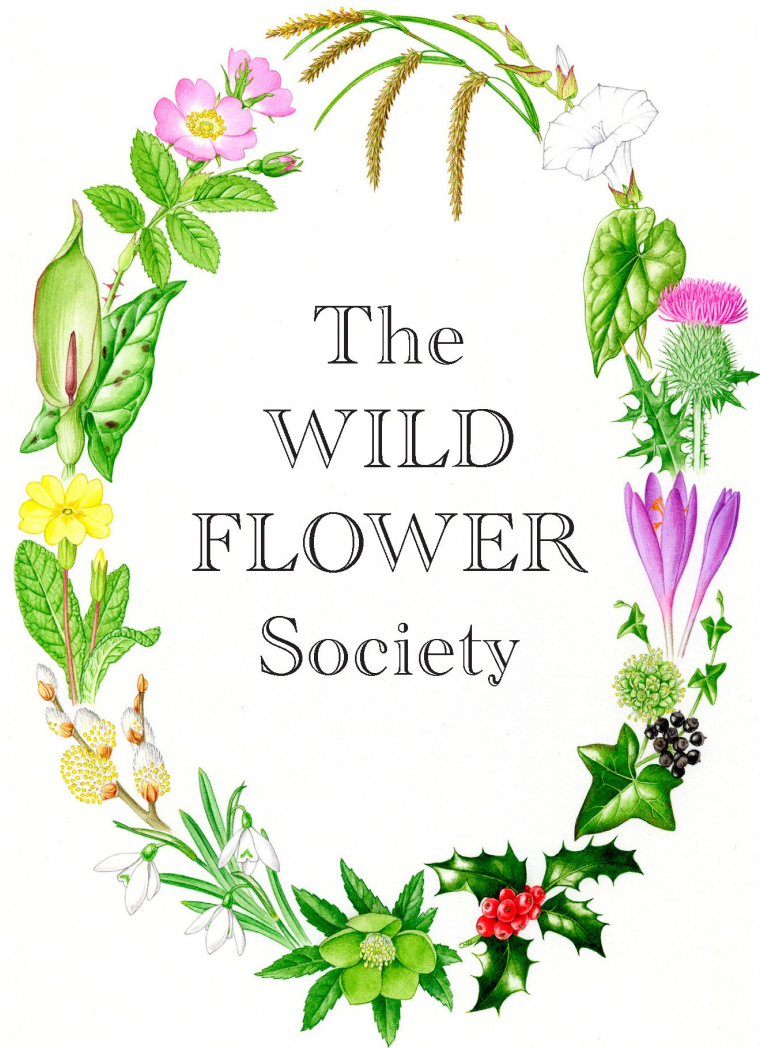


WILD FLOWER MAGAZINE



AUTUMN 2023

WILD FLOWER MAGAZINE

Published four times a year by The Wild Flower Society

Presidents: 1886-1948	Mrs E.V. Dent, O.B.E.
1948-1956	Miss H.S.A. Dent
1956-1994	Mrs C.M.R. Schwerdt, M.B.E. (nee V.V.C. Dent)
1994-1997	Prof. D. Bellamy, O.B.E.
1997-2000	Mr D. McClintock
2000-2002	Mr R.S.R. Fitter
2002-2003	Mr R.M. Burton
2003-present	Prof. Sir Ghilleen Prance, F.R.S.

AUTUMN 2023

Registered Charity No: 271694

No:525

CONTENTS

President's Letter	1
Editorial	2
Notices	2&3
1 KM Square Study	4
Winter Months' Hunt 2022-2023	8
Field Meetings 2023 - Dorset	12
Bridgwater, and Dunster Somerset	14
The Lizard, Cornwall	17
Branch Y, East Anglia report	20
10 KM Square Study (North) 2022	21
10 KM Square Study (South) 2022	25
One Day Meetings	
Pen-y-ghent, Yorkshire	29
Harefield Woods, Middlesex	30
Bradfield Woods, Suffolk	31
Chafford Gorges, Thurrock, Essex	32
Sankey Valley, Merseyside	34
Siccaridge Wood, Gloucestershire	35
Denge Woods, Kent	36
Clitheroe, Lancashire	38
Book Reviews	40

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The regular and smooth production of our Magazine is most important, and I am glad that things went so smoothly through the change of editor. I thank our Chairman, Peter Llewellyn, for guiding us through the last issue in spite of having problems with his knee. I am very glad to welcome Ken Southall as our new editor and to provide this for his first issue.

My latest book on the Amazon rainforest, *Flowers, Fruits and Fables of Amazonia* has just come out, published by Redfern Natural History Productions in Poole. It has over 300 of my colour photos of the plants and the indigenous peoples of Amazonia. It ends up with a plea from two of them about the preservation of the forest on which they depend so much for their livelihood. We associate rainforest with the tropics, but the temperate region rainforests are also important. They occur in such places as the Pacific coast of Canada and Chile, Tasmania and the Atlantic coast of the UK. The fragments of temperate rainforest in the UK are on my mind as last week I visited one of the few fragments that remain, Wistman's Wood* on Dartmoor in Devon. It is a small 8-acre patch of the original forest along the slopes beside the River Dart, but it is enough to show what the original primeval forest would have looked like. This dense oak forest is composed of a mass of twisted, shrunken and bending trees shaped over many years by the winds and with their branches covered with a mass of mosses and lichens. Particularly noticeable are the beard lichens,

Usnea, that hang down from the branches and blow around in the wind. There are even some epiphytic *Polypodium* ferns perched on the branches. The ground under the trees is a mass of large boulders covered by mosses and lichens. Wistman's Wood and other small remnant patches of temperate forest that I have visited convince me, as a specialist in tropical rainforest, that these forests truly deserve the term rainforest. Like the tropical ones, they occur in areas of high rainfall without a long dry season and the branches are loaded with epiphytes. This visit to a Devon rainforest brought back many memories of my childhood in Scotland, where I often botanised in the rainforest remnants of West coast, but as with the tropical rainforest my sadness is that our own rainforest is reduced to just a few small patches from Cornwall to Wester Ross. However, I am glad that there seems to be an increasing interest in the expanding and regeneration of the British rainforest and this includes Wistman's Wood and one at Cabilla in Cornwall with which I am also familiar. I encourage you to visit a British rainforest. Do not be like the couple who got to Wistman's Wood at the same time as us. The sign at the end of the path asked visitors to walk around not through the forest, but they went straight into it. We must take care to respect and protect the habitats that contain so many of the wild flowers that we love so much.

*See page 28 for picture.

EDITORIAL

It was twelve months ago at last year's AGM that I offered to take on the role of WFS Magazine Editor. I only had a limited knowledge of desktop publishing on a basic software package. Little did I know at that time how different and more advanced Microsoft Publisher would be! However, after much valuable help from the previous Editor, Anne Kell, I have now got to grips with MS Publisher. Many thanks to you Anne.

I am anxious to continue the general great layout of the magazine which Anne created seven years ago, and I hope this, being my first attempt, will be acceptable to the members. My uphill learning curve has been very enjoyable, albeit very time-consuming.

Quite a few fellow members will know how I find dealing with the Latin

names of plants quite difficult – especially trying to remember them! A major part of my role as Editor is to check everything that is sent to me, includes the new style of hyphenated plant names to comply with Stace 4. I'm happy to say that surprisingly, I am already getting more used to learning those (dreaded!) Latin names. Who knows, I might even get as good as our long-term experts (I doubt it though!).

My initial concerns about receiving enough 'copy' were soon diminished because in hardly any time at all, I had more than enough to fill my first edition. I have quite a lot already for the Winter edition. My grateful thanks go to everyone who has sent me their reports and articles.

KEN SOUTHALL

NOTICE

Autumn Hunt: Preston, Lancashire. Saturday 28th October.

Leader: Marion Chappell

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

Meet at 10.30 in the small car park on the left at the end of Hill Road, Penwortham, PR1 9XH

This is a repeat of last year's meeting, which was cancelled due to bad weather. It will be a circular walk of about 3 miles, mostly on footpaths, crossing the River Ribble, to Preston and back via another bridge. Marion will supply directions which take account of the new road system (or see entry on the website).

**Copy date for the Winter magazine:
1st November 2023**

Please note the new email address: wfs.magazineeditor@gmail.com

NOTICE

NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES, JANUARY 2024 Action required if you pay by Standing Order

As agreed at our 2022 AGM, WFS membership subscriptions will be increased, for the first time since 2001, with effect from 1st January 2024. A renewal form showing the new rates will be sent out with our Winter Magazine but, **if you pay by standing order, you need to take action before the next payment is due at the beginning of January 2024.**

N.B. Standing orders do not work in the same way as direct debits which you might have with bigger organisations, where the organisation can change the amount paid. With standing orders, it is you, the payer, who need to arrange for the amount to be paid to be increased. If you use online banking, changing your standing order can be done online.

If you already have a standing order but don't use online banking, please contact Robin Blades (details below) to obtain a form to send to your bank

For standing order forms or other queries please contact me: Robin Blades, WFS Treasurer, 32 Ashfield Road, London, N14 7JY.
Email: wfs.finances@gmail.com

The new rates are:

Adult member with magazine £15	Adult member sharing magazine £7
Junior member with magazine £5	Junior member sharing magazine £2.50
Family group with magazine £22	Overseas member £22

If you don't pay by standing order at the moment and would like to make your life and ours easier by setting one up, our bank account details are:

Payee: The Wild Flower Society

Sort code: 20-29-77

Account number: 00267899

Reference: your membership number. You will find this on the envelope this magazine was sent in. Please set up the payment to be made annually at the beginning of January.

To check whether you pay by standing order or for your membership number, please contact our Membership Secretary, Sue Poyser, at wildflowermembership@yahoo.co.uk

1KM SQUARE STUDY 2022

(Inadvertently omitted from the Summer 2023 magazine, with apologies.)

Name	Branch	Monad	Location	Year	New	Total
Jackie Ellis	U	SO9783	Halesowen, West Midlands	4	4	310
	U	SD9784	Halesowen, West Midlands	3	-	224
Jackie Hardy	U	SP0866	Mappleborough Green, Warks.	1	-	182
	U	SP0768	Moon's Moat, Redditch, Warks.	1	-	178
Judith Lee	U	SK2956	Cromford, Derbyshire	4	5	208
	U	SK3264	NW of Kelstedge, Derbyshire	2	16	96
	U	SK2355	SE of Longcliffe, Derbyshire	1	-	70
Nicki Mottram	U	SP2872	Abbey Fields, Kenilworth	1	-	146
	U	SP2873	Castle Green, Kenilworth	1	-	70
	U	SP2972	Crackley, Kenilworth	1	-	140
	U	SP2973	Ladydes Hills, Kenilworth	1	-	112
Richard Pykett	U	SK5742	Sherwood, Nottingham	4	8	153
	U	SK4946	Bogend, Eastwood, Notts.	2	16	37
Irene Wilkinson	U	SK3666	South of Wingerworth, Derbys.	3	48	65
	U	SK3667	West of Wingerworth, Derbys.	3	4	150
	U	SK3766	South of Wingerworth, Derbys.	3	2	55
	U	SK3767	Wingerworth, Derbyshire	3	5	115
	U	SK3866	South of Wingerworth	3	61	109
	U	SK3867	Wingerworth Derbyshire	3	37	92

Jackie Ellis made few new additions to her monads, but that is hardly surprising when you consider the high number she has already recorded. Careful checking was required in

woodland to establish that she had found Garden Solomon's-seal *Polygonatum x hybridum* and not the native species. Another worthwhile addition was Perennial Sow-thistle

Sonchus arvensis. For some reason this is frequently overlooked. Perhaps flower fatigue sets in by September when it is abundant. We find it easiest to spot from the car when it flashes past in tall, stately rows along the narrow verges. Jackie most helpfully informs us that her *Aubretia Aubrieta deltoidea* was 'growing in a tarmac walkway' which spares much agonising over 'is it wild or not?' She also added Rough Meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*. No matter how much work you put in there is always a grass that has escaped your notice in earlier forays.

This year Jackie Hardy has recorded in the 1KM square, SP0866, that is home to her allotment. Surprisingly, this is surrounded by trees and has a nearby pond and some wet areas. A lane with verges extends beyond houses out into a countryside of arable fields. At one time some of the allotments were unworked although they are now all taken. The result is quite a diversity of species, including allotment relics, which accounts for Spring Pea *Lathyrus vernus* and Lesser Celandine *Ficaria verna* 'Brazen Hussy'. The lane verges were excellent, with Hairy Tare *Ervilia hirsuta*, Wood Melick *Melica uniflora*, Wild Parsnip *Pastinaca sativa* and Stone Parsley *Sison amomum* illustrating the variety of plants to be seen there. Jackie chose her second square, SP0868, because it has been developed over the last couple of years and now boasts a large Amazon warehouse, so she was curious to know what had happened to the flora. On her first visit she recorded 13 Bee Orchids *Ophrys apifera*; on a later

visit there was one orchid and 12 holes. This is so heartbreaking. A great deal of mature woodland remains and the typical trees and plants are well represented. But houses and gardens have left their mark, with Western Red-cedar *Thuja plicata* and Rose Campion *Silene coronaria* finding a niche.

Common Restharrow *Ononis repens* was a pleasing and unusual addition to Judith's well-worked home square.



Photo: Ken Southall

Common Restharrow

In her second year in her second square, SK3264, which is mainly rough grazing, she added a number of the early woodland plants, a highlight here being Moschatel *Adoxa moschchatellina*. Her newest 'square' is merely a small plot of land 90m long by 10m wide which has been dug out and laid to permeable paving by Severn Trent Water for

their own mysterious purposes. When first spotted by Judith it was already hosting a number of early colonisers so she kept a record throughout the summer. The plot lies on an exposed but sunny limestone hillside alongside a narrow country road. It is the curious mixture of plants listed that is so enjoyable to read. Apart from the usual weedy suspects there are so many tall plants! These include Prickly Lettuce

Photo: Ken Southall



Lactuca serriola, Ribbed Melilot *Melilotus officinalis*, Mulleins *Verbascum* spp. and Evening-primrose *Oenothera* spp. Then there are the garden plants. However, did Laburnum *Laburnum anagyroides* and Macedonian Scabious *Knautia macedonica* make inroads so

speedily? Unfortunately the area is quickly scrubbing up and succumbing to Gorse *Ulex europaeus*.

Following on from walks taken during Covid, Nicki realised that the four squares she habitually walked through formed a tetrad, so for 2022 she decided to record more intensively. SP2872 has a good range of habitats as it includes the park of Abbey Fields, with old walls, a church and burial ground as well as a brook, and then roads and lanes. Seepage areas provided many waterside plants including Gipsywort *Lycopus europaeus* and Purple-loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*. In SP2873 there were far more fields and the road verges provided most interest. Winter Heliotrope *Petasites pyrenaicus* and Winter Aconite *Eranthis hyemalis* are not commonly recorded. What a boon to have allotments in the next monad! This gave SP2972 a good lift in numbers with the likes of Small Nettle *Urtica urens* and, even better, Argentine Vervain *Verbena bonariensis*, although some poor allotment holder was stuck with Field Horsetail

Photo: Ken Southall



Bird's-foot

Equisetum arvense. A clear area on the common produced Bird's-foot *Ornithopus perpusillus*. The final monad is mainly a walk along the Greenway, and no less interesting for that. Bugle *Ajuga reptans* and Sowbread *Cyclamen hederifolium* made an early appearance here. Later, Water-pepper *Persicaria hydropiper* and Brooklime *Veronica beccabunga* confirmed that it is quite wet in most of this tetrad.

Richard dislikes the fact that his lists for his home monad in the city are now always dominated by apparent garden escapes. But as he carefully records them as 'car park weeds' and 'pavement weeds' we are satisfied that they are genuine and deserve recognition. One of them, False-acacia *Robinia pseudoacacia*, is being recorded more frequently now by all Midlands branch members. Ongoing poor health meant that in Richard's first year in his rural monad he managed only two short visits in March. In year two he managed only one visit in October. He remains optimistic that 2023 will be the year he manages a summer visit! A nice hedgerow addition here was Hop *Humulus lupulus* and we were pleased he discovered an area of damp woodland. But not so pleased

that he recorded Pendulous Sedge *Carex pendula*, an inescapable pest in most places these days.

Irene's aim this year was to fill in some of the obvious gaps in her recording and this she succeeded in doing. Her monads are more wooded than one might expect and they produced some nice additions. She now has Wood Millet *Milium effusum*, a favourite of ours, in two monads; Wood Melick *Melica uniflora* in three monads; Wych Elm *Ulmus glabra* in five monads. Interestingly, Irene lists few garden escapes, and certainly none of the more exotic species which are the bane of those who live in urban areas. They constantly complain of only garden escapes to record and no 'real' plants! Once outside the residential area of Irene's monads you are immediately in a mosaic of woods and small fields, many of which are laid to pasture. Obviously this landscape does not provide garden plants with the right conditions in which to germinate and spread. According to Irene's records Garden Grape-hyacinth *Muscari armeniacum* seems to be the most exotic we are going to get.

MARY AND CLAIRE SMITH

Photo: Sven Wair



A plant to look out for: Mediterranean Nettle *Urtica membranacea*. A chance find at Colchester, Essex by WFS member Sven Wair. Germinating in autumn and flowering in early spring, it can be found in urban areas in places like the base of walls and trees, or in pavements. According to the new BSBI Atlas, it was first recorded in Britain in 2006 and has since been found in over 50 scattered localities, mostly in the coastal areas of southern and eastern England, but also as far north as Elgin (Moray).

WINTER MONTHS' HUNT 2022-2023

Name	County(ies)	No. of Sp.	Dec	Jan	Feb
Northern Counties					
Barbara Allen	South Lancashire	32	-	-	32
Julie Clarke	Lancashire	66	47	16	25
Judith Cox	North Yorkshire	61	13	24	57
Anthony and Rita Grainger	West Yorkshire	95	65	29	49
Karen Fry	Derbyshire	105	81	31	35
Dorothy Rose	Lancashire	56	37	18	30
Mary and Claire Smith	Derbyshire	109	76	56	47
Midlands and Wales					
Monica Davis	Gloucestershire & Somerset	44	30	14	22
Jackie Hardy	Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Devon	123	72	65	42
Nicki Mottram	Warwickshire	97	66	55	43
East Anglia					
Enid Barrie	Norfolk	118	88	30	51
Carol Hawkins	Norfolk	109	89	31	46
Anne and Dennis Kell	Suffolk, North Essex, Cornwall	128	86	55	67
Barbara Mathews	Suffolk	95	64	51	52
South and South East					
Caroline Bateman	London, Surrey and Sussex	123	85	61	61
Gareth Bursnall	Sussex	86	60	35	46
Helen Dignum	Sussex	64	6	45	36
Pippa Hyde	Surrey and London	94	69	26	38

Name	County(ies)	No. of Sp.	Dec	Jan	Feb
Jane Lowe	Surrey, Sussex, Somerset	68	38	39	34
Jill Oakley	Sussex and Hampshire	141	109	29	62
Janice Reynolds	Sussex	70	32	41	42
Diana Stroud	Buckinghamshire, Sussex, Surrey, Berkshire, Oxfordshire	146	126	62	66
South West					
Sarah Beetham	Bristol	57	37	18	27
Sally Maller	Devon	126	94	50	73
Chrissy Marshall	Devon	27	2	11	15

It was great to receive 25 lists for the 2022/23 Hunt, although many participants were slightly despondent about their numbers. Several people commented that the cold weather had either killed off any late flowering plants or held back the early spring flowerers.

Could I remind people that when recording grasses or ferns for the Winter Months' Hunt to check the former are still flowering with stamens present and the latter have spores showing. I know most people are very good about this so do please carry on recording these if you see them. A plea also; when you send your lists to me could you put a total for each month and one for the number of species. By this I mean the total number of plants seen not records made, as in the table that tops this account. Some members already do this, and it really is a help when checking multiple lists and saves mistakes being made.

Travelling from north to south of the UK I will start with the northern Hunters. Barbara was unable to hunt apart from in February so she sent me a list just for that month. She comments that Common Whitlowgrass *Erophila verna* is flourishing because Covid lockdown prevented spraying of the pavements, so something good came out of that. The Marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris* she found was, however, very stunted in size. Firsts for Julie whilst carrying out the Hunt were Borage *Borago officinalis* and Forsythia *Forsythia x intermedia*, both very nice plants to see. Judith sent her usual lovely list and saw three types of Crocus and one I haven't seen for several years, Abraham-Isaac-Jacob *Trachystemon orientalis*. Anthony and Rita found a new plant for their Winter Hunt, Green Field-speedwell *Veronica agrestis*, which flowered for them every month. Another nice surprise was finding Red Bartsia *Odontites vernus*, a fresh specimen

and not a carryon from earlier in the year. Karen found a couple of new ones to her, Cut-leaved Dead-nettle *Lamium hybridum* and Treacle-mustard *Erysimum cheiranthoides*. Dorothy found Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*, which she described as a horrible bully of a plant. I agree but do know a good use for the flowers. Steep them in gin for 24 hours and when tonic is added to the strained gin it turns a lovely pink colour. However, the carpets of Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* were a much better find. Mary and Claire found Harebell *Campanula rotundifolia* and Yellow-flowered Strawberry *Potentilla indica*, both plants I would be pleased to find for my Hunt.

I heard from three people in the Midlands. Monica was mostly Gloucestershire-based but had a couple of forays to Somerset. Fox-and-cubs *Pilosella aurantiaca* from the former was a good find and Creeping Comfrey *Symphytum*

Photo: Ken Southall



Fox-and-Cubs

grandiflorum from Somerset was also good. Jackie found whilst hunting that far too much tidying up of streets had been taking place so reducing the numbers of plants to be found. Green Hellebore *Helleborus viridis* and Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis* though, were good ones to find, when hunting in woodland. Nicki benefitted from works being carried out on HS2 nearby, with the disturbed ground encouraging some late flowers. Field Pansy *Viola arvensis* and Sun Spurge *Euphorbia helioscopia* were seen every month.

From East Anglia came four lists. Enid has moved from Essex to live in Norfolk and has enjoyed finding different plants in a new home location. Common Calamint *Clinopodium ascendens* was a good one to find along with Balkan Anemone *Anemone blanda*. Enid lives near Carol now, so they did some hunting together. Carol knows plenty of good places to hunt and what to see there. Atlas Poppy *Papaver atlanticum* and Field Madder *Sherardia arvensis* were amongst good finds of hers. Anne and Dennis spent a few days in Cornwall to launch their hunt in December finding it milder there with some different plants for them to record. Seaside Daisy *Erigeron glaucus* was a nice record and nearer home Winter Aconite *Eranthis hyemalis*. Barbara commented how it felt much more of a 'hunt' this time round. However, some early flowering Alexanders *Smyrniolus olusatrum* and Colt's-foot *Tussilago farfara* boosted her February total.

Travelling down over to the south, a good number of lists were sent to me.

Caroline hunts quite close to me in Surrey so I am interested and amazed at how many things she finds. Common Centaury *Centaureum erythraea* was a good one and a trip up to the smoke in London brought a record of Stinking Tutsan *Hypericum hircinum*. Gareth found Winter-flowering Honeysuckle *Lonicera x purpusii*, which flowered throughout the three months. Argentine Vervain *Verbena bonariensis* was only seen in December though. Helen was unwell with Covid in December so not able to do much hunting. A New Year Plant Hunt to Shoreham Beach made up for it with Musk Stork's-bill *Erodium moschatum* and Sweet Alison *Lobularia maritima* being found. I struck gold on December 1st and found Creeping Bellflower *Campanula rapunculoides* and Sweet Scabious *Scabiosa atropurpurea*, both new ones for my hunt, main list and my 10km square. Jane sent a super list in which Spurge-laurel *Daphne laureola* and Danish Scurvygrass *Cochlearia danica* caught my eye. Jill had cataract surgery with the instruction not to bend down too much for a while afterwards, most frustrating when there's winter plant hunting to be done. Viper's-bugloss *Echium vulgare* and Fennel *Foeniculum vulgare* being not too small were easy to record whilst upright. Janice was pleased to find Snowdrops *Galanthus nivalis* and Early Crocus *Crocus tommasinianus* growing in abundance and well naturalised in a churchyard near her home. Diana found her December hunting the best ever although the other two months were not as good. She had a trip to Sussex during December where Sea

Campion *Silene uniflora* and Caucasian Mullein *Verbascum pyramidatum* were found.

Three people sent lists from the SouthWest. Sarah found Shaggy-soldier *Galinsoga quadriradiata* and Bush Vetch *Vicia sepium* for her list in December along with plenty of other good plants throughout the Hunt. Sally sent me some lovely photographs of plants found. It's always good to see some pictures along with lists. She was really pleased to find Blinks *Montia fontana*,



which she hadn't seen in that location for a couple of years. Field Woundwort *Stachys arvensis*

was a good find as well. Chrissy started her hunt late, inspired to do so by finding a Primrose *Primula vulgaris* in a hedgerow on New Year's Eve. She also saw several ferns, commenting of the Black Spleenwort *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum* that lots of spores were present.

Winter feels a long time ago at the time of writing this. The first weather warnings of the summer have been announced this weekend, heat, and attendant thunderstorms. The Himalayan Balsam is still in bud but as soon as the flowers open, I will be out collecting some to spice up my gin and tonics, garnished of course with some of the Borage Julie found. I hope everyone has a good summer with lots of good finds.

PIPPA HYDE

Photo: Sally Maller

FIELD MEETINGS 2023

DORSET 22nd AND 23rd APRIL

DAY 1: DURLSTON COUNTRY PARK, ISLE OF PURBECK

Durlston Country Park National Nature Reserve, situated in the Isle of Purbeck region of Dorset's Jurassic Coast, proved to be the perfect place to start the wild flower season in earnest. The limestone grassland is ideal for lime-loving specialities such

the car park where the poor soil and dry conditions were ideal for small, inconspicuous plants such as Parsley-piert *Aphanes arvensis*, Lesser Chickweed *Stellaria pallida* and Common Whitlowgrass *Erophila verna* agg. The leaves of Small-flowered Buttercup *Ranunculus parviflorus* were spotted on a grassy slope nearby and soon an eagle-eyed participant had found a few of its tiny flowers.



Photo: Janet John

as the nationally scarce Early Spider-orchid *Ophrys sphegodes*, which grows in profusion at Durlston. Volunteers there have recorded up to 40,000 plants in a single year. On a perfect spring day we were joined by members of Dorset Wildlife Trust in

Out on the open sloping downs, with the backdrop of a glorious seascape we had our first taste of what was to come, when a medium spike of the pinkish-purple flowers of Early-purple Orchid *Orchis mascula* was spotted. We soon discovered that the entire area was carpeted in tiny Early Spider-orchids, most less than 10cm tall, and to add to that, a passing volunteer led some of us down the slope to enjoy a group of Green-winged Orchids *Anacamptis morio*. Both Common and Chalk Milkwort *Polygala vulgaris* and *P. calcarea* grow in this area so we had the opportunity to compare them by examining the delicate vein markings on the coloured petal-like inner sepals. Common Milkwort has anastomosing veins, i.e. the lateral veins joining with the inner ones to form loops. Chalk Milkwort have one loop or none. Some time was spent examining and comparing Mouse-ears in order to identify Dwarf Mouse-ear *Cerastium pumilum* and Sea

Mouse-ear *C. diffusum*.

In a sheltered area away from the exposed open downs Jo Stephen, the Ancient Woodland Inventory Project Officer for Dorset, pointed out the Golden-eye Lichen *Teloschistes chrysophthalmus*, which seems to be making a comeback after having been extinct in Britain for over a hundred years. Its bright orange apothecia (saucer-like fruiting bodies), with orange eyelash-like cilia around the rim, give it the name Golden Eye and make it easy to identify, even for complete beginners, so look out for it on hawthorn and blackthorn twigs in sunny open places when you're botanising near the sea along the south coast of England.

Beyond the brow of the Downs we continued our circular walk through meadows of Cowslip *Primula veris* and into a disused quarry, where there was time to examine closely many more Early Spider-orchids and to enjoy photographing them before returning to the car park after a grand walk. Thanks go to our leader Charles Whitworth for introducing or reacquainting us with this gem on the south coast.

SHEENA PATERSON

DAY 2: SHELL BAY

For the second day of the Purbeck Weekend, we met in the NT car park on the Studland Peninsula. Our leader, Charles Whitworth, introduced us to Robin Walls, the VC Recorder. We were given an excellent introduction to the ecological diversity of the peninsula, with its intricate mosaic of heaths,

dunes, wetlands and woodlands. In particular, it was considered that the area contained the UK's largest and best quality low lying wet and dry heathland.

The whole of the Studland Peninsula has been very heavily recorded since the 1930's, initially by Captain Cyril Diver. It surprised us all to be told that the Peninsula had become established over only just the last 150 years. Moreover, that the alkaline content of the shell beaches had been lost and that both the dunes and heathland were acidic.

The immediate area of the Shell Bay NT car park was a hive of activity with cars, buses, bicycles and motorbikes constantly moving onto or off the Sandbanks ferry. It took a considerable time to explore the immediate sandy verges surrounding the car park whilst avoiding passing traffic.

I was especially pleased to be shown Bulbous Meadow-grass *Poa bulbosa* in excellent condition, with the bulbous base of the flowering spike easily felt and also seen if the base was exposed. We agonised over the identification of Slender Parsley-piert *Aphanes australis* and Parsley-piert *A. arvensis* - both were present, and we spent time determining which species by examining the shape of the fruits in the leaf axils. There was a good spread of both Early Forget-me-not *Myosotis ramosissima*, with its tiny blue flowers, and nearby was Changing Forget-me-not *M. discolor*, with tiny flowers initially pale yellow or cream, but then becoming pink, violet or blue. Good specimens of Sea Mouse-ear *Cerastium*

diffusum and Little Mouse-ear *C. semidecandrum* were also found on the sandy verges with bracts and sepals clearly distinct. Suffocated Clover *Trifolium suffocatum* was spreading low along the grassy verge and Mossy Stonecrop *Crassula tillaea* was found on bare soil.

Leaving the car park, we crossed the road onto nutrient-poor acid heathland following a short track to reach a grassy mound. Earlier in the year, along this track, there had been apparently a good population of Early Meadow-grass *Poa infirma*, but, alas, no remnants could be found. On the mound were good populations of Common Cudweed *Filago germanica* and Heath Groundsel *Senecio sylvaticus* and here we took lunch overlooking the vast expanse of Poole harbour.

In the afternoon, we headed seaward from the car park, crossing on a boardwalk over a lowland oligotrophic

(low nutrient) freshwater lake. Floating Club-rush *Eleogiton fluitans* covered the water surface. Robin demonstrated why Floating Club-rush was not a sedge because of the presence of a long, basal sheath from which leaves emerge in a spiral of threes and the absence of a free ligule. On the grassy margins of the lake grew Bog-myrtle *Myrica gale*, with male and female flowering catkins apparently on the same plant. The dunes bordering the beach were covered with a broad expanse of Marram *Ammophila arenaria*. At this point, looking out to sea, threatening storm clouds were gathering and most (if not all of us) beat a hasty retreat to the cars.

It was a pleasure to join this botanical meeting and catch up with spring flowers albeit not early enough to see Early Meadow-grass *Poa infirma*.

PETER HILTON

BRIDGWATER AND DUNSTER, SOMERSET 20th and 21st MAY

DAY 1: BRIDGWATER

A glorious spring day, stunning views over the Bristol Channel right across to the coast of South Wales, and of the new nuclear reactor being built at Hinkley Point, together with an interesting botanical site of sub-maritime and saline grassland. As they say "What's not to like?"

The whole area was awash with the bright yellow flowers of Smooth Hawk's-beard *Crepis capillaris*, Beaked Hawk's-beard *C. vesicaria*

and Cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata* and looked absolutely stunning. As a side-line from the clovers which distinguish this locality we honed our identification of these perhaps rather challenging plants.

We had been promised a workshop day focussing on clovers though and we were soon set to task. A bare bank just to the side of the road had us all on our hands and knees, lenses out, Plant Crib ID notes at the ready and advice close to hand.

“Was it”, “Wasn’t it” Red Clover
Trifolium pratense or ZigZag Clover

Helen Dignum getting closer to a clover.



Photo: Janet John

T. medium? The debate went back and forth, finally settling on Red Clover, *T. pratense* but not before everyone was clear as to what “awl-shaped” and “filiform” actually meant. Next on the scene was Rough Clover *T. scabrum*. This one was easier. Leaves hairy on both sides, veins on the leaf thicker towards the edge and recurved. We were on a roll, finding Lesser Trefoil *T. dubium*, Knotted Clover *T. striatum*, and Bird’s-foot Clover *T. ornithopodioides* (I do like that one as it has such a long name for such a tiny-flowered plant). Strawberry Clover *T. fragiferum* and Sea Clover *T. squamosum* all followed in pleasing abundance, even if not yet in flower.

There were plenty of other plants of particular interest to someone - me,

who lives in the Chilterns nowhere near the sea. These included Hairy Buttercup *Ranunculus sardous* and Brackish Water-crowfoot *R. baudotii*. Both of these depend on winter-wet habitat and we saw the latter in glorious profusion in a small hollow which still held water. Sea Fern-grass *Catapodium marimum* was another treat. I like the aides-memoire that are given when you are on a field meeting. Graham Lavender told us that the difference between Fern-grass *C. rigidum* and Sea Fern-grass *C. marimum* is easy to remember as the sea washes off the extra branches so Sea Fern-grass is unbranched. My kind of help. I won’t forget that.

This grassland is a rare and threatened relic of the old sub-maritime commons which were once more widespread on this coast (and in areas such as the Thames Estuary grazing marshes). The character plant is the brilliantly evolved Bulbous Foxtail *Alopecurus bulbosus*, whose swollen stems (the ‘bulbs’) can survive total immersion in sea water at times. We were able to compare it with the common Marsh Foxtail *A. geniculatus* with its characteristic kneeling habit, and study the contrasting heads as both were in full flower. They are similar at first glance, but the rare Bulbous species has much neater, narrower, darker heads and doesn’t show the purplish colour seen in mature anthers of the familiar ‘puddle’ Foxtail. There was also considerable interest in identifying (successfully!) the hybrid *A. x plettkei*.

Our last “nice to see” was Corky-fruited Water-dropwort *Oenanthe*

pimpinelloides with its flat umbels, which Ro FitzGerald noticed whilst waiting for the straggly line of us to emerge from the grassland back onto the track as we turned for home. We had a splendid day and came away feeling more confident in identifying clovers and more besides. Many thanks to Ro FitzGerald and Graham Lavender, our knowledgeable and supportive leaders.

JANET JOHN



Photo: Ken Southall

Scarlet Pimpernel.

DAY: 2 DUNSTER

It was truly a "couldn't be better day" – the glorious weather, Stephen Parker, our leader, and the helpful, friendly group we found ourselves in.

After a very wet spring in Somerset, some species were later in flowering, yet early species were still visible. As soon as we set off along a grassy area, which ran alongside the beach, we were down on our knees to look at Suffocated Clover *Trifolium suffocatum*, Mossy Stonecrop *Crassula tillaea*, Sea Mouse-ear *Cerastium diffusum*, plus Bulbous

Meadow-grass *Poa bulbosa*, which for many of us was a target species. On the beach Yellow Horned-poppy *Glaucium flavum* was very evident, with just a few early blooms. Stephen informed us that this is the biggest colony of this species in Somerset. What immediately caught our eyes were the carpets of Scarlet Pimpernel *Lysimachia arvensis* – we had never seen so many before! Janet John was amazed at the number of Hound's-tongue *Cynoglossum officinale* which were growing both on the beach and in the adjoining grass. Fragrant Evening-primrose *Oenothera stricta* adorned the beach, though not many were in flower, and growing amongst them was Smooth Cat's-ear *Hypochaeris glabra* ranging from quite tiny flowers to much larger, depending on the soil type. Also here was Bird's-foot Clover *Trifolium ornithopodioides*. Surprising to see was Greek Dock *Rumex cristatus* growing robustly out of the sand. Further along, Early Forget-me-not *Myosotis ramosissima* and Field Forget-me-not *M. arvensis* were seen in clumps growing next to each other, which made it easy to compare them.

There was a mixture of attractive and interesting grasses including the uncommon Bearded Fescue *Vulpia ciliata* ssp. *ambigua* together with the Hare's-tail *Lagurus ovatus* and Sand Cat's-tail *Phleum arenarium* with nearby swathes of Sand Sedge *Carex arenaria*.

Sought after and expensive chalets ran all along the beach and we were almost at the end when two plants were unexpectedly found – a wonderful, towering grass that had self-seeded along the beach, whose

identity is currently being determined, and Hirsute Garlic *Allium trifoliatum*.

By this time we had arrived at the edge of a golf course and Stephen Parker urged us to look for Sand Catchfly *Silene conica*; saying that we might be lucky. Indeed we were, seeing ten in flower.

Making our way back, we walked a little way inland behind the chalets, by some fresh water and over grassland where vast patches of Small-flowered Buttercup *Ranunculus parviflorus* and the delicate Slender

Trefoil *Trifolium micranthum* were present. We arrived at a café for tea and ice creams which was a very convivial way to end a splendid day, it was the finding of Changing Forget-me-not *Myosotis discolor* which had the last word!

Such a comprehensive list would not have been possible without the guidance of Stephen Parker – grateful thanks to him for such an enjoyable day.

RITA AND ANTHONY GRAINGER

THE LIZARD, CORNWALL 23rd AND 24th MAY

DAY 1: The Lizard is an outstanding place to visit. The soils and climate make it home to a unique collection of plants found nowhere else in the British Isles, many of them rare. The soils, obviously result from the geology, which is largely metamorphic, mainly serpentine overlain by wind-blown loess. The landscape plays an important role in defining the plant assemblage. There are several historic trackways crossing the area which are deeply rutted so that, in winter months, ephemeral pools form, allowing wetland plants to grow. These dry up in the summer months. The climate also plays a role, being warmer and wetter than most of the rest of the UK.

We were very lucky to be visiting during a spring when the weather had been ideal for the growth and maintenance of the rare clovers

which grow here. In some years by mid-May these plants have shrivelled up. The soil is thin and the wind can be very strong. We were also lucky to be accompanied by the two BSBI county recorders for Cornwall, Colin French, our leader, and Ian Bennallick. They have been botanising in the area for many years and know the site intimately. On this first day we concentrated on the coastal cliff tops between Kynance Cove and Carn Caerthillian.

We found seven of the rarer clovers, three of which are specialities of the Lizard: Twin-headed Clover *Trifolium becconei*, Long-headed Clover *T. incarnatum* ssp. *molinerii* and Upright Clover *T. strictum*. These principally grow on the rocky outcrops which are dotted about the area. The land is owned by the National Trust and on the advice of Colin and Ian they have been carrying out land maintenance

to improve the habitat by controlled burning and scrub clearance. This management has opened up more outcrop areas which are gradually being colonised by the rarer plants.

Other plants of note were Fringed Rupturewort *Herniaria ciliolata*, a prostrate perennial with woody stems, Wild Asparagus *Asparagus prostratus* which is native on the cliffs, and Chives *Allium schoenoprasum*. A very strange plant is Land Quillwort *Isoetes hystrix*. It is a small plant hugging the ground and at first glance the rosette of thin curling leaves looks quite similar to Thrift. Land Quillwort is truly a Lizard speciality occurring nowhere else on the British mainland. It enjoys the thin acidic soil overlying the rocky ground. We found it on rocky outcrops together with the clovers and Spring Sandwort *Sabulina verna*. It enjoys areas that are flooded in winter but dry in the summer. The leaf rosettes appear in the autumn and remain into late spring, growing from a corm-like stem; the plant is perennial and reproduces by spores, formed at the bases of the leaves, that ripen in mid to late spring as the leaves change from green to yellow.

Another Lizard speciality is Dwarf Rush *Juncus capitatus*, which again favours the rocky outcrops. There were many patches of Scarlet Pimpernel *Lysimachia arvensis*. There were three colour variations, the standard scarlet, a much lighter pink variety and a dusky mauve variety which seemed to prefer walls. Spring Squill *Scilla verna* was still in flower and we should not overlook the beautiful display made by more



Photo: Ken Southall

common coastal plants such as Thrift *Armeria maritima*, Dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*, Heath Spotted-Orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*, Lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica* and Hairy Buttercup *Ranunculus sardous* to name but a few. Many thanks to Colin and Ian for a well informed and very interesting day.

FAY BANKS

DAY 2: Today Colin led us on a circular walk to the north of Kynance Cove. We were once again fortunate to have Ian Bennallick join us for the day and he was a great asset, making sure that even those trailing at the back had seen the special plants. The first plant of note, Prostrate Broom *Cytisus scoparius* ssp. *maritimus*, was only a short walk away, on the landward side of a small rock outcrop. Continuing on a path heading north east of Kynance Cove we passed a boggy area with plants such as Great Fen-sedge *Cladium*

mariscus and Pale Butterwort *Pinguicula lusitanica* before coming to the remains of a prehistoric settlement, first occupied in the Bronze Age. Within the low circular walls of the remains of one of the round houses we found Royal Fern *Osmunda regalis*, and nearby was one of my favourite finds of the day, Yellow Centaury *Cicendia filiformis*. As the sun was shining, the delicate yellow flowers were fully open, with many flower buds on the same plants awaiting their turn in the sun.

Continuing our walk, we arrived at a small pond with several interesting aquatic plants, including Lesser Marshwort *Helosciadium inundatum* and Alternate Water-milfoil *Myriophyllum alterniflorum*. Our lunch stop was on a well-drained slope with a new plant for me, Upright Chickweed *Moenchia erecta*. Taking a path back towards the coast, it was good to see Pale Flax *Linum bienne* in flower and more Dwarf Rush *Juncus capitatus*. It was then time for another Lizard speciality, Cornish Juniper *Juniperus communis* ssp. *hemisphaerica*, with a good-sized plant on the slope above the path. While admiring the juniper, we were treated to an excellent view of a cuckoo, perched on a rock on the ridge above us, busy calling for a mate. We returned to Kynance Cove along the coastal path, with a diversion down towards the cliffs where we found Wild Asparagus *Asparagus prostratus* and Lesser Meadow-rue *Thalictrum minus*. Good finds along the coastal path included Western Eyebright *Euphrasia tetraquetra* and more Land Quillwort *Isoetes hystrix*. We also enjoyed superb coastal views and saw other

wildlife such as nesting fulmars and kittiwakes. A highlight at the end of the day was Spotted Cat's-ear *Hypochaeris maculata*, which had only just started coming into flower. Some plants had more spots on their leaves than others. There are so many more plants I could mention! Thank you to Colin and Ian for giving your time to show us these special plants and for sharing so much of your knowledge with us.

SUSAN SIMCOCK

Below is a copy of the much appreciated letter from the leader Colin French:-

Dear Janet,
I am very happy to say that the Lizard meeting went extremely well. The weather was ideal and the Lizard Flora was the best it has been for the last 30 years. Last year's drought worked wonders. As a consequence the group were able to see all the important rarities and lots of them. We even found a couple of new sites for rarities such as one new one for *Isoetes hystrix*, plus we found the very distinctive *Lysimachia arvensis* var. *lilacina*, which was last seen in that area in 1985. Ian Bennallick came along and helped out on both days, which was a wonderful bonus. Having an extra person leading meant one of us could search for the rarities whilst the other was showing what had already been found. On the first day we planned to walk to the Caerthillian Valley (about 1km away) and I wondered that we would not get that far because it took an hour to cover the first 100 yards from Kynance car park, such was the range of flowers

to be seen. Things did speed up after that and we completed the planned route. Ian and I thoroughly enjoyed the two days, meeting the group and seeing *The Lizard* at its best.

Best wishes,
Colin



Twin-headed Clover
Trifolium bocconeii



Long-headed Clover
Trifolium incarnatum
ssp. *molinerii*



Dropwort
Filipendula vulgaris

Photos x 3: Ken Southall

BRANCH Y, EAST ANGLIA

Marilyn Abdulla

Total 625 species

I received just the one diary this year for records made in 2022. It was still a difficult and disappointing year for many people in the aftermath of the Covid pandemic. Marilyn managed to get out and about though with a lovely trip to Teesdale in May, but stayed mainly locally in Norfolk. She went out regularly with the Norfolk Flora Group and found that nearly every time she went out with them she found something new. She says that you can't beat going out with more knowledgeable botanists, not to mention more pairs of sharp eyes!

She is very good for noting the vice-county that she recorded in and with whom she botanised. She found some interesting species such as

Silver Maple *Acer saccharinum*. What I found strange were the omissions of some common species such as Cherry Plum *Prunus cerasifera* and Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*. Just imagine what her grand total might have been. A couple of her findings, such as Mongolian Lime *Tilia mongolica*, are not in Stace 4 but she can carry those forward when she reaches the giddy heights of Parnassus.

I look forward to seeing what she manages to find for this year.

STEPHEN CLARKSON

Sent in with apologies from Stephen for its lateness.

10 KM SQUARE STUDY (NORTH) 2022

	Square	Area	Year	New	Total
Julie Clarke	SD48	Lindale & Whithbarrow	20	3	791
	SD58	Milnthorpe	19	1	587
Anthony and Rita Grainger	SE23	Horsforth & Rodley	12	11	651
	SE24	Otley & Wharfe Valley	12	7	455
Peter Jepson	SD61	Bolton (North)	42	0	508
	SD62	Darwen and Blackburn	48	4	874
	SD71	Turton	41	0	458
	SD72	Accrington	47	0	625
Andrew Kafel	SE02	Halifax	16	10	973
	SE12	Brighouse	15	3	670
	SE22	Morley, Dewsbury & Batley	14	14	870
Graeme Kay	SJ98	Marple	44	0	679
Keith Robson	NZ24	Chester-le-Street	10	35	691
Dorothy Ross	SD31	Southport	4	11	131
	SD32	Lytham	20	5	386
	SD45	Galgate	10	0	299
	SD63	Longridge	35	0	381
	SD64	Chipping	12	0	205
	SD73	Whalley	18	1	306
	SD74	Clitheroe	33	2	380
Jesse Tregale	SE13	Bradford	33	15	1869
Sheila Wynn	SD64	Bowland, Lancashire	17	0	237
	SD65	Forest of Bowland	13	0	176
	SD74	Clitheroe, Lancashire	17	3	593
	SD75	Slaidburn, Gisburn Forest	17	0	239

Julie managed to add to two of her squares. In SD48 a rather splendid Italian Bluebell *Hyacinthoides italica* was found in woodland at Witherslack, and the Hart's-tongue *Asplenium scolopendrium* Cristatum Group and Soft Downy-rose *Rosa mollis* in a hedge bank at Lindale. I have had to adjust my totals as there has been some confusion, but with Julie's new plant, Water Figwort *Scrophularia auriculata*, on waste ground at Millthorpe, her SD58 total is now 587.

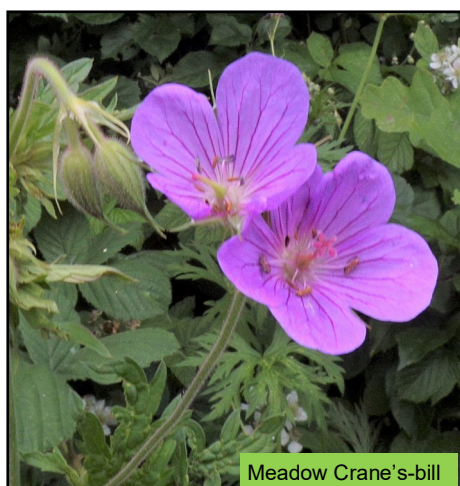
Anthony and Rita added to both their squares. In SE23, some wasteland in Lee Lane provided some interesting plants including Greater Knapweed *Centaurea scabiosa*, Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis* and an interesting garden escape Greek Jerusalem-sage *Phlomis samia*. A rather nice Small Toadflax *Chaenorhinum minus* was a car park weed at Kirkstall Forge Railway Station and a splendid Water Dock *Rumex hydrolapathum* was by a pond in Low Lane. In SE24 wasteland by the Parkway Hotel they found Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis* and saw Seaside Daisy *Erigeron glaucus* at Huby.

Peter has added to just one of his squares SD62. Whilst driving past the former Belgrave Mill, Darwen, home of Crown Wallpapers previously asset stripped and demolished, he spotted many clumps of Wood Spurge, *Euphorbia amygdaloides* ssp. *robbiae*. Also in Darwen was Early Pampas-grass *Cortaderia richardii*, which Peter has watched over several years from a seedling at the base of a riparian retaining wall by Hardmans Way, which flowered for

the first time in 2022 making an ID possible. The two other finds in Darwen were named by fern expert Alison Evans as Golden-scaled Male-fern *Dryopteris affinis* ssp. *paleaceolobata* in Sunnyhurst Wood and *D. x complexa* = Male Fern *D. filix-mas* x *D. affinis* Golden-scaled Male-fern at Spring Vale, Darwen, growing above a culvert retaining wall.

Andrew has had a good year, adding to all three of his squares. In his Halifax square SE02, Fine-leaved Vetch *Vicia tenuifolia* was a nice find on turned earth by the towpath on the B6112. The geranium with very narrow petals, Druce's Crane's-bill *Geranium x oxonianum* f. *thurstonianum* was found by him on cobbles by Woodhouse Lane; this appears to be getting more common as an escape. I have seen it on several occasions. Thrift *Armeria maritima*, which Andrew found as a wall/pavement weed opposite Caty'well Pub is a relatively common garden plant but is unusual as an escape. I have yet to find it in Bradford, unlike Kamchatka Stonecrop *Phedimus kamtschaticus*, another wall/pavement weed found by Andrew on Charlesworth Terrace, which I have found several times as an escape. In SE12 Brighouse, Andrew found the Opium Poppy *Papaver somniferum* 'Pink Chiffon' with double pink flowers on waste ground on Park Lane. The Opium Poppy appears most years in varying quantities all around Bradford. It seems much more common as a street weed than as a garden plant. I have often wondered where they come from. Another pavement weed was Hollyhock *Alcea rosea* on

Elizabeth Street in Elland. In Batley SE22, Andrew led a very interesting Bradford Botany Group meeting at Soothill old tip where we saw many Southern Marsh-orchids *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* and Common Spotted-



Meadow Crane's-bill

orchids *D. fuchsii* scattered around as well as some of their splendid hybrid *D. x grandis*. Three kinds of Meadow Crane's-bill were also seen: the common normal *Geranium pratense* and some garden escapes, *G. pratense* 'Mrs Kendall Clark', with purple and black flowers, and the eastern *G. pratense* var. *stewartianum* 'Raina', with dark pink flowers. A nice native here was Meadow Barley *Hordeum secalinum*.

Graeme has been poorly and has not sent his records in. We wish him well and hopefully he will send his records in next year.

Keith had a very good year in NZ24, with 35 new plants. New Zealand Bitter-cress *Cardamine corymbosa* at Waldrige Hall was a

nice find as this alien species appears to be spreading north. Durham city seems to be good for some nice weeds: Wall Lettuce *Mycelis muralis*, Pellitory-of-the-wall *Parietaria judaica*, and a form of Soft Shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum* 'Divisilobum' being found, as well as some nice bushes, including Fig *Ficus carica* and Spotted-laurel *Aucuba japonica*. Not very frequently reported is the hybrid between Soft Rush *Juncus effusus* and Hard Rush *J. inflexus* = *J. duffusus*, which Keith found on Waldrige Fell. This looks like a sterile Hard, but with almost continuous pith, and often growing with both parents. However, what must be his most notable find was in a place called 'Pity-Me' where he found Springbeauty *Claytonia perfoliata*.

Dorothy managed to find plants in four of her squares. In SD31 she found some nice weeds on the roadside in Southport including Black Mustard *Brassica nigra* and Prickly Lettuce *Lactuca serriola*. Giant Hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum* was on the edge of a golf course on Hesketh Road, Southport and Tree-mallow *Malva arborea* on the edge of a car park. In SD32 some roadside grasses in Lytham included Greater Quaking-grass *Briza maxima*, Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and one I have yet to find in Bradford: Hare's-tail *Lagurus ovatus*. One plant becoming far commoner as a pavement weed is Argentine Vervain *Verbena bonariensis*, found was by the lake at Fairhaven. She has only one new plant in SD73: Creeping Yellow-cress *Rorippa sylvestris* by the River Calder at Whalley and in

SD74, she saw Chicory *Cichorium intybus* by the roadside in Clitheroe and Goldenrod *Solidago virgaurea* at Crosshill Quarry, Clitheroe.

I had a good year in Bradford with

Photo: Jesse Tregale



Chinese Mustard 'Red Frills'

fifteen new plants The highlight being the hybrid grass Red Fescue x Squirreltail Fescue *Festuca rubra* ssp. *rubra* x *Vulpia bromoides*, which Michael Wilcox found in Bolton Wood Quarry. Both species have been known in the quarry for over twenty years and searches have been made for the hybrid in previous years without success. Michael found

several other new plants, including Maltese-Cross *Silene chalcidonica* on grassland opposite his house in Roundwood Glen and Jerusalem Artichoke *Helianthus tuberosus* in a new ditch at Greengate. I found a Chinese Mustard *Brassica juncea* 'Red Frills' growing by a wall on Bolton Road. This has very narrow purple leaves and also is grown as a salad vegetable. I also found a Great Forget-me-not with white veined leaves, *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Jack Frost' self-sown on a pavement on Bailey Hills Road.

Sheila added three new species to her SD74 list. In West Bradford she found Coneflower *Rubeckia laciniata*, which is new to me, and Beaked Hawk's-beard *Crepis vesicaria*. The other was Forsythia *Forsythia x intermedia*, on a woodland edge in Clitheroe.

I would like to thank all those who sent me lists. Some interesting plants were found. Hopefully we will have a splendid 2023.

B.A. 'JESSE' TREGALE



Springbeauty *Claytonia perfoliata*



Seaside Daisy *Erigeron glaucus*

Photo x 2: Ken Southall

10 KM SQUARE STUDY (SOUTH) 2022

	Square	Area	Year	New	Total
Gareth Bursnall	TQ23	Crawley, West Sussex	8	16	631
Rodney Burton	TQ56	Darenth Valley, Kent	28	6	707
José Gibbs	TR37	Margate, Kent	8	2	176
Anne Hercock	SO60	West Gloucestershire	2	169	317
Pippa Hyde	TQ15	Leatherhead, Surrey	4	4	331
Barbara Mathews	TM23	West Felixstowe, Suffolk	25	2	687
	TM24	Woodbridge, Suffolk	23	0	539
	TM33	East Felixstowe, Suffolk	26	0	669
	TM34	Shottisham, Suffolk	14	3	364
Steve Mellor	TQ14	Mole Valley, Surrey	1	377	316
Ted Phenna	SH57	Bangor & Anglesey	15	0	432
	SH67	Llanfairfechan, Gwynedd	19	2	693
	SH68	Llangoed, Anglesey	10	0	314
	SH78	Great Orme, Gwynedd	43	30	771
Ted Pratt	SY97	Worth Matravers, Dorset	10	0	615
	SY98	Wareham & Corfe, Dorset	14	0	1270
	SZ08	Studland, Dorset	16	0	1265
Janice Reynolds	TQ40	Newhaven, East Sussex	21	9	734

2022 was a difficult year for botanising in the south of Britain so it was heartening to receive so many very interesting lists. According to provisional figures from the Met Office, 2022 was the warmest year on record for the UK, with temperatures of over 40°C recorded on one day. It was a particularly dry year for southern England, significantly so in July when the amount of rainfall fell below the previous lowest record in 1911. Despite these challenging conditions

intrepid WFS botanists continued in their searches for new species.

Gareth's TQ23 hectad extends into three counties, East and West Sussex and Surrey. His discovery of Winter Honeysuckle *Lonicera x purpusii* on the banks of the River Mole got his 2022 list off to a great start. Hedgerows were productive for Gareth. In April he identified the garden form of Stinking Iris *Iris foetidissima* var. *citrina* with yellow tepals and in May he spotted the large, fluted, scrolled flowers of Altar

Lily *Zantedeschia aethiopica*. A roadside verge in June rewarded him with Peruvian Lily *Alstroemeria aurea* 'Dover Orange', with umbels of showy deep orange flowers with the inner tepals streaked dark red. Gareth is adept at finding different species varieties and this year his records of four varieties of Autumn Hawkbit *Scorzoneroides autumnalis* sent me scuttling off to search for varieties in Sell and Murrell to look for the varieties *simplex*, *cinerascens*, *pinnatifida* and *latifolia*.

Rodney has been sending in records for his Darenth Valley square TQ26 in West Kent for 28 years and has built up a very extensive list; nevertheless, in 2022 he managed to add another six species. April provided him with two dandelion species, Green Dandelion *Taraxacum alatum* and Broad-stalked Dandelion *T. expallidiforme*. In August, after rain following three scorching weeks, Rodney found an unusual Knotgrass species close to his home, which had put out a second ring of branches

above the first and that didn't have the tiny narrow leaves typical of Red-knotgrass *Polygonum bellardii*; Rodney referred to Sell and Murrell and identified it as Small-leaved Knotgrass *P. parvulum*. In late summer he discovered two Finger-grass species, Tropical Finger-grass *Digitaria ciliaris* and Hairy Finger-grass *D. sanguinalis*, the extremely hot summer being probably responsible for their very late germination.

José's TR37 square is a small sliver of the north-east Kent coast, which has a rather restricted range of habitats. The extreme heat last summer made the area very desert-like so José wasn't tempted out to botanise; everything was too frazzled. However, earlier in the year she found Winter Heliotrope *Petasites pyrenaicus* in January and in March she discovered Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*. Both were found at the very eastern edge of TR37, just before you fall into the sea at Joss Bay.

2022 was Anne's second year sending in records for her SO60 West Gloucestershire hectad. Last year she realised that records for her 1km square study could be included within the larger 10km square study; this year she has extended her searches outside her initial monad SO6302 and has added another 170 new species, a great achievement. Anne's square has a variety of habitats including part of the Forest of Dean and the upper Severn Estuary and this is evident from the species in her list. An interesting find was Pale Galingale *Cyperus eragrostis*. She

Photo: Rodney Burton



also recorded a number of orchid species including Green-winged Orchid *Anacamptis morio*, Common Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, Southern Marsh-orchid *D. praetermissa* and Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera*. Among the good range of coastal species that Anne discovered are Rock Samphire *Crithmum maritimum*, Sea Barley *Hordeum marinum* and Lesser Sea-spurrey *Spergularia marina*.

Pippa added some new species to her TQ15 hectad in the Leatherhead area of Surrey. In February she spotted Mediterranean Spurge *Euphorbia characias* and a few days later in March she found Mistletoe *Viscum album*. Pippa says that she used the extreme temperatures in the summer, when everything was very burnt up and dead looking, as an excuse to relax in the garden. However, in December, as she started her Winter Months Hunt, she checked along a roadside bank that she hadn't visited for a while and was pleased to find two garden escapes, Creeping Bellflower *Campanula rapunculoides* and Sweet Scabious *Scabiosa atropurpurea*.

In her Felixstowe square TM23 Barbara managed to increase her species total to a magnificent 687 by adding Wall-rue *Asplenium ruta-muraria* and Burnet-saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga* to her list. She enjoys searching the lanes and footpaths and impressively always carries a notebook to record her finds. Sometimes Barbara takes the ferry across the River Deben to her

TM34 hectad and walks to Bawdsey, where she discovered Common Hemp-nettle *Galeopsis tetrahit* on a road bank. A trip to Alderton in September rewarded her with Apple-of-Peru *Nicandra physalodes* beside a playing field and a grass verge there provided Barbara with Green Bristle-grass *Setaria viridis*.

Steve Mellor sent his first list for the 10km square study, TQ14 in Surrey, which has a splendid total of 377 species. He is a longstanding WFS member and an experienced botanist who has recorded for Surrey Botanical Society and BSBI. Steve has recorded mainly in chalk downland and greensand sites in the North Downs and has taken an especial interest in hybrids. He was especially pleased to discover the diminutive Bastard-toadflax *Thesium humifusum* and he managed to find Green Hound's-tongue *Cynoglossum germanicum*, which is very common in his home hectad of TQ15 but less so in this adjacent TQ14 square. Unexpectedly Steve found that Crested Hair-grass *Koeleria macrantha* was widespread in grassland on the Downs, though only ever in small clumps.

Ted Phenna has recorded in his SH78 Great Orme square for 43 years and it is difficult to believe that it was possible for him to add more species to his already superb total; however, he managed to add another 30 species in 2022 and his total now is 771! Wendy McCarthy, the VC49 Recorder, lives in his road and has been very helpful with the new additions. Ted discovered some

interesting plants at West Shore, Llandudno, which included Larkspur *Consolida ajacis*, Safflower *Carthamus tinctorius*, Blue Eryngo *Eryngium planum*, Brackish Water-crowfoot *Ranunculus baudotii* and Oxford Dandelion *Taraxacum oxoniense*. Dappled Hawkweed *Hieracium scotostictum* was a nice find in Llandudno which was identified by Wendy McCarthy and Tim Rich. Ted found Chicory *Cichorium intybus* and Great Burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* by a field gate in his SH67 Llanfairfechan square, bringing his total there up to an impressive 693.

Ted Pratt has been busy writing a book, so he didn't send a list for 2022. However, he plans to get back to recording again after his book has been completed.

Janice has been recording in her TQ40 Newhaven square in East Sussex for 21 years and in 2022 has added nine new species to her list, bringing her total up to a fantastic 734. Wood Spurge 'Purpurea' *Euphorbia amygdaloides* 'Purpurea' was discovered in May while out with Matthew Berry in Newhaven, where Purple Gromwell 'Heavenly Blue'

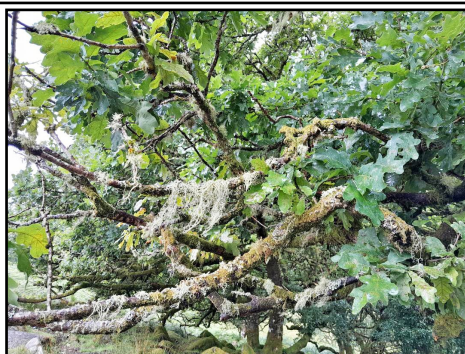
Lithospermum diffusum 'Heavenly Blue' was also found. In March Janice came upon Narcissus 'Irene Copeland', which is in the Double Division 4. It has densely double flowers with white petals interspersed with short sections of lemon yellow. Later in the spring she located clusters of star-shaped, pinkish-white flowers belonging to Kara Tau Garlic *Allium karataviense*.

Everyone's participation in the 10km square study (South) is very much appreciated. Some long-standing WFS members are having difficulties with recording in their 10km squares as they are getting older and no longer have their own transport. Consequently, they are unsure whether they will be able to continue to add to their lists. I would like to thank them for sending in such impressive and comprehensive records over many years and hope that they will carry on enjoying their botany more locally.

Thank you to all those members who sent in their lists for 2022. I hope that 2023 will provide excellent conditions for searching for new species and I look forward to receiving your new records in the New Year of 2024.

JILL OAKLEY

Photo: Ghilleen Prance



Wistman's Wood on Dartmoor, Devon. Please refer to our President's Letter on page 1.

ONE DAY MEETINGS 2023

PEN-Y-GHENT, YORKSHIRE

3rd APRIL

Photo: Jane Lowe

The objective of this meeting was to see Purple Saxifrage *Saxifraga oppositifolia* in flower. Pen-y-ghent and neighbouring Ingleborough in the Yorkshire Dales National Park are its



most southerly sites in England. The Purple Saxifrage grows there on limestone crags at around 600 metres above sea level. It flowers in late March to early April when weather conditions can be challenging for reaching the site. Unfortunately, a poor weather forecast shortly before the arrival meeting date necessitated a reschedule, and only two of us could make the new date, myself and Sheila Wynn, the leader. Despite beautiful sunshine we saw very few plant species in flower on the walk from Horton-in-Ribblesdale to Pen-y-ghent, only Dandelion *Taraxacum* agg., Daisy *Bellis perennis* and Lesser Celandine *Ficaria verna*. As we started to climb Pen-y-ghent, we could see purple patches dotted around the crags. We crossed uneven turf and loose rocks for a closer view of some of the more accessible Purple Saxifrage. The leaves, tiny in comparison to the

flowers, have stiff bristles – those and the small size are adaptations to living in cold places, as are the large flowers and the early flowering season; these make it possible for this plant to

live in the northernmost parts of Greenland where the growing season is only around 30 days. In the turf near the Purple Saxifrage were small cushions of Mossy Saxifrage *Saxifraga hypnoides*, not yet in flower, and bright green curly Comb Moss *Ctenidium molluscum*, an indicator of base-rich conditions.

We continued to the top of Pen-y-ghent where we had our lunch, then enjoyed spectacular views on the walk back to Horton-in-Ribblesdale. We saw Meadow Pipits *Anthus pratensis* and heard Skylarks *Alauda arvensis* as we walked.

Many thanks to Sheila for going ahead with this excellent field meeting.

JANE LOWE

HAREFIELD WOODS, MIDDLESEX 16th APRIL

Who could believe it! A bright, sunny, warm day. We must have done something good! Goldilocks Buttercups *Ranunculus auricomus* brightly welcomed us as we parked our cars outside the church. We had a mission – to see the Wild Tulip *Tulipa sylvestris* - but a diversion through the churchyard at the beginning proved very rewarding. Speedwells there were aplenty. Ivy-leaved Speedwell *Veronica hederifolia* ssp. *Hederifolia*, the one with the hairs in line on one side of the pedicel, and *V. hederifolia* ssp. *lucorum* with the hairs all round the pedicel, Slender Speedwell *V. filiformis*, which seldom produces seeds, Wall Speedwell *V. arvensis*, with its glorious tiny dark-blue flowers, and Green Field-speedwell *V. agrestis*, which was a real bonus. To complete our Speedwell collection, later in the wood, we saw Wood Speedwell *V. montana* though this one was not yet in flower.

The anecdotes from one of the group, Mario Maculan, had us looking at very familiar plants with new eyes. Looking at the Daisy *Bellis perennis*, Mario said that the white florets are female only and the pink edged ones are hermaphrodite. It certainly seemed to be the case from our inspection of the florets, and have you ever actually called the flowers with the several rows of petals *Bellis perennis flore pleno*? Then there were the Dandelions *Taraxacum* agg. in all their glory. When the flower is over the flower head closes up looking rather ragged.

It is like a cocoon Mario said. The plant has a quiet time and then bursts open having transformed into an amazing, highly structured pappus.

I saw my first False Oxlip *Primula x polyantha*, and it goes without saying that we saw lots of Primroses *Primula vulgaris* and Cowslips *P. veris*, which are always a delight.

After our time in the churchyard we moved into the wood, and there large as life and twice as beautiful were the Wild Tulips *Tulipa sylvestris*. They are a treat to see, bright yellow, about



Photo: Janet John

30cm tall, very narrow leaves, with the three outer petals reflexed. We saw, we photographed, we enjoyed. Coralroot *Cardamine bulbifera* was nearby, its red bulbils down the stems but the flowers still in bud.

The wood was bursting with new growth and the flowers of ancient woodland were to be seen in Abundance: Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina*, Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, Wild Garlic *Allium ursinum* and lots more.

On our walk back to the cars, towards the end of the meeting, we walked through a large area covered in Hemlock *Conium maculatum*.

How? Why? we wondered. A mystery.

An interesting walk, good companionship, a real pleasure to be botanising together again after the dark, short, cold days of winter. A great start to the season.

JANET JOHN

BRADFIELD WOODS, SUFFOLK 23rd APRIL

Bradfield Woods is an ancient woodland near Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, that unusually has had continuously-practised hazel coppicing since 1252 and so has a high diversity of flora. It is said to have around 370 plant species recorded in its 201 acres, a wide variety of fungi, nightingales & dormice.

A group of nine gathered in a very busy car park although we didn't actually see many people once walking. Unfortunately our leader, Dr Stephen Clarkson, was only able to come with us part of the way as he is struggling with an on-going foot problem, but he did share some of his knowledge before leaving us to be guided by Ken Southall & Sue Grayston.

Ken & Sue had helpfully prepared a plant list for us to use as we progressed around the waymarked trails. This resulted in a competition

to find the highest number of plants during the meeting – 92 by Sven Wair, our prizewinner!

The woods have SSSI designation



Photo: Ken Southall

and we were pleased to see their unusual plants: Oxlips *Primula elatior* scattered in the woodland and on the ditch edges, looking at their best; a few Herb-Paris *Paris quadrifolia* just starting to bud by the pathway and a profusion of Water Avens *Geum rivale*, the most I have ever seen. We saw Early-purple Orchid *Orchis mascula* just coming into flower but an extensive patch of Ransoms *Allium ursinum* was only at the bud stage.

The Oxlips are very special as they have a very limited distribution. They grow mostly in a triangle of boulder clay in Essex and Suffolk, usually in ancient woodland. Their flowers have a similar colour and shape to Primroses *Primula vulgaris*, but the flowers are held in a graceful, drooping, one-sided cluster at the top of the scape. They benefit from coppicing and the well-maintained rides, but are tasty treats for deer. Sadly we saw quite a few with their flower heads neatly bitten off.

We stopped to check the spurs to distinguish between Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana* and Early Dog-violet *V. reichenbachiana*, the former being paler than the petals and

notched on the spur end whilst the latter is as dark as, or darker than the petals and unnotched. It was good to see a carpet of Pignut *Conopodium majus*

There were a few Yellow Archangel *Lamium galeobdolon*, carpets of Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, Goldilocks Buttercup *Ranunculus auricomus* and Midland Hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata* flowering. We checked the Midland Hawthorn to see the flowers had two styles and were very pleased to see its distinctive leaf shape.

Unfortunately the scattered showers settled into more steady rain during our lunch, which was a shame. It would be very interesting to see this wood again later in the year with so many plants just starting to develop at this visit. The wood is known to have 24 species of butterfly but we only saw one Peacock with wings firmly closed. The wide, well-maintained rides might be bursting full of life in a few weeks! Many thanks to every one of the group for a lovely walk and I shall take away a beautiful memory of the stunning Oxlips.

EDID BARRIE

CHAFFORD GORGES, THURROCK, ESSEX. 3rd JUNE

On a beautiful sunny day, six of us gathered at the Chafford Gorges Nature Park visitor centre. The Nature Park, comprising three former chalk pits, was set up when the housing estate at Chafford Hundred was built in the early 1990s. Chalk extraction ended in the 1920s. One of

the pits, Grays Gorge, is designated an SSSI principally for invertebrates, but the designation mentions that the site has the largest concentrations of Man Orchids *Orchis anthropophora* and Round-leaved Wintergreens *Pyrola rotundifolia* in Essex. The reserve is managed by the Essex

Wildlife Trust, who aim to preserve the chalk grassland and meadow habitats. To that end, volunteers combat encroachment by scrub and woodland, create clearings and remove excess nutrients. The areas we visited are open to the public.

At Warren Gorge, the pit closest to the visitor centre, we saw our first Fodder Vetch *Vicia villosa*; there was plenty more later. Fodder Vetch looks like a larger and more vigorous Tufted Vetch *V. cracca* but the calyx is more asymmetrical and the standard petals' limb is about half the length of the claw in *V. villosa* and about the same length in *V. cracca*. In the car park on the way to Grays Gorge, we found Greater Quaking-grass *Briza maxima*, Hop Trefoil *Trifolium campestre* and Grass Vetchling *Lathyrus nissolia*. After a walk past a 'Mammoth-free Zone' sign, we arrived at the entrance to Grays Gorge. Near there we saw Common Broomrape *Orobancha minor*, Salsify *Tragopogon porrifolius* and a Green Hairstreak butterfly *Callophrys rubi*. We continued to an area with bare chalk where we had lunch surrounded by Kidney Vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria*, numerous Hawkweeds *Hieracium* spp., Common Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* leaves, plenty of Round-leaved Wintergreen *Pyrola rotundifolia*, Common Twayblade *Neottia ovata* and Fairy Flax *Linum catharticum*.

After lunch we continued around the edge of the quarry enjoying splendid views. We saw Yellow Vetchling *Lathyrus aphaca* and hundreds of Man Orchids *Orchis anthropophora*,

as indicated by the SSSI designation. There were also a few plants of Ploughman's-spikenard *Inula conyzae* and a patch of Wild Liquorice *Astragalus glycyphyllos*, neither in flower. Quaking-grass *Briza media*, the smaller native relative of the large alien we had seen in the car park, was also present. We found Corky-fruited Water-dropwort *Oenanthe pimpinelloides* and Sainfoin *Onobrychis viciifolia* in an overgrown area where Adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum* had previously been recorded, but was no longer evident.



Man Orchid

We then descended 101 steps to the bottom of the quarry. At the edge of the pond were Jointed Rush *Juncus articulatus* and Common Spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris*. We passed an old limekiln where we found a few Southern Marsh-orchids *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* and Adder's-tongue. *O. vulgatum*. In a wooded area we saw a single plant, not in flower, of Green-flowered Helleborine *Epipactis phyllanthes*. Nearby were a

Photo: Ken Southall

Bird's-nest Orchid *Neottia nidus-avis*, a yellow Stinking Iris *Iris foetidissima* flower and a lot of Wood-sedge *Carex sylvatica*.

Thanks to Dean Williams, warden of Chafford Gorges Nature Park, for allowing us to use the facilities at the visitor centre, which is currently

closed, and for answering our questions about the management of the site, to Sue Grayston and Ken Southall for leading, and to all who attended for sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm.

JANE LOWE

SANKEY VALLEY COUNTRY PARK, ST. HELENS, MERSEYSIDE. 27th APRIL

Seven of us met our leaders, Barbara Allen and Dave Owen, the ranger for the Sankey Valley Country Park, at the Visitor Centre.

Our path followed the course of Black Brook and part of the now disused Sankey Canal, which was the first canal of the industrial revolution to be constructed in Britain, opening in 1757. It was built to carry coal from the mines around the St. Helens area to Widnes for use in the developing chemical industry. It was also used to transport iron ore and corn, and later sugar from Liverpool to the Sankey Sugar Works. It remained open until 1963.

The park is largely mature woodland, with a species-rich meadow and wetland areas. As we walked along the track, we passed a good selection of spring flowers, including the first flowers of Red Campion *Silene dioica*, Ramsons *Allium ursinum*, Ivy-leaved Speedwell *Veronica hederifolia* ssp. *lucorum*, and Cuckooflower *Cardamine pratensis*. Julie spotted the pale flowers of *Narcissus* 'White Lion' still showing. We noted that the leaves of many of the Hazels *Corylus avellana*

had purple blotches in the centre.

Dave added to our appreciation of the site by providing details of its history, as well as its insect and birdlife. He pointed out the benefits of the ivy-clad *Hedera* sp. trees, saying they were good nesting sites for the goldcrests which we could hear. He also showed us the group of elms *Ulmus* sp. in the park which are home to a colony of the rare White-letter Hairstreak butterfly *Satyrus w-album*.



Photo: Barbara Allen (taken at a different time)

The wet woodland contained a variety of ferns, the fresh, green shuttlecocks of Ostrich Fern *Matteuccia struthiopteris* making a splendid display. Here also was Pignut *Conopodium majus*, Wood Speedwell *Veronica montana*, and a couple of plants of the uncommon Three-nerved Sandwort *Moehringia trinervia*, which, as its name suggests, has leaves with three (or there can be up to five) veins.

On a recce in March, in the woodland near Carr Mill Dam, Barbara had spotted a patch of a plant with large, showy, pink flowers. She had later identified it as Whorled Coralroot *Cardamine quinquefolia*. Although it had finished flowering by the time we

saw it, its distinctive leaves were still in evidence.

After a welcome stop for lunch, with rain threatening we set off back towards the car park, stopping on the way to examine a healthy-looking specimen of House Holly-fern *Cyrtomium falcatum* growing by the side of a stream and, further along the stream, more *Cardamine* species, Large Bitter-cress *Cardamine amara*, and Wavy Bitter-cress *C. flexuosa*.

By the time we arrived back at the car park, the rain was just starting so, after thanking Barbara and Dave for an enjoyable day, we retreated to the shelter of our cars.

SHEILA WYNN

SICCARIDGE WOOD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 9th MAY

Our walk started along the southern slopes of Siccaridge Wood – a semi-natural ancient woodland on Jurassic limestone, managed by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. The slopes were carpeted with Bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* with pockets of Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, Wood Melick *Melica uniflora* and scattered Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*.

Along the edge of the path were a few clumps of Fingered Sedge *Carex digitata*, a scarce plant in Great Britain, and a little further along Lily-of-the-valley *Convallaria majalis* stretching up and down the slopes as far as the eye could see.

As we wended our way along the

western side of the wood we saw Greater Butterfly-orchids *Platanthera chlorantha* (not yet flowering) while the thin, yellow parts of their petals shining through the green vegetation helped us to spot Herb-Paris *Paris quadrifolia*. A few plants of Angular Solomon's-seal *Polygonatum odoratum*, another scarcity, were peeping out from between logs that had recently been piled up from coppicing work nearby, and had almost, but not quite, obliterated this small population!

Emerging from the wood we headed south towards the River Frome, to walk along the towpath of the dis-used Thames and Severn Canal to see the rare Limestone Woundwort *Stachys alpina*. It was too early to



Happy botanists at Siccaridge Woods

leaved Golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* and *C. alternifolium* were pointed out. At the end of the walk, on a bridge crossing the canal, we were able to get up close and personal to Limestone Fern *Gymnocarpium robertianum*.

see it in flower but we were able to compare the leaf with that of Hedge Woundwort *Stachys sylvatica*, the leaf of the former having more crenations along its edge and a closed leaf base compared to the latter. Further along the canal both Opposite-leaved and Alternate-

All too soon the walk was over and we retreated to the pub for a drink and cake. A very big thank you to Clare and Mark Kitchen for stepping in to lead the walk at short notice. It was a super day.

LAURA GRAVESTOCK

DENGE WOODS, NEAR CANTERBURY, KENT 19th MAY

WFS and Kent
Botanical Society
Joint Meeting.

Photo: Helen Dignum

Twenty-two WFS and Kent Botanical Society members met at Denge Woods in May sunshine. This ancient semi-natural woodland is owned by the Woodland Trust, Forestry England and some private owners. Sue Buckingham, co-recorder for East Kent, introduced us to the site and we set off along the tracks and rides. Each track was



Lady Orchid

subtly different in light and flora. First, we saw a variety of woodland and clay plants including Yellow Archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*, Wild Angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, Yellow Pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum* and Common Cudweed *Filago germanica*. We all recognise a beech tree *Fagus sylvatica*, but have you ever looked at the leaf margins, which have a fringe of fine hairs?

We botanised onwards, along a more acid ride, with Broom *Cytisus scoparius*, Heather *Calluna vulgaris*, and Tormential *Potentilla erecta* and were pleased to find Pale Sedge *Carex pallescens*, which has bracts crimped at the base. We also saw Pill Sedge *Carex pilulifera*, which is one of the few common sedges with downy fruits.

The next track opened out, and we found Hairy Wood-rush *Luzula pilosa*, Greater Stitchwort, *Stellaria holostea* and Heath Milkwort *Polygala serpyllifolia* with some opposite lower leaves, and alternate upper leaves.

We followed the path down a steep bank and onto chalk, finding Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, Salad Burnet *Poterium sanguisorba*, and out onto a path where the first of the Lady Orchids *Orchis purpurea* was growing, as well as several Common Twayblades *Neottia ovata*. A few metres further on we entered the Bonsai Bank nature reserve, its original tiny size leading to the name. The reserve is now managed particularly for the Duke of Burgundy butterfly *Hamearis lucina*, and its foodplants Primrose *Primula vulgaris* and Cowslip *P. veris*. This site also hosts several thousand Lady Orchid

plants, as well as Early-purple Orchid *Orchis mascula*, Fly Orchid *Ophrys insectifera*, and we even found a Man Orchid *O. anthropophora*. I lay down

to take a picture of a Lady Orchid and in front of it was a Fly Orchid. The number of orchids was almost overwhelming, and there were also a great many non-flowering rosettes. Sites near old bonfire sites were rich in rosettes. After so many orchids, we had lunch in a sloping clearing looking out on to the orchids. The Duke of Burgundy butterfly, quite tiny, also posed obligingly for photos.

The rich delights of the day continued

through the afternoon. We saw Herb-Paris *Paris quadrifolia*, quantities of Goldilocks Buttercup *Ranunculus auricomus*, Midland Hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata*, and a Winter-cress *Barbarea* sp. Later analysis of the fruit with a persistent style, by Sue Buckingham, suggested this was Winter-cress *Barbarea vulgaris*, its seeds probably brought in on scrub cutting equipment. We also saw Slow worms *Anguis fragilis* twice, crossing the tracks, as we returned to our cars.

HELEN DIGNUM



Photo: Helen Dignum

CLITHEROE, LANCASHIRE 22nd JUNE

We were a group of four meeting in the Hanson's Ribblesdale Cement Works car park which adjoins the Cross Hill Quarry reserve. The reserve is an old limestone quarry but this has dried out in recent years with some loss of flora. Due to the dry weather Sheila Wynn had put out a 'little to see' email that reduced the expected turnout, but we actually saw a number of interesting species on a hot, sunny day.

We started with a tutorial from Sheila on distinguishing Smooth Lady's-mantle *Alchemilla glabra* from Pale Lady's-mantle *A. xanthochlora* and the garden species, Soft Lady's-mantle *A. mollis*. There were some fine specimens of Greater Burnet-saxifrage *Pimpinella major* and Rough Chervil *Chaerophyllum temulum*. We saw the leaves of White Butterbur *Petasites albus*, which flowers in January, and Wood Ragwort *Senecio ovatus*, which wasn't quite in flower. This was in woodland above the River Ribble and is a historic escape from the cultivation, which has spread along the river.

There was also a stand of 'giant' Common Blue-sow-thistle *Cicerbita macrophylla*. This was ssp. *macrophylla* rather than the usually seen ssp. *uralensis*. It is a much more robust plant than ssp. *uralensis*, growing up to 2m tall, having basal leaves with terminal leaf lobes over 40cm long and much denser glandular hairs on the inflorescence. The same ssp. was recently identified

at Clapham, Yorkshire, and was reported in the January 2023 issue of the BSBI News.

After lunch, we moved on to nearby Salthill Quarry, another disused limestone quarry, notable for its crinoid fossils. Here we saw a cultivar of Bloody Crane's-bill *Geranium sanguineum* 'Vision Violet'.

Orchids were in short supply with



Photo: Ken Southall

Bee Orchid

only two Bee Orchids *Ophrys apifera*, a few Common Spotted-orchids *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* but numerous Common Twayblades *Neottia ovata*. The quarries had several cotoneaster species on the rock faces including Wall Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis*, Entire-leaved

Cotoneaster *C. integrifolius*,
Franchet's Cotoneaster *C. franchetii*,
Hollyberry Cotoneaster *C. bullatus*
and Willow-leaved Cotoneaster *C. salicifolius*.

We saw some grasses and sedges
including Flattened Meadow-grass
Poa compressa growing on the rock-
face, Yellow Oat-grass *Trisetum*
flavescens and Wood Sedge *Carex*
sylvatica.

To round off the day we went to the
12th Century Clitheroe Castle to find
the rare French Sorrel *Rumex*
scutatus on the rock-face below the
castle. This is thought to have been
introduced as a culinary plant when
the castle was inhabited. Our thanks
to Sheila for organising a delightful
day and showing us the hidden
pleasures that quarries can provide.

BOB CRABTREE



The photo on the left
was taken at an
unusual meeting held
at Treborth Botanic
Gardens near
Bangor, Gwynedd,
on 23rd and 24th June
2023. The full report
will appear in the
next WFS magazine.

Photos: Ken Southall



This one shows
members high above
the deep quarry at
Chafford Gorges,
Thurrock, Essex,
where hundreds of
Man Orchids *Orchis*
anthropophora, along
with many other
interesting plants
were enjoyed.
See the full report on
page 32.

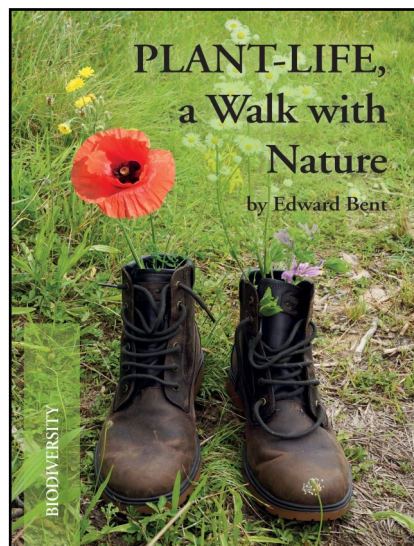
BOOK REVIEWS

Now that so much of most people's life with the written word comes online from screens, tablets or Kindle I find that in the matter of books I've become a stubborn reactionary, the kind of oldie who clings to things 'as they were'. I seem to treasure the physical solidity of actual books more and more, needing to pat and admire my new *Atlas* volumes even if consulting them would be much easier on the laptop, and I can barely lift them off the shelf! In particular the presents I choose to give for Christmas or birthdays are definitely most likely to be books, and this has inspired me to treat the three I currently have to review for WFS as a suggested wish-list for members with gift-demanding anniversaries coming up. They are all good (and affordable) but except for being based on the plant world they are very different in style and subject. As we give books to friends and family members with differing tastes, I hope the following notes might help suggest the right recipient! Order is alphabetical according to the author's surname.

***Plant-Life – a Walk with Nature*
Edward Bent
Self-published (2022).
www.nartura.net
ISBN 979-12-210-0957-6. £21**

If you have a friend or relative who is a bit of a Greta Thunberg about what this Anthropocene age of ours is doing to plants, who wants to battle our disassociation with nature, this book is packed with information aimed at all naturalists, botanists,

nature conservationists, ecologists, environmentalists and gardeners. Educators, excursionists and guides are included in the book's scope and there are thoughtful chapters with philosophical reflections on

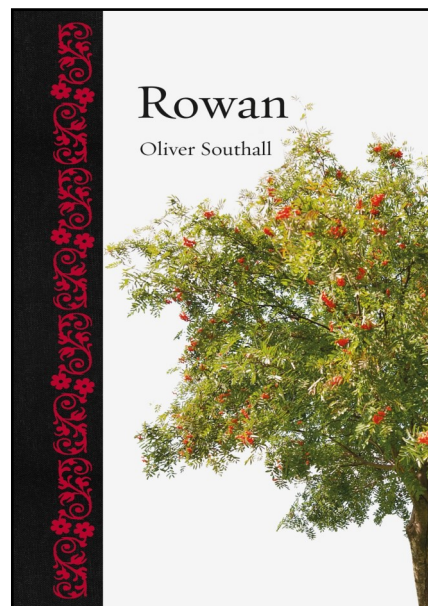


environmental challenges and on the order and principles of nature. The author has had a wide-ranging career in teaching, plant breeding, and horticultural trade promotion. The author note tells me that he has written books (internationally published) on garden plants, biodiversity, and the use of bioactive silicon in agriculture! *Plant-Life* is obviously a book he felt strongly motivated to write to give him a chance to sum up his considerable experience and express his passion for the natural world. He is obviously familiar with analysing difficult data sets, in summarising dense blocks of information, and in managing to report such material in a way one can understand.

The book is divided into five sections – ‘Identifying Wildflowers, Celebrating Nature’s Designs and Adaptations’; ‘Basic Science of Plants and their Response to the Environment’; ‘Holistic Considerations of Plant-Life, Appreciation of Form and Substance’; ‘The Evolution of Interrelationships and the Question of Biodiversity’; ‘The Earth System, Culture of Conservation, Education and Lifestyle’. I would recommend dipping in and out of these sections when intriguing sub-headings such as ‘What do plants ‘hear’?’ catch the eye. I’m a rather feeble reader, liking the anecdotal (a ripping yarn always engages me) so with a book like this I have to search for sound-bites to avoid being overwhelmed by the ‘Chaos and Complexity’ discussed by an author who has so much to say. There are countless fascinating points – for instance the diagrams listed in the table of contents are ‘Raunkiaer Classification; Eco-Cube; Eco-Wave; Holistic Notion; Fibonacci spirals; Ecological footprint’; and I now want to know more about each! If you are an energetic reader and appreciate the analysis of big subjects, this book will give you a wide-ranging view of the botanical world, its threats and problems. I find it takes work. The cover shot was my first view of the book, and the worn boots with a poppy stuck in one of them looked delightfully cosy, close to home, so I was unprepared for the powerfully analytic approach within the text. This is my weakness and I hope that other members will dive more confidently into this remarkable book.

Rowan
Oliver Southall
Reaktion Books (2023)
ISBN 9781 1 78914712 4. £18

This has been my introduction to a specialist art publishing house producing a Botany series which looks interesting to all of us. Some of the titles (all by different authors) are perhaps a bit far from British and Irish field botany, but after *Rowan* catching my attention I noticed Ash, Birch, Willow and Weeds among the more exotic subjects. These are not



monographs on a species or genus in the form familiar to us but examine the meaning of the plants in a much wider thought-scape. As the publicity sheet for this book announces, the author addresses ‘topics from myth, medicine and folklore’ and looks at this familiar tree featuring in Romanticism and cultural nationalism, in ‘from the literature of

Russia to Land Art and contemporary rewilding’.

I’m sure any of us brought up in rural settings have come across traces of folk belief – for instance that Rowans, like Elders, protect dwellings – and this book follows such threads into marvellous corners of arcane knowledge. Chapter headings such as ‘Old Gods, New Myths’, ‘Magic and Medicine’ and ‘Romantic Ecologies’ give the idea, and the illustrations are a joy for art historians and bibliophiles as well as botanists. The book touches on poetry and music and takes a look at the part these can play in political nationalism without ever losing sight of *Sorbus aucuparia*. Sections on bird migration and the importance of the berries for our beloved winter thrushes (us Quantock folk can time winter coming by their arrival on the hill trees) by and on the species’ favoured mountain habitat, resonate with home life and are illustrated by evocative photos, but I never knew that ‘our’ familiar plant is the *only* wild species of Rowan in ‘most of Eurasia’. The whitebeams are excluded from this definition – ‘Rowan’ only applies to sorbs with pinnate leaves. The much-desired garden Rowans come from South–central and Southeast Asia. Another thing I’d never realised was our friend’s great importance in Russian and Nordic literature and mythology, while Ireland, to my delight, also features prominently with archaeological sites and illuminated manuscripts from there featuring among such fascinating things as a Lithuanian protective stick-rattle made of Rowan wood, a

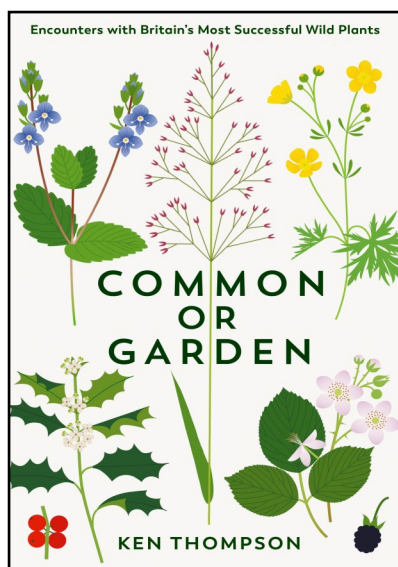
Finnish stamp of a national poet sitting below a branch of berries, and a dramatic painting of a bare-chested Finnish hero Kullervo (and his dog) cursing the country’s oppressors from a grove of Rowan trees! There are accounts of Wordsworth’s Lake District home and visits to that area by Ruskin and Pre-Raphaelite painters. There’s a gloriously funny illustration which will appeal to anyone who has botanised in Scotland in midge season – a sketch by Millais of two unhappy painters crouched on rocks with bags tied over their heads, cut with eyeholes and a slit through which to puff a desperate cigarette! In contemporary art there is of course good acknowledgement of Andy Goldsworthy’s use of leaves and berries in his marvellous ephemeral pieces.

As you can tell this book has really caught my fancy. There is of course plenty of sound botanical and ecological comment, but the way in which the author has embedded this in such a rich cultural context and imaginatively chosen illustrations is very appealing. Forget mistletoe for a year and get (or give) *Rowan* this Christmas!

Common or Garden – Encounters with Britain’s 50 Most Successful Wild Plants
Ken Thompson
Profile Books (2023)
ISBN 978-1800811447.
Hardback £14.99. eBook available

Many of us must be familiar with Ken Thompson’s work. His book on

Invasive species *Where do Camels Belong* is rightly popular, and his articles frequently appear in the horticultural press where he campaigns for awareness of the value of biodiversity in gardens, and is the champion of invertebrates often considered 'pests'. *Common or Garden* may have another link



through members' book collections because the introduction explains that it is partly planned to balance Peter Marren's *Chasing the Ghost*, which looked at the 50 very rare British plants which that writer had never found.

You may feel that looking at the 50 commonest might be rather dull. We are all drawn to rarity and what we see every day may be either so familiar as to be almost invisible, or a pesky weed inside the garden fence. However, this author makes the unpromising subject positively

thrilling! Some philosopher (Wittgenstein?) said 'the questions are always more interesting than the answers' and I've always found this sympathetic, partly because Rare Plant Surveys (my main professional work) are based on webs of sometimes unanswerable questions – where was a plant a century ago? Was the habitat the same? If there's no voucher specimen was it ever there at all? But Dr Thompson has found a way to make *answers* not only exciting, but extremely helpful to our lives as field botanists and as gardeners.

Part of the delight of this book is his skill in communication – he writes with both scientific accuracy and in a voice such as a friend might use. He takes the basic essentials of plant life – habitat, nutrients and water, light, temperature – and explains so clearly how these matter, adding complicated and mysterious things like the significance of mycorrhiza in the soil for most plants to grow and the amazing trade deals in nutrients made by different species of these invisible fungi. He clarifies the question of temperature, where the origin of a species (did it evolve in boreal or Mediterranean conditions, timing its life-cycle accordingly?) can be far more important to its reproductive success than simply frost-tolerance. The introductory chapters, starting with 'Common is Rare', lay these matters out with clarity, and touch on the contribution made by our kind of recording to the bigger picture of botany in Britain in this Anthropocene age.

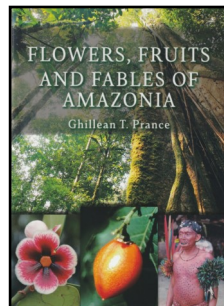
The species accounts are

accompanied by sweet illustrations by Sarah Abbott, and have comments and information on both post-glacial and folkloric history, on the physical characteristics which support great success (the prickles of Goosegrass, the massive seed production of Chickweed...), on interactions with other organisms, on what we can learn from both common and Latin names and the new genetic knowledge which sometimes torments us with changes! Chapter headings, usually for small groups of plants, give the cheerful tone of the

book – ‘Green and flat’, ‘Flat and not so green’, ‘Green and not so flat’, while some are just intriguing ‘Dangerous relations’, ‘In for a splash’, ‘The survivor’. I’m also a sucker for odd bits of knowledge, as well as craving more understanding of plants, and there are of course some most delightful details. I’m not going to give any of them away here, but hope that many WFS members will treat themselves to this delightful and important book and read them all!

RO FITZGERALD

This book, published by Redfern Natural History Productions, is beautifully illustrated with the colour photographs by the author, Ghilleán T. Prance and describes many of the interesting flowers and useful fruits of Amazonia. It includes much information on the uses by and beliefs of the indigenous peoples about many of the plant species



described. The selection of plants varies from ferns and small herbs including many orchids, to some of the tallest trees, such as the Brazil nut and several of the most used species of palm trees. It is a book about the natural history of the Amazon rainforest illustrated by

some of the information gathered from the author's studies in plant taxonomy, pollination ecology, ethnobotany and the beliefs of indigenous and local peoples, collected during his 39 expeditions in the Amazon region. Most of the plant species described have been accurately named through the accompanying voucher specimens deposited in herbaria in Brazil and elsewhere. The amazing variety of uses for the plants described ranges from medicines and hallucinogenic substances to fibres, building materials, body paints, fish poisons and many edible fruits. There is a fascinating collection of fifteen of the indigenous myths about the origin of some of the plants discussed. The final chapter draws attention to the current destruction of the forest and includes appeals from indigenous peoples to protect the forest and to defend their rights to occupy and live in and from the forest.

Available for purchase from:
<https://butterfliesandamazonia.com>
Price £25.00.

This review supplied by Ghilleán Prance.

