

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

It was a pleasure to see so many of you at the AGM at the Slapton Ley Field Centre. It was a good place to hold the meeting. I was excited to see Strapwort (*Corrigiola litoralis*) for the first time at its only location in the UK and so close to the site of our meeting. It was also a pleasure to present the certificates of the Presidents' Award to Rosemary Parslow and Ian Bennallick for their very fine and well illustrated *New Flora of the Isles of Scilly*. I am now keen to go back to the Isles and use the useful maps in the flora to locate some of the interesting plants. It is hardly a field guide so a strong rucksack will be needed to carry it around, but I feel it is a most worthy recipient of the Presidential award for 2018.

At the meeting we also changed our chairman. I would like to welcome Peter Llewellyn, our website manager, as our new chairman. I look forward to working with him. However, I would like to record a special message of thanks to our long-serving chairman John Swindells. John has done a great deal to take our society forward during his eleven years as chairman. It has been a great pleasure to work with him and I thank him for all the time and effort he has put into ensuring the health of The Wild Flower Society. The good news is

that he will remain on the committee and even continue to offer his London home as a place for the committee meetings. Thank you John for everything you do for the Society.

I have just returned from a three-week visit to Brazil, lecturing and attending the conference of the International Society for Ethnobiology. This large conference was attended by about 1800 delegates. What was most encouraging to me was that there were many indigenous peoples taking part as delegates. There are now many tribal people who are well educated and able to speak for themselves on the rights of these indigenous nations that are such an important part of the South American countries. Several of them made moving appeals for the protection of their forests against illegal logging and farming on their lands. A personal highlight for me was sitting on the podium of a panel discussion beside a Yanomami Indian whose grandmother had taught me about their uses of edible fungi 45 years ago. I never dreamed then, that I would one day hear a Yanomami man speaking about the uses of fungi at an international conference and all stimulated by my original publications on the subject.

GHILLEAN PRANCE

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EDITORIAL

What a year of contrasts! I can't remember a year when we have had to cancel events because of the two extremes of climate. We had a dreary start to the year followed by 'the Beast from the East' with heavy snow falls, which impacted on both the Winter Months Hunt and, most notably, the Spring Hunt, with Branches N3 and Y having to cancel their first meeting of the year. Most of those who took part in the Spring Hunt (page 36) commented on the difficulties they had in finding plants in flower in the couple of days of thaw they had for their search. This was then followed by the hottest summer on record and a prolonged period of drought, resulting in the flora in the drier areas of the country being 'burnt off' and plants completing their flowering earlier than expected. So we had to cancel events for a different reason. That said, most events did go ahead successfully and in glorious sunshine. I, for one, was most grateful for a warm, sunny day for our climb up Ben Lawers – just the most perfect conditions for botanising. Peter Llewellyn (our new Chairman) managed to time his quest to find the Snowdon Lily just perfectly (page 4), as the timing of flowering of

this rarity is notoriously difficult to predict.

Our recent AGM and Members' weekend based in Slapton, Devon was similarly blessed with good weather and, thankfully, slightly lower temperatures. We were treated to several Devon specialities, notably Strapwort (*Corrigiola litoralis*), which grew just down the road from the Field Centre where most of us were staying. Part of the meeting involved the presentation of the awards for the Photographic Competition and David Rich's winning picture of Hazel appears on the back cover, together with a couple other category winner's images within the magazine. I hope you'll agree, all worthy winners.

The AGM also saw the departure of our Chairman, John Swindells, who has served the Society admirably for the last 11 years. Our thanks go to him for all that he has done in this time, not least in chairing the meetings and proof-reading this magazine. I am delighted he has agreed to continue in this latter role.

ANNE KELL

THE PERILS OF PREDICTIVE TEXT

On a recent field meeting one of the members decided to use his phone to record his findings using voice recognition to translate his oral record into a text version. On saying the words "Purple Saxifrage" into the phone, the typed response came back as 'Purple Sexy Fridge'. A second attempt came up with 'Purple Sex Afraid'. Both new species to science!

ERRATUM - HORSESHOE VETCH



In the summer issue of the magazine I used a photo to illustrate Horseshoe Vetch (*Hippocrepis comosa*), which nicely illustrates the perils of using a close-up image of the flower-head without taking in the wider view. The image, reproduced above, is actually of Common Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and adjacent is a photo, from a similar angle, of Horseshoe Vetch.



Generally, the flowers of Horseshoe Vetch form a complete circle, whilst in those of Common Bird's-foot Trefoil the circle of flowers is incomplete. Flowers of Common Bird's-foot Trefoil are often tinged with orange (hence the alternative name of Eggs and Bacon) whilst those of Horseshoe Vetch are a sharper yellow, which may have orangey veins but is never suffused with red. The standard (upper petal) of the former is more tightly folded and the sepals have more pointed teeth with



the sinus between the upper two teeth obtuse.

Of course, if we'd taken a wider picture, the difference in the leaves would have become apparent with Horseshoe Vetch having multi-pinnate leaves and Common Bird's-foot Trefoil having five suborbicular leaflets, the lower two resembling stipules.

ANNE KELL

Horseshoe Vetch
Photo: Peter Llewellyn

Photo: www.aphotoflora.com

SEEKING THE SNOWDON LILY

One of the great things about the Wild Flower Society is that we can make impromptu meetings just as a result of a phone conversation between members who have met at WFS events earlier. This year our General Secretary, Sheila Wynn, mentioned that she would like to see the Snowdon Lily, never having seen it before. I knew where it usually lived on Snowdon and so together with one other WFS member, Peter Jepson and our local Frodsham Natural History Society treasurer, Roy Beacham, we decided to try to find this rare plant. Our four somewhat elderly botanical nutcases set out to try find it on the Clogwyn cliffs at the north face of Snowdon itself on a gloriously hot and sunny Tuesday 29th May 2018. I thought it would probably be the last time I attempted this long walk, at least without new knees.

The Snowdon Lily (*Gagea serotina*) is found in only six sites in or near Snowdon and nearly always on mountain ledges, so this is both a rare plant and often a difficult one to find and photograph. The advantage of this site is that quite often the Lily is to be found low down and so is accessible to photographers. For many years this plant was known as *Lloydia serotina* in honour of Edward Llwyd who found it. Around 1688 he discovered a mysterious bulbous alpine growing in Snowdonia and published the find in a list of 'more rare plants growing in Wales'. The journal he chose was Edmund Gibson's edition of William Camden's *Britannia*, which was first published in

1586 - in Latin of course. The translated entry for Snowdon Lily was this: "*A certain rush-leaved bulbous plant having a one-seeded vessel on top of an erect stalk about nine inches high on the high rocks of Snowdon viz: Trigvylchau y Clogwyn du ymhen y Gluder Clogwyn Yr Ardhu Crib y Distilh*".

Recently taxonomists have decided that *Lloydia* should really be in the *Gagea* genus so our acknowledgment of Edward Llwyd's discovery has been sacrificed by the high priests of taxonomy in the interests of botanical accuracy.

The first part of this long walk was on steep tarmac roads and actually there are plants like Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*) and Beech Fern (*Phegopteris connectilis*) to be found on the roadside verges. Eventually we reached the stile to the Llanberis Path which then leads to the Snowdon summit.

On Tuesday 29th May 2018, the day after the long bank holiday, the long trek along the Llanberis path was full of human traffic as people in their hundreds attempted to get to the summit where, we were told, a queue soon developed. People simply wanted to touch the summit trig point before returning on their nine-mile round trip. No wondering at the views or contemplating the scenery, just touch and go back home. The journey on this rocky or stony Llanberis Path is a bit of a botanist's

nightmare because the longest part of the day is spent trekking along a path with very little of botanical interest on either side.

Fortunately, there is a refreshment hut half way to the summit appropriately called Halfway House. Being the eldest and most decrepit member, I was glad of the opportunity to find a place to sit down and rest awhile. The queues though were ridiculous – until we realised they weren't for refreshments but for the loo. Before you suggest the obvious – "I just go behind a bush" – there really aren't any, or big enough rocks, on this path for quite a few miles. We ordered four orange ice lollies and I consumed mine very slowly. Soon though we had to be on our way. I had estimated we would be at the cliff face looking for Snowdon Lily by about 1.00 pm to 1.30 pm but we were now an hour or more behind schedule.

As the hordes eventually turned left up the steep climb towards Clogwyn station and the summit, we kept straight on and the hot, rocky Llanberis path gave way to a narrower, cooler, grassy path used only by climbers, botanists and sheep. The first clue we were approaching our goal was the appearance of club mosses. These are not mosses but vascular plants found in sub-montane and mountainous areas. At the same time the ubiquitous Parsley Fern (*Cryptogramma crispa*) was present in nearly every nook and cranny. Common Dog Violet (*Viola riviniana*) is not thought of as a mountain plant



but is often found in the short grass on such hikes.

Soon as we approached the Clogwyn Du'r Arddu cliffs on the northern face of Snowdon the alpine plants began to appear. In the wetter parts, Alpine Meadow-rue (*Thalictrum alpinum*) was abundant showing anthers and calyx but as you know, it has no petals. It is one of the most difficult plants to photograph because the light anthers always move in the lightest of breezes.

As expected we found Roseroot (*Sedum rosea*), Starry Saxifrage (*Saxifraga stellaris*), Green Spleenwort (*Asplenium viride*) and some wonderful splashes of pink Moss Campion (*Silene acaulis*) with particularly long pedicels. But would we find Snowdon Lily?

Sometimes there are very poor years for this plant and it can only be seen with powerful binoculars on the highest ledges. We were lucky and found about four at "photographer



Snowdon Lily

height" accompanied by another rarity, Northern Rockcress (*Arabadopsis petraea*) flowering at its most southerly station in Britain.

After an hour or so photographing the Snowdon Lily we started on our way back. On the way Peter Jepson hunted near the lake, unsuccessfully, for the Arctic mouse-ear (*Cerastium nigrescens* var. *laxum*) which is supposed to live in these parts but which none of us has found recently.

On the way back, we stopped at the hut again but the only cold refreshment on sale was a blue slush. We bought some and yes, it was every bit as disgusting as it

looked. We boasted to the owner of the hut of our success in tracking down the lily and that, as we were all quite elderly, how brave and resilient we had been in attempting this trek. The owner deflated us with the information that a man aged 92 had been to the summit and back in recent years and only last week another man aged 84 had also done the same.

We were back at the car at about 7.30 pm and using the pedometer on my phone, I calculate we had walked about eight and a half miles which was just under 20,000 steps uphill (so I'm always out of breath) and downhill (making my arthritic knees even worse). Perhaps though it might not be my very last hike to see this rare plant. After all I'm not even 84 yet, never mind 92.

PETER LLEWELLYN



Northern Rockcress

10 KM SQUARE STUDY (NORTH) 2017

Name	Hectad	Location	Year	New	Total
Mrs. J. Clarke	SD48	Lindale & Whitbarrow	15	7	758
	SD58	Milnthorpe	15	25	436
	SJ66	Winsford	28	0	764
	SJ76	Sandbach	29	0	728
A. & R. Grainger	SE23	Horsforth & Rodley	7	79	484
	SE24	Otley & Wharfe Valley	7	37	236
Mr. P. Jepson	SD61	Bolton (North)	37	1	506
	SD62	Darwen and Blackburn	43	1	863
	SD71	Turton	36	2	455
	SD72	Accrington	42	0	623
Mr. G. Kay	SJ57	Frodsham	21	2	708
	SJ67	Northwich	19	18	527
	SJ87	Alderley Edge	29	0	506
	SJ97	Macclesfield	31	0	582
	SJ98	Marple	39	5	667
Mr. A. Kafel	SE02	Halifax	11	7	740
	SE12	Brighouse	10	7	651
	SE22	Morley, Dewsbury & Batley	9	11	849
Mr. K. Robson	NZ24	Chester-le-street	5	51	521
Mrs. D. Ross	SD32	Lytham	15	3	375
	SD45	Galgate	5	6	296
	SD63	Longridge	30	4	374
	SD64	Chipping	7	0	198
	SD73	Whalley	13	8	288
	SD74	Clitheroe	28	2	361
Mr. B. Tregale	SC39	Ballaugh, Isle of Man	20	2	757
	SE13	Bradford	26	21	1709
Mrs. S. Wynn	SD64	Bowland, Lancashire	11	0	237
	SD65	Forest of Bowland	7	0	149
	SD74	Clitheroe, Lancashire	11	5	551
	SD75	Slaidburn, Gisburn Forest	11	0	239

Julie Clarke found Squinancywort (*Asperula cynanchica*) and Forsythia (*Forsythia x intermedia*) on a dis-used railway line, in Sandside, SD48. She also managed to get some Hawkweeds named by Brian Burrows and found the densely hairy form of Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum* var. *villosissimum*) in the Lythe Valley. In SD58 she noted a fine show of Chives (*Allium*

schoenoprasum) on the central reservation of the Kendal bypass and the pink hairless form of Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium* f. *colorata*) in a hedgerow at Dallam School.

Anthony and Rita Grainger had a good year in SE23 with some nice natives on Adel Bog including Heath Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza*

maculata), Common Spotted Orchid (*D. fuchsii*) and their hybrid (*D. x transiens*). Also here was Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*). Bastard Cabbage (*Rapistrum rugosum*) was a nice alien weed on soil waste at Ling Bob and, new to the 10Km North study, was Yellow Fox and Cubs (*Pilosella caespitosa*) a garden escape on a 'ginnel' in Horsforth. In SE24 the rare Meadow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*) was by the river in Leathley. Here also was the garden cultivar of Italian Lords-and-Ladies (*Arum italicum* ssp. *italicum* 'Marmoratum'). This is a very attractive cultivar with broad white veins on the dark green leaves.

Peter Jepson found the rare Pale Forget-me-not (*Myosotis stolonifera*) on Dean Head Flushes in SD61 and by Earnsdale Reservoir in SD62 he found another Forget-me-not, the hybrid between Water and Creeping Forget-me-not (*M. x suzae*). This is rarely recorded but should be looked out for where both species grow together. It has intermediate size flowers and is only partially fertile with the fruiting calyx with few seeds (one at most) and like many other hybrids often continues flowering late into the season. In SD71 Soft Shield Fern (*Polystichum setiferum*) was found in woodland by Grainings Brook and Water Figwort (*Scrophularia auriculata*) was a surprise find on marshy field by Grains Brook.

Andrew Kafel found some plants on the steps to Dudwell Lane, Skirwell Green in SE02 including the mainly southern Common Calamint (*Clinopodium ascendens*), Millet (*Panicum miliaceum*) and Barnyard Grass (*Echinochloa crus-galli*). New Zealand Hair-grass (*Carex comans*)

was a pavement weed in Halifax. Other pavement weeds were the rare Green Field-speedwell (*Veronica agrestis*) found near Elland Bridge and Seaside Daisy (*Erigeron glaucus*) on Hipperholm cross roads, both in SE12.

Graeme Kay found Wild Parsnip on the edge of the M56 in SJ57, not the usual *Pastinaca sativa* ssp. *sativa* but the alien, *P. sativa* ssp. *urens*, identified using Alan Leslie's article in the BSBI News. Also found on the edge of the M56 was Narrow-leaved Ragwort (*Senecio inaequidens*) which continues its spread across the country. Another alien which has become more common and frequently self-seeds is the Italian Alder (*Alnus cordata*). Graeme found this self-sown on the verge at Davenham in SJ67. Also in Davenham was the hybrid Hazel x Filbert (*Corylus avellana* x *maxima*). This is a fertile hybrid which is often planted and in many areas is more common than our native Hazel. Not surprisingly Graeme was very pleased with the Purple Small-reed (*Calamagrostis canescens*) found on the shore of Pickmere. In SJ98 the mainly southern Many-seeded Goosefoot (*Chenopodium polyspermum*) was in a flower bed in Stockport and Pellitory-of-the-wall (*Parietaria judiaca*), a pavement weed.

Keith Robinson had a good year with 51 new plants for his Chester-le-Street square. The first plant on his list was Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*) found in Felledge Wood which, although not particularly rare, is always a pleasure to find. I am afraid I still much prefer its other name, Town Hall Clock. The Hard x

Fragrant Evening-primrose
(*Oenothera stricta*
'Sulphurea') found
and photographed
by Jesse Tregale



Soft Shield-Fern (*Polystichum x bicknellii*) was an excellent find in Flass Vale, as was the Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*). In Plawsworth Keith found a willow new to me, Scarlet Willow (*Salix alba* 'Britzensis'), a distinctive willow with red stems. In Chester Dene the hybrid between Japanese and Giant Knotweed (*Fallopia x bohemica*) was found. This is seldom recorded although I do not think it that rare (we have two sites in Bradford) but it can be mistaken for Japanese Knotweed although it has bigger, not so truncate, leaves which are hairy below, so it is always worth checking large-leaved Japanese Knotweed for hairs on the under-side of the leaves.

Dorothy Ross had some interesting pavement weeds in SD32 Lytham, including Garden Lobelia (*Lobelia erinus*) and Pink-headed Persicaria (*Persicaria capitata*). These often self-seed from hanging baskets. In SD45 Dorothy was another who found Moschatel, this time by a footpath in Conder Green. Here she also found the seldom recorded Yellow Bristle-grass (*Setaria pumila*). English Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia anglica*) was found at Glasson Dock. In woodland near Stonyhurst SD63

Buck's-beard (*Aruncus dioicus*) and Broad-leaved Helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*) were found. Her new plants for SD73 were all found in Pendleton. These included some nice Primroses (*Primula vulgaris*) on an embankment and Corn Mint (*Mentha arvensis*) by the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. In her last square SD74 Fragrant Orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*) was in Salthill Quarry, Clitheroe and Early Forget-me-not (*Myosotis ramosissima*) was a pavement weed.

Only two new plants in my SD71 Isle of Man square, the red-stemmed form of Lady Fern (*Athyrium filix-femina* var. *rhaeticum*) on the dis-used railway track at Ballaville and Ray's Knotgrass (*Polygonum oxyspermum*) on the Cronk beach.

In my Bradford square I went with Michael Wilcox to search a wet area in Horton Bank Country Park where Marsh Foxtail (*Alopecurus genticulatus*) and Orange Foxtail (*Alopecurus aequalis*) grew together. We gathered a few stems, choosing ones with no visible anthers as hybrid grasses often retain their anthers within the spikelets. On examination Michael found one specimen with

abortive pollen, this was later confirmed by Tom Cope at Kew as the hybrid (*Alopecurus x haussknechtianus*). Clustered Bellflower (*Campanula glomerata*) was on the Valley Road railway sidings and on the abandoned nursery at Hirst Mill we found the pale flowered form of Fragrant Evening-primrose (*Oenothera stricta* 'Sulphurea'), self-sown Garden Stork's-bill (*Erodium manescavii*) and a patch of California Grey Rush (*Juncus patens*).

Sheila Wynn has added new plants to her SD74 Clitheroe square. In Clitheroe an unusual flower bed weed

was Broad-leaved Helleborine (*Epipactus helleborine*). She is still finding new plants in the often-visited Salthill Quarry, finding self-sown Entire-leaved Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster integrifolius*). The not so common Common Ramping-fumitory (*Fumaria muralis*) was in West Bradfield car park.

Thanks to all who sent records - as usual lots of exciting plants found, some new to me, which I will have to look out for, and I wish you all good hunting in 2018 although it has been a slow start with snow in April.

B.A. 'JESSE' TREGALE

10 KM SQUARE STUDY (SOUTH) 2017

Plenty of good records to report this year. I am grateful for all the interesting letters and notes about your discoveries and to those with longer lists who kindly posted a hard copy. Thank you too for continuing to send your lists by 15th January, rather than leaving it until the end of the month.

Alien species dominate Gareth Bursnall's list from the Crawley area (TQ23). Early in the year Garden Tulip (*Tulipa gesneriana*) was surviving in a hedgerow and Blue Anemone (*Anemone apennina*) on a roadside. Later he was pleased to find Stranvaesia (*Stranvaesia davidiana*) in a woodland, and Large-sepalled Hawthorn (*Crataegus rhipidophylla*) and Hollowroot (*Corydalis cava*) in hedgerows. Among Gareth's native species the white variety of Early Purple-orchid (*Orchis mascula* var. *alba*) was a

lovely woodland discovery.

Rodney Burton needed only to go into his garden for two of his TQ56 records. A tiny Common Twayblade (*Neottia ovata*) bearing a few flowers appeared in a heavily shaded part of the grass and, in the driveway, a single Annual Beard-grass (*Polypogon monspeliensis*) turned up near to where compost had been delivered the previous year. Rodney recorded a couple of unusual arrivals in pavements too. Tunicflower (*Petrorhagia saxifraga*) was in Eynsford, although it disappeared within a month, and in Swanley he spotted Four-leaved Allseed (*Polycarpon tetraphyllum*). He was most pleased to record three Greater Butterfly-orchids (*Platanthera chlorantha*) at Magpie Bottom, having searched this site for them for several years.

Name	Hectad	Location	Year	New	Total
Gareth Bursnall	TQ23	Crawley, West Sussex	3	31	551
Rodney Burton	TQ56	Darenth Valley, Kent	23	13	657
Anne Daly	SO88	Kinver, Staffs	5	7	677
	SO98	Stourbridge, Staffs	4	7	516
José Gibbs	TR37	Margate, Kent	3	20	79
Barbara Mathews	TM23	West Felixstowe, Suffolk	20	6	675
	TM24	Woodbridge, Suffolk	18	12	534
	TM33	East Felixstowe, Suffolk	21	8	657
	TM34	Shottisham, Suffolk	9	12	348
Daphne Mills	TQ75	Maidstone, Kent	8	47	639
Mike Mountford	SP09	West Bromwich	1	101	101
Ron Parker	TQ17	Hounslow & Richmond, & Gt. London	17	0	568
	TQ26	Sutton, Gt. London	26	3	1019
	TQ38	East London	24	9	618
Ted Phenna	SH57	Bangor & Anglesey	10	4	426
	SH67	Llanfairfechan, Gwynedd	14	9	659
	SH68	Llangoed, Anglesey	5	4	303
	SH78	Great Orme, Gwynedd	38	21	701
Sue Poyser & Doug Grant	TQ76	Rochester & Chatham, Kent	20	13	884
	TQ77	Higham and Cliffe, Kent	12	24	607
Ted Pratt	SY97	Worth Matravers, Dorset	6	14	552
	SY98	Wareham & Corfe, Dorset	10	21	1182
	SZ08	Studland, Dorset	12	25	1154
Janice Reynolds	TQ40	Newhaven, East Sussex	16	53	644
John Swindells	SP38	Radford, Coventry	2	0	122
Pat Verrall	TQ04	Shere, Surrey	27	4	528
	TQ14	Dorking, Surrey	24	2	554
	TQ15	Leatherhead, Surrey	6	12	384

The recording season was cut short for Anne Daly. Recovering from surgery meant she was unable to begin until August, when she was delighted to start recording an area of SO88 new to her on Highgate Common. A pool here had Greater Spearwort (*Ranunculus lingua*), Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*), and in September Anne spotted Corn Marigold (*Glebionis segetum*) by a track into the

Common. Later she was able to get to Brierly Hill (SO98) to see two Michaelmas Daisies discovered by one of her recording team beside the canal, Narrow-leaved (*Aster lanceolatus*) and Late (*A. x versicolor*) Michaelmas-daisy; also Nodding Bur-marigold (*Bidens cernua*) in marshy ground by a pool.

In her coastal strip along the extreme NE tip of Kent José Gibbs is recording in small sections, this year

concentrating on a new one comprising roadside verges, garden walls and an overgrown railway embankment. Almost all her records were made in April when she found Common Cornsalad (*Valerianella locusta*), Lesser Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia marina*), Spotted Medick (*Medicago arabica*) and many other small, easily-overlooked native species. Her only garden escape was Pot Marigold (*Calendula officinalis*).

A single Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*) in Kirton churchyard must have been a delightful surprise for Barbara Mathews in TM23 and, I envy her, Gold-of-pleasure (*Camelina sativa*), as I have never seen it. Moving northwards she explored new areas of TM24, seeing hundreds of Marsh Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*) at Playford, a village surrounded by well-tended grazing marshes. Martlesham Common was new territory too; here she recorded Fine-leaved Sandwort (*Minuartia hybrida*) and tracked down Eastern Balsam Poplar (*Populus balsamifera*) by its glorious fragrance. Nearer Barbara's home in Felixstowe (TM33) a couple of annual ornamentals, Mexican Aster (*Cosmos bipinnatus*) and Hare's-tail (*Lagurus ovatus*), had self-seeded but in the town car park she found two, more sinister, poisonous perennials, Chinese Pokeweed (*Phytolacca polyandra*) and Deadly Nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*). Barbara crosses the River Deben most weeks to record butterflies but always sees new flowers for her TM34 list, this year adding Hoary Cinquefoil (*Potentilla argentea*) and Spanish Broom (*Spartium junceum*), both near Shingle Street.

Reinstatement of a long-closed riverside path in Aylesford gave Daphne Mills access to a new area to explore in TQ75. Several casual annuals had appeared, including Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*), Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) and Chinese Mustard (*Brassica juncea*). There was Pale Galingale (*Cyperus eragrostis*) too, and a couple of interesting grasses, Green Bristle-grass (*Setaria viridis*) and Johnson-grass (*Sorghum halepense*). With the Kent Botanical Recording Group at Barming in September Daphne added Heath Cudweed (*Conyza floribunda*) and Southern Woodrush (*Luzula forsteri*).

We welcome a new 10Km recorder, Mike Mountford, who has made a great start in SP09, sending an impeccable list complete with grid references. Almost all his records are from Sandwell Valley, not far from home. Here he found Sweet-flag (*Acorus calamus*) and two locally rare species, Orange Balsam (*Impatiens capensis*) and Sensitive Fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*). Two introductions Mike recorded were Crown Vetch (*Securigera varia*) in the RSPB Reserve and Medlar (*Mespilus germanica*), which came in with spoil when the M5 motorway was built and is now well-established at the top of the hill.

Ron Parker keeps busy helping with Atlas 2020 records and he added a few naturalised garden plants for TQ26, including French Sorrel (*Rumex scutatus*) and a Leopard's-bane (*Doronicum x excelsum*). A March day's recording in East London (TQ38) produced some good spring species. Rue-leaved

Saxifrage (*Saxifraga tridactylites*) and Early Meadow-grass (*Poa infirma*) were by the Shoreditch Canal. Then in Hackney Ron saw Upright Yellow-sorrel (*Oxalis stricta*) and Lesser Chickweed (*Stellaria pallida*). Botanising on Anglesey rewarded Ted Phenna with Rock Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*) and Annual Wall-rocket (*Diplotaxis muralis*), both on Gallows Point, Beaumaris (SH57), and near Mariandryrs NR (SH68) he found Imperforate St John's-wort (*Hypericum maculatum*) by a small quarry and Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*) naturalised in a hedge. Back in

naturalised in the dunes. On subsequent days that weekend he added Sowbread (*Cyclamen hederifolium*), a Leafy Hawkweed (*Hieracium vagum*) still bearing a few flowers, and a six foot Kohuhu (*Pittosporum tenuifolium*) sapling (which I somehow missed!), all on Great Orme.

Discovering Pale Flax (*Linum bienne*) at Ranscombe Farm Reserve (TQ76) was a highlight for Sue Poyser and Doug Grant. The site warden had not seen it there for several years. Yellow Dodder (*Cuscuta campestris*) as a birdseed adventive was another interesting find. Their list included both our familiar native Goat's-beard (*Tragopogon pratensis* ssp. *minor*) and the scarce European subspecies (*Tragopogon pratensis* ssp. *pratensis*), in which the yellow ligules are as long as the green phyllaries. A large proportion of Sue and Doug's other hectad (TQ77) is marshland where they added many records during a Kent Field Club meeting on Higham Marshes. Soft Hornwort (*Ceratophyllum submersum*) and Spiked Water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) were dredged from the dykes and a good list of sedges seen there included Divided Sedge (*Carex divisa*). Inland they were pleased to find for themselves Sea Mouse-ear (*Cerastium diffusum*) and Blinks (*Montia fontana*). The latter was in a pub car park but, Doug virtuously adds, they did not go in!

Ted Pratt's botanising was limited, firstly by a back operation in spring, then with a family death overseas in summer, but he still achieved a respectable total in all three hectads. Assisted by Mick Crawley and the



Conwy both Mediterranean Spurge (*Euphorbia characias*) and Hyacinth (*Hyacinthus orientalis*) had naturalised on a railway bank at Llanfairfechan (SH67). The excellent Members' Weekend in Llandudno in September boosted Diary lists for most of us and even Ted (who has lived in and recorded this square (SH78) for WFS for decades) added new records. Wendy McCarthy's evening walk along the West Shore produced Monro's Ragwort (*Brachyglottis monroi*) and Siberian Violet-willow (*Salix acutifolia*)

Photo: Ken Southall

National Daffodil Register, he had a blitz on *Narcissus* cultivars, recording twenty across all three areas, each duly confirmed and with a literature reference. A July day near Worth Matravers (SY97) produced Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*) and a white form of Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense* var. *alba*), while a Knotgrass (*Polygonum polychnemiforme*) was growing in a gateway. In SY98 Ted says his best finds were the wilder subspecies of Summer Snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum* ssp. *aestivum*) in a damp wood near Corfe Castle and the hybrid between Goat and Grey Willows (*Salix caprea* x *S. cinerea* = *S. x reichardtii*) in another wood by the Purbeck Way. In a neglected farmyard on Studland (SZ08) he was pleased to discover Hoary Mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*) and a pink and white zoned form of Large Bindweed (*Calystegia silvatica* ssp. *disjuncta* var. *zonata*).

Janice Reynolds has a wonderful list of unexpected plants thanks to disturbed and imported soil at two construction sites in Newhaven (TQ40) for a new road next to the Ouse Valley Reserve and new flood defences along the river. From April onward she explored these areas regularly and says several of her finds will be first County records for TQ40K and five were new to her. These included Sweet-William Catchfly (*Silene armeria*), Rough Bristle-grass (*Setaria verticillata*) and Bladder Ketmia (*Hibiscus trionum*). Among the many attractive species that turned up on the disturbed sites were Annual Toadflax (*Linaria moroccana*), Marvel-of-Peru (*Mirabilis jalapa*) and Red Tobacco (*Nicotiana*

forgetiana). But perhaps Janice's oddest record was Cucumber (*Cucumis sativus*) which she spotted growing in a pavement crack in Bishoptone.

A visit to WFS member Daphne Foulsham's meadow in Albury (TQ04) gave me Early Marsh Orchid (*Dactylorhiza incarnata* ssp. *incarnata*). This grassland was formerly mown as a lawn. A few years ago Daphne decided to leave it uncut, with the result that many exciting wild flowers, including masses of Adder's-tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*) have appeared. Nearby at Albury Old Church (filmed as the Scottish church in 'Four Weddings and a Funeral') I was pleased to record Yellow Oat-grass (*Trisetum flavescens*). TQ14 records were sparse, but I was intrigued to see a sapling of False Acacia (*Robinia pseudacacia*) in rough grass on the verge of the main road at Wotton; it was clearly not planted but has no obvious origin. (See Ted Pratt's Valhalla Z1 report in the summer issue for my musings on this mystery.) A July day spent recording grasses at Polesden Lacey for the National Trust added several to my TQ15 list, including Black Bent (*Agrostis gigantea*) and Meadow Oat-grass (*Avenula pratensis*), and Star-of-Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum umbellatum*) naturalised at the edge of a woodland was recorded earlier in the year.

I wish you all happy botanising and good health and I look forward to hearing from you again in the first fortnight of 2019.

PAT VERRALL

2017 AUTUMN ONE DAY HUNT

Name	Area	Total
Doug Grant & Sue Poyser	Kent	153
Carol & Bill Hawkins	Norfolk	124
Simon Leach	Somerset	116
Anne Haden & Rachel Rabey	Guernsey	102
Branch Y	Suffolk	102
Sheila Anderson	Kent	72
Dawn Nelson	West Sussex	71
Judith Cox	Cumbria	67
Priscilla Nobbs	Surrey	67
Barbara Allen	Lancashire	64
Ian Sapsford	Kent	52
Branch N3	Lancashire	49
John Swindells	Hampshire	49
Anthony & Rita Grainger	East Yorkshire	45
Alan Swinscoe	Warwickshire	13

Number of species seen: 378

Doug Grant and Sue Poyser enjoyed a warm sunny day for their hunt. They were pleased to find Bilbao Fleabane (*Conyza floribunda*) and Common Cornsalad (*Valerianella locusta*).

Carol and Bill Hawkins did their usual walk along the north Norfolk coast from Morston to Blakeney. They find there is usually about 20% difference year-on-year. The main surprise this time was finding Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) and Cowslip (*P. veris*) in flower. They had to look twice to make sure they were not plastic!

Simon Leach had a good day, starting off with looking around Taunton, where he found some interesting non-natives, including Annual Beard-grass (*Polypogon monspeliensis*). He then moved onto Thurlbear where he was pleased to find lots of calcicoles including Dwarf

Thistle (*Cirsium acaule*) and Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*).

Anne Haden flew over to Guernsey to spend the day with Rachel Rabey to do the hunt. They were surprised to find Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*) still flowering.

Branch Y had a very enjoyable day in Woodbridge, being very pleased with their total. They were surprised to find Sweet Violet (*Viola odorata*) in flower.

Sheila Anderson only spent two hours on her hunt but was surprised how many species she found flowering and was especially pleased to see Shaggy Soldier (*Galinsoga quadriradiata*).

Dawn Nelson hadn't planned to do the hunt but found so many plants flowering while walking to the dentist, decided she would. She enjoyed her

time and was pleased to see a good mixture of species including Bur Chervil (*Anthriscus caucalis*).

Judith Cox walked along the Solway coast again, this time starting off at Workington and found three species she didn't see last year Soapwort: (*Saponaria officinalis*), Field Forget-me-not (*Myosotis arvensis*) and White Clover (*Trifolium repens*).



White Clover

This is the first time Priscilla Nobbs has had a go at the AODH walking no more than a few minutes from her house in any direction. She found several species not record by anyone

else including two garden escape hybrids Perennial Sunflower (*Helianthus x laetiflorus*) and Common Michaelmas-daisy (*Aster x salignus*).

Barbara Allen had a wonderful day walking along the Sankey Valley seeing a good variety of species including White Melilot (*Melilotus albus*) and Tall Melilot (*M. altissimus*).

Ian Sapsford spent a morning looking around Plantlife's Ranscombe Farm Reserve. He saw a good variety of species including five *Geraniums* and Field Madder (*Sherardia arvensis*).

Branch N3 spent a wet day looking around Moses Gate Country Park, Bolton. They found a few unusual non-natives including Yellow-flowered Strawberry (*Potentilla indica*) and Nuttall's Waterweed (*Elodea nuttallii*).

John Swindells had eight species not recorded by anybody else. This was mainly because he visited several acidic sites finding such species as Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*) and Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*).

Anthony and Rita Grainger spent the day at North Cave Wetland, seeing ten species that they hadn't previously found flowering there, notably Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*), Bristly Oxtongue (*Helminthotheca echioides*) and Black Nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*).

Finally, Fox-and-cubs (*Pilosella aurantiaca*) seemed such a super little orange flower to Alan Swinscoe so late in the year.

IAN GREEN

BRANCH Y AUTUMN ONE DAY HUNT

Group Y's Autumn One Day Hunt took place in Woodbridge, Suffolk on Saturday 28th October. A nice easy walk in the park I thought. I won't bother taking my books as we're unlikely to find anything we don't recognise. How naïve I was. It started out well, everyone managed to find the car park even though the local authorities had renamed the road without informing Google!

Our first stop was in the nearby allotments. Allotments can prove especially rich in wild plants and as expected we found all the usual culprits including Fat-hen (*Chenopodium album*), Shaggy-soldier (*Galinsoga quadriradiata*) and a lovely evening primrose. Fat-hen is a very variable plant which can look a lot like Common Orache (*Atriplex patula*). The way to tell them apart is that Fat-hen leaves have no side lobes. If the plant is in fruit look for the bracteoles which only occur on Common Orache. There was a lot of discussion and much (quiet) cursing as we tried to pick apart the small flowers of Shaggy-soldier to find the scales. Gallant-soldier (*G. parviflora*) has scales which are clearly three lobed whereas Shaggy-soldier scales are unlobed or with very small lobes. The two species very often grow together. After we keyed out the Evening-primrose to Common Evening-primrose (*Oenothera biennis*) I took some home to start a colony in my back garden. They are so pretty.

By this time we already had a huge number of plants and the car park

was still in sight. We watched carefully as Stephen Clarkson climbed gingerly back over the wire fence but sadly a picture for the photographic competition was not to be.

I was going to say "moving swiftly on" but I must amend that "to moving very slowly on" we crossed an open weedy patch of ground and lo we found the star plant of the day, a lone Pale Galingale (*Cyperus eragrostis*). What a find. Out came the books again with me looking ever more red faced. There was also an unusual plant nearby which although it wasn't in flower gave us much puzzlement. We took samples and are still trying to find out what it was.

We continued to follow Nicola Dixon to where she had told us she had seen Crown Vetch (*Securigera varia*) in flower just two weeks beforehand. There is a huge patch of it on the bank of a busy road but sadly the last flower had gone and try as we might we couldn't resurrect any. Never mind at least we know where it is for next year.

At this point Pat Toshach made a very kind offer of the warmth of her living room, as we apparently were only a few roads away, so we all gratefully went there for our lunch. Thank you Pat.

Just as we finished our sandwiches Nicola timed it just right to produce two mystery plants that she had found in the last few months. "Where are my books when I need them?"



Common Evening-primrose

to be very popular in annual seed mixes at the moment. And the other was an *Amaranthus*, a dreaded genus. I thought it was Pellitory-of-the wall (*Parietaria judaica*) at first glance because it was growing against a wall out of a pavement crack but the inflorescence was terminal and on closer inspection it was in fruit not flower so, of course, we can't count it for the hunt. We took some home and Stace proved invaluable as usual. The fruit was exactly like the photograph on page 499, Perennial Pigweed (*Amaranthus deflexus*). A first for me. Yippee.

We then decided to make a bee line for the river to see a different habitat. We were amazed at the number of plants still in flower at this time of year and we managed 104. Some plants like the False Oxlip (*Primula x polyanthus*) were making an early appearance (or was it late)! All in all a wonderful day full of surprises and interest.

The day wasn't finished with us yet though. There was a very slight breeze, not a lot, but enough to lift poor Nicola's notebook off the bench where she had placed it for safekeeping, up and into the mud in the harbour! Shirley Payne made a valiant and brave attempt to walk to it but in the end Dennis Kell came to the rescue with a borrowed boat hook and hooked it first time. Who says botany isn't full of excitement and drama.

Many thanks go to Dr. Stephen Clarkson for leading us so ably with his usual good humour and knowledge.

SUE GRAYSTON

When will I ever learn?" We need another hard and fast botany rule. Do not leave your books behind under any circumstances! You're bound to see something interesting that you can't identify. Grrr. Luckily more dedicated and sensible people than I had carried theirs and we made a start. One could be a Flossflower (*Ageratum houstonianum*) and the other was determined as Two-spined Acaena (*Acaena ovalifolia*). A new county record no less. Technically not countable for our Autumn One Day Hunt as it was found earlier and in Norfolk, but interesting.

Even just walking along a road there were plants that we couldn't immediately name. Some were obviously garden escapes that had seeded themselves in the road gutter. One was *Linaria maroccana*, a pretty little *Linaria* from Morocco that seems

THE GREENWOOD TREES

Christina Hart-Davies drew the illustration that appears on the front cover of the Wild Flower Magazine. She has recently produced a new book, which is illustrated with some of her beautiful watercolours, and has kindly written a piece, with information drawn from the book, for this magazine.

Native tree species are defined as those which re-colonised Britain after the last glaciation and before rising sea levels isolated Britain from mainland Europe. Pollen records show that the first sylvan pioneers to return were Birch (*Betula* spp.), Aspen (*Populus tremula*) and Willow (*Salix* spp.), followed by Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*).

As the climate became warmer and wetter, Scots Pine retreated northwards and, with Birch, is still the dominant tree in remaining pockets of Scotland's Caledonian Forest. In the 17th century Scots Pine was replanted further south, often in hilltop clumps as landmarks for travellers and drovers. Later, huge plantations provided timber for building, pit-props, railway sleepers and telegraph poles. Pine's invigorating scent was considered good for respiratory problems.

The waterproof bark of both our native Birches (*Betula pendula* and *B. pubescens*) was used for roofing and for boats. Northumbrian fishermen were recorded as using rolled Birch-bark candles. The best-known use for Birch was in making brooms. The belief grew that Birch had protective powers and you were sweeping out the Devil with the dirt. The village maypole was usually a young Birch.

Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) returned early to Britain and is still common throughout. It coppices well, growing

long, straight poles useful for building and agricultural purposes. The flexible poles were split for weaving fences, hurdles and 'wattle and daub' panels in timber-framed buildings. Always considered a magical tree, Hazel is still the preferred source of dowsing twigs and St Patrick was said to have used a Hazel wand to banish all the snakes from Ireland.

Elm (*Ulmus* spp.), Oak (*Quercus* spp.) and Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) arrived next and spread throughout, apart from the far north of Scotland. There are about 600 species of Oak worldwide and everywhere it stands for strength, courage and endurance. Our own two native species, English Oak (*Q. robur*) and Sessile Oak (*Q. petraea*) are no exception: Oak is the unofficial emblem of England, a military decoration and the commonest tree in our heraldry. The hard, durable timber was first choice for building houses and churches. It was also prized for shipbuilding and since medieval times there have been suggested planting schemes to maintain supplies for the Navy, our 'wooden walls'. Oak is the tree most often struck by lightning and so, by the contrary logic of folklore, was thought to be protective against it. Carved acorns on bannister finials and blind-pulls were lightning charms.

Soon our forty or so native trees covered most of Britain in what is known as the Wildwood. They flourished or declined in different



areas as local conditions changed. At one time Small-leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*) was the dominant species in lowland England, though nowadays it is much rarer.

Early hunters lived in the Wildwood from the start, but it was not until our Neolithic ancestors brought permanent settlements and agriculture that significant changes began. Woods were cleared for crops and pasture at an increasing rate and it is estimated that about half the Wildwood had gone by 500BC.

Remaining woods were managed to provide building materials, fuel and much more. In pre-industrial times trees supplied everything from mill wheels, cradles, carts, barrels and bowls to pails, combs and baskets. The bast (inner bark) was twisted into rope; dry leaves were used to stuff mattresses, or light fires. Other parts could tan hides, feed people and livestock, treat illness and injury, or dye cloth.

Whilst providing for so many of our ancestors' practical needs, trees also figured prominently in their mythology. The annual 'death and

resurrection' of deciduous trees and the apparent immortality of evergreens were powerful symbols. Trees became associated with certain qualities and supernatural abilities. Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) would protect against witches' spells. A lone thorn, Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), marked an entrance to the underworld.

Until very recently life was perilously insecure, so any helpful glimpse into the future would be eagerly sought. A heavy crop of Hawthorn berries (or beechnuts, or acorns) was said to predict a harsh winter; trees showing the undersides of their leaves was supposed to predict rain. The amount of summer rain could be foretold by the breaking of tree buds, though there are several contradictory rhymes on this subject:

Oak before Ash, expect a splash (rain),

Ash before Oak, expect a choke (drought)

These were not idle concerns: a drought or a ruined harvest could mean hunger or even starvation.

Previous generations knew which trees were best for particular jobs. Aspen's light but strong wood was perfect for surgical splints, shields and oars, while Alder and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) both last well in wet conditions. Winchester Cathedral is built on Beech piles, much of Venice on Alder.

Beech was the last of our native trees to arrive, establishing itself in the south-east just in time to qualify. Prayers uttered under a Beech would go straight to Heaven, but it would rustle its leaves in disapproval if you swore - perhaps worth remembering when walking in the woods!



Pedunculate Oak
(*Quercus robur*)
Illustration by Christina Hart-Davies

BOTANOPHILIA REVISITED

DENOUEMENT

Is it just down to hubris that most people are fairly relaxed about Botanophilia? Despite its insidious nature and there being no satisfactory cure, they seem to think of it as a benign condition, at worst a potentially expensive peccadillo, but unlikely to swell the ranks of militant conservationists. The WFS has remained ambivalent on the matter virtually since its inception. Its main aims do centre on turning out competent botanists after all. Individuals were considered, by the

Victorians, competent to look after themselves on sociological issues and associated lifestyle choices: such a position remains to this day. Of course, things have changed over the years. Those of us who charted their progress through Beginners' branches, via Winners' and on to Valhalla could easily judge where we stood in relation to other botanophiliacs. Nowadays though, the branches are all but vanished, so how can a person decide how far the condition has gone? The following may help:-



'Pavement Artists'
Photo by Anne Kell

1st place in the 'Human Element' category of the 2018 Photo Competition

PROGNOSES

You can recognise a tree when you see one. A flower is what it says, bushes and shrubs are a bit marginal.

You always liked snowdrops and spring bulbs. You join the WFS to get to know them a little better.

You can now identify a few flowers. Someone has shown you a native Orchid.

You are attending meetings regularly and are getting to grips with all sorts of detail. You know what a sedge is!

Grasses, sedges and rushes are grist to your mill. You attend as many meetings as possible. Holidays abroad are all botany based.

You use Latin names routinely – employ terms like adnate and falcate without needing to look them up.

You can lead meetings, describe plants to sub-species level and recognise hybrids readily.

You are really passionate about Brambles (hawkweeds), (dandelions).

You are the average person botany wise.

This is a nice thing to do but be alert, botanophilia is incipient.

You have a new and interesting hobby. Beware, this is the danger time.

You get Stace as a birthday present. Botanophilia is now inevitable.

You are well up to the old Valhalla standard. A list of local marriage guidance counsellors is available at the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

Natural by now, the stage when some decide they would like to become County Recorders: not uncommon with the WFS.

All your friends are now botanists (your old associates really have nothing interesting to talk about). Botanophilia has you in its thrall.

Good Grief!

CHOICES

Do you have a rich and sustainable lifestyle? Do you have an enthralling and rewarding hobby? Are you fascinated by flowers? Do you dream "where oxlips and the nodding violet grow"? Is your Botanophilia at all containable or are you happily content with the vagabond life of the flower seeker?

A FELLOW SUFFERER



Borage
Photo by Dennis Kell
1st place in the 'Close-up' category of the 2018 Photo Competition

2017 AUTUMN WEEK HUNT

Name	Area	Total
Barbara Allen	VC 59 South Lancs	80
Sheila Anderson	Kent	104
Caroline Bateman	Surrey and Kent	170
Gareth Burnall	Sussex and Surrey	143
Sarah Delmas	Devon	24
Pat Graham	Co. Durham and Hampshire	109
Anthony and Rita Grainger	West and East Yorkshire	107
Doug Grant and Sue Poyser	Kent	220
Ian Green	Moray	105
Anne Haden	Jersey	165
Margaret Hall	Lancashire, Cheshire and Derbyshire	68
Vince Jones	VC 62 N. E. Yorkshire	187
Simon Leach	Somerset and Wiltshire	215
Pamela Lee	Hampshire, Surrey and Dorset	53
Sally Maller	Devon	77
Barbara Mathews	Suffolk	157
Lindsay Pyne	Alderney	125
Janice Reynolds	Sussex	174
June Robinson	Greater Manchester and Derbyshire	73
Dorothy Ross	Lancashire and Yorkshire	116
Ian Sapsford	Kent and Oxford	115
Alan Swainscoe	Warwickshire	31
John Swindells	London, Hampshire and Coventry	152
Pauline Wilson	Avon	101

Number of plants seen - 585

Number of plants new to the Hunt - 6

Plants seen by all - Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)

Barbara Allen joined Branch N3 for the Hunt which unfortunately turned out to be the only wet day in the week. For the majority of the Hunt she focused on the Sankey Valley near Warrington and here she spotted Bristly Oxtongue (*Helminthotheca echioides*) and Tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*). A visit to the Southport dunes gave her Blue Fleabane (*Erigeron acris*).

I was pleased to receive Sheila

Anderson's first Autumn Hunt list. On a sunny day she spotted Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*) in full flower at Jeskyns Country Park. Fool's Parsley (*Aethusa cynapium*) was still in flower but looking sad.

A birthday pub lunch at Gomshall ended by Caroline Bateman fishing about in the River Tillingbourne, which actually flows under the pub, where she spotted the Hybrid Monkeyflower (*Mimulus x robertsii*).



Photo: Dennis Kell

This had been verified by a botanical colleague. The Langley Valley gave her Rough Poppy (*Papaver hybridum*) and a single plant of Jersey Cudweed (*Gnaphalium luteoalbum*). Caroline says the latter is popping up all over the place in London.

This was Gareth Bursnall's first Hunt which he thoroughly enjoyed. After trawling the lanes and footpaths near home he drove to Beachy Head and was amazed to find 26 plants flowering in the milder sea air. Plants spotted during the week were Silver Ragwort (*Senecio cineraria*), Rock Sea-lavender (*Limonium binervosum*) and, a surprise, Spring Whitlow-grass (*Erophilla verna*) but one of his favourites was Treasureflower (*Gazania rigens*).

Black Nightshade

Sarah Delmas lives in France and was visiting the home of her parents at Bovey Tracey during half term. On a roadside she spotted Sowbread (*Cyclamen hederifolium*), by a footpath Fuchsia (*Fuchsia magellanica*) and on a building site at Brimley, Black Nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*).

Pat Graham spent time with her daughter in Hampshire during the Hunt and visited Selborne where she found Rough Hawkbit (*Leontodon hispidus*) and Cowslip (*Primula veris*). Flattened Meadow-grass (*Poa compressa*) was in the car park at Winchester, Hare's-tail Grass (*Lagurus ovatus*) was seen near Southampton Airport and back home, in Bishop Auckland, Eastern Rocket (*Sisymbrium orientale*).

Anthony and Rita Grainger visited several nature reserves in between granddaughter duty. They were surprised to spot Cowslip (*Primula veris*) at North Cave Wetlands, once a sand and gravel quarry and now an oasis of thriving wildlife. Intermediate Evening-primrose (*Oenothera x fallax*) was found at Ben Rhydding Gravel Pits, a good area for Orchids, and the recently named Clubrush (*Bolboschoenus laticarpus*). A new plant for their Diary was Bastard Cabbage (*Rapistrum rugosum*).

"The week turned out to be sunny and warm making it a delight to botanise," said Doug Grant and Sue Poyser. I notice they saw Garden Pea (*Pisum sativum*). This is a first for the Hunt. Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*) was still in flower in a roadside ditch, as was Chinese Mustard (*Brassica juncea*) by a

restored riverside path. *Nemesia* (*Nemesia strumosa*) was doing well in a crack between the pavement/ wall. Unfortunately this is not countable so will have to go on their Parnassus list.

Ian Green took the opportunity to exercise his dogs whilst noting the plants. He says some are new to his Autumn list. Common Wintergreen (*Pyrola minor*) was spotted in Lachlanwells and this hasn't been since 1983. He also found Floating Club-rush (*Eleogiton fluitans*) which is a first for the Hunt. Allseed (*Radiola linoides*), not seen since 1999, was recorded from Monaughty Woods.

Anne Haden spent a wonderful day in Guernsey botanising with Rachel Rabey. You will all be glad to learn Rachel is feeling much better now after a fall earlier in the year. During the week Anne spotted Honey Bells (*Nothoscordum borbonicum*), Paper-white Daffodil (*Narcissus papyraceus*) and Century Plant (*Agave americana*); the last two named are new for the Hunt. Unfortunately her Dropseed (*Sporobolus indicus*) and Guernsey Lily (*Nerine bowdenii*) are not countable as they are not down in Stace as a numbered or lettered plant. Excellent plants, although I believe the former is becoming a nuisance.

Margaret Hall had to fit in the Hunt with packing for house-moving. She joined Branch N3 on a miserable wet day and due to road works had to follow tedious directions to find the venue. She says it was worth it for the friendship of members. At Bramall Hall Ivy-leaved Toadflax (*Cymbalaria*



muralis) was blooming on walls and Greater Periwinkle (*Vinca major*) had 'got away' at Biddulph Grange.

Vince Jones is the BSBI Recorder for VC 62 and this will be a busy time for him running up to Atlas 2020, so welcome to the Hunt with such a grand first total. He has in his list Tunicflower (*Petrorhagia saxifraga*) which is another first for the Hunt. Out and about in his VC he spotted many goodies including Hieracia of which 2 were Dappled Hawkweed (*H. scotosticum*) and Uig Hawkweed (*H. uiginskyense*). Vince says the latter is spreading rapidly in the South Gare. Blue Lettuce (*Lactuca tatarica*) has not been recorded since 1982.

Simon Leach was pleased to see so many grasses in flower including Annual Beard-grass (*Polypogon monspeliensis*), not seen since 1998,

Photo: Anne Kell



Photo: Ken Southall

Water Bent (*Polypogon viridis*) at Taunton and Hare's-tail (*Lagurus ovatus*) at Minehead. Whilst in London he popped into Hyde Park and spotted Small-flowered Crane's-bill (*Geranium pusillum*) and nearer home, at Thurlbear, Dwarf Thistle (*Cirsium acaule*) and Common Rock-rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*) were seen.

Pamela Lee recorded mostly near home but a visit to Dorset gave her Common Field-speedwell (*Veronica persica*). Dwarf Gorse (*Ulex minor*) was seen at Ludshott and Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), a pavement weed, at Grayshott, the latter being a first for the Hunt.

This is the first time Sally Maller has joined in the Hunt, so welcome. All

her records are near home at Wembury Point and the South West coastal path. She spotted Corn Marigold (*Glebionis segetum*) in a field managed for birds. Common Cornsalad (*Valerianella locusta*) was a garden weed and Greater Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella major*) was seen at Wembury Point.

Barbara Mathews says "No Forget-me-nots this year" but Black Nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*) has been around in great numbers. She was surprised to find Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*) in flower so late in the year. In a small churchyard by the beach at Felixstowe Ferry Wild Pansy (*Viola tricolor*) was growing. Barbara says it was so delicate and solitary. Sadly about 150 houses are being built here almost on the beach. Cotton Thistle (*Onopordon acanthium*) was a good find for the Hunt.

Lindsay Pyne tells me in September she saw Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*) for the first time so was delighted to find it still in flower for the Hunt. I'm pleased to learn Crimson Clover (*Trifolium incarnatum*) is still about. This was last recorded for the Hunt in 1978. Also found were Japanese Rose (*Rosa rugosa*) and Rock Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia rupicola*).

Janice Reynolds was pleased with her much improved total this year. Earlier in the year she came across dumped earth at Newhaven and as luck would have it she found several plants there still flowering, two being Sweet Tobacco (*Nicotiana elata*) and Annual Toadflax (*Linaria maroccana*), both firsts for the hunt. In Seaford Janice spotted Japanese Lantern

(*Physalis alkekengi*) and this hasn't been seen on the Hunt since 1981. However, she says her best plant this year is Bastard Toadflax (*Thesium humifusum*).

June Robinson joined Branch N3 on a very wet One Day Hunt. By the River Croal Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) was found and by the canal at Prestolee Druce's Crane's-bill (*Geranium x oxonianum*). In Derbyshire the lead spoil heaps speciality Spring Sandwort (*Minuartia verna*) was seen along with Greater Knapweed (*Centaurea scabiosa*).

Dorothy Ross visited many different habitats during the week. She was also on grandparenting duties and on waste ground in Blackpool she found Black Nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*) following a trip to the Zoo with her grandchildren. By a canal was Water Forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*); at Fewston Reservoir, Sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*); Fairburn Ings produced Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*) and at the famous Salthill Quarry, Clitheroe she was pleased to find Round-leaved Wintergreen (*Pyrola rotundifolia*) still in flower

Yet another member new to the Hunt is Ian Sapsford - thank you. The highlight for Ian was a single flower stalk of Alexanders (*Smrynium olusatrum*) at Cliffe Pools. At Istead Rise he saw Bloody Crane's-bill (*Geranium sanguineum*) and in a strawberry field at Oxford he spotted Flax (*Linum usitatissimum*).

Alan Swainscoe experienced both warm and cold days recording his plants. Around his village he saw Canadian Fleabane (*Conyza*

canadensis), lots of Dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale*) and Field Forget-me-not (*Myosotis arvensis*). He is now looking forward to the Winter Hunt and expectation of the long for Spring!

John Swindells covered a large area in this year's Hunt. He was very pleased to find Pale Butterwort (*Pinguicula lusitanica*) in flower at Hatchet Pond, New Forest along with White Water-lily (*Nymphaea alba*). At the Isle of Dogs - a good area to botanise - he found Warty Cabbage (*Bunias orientalis*). The last time this was recorded was 1986. Also found were Corncockle (*Agrostemma githago*) and Austrian Chamomile (*Anthemis austriaca*), the latter you have to be particularly careful with as you can only really identify it in fruit i.e. the receptacular scales become prickly in fruit. John was the only member who recorded all these finds. In Coventry he spotted Common Cornsalad (*Valerianella locusta*).

Pauline Wilson says her totals are always consistent but not necessarily all the same. Plants seen near home were American Winter-cress (*Barbarea verna*), a Bramble (*Rubus caesius*) and an 'early' flowering Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna*).

Thank you all for joining the Hunt, especially our five members partaking for the first time. All appeared to have had good weather. Plant numbers are up this year. Always remember ferns must be recorded in spore, plants in flower and horsetails in cone.

JULIE CLARKE

WINTER MONTHS HUNT 2017-18

Name	County	No. of Sp.	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total Records
Phyl Abbott	Yorks/Staffs	39	29	19	11	59
Sue Adams	Surrey/Sussex	71	51	26	27	104
Barbara Allen	Wales/Ches	70	57	22	24	103
Sheila Anderson	Kent/Surrey	53	40	x	25	65
Catherine Bell	Fife	48	33	20	25	78
Fred Booth/Daphne Mills	Kent	160	139	75	68	282
Julie Clarke	Cumbs/Lancs	55	41	16	26	83
Stephen Clarkson	Suffolk/Herts	59	37	11	31	79
Anne Cooper	Suffolk	95	71	55	56	182
Frances Critchlow	Northants etc.	70	36	46	40	122
Rosemary FitzGerald	Somerset	168	123	83	87	293
Pat Graham	CoDurham etc	53	25	19	45	89
Rita & Anthony Grainger	Yorks	53	35	26	31	92
Doug Grant/Sue Poyser	Kent	193	148	108	109	365
John Guest	Yorkshire	58	52	39	22	113
Anne Haden	Jersey	181	138	80	79	297
Carol Hawkins	Norfolk	161	135	88	70	293
Carol Holt	W. Sussex	45	All	three	months	49
Pippa Hyde	Middx/Surrey	94	71	51	46	168
Anne & Dennis Kell	Norfk/Suffk	138	110	91	57	258
Sue Kightley/Diana Stroud	Bucks	113	95	77	72	244
Geoff & Sarah Kitchener	Kent	184	111	118	66	295
Sally Maller	Devon	88	69	58	51	178
Barbara Mathews	Norfk/Suffk	102	74	67	50	191
Dawn Nelson	Sussex etc.	328	239	184	147	570
Jill Oakley	Sussex etc.	270	212	149	99	460
Ron Parker	London/Essex	118	100	40	44	184
Janice Reynolds	Sussex	123	89	61	57	207
Rosemary Roberts	Kent	75	53	40	46	139
Michael Robinson	S E London	97	69	48	54	171
Dorothy Ross	Lancs. etc.	44	30	21	25	76
Heather Silk	Kent	92	68	43	35	146
Mary & Claire Smith	Derbyshire	111	90	52	47	189
John Swindells	London/Kent	73	48	33	31	112

Total number of species seen: **613**

New to the Hunt: **38**

Total Records 2017/2018: **6336**

Total species found to date: **1111**

Everyone saw: Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*),
Common Chickweed (*Stellaria media*), Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*)

As I write this, during possibly the hottest summer since 1976, it is hard to recall last winter which was so cold and long-drawn out (remember the 'Beast from the East'?) and which, for me and some WFS Members, meant a much-depleted Winter Months Hunt list. However, many of you managed to venture out in difficult conditions and submit very extensive lists, so once again the Hunt has proved to be unpredictable and shows how the winter differs throughout the country. Thank you all for sending your lists - a grand total of 34! And I do appreciate the letters or emails which accompany your lists, which give interesting background information to the statistics.

Phyl Abbott did most of her hunting in Lichfield and, like many of us, longed for spring after a 'drab and weary February'. She was one of the few to spot Many-seeded Goosefoot (*Chenopodium polyspermum*) and the only one to find Skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*), in a churchyard; a plant which I usually find by canals.

Sue Adams' favourite find from her Hunt was the humble Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) providing a welcome reminder of summer. She was also impressed by seeing masses of Winter Heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*) in Duncton, West Sussex and was the only one to find Spreading Hedge Parsley (*Torilis arvensis*).

Barbara Allen found most of her plants in Lancashire and Wales, whilst 'dog and duck sitting' for her daughter. Presumably she was able to escape her duties occasionally for,

in December, she spotted Shasta Daisy (*Leucanthemum x superbum*) and one of my favourite Buttercups, Celery-leaved (*Ranunculus sceleratus*).

Although Sheila Anderson has not seen many plants over the winter, as she did no hunting in January- too cold?- she is glad she made the effort for the other two months and did see Bilbao's Fleabane (*Conyza floribunda*) which is a new plant for the Hunt. Bastard Cabbage (*Rapistrum rugosum*) was a good find too.

Well done to Catherine Bell, a first-timer to the Hunt and making her first attempt in such a bad Scottish winter. She has sent a lovely clear and varied list of plants including Winter Aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*), Dove's-foot Crane's-bill (*Geranium molle*) and, in December and January, Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*)!

Fred Booth and Daphne Mills have submitted an impressive list again, despite February heralding in snow and ice. They were amazed to see Common Broomrape (*Orobancha minor*) in their own garden in Kent. No-one else saw Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) and only one other Member saw Malling Toadflax (*Chaenorhinum origanifolium*), a plant I had never heard of until now.

Julie Clarke got off to a good start in December, hunting in Lancashire and Cumbria, but January's cold took its toll and she was disappointed to find only three plants of Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna*). However, she saw lots of Winter Aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*) which may have provided



Abraham-Isaac-Jacob

Photo: Ken Southall

some compensation. The wonderfully named Abraham-Isaac-Jacob (*Trachystemon orientalis*) was a nice find.

Another first timer is Stephen Clarkson, with a small but worthwhile list which included some interesting species such as Cider Gum (*Eucalyptus gunnii*), which no-one else found, Guernsey Fleabane (*Conyza sumatrensis*) and another Eucalyptus: Ribbon Gum (*E. viminalis*). All were found in his home county of Suffolk.

Anne Cooper now has new hunting territory as she has moved house since last year and is appreciating the agricultural weeds at the edges of fields near her new home. She has sent in an excellent list with a good range of plants including such arable weeds as Common Poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*), Oil-seed Rape (*Brassica napus* ssp. *oleifera*) and Common

Fiddleneck (*Amsinckia micrantha*).

Frances Critchlow is yet another WMH first timer; there are quite a lot this year. She has seen a good range of plants, even planning to target certain species for next year's Hunt, including Common Whitlowgrass (*Erophila verna*), which she was pleased to identify. Though common, it is very easy to overlook this little plant. Frances was the only Member to spot Common Hemp-nettle (*Galeopsis tetrahit*).

Ro FitzGerald has sent in a large list, even though she feels this bad winter in Somerset has reduced her totals. Despite the January frosts she saw Scarlet Pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis*), two Fumitories (*Fumaria* spp.) and Pink Sorrel (*Oxalis incarnata*) all of which seem rather fragile plants but they managed to hang on over the New Year.

I received a very chatty letter from Pat Graham, who remembers how the late Edith Rawlins inspired her to botanize. Pat has been hunting in her northern home and in the south, where her daughter lives. Her favourite find this year was Alexanders (*Smyrniololus atrum*) and she enjoyed spotting Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*), as she seldom sees it.

It's the second time that Anthony and Rita Grainger have entered the WMH and they are pleased with their increased total. Well done for spotting Yellow Fox-and-Cubs (*Pilosella caespitosa*), a new species for the Hunt. They were delighted to see Abraham-Isaac-Jacob (*Trachystemon orientalis*) by the River Aire before

the snow descended!

Doug Grant and Sue Poyser experienced heavy snowfalls in Kent (which does seem to suffer in winter) but nevertheless have sent in a very large and comprehensive list. Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*) flowered all summer until December and they were pleased with Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*) and surprised to find Greater Burnet-saxifrage (*Pimpinella major*) in January.

John Guest has some mobility problems but nevertheless is determined to enter next year's Hunt. He has submitted a decent total from hunting in Yorkshire. Common Rock-rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*) in December was a good find and John did well to be the only one to add Bread Wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) to his list.

Anne Haden's winter seems to have been mild (lucky Annel!) and consequently she has amassed quite a large total. She has found some interesting plants such as Rescue Brome (*Ceratochloa cathartica*), Apple of Peru (*Nicandra physalodes*) and Autumn Squill (*Scilla autumnalis*). Anne's home is in Jersey, which may explain the mild winter and splendid range of species.

A generous list has been sent in by Carol Hawkins who has added to the Hunt's master list with Six-Rowed Barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), Autumn Oxeye (*Leucanthemella serotina*) and Goldilocks Buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*) to name but a few. All plants were found within walking distance of her Norfolk home. Carol Holt has presented a modest



but interesting list for her first WMH. I would encourage everyone to note plants in winter, no matter how small the total. She saw Wood Spurge (*Euphorbia amigdaloides*) and was one of the few to spot Summer Snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*). I hope Carol will continue to enjoy entering the WMH.

Pippa Hyde did quite well in all three months. She saw Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) for the first time in several years and was the only hunter to find Nettle-leaved Bellflower (*Campanula trachelium*) and Russian Vine (*Fallopia baldschuanica*). Many of Pippa's plants were spotted in urban settings like roadsides or waste ground, which is where I do a lot of my botanizing.

Anne and Dennis Kell sent their list early as they were off to Tenerife (for some much needed sunshine?).

Photo: Ken Southall

Their plants were all found in East Anglia. They were disappointed not to find Alexanders (*Smyrnium olusatrum*) but otherwise achieved an excellent total, adding four species of Cranesbill (*Geranium* spp.) to their list. No-one else saw Ragged Robin (*Silene flos-cuculi*) or Rough Meadow Grass (*Poa trivialis*).

Another large total from Sue Kightley and Diana Stroud, who were impressed with 'particularly lush' Water Figwort (*Scrophularia auriculata*) and surprised to see plenty of clumps of Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) flourishing in all three months in Bedfordshire. Hairy Brome (*Bromopsis ramosa*) was not seen by anyone else.

Sarah and Geoff Kitchener had good hunting in December, but then winter took hold. However they were amazed by the Cowslips (*Primula veris*) they saw in flower and were surprised to see Austrian Chamomile (*Anthemis austriaca*) on a building site. Sarah and Geoff were the only ones to see Sea Purslane (*Atriplex portulacoides*) and Fern Grass (*Catapodium rigidum*).

Sally Maller has increased her total from last year, despite the long cold winter in Devon. She enjoys combining botanizing with dog-walking and on her winter travels has come across some nice umbellifers such as Rough Chervil (*Chaerophyllum temulum*), Greater Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella major*) and Upright Hedge-parsley (*Torilis japonica*).

Another member with a bigger total than last year is Barbara Mathews,

who was delighted by the sight of both Polypody (*Polypodium vulgare*) and Snowdrops (*Galanthus* spp.) en masse in Norfolk. Cape Daisy (*Osteospermum jucundum*) and Larkspur (*Consolida ajacis*) were unusual and exclusive finds. Quite a few people have been the sole recorder for a WMH plant this year.

I can only gasp in admiration at Dawn Nelson's enormous total this year. She did well last year, but to see and identify more than 300 species over winter in Sussex is truly remarkable. Dawn has added several plants to the WMH Master list, including Fern-leaved Beggarticks (*Bidens ferulifolia*), Orange Mullein (*Verbascum phlomoides*) and Martin's Ramping Fumitory (*Fumaria reuteri*) but her favourite find was a variety of good old Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota* ssp. *gummifer*).

Jill Oakley's total is almost as big as Dawn's and represents another impressive achievement for the WMH. I understand they have done some hunting together for the BSBI. Jill was the only member to spot Damson (*Prunus domestica* ssp. *insititia*) at Bosham. She saw five species of *Asplenium* ferns and six Speedwells (*Veronica* spp.) as part of a long and varied list.

Ron Parker has mainly hunted in London and Essex, clearly a rich area for winter botanizing! He saw several species of Snowdrop (*Galanthus* spp.) and was the only member to spot both the lovely Orange Ball Tree (*Buddleja globosa*) and Chinese Mugwort (*Artemisia verlotiorum*) growing in mainly urban habitats. Within 10 miles of her East Sussex

home, Janice Reynolds has managed to see over 200 species. She noticed Corn Marigold (*Glebionis segetum*) and Tobacco Plant (*Nicotiana glauca*) flowering throughout the autumn and was pleased that they both made it to December! She was puzzled that she hadn't noticed a well-established Adria Bellflower (*Campanula portenschlagiana*) on a wall before this winter.

Rosemary Roberts has taken part in the Hunt for several years but missed last year, so welcome back! Her finds are all close to her home in Kent and at Ightham Mote estate she found Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage, (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*), Green Hellebore (*Helleborus viridis*) and Lungwort (*Pulmonaria officinalis*).

Michael Robinson describes himself as an 'Enthusiastic Amateur'. He has entered the Hunt (along with his family?) for the first time and amassed quite a respectable total, including some plants new to the Hunt like Lesser Calamint (*Clinopodium calamintha*), Ivy Broomrape (*Orobancha hederaceae*) and Spanish Stonecrop (*Sedum hispanicum*).

My own list is almost embarrassingly modest this year but I can claim a very cold and frosty winter as an excuse. Some of my botanic excursions here in Lancashire seemed to yield nothing but dead brown leaves but I was pleased that Hedgerow Crane's-bill (*Geranium pyrenaicum*) was still flowering on local wasteground. And very pleased indeed to discover that no-one else saw Butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*)! Heather Silk is another Hunt first-

timer, who was disappointed not to reach her personal target of 100 species, but nevertheless managed to find some nice plants such as Celery-leaved Buttercup (*Ranunculus sceleratus*), Dwarf Mallow (*Malva neglecta*) and, uniquely, Pale Persicaria (*Persicaria lapathifolia*).

Mary and Claire Smith enjoyed good hunting in December, but then the cold weather set in. However, they say this year is their best ever total and they particularly enjoyed finding Smith's Pepperwort (*Lepidium heterophyllum*), which no-one else found, Tall Melilot (*Melilotus altissimus*) and Spurge-Laurel (*Daphne laureola*).

And last, but not least, to John Swindells, doing his main hunting in London, with a decent total for such an urban habitat. John was particularly satisfied to find on the Isle of Dogs a plant he had not seen for several years, Hoary Alison (*Berteroa incana*). Bethnal Green was where he found Shaggy Soldier (*Galinsoga quadrirariata*) and Dove's-foot Crane's-bill (*Geranium molle*).

As the summer of 2018 seems to be such a hot and dry one, who knows what sort of winter will follow? I look forward to receiving your lists in due course, but could I just remind members to arrange their lists in alphabetical order of the plant's **Latin** names, followed by the **English** name, as this is how the Master list is set out and it would make checking a lot easier. Also, if you could state **just** the county/ies where the plants were found. I wish you all happy Winter Hunting!

DOROTHY ROSS

SPRING WEEK HUNT 2018

Name	Location	Total
Barbara Allen	Merseyside	10
Helen Ayres	East Kent	55
Sarah Beetham	Bristol area	29
Julie Clarke	Lancashire	15
Steve Clarkson	Suffolk	17
Heather Colls	Monmouthshire	32
Rita & Anthony Grainger	Leeds	33
Ian Green	Moray	6
Anne Herccock	Monmouthshire	18
Pippa Hyde	Middlesex	24
Helen Jackson	Musselburgh	4
Anne & Dennis Kell	Suffolk	34
Sue Kightly & Diana Stroud	Berkshire	47
Sally Maller	South Devon	32
Barbara Matthews	Suffolk	9
Ron Parker	Surrey/E. London	36
Sue Poyser / Doug Grant	Kent	55
Rosemary Roberts	Kent	38
June Robinson	Sheffield	18
John Swindells	Kent	25
Pauline & Richard Wilson	Bristol area	20

Total number of different species seen 134

Species only found by one person 68

Species new to Spring Hunt:

Hoary Alison (*Berteroa incana*) - John Swindells

Chinese Cabbage (*Brassica juncea*) - Sue Poyser & Doug Grant

Well! That was an interesting start to March and our role in co-ordinating the Spring Hunt. Everyone was more or less affected by the cold and snow and most people only had two or three days in which to see anything.

Things that had flowered through the winter just disappeared, such as White Deadnettle (*Lamium album*).

We wonder if Hazel nuts will be in short supply as female flowers went black with the frost. There may well have been years when the week has

been affected by such cold weather, but certainly not since we have been recording. The humble Daisy (*Bellis perennis*) wins the prize for being the only plant recorded by everyone.

To those who apologised for the lack of flowering plants, we were all in the same boat and it will make interesting phenological reading. The more people that submit their results the better scientific basis for research. So how did we do between us?

Barbara Allen said the only good thing was that recording took no time at all as all the plants she found were seen on 7th March. Everything else had perished or shrivelled.

Helen Ayres sent a spread sheet of her spring hunt records since 2004 which made very interesting reading. In the years to 2013 totals were 45 - 55. There was then a leap to over 70 for three years. This scaled back in 2017 to more usual levels. Despite the weather she managed to record 17 sole records including Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*), Wall Whitlow Grass (*Draba muralis*) and several trees.

Sarah Beetham managed to find a very creditable number of plants. She had two sole records for Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*) and Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*).

Julie Clarke said there was not a huge amount of snow, but it was bitterly cold and windy. She managed to find White Butterbur (*Petasites albus*) as a sole record.

Steve Clarkson said it was the first year that the East Anglian branch had to cancel the group First Hunt. Personally he had three sole records for Biting Stonecrop (*Sedum acre*), Perennial Knawel (*Scleranthus perennis* ssp. *prostratus*) and Shepherds Cress (*Teesdalia nudicaulis*), the latter two being very uncommon.

Heather Colls found that most things recovered as soon as the snow

melted but, of course, it left fewer days to get around. She was the sole recorder of a subspecies of Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna* ssp. *ficariiformis*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*), Butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*) and a sub-species of Ivy-leaved Speedwell (*Veronica hederifolia* ssp. *lucorum*). She was one of only two people to see Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederaceae*) in flower.

Rita and Anthony Grainger reported a very good total considering that they only had two days to look. They found three plants new to their Spring Hunt, Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*), Trailing Bellflower (*Campanula poscharskyana*) and Water Bent (*Polypogon viridis*), the latter two not found by others. It was the first year since 2011 that Blackthorn wasn't in flower. (In fact only three people recorded it.) Other sole records were Yellow Star of Bethlehem (*Gagea lutea*), Pineappleweed (*Matricaria discoidea*), Creeping Comfrey (*Symphytum grandiflorum*) and Golden Crocus (*Crocus chrysanthus*), the latter two being naturalised.

Ian Green struggled to find anything in flower. During three days of snow only the Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) was visible above the snow. But Ian lives way further north than anyone else who sent reports.

Anne Hercock sent records for the first time and says she had great fun looking. She found most plants around the local paths. She managed to find one sole record, Green Alkanet (*Pentaglottis sempervirens*).

Pippa Hyde was pleased to find Glory-of-the-snow (*Scilla forbesii*) (how appropriate) which she has not seen for a few years. It is a sole record for this year as is Guernsey Fleabane (*Conyza sumatrensis*) and another of the variants of Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna* ssp. *fertilis*). Her list is smaller than usual, but more than she expected. She found six more plants in flower on March 8th, but didn't cheat!

Helen Jackson apologised that her finds were not enough to be entered, but that's just the way it is. Like others she had noted plants flowering in February and by 7th March they had just disappeared.

Anne and Dennis Kell were surprised at what had survived when they were able to get out on 5th March. However many plants that might have flowered in warmer weather had yet to make an appearance. Sole records for the year were Bugloss (*Anchusa arvensis*), Spring Beauty (*Claytonia perfoliata*), Common Mallow (*Malva sylvestris*) and Field Pansy (*Viola arvensis*).

Sue Kightly and Diana Stroud considered themselves lucky not to be snowed in but still experienced the severe cold winds. Again plants found during the winter months were devastated and several species seen only opened on 7th March. They had an impressive total and nine flowers not seen by others including Sun Spurge (*Euphorbia helioscopia*), Field Madder (*Sherardia arvensis*), Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Scentless Mayweed (*Tripleurospermum inodorum*), Blue Anemone (*Anemone apennina*), Perennial Candytuft

(*Iberis sempervirens*), Sweet Alison (*Lobularia maritima*) and Corsican Hellebore (*Helleborus argutifolius*). These last four are naturalised.

Sally Maller probably lives the furthest south of the recorders and still had snow but found flowers in sheltered pockets. She was one of the few people to find Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) but only just out. Her sole records probably reflect the slightly warmer climate: Hedge Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), Common Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia officinalis*), Shining Cranesbill (*Geranium lucidum*) (one flower only), Nipplewort (*Lapsana communis*), Spotted Medick (*Medicago arabica*), Broad-leaved Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) and Common Cornsalad (*Valerianella locusta*).

Barbara Matthews says that after the snow came the rain and the fog and she didn't venture out until 5th March. Despite all that she managed to find Marigold (*Calendula officinalis*) and Sweet Violet (*Viola odorata*).

Ron Parker found a very good total with five sole records. Greater Celandine (*Chelidonium majus*), Germander Speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*) and Barren Brome (*Anisantha sterilis*) were all in flower early. Others were an escaped Grape Hyacinth (*Muscari armeniacum*) and Pink-headed Persicaria (*Persicaria capitata*).

Sue Poyser and Doug Grant shared an amazing top total with Helen Ayres, both from Kent, and even then their records are down on their usual finds. They were pleased to find Danish Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia*

danica) and Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) which was found by only one other person. Their sole finds were Aubretia (*Aubretia deltoidea*), Chinese Cabbage (*Brassica juncea*), Hoary

Mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), Henbit dead-nettle (*Lamium amplexicaule*), Flowering Currant (*Ribes sanguineum*) and Greater Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella major*).

June Robinson said it was her shortest list ever, submitted after a snowy journey from The Lake District. Despite that it is very comprehensive.

Rosemary Roberts was only able to record on the 6th and 7th; nevertheless she had a very good total. Her sole record was Balkan Anemone (*Anemone blanda*) and she was one of the few people to record Common Mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*). Only one other person recorded Lenten Rose (*Helleborus orientalis*), naturalised in scattered places.

John Swindells again cited seeing flowers in February which were killed off by March. His most pleasing find was Hoary Alison (*Berteroa incana*) after an interval of nine years and which was flowering all winter. Other sole finds were Yellow Corydalis (*Pseudofumaria lutea*) and White Comfrey (*Symphytum orientale*). Grey Field Speedwell (*Veronica polita*) was only found by one other person.



Primrose in the snow

Richard and Pauline Wilson, like most people, were only able to see plants for three days. They saw White Dead Nettle (*Lamium album*), Sun Spurge (*Euphorbia helioscopia*) and Winter Heliotrope (*Petasitis fragrans*) in February and out of those only the last had any flowers remaining. There was one flower on Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*)! Their sole entry, American Winter-cress (*Barbarea verna*), is still on the same bit of verge after two years.

Our apologies if we have made any mistakes. It has been a hard act to follow, but we were grateful for the spreadsheets and other material copied to us by Lorna and Derek Holland and for their considerable advice.

Thank you to you all for your encouragement and also for stating the area locations for your records. These records will now be forwarded to Tim Sparks, a Phenologist, who was interviewed on Radio 4's Costing The Earth on 10th April. We think he made reference to plant data from The Wild Flower Society going back to the 1920's although it wasn't stated as such.

PAULINE AND RICHARD WILSON

Photo: Richard Wilson

POLAND DAY - 27th January, 2018

The purpose of this meeting, led by Stephen Clarkson, was to practice using John Poland's excellent Vegetative Key. In addition to Stephen, there were 16 attendees. After introducing ourselves, we produced our "Polands". Some, like Stephen's, well used and others, like mine, almost pristine. Stephen started by going through some technical terms. We were introduced to septate hairs (chickweed has these) and hydathodes, which are modified stomata that are found at the tips of the teeth of some leaves. The latter is useful in distinguishing Red Campion (*Silene dioica*) from White Campion (*Silene latifolia*) if there are no flowers – red has white hydathodes and white has red hydathodes! Stephen also explained the importance of looking at vascular bundles by cutting through a petiole with a razor blade and looking at the cut edge through a lens. Following this we started practising using the

keys. Stephen brought along some samples for us and we identified (as a group) Irish Yew (*Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata'), Stinking Iris (*Iris foetidissima*) and Floating Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*). I never knew that the leaves of irises are folded laterally so that just the uppersides are visible but we were able to see this by looking at the bases of them.

We had an enjoyable lunch, to which we all contributed. Sue Grayston and Ken Southall produced a quiz - 19 examples of winter stems that we were asked to identify. After lunch we had some more practice, this time on our own or in pairs. These included Lesser Chickweed (*Stellaria pallida*), Cleavers (*Galium aparine*) and Hedge Bedstraw (*Galium album*). For the latter two we had to decide if the leaf margins had antrorse (forward pointing i.e. towards the leaf tip) or retrorse (backward pointing) prickles.

Stephen also showed us an example of a non-native plant where using Poland doesn't give you the right answer. This highlighted the importance of using it as an aid to identification and not relying on it 100%. Finally, Ken gave us the answers to the quiz. No one got all 19. Anne Kell was the winner with 14 and Ken gave her a small prize. It had been a most enjoyable day. Thanks go to Stephen for leading it and Anne and Dennis Kell for organising it so efficiently.

JULIA TODD



SPRING FLOWERS IN NORTH YORKSHIRE & CO. DURHAM

Twelve of us, ranging in age from 9 to 70 plus years, gathered under the Lime trees promptly at 10.30. The earliest phase of Spring flowers was going over but there were still very large numbers of Snowdrop (*Galanthus*) to see. We used the illustrated key which was available on the BSBI website to identify what turned out to be overwhelmingly Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*) with one or two Pleated Snowdrop (*Galanthus plicatus*). An occasional flower of Winter Aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*) remained; Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Sweet Violet (*Viola odorata*) and Early Crocus (*Crocus tommasinianus*) had appeared in the last few days along with Glory of the Snow (*Scilla forbesii*). We keyed out a 'blue job' that had escaped from a grave as *Anemone blanda*. *Primula x pruhonicensis*, a hybrid Primrose in various pinks and purples was also coming into bloom.

We walked away from the churchyard along the avenue of Common Lime (*Tilia x europaea*). A few hundred metres along the road we found Rue-leaved Saxifrage (*Saxifraga tridactylites*) on a wall top just coming into bloom. Further on we viewed an impressive spread of White Butterbur (*Petasites albus*). Returning to our cars we then travelled to Gainford.

At Gainford the banks of the River Tees are accessed through the churchyard. We took a short walk upstream. Creeping Comfrey

(*Symphytum grandiflorum*) and Abraham-Isaac-Jacob (*Trachystemon orientalis*) were immediately apparent on the river bank. Walking on we saw a few Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Wild Daffodil (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*) and a single Boissier's Glory-of-the-snow (*Scilla lucilliae*). Further along were Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) and, again, Glory of the Snow (*S. forbesii*). Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem (*Gagea lutea*) was growing well in the woodland at the extremity of our walk. Having got our eye in we saw more of it on our return, along with the first stirrings of Butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*). A pleasant start to the season.

PETER COX



Field Pansy

Photo: Ken Southall

BOOK REVIEW

Peter Marren, *Chasing the Ghost* (2018). Square Peg, 286pp, chapter head line drawings. Hardback, £16.99

There must be many WFS members who have met Peter Marren, whether as a delightful botanising companion, through his wonderful books and enlightening reviews, or in his witty persona as 'Twitcher in the Swamp' (a regular column in *British Wildlife*) making cutting fun of nonsense and ignorance in the world of conservation. His work touches varied subjects dear to all of us – including rare flowers, bugs, and butterflies. He has told the story of the classic *New Naturalist* series, and more recently published a searingly honest and beautifully written account of his own early life *Where the wild thyme blew* (2016). This latest book – I'm sure we all guess that the 'ghost' is that ever-elusive orchid *Epipogium aphyllum* – celebrates a particular point in a life devoted to nature, especially to botany, and gives a vivid picture of living as a naturalist, from the most thrilling finds to the most miserable days of failure and discomfort.

I love notebooks and diaries and scrapbooks. Not only are they my essential memory boards, but I've never lost the avid desire I had as a child to see new plants. When I was really young I had 'Bentham & Hooker', and was allowed to colour in the line drawings and enter where things were found in my neatest hand. The *Observer's Book of Wild Flowers* I pretended to find too easy, but still loved ticking a new species.

Years of filling in my WFS diaries were spent with the addition of Skene's *Flower Book for the Pocket* (1936), and 'Collins' – McClintock & Fittler's *Pocket Guide to Wild Flowers* (1956) which had the irresistible attraction of a points system, one to three stars for rarities. The thrill of finding a '3 Star' plant has never left me! All these books came haphazardly among the Christmas and birthday pony books which were what I was supposed to like best, but they had a profound effect, making a new plant always more exciting than a rosette, and embedding a life-long collector's instinct.

Curiously I never had the most influential of all the popular floras, and the one which frames the chase in Peter's book. 'Keble Martin' – the exquisitely illustrated *Concise British Flora* by a Devon vicar came out in 1965, and defined British botany for thousands. This was the book within which Peter challenged himself to find ever more new species, and is the book which inspired the one-year super-hunt recorded in the *Ghost*. The story of the inspiration, and the artist and botanist at the heart of it, is related with Peter's superlative mix of lucidity and personal quirkiness, and gave me (and will give every reader) a better understanding of how our network of field botanists has long operated. It's a lovely story, and explains the one *unclear* part of the book. The subtitle is 'My search for

all the wild flowers of Britain', which seemed a surprisingly tall order for quite a modest size of book, but it actually means the flora as defined by Keble Martin, which is far smaller than that defined now by Stace, and includes almost no microspecies such as Dandelions *Taraxacum* or Blackberries *Rubus*. This is a more manageable concept, and we learn that Peter, around a significant birthday, worked out that he had seen nearly all of his hero's species, and that from those he could list a neat missing 50 that he had always hoped to see.

The challenge Peter came up with was to see all these in *one year*, and of course this makes a superb ripping yarn, or rather series of yarns, as some plants were easily found, others affected by huge difficulties

including thunder, personal bereavement, serious illness and a monster hangover! His narrative style is always delightful, each plant has a tiny but exact pen portrait (and lovely line drawing), and somehow extremely important and serious conservation subjects are slipped into the accounts with such charm that I'm sure they will be more effective than any fierce campaigning. This book will appeal to all WFS members because we are who we are, and really well-told tales of finding rare species can't help but delight. However I hope the book will reach a much wider audience, and will sweeten the way to wider understanding of the plight of our precious but threatened flora.

RO FITZGERALD

OBITUARY

TOM FOWLER

Tom Fowler, whose tall, slim figure was a familiar one on WFS field meetings and at AGMs and Members' Weekends, died on 3 May 2018 at the age of 91. His was a life marked by long continuities. His whole professional career as a quantity surveyor was spent with the firm of Fanshawe. He lived from 1954 until 2017 in the house he had had built at Little Chalfont in Buckinghamshire. Above all he was married to Barbara for sixty six years. In that context his nineteen years as the Wild Flower Society's Independent Examiner and eleven as a Branch Secretary were mere

blinkings of an eye.

Tom was born at Kenton in Middlesex but although he was a member of the London Natural History Society it was the mountains and coasts which he loved best. The house at Little Chalfont was named after Penberth on the Land's End peninsula. He and Barbara went to Scotland every year, were regular attenders at the BSBI Welsh AGM and visited the Channel Islands. The references to his discoveries in successive issues of the Wild Flower Magazine show him travelling widely; even in 2011 in his mid-eighties he had new records from

Pembrokeshire, Oxfordshire, Somerset and Norfolk.

He was quite modest about his botanical knowledge and it is perhaps not a surprise that his progress through the Society's branches took the less competitive route through Lotus Eaters (for members who had never "won" a branch) then into Valhalla and eventually Parnassus, recording a total of over 2200 plants. He had his records printed in a small notebook sized version to take out in the field.

Tom took over from Dick Walker as our Independent Examiner in 1998 and our association began the following year when I replaced Jack Chapman as Treasurer. On a Sunday morning early in the year I would travel out on the Metropolitan or Chiltern Line to deliver the Society's financial records to Tom and talk him through any notable features. Over the next few weeks he would carefully check the draft accounts I had prepared against the records, then return them to me and raise any points which needed clarifying. We are very grateful to Tom for performing this unexciting but vital role for so long.

In 2003 Tom became Secretary of Branch O. He was a little daunted to find that that made him responsible, like the medieval Bishops of Lincoln, for an area stretching from the Thames valley to the River Humber but it was soon reduced to the more manageable Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. Until he retired in 2014 he diligently reported on the diaries he received

and provided tips on finding particular plants to his branch members.

In later years Barbara's physical health deteriorated. They remained as cheerful and welcoming as ever on my visits but the bed downstairs was a sign of the difficulties being experienced. Tom took over domestic duties and it gave him great satisfaction that, thanks to his devoted care, when Barbara died in June 2017 it was peacefully in her own home. In a typically no nonsense way he then decided to move to a nursing home at Gerrards Cross for what proved to be his last few months. He was keen to arrange that his botanical books should be made available to the members of a Society which had meant so much to him.

Thanks to Alison Proudman, Barbara's god-daughter, for information.

ROBIN BLADES

The list of books presented to the Society by Tom was made available to members with the last magazine. Those not already sold were taken to the recent AGM and together their sale has raised £292 towards WFS funds. We hope their new owners gain as much pleasure from reading them as they obviously gave to Tom.