

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

All of you must be rejoicing that we may be freer to wander and look for your favourite wild flowers as the restrictions of lockdown are gradually lifted. I hope that our members are in good health and that by the time you read this we will be able to roam freely.

Today, as I write, my day has been occupied by the genus *Oxalis*. A welcome sign of spring is the amount of Wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella* in flower in the Devon woodlands where I have been walking recently. Gardening today I have been trying to remove quantities of Procrumbent Yellow-sorrel *Oxalis corniculata*, one of the most pernicious weeds in borders and amongst the stones on the pathways. If you leave a small piece of root it shoots again. The latter is an introduced species while Wood-sorrel is our only native species of *Oxalis*.

Oxalis is a large genus of over 850 species around the world but mainly in southern Africa and tropical South America. Several other species have become naturalized here so that Stace's Flora edition four lists 15.

Wood-sorrel was named *acetosella* because of the sour taste of the leaves due to the oxalic acid content. When I was in the Falkland Islands, I was interested to encounter another pink-flowered species, *Oxalis enneaphylla*. The local name of this species is Scurvy Grass or Vinaigrette because the leaves are also sour tasting. In former days this was an important food for visiting

sailors to avoid scurvy. This species is sometimes grown in the UK in rock gardens where it can form attractive clumps.

The trifoliate leaves of Wood-sorrel are often passed around as Shamrock on St Patrick's Day, but the true identification of Shamrock is thought to be Lesser Trefoil *Trifolium dubium* rather than Wood-sorrel.



Another species of *Oxalis* that I have encountered grows high in the Andean mountains and is the oca *Oxalis tuberosa*. As its name implies it has swollen tuberous roots and is much cultivated as a root vegetable by Andean people. It has been introduced to Europe as a competitor for potato, but has never caught on in any quantity here. However, it has in New Zealand, where it is quite popular and is called the NZ yam. A former doctoral student of mine, Stephen King, studied the use of oca

Photo: Anne Kell

in detail and wrote his thesis about its use and importance in the Andes. Oca is the Spanish name for this species, but in the local Quechua language it is known as Uqa.

Another species that I have encountered is the attractive bright yellow-flowered Bermuda-buttercup *Oxalis pes-caprae*. This species is from South Africa rather than Bermuda and is sometimes a weed

of arable land. Linnaeus, when he described this species, was obviously reminded of a goat's foot hence the epithet *pes-caprae*.

I think that is all you need to know about *Oxalis*, but you may encounter some of the naturalised species listed by Stace as you get back into the field again.

GHILLEAN PRANCE

EDITORIAL



Photo: Dennis Kell

I have just had a wonderful day at Kew Gardens, which never disappoints. This year the theme is 'The secret world of plants' and one of the focuses for this is a series of installations by Vaughn Bell called Plantscapes. In this he has taken six habitats, each inspired by the UK's priority habitats in the Biodiversity Action Plan, which addresses threatened species and habitats. The six landscapes are sand dunes, moorland, marsh and meadow, hedgerow, woodland and green

roofs. These are imaginatively presented on a series of tiered platforms and planted up with species associated with each habitat. It's lovely to be able to view the plants at eye level. If you have the opportunity this summer I recommend a visit.

This issue also covers the many plants that members have discovered over the last year and I hope you enjoy reading of their explorations. The 1km square study has proved particularly popular as people were more restricted to their home territories and I hope members will continue to add to these squares once we are able to travel further afield. As so many of the reports mention, individuals have been surprised how often they have walked past plants 'in their own backyard' and have only really noticed and recorded them once they have concentrated on a small patch.

ANNE KELL

**Copy date for Autumn magazine
1st August, 2021**

NOTICES

THE MEMBERS' WEEKEND INCLUDING AGM, 2021

Friday 3rd September to Monday 6th September at Margam Discovery Centre, Margam Park, Port Talbot, SA13 2UA

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Due to Covid, no decisions about the AGM can be made until information regarding the regulations for Wales becomes available, hopefully by the end of July. At that point, in consultation with the Field Studies Council, the Committee will decide whether the event seems feasible.

If it does, three weeks beforehand, in the middle of August, in line with the current Government Guidelines, the Committee will review the situation. If permitted, the AGM will go ahead only if we feel that it will be safe; members need to be aware that, by attending, they are taking responsibility for their own safety and at their own risk.

If the event is cancelled, we will hold a Zoom AGM, followed by a talk on Saturday 4th September.

Members who have booked to attend will be contacted about these decisions at each stage and information will be posted on the WFS website and social media platforms.

See insert for full details of the Provisional Programme and booking information, which are also on the website, together with a copy of the Treasurer's Annual Report.

Bookings by the 20th August 2021 to: Sheila Wynn, 17 Southfield Drive, West Bradford, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 4TU.

Email: wfs.gensec@gmail.com or Phone: 01200 425813.

Mobile number for use at the event only: 07875 284334

CANCELLATION OF THE 2021 PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

As the final decision on whether to hold the AGM will not be made until the middle of August, we have reluctantly decided to cancel this year's photo competition. If the weekend does go ahead, there will still be the usual 'Shoot and Show' competition.

Changes to Branch secretary

After providing sterling service to the WFS over many years both as Valhalla secretary from 2003 to 2018 and then as Parnassus 2 secretary since then, Ted Pratt has decided to stand down. We can't thank him enough for all that he has contributed to the Society and wish him a happy retirement from these duties but have no doubt that he will continue botanising. We are fortunate that Paul Harmes has agreed to take over as Parnassus 2 secretary from this year.

Yorkshire WT leaflet

The North York Moors National Park, in conjunction with the Field Studies Council, has recently produced a laminated card showing the common species to be found within the Park. This includes two sections on plants and it's production was part funded by WFS.

Photo library

The development of our new website proceeds apace and to make it eye-catching we are trying to build up a bank of stunning photos of plants, especially ones in flower, together with some images of people botanising. If you have any pictures that might fit the bill, please could you send them to Helen Dignum (wfs.instagrams@gmail.com).

1KM SQUARE STUDY 2020

For 2020 José Gibbs set aside her 2019 study monad in order to choose a monad with greater accessibility during lockdown. This monad, to the extent that it is not sea, comprises north-facing chalk cliff, coastal grassland (both mown and unmaintained), undercliff habitat, beach, public gardens, residential streets and a railway line. It lacks freshwater habitat and woodland, although there is tree growth along the railway banks. José recorded 90 plants in this first season. The beach promenade provided Sea-purslane *Atriplex portulacoides*, with Common Broomrape *Orobanché minor* and Sea Fern-grass *Catapodium marinum* at the undercliff. Roadsides accounted for plants such as Sea Mouse-ear *Cerastium diffusum* and Annual Wall-rocket *Diplotaxis*

muralis. There were 29 species which were not part of the county's previous records for this monad.

GEOFFREY KITCHENER

I chose Petridgewood Common, which is to the north-west of my home, because it contains contrasting habitats. This monad consists of two parts, a smaller section with secondary woodland, some meadows and a cricket pitch and a larger section which is an old common, infrequently mown and including a ditch near the roadside. Interesting species I saw here were Sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, Quaking-grass *Briza media*, Common Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and Lesser Spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*.

Name	Branch	Monad	Location	New	Total 2020
Jose Gibbs	A	TR3370	Westbrook, Margate		90
Priscilla Nobbs	M	TQ2747	Petridgewood, Surrey		119
	M	TQ2846	Salfords, Surrey	25	289
Judith Cox	N1	NZ4211	S. edge of Teesside		171
Anthony & Rita	N1	SE2338	Horsforth, Leeds		241
Grainger	N1	SE2339	Horsforth, Leeds		207
Jesse Tregale	N1	SE1634	Bradford, W Yorks		436
	N1	SE1635	Bradford, W Yorks		485
Susan & Thomas	N1	SE1137	Bingley, W Yorks		172
Simcock					
Barbara Allen	N3	SJ5391	St. Helens, Liverpool		235
Peter Jepson	N3	SD6722	Darwen, Lancs		344
Jean Richardson	N3	SJ6601	Leigh, Gt. Manchester		70
Graeme Kay	N3	SJ8281	Wilmslow, Cheshire		188
	N3	SJ9884	Stockport, Cheshire	4	206
Sheila Wynn	N3	SD7444	West Bradford, Lancs		226
Barbara Spence	O	SU7895	Stokenchurch, Bucks		218
Diana Stroud	O	TQ0179	Langley, Berks		260
Sarah Beetham	P	ST6478	Hambrook, Bristol		166
Monica Davis	P	ST6773	Warmley, Bristol		68
Pauline Wilson	P	ST7481	Old Sodbury, S. Gloucs		190
Anne Hercock	P	SO5104	Beacon Hill, Monmouth		59
	P	SO5105	Beacon Hill, Monmouth		41
John Martin	P	SJ5011	Shrewsbury		378
Caroline Giddens	P	SS9745	Minehead, Somerset		317
Jackie Ellis	U	SO9783	Halesowen, W. Midlands	14	299
	U	SO9784	Halesowen, W. Midlands		220
Jackie Hardy	U	SP0767	Winyates East, Redditch		132
	U	SP0867	Winyates Green, Redditch		163
Judith Lee	U	SK2956	Cromford, Derbyshire	53	195
Richard Pykett	U	SK5742	Sherwood, Nottingham	7	142
Mary & Claire	U	SK3548	Belper, Derbyshire	20	256
Smith	U		Belper, Derbyshire		160
Irene Wilkinson	U	SK3666	S. Wingerworth, Derbys		16
	U	SK3667	W. Wingerworth, Derbys		120
	U	SK3766	S. Wingerworth, Derbys		37
	U	SK3767	Wingerworth, Derbyshire		81
	U	SK3866	S. Wingerworth, Derbys		36
	U	SK3867	Wingerworth, Derbyshire		28
Anne & Dennis Kell	Y	TM1141	Copdock, Suffolk	6	232
	Y	TM1142	Washbrook, Suffolk		217
	Y	TM1042	Washbrook, Suffolk		82

My second monad is mainly urban and industrial, sandwiched between the A23 and the Brighton mainline railway. It includes waste-ground, grassy verges, a stream and some woodland areas with ancient indicator species such as Violet Helleborine *Epipactis purpurata* and Wild Service-tree *Sorbus torminalis*. In 2019 I recorded 264 plants and added an additional 25 in 2020. The plants I enjoyed seeing most were Sweet Spurge *Euphorbia dulcis*, shining in the sun, Brooklime *Veronica beccabunga*, Pignut *Conopodium majus*, Spindle *Euonymus europaeus*, Sharp-leaved Fluellen *Kickxia elatine* and Creeping Yellow-cress *Rorippa sylvestris*.

PRISCILLA NOBBS

Monad NZ 4211 is on the extreme southern edge of the Teesside conurbation. It is mainly suburban roads with some green space and the area around a prison which includes a large area of Winter Heliotrope *Petasites pyrenaicus* which, as its previous name *fragrans* suggests, you can smell before you see it. Another surprise near here was a long stretch of Few-flowered Garlic *Allium paradoxum* along a road verge, but when I went back to check on it a couple of weeks later the verge had been mown. We grow a lot of cornfield weeds in the garden, originally from seed provided by the Cornfield Flowers Project and some reappear every year between paving stones and in tubs, but it was a nice surprise to find Weasel's-snout *Misopates orontium* growing in a flower border about 100 metres up the road. Other than that the plants found were what you would expect on urban pavements and old hedges but

it gave local walks an added interest.

Anthony and Rita did their two local monads as part of the Bradford Botany Group survey. Their first monad SE 2338 included woodland, meadows, an area of wasteland, which was formerly a school site, and a few urban roads. They were pleased to find Three-cornered Garlic *Allium triquetrum* in the wood and Scarlet Flax *Linum grandiflorum* and Shrub Ragwort *Brachyglottis x jubar* as pavement weeds. Narrow-leaved Hebe *Veronica salicifolia* was growing on the old school site. Kamchatka Stonecrop *Phedimus kamtschaticus* var. *ellacombeanus* was another nice find.

Monad SE2329 is an area with woodland, meadows and a pond as well as some urban roads. In the pond Greater Pond-sedge *Carex riparia*, white double-flowered Cuckooflower *Cardamine pratensis* and Coral Spurge *Euphorbia corallioides* were growing. Common Fiddleneck *Amsinckia micrantha* was abundant and both Green and Grey Field-speedwells *Veronica agrestis* and *V. polita* were on the sandy wasteland. Salmonberry *Rubus spectabilis* was another new find to add to their personal lists.

Jesse did two monads in the area of Leeds where he lives. SE 1634 is mainly urban with a small nature reserve. Mizuna *Brassica rapa* var. *niposinica* growing in a raised bed on the roadside was confusing so was sent away for confirmation. Young saplings of Manna Ash *Fraxinus ornus* had self-seeded in scrub and there was a good population of Bee Orchids *Ophrys apifera* on railway sidings. Ten different *Cotoneasters*

and 13 species of *Geranium* were growing in the area. It is now possible with the help of Sell & Murrell to distinguish the different varieties of Bindweeds and *Calystegia silvatica* var. *quinquepartita* was growing along with a nice Common Mallow *Malva sylvestris* var. *mauritiana*. SE 1635 is also mainly urban but there is access to part of a Millstone Grit quarry. Interesting plants in the quarry included both Cudweeds, Common *Filago germanica* and Small *Logfia minima*, Heath Groundsel *Senecio sylvaticus* and Sand Spurrey *Spergularia rubra*, which has just reappeared after being lost for some years. Again there were lots of cotoneasters. A disturbed area by a school had Wild Pansy *Viola tricolor*, Field Pansy *V. arvensis* and their hybrid *V. x contempta* and on another soil heap there were 2 of the rarer clovers, Clustered Clover *Trifolium glomeratum* and Rough Clover *T. scabrum*. Another interesting Clover was a variety of White Clover *T. repens* var. *proliferum* which was found in pavement grass. This is an unusual plant where the flowers elongate and are replaced by small leaves and is a bit of a monstrosity according to Sell & Murrell (S&M3p44). Jesse says it is not rare but is unusual. He does come across it occasionally and thinks it may possibly be caused by mites.

An excellent total found in both these squares and as Jesse said he found far more plants than he expected and it was therefore more interesting.

SE 1137 is Susan and Tom's local monad which they covered at the same time as they were doing their flower lists for their Diaries. It is a suburban area, which also has sports



Photo: Jesse Tregale

fields, a section of the River Aire and a small area of deciduous woodland. Their most pleasing finds were Green Figwort *Scrophularia umbrosa* near the river and big patches of Large Bitter-cress *Cardamine amara* in damp grassland. A hybrid sedge *Carex acuta* x *C. nigra* was an interesting find and an old wall nearby had Black Spleenwort *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum* growing on it. They are very pleased to have Common Twayblade *Neottia ovata* growing in their own lawn.

JUDITH COX

It has been encouraging to receive four more members' 1km square recordings especially as they have enjoyed the exercise. This is certainly the way to get to know the plants in your area.

Barbara started recording her monad, which covers part of a former mining area, now returned back to nature

and is a beautiful Country Park. She has led meetings here where unusual plants have been discovered, one being Elecampane *Inula helenium* which she has recorded. Field Pansy *Viola arvensis* was spotted in a broad bean field and, in a hedge, known to be there for over 50 years, was Crab Apple *Malus sylvestris*.

Peter had been commissioned to survey some local hay meadows, half of which fell in his home monad. In addition, his daily lock-down walk looped around much of the monad, so he chose this square, recording in some lovely woodland and the fringe of Darwen Moor. His favourite find was a flowering shoot of Bitter-vetch *Lathyrus linifolius* in a field hardly a metre from where Peter had last seen it some 40 years ago. Other nice records were Melancholy Thistle *Cirsium heterophyllum* and Floating Water-plantain *Luronium natans*. The native Lady's-mantles *Alchemilla* spp. were not faring so well, but Large-toothed Lady's-mantle *A. subcrenata* had increased. The woodland produced Upland Enchanter's-nightshade *Circaea x intermedia* (*C. alpina* x *C. lutetiana*) in shaded areas and Marsh Hawk's-beard *Crepis paludosa* in flushes and by stream sides.

This was Graeme's second year and he recorded in a different monad which covers the Lindow Moss area of Wilmslow. This is where, in 1984, the preserved body of 'Lindow Man' was found. Fortunately Graeme was only looking for plants. His interesting finds included the hybrid Hazel *Corylus avellana* x *C. maxima*, Agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria* var. *major*, this being the larger variety

with stems up to 1.5 metres, Des Etang's St John's-wort *Hypericum perforatum* x *H. maculatum* and Climbing Corydalis *Ceratocarpus claviculata*. Graeme also had four more plants to add to his previous monad.

The area of Jean's monad covers Lilford Park which includes woodland, stream sides and a pond, among many other habitats. Her finds included Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana*, Lady-fern *Athyrium filix-femina*, Field Woodrush *Luzula campestris* and Black Medick *Medicago lupulina*. Jean tells me she has really missed the meetings and needs field trips to help her with identification.

Sheila's square conveniently covers most of her village plus surrounding lanes and river bank. Observations in her garden were New Zealand Bitter-cress *Cardamine corymbosa* (I agree with Sheila, it is a pretty little plant) and the entire-leaved form of Prickly Sowthistle *Sonchus asper* var. *integrifolius*, which I find is common here. A plant which appeared two years ago and is still there is Keeled Garlic *Allium carinatum*. Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina*, was a nice find growing in the hedgerow along with the variety of Lords and Ladies *Arum maculatum* var. *latreltii* which has a yellow spadix. Another find was Fairy Foxglove *Erinus alpinus* and this is really prevalent in the Clitheroe area, in fact I first recorded it there in 1988.

From reading members' recordings all have enjoyed this exercise and even found new plants for their Diaries, so perhaps more of you will take a monad up this coming year.

Purple and white forms of Fairy
Foxglove taken in the Burren



Photo: Anne Kell

Whatever, keep safe, keep well and
keep smiling.

JULIE CLARKE

Barbara's monad in Stokenchurch had a variety of habitats. This is an area with villages, lanes, one main road, pasture and paddock fields, a village hall along with playground and playing field, one relatively small unmanaged chalk grassland area, now scrubbing up, along with some woodland and plenty of hedgerows. There is no arable land and, excluding one small, inaccessible, overgrown and often dry pond, there are no aquatic habitats. Both Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis* and Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera* were found, along with some nice woodland species.

Diana's monad is largely suburban, with a small group of shops, two

small parks, a train station, a length of canal, and some business parks. Many of her plants are presumably garden escapes, such as Greater Honeywort *Cerinthe major* and Elephant-ears *Bergenia crassifolia*, but she also has Yellow-juiced Poppy *Papaver lecoqii* and various nice waterside plants.

ROGER HEATH-BROWN

When it became clear that field meetings and most personal botanical travels would be impossible in 2020, I did wonder if the 1km Square Study might come into its own and certainly this has proved to be so for Branch P. Lists came in from six members, all of whom commented on the pleasure generated by botanising so intently really close to home. There would have been seven submissions, but my own effort lost impetus for unavoidable reasons and will be taken up again in 2021!

Sarah's square is in South Gloucestershire, near Yate. It includes a stretch of the River Frome and has parts of a local ring-road which adds interestingly to the range of habitat. Her list therefore included nice native plants such as Sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, Ragged-Robin *Silene flos-cuculi* and Small Teasel *Dipsacus pilosus*, which flourishes in my garden but feels like a great rarity when I see it in the wild. Sarah also lists interesting casuals such as Gallant-soldier *Galinsoga parviflora* and Round-leaved Crane's-bill *Geranium rotundifolium* which always seems to have had really erratic vectors of establishment – widely distributed in Bristol for instance, but

rare enough in Ireland to have been on the Red Data list. She found the exercise 'very worthwhile' and looks forward to adding more.

Monica had a very difficult year with a badly fractured ankle, so she couldn't really get into her square till late summer and autumn. However she has chosen one in Warmley Forest Park, near Bristol, which sounds a fascinating area with parts of an old railway line and quite a range of habitats. An exciting find was Marsh-mallow *Althaea officinalis*, and Guelder-rose *Viburnum opulus* and Sweet-briar *Rosa rubiginosa* indicate a nice shrubby element. Monica keeps in touch with Pauline Wilson who ensures that significant records are passed on to the BSBI Recorder, showing that these close studies can contribute to much wider botanical data sets.

Pauline's own square, near Old Sodbury, manages to have a wonderful range of habitats. She mentions grassland, arable, road verges, 'railway components and bank' and, most interestingly, a piece of the famous old commons which are still a prominent feature of the area. This added Pepper-saxifrage *Silau silaus*, an inconspicuous but charming umbellifer which becomes ever rarer as ancient grasslands are lost or under-grazed. Other species found were Betony *Betonica officinalis* and Salad Burnet *Poterium sanguisorba* also suggesting how rich grasslands here must have been.

Anne chose two squares because she says that large parts of both are 'inaccessible and/or under trees' and feature rocky and slippery valley

sides. Both are near Beacon Hill in Monmouth and the project looks like being on-going. Anne writes that she 'hasn't covered every part as in places the very narrow paths would not allow for social distancing' and she did not embark on ferns in 2020. In spite of the difficulties, the results were most pleasing. One square has a path between dry stone walls, running through a meadow and into a network of woodland rides. Part is managed by Gwent Wildlife Trust and digging along one of the paths allowed a thrilling appearance of the very rare Upright Spurge *Euphorbia stricta* (which I and most Wye Valley botanists prefer still to call 'Tintern Spurge!'). This used to be much more frequent when woodlands round here were more intensively managed, with logs being dragged out by horses or tractors which kept the paths well churned up. This annual spurge has an efficient seed bank and pops up after disturbance to flourish until perennial vegetation becomes dominant again, so the appearance in Anne's square after the work follows a classic pattern. Her second square has woodland edges, a heathy area and two ponds which added some different nice plants including the delicate Climbing Corydalis *Ceratocarpus claviculata*, Common Cow-wheat *Melampyrum pratense* and Lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*.

John chose a square near home in SE Shrewsbury, and really went for it, doing an all-taxa count which totalled 1250 species 'with a few micro-moths and other insects which might be added'. His square is in a 'pleasant valley with bits of wet woodland and some meadow and pasture', though he notes that these habitats have low

diversity and none of the woodland is old. Nearby road verges and 'garden escapes' helped the final plant total to 378, which is pretty wonderful! I was impressed by two good Fumitory records, Tall Ramping-fumitory *Fumaria bastardii* 'in an alley' and Purple Ramping-fumitory *F. purpurea* – a single plant in a neighbour's garden where it is sometimes abundant. A beautiful alien was Argentine Needle-grass *Nassella tenuissima*, which had seeded from neighbouring gardens into roadside gutters. John also recorded Bird Cherry *Prunus padus*, coming into flower on a Local Nature Reserve. This shrub is by no means uncommon except in the South West but it always gives me special pleasure when I see it as it seems a sign that vegetation is becoming more northern and I'm on an adventure!

Caroline also reached the high total of 317, choosing a square on the outskirts of Minehead in West Somerset which made the best of all available habitats in this part of town. She kindly sent in a full-page scan of the OS map, and as Minehead is one of my shopping towns as well as a good botany area (with plenty of teashops for tired square-bashers when meetings are allowed!) I was able to visualise exactly where she had found things. Minehead has a remarkable microclimate, something like that of the Cornish Riviera, so I didn't get a shock even when I found Cabbage-palm *Cordyline australis* on her list – such things really do self-seed in the streets here. Because Butlins and some of the trading estates are built on former wet salt-grazing fields it is possible to see Sea

Club-rush *Bolboschoenus maritimus* growing in a ditch almost outside Morrison's car park and the abundance of ruderal habitat enabled Caroline to add six Willowherbs and six Docks to a fascinatingly varied list.

These results are really good because of the interest the studies have given to members at a time when we all need positive pleasures to focus on and because of the really interesting results which are adding to county and national records. I hope that even more members may find satisfaction and mental sustenance by starting this exercise. Even when the lists get comprehensive the 'find just one more species' challenge remains enjoyable and starting more squares which fit into your neighbourhood might always be possible?

RO FITZGERALD

We have been impressed by the valuable contribution that our members' plant lists have made to local 1Km square (monad) recording. Most of us live in built-up areas where either botanists never venture, or they visit the only interesting bit with a nature reserve, a pond or something similar and the remainder of the area is ignored. A number of the plants recorded by Branch U in both years are either new for the area or have not been re-found since the 1990s, or even earlier.

Despite achieving a higher total in her original square than any of the rest of us Jackie Ellis managed to make further additions this year. A notable record was Henbit Dead-nettle *Lamium amplexicaule*, not updated

since 1988. Looking at Jackie's new square the variety of plants recorded accounts for her good numbers. Garden escapes, grassland weeds, ferns, sedges, plants of woodland and wet areas are all there. Spreading Mouse-ear-hawkweed *Pilosella flagellaris*, Wood Melick *Melica uniflora* and Great Horsetail *Equisetum telmateia* are typical examples. One area used to be a tip many years ago and Jackie describes this as absolutely full of colour from all the wild flowers in the summer.

Jackie Hardy cheered us up no end by admitting that she had walked past House Holly-fern *Cyrtomium falcatum* in her home square for years without paying it any attention. This proves the worth of the 1km square study in focusing our attention and gave Jackie a new record for the main Diary as well. Her monads are quite similar, being urban housing estates with small grass areas but she comments on the different varieties afforded by one square having shops with car parking. Very often the road gutters and surrounding car park areas are sprayed off, but last year, fortunately, they were not. Here Jackie was pleasantly surprised to find Fern-grass *Catapodium rigidum*. We were pleased with her Keeled-fruited Cornsalad *Valerianella carinata* because she confirms that she has carefully checked the fruit for identification purposes.

Judith's stand-out find for the year was Narrow-leaved Bitter-cress *Cardamine impatiens*. Designated as RR, 'scarce' in Stace, she was delighted to find it in her home monad. A number of her new records were of garden escapes which frequently find a foothold in the

drystone walls of her village and in pavement cracks. Peach-leaved Bellflower *Campanula persicifolia* and Greater Quaking-grass *Briza maxima* were two examples. It was surprising that Viper's-bugloss *Echium vulgare* also turned up by traffic lights at a busy T-junction as it is very sporadic in the county. Perhaps a casual brought in by one of the vehicles.



Viper's-bugloss

Every diarist seems to get at least one thing for both the monad and the main Diary. Richard had to wait until October to achieve his but then found two species within a couple of hundred yards of his home. These were Common Amaranth *Amaranthus retroflexus* and Apple-of-Peru *Nicandra physalodes*. It was interesting to see Goat's-beard *Tragopogon pratensis* turn up as a pavement weed on Richard's list. In our area it appears mainly in grassland or on verges. Richard plans to do another square in 2021 which is a little more rural but not too far away. This should provide a

different suite of plants for fresh interest.

This year we included Pheasant's-tail *Anemanthele lessoniana*, better known to gardeners as *Stipa arundinacea*, with our original monad list. When we first saw it last year we were not sure it would survive amongst the other dumped garden rubbish, but it has settled in very nicely now. Our new square is not quite as rich as the first one as there are more fields given over purely to grazing. But, consequently, there are more hedgerows with different finds such as Hop *Humulus lupulus*, Wild Plum *Prunus domestica* and Black Bryony *Tamus communis*.

Irene's description of the geology of her squares is fascinating. No Derbyshire moors or limestone dales here! Basically it is sandstone with a lot of clay. The water-table is high and Irene writes from experience that a hole dug one day will be full of groundwater the next. The coal seams from the eastern coalfields also outcrop here and Irene sometimes finds thin slivers of coal in her garden. The presence of Marsh Marigold *Caltha palustris* and Marsh Ragwort *Jacobaea aquatica* illustrate the high water levels. Irene also recorded Lucerne *Medicago sativa* ssp. *sativa* and Sainfoin *Onobrychis viciifolia* which rarely occur outside the east of the county. The monad results were laid out in columns on a spreadsheet. This proved extremely interesting as it highlighted both what was commonest or rarest, and what was missing that should have been common! Irene's southern squares involve more walking and she intends doing more work on them this year.

MARY AND CLAIRE SMITH

Anne and Dennis certainly kept themselves busy during 2020 with their walks and exercising around a few monads in the Copdock and Washbrook area, near Ipswich in Suffolk. They revisited the Copdock monad and added another six species to their total. The village of Copdock actually sits on the junction of four monads which they are working their way around. The Spring and Summer of 2020 were superb weather-wise with plenty of sunshine and but not so good for the plants which started to dry up from July onwards such that there are fewer records for later on in the year. Washbrook 1 includes part of the village and adjacent fields, some pasture and some arable. One large pasture has a number of seasonal streams which provided plants such as Water-cress *Nasturtium officinale*. What I found interesting was looking at a printed out spreadsheet and to see what plants appeared to grow in every square such as Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata*, Cleavers *Galium aparine* and Common Field-speedwell *Veronica persica* and to compare with other species that they only found in one square e.g. Gorse *Ulex europaeus*, Small Nettle *Urtica urens* and Reflexed Stonecrop *Petrosedum rupestre*. And then there's always a cuckoo in the nest such as the sweetly scented Honeybells *Nothoscordum borbonicum*. But it all adds to the richness of recording, to explore the diversity of the area around you and to add to your own knowledge.

STEPHEN CLARKSON

BRANCH REPORTS FOR 2020

JUNIORS

Alice Coutts	154
Rachel Coutts	141
Carolina Dent	68

I was very happy that three junior members were still able to complete Diaries this year. Alice and Rachel started early, findings Daisies *Bellis perennis* in January, followed by Spring flowers such as Coltsfoot *Tussilago farfara* and Lesser Celandine *Ficaria verna* in March and April.

Alice found five new plants around Shetland this year, including two grasses, Sea Couch *Elymus athericus* and Timothy *Phleum pratense*, as well as Selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*, White Campion *Silene latifolia* and Blue Water-speedwell *Veronica anagallis-aquatica*. Her favourite plants this year included several water plants: Marsh Cinquefoil *Comarum palustre*, Water Forget-me-not *Myosotis scorpioides*, Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata* and Marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris*.

Rachel found 14 new species, including Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*, Marsh Horsetail *Equisetum palustre*, Water Mint *Mentha aquatica*, Tufted Forget-me-not *Myosotis laxa* and Bog Orchid *Hammarbya paludosa*. Her favourite flowers were Primroses *Primula vulgaris*, which she saw in late March.

Carolina found a nice selection of

plants around her London home during the Spring and added some different finds on a trip to the Lake District in August. New finds at home included Annual Meadow-grass *Poa annua*, Petty Spurge *Euphorbia peplus* and Salad Burnet *Sanguisorba minor*. In the Lake District, Carolina found her first fern, Maidenhair Spleenwort *Asplenium trichomanes*, as well as both Heather *Calluna vulgaris* and Bell Heather *Erica cinerea*. She ended the year back at home, finding Ivy *Hedera helix* in December.

I look forward to hearing what plants our junior members find this year. As ever, complete Diaries are wonderful but I'm also happy to receive letters, emails or pictures with your favourite plants or ID queries.

NICHOLA HAWKINS



Marsh-marigold

Photo: Peter Llewellyn

BRANCH A, KENT

Annual	New	Total
Jennifer Soan	81	81
Cumulative		
Jill Abery	46	343
José Gibbs	16	399
Pam Smith	10	369
Cumulative - Valhalla		
Doug Grant	2	1889
Sue Poyser	2	1926

Jennifer's first Diary came with 81 plants listed, mostly from the valley of the Great Stour upstream of Canterbury and so included attractive riverine plants such as Marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris*, Yellow Iris *Iris pseudacorus* and Purple-loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*. The valley is over-looked by Chartham Hatch Woods, which supplied her with records of ancient woodland indicator species such as Ramsons *Allium ursinum* and Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*.

Jill, having managed to get away to Surrey and North Cornwall in summer, added to her list Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera*, from the former, and some characteristic cliff-top plants from the latter, such as Sheep's-bit *Jasione montana* and English Stonecrop *Sedum anglicum*. North Cornish arable fields produced Corn Marigold *Glebionis segetum* and Corn Spurrey *Spergula arvensis*, both species becoming increasingly uncommon and vulnerable to the risk of extinction.

José listed 16 new records for her cumulative Diary, as well as

converting it to Stace 4 nomenclature. Some of the entries are routine gap-filling for overlooked taxa, but there were good coastal chalk plants such as Carline Thistle *Carlina vulgaris* and Ploughman's-spikenard *Inula conyzae* at Kingsdown. Also present here was Rock Sea-lavender *Limonium binervosum*, a name which it was absolutely right to use. The Sea-lavenders, however, do present a temptation to explore further given the number of microspecies with subtle distinctions and presence on limited stretches of coast; thus St Margaret's Bay Sea-lavender *Limonium sanctamargaritense* (has anyone actually recorded this apart from Peter Sell in naming it?) extends from its eponymous location to Kingsdown.

Apart from a sighting of Duke of Argyll's Teapant *Lycium barbarum* from Lymington, Pam's new records were from Kent or East Sussex. The presence of Blinks *Montia fontana* in her garden lawn showed just how wet the 2019/20 winter had been. Other plants noted on the Isle of Oxney included the fern Intermediate

Polypody *Polypodium interjectum* and also, on an arable headland, Corn Mint *Mentha arvensis*, now a county rare plant register species since it became nationally Near Threatened because of its rate of decline (Kentish losses comparing 1970-81 with 2010-20 are 45%).

New records from Doug Grant and Sue Poyser are identical: first, their discovery on waste ground near Strood of Twiggy Mullein *Verbascum virgatum* and secondly, the sighting of Copse-bindweed *Fallopia dumetorum* in some chestnut coppice east of Canterbury. The Copse-

bindweed had been regarded as extinct in Kent, but they were directed to its recently located site, where its last record before 2020 was in 1875. The species has a reputation of coming and going with the coppicing cycle, of which this was an extreme demonstration!

Although we have been left to our own devices without the usual range of botanical meetings in 2020, we have maybe got closer to our local plants and thank you to those who have sent in their records of them. Good health to all.

GEOFFREY KITCHENER

BRANCH M HAMPSHIRE, ISLE OF WIGHT, CHANNEL ISLANDS, SURREY, SUSSEX

Annual	New	Total
Leanne Baker		73
Richard Coomber		861
Sarah MacClennan		511
Cumulative – Valhalla		
Helen Dignum	58	817
Pippa Hyde	4	1680

Thank you to all who sent Diaries. I always enjoy looking through them as it is interesting to see the unusual plants you recorded.

Leanne botanised in the Southampton area, with most of her records coming from the Old Cemetery. It was an excellent effort with plants not in the Beginner's Diary also recorded such as Lesser Spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*, Burnet-saxifrage *Pimpinella*

saxifraga, Broad-leaved Willowherb *Epilobium montanum* and Enchanter's-nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*. Well done, a very good first Diary.

Richard found an amazing number of new species and is now looking forward to being in Valhalla next year. His most interesting finds were Asarabacca *Asarum europaeum* at Redlynch, Tree Groundsel *Baccharis halimifolia* at Mudeford, the very

attractive Woolly Thistle *Cirsium eriophorum*, Marsh Cinquefoil *Comarum palustre* and Dorset Heath *Erica ciliaris* at Arne. In the New Forest he found Marsh Gentian *Gentiana pneumonanthe*, Coral-necklace *Illecebrum verticillatum*, Bastard Balm *Melittis melissophyllum*, Pillwort *Pilularia globulifera* and Wild Gladiolus *Gladiolus illyricus*. At Pennington Marshes he spotted Golden-samphire *Limbarda crithmoides* and in Sussex he recorded Chinese Mallow *Malva verticillata*. Definitely a list to get everyone's mouth-watering. An incredible total - brilliant.

Sarah's Diary was rich in interesting species mostly from Hampshire and Hayling Island. For a first main Diary her total was an impressive achievement. Her most unusual plants were Garden Rocket *Eruca vesicaria*, Judas-Tree *Cercis siliquastrum*, in a hedge at Walderton, and Greater Chickweed *Stellaria neglecta* which, as its name suggests, is often overlooked. Another very unusual plant was *Tragopogon x mirabilis* (*T. pratensis* x *T. porrifolius*, Goat's-beard x Salsify). Apple-of- Peru *Nicandra physalodes* and Crimson Clover *Trifolium incarnatum* ssp. *incarnatum* were other good finds. A brilliant first main Diary, very well done.

Most of Helen's new records came from Hampshire and West Sussex. New finds included Bur Chervil *Anthriscus caucalis*, which is easily overlooked as it flowers early on dunes, Common Blue-sowthistle *Cicerbita macrophylla*, a plant quite common in the past which seems to have decreased in numbers, and

Greater Sea-kale *Crambe cordifolia*, a rare garden escape which I have yet to see! On Hayling Island she recorded Corsican Hellebore *Helleborus argutifolius* and Purple Viper's-bugloss *Echium plantagineum*. On a visit to Rye Harbour she noted Rottingdean Sea-lavender *Limonium hyblaicum* and at the AGM in 2017 in Wales (brought forward) she was shown Mountain Male-fern *Dryopteris oreades* and Bloody Crane's-bill *Geranium sanguineum*.

Pippa noticed a strange plant while travelling by bus. She quickly nipped off at the next stop and recorded Fern-leaf Yarrow *Achillea filipendulina*. What a very good find. Other plants were Kerria *Kerria japonica*, Japanese Anemone *Anemone x hybrida* (*A. hupehensis* x *vitifolia*) and Lenten-rose *Helleborus orientalis*.

GARETH BURNSNALL



Photo: Helen Dignum

BRANCH N1 YORKSHIRE, CLEVELAND, HUMBERSIDE

Cumulative - Valhalla	New	Total
Anthony & Rita Grainger	18	1707
Carmen Horner	39	1826
Kerry Morrison	50	599
Susan Simcock	111	1058
Thomas Simcock	114	1076
Mary Sorsby	83	830

Most of Anthony and Rita's new finds were in their local area around Bradford and were found when out surveying for their local monads. They were particularly pleased to find Salmonberry *Rubus spectabilis*, Coral Spurge *Euphorbia corallioides* and Sorbaria *Sorbaria sorbifolia*. On a visit to Somerset they were delighted to find Somerset Skullcap *Scutellaria altissima* identified with the help of the *Flora of Somerset*, written by Ian & Paul Green.

Carmen has had a busy year recording close to home for the Wharfedale Naturalists' Society where nice finds included Hedge Barberry *Berberis x stenophylla*, Tartarian Honeysuckle *Lonicera tatarica* and Upland Leptinella *Cotula alpina*. After lockdown ended, on a visit to Oldham, she saw Labrador-tea *Rhododendron groenlandicum* and in Upper Teesdale managed to find Starry Lady's-mantle *Alchemilla acutiloba*.

Kerry had an interesting year once field trips were allowed. On a return visit to the South Gare at Teesmouth, at a later date than last year's trip, she found Tunicflower *Petrorhagia*

saxifraga and Proliferous Pink *Petrorhagia prolifera* in flower and Horned-pondweed *Zannichellia palustris* in one of the ponds. Water-soldier *Stratiotes aloides*, Fringed Water-lily *Nymphoides peltata* and Nuttall's Waterweed *Elodea nuttallii* were all nice finds in the gravel pits at Hay-a-Park near Knaresborough.

Susan and Tom have sent in their lists for 2019 and 2020. They are members of the Bradford Botany Group and enjoyed field trips to both Yorkshire and Lancashire, especially the Ainsdale area and the Green Beach where they met Joshua Styles, an enthusiastic young botanist whose own channel can be accessed via the BSBI website. Typical coastal plants seen included Garden Angelica *Angelica archangelica*, Sea-holly *Eryngium maritimum* and the Water-dropworts *Oenanthe fistulosa* and *O. lachenalii*. The WFS field trip to Braunton Burrows in N.Devon in 2019 was also a good chance to see coastal plants again including the rare Sand Toadflax *Linaria arenaria* and Argentine Dock *Rumex cuneifolius*. A trip to the Malham area in 2019 found the hybrid Polypodies *Polypodium x mantoniae* and *P x*

shivasiae. Tom was also pleased to see Teesdale Violet *Viola rupestris* in flower at Arnside. Most of their species for 2020 were found in their local area when completing their monad lists.

Mary went on some walks in February with the Sorby Natural History Society where she saw Scarlet Oak *Quercus coccinea* and then spent most of the spring out by herself in the local area where she

found plants new for her list like Spring Sowbread *Cyclamen repandum* and Spring Squill *Scilla verna*. Later trips with Naturetrek to the Sefton Coast and the Don Valley were welcome breaks and Narrow-leaved Water-plantain *Alisma lanceolatum* and Bird's-nest Orchid *Neottia nidus-avis* were nice finds.

JUDITH COX

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

Cumulative - Valhalla

Elizabeth Elliott

Richard Friend

Kevin Storey

New

74

49

Total

417

290

Elizabeth produced an excellent record this year, particularly considering the restrictions we were under. It was most enjoyable to read her report and it brought back memories of places I had not visited for many years. Elizabeth explains that the total number of plants recorded in bloom this year was less than in 2019 - clearly related to the fact that she had not been far from home. Three nights in Scarborough led her to Filey and Bempton where she saw some early plants in bloom. No holiday this year, so just trips from home. The furthest west was Muker Meadows in June, a real treat, and to Cow Green in Spring. Too late for the Spring Gentians *Gentiana verna* but Elizabeth did see Autumn Gentian *Gentianella amarella* there in late August. The plant of the year for her

must be Coastal Gumplant *Grindelia stricta* found on the cliff face in Whitby in January as she was climbing up to Captain Cook's monument. This plant has been naturalised in Whitby for about 200 years. Originating on the western coast of North America, was it inadvertently brought back by Captain Cook?

Richard writes, 'Not much new this year although I did see a prodigious amount of Northern Hawk's-beard *Crepis mollis*, having been released from lockdown just in time to start field work on this species for an MSc dissertation. I am studying the phenology and ended up recording the flowering condition of several hundred plants over five sites every three days over six weeks. Not

Black Nightshade



particularly hairy or soft *C. mollis* can be tricky to separate from Marsh Hawk's-beard *C. paludosa* and a couple of the *Hieraciums*. I should be OK with it from now on though.

Thanks to our local WFS coordinator Lizzie Maddison for her generous help with this work.

In June/July, I took the opportunity to help with re-survey work on Widdybank Fell in Teesdale.

I did several hundred plots over eight days and found new sites for some of the Teesdale rarities, including Teesdale Violet *Viola rupestris*, Bird's Eye Primrose *Primula farinosa* and Spring Gentian *Gentiana verna*.

Kevin writes 'Three new records for the county this year. Black

Nightshade *Solanum nigrum* was one of these and I loved the unusual habitat in which it was thriving. Whilst going to see Bee Orchids *Ophrys apifera* at Bishop Middleham, it was nice to find the Dark-red Helleborines *Epipactis atrorubens*, although sadly not in flower. Bloody Crane's-bill *Geranium sanguineum* was also looking lovely. I really value these unexpected finds. The Midland Hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata*

provided some early excitement.

Looking at something and asking – "now, that looks a bit different" and being rewarded with a new find does it for me. Like, for instance, Bitter-vetch *Lathyrus linifolius* which seemed to be hiding along a rocky riverside path, or when a campion looked a bit odd but turned out to be White Campion *Silene latifolia* - no great rarity just nice to see. Same as realising that you've walked past - and in some cases over - things a thousand times and just blanked them out until that moment, as happened with me, and Petty Spurge *Euphorbia peplus* and Great Horsetail *Equisetum telmateia* seen on the same day.'

Finally, a note from myself. Whilst exploring the fells above my house, I found a new VC67 record for Mossy Saxifrage *Saxifraga hypnoides* along with further new sites for Starry Saxifrage *Micranthes stellaris* and Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium alternifolium*. As Kevin puts it so well, I must have passed close by so many times and not spotted them.

LIZZIE MADDISON

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

Annual	New	Total
Owen and Carol Fawcett		687
Cumulative - Valhalla		
Barbara Allen	13	1317
Susan Bowden	0	952
Pauline Grimshaw	0	1410
Bob Hodgkinson	0	223
Dave Morgan	74	826
Jean Richardson	14	610
Sue Riley	18	1142
Dorothy Ross	2	959
Carol Winder	0	546

During 2020 three new members joined the Branch; we hope 2021 will be better for you and for us all.

Barbara made a visit to Ainsdale early to find Glabrous Whitlowgrass *Erophila glabrescens*. The rest of her new finds were in the St Helens area whilst concentrating on her monad. Strawberry Saxifrage *Saxifraga stolonifera*, an established throw out, was spotted on a footpath joining Gartons Lane, Pale Galingale *Cyperus eragrostis* at Sutton Mill dam and Red Bistort *Bistorta amplexicaulis* at the intersection of the M62.

Dave took advantage of the easing of restrictions in early summer and spent a holiday in Pembrokeshire. There, on the cliff tops, he found Saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*. Nearer home his 'mountain' walking took him to Shutlingsloe, a steep sided hill south of Macclesfield, where he

found Hare's-tail Cotton-grass *Eriophorum vaginatum* and, in the beautiful Swaledale, he came across Melancholy Thistle *Cirsium heterophyllum*.

Jean managed to get away to the Chilterns and found Dark Mullein *Verbascum nigrum*. Whilst sitting on the grassland enjoying lunch she spotted Dwarf Thistle *Cirsium acaule* – not called the picnic thistle for nothing! Jean sent me a lovely photo of Trailing Azalea *Kalmia procumbens* found at Glen Affric of which I am very envious.

Sue has been spending lock-down with her friend in Warton, near Lancaster. This is a good hunting area and on the iron spoil heaps by the estuary she spotted the rare Basil Thyme *Clinopodium acinos*. On the M6 motorway bridge at Farleton was Prickly Lettuce *Lactuca serriola*. A couple of plants missed from her

2018 finds are Reed Sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima* and Marsh Dock *Rumex palustris*, both at Port Meadow.

Dorothy's finds for 2020 are Greater Cuckooflower *Cardamine raphanifolia*, a most attractive plant, found near home along the River Darwen and Small Teasel *Dipsacus pilosus* in a field near Witney, Oxfordshire. She tells me unfortunately two holidays had to be cancelled. I think this will have happened to us all.

As I type this it is dark and raining outside but the Snowdrops are out. The plants appear whatever the weather. Keep up your monad recording as well as your Record Books and I look forward to receiving more at the end of the year.

JULIE CLARKE



Photo: Peter Llewellyn

BRANCH O BEDFORDSHIRE, BERKSHIRE, BUCKINGHAM- SHIRE, HERTFORDSHIRE, OXFORDSHIRE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Annual	New	Total
Angus Bentall		245
Mary Bentall		214
Christina White		211
Cumulative - Valhalla		
Jean Goodrum	2	1197
Susan Grimshaw	2	1187
Roger Heath-Brown	12	1921
Margaret Holmes	2	1031
Sue Kightley	3	1941
Barbara Spence	57	916
Diana Stroud	7	1963

This is Angus's first Diary and he has made an excellent start. His records are mainly from the Oxfordshire Cotswolds and include local specialities like Meadow Clary *Salvia pratensis* and Wild Liquorice *Astragalus glycyphyllos*. He did manage a late visit to the Suffolk coast however, seeing such dramatic plants as Yellow Horned-poppy *Glaucium flavum*. What a contrast that must have been from the Cotswolds. It is Mary's first year too and she saw many of the same plants as Angus. She mentions Shining Crane's-bill *Geranium lucidum* on 'waste-ground in my garden', just as it is with me! She also found both Early-purple Orchid *Orchis mascula* and Southern Marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*, always a sight to behold.

This is also the first year for Christina, whose home patch is around Northampton. Indeed she has not had the benefit of any significant trips further afield. However she has a solid collection of species from her own neighbourhood, including lots of allotment weeds and a healthy number of grasses. From her list my own favourites would be Good-King-Henry *Blitum bonus-henricus*, Wild Clary *Salvia verbenaca* and Sticky Groundsel *Senecio viscosus*.

Jean, who lives near Tring, spent a lot of time searching her local area and found many flowers she had not previously spotted there. Her efforts were rewarded with Sweet-William *Dianthus barbatus*, on a grass verge. She was able to have a week away in September, in Norfolk, and was pleased to find Golden-samphire

Limbarda crithmoides in a saltmarsh near Cley.

Susan reckons she has walked over 800 miles in the past year, within a 2 mile radius of her home near Maidenhead. Fortunately, it is quite a varied area and she was pleased to discover many old favourites surprisingly close to home. Her walks added Mediterranean Spurge *Euphorbia characias*, in an uncultivated arable field and Pot Marigold *Calendula officinalis*, on a cornfield edge.



Wild Clary

Next in alphabetical order is myself. I managed to get out and about more than many of our branch, with a day in Hampshire, a week in Yorkshire, a canal holiday and a short break in Essex. Perhaps my favourite additions were Bullwort *Ammi majus* and Upland Leptinella *Cotula alpina*.

The first of these was in a set-aside in Hampshire where it has persisted for at least three years and looks almost naturalized. The second was seen in pouring rain by the bleakest of moorland roads in Yorkshire.

Margaret has been very restricted in her activities this year, but has still managed two additions to her list. Shallon *Gaultheria shallon* was spotted in woodland just 300 yards from her house, where she had walked so many times before; and Blinks *Montia fontana* turned up in her own garden!

Sue visited Diana Stroud's monad square, where there were three new plants for her list, Arrow Bamboo *Pseudosasa japonica*, Tobacco *Nicotiana tabacum* and Argentine Vervain *Verbena bonariensis*. It was the Argentine Vervain which she was most pleased with, having been looking out for it for quite some time. It's so often that way isn't it?

Barbara has had a surprisingly successful year, with records from London, Oxfordshire, Bucks and Somerset. She joined a number of productive organised expeditions to various Oxfordshire sites and added several new plants from her monad hunt as well. Her email refers to her "struggle not to name every species as a favourite", but of those she mentions, I would pick out Ivy-leaved Bellflower *Wahlenbergia hederacea*, at Holford Combe, Somerset, Bird's-foot *Ornithopus perpusillus* from Frilford Heath, Oxfordshire, and Wood Vetch *Ervillea sylvatica* at Dancer's End, Bucks.

Diana did the monad study on a

square near her home and was delighted to find three new plants for her Valhalla list, as well as making the first ever record for Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis* from southern Bucks. In October she had a break in Sussex and followed up various leads from the BSBI News, which provided her with Chinese Mallow *Malva verticillata* and Annual Buttonweed *Cotula australis*, amongst others.

In addition to hearing from those with plant records to report it was good to hear from various other members – many thanks for writing in! Rosemary Thorp writes that she did the BSBI's garden wild flower hunt, Seán Karley told me about an enormous Tree-mallow *Malva arborea* that appeared spontaneously in his garden and Rosemary Scott visited local reserves to enjoy the chalkland orchids. Do keep in touch everyone, and here's hoping for some fine flowers in 2021.

ROGER HEATH-BROWN

Photo: Anne Kell



Small Teasel

BRANCH P

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

In such a strange year it was impossible to know what to expect in the way of news, but it seemed that botany did indeed help members stay interested and enjoy the rather wonderful summer weather. The 1km Square Study proved popular (see pages 4 - 13) and I heard from plenty of members who had been active close to home. As usual I'm reporting in alphabetical order as number totals are not relevant in our mix of full Diaries, accumulative lists, and highlight snippets!

Carol Crawford is a new member from Co Down who joined last May, but most of her summer was devoted to doing an Open University course in natural sciences. When able to relax she was going to start on wild flowers found in her garden, and I look forward to her future news.

Monica Davis submitted a 1km list in spite of months 'off' with a badly broken ankle, but she was also in touch with me while Lizzie Maddison was circulating her much-enjoyed 'Botany Bits'. In an email about this Monica told me how she 'picked a number of grasses and put them in a vase' then took her lens for a really close look. We mostly look at grasses as pesky things to identify, so it was lovely hearing them found 'so beautiful' in a way we don't usually notice.

Ruth Dawes managed several good

walks in gaps between restrictions. She lives in Oswestry close to the English/Welsh border, so favourite local reserves were sometimes out of bounds. Marsh Fragrant-Orchid *Gymnadenia densiflora* had to be viewed through binoculars in early summer, but in July she could visit favourite places on the Montgomery Canal, finding a surprise casual Toothpick-plant *Visnaga daucooides*. I have a jar of dried heads in my kitchen, for that use, but bought in Morocco not Llanymynech! In December she reports trying out a Mammal Society 'Mapper App' with great success and she recommends it for fun at unflowery seasons 'There wasn't a category for spotting lolo Williams running in his shorts, but he was a fine specimen' among Mole hills and Otter spraint!

Pauline Dublon, another new member (in South Wales) worked at her Diary close to home at Cwmdare, and produced a creditable list of 198 species including Elecampane *Inula helenium* which I love for its statuesque form and its connection with ancient settlements. She also sent me an excellent photo, a close-up of a Red Dead-nettle *Lamium purpureum* flower. This was a treat in itself and like Monica's grasses a lesson in the rewards of a close look at common things.

Caroline Giddens has recorded so thoroughly in Minehead and round

Exmoor that she finds it difficult to add anything new to her accumulative list and 2020 only brought two. One was a pavement casual Pasta Wheat *Triticum durum* but the other was a real rarity Upright Goosefoot *Oxybasis urtica*. I'm easily frightened by Chenopodiaceae, so am really impressed by this record.

Richard and Judy Gosnell made the best of restrictions by enjoying all kinds of life in their locality, including 'bug watching along the canal' (I must look out for 'froghoppers munching comfrey'), and observing grass verges which missed the usual early summer cuts, allowing Meadow Crane's-bill *Geranium pratense*, which must be Wiltshire's 'national flower', to appear even in 'unexpected corners of pavements'. A lucky sighting was of masses of Sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica* before a remaining traditional hay meadow was cut.

I originate in Ireland, had some childhood in Scotland, then settled in England, but I have to admit that there must be something in Welsh air which nurtures dedicated botanists! Ruth Harding lives near Cardigan, and regularly sends beautifully presented Diaries. In 2020, like everyone, she recorded near home, but her list of 145 had an excellent spread with examples from more difficult groups such as rushes, sedges, grasses and willows as well as special plants which included Climbing Corydalis *Ceratocarpus claviculata* and Narrow Buckler-fern *Dryopteris carthusiana*, a specialist of damp places. Her entries are always a joy to read, neat and clear with the habitat indicated.

Wendy Hofmaier, a new member last year, was able to almost complete a Beginners' Diary and send me a list of nearly 30 extra species. She and Eliza Sackett both live in Nether Stowey in the Quantock foothills, so botanise in the footsteps of Dorothy Wordsworth and the rest of the Romantic poet gang. Wendy walks her dogs twice a day round neighbouring lanes and, when possible, uses more distant Quantock paths, so her records include nice 'hill' plants such as Common Cow-wheat *Melampyrum pratense* which can be found in some of the distinctive 'twisted' local oak woods.

Graham Lavender also had much of his botany 'directed' by their dog Doris on careful walks while she recovered from an operation – luckily her speed was just right for botanising. Graham continues to dive deep into some of the more critical Exmoor specialities such as seriously advanced variants within Golden-scaled Male-fern *Dryopteris affinis* agg. like *D. lacunosa* and *D. paleaceolobata*!

Simon Leach is always busy with dandelions and plant galls which can be found helpfully close to his home in Taunton, but during the spring and summer he kept most of the botanists in Somerset fascinated and entertained by circulating a weekly report featuring 'FFDs' (first flowering dates). He would issue a list of challenges and report our responses in a way which engrossed everyone as he went far beyond the phenological interest of late or early flowering dates into wide speculations on how climate change affects us here in Somerset (as

opposed to the global scale). Simon's writing is also a joy, so we had wonderful accounts of bird song and behaviour and butterfly appearances. Challenges-within-the-challenge such as recording the distribution of different flower styles of Field Bindweed *Convolvulus arvensis* (with or without stripes? how many? with or without colour 'ticks'?) became seriously addictive. I'm not alone in printing out and keeping each account as an amazing record of this strangest of years.

Steve Little (often joined by David Albon) usually botanises in widespread locations, says he 'was not idle and spent many happy hours wandering round Cheltenham ... venturing into its more grungy areas'. These sound most unlike the usual visitor's image of this elegant Cotswold town, but he found some unusual casuals such as Fern-leaved Beggarticks *Bidens ferulifolia* and 'a very robust' *Chenopodium* which may prove to be Striped Goosefoot *Chenopodium strictum*. He also found the still little-known relative of Wavy Bittercress *Cardamine flexuosa* – *C. occulta* which was announced by Mick Crawley in *BSBI News* April 2020 as turning up in Britain and is worth looking for. Fast work, Steve - and good spotting to catch such a dim plant! It sounds as if a 'Cheltenham gutter' is a pretty typical habitat – I must take up this challenge...

Clive Lovatt's communications are always full of interest as he is active as BSBI Recorder for West Gloucestershire (often going out with other local botanists) and also continues his long-term historical



Photo: Brian McCallion

research which has widened from the botany of Bristol and the Avon Gorge to include the west Cotswold area. He did an Autumn Day Hunt with friends in the strange coastal landscape at Severn Beach, finding 'fresh anthers' in late-season cleistogamous flowers of Sea Pearlwort *Sagina maritima* – a triumph of close attention and a good lens! Recently he discovered that the Boots branch in Stroud has been a chemist shop since 1844, and at one time belonged to a botanist! This Mr Coley would have been a contemporary of H.J. Riddelsdell, famously connected to the first *Flora of Gloucestershire*.

Pat Lumsdon very nicely joined the WFS in 2020 to help with a Shropshire plant survey which the Society had sponsored, and she thought we 'deserved her support'! Thank you, Pat, and I look forward to hearing more about your own botanising and what you do in connection with your local Wildlife Trust.

Brian McCallion sent me two lovely photographs taken on the coast path overlooking Strangford Lough near his home in Bangor, Co Down. My favourite was of a mass of Spring Squill *Scilla verna* flowers wide open in sunlight.

John Martin wrote mostly about his 1Km Square but had enjoyed a few trips 'further afield' including one to the Elan Valley in Mid Wales where he saw his 'first Bog Orchid for almost 30 years!' *Hammarbya paludosa* is really difficult to see – the Irish botanist Evelyn Booth once told me that the best way to find it was to *listen*! If you can hear the bog water seeping under sphagnum moss you are in the right place. John not only found it but took a good photograph of its almost-invisible spike.

James Masters lives near Salisbury, and has always been interested in wild flowers. However a busy life in other areas meant that he recently felt the need to refresh his knowledge (as we all feel, even after a long winter!) and I was glad to hear that he was enjoying the magazines and thought that the WFS would be helpful to him as he starts to get settled into botanising close to home.

Eliza Sackett felt frustrated by restrictions – her husband Terry is a birder and they usually take plenty of trips out which she uses for botanising. They did manage to make mid-summer visits to two fascinating local Somerset habitats – the dunes and sandy ground round the famous chalets at Dunster Beach and the shingle bar, salt marsh, ditches and dry coastal grassland at Steart. Eliza made the best of these days,

recording four Oraches (*Atriplex* species), beauties such as Flowering Rush *Butomus umbellatus*, and the sweet Hare's-tail Grass *Lagurus ovatus* which is widely naturalised on the dunes near Minehead. She also enjoyed a stunning display of Crimson Clover *Trifolium incarnatum* which appeared in a local arable field sowed with a bird-food mix!



Photo: Janet Vernon

Janet Vernon managed a rare outing indeed, getting from Shropshire to Holy Island in Northumberland. She reports 'a few brilliant (for me) finds' which is modest as she often sends me photographs of star plants. Her 2020 list included 'dainty Lesser Meadow-rue *Thalictrum minus* growing on low cliffs by the sea, Wild onion *Allium vineale* which makes me smile with its spiky hair-do and Common Butterwort *Pinguicula vulgaris* – its amethyst flowers and yellow rosette leaves standing out

against a muddy, sparsely vegetated cliff side'. Thank you, Janet, you have written the report for me! I only need to add mentions of an exhilarating photo of a spread of Bloody Crane's-bill *Geranium sanguineum* and Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum*; a close-up of the elusive Lindisfarne Helleborine *Epipactis sancta* and a find nearer home, Fringed Water-lily *Nymphoides peltata*, in a pond near Shrewsbury. The Vernons also take the prize for circulating the most genuinely funny Covid jokes!

Pauline Wilson spreads her considerable botanical energies widely. She makes many contributions to county records in South Gloucestershire and beyond, keeps in touch with a wide network of local botanists, supports the interest in a U3A group when possible, while Richard, her husband, is a warden in the Cotswold AONB which draws them into contact with many groups and individuals working to improve conditions for plants, and they are now secretaries for the Spring Week Hunt. Pauline sends me many interesting questions and bits of news. During 2020 we went into the problems of identifying *Barbarea* species, how to cope with Broomrapes (roll on the new BSBI Handbook!) and the apparent increase in *Trifolium incarnatum* Crimson Clover as a grass-seed contaminant. Even among the restrictions of 2020 she saw some lovely plants, including Venus's-looking-glass *Legousia hybrida*, a rare find in the West, and she was delighted by plenty of Harebells *Campanula rotundifolia* growing beside a path at Frenchay Church near Bristol – a beautiful and unusual

churchyard find.

Aaron Woods only moved recently to the Worcestershire/ Herefordshire border, so keeps a full annual Diary as well as an accumulative list while he gets to know the local flora and habitats. As he also records for the BSBI this knowledge is adding up impressively. He managed to make some useful additions, both welcome 'nice' plants such as Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina* and Saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*, and more thuggish things which still have to be ticked off like Alexanders *Smyrniolum olusatrum*! One outing to Devon (which must have felt like going abroad in 2020) gave him spring ephemerals such as Sea Mouse-ear *Cerastium diffusum* and Early Forget-me-not *Myosotis ramosissima* at Dawlish Warren. His personal favourite from this trip was the rare and pretty introduction Rosy Cress *Arabis collina* which has been established on walls at Buckland in the Moor for many years. This treat had competition much nearer home though when Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem *Gagea lutea* was found among the famous Wild Daffodils of the 'Golden Triangle' – even if the rare little bulb was pointed out by a non-botanist!

I've been astonished and delighted by the variety of communications which have come to help me produce this report and the energy and determination shown by members. Botanising in a difficult world is obviously a **good thing to do!** I hope 2021 will also be bringing happiness and interest.

RO FITZGERALD

BRANCH T CORNWALL, DEVON, SOMERSET, DORSET, WILTSHIRE

Annual	New	Total
Suzanne Jones		297
Sally Maller		373
Chrissy Marshall		244

Suzanne joined the WFS this year. Her 297 species would be an excellent total for a first Diary at the best of times, but even more so in 2020. During the first lockdown she started on a fascinating project, which helped her record such an impressive total. In 1903 and 1904 the Dawlish Gazette newspaper published a list of wild flower plants that a lady had found in her walks locally during the months of April, May and June. Suzanne decided to see just how many of these plants could still be found in the Dawlish area in 2020 and what new species had appeared. I was pleased to be able to help her, as best I could, with identification. Unsurprisingly there were some challenges, not least matching some of the names used over 100 years ago with those in use nowadays. Suzanne has produced a detailed report on her findings, but in summary she was able to find between 80 and 85% of the original species, plus add a considerable number of new species. In the future she hopes to hold a local exhibition on her project, with images of many of the plants she has found. A report of her findings was published in the Spring 2020 issue of the Wild Flower Magazine.

Sally mostly recorded around Wembury, in south Devon. Being by the coast, it has a good variety of habitats to explore. She also was able to make some visits to Christchurch, where she has family. Although she was not able to record much that was new to her, she reached a very respectable total of 373. Amongst her highlights were beautiful swathes of Bugle *Ajuga reptans* in a local wood, Sea-milkwort *Lysimachia maritima* on a local estuary and Pale Butterwort *Pinguicula lusitanica* in the New Forest. She recorded a good selection of the common grasses, sedges and rushes, but is keen to learn more next year and I hope I will be able to help her with this.

Chrissy spent a lot of time working on grasses, sedges, rushes and ferns in 2020, with some support from me over WhatsApp (which worked surprisingly well as a way of helping with plant ID). These, along with other new finds, brought her yearly total up to 244 from 179 last year, a good increase. She pretty thoroughly covered the common species in the aforementioned groups and included in her list were such nice species as Wood Melick

Melica uniflora and Rustyback *Asplenium ceterach*. Another plant we discussed over WhatsApp was a Mullein. It wasn't totally clear what she had found at first, but with a bit of effort we were able to confirm its identity as Twiggy Mullein *Verbascum virgatum*. She is looking forward to 2021 to reinforce what she learned last year and explore further. I've given her a few species to keep an eye open for, but I'm sure she has little need of my direction now that she is making such good progress.

Some members who didn't send in a Diary have still kindly provided me with the highlights of their botanical year. Alison Watt's best find was Pennyroyal *Mentha pulegium*. In September she went for a restorative cup of coffee in the grounds of Derriford Hospital, Plymouth after a CT scan. Every cloud has a silver lining because on a grassy bank opposite was a largish clump of this species in full flower. She thought it was one for her Diary, but it turned out she had been shown it in the New Forest in 2000 and in 2017 at the Avon Dam in Devon. However, she knew it was a rare find in Devon so informed local botanists.

Also in September, Lesley Philpott went out for a very short walk on the cliffs near her home and came across Sickie Medick *Medicago sativa* ssp. *falcata*, where she had never noticed it before. She took a photo and sent it to the Vice County Recorder for verification. The old flora maps have a small spot for the species just on Bude but this was a new location.

David Caals maintains a non-peer-reviewed life list to which 38 species

were added in 2020. He only counts those he has taken photos of and he sent me two lovely images as examples. One was of Siberian Squill *Scilla siberica* growing in a pavement crack (of which his neighbour said 'Look at these things, I just planted a few and they're spreading everywhere!'). The second was Sneezeweed *Helenium x clementii* noticed on a visit to a cliff verge in Southbourne, outside Bournemouth. His last find of the year should have been the Jersey Pink *Dianthus gallicus* that has mysteriously arrived on the dunes at Hengistbury Head Dorset. He dashed to the spot, hoping to see it in full flower, only to find one withered bloom, two seed cases and three buds. Frustratingly a planned holiday prevented a return visit the next week, so it will have to wait for next year.

TIM PURCHES



Photo: David Caals

BRANCH U

STAFFORDSHIRE, WEST MIDLANDS, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, WARWICKSHIRE, DERBYSHIRE, LEICESTERSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE

Annual	New	Total
Richard Fenn Griffin		369
Judith Lee		395
Sue and David Rogerson		58
Irene Wilkinson		208

Cumulative - Valhalla

Patricia Cox	0	526
Jackie Ellis	12	946
Dorothy Evans	2	1752
Alison Gregory	0	1456
Jackie Hardy	39	1013
Richard Pykett	8	834
Marjorie Shepherd	0	955
Mary and Claire Smith	19	1522
John and Monika Walton	338	1068

We would like to thank all of our diarists for the work they have put into their Record Books this year. Local walks may have seemed unadventurous but they have made many of us sharpen up on our identifications with pleasing results. Thanks also to those who let us know they had no new finds. Travel restrictions depressed most people's numbers but it is encouraging to know that members have continued to observe their plants. We wish them more success in the coming season!

Our reports start on a high note with Richard Fenn Griffin's sighting of Lizard Orchid *Himantoglossum hircinum* in Leicestershire. But Richard's own pick of the season is the stunning photo he took on his phone of Field Pansy *Viola arvensis*

on waste-ground near his home. He writes that he has enjoyed discovering just how many wonderful plants are accessible from his front door step, a sentiment most members echoed. Richard must have spent some time scuffling around on a nearby woodland floor because he was fortunate enough to turn up both Toothwort *Lathraea squamaria* and Heath Speedwell *Veronica officinalis* early in the season.

It was good to learn from Judith's Diary that Common Wintergreen *Pyrola minor* still flourishes on the Monsal Trail. Away from the traditional hotspots, a tip-off from another Derbyshire botanist gave Judith (and ourselves) the excitement of recording Caterpillar-plant *Scorpiurus muricatus*. This had

appeared, with other aliens, in a dried-up pond which is usually home to vast numbers of ducks. Special bags of duck food are sold in the adjacent shopping centre so we can be fairly certain how the plant arrived. Its curled fruits are very distinctive and give rise to its common name. Further afield, on a holiday in Scotland, Judith found Lesser Knotweed *Koenigia campanulata*.

Sue and David joined the WFS late in the year and personal circumstances meant they could only record for one month, but they made a good start using the Beginner's Diary. They have a rich local area, a former opencast mining site with 'flashes' and a canal, that has gradually scrubbed up and now remains a haven for wildlife as a country park. Along with pretty flowers such as Tufted Vetch *Vicia cracca* and tall, hard-to-miss plants like Hemp Agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum*, it was good to see Sue and David spotting the less obvious Enchanter's Nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*. They even dared to have a go at a yellow composite, successfully identifying Nipplewort *Lapsana communis*.

This is Irene's first Diary and she combined it with her local 1Km square studies. Consequently she has achieved a very comprehensive list of all the basic plants of her area. We were pleased she had noted Slender St John's-wort *Hypericum pulchrum* which is easy to overlook. Whether by accident or design, Irene very wisely visited contrasting areas of the county, when the rules allowed, so she found typically acidic plants such as Common Cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium* on the

moors and limestone lovers in the Dales. Dark Mullein *Verbascum nigrum* was one of these but it would be remiss of us not to mention her record of Derbyshire's speciality, Jacob's-ladder *Polemonium caeruleum*.

Patricia reports that she has no new records and reprimands herself that she must try harder in 2021. Hopefully she will have every opportunity to do so.

Garden escapes and climate change are having a big impact on Branch U's records now. Jackie Ellis has beaten the rest of us to it with Hydrangea *Hydrangea macrophylla* and Chinese Bramble *Rubus tricolor*. She herself notes that the latter was a bit of a surprise when she spotted its strawberry like fruits at the side of a canal. Finding Small Scabious *Scabiosa columbaria* in Wales made Jackie's day as she has been looking out for it for some time. We are pleased that she is attempting to look more closely at Alchemillas *Alchemilla* spp. The more we look at confusing species the more familiar they become so, in time, we can distinguish between them.

Dorothy is one of a number of diarists who found Common Amaranth *Amaranthus retroflexus*. It would be interesting to know why it is suddenly thriving in our area. Dorothy's plant was on a local Pick Your Own farm but others have reported it as both a garden and pavement weed. The huge popularity of hanging baskets and container gardening easily accounts for Dorothy's record of Bacopa *Chaenostoma cordatum*.

Alison had no new records this year but she did investigate a Willowherb *Epilobium* spp. found in a local churchyard. Disappointingly it was not the rare one that had been reported many years in the past but it is always wise to check.

Jackie Hardy made a good number of additions without even leaving the Midlands. She was delighted by her discovery of Grimley pits, mainly a birding site, but with arable field edges of some interest. The discovery of Thorn-apple *Datura stramonium* on a field headland was a highlight. It was as well she took a photograph because on her return with a friend ten days later it had vanished. Green Nightshade *Solanum nitidibaccatum* was also found here. Elsewhere in Worcestershire Blue Lupin *Lupinus angustifolius* was recorded for the first time in Branch U.

Pale Galingale *Cyperus eragrostis* seems to have thrived recently, giving Richard Pykett a new find from an area in Cornwall that he visits regularly. He is still finding new things around Llandudno and the Great Orme and this year it was Spotted Medick *Medicago arabica* beside the lifeboat station. An area he doesn't know, Newborough Warren, provided him with his greatest triumph when he found, and identified for himself, Seaside Centaury *Centaureum littorale*. A nice achievement.

Although Marjorie didn't add any new records this year she did spot Common Stork's-bill *Erodium cicutarium* on some rough ground between her home and the local shops. It has never appeared here

before so Marjorie was very pleased with her sighting.

Our own favourite record was Slender Borage *Borago pygmaea* seen on a coastal footpath in North Wales. Set off by full sun and a sparkling sea the large clump of light blue flowers quite took our breath away with its beauty. Equally stunning, but for a different reason, was Silver Lady's-mantle *Alchemilla conjuncta*. This was a fine plant in the middle of a well worn footpath on the moors but it has never been recorded at this site before. Locally Fine-leaved Vetch *Vicia tenuifolia* was found near Tufted Vetch *V. cracca* so they could be compared. The flower colour was markedly different and the measurements of the corolla and limb easily differentiated them.

With the end of the BSBI 2020 survey and no meetings John and Monika took the opportunity, when rules permitted, to visit some of the hotspots outside their county, with trips to Essex and Somerset boosting their total. But they also commented on the surprising amount of Medium-flowered Wintercress *Barbarea intermedia* in local fields. This species does seem to be coming back after a quiet few years. A new site for Green-flowered Helleborine *Epipactis phyllanthes* on Cannock Chase was an excellent find. A walk around Stratford-upon-Avon added Sea Campion *Silene uniflora* at one of its few inland sites in England.

MARY AND CLAIRE SMITH

BRANCH V GREATER LONDON, MIDDLESEX

Annual	New	Total
Jane Lowe		607
Clare Million		453
Cumulative		
Ann Allen	3	197
David Bevan	103	1,903
Robin Blades	10	1,236

My fellow Branch members and I had a surprisingly productive year despite the ravages of Covid-19. This was quite unexpected and provided a fruitful last year for me to celebrate as my final Branch V report.

Jane submitted another excellent account of her discoveries. She started in mid-January with finding Cape-pondweed *Aponogeton distachyos* in a pond at Keston in Kent, where it has been known since before 1931. Even in 'lockdown' she managed to add Chives *Allium schoenoprasum* growing in a pavement crack near her home in London SW16. This is seldom reported outside gardens. Close by, and now far more widespread, were Four-leaved Allseed *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* and Water Bent *Polypogon viridis*. In a wood near Croydon, Jane was delighted to witness the striking flower of the Dragon Arum *Dracunculus vulgaris*. This Mediterranean plant appears to have benefited from our recent periods of very hot summer weather. When movement restrictions eased later in the Summer, Jane joined some other WFS members in July to visit Aviemore where the highlights

included Creeping Lady's-tresses *Goodyera repens* near Loch an Eilean. In the Cairngorms they saw Interrupted Clubmoss *Lycopodium annotinum*, Dwarf Cornel *Cornus suecica* and Bog Bilberry *Vaccinium uliginosum*.

Because of Covid-19 restrictions, Clare delayed making a serious start with her recording until early June, but she still recorded a good range of plants. Like Jane, she noted the continuing spread of Water Bent *Polypogon viridis*, which is now abundant in much of London. This was seen in her home area of Putney/Wandsworth, together with the now ubiquitous Guernsey

Photo: David Bevan



Dragon Arum

Fleabane *Erigeron sumatrensis* and the increasing Narrow-leaved Ragwort *Senecio inaequidens*. She revisited Rye Harbour in August and was rewarded with Twiggy Mullein *Verbascum virgatum* and Red Hemp-nettle *Galeopsis angustifolia* (which, she was pleased to see, was expanding on the shingle). Also in August, Clare joined a Naturetrek day trip to Martin Down in Hampshire where the leader introduced her to the delights of Bastard-toadflax *Thesium humifusum*, Frog Orchid *Coeloglossum viride* and Saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*.

I was particularly pleased to welcome Ann back to the Branch after a period of ill health. She now joins the cumulative section, with 3 additions to her 2019 list. Two of these were aliens (or 'exotics' as I like to call them), which seem to be increasingly escaping from gardens: Fringe cups *Tellima grandiflora*, found close to her home at Harrow on the Hill and Spotted Dead-nettle *Lamium maculatum*, in a hedge near Heworth, a suburb of York.

My own additions were largely extracted from lists I compiled back in the period 1980-1983 - before joining Valhalla in 1984. During those years, I was most fortunate in having Rodney Burton and Alan Leslie as my Branch Secretaries. Both were most supportive in my early attempts to put names to my discoveries. I remember particularly an early October day in 1982 when Alan set out to demonstrate the various Glassworts that grew in the salt marsh at East Head, near West Wittering in West Sussex. It turned out to be the wettest field meeting I have ever

attended. The 'heavens opened' at the start and continued to the finish! Alan took no notice of the rain and calmly proceeded to point out the subtle features of the five species present in great detail. I was hugely impressed, but forever after associated Glassworts with heavy rain and I have entirely failed to grapple with them ever since! One other notable WFS outing was to Noar Hill with the indomitable Lady Anne Brewis in June 1982. While searching out the Hill's well-known colony of Musk Orchids, a gust of wind dislodged her wig and I have a vivid memory of Lady Anne chasing it down the Hill on that windy day!

Robin Blades sent me his carefully investigated list of discoveries, this time all seen within the London area. As the London Branch Secretary, I am always pleased to highlight such plants. The majority of Robin's additions were found close to his home in N11. He was the second of our Branch to record Cape Pond-weed *Aponogeton distachyos*. On this occasion, he saw it in flower on July 18th in Ellen Meade Pond on Totteridge Common, Hertfordshire. When not in flower this is easily overlooked - as I must have done myself in this very pond! He also followed up and added Tall Tutsan *Hypericum x inodorum* from Coldfall Wood in East Finchley, which I had mentioned in an LNHS Newsletter report.

I have much enjoyed my long years as Secretary of the London Branch and have learned a great deal about plants (and people!). One of the perks of the job is the vicarious pleasure it brings of enjoying plants

through the eyes of other Branch members. Such observations can bring back happy memories and occasionally act as guides to future forays!

I shall continue to keep an eye on the progress of the London Branch, knowing that you are all now in the capable hands of Sue Buckingham. Happy hunting!

DAVID BEVAN

BRANCH W, SCOTLAND

Given the peculiarities of the year I wasn't sure if I could expect any news or Diaries, so was delighted when varied and interesting emails and letters came in.

Jim Blackwood joined in the summer when he returned to his childhood home at Lochwinnoch in Renfrewshire after 30 years working in London. His interest in botany has been life-long and he has been enjoying revisiting the varied habitats

close to home – lochs, wetlands, meadows, woodlands, a river, burns and hill country. We exchanged emails about that fascinating Northern rarity Spignel *Meum athamanticum* and I look forward to hearing of more of his finds in 2021.

Hilary Blyth submitted an actual Diary which was a real pleasure to check. Her entries are always neat, she gives grid references (which helps Branch Secretaries if any unusual plant distributions occur), and Stage 4 name changes were correctly given. She reported only two new plants for the cumulative list she keeps – Wild Mignonette *Reseda lutea* and Bay Willow *Salix pentandra* – but saw other nice things such as Field Mouse-ear *Cerastium arvense* flowering in abundance, and a well-established self-sown bush of Cornelian-cherry *Cornus mas*. She reports her botany being restricted to one walk endlessly repeated because a family dog locked down with her refused to take any other route, but she still recorded over 120 species!

Roger Connard used the beginning of lockdown to do some urban botany close to home, and later continued adding to his website www.isleofbutewildflowerwalks.co.uk which now has 8 new walks. He was able to check on the island's only



Spignel

Photo: Jim Blackwood

population of Hound's-tongue *Cynoglossum officinale* which flourishes on a storm-swept beach and added two species new to him in this area Kidney Vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria* and Mountain Everlasting *Antennaria dioica* .

Helen Jackson lives in Musselburgh which has a long beach-front, a river and plenty of green space, but she was disconcerted by a lockdown effect which many of us noticed – that

Retiring from being BSBI Recorder for VC 82 East Lothian is supposed to give her some restful times, but she lives at the junction of four 1km squares 'and passes through all of them' if she goes 'round the block to the shops', so I predict that these will be four of the best-recorded squares in Scotland, and I look forward to hearing more about them in the future. I do admit to slight relief though that Helen didn't feel like doing the paperwork to send all four in for the 1km Square Study!



Norwegian
Mugwort

Lyn Jones did find his botany more 'constrained' than usual but turned some of his energy towards working on under-recorded squares for *Atlas 2020*, and did manage one expedition to his beloved highlands during a lockdown gap in August. He saw String Sedge *Carex chordorrhiza* and Least Water-lily *Nuphar pumila* (an adorable plant which I've only ever seen once) near Aviemore, and the very rare Norwegian Mugwort *Artemisia norvegica* on Cul Mor. He says the 'rest of the year involved much time and many photographs' improving his on-line key visual-flora.org.uk with additional conifers and grasses. I'm sure many of you will be getting the benefit from this app. already.

swarms of people appeared in usually quiet spaces to take their allowed exercise. This makes distancing difficult and does not encourage crawling to look for tiny spring ephemerals in public places! However she did manage to re-find Little Mouse-ear *Cerastium semidecandrum* (always tiny and easily overlooked) in two sites, and added a new monad record as well.

Martin Kenny lives on Sanday in Orkney, so is by far our northernmost member! I like to think of this because he once lived in the Mendips, so it's amazing to imagine the miles between my home county of Somerset and his distant island. His botanical life there is very busy, looking at the local flora and habitats while setting up a small nursery for local specialities, including 'iconic'

species like the true Scots Lovage *Ligusticum scoticum*. He is also working to restore botanical interest in some 'amenity areas' near the village 'to open people's eyes to the lovely plants literally on their doorsteps'. He promises me this will be done with properly sourced native seed and will be the opposite of the usual council sowings. I wish him very well with this initiative and wish someone would fill the verge lawns near me with Bird's-foot Trefoil!

Brian Plant, in South Ayrshire, is happy to be doing some 'gentle' botany now that retirement allows time. His cottage near Kirkmichael adjoins the Blairquhan estate so he is able to wander in pleasant places, seeing what flowers are coming out and doing some photography and identification. When we corresponded in June he was puzzling over two local Comfrees – I know the feeling!

Michael Robinson, another new member, has ended up in Aberdeen by way of Berkshire, West Sussex and Switzerland! He is theoretically retired but still deeply involved in establishing new nursery schools in the city. He says 'wild open spaces' always give him joy and he looks forward to more time with flowers and birds – a very nice detail in his introductory letter to me is that Red Campion *Silene dioica* is his favourite flower. We are all in awe of rarities so it's great to be reminded of the beauty of common plants.

Anna White and I corresponded about memories of Olga Stewart, botanist mother of Nick who is currently teaching many of us online about aquatics. Anna sent me a



Photo: Martin Kenny

lovely story of botanising with Olga near Newton Stewart, years ago, when they saw a man collecting lots of flowers from Green Alkanet *Pentaglottis sempervirens*. They asked him why he was doing this and he said 'I like to scatter Borage flowers in my Pimms' – they didn't tell him it was the wrong plant 'as he had been doing it for years and we presumed it was not going to poison him'!

Alison Wilson was sad to miss the usual annual outing organised by Angus Hannah, which always sounds so enjoyable, but she too sent me an excellent story, this time about Sundews. In a book she found a quotation from a gamekeeper who was somehow showing people plants not birds. Pointing to a *Drosera* with small insects round it he called it 'one of they Carney Vores'. I think I shall adopt the term!

Let's hope that wider explorations will be possible again before too long, but meanwhile it's delightful that members, including those recently joined, are clearly making the best of nearby botany and finding pleasure in our home floras.

RO FITZGERALD

BRANCH Y

ESSEX, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, NORFOLK, SUFFOLK

Annual	New	Total
Marilyn Abdulla	343	343
Nicola Cooke	199	199

Cumulative - Valhalla		
Barbara Mathews	5	1512

Living in Norfolk, Marilyn has access to many varied habitats, and managed to get from Beeston Bump on the north Norfolk coast to Thetford Heath further south. Starting in the Winter months of 2020 she had some of the usual encounters such as Winter Aconite *Eranthis hyemalis* but in early February came across a flowering Shasta Daisy *Leucanthemum x superbum* which is related to the more common or garden Ox-eye Daisy *L. vulgare*. She is close to the special Wayland Wood where the unusual Yellow Star-of-

Bethlehem *Gagea lutea* grows. It can be found in great numbers if you know where to look. In the Breckland area of southern Norfolk she found Perennial Knawel *Scleranthus perennis* and Tower Mustard *Turritis glabra* (which has appeared in large numbers in south Suffolk close to me in Hadleigh), the small, yellow-flowered, but with its eponymous fruits, Bur Medick *Medicago minima* and an East Anglian speciality in the form of the majestic Hoary Mullein *Verbascum pulverulentum*. Marilyn is an experienced botanist but has some gaps in her recording when it comes to long, green, stringy things in the form of grasses, sedges and rushes. We'll have to help her out in that field when we are allowed to meet up in the field once again in 2021. However, Marilyn made a name for herself by finding the very rare Inland Club-rush *Bolboschoenus laticarpus* by a pond edge on Beeston Common. (Confirmed by Fred Rumsey in September 2020.) It differs from its commoner cousin Sea Club-rush *B. maritimus* in the increased number of spikelets on several main stalks, more perianth bristles and differences in the colour and shape of its seeds. Bravo!

Nicola recorded virtually all of her

Photo: Peter Llewellyn

Shasta Daisy



Common Restharrow



Photo: Anne Kell

plants in east Norfolk but had to wait until September in the west of the county before she found Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*. Her records were very well-presented with details of habitat and a grid reference for every species found. She encountered a few problems with some similar-looking species which we chatted about and only time and experience will improve on that. For example, the differences between Common and Spiny Restharrow *Ononis repens* and *O. spinosa*. The main difference used to sort them out is the arrangement of hairs on the stem, but there are varieties within the two species which complicate matters! There are two subspecies of Goat's-beard *Tragopogon pratensis* but she might not have realised that one of them, ssp. *pratensis*, is more unusual to find in East Anglia.

Barbara managed to find five new species divided between Suffolk and Norfolk. She knows Felixstowe like the back of her hand but somehow a *Mimosa Acacia dealbata* appeared out of nowhere. Also locally she found Four-leaved Pink-sorrel *Oxalis tetraphylla*. In Norfolk she recorded Rum Cherry *Prunus serotina* and a Corkscrew Willow *Salix babylonica* f. *pekinensis* 'Tortuosa'. Her one another find is Stinking Chamomile *Anthemis cotula* which she found in Norfolk but I know of it on Landguard Common in Felixstowe; I'll have to point it out to her!

I can't wait to be able to go back out in the field on our meetings and help people out and to sort out the confusions between plants such as Canadian and Guernsey Fleabanes *Erigeron canadensis* and *E. sumatrensis*, Gallant-solider and Shaggy-soldier *Galinsoga parviflora* and *G. quadriradiata*, Common and Large-flowered Evening-primrose *Oenothera biennis* and *O. glazioviana* and Knotgrass and Equal-leaved Knotgrass *Polygonum aviculare* and *P. depressum*.

STEPHEN CLARKSON



Photo: Dennis Kell

PARNASSUS 1

	New	Total
Jan Armishaw	19	2515
Gareth Bursnall	23	2564
Rodney Burton	5	2532
Marion Chappell	18	2987
Julie Clarke	10	4190
Stephen Clarkson	48	3017
Heather Colls	25	2647
Judith Cox	17	2737
Paul Harmes	42	2765
Carol Hawkins	36	3257
John Hawksford	3	3009
Graeme Kay	1	3041
Alan Leslie	235	3327
Ron Parker	0	2900
Chris Pogson	0	3346
Ted Pratt	52	3139
Jesse Tregale	57	3666

Jan has moved up from the top of Parnassus 2 numerically to the bottom of Parnassus 1 where she will soon overtake me, whilst staying at the top alphabetically. All her new records from the end of the first lockdown to September are from East Kent. In May she made the first record of Turkish Sage *Phlomis russeliana* in the county, self-sown on a verge in Canterbury 60 metres from a garden. In July there was a form of Hoary Ragwort without ray-florets, for which she found the name *Senecio erucifolius* var. *discoideus* in Druce's Flora of Northamptonshire. In August a friend took her to see her allotment near Canterbury and there was a seedling of Achocha *Cyclanthera pedata* which had appeared through soil or compost being brought in – there was no sign of it elsewhere in the allotments. This gourd from tropical America has

unmistakable leaves. In September Jan found Slender Oat *Avena barbata* on waste ground near the A2 at Harbledown. In October it was at last possible to get away from Kent for a self-catering week in Derbyshire, where she found Small-leaved Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster microphyllus*, on flat rock near Crich.

In February Gareth went to the same event in London as Jan, but whereas her new plants from it were crocuses, his were double-flowered Wood Anemone *A. nemorosa* 'Flora Pleno' and the form of the same species with extra large flowers *A. nemorosa* var. *robusta*. His one new plant in March before the lockdown started was a white-flowered Primrose *Primula vulgaris* var. *alba*, also a name from Druce's Northants flora. In August, Gareth went to see the Java Water-dropwort *Oenanthe*

javanica at Newdigate, reported in BSBI News of April 2020, and Pickerelweed *Pontederia cordata* was at the same place. A week later he was in Northern Ireland and saw *Fuchsia* 'Other Fellow', a cultivar with white sepals and coral-pink petals, on waste ground at Ballycastle. His last plant was *Phygelius aequalis*, a relative of Cape Figwort with yellow-throated orange flowers, seen in a hedgerow at Ifield, Sussex. The best botanical differences between *P. capensis* and *P. aequalis* are the branches with narrow wings on their four angles and the flowers on each branch all facing the same way in the latter.

During the first lockdown my own permitted exercise took me past two plants of Lords-and-Ladies *Arum maculatum* side by side, one with spotted leaves, the other with unspotted leaves. Back indoors, I found in Sell & Murrell 5:45 'plants without spots or blotches on the leaves are var. *immaculatum* Mutel'. Nowadays this would be considered not worth naming except as a forma, but there must be hundreds of instances of varieties which could easily be tested by raising them from seed – the discoid Hoary Ragwort mentioned might be one – but changing them all to formae is hardly worth the bother. I decided on a project to record in four adjacent monads covering all of Eynsford village, and in June when the limitations were lifted the project so fitted my exercise needs that I continued it until September, which did nothing for my Parnassus total but a lot for my 10-km square study. It was only after I had stopped that I

discovered Spreading Mouse-ear-hawkweed *Pilosella flagellaris* at home – there will be more about that in BSBI News no.148.

As last year, I am using a single paragraph for Marion's and Julie's 2020 additions, but this year it is only Marion's with additions not in the other's. They start with Killarney Fern *Trichomanes speciosum* by the stream at Bell Bank near Bingley, an extraordinary survival first discovered by Jesse in 2012, which has increased since, seen at a ferns meeting of the Bradford Botany Group. Julie who was also there listed Japanese Buckler-Fern *Dryopteris erythrosora* in woodland off Primrose Lane at the edge of Bingley. With Julie and Sheila Wynn, Marion saw the hybrids Heath Fragrant-orchid *Gymnadenia borealis* x Narrow-leaved Marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides* and Heath Marsh-orchid *D. maculata* x Narrow-leaved Marsh-orchid at the Orton Pasture SSSI; it appears that these excessively rare hybrids are labelled to prevent excessive trampling of the site. Via Julie, she got from the blogger Bryan Yorke instructions to find the var. *bicolor* of Dark-red Helleborine *Epipactis atrorubens* in the Hutton Roof area. In view of the hazards of limestone pavements generally and the lack of a mobile phone signal up there, she persuaded her husband to accompany her, and as they found the orchids and it was a beautiful day he was very happy to have such a lovely day out. Plants seen by both Marion and Julie include Hawkweeds *Hieracium* spp. taken from the late (and much-lamented) Vince Jones's

book Yorkshire Hawkweeds and Dense-flowered Knotweed *Persicaria glabra* and Portuguese Figwort *Scrophularia grandiflora* as pavement weeds in the Fulwood area of Preston first found by Steve Little.

Like the rest of us, Stephen made most of his records in the second half of the year but in June with Carol and Bill Hawkins he went to see the officially extinct Interrupted Brome *Bromus interruptus* on a private farm in Cambs. It is cultivated there, but it also escaped into the farm's machinery parking field. Stephen went on to make many highly unusual records in East Suffolk and North Essex. In July Baby-blue-eyes *Nemophila menziesii* was on a roadside verge far from habitation at Beazley End. In September a population of very large plants of a *Persicaria* was discovered at Steeple Bumpstead; it was eventually identified, not without difficulty, by Dr Akeroyd, the author of *Docks and Knotweeds of Britain and Ireland*, as the non-British subsp. *leptoclada* of *P. lapathifolia*. In October he found *Rosularia sedoides* between the graves in an old cemetery in West Bergholt; until it was moved from one genus to another in 1977 this was one of three quite different species called *Sedum sedoides*, and that name is still used by Google and its various advertisers, none of whom have an English name for it. In November there was Turkish Sage *Salvia russelliana* at Rayne, and in December Nepalese Paper-plant *Daphne bholua* on a verge in the village of Tattingstone, about 100 yards from a large house whose very extensive grounds reach almost to

the shrub.

Heather's best plant was undoubtedly Jo-jo-weed *Cotula sessilis*, a new county record found on a camping field at Croyde Bay in North Devon, very early in March, where she was staying. She had read about it in BSBI publications, and thought it might be worth leaving a warm caravan to have a look for it. Later in the year she managed to find six different flower-colour forms of Bindweed *Convolvulus arvensis* and on the bank of the River Wye at Llandogo, Mons. *Persicaria x intercedens*, the hybrid of water-pepper *P. hydropiper* and Redshank *P. maculosa*. While trialling a local key of hawkweeds she re-found South Wales Hawkweed *Hieracium cambrense* and Sociable Hawkweed *H. consociatum* where recorded by Trevor Evans in 1985 and 1995 respectively. She also managed a week in Cornwall in October and had a lovely time with the new *Flora of Cornwall*. The Chain Fern *Woodwardia radicans* at Gulval was the addition I would have most liked to see myself.

Judith's best pre-lockdown finds were an ericaceous hybrid *Gaultheria x wisleyensis* 'Wisley Pearl' naturalised in woodland near Harrogate, matched in treesandshrubsonline.org, and Mishchenko Squill *Scilla mischtschenkoana*, which has flowers of the palest blue with a darker vein on each segment; she found the latter well hidden by a lane in a remote site near Kirkby Fleetham, on directions in a newsletter by a BSBI vice-county

recorder. Judith spent the summer period of relative freedom on the west Cumbrian coastal area where she was brought up. In her lifetime *Hydrangea H. macrophylla* has increased by the main road going down into Whitehaven to be spread out over a large area on both banks. *Symphytotrichum dumosum*, for which I have invented the name Bushy Michaelmas-daisy, is on Whitehaven harbour wall. Plants matching cultivars 'Black Knight' and 'Pink Pearl' of Butterfly-bush *Buddleja davidii* are on the site of a hotel at Skinburness demolished about 20 years ago. Judith was given RHS Hedera: the Complete Guide as a present, from which she was able to identify Ivy cultivars *Hedera hibernica* 'Variegata' on a track going down into Yarm and *H. colchica* 'Dentata Variegata' totally alone in a hedge by a country road also near Yarm, back in N.E. Yorks in December.

Paul was in Andalusia leading a Naturetrek tour when Covid regulations began in both Spain and England and when he got back home had to self-isolate for three weeks. When he was able to circulate in a limited area around his home in Lewes, he began by looking for varieties to be found in Sell & Murrell. Var. *cupaniana*, a pavement weed, was more convincing than other varieties of Black Medick *Medicago lupulina*, var. *aequale* of Dove's-foot Crane's-bill *Geranium molle* was in four places, and later var. *sinuata* of the wet-places ssp. *intermedia* of Greater Plantain *Plantago major* was in a gutter. His record of Musk Mallow *Malva moschata* var. *moschata* at the base of a wall in Lancaster St taught

me that this is not the common variety in Britain. Paul's best plant of the year in his own estimation and mine was Annual Buttonweed *Cotula australis*, a new species for Sussex, seen in April among cobbles and brick paving in Keere St. Many other seldom reported plants on the streets of Lewes followed, of which this is a selection: Tall Fleabane *Erigeron annuus*, Rock Isotome *Isotoma axillaris*, Chilean-iris *Libertia formosa*, Royal Mallow *Malva trimestris*, 'Victoria Pink Dwarf' which is a distinctive strain of Wood Forget-me-not *Myosotis sylvatica*, the orange-flowered var. *aurantiacum* of Welsh Poppy *Papaver cambricum*, var. *argenteovariegata* of Lesser Periwinkle *Vinca minor* and *Melampodium montanum*, a yellow-flowered daisy from Latin America, which had escaped from a hanging basket outside a pub into a gutter.

Carol's best new find in my opinion was the Small-fruited Knotgrass *Polygonum microspermum* seen on a farm track near home at Wymondham in West Norfolk during a first lockdown exercise, so presumably without fruit, but with the right very distinctive habit. In her opinion the plant of the year was Hungarian Brome *Bromopsis inermis*, on a long stretch of road near Camps Hall, Ashdon, Cambs., but I regard that as an unwelcome invader, dangerous so near a population of Crested Cow-wheat *Melampyrum cristatum*. A better Cambs. report was the Miniature Bulrush *Typha minima* in its seasonal pond near Soham, the only British locality, which she was delighted to be able to show to Stephen later. During the year

Carol, encouraged by Jan, found nine of the ten flower colour forms of Bindweed *Convolvulus arvensis* listed by Sell; only f. *quinquevulnerus* is missing.

John exercised himself a lot, making plant lists from 56 monads, no less, but made no records for his Parnassus list until September, all close to home at New Mills in Derbyshire. He replaced his single record of Dog-rose *Rosa canina* in the broad sense of Stace, 3rd edition, with records of *R. canina* and Glandular Dog-rose *R. squarrosa* in the narrow sense of the 4th edition. His other two records are both Montbretias, Giant M. *Crocasmia masoniorum* and Potts' M. *C. pottsii*, the latter by the lane past his house at the point where it peters out onto the moors, where he has overlooked it among the usual Montbretia *C. x crocosmiiflora* for about 40 years.

Graeme also sampled lots of monads, but his only Parnassus record was the large alien var. *grandis* of Agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*. This was on a site at Wilmslow, Cheshire, which was a tip long ago, but is now mainly young woodland. The variety is distinguished by being very tall and branchy with larger very deeply toothed and rugose leaflets. The name var. *major* used by Sell & Murrell is invalid because it had previously been published in a different sense.

Only 39 of Alan's enormous total are 2020 additions; the rest are records omitted from previous years, mostly



brought to light by a trawl of his own enormous Flora of Cambridgeshire. Of the 39, 20 are Whitebeam *Sorbus* species and hybrids, all the specialities of Bristol and South Wales, plus 3 Welsh Hawkweeds *Hieracium* spp., to which he was guided by Tim Rich and others. There were also three rose *Rosa* hybrids, all determined by Roger Maskew, of which two were the triple hybrids Dog-rose *R. canina* x Harsh Downy-rose *R. tomentosa* x Glaucous Dog-rose *R. vosagiaca*, a single plant on the edge of a woodland strip at Hardwick, and Glandular Dog-rose *R. squarrosa* x *R. tomentosa* x *R. vosagiaca*, several in an old field hedge at Great Gransden, Hunts. Alan's other 2020 records include *Agrimonia eupatoria* var. *grandis* (see above) on a bank in Great Kneighton Country Park, where it may have been introduced but is now self-sowing, Deodar *Cedrus deodara* freely self-sowing in Cottenham Dissenters' Cemetery where there are two mature trees, a large plant of the Florence Fennel *Foeniculum officinale* var. *dulce* (the form of which the swollen base is eaten) known for several years on old railway sidings at Chesterton and the ssp. *dubia* of Changing Forget-me-not *Myosotis discolor* in an old chalk-

Photo: Jean Tosti,
Creative Commons

pit off Coldham's Lane, Cambridge, where there were many plants in short rabbit-grazed turf. The species is rare in Cambs. (the county where all the sites in this paragraph are located), but ssp. *dubia* appears to be less rare than ssp. *discolor*.

Ron was unable to add to his Parnassus score in 2020, due to lockdown. However he did manage to produce a list of 399 flowering plants from a monad near his home. Chris also had a nil return, although he was able to enjoy the boost to enjoyment of the wonderful Spring flora last year supplied by the Covid restrictions.

Ted's greatest pleasure came from Common Ramping-fumitory *Fumaria muralis* in the ssp. and var. *muralis* which he first found at Corfe Castle in 2013, but it came into the hands of referee Tim Rich only in 2020. Tim is only 95% sure that it is correctly named and will only go to 100% after he has got more material from seed, so Ted has not counted it. I am happy to allow it on 95% certainty and have added 1 to his total accordingly. Fortunately I am not the referee, for I would refuse to accept the validity of subordinate taxa in *F. muralis*. Ted was also glad that Dorset County Council's financial constraints continued to reduce the spraying of Swanage's pavements, gutters etc. He listed some most unusual street weeds, including Fishplant *Houttuynia cordata*, Hooker's Fleabane *Inula hookeri*, Portuguese Squill *Scilla peruviana* and Rose-of-heaven *Silene coeli-rosa*.

I always have to be very selective reporting the great assortment of

Parnassus novelties Jesse finds, even in a year like 2020. In the first lockdown period there were a flowering Midland Hawthorn cultivar *Crataegus laevigata* 'Rosea Flore Pleno' on the very edge of a wall above a high vertical cliff, an impossible place for planting, and he found self-sown seedlings on a pavement underneath a branch of a planted tree of Himalayan Birch *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* on the other side of the wall. In September also in Bradford he saw in pleasing proximity both the normal Redshank and the white-flowered *Persicaria maculosa* f. *albiflora*. In October, two bus rides took Jesse to a rendezvous with a friend in Halifax where they saw several countable Austrian Whitebeam *Sorbus austriaca*, confirmed by Tim Rich, and an old and tall plant of Perennial Wall-rocket *Diplotaxis tenuifolia* which had never had lobed leaves, making it f. *integrifolia*. Late in October the Tregales managed a week's holiday in Northumberland, which gave him Late Michaelmas-daisy *Symphyotrichum x versicolor*.

RODNEY BURTON



White-flowered Redshank

Photo: Jesse Tregale

PARNASSUS 2

Dorothy Bullock	1	2036
Everald Ellis	1	2189
Ro FitzGerald	9	2077
Peter Jepson	2	2198
Geoffrey Kitchener	12	2261
John Martin	23	2148
Dawn Nelson	15	2246
Priscilla Nobbs	21	2477
Ted Phenna	17	2028
Janice Reynolds	6	2368
Richard Robinson	4	2110
Sheila Wynn	19	2445

Dorothy writes "Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum* Celtic White turned up in my garden. It spreads rapidly and my garden would be full of it if I did not weed it out. It is very robust and the foliage is bright green compared with the pink flowered Herb Robert."

Everald writes "Maple-leaved Goosefoot *Chenopodium hybridum* is the only new plant I have seen this year, which I discovered growing in disturbed soil in the rear garden." There were 90 other species in the garden, but no other new ones.

Ro writes "I added almost nothing to my list – a handful of bird-seed aliens and a beautiful Common Morning-glory *Ipomoea purpurea* flowering in a hedge in September when our little Friday group of four managed a distanced walk near Hinkley Point Power Station. Otherwise, Graham Lavender and I had a single morning recording in a waste ground site in Blue Anchor. The famous pub was closed some years ago because

coastal erosion was biting into the foundations (it is on one of the Lias cliffs). Parts are still used for storage and the former garden and lawns have just been left or used as a waste or hardcore dump. It is a ruderal treasure-chest now. There are various persistent and/or self-seeding garden relics and the dumpings have brought in other plants. It is rabbit and deer grazed and there is a footpath through, so the brambles have not quite taken over. Graham and I decided that anything we found flourishing could count as genuinely naturalised." A couple were Garden Tree-mallow *Malva x clementii* and Cape Daisy *Osteospermum jucundum*.

Peter writes "I stayed on my home range and took the view that if I drove anywhere, broke down, and needed assistance I would be putting myself and others at risk - not to consider slipping and breaking a limb." One of his two records was Spotted Hawkweed *Hieracium spilophaeum* – he had wondered about the

hawkweed on the church walls for many years – Sheila Wynn got it named recently; “so a well-timed walk with my wife to this TV village was well called for.”

His other record *Dryopteris affinis* ssp. *cambrensis* has no English Name in Stace as he gives it as a subspecies; whilst Peter noted elsewhere it is regarded as a species. However, the name Narrow Scaly Male Fern is given in *Native Ferns* (of the British Pteridological Society) for the subspecies. He wrote “There is a long story for me with this plant. In 1978 a group of WFS members made a two-week grand tour of Scotland. When we stopped in a lay-by on the way past Loch Lomond, Mike Mullin pronounced on a large clump of multi-crowned fern as *Dryopteris x tavellii* (*D. borrieri* x *D. filix-mas*). In 1978 this was not in Dandy so I did not count it for many years – only after attaining Parnassus. However, the other year when I was reviewing my list to follow Stace, I deleted the record of *D. x tavellii* as it did not fit within the framework of the new taxonomy.”

“A few years after 1978 on another trip to Scotland I stopped in the same lay-by and collected a very small off-shoot crown from this very large clump of multi-stemmed plants (this was for a fern garden I was creating at a local information centre). The fern has flourished and over the years produced a fine multi-stemmed plant. Sadly, by Loch Lomond the lay-by and fern appears to have been lost to road-widening. So things stood unresolved until this year when a member of the Pteridological Society looked at the fern planted at the

information centre and it was determined as *Dryopteris cambrensis*, or as Stace *D. affinis* ssp. *cambrensis*, so I am now counting it as such.”

Geoffrey had a remarkable year. He writes “I was privileged to hear of, and see, Long-lipped Tongue-orchid *Serapias vomeracea* shortly after it had been found in East Kent, the first wild plant in the British Isles: a solitary deep-red flowering spike looking like nothing else I have seen in our flora. I had not come across Copse-bindweed *Fallopia dumetorum* before. It was believed extinct in Kent but I found it outside a wood where last recorded in 1948. The icing on the cake was a subsequent visit where closer study showed the hybrid between this and Black-bindweed *Fallopia convolvulus*, viz. *Fallopia x convolvuloides*, not previously confirmed from the British Isles. Desert Prickly Pear *Opuntia phaeacantha* was first found growing in Kent on a sandy bank near Maidstone in 2013. I had not got round to looking before, but there it was, after seven years, still surviving our winters!”

John writes – “The year was mainly spent on very local botany, mostly within my home 1km square where I have recorded 374 species of vascular plants in an apparently wild state this year. A few of these were new for the list including some of the new *Rosa* taxa from Stace 4, which keyed and matched the accounts convincingly. We were also going on regular local walks during the first lockdown, which was a great way to learn the paths of the southern half of

Shrewsbury and some of the surrounding countryside. This did produce some new plants, with favourites of mine being two huge Broussa Mullein *Verbascum bombyciferum*, found new to VC40 on a roadside bank near the A5; Blue Lawn-lobelia *Pratia pedunculata*, abundantly naturalised on a road verge in my home monad on my birthday; and, much later in the year, the oddly named Tree Spinach *Chenopodium giganteum*, having somehow escaped the council's spraying despite attaining an impressive 2 metres in height.



Bog Orchid

"I did manage a couple of trips out specifically looking for plants in the summer, of which the Bog Orchids *Hammarbya paludosa*, in the Elan Valley in mid Wales were a highlight. Most of my other additions were from the Isles of Scilly in October, where highlights were my first sightings of

Least Adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum lusitanicum* since starting the WFS Diary and amongst the various aliens the eventual identification of Giant Umbrella-sedge *Cyperus ustulatus*. I photographed this striking looking *Cyperus* at the back of the tip on St Mary's but was really struggling to name it when I got home. The Facebook aquatic plants group came up with *C. ustulatus* (both Mark Duffell and Gerhard Wiegleb naming it). I managed to contact a birder still on the islands who kindly obtained specimens and Eric Clement has confirmed them - new to Scilly and possibly to Britain."

Dawn writes "My own village of Elsted proved a good source, perhaps because I searched here more than usual. The Chinese Mallow *Malva verticillata* was not exactly beautiful other than being new to me. The yellow variety of Common Broomrape *Orobanche minor* var. *flava* and Keeled Garlic *Allium carinatum* were nice to find as they are showy. The Agave-leaved Sea-holly *Eryngium agavifolium* has had me puzzled for some time. I first spotted it in early 2018 but it has taken a while to get an identification, but it has sadly been grubbed out as being rather prickly on a narrow pavement."

Priscilla writes "The first unexpected find was in my road on a grass verge left uncut by the Council: Garlic *Allium sativum*. The find that delighted me most was Narrow-fruited Water-cress, *Nasturtium microphyllum*. I was recording for my Monad, TQ2846 and had to go north of it to cross the London to Brighton

railway line using the new bridge. The plant was in a wet ditch by the bridge. I went back later to look at the fruits to confirm the identification.”

Welcome to Ted Phenna who has joined the branch. Like many others he stayed close to home – in his case by the Great Orme! In his own road he recorded Yellow Chamomile *Cotula tinctoria* and Guernsey Fleabane *Erigeron sumatrensis*. The latter particularly surprised him, but if it performs as it usually does it will be followed by many more plants. Of his



Agave-leaved Sea-holly

records carried forward he writes “I was surprised to see Tricolor Daisy *Ismelia carinata* with its brightly-coloured flower pushing its way through the brambles on Appletree Banks, the dunes at the southern end

of Tresco on the Isles of Scilly in 2014. Although the Isles had so many plants new to me, this was the star of my holiday.”

Janice found Iranian Wood Sage *Teucrium hircanicum* on the Newhaven site planned for development, on which so many aliens had appeared on imported soil in the previous year. Matthew Berry identified it for her.

Richard writes – “There are two plants which have given me much pleasure this year. The first was True Fox-sedge *Carex vulpina*. I have looked for this on a number of occasions in its *locus classicus*, the Amberley Wild Brooks on my doorstep. Holding a sedge I was discoursing on the difference between it and False Fox-sedge *Carex otrubae* when I suddenly realised that the plant in my hand had all the characteristics of *C. vulpina*. What a joyous moment that was. The second was Great Pignut *Bunium bulbocastanum* on chalk grassland at Perching Hill. Eleven plants were first spotted on a field meeting of the Sussex Botanical Recording Society in 2018. Initially it was passed over as a slightly robust Burnet-saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga*. However, the bracts needed explaining. Following the meeting further research suggested *Bunium bulbocastanum* - subsequently confirmed by David Streeter. The following year only one plant was seen but this year, two much larger populations were discovered nearby during an ecological survey carried out for the farmer to whom the land belonged. The 2018 and 2019 plants were

outliers from these two bigger populations. The only sites previously for Great Pignut in the UK have been in the Chilterns. With some prescience, the 2020 New Atlas remarks that 'Its absence from the North and South Downs is difficult to explain in view of its relative abundance in similar habitat at Boulogne (France).' No longer. The satisfaction in this case derives from the filling the gap in a disjunctive distribution."

Sheila writes "My most enjoyable experience this year was a morning in June with Julie Clarke and Marion Chappell when we met at Orton in Cumbria to see some hybrid orchids. The site was a delight. It is a damp hillside pasture with a variety of sedges, Bird's-eye Primrose *Primula*

farinosa and carpets of orchids including Northern Marsh-orchid, *Dactylorhiza purpurella*, Heath Spotted-orchid *D. maculata* and Heath Fragrant-orchid *Gymnadenia borealis*, as well as the hybrids. In the same area, I also managed to track down the Leafless Hawk's-beard, *Crepis praemorsa*. In the BSBI online journal, British and Irish Botany (Vol.2 Issue 1), in an article by D.J.McCosh, D. Barlow, B.Burrow and T.C.G.Rich, three new species of Hawkweed from Northern Britain, which had been identified by Vince Jones, were named. One of these we were shown by Brian Burrow on the Malham Meeting in 2014. In June I had two days out near Settle, looking at the Hawkweeds and I managed to find another, False Porrect-bracted Hawkweed, *Hieracium pseudosubcyaneum*, confirmed by Brian Burrow."

"Another interesting plant was the Hairless Persicaria *Persicaria glabra*, growing in a pavement crack near Preston. Unfortunately, it didn't survive long as the neighbours, alerted by the arrival of strangers behaving oddly in their avenue, quickly pulled it up, in spite of assurances that it wasn't Japanese Knotweed!" She also found online references for the white forms of Quaking-grass *Briza media* var. *albida*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense* forma *albiflorum*, Dodder *Cuscuta epithymum* var. *alba* and Common Stork's-bill *Erodium cicutarium* forma *albidum*.

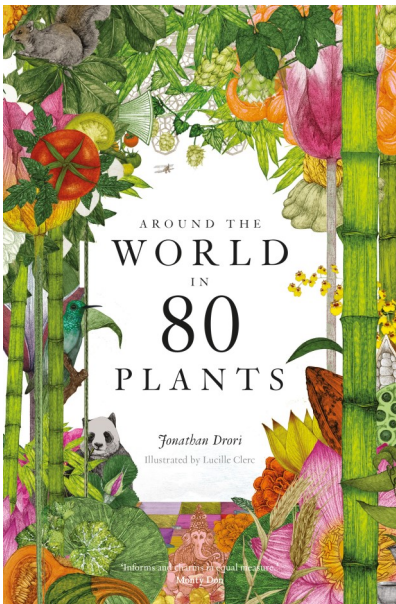
EDWARD PRATT



Bird's-eye Primrose

BOOK REVIEWS

I'm feeling extremely lucky because my 'job' as WFS book reviewer has brought me two gloriously unusual and entertaining books which I might never have come across. They are from publisher Laurence King which accounts for their beauty (this firm is tops in creative arts publishing). Neither are directly relevant to the WFS but they are both about PLANTS and are full of oddities of the 'not many people know that' kind which I find irresistible. They are raising my spirits wonderfully from lockdown blues and weather misery and I want members to be aware of such cheering presents-to-self when the going is hard, or for topping birthday and Christmas lists.



The first is *Around the World in 80 Plants* by Jonathan Drori, a distinguished worker in many areas of national and international plant conservation. The hardback will cost £20. The pictures are by the wonderful French illustrator Lucille Clerc. The second is *Forage – Wild Plants to Gather, Cook and Eat* by Liz Knight, a wild food expert, with illustrations by botanical artist Rachel Pedder-Smith. The publisher's press release says the author's 'recipes have led many sceptics to eat their words and their weeds!' It will also cost £20.

The *80 Plants* are chosen mostly from exotic places but begin with one each from England, Scotland and Ireland, which give a perfect example of the surprises this book offers and the way it presents weird and wonderful information which also has a sound basis in botanical science. England is represented by – the Nettle! My brain was full of question marks when I saw this, but soon I was enchanted to know that male nettle flowers fire pollen catapults and in certain lights one can watch these tiny explosions and to be told that 'urtication' – flogging oneself with nettles – was used by Roman soldiers in damp, chilly Britain to try to relieve their rheumatism and this practise still exists in corners of modern life!

Then I turned to *Foraging* and was delighted to find another revelation –

a recipe for Nettle Cup-cakes! In 2020 we reviewed the excellent *Wild Food Plants of Ireland* by Tom Curtis and Paul Whelan which also covers botanical and phytogeographical concerns – Liz Knight's book is more directly for the cook, though its plant names are correct and the illustrations superb. Surprises include dried Meadowsweet for Winter Buns, fried Dandelion buds, and eating Red Deadnettle, a crop available beside my front path any day of the year!

Both books have shaken my mindset and prejudices in an admirable way. In *Around the World in 80 Plants* the English Nettle is followed by *Rhododendron ponticum* for Scotland, and for Ireland – forget Shamrock or St Dabeoc's Heath, the entry is for Kelp seaweed. Each page is a work of art though (the terrible *Rhododendron* story is set against an exquisite view of loch, mountain and flower) and I just wish that such

mental stimulation and such visual beauty could be found together more often.

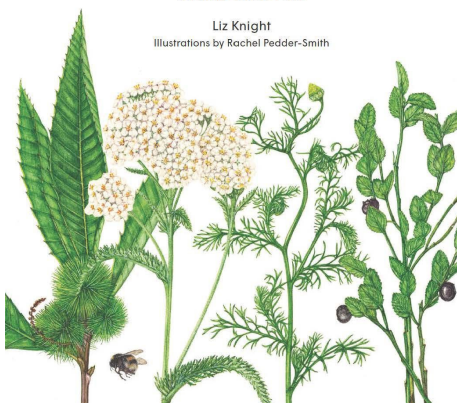
RO FITZGERALD

Forage

Wild Plants to Gather,
Cook and Eat

Liz Knight

Illustrations by Rachel Pedder-Smith



Pat Verrall kneeling at the feet of
Eric Philp at Burham Down, Kent

Photo: Sue Poyser

OBITUARY

PAT VERRALL - 1944 - 2020

It is with great sadness that I write these words after hearing of the passing of Pat Verrall on 22nd December 2020. Pat was one of the Wild Flower Society's most long-serving and much-loved members whose cheery disposition led to many people knowing her through her involvement in our field meetings, members' weekends and through the many positions she held in our society.

Pat joined the WFS in 1959 at age 15 under her maiden name of Pat Weedon and sent in her first list in 1960. She worked her way through the branches which in those days were quite competitive, eventually becoming a member of Lotus Eaters and then Valhalla branch Z. Pat submitted a Diary or plant lists for 60 years with very few gaps. Her list submitted in 2019 contained 1864 species.

Pat was born in 1944 and spent her early life in Middlesex. Later the family moved to Claygate in Surrey. Pat's interest in wild flowers developed at an early age while at Guildford County Grammar School. From August 1966, the year of her marriage to Michael Verrall, she worked at Beechams as a biochemist in the research laboratories. Once her son James started school, she completed qualifications at Merrist Wood College, began working at Sutton Place Nurseries and her career took a different direction.



Later she re-trained as a Garden Designer and advertised her services locally. She soon gained commissions further afield and this horticultural knowledge made her a special expert for our field meetings when we stumbled across a garden escape which no-one but Pat could recognise.

Pat was a deeply-committed Christian who became churchwarden at Holy Trinity, Westcott near her home at Abinger Hammer. Her expertise in garden design and horticulture was particularly useful when she completed botanical surveys and devised management plans for churchyards.

In the Wild Flower Society Pat held various posts: Winter Months Hunt secretary 1986 to 1994, Branch X

(Invalids) secretary 1991 to 1993, Executive Committee member 1991 to 1994, 2000 and 2003, General Secretary from 1994 to 1999 and 10 km square (South) secretary 2008 until 2020.

People who knew Pat speak of her friendliness and willingness to engage in discussing wild flowers with people of all levels of expertise. She would be one of the first to make new members feel welcome in the society. So many members have happy memories of Pat and these are just a few:

"Asking someone if they knew Pat Verrall, the reply of "yes" would always come with a smile." D. Foulsham

"I will miss her knowledge, her wicked sense of humour and above all her

company in the field." P. Harmes

"Pat was a believing Christian who, through faith in Jesus, will be rejoicing in heaven." E. Pratt

"A lovely, kind and happy lady. A lady in the true sense of the word. I shall miss her very much." G. Bursnall

"I had referred to someone in an article as one of the Grand Dames of the WFS. I remember Pat laughing and saying maybe one day we would become Grand Dames as well. Pat, you were always one of the Wild Flower Society Grand Dames and I will miss you" P. Hyde

PETER LLEWELLYN

Thanks to all who contributed information and memories of Pat.

It is with great sadness that I also have to report the passing of a number of other former WFS members.

Derek Holland passed away in November 2020. Whilst Lorna, his wife, who passed away in 2018, was the primary botanist in the family, between them they master-minded the Spring Week Hunt for 15 years.

Sadly Phyl Abbott died on 18th April 2021. Phyl joined the WFS in 1972. She was a Valhalla Branch Secretary from 1990 - 2014 and used to lead meetings in West Yorkshire. She was always willing to help others and very generous with her knowledge. She was a well-known Yorkshire botanist who, in 2005, produced the *Plant Atlas of Mid-west Yorkshire*.

Stella Luce passed away on 14th March 2021. Stella had been a member of the London Branch (V) for many years and was also a very active member of the London Natural History Society's Botany Section, where she acted as the 'Indoor Meetings Secretary' for several years in the 1980s and 1990s. She gained the lofty heights of Parnassus and had amassed a total of 2320 records.