

## A circular wreath of various wildflowers and plants surrounding the text "The WILD FLOWER Society". The wreath includes pink roses, yellow buttercups, white snowdrops, green holly leaves with red berries, purple crocuses, a pink thistle, a white morning glory, and several types of grasses and seed heads. The text is centered within the wreath in a black serif font.

AUTUMN 2024

# 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 2024**

Registered Charity No: 271694

**No: 529**

---

## CONTENTS

President's Letter	1
Editorial	2
Notices	3
1 KM Square Study North West (Branch N3) 2023	3
Spring Week Hunt 2024	4
Winter Months' Hunt 2023 - 2024	8
The Lizard, Cornwall 21 <sup>st</sup> - 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	13
Glencoe and area, Scotland 3 <sup>rd</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup> June	15
Orton and Kirkby Steven, Cumbria 24 <sup>th</sup> - 25 <sup>th</sup> June	18
10 KM Square Study (North) 2023	20
10 KM Square Study (South) 2023	24
Spring Hunt, Ipswich, Suffolk 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	28
Snowdrop meeting in Northumberland, 24 <sup>th</sup> February	29
Lesnes Abbey Woods, Bexley, London, 26 <sup>th</sup> March	30
Arnside Knott, Cumbria 11 <sup>th</sup> April	31
Croxley Common Moor, Rickmansworth, Herts, 21 <sup>st</sup> April	32
Shotover and Brasenose Wood, Oxford 15 <sup>th</sup> May	34
Shoreham Beach, West Sussex, 18 <sup>th</sup> May	36
New Buckenham Common, Norfolk 29 <sup>th</sup> May	38
Yellow Anemone, Norham, Northumberland	40
Emorsgate Manor Farm, near Bath, Somerset, 18 <sup>th</sup> June	41
Book Review	43

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Since April I have been living in Plymouth beside the Hoe, with a wonderful view over the harbour. Because of Anne's illness, my botanising has largely been confined within the city. The flora here is a strange mix of some interesting native species together with many naturalised aliens. Ragworts seem to dominate, with Silver Ragwort *Jacobaea maritima* the most abundant, but Common Ragwort *J. vulgaris* and Oxford Ragwort *Senecio squalidus* are also frequently seen.



On the grassland in front of the Citadel there was an abundance of Wild Clary *Salvia verbenaca* in full flower and amongst it some Vervain *Verbena officinalis*. One of the interesting new plants added to my list was the parasitic species Ivy Broomrape *Orobanchae hederaceae*, which occurred in abundance in May where ivy grows on the walls of the Citadel.

At first, I searched in vain for the Plymouth Thistle *Carduus pycnocephalus* and it was not until local botanist Tim Purches told me where it grows, on the rocks near the Lido, that I found it. My explorations had not taken me down the tunnel that leads to the entrance to the Lido. Now I have seen both species named for Plymouth, the Thistle and the Campion *Silene vulgaris* ssp. *macrocarpa*. The many walls around here are covered in interesting plants.

The commonest is the urticaceous species Pellitory-of-the-wall *Parietaria judaica*; one of the most attractive is Trailing St. John's-wort *Hypericum humifusum*. Annual Wall-rocket *Diplotaxis muralis* and two species of stonecrop, Biting Stonecrop *Sedum acre* and White Stonecrop *S. album*, are also common below the Citadel. I have also found the attractive Common Restharrow *Ononis repens* in many places along the seafront. Today on my daily walk, as I write this in August, I was pleased to see that the wild flowers below the Citadel, such as Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, were attracting many butterflies and I saw four different species in that meadow. It is good to know that the pollinators are surviving here in the city. Living in a city has not reduced my ability to see and enjoy many interesting wild flowers and much wildlife.

My one break away from Plymouth was a week in late July to attend the 20th International Botanical Congress, held in Madrid. 3,000 botanists from around the world gathered to present their research and to have many fruitful debates and discussions, despite the 40-degree temperature. Two themes really dominated the event: firstly, the new molecular phylogeny of the angiosperms that has clarified the relationships of many plant families and secondly, the effects of climate change on the vegetation in almost all parts of the world. Plants are telling the world that we need to act quickly to control climate change.

GHILLEAN PRANCE

## EDITORIAL

It has been good to see quite a lot of television publicity about re-wilding in the countryside. For instance, farmers in Cumbria are making efforts to re-instate some of their fields as traditional meadows. Also, within this and the last edition of our magazine there are reports about wild seed production in this country. Sue and I have been asked to survey some of local farmers' fields with a view to increasing species

diversity.

One of my several hobbies is philately, and in particular 'thematic' collecting. These include 'birds on stamps', 'trees on stamps' and 'flowers on stamps'. I want to share with you my absolute favourite set of stamps below, issued in 2004.

KEN SOUTHALL





## NOTICES

Uncredited photographs in this magazine are by the editor.  
The 2024 password for the Members' page of the website is speedwell4  
Copy date for the Winter magazine is 1<sup>st</sup> November

### NORTH WEST (BRANCH N3) 2023 1 KM SQUARE STUDIES

			Year	New	Total
Barbara Allen	JS5391	St. Helens, Merseyside	4	4	293
Judith Cox	NY0843	Allonby, Cumbria	2	0	228
Pauline Grimshaw	SJ9620	Gee Cross, Tameside, Greater Manchester	1	119	119
Sheila Wynn	SD7444	West Bradford, Lancashire	4	15	249



Continuing recording in SJ5391 in the Gorsey Lane area of St. Helens, **Barbara** noted Spear Mint *Mentha spicata* by a footpath. Smaller Cat's-tail *Phleum bertolonii* was a good find in a fallow field (you have to be very careful that it is not just small Timothy *P. pratense*. Smaller Cat's-tail is ore

diminutive in all its parts and the ligule is acute rather than obtuse). She also came upon Goat's-beard *Tragopogon pratensis*. Visiting the local country park, she saw numerous plants of Tall Melilot *Melilotus altissimus*.

**Judith** was unable to record in her square this year but said that the plants would still be there next year.

**Pauline's** monad covers a country park, grassland and roadside. On walls she found Ivy-leaved Toadflax *Cymbalaria muralis*, Wall Rue *Asplenium ruta-muraria* and Reflexed Stonecrop *Petrosedum rupestre*. In various habitats Pauline spotted Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*; although a lovely plant, it is very invasive. Growing in disturbed ground where a new drainage ditch had been dug she came across Black Mustard *Brassica nigra* and Lesser Swine-cress *Lepidium didymium*, while more

unusual species encountered were Wood Horsetail *Equisetum sylvaticum* and Red Bistort *Bistorta amplexicaulis*.

I believe in starting your own garden weeds and this is just what **Sheila** did for her 1km square. Three of the plants that she spotted were Pale Flax *Linum bienne*, Northern Marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza purpurella*, by her pond, and Roadside Dandelion *Taraxacum longisquameum*. The latter was verified by the BSBI *Taraxacum* referee, John Richards. Sheila was pleased to find Blue Fleabane *Erigeron acris* on the wall

of West Bradford Bridge as it had been a while since she saw it there. She also found Mexican Fleabane *Erigeron karvinskianus* by the village green. This plant seeds everywhere these days. I first recorded it in 1987 whilst on holiday on Guernsey, but then it was called St. Peter Port Daisy

I hope to receive more records for 1km squares during 2024. It is so rewarding and very little travelling is involved.

JULIE CLARKE

## SPRING WEEK HUNT 2024

		Total
Julie Clarke	Cumbria	22
Barbara Allen	Merseyside	56
Rita and Anthony Grainger	Leeds	63
Karen Fry	Nottingham	63
Gill Watkins	Peterborough	22
Susan Grimshaw	Berkshire	36
Diana Stroud	Berkshire	58
Steve Clarkson	East Anglia	73
Anne and Dennis Kell	Suffolk	66
Barbara Mathews	Suffolk	58
Helen Ayres	Kent	65
Caroline Bateman	Surrey	56
Pippa Hyde	Surrey	59
Priscilla Nobbs	Surrey	34
Jackie Hardy	Warwickshire	44

Nicki Mottram	Warwickshire	48
Ron Parker	London	32
John Swindells	London	33
Pauline & Richard Wilson	Bristol area	28
Ro FitzGerald	Somerset	120
Suzanne Jones	Devon	28
Sally Maller	South Devon	111
Anne Haden	Jersey	66
Alli Singleton and Sheila Mallet (Madder than ever Jersey Group)	Jersey	65
Lindsey Pyne	Alderney	69
Total number of species seen 292		
Only found by one person 113		

Two new people joined in the Hunt this year, both from the Channel Islands, so welcome to them. The



cold, wet weather featured in many people's comments and,

interestingly, species only seen by 50-75% of people include some that are usually found by almost everyone e.g. Lesser Celandine *Ficaria verna* and White Dead-nettle *Lamium album*. Nobody found Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata* this year, yet in April it was lining our hedges and road verges, to the extent that it got a mention on Facebook. Also worthy of note are some plants that more people are finding, e.g. Three-cornered Garlic *Allium triquetrum* and Goat Willow *Salix caprea*. Is that because they are spreading, as I would guess is the case with Three-cornered Garlic, or are some things flowering earlier, maybe the Goat Willow? Some people are very scientific, use the same route each year and produce a comparative spreadsheet. Some people go out every day, but some only go out on one day. So, the variation in numbers

can be for all sorts of reasons.

**Julie Clarke** described the rain, frost and wind, not conducive to early flowering. As last year, she did, however, find White Butterbur *Petasites albus*.

**Barbara Allen's** best find was Purple Ramping-fumitory *Fumaria purpurea*. She reported that Three-cornered Garlic was spreading in her area. She was the only person to find Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* in flower.

**Rita and Anthony Grainger** found Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem *Gagea lutea*, their signature plant, and this year they found many more in flower despite the River Wharfe flooding in February just below where it grows. They also found Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa* flowering very early.

**Karen Fry** searched every day for about half an hour, spotting Ivy-leaved Speedwell *Veronica hederifolia* ssp. *lucorum*. She was also one of only two people to find Round-leaved Crane's-bill *Geranium*



*rotundifolium*.

**Gill Watkins** is a new member. She sent a few photos of plants she wasn't too sure about, Wood Avens *Geum urbanum* being a good find.

**Susan Grimshaw** was unable to go to some of her usual places because of flooding, so found fewer species than usual. She did find Sun Spurge *Euphorbia helioscopia*, which last year was seen all over the place, including near us. This year we didn't see it at all. She also found patches of Sweet Violet *Viola odorata* growing in superb patches at Cox Green.

**Diana Stroud** found a real mix of plants. Common Stork's-bill *Erodium cicutarium*, Aspen *Populus tremula*, Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris* and Wych Elm *Ulmus glabra* were only found by one or two other people.

**Steve Clarkson's** plants were all found in areas local to him. Hedgerow Crane's-bill *Geranium pyrenaicum* was a sole find, as was Least Duckweed *Lemna minuta*, which is an introduction. He was also one of only two people to find Box *Buxus sempervirens* and Fern-grass *Catapodium rigidum*.

**Anne and Dennis Kell** joined the East Anglian Branch First Day Hunt. Lesser Stitchwort *Stellaria graminea* was an early sole find, while Fern-grass, Rough Meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*, Annual and Perennial Wall-rocket *Diplotaxis muralis* and *D. tenuifolia* and Round-leaved Crane's-bill were not found by many other people.

**Barbara Mathews** said that it had

been a bit of a struggle to find anything in flower due to the weather. Common Cudweed *Filago germanica* was once again a sole find. Surprisingly, Winter Heliotrope *Petasites pyrenaicus* was only found by three people and we struggled to find any flowers by March.

**Helen Ayres** once again concentrated on trees in flower, including Wych Elm and several poplar *Populus* species. Parsley-piert *Aphanes arvensis* was well spotted, while no one else found Green Hellebore *Helleborus viridis*.

**Caroline Bateman** said that most of her entries were from 'pavement botany' in Redhill and Reigate. Field Wood-rush *Luzula campestris* and Blinks *Montia fontana* were good finds, as was Keeled-fruited Cornsalad *Valerianella carinata*, which seems very early to be in bloom.

**Pippa Hyde** said that she had found a few more species than last year but had been unable to find Common Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*. She was one of the hunters to find Three-cornered Garlic.

**Priscilla Nobbs** did her 'round the block' walk over one day. She found seven more species than last year. She keeps a year-to-year record and discovered that she had not found Field Forget-me-not *Myosotis arvensis* on the Hunt before.

**Jackie Hardy** stayed local to Redditch and thought perhaps that the lush early grass would mean not so many flowers being in bloom. Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, Black Poplar *Populus nigra* and

Meadow Buttercup were good finds.

**Nicki Mottram** said that the spring bulbs were nearly over. She was pleased to find Cowslips *Primula veris*. Meanwhile, Danish Scurvygrass *Cochlearia danica* was carpeting the central reservation of the A46 but was not out in more rural locations.

**Ron Parker** keyed out some dandelions *Taraxacum* spp. while out hunting. Sole finds were Bristly Oxtongue *Helminthotheca echinoides*, Narrow-leaved Ragwort *Senecio inaequidens* and Wild Cherry *Prunus avium*.

**John Swindell's** hunting ground was the London borough of Tower Hamlets. Wild Strawberry *Fragaria vesca* was an early find. Odd things pop up in urban areas and he also found Spanish Broom *Spartium junceum* and Pink-headed Persicaria *Persicaria capitata*.

**Richard and Pauline Wilson** once again found a few flowering heads of Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina* in a wood full of plants. Spurge-laurel *Daphne laureola* was a surprise find whilst they were out on a walk.

**Ro FitzGerald** said that it had not been an easy week weather-wise and many of her entries were from car parks and road-verges. However, a visit to an organic farm produced some excellent weeds! She had several sole finds flowering early, including Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*, Hemlock *Conium maculatum* and Hawkweed Oxtongue *Picris hieracioides*.

**Suzanne Jones** had an enjoyable



week hunting in the Dawlish area, Bideford and the South Hams, all in Devon. Hottentot-fig *Carpobrotus edulis* was a good find as were Selfheal *Prunella vulgaris* and Common Fumitory *Fumaria officinalis*, all found by only one other person.

**Sally Maller** felt that because the winter had been so mild, the flowers were out early. She was pleased to find a single flower on Sea Mouse-ear *Cerastium diffusum* on a cliff edge. From a number of sole finds, I have picked out Ramsons *Allium ursinum*, Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium* and Yellow Archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*.

**Anne Haden** found Oxford Ragwort *Senecio squalidus*, which she said she had never seen on Jersey before. Hutchinsia *Hornungia petraea* was a scarce plant to find, while no one else found Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*.

**Alli Singleton and Sheila Mallet** (Madder than ever Jersey group) did their hunt over 3 days. Four-leaved Allseed *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* was a very good find, while Three-nerved

Sandwort *Moehringia trinervia* and Field Wood-rush were only found by two people.

**Lindsay Pyne** hunted mainly over one day. She expected to see Thrift *Armeria maritima* but couldn't find any and struggled to find Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* in flower. Sheep's-bit *Jasione montana*, Germander Speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys* and Wild Carrot *Daucus carota* were all good finds.

The number of species seen by almost everyone is the same as last year (14) but they are not all the same species. I do wonder if a few things get missed off lists. It is very useful to receive spreadsheets in alphabetical order, but we still sometimes need a re-count to get everything right!

PAULINE AND RICHARD WILSON

## WINTER MONTHS' HUNT 2023-2024

Name	County(ies)	No. of Sp.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.
Northern Counties					
Barbara Allen	South Lancashire	53	21	24	39
Julie Clarke	Lancashire	55	31	19	34
Judith Cox	North Yorkshire	56	9	23	53
Brian Gough	Derbyshire and Leicestershire	93	50	48	35
Anthony and Rita Grainger	West Yorkshire	81	52	36	41

Dorothy Ross	Lancashire	49	35	18	28
Mary and Claire Smith	Derbyshire	95	72	51	43
<b>Midlands and Wales</b>					
Monica Davis	Gloucestershire	53	32	16	31
Jackie Hardy	Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Cambridgeshire	87	53	61	28
Nicki Mottram	Warwickshire	76	35	47	55
<b>East Anglia</b>					
Enid Barrie and Carol Hawkins	Norfolk	140	96	84	76
Stephen Clarkson	Suffolk, Norfolk, plus two from Scotland	97	59	44	27
Anne and Dennis Kell	Suffolk and North Essex	192	144	123	118
Barbara Mathews	Suffolk	98	76	51	49
<b>South and South East</b>					
Caroline Bateman	London, Surrey and Sussex	137	84	74	69
Sue Denness	Sussex	189	146	114	57
Helen Dignum	Sussex	164	127	53	56
Pippa Hyde	Surrey, Sussex and London	93	57	34	60
Jill Oakley	Sussex and Hampshire	197	140	119	68
Janice Reynolds	Sussex	66	27	30	47
Diana Stroud	Buckinghamshire, Sussex, Surrey, Berkshire, & Oxfordshire	135	109	85	72
<b>South West</b>					
John Swindells	London and one in Norfolk	65	53	24	25
Sally Maller	Devon and one in Dorset	172	65	48	67
<b>Channel Islands</b>					
Lindsay Pyne	Alderney	117	102	65	73

The winter of 2023/24 was one of varying weather issues, with rain, snow, wind and general miserable cold to endure. Apart from Winter Months hunting, there were other exciting natural history opportunities to enjoy, with the early part of the year being what is known as a Waxwing Winter. The UK is visited by a small number of Waxwings most winters but just occasionally a mass eruption occurs, with many thousands of birds that would usually overwinter in Scandinavia relocating to the UK. I was excited to read online that my old stamping ground, Bushy Park, in southwest London, was the temporary home to a large flock. I was on the bus to Hampton the next day and enjoyed the spectacle of the birds stripping Mistletoe *Viscum album* berries from the large clumps in the trees there. I also had a couple of trips to Brighton, which provided the chance to see murmurations of Starlings soaring around the pier and provided consolation on days when there wasn't much else to find. But on to the WMH: it was great to receive 24 interesting lists of plants, with participants from many locations in the UK.

As usual, I will work my way from north to south, starting with **Barbara**, who had to abandon several hunting expeditions due to flooding. She did, however, make some good records, including Whorled Coralroot (or Five-leaved Cuckooflower) *Cardamine quinquefolia* and Narrow-leaved Ragwort *Senecio inaequidens*. **Julie** sent in her list, commenting that she has been enjoying the Hunt for over thirty years! The *Cardamine* featured

in her list too; lucky people in Lancashire having such a super plant to see. Wood Avens (or Herb-Bennet) *Geum urbanum* just scraped into her December list as there was one petal left on a flowerhead. It was, as always, lovely to hear from **Judith**, who had a trio of crocuses on her list, along with one of my favourite early spring flowers, Winter Aconite *Eranthis hyemalis*, and Yellow Star-of



-Bethlehem *Gagea lutea*. **Brian** found Danish Scurvygrass *Cochlearia danica* in February. I have heard this also called Snow-in-spring and certainly it looks like that when seen growing in profusion along roadsides. Love-in-a-mist *Nigella damascena*, currently in bud in my garden, was another good find. **Anthony and Rita** found an abundance of flowers left on some Garden Tree-mallow *Malva x*

*clementii* in December and battled through the rain in February to find Summer Snowflake *Leucojum aestivum*. **Dorothy** commented that her list was a modest one compared with other years. It was, however, interesting and included some motorway verge botanising, with Tansy *Tanacetum vulgare* and Common Michaelmas-daisy *Symphyotrichum x salignum* being seen. I do hope that you were in the passenger seat of the car, Dorothy, and not driving! **Mary and Claire** bring up the rear of the northern county participants with their customary envy-inducing list that includes a plant which I have never seen, Mezereon *Daphne mezereum*, in a new site for Derbyshire, plus another new one for their WMH list, Garden Lavender *Lavandula angustifolia*.

Moving on to the Midlands, **Monica** sent me a list that included Welsh Poppy *Papaver cambricum* and Feverfew *Tanacetum parthenium*, both described by Monica as gutter plants. It's always a bonus when the local council haven't had the time or inclination to spray roadsides and gutters. **Jackie** spent time botanising in churchyards and found Meadow Saffron *Colchicum autumnale* naturalised in grass in one and Barren Strawberry *Potentilla sterilis* in another. **Nicki** went out hunting on New Year's Day, finding most of her January records that day, with alleyways in her local town proving productive. Ivy-leaved Toadflax *Cymbalaria muralis* and Mexican Fleabane *Erigeron karvinskianus* were two plants that are always pretty ones to find.

In East Anglia, **Enid** and **Carol** hunted together, which was a clever move. On a cold wet day, having company to encourage and egg you on is always good. They found Wild Clary *Salvia verbenaca* established and spreading in one location and Corn Marigold *Glebionis segetum* naturalised on a pathway. **Stephen** sent one of his fascinating lists, that included Yellow-flowered Strawberry *Potentilla indica* and Lesser Calamint *Clinopodium nepeta*. **Anne** and **Dennis** had a record-breaking winter travelling all over East Anglia and achieving a magnificent total. Greater Honeywort *Cerinthe major* and Bowden Lily *Nerine bowdenii* were two finds that stood out for me.

**Barbara** commented on the poor weather, saying that often she only found single plants flowering. During one of the months, it took her three weeks to find a flowering Shepherd's-purse *Capsella bursa-pastoris*. She found Common Whitlowgrass *Erophila verna* more easily, seeing hundreds of plants in several places.

**Caroline** is a fellow Surrey resident and attended the BSBI New Year Hunt in my hometown of Leatherhead. I was in Brighton watching Starlings so was unable to be there and missed out on Hare's-foot Clover *Trifolium arvense* and Lesser Celandine *Ficaria verna* that day. Sue sent her first WMH list, which was an excellent one. Much of her hunting was with **Jill** and **Helen**, who are also in this southern grouping. Scarlet Pimpernel *Lysimachia arvensis* and Garden Pansy *Viola x wittrockiana* were good finds, reminding me that Shoreham is worth visiting in the winter months as

well as summer. **Helen** missed out on all the New Year Hunt fun as she was laid low with Covid. She was then away on holiday so didn't do much hunting in January. In December, however, she visited another of my favourite hunting-grounds, Pagham, West Sussex. There, Sicilian Chamomile *Anthemis*



*punctata* and Viper's-bugloss *Echium vulgare* were added to her list.

I, **Pippa**, visited the delightfully-named Shepherdess Park in East London during February, having read about the mosaics that have been installed there. These were created as part

of a community project and were well worth seeing, as was Three-cornered Garlic *Allium triquetrum*, which I found nestling in a flower-bed. **Jill** said she did not travel far due to the weather but did find Fortune's Hollyfern *Cyrtomium fortunei*, which is a new one on me, and Balkan Spurge *Euphorbia oblongata*. **Janice** said her best day was hunting at Southease churchyard, which was carpeted in Snowdrops *Galanthus nivalis*. Also seen there were White Crocus *Crocus vernus*, which were being visited by Buff-tailed Bumblebees. **Diana** sent an extensive list, noting that some regulars were missing but new ones

that she had added were Butterfly-bush *Buddleja davidii* and Bearded Couch *Elymus caninus*. On **John's** list were Tall Nightshade *Solanum chenopodioides* and Eastern Rocket *Sisymbrium orientale*, plants that he showed me when I was more London-based, so it brought back happy memories seeing them on his list.

I had only one list from the Southwest but also one from the Channel Islands. **Sally** sent a mainly Devon-based list but had one entry from Mudeford, Dorset, where she found Jersey Cudweed *Laphangium luteoalbum*. Nearer home she found Shining Crane's-bill *Geranium lucidum* flowering.

**Lindsay** sent me a list from Alderney which contained so many good plants that it is hard to choose just a couple. Seaside Daisy *Erigeron glaucus* is a plant I particularly like so I include that along with the two 'figs', Hottentot-fig *Carpobrotus edulis* and Angular Sea-fig *C. glaucescens*, because they are showy plants with great big cheerful flowers.

Writing this account, with its whistle-stop tour of the UK is a reminder of how lucky we are to have such beautiful places to visit and botanise in. There is always somewhere new to explore and something new to see, with the Winter Months Hunt an excuse (although none is needed) to get out into the fresh air. Like Julie, I have taken part for many years and plan to continue. I do hope others will as well and look forward to seeing the next bumper batch of lists in 2025.

PIPPA HYDE



## THE LIZARD, CORNWALL, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> MAY

**DAY 1:** This meeting was a repeat of the one held last year, with the same route, and the same range of plants. The previous visit had been a great success, so why change anything? We had the same leaders as before, Colin French (Vice-county Recorder for West Cornwall) and Ian Bennallick (VCR for East Cornwall) - only the WFS attendees were different! Since last year's meeting was excellently described by Fay Banks and Susan Simcock, this year's report will be relatively brief.

Seventeen of us started day one at the Kynance Cove car park and were introduced to our leaders, who told us something of the geology and the history of botanical recording in the area. Every WFS meeting takes a long time to leave the car park and in this case the culprit was Greek Sea-spurrey *Spergularia bocconeii*. However, we were soon on our way along the clifftops, greeted by a pair of Choughs. Before long we sighted the first of 'The Big Six' Lizard specialities, Land Quillwort *Isoetes hystrix*. Despite its very restricted distribution, we saw large numbers of this plant during the course of the meeting and became proficient in picking out its slightly yellowing tufts of leaves for ourselves.

On a rock outcrop called 'The Mound' we were shown Twin-headed Clover *Trifolium bocconeii* and Dwarf Rush *Juncus capitatus*. Over the course of the two days we saw more Twin-headed Clover, but we were hard-pressed to find any with more than one head! Other outcrops

provided Long-headed Clover *T. incarnatum* ssp. *molinerii* and Upright Clover *T. strictum*. The day was rounded off with a stroll across the flat grassland behind the cliffs, where the tiny Pigmy Rush *Juncus pygmaeus* was growing in a damp rutted pathway, completing the Big Six. However, throughout the day there were many, many other wonderful plants on show as well!

ROGER HEATH-BROWN

**Day 2:** Today we walked inland from Kynance Cove towards Kynance Farm, exploring the downs and serpentine outcrops, as well as the damp, rutted trackways which



Ken and Helen

Photo: David Steere

provide a habitat for so many of the Lizard's rarities. As we made our way downhill, Ian Bennallick explained

how the scrub is being cleared to link the rocky outcrops and encourage the Devon Ruby Red cattle to move from one outcrop to the next, grazing what would have been gorse-dominated habitat and opening it up for the small, rare plants characteristic of the Lizard.

As we approached the marshy valley bottom where a bridge crosses the stream, we came across Few-flowered Spike-rush *Eleocharis quinqueflora* and there, nestling by the path, almost hidden under the dense vegetation of Great Fen-sedge *Cladium mariscus* and Hemlock Water-dropwort *Oenanthe crocata*, were one or two flowering plants of the tiny Pale Butterwort *Pinguicula lusitanica*. Uphill towards an ancient Bronze Age settlement, the benefits of the management regime became clear when the beautiful Yellow Centaury *Cicendia filiformis* was spotted on a small patch of bare ground free from all competitors.

On the plateau, the ancient tracks had lost their winter wetness but were still damp enough to harbour Three-lobed Crowfoot *Ranunculus tripartitus* and Pedunculate Water-starwort *Callitriche brutia* ssp. *brutia*. As we made our way towards a pool, we were greeted by a herd of inquisitive ponies which quickly tired of us and returned to their grazing duties when no treats were forthcoming. The pool became the scene of a balancing act as several of us stretched over the water, intent on photographing both the feathery submerged leaves and

the more wedge-shaped, three-lobed aerial leaves of Lesser Marshwort *Helosciadium inundatum*. Further on, Ian explained the difference between the rare endemic heather hybrid *Erica x williamsii*, with its bright-yellow, new spring growth, and the parent plants, Cornish Heath *E. vagans* and Cross-leaved Heath *E. tetralix*.

We lunched on a rocky outcrop near the farm, then wandered through Gew Graze Valley, home to the very rare endemic Cornish Juniper *Juniperus communis* ssp. *hemisphaerica*. The population of this juniper had been reduced to 13 plants growing close together in Gew Graze Valley until cuttings taken by a team from the Eden Project and grown on in their nurseries were reintroduced. They are now well established in several introduction sites, so the future of this rarity may now be secure.

After a steep climb we headed back along the coast towards another great find; there, on the cliffs above the café at Kynance Cove, I had my very first sighting of Spotted Cat's-ear *Hypochaeris maculata* and although only just beginning to flower it certainly didn't disappoint, providing the perfect end to an excellent day of botanising.

Despite adverse weather conditions earlier in the year, county recorders Colin French and Ian Bennallick were able to point out everything that they'd planned to show us during our two-day visit. Thanks go to them both



Nearing the end of a wonderful two-day meeting at the Lizard

for their expert and enthusiastic guidance. Also, thanks to Colin for his detailed and beautifully illustrated Flora of Cornwall and to Ian for his many contributions to it. The Flora

has proved invaluable to me while working on this report.

SHEENA PATERSON

## GLENCOE and AREA, SCOTLAND, 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> JUNE

**Day 1: Rannoch Moor.** Our three-day botanical adventure in Scotland started at Rannoch Moor, which is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation. We explored the blanket bog and loch plant assemblages, with the most notable plant seen being the iconic Rannoch-rush *Scheuchzeria palustris*. The group thoroughly enjoyed identifying the rushes, sedges and mosses typical of this habitat, under the guidance of Lyn Jones and other botanical experts. After walking through difficult boggy terrain, we were rewarded with a scenic lunch

location on a rock formation surrounded by bog and a view of mountains in the distance.

In the afternoon we explored water plants in a picturesque loch at the base of a mountain, where we saw Floating Club-rush *Eleogiton fluitans* and Water Lobelia *Lobelia dortmanna*.

MARIYA TARNAVSKA

**Day 2: Cuil Bay.** After the rigours of bog-trotting over Rannoch Moor, our group of intrepid botanists met again



at Cuil Bay, on Loch Linnhe. We were greeted by such cold and blustery weather that we could barely hear each other speak in the strong wind as we set off along the shoreline. We soon reached the temporary shelter of a narrow strip of woodland, where we examined the differences between five different ferns all growing within a few metres of each other. Further on, we were shown Pale Butterwort *Pinguicula lusitanica*, which several of the group were keen to see for the first time, as well as Bristle Club-rush *Isolepis setacea* and Small-fruited Yellow-sedge *Carex viridula*.

We continued west towards a lochan and bothy, where a keen bryologist in the group found the fascinating and very photogenic Cruet Collar Moss *Splachnum ampullaceum*, which is very fussy and only grows on the dung of herbivores. There were a few laughs when someone wondered if it would grow on the dung of a human vegetarian!

We were all keen to reach the nearby patch of temperate rainforest, a globally rare and threatened habitat that provides perfect conditions for moisture-loving mosses and lichens as well as plants. On the way, we

made a brief diversion to visit a patch of Hay-scented Buckler-fern *Dryopteris aemula* but a few paces into the wood, much to the delight of many, both Wilson's Filmy-fern *Hymenophyllum wilsonii* and Tunbridge Filmy-fern *H. tunbrigense* were present. Close by, there was also a wonderful array of mosses and lichens. These included what was (probably) the very rare lichen *Pseudocyphellaria norvegica*, which, unlike many lichens, has a vernacular name, i.e. Norwegian Specklebelly.

Our route then took us further along the shore before climbing through the woods; many common species were spotted on the way, including the first flowering specimen we had seen of Bog Asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*. We continued up and over a small hill on increasingly rough and heathery terrain; there were a few tumbles on the way but thankfully the landings were soft. However, we were soon rewarded with several beautiful orchid species including Early Marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata* and Lesser Butterfly-orchid *Platanthera bifolia*. A good footpath then took us back towards our starting point and the promise of a cup of tea and cake, courtesy of Lyn and his wife, which was very welcome and very tasty.

PAUL NIGHTINGALE AND ROLAND STEVENS

**DAY 3: Meall Mor.** Back in March, I drove up to Upton, near Didcot, Oxfordshire, to see the Giant orchid *Himantoglossum robertianum* that has appeared there. A successful trip, but as I arrived back home, I I



asked myself whether I was too old for all this travelling lark; Glencoe is, after all, 9.5 hours of driving away. Of course, by the following morning I had come to my senses; so few Scottish alpine plants grow here on the South Coast and, to justify the effort still further, I could bookend my visit and pop over to the Isle of Skye for Alpine Rock-cress *Arabis alpina* and to Glenfinnan for *Diapensia lapponica*.

So, on the morning of the third and final day of our meeting, I found myself with the others who had opted to ascend the 682 metres of Meall Mor, outside Glencoe. Our guide was

Photo: David Caals



the excellent Dan Watson, of the National Trust for Scotland, and he briefed us on how the land was being managed. Cattle had been tried out, but they had stayed on lower ground. Sheep, likewise, declined inclines; besides they were liable to chomp through the Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* too much and deprive the Chequered Skipper butterflies *Carterocephalus palaemon* of their larval food plant (not seen unfortunately, but we did see the delightfully-named Timothy Tortrix moth *Aphelia paleana*). The

botanically rich slopes therefore were undergrazed. However, hope was at hand in the form of Highland cattle, corralled down by the road. Contrary to appearances they were not intended to stand around as a major tourist attraction, with much ooh-ing and aah-ing, but would soon be released to do their proper job.

So, up the near vertical slopes and gullies we went, allowed to get our breath back by Dan only when he spotted something interesting. We were a mixed bunch. One person declared himself to be very keen on smut. But I soon realised that I didn't share a common interest with him when he examined his 2000th Pignut *Conopodium majus* and finally found a black fungus on it. Another seemed interested mainly in bryophytes, with her lens deep in every *Bryum*. A third was keen on rushes and sedges, with the highlight of her day being Three-flowered Rush *Juncus triglumis*. Was it primarily an aesthetic appreciation or an intellectual challenge, I asked. Both, she replied.

It was a bit like herding sheep, but we all had a great time. The Mountain Avens *Dryas octopetala* was a common goal richly rewarded, but Scottish Asphodel *Tofieldia pusilla*, Hair Sedge *Carex capillaris*, Wood Vetch *Ervilia sylvatica*, Hard Shield-fern and Holly-fern *Polystichum aculeatum* and *P. lonchitis*, Whortle-leaved Willow *Salix myrsinites*, Frog Orchid *Coeloglossum viride* and Roseroot *Rhodiola rosea* also got everyone jostling round. We were finally enticed towards the summit by the promise of Alpine Cinquefoil *Potentilla crantzii*, via Variegated



Horsetail *Equisetum variegatum*. And since the further, up we went. I am particularly pleased to have made the extra effort as I saw for the first time a whole forest of Dwarf Willow *Salix herbacea*.

in equal measure to have been there and done it. Heartfelt thanks are due to Dan Watson, and to Lyn Jones for organising it all.

DAVID CAALS

It was one of those occasions when you're utterly exhausted but delighted

## ORTON AND KIRKBY STEPHEN, CUMBRIA, 24<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> JUNE

**Day 1: Orton and Tarn Moor.** A wonderful day, with good weather, lovely views and congenial company. Our group of 12 members and four leaders set off from Orton along a country footpath leading to meadows. Before reaching the meadows, we found Pyrenean Valerian *Valeriana pyrenaica* next to the footpath. The meadows themselves were awash with summer flowers, providing plenty of interest.

When we had had our fill there, we carried on to Orton Pastures SSSI, which is not normally open to the public, but which Alan Gendle, one of our leaders, had arranged permission for us to visit. This particular SSSI consists of pockets of different soil types, encouraging a rich and diverse flora. Apparently it is one of the few sites in the country with records for all three British Fragrant-orchid species. Although we were too early in the year for Marsh Fragrant-orchid *Gymnadenia densiflora*, we did find Chalk *G. conopsea* and Heath Fragrant-orchid *G. borealis*. Hopefully I have come away with a better understanding of how to tell the three apart. Indeed, anybody

interested in wild orchids would have been in seventh heaven as we also saw Early Marsh-orchid subspecies *Dactylorhiza incarnata* ssp. *incarnata* and Narrow-leaved Marsh-orchid *D. traunsteinerioides*, with the gap in its inflorescence giving it a one-sided look. Highlights for me were the hybrids we were shown, namely Heath Spotted-orchid x Northern Marsh-orchid *D. maculata* x *D. purpurella* = *D. x formosa* and the intergeneric hybrid between Heath Fragrant-orchid and Northern Marsh-orchid *G. borealis* x *D. purpurella* = *X Dactylodenia varia*, this latter being intergeneric.

Also of particular interest was the very rare Leafless Hawk's-beard *Crepis praemorsa*. There were a number of plants in full flower in one small area, quite beautiful and very different from the Marsh Hawk's-beard *C. paludosa* that we had seen earlier. Living in Kent, one thing I had not fully appreciated before is how different the northern flora is from that found at home. For example, Northern Bedstraw *Galium boreale*,

with its four leaf "ruff", was new to me, but is seemingly quite common in the north.

By mid-afternoon we were back at our cars and we then drove to Tarn Moor to look at two more orchid hybrids, namely Early x Northern Marsh-orchid *D. incarnata* x *D. purpurella* = *D. x latirella* and the very rare intergeneric Heath Fragrant-orchid x Early Marsh-orchid *G. borealis* x *D. incarnata*. It was also good to be shown another Early Marsh-orchid subspecies *D. incarnata* ssp. *pulchella*, with reddish-purple flowers and the stem leaves almost touching the inflorescence.

I would like to thank all four leaders, who each played a different but important part in making the day a success, in particular Alan Gendle, warden of the Waitby Greenriggs Cumbria Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve, and Carol Armstrong, both Hardy Orchid Society members, who gave freely of their knowledge, which I'm sure we all appreciated.

CLAIRE HORDER

**Day 2: Waitby Greenriggs Nature Reserve, Kirkby Stephen.** We were so lucky to have glorious weather for our trip to Waitby Greenriggs. The warden, Alan Gendle, gave us a short history of the reserve, which consists of land bordered by two disused railway lines running from Kirkby Stephen in a westerly direction. One went to Smardale and ultimately took coke to Barrow Steelworks. The other line ran through the Eden valley towards

Penrith carrying mixed freight. Both lines operated for approximately 100 years until they were closed in the 1960s. Luckily the hay meadow flowers mostly survived due to the land between the two lines being cut off, but when the site was acquired by the Wildlife Trust, there had been quite a lot of tree clearance to be done. Alan told me that he manages the site mostly by himself, except for a little help in the winter with tree clearance. He's doing a great job, as the reserve holds all sorts of wonderful things. We split into two groups, one led by Carol Armstrong and the other led by Alan

. Our day started with a short scramble down the steep side of the cutting into an orchid-filled paradise. We saw Fly Orchids *Ophrys insectifera*, all with little sticks to show where they were. A good thing too as they would have been almost impossible to spot without them. Then there were Common Twayblades *Neottia ovata*, Common Spotted-orchids *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and Fragrant-orchids *Gymnadenia* spp., with the occasional Northern Marsh-orchid *D. purpurella*. Of course, being orchids there were a few hybrids hiding amongst the crowd. It took a while, but eventually Alan found a Common Spotted-orchid x Northern Marsh-orchid hybrid *D. fuchsii* x *purpurella* = *D. x venusta* - very nice. We also found the hybrid between Chalk Fragrant-orchid and Common Spotted-orchid *G. conopsea* x *D. fuchsii* = *X Dactylodenia heinziana*. It looks like a Common Spotted-orchid with a very long spur.

In the wetter areas there were



beautiful Marsh Helleborines *Epipactis palustris* just starting to blossom. Lesser Butterfly-orchids *Platanthera bifolia* also grow here. I don't think I've ever seen so many in one spot. These little beauties were not the only flowers worth seeing though; this is a place to really savour. All the usual suspects were there, plus Hairy St. John's-wort *Hypericum hirsutum*, Slender St. John's-wort *H. pulchrum*, Grass-of-Parnassus *Parnassia palustris* and,

for sedge-lovers, there were Glaucous Sedge *Carex flacca*, Long-stalked Yellow-sedge *C. lepidocarpa*, Common Yellow-sedge *C. demissa* and Hair Sedge *C. capillaris*.

Another rarity was a willow which we were told was Ehrhart's Willow *Salix x ehrhartiana*, a cross between Bay Willow *S. pentandra* and White Willow *S. alba*. It was nice to see a patch of Saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*, a plant I've rarely seen. All in all, a lovely morning's botanising. A big thank you to both Alan and Carol for showing us around the reserve.

In the afternoon we visited Ash Fell. We drove a short way from Kirkby Stephen, parked next to the road to Sedburgh, then crossed the road into a field, site of the former White Quarry. A little way up we started searching amongst the heather and soon found our quarry, Lesser Twayblade *Neottia cordata*. After much photography we very happily made our way back to our cars. My only sadness was that husband Ken had not been able to enjoy it too as he'd had an accident and was spending his time in Carlisle hospital.

SUE SOUTHALL

## 10 KM SQUARE STUDY (NORTH) 2023

	Square	Area	Year	New	Total
Julie Clarke	SD48	Lindale & Withbarrow	21	6	797
	SD58	Milnthorpe	20	1	588
Anthony & Rita Grainger	SE23	Horsforth & Rodley	13	2	653
	SE24	Otley & Wharfe Valley	13	12	467

Peter Jepson	SD61	Bolton (North)	43	1	509
	SD62	Darwen and Blackburn	49	4	878
	SD71	Turton	42	0	458
	SD72	Accrington	48	0	625
Andrew Kafel	SE02	Halifax	17	1	974
	SE12	Brighouse	16	2	672
	SE22	Morley, Dewsbury & Batley	15	0	870
Keith Robson	NZ24	Chester-le-Street	17	49	740
Dorothy Ross	SD31	Southport	5	8	139
	SD32	Lytham	21	0	386
	SD45	Galgate	11	0	299
	SD63	Longridge	36	0	382
	SD64	Chipping	13	0	205
	SD73	Whalley	19	2	308
	SD74	Clitheroe	34	1	381
Jesse Tregale	SE13	Bradford	34	11	1880
Sheila Wynn	SD64	Bowland, Lancashire	18	0	237
	SD65	Forest of Bowland	14	0	176
	SD74	Clitheroe	18	24	612
	SD75	Slaidburn, Gisburn Forest	18	3	242

**Julie** has added to both her squares, finding in SD48 the rare Bird's-foot Sedge *Carex ornithopoda* in Brigsteer Wood, the lovely Lily-of-the-valley *Convallaria majalis* on the roadside nearby and the unusual alien Sensitive Fern *Onoclea sensibilis* at Throughs Lane, Storth. The only new find in SD58 was a weed at Woodlands Nursery, Canary-grass *Phalaris canariensis*.

**Anthony and Rita** found new plants in both of their squares. In SE23 they found the hybrid between Wood Avens and Water Avens *Geum urbanum x rivale* = *G. x intermedium* in West End, Horsforth. This hybrid can often be found if the parents grow close together. Also, at Horsforth as a garden weed, they found Thorn-apple *Datura stramonium*. This is a rather puzzling plant as it is highly poisonous and is



Thorn Apple

never grown in gardens, yet it regularly appears on waste ground, roadsides and in gardens etc., a complete mystery as to how it gets there. In SE24 they encountered three saplings from planted trees in Otley Chevin: Giant Fir *Abies grandis* Western Red-cedar *Thuja plicata* and Western Hemlock-spruce *Tsuga heterophylla*. All three are well-known as self-seeders (although many non-native trees are not), so if the parent trees are found it can be worth searching around for young self-seeded plants. In Golden Acre Park, Leeds, they found Cotton Thistle *Onopordum acanthium*. This is another alien which sporadically appears; we have had it in Bradford for the last two years. Finally, a nice native, the rayed form of Groundsel *Senecio vulgaris* var. *hibernicus*, which was once common around Bradford, but has become a lot rarer.

**Peter** has done little botanising, having been busy monitoring the re-establishment of his moorland site and carrying out the West Pennine Moors Globeflower *Trollius europaeus* survey for English Nature. In SD62 he did find the rather splendid Whorled Caraway *Trocdaris verticillata* looking very much like a late-flowering Pignut *Conopodium majus*, but with Yarrow-like *Achillea millefolium* leaves, quite a find. Also in SD62 he came across Nordstedt's Dandelion *Taraxacum nordstedtii* at Sunnyhurst Farm and Greater Periwinkle *Vinca major* on a verge at Horton. He found only one new plant in SD61, Burnet Rose *Rosa spinosissima*, on the edge of Darwen Moor.

**Andrew** did not do much botanising in 2023 but in SE02 in Coleridge Street, Halifax, he did find Knotted Crane's-bill *Geranium nodosum*, which he found again in SE12, growing between pavement and wall on Birkhouse Road, Bailiff Bridge, with a rather splendid white-flowered Iceland Poppy *Papaver nudicaule*. This can look like a form of Common Poppy *Papaver rhoeas* but it has distinctly hairy fruit, unlike Common Poppy, which has hairless fruits.

**Keith** has had an excellent year in NZ24, Chester-le-Street, County Durham, with some rare natives and unusual aliens. The natives included Rough Horsetail *Equisetum hyemale*, which he found in Kelpier Wood, Stinking Hellebore *Helleborus foetidus* in Flass Dale and two nice orchids, Common Twayblade *Neottia ovata* at Low Newton Nature-reserve and Greater Butterfly-orchid



*Platanthera chlorantha* in Durham city. Aliens found included the very rare Woad *Isatis tinctoria* at Potters Bank, Durham. In Langley Park he found the unusual wheat-rye hybrid, Triticale *Triticosecale rimpaui*, a new grain crop which occasionally escapes, and Common Vetch *Vicia sativa* ssp. *sativa*; this subspecies with very large hairless fruit pods is much the rarest and is seldom recorded. Near Langley Park he found Mistletoe *Viscum album*, which is quite common in the south but rather rare this far north. Keith also added seven *Rubus* species to his list.

**Dorothy** has managed to add to four of her squares. On a day out botanising and birdwatching in SD31 (Southport), she found the car park interesting, finding the rather nice Sea-holly *Eryngium maritimum*, Knotgrass *Polygonum aviculare* and Field-rose, *Rosa arvensis*. There was



Field Rose

only one new find in SD45, where she found Sweet Violet *Viola odorata* on the verge of Buckley Gate. This is

a native plant but quite common in gardens, often escaping, but I have yet to find it in Bradford. She had some nice finds by the Leeds - Liverpool Canal at Altham in SD73, including Scarlet Pimpernel *Lysimachia arvensis*, the excellent Viper's-bugloss *Echium vulgare* and the rather rare Wild Pansy *Viola tricolor*. In SD74, her only new find was Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* at Salthill Quarry, Clitheroe.

I, **Jesse**, had a quiet year in SE23 (Bradford), but in February I did find Garden Parsley *Petroselinum crispum* ssp. *crispum* growing between a wall and pavement, with its probable parent growing on the edge of a nearby back garden. Later in the year, when parking by the Crown Court, I noticed some seedlings and after a search found the parent, Japanese Maple *Acer palmatum*, with dozens of seedlings spreading out several yards from the planted tree. Most of my other finds were shown to me by Michael Wilcox: Gold-of-pleasure *Camelina sativa* on disturbed ground at Apperley Bridge and a rather splendid cultivar of Snapdragon *Antirrhinum majus* 'Purple Twist' growing out of the pavement at Lower Holme Park.

**Sheila** found some nice new plants in two of her squares. In SD74 (Clitheroe), Salthill Quarry proved fruitful with *Geranium sanguineum* 'Vision', a low, mounded cultivar of Bloody Crane's-bill with leaves turning red in autumn, Wasp Orchid *Ophrys apifera* var. *trollii*, an unusual variety of Bee Orchid with a long narrow central lobe which ends in a point, the alien Red-leaved Rose

*Rosa glauca*, which seems to self-seed frequently, and five Blackberry *Rubus* species. Sheila also found a rather nice weed in her garden, Pale Flax *Linum bienne*. In SD75 (Slaidburn), she found the rather rare escape Lamb's-tail *Chiastophyllum oppositifolium* on the side of the bridge over the River Hodder and Knotted Pearlwort *Sagina nodosa* at Stocks Reservoir.

sent me lists. Some interesting plants were found, some new to me. Hopefully we will have a splendid 2024.

Lastly, I did not realise how long I have been doing the WFS 10 Kilometre North report. It seems that my first report was for 1998, so 2023 is my 26<sup>th</sup> year.

B.A. 'JESSE' TREGALE

I would like to thank all those who

## 10 KM SQUARE STUDY (SOUTH) 2023

Name	Hectad	Location	Year	New	Total
Gareth Bursnall	TQ23	Crawley, West Sussex	9	5	636
José Gibbs	TR37	Margate, Kent	9	1	177
Anne Hercock	S060	West Gloucestershire	3	49	366
Pippa Hyde	TQ15	Leatherhead, Surrey	5	24	355
Barbara Mathews	TM23	West Felixstowe, Suffolk	26	0	687
	TM24	Woodbridge, Suffolk	24	0	539
	TM33	East Felixstowe, Suffolk	27	1	670
	TM34	Shottisham, Suffolk	15	0	364
	TQ14	Mole Valley, Surrey	2	113	490
	TQ15	Bookham & Fetcham, Surrey	1	556	556
	TQ16	Epsom, Surrey	1	313	313
Ted Phenna	SH57	Bangor & Anglesea	16	0	432
	SH67	Llanfairfechen, Gwynedd	20	7	700
	SH68	Llangoed, Anglesey	11	0	314
	SH78	Great Orme, Gwynedd	44	7	778
Ken & Sue Southall	TM05	Needham Market & Stowmarket, Suffolk	1	323	323

It was very pleasing to receive such an interesting set of records for this study and it was especially encouraging to be sent lists for three new 10km squares. I was also delighted that longstanding members are continuing to add species to their hectad lists. As members get older and find it more difficult to cover every area of their squares, it is lovely to learn of any new finds, even if only a single species record. It is also great to welcome new participants. A 10km square might seem a large area to cover but it can be approached in stages and anyone who has already recorded in a 1km square within the chosen hectad will be off to a flying start as their 1km square list can be included.

This was the ninth year that **Gareth** had recorded in his West Sussex TQ23 square, which covers Crawley in the northeast and stretches to the outskirts of Horsham in the southwest. He managed to add five more species to his previous fantastic total of well over 600. In May he spotted Honey Garlic *Allium siculum* on waste ground and in late June he discovered a Hollyhock *Alcea rosea* which had popped up on a roadside verge. An excellent June find were a couple of small self-sown plants of Spanish-dagger *Yucca gloriosa* growing in a long-neglected flowerbed.

**José** records near Margate in her TR37 hectad along a narrow strip of land which is probably only 2km at the widest point and has a limited range of habitats; the rest of her hectad is in the sea. In July, despite these limitations, she added Bugloss

*Lycopsis arvensis*, which she found growing in a grass verge in Westbrook.



**Anne** recorded a good number of new species in her hectad in West Gloucestershire. A cluster of Annual Beard-grass *Polypogon monspeliensis* plants caused her to speculate how they could have arrived there; they were nearer the road than the river so seeds could well have been sown by birds or become detached from vehicles. American Winter-cress *Barbarea verna* was a surprise find. She kept an eye on the two plants but they suddenly disappeared. Anne undertook a thorough exploration and plant count of the rough ground between road and railway in Lydney for the Big Meadow Search - a UK-wide project. She found this area rich in flora and grasses, with a variety of different habitats. On a wide, wild grassy verge in the Boating Lake car

park, Anne discovered Upright Spurge *Euphorbia stricta*.

**Pippa** went on some good botanical walks in Leatherhead and nearby areas. In May she found Green Hound's-tongue *Cynoglossum germanicum* in woodland, while Canterbury-bells *Campanula medium*, Small Balsam *Impatiens parviflora* and Six-rowed Barley *Hordeum vulgare* were among her June discoveries. A trip to some old agricultural land close to her home in Fetcham provided a variety of goodies which included Bastard Cabbage *Rapistrum rugosum*, Gold-of-pleasure *Camelina sativa* and Witch-grass *Panicum capillare*. In September Pippa spied a Globe Artichoke *Cynara cardunculus* growing beside a busy road.

**Barbara** already has a magnificent list for her East Felixstowe 10km



Photo: David Steere

Squirting Cucumber

square but she still managed to add a very unusual species, discovering Squirting Cucumber *Echballium elaterium* growing strongly in a gutter; the plant was two metres long, lush, with two good flowers and one unripe fruit. Barbara had previously seen a specimen growing over a garden wall a good quarter of a mile away but there seemed to be no direct way for it to have arrived at this new site, although it was not possible to see into nearby gardens because they were surrounded by high fences.

**Steve** was very industrious in 2023; not only did he add new species to his TQ14 Mole Valley District square but he also sent in records for two more hectads. His additional finds in the Mole Valley included Orpine *Hylotelephium telephium*, Greater Yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus angustifolius* and Highclere Holly *Ilex x altaclerensis*. Steve now has an impressive total for this square. His TQ15 Bookham & Fetcham square yielded some interesting plants. In March he recorded Glabrous Whitlowgrass *Erophila glabrescens* as well as Common Whitlowgrass *E. verna*. A *Wildlife Aid* site in Leatherhead between the M25 and River Mole was a productive area, with Flixweed *Descurainia sophia*, Many-seeded Goosefoot *Lipandra polysperma* and both Galingale *Cyperus longus* and Pale Galingale *C. eragrostis* all present. Violet Helleborine *Epipactis purpurata* was a good find at Juniperhill Wood. In his Epsom area square TQ16, Steve recorded a good range of sedge and rush species. In May he found Corky-fruited Water-dropwort *Oenanthe pimpinelloides* and Garden Star-of-



Bethlehem *Ornithogalum umbellatum* ssp. *umbellatum*, while ponds and rivers provided him with Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, Arrowhead *Sagittaria sagittifolia*, Marsh Speedwell *Veronica scutellata* and Narrow-fruited Water-cress *Nasturtium microphyllum*.

It was **Ted's** 44<sup>th</sup> year of recording in his SH78 Great Orme square in Gwynedd and he added seven more species to his amazingly long list. He found a less common variety of Tall Ramping-fumitory, *Fumaria bastardii* var. *hibernica*, which has a dark red upper petal with wings turning upwards, the more common var. *bastardii* having a pale pink upper petal. Gallant-soldier *Galinsoga parviflora* was a nice discovery at the Oval and just inside the nearby cricket ground, Ted spotted Scented Mayweed *Matricaria chamomilla* and Celery-leaved Buttercup *Ranunculus sceleratus*, while a garden pond



provided him with Orange Foxtail *Alopecurus aequalis*. In his Llanfairfechan area square SH67 Ted identified several species which are often found in bird seed mixes, including a variety of Common Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* var. *sativus*, with very upright hollow flower stems and no red or orange in the flowers, and Phacelia *Phacelia tanacetifolia*.

2023 was the first year that **Ken and Sue** have participated in the 10km Square (South) study. Their chosen square is TM05, which covers Needham Market and Stowmarket. This rural hectad is right on their doorstep, with lanes, fields, streams and ponds. Ken and Sue produced a very good list for their first year, finding quite a few plants that they hadn't known were growing locally. There is only room to mention a few of their interesting finds here, such as Garden Asparagus *Asparagus officinalis*, Buckwheat *Fagopyrum esculentum*, Night-flowering Catchfly *Silene noctiflora* and Henbane *Hyoscyamus niger*, as well as a commendable list of grass species. Ken and Sue say that they are enjoying exploring their local area and are getting out for walks more regularly as well.

I would like to thank everyone for all their hard work and for sending in such excellent and varied records and I look forward to receiving lists of the new species that you find in 2024.

JILL OAKLEY



## SPRING HUNT, IPSWICH, 3<sup>rd</sup> MARCH

Fortunately for us the day dawned bright, winds were light and the torrential downpours of late were non-existent. However, they had left their mark and parts of our route proved quite boggy. Eight of us gathered by the Wet Dock in Ipswich to begin our foray. The car park and surrounding area provided our first 20 plants within half an hour. Many were the

expected over-wintering plants but our first spring plants had started blooming with Early Forget-me-not *Myosotis ramosissima*, Springbeauty *Claytonia perfoliata*, Rue-leaved Saxifrage *Saxifraga tridactylites* and Danish Scurvygrass *Cochlearia danica* much in evidence. One unusual find that had us

wracking our brains was a beautiful Dead-nettle with fine white lines running down the mid-rib of the leaf and pale purple blotches on the petals – see picture. We couldn't find this in Stace (so possibly isn't countable for this hunt) but with the aid of Google Lens found a good match in Bifid Dead-nettle\* *Lamium bifidum*, a Southern European plant. Another plant of interest in this area (but sadly not flowering) is Nettle-leaved Goosefoot *Chenopodium murale*, a recent coloniser of the dock walls.

Having skirted the docks area we

continued along the streets of Ipswich. It's amazing just how much you can find growing in pavement cracks. The more unusual additions were Eastern Rocket *Sisymbrium orientale* and Fern-grass *Catapodium rigidum*. This then led us into Holywells Park, once part of a stately home but now a public park with areas managed for wildlife. Here we



found most of our spring-flowering tree species with the exception of Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, which eluded us. There were also carpets of Lesser Celandine *Ficaria verna* and various Crocus species. A loop back through more streets saw us back at the car park by mid-afternoon with a final haul of 67 species found in flower.

ANNE KELL

Please note: a photograph of \*Bifid Deaf-nettle appears in the 'Exotics' page 44 of the previous WFS magazine (Summer 2024).

## SNOWDROP MEETING IN NORTHUMBERLAND, 24<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY

It was towards the end of winter in late February in the wilds of the northeast in Northumberland. The weather was perfect, with blue skies and bright sunshine, and it was relatively mild for this time of year. Half a dozen of us met up in the middle of nowhere near an ancient narrow stone bridge over the River Till, which was built in 1825. Nearby was a beautiful-looking mansion called Fowberry Tower.

Our aim was to look at snowdrops, but a very special variety which only grows in the wild in Northumberland and which was first named in 1877 by the Reverend H. Harpur-Crewe for its discoverer, a Mr. Sanders. Stepping on to the wide riverbank, with steep edges and fast-flowing water beneath, we were greeted by swathes of the white flowers of Snowdrop *Galanthus nivalis*. However, within just a few steps there was another beautiful, but obviously differently-coloured snowdrop displaying a bright gold ovary and, on closer inspection, yellow, and not green markings on the tepals (see photo). This turned out to be the Yellow-Snowdrop *Galanthus nivalis* Sandersii Group. There were many plants dotted throughout for quite a distance. A lone yellow flower belonging to a Lesser Celandine *Ficaria verna* gleamed in the sunshine. However, it was another snowdrop that grabbed our attention which had noticeably wider leaves of up to 1.5cm compared to the narrow leaves of *G. nivalis* at up to 1cm. The leaves of the latter are also flat, but

these were slightly pleated, with the edges just folded under. These larger plants, of which there were several clumps, were *G. x valentinei*, the hybrid between Snowdrop and Pleated Snowdrop *G. plicatus*.

From this site, our leader Judith Cox took us to another supposed site for the stunning Yellow Snowdrop,



whose bulbs can be bought online or at a nursery for between £8 and £15 per bulb. It was but a few miles to the church of St. Peter's

in Chillingham. We searched and searched the graveyard and surrounding woodland but to no avail. However, if any of you decide to visit the area please go into the church, where you will see the most magnificent tomb that you are ever likely to see, commemorating Sir Ralph Grey, who died in 1443, and his wife, Elizabeth. A few of us then adjourned to a local hostelry for refreshments and a chat and catch-up. Thanks to Judith for organizing this lovely meeting.

Photo: Judith Cox

STEPHEN CLARKSON

## LESNES ABBEY WOODS, LONDON BOROUGH OF BEXLEY, 26<sup>th</sup> MARCH

How do you get from Buckinghamshire to Kent for a 10:30am start by public transport without any changes? By using the Elizabeth Line of course. One hour from Iver to Abbey Wood. Easy.

Our first Field Meeting of the year and it proved to be a real treat. Ian Holt the Estate Manager for Lesnes Abbey Woods met us at the start and gave us the background of the site. Lesnes Abbey was founded in 1178 but was closed by Cardinal Wolsey in 1525 and fell into ruins soon after. It



Tower Mustard

is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the site is managed and Maintained by Bexley Council.

Ian showed us a “weed” that had sprung up in a recently created garden near to the café – a plant of Tower Mustard

*Turritis glabra*. Clearly the disturbance of the ground had caused a long lost seed to germinate. This is its only site for the plant in Kent. Another surprise Ian showed us was a plant of Lesser Calamint *Clinopodium nepeta* on a dry bank at its only site in London.

It was a very smelly meeting! The Calamint has a strong, sweet minty

smell and that was soon followed by Black Horehound *Ballota nigra*, which according to Blamey is “disagreeably pungent” although one or two declared it pleasant, and the first flowers of Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* which is another whose smell is either loved .....or not.



Photo: Jane Lowe

Our first port of call was the ruin of the Abbey and there was plenty of interest. Ferns such as Wall-rue *Asplenium ruta-muraria* and Black Spleenwort *A. adiantum-nigrum*, small plants such as Rue-leaved Saxifrage *Saxifraga tridactylites*, perhaps Thyme-leaved Sandwort *Arenaria serpyllifolia* (might have been *A. leptoclados* as difficult to tell without the fruits), Procumbent Pearlwort *Sagina procumbens* and Common Whitlowgrass *Erophila*

*verna* and even a surprise discovery of a stunted plant of Common Juniper *Juniperus communis* – confirmed by the smell of course!

Wandering through the woods themselves we came across the Daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* with its darker yellow trumpet and paler tepals, swathes of Wood Anemones *Anemone nemorosa*, Bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and Wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*. Spring had certainly sprung.

The day finished with coffee and delicious cake from the café. Fully recommended.

A lovely start to the season. A day of a few surprises and the pleasure of seeing the new season of plants awakening. Thank you to Jane Lowe for leading and planning the meeting. It was much enjoyed.

JANET JOHN

## ARNSIDE KNOTT, CUMBRIA, 11<sup>th</sup> APRIL

Our leader, Julie Clarke, led us on a circular route, starting from the promenade in Arnside, and including



estuarine, roadside, limestone grassland and woodland habitats. As we walked along the edge of the estuary, Julie pointed out Water Bent *Polypogon viridis* growing at the path edge, which she thinks is increasing. This year's growth of Maidenhair Fern *Adiantum capillus-veneris* was just starting to get going on a cliff wall dripping with water. Winter Heath *Erica carnea* provided a splash of colour where it had escaped onto the cliffs above us.

Proceeding to a woodland above the beach, we were immediately hit by the strong smell of Ramsons *Allium ursinum*. Almost hidden in the undergrowth were a couple of plants of Green Hellebore *Helleborus viridis*. We enjoyed seeing Goldilocks Buttercup *Ranunculus auricomus* in flower nearby, along with the leaves of White Butterbur *Petasites albus*. The native Daffodils *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* were already going over.



We headed on an ever-steeper path up to the top of Arnside Knott where there were great views down towards Silverdale Moss. En-route we saw Lamb's-tail *Chiastophyllum oppositifolium*, Winter Heliotrope *Petasites pyrenaicus*, a good display of the female spikes of Butterbur *P. hybridus* and numerous plants of Stinking Hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*. It was interesting to see the white-flowered form of Blue Moor-grass *Sesleria caerulea* var. *luteo-alba*.

At the top of Arnside Knott we examined the star species of the day, Teesdale Violet *Viola rupestris* and were delighted to find several plants in flower. This is a rare plant in Britain. The small Arnside colony has white flowers, rather than the blue flowers found in Teesdale and Yorkshire. Management work had recently been carried out to encourage the violets by removing an area of turf, so only time will tell if this is successful. We failed to find any

Rare Spring-sedge *Carex ericetorum*, but you can't win them all!

On the way back to the cars after lunch, we saw the white-flowered form of Ivy-leaved Toadflax *Cymbalaria muralis*, growing well on several walls. We were lucky to see a fresh specimen of Toothwort *Lathraea squamaria*, a little further along from where Julie has seen them in the past. We finished by admiring a Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* in flower in the walled garden. Also here was a Guelder-rose *Viburnum opulus*, known in Ukraine as the Kalyna Tree, planted last summer in honour of the Ukrainian families who joined the village in 2022. Thank you Julie, for showing us this special place. The weather today seemed to change from warm one moment to cold the next, but thankfully it stayed dry.

SUSAN AND TOM SIMCOCK

## CROXLEY COMMON MOOR, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE, 21<sup>st</sup> APRIL

Croxley Common Moor has 40 hectares of historic grassland. It straddles the flood plain of the River Gade. The canal that runs through is the Grand Union Canal. The constant action of the river combined with centuries of cattle grazing has resulted in the rich and diverse plant life we have today. The Common is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is also a designated Local Nature Reserve. No fertilizers have ever been added and it has acid and

neutral grassland. The site also has a rich variety of birds and insects.

The sharp North wind was no deterrent. Twenty-four hardy souls, which included some members of London Natural History Society, set off from our meeting point at Croxley Underground station. I was surprised to see so much brilliant yellow Bulbous Buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus* in flower as I had not yet seen any flowering in East Kent this



year. The Common Whitlowgrass *Draba verna* adorned the grassy mounds, the delicate seed pods waving frantically in the wind. Jane Lowe drew our attention to the attractive Changing Forget-me-not *Myosotis discolor* ssp *discolor* with the corolla initially yellow. We also found the attractive bright mid blue flowered Early Forget-me-not *Myosotis ramosissima* draping itself over a rocky mound. We came across plenty of Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanum odoratum*. Mario, the leader, asked us to chew the base of the stem and to my surprise it tasted of coconut. I always like to learn something new.

The next group of plants we studied was a few of the “Mouse-ear family”, *Cerastiums*, starting with the variable Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*, then leading on to the Sticky Mouse-ear *Cerastium glomeratum*, which was very distinctive, with the tight clusters of flowers and finally the Little Mouse-ear *Cerastium semidecandrum* with the slightly notched petals much shorter than the sepals with broad pale edges. Mario amusingly pointed out that he thought that the specific name for the Little Mouse-ear *semidecandrum* (meaning “half ten”) refer to the number of stamens, but it is an oddly roundabout way to describe the number five.

The Fabaceae family was well represented. Beside Gorse *Ulex europaeus* and Broom *Cytisus scoparius*, we saw many spinless green stems of Dyer’s Greenweed *Genista tinctoria*, though not yet in flower. A very important plant before

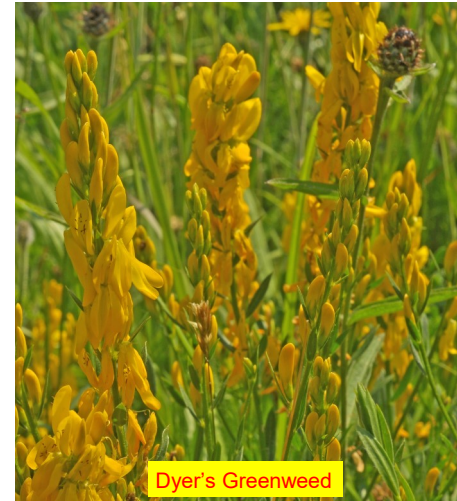


Photo: Jan Armishaw

the development of synthetic dyes, its flowering stems were used in previous centuries to obtain a yellow colouring that would also be combined with Blue Woad *Isatis tinctoria* to turn cloth green. More interesting, and much rarer in London, was Petty Whin *Genista anglica*. This plant has a spiny stem and much smaller leaves than Dyer’s Greenweed, and it is the food plant of the caterpillars of Slate Sober Moth *Aproaerema albipalpella*. A sign on the Common said that this is possibly the last remaining site in the whole of the UK for the moth!

Sharp eyes spotted Spring-sedge *Carex caryophyllea* and the straggly Three-nerved Sandwort *Moehringia trinerva* with the clearly seen 3 to 5 veins on the backs of the pointed oval leaves. Luckily the sun was starting to shine and it was good to see a couple of Orange Tip butterflies dancing around gracefully. Another plant that one doesn’t usually find in the London area was Betony



*Betonica officinalis*. Unfortunately, it was far too early in the year for the flowers, and we could only see the well-marked basal rosettes of long-stalked oblong leaves.

Later we briefly walked along the bank of the river. Here there were swathes of the feathery green leaved Hemlock Water-dropwort *Oenanthe*

*crocata*. This is a very poisonous plant. Mario had a brilliant way of bringing Botany alive by telling us interesting research details about the Hemlock Water-dropwort which I think many of us didn't know. To quote Mario:- "Though the literature tends to identify the poison that was used to kill Socrates as ordinary Hemlock, recent studies, relying on his pupil Plato's eyewitness observation of the event have suggested that a more probable plant would have been Hemlock Water-dropwort. The effect of this plant is that it stops muscles from contracting, including those in the chest, thus causing death by asphyxia. Before the conquest by the Romans, it is said that the ancient Sardinians would get rid of their old folk by poisoning them with this plant. When facial muscles stopped contracting, the victims would die showing a fake smile, the 'Sardinian smile', which gave origin to the English word sardonic". Mario, thank you very much for a very interesting and refreshing WFS day.

JAN ARMISHAW

## SHOTOVER AND BRASENOSE WOOD, OXFORD, 15<sup>th</sup> MAY

It was a warm, sunny day in late spring when the WFS group met up with our leader, Roger Heath-Brown, on Shotover Hill, near Oxford. Despite Roger's warning email, which suggested that Wellington boots might be desirable, most wore walking boots or stout shoes. Brasenose Wood, adjoining Shotover,

is an ancient wood, and the whole site is a remnant of a much larger royal forest with a historical reputation for being the haunt of highwaymen. Shotover Hill is capped with an acid soil, which is apparently unusual around Oxford. Then, as we descended through woods and grassland on clay soil, we reached a

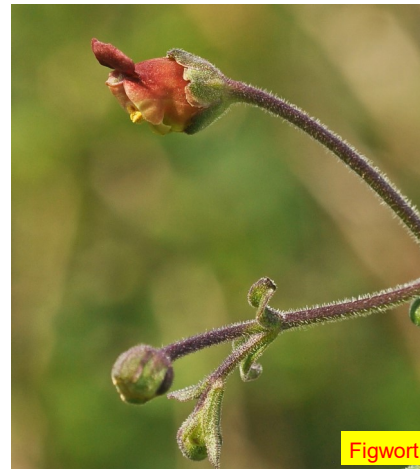
lower, flat meadow and then Brasenose Wood, which lies on Kimmeridge Clay.

It soon became clear that the meeting would be an excellent opportunity to reawaken our dormant plant identification skills and that we had an excellent leader who would examine almost all botanical specimens and set us up for further botanical challenges in 2024.

Small Balsam *Impatiens parviflora* was a notable invasive speciality. As we descended, we saw an assemblage of early-flowering plants, including Three-nerved Sandwort *Moehringia trinervia* and the moss-like Procumbent Pearlwort *Sagina procumbens*. The characteristics of Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana* and Soft-rush *Juncus effusus* were discussed. The differences in leaf tooth structure of adjacent Silver and Downy Birch *Betula pendula* and *B. pubescens* were also pointed out. As we reached some sandy grassland, both Sand Spurrey *Spergularia rubra* and Bird's-foot *Ornithopus perpusillus* were found in full bloom, the small flowers challenging our ability to photograph them. Here, also, the distinguishing features of Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa* and Sheep's Sorrel *R. acetosella* could be examined.

After lunch, we continued into Brasenose Wood, where Wood Millet *Milium effusum*, Wood Meadow-grass *Poa nemoralis* and Rough Meadow-grass *P. trivialis* were seen for comparison. We also saw five buttercup species over the course of day, including Goldilocks Buttercup

*Ranunculus auricomus*, as well as a subspecies of Lesser Celandine *Ficaria verna* ssp. *fertilis* which was new to some of us. As an aside, we examined some *Dryopteris* ferns, Male-fern *D. filix-mas* and Golden-scaled Male-fern *D. affinis*, firmly distinguishing them from some nearby buckler-ferns by referring to Stace's *New Flora*. Vegetative identification was required for



Common Figwort *Scrophularia nodosa*, Common Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, Saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria* and Betony *Betonica officinalis*. Both Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and Midland Hawthorn *C. laevigata* were present in close proximity and clearly separable on the basis of leaf shape and fruits. Over the course of the meeting, a small selection of sedges *Carex* spp. was seen for comparison: Remote Sedge *C. remota*, Carnation Sedge *C. panicea*, Lesser Pond-sedge *C. acutiformis*, Hairy Sedge *C. hirta* and Wood-sedge *C. sylvatica*.

Mischievously, Roger led us back uphill along a steep track, but the group coped well with the muddy conditions and we were able to examine the flower colour of Red Campion *Silene dioica* and the hybrid with White Campion *S. dioica* x *S. latifolia* = *S. x hampeana*.

This meeting certainly left us better prepared for the botanical year ahead and the wonderful array of WFS field trips on offer.

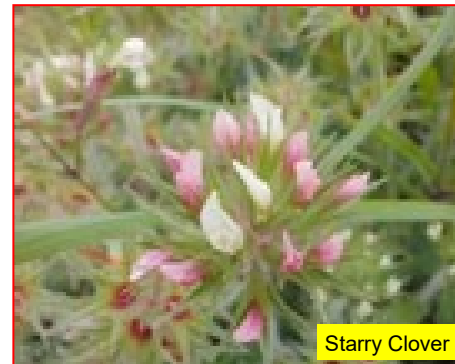
PETER HILTON

## SHOREHAM BEACH, WEST SUSSEX, 18<sup>th</sup> MAY

The morning started grey and chilly as Gareth Bursnall, our leader, shepherded us into a sheltered corner of the car park to introduce the day. Our party of 19 included the WFS's youngest member, 8-year-old Ruby, already an enthusiastic botanist. We were also fortunate to be joined by Jacky Woolcock from the Friends of Shoreham Beach (FoSB), who provided some fascinating insights about the site and helped us find some of the special plants.

Gareth explained that Shoreham Beach is a rare example of vegetated shingle habitat and, as such, was declared a Local Nature Reserve in 2006. In addition, a range of garden-escapes and throw-outs flourish in the more fertile soil near the houses that line the beach. 155 plant species have been recorded to date.

As we set out on our walk westwards along the beach, our attention was soon drawn to a tall, handsome Allium, identified after some discussion as Hirsute Garlic *Allium trifoliatum*, based on the pink tinge on its otherwise white tepals. It then didn't take long for Jacky to locate the first patch of our chief target for



Starry Clover

the day, Starry Clover *Trifolium stellatum*, established for over 150 years at Shoreham, one of only two currently known UK sites. It was a 'lifer' for many of us and we spent some time admiring the beautiful pink and white flowers and star-shaped fruits.

Other interesting plants in the vicinity included an enormous Evergreen Spindle *Euonymus japonicus* and, a little further along, a patch of Italian Catchfly *Silene italica*. The whole beach resembled a giant garden, with Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber*, Sea-kale *Crambe maritima* and Seaside Daisy *Erigeron glaucus* all in full bloom, interspersed with some handsome stems of Eastern

*Gladiolus communis*, charmingly known as 'Whistling Jacks' on the Isles of Scilly, where they were previously grown commercially. Jacky explained that the FoSB had made huge efforts to eradicate the highly invasive Three-cornered Garlic *Allium triquetrum*, although some scattered survivors indicated that the battle is far from won.

We paused to admire a fine patch of Kidney Vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria* growing alongside Sea Campion *Silene uniflora*, and a few spikes of Common Broomrape *Orobanche minor*, most likely parasitising the Kidney Vetch. By now the sun was starting to make an appearance, encouraging a few Common Lizards to bask on the stones. Moving along the beach, we were soon down on our hands and knees to examine an area of low-growing native coastal species, dominated by Rough Clover *Trifolium scabrum*. There was also some Sea Mouse-ear *Cerastium diffusum*, notable for having four petals and sepals (mouse-ears usually have five). Most interesting of all, however, was the discovery of some Yellow-vetch *Vicia lutea*, another new plant for many of us. Unfortunately, only one pale yellow flower was out and even that had been chewed by some unappreciative invertebrate.

Lunch was taken at this point, some of us near the shoreline alongside a patch of Japanese Rose *Rosa rugosa*, while others found themselves next to a huge bag of *Three-cornered Garlic*, evidence of the efforts of the FoSB. Afterwards,

as we continued along the beach, we stopped to chat to one of the householders and, after admiring his garden, heard about the challenges of property maintenance in this exposed position. Just outside his wall, two more garden-escapes caught our eye: Greater Honeywort *Cerinthe major*, with its dangling deep-purple flowers, and Salsify *Tragopogon porrifolius*, just coming into flower.

A little further on, we spotted a small spurge, notable for the narrow leaves crowded onto its non-flowering stems. This was Cypress Spurge *Euphorbia cyparissias*, another species that has become naturalised in waste places. By now, walking along the shingle was becoming quite tiring but Gareth urged us on towards two final delights: a splendid patch of Rosy Garlic *Allium roseum* and lastly some handsome Red-hot-pokers *Kniphofia uvaria*. After returning to the car park along the more comfortable boardwalk, some of us stopped for a welcome drink at a charmingly diminutive café in a converted horse-box. The café owner was keen to show us an interesting clover that had appeared in her lawn, enabling us to add Crimson Clover *Trifolium incarnatum* ssp. *incarnatum* as our final species for the day.

Many thanks to Gareth for organising and leading a most enjoyable and interesting day's botanising and to Jacky for providing additional insights. Shoreham Beach is certainly a special place and I look forward to returning there.

CLARE MILLION

(Continued next page)



Below is a copy of Ruby's letter (with appropriate permission) to Priscilla Nobbs in appreciation of her help, support and encouragement. Ruby clearly enjoyed the day at Shoreham and I'm told that her favourite flower was the Starry Clover. See pictures:



Dear Priscilla,

When we were at Shoreham beach 🌴 I loved looking at the intriguing flowers. I also loved learning about the flowers. Thanks a lot for the sheet. It really helped. It's amazing how many plants you can find in the grass.

From Ruby.



Ruby and friends enjoying the meeting at Shoreham beach.

## NEW BUCKENHAM COMMON, NORFOLK, 29<sup>th</sup> MAY

This event was held to celebrate the life of Bill Hawkins, whose funeral was held in January this year. He was one of the leading lights of the Society and led many, many walks over the years with his lovely wife, Carol. They both became great friends of mine and it was sad and depressing to see him go slowly and inexorably downhill over many years due to Parkinson's until his demise late last year. It was decided to hold this meeting at this time of the year to showcase one of his favourite botanical spots, New Buckenham Common.

Twenty-three people turned up, several from quite a distance away, including a few that I hadn't seen for many years and it was so good to see them again and to experience so many life-affirming hugs. It was a variable day weather-wise but it did turn out nice in the end. As Carol introduced the day and thanked everyone for coming from far and wide, Bill, in the form of a Swift, flew over our heads to wish us well.

A friend of Carol's, Vicky, was brilliant in supplying us all with tea and coffee. When we returned at

lunchtime, she brought out some home-made cakes and biscuits amongst which were probably the most scrumptious chocolate brownies that I have ever tasted. Stella had also baked some biscuits for us, and it didn't take long for them all to disappear.

with the petals. Its three-lobed leaves have the leaflets all arising from the same point, whereas in Creeping Buttercup *R. repens*, the terminal lobe/leaflet is distinctly stalked.

Rushes provided for an interesting discussion and demonstration, starting with the glaucous, dark green



The happy group at Bill's memorial meeting.

We set off across the Common, which was unbelievably wet in places, probably not surprising considering the vast amounts of rain that we had suffered in recent months, but which had also helped to top up the few meres that are around here. People split up into small groups to look at the plants or chat or a mixture of both! There were buttercups galore, mainly Bulbous Buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*, its reflexed sepals confirming its identification. Close by for comparison was Meadow Buttercup *R. acris*, whose pale sepals are flush

stems of Hard Rush *Juncus inflexus*. When the leaves are split open, they contain a distinctly interrupted white pith. The brighter green stems of Soft-rush *J. effusus*, by contrast, contain pith that it is very soft and continuous and which was historically used to make rushlights. The hybrid between the two, *J. x diffusus*, which we also found, has intermediate characters, especially the pith, which is unevenly interrupted.

The last time that we had a walk here, a few of us were lucky enough to see a couple of Turtle Doves,

which are now getting rarer and rarer. Today we all heard the gentle purr of one calling nearby but unfortunately it did not show itself.

One of the small brooks was filled to the brim with Lesser Water-parsnip *Berula erecta* which had swamped out everything else. One of the main reasons for visiting the Common at this time of the year is to see the large population of Green-winged Orchid *Anacamptis morio* and we were not disappointed, as there were many to see, enjoy and take photos of. It has been yet another floriferous year, similar to 2023, for so many plants, one in particular being Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata*, which has

been showing in the millions this year. Elsewhere in East Anglia, I can also vouch for the vast numbers of Meadow Saxifrage *Saxifraga granulata* and a few lovely white blossoms were displaying themselves here. On our way back to our vehicles we were transfixed by a small but beautiful patch of Heath Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*, a fitting end to our walk on the Common.

Thank you again to all of you who made this a special and memorable day, not just for all of us but especially for Carol, and Bill, who joined us in spirit.

STEPHEN CLARKSON

#### YELLOW ANEMONE AND MARGARET DICKINSON IN NORHAM, NORTHUMBERLAND

**An article by the Rev'd Canon Dr. Rob Kelsey, WFS member, written for his local parishioners.**

At the point where the Mill Burn goes under the road, just downhill from Norham Castle, you can see the unfamiliar – to me, at least – Yellow Anemone *Anemone ranunculoides*. It

woodland and hedgerows.

I've done a fair bit of amateur botanising in my time but before I came to Norham, I had never even heard of Yellow Anemone. My *Illustrated Flora of Britain and Northern Europe* (Blamey & Grey-Wilson) describes its distribution as 'Continental Europe except for the extreme north; naturalised locally in Britain'. And, according to my *New Flora of the British Isles* (Stace), it is 'grown in gardens, sometimes persisting as a throw-out or escape in shady places'.

The plant has existed in Norham for a long time. The botanical artist, Margaret Rebecca Dickinson (1821-1918), painted a specimen that had



is similar in shape and size to the Wood Anemone *A. nemorosa*, which is found throughout the British Isles in

been collected from 'Morris Hall Dene' in 1872. An excellent book about this 'talented and prolific' woman, who lived in Norham for the last fifty years of her life, has been written by our very own (i.e. local resident) Elizabeth Towner. It was published in 2021, with excellent illustrations, and copies can be obtained from here: <https://www.nhsn.org.uk/product/margaret-rebecca-dickinson-a-botanical-artist-of-the-border-counties>.

The flowers at the bottom of the Mill Burn are at their best in April if you want to see them. However, I have seen numerous plants of Yellow Anemone flourishing along a length of roadside verge west of Denholm, Scottish Borders, roughly halfway between Hawick and Jedburgh,

somewhat later than this. The road was shadier than the bottom of the Mill Burn, which might explain why the blooms last longer.

The plants west of Denholm were growing at least 200 metres from the nearest house, which suggests to me that they were not a direct garden-escape. They were, however, growing near the River Teviot, which flows into the River Tweed, so perhaps the plants in Norham originally came from higher upstream. This hypothesis appears to be supported by the distribution map produced by the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (<https://bsbi.org/maps?taxonid=2cd4p9h.4nc>), which shows records of Yellow Anemone at various points along the stretch of the River Teviot at Hawick, Denholm, Ancrum and Kelso.

## EMORSGATE MANOR FARM, NEAR BATH, SOMERSET, 18<sup>th</sup> JUNE



Photo: Barbara Lewis

On a bright sunny day, the group, led by Pauline and Richard Wilson, together with Vice-county Recorder for North Somerset, Helena Crouch, gathered at Emorsgate Manor Farm for a day's botanising. Arriving at this family-run business down a very narrow lane, the impression was of stepping back in time; from the old stone farmhouse to the well-grown hedges and flower-filled fields, the farm forms an oasis amid intensively managed farmland. Farmer Donald MacIntyre, who has been farming here since 1980, met us and after coffee and biscuits, we were taken into the kitchen garden, where a very fine specimen of Wood Vetch *Ervilia*



*sylvatica* was growing, and then through the farmyard to meet two Shire horses, part of a herd used to graze the meadows. The 800-acre farm is managed for the production of wild flower seed for use in ecological restoration and the rejuvenation of nature and there is no use of pesticides or artificial fertilisers. The seed used is of wild origin and has genetic variation to help manage the difficulties caused by climate change etc. We were impressed by the ethos of this business and felt very lucky to be able to spend a day here.

In a small garden we saw Bulbous Buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*, Meadow Crane's-bill *Geranium pratense*, together with Shining Crane's-bill *G. lucidum* and Dove's-foot Crane's-bill *G. molle*. Also here were Nettle-leaved Bellflower *Campanula trachelium*, Corky-fruited Water-dropwort *Oenanthe pimpinelloides*, Fairy Flax *Linum catharticum*, Sea Pea *Lathyrus japonicus*, Wild Marjoram *Origanum vulgare* and Oxeye Daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*. We then moved on into the fields, which were planted with Meadow Crane's-bill, Bladder Campion *Silene vulgaris*, Common Poppy *Papaver rhoeas* and Rough Chervil *Chaerophyllum temulum*. Amongst the crops were Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium* and Dandelion *Taraxacum* agg., useful food sources for pollinators. Naturally occurring, but also harvested, were Rough Hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus* and Common Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*.

Progressing along the field hedge boundary we saw Scarlet Pimpernel *Lysimachia arvensis*, Crosswort

*Cruciata laevipes*, Cowslip *Primula veris*, Greater Knapweed *Centaurea scabiosa*, Greater Butterfly-orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*, Marsh Foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus*, an Eyebright (probably *Euphrasia nemorosa*), Yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, Field Forget-me-not *Myosotis arvensis* and Wych Elm *Ulmus glabra*, in the hedge. Next were fields sown with Red Campion *Silene dioica*, Hedge Bedstraw *Galium album*, Dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris* and Perforate St. John's-wort *Hypericum perforatum*. Naturally occurring were Wall Speedwell *Veronica arvensis*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Wild Pansy *Viola tricolor* and Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*. A crop of Wild Mignonette *Reseda lutea* was next. In a short stretch of woodland, we saw Agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*, Adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum* and Common Spotted-orchid. Out of the woodland and into fields were growing Crosswort and Common Poppies.

We then crossed a field containing a herd of Shire horses, which were interested in checking us out for apples and peppermints! The horses are a rare breed and are used on the farm for conservation grazing. Arriving at the top of a hill looking down into the valley, we stopped for lunch. After refreshments, we made our way down a steep slope to a meadow where Selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*, Goat's-beard *Tragopogon pratensis*, Quaking-grass *Briza media* and Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis* were seen. This meadow had previously been cut for silage and was quite species-



poor. It had been scarified in the autumn and sown with a meadow mix from a local field which included Yellow-rattle, an obligate partial parasite, generally on Perennial Ryegrass *Lolium perenne* and Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*. The field is grazed by the horses until March, the timing being weather-dependent. The hay-cut is taken in July. Other plants growing in the meadow included Fairy Flax, Common Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Sainfoin *Onobrychis viciifolia* and Oxeye Daisy. Leaving the meadow, we walked along a track cut into limestone where there was a good assemblage of plants, including Pepper-saxifrage *Silene silaus*,

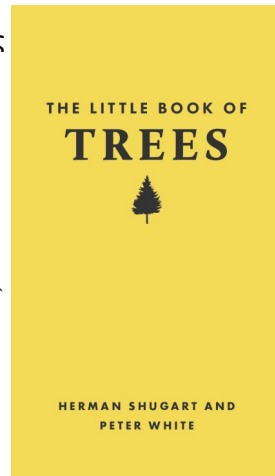
Hoary Plantain *Plantago media*, Yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata*, Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis*, Glaucous Sedge *Carex flacca*, Common Centaury *Centaureum erythraea*, Wild Thyme *Thymus drucei*, Pyramidal Orchid, Common Restharrow *Ononis repens* and Oxeye Daisy.

After tea and cake at the farmhouse, we were shown some of the techniques used to separate and collect seed. Many thanks to Donald and his family for a fascinating tour of this beautiful farm.

BARBARA LEWIS

## BOOK REVIEW

***The Little Book of TREES*: Herman Shugart & Peter White: Princeton University Press (2024): ISBN: 9780691251790: Publisher's price £12.99 and listed online.**



When this book came to my attention, I hadn't realised that it was one of a series, but now I've looked at four of them. As children, many of us were devoted to the 'I Spy' and 'Observer's' books - I certainly was - and years in the WFS have

kept the pleasure of 'spotting a new one' vividly alive, but of course these finds were for adding to wish lists and didn't necessarily come with deeper awareness of the object or creature. This new series of collectable books provides fuel for such awareness without losing the charm of earlier experience.

Princeton of course publishes physically beautiful books - any of us who have invested in the huge BSBI *Plant Atlas 2020* must, like me, find it awesomely well-produced - and this 'Little' series is admirable. The books are literally what they say; 16x10cm (the front cover just about the length and breadth of my hand), they are sturdily bound, clearly printed and beautifully illustrated by an artist called Tugce Okay, who really 'sees' the natural world. Her watercolours grace all the volumes I have seen,

namely *Beetles*, *Spiders* and *Butterflies*. They satisfy the senses of people who love hard-copy books - they *feel* good as well as look good, and as a series they satisfy the collector's instinct.

*Trees* is not for identifying them but to give context to their place in the world, and this is appositely and fascinatingly done. Each 'chapter' gives a page and an illustration to multiple aspects. I can only pick examples out at random: 'Multiple Tree Origins' of course starts with 'What is a tree?', and the chapters proceed through 'Patterns of Tree Diversity', 'Tree Leaves', 'Tree Trunks' (where I'm tempted by 'How to be a hyper-tall tree') and 'The Architecture of Trees' (where I have to look at 'Crown shyness'). The subjects all attract curiosity - 'Tree Bark', 'Tree Roots', 'Seeds and Life History', 'Ecology and Forest Dynamics' - and lead of course, quite rightly, to 'Conservation', which we all now know is a key part in keeping

humans alive on the planet we have tried so hard to wreck. The last chapters are perfect too for readers like me who love odd, 'not many people know that' information, adding 'Myths and Folklore' and 'Curious Facts'. As you might guess, I'm riveted by the notes on 'The sacred Bodhi tree' in Hindu and Buddhist belief (there's a most glorious Tugce Okay picture of its amazing roots covering a temple ruin); on the wood used to make didgeridoos; and 'The Talking Tree' or Bushveld Cherry *Pappea capensis*, which Zulu and Xhosa peoples used to mark important meeting places.

I think that this series can provide a great deal of enjoyment to readers of any age and would make excellent presents for young relatives ready to be drawn to many aspects of the natural world in this attractive and user-friendly form.

RO FITZGERALD

---

Here's a picture from ten years ago. Do you remember, or can you guess where?





