

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I write this letter, with some sorrow, two days after Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II died. I know from experience that the Queen who reigned over us for so many years loved flowers and I know also that our members would want her remembered in this issue of our Journal. I feel honoured that in 1995 it was Her Majesty that laid a sword on my shoulder when I received my knighthood, but I also had the privilege of discussing flowers and gardens with her on several other occasions. Here I would just like to thank her for her faithful service to our nation in so many ways and to express our sympathy and encouragement to our new Monarch His Majesty King Charles III.

It has been a strange year weather-wise for wild flowers, at least in the southern half of the UK. The long drought affected many flowers, but I came across a few surprises such as a large cluster of butterfly orchids in full bloom on a grassy bank nearby in West Dorset.

For me the fruits of all my work during lockdown are coming to completion. A series of three books on the history of plant trading in Amazonian Brazil is now in late stages of preparation by a press in Brazil. Here in the UK, my new book *The Amazon and its people in black and white* was published in May by Butterflies and Amazonia Press. It is

illustrated by many of the black and white photos which I took during my Amazonian expeditions. The text is mostly from quotes taken from the books of the three great Victorian naturalists who explored the Amazon region in the 1850s, Richard Spruce, Henry Bates and Alfred Russel Wallace, the co-discoverer of evolution. I photographed many of the forest details and life of the tribal people that they discussed in their books. This book is part of a series of three aiming to draw attention to the terrible destruction of the forest and of the indigenous peoples that is happening at present. The other two books are written by entomologist Philip Howes. *Vicar of the Amazon* is the amazing story of The Reverend Arthur Miles Moss, the Anglican Priest and naturalist whose Parish was the whole of Amazonian Brazil from 1910-1945. Moss collected many plants and insects and his collections are deposited in several major institutions in the UK such as Kew and the Natural History Museum. The third book in the series is called *The spider-winged cupid and the platypus* and it brings together a collection of amazing facts about mimicry in butterflies and moths. All three books are of interest to naturalists and conservationists and they are available for purchase through www.leanenergy.co.uk.

GHILLEAN PRANCE

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EDITORIAL

I have always been keen on all aspects of natural history, sparked off by the nature table at my primary school (sadly something that health and safety rules won't allow anymore) and woodland walks with my Mum as a child. However, my love of the outdoors also extends to interests in walking, cycling and sailing. We are fortunate to own our own yacht and have managed to escape from this summer's intense heat by getting on the water. Sadly, not a wild flower in sight. We bought our first yacht about 10 years ago. They say that you shouldn't let your heart overrule your head when making important decisions but the fact that she was called 'Redshank' rather sold the boat to us, as it exemplified our love of birds and plants, because, as you know, a Redshank is not only a bird but also a flowering plant. She proudly sported a transfer on each side of the bow of a flying Redshank and we had prints of both the plant and the bird on the saloon doors. We parted with Redshank last autumn and now have a slightly larger yacht. She came with the name of 'Mischief' and had previously been called 'Titan'. Neither name appealed to us and, not being of a superstitious nature, we hunted around for a new name that again reflected our interests. Our initial hunt couldn't unearth any other birds and plants that shared the same name until Dennis looked up the Latin names. To our amazement we found that the generic name for the bird Turnstone and the plant Sandwort was *Arenaria*, meaning sand lover. Neither of us had appreciated before this point that two species could share the same

Latin name but apparently this is permissible as long as the two organisms concerned are in different kingdoms. So we are now the proud owners of *Arenaria* and she too sports transfers of a flying Turnstone on either side of her bow (sadly the Sandworts were too small).

Ron Parker has also been looking at the English names of plants and was fascinated by how many plant names contain a reference to an animal. On page 4 I explore this idea further with some examples of the plant names he kindly sent me. Throughout the reports in this issue you will notice further reference to many of these plants showing just how common the use of animals' names is in the botanical world.

Again the magazine is packed with members' exploits, be they contributing to one of the many hunts the Society runs or participation in field meetings, the early season ones being reported here.

My thanks must go to Peter Leonard for producing another of his superb keys which occupies the centre-page spread so you can remove it for use in the field.

Sadly, my plea for a replacement editor has so far fallen on stony ground. Please give this your serious consideration as my editorship will cease with the next Spring issue. If you would like to find out more of what the job entails please do drop me a line. I am happy to coach the new incumbent through the role.

ANNE KELL

NOTICES

Autumn Hunt: Change of Secretary

Unfortunately, Heather Colls is no longer able to continue as Autumn Hunt Secretary. We'd like to thank Heather for all her work over the last two years. Jackie Hardy has kindly agreed to take over from Heather, starting with this Autumn's Hunt. Please send your lists to her by 15th November by email to jackie.hardy321@googlemail.com or send written lists to Mrs J. Hardy, 82, Kingham Close, Winyates Green, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 0SB. If you would like Jackie to return your list, please enclose a stamped, addressed envelope.

WFS Gift Cards

Would you like to give someone a present of a year's subscription to the Wild Flower Society? It would make an ideal Christmas gift, for example.

We now have gift cards available for you to send.

To purchase your gift subscription, please get in touch with our Membership Secretary, Sue Poyser, whose contact details are on the last page of the magazine.

Autumn Hunt - Preston, Lancashire. Saturday 29th October

Leader: Marion Chappell

If you would like to attend and haven't already booked, please contact Marion directly, email: marion.chappell@gmail.com

Meet at 10:30 in the small car park on left, at end of Hill Road, Penwortham PR1 9XH This will be a circular walk of about 3 miles, mostly on footpaths, crossing the River Ribble to Preston and back via another bridge.

Marion will supply directions which take account of the new road system (or see entry on the website).

WFS T-shirts and hoodies

If you are interested in purchasing either of these items visit the following websites:-

<https://tinyurl.com/WFStshirt2022>

<https://tinyurl.com/WFShoodie2022>

David Albon

It is with great sadness that I have to announce the recent death of David Albon. He had been a very active member of the Society over recent years attending many of our more adventurous field meetings, scaling many heights in search of unusual plants. Along with Steve Little, he gave the presentation at last year's AGM on their visit to Tristan da Cunha. He will be sorely missed. Our thoughts are with his many friends and family. An obituary will appear in the next issue of the magazine.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

One of our members, Ron Parker, made an observation that many common English names for plants share their names with animals and he has sent me a list of several examples. I'm sure we are all familiar with the orchids that take their names from the animals that they are either thought to resemble or possibly be pollinated by, such as the Bee Orchid, Early Spider-orchid, Fly Orchid and Lizard Orchid, with the central lobe of its labellum resembling the long tongue of a lizard.



Lizard Orchid

There are several references to birds, with the seed-pods of Bird's-foot and Bird's-foot-trefoil looking like the

claws on a bird's foot, the central yellow spot in Bird's-eye Primrose considered by Gerard to resemble the eye of a bird and the roots of Bird's-nest Orchid thought to look like the dense interwoven parts of a bird's nest. But why Bird Cherry and Bird-in-a-bush? Other references to specific bird species include Crane's-bills and Stork's-bills, which reference the shape of the seed pod, Cuckooflower, because it flowers at the same time as the cuckoo sings, and Goosefoots, because the leaves are similar to the footprint of a Goose. The English name Hawkbit derives from the medieval belief that hawks ate the plant to improve their eyesight. Finally, Larkspur has a long corolla tube that takes the shape of the spur, or long hind claw, on the foot of a lark.

Cats and dogs, especially in their colloquial forms, feature highly on the list. Catmint, a plant that cats show a liking for, Cat's-tail (like Squirrel-tail and Rat's-tail Fescues and Dog's-tail, Mare's-tail and Mouse-tail), where the inflorescence looks like a tail and Cat's-ear (like Mouse-ear) for the fine hairs on the leaves. The word 'dog' is often used in a herbal sense to mean 'inferior', so Dog's Mercury was considered inferior to Annual Mercury for use as an enema, Dog-violets were inferior to Sweet Violets because they lacked scent and the Dog Rose wasn't as striking as the Garden Roses (although I might disagree on that one). Dogwood, whilst having beautiful foliage in the autumn, wasn't considered a

Bird's-foot-trefoil

worthwhile plant – its fruits aren't edible, it has an unpleasant odour and its timber had few practical uses. However, Dog's-tooth Violet is again named for its appearance with the oblong white bulb resembling a dog's tooth.

Some other plants named after the parts of animals because of their similarity are the grasses Cock's-foot and Cockspur, where the shape is referring to the inflorescence, Adder's-tongue with the erect sporangia nestling within the leaf blade having the appearance of a tongue and Weasel's-snout, where the pink flowers resemble a miniature snapdragon and are followed by a hairy green fruit which is said to resemble a weasel's snout (you may need to use your imagination here). The Dandelion takes its name for the French Dent de lion or tooth of the lion referring to the jagged shape of the leaves.

The common name Cowslip may derive from the old English for cow dung, probably because the plant was often found growing amongst the manure in cow pastures.



Similarly Oxlip, although this is more likely to be in wood pasture.

Some are a little more obscure and possibly requiring more imagination. The common name of Fox-and-cubs, which has often intrigued me, is apparently due to the appearance of the open flowers (the fox) beside the flower buds (the cubs).

I'm sure you can think of many more examples. Ron is challenging you to find as many names as you can that are associated with animals and try to work out their derivation. Maybe you would like to write something for a future magazine. It is a fascinating subject that requires further research. Over to you.

ANNE KELL

Rough Dog's-tail



FIELD MEETINGS 2022

HELMSLEY AND HARROGATE 21st - 22nd MAY

Saturday 21st May - Ashberry Nature Reserve

Most WFS field excursions are excellent and interesting but this one was superb. It is impossible at any site to see all the plants at their best but on the day we visited Ashberry Pasture we got very close to this. The pastures were packed with interesting species but we also had a wealth of plants to see in the wider environment. The lanes round about, bordered as they are by ancient woodland, also yielded interesting plants, some nationally rare. Roger Martin, our leader, was very knowledgeable and we were also blessed with many people in the group who had knowledge of different identification techniques and who were more than willing to share that knowledge and also regale us with various stories of medicinal uses and insect pollination techniques.

The site of Ashberry Pasture is a long boggy valley with limestone flushes and a flowing stream. The woodland, edging the whole, gives an intermixing of wetland and woodland flowers on the margins, allowing us to see Wood Anemones *Anemone nemorosa* and Tormentil *Potentilla erecta*.

In the stream we found Lesser Water-parsnip *Berula erecta* and Fool's Watercress *Helosciadium nodiflorum* growing intermixed which allowed a direct comparison of the two, the *Berula* being more upright and with

the distinctive white band around the lower petioles. There was also a wealth of Water-cress *Nasturtium officinale* to round off the assemblage.

Scattered around the stream banks were the delicate flowers of Bird's-eye Primrose *Primula farinosa* and occasional Early Marsh-orchids *Dactylorhiza incarnata* and Early-purple Orchids *Orchis mascula*. The Marsh Hawk's-beard *Crepis paludosa* let the side down slightly by only being in bud.

We found twelve different sedges: Lesser Pond *Carex acutiformis*, Common *C. nigra*, Bottle *C. rostrata*, Hairy *C. hirta*, Carnation *C. panicea*, Glaucous *C. flacca*, Common Yellow *C. demissa*, Tawny *C. hostiana*, Dioecious *C. dioica*, Star *C. echinata*, Pill *C. pilulifera* and Wood *C. sylvatica*.

In the first part of the bog we found such gems as Large Bitter-cress *Cardamine amara*, Marsh Lousewort *Pedicularis palustris* and Marsh Arrowgrass *Triglochin palustris*, the last beautifully in flower.

The far end of the site was perhaps the best, hosting several large patches of gorgeously flowering Globe Flowers *Trollius europaeus* and Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*. The Globe Flowers looked inaccessible to insects but when one of our party gently pulled open a



Ashberry Pasture

flower it was full of them, including a large fly, so they obviously know how to get in.

The wooded lanes around the site yielded the star of the day in Baneberry *Actaea spicata*. Also present was Lily-of-the-valley *Convallaria majalis* together with Stone Bramble *Rubus saxatilis* and ancient woodland species Spurge Laurel *Daphne laureola* and Green Hellebore *Helleborus viridis*. On the way back down the lane to the parked cars, growing on the bank, was a Bird's-nest Orchid *Neottia nidus-avis*, which no one had spotted on the way up.

Thanks go to Roger and everybody else involved in organising the trip and researching the site. I hope everyone enjoyed the day as much as I did.

FAY BANKS

Sunday 22nd May - Birk Crag and Oak Beck, Harrogate

This was not your usual WFS event – rather, a ramble through native woodland chockful of unusual aliens looking very at home in their new

environment. Their source? Harlow Carr RHS Garden, located just above.

We were fortunate enough to have as our leader Kevin Walker, BSBI Head of Science and botanical recorder for the Harrogate and District Naturalists' Society, who has been studying the flora of the site for many years. Overall, he estimates that some 40 species have made their way down the small stream from Harlow Carr Garden into the woodland below. This unusual floral cast was first noticed in the 1980s, but prior to the publication of Stace-1 in 1991, there was no easy way of identifying many of them. In reality, they had probably been there longer, as the Garden had not made (and largely still doesn't) much effort to prevent its inmates from escaping, although they do now 'neutralise' their Skunk-cabbages and are more careful about garden-waste disposal.

We started as we meant to go on with a clump of Hedgerow Crane's-bill *Geranium pyrenaicum* 'Bill Wallis' on the track-edge outside the Garden, swiftly followed by a solitary, rather

Photo: Mandy Jones

spectacular purple *Allium*; so as not to hold up proceedings, we decided to come back to it at the end of the day to key it out. We then entered the woodland through which the nameless stream runs down from Harlow Carr to join the Oak Beck at the bottom of a surprisingly deep gorge. Within a few tens of metres we had found: Abraham-Isaac-Jacob *Trachystemon orientalis*, Greater Cuckooflower *Cardamine raphanifolia*, the ubiquitous Coralroot *Cardamine bulbifera*, Caucasian Penny-cress *Pachyphragma macrophyllum*, at one of its few British sites, Aconite-leaved Buttercup *Ranunculus aconitifolius*,

At one point, we stopped to look at Soft Shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum*, once much less common at this latitude but seemingly on the move north with climate-change. We also passed an imposing candidate for the hybrid with Hard Shield-fern, *Polystichum x bicknellii*, although no firm conclusion was reached. Another fern present on Birk Crag is the gametophyte form of Killarney Fern *Trichomanes speciosum*, though no sporophyte has ever been found.

We descended to the Oak Beck above its confluence with the Harlow Carr stream. What was striking in this area was the virtual absence of any

Aconite-leaved
Buttercup



Photo: Steve Little

Pick-a-back-plant *Tolmiea menziesii* and Fringecups *Tellima grandiflora*. As Kevin wryly observed, some plants seamlessly blend in, others pose more of an invasive threat, with Pick-a-back-plant being one of these, though fortunately it is still less common than Fringe-cups at this site.

alien species. Instead, we encountered some nice natives such as Large Bitter-cress *Cardamine amara* and Wood Stitchwort *Stellaria nemorum*, the latter frequently juxtaposed with its commoner relative Greater Stitchwort *Stellaria holostea* for comparison. Also present was Sweet Cicely *Myrrhis odorata*, always

a bit of a novelty for those from 'Down South'.

Once we reached the confluence of the two streams, the aliens started to re-appear. A colourful addition to the woodland floor were several patches of Purple Toothwort *Lathraea clandestina* and it was near to these that we stopped for lunch, an event summarily curtailed due to the fact that the local midges considered it a good spot for their lunch too. Nearby we found a large stand of the invasive American Skunk-cabbage *Lysichiton americanus*, Smooth-stalked Sedge *Carex laevigata*, uncommon in this area, and frequent Marsh Hawk's-beard *Crepis paludosa*.

En-route back to our starting-point, there was brief consternation when one of our number, Lyn Jones, went missing, presumed lost to his insatiable appetite for all things bryophyte, but he soon reappeared bearing a fistful of Courgetti Spaghetti (the unofficial name for the moss

Plagiothecium undulatum coined by his grandson) and strongly denied having been lost in the first place.

And what, you ask, of the Allium that opened our story? Well, when a couple of members of the group went back to the spot, they found that some ne'er-do-well had decapitated it, leaving just mangled remains of the leaves and stem. Fortunately, other members of the group had had an après-event wander into the Garden itself and were able to shed the necessary light: *Allium hollandicum* 'Purple Sensation'. As a post-script, a keen few visited the site further down the Oak Beck where both species of skunk-cabbage, American and Asian *Lysichiton camtschatcensis*, have become established, along with their unwelcome hybrid offspring.

Many thanks to Kevin for leading a most enjoyable and unusual event.

STEVE LITTLE

MID WALES 8th - 9th JUNE

Wednesday 8th June - Cors y Llyn, Newbridge-on-Wye

Seventeen of us, equipped with waterproofs and umbrellas, joined Ray Woods at Cors y Llyn National Nature Reserve near Builth Wells in Powys, mid-Wales for a varied exploration. Ray is knowledgeable and well-read and provided a fascinating and continuous commentary on all manner of subjects throughout the walk, from the history of the sites visited to

discussions on the management of beavers, to the decision to deem biological records more than 20 years old as irrelevant for planning decisions, to impacts of rising CO₂ levels on stomatal density and consequently plant nutrition.

We started by looking at a meadow full of Heath Spotted-orchids *Dactylorhiza maculata*. We understood that the meadow had not been ploughed since World War II

and had escaped the use of 'improving' fertilizers; the contrast with the neighbouring field was dramatic. Natural Resources Wales manage the meadows by cutting in late August and then allowing sheep to graze for a few weeks.

Ray gave various helpful hints on identifying species such as the difference between the grasses Smooth Brome and Soft Brome *Bromus racemosus* and *B. hordeaceus*. Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* had started to grow in one of the meadows. This grass forms undesirable tussocks and, since sheep are unable to digest the grass, it is likely to increase. Lessons on willow and birch identification followed. Plants that I have rarely seen before were Greater Burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* and Dyer's Greenweed *Genista tinctoria*.

After a brief diversion to look at a pond excavated in the 1970s, we entered an extensive bog which, we

were warned, was 20 feet deep in places. This proved an incentive to keep to the kilometre-long boardwalk. Initially we sauntered through dense woods dominated by willows and then birches until we entered a more open area with stunted Scots pines *Pinus sylvestris*.

At least two varieties of Cotton-grass *Eriophorum* spp., a proliferation of Cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccos*, Marsh Cinquefoil *Comarum palustre*, Round-leaved Sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* and sphagnum mosses were among numerous species testifying to the wet acidity of the environment.

The sun appeared for the all-important lunch break which took place at a widened part of the boardwalk where Ray continued to regale us with information gleaned from his widespread perusal of the scientific literature.



Cors y Llyn boardwalk

Tufted Loosestrife

The next opportunity to sit down was in an extraordinary field of ant hills on which Heath Bedstraw *Galium saxatile* thrived.

If any of us thought the sight of our cars signalled rest and a coffee, we were disappointed as we then drove a short distance to The Bog near Ridgemount. Ray also knew much of this former Common's chequered history. It is now an SSSI and owned by the local Council who struggle to reach agreement on maintenance. The presence of sheep was apparent from their copious droppings and some alarming bleating from a patch of bracken.

The lower area of The Bog was too wet for access without very long wellies but we did see the unusual Tufted Loosestrife *Lysimachia thyrsoiflora* with a few of its globular clusters of flowers. A tiny specimen of Lesser Bladderwort *Utricularia minor* was passed around for viewing through a hand lens.

A circuit of the Reserve was completed by 5 p.m. at which point one of our members summed up the day with, 'We are doomed!' as a summary of Ray's views on the current (and potential future) management of wildlife interests and nature reserves in Wales.

AMANDA JONES

Thursday 9th June - Penrhiw Farm, Newbridge-on-Wye

As we drove slowly and carefully down the long track through the fields that leads to Penrhiw Farmhouse we knew that it was going to be a special day. Earlier we'd parked up close to



the river bridge at Newbridge-on-Wye before decamping into a smaller number of cars. I was sitting in the front next to Gwyndaf John and he explained that 'Penrhiw' basically means 'Top of the hill'.

We parked in the farmyard and, as we got out of the car, a Red Kite drifted low overhead and we couldn't help but notice a number of Swallows zipping to and fro over the farmyard. The farmer, Gina Llewelyn, who welcomed us warmly, told us that there were a number of nests in the outhouses and that Grey Wagtails, Pied Wagtails, House Sparrows and Common Redstarts were all nesting nearby. Sadly, though, this was the first year she had known when the House Martins had failed to arrive, a story echoed across the country with northerly winds and poor weather

detering many from reaching our shores.

Gina moved to Penrhiw in 1992. Previously, it had been a small family-run farm since 1949. Gina is passionate about doing her bit for Mother Earth and loves living here and doing what she can to make a difference. Many of the fields have never been ploughed or fertilised and the habitats also include a wood, marsh, small quarry and orchard, together with the stream that borders the property.

During the morning we fanned out and wandered alongside the track and around the rough meadow close to the farmhouse. Amongst the many flowering grasses there were the white flowers of Heath Bedstraw *Galium saxatile*, the gentle blue flowers of Heath Milkwort *Polygala serpyllifolia* and the yellow flowers of Common Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Mouse-ear-hawkweed *Pilosella officinarum* and Cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*. Here and there we came across thriving patches of other plants including Slender St-John's Wort *Hypericum pulchrum*, Fairy Flax *Linum catharticum* and Lesser Stitchwort *Stellaria graminea*.

On the small bank at the side of the track we were all amazed to see the large amount of Bird's-foot *Ornithopus perpusillus* that was flowering in abundance, together with patches of Annual Knawel *Scleranthus annuus* and English Stonecrop *Sedum anglicum*.

We had a number of people present with skills in identifying all kinds of things and various mosses,

liverworts, bugs and beetles were pointed out. Gina was really excited and told us how much she enjoyed having people around who really appreciated the fauna and flora.

As lunchtime approached the predicted rain began to fall and we made our way to the woodland where another surprise awaited us. Gina runs a Forest School for children and we walked under a large archway and into a shelter with a kettle warming up over a campfire which we all sat around for lunch, bringing back memories for some of Scout and Guide camps. Gina and her friend, Jules, waited on us and, after we had eaten our sandwiches, came around with cups of tea together with shortbread biscuits and flapjack. Janet was also going around handing out slices of a delicious fruit cake that she had made especially for the occasion. Only one person refused a slice of the tasty, nourishing treat. I plead the fact that I was absolutely full up and literally couldn't manage another morsel, but I've no doubt that I will be reminded of it whenever we meet from now on!

Following all of that food it was perhaps surprising that we actually got going at all in the afternoon but, with full stomachs, we headed back out into what was now a constant drizzle. Our spirits weren't dampened though and Philippa, one of our bryophyte enthusiasts, was heard to say, "It's perfect weather for mosses – it doesn't get any better than this!"

Across a field and through a gateway with a nice show of flowering Round-leaved Crowfoot *Ranunculus omiophyllus*, we reached the damp



Around the camp fire

meadow that was home to a plant that we had all been looking forward to catching up with, Whorled Caraway *Trocdaris verticillata*. It wasn't quite flowering yet but, once we got our eyes in, it was easy to find the delicate leaves spread over quite a large area of grassland. This is a plant that has been lost in many places because of modern agricultural practices so it was great to see it thriving here. Gwyndaf had informed me earlier that it is the County flower of Carmarthenshire where he used to live.

There was a field pond close by dominated by Reed Sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima*, with other plants, including Common Marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*, Greater Birds-foot-trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus* and a beautiful little patch of Water-purslane *Lythrum portula* flowering next to the water. Pale Sedge *Carex pallescens* was also growing nearby.

We made our way back to the farmhouse via a barbed wire fence that everyone managed to negotiate with varying degrees of poise and grace, before wandering around the orchard. As we were preparing to leave we were treated to an impromptu demonstration of how to use a scythe by Gina.

Wild Flower Society meetings are known for being friendly and relaxed and this meeting was just that and more: great flora, great fauna and great company! Many thanks to Gina for allowing us to spend an enjoyable day exploring her special place.

STEPHEN PLUMMER

Photo: Ken Southall

SURREY AND SUSSEX 10th - 11th JUNE

Friday 10th June - Farthing Downs, Surrey

As a keen but relatively new and inexperienced member of the WFS, I must admit to being rather alarmed when Priscilla Nobbs asked me if I would co-lead a WFS trip with her in 2022. I did stress that although I am pretty confident with most plants in my own patch and where to find the local specialities, I have no idea when it comes to recognising hybrids, subspecies etc. However Priscilla is not an easy person to refuse! But I needn't have worried - take a group of enthusiastic botanists to a small car park and they can easily amuse themselves for an hour or two. Take them to a stunning area of rich chalk grassland as found at Farthing Downs, and the job is done! Plus, of course, Priscilla and Gareth Bursnall

have a wealth of knowledge which they willingly shared with the group.

We met on a warm sunny morning in the car park on top of the Downs with great views over the countryside and up to London. Farthing Downs was purchased by the City of London in 1883 and they continue to manage the area which is an SSSI and in 2019 became part of the new South London Downs NNR. After Priscilla's introductions we wandered along the top of the downs finding Wild Carrot *Daucus carota*, Dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*, Kidney Vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria* and Horseshoe Vetch *Hippocrepis comosa* (which were growing close to each other for a useful comparison) and admiring the local speciality, Greater Yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus angustifolius* which, although rare nationally, grows in great numbers in this area. When compared to *R. minor* the differences are quite subtle but two distinguishing features are that the violet tooth of the upper lip is longer than wide and the lower lip does not turn down, away from the upper lip. We were pleased to spot a few patches of the tiny Thyme-leaved Sandwort *Arenaria serpyllifolia* but were then temporarily diverted from plants by the singing of skylarks and then a yellowhammer which obligingly posed on top of a shrub for us to have a good look at him.

Dropping down from the top of the Downs to a sloping meadow, we spent some time admiring a good selection of Fly Orchids *Ophrys insectifera* and Man Orchids *Orchis*

Photo: Moira Smith



Chalk
Fragrant-orchid



Chalk
downland flora

anthropophora plus large numbers of Common Twayblades *Neottia ovata*. Gareth also pointed out that the Valerian we were seeing was the *Valeriana officinalis* ssp. *collina*, found in dry calcareous areas. By now we had worked up an appetite and as we hadn't moved far from the car park we had the bonus of returning to the nearby benches for lunch.

We started the afternoon in my favourite field which was awash with stunning Chalk Fragrant-orchids *Gymnadenia conopsea* and Common Spotted-orchids *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*. We all had a good sniff of the Fragrant Orchids which, for pollination, rely predominantly on attracting moths with a long proboscis as the nectar is found at the bottom of their long spur. We also found several Bee Orchids *Ophrys apifera* and a few Pyramidal *Anacamptis pyramidalis* bringing our total up to 7

orchid species. We found examples of the deep-blue Chalk Milkwort *Polygala calcarea* which prompted discussion of the differentiating features when compared with Common Milkwort *P. vulgaris*. The easiest feature to observe was the false rosette of leaves above the short woody stem.

We progressed from these east-facing meadows to the meadows on the other side of the valley and slowly worked our way up the slope admiring many other chalk specialities until near the top of the hill we found a few examples of Field Mouse-ear *Cerastium arvense* which was a new species for several of the group.

A leisurely return to the car park ended a fascinating and, in the end, very enjoyable day with a great bunch of enthusiasts.

MOIRA SMITH

Photo: Anne Keil

Saturday 11th June - Beachy Head, Sussex

Twelve eager members set off from Holywell tea rooms at the end of the promenade at the foot of Beachy Head the highest point of the chalky ridge of the South Downs. We explored the lower slopes and beach area and soon spotted interesting plants.

New to many was the stately Tree-mallow *Malva arborea* and we all admired the Kidney Vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria*, still half asleep in its duvet of downy sepals, plus its daintier relative the Horseshoe Vetch *Hippocrepis comosa* with fruits looking like a string of horse-shoes joined together. Two naturalised aliens were noticed, Wallflower *Erysimum cheiri* and Hoary Stock *Matthiola incana*. The latter white flowered here in Sussex rather than deep pink as on the Isle of Wight. After ascending the cliffs, the blue-

Photo: Anne Kell



Stinking Iris

purple flowers of Stinking Iris *Iris foetidissima* were in perfect form much nicer than the dirty yellow garden form, var. *citrina*. Other names for this plant are Gladdon as the leaves resemble the swords of the Roman gladiators and Roast Beef Plant as the leaves smell of roast beef if you crush them.

After our picnic we set off to Whitbread Hole, a circular depression in the downs. Here we encountered Wild Onion or Crow Garlic *Allium vineale* another new plant for many. The prize here, however, goes to the roses. They were out in profusion, a delight to both the eyes and smell as the fragrant Sweet-briar *Rosa rubiginosa* with its glandular apple-scented leaves perfumed the air. Why bother with garden roses when the wild ones are so much better! Sitting and relaxing in the sun after seeing the fabulous Greater Knapweed *Centaurea scabiosa* we just drank in the view, bright blue sky and blue sea shimmering in the sunshine. How blessed we were with sun, sea and beautiful plants in the good company of our fellow members.

For members in Parnassus “strange and weird” garden escapes are plentiful in Eastbourne including *Eryngium eburneum (paniculatum)* growing half way up a retaining wall and *Hypericum empetrifolium ssp. oliganthum* growing on other walls further along the promenade.

GARETH BURSNALL

WINTER MONTHS HUNT 2021-2022

Name	County(s) N. Counties	No. Sp.	Dec	Jan	Feb
Barbara Allen	S. Lancashire	56	30	35	28
Julie Clarke	Lancashire	41	24	28	30
Judith Cox	N. Yorkshire	94	20	45	58
Anthony & Rita Grainger	W. Yorkshire	71	41	42	48
Dorothy Ross	Lancashire	51	31	24	27
Susan Simcock	W. Yorkshire & Staffs	63	45	30	26
Tom Simcock	W. Yorkshire & Staffs	53	39	20	21
Mary & Claire Smith	Derbyshire	81	59	51	43
Christine Wainman	E. & W. Yorks, Lancs	50	37	29	27
Midlands/Wales					
Jackie Hardy	Worcs, Warks & Devon	143	14	108	86
Nicki Mottram	Warwickshire	98	44	77	56
East Anglia					
Stephen Clarkson	Suffolk & Essex	96	39	36	69
Sue Grayston & Ken Southall	Suffolk & Essex	98	97	64	86
Carol Hawkins	Norfolk	150	124	102	79
Anne & Dennis Kell	Suffolk	154	118	79	69
Andrew Toomey	Suffolk	54	27	25	42
S. and S.E.					
Caroline Bateman	London, Surrey & Kent	165	102	92	84
Sue Buckingham	Kent	215	177	67	49
Helen Dignum	Sussex	171	71	124	32
Susan Grimshaw	Berkshire	67	55	35	36
Pippa Hyde	Surrey & London	105	68	61	72
Daphne Mills	Kent	209	180	82	76
Jill Oakley	Sussex & Hants	187	118	128	62
Janice Reynolds	Sussex	118	95	38	58
Diana Stroud	Berkshire	142	113	97	94
John Swindells	London	102	79	63	65
S.W.					
Ro Fitzgerald	Somerset	207	149	131	107
Sally Maller	Devon, Dorset, Hants, Middx	188	100	81	91

Slightly fewer people took part in the Winter Months Hunt this time. Still a healthy 32 members sent in some 28 lovely lists. The common cry was that people felt their numbers were down on previous hunts due to the weather

in early 2022. There seemed to be storm after storm. As fast as the few plants flowering recovered there was another downpour to beat them back to the ground.



Photo: Everalld Ellis

It is always good to hear from people even if they are not able to complete the hunt. Everalld Ellis emailed me some gorgeous photographs she had taken as compensation for not sending a list. I particularly liked her Snowdrop *Galanthus nivalis* wood photograph shown above.

From the northern counties of England I received nine lists. Barbara Allen sent a good list which included Colt's-foot *Tussilago farfara* which is always a pleasure to find. Julie Clarke found Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* flowering in January. It is surprising what will suddenly throw up some flowers. Judith Cox carried out the BSBI New Year Plant Hunt on the South Gare and found Tunicflower *Petrorhagia saxifraga* still in flower. Anthony and Rita Grainger sent their usual interesting list which included Sulphur Cinquefoil *Potentilla recta*. Dorothy Ross visited the coast at Lytham and found Sea Rocket *Cakile maritima* still in flower there. Susan and Tom Simcock sent separate lists with

Susan finding slightly more plants than Tom. Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium* and Hedgerow Crane's-bill *Geranium pyrenaicum* were good records from their lists. Mary and Claire Smith found a new one for their list, Sweet Spurge *Euphorbia dulcis* which they say has only just reached their

area. Christine Wainman has been a WFS member for some time, but this was her first WMH. She found Narrow-leaved Ragwort *Senecio inaequidens* flowering in December and January, a good one to record.

Two people sent lists from the Midlands: Jackie Hardy used the winter months to concentrate on her tree identification skills. Whilst doing so she found two trees of Wych Elm *Ulmus glabra* with red male flowers showing. Nicki Mottram joined the WFS in March 2021. She sent me a great account of her strategy whilst carrying out the WMH, recording as much as possible early in the month then topping up numbers when possible. Most records sent were from within two miles of her home with Lungwort *Pulmonaria officinalis* found in February.

East Anglia produced five lists for the Hunt. Steve Clarkson started 2022 with a bang and on 1st January found a ten metre stretch of Cornish Bellflower *Campanula alliariifolia*. A

fabulous start to the year. Sue Grayston, hunted in Suffolk and Essex with Ken Southall. They found Guernsey Fleabane *Erigeron sumatrensis* in both counties. Carol Hawkins found some of her favourite hunting grounds have been cleared in an onslaught of new house building. However, she found Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* flowering in February which was pleasing. Anne and Dennis Kell sent a large list of plants, all of which were found in Suffolk. They saw Butcher's-broom *Ruscus aculeatus* flowering every month of the hunt. Andrew Toomey found one of my favourite flowers, Springbeauty *Claytonia perfoliata*.

From the south and southeast I received ten lists. Caroline Bateman hunts in Reigate and Redhill which I often pass through for work. I need to be more observant as she found Fern-leaved Beggarticks *Bidens ferulifolia* for the Hunt. Sue Buckingham said her highlight was masses of Sweet Scabious *Scabiosa atropurpurea* in a variety of colour forms from its well-known location at Ramsgate harbour. Helen Dignum, saw Butcher's-broom *Ruscus aculeatus* on 1st December and continued to see many wonderful plants throughout the hunt. Susan Grimshaw included in her interesting list Annual Wall-rocket *Diplotaxis muralis* which had been flowering continuously since May 2021. On a trip to Central London in February I was travelling by bus and passed a small area of waste ground near Tower Bridge. On walking back, I found quantities of Tall Nightshade *Solanum chenopodioides* flowering. Daphne Mills went out hunting with Sue Buckingham and was shown plants of Treacle-mustard *Erysimum*

cheiranthoides with a few flowers still showing. Jill Oakley botanised for the BSBI New Year Plant Hunt and visited Pagham where she saw Sicilian Chamomile *Anthemis punctata*. A nasty accident later in January curtailed her hunting for several weeks. Diana Stroud sent me a superb list full of great plants including Rustyback *Asplenium ceterach*. It is always good to see ferns on people's lists. Janice Reynolds wrote me a lovely letter accompanying her list. She found Stinking Iris *Iris foetidissima* flowering. A lovely plant which does not deserve such a name. John Swindells found Greater Burnet-saxifrage *Pimpinella major* which was not only new to his Winter Hunt list but appears to be new to inner London.

From the southwest I received two lists. Ro Fitzgerald said the most unusual plant was probably Fodder Vetch *Vicia villosa*, still with grand purple spikes a couple of weeks before Christmas. Sally Maller found most of her plants around Wembury, near Plymouth. A foray up to Middlesex, where her daughter lives, provided plants of Ivy *Hedera helix* in December.

Winter is just a memory as I write this in the summer. My tortoise has come through another hibernation successfully and is busy controlling the Dandelions in my garden. I am not sure she cares which species they are as long as the leaves are crisp and taste good. Thank you all for supporting the WMH and I hope to receive lists from you again in 2023.

PIPPA HYDE

ST. JOHN'S-WORT IDENTIFICATION.

A Beginners Guide to non-shrubby *Hypericum* species.

Britain and Ireland have 12 non-shrubby species of St. John's-worts (SJW), plus a few shrubby species like Tutsan. All have attractive yellow flowers and many are widespread. Separation of these 12 species is **fairly** straightforward in Britain and Ireland. Species that are usually easy to identify as separate species in Britain may not be so easy in Europe. The best comprehensive and expert guide to **British and Irish St. John's-worts** was written by Dr N. K. B. Robson and published by the W.F.S. in its *A Guide to some difficult plants* reprinted by Summerfield Books in 2006. The strength of this paper is that it gives a European wide perspective, written by the leading expert.

Following, is my non-expert attempt to produce a **set of identification features** to separate these 12 species, based on photos I have taken. The idea is to use it as an addition to your field guide which will include other information like flowering time and distribution maps. It attempts to give more detail than normally possible in a field guide.

The weasel word 'fairly' appears above because this group of species has pairs that can hybridise. This is especially true of the most common Perforate SJW and the Imperforate SJW and their hybrid known as 'Des Etangs' *Hypericum x desetangsii*. David J. Barden wrote an excellent paper on this hybrid, *Hypericum maculatum-Hypericum perforatum complex in*

Cambridgeshire (V.C. 29) published in Nature in Cambridgeshire, Volume 52, 2010 and available on their website. The key finding for me in this paper, was the range of intermediate plants that David Barden separated into five groups. It showed me that some plants I had photographed and labelled as pure *H. perforatum*, were in fact not pure. It is however possible to find populations of Perforate SJW which appear pure and have no aberrant features, the 'perfect perorate'.

As always, plant ID should be based on a range of features, as no single feature is always 100% reliable. This Key covers leaves (perforations and black dots), petals and sepals with attention to black glands and stem profile which should be looked at mid-stem, not just at the top. Use of X10 or X15 eyepiece will be expected unless you have very good eyesight. Where the ID Key species boxes touch, this indicates that hybridisation can occur.

Finally, the exact definition of a gland is that it has a zone of secretion and this is clearly the case for the stalked glands on the sepals. The black dots on the leaves are also glands but I prefer to call them 'dots' because they just look like dark dots. Perforations, which can be dots or lines, are a feature of St John's-worts and are also glands. Glands contain hypericin and other chemicals which are an attempt to repel insects.

PETER G. LEONARD

10 KM SQUARE STUDY (NORTH) 2021

	Square	Area	Year	New	Total
Julie Clarke	SD48	Lindale & Whitbarrow	19	3	788
	SD58	Milnthorpe	18	4	509
Anthony & Rita Grainger	SE23	Horsforth & Rodley	11	35	640
	SE24	Otley & Wharfe Valley	11	43	448
Peter Jepson	SD61	Bolton (North)	41	0	509
	SD62	Darwen and Blackburn	47	2	870
	SD71	Turton	40	1	458
	SD72	Accrington	46	0	625
Andrew Kafel	SE02	Halifax	15	49	963
	SE12	Brighouse	14	1	667
	SE22	Morley, Dewsbury & Batley	13	2	856
Graeme Kay	SJ57	Frodsham	25	0	719
	SJ67	Northwich	23	4	536
	SJ87	Alderley Edge	33	1	536
	SJ97	Macclesfield	35	4	596
	SJ98	Marple	43	0	679
Keith Robson	NZ24	Chester-le-street	9	35	656
Dorothy Ross	SD31	Southport	3	0	120
	SD32	Lytham	19	2	381
	SD45	Galgate	9	0	299
	SD63	Longridge	34	1	381
	SD64	Chipping	11	0	205
	SD73	Whalley	17	3	305
	SD74	Clitheroe	32	1	378
	SE13	Bradford	32	44	1854
Jesse Tregale Sheila Wynn	SD64	Bowland, Lancashire	15	0	237
	SD65	Forest of Bowland	11	0	176
	SD74	Clitheroe, Lancashire	15	14	590
	SD75	Slaidburn, Gisburn Forest	15	0	239

Julie, as usual, had some interesting finds in SD48. She found the rare alien Somerset Skullcap *Scutellaria altissima* in a hedgerow at Foulshaw. Her only other two species for the square were Black-grass *Alopecurus myosuroides*, which is quite rare this far north, and Barren Brome *Anisantha sterilis*. In SD58 the Changing Forget-me-not *Myosotis discolor* was a nice find in Green

Lane and Garden Parsley *Petroselinum crispum* was on the edge of a wall behind the closed Kingfisher Restaurant. The hedgerow at Ackingthwaite provided Russian Vine *Fallopia baldschuanica* and Red Bartsia *Odontites vernus*.

Anthony and Rita had some nice finds in both their squares. In SE23, Great Brome *Anisantha diandra* was

a nice find on West End Lane, Horsforth. In June they led a Bradford Botanists meeting finding Knotted Crane's-bill *Geranium nodosum* self-seeded on a ginnel off Southway, which had us all confused for a while, with Sulphur Cinquefoil *Potentilla recta* nearby. Earlier finds included Green-leaved Snowdrop *Galanthus woronowii* in Westbrook Lane and Argentinian Vervain *Verbena bonariensis*, as a small colony on the pavement on Broadway Drive. Both of these have become common garden escapes. However, a rather unusual garden escape was Caucasian Campion *Silene schafta* found on Troy Hill Horsforth. In SE24 they found some interesting plants in Golden Acre Park: Small Balsam *Impatiens parviflora* which I am still awaiting its spread to my Bradford square, Dark Mullein *Verbascum nigrum* and Pale Willowherb *Epilobium roseum*, which is now well established in Bradford. By Yeadon Tarn they found the rare Orange Foxtail *Alopecurus aequalis* and in a nearby pond the alien Least Duckweed *Lemna minuta*, which is becoming more common. A couple more, both of which I am hunting for in Bradford, are Giant Butterbur *Petasites japonicus* found on the roadside verge at Castley and Black Bryony *Tamus communis* in a hedgerow at Weeton.

Peter added to two of his squares. In SD62 he found a nice colony of Small Cudweed *Logfia minima* on the inner embankment of the former Sunnyhurst Hey Reservoir and Broad-leaved Bamboo *Sasa palmata* well established on a former railway track near Abbey Village. In SD71, with the aim of collecting Common

Cow-wheat *Melampyrum pratense* seed for a re-establishment project, Peter returned to a location where he had recorded a large population in 1982. Sadly, through habitat change, it had gone. However, he was compensated by finding Knotted Crane's-bill *Geranium nodosum*, a garden escape, between houses and Bradshaw Brook on his walk back.

Andrew had a rather splendid year with 49 new plants for SE02. Being just a few miles from Bradford I was able to visit and he also led a couple of trips for the Bradford Botanists Group. The Christmas-rose *Helleborus niger* was rather splendid growing on a wall outside Halifax Cathedral. This was not in flower in 2021 but had some fine flowers in January 2022. Honey Spurge *Euphorbia mellifera* was another self-seeding plant at the top of Wade Sreet and the rather rare Changing Forget-me-not, *Myosotis discolor* ssp. *dubia* was on Charlsdon Road. Grey Field-speedwell *Veronica polita* was on a wall on High Lane and, possibly the highlight of his list, which I have



Photo: Jane England

been searching for many years in Bradford without success, was Rue-leaved Saxifrage *Saxifraga tridactylites*. Many plants of it were growing as a pavement weed by the car park in Bowling Dyke. In SE12 on a Bradford Botanists meeting we found Short-fruited x American Willowherb *Epilobium x vicinum* on Godley Lane. Andrew also managed to add to his SE22 list finding a splendid patch of Pleated Snowdrop *Galanthus plicatus* in a wood off the A650 and a rather splendid red and white flowered plant of Hollyhock *Alcea rosea* on the side of a formal railway cutting in Thornhill.

Graeme managed to find new plants for three of his squares. In SJ67 during a visit to Furey Wood, Northwich he found Soft Shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum*, the rather splendid White Clover with pink flowers *Trifolium repens* var. *carneum* and a possible planted Buckthorn tree *Rhamnus cartharticas*. In SJ87 Balm *Melissa officinalis* was on the verge of the bypass at Wilmslow. In SJ97 he found Persian Ivy *Hedera colchica* between the canal and road and in the same square was Highclere Holly *Ilex x altaclerensis*, Red Oak *Quercus rubra* and Broad-leaved Osier *Salix x smithiana*.

Keith, like many of us, was confined mainly to his local vice county but managed to add 35 to his square. The Mougeot's Whitebeam *Sorbus mougeotii* found at Weldridge is the only record I have from outside my square where we have been finding it self-seeded for over ten years. Other nice finds at Weldridge were Wild Marjoram *Origanum vulgare* and the white form *Origanum vulgare* 'White

Charm' and Trailing St. John's-wort *Hypericum humifusum* found on Weldrige Fell. Another nice native was Melancholy Thistle *Cirsium heterophyllum* at Felledge.



Marjoram

Dorothy added to four of her squares. In SD32, on the dunes at Lytham, she found Chicory *Cichorium intybus* and the rare Grey Field-speedwell *Veronica polita*. In SD45 Hairy Tare *Ervilia hirsuta* was on the edge of the pavement at Ribchester. The roadside at Pendleton in SD73 provided Spotted Dead-nettle *Lamium maculatum* and Lungwort *Pulmonaria officinalis*, with Russian Comfrey *Symphytum x uplandicum* by the stream. Shaggy-soldier *Galinsoga quadriradiata* was on waste ground by Clitheroe Station in SD74.

I had a good year in Bradford. Early in the year I met up with Brian Bryne and we found a number of Narcissi. I

Photo: Peter Llewellyn

sent photographs to Mick Crawley and David Broughton, who named some of them, including a rather fine *Narcissus* 'Stratosphere' found on a soil heap in Boars Well. The best plants of the year were all found by Michael Wilcox, including the long sought Hybrid Sweet-grass *Glyceria x pedicellata* in a meadow by Hirst Wood, Pale Sedge *Carex pallescens* by Royds Cliff Wood pond, Golden Tickseed *Coreopsis tinctoria* on waste ground off James Crescent and Four-leaved All-seed *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* on the cobbles off Kings Road. The latter is another plant which appears to be travelling north. I also managed to send some Dandelions to Prof A.J. Richards who named ten new ones for the square. Finally, late in November, I found a rather fine *Nemesia* 'Vanilla Berry' growing between wall and pavement on Ashbourne Oval.

Sheila managed to add to one of her squares, SD74, where an abandoned garden cleared for building provided her best finds. These included the blue-flowered Thorn Apple *Datura stramonium* var. *chalybaea* growing with the normal white-flowered form, var. *stramonium*, the densely hairy Pale Persicaria *Persicaria lapathifolia* var. *salicifolia* and the rare Green Field-speedwell *Veronica agrestis*. Another interesting find was the pink-flowered Primrose *Primula vulgaris* ssp. *sibthorpii* growing in a hedgerow in Bowland Gate Lane, West Bradford.

I would like to thank all those who sent me lists. Some interesting plants were found although for many of us we were rather restricted in where we could go. Hopefully we will have a splendid 2022.

B.A. 'JESSE' TREGALE

Photo: Jesse Tregale



Nemesia
'Vanilla Berry'

10 KM SQUARE STUDY (SOUTH) 2021

Name	Hectad	Location	Year	New	Total
Nick Barber	SP22	Churchill, Oxfordshire	3	38	245
Gareth Bursnall	TQ23	Crawley, West Sussex	7	17	614
Rodney Burton	TQ56	Darenth Valley, Kent	27	5	701
José Gibbs	TR37	Margate, Kent	7	11	174
Anne Hercock	S060	West Gloucestershire	1	148	148
Pippa Hyde	TQ15	Leatherhead, Surrey	3	33	327
Barbara Mathews	TM23	West Felixstowe, Suffolk	24	2	685
	TM24	Woodbridge, Suffolk	22	1	539
	TM33	East Felixstowe, Suffolk	25	1	669
	TM34	Shottisham, Suffolk	13	0	361
Daphne Mills	TQ75	Maidstone, Kent	12	16	719
Ted Phenna	SH57	Bangor & Anglesey	14	0	432
	SH67	Llanfairfechan, Gwynedd	18	0	691
	SH68	Llangoed, Anglesey	9	0	314
	SH78	Great Orme, Gwynedd	42	15	741
Sue Poyser & Doug Grant	TQ76	Rochester & Chatham, Kent	24	6	906
	TQ77	Higham and Cliffe, Kent	16	1	619
Ted Pratt	SY97	Worth Matravers, Dorset	10	17	615
	SY98	Wareham & Corfe, Dorset	14	14	1270
	SZ08	Studland, Dorset	16	16	1265
Janice Reynolds	TQ40	Newhaven, East Sussex	20	26	725

After reviewing the previous year's splendid 10km Square (South) Study records, I waited with anticipation to see if the 2021 records would turn out to be as outstanding and I was not disappointed. Once again, I am extremely impressed with the hard work, dedication and knowledge shown by all the WFS members taking part; all the information sent with their records was especially interesting and useful.

Nick's 10km square SP22 straddles two Vice Counties. Most of his 2021 records were in VC 23, Oxfordshire and a few were over the border in VC33, East Gloucestershire. A first for Nick was Grass Vetchling *Lathyrus nissolia* in a neighbour's meadow next to his home. Using a record from an old document he managed to locate Spurge-laurel *Daphne laureola* in a small woodland on the edge of Churchill village. Another old local record made Nick decide to take a bike ride, rather than to whizz past in a car; he was rewarded by finding masses of Dwarf Elder *Sambucus ebulus* in a hedgerow. Annual Beard-grass *Polypogon monspeliensis* popped up surprisingly in his vegetable garden.

In January Gareth had an interesting start to the year when he discovered Silvery Crocus *Crocus biflorus* on a grass verge. In March he added *Narcissus* "Suzy", with its butter yellow tepals and an orange trumpet and he was pleased also to find Stinking Hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*. A beautiful Wood Anemone variety *Anemone nemorosa* var. *carnea* which is pink flushed on both sides was a bonus on a woodland walk. In May a pond margin supplied Gareth with both Centuryplant *Agave americana* and the Bamboo *Pleioblastus auricomus* with its striped yellow and green leaves. A swarm of self-sown seedlings with variegated leaves was a new and totally unexpected find of the Wedding Cake Tree *Cornus controversa* "Variegata".

Rodney has added yet more species to his already impressive list for his TQ56 square in Kent. His most exciting find was spotted during a very long wait for a flu jab when he saw a number of plants at the roadside which were growing straight upwards with a very distinctive habit. They looked quite different from ordinary Knotgrass. Rodney took a small sample home to photograph and was able to identify it as the Knotgrass *Polygonum agrestinum*. A small plant of Caucasian Crosswort *Phuopsis stylosa* was easily recognised as Rodney had grown it in a garden previously. Then, in a disused allotment area, he discovered a large shrub of Dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* ssp. *australis*. Other good finds were Thorn-apple *Datura stramonium* var. *stramonium* growing beside a pavement and Tall Tutsan *Hypericum x inodorum* which



Dwarf Elder

had found a home by a roadside kerb.

José has managed to add quite a few species to her TR37 North Kent coast square even though she had taken outings and a holiday away from home. In 2019 José had heard that a Lizard Orchid *Himantoglossum hircinum* had been found at Foreness Point. She was unable to get there the following year, so in 2021 she took the opportunity to look for it. The orchid was originally seen growing very close to a sewage treatment plant. However, a visit during flowering time found that the entire area had been taken over by a travellers' encampment! José persevered and continued to look for other plants. She found four spikes in bud that looked as if they were Lizard Orchid and checking them weekly, she finally saw one in flower just days before she went on holiday. Sadly though, three spikes had completely disappeared and the remaining spike was very damaged, possibly by dogs running around or by strong winds.

In 2020 Anne recorded a 1km square SO 6302 at Lydney, a small country town in Gloucestershire near the Severn Estuary. She spotted on the WFS website that records for a 1km square could be included in a 10km square study if it was within the same hectad, so she submitted her list of 148 species of Lydney records for inclusion in the 10km square SO60. Anne lives near Monmouth, but her husband swims in the summer months at the outdoor pool in Lydney which is much too cold for her! Sometimes she went for a botanical wander while he swam and came across the conservation meadow

area in St Mary's churchyard. Anne gained permission from the churchwardens to do a study of it as she was already taking part in the Big Meadow Search organised by Carmarthenshire Meadows Group. As she got to know Lydney better with its varied habitats she decided to extend it to a one kilometre square study and now she is expanding even further into a 10km square.

In 2021 Pippa added some good finds to her Surrey 10km square TQ15. All the new species were discovered in the beautiful countryside that is within walking distance from her home. The year got off to a good start for Pippa with Wall-rue *Asplenium ruta-muraria*, Pot Marigold *Calendula officinalis* and Adria Bellflower *Campanula portenschlagiana* in January. The Lesser Celandine variety 'Brazen Hussy' *Ficaria verna* was a nice early spring discovery, its glossy, heart-shaped, deep blackish-bronze leaves contrasting with the bright yellow flowers. In June Pippa was delighted to find three different orchid species along the roadside, two of which, Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis* and Common Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, were new to her list. Summer additions included two grasses, Meadow Fescue *Schedonorus pratensis* and Cockspur *Echinochloa crus-galli* as well as Wild Basil *Clinopodium vulgare*.

In 2021 Barbara botanised fairly near her home but still managed to add to lists in three of her four hectads. In September she found Japanese Anemone *Anemone x hybrida* growing on a pavement and she discovered Hoary Ragwort *Jacobaea*

erucifolia above a caravan park on a footpath in her TM23 West Felixstowe square. *Nasturtium Tropaeolum majus* was a nice find in a vacant, overgrown allotment in East Felixstowe in TM33 and in August Barbara spotted Sowbread *Cyclamen hederifolium* on a steep bank under trees just outside Woodbridge in her TM24 hectad.

In 2021 Daphne spent much of her time botanising in the Detling area to the north-east of Maidstone in her TQ75 square. She made some very nice finds which included Deadly Nightshade *Atropa belladonna*, Downy Oat-grass *Avenula pubescens*, Medium-flowered Wintercress *Barbarea intermedia* and Small Toadflax *Chaenorhinum minus*. In August, at The Larches, Daphne was surprised to come across a large amount of Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis* and a group of three Violet Helleborines *Epipactis purpurata* was a lovely find on a woodland roadside. In September 2020 when Daphne discovered Cope-bindweed *Fallopia convolvulus* her sharp eyes also spotted a probable hybrid of Black x Cope-bindweed *Fallopia x convolvuloides* (*F. convolvulus* x *F. dumetorum*). The Vice County Recorder has verified her identification which has been added to her 2021 list bringing her total number for her hectad to a very impressive 719 species.

Ted Phenna has excelled himself yet again, after forty two years he has managed to add fifteen new species to his SH78 Great Orme square bringing his total to a splendid 741. Wendy McCarthy, the VC49 Vice

County Recorder, lives about 100 yards away from Ted and she has helped with confirming the identification of some of his more unusual finds. Slender Sandwort *Arenaria leptoclados*, Entire-leaved Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster integrifolius* and Western Eyebright *Euphrasia tetraquetra* were just a few of Ted's interesting June finds; and later in the summer he added Undivided-leaved Hawkweed *Hieraceum holophyllum* and Sand Lucerne *Medicago sativa* nothosp. *varia*. Some surprising October discoveries were African Lily *Agapanthus praecox* by a roadside and a single small plant of Pale Galingale *Cyperus eragrostis*, growing in Ted's road at the base of a wall.

In 2021 Doug and Sue have continued to discover yet more new species to add to their TQ76 square, Rochester & Chatham, to bring their magnificent total up to 906. Doug and Sue expressed thanks to Daphne Mills for finding and showing them some of the new species. Disturbed imported soil on a roadside verge provided them with Tree Spinach *Chenopodium giganteum* and Petunia *Petunia x hybrida*. Other finds included Crimson Clover *Trifolium incarnatum* ssp. *incarnatum* on the edge of a path and Russian vine *Fallopia baldschuanica* growing on a roadside bank. The most exciting and amazing discovery that Doug and Sue made in their TQ77 square in 2021 was thousands of plants of Mousetail *Myosurus minimus* on the edge of an arable field, they promptly sent their record in to the Vice County Recorder.

Ted Pratt has continued with his outstanding achievements by adding even more species to his three hectads. In his SY97 square, Worth Matravers in Dorset, he made a number of interesting finds including two Dandelion species, Rounded-lobed Dandelion *Taraxacum cophocentrum* and Pink-stalked Dandelion *Taraxacum pallescens*. Hybrid Monkshood *Aconitum x stoerkianum* was the sighting which gave him the most pleasure. Soil dumped by the new cycle track by the A351 at Sandford was the most productive site in Ted's SY98 hectad, Wareham & Corfe in Dorset, which provided him with Corncockle *Agrostemma githago*, Sweet-William *Dianthus barbatus*, Clove Pink *Dianthus caryophyllus*, Hyssop *Hyssopus officinalis* and Orange Mullein *Verbascum phlomoides*. Ted's highlight in his SZ08 square, Studland, in Dorset, was the first record for Common Meadow-rue *Thalictrum flavum*. Black Chokeberry *Aronia melanocarpa* and Pale Galingale *Cyperus eragrostis* were also nice discoveries and Ted added six dandelion species to the square.

Janice has continued to make interesting finds in her TQ40 Newhaven square. In March she spotted Glaucous Spurge *Euphorbia myrsinites* and in April she discovered the showy Wallflower variety *Erysimum* "Bowles Mauve", both growing in pavement cracks near her home. Also, in her local area Janice added a number of other species found later in the year, including Peruvian Lily *Alstroemeria haemantha*, Himalayan Honeysuckle *Leycesteria formosa* and Stinking

Tutsan *Hypericum hircinum*. Two trips to Lewes rewarded her with Annual Buttonweed *Cotula australis* and Turkish Sage *Phlomis russeliana*. Janice also sent a list of sixteen species she had recorded over the last few years and that were not included in Stace 4; she supplied verifiable literature references for all of these and they have been added to her 2021 total.

Thank you all for taking part in the 10km Square (South) Study and I hope your botanising 2022 year will be an exciting and fulfilling one.

JILL OAKLEY

Photo: Anne Kell



Himalayan Honeysuckle

ONE DAY MEETINGS 2022

DEREHAM, NORFOLK 6th MARCH

One chilly grey morning in a damp tarmacked corner of deepest Dereham a hardy group of budding botanists met up. The conditions weren't ideal but the warmth and happiness of seeing our wonderful "woofs" friends after the winter kept spirits high. I'm afraid more chatting was done than botanising but all seemed happy with that.

We set off after the usual, "Where's the loos?" scenario and 'did' the car park. I think it took about an hour and a half for us to emerge from there. Car parks are often a good place to encounter our little green friends as they haven't yet been tidied away or zonked with herbicide. As a recorder I have often found that pavement cracks, untidy corners and gutters are wonderful hunting grounds for our beleaguered flora.

We took a meandering path through the town streets, then on into the churchyard of St. Nicholas, Dereham. The usual culprits were all in evidence. Common Whitlow-grass *Erophila verna* was putting on a fine show, along with Hairy Bitter-cress *Cardamine hirsuta*, two small white flowered plants in a similar habitat. Some of the loveliest flowers are very small. One of my favourites is Thyme-leaved Speedwell *Veronica serpyllifolia*. Its tiny flowers are so beautiful under a loupe. After lunch sitting in the church we walked through a small area put aside for

nature. Not many plants were found here in flower but there was plenty of promise for the Summer. We did find a lovely Green-leaved Snowdrop *Galanthus woronowii* with, as you would expect, bright green leaves. Certainly, one to look out for. On the way back to town we found Henbit Dead-nettle *Lamium amplexicaule* at the bottom of a wall. Lesser Chickweed *Stellaria pallida* was looked for and found growing under a lamppost. Its lighter green colour and no petals gave it away. By May it'll be dried up and gone. In total we found 44 plants in flower. Some of us found a nice warm coffee shop and carried on chatting there. A big "Thank you" to our leader Dr Stephen Clarkson.

SUE GRAYSTON



Henbit Dead-nettle

Photo: Sue Grayston

SOUTHPORT 24th MARCH

On a lovely sunny day (despite dire warnings about coming prepared for snow!) over 20 members met for a day on the Sefton Coast.

We started on the dunes adjacent to the Marine Lake at Southport. There was very little to be seen in flower so early in the year, but the main objective of the visit was to see the Early Sand-grass *Mibora minima* at one of its few sites in the country. This is a tiny grass rarely growing to more than 10cm tall and much more likely to only be about 6cm. Its favoured habitat is disturbed sand at the edges of paths through the dunes. Its early growth is a beautiful pink colour and if you manage to visit at just the right time, the whole area of the dunes where it grows is covered in a pink glow. Unfortunately, due to the dry sunny weather in the preceding two weeks, we had missed this, but there was still plenty of it to see.

We also spent some time revising vegetative identification of the plants that were starting to emerge.

Apart from the *Mibora*, the other plants we were looking out for were various tiny white-flowered spring ephemerals (annuals that flower and set seed very early in the year and have often disappeared by the end of May).

The first of these, which was everywhere on the dunes, was Common Whitlow-grass *Erophila verna*, which has four petals, divided



Early Sand-grass

Photo: Sheila Wynn

to almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of their length, so that at first glance it appears to have eight petals.

We were also looking for two annual Mouse-ears – Sea Mouse-ear *Cerastium diffusum* and Little Mouse-ear *C. semidecandrum*. These look very similar but are distinguished by the number of petals, Sea Mouse-ear usually having four petals and Little Mouse-ear having five. Also, the bracts of Little Mouse-ear have a wide, white scarious margin, whereas those of Sea Mouse-ear are completely herbaceous. We did manage to find a few scattered plants of both species. Not flowering, but easily identified by their pale green leaves, were patches of Lesser Chickweed *Stellaria pallida* growing on the sand.

We then moved on to Formby for lunch in the picnic area of St Luke's Churchyard where there was a delightful display of naturalised spring bulbs and lots of Springbeauty *Claytonia perfoliata*, some of which was just coming into flower.

From there we walked to the dunes, passing through an area of housing where we found another spring ephemeral, Rue-leaved Saxifrage *Saxifraga tridactylites*, growing on a wall. We stopped to admire a carpet of Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina* in a corner of the estate.

We were met by Phil Smith who had agreed to join us for the afternoon. The first insect he showed us was a Gorse Shield-bug *Piezodorus lituratus* looking like a bronze version of the Common Green Shield-bug.

Two Fumitories which Phil identified as Tall and Common Ramping-fumitory, *Fumaria bastardii* and *F. muralis* respectively were growing by the side of the track.

As we approached the dunes, Phil showed us Fine Osier *Salix x forbyana* which is a triple hybrid (*S. purpurea* x *S. viminalis* x *S. cinerea*). There was also an attractive clump of Summer Snowflake *Leucojum aestivum* naturalised near a lake, which Phil explained was created on a former sand extraction site.

Our destination was an area of dunes on which were growing large numbers of the two Mouse-ears which had been so elusive at the morning site. This was a good opportunity to examine them closely to see the differences.

Here we also managed to spot a few plants of the delightful, tiny Early Forget-me-not *Myosotis ramosissima*.

As the day was starting to get rather chilly, after thanking Phil, we set off back to our cars. It had been an enjoyable day and it was good to catch up with everyone after the winter.

SHEILA WYNN



Sea Mouse-ear - 4 petals



Little Mouse-ear - 5 petals

Photos: Phil Smith

WHITEHILL WOOD, OXFORDSHIRE

11th APRIL

Our first site was along the river Evenlode, walking the footpath which follows the riverbank, which is generally quite sheer. Whitehill Wood is a SSSI designated as a typical mixed broadleaf and yew woodland. The woodland lies along a north facing steep bank.

The early date of the meeting was necessitated by the early flowering of the plant which was the chief object of the visit, Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem *Gagea lutea*. The leaves of the plants resemble those of bluebells but have three veins running down the back instead of the one found in Bluebells. There were lots of plants, mainly on the river side of the path, but only a few in flower. The woodland contained a nice selection of spring woodland flowers, Wood Anemones *Anemone nemorosa*, Lesser Celandines *Ficaria verna*, Early Dogviolets *Viola reichenbachiana*, Ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, Ramsons *Allium ursinum*, Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis* etc. Around several Hazel trees *Corylus avellana* we found lovely examples of Toothwort *Lathraea squamaria* which is parasitic on the tree's roots.

Luckily the weather was fine and following lunch we drove a couple of miles to the second site, a known locality for Perfoliate Penny-cress *Microthlaspi perfoliatum*. Following an unremarkable walk of about a mile we arrived at the site on Palmer's Bank. The site is maintained by local botanists. The vegetation has been scraped away on a small bank leaving bare stony soil. The site is

weeded and raked over every year in late December. Perfoliate Penny-cress is very rare and found only on bare oolitic limestone in parts of Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Worcestershire. There was a large number of the plants with both flowers and seeds. The leaves clasp the stems. To observe them properly required getting down to ground level as the plants are small and the leaves close to the ground.

We were very privileged to see two such wonderful plants in close proximity. Thank you very much to Roger Heath-Brown for leading the outing.

FAY BANKS



Perfoliate Penny-cress

Photo: Fay Banks

WEETING HEATH, NORFOLK 16th APRIL

There was an immense air of anticipation as 18 of us assembled in warm, sunny and almost windless weather to look for the early flowering Breckland specialities under the guidance of Stephen Clarkson. Unfortunately, James Symonds, the Weeting Heath warden, was unable to join us at the last minute for '2020–22' reasons but his dedication to the reserve was apparent and very helpful!

Photo: Rob Still

Before leaving the car park we were able to see the vegetative parts of Tunicflower *Petrorhagia saxifraga* and Kamchatka Stonecrop *Phedimus kamtschaticus* and the dried seedhead of Field Wormwood *Artemisia campestris*.

Having safely negotiated a road crossing and a stile we were soon entering an arable field that is managed for Breckland specialities, in particular speedwells, with more than 650,000* Fingered Speedwell *Veronica triphyllos*, 66,000* Breckland Speedwell *V. praecox* and 46,000* Spring Speedwell *V. verna* – as well as the summer-flowering Spiked Speedwell *V. spicata*. (*estimates from 2018 quadrat surveys.)

With populations that large you would think they should be fairly easy to find, but James had very helpfully put out some flags where particularly fine examples could be seen. This was very helpful for getting to know these diminutive blue-flowered specialties that do require a hands-and-knees approach to fully appreciate their differences and the colour intensity of their tiny flowers, being just 2–4mm wide. Once acquainted, we were able to spot hundreds of Fingered and Breckland Speedwells, with far lesser numbers of the typically later-flowering Spring Speedwell, of which we were fortunate to find a few plants in full bloom.

The walk along the field margin was accompanied by Skylarks in full song,

Rare Spring-sedge

Spring-sedge





Breckland Speedwell - left
Spring Speedwell - centre
Fingered Speedwell - right

a couple of Brown Hares in the rising crop and an obliging Woodlark, as well as Brimstone and Peacock butterflies.

Within the field and in the heathland edge to the field were a number of members of the Pink family – Sand Catchfly *Silene conica*, Corn Spurrey *Spergula arvensis*, Little Mouse-ear *Cerastium semidecandrum* and Field Mouse-ear *C. arvense*. Also of note were Rue-leaved Saxifrage *Saxifraga tridactylites*, Star-of-Bethlehem *Ornithogalum umbellatum*, Shepherd's Cress *Teesdalia nudicaulis*, Thale Cress *Arabidopsis thaliana*, Large Thyme *Thymus pulegioides*, plus white and pink forms of Common Stork's-bill *Erodium cicutarium*. One Annual Knawel *Scleranthus annuus* plant was sufficiently developed to be able to see the acute sepals with a thin pale margin (the main separating features between this and Perennial Knawel *S. perennis*).

For grass-lovers, flowering Early Hair-grass *Aira praecox*, Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and Hard Fescue *Festuca brevipila* were the highlights.

More than sated with the arable field we then made our way to a couple of James's flags at the edge of the heathland. A handful of us 'over-excited-and-over-fifties' had spotted these earlier and headed towards them but, like errant schoolboys on a field trip, at that time we were rightly brought back on track by Stephen. The flags indicated where both Spring-sedge *Carex caryophyllea* and Rare Spring-sedge *C. ericetorum* could be found and their proximity allowed for a full appreciation of the differences – the female glumes of Spring-sedge being acute and brown with a green midrib, those of Rare Spring-sedge being dark purple-brown with a pale border; making this species look much darker in the field.

After this unashamedly esoteric experience we made our way back to the Reserve Centre for lunch.

After lunch we drove a few miles to Santon Downham to a site about 500m north of the Suffolk border with a primary goal of locating Perennial Knawel. This took a while as the plant has been in decline here and, despite scrutiny of the sandy heathland soil

by so many pairs of eyes, only two Knawel plants were found. Both being somewhat depauperate specimens it was not possible to identify them to species, though it was in the 'traditional' area for Perennial Knawel – perhaps suggesting that the species' continuing presence here is under serious threat.

Undeterred, most of the group decided to explore another area, with Stephen pointing out the seedheads of last year's Smith's Pepperwort *Lepidium heterophyllum* and Tower Mustard *Arabis glabra*. A final

(unsuccessful) search for signs of Yellow Bird's-nest *Monotropa hypopitys* was punctuated with a few Orange-tips, Green-veined Whites and Holly Blues flying around and a nice colony of Lily-of-the-valley *Convallaria majalis*, of which none were flowering, though a handful were close to budding.

The walk back to the car park in beautiful weather gave ample time to reflect on what had been a thoroughly enjoyable day.

ROB STILL

BUCKLAND HILLS, SURREY 23rd APRIL

Fourteen people left the carpark admiring the carpets of Ground Ivy *Glechoma hederacea* along the way. Everyone was eager to see the Koch's (Trumpet) Gentians *Gentiana acaulis* as promised. These were first recorded in the 1960's and were obviously planted. Over the years however they have spread by stolons and maintained themselves happily on this south-facing slope of the North Downs and now are found at three sites.

The first part of the walk was along a busy road. A pleasant surprise in the hedgerow was several plants of Lords-and-Ladies *Arum maculatum* all with yellow spadices var. *laterelii*. Another surprise was an unusual anemone by a gate. It had scarlet tepals with a white centre. This was later identified as Peacock Anemone *Anemone pavonina* var. *ocellata*.

Entering a wooded area we were greeted by Sanicle *Sanicula europea*, a delicate and attractive umbel. Present in quantity was Stinking Iris *Iris foetidissima*, whose leaves smell of roast beef when crushed.

How nice it was to see the trees sprouting into leaf after the long winter. Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* was now flowering as we headed towards the escarpment of the North Downs. We were relieved after a long uphill climb to reach the first site for the Trumpet Gentians. Gasps of amazement and delight reverberated around followed by clicks of cameras! (See photo on back cover by Stephen Clarkson.) Ken Southall was in his element with his "state of the art" camera & tripod.

Also present here was the Chalk Milkwort *Polygala calcarea* equally

bright blue in colour and having a false rosette at the base.

The path levelled out as we approached the next site, many of us desperate to eat due to an early morning start. How perfect it was to see more patches of Gentians in full flower while eating our sandwiches. How these plants reached here so far away from the original site nobody knows. Did they disperse by seed, or were they transferred by somebody? We've put Miss Marple on the case to investigate!

While the rest of the group were eating Steve Clarkson and I investigated a metre long patch of violets. The "jizz" looked different, much larger in size and the spur only slightly notched. Using the BSBI Viola Handbook we concluded this was *Viola x bavarica* i.e. Common Dog-violet *V. riviniana* x Early Dog-violet *V. reichenbachiana* later confirmed by Steve who took some home to check properly. This was my favourite plant of the day.

After lunch we explored the surrounding turf to find more calcicoles i.e. chalk-loving plants. The tiny Fairy Flax *Linum catharticum* was soon found along with Common Milkwort *Polygala vulgaris*, Glaucous Sedge *Carex flacca*, Wayfaring-tree *Viburnum lantana* in full bloom plus Whitebeam *Sorbus aria* coming into leaf.

We now returned the same way not expecting to find any new plants. We were wrong, soon Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina* was spotted, followed by Mistletoe *Viscum album* high up in

a tree. The best surprise was at the end. A member who lived nearby located a Surrey speciality, the Green Hound's-tongue *Cynoglossum germanicum* locally common on the North Downs. It wasn't in flower but keyed out using Poland's *Vegetative Key to the British Flora*. What a perfect end to the day.

Very tired after a six mile walk (three miles each way) we made our way back to the cars leaving Sue Grayston and Steve still trying to identify a Dandelion *Taraxacum* spp. they collected on route. They were probably still there after dark!



Common Dog-violet

Overheard comments were; "To see those Trumpet Gentians at perfection in the sunshine was superb." "It's been a wonderful walk."

GARETH BURSNALL

MINERA QUARRY

2Nd JULY

Overnight rain cleared to a lovely bright and breezy day with perfect temperatures. A small, but enthusiastic group enjoyed a long morning walk around this former Carboniferous Limestone quarry.

The orchids did not disappoint; as promised, ten species were in bud, flower or fruit. Not surprisingly, there were also many putative hybrids present with so many of the promiscuous *Dactylorhiza* genus occurring here. Favourite orchid species amongst the group were the Frog Orchid *Coeloglossum viride*, variously coloured from green to bronze and the widespread Marsh Fragrant-orchid *Gymnadenia densiflora*, with its pink-purple flowers and sweet scent. We were very pleased to have Ethan Watts with us, who had done a dissertation on this species at Minera and was able to point out photogenic clumps and where the earliest flowering specimens occurred as well as explaining the characteristics of our three British *Gymnadenia* species.

Another hybrid, Purple Toadflax x Pale Toadflax *Linaria x dominii* was admired growing in very bare gravel.

Sharp eyes spotted the single flower on Round-leaved Wintergreen *Pyrola rotundifolia* ssp. *maritima* and plenty of leaves. It wasn't looking too hopeful at first for the saprophytic Yellow Bird's-nest *Hypopitys monotropa*, apart from old seed heads, but again a lady who

remembered losing her specs found it in a birch clearing, with a beautiful ground layer of Stripe Moss *Eurynchium striatum* in dappled light.

Butterflies included Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary *Boloria selene* and Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*. One highlight spotted by Gill Jakeman was the attractive Bilberry Bumble Bee *Bombus monticola*, with tail and over half the abdomen coloured orange-red and a yellow collar. A localised and declining species, the males and workers travel from the adjacent moorland onto this limestone site to feed on Wild Thyme *Thymus drucei*, Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* and other plants.

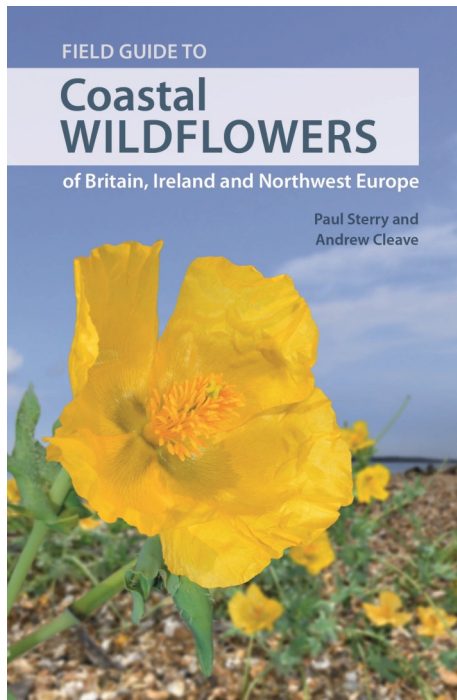
Many thanks to Barbara Allen for passing on up to date information; this was a great help when I stepped in as leader after she caught COVID19.

Sue from Montgomeryshire Field Society was welcomed as a guest. In the tradition of old established field societies, home-made refreshments were shared. Damson and lemon sponge and elderflower cordial went down well. Sue Southam was regaled with tales of outings by this friendly group and we may have recruited a new member.

RUTH DAWES

BOOK REVIEW

Sterry, Paul & Cleave, Andrew. *Coastal Wildflowers of Britain, Ireland and Northwest Europe*. Princeton (2022). ISBN978-0-691-21815-1; Ebook ISBN 978-0-691-23845-6



This is a delightfully produced book and has been written with real passion for the subject. The authors call it a 'celebration' of coastal flowers and of some of the more inland species which are able to thrive in sub-maritime conditions. For instance the Sea Lavenders (the *Limonium* micro-species which give some of us such headaches) are given enlightening attention including a distribution map of the rarities, while a facing page has Common Mallow *Malva sylvestris* which is utterly

familiar from farmyards and waste ground. This juxtaposition actually gave me a memory jolt as an excellent cultivar of the species 'Primley Blue' was first found on a Devon beach!

Each plant has an excellent photograph and brief entries under 'Height; Ecology & Natural History; Habitat; Flowers (size, colour etc); Fruits; Leaves. There is often a close-up detail photo as well. Finally there's a thumbnail map for Britain and Ireland, with a note on the NW European status. The maps can't be precisely interpreted at such small scale, but they give the general idea. I'm sure we've all suffered from struggling through keys to identify something found near home, only to find the 'identified' plant only grows on one Shetland island or Welsh mountain! These entries give an excellent and often beautiful impression of the plant, and I'm very taken with the Ecology element as associated insects are often mentioned. The introduction gives Habitat Overviews for Sandy beaches and dunes, Shingle, Estuaries and saltmarshes, Cliffs, Machair, Maritime Heath and Manmade areas, and these include fascinating details about the creatures which depend on such sites. This information supports the wish of the authors to *enthuse* visitors to the coast, and attract them to plants as an essential part of their

holiday experience. Some seaweeds are included, some fungi, some lichens and even 3 mosses, all very well photographed and certainly giving the idea of the riches of seaside habitats if one starts to really look around.

This is however where I run into a personal 'But...' The professed twofold aim of the book is to 'help casual visitors to identify flowers' and to 'provide an opportunity for seasoned botanists to hone their skills', and at times I feel that such a wide customer base has not quite combined with the authors' very lively enthusiasms to give a logical layout. The order of the entries seems erratic – they are not sorted by colour like many modern beginner's guides. Things are loosely grouped in family order, which is hardly going to look familiar to a casual visitor, but unless someone knows enough to consult the (perfectly good) index, I can't quite see how to find the species without flipping through the entire book. I feel very mean making a point of this, but there is such an obvious hope that this book will reach holidaymakers who *don't* know their plants that I felt a little worried about how they were going to hit on the right page.

Possibly this could be a blessing in disguise – going through much of the book again and again would certainly imprint strongly the images of many lovely flowers, and so could be a learning process in itself. There are also some very pleasant clues available – inside the front and back covers there are thumbnail pics so for instance one can catch 'Sea-spurreys pp83-85' or 'Scurvygrasses

pp116/117' or Centauries, Spurges, Stork's-bills... It's only if a genus or species doesn't have one of these signposts that it would be hard to tell where to look.

A botanist friend says he can imagine the book 'on the shelves of coastal AirBnBs and guest houses and Youth Hostel Libraries' and compares it to a 'gloriously up-market' version of the I-Spy books which inspired many a natural history expert-to-be. It is a really nice book to own, and it will become one of my 'always in the car' books (with Francis Rose and Harrap) to be used at times when I have a holiday from Stace and would love to read a bit about rare ants or the moths of clifftops. I hope it will become really popular – it deserves to become much loved. Ignore 'confused.com' and just carry it every time you go to the coast!

RO FITZGERALD

The RRP is £19.99 but you should find the book listed by NHBS at £13.99 and probably many members will already use this bookshop. The publishers have offered a discount of 30% off *Coastal Wildflowers* from their website (<https://press.princeton.edu>) using the code WFM22 and this will be good until 30th November. They have kindly extended the promo code across all their nature titles which will hopefully come in handy in the lead up to Christmas.