N3	SJ9256	Bosley Reservoir, Cheshire	1	-	151
Sheila Wynn	N3	SD7444	West Bradford, Lancs	2	7	233
Anne Hercock	P	SO6302	Lydney, Gloucs	1	-	174
Jackie Ellis	U	SO9783	Halesowen, W. Midlands	3	7	306
	U	SO9784	Halesowen, W. Midlands	2	4	224
Jackie Hardy	U	SP0767	Winyates East, Redditch	2	-	132
	U	SP0867	Winyates Green, Redditch	2	1	170
	U	SP0966	E of Mappleborough Green	1	-	114
	U	SP0967	E of Mappleborough Green	1	-	103
Judith Lee	U	SK2956	Cromford, Derbyshire	3	8	203
	U	SK3264	NW of Kelstedge, Derbyshire	1	-	80
Richard Pykett	U	SK5742	Sherwood, Nottingham	3	3	145
	U	SK4946	Bogend, Eastwood, Notts	1	-	21
Mary and Claire Smith	U	SK3548	Belper, Derbyshire	3	3	259
	U	SK3549	Belper, Derbyshire	2	29	189
Irene Wilkinson	U	SK3666	S. of Wingerworth, Derbys	2	1	17
	U	SK3667	W. of Wingerworth, Derbys	2	26	146
	U	SK3766	S. of Wingerworth, Derbys	2	16	53
	U	SK3767	Wingerworth, Derbyshire	2	29	110
	U	SK3866	S. of Wingerworth, Derbys	2	12	48
	U	SK3867	Wingerworth, Derbyshire	2	27	55

*pusillum* and Six-rowed Barley *Hordeum vulgare*, near a church and Argentine Vervain *Verbena bonariensis* as a pavement weed. SE 2339 is also woodland and meadow and gave them Green-leaved Snowdrop *Galanthus woronowii* and Knotted Crane's-bill *Geranium nodosum*. Their new monad SE 2438 has woodland, a stream and pond, waste ground and some urban streets. They found Rose-of-Sharon *Hypericum calycinum* growing as a

pavement weed and Giant Herb-Robert *Geranium maderense* and Greater Quaking-grass *Briza maxima* in a ginnel. Caucasian Campion *Silene schafta* was another interesting find on waste ground. Several of these new finds were also additions to their main diary list.

JUDITH COX

This is Barbara's second year recording SJ5391 and 36 new plants were found. An early start gave her



## Gipsywort

Snowdrop  
*Galanthus nivalis*.

Lesser  
Stitchwort  
*Stellaria graminea*  
was seen  
under an oak  
tree and  
Barbara tells  
me this has  
been there  
for over 60  
years. Two  
garden throw-  
outs were

*x mixta* and Common Bird's-foot-  
trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*.

One of Sheila's seven new finds  
turned up in her garden after digging  
up part of the lawn to enlarge a flower  
bed. This was Corn Spurrey *Spergula*  
*arvensis* and on checking the seed  
surface it had the club shaped  
papillae identified as var. *arvensis*.  
An early start gave her Snowdrop  
*Galanthus nivalis* and Soft Shield-fern  
*Polystichum setiferum*.

Thank you for sending me your  
monad lists and keep safe during  
2022.

JULIE CLARKE

Photo: Ken Southall

Italian Lords-and-Ladies *Arum italicum* and Spotted Dead-nettle  
*Lamium maculatum*. Monad SJ5491  
is new for 2021. However, only half of  
the monad was accessible. The area  
she could record was taken over by  
the Forestry Commission some 20  
years ago but has proved an  
interesting site to investigate. There  
were numerous plants of Southern  
Marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*.  
Two other finds were  
Shaggy-soldier *Galinsoga quadriradiata*  
and Marsh-marigold  
*Caltha palustris*.

Graeme's monad for 2021 covers  
Bosley Reservoir and surrounding  
countryside south of Macclesfield.  
Around its edge he was pleased to  
find Mudwort *Limosella aquatica* in  
abundance but not as happy to find  
New Zealand Pigmyweed *Crassula helmsii*.  
In the marshy area were  
Nodding Bur-marigold and Trifid Bur-  
marigold *Bidens cernua* and *B. tripartita*,  
so a good opportunity to  
compare the two. Drier conditions  
gave him Hybrid Cinquefoil *Potentilla*

Anne Hercocock started recording in  
SO6302 last summer while her  
husband was using the open air  
swimming pool in Lydney. Her  
records are largely from a semi-urban  
mosaic, with verges, canal banks, old  
lanes, open spaces and a  
churchyard. Here she found a  
conservation meadow area and other  
regularly mown parts so this seemed  
a good site to add to the others and  
formed the basis for choice of square.  
Chalky soils are found in the area, so  
she recorded White Bryony *Bryonia dioica*,  
Common Centaury  
*Centaureum erythraea* and Vervain  
*Verbena officinalis*, which is always  
nice to find when it turns up.  
Gypsywort *Lycopus europaeus* and  
White Water-lily *Nymphaea alba* are  
associated with the canal, but Anne's  
favourite find was Wild Onion *Allium vineale*  
which is obviously not  
common in her area. She will  
continue to record this year to catch  
the spring flowers and will keep a  
keen eye on the progress of the  
churchyard meadow.

PAULINE WILSON

In 2021 Jackie Ellis very kindly checked her previous year's entry for Squirreltail Fescue *Vulpia bromoides* in her home square. It is so easy to muddle this up with Rat's-tail Fescue *V. myuros*. The position of the leaf sheath in relation to the inflorescence and the length of the upper and lower glumes all need taking into account. Jackie's original identification was proved correct and we have reinstated her record. However, a new record in 2021 for Hybrid Black-poplar *Populus x canadensis* threw up an interesting anomaly. Last noted in the BSBI DDB in 1988 there is a more recent record for Black-poplar *Populus nigra* (fastigate cultivars). Two different trees, or same tree, two different recorders? Hopefully Jackie may be able to throw some light on this. In her second monad Jackie records Peach-leaved Bellflower *Campanula persicifolia*. This appears increasingly as a garden escape in everyone's records.

An early visit to one of her original monads added some woodland plants for Jackie Hardy, which also had a notable find in Holm Oak *Quercus ilex*. We will be interested to see how Jackie's records develop in her new monads. Both have working farms and the main crop appears to be cereals. SP0966 has a busy main road, with a wide verge, running through it but SP0967 does have some diverse habitats with more trees and appears to be wetter. The former square suffers from inappropriate mowing which encourages the rougher grasses on the road verge. Even worse, the access road to a poultry farm is closely mown and this takes off all

the Bee Orchids *Ophrys apifera* before they can flower. Just a few of the annual weeds survive at the very edge of the road. In SP0967 the cereals are sprayed to control the weeds but this takes place late enough for some plants to survive for a period. Hopefully Jackie may find that there is some crop rotation that will allow a wider flora. The monads are not totally without interest and it would be good news if Jackie could report on some species improvement in her second year.

In the third year of recording her home square most of Judith Lee's additions were garden escapes. For many of us these seem to be the main source of new records now. Garden Grape-hyacinth *Muscari armeniacum* is a typical example which seems to be thriving in pavements everywhere. No doubt their spread has been helped by the reduction in weed spraying by local councils over the past couple of years. Judith's new square is very different. Her home monad is just within the limestone but this one is firmly on the grits and sandstones; very rural with only a scattering of farms and houses; mainly pasture or rough grazing with some woodland. Daisy *Bellis perennis* was not recorded: this is working land, not an area of carefully tended lawns! But it still has interest with grassland showing Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis* and Quaking-grass *Briza media*. A further pleasant surprise was Wood Horsetail *Equisetum sylvaticum*.

Of his three new records in his home square Richard spotted the Wild-oat





## Quaking Grass

there was no sign of the Wild Strawberry. So why it appeared in 2021, a damp, dreary year, who knows? It shows the value of ongoing recording. Our main achievement in SK3549 was to re-find Mat-grass *Nardus stricta* which hadn't turned up for the Atlas 2020 recording. Virtually the whole monad has gradually been improved by liming over the years to achieve pasture for sheep, cattle and horses. By ascending towards what was obviously a somewhat acidic piece of woodland we finally found a short, narrow bank just below the trees that had been left untouched by the farmer. To prove the point not only was the target grass present but also Sheep's Sorrel *Rumex acetosella*.

*Avena fatua* at the base of a tree. This seems to be a favourite habitat for city grasses and has proved productive in previous years also. His new monad was chosen because it was entirely different being in the countryside. Unfortunately Richard only managed to visit in March and was prevented from going again by poor health. But his list gives an interesting snapshot of the early spring plants. Writing this at the end of January it is cheering to read of the likes of Lesser Celandine *Ficaria verna*, Forsythia *Forsythia x intermedia*, Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana* and Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa* and know that we shall be seeing them again soon.

We were startled to find Wild Strawberry *Fragaria vesca* flowering brightly amongst Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis* in our home monad. Our surprise was because this piece of land was studied intently in 2020 - a warm, sunny year - and

Irene confesses that she neglected her monads in the excitement of being free to travel further and so record more for her main diary. Despite this she still had two new records, Viper's-bugloss *Echium vulgare* and Wall Barley *Hordeum murinum*, to contribute to BSBI records for one tetrad. Plus a re-find from 1997: Large-flowered Evening-primrose *Oenothera glazioviana*. She was able to make an earlier start this second year which filled in a number of the missing spring flowers. The pretty Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa* eventually turned up in three out of the six monads. Some of the trees were also more easily spotted while the vegetation was thinner. But Irene admits that they are still poorly represented, as are some common species. She particularly highlights Docks *Rumex* spp. as needing more work!

MARY AND CLAIRE SMITH

## EXOTICS

In the absence of records sent specifically for the Exotics Report I humbly offer the following in which I have fallen back on my ongoing taxonomic education for subject matter.

Last summer I noticed a flax growing in a bed with other deliberately sown species. The flowers were of a stronger, deeper blue shade than is usually seen in Flax *Linum usitatissimum*. The plants also had multiple stems and using Stace (2019) keyed to Perennial Flax *Linum perenne*. More or less on a whim I also checked the *Linum* section on the Belgium aliens website, in which the only blue-flowered perennial flax keyed is *Linum austriacum*. The leading botanists there seem to be sceptical of records of *L. perenne* as a casual escape with this sort of provenance (sown flower mixes), stating that any such records would require confirmation. They note that the *L. perenne* group, to which *L. austriacum* belongs, is 'a

taxonomically critical species complex'. Some of the Belgian sightings have involved plants that are more or less intermediate between *L. perenne* and *L. austriacum* and might be of hybrid origin.

According to *Flora Europaea* the best way of distinguishing *L. austriacum* from *L. perenne* is by its recurving fruiting pedicels. As the fruiting pedicels of the plants seen in Eastbourne were markedly downward curved at maturity, they have been named as *L. austriacum*. For future reference, material was placed in my own modest herbarium and also in Eric Clement's far more extensive one. Successful short range dispersal onto adjacent ground (a nutrient rich lawn) occurred in this case, so the challenges of this complex group could soon be the concern of other botanists too.

MATTHEW BERRY

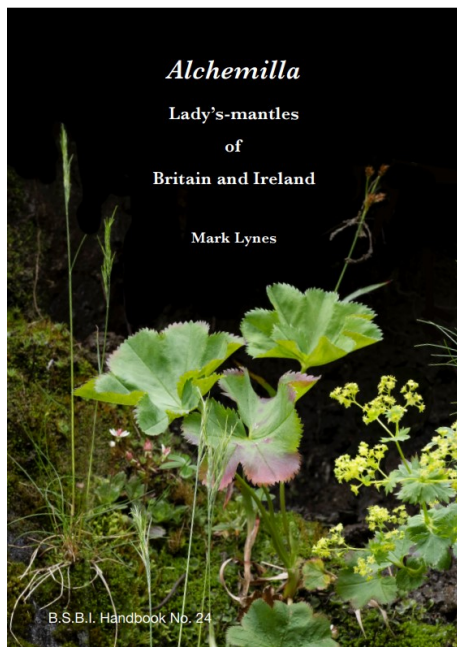
## BOOK REVIEW

**Lynes, M. *Alchemilla – Lady's-mantles of Britain and Ireland*.  
BSBI Handbook 24 (2022). ISBN 9780901158567. £19.50**

Some critical plant groups, such as Dandelions and Hawkweeds, intimidate by their numbers and complexity. They have passionate fans, but don't usually appeal to the wide majority of botanists. Lady's-mantles however seem as if they should be much milder to deal with. Most of us see very few of the microspecies and even though gardeners moan about excessive

self-seeding by the ubiquitous and frequently naturalised neophyte Soft Lady's-mantle *Alchemilla mollis* everyone loves the beauty of raindrops held in the angle of the leaves.

My old WFS diaries show a very normal experience of the genus. In England there would be encounters with *A. filicaulis* (a nice sign of good



habitat even if my grasp of the varieties *filicaulis* Slender Lady's-mantle and *vestita* Hairy Lady's-mantle was wobbly), and Pale Lady's-mantle *A.xanthochlora* might also be seen in pleasing habitat. When I stayed with Northumberland cousins I usually saw the more northern species Smooth Lady's-mantle *A.glabra* and in years when I was lucky enough to spend time in the Cairngorms Alpine Lady's-mantle *A.alpina* of course became a close friend, partly because of its habit of appearing at around 500m to tell botanists facing a long walk up that they had begun to gain some height.

Then I very shyly joined a BSBI meeting in the Cumbrian region. Inspiringly led by Prof. John Richards, the weekend was focused on Whin Sill outcrops and their

fascinating flora and introduced me to the concept of really rare Lady's-mantles and their critical difficulties. On 17 May 1985 I entered Velvet Lady's-mantle *A.gracilis* (now a synonym of *A.monticola*). This was a newly-discovered species and thrilling to see, so I well remember feeling really crushed when this prize entry in my first Valhalla diary came back marked 'Can't find in Dandy – deduct'! I was clearly carried away by these lovely plants though because I went alone to Teesdale on the way home and boldly added Clustered *A.glomerulans*, Starry *A.acutiloba* and Rock *A.wichurae* Lady's-mantles. They were all really lovely though in later years I would have been far too uncertain to make those identifications.

Now this latest BSBI Handbook can help us all answer every question about the genus. It's a lovely book, full of excellent photographs, and Mark Lynes does a really splendid job of pointing out the essential features of leaves and flowers, providing a template with which to approach each identification. Invaluable diagrams of hairs, veins and teeth back up the photographs, and each species is given a full description. Detailed habitat information gives a real feel for where these rare microspecies might be found. The book is also a fascinating read, quite apart from its practical excellence. It seems that much *Alchemilla* research is carried out in Scandinavian countries – the further north you go the more varied the Lady's-mantles – and they are a critical genus with plenty of lively arguments about fine details, and plenty of new species possibly to be

found. The introduction tells delightful stories about discoveries made by botanists such as Max Walters and Margaret Bradshaw whose names must be familiar to many of us. Indeed there is a 'new' species discovered by and named for the queen of Teesdale conservation, Margaret's Lady's-mantle *A.mebii*, but as only about 60 plants known, in Yorkshire, it's probably going to be a real challenge to add it to even the most ambitious Parnassus list!

For northern and Scottish members this book is a must and I'm really looking forward to using it to clear my head once and for all about *filicaulis* uncertainties. It gives a model demonstration of how to approach the finest distinguishing details of closely-related plants. And it's INSPIRING – I believe that every active botanist who reads it will be challenged to record *A.faeroensis* 'New to Britain and Ireland'!

RO FITZGERALD

## OBITUARY RICHARD ROBINSON 1943 - 2022

Richard Robinson enjoyed a highly distinguished academic career, retiring as Professor of Paediatric Neurology at Guy's hospital. In 2009 he and his wife Jenny decided to sell up in Dulwich and move to the Arun valley, by no coincidence one of the most richly, botanically diverse spots in the whole of the UK. Their home tetrad (2x2km square) would be centred on Amberley village and encompass some prime chalk grassland on the scarp above plus a portion of the Wild Brooks over to the River Arun. During the survey for the 2018 *Flora of Sussex* (to which Richard contributed) this conjunction of prime habitats yielded a total of 598 taxa of vascular plants for the TQ01G tetrad, the second highest tally in Sussex. (For the record, the tetrad with highest total was TQ30H in Hove where the resident recorder had identified legions of subtle alien plants to bring the tally to 818).

When I first met them Richard and

Jenny were waiting for the renovation of an old cottage in Amberley, near the church, which had, in estate agents' parlance, (in this case almost an understatement) 'breath-taking views over Amberley Wild Brooks'. The front garden sports Southern Polypody (*Polypodium cambricum*) as well as some choice varieties of Rosemary, while the rear leads down in narrow terraces to the winter-wet and sedgy levels; and from the front rooms there is a prospect of the close-cropped turf of the South Downs. It is hard to imagine a location more ideally suited to someone of a botanical leaning.

Richard attributed his early interest in plants to nature walks with his father from their home in St. Asaph in North Wales. In adult life a high-flying career and his commitments to his dear family (early in his training he met Jenny, a Ward Sister, and they went on to have four children) did not leave a great deal of free time

available for botany. This career took him and the family to Nigeria where he wanted to treat children in a situation where the mortality rate was tragically high and later, to Kentucky, to study under a leading expert in paediatric neurology; after this he secured his personal chair at Guy's. The interest in botany, however, stayed with him and in fact for his retiring *Festschrift* Richard gave a lecture to his fellow academics not on a medical topic but on wild flowers.

Retired (more or less), it was not long before Richard was signed up for the Sussex Botanical Recording Society and enhancing their meetings in addition to those of WFS, which he had joined in 2003. He brought to these occasions a scientific rigour – which he wore very lightly – a great willingness to share his knowledge and an equally great willingness to expand it. He relished the challenge of a difficult specimen, if necessary corresponding with the relevant authorities and feeding back to the meeting leader the eventual outcome. He was affable, witty and possessed of a fund of fascinating snippets of information. In short, he was always an asset to a group of field botanists out doing what they all loved doing in company. Richard enjoyed sharing his part of the Arun Valley, leading field meetings on the Brooks and over the flowery expanses of chalk grassland above. Orchids were an especial love and Richard served as chair of the Hardy Orchid Society. Latterly he had developed an interest in Cotoneasters from which, selfishly, I looked forward to benefiting. Residing not far from Amberley I now find I am visiting locations which hold vivid memories of Richard – some

stands of Marsh Fern *Thelypteris palustris* in damp woodland on the edge of the Wild Brooks, Field mouse-ear *Cerastium arvense* along the South Downs Way near Amberley Mount and, most recently as I write this, a hedgerow above Amberley village where last June he demonstrated to a group of appreciative botanists a plant of Fly Honeysuckle *Lonicera xylosteum*.

In Amberley Richard and Jenny had established themselves at the heart of the community, their medical expertise being a particular asset during the first year of the Covid pandemic. On the day before his death from a heart attack Richard was leading a working party removing the woody bases of Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber* which were threatening to damage the walls of the churchyard. He had organised a number of events to increase the interest of the villagers in their wild flowers and he took an active part in managing the churchyard – even learning how to use a scythe in order to achieve the best possible results for the sward. Somehow we all assumed that there would be a lot more of Richard to come, but it was not to be: it is fitting, however, that he now rests in his churchyard in the shade of a lime tree among the meadow species which his labours have caused to flourish.

NICHOLAS STURT