

# B.S.B.I. NEWS

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## CONTENTS

Editor's Notes	2
Secretary's Notes	2
Linnean Society Awards	4
Books from Oundle Lodge	4
The Surrey Flora Committee	4
The Historical Flora of Middlesex	6
Warwick Museum	6
Rare Species Recording in East Anglia	6
Records Committee	8
Maps and County Floras	8
<i>Ranunculus auricomus</i>	8
<i>Abutilon theophrasti</i>	8
Illustration: <i>Abutilon theophrasti</i>	9
Adventive News 4	10
<i>Carex punctata</i> in Cornwall	12
Roadside Verges	13
Field Studies at Ardtornish	14
£500 to Spare?	15
Plant Request	15
Letters: Misnomer	16
<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	16
Answer to a Problem?	16
Biological Curators Group	17
Individual Record Cards	17
Stop Press	20

## EDITOR'S NOTES

As the deadline of October 20 for receiving copy for this issue of *News* drew near, I looked with some dismay at the few small items and began to think that there would not be a No. 11 until spring next year. A few 'phone calls and a letter or two set things going however and by finding a printer to do a rush job here is the result. I tell this small story to bring home to you all how important it is to receive a regular supply of items for these pages. That is of course assuming that the arrival of *News* on the doormat is a welcome event, providing points of interest and discussion. If it does not provide these things please write and tell me so with, of course, constructive ideas for improvement or additional interest.

The excellent linedrawing of *Abutilon theophrasti*, technically known as a thumb-nail sketch according to the artist, is the work of Mrs Hilary R. Broad, daughter of John Carr and recently back from drawing the plants of southern Spain. Hopefully she will provide further examples of our adventive plants whose portraits are so hard to find. How I wish my thumb-nail had such artistic ability.

KENNETH A. BECKETT

## SECRETARY'S NOTES

This number of "News" catches officers and secretaries at an extra busy time in the midst of the autumn meetings, with some future projects still under discussion and not yet finalised for report. Some recent events and news include the sending in August of a birthday telegram by the Society to our Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, and this reply was received by the Hon. Gen. Sec. "I am extremely touched by your telegram of good wishes on my birthday and send my very sincere thanks to you and to all who joined in your kind message. Elizabeth R. Patron".

In September some 60 members attended the very successful Recorders' Conference at Attingham Park. The informal and comfortable surroundings were ideal for the enjoyment of the papers and discussions during which much useful information on the specific problems of recording and publishing local Floras was offered. Field work on three of our delightful groups:— *Rosa*, *Rubus* and *Salix* gave valuable help with field identification, and all delegates expressed thanks and appreciation to the Speakers and Field Leaders.

Our congratulations go to Mr E. S. Edees. (B.S.B.I. *Rubus* referee), the recipient of the H. H. Bloomer Award of the Linnean Society of London for 1975. This award is made alternately to a botanist and a zoologist as an amateur naturalist who has made an important contribution to biological knowledge. B.S.B.I. members who have in the past been recipients of this award include:— J. E. Lousley, E. C. Wallace, A. G. Long, J. G. Dony and Miss U. K. Duncan.

Looking ahead, with this mailing comes preliminary notice of the 1976 A.G.M. which will be held on *Saturday May 22nd* at the Jodrell Laboratory, Kew, by kind permission of the Director. The programme will include the Presidential Address, and Papers on the very topical problem of supply of native British wild plants for

naturalising. It is hoped to invite speakers with varying viewpoints, including landscape architects, nurserymen, and on the importance of distribution for genetic sampling. On *Sunday May 23rd* a visit to the Kew Satellite Garden at Wakehurst Place in Sussex should demonstrate both British wild plants and some of the plants from the Himalayas for which the garden is famed, slides of some of these in their native habitats will also be shown. Further details as available are printed in the Field Programme, with this mailing, and the full programme and booking forms will be sent to all members in early April. May I remind members that nominations are due for election to Council. All nominations should be made in writing, signed by two members of the Society, accompanied by written consent of the candidate to serve, if elected, and sent to the Hon. General Secretary before *February 1st, 1976*.

Reminders also that subscriptions at the new rates are due on January 1st, 1976, with Bankers Order altered (on new forms provided, or these are available from the administrative office at Reading). Members who have an address alteration, e.g. new administrative county or post code, or change of title are asked please to send these as soon as possible to the B.S.B.I. Administrative Office, Harvest House, 62 London Road, Reading, RG1 5AS. If your new, or amended address has been sent already on a new Bankers Order it will have been noted. The new membership list now in preparation by Mrs Rachel Hamilton, Hon. Membership Secretary, is a mammoth task. By the time the next list is due (1978 or 9) any addresses using old county names may be seriously out of date, so please send address changes now in time for printing in this forthcoming list.

Some members have asked about the cataloguing of rare British species which may have been rescued from destroyed sites and now grown in members' gardens. Information on the location of material of rare perennial species is being collected at B.R.C. If you have plants of wild British origin from known localities in cultivation would you please send a note of this to Dr F. H. Perring, Biological Records Centre, Monks Wood Experimental Station, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, PE17 2LS. This is most helpful if sent on an individual pink record card as described on page 17. Members are reminded that it is now illegal to take wild plants from the wild without the owner's permission, and no plants listed as Rare Species in the Code of Conduct for the Conservation of Flowering Plants and Ferns should be collected.

Finally a correction to my Notes in News No. 10—to put the record straight Royal Assent was given to the Conservation of Wild Creatures and Wild Plants Act on *August 1st 1975*—not July 31st as anticipated. (The note was written in advance as I was in the Tyrol at the time of *News 10* going to print). We can now also report that the Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office have sent a supply of posters to each local education authority in England and Wales, sufficient to allow one poster depicting protected animals, or one poster depicting protected plants, for every secondary school. The Scottish Office also has sent plant posters for all Scottish secondary schools as it happens that none of the protected wild creatures occurs in Scotland. It is hoped that members will purchase these posters for local display—35p each post free (special terms for bulk orders) from B.S.B.I. Oundle Lodge, Oundle, Peterborough, PE8 5TN.

MARY BRIGGS

## LINNEAN SOCIETY AWARDS

The Linnean Society's Gold Medal for Botany this year was given to one of this country's outstanding ecologists, Dr A. S. Watt, F.R.S., whose name has long been associated with the ecology of Breckland in general and with bracken in particular. His earlier work on the Chiltern beechwoods was equally important and has become a classic in his lifetime enshrined in Tansley's *British Islands and their Vegetation*. More recently his idea that changes in vegetation may be cyclic rather than unidirectional has influenced plant ecologists all over the world.

The Bloomer Award for amateurs was awarded to E. S. Eedes known to all British field botanists as the leading expert in the study of blackberries. He is now working with A. Newton on the production of a revised list of *Rubi* for Britain and the collection of data towards a comprehensive Atlas.

## BOOKS FROM OUNDLE LODGE

The following books and posters are available to members: all prices include postage and have mostly been raised to take account of the recent increases.

### Books

- Bibliography of the British Flora*, N. D. Simpson. £4·00.  
*The Botanist in Skye*, C. W. Murray. £1·15.  
*Flora of Gloucestershire*, H. J. Riddelsdell et. al. £9·65.  
*A Flora of Cambridgeshire*, F. H. Perring et. al. £1·15.  
*A Check-list of Dumfries, etc.*, H. Milne-Redhead. 60p.  
*Critical Supplement to the Atlas of the British Flora*, £5·00.  
*English Names of Wild Flowers*, J. G. Dony et. al. £1·50.  
*The Flora of a Changing Britain*, ed. F. H. Perring. £1·20.  
*The Botanist in Ireland*, R. L. Praeger. £4·20.

### Posters

- Save the flowers*, 15p each, 10 or more 10p each.  
*Please leave wild flowers*. . . . 15p each, 10 or more, 10p each.  
*These endangered plants are protected by law*, 35p each, 10 or more, 20p each.

Payment should be sent with orders to Dr F. H. Perring, Oundle Lodge, Oundle, Peterborough, PE8 5TN. Cheques payable to F. H. Perring, B.S.B.I. a/c. All profits go to the Society.

## THE SURREY FLORA COMMITTEE

The Surrey Flora Committee originated from the B.S.B.I. map scheme. In 1957 many of those who had been "mapping" formed an independent body of botanists

whose objective was the production of a new *Flora* of Surrey. To-day it is amusing to read in the Minutes of the lengthy discussions held before we decided on the then original idea of the "tetrad" as a basis for recording.

Under the guidance first of Barbara Welch and then Donald Young general field work continued until 1967. By this time the S.F.C. helpers had really become addicted to crossing off cards and as Frank Perring had recently introduced the Biological Site Recording Scheme they undertook to complete habitat, vascular plant and bryophyte cards for all Surrey's S's.S.S.I. S.S.S.I. revision greatly increased and complicated this work but now only 16 bryophyte cards await completion.

Many more tasks have been undertaken during this time. We have recorded for all Surrey sites owned by the National Trust and the Forestry Commission and advised them on conservation measures and reserve areas. Inevitably conservation has become an increasing part of our work and we have supplied all those who asked (and many who did not) with site reports and management suggestions—private landowners, business firms, local government officials and others. The co-operation of all who were approached has been most encouraging and the response of some of our rare British species nothing short of spectacular. Of course, we work closely with the Surrey Naturalists' Trust in which many of us hold office. We also work closely with the S.E. Region of the Nature Conservancy Council. Two of our major tasks for them have been the supplying of information for the Staines Moor Public Inquiry and a series of vegetation maps of the West Surrey heathlands.

All this time work was continuing on the new *Flora*—preparation of distribution maps, collation of Individual Record Slips etc. The illness and untimely death of Donald Young delayed matters, but fortunately Ted Lousley agreed to write the book. The introductory chapters deal largely with the changes in our *Flora*. Accounts are given both of separate spp. and of reserves and stress the vital need for conservation. The text contains much interesting information about the spp. The new *Flora* is now with the publishers and at long last, one thinks, the S.F.C. really *will* retire. But no—at the last A.G.M. helpers were unanimous and vociferous in their decision to continue as an independent body. Perhaps our strength lies in this independence. We are not tied to any larger organisation with rules and regulations and endless committee meetings. Every helper is free to go off and do any work they think necessary and then report the fait accomplis. Or perhaps it is in the complete friendliness and willingness to tackle anything shown by all our helpers. Of course our ranks have not remained static. Happily, many of the old gang are still with us, but others have left the county and newcomers joined us. Yet not once, since our inception, have I known anyone quarrel or refuse a job of work even if it is recording in the same old area for the umpteenth time.

Whatever the reason I do know that Surrey is very fortunate in having such a friendly, helpful and capable body of botanists who have accomplished so much and who are determined to continue working for our county.

JOYCE SMITH

## THE HISTORICAL FLORA OF MIDDLESEX

by Douglas H. Kent

Copies of this *Flora* are available to members of the B.S.B.I. at a special discount rate of £12 until April 30th, 1976. This represents a saving of £3 on the published price of £15. Apply for copies to:

Dr R. Lincoln,  
The Ray Society,  
c/o The British Museum (Natural History),  
Cromwell Road,  
London SW7 5BD.

### SCHOENUS FERRUGINEUS

Our member, Brian Brookes, would be grateful for any help concerning the history of this species in Britain. Any information about the original locality by Loch Tummel and the subsequent "rescue" transplantings would be particularly useful. References to material in herbaria, to photographs, maps, field notebooks and correspondence as well as published notes would be very helpful indeed. Information to Brian Brookes, Kindrogan, Enochdhu, Blairgowrie, Perthshire, PG10 7PG.

### RARE SPECIES RECORDING IN EAST ANGLIA

The Nature Conservancy Council have renewed for one year the contract for the project based on the University Botanic Garden, Cambridge described by Dr Walters in News No. 9.

It is a pleasure to record that co-operation and help has been given most generously by County Recorders, Museum Curators and members of the Society.

The progress achieved in mapping and documenting the Rare Species in East Anglia is mainly due to the many kind people who have helped—by making their old notes available, or by strenuously searching their memories (and cupboards for old maps and floras), by visiting former sites (sometimes in the snow) and by taking on the onerous task of surveying and mapping individual species; to them all I am greatly indebted.

Mapping and documenting the rare species in the new administrative county of Cambridgeshire and in Breckland has been completed, and it is expected to complete Norfolk and Suffolk by the end of Contract.

In Cambridgeshire we have probably lost our only sites for *Cirsium tuberosum* and *Anthoxanthum puelii*, the only site for *Bromus interruptus*, and one site for *Muscari atlanticum* (largely due to changes in agricultural practices over the past 10 years) but we have gained new sites for *Seseli libanotis* and *Himantoglossum*

*hircinum*, *Bunium bulbocastanum*, *Apera interrupta* and refound an old station for *Silene otites*. All these new records are due to the keen eyes of one of our foremost ornithologists, Mr G. M. S. Easy. In Breckland there is considerable cause for alarm over 3 of the rare Breckland annuals. After searching every old site that it has been possible to identify, *Alyssum alyssoides* was found in only one site (17 plants), *Veronica triphyllos* in only two sites. In one there was one small clump and in the other a by-pass was cut through it while the population was being mapped. Lastly *Scleranthus perennis* subsp. *prostratus*, a British endemic subspecies, has only three sites—all under threat—and in one site the 2 plants seen in May had disappeared by August (due to the degeneration of the habitat and the severe drought).

For some species it has been a "good" year. The high water table which gradually fell during the summer was ideal for *Lythrum hyssopifolia*, which germinated abundantly on the wet margins of 5 wet hollows in the Thriplow-Whittlesford area. Other species which also did well this year were *Herniaria glabra* and *Veronica verna*. *Veronica praecox* was also more "frequent"—possibly because this year more rye was grown.

*Veronica spicata* was obviously affected by drought, leaves wilting by August, but in Cambridgeshire one of our patches was a sheet of blue by the end of September, and in the small enclosed reserve on Weeting Heath where I planted it some years ago it was a mass of flowers in October. Also in Garboldisham a tiny vegetative patch refound last year produced 4 flowering spikes this year. But in the other stations in Norfolk and Suffolk it either did not flower (in one station it was reduced to 1 plant with 1 flower) or had disappeared completely.

Obviously the populations of many of these very rare plants, at the extreme end of their range, fluctuate from year to year, and much of the documentation consists of building up a record of changes in the populations in the past. Any scrap of information would still be of use—and in particular I would be very pleased to hear from any members who were formerly keen Wild Flower Society recorders, for they may have forgotten how much valuable information is contained in their Diaries.

It is appreciated that some members have felt in the past that the best protection for the site of a rare plant has been to keep it secret. But to-day sites are being destroyed with a terrifying rapidity: in the course of checking through records a new site for *Scleranthus perennis* subspecies *prostratus* with *Thymus serpyllum* subspecies was noted. Immediate investigation showed that this site had been discovered some years ago by a group of botanical recorders who had not appreciated the importance of their find and had therefore not taken any steps to discover the future of the site. It so happened that the farmer was about to turn the area into a bulling ring and dump silage on to it. Further exploration resulted in the find of *Veronica verna* and *Silene conica* and the occurrence of the *Scleranthus* in four good patches. Fortunately the owner and farm manager have agreed not to "develop" the site agriculturally (provided the site is not publicised). But there have been, alas, other examples where the importance of a site in a national context has not been realised in time, and sites have been unnecessarily lost.

G. CROMPTON

## RECORDS COMMITTEE

Due to death or retirement a number of changes have had to be made to the lists of Vice-County Recorders, and to the Society's Referees and Specialists, as follows:

<b>Recorders</b>	V.-C. 13 Mrs M. Briggs V.-Cs. 62 & 65 T. F. Medd V.-C. 74 Miss J. Martin
<b>Referees</b>	Rosa: add Mrs I. M. Vaughan Polygala: delete Dr J. McNeill (now in Canada) Carex: especially <i>C. muricata</i> agg. R. W. David
<b>Specialists</b>	Local Floras: M. Walpole Popular Names: F. H. Perring

## MAPS AND COUNTY FLORAS

The recent publication of a County Flora without a map prompts the thought that some authors fear that the costs of royalties in reproducing a portion of an Ordnance Survey map may be exorbitant. This is not true. The cost of a piece of map 8 x 5 in. in a run of 2,000 copies would only be £5.30 plus VAT at present prices. Full details of regulations and costs (and an application form) can be obtained from the Director General, Ordnance Survey, Maybush, Southampton, SO9 4DH.

The growth of local biological records centres meeting the needs of the Nature Conservancy Council and the County Naturalists' Trusts continues. The BSBI Recorder can make a significant contribution to conservation in his area if he keeps in touch with the local centre and informs the Records Office of significant finds at least once a year.

F. H. PERRING

## RANUNCULUS AURICOMUS

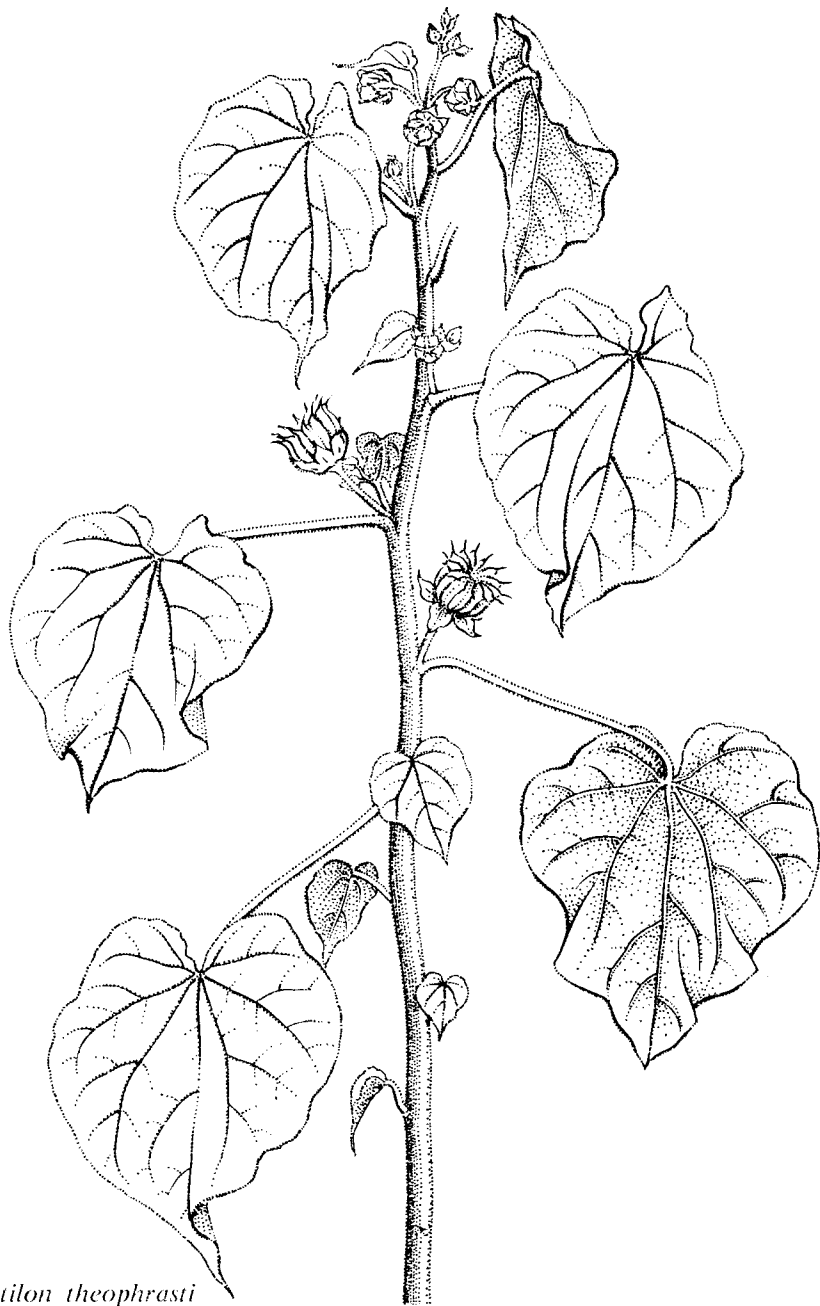
I am continuing a study of *Ranunculus auricomus* in the British Isles. In order to grow as wide a range of material as possible I would be grateful to receive single plants in the wild state from sites in the British Isles—in particular from Scotland, Ireland, Wales and the N. and S.W. of England. (Please do not take specimens from populations which are very small). Specimens may be sent to The Experimental Garden, University Botanic Garden, Cambridge (labelled "for the attention of A. C. Leslie"). All specimens will be acknowledged and postage refunded. A six-figure grid reference and any other details concerning the locality would be additionally welcome.

A. C. LESLIE

## ABUTILON THEOPHRASTI

*Abutilon theophrasti* Medic. (named for Theophrastus, 370-285 B.C.) is an erect annual 50-120 cm tall, usually unbranched, and hairy in all parts. The small yellow or orange yellow flowers are followed by a head of carpels 2-3 cm wide when ripe. A native of southern Asia, it is naturalised in most of the warmer parts of the world and turns up in Britain fairly frequently as an adventive. In U.S.A. where it is a common weed in the warmer areas the velvety tomentose, boldly veined leaves have been used to pattern butter and pastry, resulting in the vernacular names butter-print and pie-marker. It is also known as velvet-leaf.





*Abutilon theophrasti*

## ADVENTIVE NEWS 4

**More grass-seed aliens**

Mrs D. I. Cockerill sent me the following list of plants (those with an asterisk being in Hb. DIC and det. BM and EJC) which appeared at Trotshill (Worcs.) after the grass verges were re-seeded in 1972. None survived the subsequent mowings, but the annual *Silene* is still in cultivation thanks to the harvesting of a few seeds. It resembles a large *S. conica* L. and occurs from the Mediterranean region eastwards to India and is also established in North America.

\**Amsinckia* sp. Specimen inadequate for accurate determination.

*Descurainia sophia* (L.) Webb ex Prantl.

\**Lappula squarrosa* (Retz.) Dumort. ssp. *squarrosa* (*L. echinata* Fritsch).

*Linum usitatissimum* L.

\**Silene conoidea* L. Voucher specimen also in Hb. BM.

*Silybum marianum* (L.) Gaertn.

During June 1975 Mrs E. M. Hyde and Mark Hyde found one plant of *Parentucellia viscosa* (L.) Caruel among rye-grass on the newly-seeded by-pass at Bentley (East Suffolk). *Trifolium incarnatum* L. was also present, a plant which has become increasingly rare in recent years (I have only seen it once in the last ten years!).

**Aliens at Guildford**

A. C. Leslie found four very interesting plants at Guildford tip (Surrey) during 1975 and I reproduce here verbatim his useful notes. Vouchers for all are in Hb. ACL.

*Nigella hispanica* L. A single plant with dark blue perianth segments and lacking the elaborate involucre of *N. damascena* L. from which it also differs in having densely glandular follicles which are fused almost to the top. Native in Spain, Portugal and North Western Africa.

x *Agropogon littoralis* (Sm.) C. E. Hubbard (*Agrostis stolonifera* L. x *Polypogon monspeliensis* (L.) Desf.). A single plant growing with both parents and probably originating on the tip. The panicle was narrow with persistent spikelets (as in *A. stolonifera*) but both glumes and lemmas were awned (as in *P. monspeliensis*). The plant was vigorous producing many short stolons.

*Potentilla intermedia* L. Several plants scattered over a few square yards. Stems procumbent at base, leaves with mostly 5 leaflets and the numerous flowers with petals shorter than the sepals. Native in Northern and Central Russia.

*Poa chaixii* Vill. An unusual tip plant of which two clumps were found. The flattened vegetative shoot, the broad dark green leaf and the very short ligule are distinctive. Native of Western and Central Europe, Asia Minor and Caucasus.

**Aliens at Ipswich**

During 1974 Mrs E. M. Hyde and Mark Hyde explored waste ground (including the Docks) at Ipswich (East Suffolk) and found a number of interesting plants among which were the following:

*Amaranthus retroflexus* L. Det. Cambridge Botanic Gardens.

*Hibiscus trionum* L. Still there in 1975.

*Hordeum jubatum* L. An attractive perennial grass.

*Iva xanthifolia* Nutt. Also 1975. Det. Cambridge Botanic Gardens.

*Solanum sarrachoides* Sendtn.

*S. sisymbriifolium* Lam. Still there in 1975. Det. BM.

*Sorghum halepense* (L.) Pers. Det. BM. Only this species was growing inside the Docks.

### Mixed Bag

*Abutilon theophrasti* Medicus (*A. avicennae* Gaertn.) Road verge at the top of Darnacle Hill, near Goff's Oak (Hertfordshire) on 14.9.75. Mrs H. R. Broad. Conf. EJC. Single plants of this species not infrequently occur, but at this site there were no less than fifty plants in flower and fruit.

*Hydrocotyle moschata* Forst. f. K. E. Bull first reported this species as covering a lawn at Broadwater Down, Tunbridge Wells (West Kent) in 1958 (Hb. EJC). This year the site is unfortunately being developed by builders but it has re-appeared in plenty on soil heaps and bare ground. Since it differs in having less hairy and less deeply cut leaves than the taxon naturalised on Valentia Island (South Kerry) and which is now somewhat rampant in D. McClintock's garden at Platt (West Kent) see full description in *Proc. BSBI* 3: 288 (1959)--I sent a specimen to J. F. M. Cannon (at BM). He confirmed this name saying that it "compares quite well with some New Zealand specimens" . . . "but the real problem is that this whole group extends from New Zealand, through temperate and tropical Asia, to tropical Africa, and is in grave need of a comprehensive monographic revision."

The other "*Hydrocotyle* species" discovered about 1968 by K. E. Bull as a lawn weed at Bayhall Road, again in Tunbridge Wells, was "expertly" named as *H. microphylla* A. Cunn., but on closer inspection it has been found to be a small-leaved and compact form of the unrelated but superficially similar *Sibthorpia europaea* L. Hb. EJC. It still successfully survives there.

*Lathyrus annuus* L. Appeared in the garden of Mrs J. Swanborough at Pew Hill, Chippenham (Wiltshire) during June 1975 although no bird-seed has been scattered there since 1963! Det. EJC. The 1-3 flowered raceme of yellowish flowers and the tuberculate seeds are characteristic features of this Mediterranean species.

*Veronica repens* Clarion ex DC. Lawn weed of Knockomic House, near Forres (Moray). Aug. 1975. Miss M. McCallum Webster. Hb. EJC. Conf. J. E. Lousley. This perennial plant is a native of damp places in the mountains of Corsica and Southern Spain and is grown in our gardens as a low delicate moss-like creeper good for ground-cover on the rockery. Its flowers are up to 10 mm in diameter. Does anyone know of it becoming invasive elsewhere? It is one of the plants mentioned by D. McClintock in his excellent article on *Alien Lawn Weeds* in *RHS Journal* 85: 276-280 (1960).

### Comment on *Consolida*

A. C. Leslie's article on *Consolida* in the last *News* has drawn attention to the widespread misuse of the name "*C. orientalis*" for *C. ambigua* (L.) P. W. Ball and Heywood; on re-checking specimens I discover that I have never seen true *C. orientalis* (Gay) Schrödinger either as an alien or in gardens. This error is

unfortunately widespread in the British literature. One of my sheets I now notice is *Consolida ambigua* x *Delphinium* sp. (I haven't yet heard of an intergeneric hybrid name for this cross!) with 1-3 unequally developed carpels per flower—this white-flowered hortical adventive occurred on a refuse-tip at Stone (West Kent) in September 1974.

### Finale

Who can draw? Could anyone produce line-drawings to illustrate these articles? A good illustration is far better than many descriptive words. Ideally I would like to assemble a collection which I could delve into for each *Adventive News*: any plants not illustrated in our standard British floras would be suitable items.

Mr J. E. Dandy has again very kindly checked the nomenclature of these notes and helped in other ways.

I look forward to receiving more of your records and problem specimens.

ERIC J. CLEMENT

13 Shelford, Burritt Road,  
Kingston, Surrey, KT1 3HR

### CAREX PUNCTATA IN CORNWALL

The classic Cornish station of this sedge is a cliff-face west of Charlestown near St Austell (20/05). Here *C. punctata* Gaud. persists, though it shifts its ground in accordance with changes in the vegetation. The hollow, high up on the cliff, where fifteen years ago it was dominant, is now overgrown with scrub and the sedge can no longer be seen in it, though plentiful below.

*C. punctata* has been reported from three other places in Cornwall. I have failed to find it at Polstreath Cove, Mevagissey, (20/04), though the situation is entirely suitable. The Lizard record (10/61), so Professor Tutin informs me, was an error for *C. distans*. The third record is the Perrycostes', as given in Thurston and Vigers' *Supplement* (1922) to Davey's *Flora of Cornwall*: "Freshwater, near Polperro, 1914." The name "Freshwater" is not in any map or gazetteer but is still used locally for the place where a stream meets the sea about a mile west of Polperro (20/15). Today only *C. extensa* is there; and, as no specimen can be traced, one cannot tell if the Perrycostes really saw *C. punctata*.

In addition Miss B. M. Sturdy this summer spotted a single plant growing, very uncharacteristically, in long grass on the cliff top about two miles south of Mousehole (10/42). Mr L. J. Margetts and I confirmed the determination and on 27 September explored the area together, finding between 70 and 80 plants at the base of the cliffs below Miss Sturdy's station. The sedge extended over more than a quarter of a mile but was largely concentrated in two spots. The area is most fortunately adjacent to a new nature reserve, Kemyel Crease, just acquired by the Cornwall Naturalists' Trust.

This supposedly rare sedge may well be more common than is imagined. It is easily overlooked—because it frequently occurs as single plants, because it sometimes fails to flower, and because of confusion with the much commoner *C. distans*. In fact *C. punctata* normally flowers much later than *C. distans*, which by the end

of August has usually dropped its ripe utricles just when *C. punctata* is at its best. In addition, the leaves of *C. punctata* are often much broader (up to 8 mm) and of a brighter, yellower green than those of *C. distans*; the habit is more upright, as are the female spikes; the utricles project at an angle of 90° from the axis of the stem (those of *C. distans* ascend, at 45°); the male glumes are gingery brown, not purplish brown as in *C. distans*; and the lowest bract is usually longer than the inflorescence.

The shininess of the utricle is not a completely safe guide, for a form of *C. distans* with shiny utricles is common in the west (as on the Lizard), nor have I found the shape of the leaf-sheath a very reliable character.

*C. punctata* should be looked for wherever water trickles down a cliff, or in cracks and grikes of any rock-platform above high-water mark but within reach of the spray. It appears to have some special requirement as a result of which it is never, I believe, found in company with *C. distans*, though it is sometimes associated with *C. demissa* or *C. serotina*. In Wales and in Dorset it is also a plant of dune-slacks, but in south Cornwall this habitat hardly occurs.

R. W. DAVID

### ROADSIDE VERGES

It would probably be accepted by all B.S.B.I. members that roadside verges were valuable habitats for wild flowers, and that seasonal cutting of the grass was an important factor in maintaining them. The timing and frequency of cutting has been a bone of contention, but it has always been necessary to cut at sometime to suppress the most aggressive coarse growing plants and prevent invasion by scrub. However, it will by now be fairly widely known that the Department of the Environment, as the Highway Authority for Motorways and Trunk roads, has instructed its agents (the County Councils) that there is to be no more mowing of roadside grass on these roads except in a number of special circumstances. It has also suggested to County Councils that they should apply similar policies to their own roads (the greatest mileage). Some councils will do this but several have queried the advice and will probably continue general mowing on most roads.

The special circumstances mentioned above include mowing for safety, sight-lines, drainage and fire control, but also include provision for "sites listed as being of outstanding botanical interest, where a special system of management is required". The intention is that the list of sites shall be provided by the Nature Conservancy Council, but this will usually be delegated to County Naturalist's Trusts. Lists of all the Naturalist's Trusts sites (except in one or two cases where there was such a degree of secrecy that information was refused to me, which may yet prove to be their undoing) are given in Monks Wood Occasional report No. 2 (Co-operation for Conservation of Rural Road Verges) copies of which have been sent to all County Highway and County Planning departments in England and Wales, and to all Naturalists Trusts.

These lists are usually of elite sites only and there must be many more places in every County where, under the new circumstances, some form of management must be exercised to maintain existing, but not necessarily outstanding, herbaceous vegetation on roadsides. It seems to me therefore really very important now that

all members who have knowledge of roadside sites of more than ordinary botanical interest should inform their local County Naturalists Trust as soon as possible so that the location can be checked against the County list of protected sites. In addition, B.S.B.I. members (and who better?) should constantly be on the lookout for fresh roadside sites where the existing botanical interest may be at risk if there is no management, and keep the Naturalist's Trust informed of these. It will be up to the Naturalist's Trusts to agree with their local Councils which sites can in practice be accepted.

J. M. WAY  
*Monks Wood Experimental Station*

### FIELD STUDIES AT ARDTORNISH

Ardtornish is an enormous Victorian house towering up in the middle of a proportionately enormous garden, from the lower south facing slopes of a wooded hill between the mouths of two small and typically West Highland rivers. It commands a view straight down Loch Aline and across the Sound to the highest hills of the Isle of Mull. No better centre could be imagined for the exploration of the peninsula of Morvern, a tract of wild country, which, despite the wealth and diversity of its flora and fauna, is probably known to fewer naturalists than any equally accessible area in Scotland. But the recent acquisition by the S.P.N.R. of the better parts of the two richest hills in the peninsula, which actually march with the Ardtornish estate, confirms the suspicion, which has been growing in me for more than twenty years, that the best ultimate future for those parts of Morvern that are not already afforested may well be as a nature reserve.

With this possibility in mind, I am thinking of organizing at Ardtornish, between mid-June and mid-July 1976, three or four experimental courses, each lasting a week, in relatively elementary field botany. At this stage all I am trying to discover is what demand, if any, there would be for this kind of holiday. Since all participants would be spaciouly and comfortably housed, and I hope adequately fed at Ardtornish, the maximum number for each week would be only about 15, and the cost, though to a certain extent adjustable to the requirements of the majority, would be correspondingly high; certainly not less than £40, possibly over £50. Indeed the combined disadvantage of a long and expensive journey, the costliness of all supplies owing to the distance they have to be transported, and an abnormally high average rainfall may prove fatal to the project before it is even launched. And apart from an abundant supply of hot water, the counterbalancing advantages, to be found in the scenery and its accessories, are more imponderable. I will here content myself by listing a random but representative assortment of a dozen plants that are to be seen in local abundance (and all but the first two within a quarter of a mile of a passable road) in this one small area: -- *Arenaria norvegica*, *Cardaminopsis petraea*, *Drosera x obovata*, *Isoetes echinospora*, *Hammarbya paludosa*, *Rhynchospora fusca*, *Dryopteris aemula* (in association with both species of *Hymenophyllum* and *Listera cordata*), *Cephalanthera longifolia*, *Orthilia secunda*, *Orobanche alba*, *Carum verticillatum* and *Ligustrum scoticum*. Sadly, *Spiranthes romanazoffiana*, being almost impossible to detect before early August, must on that account alone be omitted from this list. But

even without it, and even granting that some of these plants individually are not all that uncommon, where else in Britain could you be confident of seeing plenty of all 12?

Whether or not I proceed with this project and, if so, whether I invite certain well-known botanists to come as leaders of more specialised courses, depends on what reaction, if any, this note evokes. If anybody who reads it is sufficiently interested to contemplate coming to Ardtornish, I should be most grateful if he or she would, as soon as possible, not only write to the address below to tell me so, but also answer the following questions:—

1. What would be the maximum you would be prepared to pay for such a week, including the transport essential to the course?

2. If necessary, in order to increase numbers and thereby reduce costs, would you be willing to share a bedroom?

3. Would you prefer courses to run from Wednesday to Wednesday in order to obtain the mid-week reduction in rail fares, or from Saturday to Saturday to confine your holiday to a single working week?

4. If you come by car, would you be willing, if suitably reimbursed, a. to bring others with you from the same direction, and b. to use the car, if necessary, for excursions during the week?

It is perhaps worth adding, for those with non-botanical spouses who might even so be persuaded to join the party, that other pursuits for which facilities and guidance are also available include bird-watching and fishing on a variety of lochs.

JOHN RAVEN,  
*Docwra's Manor,*  
*Shepreth,*  
*Royston,*  
*Herts. SG8 6PS*

### £500 TO SPARE?

A most exciting brochure on Cape Flower Tours has been received from South African Travel. Any member interested can obtain details from:— A. A. Overland Tours (Pty) Ltd. at Swiss Centre, 10 Wardour Street, London, W1V 3HG. Botanical Holidays (some more moderately priced) are also organised by Cox and Kings Ltd.:— tours to Turkey and Afghanistan, the Island of Corsica, Corfu and Sicily, and mountain centres in the Pyrenees, Tyrol, High Tatras, and Dolomites. Details from Vulcan House, 46 Marshall Street, London W1V 2PA. Also by Wayfarers to the Pyrenees, Swiss Alps, etc., details from 176 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0DE. Many of these tours are led by B.S.B.I. members.

### PLANT REQUEST

Seeds or cuttings of the common barberry *Berberis vulgaris* wanted by Mr C. R. Hill, 311 Dickson Road, Blackpool, Lancs., FY1 2JL. Mr Hill has found that many species are obtainable from nurseries, but not this one.

## LETTERS

## MISNOMER

The Old House,  
Ashbourne,  
Derbyshire DE6 1AJ

24 October, 1975

The Editor, B.S.B.I. News

Dear Sir,

The enjoyable account of the "Spotted Pimpernel" in Miss Hyslop's letter in B.S.B.I. News No. 10 recalls another intriguing example of journalistic botany which I noticed in one of the London dailies recently. In an otherwise well-reported account of the conservation of a wetland site we were told of "the Marsh Orchid, *Dactylis*, otherwise known as Marsh Cinquefoil" . . . ?

Yours sincerely,  
(Miss) Kathleen Hollick

## ARBUTUS UNEDO

National Museum of Wales,  
Department of Botany  
30th September, 1975

Dear Mr Beckett,

With reference to Mr Nodder's note on *Arbutus unedo* in B.S.B.I. News No. 10, it may be of interest to quote Mrs Grieve's interpretation of the meaning of the name "Unedo", in her *Modern Herbal* (1931): ". . . the fruit was known to the ancients, but according to Pliny (who gave the tree the name of *Arbutus*) was not held in much esteem, as the name implies (un ede=one I eat), the fruits being considered so unpalatable, that no one tasting them for the first time would be tempted to repeat the experiment. Nevertheless, there is some evidence that at one time the fruit was an article of diet with the ancients".

Yours faithfully,  
S. G. Harrison, Keeper

## ANSWER TO A PROBLEM?

The keen amateur botanist can cause certain problems for the busy professional by inundating them with parcels of specimens and this is aggravated if the latter happens to dislike letterwriting. An all-purpose form something like the following might be of benefit to both:-

Thank you for your communication/phone call/parcel/packet. (Space for others)  
I/we was/were delighted/surprised/pleased/interested to receive it/them.

Your specimens arrived beautifully packed/very fresh/in good order/a trifle dry/a little mouldy. I/we was/were away when the parcel arrived so identification is not now possible./Please use more stiffening.



Please send further material/no further material/more next season/with fruits/in flower/pressed/living/rooted./Please do not send more specimens till you hear from me/us. I/we are not accepting any further material this year/till next year/until further notice. I/we am/are leaving the country.

I will examine them immediately/as soon as possible/when I have a little more time/next week/next month/after the holidays/later on.

Please do not put any further offerings through the letter box when my wife/husband/mother/housekeeper is out, the last three/lot(s) have been eaten by the dog/my youngest/destroyed by the cat/mice/hamsters which unfortunately are in the hall most of the day. He/she/it/they are allergic to this plant.

ALISON RUTHERFORD

### BIOLOGICAL CURATORS GROUP

Following a preliminary meeting held in Leicester on Friday 18th April 1975 a Biological Curators Group has now been formed with the following terms of reference:-

1. To facilitate the exchange of information between individuals concerned with collections of specimens and records, their conservation and interpretation.
2. To present the views of biological curators to the Museums Association and to other bodies.

A first general meeting of the Group will be held in London in December and this will be followed by further meetings and seminars on specific topics at different locations in the United Kingdom. It is also planned to produce a quarterly Newsletter.

Membership of the Group is open to all interested individuals at an annual subscription of £1. Further details and application forms are available from G. Stansfield, B.Sc., F.M.A., c/o The Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, 152 Upper New Walk, Leicester LE1 7QA.

### INDIVIDUAL RECORD CARDS

It seems that some members have not seen or used the current Biological Records Centre pink Individual Record Cards recommended for use with the Irish Ivy Survey. To help with submitting these and other records accurately the following abstract from the B.R.C.'s booklet *Instructions for Recorders* is reprinted here.

N.B. These cards are also used to record animals so that some of the "boxes" on the card are irrelevant for plant recording.

These cards are used for recording **one** species from **one** locality. They should be used only when it is desirable to give more information about a specimen (e.g. precise location) than is allowed for on the Field Cards. They must be used for rare and critical species; and should also be used for recording hybrids (see "Sub-

species"). Data written in the boxes provided on the front of the card will be transferred to 80-column punched cards which can be processed by computer and by the machinery at BRC.

The original hand-written cards received by the Centre will have only the species number and the Vice-county number punched so as not to obliterate the written record. They will then be sorted mechanically for filing. **If they are at all damaged the machines will not accept them and they will have to be re-written.** For this reason they must not be:

- used in the field;
- folded;
- fastened together with paper clips;
- held together with rubber bands unless protected by cardboard.

The card should be completed as follows:

GENUS & SPECIES Name, preferably scientific. In capitals.

SUB-SPECIES, ETC. Name of sub-species, variety or 2nd parent of hybrid.

GRID REFERENCE Using the 8 spaces provided fill in the grid reference (see instructions for grid references) e.g. 52/231746

5	2	2	3	1	7	4	6
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

; if only 1 km grid reference known  
e.g. 32/71-84-

3	2	7	1	-	8	4	-
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

; if only 10 km grid reference known, e.g. 44/51 

4	4	5	-	-	1	-	-
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

VICE COUNTY Name and number. e.g.

South Devon			
			3

LOCALITY

Enter the name of the town or village marked on the appropriate 1" O.S. map **or** the distance and direction from such a place. If possible this should be stated in twenty letters or less, e.g. 3 km S.W. KIMBOLTON or 5 mls. N. CAMBRIDGE (i.e. place names in capitals).

ALTITUDE

When known this should be stated in feet or, preferably, metres, e.g.

	3	5	7m

metres

1000 ft.			

feet

N.B. Do not put measurements in feet in the boxes for metres.

**HABITAT** Describe the habitat in which the specimen was found, if possible to fit one of the following categories:

- 0 Woodland
- 1 Scrub
- 2 Lowland heath
- 3 Basic grassland
- 4 Neutral or acid grassland
- 5 Marsh or fen
- 6 Aquatic habitats
- 7 Hedgerow and roadside
- 8 Waste ground, walls (ruderal)
- 9 Natural open habitats, cliffs and screes, mountain tops, sand dunes, shingle
- 10 Arable
- 11 Bog and moorland
- 12 Non-classifiable

For classes 0–9 and 12 it should also be stated if the habitat is maritime.

**DATE** Insert day, month and year,

e.g. 23rd August, 1966

**RECORDER'S NAME** In the case of a **field record** this is the name of the person who saw the specimen and is filling in the card. For a **museum specimen** it will be the name of the collector which appears on the label. For a **literature record** it will be the name cited.

**RECORDER'S NUMBER** Unless you have already been allocated a number by B.R.C. this should be omitted.

Rarity, status and source are recorded by drawing a diagonal line through the appropriate box. The abbreviations are as follows:

**RARITY** **RARE** = locally rare (normally used only when the species is known to be confined to a single locality not exceeding 1 km square in extent within a 10 km square).

**EXT.** = locally extinct (known to have occurred in the 10 km square but now absent (and not recorded for x years).)

**STATUS** **NAT.** = native.

**INT.** = introduced or planted deliberately.

**ESC.** = escaped from garden, or zoo etc. accidentally.

**MIG.** = migrant.

**CAS.** = accidental or casual, not persisting in natural surroundings for more than a year or two.

SOURCE     FLD. = field.  
               MUS. = museum or herbarium.  
               LIT. = literature.

ADDITIONAL DATA     Place a diagonal line through the small box to the right if there are any additional data, and write these data or the reference to them **on the back of the card** (leave a margin of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " inch (2 cms) at each end) or in the space for comments.

COMMENTS & COMPILER     Any brief comments may be written in this box, and/or the name of the person filling in the card if other than the recorder.

DETAILS OF SOURCE     For **museum** records insert the name of the museum or herbarium in which the voucher material can be found, with the standard abbreviation if known; if in your own collection or that of the finder use PVT (Private).

e.g. 

British Museum				
B	M			

For literature records give the reference, e.g.

J. Soc. Brit. Ent.						
				2	:	22

EXPERT     Name of the expert who determined the material (when other than the recorder), e.g.

E. R. Smith				

N.B. The boxes are for the initials.

**Nothing should be written in the stippled areas** on the card as these are needed for coding. Any additional information should be written on the back of the card (see Additional Data).

## STOP PRESS

### Atlas of the British Flora

Over 400 orders have been received for this. A reprint will be made for distribution in January/February 1976.

### Network Research

The surveys of black poplar and wild service tree continue for one more season. Supplies of cards are still available from BRC, Monks Wood, Huntingdon.