

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I have not been out and about much this last quarter for two reasons. Firstly, I have been busy studying the taxonomy of a small family of trees, the Humiriaceae, to prepare a monograph describing all 80 species in detail. This has involved much time in herbaria and libraries, including a recent visit to the massive herbarium of the New York Botanical Garden, which houses some six million specimens. I also made many visits to the even larger herbarium at Kew. In New York I received the first copy of my botanical monograph of the South American members of the Rhizophoraceae or mangrove family, which was issued while I was there. The second reason for not getting out much this spring was that I damaged my Achilles tendon running to catch a train on Clapham Junction Station. I learned that at my age you just wait for the next train! I am glad to say I am back to normal walking again and am now preparing for trip to Brazil to study the Humiriaceae in three Brazilian herbaria. The Humiriaceae is largely a South American plant family, but has one widespread species in the forests of West Africa.

At some time seeds of an Amazonian species must have drifted from the Americas to Africa. The woody fruits of the common riverside Amazon species *Sacoglottis amazonica* are often found in drift and have even washed up on the west coast of Scotland. How plants distribute around the world in many ways is an interesting and fascinating topic.

This year has been a hard spring for wild flowers in the UK with the highly changeable weather that has confused them with all the warm and cold spells. I was able to take a break in Galloway in April and enjoyed the early spring flora there. The house we were in was surrounded by woodland dominated by Wild Garlic. We used some of the young leaves to make a very flavourful pesto. I did not see any rarities on that trip, but the woodland was very colourful with the Bluebells, Garlic and Celandines and the air was full of red kites that have been released and bred in the region. I will be back from Brazil in time for the AGM of our Society and look forward to seeing many of you as you come down to the South-west.

GHILLEAN PRANCE

WITH THANKS

I should like to add my thanks, on behalf of the Society, to those expressed by our Chairman, John Swindells on page 38, to all our retiring Valhalla Branch Secretaries who have done sterling work on your behalf reviewing your Field Record Books each year. Thanks also go to Chris Pogson, who is retiring as Secretary for Parnassus 1. Rodney Burton is now stepping into his shoes and Ted Pratt will take over the reins of Parnassus 2. John Swindells is now the Secretary for Branch Secretaries still in Valhalla and Peter Jepson, Pippa Hyde and Heather Colls will now form the Referee Panel for queries from Branch Secretaries. So it is the end of one era and the beginning of another. From this year all Field Record Books will be submitted to your local Branch Secretary. I wish you good hunting.

ANNE KELL

EDITORIAL

Photo: Sheila Wynn

I'm sure many of us have a wish-list of plants we should like to see or places we should like to visit. In my case, high on my list has always been a wish to visit The Burren in County Clare, Ireland, renowned for its extensive limestone pavements and unique flora. This May I was lucky enough to pay such a visit, together with a group of enthusiastic and knowledgeable botanists, who helped to lead the way. My highlights have to be the carpets of Spring Gentians (*Gentiana verna*) and Mountain Avens (*Dryas octopetala*) that clothed the hillsides and the elusive Pyramidal Bugle (*Ajuga pyramidalis*). For those of you who submit a Field Record Book (commonly referred to as 'The Diary')

many of the plants listed in these reports are probably examples of your wish list. On page 10, Aderyn Turner beautifully describes her quest to see a plant high on her wish list, the Red Helleborine (*Cephalanthera rubra*), in flower.

Another fanciful idea is to have a living organism named after me. Not a very realistic

prospect I appreciate (and possibly a little vain), so the nearest I can do is pinch someone-else's discovery. In my case the nearest I can achieve is the white form of the Common Spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii* ssp. *okellyi*), which is considered to be an endemic of The Burren. And so our hunt began. We were slightly too early for the main display of Common Spotted-orchids but there were seas of Heath Spotted-orchids (*D. maculata*) to search amongst. However, our quest was finally successful and the family name secured (I appreciate I am a Kell rather than Kelly but it's near enough!) – see photo. O'Kelly (or just straight Kelly as he was born) was a Victorian plantsman who lived just outside Ballyvaughan, where we were staying. He rather plundered the Burren for his collections and, at the time, had many varieties and subspecies attributed to him. Most of these attributions have now been lost and the only one that I can now find is the *okellyi* subspecies we sought. O'Kelly had a major business exporting The Burren's specialities to Britain and one of his noteworthy customers was the famous horticulturist Ellen Willmott of Warley Place, Essex. Hopefully his exploits didn't do too much damage to this fragile flora. Fortunately we are more enlightened today and we collect records rather than specimens. Enjoy reading about your fellow botanists' finds.

ANNE KELL



Common Spotted-orchid
ssp. *okellyi*

THE MEMBERS' WEEKEND INCLUDING AGM AND BUFFET LUNCH 2018.

Friday 31st August to Monday 5th September at Slapton Ley Field Studies Centre, South Devon.

Please note that this year we will be having a buffet lunch before the AGM rather than the usual afternoon tea. This is because a light, evening meal will be provided by the centre for those people staying there.

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

Bookings for the buffet lunch and field meetings by the end of July 2017 please, to Sheila Wynn, 17, Southfield Drive, West Bradford, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 4TU. Phone: 01200 425813. e-mail: wfsgensec@yahoo.co.uk

Correction - BSBI/WFS Presidents' Award

Regrettably there were some errors in the table concerning the Presidents' Award which appeared in the Spring issue of our magazine. The errors relate to the two columns listing Presidents in the year for which each award was given.

I am grateful to Gwynn Ellis who prepares the certificates given to recipients of the award, and so knows which Presidents signed them, for drawing my attention to discrepancies in the table. They arise from confusion on my part relating to dates of AGMs and elections in our two societies. The listed Presidents should have been the ones party to the decision about the award, normally the ones in post at the end of the year to which the award relates.

We were able to ensure that the table was correct when published in *BSBI News* No. 138, April 2018 but by then it had already appeared in the *Wild Flower Magazine*.

The corrections are:

1994 WFS President David J. Bellamy
1997 WFS President David McClintock
2000 WFS President Richard S.R. Fitter
2001 BSBI President Richard D. Pryce
2002 WFS President Rodney M. Burton
2003 WFS President Ghilleen T. Prance.

JOHN SWINDELLS

**Copy date for Autumn magazine
1st August, 2018**

BRANCH REPORTS FOR 2017

BRANCH A, KENT

Cumulative	New	Total
José Gibbs	54	195
Annual		
Pamela Smith		277

José Gibbs' records mostly derive from Suffolk, home territory at Westgate-on-Sea and an outing with the Kent Botanical Recording Group to Harty Ferry on the Isle of Sheppey. In Suffolk, although she was a bit early for many flowers, her Tunstall Forest finds included Climbing Corydalis (*Ceratocarpus claviculata*), always a plant suggestive of good habitat and one for which the British Isles should take credit for a large proportion of the global population. Whilst the Suffolk coast provided Sea-kale (*Crambe maritima*) on the

Photo: Anne Kell



Sea-kale on a
Suffolk beach

shingle, a day on the Kentish saltmarshes gave her a near-complete set of Glassworts in a meeting set up to target them. These comprised six species, of which three

are nationally scarce: Yellow Glasswort (*Salicornia fragilis*), One-flowered Glasswort (*S. pusilla*) and Perennial Glasswort (*Sarcocornia perennis*).

Pamela Smith has many interesting records clustered around the Kent/Sussex border in the Wittersham/Iden area, although she had a classic border species further west, near Merriments, namely Coralroot (*Cardamine bulbifera*). A week in May gave her all sorts of specialities from the Isles of Scilly, their counterpart to the Herb-Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) of Wittersham being the Giant Herb-Robert (*G. maderense*) of St. Martin's. Staying at St. Martin's, it was perhaps inevitable that she should see St Martin's Buttercup (*Ranunculus marginatus*), but to be able to see it from one's bedroom window is an opportunity afforded to few botanists! While the Scillies are well known to ornithologists, visitors interested in flowers might well seek out Bird's-feet instead: not only did the diminutive Bird's-foot (*Ornithopus perpusillus*) go onto Pamela's list; but also she saw the much rarer Orange Bird's-foot (*O. pinnatus*) in several places on St. Martin's.

GEOFFREY KITCHENER

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

Cumulative	New	Total
Janet Blizzard	144	764
Ellen Campbell	85	817
Jacqueline Rose	118	744
Jill Smith	9	1126

After finishing two annual diaries Janet Blizzard has progressed to adding new finds to her previous total. She mostly botanised in Hampshire but went on several WFS Meetings. At Sydlings Copse she saw the wonderful Lizard Orchid (*Himantoglossum hircinum*) while locally she recorded Yellow Bird's-nest (*Hypopitys monotropa* ssp. *hypophegea*) and Keeled Garlic (*Allium carinatum*). On the New Forest meeting she was shown the beautiful Coral Necklace (*Illecebrum verticillatum*) which seemed to glisten in the sunshine along with the New Forest-bladderwort (*Utricularia bremii*) in a very boggy pool. At a local farm she found Common Millet (*Panicum mileaceum*) and Quinoa (*Chenopodium quinoa*), an increasingly grown crop in some areas, along with Dwarf Spurge (*Euphorbia exigua*) and Red Hemp-nettle (*Galeopsis angustifolia*). Her records even included both species of Eel-grass (*Zostera marina* and *Z. noltei*) at a local saltmarsh. Her total of 144 records was very impressive and accurately presented.

Ellen Campbell botanised exclusively in her home area of East Sussex

mainly in and around Hastings. She recorded Nettle-leaved Goosefoot (*Chenopodium murale*) at Winchelsea and the lovely Basil Thyme (*Clinopodium acinos*) at Glynde. At Ore she saw Pale Galingale (*Cyperus eragrostis*), while coastal finds included Purple Dewplant (*Disphyma crassifolium*), Blanketflower (*Gaillardia x grandiflora*), Corsican Hellebore (*Helleborus argutiifolius*) and Greater Musk-mallow (*Malva alcea*). Two other great finds were the elusive Mousetail (*Myosorus minimus*) and Caucasian Crosswort (*Phuopsis stylosa*). An excellent diary with clear habitat notes and grid references.



Mousetail

Photo: Ken Southall

Jacqueline Rose's new records for this year were also confined to Hastings and the surrounding area. She recorded Sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*), always a pleasure to see, and Coralroot (*Cardamine bulbifera*), which seems to have had a good year in the south-east. At Bedgebury Pinetum she found Chaffweed (*Centunculus minimus*). Other interesting records were Meadow Saffron (*Colchicum autumnale*), Late Michaelmas-daisy (*Aster x versicolor*), and House Holly-fern (*Cyrtomium falcatum*) on Hastings seafront. On shingle she noticed Flixweed (*Descurainia sophia*) and Yellow Vetch (*Vicia lutea*). Giant

Viper's-bugloss (*Echium pininana*) seems to be increasing in the South-east. Her best records however have to be East Sussex's rarest plant Spiked Rampion (*Phyteuma spicatum*) and, a new arrival, New Zealand-spinach (*Tetragonia tetragonioides*).

Jill Smith found nine new plants this year including Giant Rhubarb (*Gunnera tinctoria*), Scarlet Geranium (*Pelargonium x hybridum*) and, her most unusual find, Kangaroo Apple (*Solanum laciniatum*) at Ventnor on the Isle of Wight.

GARETH BURNSNALL

BRANCH N1 YORKSHIRE, CLEVELAND, HUMBERSIDE

Annual	New	Total
Charles Flynn	23	
Angela Wheatcroft	262	
Katherine Glover	676	
Cumulative		
Mary Sorsby	396	451
Susan Simcock		827
Thomas Simcock		836

I am very pleased to have received several new record books this year and have welcomed several new members to Branch N1.

Charles Flynn has been interested in plants for many years but just joined the WFS in November. He managed to see 23 species in flower on two days in the last week, one of which was Early Forget-me-not (*Myosotis ramosissima*), which he said was just flowering late. I look forward to

seeing his first full record book next year.

This is Angela Wheatcroft's first Field Record Book but she has been going out with the Bradford Botany Group for several years and enjoyed a visit with them last spring to Roche Abbey to see the early flowers including Lily-of-the Valley (*Convallaria majalis*). She lives in York and has been very pleased to record many of her finds in the city, such as Wall Lettuce

(*Mycelis muralis*) and Blue Fleabane (*Erigeron acris*) on the top of Clifford's Tower and Mexican Fleabane (*Erigeron karvinskianus*) growing by a leaky downpipe outside a church.

This is Katherine Glover's first Record Book for some time as she has rejoined the WFS after a lengthy gap but she maintained her interest and has sent in an impressive list. Katherine lives on the edge of the Yorkshire Wolds so has plenty of interesting local places to visit, including Kiplingcotes Quarry where Red Hemp-nettle (*Galeopsis angustifolia*) is a highlight, and Wharram Quarry where Thistle Broomrape (*Orobanche reticulata*) grows. She revisited Ben Lawers to see its alpine flora en route to the Isle of Skye, where Moss Campion (*Silene acaulis*) and Mountain Avenas (*Dryas octopetala*) remain some of her favourite plants. On the way to Orkney she managed to see Oyster Plant (*Mertensia maritima*). Mary Sorsby has had another interesting year with the highlight being a trip to the Isles of Scilly where she saw lots of the lovely flowers which grow there, including the Dewplants (*Drosanthemum floribunda* and *Disphyma crassifolium*), Hottentot-fig (*Carpobrotus edulis*), lovely displays of African Lily (*Agapanthus praecox*) and lots of *Aeonium cuneatum* growing on the walls. Nearer home she saw White Butterbur (*Petasites albus*) and Early Spider Orchids (*Ophrys sphegodes*).

Susan and Tom Simcock joined the WFS three years ago but have just

managed to complete their record books and have sent in cumulative totals for the three years which make impressive lists. They also go out with the Bradford Botany Group and the Wharfedale Naturalists' Society and joined their visits to the Yorkshire Dales, the Brecklands, Pembrokeshire and the Burren. Susan's favourite plant was the wonderful display of Purple Saxifrage (*Saxifraga oppositifolia*) on Pen-y-ghent, whereas Tom particularly enjoyed the specialities of the Burren including Irish Marsh Orchid (*Dactylorhiza kerryensis*) and Irish Saxifrage (*Saxifraga rosacea* ssp. *rosacea*).

I hope everyone has a successful year and look forward to next year's record books and lists.

JUDITH COX

Irish Saxifrage



Photo: Anne Kell

BRANCH N2 NORTHUMBERLAND, CUMBRIA, TYNE AND WEAR, DURHAM

Annual	New	Total
Vicki Smith	52	
Richard Friend	354	
Cumulative		
Rob Kelsey	75	278
Kevin Storey		236

Vicki Smith had some fascinating finds in her first year with the WFS. She has visited some quite specialised habitats including the calaminarian grasslands of the North Pennines. Of particular interest were Alpine Penny-cress (*Noccaea caerulea*), Spring Sandwort (*Minuartia verna*) and Thrift (*Armeria maritima*) all flourishing on the metalliferous soils at Whitesyke.

It is the first time Richard Friend has completed a WFS record book. He writes 'Mine appeared out of the blue on my door mat one winter's morn in 2017. A few days later I got an e-mail along the lines of, 'I have enrolled you in the WFS. You better get plenty of records or else.' I spend as much time as I can botanising with Lizzie Maddison, who lives just over the hill from me. She has twisted my arm into many botanical / bryological activities and once paid me for a full day of work with a packet of biscuits (I work in a biscuit factory, so she thinks that's funny.) To the point, I really enjoyed filling in the diary and looking back over the year. Mountain Sorrel (*Oxyria digina*), near Loch Marree, was completely new and unexpected. Also, on the march to

the slopes of Ben Arigh Charr, we found Northern Rock Cress (*Arabidopsis petraea*). I was gasping too much to take in the significance, but my pictures are good. Finally, I was really excited to see Bog Rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) near Poolewe. We have it in the North Pennines but I hadn't seen it before. Unfortunately, I probably still haven't seen it since there are no records north of Stirling. One of the great things about plants is everyone, no matter how expert, is always learning.'

Some of Rob Kelsey's favourite finds last year included Shaggy Soldier (*Galinsoga quadriradiata*) at the edge of a busy pavement in Manchester, Pyrenean Valerian (*Valeriana pyrenaica*), which he had driven past on numerous occasions in previous years, when it wasn't in flower, and Common Twayblade (*Neottia ovata*), which he had never seen before. He also saw Ragged Robin (*Silene flos-cuculi*), another of his favourite flowers and the first flower which made him think "The first time I saw this was about twenty years ago!" Finally Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), which he hadn't

seen before. Or to be more accurate, "I had probably seen it before, but hadn't *properly* seen it before, in the sense of identifying it, and thus being more aware of its existence and its place in the natural scheme of things, which is one of the joys of botanising".

Kevin Storey identified Golden Rod (*Solidago virgaurea*) on the Banks of the Tees at Cotherstone, as one of the interesting species he enjoyed recording in a busy 2017.

LIZZIE MADDISON

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

Cumulative	New	Total
Bob Hodgskinson	7	217
Sue Riley	53	1067
Jean Richardson	138	387
Dorothy Ross	7	947
Carol Winder	17	538

Since my last report 10 new members have joined the Branch. Although we have not had a good summer I do hope they have enjoyed their plant hunting.

Bob Hodgskinson tells me he has seen new plants in old places. He meticulously describes the plants he has recorded along with the Stace number. In May he spotted Grey Field-speedwell (*Veronica polita*) by Whitchwood and Greater Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia media*) on the foreshore, both at Lytham.

Sue Riley started the year joining the Branch meeting at Crosby where she added Greater Snowdrop (*Galanthus elwesii*) to her list. A nice find in the Lye Valley, Oxford was Narrow-lipped Helleborine (*Epipactis*

leptochila) and she collected a feast of plants during the AGM weekend including Spiked Speedwell (*Veronica spicata*), Goldilocks Aster (*Aster lynosyris*), Bog Sedge (*Carex limosa*) and Alpine Pennycress (*Noccaea caerulea*).

Jean Richardson is a lover of the Hebrides and during a holiday on Colonsay this year she recorded both Lesser Water-plantain (*Baldella ranunculoides*) and Bog Pimpernel (*Anagallis tenella*). The attractive annual Large-flowered Hemp-nettle (*Galeopsis speciosa*) was found in Astley Moss, Greater Manchester. Sadly this plant suffers from modern methods of cultivation, but fortunately in the mosses around Manchester it usually appears for us. Whilst climbing to the top of Pen-y-Ghent

she was rewarded by the sight of Purple Saxifrage (*Saxifraga oppositifolia*).

Dorothy Ross also saw Greater Snowdrop (*Galanthus elwesii*) at Crosby. In woodland at Stonyhurst she spotted Buck's-beard (*Aruncus dioicus*) and on a roadside in Lytham, Pink-headed Knotweed (*Polygonum capitatum*).

During a holiday in Edinburgh Carol Winder spotted Eastern Rocket (*Sisymbrium orientale*) and White Comfrey (*Symphytum orientale*) on Calton Hill. At Queens Park in Bolton she spotted Argentinian Vervain (*Verbena bonariensis*) and adding to her healthy list of plants recorded in the Yarrow Valley she found Hemp (*Cannabis sativa*) which I am sure did not stay there very long!!!

Aderyn Turner has written a personal account of her year, which follows.

I always look forward to your lists or even a short note to say how you are getting on. Enjoy hunting in 2018 and I hope the weather will be kind to us.

JULIE CLARKE

MEMORIES OF 2017

It's over 20 years since I retired. Then a fairly keen bird-watcher (and I still am) I began to take more interest in identifying some of the less common wild flowers. For one thing they are more static - especially important as one gets less mobile!! I set myself the challenge of trying to get reasonable photos of all the British wild orchids, so each year I've visited some lovely

parts of the UK to build up a collection. There aren't too many left to find but one has really proved frustrating, the Red Helleborine (*Cephalanthera rubra*), a stunning flower when you see a good photograph. My only acceptable photograph is of one flower stem carrying several buds, some almost open. I was a few days early but on my way to Aberystwyth. During those few days heavy rain destroyed the delicate stems. This was the second or third time I had visited Sheepscombe Wood seeing some healthy plants but with flowering over. More pictures of shrivelled flowers.

In April I contacted the Warden who has been so helpful. On his advice I contacted him again a few weeks later when he said there were quite a few healthy looking plants. We were planning to visit Kent towards the end of June so we were in contact again with the warden who was then able to tell me that, sadly, he hadn't got a single flower but gave me a contact for the warden in the Chilterns. Yes, there was one flower and a group were going to look that day. Not possible from Lancashire but we set off the next morning and found our way viewing through the fenced enclosure one shrivelled flower stem!! So I hope for next year.

It's not all doom and gloom because in February I managed to join a group visiting Stanner rocks, the only British site for the Early Star of Bethlehem (*Gagea bohemica*) and there were lots of them on the steep hillside slope. A month or two later, I also saw the more common Star of Bethlehem (*Gagea lutea*) in Lancashire, thanks to information

from Julie Clarke. In August I visited Crosby to see the rare Sea Wormwood (*Artemisia maritima*) in flower on the edge of the dune, lucky to have survived a nearby fire earlier in the summer. And then there are the bluebell woods near us on a warm evening. A sea of blue, gorgeous perfume and only the sounds of birds, the occasional snuffling of a badger and the bark of deer before the owls begin to call and the woodcock begins its roding flight.

2018? The Red Helleborine again!! But I do have a few others in mind.

ADERYN TURNER

Photo: Olivier Pichard, Wikimedia Commons



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

Annual	New	Total
Joy Lyon		176
Cumulative		
Margaret Holmes	2	1026
Barbara Spence	72	749

This was Joy Lyon's first year in the WFS and she has done an amazing amount of plant hunting. She helped with 5 survey sessions for the local naturalists' trust and went to the WFS meetings at Amberley Wild Brooks and Dancers End. She also attended two Field Studies Council courses at Flatford Mill. Her Beginner's Diary reflects all this, with lots of bread-and-butter plants, as well as specialities from her field trips. Her records of Sea Pea (*Lathyrus*

japonica), Bur Medick (*Medicago minima*) and Tree Lupin (*Lupinus arboreus*), all from Shingle Street in Suffolk, are particularly nice.

Margaret Holmes sends just a short list this year. She found Lenten Rose (*Helleborus orientalis*) in a local wood and sent me a fine photo. At the other end of the country, she recorded Giant Bellflower (*Campanula latifolia*) from a railway embankment near Glasgow – another

impressive plant. In addition, I was pleased to have two further photos of plants to identify. This is often quite difficult, since it can be hard to make out the fine details of hairs, glands and other features. One of the plants seems to be Northern yellow-cress (*Rorippa islandica*), from near Oban, which would be a very nice find.

Barbara Spence has moved on to cumulative recording and sent in an impressive spreadsheet complete with grid references. She has been on courses for Cyperaceae and Polygonaceae and has been recording a couple of local tetrads as well as helping with the Oxfordshire Flora Group's Atlas 2020 efforts. One of these sessions, at Otmoor, produced Fen Violet (*Viola persicifolia*), Heath Dog-violet (*V. canina*) and their hybrid (*V. x ritschliana*). However, her favourite sightings included Melancholy Thistle (*Cirsium heterophyllum*), seen on a

holiday on Mull, and Apple-of-Peru (*Nicandra physalodes*), which turned up on her allotment. I was also very pleased to see that she had recorded Brown Galingale (*Cyperus fuscus*) at Cock Marsh, where I had seen it 33 years previously!

I'll end by encouraging you to keep those identification queries coming in and by reminding everyone about the meetings in our area (details in the winter magazine). There will be plenty to see at each of the sites, whether you want to enjoy beautiful wild flowers at their best, or to learn about the specialities of our region. So I encourage you to come along, and hope to meet you soon.

I wish everyone a good botanising year and look forward to hearing of your exploits in due course.

ROGER HEATH-BROWN



Photo: Peter Llewellyn

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

As usual, writing this report in January (and not a pleasant one), it is a pleasure to read the news and records which have come in, which make me feel so enthusiastic about the botany season ahead. 2017 has brought a varied bag of news – I hope you all enjoy reading it as much as I have. However one most loyal, long-term member, Mornee Button from Cheltenham, had a wretched year with horrible health problems and could do no botany. I'm sure you will all join me in wishing her recovery and better times in 2018. I hope that it will be a year of many thrills and good finds for everyone and fewer wet days with midges!

Monica Davis tells me that she "feels so annoyed that another year has flown past" and she has such a 'little list', but I think we all share this feeling and she actually sent me a list of nearly 20 perfectly lovely finds which had been memorable highlights. A trip to Carbis Bay produced a real speciality of the North Cornwall and Lizard coasts, Hairy Greenweed (*Genista pilosa*) seen on the coast path near Zennor and my favourite Crane's-bill, Long-stalked (*Geranium columbinum*), with the hair-thin, long flower stalks which give it its English name. The Monmouth & Brecon Canal had dramatic Arrowhead (*Sagittaria sagittifolia*) and nearer home in Gloucestershire some lovely Bee Orchids (*Ophrys apifera*) were seen

in full flower. A friend of Monica's named them as an abstruse variant (var. *belgarum*), but as Stace's *New Flora of the British Isles* does not include any varieties. I felt I should just enjoy imagining them and say no more!

Ruth Dawes didn't provide a branch report but says she "enjoyed doing the one-day report" for the Gwydyr Forest Day of the AGM, which appeared in the winter issue of the magazine. This included an excellent explanation of the difference between obligate and facultative metallophytes.

Gill Greef joined the society last spring. She shares the position of many of my friends of being 'retired' but actually 'permanently busy'. However she is finding time to establish excellent botanical experience by joining the Yate U3A group led by Pauline Wilson (who has helped and inspired so many Branch P members!). Gill mentions being 'stretched' to grapple with grasses and when an April walk in the Mendips produced an unfamiliar plant near their picnic spot at Charterhouse, she was able to 'work through the possibilities' to a tiny cress with distinctive purple anthers and find that it was indeed the rare Alpine Penny-cress (*Nocca caerulea*) and they had been in one of its classic sites! She also enjoyed a beautifully flowery day on

Rodborough Common in Gloucestershire, seeing abundant orchids and Horseshoe Vetch (*Hippocrepis comosa*), which had previously eluded her. She also made her first WFS hunt effort, doing the Autumn Week Hunt while on a visit to the New Forest.



Photo: Ken Southall

Barbara Hackett is a very new member and is living in a very new habitat, having moved from the Chilterns to Inverness and now to the Causeway coast of Co Antrim. This must be both exciting and daunting, but she is making determined efforts to get to know the flora of this dramatic part of Northern Ireland and I'm sure her input to Branch P will be enthralling, as this is a prime botanical, as well as scenic, county. I'm sure we all wish her very well and I know she would welcome contact with any botanists visiting the area.

Ruth Harding sent in an actual

Record Book - a rare treat for a modern branch secretary. There is nothing like being allowed to follow someone's finds throughout the year and imagine the excitement of seeing special plants. Ruth's diary is also extremely well recorded, with brief habitat notes as well as locations. Her work takes her to reserves and SSSIs, so I'm sure this meticulous recording must be a good *aide-memoire* for future years. 2017's finds are entered as the second column of the two-year Record Book, so it was fascinating to see how well Ruth has added in more common species, including some difficult ones such as grasses, Willowherbs (*Epilobium* spp.) and the sometimes confusing Trailing Tormentil (*Potentilla anglica*). She recorded just on 300 species, some enviably special. I'm always charmed by Yellow Bartsia (*Parentucellia viscosa*) and the fascinating Pale Toadflax (*Linaria repens*) with its elegant grey and lavender veining. A very special day out with colleagues was spent among the riches of the Wye Valley, where they could find specialities such as Tintern Spurge (*Euphorbia serratula*), Bird's-nest Orchid (*Neottia nidus-avis*), Herb-Paris (*Paris quadrifolia*) and the dainty and rare little sedge, Fingered Sedge (*Carex digitata*).

David Rich had a hip operation in 2017, but applied lateral thinking to this difficulty by deciding to omit foreign holidays and stay in the UK to see the most exciting plants he could. He says he is fairly new to botany, but as he went to a number of WFS meetings and seems to have acquired knowledgeable advice and targeted special plants wherever else

he went, his list of highlights is extremely classy! A wedding near Penrith allowed a dash into the hills for Pyrenean Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia pyrenaica*) and in Lancashire he managed to see the endemic Isle of Man Cabbage (*Coincya monensis*) and *Artemisia campestris* ssp. *maritima*, an extremely rare subspecies of Field Wormwood in possibly the only remaining UK site. I enjoyed his account of 'a very wet morning searching Lucketts Wood' where Cornish Bladder-seed (*Physospermum cornubiense*) eventually turned up – an all-too-familiar reminder of many Devon and Cornwall plant hunts!

Sue Townsend is remaining a WFS member, but opting out of Branch P business for a most worthy reason - what time she can spare is given to her local Shropshire Botanical Society and to BSBI recording. I hope she will be able to re-join us if she ever reaches a more leisurely time of life.

Janet Vernon, also in Shropshire, gives a lot of time to a local nature reserve at Prees Heath Common, where she takes photographs for their website. This is primarily a butterfly reserve, but also has good damp habitat with treasures such as Orange Foxtail (*Alopecurus aequalis*) and three named Stoneworts! Janet also had a holiday in Dorset where she saw Babington's Leek (*Allium ampeloprasum* var. *babingtonii*) 'tall and proud lining minor roads and tracks near the sea', and she was 'over the moon to get down and dirty amongst patches of Sea Pea (*Lathyrus japonicus*)' on the famous

shingle of Chesil Beach. Janet's good eye also picked out a population of Glasswort species (*Salicornia*) which were maturing in vivid contrasting reds and greens, an unusual sight.

David Wright botanised as usual round his home at Helen's Bay, Co Down, in an interesting coastal area of Northern Ireland. Many of the habitats he visits are parks and public spaces and the coastal paths, so he always finds interesting established aliens and escapes. Perhaps the most glamorous in 2017 was Bleeding-heart (*Dicentra formosa*), but his close attention on his walks also yielded quite inconspicuous native plants such as *Cochlearia officinalis* ssp. *scotica*, a northern and western variant of Common Scurvygrass (the location tallied with the distribution given in Paul Hackney's edition of *Flora of the North-east of Ireland*), and Few-flowered Spike-rush (*Eleocharis quinqueflora*). David has opted to 'go accumulative' so sent me only his new species, adding more than 40 and bringing his grand total to over 300. The only plant I felt a bit doubtful about was Corncockle (*Agrostemma githago*), which had come up when a new path was made through a previously planted 'Wild Flower Meadow'. This and various other arable weeds probably came from the original sowings, but it's nice that the introductions are establishing a seed bank and they must have been great fun to find!

ROSEMARY FITZGERALD

BRANCH T CORNWALL, DEVON, SOMERSET, DORSET, WILTSHIRE

Annual	New	Total
Sarah Delmas	69	
Cumulative		
Margaret Evelyn		335
Kathleen Hughes	9	259

This year I received three Record Books. As I have said in previous reports, it would be really nice to have more members sending their diaries.

Sarah Delmas' records are again from Bovey Tracey, Devon, where she visits from her home in France. Plant hunting for her WFS diary is restricted to these short visits. This year Sarah recorded 69 plants in flower, these include the non-native Himalayan Honeysuckle (*Leycesteria formosa*), Fuchsia (*Fuchsia magellanica*) and Wild Basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*).

Photo: Janet Vernon



Bird's-foot

Margaret Evelyn's diary included many interesting wild flowers from Dorset. Some highlights of the WFS Record Book are Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), Bird's-foot (*Ornithopus perpusillus*) and the invasive Hottentot-fig (*Carpobrotus edulis*) growing on the sea cliffs at Bournemouth.

Kathleen Hughes' cumulative diary added nine new plants, mostly found during a trip to the wonderful Isles of Scilly. Plants encountered on the island included some of the many arable plants the islands are famous for, such as Common Cudweed (*Filago vulgaris*), Corn Marigold (*Glebionis segetum*) and Small-flowered Catchfly (*Silene gallica*).

I look forward to receiving next year's records, hopefully with a few more to check through.

STEVE PARKER

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

Annual	New	Total
Richard Fenn Griffin		345
Jackie Hardy		653
Sian Matthews		580
Marion Storm		113
Alan Swinscoe		151
Cumulative		
Patricia Cox	22	510
Jackie Ellis	83	673
Richard Pykett	43	742
Marjorie Shepherd	16	947

As she made her way to the railway station Patricia Cox discovered a splendid piece of disturbed ground. Although it meant peering intently through a close-mesh fence, hard to miss were three imposing Thorn-apples (*Datura stramonium*) in a row on top of the earth bank. Further investigation produced two plants of Apple-of-Peru (*Nicandra physalodes*). She returned another time but was extremely frustrated that the fence prevented her from getting close enough for accurate identifications and also from seeing over the bund. Not quite so exotic, but still worthy of recording, at the site were Sweet Alison (*Lobularia maritima*) and Tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*). On a visit to Cornwall Patricia was very fortunate to find both Brittle Bladder-fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*) and Intermediate Polypody (*Polypodium interjectum*) on a wall. Obviously there was a high lime content in the

mortar which was very much to their liking. Patricia expressed pleasure at finding Winter Aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*) and re-finding Dwarf Mallow (*Malva neglecta*).

Jackie Ellis visits Wales regularly each year and always adds many good plants. This year was no exception with Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), Heath Wood-rush (*Luzula multiflora*), Green-ribbed Sedge (*Carex binervis*), Heath Dog-violet (*Viola canina*) and Bog-laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*). She also recorded Creeping Forget-me-not (*Myosotis secunda*) later in the year in Wales, which is a species needing wet areas, preferably with acidic soil, so comparatively unknown to many of those who botanise in the Midlands. Two hybrids were noted nearer home: the cross between Red and White Campion (*Silene x hampeana*) and that of Water and

Wood Avens (*Geum x intermedium*). One of Jackie's highlights was finding Toothwort (*Lathraea squamaria*) in large groups on a local botany meeting. She was also pleased to find Dune Helleborine (*Epipactis dunensis*) where it was supposed to be, on Anglesey, after a diligent search of a much larger area than she had anticipated.

Richard Fenn Griffin mainly botanised in his home area this year but this paid off with a good increase in his numbers for his second year of recording. Many of the basics were recorded at a local retail park, a nice idea as it is easy walking and there is always plenty of parking! He was also able to join the local Flora Group on a number of meetings where we were fortunate to have Tufted Loosestrife (*Lysimachia thyrsiflora*), Mudwort (*Limosella aquatica*) and Prickly Heath (*Gaultheria mucronata*). His own discoveries included Wild Basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*), Bifid Hemp-nettle (*Galeopsis bifida*) and Canary-grass (*Phalaris canariensis*). Rather oddly most recording seems to have concentrated on the acid areas and Richard only captured the limestone specialities by visiting Malham where he saw Alpine Penny-cress (*Noccaea caerulea*) and Mountain Pansy (*Viola lutea*).

An excellent total by Jackie Hardy, greatly helped by all the surveying and monitoring she has been doing. We wonder that she found time to go home to bed at all during the summer! She also attended her first AGM weekend and highlights Goldilocks Aster (*Aster linosyris*) and the swathe of Marsh Gentians (*Gentiana pneumonanthe*) at Cors

Goch as special sights. The WFS meeting at Cow Green reservoir provided Jackie with Moonwort (*Botrychium lunaria*), which had been eaten off by slugs nearer home, and Alpine Bartsia (*Bartsia alpina*). The urban landscape of Rugby proved interesting as she found Chinese Mallow (*Malva verticillata*), confirmed by the Vice-county recorder. Later in the year she was also able to compare Annual Pearlwort (*Sagina apetala*) and Slender Pearlwort (*S. filicaulis*) on a Flora Group meeting in the town, as well as Common Orache (*Atriplex patula*) and Spear-leaved Orache (*Atriplex prostrata*). Always useful to do when you have a Vice-county recorder at hand to point out the differences. The hybrid between Common Dog-violet and Early Dog-violet (*Viola x bavarica*) was a very good find in a very busy year.

A visit to the coasts and downland of Sussex, where Sian Matthews first developed her botanical knowledge, gave her fresh habitats and a different range of plants. She was thrilled to find Sea-kale (*Crambe maritima*) in flower and made a special, very worthwhile, return visit to see the Yellow Horned-poppy (*Glaucium flavum*) in flower. At home she kept us on our toes by recording Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*) in the Grantham Canal. And, yes, she was quite correct in her identification. Cotton Thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*), Dwarf Spurge (*Euphorbia exigua*) and Large Thyme (*Thymus pulegioides*) were all nice records from her home county. Sian did not neglect the grasses with Silver Hair-grass (*Aira caryophyllea*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) and Yellow Bristle-grass (*Setaria*

pumila) being noteworthy. She expresses disappointment that a local brownfield site is now being redeveloped, thus losing the Juneberry (*Amelanchier lamarckii*) and Chinese Mugwort (*Artemisia verlotiorum*) that she recorded this year.

A highlight of Richard Pykett's botanical year was his very first sighting of Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*) on Longstone Edge. Visiting relatives in Lancashire also paid off as the stone walls of the village had a good display of Fairy Foxglove (*Erinus alpinus*). He was also rightly pleased, when taking a walk alone during the AGM weekend, he found and identified Sicilian Chamomile (*Anthemis punctata*) on Marine Drive. The walk ended back at sea level with two maritime species also new to Richard, Sea Rocket (*Cakile maritima*) and Sea Stork's-bill (*Erodium maritima*). In his local area Two-rowed Barley (*Hordeum distichon*) in a car park was a useful addition. We also had a further two grasses at our Branch meetings that are often tricky to identify with Flattened Meadow-grass (*Poa compressa*) and Rat's-tail Fescue (*Vulpia myuros*). Richard's own favourite of the local meetings was Common Wintergreen (*Pyrola minor*).

Marjorie Shepherd was able to attend both of Branch U's meetings and added a goodly number to her diary. Rigid Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris submontana*) was probably the rarest



Yellow Horned-poppy

plant encountered and seen in its typical habitat in a crevice in a limestone dale. The second meeting added four aquatic plants to Marjorie's list, plus Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani*). Unfortunately, one of the aquatics was New Zealand Pigmyweed (*Crassula helmsii*)! A more welcome find was Horned Pondweed (*Zannichellia palustris*), which is occurring more often now in the county. Trying to reach aquatics and then being actually able to see the tiny flowers is often the biggest challenge diarists face, but luckily we had a number of pairs of eyes looking on the day. On the way to the meeting we took a detour so Marjorie could record Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*) growing quite abundantly under a railway bridge. This is a new site for what is a very rare plant, so far, in Derbyshire.

This is Marion Storm's first diary upon re-joining the WFS after an absence of some years. Many of her records are from around her home town with some nice additions from Sutherland

Photo: Anne Kell

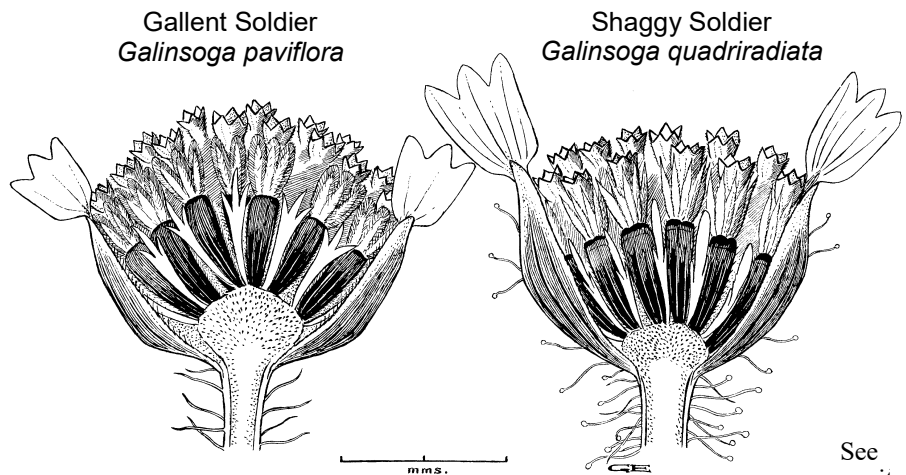
in Scotland. Our favourite from the latter has to be Pale Butterwort (*Pinguicula lusitanica*), with Creeping Willow (*Salix repens*) and Heath Milkwort (*Polygala serpyllifolia*) as runners-up. Marion's previous experience shows in that she has looked at all groups of plants and included trees, grasses and rushes in her finds. These include Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) and Toad Rush (*Juncus bufonius*). It must have been a bit of a trek up to Kinder Scout but it was worthwhile as she saw Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*) and Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*). Neither of these has been as plentiful recently and it is good to see them appearing again. The list wouldn't be complete without mentioning Sweet Cicely (*Myrrhis odorata*), that wonderful plant that her home county has in such abundance.

selection of plants from the area. Enchanter's-nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*) and Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) we might expect but there are also productive areas of marsh which had Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*) and Ragged-Robin (*Silene flos-cuculi*). A further wooded area had Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), whose dainty panicle everyone seems to admire. Alan also kept a close eye on garden weeds, including his own. This gave him an early start with Thale Cress (*Arabidopsis thaliana*), and later in the year, Knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*) in the gravel. He was probably grateful that the Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*) was a weed in someone else's lawn and not his, although the same garden also had Black Bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*) which at least has the merit of being more unusual.

Alan Swinscoe has some good tracts of woodland near his home so he always records an interesting

MARY AND CLAIRE SMITH

Illustration by Graham Easy



BRANCH V GREATER LONDON, MIDDLESEX

Annual	New	Total
Ann Allen		205
Jane Lowe		477
Clare Million		258
Cumulative		
Robin Blades	10	1210

I was pleased, this year, to welcome one new member's diary to add to my trio of regular recorders. All four had travelled far and wide to bring me a wide range of excellent records.

Ann Allen lives in Harrow, west London, and covers her local patch very thoroughly. She found Bugle (*Ajuga reptans*) growing on Harrow School's playing fields and Climbing Corydalis (*Ceratocarpus claviculata*), from pavement cracks in Rox Park. The latter is a very scarce plant in Middlesex, though occasionally introduced with other plants. It is sometimes mistaken for species of *Fumaria*. I have asked Ann to send me a sample for confirmation - if it survives into this year. She also recorded Gallant Soldier (*Galinsoga parviflora*), from "various sites in London". This has long been a speciality of central London, having originally escaped from Kew Gardens. However, it is easily mistaken for its close relative Shaggy Soldier (*Galinsoga quadriradiata*) and, in my experience, this is now far more frequent, so I have again asked Ann to send me a bit. There is an excellent drawing by Graham Easy showing the differences between the

two in Rodney Burton's *Flora of the London Area* (LNHS, 1983) - see opposite. There was no such difficulty in identifying Winter Aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*) or Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*), which Ann found well naturalised and flowering in February, in a shady beech wood near Latimer Weir in Bucks. Later in the year Ann visited Northumberland and, at the charmingly named Low Newton-by-the-sea, she added Bloody Crane's-bill (*Geranium sanguineum*) and Bladder Campion (*Silene vulgaris*).

Jane Lowe sent me a very helpful covering letter complete with some fine photographs of some of her more unusual discoveries. The most striking of these was a close up view of the inflorescence of a Coralroot plant (*Cardamine bulbifera*) growing "near the stepping stones by Box Hill". This population (first found in 1966) has flourished here ever since. It lies slightly outside the plant's known native range and Lousley remarked (*Flora of Surrey*, 1976) that it was a "probable introduction" at this site. Jane's record book was a joy to read, with each entry clearly written, complete with a six-figure



Coralroot

grid reference and the relevant place-name and vice-county. The inclusion of the vice-county is particularly helpful as it enables me to pinpoint the place-names. These may be well known to the recorder but quite unknown to me. Jane saw an impressive range of species during the year. She started early, with a New Year trip to Dorking in early January with the Surrey Botanical Society. Here they found two large Fleabanes (*Conyza sumatrensis* and *C. floribunda*) and the first flowering Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna* ssp. *fertilis*). The other native subspecies (ssp. *verna*), bearing cream coloured tubers, was added in early April - also in Dorking. In early May she joined John Swindells' London Natural History Society (LNHS) field meeting to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Here they found Narrow-leaved Ragwort (*Senecio inaequidens*) and

American Winter-ress (*Barbarea verna*) among other urban colonists. She tells me that her "most spectacular" find of the year was Marsh Sow Thistle (*Sonchus palustris*), which she saw in mid July in the National Nature Reserve at Stodmarsh in Kent, and enclosed an excellent photograph to prove it. She visited Hadrian's Wall in early August and was able to add Marsh Hawk's-beard (*Crepis paludosa*) and Wild Pansy (*Viola tricolor*), as well as visiting several associated Roman sites. A visit to the Sussex seaside at Cuckmere Haven, produced Long-stalked Crane's-bill (*Geranium columbinum*) in late August and, close by, at Birling Gap, Round-headed Rampion (*Phyteuma orbiculare*).

Clare Million sent me her first Record Book, having joined the Wild Flower Society just over a year ago. I was most impressed. She had also, wisely, joined both the LNHS and the Surrey Botanical Society (SBS) during the course of the year and had attended some of their field meetings. She had travelled widely and visited a good range of flower-rich places. These included the island of Lundy in June, where she was able to track down the celebrated Lundy Cabbage (*Coincya wrightii*) as well as the introduced Balm-leaved Figwort (*Scrophularia scorodonia*). Like Jane, Clare joined a LNHS meeting led by John Swindells that visited the Olympic Park, but this visit occurred later in the year (in mid September) and they saw a wider range of characteristic London plants than on the earlier visit. Narrow-leaved Ragwort (*Senecio inaequidens*) was still there and was joined by Round-

leaved Crane's-bill (*Geranium rotundifolium*) and Hoary Mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), two plants that have recently become abundant in parts of London. They also saw Dwarf Elder (*Sambucus ebulus*), which is much less widely distributed, but locally frequent along some canals in East London. She also joined the SBS on an August visit to Nutfield Marsh Nature Reserve, near Redhill in Surrey. Here, in the wetter parts, they saw such characteristic species as Marsh Yellow-cress (*Rorippa palustris*), Common Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*), Water Figwort (*Scrophularia auriculata*) and Water Chickweed (*Myosoton aquaticum*). Much less expected, growing at the edge of the car park, were some plants of Wall Bedstraw (*Galium parisiense*), which has always been extremely scarce in Surrey.

As in the past, Robin Blades accompanied his select list of new records with a most helpful covering letter. His only London addition was Greater Quaking-grass (*Briza maxima*), which he noted at the base of a street tree close to his home in Southgate (LB Enfield). This attractive annual Mediterranean grass is often grown in gardens and frequently escapes. It is certainly more often noted today than in the past - there were, for example, just two records in Rodney Burton's *Flora of the London Area* (1983). Robin visited Arnside on Morecambe Bay in early March. This was too early in the year for most of the area's rich flora, but Robin often enjoys winter bird watching here. On this occasion he was pleased to record Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*).

Two plants were growing under an overhang on limestone cliffs at the west end of the seafront. Two ferns were also prominent among Robin's additions recorded at the WFS Members' Weekend in North Wales in early September. These were the very local Forked Spleenwort (*Asplenium septentrionale*) and the small-leaved, delicate subspecies of Maidenhair Spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes* ssp. *trichomanes*). One undoubted highlight of the weekend was a visit to the Great Orme and its fabled flora. Although they were only able to sample a small part of it, Robin was pleased to record two of its specialities. These were the charming (and declining) Goldilocks Aster (*Aster lynosyris*) and Spiked Speedwell (*Veronica spicata*). In late July, Robin visited the East Sussex Downs, which included visits to the 'Bloomsbury' houses at Charleston and Monk's House. He watched a Chalkhill Blue butterfly feeding on Round-headed Rampion and thought that was probably "as classic a Sussex sight as you can get". Close by at Castle Hill National Nature Reserve near Lewes, Robin added Night-flowering Catchfly (*Silene noctiflora*).

I write at the end of a very cold February with much snow on the ground in London. It is still too early to tell how well my local woodland population of Wild Daffodils (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*) is doing, but they are certainly late into flower this year. Thank you for all your records and correspondence. I look forward to hearing from you all at the end of the year. Good hunting!

DAVID BEVAN

BRANCH W, SCOTLAND

Sadly there is very little news from Scotland this time. I don't think it was a lousy year for wild flowers, but I've had several anecdotal reports of members being 'too busy' to get in touch, so am blaming that universal blight. Branch secretaries have to sustain hope, so I try to imagine my desk this time next year covered with accounts by every member of enjoyable botany days and good finds!

Two new members have sent me most interesting e-mails. They are both rather new to botany too, but are planning to gain experience in determined and interesting ways. Catherine Bell in West Perthshire has joined the BSBI as well as us, has signed up for an online Identiplant course and been very active in the months since she joined. She has started a Beginners Diary, done the BSBI New Year Plant Hunt and is enjoying the Winter Months Hunt, managing to see both Common Rampion-fumitory (*Fumaria muralis*) and one flower of Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*) before the frosts became really fierce – both of these seem a bit of a triumph in a Scottish winter! She looks forward to meeting other members at the Perthshire meeting in July and wishes there were more meetings north of the border! She is taking some striking photographs of close-up plant details.

Hilary Blyth submitted a Diary again, with a second year of records. This was not only a delight because of Scottish lists being so rare this time, but because Hilary is such a careful botanist, working at identifications

and recording plants meticulously. She botanises mostly round home in Denny, Central Scotland, so she sees which plants appear regularly and how they perform, even noting variations in flower forms in species such as Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*). 2017 also saw a number of good additions to her list – some mundane but useful (such as docks and sow-thistles) but some exciting such as Broad-leaved Helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*), the dainty Climbing Corydalis (*Ceratocapnos claviculata*) and Yellow Figwort (*Scrophularia vernalis*). This last was a lovely memory trigger for me, as I first saw it in Scotland when I was a small child, near the gates of Gosford House, Longniddry and have never forgotten the thrill! Some entries have evocative notes too, such as 'I've



Fox and Cubs

Photo: Catherine Bell

waited ages' (to see Horseradish in flower) – I'm sure we all share that frustration when some plants always seem to be found at the wrong time! Hilary's total is now approaching 200 – showing good steady progress – and although a holiday in Berwickshire had ended with a blown-down tent and washed-out notebook instead of lovely botanical records. Hopefully 2018 will be kinder.

Brigid Donald is in the middle of moving from Sutherland down to Lanarkshire, where she hopes to get involved with community conservation work, but meanwhile she naturally has no time to botanise.

Alison Wilson did manage to take part in a week organised by Angus Hannah, exploring the Firth of Clyde,

which sounded delightful, but had no time afterwards to write up their finds.

Helen Wilson in Edinburgh was once a shepherd, then a librarian and is now learning wild flowers with a special interest in connected folklore and the former uses of wild plants. She has done a Herbology course at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, which must have been a fascinating introduction to botany and will add interest to every find. She too is very keen to meet other botanists.

Joan Thomson and Barbara and Garry Walker have all been affected by bad health and a bad accident and have been grounded throughout the year. I'm sure we all send them much sympathy and warm wishes for better times in 2018.

ROSEMARY FITZGERALD

BRANCH Y ESSEX, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, NORFOLK, SUFFOLK

Cumulative	New	Total
Nicola Dixon	58	1470
Barbara Mathews	7	1503
Julia Todd	29	858

I seem to be forever apologising to members of my branch for the lapses over the past few years which happened after the near fatal car crash when a drunk driver wrote off my car with his pick-up truck. Believe it or not that was in April 2015, but it took until late 2017 before I realised that I was coming to terms with what had happened and I had turned various corners and was returning to normal (whatever that may be!). My problems with paper and

communication were rapidly vanishing so it surprised me that, when diaries and records were sent to me from December 2017 onwards, I dealt with them immediately. I looked at my members' diaries, commented on them and made notes that I would put together into one article when I had done them all and returned said diaries to their owners. The time came to write up this piece and collate all of that information. The problem was that I couldn't find the

notes that I had made. I turned my place upside-down in the search but they remained hidden from me. Panic sets in; what am I going to do? I did write to the affected parties but the information that I needed to beat my deadline for the editor was fast approaching. Hence just the three diaries that I can comment on but those of Christiaan Partridge, Elizabeth Day and Pat Toschach I cannot, for which the apologies mentioned above. I don't want them to think that I don't care and I encourage them to go out botanising and enjoy seeing and learning about the wild life around them. I can only say that I will do better next time around.

Nicola Dixon has had a very busy year and again has presented her diary in brilliant form with lots of ancillary information as to habitat, GPS grid references for every plant and details of the meetings that she attended and names of referees. All of her new plants, bar one, are from WFS meetings on the Isle of Skye, in upper Teesdale and north Wales. Her one new record from Norfolk was a very unusual one, Two-spined Acaena (*Acaena ovalifolia*). Her new records are so varied and it is not easy to pick a few out of such interesting wild flowers. These included a whole suite of five different Lady's-mantles (*Alchemilla* species) from upper Teesdale; from Skye the insignificant looking Pipewort (*Eriocaulon aquaticum*), the diminutive Eyebright (*Euphrasia marshallii*), keyed out by a ring of us lying on the ground, and the even more diminutive Iceland-purslane (*Koenigia islandica*). And on a day which was the wettest I can ever

remember experiencing. But there were some larger more colourful plants such as Yellow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga aizoides*) and Goldilocks Aster (*Aster linosyris*).

Barbara Mathews hasn't travelled far from home in Felixstowe this year and has managed to add seven species to her cumulative total, but some exotics they are too, such as Mexican Aster (*Cosmos bipinnatus*) growing by a footpath. A couple of new records include Tree Mallow (*Malva arborea*) and Lungwort (*Pulmonaria officinalis*) which I thought would have graced her tally a long while ago.

Julia Todd has moved into our area and has a cumulative diary to which she has added a few new plants from where she is now, in Essex, such as Small Teasel (*Dipsacus pilosus*) on a riverbank at Witham and both Sharp-leaved and Round-leaved Fluellens (*Kickxia elatine* and *K. spuria*) at Mark's Hall near Coggeshall. Her trip to Greenwich in London afforded her quite a few new species which include Warty Cabbage (*Bunias orientalis*), instantly identifiable by its fruits, Least Yellow-sorrel (*Oxalis exilis*), identified by having only one flower in its inflorescence, Twiggy Mullein (*Verbascum virgatum*) and Slender Trefoil (*Trifolium micranthum*). Her trip to Somerset afforded her but one plant, but an attractive one at that, Fox-and-Cubs (*Pilosella aurantiacum*), although I know of some gardeners who rip it out as soon as they discover it because it can spread rather quickly.

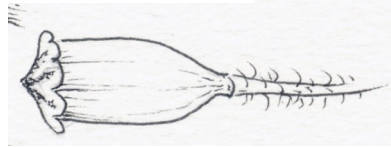
STEPHEN CLARKSON

KEY TO POPPIES (*PAPAVER*)



Photo: Ken Southall

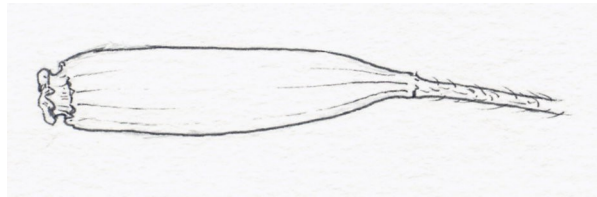
POPPY SEED CAPSULES



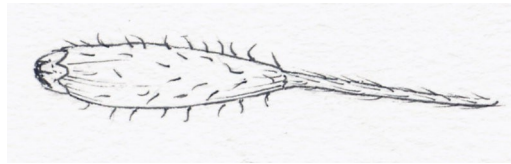
Long-headed
Poppy
X2



Common
Poppy
X2



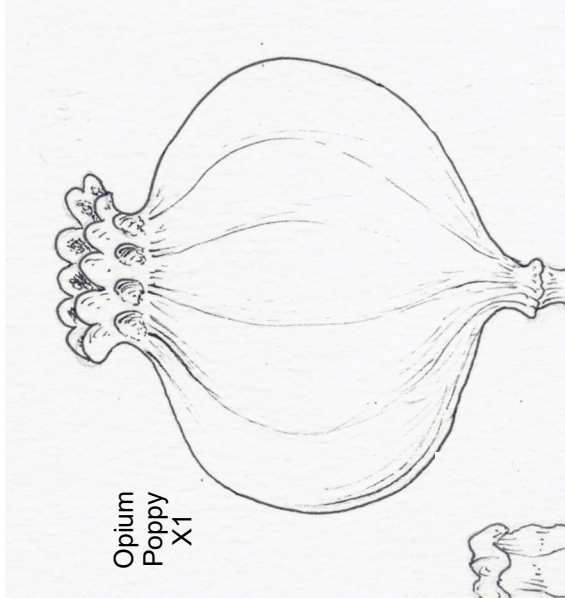
Rough
Poppy
X2



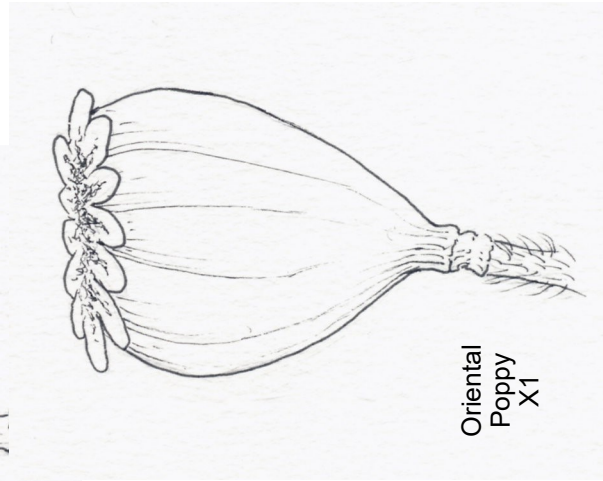
Prickly
Poppy
X2



Atlas
Poppy
X2



Opium
Poppy
X1



Oriental
Poppy
X1

Illustrations by Christine Grey-Wilson

Character	Common Poppy (<i>P. rhoeas</i>)	Long-headed Poppy (<i>P. dubium</i>)	Rough Poppy (<i>P. hybridum</i>)	Prickly Poppy (<i>P. argemone</i>)	Opium Poppy (<i>P. somniferum</i>)	Atlas Poppy (<i>P. atlanticum</i>)	Oriental Poppy (<i>P. pseudo-orientale</i>)
Annual/ Perennial	Annual. No basal rosette of leaves at flowering.	Annual. No basal rosette of leaves at flowering.	Annual. No basal rosette of leaves at flowering.	Annual. No basal rosette of leaves at flowering.	Annual. No basal rosette of leaves at flowering.	Tufted perennial. Basal rosette of leaves at flowering.	Tufted perennial. Basal rosette of leaves at flowering.
Petal colour	Bright scarlet, often with black blotch at base	Orangey red	Crimson with dark blotch at base	Pale scarlet, sometimes with dark blotch at base	White to deep mauve, occ. red, usually with deep purple centre	Orange-red	Pale pink to orange-red, usually with dark basal blotch
Anther colour	Bluish-black	Bluish-black	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Violet
Petal length	33 – 45 mm	15 – 35 mm	10 – 25 mm	15 – 25 mm	25 – 50 mm	20 – 40 mm	45 – 80 mm
Pedicel hairs	Usually patent	Appressed	Appressed	Appressed	Glabrous/ sparsely hairy	Appressed to erecto-patent	Conspic. appressed
Capsule shape	< 20mm Obovoid to subglobose	<25mm Narrowly obovoid	<15mm Subglobose to elliptical	<25mm Narrowly obovoid	<90mm Globose to obovoid	<25mm Narrowly obovoid	<40mm Subglobose to obovoid
Capsule hairs	Glabrous	Glabrous	Densely bristly	Sparsely bristly	Glabrous	Glabrous	Glabrous
Additional features					Stem leaves glaucous	Pinnately lobed leaves	

Yellow-juiced Poppy (*P. lecoqii*) is similar to the Long-headed Poppy, except it contains a yellow latex, which becomes reddish when dried and has yellow anthers.



Atlas
Poppy



Prickly
Poppy



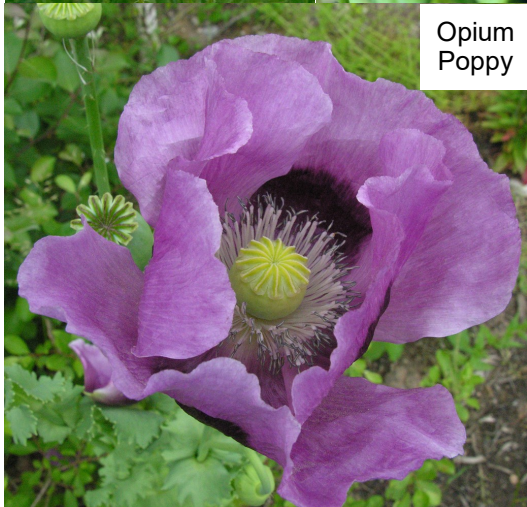
Common Poppy



Rough Poppy



Long-headed
Poppy



Opium
Poppy



Oriental
Poppy

VALHALLA REPORTS FOR 2017

Z1 (1800-2000)

	New	Total		New	Total
Dorothy Bullock	18	2013	Helen Jackson	3	1896
Ro FitzGerald	27	2007	Ted Phenna	32	1888
John Martin	62	2002	Sue Poyser	12	1887
Dawn Nelson	75	1971	Caroline Giddens	2	1878
Brian Bonney	75	1956	Doug Grant	13	1869
Diana Stroud	7	1915	Roger Heath-Brown	13	1866
John Dicker	0	1913	Pat Verrall	44	1858
Sue Kightley	7	1897			

Photos: Peter Llewellyn or Wikimedia Creative Commons

I congratulate Dorothy Bullock, Ro FitzGerald and John Martin on passing into Parnassus. We had no new members for this final year for the branch. A number of members mentioned that they spent some time surveying squares for the next national atlas, giving them less time to look for new species for themselves, but sometimes happily turning up new species in their square bashing.

Dorothy Bullock had a much better year, being able to go on a flower trip with Julie Clarke and Brian Burrow. She enjoyed seeing Brian Burrow as he was a friend of her late husband Peter. Also Ted and Rhianon Phenna came to stay which enabled her to get to Settle and beyond, where in Ribbleshead Quarry they saw Northern Spike-rush (recently renamed as *Eleocharis mamillata* ssp. *austriaca*) and the hybrid between Dark-leaved and Tea-leaved Willow (*Salix* x *tetrapla*). They will come and stay with her again and hopefully she will be able to go on more wild flower outings.

Ro Fitzgerald has been meeting every Friday with three other members of the Somerset Rare Plants Group, each of whom has their own speciality, to work on low-number squares, or lost target species for the Atlas 2020 recording. This square bashing has been hugely rewarding. She has had real help and education with things of which she had always been rather scared. One particular day on the edge of the Quantocks really encouraged her new enthusiasm, as this old thin woodland between the open hill and farm land (possibly former parkland), has such a variety of old conifers regenerating, like Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*). The parent Japanese Red Cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*) in particular was a fine tree and very impressive in this now quite wild area, in which, with the others' help, she also saw the hybrid between Marsh and Creeping Thistles (*Cirsium* x *celakovskianum*). Another good find was a hybrid between Wood and Broad-leaved Docks (*Rumex* x *dufftii*) on Dunster beach on December 1st!

In 2017 John Martin had another eventful year. He really enjoyed seeing Early Star-of-Bethlehem (*Gagea bohemica*) almost 30 years after he first saw it at Stanner Rocks and looking at its best. Likewise he hadn't seen Spotted Catsear (*Hypochaeris maculata*) for many years and the plants on the Lizard were absolutely at their best (he was lucky enough to be working down there that week on long term monitoring of the National Nature Reserve). He did actually see some plants of one species he is missing, Rare Spring Sedge (*Carex ericetorum*), on Weeting Heath, but they were unidentifiable by August - he was shown them by Alex Prendergast who had seen them in fruit earlier in the year in the exact spot, but there were no features John could use to identify them, so they'll have to wait! The Skye highlight for

him was the Alpine Rockcress (*Arabis alpina*), even though it had gone over and was all in fruit. After several hours waiting for an Elegant Tern to show at Pagham Harbour, West Sussex, it was excellent to find the increasing Chiding Pink (*Petrorhagia nanteuilii*) flowering there outside the fenced off bird nesting area - he had only seen it as an alien in Cardiff Docks many years ago. The New Forest Bladderwort (*Utricularia bremii*) was great to see on the New Forest field trip, which was also his birthday and featured lots of other wonderful plants and insects. Finally Cowherb (*Vaccaria hispanica*) was a delight on the sides of the main coast road just a couple of miles from his house.

Dawn Nelson has had a great year with lots of interesting new species. She heard about the Turkish Squill

Photo: Ken Southall



(*Scilla bithyrca*) and Yellow Anemone (*Anemone ranunculoides*) at Hurstbourne Tarrant, which Peter Billingham kindly showed her. The *Scilla* was impossible to miss, she says. Her regular tour to the Isles of Scilly added several more. Another tour, she now does regularly to The Burren, added yet more. She has yet to find Pyramidal Bugle (*Ajuga pyramidalis*) in flower but lives in hope, at least she knows where to look! Her highlight of the year was finally seeing Oysterplant (*Mertensia maritima*) at Ballantrae; she had searched unsuccessfully several times and always a long way from home. This was facilitated by the kindness of Peter Llewellyn, also accompanied by Peter Jepson. An approximately 950 mile round trip for her, all in just four days, adding some plants from known sites like Leafless Hawksbeard (*Crepis praemorsa*) and the hybrid between Branched and Variegated Horsetails (*Equisetum x meridionale*) and one serendipitous find, Two-flowered Everlasting-pea (*Lathyrus grandifloras*) ramping for several metres over trees, when they pulled into a layby (in middle of nowhere) during the long drive. A family holiday in The Brecks added some special species like Purple-stem Cat's-tail (*Phleum phleoides*). Many of her finds are more local and she is amazed that she is still managing to come across some that are new. At the beginning of the Winter Months' Hunt, Jill Oakley and she saw Sea Knotweed (*Polygonum maritimum*) at its Hayling Island site.

Brian Bonney sent in his records for 2016 and 2017 together. He was pleased to find Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) on the intertidal mudflats in

the Exe estuary in 2016 and see Wild Candytuft (*Iberis amara*) on the 2016 AGM weekend. He was especially pleased to record the Hybrid Shepherd's Purse, (*Capsella x gracilis*) in 2017 along a non-tidal stretch of the River Itchen in Southampton, between the old Woodmill and the ancient Mansbridge in Swaythling. He had been looking for it for some years, as each year both parent species, Shepherd's Purse (*C. bursa-pastoris*), and Pink Shepherd's Purse (*C. rubella*) are to be seen growing along the south bank of the river, the latter being the more abundant. The large stature and relative longevity of the plant was very apparent, suggesting hybrid vigour, and the two specimens seen 'ticked all the boxes' as far as the description of the hybrid, on p.395 of Stace, was concerned. In particular, the possibility of confusion with *C. bursa-pastoris*, due to formation of sterile capsules in cold weather, was ruled out as his sightings occurred during exceptionally hot weather (e.g. the sighting of 21st June cited was the 5th successive day with local temperatures of 34^o C or more and this particular plant seemed little changed as of 17th August!)

Diana Stroud and Sue Kightley botanise together. Sue had a knee problem last year leading to replacement surgery. She hopes to get out more following that. Their happiest moment was finding Purpleberry Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster affinis*) at the delightfully named Plwmp in Cardiganshire. The sun was shining and there were masses of it in the hedgerows.

John Dicker is sorry he has nothing to add. For health reasons he has to do an hour's walk each day, meaning that although it keeps him pretty fit, by the time that he has finished it is too late to get to meetings. He still does a fair amount, carrying on recording for Surrey Botanical Society, but nothing new has cropped up for him. He did manage to find a new Surrey site for Catmint (*Nepeta cataria*).

Helen Jackson has at last found Wilson's Honeysuckle (*Lonicera nitida*) in flower, some producing black berries and so bird-sown. She also remembered that she had not added in her record of Kamchatka Stonecrop (*Sedum kamtschaticum*) from the annual meeting at Great Ayton in the previous year. (Anyone is welcome to add in old sightings which they realise they have not included in a past year's list.)

Ted Phenna's most interesting plants in 2017 were growing on the town side of a slip road to the A55 just west of Conwy. This roadside area was really luxuriant with strongly growing plants as it had recently been disturbed to alter the bend in the road. The two plants new to him there were Glandular Plantain (*Plantago afra*) and Fodder Burnet (*Poterium sanguisorba* ssp. *balearicum*). There were 15 individual Plantains and the Burnet looked very large and healthy with quite a few plants evident. Another find which pleased him was Southern Wood-rush (*Luzula forsteri*), by Penrhyn Castle entrance, on a steep bank almost hidden by tall vegetation. It is very rare in North Wales.

Sue Poyser and Doug Grant continue to botanise together. They had a very enjoyable holiday in Swanage in June/July, where they went in search of some of Purbeck's special flowers. They were particularly pleased with Broad-leaved Eyebright (*Euphrasia tetraquetra*) growing just as described by me on south-facing slopes in Durlston Country Park. Sue took some photos which meant they knew exactly what to look for on a Kent Botanical Recording Group Eyebright meeting on the cliffs above Dover harbour with Fred Rumsey, where they rediscovered it, the first record since 1981. Any recently disturbed soil makes good hunting areas and a new riverside footpath at Aylesford, near Maidstone, was no exception. Along it, beneath the M20 bridge they found a plant new to Kent, now confirmed as Twoscale Saltbush (*Atriplex micrantha*). This species has only been recorded in Cambridgeshire and Essex in recent years. It is a halophyte and is spreading along major roads in Europe. Unfortunately, it does not have a proper write-up in Stace, but it can be carried forward and added when they reach Parnassus.

Caroline Giddens is now very limited in where she can travel, but she did see the Rosy Evening-primrose (*Oenothera rosea*) in cobbled paving and gutter at Bossington, near Porlock in Somerset.

Roger Heath-Brown picks out as his favourites from his list Yellow Birdsnest (*Hypopitys monotropa*), seen by the Pilgrims' Way, near Detling, Kent, having searched for it unsuccessfully many times before, and Small Mallow (*Malva pusilla*) in

Photo: Sue Grayston

fields north of Littleport, Cambridgeshire, requiring quite a trek along dirt tracks, and looking so well established as an arable weed. Among his other finds was Margaret's Whitebeam (*Sorbus margaretae*) by the coastal footpath near 'Desolate', Lynmouth, Devon. He writes "Although this is exactly the area described in the BSBI Handbook, it is not the site in the photograph there, unless the picture is back-to-front!" It can happen.

Pat Verrall found False Acacia (*Robinia pseudacacia*) by the A25 a puzzle, not least because she drives past that spot once or twice a week and had never noticed it until last autumn, when the yellow autumn colour caught her eye. It was a well-established sapling, double-stemmed ca. 1.5 m high. That puzzle may be due to council cut-backs; the verge was probably trimmed more often until recently and the sapling regularly cut down (hence multi-stem as it re-grew). The verge has recently been cut and the *Robinia* is no longer visible. The other mystery is its origin. The A25 is mostly rural here. *Robinia* normally spreads by suckering, but the nearest building is a pub about 250 yards away on the other side of the road, with no *Robinia* in garden or car park. Seed production is uncommon in UK except in very hot summers (even if there was a nearby parent tree to produce seeds). Maybe a seed arrived via a bird. She has been unable to discover if Acacia seed is ever used in birdseed mix, but that seems the most likely origin. As to its germination, in her nursery



trade manual '*Hardy Woody Plants from Seed*' (P. McMillan Browse) there is a suggestion that germination of *Robinia* may benefit from a degree of H₂ SO₄ digestion - so maybe traffic fumes have helped! Interesting to speculate, but it has not been planted. Some of her more exciting plants included Downy Woundwort (*Stachys germanica*) on Roger Heath-Brown's Oxfordshire meeting: a beautiful plant. Her favourite plant on the AGM weekend was Blue Lettuce (*Lactuca tatarica*), a glorious blue flower. One of her best past records was seeing gaudy orange splashes of flowers on a rock face in Jersey; she was fairly certain it was a *Lampranthus* and later identified it as Golden Ice Plant/Golden Fig Marigold (*L. aureus*). Eric Clement confirmed it from photos and added that it was a first for Jersey.

So that's it, my tenth and the final Z1 report. I look forward to hearing from members again sooner or later in Parnassus 2, together with some of those I have passed into Parnassus 2 over the years, though four of the latter are already in Parnassus 1.

EDWARD PRATT

Z2 (1550-1799)

	New	Total		New	Total
David Bevan	1	1792	Pamela Lee	6	1612
Dorothy Evans	(16)	(1732)	Chris Metherell	21	1597
Carmen Horner	103	1633	Graham Peck	64	1797
Pippa Hyde	0	1666	Rachel Rabey	1	1768

David Bevan reports that his best (and only) new record for 2017 was the hybrid grass *Alopecurus x brachystylus* - the cross between Meadow Foxtail (*A. pratensis*) and Marsh Foxtail (*A. geniculatus*). This was growing on the 'Green' of Bounds Green close to David's home. Its identity was confirmed by Tom Cope who told David that it is widespread wherever the parents grow. One to look out for.

The star flower of the year for Dorothy Evans was Scottish Primrose (*Primula scotica*) from Yesnaby, Mainland, Orkney – 'absolutely exquisite' is how she describes it. Other Orkney finds were Curved Sedge (*Carex maritima*) and Hedge Veronica (*Veronica x franciscana*). Fitter, Fitter & Blamey note that Spear-leaved Willowherb (*Epilobium lanceolatum*) 'has a curious liking for Midland churchyards' and there it was in Dorothy's own local churchyard in Warwick and she had been looking for it for years.

Carmen Horner told me that she hadn't managed as much travelling around in 2017 as usual. Nonetheless she recorded an impressive total including nine orchid taxa. A holiday with Bradford Botany Group in western Ireland enabled Carmen to see many of the

specialities of the Burren and Connemara. Finding three butterworts together at Cappanawalla in the Burren was a treat. They were Common Butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*), Large-flowered Butterwort (*P. grandiflora*) and their hybrid *P. x scullyi*. A Pillwort (*Pilularia globulifera*) survey with the Yorkshire Fern Group enabled her to see the plant that she had been looking out for for some time.

Pippa Hyde moved house in 2017 and recorded no new plants but she is looking forward to finding some in 2018.

Pamela Lee's list was mostly made up of species which she has 'only known hitherto as garden plants'. These included False Virginia-creeper (*Parthenocissus vitacea*) seen on WFS's Harting Down field meeting led by Dawn Nelson and Black-eyed-Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), which bloomed for months in her garden on the borders of Surrey and Hampshire. Pamela suggests that 'some kindly bird must have sown it' as neither she nor her neighbours have grown it before. More exciting though was her discovery of Purple Toothwort (*Lathraea clandestina*) hidden under nettles at Hammer Vale near Haslemere, Surrey.

'A mixture of the prosaic... and the amazing' was Chris Metherell's comment on his list. In the amazing category were the sporophyte generation of Killarney Fern (*Trichomanes speciosum*) from Co. Donegal and *Polystichum x lonchitiforme* (the hybrid between Soft Shield-fern *P. setiferum* and Holly Fern *P. lonchitis*) from Co. Leitrim, its only locality in Ireland or Britain. Another I would highlight if it were on my list is Water Germander (*Teucrium scordium*) from The Burren in Co. Clare. The prosaic were commoner plants overlooked in previous years.

Graham Peck has searched through earlier record books and diaries to find 51 taxa not previously recorded in his Valhalla list. Some of these are now countable because they receive full (numbered or lettered) accounts in Clive Stace's *New flora* 3rd ed. Among Graham's new finds (all from Suffolk) are several grasses identified with help from Arthur Copping, including Shama Millet (*Echinochloa colona*) and Nodding Bristle-grass (*Setaria faberi*). Another species which caught my eye was Yellow (or Field) Dodder (*Cuscuta campestris*) which Graham saw growing on Chard. This is a species that probably

originated in North America but according to Sell & Murrell has now spread to most of the world as a weed of cultivation.

I always enjoy the letters I receive from Rachel Rabey. When she wrote from Guernsey in January she told me spring had arrived, evidenced by Snowdrops, Primroses and Celandines spurred on by the little extra light. Six weeks later the island had snow! Rachel doesn't leave Guernsey these days but every year she seems to find at least one new plant: this year's was Witch-grass (*Panicum capillare*) – probably from birdseed (there was evidence of a nearby rock being used as a perch). A piece from this plant is now in the Guernsey Herbarium. Rachel says that her botany has been well polished over the last year as she has been working with Jane Gilmour to update the Guernsey plant list - see page 55.

I hope all of you who have been sending me your lists will continue to record your new finds and send your lists to your Regional Branch Secretary.

As for all the Secretaries of Valhalla divisions this report is my last so it seems an appropriate time to reflect on nine years as a Branch Secretary. Reading through all the lists I've received through those years has taken me in my imagination all over Britain, Ireland and the Channel Islands. I've received records from Suffolk to Co. Kerry, from Jersey to the Shetlands and numerous places in between. I've learned about people, places and plants unknown to me before. I've received many

Photo: Wikipedia Creative commons



Purple Toothwort

evocative accounts of searching for special plants and the excitement in finding them as well as the pleasure from accidental discoveries on one's doorstep. I've shared in the enthusiasm we all have for plants and the enjoyment so many of us gain from the beauty and variety of our flowering plants and ferns.

What have been the highlights from nine years of record books and lists? I've already mentioned the newsy letters from Rachel Rabey. I should also mention the wonderful photographs sent by Sheila Wynn to accompany her lists of new plants. At the end of 2011 she printed and bound her own personal record book for 2008-2011 which included over 100 colour photographs of plants and their habitats. At the time I commented that if we offered a prize for an outstanding record book for our adult members as we do for our junior members then Sheila would be a strong contender. Perhaps the most memorable account of the search for a special plant was Richard Robinson's description of his quest for Alpine Catchfly (*Silene suecica*): "A long slog... to a little bothy which my GPS told me was due east of the flower. As I proceeded westwards I came to realise there was a mountain between me and it. I started to climb it. It got steeper and rockier. I was alone with no reception on the mobile. I decided to traverse the mountain instead and gaining a col found myself on a moorland plateau with distant heather vistas. Nothing but acid heathland with a possible exception of a billiard table sized patch of shingle in the distance. A mountain hare got up from under my feet and sat on the shingle. I followed

– and there it was. Blue sky, a few golden plover pottering about, total silence. Unforgettable."

I shall finish with a thank you to all our retiring Valhalla Secretaries for your years of service to our Valhalla members. Particular thanks are due to Nick Rumens whose first Valhalla report was for 1998.

JOHN SWINDELLS



Photo: Peter Llewellyn

Z3 (1350-1549)

	New	Total
Alison Gregory	0	1404
Beryl Savigar	9	1448
Mary & Claire Smith	72	1453
Anthony & Rita Grainger	93	1549

Alison Gregory sent a postcard to say she had no new flowers but still had ambitions, notably Twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*), in this I am sure we all wish her well.

Beryl Savigar sent a list exclusively from Wales. This included Nodding Bristle-grass (*Setaria faberi*) and Great Millet (*Sorghum bicolor*) from the edge of a maize field, Chalk Eyebright (*Euphrasia pseudokernerii*) on the stony edge of a forest track and the unpleasantly smelly (at least to me) Rock Crane's-bill (*Geranium macrorrhizum*). However, I particularly liked her Intermediate Periwinkle (*Vicia difformis*) from a hedgerow in Monmouthshire.

Mary and Claire Smith like to find new plants themselves and they certainly did with their records from Derbyshire and neighbouring counties, although their list was added to by visiting Kent and our AGM at Llandudno. It looks to me that last year's AGM must rank one of the most 'flowerful' ever. The first on their list was Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*) from under a railway bridge in Derbyshire, counting twelve plants in all. So far inland I wonder how this frost sensitive species will survive the 'beast from the east' currently raging as I write this report. Oak-leaved

Goosefoot (*Chenopodium glaucum*) was an excellent find on the banks of the River Trent in Nottinghamshire. Further afield in Kent, Marsh St John's-wort (*Hypericum elodes*) and Late Spider-orchid (*Ophrys fuciflora*) were favourites along with 'small things' like Bur Medick (*Medicago minima*) and Rough Clover (*Trifolium scabrum*). At the AGM, Great Orme plants featured along with Lesser Tussock-sedge and Bog-sedge (*Carex diandra* and *C. limosa*) at Cors Goch, Anglesey and Narrow Male-fern (*Dryopteris cambrensis*) near Llanrwst.

Anthony and Rita Grainger's excellent list is mainly from their home county of Yorkshire, a holiday in Pembrokeshire and a most successful trip to western Ireland, including the Burren. They appear to have seen all the Burren specialities and, elsewhere in western Ireland, St Dabeoc's Heath (*Daboecia cantabrica*), Irish Heath (*Erica erigena*), Mackay's Heath (*E. mackayana*) and its hybrid (*E. x stuartii*). They also list no fewer than eight Marsh-orchids (*Dactylorhiza*) from various places made up of species, sub-species and hybrids. They include *Dactylorhiza incarnata* ssp. *cruenta*. Stace does not give a common name for this sub-species,

but I rather like the unintentional humour provided by a Swedish book, in which the Latin sub-specific name is directly translated into English, to give 'Bloody-early Marsh-orchid'! I was pleased to read that the much declined Opposite-leaved Pondweed (*Groenlandica densa*) is still around the Grassington area (I assume the River Wharfe). Coincidentally, I had also looked, but unsuccessfully, for it in that river last summer at the spot where I had recorded it in 1975; so well done Anthony and Rita. As many

members need do at some point, they deleted an aggregate taxon in order to add several named Dandelions (*Taraxacum*).

My stint as Z3 Branch Secretary has been short-lived due to the changes agreed at the AGM. I for one disagreed with the changes but one has to accept the majority. I wish all the best for the progression of my branch members in the future.

PETER JEPSON

Z4 (1150-1349)

	New	Total
Alison Watt	52	1318
Janet Cullen	1	1309
Christine Newell	4	1237
Barbara Allen	64	1220
Jane Squirrel & Graham French	3	1210
Susan Grimshaw	7	1179

I had a very quiet 2017 as I moved house in August so it was good to receive six very interesting lists of plants and see what I had been missing out on. On the plus side for me I am now living in Surrey and can see Box Hill from my top floor bedroom window. Although I know the area fairly well I am looking forward to many days of exploring. I particularly like the idea of being able to walk through the fields to Dorking for shopping, with a brief diversion to the Denbies Vineyard on route.

always remember Lorna and Derek's kindness to me on the loss of my mother in 2016. I always enjoyed Lorna's e-mails with details of what she had found both in the UK and on trips to Symi. Lorna was an excellent botanist and an enthusiastic participant on walks and AGMs. When others were flagging and looking the worse for heat and hunger Lorna without fail looked elegant and cheerful. She will be much missed; many condolences to Derek.

I was very saddened to receive the news of Lorna Holland passing away in early 2018. Lorna was a great friend to the society and to me. I will

Alison Watt is a new member of this branch and sent me lists for two years which I was very happy to see. She visited the Channel Islands in

2016 and went to Sark. She was lucky enough to see Narrow-leaved Cudweed (*Filago gallica*) there, although only one plant was found. Alison attended the 2017 Members' Weekend at Llandudno and had a splendid time there seeing Wild Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster cambricus*) on the great Orme and Lesser Clubmoss (*Selaginella selaginoides*) during the day spent at Anglesey.

Janet Cullen has been having problems in finding and seeing plants as she has been waiting for a cataract operation. Hopefully she has had this by now and is back out hunting. In 2017 she saw Guernsey Fleabane (*Conyza sumatrensis*) at Dungeness. A lovely place to visit and with lots of good plants to discover.

Christine Newell has been going through old lists and discovered she had failed to add two lovely ferns from a visit to north Wales in 2000, namely Forked Spleenwort (*Asplenium septentrionale*) and Wilson's Filmy-fern (*Hymenophyllum wilsonii*). More recently she found Flowering Nutmeg (*Leycesteria formosa*) in a pavement crack in a car park.

Barbara Allen e-mailed me her list and saw some super plants in 2017. She was another one who saw Forked Spleenwort (*Asplenium septentrionale*) although more recently, from the 2017 Members' Weekend. Also from that weekend she recorded Marsh Fern (*Thelypteris palustris*) and Delicate Maidenhair Spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes* ssp. *trichomanes*).

Jane Squirrel and Graham French sent me a short list of plants seen in

2016 and 2017. Green Amaranth (*Amaranthus hybridus*) was a pavement crack find in 2016 whilst in 2017 they holidayed in Somerset. Mexican Fleabane, or as I prefer to know it St Peter Port Daisy, (*Erigeron karvinskianus*) was found at Cheddar Gorge and White Rock-rose (*Helianthemum apenninum*) at Brean Down. I was also delighted to hear their daughter Holly has completed her first record book.

Susan Grimshaw wrote me a lovely letter about her finds and is an example of how it is best to never stop thinking about plant hunting opportunities when out on other pursuits. Attending her sister-in-law's golden wedding anniversary in Lancashire allowed Susan the chance to go and see Lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium calceolus*). A few plants were in flower which must have been a treat to see. Susan's favourite plant of the year was Wild Liquorice (*Astragalus glycyphyllos*) with its fascinating seed pods. The Oxfordshire field meeting was the only WFS meeting attended and Venus's-looking-glass (*Legousia hybrida*) was seen there. Susan has already recorded this for her record book but it was her second favourite plant of the year.

As people will know following a change in regulations the Valhalla Branches are now no more so I shall not be receiving your lists. This does not mean I won't be watching all your progress over the coming years. I have enjoyed our time together in our little Z4 family and wish you all well in your future botanising.

PIPPA HYDE

Z5 (1000-1149)

	New	Total
Pauline Wilson	4	1050
Lesley Philpott	4	1026
Peter Whitcomb	0	1021

Both Pauline Wilson and Lesley Philpott are involved with U3A Botany Groups and it was lovely to hear about their outings this summer. Pauline tells me that her group had a trip to Rodborough Common near Stroud and were delighted to find there were hundreds of Fragrant Orchids dotted all over it. She has also been to Cheddar Gorge where she managed to locate the Cheddar Pink (*Dianthus gratianopolitanus*) growing on the cliffs.

Lesley and her U3A group have obviously had some lovely trips and she tells me of an outing they had to Forrabury Stitches, near Boscastle, where they were greeted with a magnificent sight of golden yellow Corn Marigolds (*Glebionus segetum*) stretching down to the cliff and the sea. Lesley has been hampered with mobility problems and last year she was telling me of her failed attempts to negotiate a stile, which was preventing her from visiting the site of a Bog Orchid (*Hammarbya*

paludosa). I am glad to report that, at her third attempt, and with what sounds like a concerted effort from all her companions, she can now add this plant to her WFS list!

Peter Whitcomb has had another busy summer and has not been able to increase his total of species this year but he has sent me an impressive list of rarities including Round-headed Rampion (*Phyteuma orbiculare*) and Corn Gromwell (*Lithospermum arvense*) which he has seen in 2017 in various Nature Reserves in the Brighton area, but which he already has recorded in his Diaries for previous years.

Well this is the last report I shall be writing as it marks the end of Valhalla Branch Z5. I send my very best wishes to all Valhalla Z5 members past and present. I have thoroughly enjoyed reading of all your botanical exploits over the years and I hope to meet up with some of you on field meetings in 2018.

HEATHER COLLS

Z6 (850-999)

This year I have received only one letter with a report of a new find. Alan Davies has been in this branch, gradually building up his list since 2011. This year he found Ribbed Melilot (*Melilotus officinalis*) in the Abergele Business Park. He has found many interesting plants here

before. I wish him good botanising in his 'new' Branch. I now retire from being a Branch Secretary, a job which I have thoroughly enjoyed and I will continue to look forward to reading other branch reports. Wishing everyone happy botanising.

RACHEL RABEY

PARNASSUS REPORTS FOR 2017

PARNASSUS 1

	New	Total		New	Total
Phyl Abbott	12	2504	John Hawksford	3	2999
Margaret Burnhill	0	3147	Graeme Kay	11	3021
Marion Chappell	35	2921	Alan Leslie	27	2859
Julie Clarke	23	4142	John Palmer	0	5820
Steve Clarkson	73	2791	Ron Parker	69	2842
Heather Colls	32	2561	Chris Pogson	4	3345
Judith Cox	33	2611	Ted Pratt	51	2838
Paul Harmes	61	2630	Barry Shaw	1	2533
Carol Hawkins	32	3210	Jesse Tregale	54	3452

It may be that 2017 was a poorer year for botanists or that our group was less able to get out into the field but the total number of new finds is down by about one-third this year. Maybe 2018 will see a bounce back to the 600 or so reported in 2016.

I start with a welcome to Phyl Abbott, who joins us after some time in Parnassus 2. All her records this year are from places local to where she lives in Yorkshire. A trip to Otley Chevin Forest Park yielded two unusual ferns, *Dryopteris affinis* ssp. *paleaceolobata* (Greater Western Scaly Male fern) and *D. x critica*, the hybrid between *D. filix-mas* (Male fern) and *D. borrieri* (Borrer's Scaly Male fern). Another interesting hybrid was the Willow *Salix x pontederiana* (*S. purpurea* x *cinerea*) from the edge of Swinsty Reservoir.

Margaret Burnhill has been unable to get out as much as usual and was unable to add to her total. She

hopes to see a bit more in 2018.

Marion Chappell attended several meetings this year and the quality of her list shows this. Langcliffe, with Brian Burrow as guide, yielded several Hawkweeds and Dandelions, both critical groups that are hard for most of us - the presence of an expert makes all the difference. In the New Forest, Marion saw *Illecebrum verticillatum* (Coral-necklace) and *Utricularia bremii* (New Forest Bladderwort), the latter restricted to this location in the UK. *Anthemis arvensis* (Corn Chamomile) was at Sankey Valley - a plant probably less frequently reported than hitherto. Botanising nearer home, however, allowed Marion to find the uncommon *Lathyrus vernus* 'Alboreus' (Spring Vetchling) near Parbold in Lancashire and *Verbascum arcturus* (Cretan Mullein) growing on limestone walls in Sunderland, among many other good things.



Photo: Anne Kell

Julie Clarke benefitted from going on the Langcliffe meeting with Brian Burrow (see above) and increased her count of Hawkweeds and Dandelions. On a roadside near Manchester Airport Julie reported the less usual *Pastinaca sativa* ssp. *urens* (Eastern Parsnip), first found by Graeme Kay after a tip-off from Peter Jepson. *Hornungia alpina* (Alpine Hutchinsia) seems well established on a wall in Helmsley, a pretty escape!

Steve Clarkson is catching up with plants seen in previous years. His number this year is mainly gleaned from the Isles of Scilly and Guernsey, two locations where plants from the Southern Hemisphere make up attractive, not to say gaudy, additions to the local native flora. On St Mary's, Steve recorded *Lotus maculatus* (Parrot's-beak), which is native to Tenerife and now very much threatened there, so any limited spread here might be welcomed. He also saw *Crassula decumbens*, known here as Scilly Pigmyweed, and for over half a century recognised as a Scilly speciality, although it is not uncommon in both

Pastinaca sativa ssp. *urens*

South Africa and Australasia, where it goes under other trivial names. Tresco yielded a good list of those plants which originated in the Abbey Gardens and 'hopped over the wall'. Among these are two Australasian tea-trees (*Leptospermum*), including *L. scoparium*, whose English name is Manuka Myrtle; it is the source of the Manuka Honey sold in health food shops. While on Guernsey, Steve took the trip to Herm, where, on the walk up from the landing stage, he saw *Felicia bergeriana* (Kingfisher Daisy), a very attractive bright-blue South African invader.

Many of Heather Colls' sightings were using the new Flora of the Isles of Scilly, especially around the Tresco Gardens and from the AGM in Wales. The Mexican *Furcraea longaevea* (Giant Furcraea) was on the dunes on Tresco, the South American *Ugni molinae* (Chilean Guava) was on St Martin's, while St Mary's had both *Homeria collina* (Cape Tulip) from South Africa and *Olearia solandri* (Coastal Daisy Bush) from New Zealand - an astonishing range of sources. From Heather's Wales list, I noted two unusual Willows, *Salix acutifolia* (Siberian Violet-willow) and *Salix x mollissima* (*S. triandra* x *viminalis*, Sharp-stipuled Willow).

Judith Cox has an interesting list with a colour theme. Early in the year, she found *Pulmonaria rubra* (Red Lungwort) at Oulton in North Yorkshire, then *Ribes uva-crispa* 'Hinnonmaki Red' (Red Gooseberry) on a roadside near Seata Quarry, also in North Yorkshire, *Gladiolus x hortulanus* (Red Gladiolus) in a

country lane near Carlisle and *Anagallis arvensis* var. *carnea* (Pink Scarlet Pimpernel) on the Great Orme, Llandudno. In contrast, Judith reports finding White Buddleja (*Buddleja davidii* var. *alba*) in the Viaduct car park in Carlisle.

Paul Harmes has a good long list this year, although only 14 were from the past year. A review of past records, not previously listed in his Diary, accounts for the other 47. From the latter group, one finding of especial note is that of *Ophrys x pietzschii* - the rare and short-lived hybrid between *O. apifera* (Bee Orchid) and *O. insectifera* (Fly Orchid). Most of the sightings in 2017 were from the Moray area in Scotland - including *Cystopteris dickieana* (Dickie's Bladder-fern) on the parapet of the old Bridge at Glenlivet, the beautiful *Mertensia maritima* (Oysterplant) on the shingle at Logie Head and *Vicia orobus* (Wood Bitter-vetch) where it grows in some profusion on the shingle and sand beach at Fort George. There is still argument about whether the Bladder-fern is a separate species or a variety of *C. fragilis* (Brittle Bladder-fern); a resolution is, as they say, above my pay-grade, but the two putative species do produce a hybrid which is sterile, which seems to indicate more than varietal status for Dickie's fern.

After Guernsey last year, Carol and Bill Hawkins went to the Isles of Scilly once again. Carol already has a goodly list from the islands but still managed to add many more this year. Carol was especially pleased to find *Trigonella caerulea* (Blue Fenugreek) at Churchdown Farm on

St Martin's (the site better known as the *locus classicus* for *Ranunculus marginatus* (St Martin's Buttercup). Apparently this is the first record for the fenugreek anywhere in the country since 2001. Although found in the Mediterranean, it is widely used in Georgian cuisine. So perhaps look near your nearest Georgian restaurant! Less attractive but much more easily found, at present on Scilly, but increasingly elsewhere was *Senecio minimus* (Toothed Fireweed). Carol was also pleased to see the showy *Arctotis aspera* (Rough-leaved Arctotis) on the dunes just west of the Gardens on Tresco. Much closer to home, beside the roundabout on the A11 south of Attleborough, was the same Eastern Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa* ssp. *urens*) also seen near Manchester Airport (see above).

John Hawksford has been busy recording for Atlas 2020 and in arranging week-long meetings for his local Natural History Society. He found the unusual white form of the Early Dog-violet (*Viola reichenbachiana* var. *leucantha*) on the towpath of the Cromford Canal, Derbyshire and also *Carex comans* (New Zealand Hair-sedge) in cracks in tarmac of Crewe station car park. I have the impression that this sedge is spreading in a variety of urban sites.

Graeme Kay spent a rewarding time in the dunes at Crosby with several new finds where he originally went to see *Artemisia campestris* ssp. *maritima* (the seaside subspecies of Sea Wormwood) in what is possibly now its only British site. By the canal edge in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire,

Graeme noted *Caltha palustris* var. *polypetala* (Giant Marsh Marigold). Last year, Graeme reported a sighting of *Carex oederi* ssp. *bergrothii* near Northwich. Since then, however, experts have decided that this plant is, after all, not ssp. *bergrothii*, which is a bit disappointing, especially when its jizz indicated something different from the usual.

Alan Leslie had a great time visiting Skye on a WFS meeting led by Ian Green. There were three hybrid horsetails and that Skye rarity *Arabis alpina* (Alpine Rock-cress) in its long-known habitat in the Cuillins. And *Koenigia islandica* (Iceland Purslane) near the Old Man of Storr; as Alan comments, "Goodness, what a plant. So tiny - the first plant in flower I have recorded looking at it under water with a hand lens". An unusual extra in Uig Wood, still on Skye, was *Mitella ovalis* (Coastal or Oval-leaf Miterwort). Nearer home, at the edge of a new lake in Great Kneighton Country Park, Cambridge, Alan examined a collection of hybrid alders including *Alnus cordata* x *glutinosa* and *A. glutinosa* x *incana*. Manea in Cambridgeshire may not be as remote as Skye, but it is well off the beaten track. Alan's finding *Gnaphalium pensylvanicum* (*sic*), known variously as Purple Cudweed, Pennsylvania Everlasting or Pennsylvania Cudweed, in a road gutter there is truly curious; it is hardly a garden plant!

Ron Parker comments that there are only another 158 to go until he reaches 3000. But at the present rate, it will not take too long. The WFS meeting in Yorkshire yielded a

long list of Hawkweeds, Dandelions and Mouse-ears. The Crosby meeting added another ten including two Evening Primrose hybrids—*Oenothera* x *britannica* (*O. glazioviana* x *cambrica*) and *O. x fallax* (*O. glazioviana* x *biennis*) and Ron also had a good time with several Rubi at Prestwood, near Slough, in Buckinghamshire.

I did not make many botanising trips in 2017 but was pleased to see the range of orchid hybrids at Tarn Moor in Cumbria, including one new to me, *Gymnadenia borealis* x *Dactylorhiza incarnata* ssp. *incarnata* (the hybrid between Heath Fragrant-orchid and a subspecies of Early Marsh-orchid).

Ted Pratt has a longer list than appears from the numbers above. This is because he has been checking his records for duplicates and found 16, which have now had to be removed. Looking for duplicates in lists of over 2500 takes some time and my guess is that few of us undergo this exercise. Duplication occurs not so much by repetition of the same names but by counting an aggregate taxon together with both subspecies, or, by not realising that names have changed and the two different names refer to the same plant - easy enough to do. Of course, it is better to correct such errors but there is no great harm done. And so, back to Ted's list, which, despite his having less time for botanizing in 2017 includes many plants of interest. Ted says that his best find of the year was a Dandelion - a species which is known but which has yet to be scientifically described and named, so that he cannot include it yet. Ted was pleased, however, to

re-find *Asarum europaeum* (Asarabacca) in South Wiltshire after several failed attempts, near where he saw it about 30 years ago. He also found, in Purbeck, *Prunella x intermedia*, the hybrid between *P. vulgaris* (Selfheal) and *P. laciniata* (Cut-leaved Selfheal) and adds that he saw a variety of Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera* var. *chlorantha*) on the way.

Barry Shaw has continued to travel widely and has been very busy in other ways, so that he was left with little time for botanizing at home. Following Graeme Kay's finding of the Eastern Parsnip near Manchester Airport, Barry was able to add this one more to his total.

Jesse Tregale went to Ireland twice last year, once with the Bradford Botany Group in the Burren and once with Michael Wilcox. Having been to the Burren before, Jesse did not expect to find many more species and so was pleased with the *Arenaria norvegica* ssp. *norvegica* (Arctic Sandwort) and the hybrid Greater Butterwort, *Pinguicula x scullyi*. With Michael, Jesse found an unusual pavement weed in Larne - *Turgenia latifolia* (Greater Bur Parsley). In more classical sites, near Lough Mask they saw *Hypericum canadense* (Irish St John's-wort) and near Glinsk, *Haloragis micrantha* (Creeping Raspwort) and *Juncus planifolius* (Broad-leaved Rush). Back at home, Jesse and Michael found *Alopecurus geniculatus* (Marsh Foxtail) and *A. aequalis* (Orange Foxtail) growing together. A likely intermediate was identified and later confirmed as the hybrid between these two species

(*A. x haussknechtianus*). Jesse's last plant of the year was, as he says, "a rather splendid" *Polystichum munitum* (Western Sword Fern) growing in Scholes Coppice near Rotherham.

Many thanks to all Parnassians who, as usual, sent me their lists in very good time. The difference this year is that I am ahead of myself in writing this article, largely prompted by my being away for most of the next five months. Thank you also for adding the English names where relevant; that has saved me quite a lot of looking up.

This is my last Year with Parnassus I. I have enjoyed reviewing your lists over the years and have learned a great deal. Many thanks for all your e-mails and letters, some with great detail which has made my job so much easier when I can just cut and paste. And thanks for your tolerance and good humour in not chasing me for the final copy.

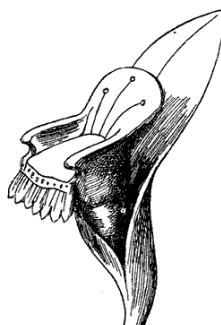
Next year Rodney Burton takes over. I wish him well in this endeavour and am sure he will be as keen to see your lists as I have been.

CHRIS POGSON

Armchairia
Comfortabilis

From
Edward Lear's
Nonsense
Botany
1871

Happy
recording



PARNASSUS 2

	New	Total		New	Total
Jan Armishaw	233	2286	Geoffrey Kitchener	15	2232
Gareth Bursnall	42	2409	Priscilla Nobbs	58	2293
Rodney Burton	11	2497	Janice Reynolds	25	2307
Everald Ellis	1	2185	Richard Robinson	29	2033
Peter Jepson	12	2066	Sheila Wynn	220	2249

Last year I promised to say something about reference sources this year, which I will do, as I deal with each of the ten above in turn.

Jan Armishaw has come up from Valhalla and brought with her saved Parnassus-only items from years back to 2013, which account for about half her total in the 'New' column. I don't need to go beyond the letter A for examples. She cites David McClintock's *'Supplement to the Flora of Guernsey'* as her source for the name of the amazingly pink-coloured petals of the Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* f. *rosea*) seen in grassland near Allonby (Cumbria) in 2016 – perfect. For the two species of Australian Blackwood (*Acacia*) self-sown in woods behind Tresco Gardens in Scilly "checked by head gardener" would have been adequate as a reference, but Jan cites the *'RHS Plant Finder 2014'* – maybe she used that to check the spelling of the names, though they are also in 'Stace'. For the Garlic Chives (*Allium tuberosum*) which many of us saw naturalised outside the hall where we met for the 2014 AGM, the name of our Chairman, who told us all what it was from the steps, would have been appropriate as a reference source – she could also have used the

Internet, as I have just done to decide my choice of English name for this plant. In 2017 Jan went on a number of meetings of the WFS and the Kent Botanical Recording Group. Self-sown seedlings of Caucasian Fir (*Abies nordmanniana*) were found behind Abbey Fields at Faversham in Kent with Liam Rooney; she puts 'Stace' in the column of her spreadsheet headed SOURCE, though no source is needed, as I am happy to accept that together they could if necessary use the book to identify the parent tree.

'Shrubs', the book by Roger Phillips and Martyn Rix in Pan Books' Garden Plants series, is quoted by Gareth Bursnell as the source of the name *Hedera helix* 'Digitata' for the Ivy cultivar seen on a London Natural History Society meeting at Maze Hill in south-east London. He found the name *Primula vulgaris* var. *caulescens* for a Primrose with its flowers in a stalked umbel, not otherwise showing any sign of hybridisation with a Cowslip, in McClintock's *'Flora of Guernsey'*, though he had found the plant at Kilnwood in Sussex rather than Guernsey. Quite the most interesting plant in Gareth's list is the Holly-leaved Naiad (*Naias marina*), which

arrived two years before in a ditch at the Arundel Wetland Centre and increased; previously its British distribution was limited to the Norfolk Broads. He also found Lily-turf (*Liriope muscari*) on waste ground near his home in Sussex, only the second British record of this Asiatic plant outside gardens. This is now a common garden plant. The English name I found for it came from 'Manual of cultivated plants' by L.H. Bailey, which is a proper botanical reference work to species (but not cultivars) grown in the United States and Canada; unfortunately it is long out of print and not cheap to buy.

Only one of my records from my local recording area is worth mentioning, for the extraordinary site where it grew. *Polypodium vulgare* 'Bifidomultifidum' is a monstrous form of Polypody propagated as a cultivar because it is very easy to establish, but it is hard to imagine how it could have been established where it was growing. Two houses in Blackheath have their fronts at street level, but the ground they stand on slopes very steeply down, so that at back garden level there could be a complete lower storey. One of them has a walkway, supported one cannot see how, which starts at street level and continues at that level to go on round the corner, perhaps to a fire-escape; presumably it is private but there is nothing to say so, and on a London Natural History Society meeting in November we ventured along the walkway in the hope of finding ferns on the brick wall between the properties. The wall is high enough to prevent users of the walkway from seeing into the adjacent property, but

not too high to prevent the taller ones among us from peering over the top. Perhaps 18 inches down, but many feet above the ground below, there was this fern. How could it have got there, if not from a spore on the wind? My other three 2017 additions all come from a visit by a group from the local Active Retirement Association to Cornwall in August, which included an evening at the Minack Theatre. I thought there was time before it to look for Logan's Sea-lavender (*Limonium loganicum*) which grows nearby on cliffs, using Chris Pogson's 'Pogfiles', but they were not detailed enough to find them quickly. Earlier that day, I went to Marazion for Sea Daffodil (*Pancratium maritimum*); I can't remember where I learned about that, but it's easily found as the dunes where it grows are a narrow strip. On the following day I walked along the road out of Newlyn into the countryside and came across a bamboo, which was spreading along the verge as fast as it could to get away from a garden, and identified it later as Indian Fountain-bamboo (*Yushania anceps*) by matching the poor photo on my mobile phone with better ones on the Internet. It is such chance finds that please me most.

Everald Ellis' one record is of Garden Orache (*Atriplex hortensis*) in the walled garden at Bishop Burton College in East Yorkshire. She says it was 'presumably bird-sown', but where I last saw it, coming up plentifully in a corner of the walled 'World Garden' at Lullingstone Castle, it was on the site of a derelict herb garden dug over after 20 years of neglect.



Pyramidal
Bugle

Photo: Anne Kell

All of Peter Jepson's additions, like mine in the last paragraph, are plants described by 'Stace', and the most remarkable of them is Pyramidal Bugle (*Ajuga pyramidalis*) in its only Lake District site, a precipitous cliff which ought to have been inaccessible for someone of his (and my) age. Other highlights of his year were Caucasian Pennycress (*Pachyphragma macrophyllum*) close to the place where he was to attend a funeral the day after he received BSBI News no.35, where the site was described, and the Water / Tufted Forget-me-nots hybrid (*Myosotis x suzae*) on the exposed margin of his local reservoir.

All of Geoffrey Kitchener's 2017 records are from Kent – not surprising as he is the (very active) BSBI recorder for the county – and two are of national interest. *Inula racemosa* is a garden plant, both grown for ornament and, at least in its

native country, the Himalayas, used as a medicinal herb. As far as he and I can discover there is no previous British record of this as a wild plant and it has no English name. He and his wife Sarah found it in August in several places along a country road between fields east of Brenchley. He gives as a reference 'Perennials' in the same series as 'Shrubs' already mentioned. The other is a triple Dock hybrid, in remote fields near the Sussex border, where the only other docks were Wood Dock (*Rumex sanguineus*) and the Curled Dock / Blunt-leaved Dock hybrid (*Rumex x pratensis*). It was identified by the BSBI *Rumex* referee (himself) and it may well be a world first. Geoffrey's record of New Zealand Spinach (*Tetragonia tetragonioides*) has an unusual location – over 400 metres out to sea on the east pier at Ramsgate.

For Priscilla Nobbs, the highlights of 2017 were Alpine Bartsia (*Bartsia alpina*) and Coral-necklace (*Illecebrum verticillatum*) seen on WFS meetings in Upper Teesdale and the New Forest respectively, but there were other things which would have excited me as much, many of them on the Great Orme on the AGM excursion, but also the new hybrid of Winter Heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*) and Giant Butterbur (*P. japonicus*) shown in a Sussex hedgerow by Arthur Hoare. Several trees in her list have references to 'Johnson' which I take to mean 'Trees' by Hugh Johnson. (I prefer to use Alan Mitchell's 'A Field guide to the trees of Great Britain and Europe' which has excellent descriptions and line drawings. Though long out of print, it

is still available very cheaply second-hand.) Another source which Priscilla quotes is the '*RHS Encyclopaedia of Garden Plants*' – the full title is needed because there are other RHS encyclopaedias.

Janice Reynolds continues to make frequent references to '*The Complete Handbook of Garden Plants*' by Michael Wright, which is easy to find second hand. This year, however, her numbers have been boosted by the importation of soil in road works and new flood defences, which gave her Foxtail Barley (*Hordeum jubatum*) and Rough Bristle-grass (*Setaria verticillata*). A Sussex Botanical Recording Society visit to the Crumbles at Eastbourne gave her a lot of garden plants not in a garden, some of which I haven't seen in WFS documents before, like Yellow Asphodel (*Asphodeline lutea*), which could come up either from seed or from chunks of rhizome.

Matthew Berry's column in BSBI News is a frequent source of plants for Richard Robinson to go hunting, but he claims to get more 'added value' from archaeophytes he has discovered for himself. I was most taken by his record of the hybrid of Hard and Soft Shield-Ferns (*Polystichum x bicknellii*) at Selborne, supported by a brief field note. His plant of the year, though, was a blatant casual, Annual Toadflax (*Linaria maroccana*) in a variety of colour forms on calcareous roadside spoil at Arundel. Some of these have cultivar names!

Sheila Wynn, like Jan, brings into Parnassus very many names she could not count in Valhalla, almost twice as many as her 2017 total, and she has been on many of the same meetings. She is not the only one to cite the *RHS Plant Finder* or its online equivalent as a reference; this is acceptable if the name referred to is effectively a description, as in the case of the Gold-edged Plantain-lily *Hosta fortunei* var. *aureomarginata* (this was from the Woodland adjacent to Smithill's Hall Gardens, Bolton) or the many white-flowered varieties *albus*, *alba* or *album* according to the gender of the genus name. *The Plant Hunter* and corresponding database are not intended for this use but to help gardeners find a source for plants they know the names of and nurserymen to find a market for the plants they sell, so for non-commercial plants another source of names must be found. Sheila found the name for the white-flowered Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre* f. *album*) from Robber's Bridge, Exmoor in G.C. Druce's century-old '*Flora of Berkshire*'. Notice that 'white-flowered' in the last sentence does not have a capital W, not being part of an English name. I would be quite happy if Parnassus members could drop using English names altogether.

I fully expect to be in Parnassus 1 myself next year and look forward to seeing some of you join me there soon.

RODNEY BURTON

EXOTICS REPORT 2017

The Exotics report is the place where members can report plants they have found which aren't on the currently accepted list of species for the main diary competitions. It should be full of reports of exciting, weird and wonderful aliens, hybrids, and varieties not in Stace. Unfortunately, nobody has reported anything to me. Stace, of course, is now so comprehensive that it is much harder to find species which it doesn't include: but it isn't impossible.

My sole exotic last year was *Saururus cernuus* (Swamp lily) which has been established at Donington

Pool, Albrighton since at least 2005.

So that's it! Can I make a plea to members to send me details of any plants they see which aren't in Stace. Having done the job in the past I know branch secretaries can have quite enough to do going through the diaries and lists they receive. But I know some of you do mention non-Stace records of your members, if only to tell them they can't count them. If you could see your way to dropping me an e-mail with the details of such records it might also provide material for this report.

STEVE O'DONNELL

JUNIORS

Alice Coutts	169
Rachel Coutts	127
Holly French	47

Holly French sent a wonderful first diary. The Beginner's Diary includes a few line drawings of key features of some plants, but Holly had added some more of her own. I especially liked her sketch of a leaf of Bristly Oxtongue (*Helminthotheca echioides*), which really caught the essence of this plant, and her illustrations of the different seed pod shapes of Common and Long-headed Poppy (*Papaver rhoeas* and *P. dubium*). She also had some written notes about the plants, such as the "purple splotches on the stem" of Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), and their habitats, such as

Enchanter's Nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*) in "shaded woodland" and Wild Thyme (*Thymus polytrichus*) on "grassy banks". A holiday in Somerset provided some interesting finds, such as Harebells (*Campanula rotundifolia*) on Brean Down and Musk Thistle (*Carduus nutans*) on Glastonbury Tor. However, most of her plants were found closer to home, around her village and in the Cambridgeshire/Northamptonshire countryside. An Easter walk at Stanwick lakes led to six records including Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*), and in a nearby village in late May she was able to compare Bulbous, Meadow and Creeping

Buttercups (*Ranunculus bulbosus*, *R. acris* and *R. repens*).

Alice Coutts sent her second diary full of lovely Shetland plants. New plants this year included her first grass, Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and two new ferns, Black Spleenwort (*Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*) and Hard-Fern (*Blechnum spicant*). Her favourite plant was Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*), which she spotted on a walk during a local nature festival. Another favourite was Marsh cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*).

New member Rachel Coutts sent in her first diary this year, with many of the same plants as her elder sister Alice. Rachel's favourite plant was a daffodil, Shetland's naturalised population of *Narcissus* "Telarmonius plenus", but unfortunately they were also a favourite of the local sheep, who ate them!

A holiday down to Edinburgh enabled Alice and Rachel to find four new plants: Ivy-leaved toadflax (*Cymbalaria muralis*) in Edinburgh, Nipplewort (*Lapsana communis*) at Polkemmet country park, Dove's-foot crane's-bill (*Geranium molle*) in the picnic area during a visit to the zoo and Perforate St. John's-wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) by the railway at Leuchars. They both found four different speedwells: Slender (*V. filiformis*), Thyme-leaved (*V. serpyllifolia*), Green Field (*V. agrestis*) and Germander Speedwell (*V. chamaedrys*). Alice found a fifth species, Heath speedwell (*V. officinalis*). Other extras for Alice included a visit to Loch of Gards, where once again she found three water-crowfoots, and a visit to the



Ivy-leaved
Toadflax

Photo: Anne Kell

Keen of Hamar, where again she found some local specialities including the Shetland mouse-ear (*Cerastium nigrescens* var. *nigrescens*) and Arctic sandwort (*Arenaria norvegica* ssp. *norvegica*). Both sisters saw a rare Eyebright, *Euphrasia arctica* ssp. *arctica*, on their home island.

I would also like to welcome all our new junior members, including those who have joined through #HerbologyHunt. I am always happy to hear from any junior members, by post, email or tweet (@nichola_hawkins), with your botanical stories, pictures or identification queries. If you are keeping a list of plants that you have found this year, you are welcome to send a paper diary, electronic list, HerbologyHunt spotter sheets, or even create a Twitter moment from your #HerbologyHunt posts. I hope you are all having a wonderful year of plant-hunting and I look forward to hearing about it!

NICHOLA HAWKINS

WILD FLOWER SOCIETY ON THE INTERNET

WFS Website

Some months ago I reported that my computer system had failed badly and that, combined with some changes to the way Adobe registers its programs, I had real difficulty in re-creating the necessary assistance which I had used for years to manage our web site as it is. I still have no solution to Adobe's abandonment of support for the two versions of Dreamweaver (used for managing websites) and Photoshop (used for graphics and image alteration) but have found what is called a "workaround". Currently I can update and manage our web site and Facebook page just as before.

The newest part of the web site is the updated Spreadsheet diary. John Swindells and I updated the physical diary some years ago so that it was compatible with Stace 3 names but the existing spreadsheet diary was in the old format. It is now the same as the physical diary with some additions such as automatic counting of entries.

WFS Facebook page

We were an early adopter of Facebook but the format was rather old and cumbersome, so I tried to migrate the valuable bits to a new modern Facebook page to allow more users to contribute. I failed and had to start all over again.

The new page has been up and running for about a year and we now

have over 250 members including some from Europe and the States. Although it is a public group you must make a request to join and you need to already have a Facebook account yourself. Many people join Facebook but add nothing to their own page simply so they can join groups like ours. There is far more contribution from these new members than on the old pages as people want to show their photos of plants or request an identification.

As the founder of this Facebook page I am one of the administrators and Dawn Nelson is the other. Our duties are mostly about admitting new members but should there be anyone who posts inappropriate material (adverts, aggressive posts, overtly political comments) we can delete the post, the whole thread, stop further comments or even cancel the membership. I haven't had to do any of this so far probably because we have relatively few and very civilised members but on another Facebook page call Wild Flowers of Britain and Ireland we do have to monitor post content carefully and sometimes even delete membership.

There are no hard and fast rules on our Facebook page. Occasionally people will post garden plant photos and want identifications of those. I will discourage that in the spring and summer but in winter we don't have as much to post so it would be acceptable then. Foreign plant photos are also acceptable just as they are in our photographic

competition. Mostly though, we encourage people to post about wild flowers of Britain and Ireland.

The weekly numbers of people asking to join our Facebook page is increasing as the weather gets better. Judging by what happens to numbers of users of my own web site, I expect that interest will surge in spring and summer and that the membership of our Facebook page will actually exceed that of the Wild Flower Society itself (approx. 600) by the Autumn. Some of our new members have shown interest in becoming subscribing members and I expect that to increase over the next few months. Any help in keeping interest going by adding comments, identifications or photos from our existing members would be greatly appreciated. I think this Facebook page may be (accidentally) our most powerful recruiting agent yet.

The issue of younger members arises. There isn't an age limit on our Facebook membership but neither has it been created with younger people in mind. I'm not sure what to do about this. Any ideas? In spite of Nichola Hawkins' sterling efforts, we haven't really succeeded in recruiting younger members to the WFS in any great numbers over the years. A special page could be created with careful safeguarding from people who know about such things perhaps. But would any young person join?

Facebook is now seen as for older folk by the younger generation, I understand.

PETER LLEWELLYN



Early Star-of-Bethlehem

Photo: Peter Llewellyn

Checklist of Guernsey Plants

Rachel Rabey and Jane Gilmour have updated the 2005 checklist, adding all casuals and aliens added to the island list since then. As before, each plant has a brief indication of distribution and frequency. The list is in family order with current scientific names and English names. This 2018 edition will prove invaluable to any experienced botanist visiting the island. It's available from La Société Guernesiaise, Candie Gardens, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 1UG, or via their website www.societe.org.gg. Price is £6 + £1.64pp and mine was posted with the most gorgeous botanical stamps!

RO FITZGERALD

Don't forget to submit those photographs for the photographic competition. Deadline 21st August

OBITUARY

Rosemary Cashmore 31 March, 1931 - 23 March, 2018

Rosemary Cashmore died peacefully in Chilton House Nursing home a few days before her 87th birthday. She joined WFS more than 50 years ago and took an active part in recording her local flora in the Chilterns. She served on the committee for several years in the 1980s, first as Field Meetings Secretary, then as General Secretary. She was particularly successful in the former role, her determined and persuasive nature resulting in bumper Meetings Programmes and she led many herself in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Bedfordshire.

Rosemary grew up in Cumbria, near Grange-over-Sands, but moved south to work in London. After her marriage to William Cashmore, a former Director of the Institute of Agricultural Engineering at Wrest Park, Bedfordshire, she spent the rest of her active life in the beautiful village of Haddenham in Bucks. Here she was a leading light in organising social events and entertaining and she founded Haddenham U3A, now 400 members strong.

On first encountering Rosemary at a WFS field meeting more than 40 years ago I was somewhat in awe of her, but that soon passed during a glass of something (probably not lemonade!) and a humorous post mortem on the field meeting we'd just attended and from then on I regularly enjoyed staying in Haddenham,

botanising, visiting gardens and nurseries and joining the merry coffee and lunch parties around the village.

Rosemary's last field meeting some fifteen years ago ended with her determinedly taking a strenuous, for her, additional trek to show several members Red Helleborine (*Cephalanthera rubra*). Soon after this, while on holiday with Elizabeth Norman, Rosemary suffered her first stroke. This was to lead to a gradual decline which prevented her from taking an active part in WFS, but she continued her membership until she died, always taking a keen interest in news of both plants and members.

As well as being a knowledgeable botanist Rosemary had a great interest in Queen Victoria and Jane Austin and lectured on all these subjects. Classical music and bridge, embroidery and photography, gardening and field botany all kept her busy and involved for as long as she was able. Rosemary's strong and forthright character could sometimes seem a little daunting, but to her many friends from all walks of life she was a kind, loyal and generous lady, her sharp sense of humour making her great fun to spend time with. She will be much missed by all who knew her and enjoyed her lively company.

PAT VERRALL