

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I do hope that all of our members are keeping well and isolated enough to avoid the virus. I continue to keep quite isolated and have been out and about very little during this strange year. The wild flowers that I see most of continue to be the weeds in my garden, but I have seen a few wild flowers in the field, particularly the beach flora along the Dorset coast. The excitement near to here is the appearance of Heath Lobelia *Lobelia urens* in an area in East Devon where it was first recorded. This rare and red listed plant occurs erratically, mainly when areas are disturbed, but it is good to know that it is still hidden in the soil seed bank around Axminster. I have also been enjoying browsing the excellent new *Flora of Cornwall* by Colin French. This Flora has good distribution maps of all species, many photographs and interesting data about the history of many species. I note that *Lobelia urens* also occurs, or has occurred, in two locations in Cornwall near to Lostwithiel. We are most fortunate in



Photo: Peter Llewellyn

the Southwest to have good and most useable Floras of Devon, Dorset and now Cornwall. I know that I will be using the *Flora of Cornwall* as much as I do the *Flora of Dorset*. We are lucky in the UK to have so many good regional Floras to enable our search for, and identification of, wild flowers.

GHILLEAN PRANCE

EDITORIAL

To say this has been an unusual year is somewhat of an understatement but I hope everyone has managed to stay safe and use their time productively during these unprecedented times. My thanks go to those who have written their botanical reminiscences of the lockdown or of times past and to Gareth Bursnell for his wonderful poem. The lockdown has obviously stimulated your literary flair.

The theme for this magazine is saltmarshes with the final field report for 2019 on the Oare marshes trip and a superb Glassworts *Salicornia* ID sheet produced by Liam Rooney, one of the leaders on that trip. As this is the peak time for flowering in the *Salicornia* species, why not detach the ID sheet, laminate it and try it out in the field?

Den and I have spent some time this summer walking parts of the coastline of Suffolk and Essex. Whilst, the saltmarshes of Suffolk have, sadly, largely been denuded, those around the estuaries of Essex are extensive and provide a superb example of the habitat. Some of the Glassworts we have seen on these marshes are at least 20cm tall and would grace many a London market stall as Samphire. Fortunately the marshes are so remote that they are little visited or disturbed and the resource has not been plundered. On one of these walks we encountered a beautiful stand of Hog's Fennel *Peucedanum officinale*, in its autumnal colours. This plant is being encouraged to spread as it is the sole food plant for an endangered moth, Fisher's Estuarine Moth. I always marvel at

how evolution results in one species being so dependent on just one other single host species.

I hope the reading of the accounts of last year's Autumn Hunts will spur you into recording for this year's hunt in the last week of October. This should be an easy way to socially-distance and get out into the field to enjoy the last of our summer flowers. Please note that the One Day and One Week hunts have now been amalgamated into one but can you state how many days over the week you were out in the field looking for plants in flower. Heather Colls (heather.colls@btinternet.com) has kindly agreed to co-ordinate the Hunt and her details are in the 2020 Year Book.

ANNE KELL



Autumnal colours of
Hog's Fennel

NOTICES

Winter months collaboration with the BSBI

Over the winter months we will be teaming up with the BSBI to encourage greater involvement in each other's winter activities. To support the BSBI's very successful New Year Plant Hunt we would like to contribute walks and recording teams to represent the society and very much hope this is something that you will consider supporting. More details will follow via the e-mail alerts service and through branch secretaries, as they are confirmed.

IN PRAISE OF COMMON PLANTS

With what relief do we all start a cumulative diary, knowing we haven't got to list all the common plants again every year. But that is very ungrateful when those ordinary plants provide for so many of our needs.

A number of the plants we deride, such as Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris* (formerly *Senecio vulgaris*) and Thistle *Cirsium* spp., are essential to pollinators. Without the large range of insects they support many of the food plants we take for granted will no longer produce the quantities we need to feed ourselves. Even the dreaded Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum* provides shelter in bad weather for diverse wildlife. Even Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, despite its reputation, does sustain a number of creatures and can be a lifeline to them where landscapes are given over to agribusiness. All these plants contribute to the food chain on which we depend.

Take Brambles *Rubus* spp., a common, but difficult, group. In autumn the hedgerows are alive with foragers, happy to fill their freezers

with juicy blackberries to feed them through the winter and never mind the species!

It's not just the Amazon rainforest that might yield medicinal plants. Willows *Salix* spp. gave us aspirin and Foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*, digoxin. What secrets may other common plants hold to improve our health?

We can feast our minds as well as our bodies on our familiar plants. Forget Van Gogh's sunflowers and Monet's waterlilies. Enjoy the star-like Daisies *Bellis perennis* twinkling on the lawn; a meadow transformed to a field of cloth of gold by a vast sweep of Dandelions *Taraxacum* spp; billowing clouds of blossom from Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, a harbinger of summer.

Why not make Nettle soup and Chickweed salad? Take some Feverfew for that headache? Let's bring common plants back into our lives and celebrate them!

MARY AND CLAIRE SMITH

TEESDALE SPECIAL FLORA RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION TRUST

Wild, remote and beautiful, Upper Teesdale is a very special place. Walking the Pennine Way, many will have passed through this area, heard the haunting cry of the golden plover, watched the curlews soaring overhead and reflected upon the history of this ancient landscape. However, Upper Teesdale has a less well-known story to tell in the wild flowers which grow there; a unique combination of plant species known as the Teesdale Assemblage. This ancient flora is older than Stonehenge and is regarded as one of the top five 'botanical hotspots' in Britain and Ireland.

Walking along the Birkdale Track by the side of Cow Green Reservoir in Spring you would readily appreciate why Upper Teesdale is described as unique. The combination of wild flowers, grasses and sedges which grow on Widdybank Fell and the surrounding areas can be found nowhere else. The tiny blue gentians growing in the short turf on the limestone grassland are possibly the most well-known of the rare plants but, actually, there are 100 plant species of conservation interest. Three of the species, including Spring Gentian *Gentiana verna* are only found here in Upper Teesdale. A further four, including Alpine Forget-me-not *Myosotis alpestris* and Scottish Asphodel *Tofieldia pusilla* grow in Scotland but can be found nowhere else in England. The plants mentioned so far are northern species and Upper Teesdale is the southern edge of their range. Perhaps even more remarkable are

the four southern species found here including the brilliant, blue flowered Dwarf Milk-wort *Polygala amarella* and Hoary Rockrose *Helianthemum oelandicum* with its yellow, deflexed petals and exposed anthers. Uniquely, Teesdale is a frontier zone where rare southern and northern species are found growing together and an ideal place for observation of the effects of a changing climate.

Today, it is generally agreed that the majority of this special Teesdale Assemblage of plants have survived here continuously since early post-glacial times, around 10-12,000 years ago. Many of these plants would have been widespread in the early post-glacial landscape, but such a unique combination of plants has not persisted anywhere else in Britain.

Teesdale's unique sugar limestone habitats, where eroding sugar limestone appears at the surface, supports open vegetation suitable for several of the special species. Other habitats in the Dale that support populations of the special plants include limestone and Whin Sill cliffs, land above the tree line and sparsely vegetated habitats along the bank of the River Tees.

Dr Margaret Bradshaw has studied the special flora in Upper Teesdale since the 1950s. Margaret is nationally renowned for her botanical and conservation work in Upper Teesdale. She was a member of the Teesdale Defence Committee that opposed the construction of the Cow Green Reservoir because of the

damage it would cause to the rare plant populations. She was awarded an MBE for Services to Conservation in 1977. Now 94, she continues to work, endlessly studying and raising awareness of the special plants here and enthusing others to carry on with the work she has started.

Margaret's long-term plant monitoring studies on Widdybank and Cronkley Fells have demonstrated worrying declines in several of the rare species, especially in recent decades. Three years ago, frustrated at Natural England's lack of funds (its core grant has halved since 2010) and the consequent low focus and action on the conservation of the rare species of the Dale, she created the Teesdale Special Flora Research and Conservation Trust.

The two main aims of the project are to map the distributions of approximately 100 rare species in detail and to make recommendations to Natural England where any conservation action is needed. Also, it is hoped that the project will encourage more interest in the Teesdale flora leading to a 'Champions of the Teesdale Special Flora' group that could continue the work in the longer-term.

The project area includes the whole of Teesdale west of the Balder and Eggleston Burn. Our main survey method involves systematically recording pre-defined sites known to support significant populations of special plants. We carefully search each 10m x 10m square in the site and list all of the special plants in each square. The rarest species are recorded in each 1m x 1m square in



which we find them in. This is slow, labour-intensive work requiring excellent plant identification skills and an ability to concentrate on a repetitive task for long periods.

So far, we have surveyed over 6,000 10m x 10m squares and made over 12,000 botanical records. In the first three years we have concentrated much of our survey effort on Widdybank Fell. We have completed the survey in 24 of 41 species-rich sites on the Fell and made additional records from over 80 other sites in Teesdale.

We work closely with Natural England, letting them know where more active conservation measures are needed when we find populations of special plants that are struggling or vulnerable.

Photo: Lizzie Maddison

Until 2016 the number of botanical records of the rare species in the BSBI database or held by Natural England was surprisingly small. Also, most of the records were not precise enough to be useful for conservation, giving only a rough idea of where the species occurred.

In our first three years we have substantially increased the number of records for many of the rare species. For instance, we have increased the number of records of False Sedge *Carex* (formerly *Kobresia*) *simpliciuscula* from 200 prior to the survey to 2,419. The equivalent numbers for Alpine Rush *Juncus alpinoarticulatus* were 46 before our survey and 1,000 records now. We can now map the extent of populations much more thoroughly and accurately than has been done before. We also have a clear record of which areas have been surveyed and which have not.

An unexpected highlight of the survey was finding a new species for the area in 2019. This was Ostenfeld's Eyebright *Euphrasia ostenfeldii*, which we found in short limestone grassland above 700m on both Little Fell and Mickle Fell. This is a Nationally Scarce species which had not previously been confirmed from anywhere in the Pennines.

In the 1970s Margaret and a group of volunteers mapped the populations of over 20 of the special plants in detail on Widdybank Fell. By comparing those maps with the results of our recent work we can quantify the change in population. Sadly, the extents of many of the special plants have contracted in the sugar

limestone habitats including Spring Gentian *Gentiana verna*, Hoary Whitlowgrass *Draba incana*, Alpine Bistort *Bistorta vivipara* (formerly *Polygonum viviparum*), Northern Bedstraw *Galium boreale*, False Sedge and Teesdale Sandwort *Sabulina* (formerly *Minuartia*) *stricta*. The initial findings emphasise how vital on-going survey work is to discover what is happening to the special flora in all parts of Upper Teesdale.

The initial phase of the project began in April 2017. So far, the project has been entirely privately funded by Margaret, but this funding is now exhausted. This phase has demonstrated the need for establishing more detailed baseline information on species distribution and population sizes, so that we can monitor how they change in the future.

The next phase is planned to extend coverage over a wider geographical area within Upper Teesdale and to focus on other scarce/rare species. We aim to survey a further 12,500 10m x 10m squares in the most important areas. We estimate that it will take another five years of similar survey effort to complete this. We require a professional botanist to work for 120 days per year to complete the scheduled tasks. Around £25,000, is needed each year from 2020 to 2024; a total of £125,000. This works out at about £10 per square surveyed and will support field work, data entry and analysis and dissemination of results.

Very importantly, it will also support the training of volunteers to become

Champions of the rare species in Upper Teesdale. Margaret's knowledge of the area is unsurpassed and she is very keen to share this with others enabling us to carry on her important work in monitoring and protecting this botanically significant area.

Rare plants such as Bird's-eye Primrose *Primula farinosa*, Spring Gentian *Gentiana verna*, Dwarf Milkwort *Polygala amarella*, Rare Spring-sedge *Carex ericetorum* and Teesdale Violet *Viola rupestris*, have been surveyed annually by Margaret since the 1970's, more recently supported by a small number of volunteers. These permanent sites provide a significant long term record of the population size of individual species.

Last year several sites were established to monitor another ten of the rare species. Volunteer Champions have been trained. Each Champion will monitor a single species such as Scottish Asphodel *Tofieldia pusilla* or False Sedge. These volunteers are now in a position to go out into the field this year and record their designated species. Opportunities for further training may be possible in future years.

The WFS has generously provided a grant of £5000 to fund survey work over the five years of the project. Beginning in this current season, we will survey an interesting area adjacent to Slapstone Sike. The habitats here are varied, holding many of the rare plants and include limestone grassland, Calaminarian

sites from the lead mines and fragile boggy areas in the wetter parts. Around the edges of the Slapstone Sike there is a mixture of interesting sedges and rushes including False Sedge, Dioecious Sedge *C. dioica* and Alpine Rush *Juncus alpinoarticulatus*. Finally, two of Margaret's permanent sites are in this area where *Primula farinosa*, *Gentiana verna* and *Viola rupestris* have been monitored since 1969. Annual reports will provide the WFS with progress of the work.

Much of this area can be seen from the Birkdale Track and many of the rare species are within a few metres. We had hoped to have field visits to the site this year to demonstrate the work being carried out. Due to the current situation this has had to be postponed but we hope to be in a position to offer the same opportunities next year.

We are keen to ensure that Margaret's legacy is secure so that future generations can appreciate and enjoy the unique combination of species found only in Upper Teesdale. The Wild Flower Society, in supporting this project, has made a significant contribution towards that aim.

Donations can be made online through Just Giving at <https://www.justgiving.com/teesdalespecialflora> or by contacting the Trust's Treasurer at geoffherb@btinternet.com

LIZZIE MADDISON

A WALK IN ISOLATION

On 24th March 2020, the United Kingdom went into lockdown as a result of the Covid19 pandemic. Various 'rules' on what one was permitted to do were announced by the Government including the allowance of one form of exercise a day, 'For example a run, walk or cycle ride' - this to be taken alone. At that time I had been ill with what appeared to be Covid19 for ten days. Two weeks was the time announced people should self-isolate if ill so on the fifteenth day I decided gentle exercise was needed.

I planned out a suitable walk for myself which would take me along a nearby bridleway, up a slight slope on a small footpath and back home along a residential street. This walk was just over a mile long and easy walking, so would be ideal. There was also a bench halfway round which I could make use of if needed. I was aware however that stopping or resting was not part of the deal allowed when exercising. My secret weapon to counter this should I need to stop was a friend's cast off i-phone, which I carried to photograph anything that appealed to me.

I had walked the route when participating in the Winter Months and Spring Hunts so knew there would be plants for me to look at whilst walking. Some, like Winter Heliotrope *Petasites pyrenaicus* (formerly *P. fragrans*) had gone over but the leaves were attractive to see with Green Alkanet *Pentaglottis sempervirens* flowers peeping through. Further along the bridleway seed heads of Stinking Iris *Iris*

foetidissima glowed in the sometimes murky daylight. The Eastern Sowbread *Cyclamen coum* I had recorded previously for the hunts still looked magnificent and the photograph I took became the home page on my i-phone. At the end of the bridleway a large patch of Primroses *Primula vulgaris* was the signal to me to turn left and up the hill. At the top Colt's-foot *Tussilago farfara* was a



Green Alkanet

good opportunity for a rest and photo stop. The walk back home was equally interesting to me with a wide grass verge one side of the road and a small area of grassland to inspect. Aubretia *Aubrieta deltoidea* had established itself in one place on the verge and the grassland was full of Common Field-speedwell *Veronica persica*. Nearer home was an area with a wire enclosure. This I knew

Photo: Pippa Hyde

would be worth visiting again.

The initial three weeks of lockdown was extended, then extended again. I carried on walking and found I did not need nearly so many rests but did want to carry on taking photographs. I had created an album of my pictures on Facebook which my friends on there appeared to like. As the lockdown progressed many more plants were found. The bridleway had some houses to one side so some of the plants I saw were obviously garden throw-outs. Others such as the Lungwort *Pulmonaria officinalis* I saw were well established and spreading. This I found poking through a patch of White Comfrey *Symphytum orientale*. One garden had ex-battery hens that had been rescued in two large coops. Their clucking was a comforting sound and I stopped every day to see how they were. The grass verge further along the walk became a mass of Cowslips *Primula veris* and the flowers of Red Clover *Trifolium pratense* were a reminder that plants do not have to be rare to be very attractive.

Along with exercise, trips out for essential shopping were allowed during lockdown, with shortages of some food items to contend with. I dusted off my books on foraging and planned what to harvest if things got tough. There was plenty of Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata* to be found along the bridleway along with Common Nettle *Urtica dioica* and Dandelions *Taraxacum* spp. There were also Blackberries *Rubus* spp. to be harvested later in the year and along the bridleway a few Raspberry *R. idaeus* plants. Herbs such as Wild Marjoram *Origanum vulgare* and Wild

Thyme *Thymus drucei* (formerly *T. polytrichus*) could be useful and the Elder *Sambucus nigra* growing everywhere could be turned into a multitude of delicious things to sustain my thirst.

One of the particular pleasures for me on sunny days was the many different butterflies and other insects to be seen. There were plenty of Orange-tip butterflies laying eggs on the Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata*, which is one of their food plants. Comma, Red Admiral, Peacock, Brimstone and Speckled Wood were also seen although photographing them was a challenge. They did not stay still like the plants, so the results were somewhat blurred at times. Ladybirds and other jewel type beetles were discovered and several species of bee. A squashed Cockchafer or Maybug was found and being viewed with alarm by a small child. I was able to share a photograph of what the bug should have looked like when alive with the child using my i-phone, held at arm's-length, of course, to respect social distancing. The gardens I passed gave me immense pleasure too. Seeing Judas-tree *Cercis siliquastrum* and Foxglove-tree *Pulmonaria tomentosa* in full flower against the blue sky were highlights for me. Seeing which plants thrived in other people's gardens gave me many ideas for future planting in my own small back garden.

A relaxation on the lockdown measures was finally announced in May and I went for yet another walk to celebrate. The sun was shining, Oxeye Daisies *Leucanthemum vulgare* and Columbine *Aquilegia*



Photo: Pippa Hyde

vulgaris were flowering on the grass verge along with Peach-leaved Bellflowers *Campanula persicifolia*. The Green Alkanet I had seen at the start of my series of walks had been a constant companion throughout and was still flowering. During my walks I had seen 106 different species and I knew there were many more to be found. I reached the area with the wire cage. Two Bee Orchids *Ophrys apifera* were self-isolating inside and looking incredibly beautiful. I returned home and poured myself a large glass of homemade Elderflower Champagne to celebrate even further.

PIPPA HYDE

My wife and I are fortunate to live in a village just outside Oxford. In March we bought another house in the village, which needed building work before we could move in. As a result the lockdown left us owning two houses a quarter of a mile apart –

Bee Orchids in isolation

and two gardens to work on. Thus our permitted outside exercise consisted of walking between the two houses on the various footpaths around the village, together with endless amounts of gardening.

Rather than recording a traditional square, I have maintained a list of plants found in our parish, and it is an indication of the amount of footpath walking we did that I added a dozen species to my list in under three months. The most interesting find was in fact not new to my list - In a muddy field corner, trampled where the cattle drink from a stream, there was a fine crop of Mousetail *Myosurus minimus*, many hundreds of plants. I had seen this elsewhere in the parish ten years ago. It is known to appear erratically, but perhaps I had not previously been past this particular spot at the right time of year.

In addition to my daily walks I have been recording plants in the new garden, with a total currently in the low 80s. It is striking how different the flora is from the old garden. Species like Ivy-leaved Speedwell *Veronica hederifolia* which are a problem weed in the old garden, are largely absent from the new one. In contrast, White Bryony *Bryonia dioica* is a pest in the new garden. Normally we do not dig plants up to explore their root structure – it is illegal in general. However, digging up White Bryony in my own garden I have been amazed at the size of some of the tubers, bigger than a prize-winning parsnip. It leaves me wondering what other botanical surprises remain hidden underground!

ROGER HEATH-BROWN

A ROMP IN THE HILLS

Lockdown had arrived! Woe, woe and thrice woe, we are all bidden to stay at home. Fortunately we had a shelf full of WFS back issues to save us from endless gardening and spring cleaning. A chance remark that “My Favourite Walk” had formed an interesting series set me thinking of the time I lived in the Spey Valley and had the whole Highlands as my playground. Scot free so to say! A trip down memory lane seemed indicated and I dug deep for this personal reminiscence from nearly fifty years ago. I doubt much has changed in the interim despite my minor editing.

The weather man was forecasting a cracking day for the morrow before things broke down late evening and the rains would come to settle in for the weekend. It was too good to miss, so I was off for an early start from Cowlumbridge aiming to ascend the western Cairngorms by way of the Lairig Ghru path. Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris* welcomed me with heady scent and a rustle of tree-surf through their upper canopy. At this hour wildlife is still about and a roe buck melted gently into the shade. By contrast, a cock Capercaillie was most grumpy about being disturbed. Crested Tits played in the branches, while early bees buzzed noisily around the heather mounds. Miles went by without seeing a soul and the great hills grew ever closer. Rocks hereabout are prevaillingly of granite, so they are, in consequence, not so rich in alpine flora as the hills further west. Ling *Calluna vulgaris*, Bell Heather *Erica cinerea* and Cross-

leaved Heath *E. tetralix* cover the lower slopes. Joining them are Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* and Cowberry *V. vitis-idaea* an all-providing larder for the local wildlife. Another charming little plant on these lower slopes is Dwarf Cornel *Cornus suecica*. Four yellowish-white bracts, tinged purple attract insects to a large number of small purple flowers with yellow stamens. The fruit is a red berry, named as *Lus a' Chraois* by the old highlanders who must have thought it good for the appetite – it translates as Herb of Gluttony.

The northern coires of Braeriach gave me a warming and a welcome in bright sunshine; surely an invitation to linger in their recesses. Coire an Lochain holds a moderately large body of water considering it is 3250' above the distant sea. It is normally frozen over by late November and stays so until April. Braeriach though makes its own rules. On the shortest day last winter, the water lapped from shore to shore. Two years ago, on the longest day, there was such a depth of snow that one would never know a lochan existed here despite being 1000' below the summit. One might seek saxifrages in its recesses, but these are not common in the Cairngorms. Starry Saxifrage *Micranthes* (formerly *Saxifraga*) *stellaris* is probably the most regular, although the very rare Highland Saxifrage *Saxifraga rivularis* can be sought by those with a good head for heights, climbing into the upper reaches of rocky coires. Crowberry *Empetrum nigrum* begins to appear

hereabouts. Very hardy, it is surely the most alpine of berries; the leaves are small, dark in colour and capable of withstanding prolonged drought. The flowers are scarcely noticeable, but the fruit is about as big as the Bearberry *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*, black in colour and very sour. Its shoots are the main diet for the Ptarmigan in winter. The Bearberry also starts creeping up the slopes, hugging the ground against the gales that sweep the high ground. Fruit matures late on this plant and is frequently buried under an early snowfall. Bog Bilberry *Vaccinium uliginosum* is dotted here and there among its more common cousin. It can be distinguished by stout, woody stems and glaucous leaves. The Cloudberry *Rubus chamaemorus* is near its vertical limit and grows on peaty ground. The fruit is red, but ripens to yellow on maturity and very tasty it is too.

Creeping plants become more frequent the higher one goes. The tiny Sibbaldia *Sibbaldia procumbens* can be difficult to see unless showing its yellow blossoms later on in the year. I tend to look for it if I find Alpine Lady's-mantle *Alchemilla alpina* close by an old snow bed.

Ascending to the summit plateau, I met with two of the range's more striking plants. Trailing Azalea *Kalmia procumbens* prefers the more exposed ridges to show off delicate pink or rosy blossoms. Moss Campion *Silene acaulis* cushions abound on the plateau and make a dominant display some years.

Strolling on the broad plateau was a real delight in the bright sunlight; it

seemed that all of Scotland was on display. The Wells of Dee drew me across - it is a place I seem to be drawn to naturally in all seasons and all weathers. I recall blinding snowstorms, days of pouring rain, one night of iron hard frost with the Aurora lighting the way; by contrast a day of soft mist, so still and silent, another day of brilliant sunshine with just the high tops and Ben Nevis on the horizon showing above the rest of Scotland cut off at 4000' by a fog inversion that lasted all day. The Wells bubble up from the plateau gravels, the highest source of any river in the country. The infant Dee makes its way to the edge of the grand Garbh Coire and cascades on the start of its seaward journey. Here were a trio of summit stoics Dwarf Cudweed *Omalotheca supina* (formerly *Gnaphalium supinum*), Least Willow *Salix herbacea* and Three-leaved Rush *Juncus trifidus*. These can always be found at the highest levels, but I had rimmed around almost to Cairn Toul before coming across Curved Wood-rush *Luzula arcuata* in a small hollow.

Cairn Toul seemed the ideal spot to relax and fill in on the open country all around. Deeside and Feshie glowed in the afternoon sunshine. Laggan and Spean extended towards the Ben, which was beginning to cloud over as the promised rain drew nigh. From my hill the land sloped steeply down to An Moine Mhor (The Great Moss). Much wildlife was on show; a large herd of Red Deer grazed in the middle distance. Ptarmigan scratched around the snow patches. Lovely little birds, they used to form part of a shooting catch. I have not heard of anyone

bothering them in recent years and, with National Park status installed, these high tops are rarely shot over nowadays. One regularly sees Dotterel over the snow beds towards the hills above Loch Eanaich, while today, a pair of Snow Buntings played within a few yards of my seat. Relaxed, at ease and not in the least tired I let contentment reign.

Gradually the great silence of the hill claimed me. It is difficult to describe how still the mind and body can become. One's internal dialogue turns off, awareness and calmness grow exponentially. If one can fully enter into this unitive harmony it is a wonderful experience. Eventually time re-asserts itself, however, and one is ready to move on. A romp around the tops led into evening and, as the cairn above Coire Brochain was reached, so the first spots of rain

urged me to lower ground. By the time the Lairig path was reached darkness and damp became my lot and there was a fair hike to come. The tree surf of the morning was now replaced as a torrent of darkness urging me onwards and homewards.

Ah well, time for tea, no more mountain memories today. I frequently used to be asked the question, "Why do such things?" All I could offer in reply was to urge them to try it out for a bit. If the query still needed an answer, then there was and will remain none. For the lucky ones who see it all - Let your heart keep true to the peaks above. Let your feet be sure on the hills you love. May the summer mists and the winter storms never hide your path to the high Cairngorms.

BILL HAWKINS

Ode to an Ancient Botanist

As I lay in my bed with my bones all a-creak,
I remember the flowers that I used to seek.
The views from the mountains of Scotland and Wales,
The dales and the valleys, the calm and the gales.
The joys of the Geum, the Gentians and Stocks,
In gullies and crevices amongst all the rocks.
The stately Wild Carrot down near the sea
And even that alien, the Everlasting Pea.
The wonderful orchids seen on the downs,
Plus weeds rather scraggy in pavements and towns.
The harebells and heathers, the lilies and grasses,
Adorning the hedgerows, the fields and the passes.
The scent of wild roses, the reek of the onion,
As I hobble along with my stick and a bunion.
But the best sight of all I will never forget
A Lady's-slipper orchid all glistening and wet.

GARETH BURSNALL

BRANCH REPORTS FOR 2019 PARNASSUS 1

| | New | Total |
|------------------|-----|-------|
| Gareth Bursnall | 73 | 2541 |
| Rodney Burton | 23 | 2527 |
| Marion Chappell | 20 | 2969 |
| Julie Clarke | 16 | 4180 |
| Stephen Clarkson | 133 | 2969 |
| Heather Colls | 28 | 2622 |
| Judith Cox | 65 | 2720 |
| Paul Harmes | 28 | 2663 |
| Carol Hawkins | 8 | 3257 |
| John Hawksford | 5 | 3006 |
| Graeme Kay | 10 | 3040 |
| Alan Leslie | 142 | 3096 |
| Ron Parker | 34 | 2900 |
| Chris Pogson | 0 | 3346 |
| Ted Pratt | 85 | 3087 |
| Jesse Tregale | 58 | 3609 |

I need to begin with a few words about cultivars, because there is evidently misunderstanding about them in some parts of Parnassus. Cultivars are plants which differ in some way from a botanically described taxon which makes them more useful, garden-worthy or interesting. They can be propagated by dividing the plants in various ways, so what you might be able to count could be a division which has somehow got separated from a plant in cultivation. They can also be propagated by seed, but in that case, the new plants created must have the distinctive character of the parent, which may require breeding through several generations to create a pure line. It is possible for a cultivar to have multiple origins, so if you find a plant which matches a cultivar far from any obvious source it is OK to use the cultivar name for it; Judith's

Ficaria verna 'Brazen Hussy' is a good example. The problem from the WFS point of view is usually identifying them, though some, such as *Geranium phaeum* 'Album', obviously a white-flowered (not Dusky) Crane's-bill, may reasonably be identified from their name alone. A few, such as *Pulmonaria* 'Mawson's Blue', occur so commonly that they are described by Stace. For the rest you will have to use horticultural sources. Plants coming up from garden rubbish dumped on roadsides are likely to be very widely available ones and these are the ones in books, including the *RHS Dictionary*, though even that lists only a small proportion of cultivars. The *RHS Plant Finder* comes out annually and lists all available cultivars and where you can buy the less common ones, but it has no illustrations or descriptions. The RHS website has a

'find a plant' section which may give a link to nurserymen's websites where there are likely to be illustrations. The best advice if you find a plant which you cannot identify, but have reason to believe might be a cultivar, is to take photographs, including the whole plant, flowers and other details which look as though they might be significant (e.g. spotted leaves) and work from there.

Winter Heath *Erica carnea*, the hybrid of Lady and Monkey Orchids *Orchis x angusticuris* and the variety of Bee Orchid lacking the red element in its colouring *Ophrys apifera* var. *flavescens*, each seen at a different one-day WFS meeting, were the highlights of Gareth's busy year, but I want to concentrate on flowers he saw later in the year, which relate to those in the lists of others mentioned later in this report. Three days later, after all the programmed business of the AGM, people were taken to a spot of waste ground near Cowley where the following were all in flower: Mexican Aster *Cosmos bipinnatus*, African Daisy *Dimorphotheca sinuata*, Annual Baby's-breath *Gypsophila elegans*, Tidy-tips *Layia chrysanthemoides*, Scarlet Flax *Linum grandiflorum*, Sweet-William Catchfly *Silene armeria* and Zinnia *Zinnia elegans*. The problem was to know how all these attractive garden plants had come to be there in the same place. The evidence (or it might have been the person who took them to the site) suggested that they were the result of council amenity planting. As they had been abandoned but maintained themselves by seed for a couple of years or more (all the species listed are annuals), they can be considered wild. After that Gareth

went to the *Sorbus* identification meeting in late September, which added ten more names to his list, including the hybrid of Bristol and Common Whitebeams *S. x houstoniae*, of which only one bush has ever been found, which can only be reached by rope.

My botanical year, like Gareth's, began in February with a London Natural History Society meeting led by Mark Spencer in Islington, which gave us both several new species. I was most impressed by the plant of Coastal Redwood *Sequoia sempervirens* three or four times the height of the curry-plants surrounding it in a flower-bed. Mark had watched its height gain over several years, but I don't suppose it will be allowed to reach its potential of maybe 50 metres. At Whitstable in May I came by chance across the only known British population of Shore Medick *Medicago littoralis*. I had known that it was there, then forgot. In September, visiting Maidstone as a tourist, I saw a strong plant of Chinese Silver-grass *Miscanthus sinensis*, growing out of a wall close to the river. On a very wet afternoon at the end of that month, Alan Leslie took me on a walk round Cambridge, which was very fruitful. Our finds included Himalayan Musk Rose *Rosa brunonii*.

Only one of the plants in Marion's 2019 list, Kamchatka Stonecrop *Phedimus kamtschaticus* (formerly *Sedum kamtschaticum*), was an independent discovery of hers; it was on a pub car park wall at Penwortham, Preston. The others were mostly with Julie Clarke, but it was only on information from Julie that she found Bastard Agrimony

Aremonia agrimonioides on the Thames path near Kew. She does not say who she was with 'on the way back from Northumberland' when she saw a pink-flowered Perennial Cornflower *Centaurea montana*; she gives this the cultivar name 'Rosea', but that appears to have been superseded by 'Carnea' – cultivar names can change too! Together, Julie and Marion saw a plant of Thorow-wax *Bupleurum rotundifolium* in a hedgerow near a house in the Kendal area where Julie was busy recording for the BSBI's new atlas.

Julie's other finds include both white and pink-flowered plants of Powell's Cape-lily *Crinum x powellii* 'Album' and 'Roseum' respectively, in different places on the south Lancashire coast, but only adds one to her total because she had four years earlier in Jersey seen this hybrid with foliage only; she knows the rules. An unusual and most attractive find was Garden Stork's-bill *Erodium manescavii*, on the edge of the retaining sea wall at Grange-over-Sands, self-seeded from a planting; when I had this in my own garden I found that it can sow itself quite widely and the new plants could often persist. Julie noticed in Stace's pages Kingfisher Daisy *Felicia bergeriana* naturalised on walls near the harbour on the Channel Island of Herm, which she had seen on many visits in years gone by without realising that it was countable.

There are many records from 2018 among Stephen's great total, which eliminate his backlog, but I limit myself to those from 2019. They include records from nine WFS meetings, one of which he led, and

was at the site near Cowley mentioned above from which he listed Blanketflower *Gaillardia x grandiflora*, the only person in Parnassus 1 to do so. He has declined to indicate any favourites for me, so I will report on four of the plants I would most have wanted to see myself, without duplicating any which have already appeared in this magazine in the context of meeting reports. They are the very rare subspecies *repens* of Lesser Waterplantain *Baldellia ranunculoides* seen on Dowrog Common, Pembrokeshire in June, Fringed Loosestrife *Lysimachia ciliata* by the Loch of the Lowes in Perth, Rannoch-rush *Scheuchzeria palustris* near Rannoch Station, these two both in July, and Prairie Cord-grass *Spartina pectinata* at Five Lakes, near Maldon, in Essex in September.

The most worthwhile plant in Heather's list is without doubt Kerry Lily *Simethis mattiazzii*; she gave up the first week of June especially to see it in Co. Kerry (the second week would have been better, with more flowers open). Much nearer home in Monmouth, she found Wisteria *Wisteria floribunda* in a field hedge in an area of small paddocks and, in October, Autumn Oxeye *Leucanthemella serotina* in rough ground at the east end of drainage pools and Turkish Hazel *Corylus colurna* in woodland by the Wye Valley Walk.

Judith's first 2019 record was Lesser Celandine with bronzy petals *Ficaria verna* 'Brazen Hussy' by a lane near Dumfries. She likes to copy rarity statements ('R', 'RR' or 'RRR') from Stace's flora, but the 'RRR' against

Greater Yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus angustifolius* on the meeting in Surrey in July seemed wrong when it is so abundant in 10 hectads there and in Kent. Two days later she was with Gareth and Janice Reynolds visiting sites in East Sussex but they don't all appear to have seen the same plants; *Nemesia* *Nemesia strumosa* was coming up from a pavement crack in Rottingdean. Having myself seen Spiny Cocklebur *Xanthium spinosum* only as a soybean alien (and overseas), I was surprised to see Judith's mention of it as a bird-seed alien at an address in Yarm, thinking that no birds could cope with its hard spiny burs to get to the two seeds enclosed – but Eric Clement has assured me that parrots can, and their food is a special mixture.



Photo: Peter Cox

Twenty-three of Paul's 29 records are the result of a visit to Alan Leslie, a week after my tour with him. Two which I have picked out for a mention are recently arrived aliens, Secret Bitter-Cress (my translation of *Cardamine occulta*) as a weed at the

Skylark Garden Centre near Wimblington, Cambs, and Panicked Willowherb *Epilobium brachycarpum* on railway sidings at Ipswich. While Paul was driving near Little Exeat Farm near South Chailey in Sussex, his eye was caught by a large quantity of Niger *Guizotia abyssinica* scattered along an eighty yard stretch of verge. On closer inspection, a number of other species were observed, of which Purple Clematis *Clematis viticella*, Four-leaved Pink-sorrel *Oxalis tetraphylla* and Annual Phlox *Phlox drummondii* were new to him. The source of this mélange was obscure.

Carol's list is short due to her husband's illness and her mother's death, for which we add our condolences, and most of it comes from near her Wymondham home. 'Surfinia' which grew out of the wall of hairdressers' in the High Street is not a cultivar of *Petunia x hybrida*, it's a registered trade name! Pride-of-India *Koeleruteria paniculata* was spreading very widely over a very large area near an old chapel. A single unhappy Zinnia *Zinnia elegans* was in a patch of roadside weeds on Back Lane. Further from home, Royston station platforms and track ballast has been infested for some time by Annual Toadflax *Linaria maroccana*, and in late March Carol had the opportunity to check it out.

Three of the five plants in John's short list are worth mentioning, all from meetings of the Cheshire Flora Group. There were several plants of Inland Club-rush *Bolboschoenus laticarpus* on the north-east edge of Marbury Big Mere; this species was not recognised as British until ten

years ago, but it is now known as a wild plant from 15 counties. I can't remember seeing a mention of it in this magazine before. *Caltha palustris* ssp. *polypetala* was recorded from the southern edge of the west lake, Queen's Park, Crewe, but the epithet *polypetala*, which belongs to a plant from the mountains south and east of the Black Sea, with more numerous but narrower 'petals' than our usual native Marsh Marigold, has been consistently misapplied in Britain for almost a century. The British plants wrongly given this name are (all?) the var. *barthei* of Stace's 4th edition. On the edges of the east lake in Queen's Park there were very many plants of Northern Yellow-cress *Rorippa islandica*, a new species for Cheshire.

Also in Cheshire was a listing by Graeme of *Ficaria verna* 'Brazen Hussy' in a cemetery at Cheadle. Two excellent May records are Prostrate Toadflax *Linaria supina* on a rough industrial site at Llanelli and the larger-flowered var. *sylvestris* of Field Forget-me-not *Myosotis arvensis* in a dumpy area at Audlem, Cheshire.

I must start this paragraph by thanking Alan profoundly for helping me write the first paragraph of this report. Having had a stint himself reporting on Parnassus and, as a member of the commission responsible for the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants, he is extremely well qualified to do so. 2019 was the year of publication of his *Flora of Cambridgeshire*, a remarkable achievement, and he found time for a systematic search of its contents for

taxa missing from his Parnassus list. There were thirty of them, one of which was a white-flowered Greater Knapweed *Centaurea scabiosa* f. *albiflora* at the edge of Chippenham Fen in 2010. He found this name in the *Illustrierte Flora von Mitteleuropa*, but Judith had found *Centaurea scabiosa* var. *alba* in Druce's *Flora of Oxfordshire*. I prefer the former, i.e. the forma, which I think is the more appropriate rank. For 2019 plants, Alan acknowledges the help of Paul in Sussex, John Norton in Hants and more particularly Ian Green in Scotland, who led him to numerous very rare alpine, especially the hard to reach Purple Coltsfoot *Homogyne alpina*.

Most of Ron's records come from three meetings. He benefited greatly from the WFS meeting at Eastbourne in June, especially as the leader Matthew Berry took him out on his own the previous evening. Species which I don't recall having seen mentioned before are a Daisy-bush *Olearia solandri* and Pink Evening-primrose *Oenothera speciosa*, a perennial which has recently become a popular garden plant.

David Bevan's stroll along the Parkland Walk in July gave him three, one of which was Four-leaved Pink-sorrel *Oxalis tetraphylla*, which is now in favour in gardens as a pretty clover substitute. On a joint London Natural History Society and South London Botanical Institute meeting in September south of Wallington, interesting aliens included Russian Cinquefoil *Potentilla intermedia* and Giant Scabious *Cephalaria gigantea*.

Chris, who now lives in France, told

me that he had not done any 'serious' botany in the UK in 2019, but described his plans for doing some in 2020. Sadly, at the time of writing it seems unlikely that he will be able to carry them out.

The first plant I want to mention from Ted's very interesting list is Cretan Tulip *Tulipa saxatilis* on Bournemouth East Cliff, seen in March. On Sugar Hill in Wareham Forest three different eucalypts were observed to be regenerating, Broad-leaved Kindlingbark *Eucalyptus dalrympleana*, Cider Gum *E. gunnii* and Snow Gum *E. niphophila*. I hope these trees are not going to become a significant crop in English forests; the devastating fires in Australia last year were fuelled by native *Eucalyptus* species, and Portugal, which uses a lot of eucalyptus pulp for its paper industry has a history of devastating fires over more than thirty years. Waste ground in Canford Cliffs village had a good crop of dumped garden plants, of which I can find English names for Rock Isotome *Isotoma axillaris*, Foxglove Beardtongue *Penstemon digitalis* and Black-eyed Susan Vine *Thunbergia alata*. Godlington Manor allotments in Dorset were the home of the small-leaved variety of Small Nettle *Urtica urens* var. *parvifolia*.

To select Jesse's records for this paragraph, I have only to make notes from the very thorough letter covering his list, and then rule out about half of them in order to bring the paragraph down to a reasonable size. There are many which indicate careful indexing beforehand. First comes a carrot cultivar grown from seed, *Daucus carota* 'Dara', with pink petals often

changing to dark purple; this was on the site of a cinema burnt down in 2015 at Shipley. *Tulipa* 'Banja Luka', a Darwin Hybrid tulip with distinctive coloration, was in a rough field by Bolton Road, Bradford. *Polystichum aculeatum* var. *cambricum* is a variety of Hard Shield-fern which is usually left out of books because it is thought to be an immature form of the species not deserving taxonomic recognition, but it is important because it often gets mistaken for Holly Fern *P. lonchitis*. However the plant seen at a Bradford Botany Group meeting by Janet's Foss, a waterfall near Malham, had spores so it could hardly be called immature. The hybrid between Fool's- watercress and Lesser Marshwort *Helosciadium* x *moorei* (formerly *Apium* x *moorei*) was a chance find near the Garavogue River in Co. Sligo while he was waiting for a rendezvous.

RODNEY BURTON



Tulipa
'Banja Luka'

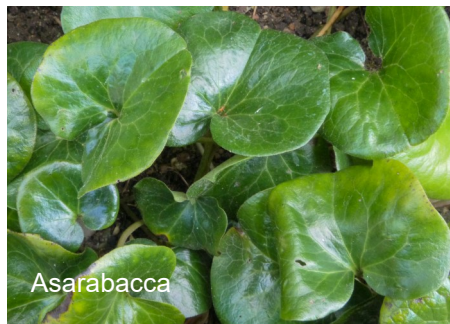
Photo: Jesse Tregale

OMISSIONS AND CORRECTIONS FROM BRANCH M REPORT

| Annual | New | Total |
|------------------------------|-----|------------------------|
| Richard Coomber | 872 | 872 |
| Cumulative – Valhalla | | |
| Nick Aston | 6 | (Corrected Total) 1566 |
| Peter Whitcomb | 4 | 1028 |

Sincere apologies to the following members for omitting your records from the 2019 report for Branch M. How this happened I am not sure and trust this is a one-off and dementia has not set in!

Richard sent in his first diary and, as is apparent in his totals, he travelled far and wide making the most of WFS Meetings and also botanical trips with his local flora group in Hampshire. Among his many interesting species were Onion *Allium cepa*, Ragweed *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, Asarabacca



Asarabacca

Asarum europaeum and Narrow-leaved Helleborine *Cephalanthera longifolia* all in his native Hampshire. In Norfolk he found Buttonweed *Cotula coronopifolia*, an excellent addition. In Dorset he recorded Dorset Heath *Erica ciliaris* at Arne. At Cricklade, in Wiltshire, he saw a field of Fritillaries *Fritillaria meleagris*, a fantastic sight when all fully out. In

Devon he visited Berry Head to see the White Rock-rose *Helianthemum apenninum* and in the New Forest he saw the wonderful Wild Gladiolus *Gladiolus illyricus* and Coral-necklace *Illecebrum verticillatum*. The WFS trip to Braunton Burrows enabled him to see Sand Toadflax *Linaria arenaria*, Sea Stock *Matthiola sinuata* and the beautiful Yellow Bartsia *Parentucellia viscosa*. Back in Dorset at Durlston Head he counted the Early Spider-orchid *Ophrys sphegodes*, while on the Isle of Wight he found Oxtongue Broomrape *Orobanche picridis*. On the WFS trip to Fingest he was shown Dragon's-teeth *Lotus* (formerly *Tetragonolobus*) *maritimus*. In all my years of marking diaries for Branch M I have never seen such an incredible total. A stupendous effort - I hope it continues.

Peter found four new plants this year. Locally Fodder Vetch *Vicia villosa* was recorded, while on a trip to the Lake District and Yorkshire he found Alpine Lady's-mantle *Alchemilla alpina* and Fringecups *Tellima grandiflora*. Back in Sussex his best find was the hybrid Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum* crossed with Hedge Bedstraw *G. album*, namely *G. x pomeranicum*, a brilliant find.

GARETH BURNSNALL

FIELD MEETING 2019

OARE MARSHES - 6th OCTOBER

Had we taken on more than we could manage? It was with some trepidation we approached the date of the Field Meeting at Oare Saltmarshes, a meeting dedicated primarily to Glassworts, *Salicornia* to those in the know. A check in the Plant Crib, by T.C.G. Rich and A.C. Jermy gave us the correct vocabulary and pointers to what we should be looking for, but also doubts. Were those little bulges on the stem really flowers? Would we really be able to tell the difference between a 90° angle and a 110° angle made with the apex of the segment? How curvy was the curvy stem of the *Europaea* group? Happily Sue Buckingham sent everyone an "Easy identification for *Salicornias*" sheet as homework before the meeting.

The weather forecast wasn't good. Rain all day was promised. At least that meant all 25 of us turned up in waterproofs and wellies. It has to be said botanists are a hardy breed. Anyway luck shined on us and apart from the odd drizzle we escaped any downpour. The Health and Safety talk by Sue at the beginning reminded us that we were on fragile terrain and to watch where our feet went. We didn't want anyone slipping down into a creek or being sucked into the mud. Having almost disappeared into a fen a few years ago at Upton Fen in Norfolk I am very aware of the dangers and take good care. Then ready to start.

Liam Rooney told us there are basically two groups of Glassworts,

the *Europaea* and the *Procumbens* groups.

The *S. europaea* (diploid) group consists of *S. ramosissima*, *S. europaea*, and *S. obscura*

To make life complicated there is a good deal of variation within the plants, so to differentiate within the group can be challenging.

Characteristics of this group are:-

- the stems are more curvy
- there are two smaller and one larger central flower

The *S. procumbens* (tetraploid) group includes *S. fragilis* and *S. dolichostachya*.

Characteristics of this group are:-

- stems are more straight sided
- flowers are equal sized

By the way, just in case, like us, you do not have your roots in biology and botany, diploid means having double the basic number of chromosomes, and tetraploid means having four times the number. Hope that is helpful.

First sighting was of *S. ramosissima* - easy! Very curvy and a reddish-purple in colour, middle flower the biggest, angle certainly more than 90°, less sure that the "scarious" margin at the apex of each segment

was 0.2mm. In fact I wasn't sure at this point of the day that I knew what the "scarious" margin was and whether or not I was looking at the correct bit of the plant....and 0.2mm? Isn't that just very, very small?

Next up was Perennial Glasswort *Sarcocornia perennis*. Another easy one, not actually a *Salicornia* but a *Sarcocornia*. The only shrubby Glasswort, the stem side shoots were sterile (i.e. no flowers) with a cluster of flowering stems at the end.

The hunt was then on for *S. fragilis*. We knew what we were looking for. Three equal flowers, not curvy, in fact a cylindrical straight stem, yellow/green in colour and not too many terminal segments. Yes. Found. Success.

Building on our growing confidence we found and compared a specimen which seemed to have some characteristics of both *S. fragilis* and *S. dolichostachya*. For *S. fragilis*, 20 segments on the leading stem, tapering end to stem, waisted between segments (like a tightened belt said Liam). *S. dolichostachya* does have segments which seem to spill over each other but has more than twenty one segments.

The hunt was on for other Glassworts and the debate and discussion was lively. To Liam's satisfaction and everybody else's happiness, we were convinced that *S. europaea* (only 0.1mm scarious margin and greeny-yellow not purplish), *S. disarticulata* (easy peasy, it only has one flower) and *S. disarticulata* x *S. ramosissima* otherwise known as *S. x marshallii* (having one and three flowered

segments) were found. There is an outside chance that one plant of *S. obscura* (it is glaucous) was found and this has been sent off to the BSBI referee for a judgement.

We did see some other good saltmarsh plants, Annual Sea-blite *Suaeda maritima*, Common Cord-grass *Spartina anglica*, Golden Samphire *Limbarda* (formerly *Inula*) *crithmoides*, Common Sea-lavender *Limonium vulgare*, Sea Aster *Tripolium pannonicum* (formerly *Aster tripolium*) and Sea Wormwood *Artemisia maritima*. Another visit to the saltmarshes in August when the Sea Lavender is in flower is certainly on our bucket list.

The day was rounded off very nicely by tea, coffee, Welsh cakes, Nettle-flavoured shortbread and yummy cake. Thanks to Owen Leyshon and his baking team. Don't worry fellow WFS members, I have already asked the Kent Botanical Recording Group if they could do another joint meeting with WFS!

Altogether a "Grand Day Out" seeing plants that are a real treat for a couple of 'would-be' botanists from the Chilterns, where experience of saltmarsh flora is difficult, if not impossible! And also for sharing interest, knowledge and cakes with fellow enthusiasts. Thanks to Sue and Liam for sharing their knowledge.

JANET JOHN

Liam has kindly produced the following ID sheet to help aid identification of this difficult group.

BRANCH REPORTS FOR 2019 PARNASSUS 2

| | New | Total |
|--------------------|-----|-------|
| Jan Armishaw | 119 | 2496 |
| Dorothy Bullock | 6 | 2035 |
| Everald Ellis | 2 | 2188 |
| Ro FitzGerald | 18 | 2068 |
| Peter Jepson | 109 | 2196 |
| Geoffrey Kitchener | 8 | 2249 |
| John Martin | 50 | 2125 |
| Dawn Nelson | 84 | 2231 |
| Priscilla Nobbs | 50 | 2456 |
| Janice Reynolds | 23 | 2362 |
| Richard Robinson | 30 | 2106 |
| Sheila Wynn | 81 | 2426 |

Jan writes, "The first pleasing new find for me was the White Red Dead-nettle *Lamium purpureum* var. *molucellifolium*, so unexpected as I did not know that this form existed up until then. On a grass verge near the Beamish Museum in Durham I was delighted to find the Double-flowered Greater Celandine *Chelidonium majus* flore pleno, a cheerful patch of golden yellow to brighten the landscape. In May, while walking part of the Ring Walk round Canterbury which took us across a corn field, I found Broad-leaved Spurge *Euphorbia platyphyllos*, a plant which I have always wanted to see. It towered above the other arable plants and the sunlight captured the red tinge of the branched plants. I found three other excitements in the Isles of Scilly. The first was a White Ramping-fumitory variety *Fumaria capreolata* var. *devoniensis*. The sprawling fumitory caught my eye as it was white flowered, but the flowers were tinged pink and the pedicels

were recurved. I was pleased that it keyed out. The next excitement was finding Smooth Tare *Ervum tetraspermum* (formerly *Vicia tetrasperma*) at the edge of an arable field: the clear lilac colour of the larger flowers was stunning. My final success was a Ground Ivy variety *Glechoma hederacea* var. *minor* which had purple stems and very dense hairs. I find the Sell and Murrell books are excellent for varieties, as I have become much more aware of differences in the field. My final delight was Spineless Petty Whin *Genista anglica* var. *subinermis* growing on shingly grassland near Kingsdown, Kent."

Dorothy writes, "I didn't get on any meetings but I did manage to get to Wales and Ted Phenna showed me new plants. My highlight was seeing a large patch of Greater Honeywort *Cerinthe major*, in the wild, in a field, near St Katherine's Church at Bryn Pydew."



Pale Corydalis

to see he had named correctly, but many he hadn't! Later he was particularly pleased with two finds. Firstly, Eastern Parsnip *Pastinaca sativa* ssp. *urens*. In early June 2014 he had driven his daughter to Manchester Airport; leaving the M56 onto the airport slip-road he spotted an extensive stand of a leggy umbel with small undeveloped umbels - no colour. The plant at that stage

Everald saw two new species: Yellow Monkwort *Nonea lutea* and Pale Corydalis *Pseudofumaria alba*, both on the same roadside in Beverley, East Yorkshire but on different dates.

Ro's most exciting plants were the aliens Annual Buttonweed *Cotula australis* and Toa Toa *Haloragis erecta* 'Wellington Bronze'. Annual Buttonweed, a New Zealand species which seems to be moving into the UK, is found typically in caravan sites. This was new to Somerset in Home Farm Holiday Camp, St Audries, spreading where touring caravans are parked in summer but in flower in early March. *Haloragis erecta* was in a yard used for hardcore storage: one fine large plant. Ro writes, "It is a charming plant, rare but known in the nursery trade, recommended as a foliage contrast with bright late-flowering annuals." Toa toa is a New Zealand name.

Peter spent the spring and early summer period caring for aging members of his family. However, he did manage to get the rest of his Hawkweed *Hieracia* specimens determined – some he was pleased

had a jizz of Stone Parsley *Sison amomum*. He mentioned them to the BSBI V.C. Recorder (Cheshire) who later confirmed them as *Pastinaca sativa* ssp. *urens*. He had fully intended to re-visit, but did not manage to do so until last summer. Whilst driving down the M66 he spotted the occasional patch of what he thought might well be the ssp. *urens*. Then at the M66/M60/M62 interchange there was a forest of the same Parsnip plant; these then appeared at intervals up to the airport. At the airport he was able to view *Pastinaca sativa* ssp. *urens*, face to face. He thinks the plants he spotted en-route were the same subspecies. Further, small numbers of similar plants also occur along the M65 about a mile from his home. He writes, "If you haven't spotted it so far watch out for this plant: it appears to be rapidly spreading on motorways." Secondly, Black Chokeberry *Aronia melanocarpa*. Back in the 1970s he visited an area called White Coppice in the West Pennine Moors. He noticed in flower two or three bushes of what looked like an alien species of Hawthorn, but he failed to make a determination. However, these he assumed to be planted on the steep

embankment of an artificial watercourse. He had visited the area many times since but not always passed the bushes. However, this year he passed with the bushes in fruit, enabling a determination not of a *Crataegus* but of an *Aronia*, and he also observed some way away a self-sown young shrub.

Geoffrey said the plants he found most interesting were Robust Curled Dock *Rumex crispus* ssp. *robustus*, a casual at Tonbridge (he remembered Peter Sell saying he'd found it in Cambridgeshire and how distinctive it was) and the very attractive Slender Borage *Borago pygmaea* on a coastal path on the Lleyn peninsula.

John writes, "I reached 60 and I was lucky enough to be able to retire from working as a Vascular Plant Specialist with Natural England. Enjoyable as that has been, it's even better to have my time to myself. Before retiring I managed to visit Ranscombe Farm in Kent again where it was great to see Interrupted Brome *Bromus interruptus* doing well (reintroduced) in several arable margins." Despite making maybe his 30th trip to the Isles of Scilly, it was only his third since doing the WFS diary, so there were quite a few additions on a visit in April. The recent flora of the Isles also enabled him to name previous mystery plants, so he had several new species. The highlights were the big and evidently thriving colony of Kangaroo Fern *Phymatosorus diversifolius* at Rocky Hill, the showy Kangaroo-apple *Solanum laciniatum* flowering on the old tip and, finally, working out Toothed Fireweed *Senecio minimus*, which is now very widespread there.

Dawn had a day seeing special plants near Arnside with Julie Clark. Her favourites included Green-flowered Primrose *Primula vulgaris* 'Viridis', 'a strange clear pale green colour' and Fingered Sedge, *Carex digitata* : both very attractive in their different ways. She writes, "Over the year I have been going out with Tony Mundell square-bashing and searching for old records for Atlas 2020 in V.C.12 (North Hampshire), as well as visiting a couple of estates in Hampshire that are well managed, plus attending the Hants Plants meetings, where we found *Erigeron x stanleyi* = *E. acris* x *floribundus* which was great to see, Orange Foxtail *Alopecurus aequalis* which was a delightful and very attractive find, as was Crown Vetch *Securigera varia*. In Sussex Jill Oakley, Sue Denness and I saw Greater Dodder *Cuscuta europaea* in an old known location. I found Divided Sedge *Carex divisa* with which I was very pleased."

Priscilla was really pleased to find Quinoa *Chenopodium quinoa* at the edge of a barley field in Essex. Her other enjoyments were all seen at WFS meetings. However one, Downy Woundwort *Stachys germanica*, she had to look for on her own to see it in flower, as her group only went to the plant that had finished flowering. She was staying with friends nearby, so thought she would try and find it with instructions from Steven Little. She had to first find the Scout Hut, then walk along the footpath – it was further than she expected - and she was just giving up when she came across the two plants in flower.

Janice was pleased with her total, considering she had not been out of

East Sussex. She has a good eye for garden escapes and skill in finding sources in literature. She most enjoyed finding Scarlet Flax *Linum grandiflorum*, with its lovely colour, and Orange and Hungarian Mulleins *Verbascum phlomoides* and *V. speciosum*, for which she had searched in other counties but failed to find.

Richard writes, "It was fun to stumble unexpectedly across Sulphur Cinquefoil *Potentilla recta* and Whorled Clary *Salvia verticillata* outside Amberley Castle not 200 yards from my front door. However, Greater Dodder *Cuscuta europaea* has long been a goal ever since I saw it as the first plant in David Attenborough's *The Private Life of Plants* seen in time lapse photography entangling itself in a clump of nettles. I had a grid reference, despite which it took some time wading through chest high nettles in a dark wood before I glimpsed a little tendril snaking round a nettle stem. Had it been a suitable habitat to perform a self-congratulatory war dance I would have done so."

Sheila writes, "One highlight of my year was the BSBI Meeting at Roudsea Wood in Cumbria with Mike Porter, somewhere I've long wanted to go, where the two sedges Large Yellow-sedge *Carex flava* and Elongated Sedge *C. elongata* were new to me. On my way to the Durham meeting, I made a detour down the long, narrow, single-track road to Hurst in Swaledale to see the putative hybrid Pansy, *Viola lutea* x *V. arvensis*. It grows in profusion all

along the roadside and on the old lead-mining spoil-heaps. They made a wonderful display and were definitely worth the trip! I also enjoyed seeing the Thistle Broomrape *Orobanche reticulata* at its well-known site in the corner of a field near Aberford, which Steve Little took me to, after the meeting near Leeds last July." Later she was interested to be shown *Persicaria runcinata* which, since 2011, has spread over a distance of 1km along the banks of the River Dunsop in the Forest of Bowland. This was reported in the article by Peter Jepson in the January 2019 issue of the BSBI News, in which he expresses concern that it could become an invasive species.

EDWARD PRATT

Photo: Sheila Wynn

Thistle
Broomrape



10 KM SQUARE STUDY (NORTH) 2019

| Name | Hectad | Location | Year | New | Total |
|----------------|--------|---------------------------|------|-----|-------|
| Julie Clarke | SD48 | Lindale & Whitbarrow | 17 | 23 | 774 |
| | SD58 | Milnthorpe | 17 | 58 | 508 |
| Anthony & Rita | SE23 | Horsforth & Rodley | 9 | 62 | 558 |
| Grainger | SE24 | Otley & Wharfe Valley | 9 | 30 | 380 |
| Peter Jepson | SD61 | Bolton (North) | 39 | 2 | 509 |
| | SD62 | Darwen & Blackburn | 45 | 1 | 868 |
| | SD71 | Turton | 38 | 0 | 456 |
| | SD72 | Accrington | 45 | 0 | 625 |
| Andrew Kafel | SE02 | Halifax | 13 | 15 | 773 |
| | SE12 | Brighouse | 12 | 10 | 661 |
| | SE22 | Morley, Dewsbury & Batley | 11 | 0 | 853 |
| Graeme Kay | SJ57 | Frodsham | 23 | 10 | 719 |
| | SJ67 | Northwich | 21 | 0 | 532 |
| | SJ87 | Alderley Edge | 31 | 12 | 529 |
| | SJ97 | Macclesfield | 33 | 1 | 589 |
| | SJ98 | Marple | 41 | 0 | 673 |
| Keith Robson | NZ24 | Chester-le-street | 7 | 36 | 595 |
| Dorothy Ross | SD31 | Southport | 1 | 120 | 120 |
| | SD32 | Lytham | 17 | 3 | 379 |
| | SD45 | Galgate | 7 | 0 | 299 |
| | SD63 | Longridge | 32 | 3 | 377 |
| | SD64 | Chipping | 9 | 4 | 202 |
| | SD73 | Whalley | 15 | 5 | 293 |
| | SD74 | Clitheroe | 30 | 5 | 373 |
| Jesse Tregale | SC39 | Ballaugh, Isle of Man | 22 | 2 | 766 |
| | SE13 | Bradford | 28 | 26 | 1749 |
| Sheila Wynn | SD64 | Bowland, Lancashire | 13 | 0 | 237 |
| | SD65 | Forest of Bowland | 9 | 26 | 175 |
| | SD74 | Clitheroe, Lancashire | 13 | 5 | 562 |
| | SD75 | Slaidburn, Gisburn Forest | 13 | 0 | 239 |

Julie Clarke found some nice natives in SD48: Rough Chervil *Chaerophyllum temulum* at Foulshaw and the rare Barberry *Berberis vulgaris* at Spennel Brook. Also here was Balearic Boxwood *Buxus balearica*, new to the 10km square study. Navelwort *Umbilicus rupestris* at Grange-over-sands and Small Balsam *Impatiens parviflora* at Leven

are two of the plants I am still searching for in my Bradford square. In SD58 Thorow-wax *Bupleurum rotundifolium* was on a grass verge at Farlton and Round-leaved Crowfoot *Ranunculus omiophyllus* in a marshy area by Hood Riding Farm. Julie also did some Cumbria recording in SD58, finding Intermediate Water-starwort *Callitriche brutia* and, on the track to

Middle Fell House, new to me, Red Tobacco *Nicotiana forgetiana*.

Anthony and Rita Grainger had a good year in their squares. They now have all four species of Butterbur in SD23, finding White Butterbur *Petasites albus* and Giant Butterbur *P. japonicus* on the Meanwood Beck Trail and Winter Heliotrope *P. pyrenaicus* on Rodley Nature Reserve, where they also found Motherwort *Leonurus cardiaca* and Phacelia *Phacelia tanacetifolia*. The Common Cornsalad *Valerianella locusta*, which is far from common in Yorkshire, was on waste ground on Westbrook Lane. In SD24 some exciting plants on the footpath of Otley Weir included the white-flowered form of Spotted Dead-nettle *Lamium maculatum* f. *album* and Giant Herb-robert *Geranium maderense*. The rare Greater Chickweed *Stellaria neglecta* was at Rougemont and Shaggy-soldier *Galinsoga quadriradiata*, a weed in Golden Acre Park.

Peter Jepson was busy with family commitments for much of the year, so had little time for botanising but still added to two of his squares. In SD61 Black Chokeberry *Aronia melanocarpa* was on a wooded embankment of Coppice Wood. In SD62 there was Dark-styled Hawkweed *Hieracium subcrocatum* at Sunnyside treatment works, determined by David McCosh, the Hawkweed expert. Eastern Parsnip *Pastinaca sativa* ssp. *urens*, which has been spreading up the country, was seen on the M65 between J5 & J6, which is in two of Peter's squares SD62 & SD72, so now I await its arrival in Bradford.

Andrew Kafel found some nice plants in two of his squares. In SE02 Broad-leaved Helleborine *Epipactis helleborine* was by the railway near Luddendenfoot and the attractive Argentine Vervain *Verbena bonariensis*, a garden escape, was found on School Street in Halifax. Also on School Street, growing on the cobbles, was Four-leaved Allseed *Polycarpon tetraphyllum*, probably the furthest north this southern annual has yet reached. The white variety of Marjoram *Origanum vulgare* var. *albiflorum* was in Cripplegate. In SE12 he had two nice finds in Cromwell Bottom, Giant-rhubarb *Gunnera tinctoria* and a cultivar of Soft Shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum* f. *divisilobum*. After an e-mail from Andrew in November, I went to Brighouse to see and confirm Andrew's Annual Gypsophila *Gypsophila muralis*, self-sown on the pavement, and nearby was Field Woundwort *Stachys arvensis*, which is rare in Yorkshire.

Graeme Kay found new plants in three of his squares. In SJ57 all except Italian Lords-and-Ladies *Arum italicum* ssp. *italicum*, found at Helsby, were found in Frodsham, with some nice Crocuses, including Early Crocus *Crocus tommasinianus* and Yellow Crocus *Crocus x luteus*, self-sown in the churchyard. Two nice verge weeds were Water Bent *Polypogon viridis*, which is now getting common and the much rarer Green Bristle-grass *Setaria viridis*. All Graeme's new plants in SJ87 came from an open day at Henbury Hall, with Yellow-oxeye *Bupththalmum speciosum* and Brazilian Giant-rhubarb *Gunnera manicata*, naturalised by the lake, and Creeping

Comfrey *Symphytum grandiflorum* in the woodland. The Water Bent turned up again in Macclesfield, Graeme's only new plant for SJ97.

Keith Robson has been recording for the BSBI Atlas 2020 and so has not spent much time in his square NZ24 but still managed to find 36 new plants. The rarely recorded hybrid, Hogweed x Giant Hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum* x *H. sphondylium* was found by the River Wear near Great Lumley. Purple Iris *Iris versicolor* was in a pond in Langley Park and, also in Langley Park, was Hoary Mustard *Hirschfeldia incana*, which is still spreading north. Keith found two hybrid willowherbs at Waldridge, Broad-leaved x American Willowherb *Epilobium* x *interjectum* and Broad-leaved x Hoary Willowherb *E. x limosum*.

Dorothy Ross has started a new square, SD31 Southport, finding a plant rarely recorded in the north, Alexanders *Smyrniololus atratum*, on a verge in Southport and Greater Spearwort *Ranunculus lingua* and Rose Campion *Silene coronaria* on the dunes at Ainsdale. In SD32 Fool's-water-cress *Helosciadium nodiflorum* (formerly *Apium nodiflorum*) and Black-bindweed *Fallopia convolvulus* were by the cemetery in Lytham. In SD63 Phacelia *Phacelia tanacetifolia* and Procumbent Yellow-sorrel *Oxalis corniculata* were on the roadside near Longridge. Dorothy found the rare Angular Solomon's-seal *Polygonatum odoratum* at Whitewell. Also here was Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina*. Annual Wall-rocket *Diplotaxis muralis* and Canadian Fleabane *Erigeron canadensis* (formerly *Conyza*

canadensis) were on the roadside at Pendleton in SD73, and in SD74 Trailing Bellflower *Campanula poscharskyana* and Creeping-Jenny *Lysimachia nummularia* were found in Waddington.

There were only two new plants for my Isle of Man SD71 square, Armenian Crane's-bill *Geranium psilostemon* and Fringe-cups *Tellima grandiflora*, garden escapes both found on the disused railway line at Ballavolley. It was a good year in Bradford. Michael Wilcox showed me some waste ground in Briggate, Shipley, where we found Larkspur *Consolida ajacis* and Chinese Hound's-tongue *Cynoglossum amabile*. He also showed me Spring Starflower *Tristagma uniflorum* on the Apperley Bridge towpath, but the plant of the year must go to the Northern Dead-nettle *Lamium confertum*, found on disturbed ground on Wakefield Road, Bradford.

Sheila Wynn went to Dunsop Bridge in Bowland, SD65, to meet up with Peter Jepson, who showed her his newly-discovered *Persicaria runcinata*, new to Britain. Also new to her square was Brittle Bladder-fern *Cystopteris fragilis* and Variegated Horsetail *Equisetum variegatum*. In SD74 Sheila found the wavy-edged Hart's-tongue cultivar, *Asplenium scolopendrium* 'Marginatum Group' in West Bradford. In Salthill Quarry car park, the Hawkweed *Hieracium lepiduloides* was found, new to the north of England, and the Spotted Hawkweed *H. spilophaeum* was on the church wall at Downham.

It's early April and I, like many others, am in lockdown, confined to home

and walking the dog so my report next year may well be rather brief. I managed to take my sister-in-law, and fellow botanist, Bridget Keehan, over from Ireland, to see Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina*, unfortunately still only in bud, and the Killarney Fern *Trichomanes speciosum* in Bingley. Here she pointed out a plant new to my square, Fortune's Holly-fern *Cyrtomium fortunei*, self-sown on a wall. While walking the dog from home I found another plant new to

my square, Tree Mallow *Malva arborea*, so those of us who live in their 10Km square may be able to seek out new plants during their exercise walk in these difficult times.

Thanks to all who sent records - as usual lots of exciting plants found, some new to me, which I will have to look out for, and I wish you all good hunting in 2020.

B.A. 'JESSE' TREGALE

10 KM SQUARE STUDY (SOUTH) 2019

| Name | Hectad | Location | Year | New | Total |
|-------------------------|--------|---------------------------|------|-----|-------|
| Nick Barber | SP22 | Churchill, Oxfordshire | 1 | 185 | 185 |
| Gareth Bursnall | TQ23 | Crawley, West Sussex | 5 | 18 | 575 |
| Rodney Burton | TQ56 | Darenth Valley, Kent | 25 | 18 | 682 |
| José Gibbs | TR37 | Margate, Kent | 5 | 26 | 138 |
| Pippa Hyde | TQ15 | Leatherhead, Surrey | 1 | 90 | 90 |
| Barbara Mathews | TM23 | West Felixstowe, Suffolk | 22 | 0 | 681 |
| | TM24 | Woodbridge, Suffolk | 20 | 0 | 538 |
| | TM33 | East Felixstowe, Suffolk | 23 | 3 | 663 |
| | TM34 | Shottisham, Suffolk | 11 | 7 | 361 |
| Daphne Mills | TQ75 | Maidstone, Kent | 10 | 22 | 695 |
| Ted Phenna | SH57 | Bangor & Anglesey | 12 | 2 | 432 |
| | SH67 | Llanfairfechan, Gwynedd | 16 | 7 | 676 |
| | SH68 | Llangoed, Anglesey | 7 | 0 | 314 |
| | SH78 | Great Orme, Gwynedd | 40 | 10 | 716 |
| Sue Poyser & Doug Grant | TQ76 | Rochester & Chatham, Kent | 22 | 3 | 893 |
| | TQ77 | Higham and Cliffe, Kent | 14 | 1 | 613 |
| Ted Pratt | SY97 | Worth Matravers, Dorset | 8 | 13 | 582 |
| | SY98 | Wareham & Corfe, Dorset | 12 | 31 | 1242 |
| | SZ08 | Studland, Dorset | 14 | 24 | 1226 |
| Janice Reynolds | TQ40 | Newhaven, East Sussex | 18 | 8 | 690 |
| Pat Verrall | TQ04 | Shere, Surrey | 29 | 15 | 545 |
| | TQ05 | Woking, Surrey | 2 | 0 | 112 |
| | TQ14 | Dorking, Surrey | 26 | 6 | 570 |
| | TQ15 | Leatherhead, Surrey | 8 | 1 | 414 |

Thank you all for sending your lists so promptly and for the interesting notes and letters which are so helpful when writing the report.

It is good to welcome Nick, a keen botanist who has joined WFS to take on new challenges. He made a flying start in his local Cotswold square, SP22, which mainly straddles Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, with a tiny area of Warwickshire. Asked by a local landowner to survey a calcareous grassland site he recorded Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, Cotton Thistle *Onopordum acanthium*, Clustered Bellflower *Campanula glomerata* and many grasses including Smaller Cat's-tail *Phleum bertolonii*. In a disused quarry several established garden escapes, derived from tipping, were thriving; Garden Grape-hyacinth *Muscari armeniacum* was flowering in March and, in July, Hollyhock *Alcea rosea*, dark red Macedonian Scabious *Knautia macedonica*, Rose Campion *Silene coronaria* and Argentine Vervain *Verbena bonariensis*, which must have made a colourful display.

One of Gareth's favourite finds was Field Marigold *Calendula arvensis*, a flower-bed weed in Crawley; he recorded it in January and says it is still there a year later. A Daffodil cv. *Narcissus* 'Cassata', white with a pale lemon trumpet, was another unexpected discovery in a woodland hedgerow. Several other garden escapes turned up, including a wine red Primrose cv. *Primula x pruhonicensis* 'Wanda' on a streamside bank and Yellow Alkanet *Anchusa ochroleuca* on a roadside

verge. By another roadside Gareth was pleased to see Vervain *Verbena officinalis*, which is uncommon in his area and, when recording in a churchyard, he found Trailing Tormentil *Potentilla anglica*.

Rodney found several aliens, generally tracing their origin to nearby gardens, but his Cabbage *Brassica oleracea* scattered along the A224 is awarded the novel category of 'fallen off the back of a lorry?'. Tree-mallow *Malva arborea*, behind station railings, and Eastern Leopard's-bane *Doronicum columnae*, high on a street verge, were both in impossible places to have been planted, and Rough Bristle-grass *Setaria verticillata* turned up as a casual at the foot of a wall. In a local hedgerow he spotted the hybrid Hedge Bindweed x Large Bindweed *Calystegia sepium* x *C. silvatica* = *C. x lucana*. Among Rodney's native species were Small Toadflax *Chaenorhinum minus* on allotments and, the find that pleased him most, two plants of Perfoliate Pondweed *Potamogeton perfoliatus* in the River Darent, the first he had seen there for over 20 years.

For José the first record of the year was her highlight, Danish Scurvygrass *Cochlearia danica*, a single plant spotted on the cliff-top only just inside her square. After that, due to other commitments, almost all further finds were made on one June day's walk along the beach and cliff-top, when she was particularly pleased to find Wild Clary *Salvia verbenaca* and Common Broomrape *Orobanche minor*. Two extremes of the Mallow *Malva* genus were also

recorded, Tree-mallow *M. arborea* at Botany Bay and Dwarf Mallow *M. neglecta* on Foreness Point. José comments she has not yet identified many grasses but she lists a few, including Sea Fern-grass *Catapodium maritimum*.

Having now settled into her new home in central Leatherhead Pippa has started recording around the town. Finding Winter Heliotrope *Petasites pyrenaicus* (formerly *P. fragrans*) in a bridleway on New Year's Day, she later found these paths a good source of garden escapes, finding Balkan Anemone *Anemone blanda*, Rosy Garlic *Allium roseum* and Oriental Poppy *Papaver setiferum* (formerly *P. pseudoorientale*). Chinese Mugwort *Artemisia verlotiorum* was a good find by Leatherhead Station, where there was also Spotted Dead-nettle *Lamium maculatum*. Walking by the River Mole in spring, Pippa recorded Ramsons *Allium ursinum* and Glory-of-the-snow *Scilla forbesii* (formerly *Chionodoxa forbesii*) and, returning in September, discovered Small Teasel *Dipsacus pilosus*.

Barbara started the year well in TM23 when, in a cliff-top woodland where she had frequently walked before, she noticed a large area of Creeping Comfrey *Symphytum grandiflorum* covered in flowers. Other nice spring finds on the Felixstowe cliff-top were Pirri-pirri-bur *Acaena novae-zelandiae* and Spring Starflower *Tristagma uniflorum*. A June visit across the River Deben (TM34) gave Barbara French Crane's-bill *Geranium endressii* in a car park and Mind-your-own-business *Soleirolia soleiroliae* on a pavement edge, but

she was disappointed to have no further opportunity for botanising after that.



Sicilian Chamomile

Daphne concentrated on recording an area just north of Maidstone for Kent Botanical Recording Group. On Blue Bell Hill in May she was surprised to find Yellow Vetchling *Lathyrus aphaca* having regularly driven past it and Lesser Centaury *Centaureum pulchellum* was there in August. Her few established garden escapes included Turkish Iris *Iris orientalis*, Bladder-senna *Colutea arborescens* and, a new one to Daphne, Pink-headed Persicaria *Persicaria capitata*. Nearer home she spotted the invasive alien Floating Pennywort *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* in the river at Aylesford

Photo: Ken Southall

which only just made it onto her list, as the plant was removed shortly after.

Ted's best square was Great Orme (SH78) where he has now recorded in this 10Km patch for 40 years! He was shown several good plants by Wendy McCarthy and was particularly pleased to see Small-flowered Buttercup *Ranunculus parviflorus* which had not been found here for many years. Unfortunately, it was growing on a narrow path and badly trampled; perhaps it will self-seed. He found several non-native species too: Sicilian Chamomile *Anthemis punctata* was on cliffs above Marine Parade and he added two new grasses, Argentine Needle-grass *Nassella tenuissima* and Cockspur *Echinochloa crus-galli*. In Llanfairfechan (SH67) Ted found Rose Campion *Silene coronaria* near a bird-hide, but his most interesting find was a Hawkweed *Hieracium* with dark leaf-markings, growing unplanted in a roadside wall. Ted has this in his garden, given to him by a friend 30 years ago, but had never known its name; it was identified by Wendy (conf. Tim Rich) as *H. scotostictum*. Another wall near Bangor had Trailing Bellflower *Campanula poscharskyana* and, in a pond at Penrhyn Castle, he found Large-flowered Waterweed *Egeria densa*.

Sue and Doug were busy gap-filling for the BSBI Atlas, only getting to their two hectads at the end of the year. In Rochester (TQ76) they added Passionflower *Passiflora caerulea* and Greater Honeywort *Cerinthe major*, both self-sown in alleyways, and found *Nemesia*



Nemesia strumosa on top of the church wall. Their only new record for TQ77 was a seedling Hedge Hebe *Veronica x franciscana* seen at Chatham Maritime near the parent plant.

Ted had a bumper year in all his squares. Dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris* is surprisingly uncommon in Purbeck, so he was pleased to see it by a closed quarry in SY97, whereas Pink Shepherd's-purse *Capsella rubella*, found in a car park, is increasing. Some unusual varieties of trees featured in SY98. A form of Silver Birch with small leaves tapering to their stalks, *Betula pendula* var. *cuneata*, was on Arne Moors and a small leaved Elm, Davey's Elm *Ulmus daveyi*, was identified at Corfe Castle. Ted particularly enjoyed spotting

Photo: Peter Llewellyn

Navelwort



Photo: Peter Llewellyn

Glaucous Spurge *Euphorbia myrsinites* in a Wareham pavement. At Arne there was Coral-necklace *Illecebrum verticillatum*, discovered there by visiting botanists, also Sea Stork's-bill *Erodium maritimum*, which might have arrived on the wheels of an RSPB vehicle. Ted's highlights for SZ08 were recorded on the Poole Harbour side of the hectad. He found Silver Knapweed *Centaurea cinerea* on a sea wall at the Branksome site mentioned in Stace. On waste ground further along the coast he saw a couple of exotic garden escapes, both grown here as annuals: Black-eyed Susan Vine *Thunbergia alata*, native to South Africa and, an Australian species, Showy Isotome *Isotoma axillaris*.

For the past couple of years Janice has found imported soil on construction sites in Newhaven to be a rich source of unexpected plants. This year she was especially pleased to find Hungarian Mullein *Verbascum speciosum* which was a new one for

her Parnassus Diary. Scarlet Flax *Linum grandiflorum* and Round-leaved Crane's-bill *Geranium rotundifolium* also appeared. Janice's local paving cracks are often fertile ground for garden escapes, this year producing Aubretia *Aubrieta deltoidea* and Greater Honeywort *Cerinthe major*.

One of my own most exciting discoveries in TQ04 was Navelwort *Umbilicus rupestris*, very uncommon in Surrey, growing abundantly for 50 metres along a lane-side bank; I later read that it was recorded there in 1986. Long-stalked Crane's-bill *Geranium columbinum*, another species I seldom see, was on a grassy bank, and it was a joy to see the glorious blue of Chicory *Cichorium intybus* along a field path above Shere. On an infilled sandpit are two Daffodils I have long intended to identify. They keyed out to Two-coloured Daffodil *Narcissus bicolor* and Boutigny's Daffodil (Pheasant's-eye x White Daffodil) *N. poeticus* x *N. moschatus* = *N. x boutignyanus*. In Dorking High Street (TQ14) I was astonished to spot Water Chickweed *Stellaria aquatica* (formerly *Myosoton aquaticum*) in the pavement by a shop's drainpipe, and it was good to see a clump of pure white Heath Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata* var. *leucantha* in my village churchyard. My sole record for TQ15 came in November, a clump of Milk Thistle *Silybum marianum* by a field track at Polesden Lacey.

Wishing you all happy and successful botanising in 2020.

PAT VERRALL

2019 AUTUMN ONE DAY AND ONE WEEK HUNTS

| Name | Area | Total week hunt | Total day hunt |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Barbara Allen | South Lancs | 128 | 112 |
| Anthony and Rita Grainger | Yorks | 100 | 48 |
| Doug Grant and Sue Poyser | Kent | 151 | 105 |
| Sue Grayston and Ken Southall | Suffolk | 112 | 22 |
| Dennis and Anne Kell | Suffolk | 139 | 84 |
| Simon Leach | Somerset | 217 | 138 |
| Branch N3 | Lancs | | 119 |
| Branch Y | Norfolk | | 84 |
| Susan Grimshaw | Berks | | 71 |
| Joy Lyon | Lothian | | 20 |
| Priscilla Nobbs | Surrey | | 70 |
| Nick Barber | Oxford/Glos. | 28 | |
| Gareth Bursnall | Sussex | 111 | |
| Heather Colls | Monmouthshire | 106 | |
| Rosemary FitzGerald | Somerset | 173 | |
| Gill Greef | Gloucestershire | 61 | |
| Peter Llewellyn | Cheshire/N Wales | 115 | |
| Sally Maller | Devon | 82 | |
| Ron Parker | London | 147 | |
| Janice Reynolds | Sussex | 131 | |
| June Robinson | Sheffield/ Peak District | 19 | |
| Eliza Sackett | Somerset | 104 | |
| John Swindells | Tower Hamlets, London | 108 | |
| Christina White | Northamptonshire | 53 | |
| Pauline Wilson | Avon | 113 | |
| Number of species seen | | 443 | 282 |

Plants new to the Week Hunt - Siberian Stonecrop *Phedimus hybridus* (formerly *Sedum hybridum*), Rye Brome *Bromus secalinus*, Lesser Calamint *Clinopodium nepeta* (formerly *C. calamintha*), Nemesia *Nemesia strumosa*, Giant Scabious *Cephalaria gigantea*, Annual Marguerite *Mauranthemum paludosum*.

Plants seen by all on the Week Hunt - Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, Daisy *Bellis perennis*, Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber*, Groundsel *Senecio vulgaris*, Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*.

Ten people combined their one day and one week hunts.

Barbara joined Branch N3 for their One Day Hunt around Ainsdale, Southport and was surprised to find so many plants in flower there, as well as back home in St. Helens. Hungarian Brome *Bromopsis inermis* was seen on 'Falklands Way' and, on the grass verge by the Coastal Road, Jersey Thrift *Armeria arenaria* was clinging on despite the growth in vegetation. She found a Campion in the dunes which keyed out beautifully using Stace to *Silene latifolia* x *S. dioica* = *S. x hampeana*. Around her home area she found Apple-mint *Mentha x villosa*.



Yellow-wort

Photo: Peter Llewellyn

Anthony and Rita spent their One Day Hunt in the Aire Valley RSPB reserves of Ings and St. Aidan's. The Society held a meeting at St. Aidan's in 2019 and in the car park members saw some hybrid Docks. Sadly, this area had been cleared and sanitised. Hopefully, they will appear next year; it is not easy to eradicate Docks!

They were pleased to see Yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata* and Common Centaury *Centaureum erythraea*, finishing the day with Japanese Honeysuckle *Lonicera japonica*. They then spent three half days locally finding Yellow-flowered Strawberry *Potentilla indica* and Shining Crane's-bill *Geranium lucidum*, being the only members to spot the latter. At the newly built Kirkstall Forge Railway Station they found Sowbread *Cyclamen hederifolium* and at Rodley N.R. they spotted Crown Vetch *Securigera varia*.

Doug and Sue had very enjoyable One Day and Week Hunts but were disappointed that they saw far fewer species flowering compared to the previous year despite putting in the same amount of effort. However, they did find two species they hadn't seen for the One Day Hunt before, White Bryony *Bryonia dioica* and Dwarf Mallow *Malva neglecta*. They were pleased to find Common Gromwell *Lithospermum officinale* and Dwarf Thistle *Cirsium acaule*, both new to their Week Hunt list and were the only members to spot Goat's-beard *Tragopogon pratensis* ssp. *minor*. However, a first for the Week Hunt is Nemesia *Nemesia strumosa*.

Sue tells me that, despite the dreadful weather, she and Ken managed to dodge the rain and get out most days usually within 5 miles of home. They spotted Annual Marguerite *Mauranthemum paludosum*, which is a first for the Hunt. Other plants seen were Fool's-water-cress *Helosciadium nodiflorum* (formerly *Apium nodiflorum*), Water Chickweed

Stellaria aquatica (formerly *Myosoton aquaticum*) and Narrow-leaved Michaelmas-daisy *Symphyotrichum lanceolatum* (formerly *Aster lanceolatus*) but the highlight of the Hunt was seeing Carlina Thistle *Carlina vulgaris* in full flower.

Anne and Dennis joined Branch Y for part of the Hunt but most of their finds were in the Copdock area. A good find there was Treacle-mustard *Erysimum cheiranthoides*. Moving to Sudbury they recorded Seaside Daisy *Erigeron glaucus* and Goat's-beard *Tragopogon pratensis* but they really thought winter had passed us by when they found Springbeauty *Claytonia perfoliata* flowering in Ipswich. Anne and Dennis were the only ones to record this plant.

Simon was joined by his local botany group spending the One Day Hunt in the Bridgwater area. They had a very good day finding 46 species that no one else saw, including Fool's Parsley *Aethusa cynapium*, Musk Stork's-bill *Erodium moschatum* and White Ramping-fumitory *Fumaria capreolata*. His Week Hunt was centred around Taunton. Surprising finds were Rye Brome *Bromus secalinus*, a new plant for the Hunt, on the edge of a stubble field at Corfe, and Wood Melick *Melica uniflora* at Thurlbear Wood, a Somerset W.T. Nature Reserve; this has not been recorded since 1997. His best finds were *Silene latifolia* x *S. dioica* = *S. x hampeana*, which turned out to be a first record in square ST22, and Moth Mullein *Verbascum blattaria* in a gateway by Corfe Church, this being a second site for this species in the Taunton area.



The following people only completed the One Day Hunt.

Branch N3 had a very good day out despite the rain. They were the only ones to see a species I have never seen, Jersey Thrift (*Armeria arenaria*).

Branch Y had a good day looking around the Sudbury area, seeing 17 species not seen by anyone else, including Round-leaved Crane's-bill *Geranium rotundifolium* and Small Nettle *Urtica urens*.

The day for Susan was spent looking around her home patch finding one spike of Ivy Broomrape *Orobancha hederaceae* still flowering amongst dozens of dead spikes in her garden. She was also the only person to see

Changing Forget-me-not *Myosotis discolor* and Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata*.

Joy had recently moved to Edinburgh from Oxfordshire. One way of getting to know this new area was to have a go at doing her first One Day Hunt, seeing three species not seen by anyone else, Lesser Stitchwort *Stellaria graminea*, Pink Purslane *Claytonia sibirica* and Honesty *Lunaria annua*.

Priscilla was pleased to find seven species flowering that she hadn't seen the previous year, plus she increased her total by another three species. She was pleased with Broom *Cytisus scoparius* and Argentine Vervain *Verbena bonariensis*.

The following people only sent in records for the Week Hunt.

Nick is a new member. He has sent a very detailed spreadsheet with place, habitat and grid reference. I particularly select Small Scabious *Scabiosa columbaria* from Cleeve Hill, Cheltenham as it brings back memories from when I used to live there and Wall Lettuce *Mycelis muralis* was spotted at the foot of a wall in Chipping Norton.

Gareth says he tends to hibernate in November especially when it is dark and wet but I am glad he decided to venture out for the Hunt. Sadly the drought had hit a number of plants but he managed a good score. Field Woundwort *Stachys arvensis* was a nice find along with Fern-grass *Catapodium rigidum*. In the hedgerows was Common Ivy *Hedera*

helix, how the bees love this in the autumn, and to brighten his day he spotted Treasureflower *Gazania rigens*.

Heather's list is solely within Monmouthshire. She was the only member to record Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and Himalayan Knotweed *Koenigia polystachya* (formerly *Persicaria wallichii*). Autumn Oxeye *Leucanthemella serotina* was a nice find. Others were Toad Rush *Juncus bufonius* and Meadow Vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*. Heather must have an eye for the tiny-flowered plants as she spotted Wall Speedwell in flower *Veronica arvensis*, which is difficult to spot at this time of the year.

Once again the final Somerset field meeting was held during the Autumn Hunt where the finds are included in Ro's list. She says they were fortunate with good weather providing interesting, productive botanising in and around the different habitats of Bridgwater. Some plants seen during the week were Balkan Spurge *Euphorbia oblongata*, White Ramping-fumitory *Fumaria capreolata* and Intermediate Periwinkle *Vinca difformis*. Although the canal paths had been trimmed Ro was pleased to find Remote Sedge *Carex remota* and False Fox-sedge *Carex otrubae* re-flowering, these being new for her Autumn list. Ro was the only member to find Small Toadflax *Chaenorhinum minus*.

This is Gill's first time recording for the Hunt. Most of her 61 plants were seen whilst completing a pilgrimage from Bristol to Gloucester – she says 36 miles in 3 days. Unfortunately

nonstop rain on one of the days made it more difficult. However, some of the plants spotted were Black Nightshade *Solanum nigrum*, Tall Melilot *Melilotus altissimus* and Honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*.

Peter was the only member to find Sicilian Chamomile *Anthemis punctata* ssp. *cupaniana* seen in Llandudno. He climbed the Orme to the site of Goldilocks Aster *Galatella* (formerly *Aster*) *linosyris* only to find it had finished flowering and had to start back down again just as a huge gale was starting to blow, so the next stop was home. On route to the Manchester City Football Ground he spotted Black Medick *Medicago lupulina* and, back home in Helsby, Common Fumitory *Fumaria officinalis* and Cut-leaved Dead-nettle *Lamium hybridum* were seen.

Sally usually sends her list from her home County of Devon but whilst visiting her daughter in Dorset took the opportunity to record in another County. This made it interesting for her as there were lots of new plants to record. She says it was a bit of a wet week but having to walk the dogs resulted in her getting out most days. Several, seen solely by her, included Broom *Cytisus scoparius* and Shallow *Gaultheria shallon*, both at Hengistbury Head. Over the border in the New Forest she spotted Hard-fern *Blechnum spicant*.

Ron joined the London N.H. Society meeting at Sutton Community Farm and picked up weedy plants including Green Alkanet *Pentaglottis sempervirens*, a plant difficult to eradicate. A plant growing on the

quaint-named Pudding Mill Lane was Chinese Mugwort *Artemisia verlotiorum*, along with a plant we are not too happy to have around, namely Giant Hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*. He has also recorded two new plants for the Hunt namely Stingless Nettle *Urtica dioica* ssp. *galeopsifolia* and Autumn Stonecrop, with the new name of *Hylotelephium* (formerly *Sedum*) 'Herbstfreude' - what a mouthful!

Janice is another member who dodged the rain during the Hunt. She saw Bastard-toadflax *Thesium humifusum* at Cradle Hill Valley which she says has been in flower since June. Lilac *Syringa vulgaris* was still in flower at Bishopstone and she spotted Fern-leaf Yarrow *Achillea filipendulina* at Eastbourne. The latter has not been recorded since 2005.

June is a long standing member of the Hunt, searching around Sheffield and the Peak District. With five sunny days she says it was good to be out. This year she found both Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix* and Bell Heather *E. cinerea*. June was the only member to record Creeping Bellflower *Campanula rapunculoides*.

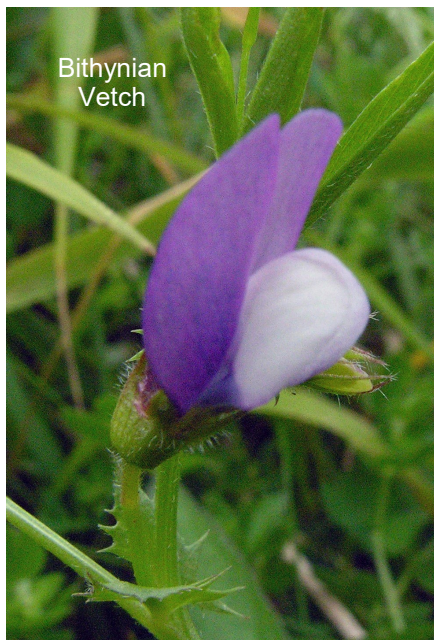
Eliza is a relatively new member to 'Woofs' and was able to join the Somerset Rare Plants meeting where, under the guidance of Ro FitzGerald, she enjoyed the Hunt and, especially, learning about new plants. Some of the plants seen were Upright Yellow-sorrel *Oxalis stricta*, Grey Field-speedwell *Veronica polita* and Atlas Poppy *Papaver atlanticum*.

John kept to his own area this year and comments that he found only single flowers on many of his finds. He feels the dry summer has left its toll. His star plants were Mediterranean Nettle *Urtica membranacea* and Hoary Plantain *Plantago media*. The latter is only the third record of this plant in Tower Hamlets in 40 years. However, John was the only member to spot Common Amaranth *Amaranthus retroflexus* and Skullcap *Scutellaria galericulata* and the last time his Warty-cabbage *Bunias orientalis* was seen was 1995.

Christina is a new member and this is her first Hunt which, according to my records, is a first list from Northamptonshire. She thoroughly enjoyed herself. Recording within six km from her home and slipping into various habitats, she says that Bristly Oxtongue *Helminthotheca echioides* was everywhere. At this time of the year the flowers on Thyme-leaved Speedwell *Veronica serpyllifolia* were so tiny making it difficult to identify but Christina got there in the end. Her highlight of the Hunt was Blue Fleabane *Erigeron acer* as she had never seen it before.

Due to the damp season and lack of frost Pauline says she has recorded more flowers than ever before on this Hunt. Two plants not seen before are Bithynian Vetch *Vicia bithynica* and Yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata* which increased her score. Some 'old faithfuls' were Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, Greater Celandine *Chelidonium majus* and Ivy-leaved Toadflax *Cymbalaria muralis*.

This is Julie's last year as Autumn Hunt Secretary and she would like to thank you all for your support and for your kind remarks via your e-mails. Many members have been sending in their lists since 2001, the year she took over. Ian is also standing down as the One Week Hunt Secretary and expresses his thanks.



Bithynian
Vetch

Photo: Peter Llewellyn

JULIE CLARKE (Week Hunt)
AND IAN GREEN (One Day Hunt)

From 2020 the Autumn One Day and Week Hunts are being amalgamated and Heather Colls will be responsible for collating your records. You can participate on as many days as you wish over the week. When you submit your records please can you indicate on how many days you were out in the field looking for plants in flower.

AUTUMN ONE DAY HUNT

SUDBURY, SUFFOLK—27TH OCTOBER 2019

What a strange year we have had weather-wise. So much for the predictions that we were going to duplicate the long heatwave of 2018.

The year has been one of variable weather patterns and seemingly alternating days of sunny and wet ones. Thankfully, this autumn one-day hunt was one of blue skies with warm sunshine, when not in the shade, but noticeably colder when one was. There were just four of us to take advantage of this lovely day and, although I know Sudbury quite well, it was good to see the area from a different angle and see the town from the River Stour and its associated meadows.

Any good hunt always starts in the car park and Sweet Violet *Viola odorata* and Great Mullein *Verbascum thapsus* were in the nearby plant beds. A flower now seen in increasing numbers at this time of the year is Narrow-leaved Ragwort *Senecio inaequidens*. Confusingly, the Ragwort species are now divided into two separate genera, *Senecio* and *Jacobaea*, not easily separated from one another by morphology, although *Jacobaea* has more than 1.5 to 2x the number of inner phyllaries/bracts to yellow ligules and *Senecio* has an equal number of each. (There is currently some discussion over this character - Ed.)

This year I think that there has been an explosion in the numbers of Bristly Oxtongue *Helminthotheca echioides* and it has had a long flowering period too. The Speedwells featured well today with Germander *Veronica*

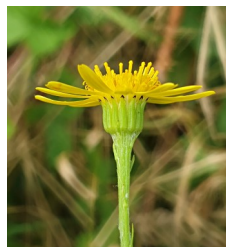
chamaedrys, Common *V. persica*, Slender *V. filiformis*, Thyme-leaved *V. serpyllifolia* and Brooklime *V. beccabunga*.

There were many people about taking in this lovely day and several canoeists on the river where we found a lone purple-flowered Salsify *Tragopogon porrifolius* on the bank, together with a few late-flowering grasses. A stroll through the town's streets rewarded us with some established garden escapes such as the yellow Californian Poppy *Eschscholzia californica*, the purples of Snapdragon *Antirrhinum majus* and Sowbread *Cyclamen hederifolium* and the pale pinks of Japanese Anemone *Anemone x hybrida* and Mexican Fleabane *Erigeron karvinskianus*.

Our final specimen was a very odd-looking Willowherb which seemed to have more Rosebay qualities about it than any other, but, when I got home to do some research, it could only be Rosebay Willowherb *Chamaenerion (formerly Chamerion) angustifolium*. A rewarding day with good company and a grand total of 84 species.

STEPHEN CLARKSON

Jacobaea vulgaris *Senecio squalidus*



Photos: Kevin Widdowson

BOOK REVIEW

Tom Curtis & Paul Whelan *The Wild Food Plants of Ireland – the complete guide to their recognition, foraging, cooking, history and conservation*. Orla Kelly Publishing (2019). Soft cover. €25, available from most Irish booksellers. In UK £28.99 from NHBS Books.

I'm sure many of us remember the heady pleasure of 1973 when Richard Mabey's *Food for Free* appeared raising enthusiasms which have never died away. I was camping with friends, travelling in horse-drawn caravans and, clutching our first copy, we were determined to 'live off the land'. This ideal did waver a bit after three or four days on a subsistence diet of Hogweed sprouts (quite good, boiled when still in the spathe) and there was a shameful wave of excitement when we went through a village with a chip shop! But in spite of this kind of experience and mistakes like confusing Rock Samphire *Crithmum maritimum* (only remotely palatable in a fierce vinegar pickle) with Marsh Samphires, *Salicornia* species which are delicious with the most delicate fish dishes, the first years when foraging became popular did give an enduring love of this long-neglected relict behaviour from our prehistoric past.

The arrival of this Irish book immediately interested me. I have worked for and with one of the authors, Tom Curtis, surveying rare and threatened species, and shared many meals with him from a picnic on a Kerry mountain top consisting of one tin of sardines hacked open with a pen knife, to superlative feasts in homes and restaurants, so I knew that the food element would be thoroughly well treated. Paul Whelan was better known to me for work on Lichens, but he is also famous in the

world of computer applications and their use in book design. Their collaboration has produced a remarkable work.

I could write enough on its excellences to fill an entire issue of the magazine, but space being strictly rationed I would ask readers to study the subtitle, because this gives the scope of the book. Each heading is covered in the species accounts, which are admirably clear and authoritative. Please don't think the book might be parochial, not interesting to UK botanists – these plants are widespread and their treatment here is relevant in any of the countries. An important part of the assessment of each species comes from an aspect of botany which I know far too little about. This concerns plants which the authors (and other European authorities) classify as CWRs – Crop Wild Relatives – wild plants which hold genetic characters which may have contributed to the bred and selected cultivated varieties we grow today and, most importantly, preserve genes which may save our food sources in the future. Most of the world is fed now by a frighteningly small number of seed strains and to keep production going in our rapidly changing physical conditions we may have desperate need of the strengths and disease resistance of some of the anciently used plants.

Ireland has been forward in research

into and conservation of genetic resources and the Introduction summarises many of these initiatives, discussing the importance to this work of global seed banks – fascinating information most often only brought to our notice by brief comments in the gardening or conservation press. As well as such specialist material the defining quality of the book also comes from the combined knowledge and experience of the authors as both acknowledged foodies and writers of things like the first ‘Irish Red Data Book’. Their real love of and respect for wild plants shines throughout. It’s a book written from the heart as well as from a dedicated desire to save what we can of the natural world. One of the ways to do this, of course, is to make more people aware of our flora and what threatens it, which is why this book, with its wide range of interest, is much more important than just acting as an update of *Food for Free*. Before my word count runs right out of control I’ll describe just one sample species account.

At the beginning of the alphabet A is for *Asparagus* and this drew me in immediately as the ‘proper’ wild *Asparagus A. prostratus* was a top target species of my first Threatened Plant work in Ireland. It’s a rare survivor round the coasts of Ireland and England and picking it to eat in either country is a big legal and ethical no no! But here we have its description contrasted with that of the naturalised Garden *Asparagus* clearly laid out, with advice on how to grow the garden variety as well as buying bundles, so treats are definitely possible. The History notes in each species account are riveting – it

seems that *Asparagus* seeds have been found in Palaeolithic sites 20,000 years old, as well as the Romans freezing it in alpine snows to cook for the feast of Epicurus! I once heard a talk by an archaeologist on seeds found in Viking lavatories in Dublin and was thrilled because they included *Prunus* stones and Co Wexford, where I was working, has many puzzling varieties in its most ancient hedges. This kind of abstruse information about familiar plants is irresistible and an appealing part of the book and gives a fascinating depth to uses which can be still current. Some plants are familiar to cooks and foragers – Blackberries, Cranberries, Sea Beet, Sloes – but some are more surprising such as Common Mallow and various vetches. The Culinary Index is inspiring – Nettle & Ricotta pizza, Hawthorn & Beetroot salad or Sea Buckthorn ice-cream anyone?

As well as the fun parts with history, uses and ideas for exciting meals each species account has a check box where all the serious conservation data is summarised, including Conservation Status, Economic Potential and whether it is in a gene bank and, if so, which one(s). This book, like the BSBI publications *Threatened Plants* (2017) and *Grassland Plants* (2019), is an invaluable tool for land managers and workers in practical conservation.

Finally, it’s beautifully produced and illustrated, a pleasure to handle, and I hope will reach the hands of many members wherever they live.

RO FITZGERALD

OBITUARY

VINCENT JONES-1947-2020

Vincent Jones was an eminent botanist known throughout the country for his knowledge and love of plants. He was a long-time member of The Wild Flower Society and took over as recorder for the BSBI for VC 62 (N.E. Yorkshire) in 2006 along with Mike Yates.

He lived in Ingleby Greenhow, North Yorkshire where his father had been the local school headmaster. After studying for a Maths degree at York University, he spent his working career teaching 'A' level Maths in a local sixth form college. Apart from botany his other main interests were cricket and bridge. He would always be tuned into his radio when we were out if there was any cricket being played anywhere in the world.

Vincent was a member of the Cleveland Naturalist's Field Club and often accompanied Ian Lawrence on field trips for local botany groups. He also helped lead the NE Yorks Botany Group which has indoor winter meetings and summer field trips often devoted to updating the VC 62 records.

WFS field trips took him to places as far apart as Guernsey and the North of Scotland and he led many field trips for both the WFS and the BSBI, especially to Upper Teesdale, where he was an expert on the local flora. His interest in Hawkweeds started with his contact with the *Hieracium* Study group which led to a lifelong passion which included finding all of Pugsley's old records from a

hundred years earlier, often in the same sites as originally recorded. He made pressings of all his specimens and his extensive herbarium is now in Leeds Museum. This interest in Hawkweeds resulted in his book '*Yorkshire Hawkweeds*' published in 2014. He has now had a species named after him, *Hieracium jonesianum* and the names of three other species which he discovered have recently been published.

After taking on the job of recorder in 2006 Vincent rarely left the county, in fact he had no passport or mobile phone and would have nothing to do with modern technology. When not out botanising he spent a lot of time in his garden where he grew all his own fruit and vegetables. He never had a meal or a drink out and was almost self-sufficient. In winter, as a competent bryologist, he spent time recording mosses and liverworts.

Recently Vincent had been making a study of the flora of the South Gare and was helped by Dave Barlow who joined him as joint recorder in 2018. He was a very able botanist who could identify and name Brambles *Rubus* spp., Dandelions *Taraxacum* spp. and Hawkweeds *Hieracium* spp. and was always willing to help any budding botanist. He will be greatly missed.

Many thanks to Mike Yates and Dave Barlow for their help and information.

JUDITH COX