



- (a) *Blechnum chilense* (Kaulf.) Mett.
- (b) *Pteris vittata* L.
- (c) *Dicksonia antarctica* Labill.

ADMINISTRATION

HON. GEN. SEC. (General Enquiries)

**Mrs Mary Briggs, White
Cottage, Slinfold, HORSHAM, West Sussex RH13 7RG.**

HON TREASURER. (Payment of Subscriptions and change of address).

**Mr Michael Walpole, 68 Outwoods Road,
LOUGHBOROUGH, Leics LE11 3LY.**

(Please quote membership number on correspondence concerning membership or subscriptions).

FIELD MEETINGS:

**Mr Jeremy N.B. Milton, Sch. of Biol. Sci.,
Queen Mary College, LONDON E1 4NS.**

COMMITTEE SECRETARIES:

CONSERVATION:

Miss Lynne Farrell, N.C.C., P.O. Box 6,
HUNTINGDON PE18 6BU.

PUBLICATIONS:

Mr Arthur O. Chater, Dept of Botany,
British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road,
LONDON SW7 5BD.

MEETINGS:

Miss Joanna Martin, N.C.C., Calthorpe House,
Calthorpe Street, BANBURY, Oxon OX16 8EX.

Further details of Permanent Working committees and Associated Societies are on p. 30.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Elections to Council

Nomination for vacancies on Council, in writing, signed by two members of the Society and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate to serve, if elected, should be sent to the Hon. General Secretary, White Cottage, Slinfold, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 7RG, to arrive BEFORE FEBRUARY 1st 1984.

Mary Briggs, Hon. Gen. Sec.

**Contributions for inclusion
in *BSBI News* 36
must reach the Editor before
11th February, 1984.**

HON. GEN. SECRETARY'S NOTES

Panel of Referees

Our apologies to our re-appointed and newly appointed Referees that they have been inadvertently (inexplicably?) titled as "Judges". Rumours that Referees will in future don black caps when sinking a species have not been confirmed. The title will revert to "Referees and Specialists" at the next printing. Potentially more confusing discrepancies are the two genera listed with no Referee:

In the first, under PTERIDOPHYTA:

Asplenium) **should be bracketed**, as Anne Sleep tells us that
Polystichum) she is happy to receive specimens of both.

In the second, under CARYOPHYLLACEAE:

Stellaria) **should be bracketed**, as Peter Benoit will accept
Cerastium) specimens of both. Of the latter, **annual** species only, with
mature fruits, please.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND PERENNIAL *CERASTIUM* SPECIMENS TO PETER BENOIT.

Collecting Plants Abroad

The DoE is to publish a new leaflet on Plant Importing Regulations in 1984. Meanwhile we remind members that if they wish to collect plants from the wild in Europe or the Mediterranean, they should apply to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for a licence which covers the import of up to 2 kgms – with this licence the collector can be exempt from phytosanitary regulations.

For import licence and list of plants not permitted under phytosanitary regulations apply to the following:

M.A.F.F.,
Plant Health Administrative Unit,
Eagle House,
90-96 Cannon Street, London EC4N 6HT.

Dept. of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland,
Chesser House,
500 Gorgie Road, Edinburgh EH11 3AW.

Collectors also need a permit for collection and export from the country visited.

The Wildlife Conservation Licensing Section,
Department of the Environment,
Tollgate House,
Houlton Street, Bristol BS2 9DJ.

and in N. Ireland:

The Dept. of Agriculture for Northern Ireland,
Animal Health Division,
Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 3SB.

Specimens in Plastic Bags

From the introduction to the List, you will see that plastic bags are not normally recommended for sending specimens. However at the recent meeting of BSBI Recorders we heard from Gwynn Ellis that specimens sent to the National Museum of Wales did arrive in good condition in plastic bags IF sent in *unsealed* and slightly inflated plastic bags in strong envelopes, and posted FIRST CLASS on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.

For some groups plastic is recommended e.g. Salicornias and Roses; it is helpful if these are wrapped first in paper to absorb any drops of condensation should the packets be left on sunny windowsills or in hot postal vans. On page 20 Jenny Moore asks for Characeae specimens “damp (not wet) in a polythene bag” and marked “to be opened at once”. This instruction obviously varies with the circumstances of different referees, depending on whether they are in a Department with a team of stand-in post openers, or, in some cases, the packets may well lie unopened on the doormat of an empty house.

Polythene packets of soggy, brown, mouldering, disintegrating and unidentifiable vegetation are all too familiar at the receiving end. If there is a good example to hand in Annual Exhibition week we plan to put it on display! Meanwhile the recommendation is for most specimens to be sent pressed – others, if in polythene, with care.

S.a.e. PLEASE

Another request from the Recorders' Meeting is please to remember postage for reply. Here again the Recorders' circumstances may differ, but we heard a strong plea from those who are retired, writing from home, and who are at times using up to 2 books of stamps weekly from their own pockets, replying to enquiries and naming specimens. It was commented that students were the worst offenders, not BSBI members. We would particularly ask lecturers and those with influence on students, when recommending sending queries to a BSBI Referee or County Recorder, to stress please **SEND POSTAGE FOR REPLY.**

CONGRATULATIONS

First, to Dr **JOHN DONY** whose richly deserved MBE was announced in the Birthday Honours.

Then **The British Bryological Society** which celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 1983. By kind invitation the Hon. Gen. Sec. represented the BSBI at the Conversation and supper of the Jubilee meeting in September. In proposing the toast to the B.B.S., Professor W. Chaloner F.R.S. remarked that from a palaeobotanical viewpoint 60 years was very short . . . but significant for a specialist society of Bryologists. We send greetings and wish the Society well for the next 60 years.

Golden Wedding greetings to **Edgar Milne-Redhead** (past-President of BSBI) and his wife Olive who celebrated this achievement in September 1983.

Congratulations also to **Professor William T. Stearn**, recently elected to the Royal Academy of Swedish Sciences, the first British botanist to be so honoured since 1964. Professor Stearn tells me that on a recent visit to Swedish Lapland he was looking one midnight at a ground-cover plant which he thought at first was a Saxifrage until he realised that this dominant plant was *Diapensia lapponica*!

Look farther dig deeper

In 1981 Margaret Patterson reported a fine colony of 30 plants of *Verbascum pulverulentum* flowering on waste ground in Priory Street, Cardigan, VC 46. As this species is confined in Britain to roadsides and waste places in East Anglia, and is a very rare casual elsewhere, she was puzzled until she realised that the site had been used until 1979 by the local Agricultural Co-op for storing farm machinery. Arthur Chater has told me that further enquiry showed that in 1977 used machinery from a depot in Norwich was brought to the site, so the source of the colony, which still flourishes, can be assumed with some certainty.

This tracing and tracking of the movements of a *native* plant across Britain is of particular interest, contrasting with the recording of considerable numbers of alien and adventive plants, often with suggested origin and possible means of transportation, in each issue of *BSBI News*.

Tail-piece

The Horsham printer responsible for BSBI stationery printing tells us that he has supplied 16,500 Secretary's headed postcards to the Hon. Gen. Sec. since 1972!

Mary Briggs

BSBI MEMBERS LEADING BOTANICAL EXCURSIONS ABROAD IN 1984

Majorca	March	Frank Perring	1 week
Crete	April	Mary Briggs	2 weeks
S.W. Turkey	May	Mary Briggs	2 weeks
Berdun-Aragon, Pyrenees	May/June	John Mason	2 weeks
Bohinj - Jugoslavia	June	Mary Briggs	2 weeks
Wengen - Swiss Alps	June/July	Mary Briggs	2 weeks
Selva Val Gardena - Dolomites	July	John Richards	2 weeks
Berdun & Formigal - Aragon & High Pyrenees	July	Mary Briggs	2 weeks
La Grave Haute Alpes	July	John Mason	1 week

Details of all the above from:

Cox & Kings Special Interest Holidays, 46 Marshall Street, LONDON W1V 2PA. Tel: 01-439 3380.

E. Aegean Islands & S.W. Turkish Coast Cruise	Early April	Oleg Polunin	2 weeks
" " " " "	Late April	John Akeroyd	2 weeks
St. Luc Swiss Alps	June/July	John Akeroyd	2 weeks

Details of these from:

Fairways & Swinford, 37 Abbey Road, St. John's Wood, LONDON NW8 0BY.
Tel: 01-624 9352

PUZZLE PLANT

The curious misshapen extuberances of the Knopper Gall on acorn cups of *Quercus robur* caused by the gall-wasp *Andricus quercuscalicis* is another which mystifies many during the autumn months. At the BSBI Oak Symposium at the University of Sussex in 1973, Arnold Darlington told us that the first report of this Oak Gall in Britain was by Dr M.F. Claridge in 1962. As it happened a queried specimen had arrived in the BSBI post on the morning of his paper at the Symposium, providing a topical demonstration.

Mr Darlington has since recorded the spread of the gall across Britain, from the first sighting in East Anglia spreading south to the Channel Islands then to the south-west of Britain, but now across almost the whole of the country. It had a population explosion, in 1979 when it was difficult to find a *Quercus robur* acorn in West Sussex that was not infected. Fortunately the *Andricus* is not so prolific every year.

"For reference next Autumn. The Hon. Gen. Sec. had received eleven Knopper Galls before *News 34* went to press this autumn - Knopper Gall size packets on the White Cottage doormat from mid-September and through October do not now excite a prospect of surprise!".

As to the origin of "Knopper" as the English name for this knobby gall. O.E.D. defines 'knop' as "a small rounded protuberance, boss, stud, button, tassel or the like".

It was "knoppe" in late middle English, middle Dutch and middle low German. cf. an old name for *Sparganium* was 'knop sedge' and cf. William Turner's description of *Astragalus* which includes, of the roots: "blacke little rotes with knoppes lyke acornes" (in *The names of herbes* 1548, The Ray Society 1965). (See also *Observer*, 16 Oct 1983 and *D. Tel.* 7 Nov 1983.

Thanks to Pamela Hadden for her drawing.

Mary Briggs



Knopper Galls On Acorn

del. Pam Hadden

EARLY CONSERVATION

Since asking for references to plant conservation earlier than **1885**, and Clive Lovatt's published note in reply, on comments on *Arabis stricta* in 1841 (*BSBI News* 32, p. 4 and 33, p. 21), David Allen has drawn attention to his paper '*The early history of plant conservation in Britain*' in *Trans. Leicester Lit. Phil. Soc.* 72, 35-50 (1980). In this David gives the end of the 1830s for the earliest signs of the first twinges of botanical conscience – from the pens of two young men active in the Botanical Society of London, founded in 1836. One, Daniel Cooper, he quotes writing in **1837** of the likely fate of Battersea fields “when railroads extend into this, the Metropolitan Botanists' favourite locality, overturning and obliterating some of nature's choicest productions”. However around 1850 one of the Botanical Society's members celebrated “the recent discovery of a new Essex rarity, *Bupleurum falcatum* by contributing no fewer than three hundred specimens of it to that year's annual Exchange”! David Allen's paper is strongly recommended to anyone with an interest in this subject.

Dr John Dony has also sent a note of the condemnation by botanists in **1864** of the RHS which had offered between two and three hundred prizes for the formation of the best local collections of wild flowers. John adds that Luton Museum now holds the Bedfordshire collection from this competition, “300 specimens including all the rarities which I am glad to have as their only confirmed record”.

Ursula Preston sends a note of specific concern with a suggestion for positive action. At the end of the last century when W.H. Hudson in *Nature in Downland* wrote of the *Juniperus communis*: “It is to be wished that something could be done to prevent the destruction of this handsome bush. If one of the great landowners of the downs would create a juniper preserve at some point where the plant grows spontaneously and well, he would deserve the gratitude of all lovers of nature who are accustomed to take their summer rambles in downland”. Mary Briggs

STRAIGHTENING THE RECORD

While I much appreciated the very kind sentiments included in my Profile published in the last News, it did contain one major error that I must correct, lest some future historian of the Society latch on to it as a convenient source of light relief.

In the middle of the profile, a splendidly glamorous picture is painted of me meeting my wife for the first time, up a willow tree at Flatford Mill. The truth is often said to be stranger than fiction but, regrettably, in this case it is merely much more prosaic. In fact, I met Margaret at the tender age of 14 and have been 'going steady' more or less ever since. Our work on willow epiphytes, later published in the *BSBI Proceedings*, was begun when we were both at university some seven years later, and was the first of many joint projects that happily, for us at least, continue to this day. My wife has been heard to remark that I am the most unromantic person she has ever met. The version already published in the News might do something to enhance my dismal reputation but, if left uncorrected, would not be in the best traditions of a society devoted to the unbiased search for scientific truth!

JOHN CANNON, President BSBI, Botany Dep't, British Museum (Nat. Hist.), Cromwell Road, LONDON SW7 5BD.

SENECIO VERNALIS Waldst. & Kit. IN BRITAIN

In Europe, *Senecio vernalis* Waldst. & Kit. has spread very successfully from W Russia into C and N Europe in the last 250 years, and now seems to have reached Belgium and France.

As there seems to be a high probability that this species, a native of E and SE Europe, S Russia, SW Asia and Afghanistan, eventually will also invade Britain, I want to draw attention to it.

So far, it has been recorded near Bideford, v.c. 4, in 1961, in Market Harborough, v.c. 55, in 1968, 1971 and 1972, in Lubenham, v.c. 55, in 1968, near Ravenstonedale, v.c. 69, in 1982, in the Isle of Man, v.c. 71, in 1982, and again in 1982 in Dalgety Bay, v.c. 85. Very often, the species was found in newly seeded roadside verges and seems to have been imported with grass seed.

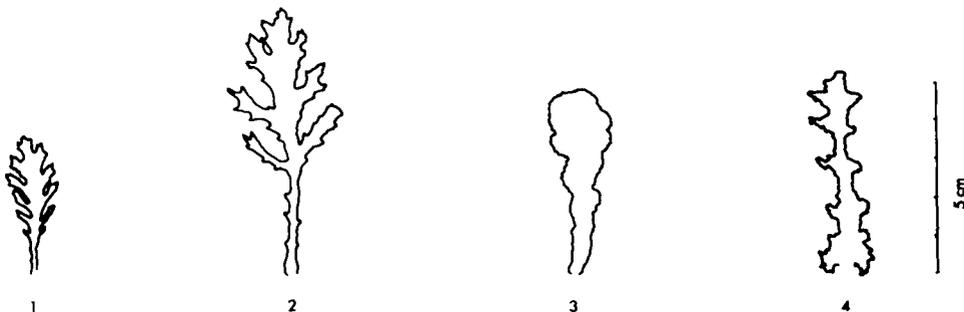
S. vernalis is very similar to *S. vulgaris* L. in its leaf shape, but differs in its inflorescence, which is a lax corymb of ligulate capitula, very similar to that of *S. squalidus* L. Also, *S. vernalis* very often has a densely arachnoid indumentum. Despite a difference in chromosome number, which is $2n=20$ in *S. vernalis*, but $2n=40$ in *S. vulgaris*, the two species seem to hybridise wherever they meet. This hybrid is known as *S. x helwingii* Hegi. The main difference between *S. vernalis* and *S. squalidus* is the leaf shape (see illustration), but they also differ in the indumentum. Furthermore, *S. vernalis* is an annual. Although the hybrid between these two species has never been reported from nature, it can be produced easily under artificial conditions, and shows up to 34% pollen fertility. There seems to be a high potential for taxonomic confusion, particularly of *S. x helwingii* with *S. x baxteri* Druce, the sterile hybrid between *S. vulgaris* and *S. squalidus*, but also with *S. vulgaris* var. *hibernicus* Syme, the shortly ligulate ruderal variety of *S. vulgaris*. It may also be of great interest to follow the spread of *S. vernalis* in comparison to that of *S. squalidus*, which also was introduced to Britain.

It may well be that *S. vernalis* will not establish itself from imported seed, but rather extend its range by colonizing Britain from the south.

J.W. KADEREIT, The Botany School, Downing St. CAMBRIDGE CB2 3EA.
BRIDGE CB2 3EA.

Present address: Institut f. Systematische Botanik u. Pflanzengeographie, Im Neuenheimer Feld 328, D-6900 HEIDELBERG, W. Germany.

Middle cauline leaves of *Senecio squalidus* L. (1, 2), basal (3) and middle cauline leaf (4) of *Senecio vernalis* Waldst. & Kt.



leaves of *Senecio*

PROFILE

(Professor David A. Webb, Ph.D., Sc.D., B.S.B.I. Vice-President)

As the uncrowned king of Irish botany, any attempt at a portrait of David Webb must smack of *lese-majesty*. David's is a striking figure, with his aquiline profile, keen eye, explosive laugh and zestful aura. The key combination of white mane and blue jeans permits identification even at a distance, during most seasons. A vivid description of an earlier edition Webb was volunteered by an elderly Clare woman: "Tall, and straight, and wild, and red-headed, climbing away up on them mountains like a wild goat; sure the students couldn't keep up with him". They still can't.

For many years a pillar of the School of Botany of Trinity College, Dublin, David's contribution has been outstanding both as scholar and as teacher. A generous patron of youth, he has brought out the talent in others by the challenge of his own. Of his scholarly achievements, this is not the place for an extensive account. Irish readers will have been reared on 'An Irish Flora', now in its sixth edition. His co-editorship of *Flora Europaea* spans over twenty years of endeavour. He has earned an added lustre through his occasional irruptions into other botanical fields, to joust with phytosociologists, geneticists, and so on; each article a *tour de force*. At once sage and *enfant terrible*, he commands a rare blend of erudition, incisiveness and common sense, and is delightfully quotable. The breadth of his learning is epitomised in the two latest works that he has co-authored: the one *An Academic History of Trinity College Dublin*, the other – still hot from the press – the *Flora of Connemara and the Burren*.

The magnetic quality of the man makes him liable to become the focus at botanical gatherings, a presence impossible to ignore. Finally, one cannot forego mention of the pleasure of David's company at the dinner-table: a lover of good food and wine (himself a cook of no small ability), a lively debater and a memorable raconteur. 'D.A.' is clearly an established figure in the lore of botanists; a legend in his own lifetime. Long may he continue to dazzle and to goad us.

A.N.O.N.

KINDRED SOCIETIES

From time to time we are asked for the addresses of other British botanical societies:-

BRITISH PTERIDOLOGICAL SOCIETY:

Hon. Sec. Mr A.R. Busby, 42 Lewisham Road, Smethwick, WARLEY, West Midlands B66 2BS.

BRITISH LICHEN SOCIETY:

Hon. Sec. Mr J.R. Laundon, Dept of Botany, British Museum (Nat. Hist.) LONDON SW7 5BD.
SW7 5BD.

BRITISH BRYOLOGICAL SOCIETY:

Hon. Sec. Dr R.E. Longton, Dept. of Botany, The University, READING RG6 2AS.

BRITISH PHYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY:

Hon. Sec. Dr J.M. Jones, Dept. of Marine Biology, PORT ERIN, Isle of Man.

BRITISH MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY:

Hon. Sec. Dr H.O.W. Egginis, Biodeterioration Centre, University of Aston in Birmingham, St. Peter's College, BIRMINGHAM B8 3TE.

ALIENS and ADVENTIVES

ADVENTIVE NEWS 26

compiled by Adrian L. Grenfell

MORE ON TAN BARK ALIENS

An August visit to the Manor Tannery, Grampound, Cornwall by A.J. Byfield, K.L. Spurgin and the writer produced a rich crop of adventives hailing from Turkey. New to Britain was *Chrozophora tinctoria* (L.) a. Juss., det. EJC, Hb. ALG, one of two Mediterranean annuals treated at specific level in the *FE 2* account of *Euphorbiceae*. This, and *C. obliqua*, are treated as a single polymorphic species by A. Radcliffe-Smith in the more recent *Flora of Turkey*. *C. tinctoria*, finely depicted by G. M. S. Easy, appropriately from a 1974 Turkish gathering, has leavessilverish with short stellate hairs and appears strikingly amaranth-like: it could easily be mistaken for such at first sight. Perennial *Amaranthus deflexus* L., *Citrullus lanatus* (Water Melon) and *Cucumis melo* (Melon) were all new to Cornwall; seeds of the later duo must have been introduced into the tan bark by human agency! *Amaranthus albus*, *Trifolium constantinopolitanum* and *Malva nicaeensis* were also present.

The proprietors, the Croggon brothers, tell me that the cupules of Valonia Oak, *Quercus macrolepis*, imported from Turkey, are crushed and used in conjunction with Forest of Dean oak bark for the extraction of tannins used in the production of high quality shoe leather. The densely pubescent cupules, up to 40 mm in diameter with their spreading scales, provide an excellent vehicle for the introduction of alien propagules, the survival of which is aided by the fact that tannin leaching is carried out under neutral conditions. Until recent years, the spent bark was dumped but it now finds increasing use horticulturally as a mulch (peat being expensive in Cornwall); its importance as a source of adventives was first recognised by L.J. Margetts in the early 1970's. The County Demonstration Garden at Probus is a big user and here in August the writer found *Amoria glomerata* (L.) R.M. Burton (*Trifolium glomeratum*), *Trifolium scabrum*, *Securigera securidaca* (L.) Degen & Dorfner, *Ornithopus compressus* L. (new to Cornwall) and several *Medicago* species.

A large crop of seedlings was found in late September during a second tannery visit (Mrs B.E.M. Garratt, K.L. Spurgin and the writer): the most noteworthy so far identified being *Lathyrus aphaca* agg. (critical in Turkey); *Pisum sativum*, *Medicago truncatula* and *Hymenocarpus circinnatus* (L.) Savi, all new to Cornwall; *Trifolium angustifolium*; *Scorpiurus muricatus*; *Ornithopus compressus*; *Coronilla* cf. *coronata* L. and *Onobrychis aequidentata* (Sibth. & Sm.) D'Urv. both new to Britain. Mature plants of *Portulaca oleracea* and *Medicago minima* were noted.

The following cumulative list comprises not less than 75% legumes – an astonishingly high proportion. The complete absence of *Compositae* and *Graminae* is particularly noticeable.

AMARANTHACEAE

Amaranthus albus
deflexus

PORTULACACEAE

Portulaca oleracea

CARYOPHYLLACEAE

Herniaria hirsuta

LEGUMINOSAE

Lathyrus annus

aphaca

cicera

inconspicuus

Pisum sativum

Medicago arabica

cf. *laciniata*

minima

polymorpha

truncatula

Amoria glomerata

Trifolium affine

angustifolium

constantinopolitanum

Trifolium dubium

repens

resupinatum

scabrum

speciosum

tomentosum

Hymenocarpus circinnatus

Securigera securidaca

Ornithopus compressus

Coronilla cf. *coronata*

scorpioides

Scorpiurus muricatus

Onobrychis aequidentata

EUPHORBIACEAE

Chrozophora tinctoria

MALVACEAE

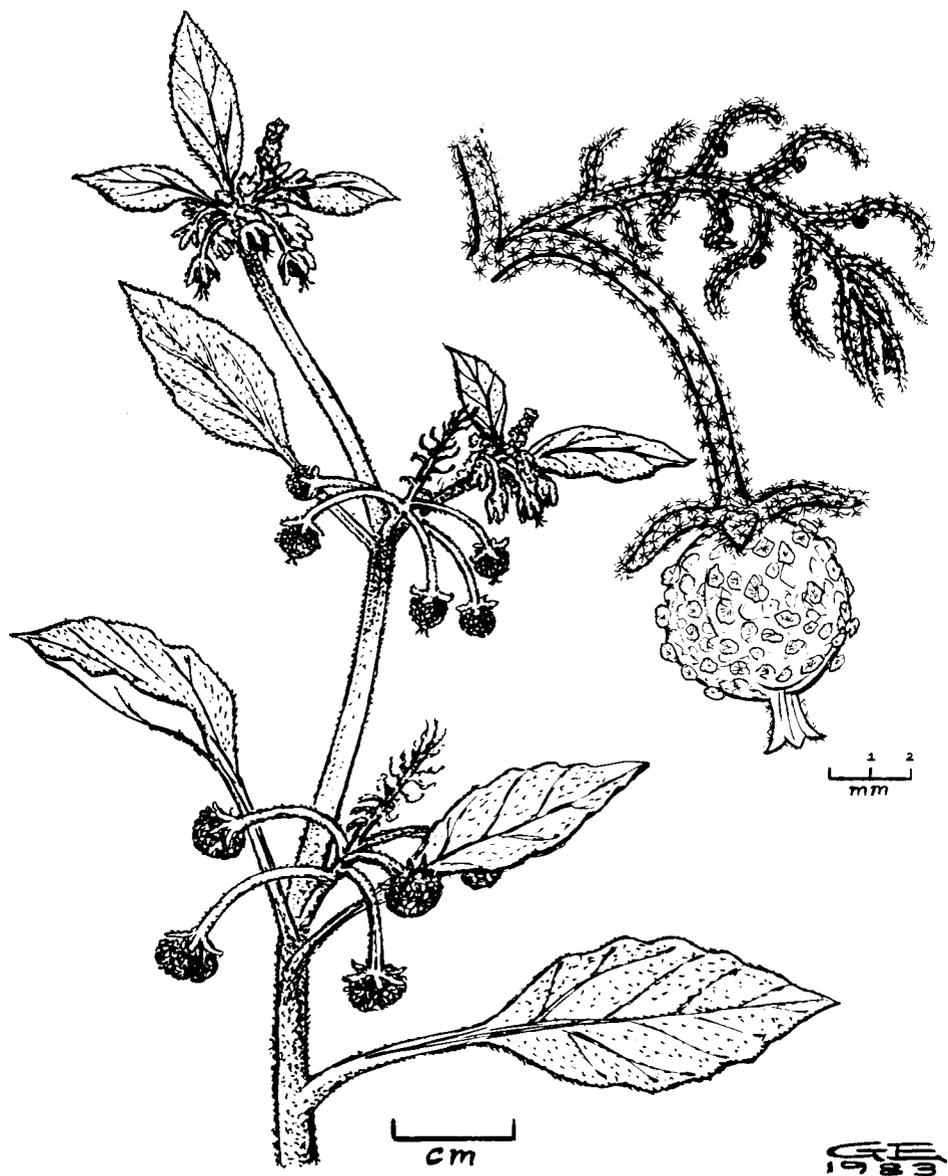
Malva neglecta

nicaeensis

CURCURBITACEAE

Citrullus lanatus

Cucumis melo



Chrozophora tinctoria (L.) A. Juss. del. G.M.S. Easy © 1981

ADVENTIVE FERNS - 1 (see front cover)

Adiantum pedatum L.: A very rare garden escape established on a bridge near Virginia Water, Berks., *Proc. BSBI* 7: 632 (1969). Is it still there? Records of *A. capillus-veneris* as an escape are much more frequent and often from inland sites; I suspect all are not correct, (?) more often now than the British native. *A. cuneatum* (Lang.) Fisch. completes a trio all very similar which could escape and be overlooked. I should welcome fronds in support of any inland record not considered a native occurrence.

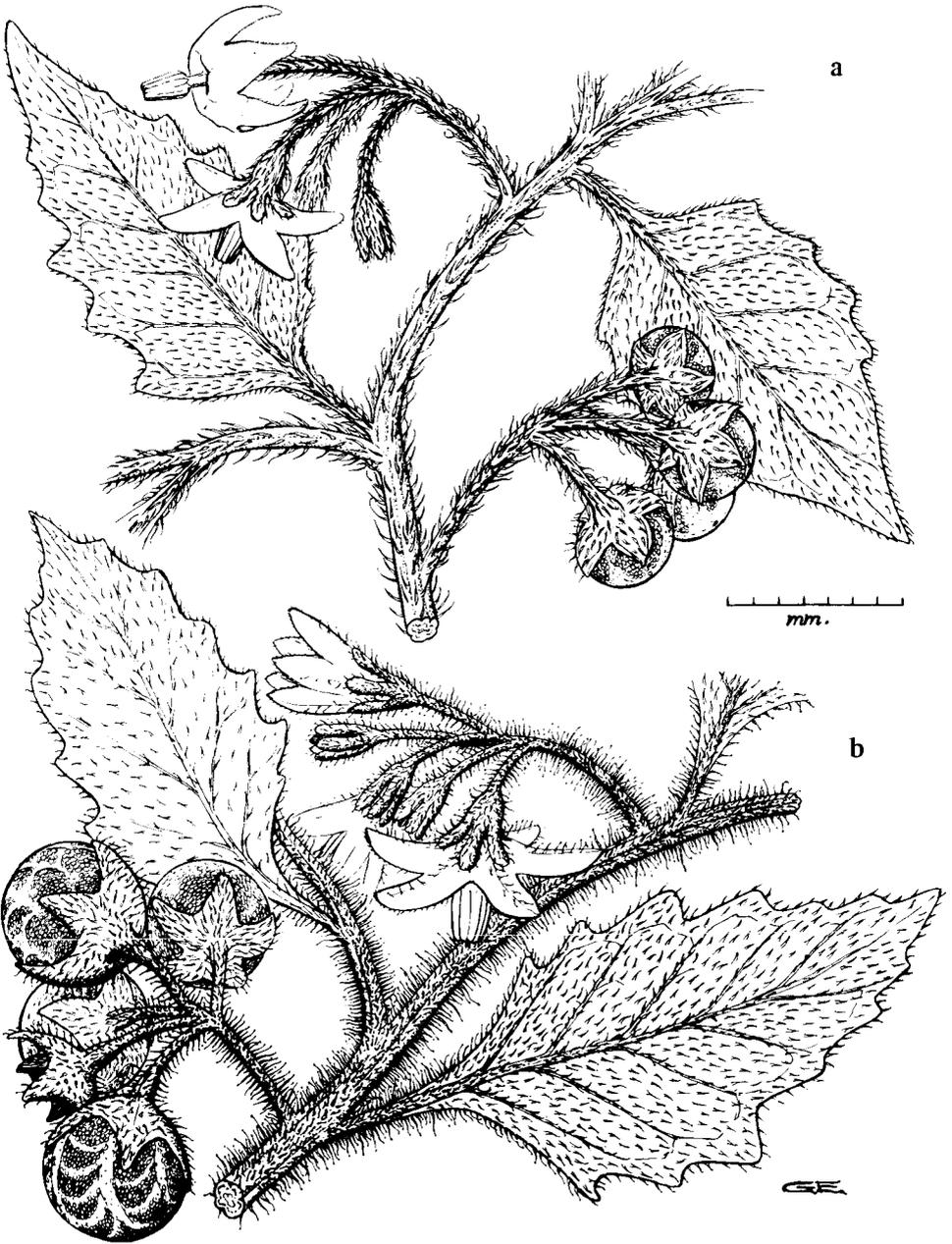
Pteris species are also frequently grown in greenhouses and rarely recorded outside. They are not hardy. *P. cretica* L. was reported on a Bristol University wall in 1980 (Dr M.C. Smith); from a Clifton grating in 1981 (A.J. Byfield) and from Gough's Cave, Cheddar, Som. in 1979 (R.M. Payne). The *Flora of the London Area* lists half a dozen sites: J.B. Latham (1983) reports it "completely naturalised on a damp basement wall, growing with bracken", Kensington Court, London. W8. J.M. Mullin's *P. multifida* Poir. in a Bristol basement (1974) cannot now be found. I know of three records of *P. tremula* R. Br. Two of these appeared in *News* 14:17 and the third, relating to J.M. Mullin's 1981 S. Kensington record, was summarised in *WF Mag.* 394:36. The frosts quickly accounted for each. Artificially warm conditions on the 'hot' colliery tip at Bream, W. Glos. afforded some 18 protection for *P. vittata* L. (*P. longifolia* auct. non L.) but, alas, it has now gone, last seen in 1981 by T.G. Evans. When I visited the site in 1979 the few remaining plants were accompanied by *Osmunda regalis*, another occasional escape. The history of *P. vittata* on the Oxford Botanic Garden conservatory wall is a still longer one; it appears to date from Druce's 1924 record under *P. longifolia* when it had been "there for some years". Lousley (1964) and Jarrett (1967) each reported its continued existence and I imagine that it may well still be there. Both this and *P. longifolia* L. have long been confused; Jarrett (1968) states that the latter was almost certainly the first to be introduced (from the New World tropics) but that *P. vittata* from temperate and tropical regions of the Old World has "almost completely ousted" it as a greenhouse plant.

Young plants of *Dicksonia antarctica* Labill., which is established in the Scillies and on Valentia Island, Co. Kerry, have been seen frequently in and around the Penjerrick estate, nr. Falmouth, Cornwall since 1961. D. McClintock & Mrs B.E.M. Garratt collected it nearby at Glendurgan in 1983: based on a photocopy of the specimen, B.M. Blechnum chilense (Kaulf.) Mett. (a name which JMM tells me may have to give way to *B. caudatum* Desv.) has come to me from two new Cornish localities: Tregeseal Valley, St. Just-in-Penwith, in hedgerow, Miss I.F. Gravestock, 1982, det. & Hb. ALG and abundant on a derelict estate, Lilliw, nr. Truro, comm. K.L. Spurgin. Fertile fronds are rare in Br. *Cyrtomium falcatum* (L.f.) (*Polystichum falcatum*) is probably well known to members holidaying in Guernsey and the Scillies: on the mainland it has long been established (and increasing) in the centre of Cheltenham, Glos. in basements and gratings. A plant survived one winter replete with pot and soil! - a discarded house plant - on a Bristol tip a few years ago.

MORE ON SOLANACEAE IN BRITAIN

Solanum sarrachoides Sendtn.* Established wool-alien in market-garden fields, Flitwick, Beds., C.G. Hanson *et. al.* *Solanum x procurrens* Leslie, its hybrid with *S. nigrum* spp. *nigrum*, is occasionally encountered in these fields as in 1978 and 1983, C.G. Hanson, B.S. Worzell *et. al.* Both are superbly depicted by G.M.S. Easy opposite *Leslie (1976) showed that most British material under this name is referable to *S. nitidibaccatum* Bitter and that *S. sarrachoides* Sendtn. emend. Bitter is much the rarer species. In view of the complex and confused nature of the aggregate in South America, its country of origin. I use the name *S. sarrachoides* in its widest sense.

Solanum capsicoides All. (*S. aculeatissimum* Jacq., *S. ciliatum* Lam.): Single plant in a seed tray, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, Mrs J. Denton, det. at Kew, Hb. ALG. My own attempt at botanical illustration appears on p. 15 *S. capsicoides*, a short-lived perennial to 1 m, is a native of Central America and has been grown, despite its fearsome spines, as an ornamental for its attractive fruits and is widely naturalised in tropical areas. Previous Br records, under *S. ciliatum*, are from a rubbish tip, Dagenham, Essex in 1926 and again in greater quantity in 1927; also from Grays, Essex and Yiewsley, Middx. without date (*BEC* 1927: 312, 1928). *Gorteria* 7(12): 203 (1975) gives a more recent Holland record.



(a) *Solanum x procurrens* Leslie (b) *Solanum sarrachoides* Sendtn.
del. G.M.S. Easy © 1981

Physalis angulata L.: Single plant on a now disused tip, Lezayre, IOM, det. ALG, Hb. **Manx Mus.**, comm. Miss M. Devereau. Much the rarest of the yellow fld. annual *Physalis* species encountered in Br. Using EJC's account of this much-confused group (*News* 21:18.), I have devised the following artificial key which should help future workers:-

1. Perennial
 2. Corolla whitish; plant somewhat pubescent; fruiting calyx orange or orange/red *P. alkekengi*
 2. Corolla yellow with purple markings in throat; plant with dense indumentum; fruiting calyx green *P. peruviana*
1. Annual
 3. Fruiting pedicels 15-30mm; anthers 1.5-2mm *P. angulata*
 3. Fruiting pedicels 8mm; anthers up to 5mm
 4. Corolla 5-10mm, yellow with purple markings in throat; anthers 1.2-8mm, straight at maturity *P. ixocarpa*
 4. Corolla 5-10mm, yellow (occasionally with purple markings in throat); anthers 3-5mm, curved at maturity *P. philadelphica*

BIRD-SEED ALIENS

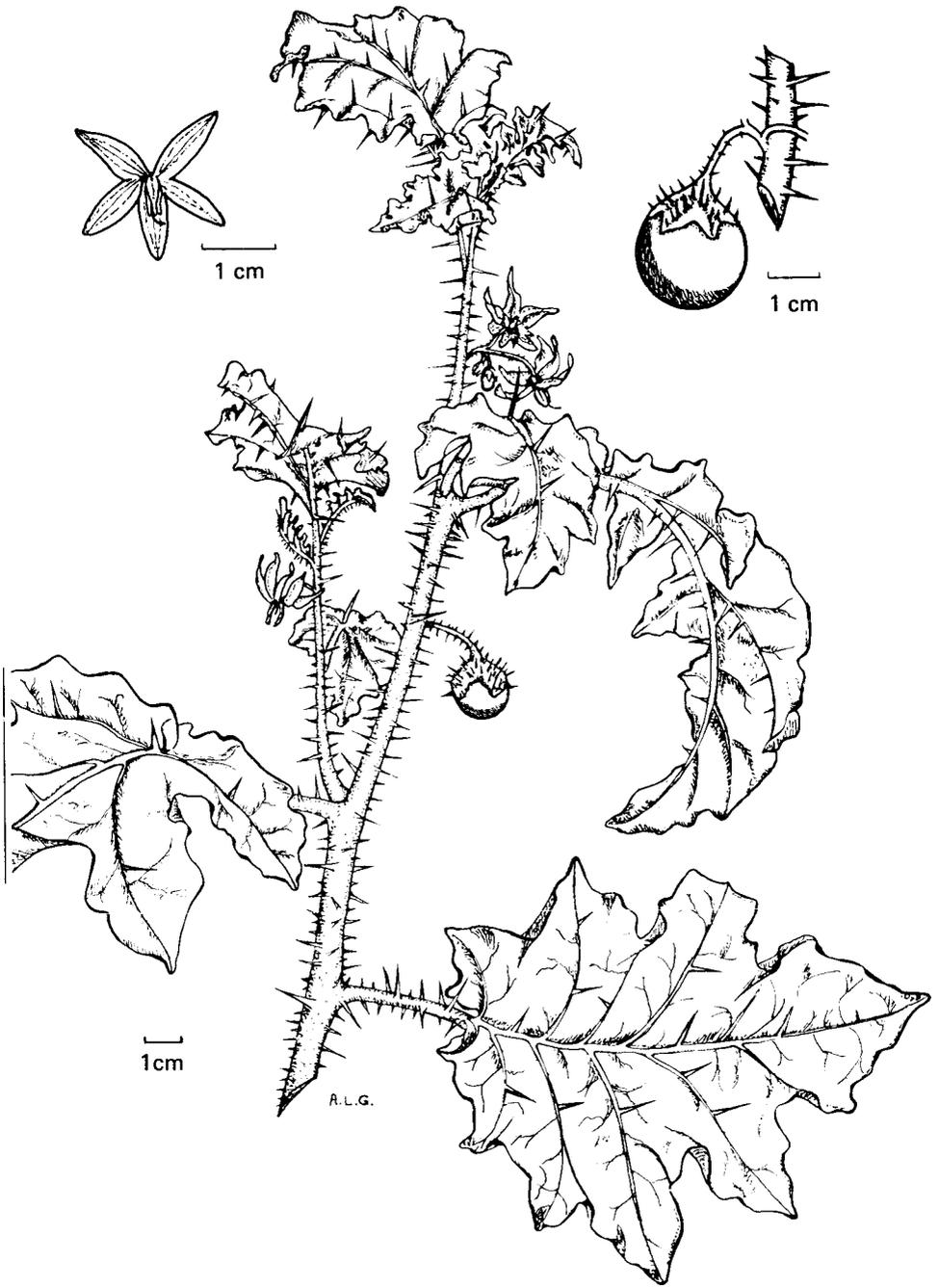
Dr Stephen O'Donnell, who "does not normally make a point of searching for aliens", writes "I was lucky enough to stumble on a fantastic crop of aliens in the centre of Birmingham". He rightly suggests bird-seed fed to pigeons coupled with considerable soil disturbance in the grounds of the Anglican Cathedral as the main factors involved. In addition to *Amaranthus retroflexus*, *Setaria* spp., *Sorghum halepense*, *Digitaria* and *Echinochloa crus-galli* were the much rarer *Chenopodium ambrosioides*, *Anethum graveolens*, *Solanum rostratum* and *Panicum capillare*, the latter in some quantity. Of *Amaranthus albus* Dr O'Donnell writes "The fruit is quite remarkable a kind of egg cup arrangement with the seed as the egg and with a little cosy pulled over it". This colourful description of transverse dehiscence in *Amaranthus* may help beginners and amuse the taxonomist! (See G.M.S. Easay's drawings of *Amaranthus* species in Cambridgeshire in *News* 22: 18-19).

This fine haul, all det. or conf. ALG, was completed by the very rare bird-seed introductions *Sida spinosa* L. and the attractive grey-green paniced grass, *Eragrostis cilianensis*, more usually found as a wool alien. N. American malvaceous *Sida spinosa*, a weed in Africa (whence it probably came), sports small orange flowers apparently opening at night suggesting moth pollination. Its lack of epicalyx segments groups it with *Abutilon*.

Panicum capillare, a rare casual, has been the subject of several records this year, the recorders stressing the huge size of the panicles, up to 50 cm wide, and the profusion of plants. C.G. Hanson reports it thus from Rye Meads Sewage works, Herts. and M.A.R. Kitchen from a Bristol waterfront accompanied by *Amaranthus albus* and *Setaria verticillata*. The hot summer perhaps, a change in the composition of bird seed mixtures, or both? Likewise *Scorpiurus muricatus* with its curious irregularly coiled, \pm spiny legumes. R. Maycock sent it from a Stewkley, Bucks. garden, det. J.G. Dony, conf. ALG; Mrs D.I. Cockerill from a garden at White Ladies Aston, Wores; otherwise it did well in Bedfordshire fields as a wool alien. Sometimes sent to me as *S. subvillosus*; alas, it never is. A field at Eynsford, Kent, partially treated with sewage sludge, yielded *Bupleurum subovatum*, *Centaurea diluta*, a red form of *Atriplex hortensis* and *Neslia paniculata* (L.) Desv. for R.M. Burton. *Neslia* can no longer warrant its place in CTW 2: EJC tells me he has not received a specimen in thirty years. From the same field Dr G.S. Joyce reported spectacular *Ononis baetica*, *Lepidium sativum* and *Vaccaria hispanica*, all comm. and conf. R.M. Burton. *Plantago afra* L. appeared in Mrs P. Hill's Wellington, Som., garden. *Malva nicaeensis*, on disturbed ground, disused farmyard, Newport, IOM, may have arrived from bird-seed but more likely via farmyard manure from cattle feed. (B. Shephard).

Finally I thank members for their specimens and records (many on 5" x 3" slips! - SAE if you require any): hopefully all will eventually be published - some in the *WF Mag.* from dual members. Please make sure you send details to your vice-county recorders. Specimens, preferably dried and representative, to myself or J.M. Mullin, Department of Botany, British Museum (Nat. Hist.), LONDON SW7 5BD, don SW7 5BD.

A.L. GRENFELL, 19 Station Road, Winterbourne Down, BRISTOL BS17 1EP.



Solanum capsicoides All. del. A.L. Grenfell © 1983

SHODDY ALIENS (Part 2)

This is the second short article on plants, found where there has been shoddy. The shingle bank of the River Tweed, where these plants have been recorded for over sixty years is still very overgrown, but there are occasionally small areas of bare ground. There one often sees the Medicks with their spiny fruit. Among these are *Medicago polymorpha* and *M. arabica*, which are well illustrated in most wild flower books. Other medicks often seen are *Medicago minima* var. *longiseta*, *M. laciniata*, *M. praecox* and *M. truncatula*, which was called *M. tribuloides*.

Medicago minima var. *longiseta* differs from the type by being clothed with whiter and softer pubescence and in having longer spined fruit. *Medicago laciniata* extends from North Africa, through the Middle East to Pakistan. It is also an adventive in South Africa. A glabrous prostrate annual, the easiest way to distinguish it, is by the shape of the leaves.

M. praecox and *M. truncatula* are plants of bare ground round the Mediterranean. The former is allied to *M. polymorpha*, but is smaller and less pubescent, the stipules pinnatifid-laciniate, fruit 2-3 coils, and usually 1-2 flowers. The latter's flowers are orangy yellow. The fruits cylindrical, not reticulate, with 4-6 coils, the keeled margin grooved on both sides and armed with conical spines. All these I have seen in the last few years at Galashiels.

MRS O.M. STEWART, 14 Church Hill, EDINBURGH, EH10 4BQ.

RED INDIAN BEAN TREE IN WESTMINSTER

There are a number of fine trees of *Catalpa bignoniodes* Walt. at Westminster (Middx.) in Palace Yard and Parliament Square. A scorched-earth policy is pursued against all unwanted plants in such places; however I noticed a large number of seedlings of this tree growing in the shelter of a narrow roadside gully in the summer of 1983, and a few are being grown on. Presumably this phenomenon is a result of an unusually hot summer, also dependent on seed production in previous years.

R. Palmer.

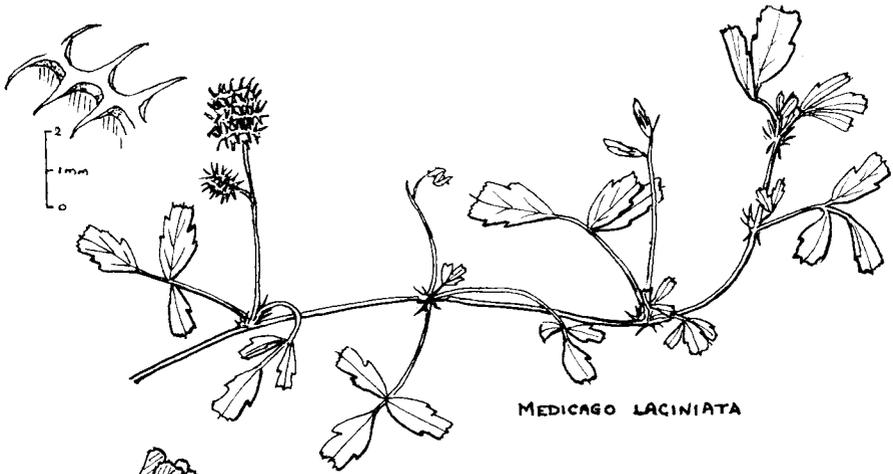
WHITE CURRANTS

This summer, I found wild white currants for the first time ever, in a tree-belt near Alton, Hants. There were berry-bearing red currants in the same tree-belt. Across the other side of a field there was once a big house, which, no doubt, had a fruit-garden. The white berries are not only a different colour, they are quoit-shaped, as opposed to globular and their taste is sweeter. Has anybody else found them in the wild?

Lady ANNE BREWIS, Benhams, Blackmoor, LISS, Hants.

NORTHERN FRANCE

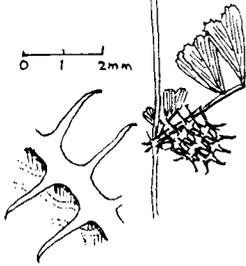
Any member planning to visit Northern France or Belgium who would like to contribute to the recording scheme organised by Institut Floristique Franco-Belge (I.F.F.B.) at the Station D'études en Baie de Somme, Universite de Picardie, please write to: **Prof F. Vignon**, Secrétaire I.F.F.B., Faculte des Sciences, 33 rue Saint-Leu, 80039 AMIENS Cedex.



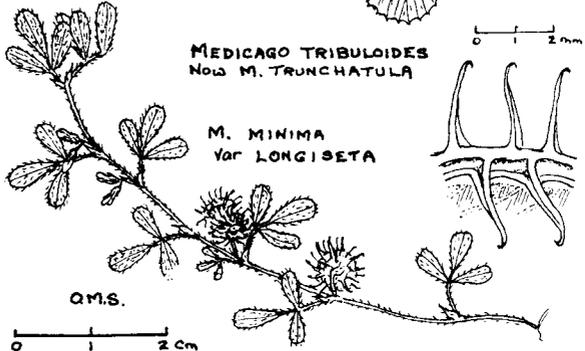
MEDICAGO LACINIATA



MEDICAGO TRIBULOIDES
Now *M. TRUNCHATULA*



MEDICAGO
PRAECOX



M. MINIMA
var. *LONGISETA*

O.M.S.

**BSBI FIELD MEETING, SWITZERLAND,
JUNE 26 – JULY 3, 1984**

Leader: Adrian Grenfell

This meeting will be based at Lauterbrunnen approximately 12 miles south of Interlaken in the heart of the Bernese Oberland. At this time many alpine and sub-alpine species will be at their best and members will have the opportunity to see several British rarities without stepping on Lynne Farrell's toes!

The party, which will be limited to 15/16 in number, will fly from London (Heathrow) to Zurich for transfer to Lauterbrunnen and will use shared accommodation in pine-wood chalets at the Camping Jungfrau site (self-catering). Hotel accommodation can be arranged if required. Five all-day excursions will include botanising on the summit of Schilthorn (9,400 ft) and in the Eigergletscher/Biglenalp area and will be strenuous, perhaps suited to younger members. One free day will be set aside for an (optional) excursion to the Jungfrauoch. Cost, excluding food, is not expected to exceed £150.

Full details/booking forms will be available in late December; members interested should write to:-

A.L. Grenfell, 19 Station Road, Winterbourne Down, **Bristol**, BS17 1EP.
(Telephone: Winterbourne (0454) 774448).

BSBI REGIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Some members may be unaware that our colleagues in Scotland, Wales and Ireland produce their own periodicals which are distributed to those resident in the regions concerned.

So that **all** members can obtain copies, the following arrangements have been made.

Scottish Newsletter – published annually in April.

To be included on the mailing list, open on account, by sending £1 to: PETER MACPHERSON, 15 Lubnaig Road, GLASGOW G43 2RY.

Welsh Bulletin – Two issues per year.

To obtain, send 50p plus two 8½" x 6" s.a.e. to:
R.G. ELLIS, Botany Dep't, National Museum of Wales, CARDIFF CF1 3NP.

Irish Naturalists' Journal

Subscription price IR £10.00 (= £9.00 sterling) p.a. Individual issue £2.50

Send to: PAUL HACKNEY, Dep't of Botany & Zoology, Ulster Museum BELFAST BT9 5AB.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE

The Meetings Committee wishes to announce that a residential weekend conference entitled '*Archaeology and the Flora of the British Isles*' is to be held at St. Anne's College Oxford 21-23 September 1984.

The all-inclusive price for the weekend and conference dinner will be in the region of £55.00. The conference is being organised jointly with the Association for Environmental Archaeology. The contributors will include Judith Turner, Ian Simmons, Martin Jones, Peter Moore, Alan Hall and Peter Reynolds and the subject matter arranged by habitat. There will be a field excursion.

Application forms will be distributed with a spring BSBI mailing

Other (non-BSBI) Notices

XIV International BOTANICAL CONGRESS 24th July – 1st August 1987 Berlin (West), Germany

Programme Divisions

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Metabolic Botany | 4. Structural Botany |
| 2. Developmental Botany | 5. Systematic and Evolutionary Botany |
| 3. Genetics and Plant Breeding | 6. Environmental Botany |

There will be general lectures, symposia (to include lectures and a selection of contributed papers) and poster sessions.

The **Nomenclature Section** will convene in Berlin 20th – 24th July 1987.

Field Trips

Pre- and post-congress scientific field trips will be arranged to various parts of central, south and north Europe.

The first Circular

is available on request and includes further details of the Congress and a preliminary reply form to be returned if you wish to receive further information and documents.

Enquiries should be sent to the Congress Secretariat:

Prof. Dr Werner Greuter,

XIV International Botanical Congress,

Konigin-Luise-Strasse 6-8,

D-1000 Berlin (West) 33.

STRUCTURE AND EVOLUTION OF THE BRITISH FLORA

A short course – 11 lectures – will be held at Birbeck College, from January 1984. On Wednesday evenings at 6.30 pm, the topics covered will include the history and development of the British flora, present day vegetation types and evolution in the British flora. The course is aimed at the interested amateur but the experience of participants will be readily accepted. Enquiries should be sent to:

MARTIN INGROUILLE, Botany Department, Birbeck College, Malet Street,
LONDON WC1 7HX.

FIELD STUDIES

Rachel Hamilton, our representative on the Field Studies Council sends a synopsis of the courses organised for 1984 at the 9 centres; indicated as follows: **P.M.** = Preston Mountford, near Shrewsbury, **DF** = Dale Fort, near Haverford west, **J.H.** = Juniper Hall near Dorking, **S.L.** = Slapton Ley, S. Devon, **M.T.** = Malham Tarn, Settle, **F.M.** = Flatford Mill, near Colchester, **L.W.** = Leonard Wills, near Taunton, **O.** = Orielton, Pembroke, and **DR** = Drapers, near Bettws-y-Coed.

Once again in 1984 the Field Studies Council is providing an enormous variety of courses (from 2 days to a week) in all sorts of botanical topics, and at all levels of difficulty (physical and academic). Here is a selection to whet the appetite.

If it is a holiday with plants you are looking for, many of the centres run courses exploiting their area, and looking at flowers of the season: *Flowers of the Pembrokeshire Coast* (May), *Flowers of Pembrokeshire* (June) both at DF, *Plants of S. Devon and Dartmoor* (August, S.L.) *Flowers of the Limestone* (June, D), *Wild Flowers in Spring* (June, F.M.), *Spring Flowers and Things* (May, L.W.), *Flowers in Late Summer* (August, M.T.) *Fruits in Season* (October, L.W.).

There are ideal opportunities to develop a new, serious interest: *Medicinal Plants* (L.W. or F.M.) or *Herbs and Herbalism* at the same two centres, *Sedges and Rushes* (F.M. or J.H., both in June), *Lichens* (J.H., a weekend in June, M.T., 5 days in Sept, or O., a week in August). Most of the centres run a Fungus course, in Sept or Oct, for a weekend or longer and assuming a varying amount of experience and gastronomic curiosity!

For people wanting to consolidate their understanding of a particular, perhaps difficult, group, or to look into different approaches, there are some courses which build on previous knowledge: *Ferns* (S.L., DR or P.M., all in August) *Docks and Knotweeds* (Preston, Montford, August) *Grasses, Sedges and Rushes* (P.M., June M.T. July) and *Getting to Grips with Grasses* (DF, August), *Orchids* (J.H., May and June) *The Identification of Plants without using their flowers* (L.W., October) and *Winter Botany*, at the same centre in February, *The Potential of Plants* (F.M., September).

Full details of these and masses more courses including an exciting selection of foreign trips can be obtained from the F.S.C. Information Office, Preston Montford, Shrewsbury SY4 1HW.

CHARACEAE ATLAS

Have you got your copy of the *Characeae Atlas* which was published in April 1983? This is an Atlas with a difference as, apart from the distribution maps, it also contains a complete catalogue of the charophyte specimens of the B.M. Herbarium. I would be pleased to receive any comments on the maps or catalogue data from members who have had time to digest their copies. There are many "blank squares" of the British Isles where charophytes have not been recorded, thus providing scope for members in those areas to gain a "first" by searching out these elusive plants. The *Provisional Atlas of the Characeae of the British Isles*, including a catalogue of specimens held in the Herbarium of the British Museum (Natural History) by J.A. Moore and D.M. Greene is available from I.T.E., 68 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 1LA and costs £6.35. Characeae specimens for identification should be sent to Mrs Jenny Moore at the Botany Department of the B.M. A plant is best sent damp (not wet) in a polythene bag and strong envelope marked "Live Plant Material - Open at once".

Requests

Flora of the Lizard

Work is currently being undertaken by the University of Bristol Lizard Project to compile a Flora of the Lizard Peninsula (West Cornwall, v.c. 1). It is hoped that the flora will cover all vascular plants and charophytes, for which the area is famous, and it is intended to incorporate both historical and recent records.

Recent recording has been based on the one-km squares of the National Grid, but for more unusual species it is hoped to include more precise details of their occurrence at the Lizard.

Records would be welcomed from Members, ideally accompanied by the following details: locality, grid reference, date, recorder and notes on the plant's frequency and ecology at the site.

Please send records, or write for further information to:

A.J. BYFIELD, Dept of Botany, The University, Woodland Rd, BRISTOL BS8 7UG.
BS8 7UG.

TETRAGONOLOBUS MARITIMUS

I am about to embark on a study of the population biology of this species at a disused quarry site in Oxfordshire. Can anyone help me with information on the history of the species' introduction into Britain, details of associated species at other sites, or with any aspects of its ecology?

Although this is a personal project, I should be grateful if replies could be sent to the address below.

DR ROGER COUSENS, Weed Research Organisation, Yarnton, OXFORD
OX5 1PF.

ANTHOCYANIN FRINGE SURVEY

I am at present engaged in a study of the anthocyanin fringe polymorphism in *Arum maculatum* L. (see *News* 33, p. 20). As far as I know, this polymorphism has never been the subject of a country-wide investigation. I would therefore, be most grateful if BSBI members could provide me with the following information – whether the leaf margin is edged with purplish to black coloration or not, and if it is, whether the leaves are spotted or not, in local populations of *A. maculatum* L., the frequency of occurrence of this fringe polymorphism (if time permits), locality, habitat description, appropriate vice-county and six-figure grid reference. Postage will be refunded if requested.

PHILIP HARMES, 21 Newthorne Place, BUCKLEY, Deeside, Clwyd CH7 2EY.

Motorway History Film

A film on the natural history of motorways to be shown on television, is currently being researched by Uden Associates Ltd. NCC has recommended that our members could possibly help with this project. The researcher writes:-

“What we would particularly like to find is a botanist who has surveyed an area where a new motorway will shortly be built, and who is trying to save an area of botanical interest by getting the motorway rerouted. We know, for example, of some exceptional oxslip sites and an ancient alder swamp which were threatened by the M11 some years ago; but unfortunately these were ultimately destroyed, and there is nothing left to film”.

Information on spectacular displays or appearance of interesting species along motorways would be welcome, and if any member would like to help please contact:

BARBIE CAMPBELL COLE, Uden Associates Ltd., Chelsea Wharf, Lots Road, Chelsea, LONDON SW10 0QS.

LOTUS SUBBIFLORUS AND *L. ANGUSTISSIMUS* IN S.W. ENGLAND

On 7th August, 1975, a fire on cliffs at Rickham Common, S. Devon, (v.c. 3,) burnt an extensive area of coastal scrub dominated by *Ulex europaeus*. Initially, the bare ground was colonised by a wide range of (mainly annual) species, including several normally associated with maritime grasslands rather than scrub, e.g. *Sedum anglicum* (the dominant species until 1979), *Spergularia rupicola*, *Plantago coronopus*, *Erodium maritimum* and *Jasione montana*. Within three years a patchy grassland had developed, dominated by *Holcus lanatus*, but over large areas this has now been replaced by a dense scrub of *Ulex europaeus* and *Rubus fruticosus*.

Of all the early colonisers the two of greatest interest were *Lotus subbiflorus* (first recorded 1976) and *L. angustissimus* (1978). Until 1981 both species spread rapidly (at least 30 patches of *L. angustissimus* and 'hundreds' of *L. subbiflorus* in 1980), although they have since undergone a sharp decline with many sites becoming completely overgrown by rank *Holcus lanatus*, or by bushes of *Ulex* or *Rubus*. It appears that *L. angustissimus* is now extinct on the site while *L. subbiflorus* persists only along the edge of the clifftop path, which is kept clear of encroaching *Ulex* by National Trust staff.

How these *Lotus* species arrived on the site is a complete mystery; before the fire, in 1973, a search along the South Hams cliffs (from Bolt Tail to Start Point) turned up no plants of *L. angustissimus*, and only three colonies of *L. subbiflorus* (nearest to burnt area c 1 km E.S.E.). Perhaps the most likely explanation is that initial colonisation was from buried seed, and it is tempting to suggest that the two *Lotus* species – and also some of the maritime annuals – can only survive on these relatively sheltered sea-cliffs if ground is (at least intermittently) kept open by some form of disturbance; in this case fire, but landslips, grazing, trampling or footpath maintenance could do just as well.

L. angustissimus is becoming increasingly rare in Britain, with almost two-thirds of its 10 km square records being pre-1930 only (*Atlas of the British Flora* 1962). In many areas the traditional practice of controlling clifftop scrub by burning has long since been abandoned, and this – coupled with myxomatosis – may have allowed scrub vegetation to replace the paramaritime grasslands which *L. angustissimus* appears to favour. This is certainly the case on Rickham Common where, according to local villagers, the cliffs at one time had open grassland where now there is only impenetrable *Ulex* scrub.

I would be pleased to hear from anyone who has habitat records for these *Lotus* species in S.W. England, and would especially welcome any information on sites where one or other used to occur but is now known to be extinct. I am hoping to visit a number of *L. angustissimus* sites in 1984 and would be interested to hear of any extant records known to members. Postage will of course be refunded.

S.J. LEACH, Nature Conservancy Council, Rathcluan House, Carslogie Road, CUPAR, Fife, KY15 4JA.

Damaged SSSIs

Members are reminded that any evidence of damage or deterioration to an SSSI should be reported to the Secretary of the BSBI Conservation Committee. (See recommended procedure for BSBI members *BSBI News* 31, p. 10).

The present Secretary of the Conservation Committee is Miss LYNNE FARRELL, NCC, P.O. Box 6, HUNTINGDON PE 18 6BU.

MORE POLYGONACEAE NOTES

The previous article was written almost a year ago, since when more info. has come in, as detailed below.

Polygonum capitatum: Several patches on pavement, near Chelsea Embankment (Mddx), Oct 1982. J.R. Palmer. conf. EJC. No gardens closeby, and no obvious origin: it could persist in this near frost-free spot.

P. nepalense: This species is fully described and illustrated in *Giornale Botanico Italiano* 107(6):291-294 (1973). Dr E. Pignatti Wikus therein gives full synonymy: this is the first instance of naturalisation in the Alps (at Belluno, N. Italy), where, most curiously, it occurs with the N. American alien *Collomia linearis*. *Fl. d'Italia*, 1982, gives a further locality, from Caprile.

P. senegalense: The *BSBI Handbook* (p. 66) gives this as only a wool-alien species, from vc's 37 and 63, and implicitly rejects all others. This species has indeed been over-recorded; the Mddx record is wrong (delete my own "claim" given in *Watsonia* 8(2):187 (1970)), and the Norfolk occurrence is also most dubious. Confusion has been caused by huge, introduced forms (often non-flowering) of *P. lapathifolium* originating in tropical climes (mostly Africa?) totally unlike the normal British varieties. Witness the huge synonymy of this offender!

The *Handbook* (p. 170) details those alien *Rumex* species which one might expect to find in Br, but for which no records exist. The equivalent page on *Polygonum* was edited out (in error?). D.H. Kent very kindly supplied me (31/12/82) with copious notes on this subject, which I feel will interest other members; they are appended, with his permission, below.

"The additional *Polygonum* species adventive in N. & W. Europe are *P. erectum* L., *P. anchoreum* S.F. Blake. *P. argyrocoleum* Steud. ex Kunze and *P. divaricum* L. all as Swedish casuals – mostly about docks, etc. in the past, and *P. cilinode* more or less naturalized in Holland for varying periods of time. The Dutch casuals are *P. camporum* Meisn., *P. leptocarpum* Robinson, *P. salicifolium* Brouss. ex Willd. and *P. schindleri* Danser, mostly old records from Dock areas. Strangely there do not appear to be any records from France – but the French are mostly ... (expunged) ... with aliens – e.g. Ted Lousley had to cross the Channel to find *Viola nana* and *Senecio squalidus* in quantity in the Pas de Calais. I have seen your review of *Docks and Knotweeds* in *Lond. Nat.* 61:29 (1982), but as to the interchanging of plates 11 & 12 – I do not know. The drawings were prepared in JEL's time, and were made from specimens in his Herb., the former from vc 63, 23 Set 1965, the latter a sp. dated 30 Sept 1967. A check at Reading (University) might provide the answer.

"There is a further taxon omitted from *Docks and Knotweeds*, viz. *Polygonum persicaria* L. subsp. *hirticaule* Danser, in *Bull. Jard. Bot. Buitenzorg*, ser. 3, 8:184 (1927). Selby, vc. 61, 1933, W.A. Sledge, det. Danser, 'probably from S.-E. Asia.' *Rep. Botl. Soc. & E.C. Brit. Isles* 10(3):481 (1934). I looked up the description at Kew last Thursday – viz.

P. persicaria ssp. nova *hirticaule*. Caulis erectus, praecipue apicem versus ramosus. Internodia pilis longis undulatis patentibus hirsuta. Folia sub medio (circiter in tertia parte longitudinis) latissima, apice acuminata.

Haec subspecies habitu formaque foliorum *P. lanathifolio* similis est fructibus ocreisque tamen perfecte cum *P. persicaria* congruit. China. Japan. Java.

No further British records appear to exist".

E.J. CLEMENT, 13 Shelford, Burritt Road, KINGSTON-ON-THAMES, Surrey, KT1 3HR.

THE VICE-COUNTY CONTROVERSY

VICE-COUNTIES VERSUS GRID SQUARES: A K.O.?!

In view of the often emotive responses in *B.S.B.I. News* 34 to my deliberately provocative contribution in the previous issue, I feel that I should expand my arguments in order to answer some of the points raised by Messrs. James & Sawford, Allen, Kent, Brightman and Howitt. Firstly, the collective heading for the articles, "Vice-counties versus grid squares", is an over-simplification. We actually have three options as basic recording units; grid squares, vice-counties, and the present administrative counties. James & Sawford and Kent use 'vice-county' and 'county' indiscriminately as though they are synonyms, while Allen attempts to resolve them by stating that "... vice-counties, singly or in pairs or in clusters, echo the counties sufficiently closely on the whole. . . .". In fact, most if not all vice-county boundaries differ from those of their present administrative counterparts; some differ in trivial but irritating details, others are unrecognisable.

Sawford & James, Allen and Brightman argue that the localities of many early records and herbarium specimens can only be attributed to vice-counties. However, most possess sufficient source information to be assigned to at least a modern county if not a centrad. Kent writes "And what of county pride, without which county floras would remain unwritten?", and Allen states that "People identify with a county". The operative word is *county*, not vice-county. Kent also asserts that "A vice-county number often conjures up a mental picture of the area", but I suspect that the percentage of B.S.B.I. members possessing this ability is dwindling. Botanists have particular affinity with their local *area*, an abstract concept free of any type of precise geographical boundary. Furthermore, of the six excellent modern floras/plant atlases covering southeast England (Hertfordshire, Essex, Surrey, Bedfordshire, Sussex and Kent), four have distribution maps wherein administrative counties are the sole or more boldly-marked boundaries, and vice-counties have been amalgamated as necessary to obtain the best fit to the present counties. Even more encouraging are books resembling county floras but describing regions of true geographical integrity, such as Burton's recent London Flora and Trist's detailed account of the Brecklands. Evidently, vice-counties have already been largely superseded as templates for local recording by grid systems that are usually confined by physiographic or administrative county boundaries.

However, my criticisms were levelled primarily at the continued use of vice-counties by the B.S.B.I. as basic units for *national* recording. The vast disparity between vice-county recorders in the number of records submitted to *Watsonia*, explained convincingly and sympathetically (perhaps too sympathetically in view of the reasons given) by Allen and Kent, shows that the present system is no longer viable. Centrads have the advantage of clearly defined linear boundaries and constant areas. They are used with apparent ease by Welsh botanists (cf. *Nature in Wales* N.S. no. 1), the British Pteridological Society (Busby, *B.S.B.I. News* 34, p. 19), and a myriad of other societies; I cannot believe that many B.S.B.I. members share Howitt's opinion that "... all interest in the local flora" is dependent on whether a particular plant is in 'Wilts' or 'Lincs' (or even SU14 or TF28). What matters most to me is that it should persist.

RICHARD BATEMAN, 3 Jersey Lane, ST. ALBANS, Herts AL4 9AD (TL10).

WHAT CAN REPLACE THE OUTMODED VICE-COUNTIES?

The five letters in defence of Watsonian vice-counties in the last issue of *B.S.B.I. News* finally persuaded me that that system does indeed need to be replaced. I can find the following arguments advanced in favour of continuing to use it:

1. Historical records which are the prime source of information about the past character and ownership of botanically important sites largely relate to counties.
2. Amateurs being encouraged to collect records for a survey need the stimulus of knowing they are working part of an easily identified geographical area, typically a county.
3. The sequence of v.c. numbers has been used to provide a sequence for the specimens of each species represented in the British Herbarium at **BM**.
4. Most past records are arranged by vice-counties, so vice-counties must still be used if future records are to appear to continue them.

The last point was stressed particularly in relation to the systematic lists of plant records in each issue of *Watsonia*. It was the revelations about the uneven coverage of these lists in Mr Kent's letter which struck me as especially revealing of the inadequacies of the present arrangements. One inference which seems quite reasonable to me is that if we had fewer appointed recorders the difficulties of getting them all to submit records to *Watsonia* would be reduced.

The annual 'Plant Records' column is the item in *Watsonia* which interests me most. I only expect to find in it records of *national* interest, the present definition of which goes back I think to vol. 13 page 131 (1980). It is a great disappointment to read that many such records which have been made are still not published there. The local journals and floras indicated in Mr Kent's letter are mostly not readily accessible to the members of the B.S.B.I. at large to whom 'Plant Records' is presumably addressed and should be thought of as invaluable storehouses of data concerning records of *local* interest. (Incidentally, a catalogue of current British serials containing local plant records would be useful in *B.S.B.I. News* and I do not think anything like it has ever been produced. Mr Kent is well aware of a journal covering his own v.c. 21, so why was this county excluded from his list?).

It does not seem to me that items 1 and 2 above are arguments in favour of the old vice-counties at all. Is it not the case that historical records of the sort which Mr James and Mr Sawford have in mind are mostly kept in County Archives? Surely these have been rearranged among the modern counties.

The relationship between 1852 boundaries and modern amateurs is not well supported by relevant recent publications in Mrs Perring's latest stock list. The newest local flora there is my own *Flora of the London Area* which lists the names of about 140 contributors and deals with an area bounded entirely by grid lines, including all of v.c. 21 (Middlesex) and bits of 6 other vice-counties. Last year there was the *Atlas of the Kent Flora* which leaves out a large chunk of v.c. 16 (W. Kent), covering instead the modern administrative county, I suppose like the *Flowering Plants and Ferns of Cumbria*. Trist's *Ecological Flora of Breckland* deals with a well-defined area whose boundaries have nothing to do with the counties of any period; and so on.

No, if it is true that people like to “identify with” a county, surely it is important that they will want to relate their fieldwork to the counties as they are now, not as they were over a century ago. In Mr Allen’s Isle of Man and some other parts of the country nothing much may have changed in 130 years, but elsewhere there are new counties with administrations eager to foster a spirit of allegiance. Some of them also have a County Museum with a natural history department which can be a focus of local biological recording.

I therefore propose that the B.S.B.I. should abandon Watson’s boundaries and adopt instead the present-day counties which can be easily traced on modern maps. It does not seem to me to matter much that they vary greatly in area. If someone will produce for me an overlay showing the new boundaries, I will use it in conjunction with my own supplies of O.S. maps and my heavily annotated copy of *Atlas of the British Flora* and its *Critical Supplement*, supported by the splendid collection of local floras at the Institute from which Mr Brightman writes, to prepare a new *Comital Flora of Great Britain* (I am sorry I cannot cope with Ireland too), an important feature of which will be a concordance relating the old and new systems. This would serve as a new base-line for published plant records of national interest.

One advantage of this proposal that appeals to me is that the B.S.B.I. would not need so many county recorders. I look forward to a situation at an early date when there are no county recorders incapable of producing a correct grid reference or unwilling to allow county novelties to be published.

RODNEY BURTON, Sparepenny Cottage, Sparepenny Lane, Eynsford, DARTFORD, Kent, DA4 0JJ.

ANY VIRTUE IN VICE-COUNTIES?

Despite the emotive, unanimous opposition (*BSBI News*, 34, pp 35-38) to Richard Bateman’s suggestion that vice-counties are outmoded (*loc. cit.*, 33, p 8), and at the risk of incurring similar admonishment, I feel that another voice should be raised on behalf of those members who crave a more rational policy of recording for the Society.

Support for vice-counties is centred upon two arguments: (a) that they stimulate local recording by giving botanists a sense of identity, and (b) that they provide essential continuity as national recording units. Although these are worthy objectives, I believe that vice-counties have been supplanted in both respects.

Firstly, we should not equate vice-counties with administrative counties, which would continue to be a focus of recording effort long after the demise of the former. The adherence of most modern floras to prevailing administrative boundaries demonstrates a preference to adapt to boundary changes when these occur. This being so, the retention of vice-counties can only add confusion to the already onerous task of compiling such Floras, a point that is often stressed in their introductions.

As the basic national recording unit, the vice-county has been completely superseded. Only centrad, tetrad or even smaller grid squares provide the resolution necessary to interpret and monitor plant distributions. Works such as *Atlas of the British Flora* and J.G. Dony’s *Flora of Hertfordshire* heralded this era in botanical

recording, which, in Dony's words, "sounded the death knell of the Watsonian system which had restricted progress for half a century". Hence vice-counties have been outmoded and unnecessary for nearly two decades, and an objective reappraisal of their worth is long overdue. Given the choice, I suspect that the majority of BSBI members, v.c. recorders included, would prefer to see them go.
IAN DENHOLM, 6 Glemsford Drive, HARPENDEN, Herts AL5 5RH.

Let The Recorders Decide

The continued use of the vice-county system raises many problems which would not be solved by R.M. Bateman's helpful suggestion in *BSBI News* 31. Your correspondents in the following issue show very clearly that it conflicts with the love of one's county felt so keenly by most of us. This latter has resulted in a succession of county floras of which we have every reason to be proud. We had, however, good county floras before we had the vice-county system and will continue to have them if we abandon the system as the county is in most cases the most sensible basis for their compilation, having an appeal to local patriotism that is sufficient to ensure a financial return. They need not – as is to be seen in the three most recent floras, of Kent, Suffolk and the London area – have any relationship whatsoever with the vice-county system. Given time we shall see a flora of the new county of Avon.

One of the main reasons for retaining the vice-county system so long has been the hope that it would result in a reliable Comital Flora, comparable with the superb *Topographical Botany* of 1883, showing the broad distribution of British plants. The prospect of this becomes more remote since the publication of *the Atlas* in 1962, leaving little doubt that our efforts could now be more usefully employed in working on a revision of this.

Otherwise what is the usefulness of our local recording? It is surely now to enable us to know with certainty the plants within the units of our recording, whatever they may be, that are of greater importance than others that may be present. The evidence we have will justify the action we may take to protect our rare species. The county with which I have been most concerned and love greatly, consists of parts of six vice-counties; and the vice-county of nearly the same name, for which I can feel no affection, is spread over five administrative counties. Given a threat to a site or a species my course of action is clear; it is to go to the offices of the county in which the site is, for it would be useless to go to those of the county it would have been in in 1852. If this fails, as it rarely does, I have to appeal to the appropriate region of the NCC, the regions of which are groups of administrative – not *vice*-counties. For nearly 40 years I was the reluctant recorder for a vice-county, and for 30 years for another, when all the time I would have been the willing recorder for two administrative counties. The vice-county system suits excellently the needs of the Isle of Man – the lack of any system at all might serve it just as well! David Allen has needed to look in only one folder for the Manx specimens in herbaria while I have needed to search six to make sure I have found all relative to either a county or vice-county.

We would do well to consider the abandoning of the vice-county system, allowing our recorders to choose their own areas of recording – a vice-county if they wish. There would be a risk that some small areas would be covered twice, with others not at all, but it could be more effective than the system we have now, as well as saving us the expense of printing incomplete 'Plant Records'.

J.G. DONY, 9 Stanton Road, LUTON, Beds LU4 0BH.

ADMONISHMENT

I have been reading the correspondence about vice-county recording with a raised eyebrow. As a bryologist with only a slight interest in the recording of vascular plants, I am struck by a major difference between vice-county recording of the two groups. This is simply that bryologists have seen fit to produce revised enumerations of vice-county occurrence every 20 years or so. Thus the system is seen to be alive and well and still maintained. You vascular plant folk have attempted nothing so ambitious since Druce's *Comital Flora*. No wonder the system seems to be archaic. Shame on you!

M.O. HILL, I.T.E., Penrhos Road, BANGOR, Gwynedd LL57 2LQ.

MORNING GLORIES (*IPOMOEA* SPP)

Illustrated are two species of *Ipomoea* (*Convolvulaceae*) grown from soya bean waste. Both were recorded back in 1945-47 in the vicinity of Soya Foods Ltd, Springwell (Mddx), and, again, as oil-milling adventives (largely soya bean) in north-west Kent 1973-6 (*Trans. Kent field Club* **6**(2):85-90 (1977)). The larger plant is *I. purpurea* Roth, with bright violet-blue flowers almost white towards the base; the smaller one is *I. lacunosa* L., with much shorter, all-white corollas. Both are annuals from N. America, and fail to persist in Britain.

G.M.S. EASY, 11 Landbeach Road, Milton, CAMBRIDGE CB4 4DA.

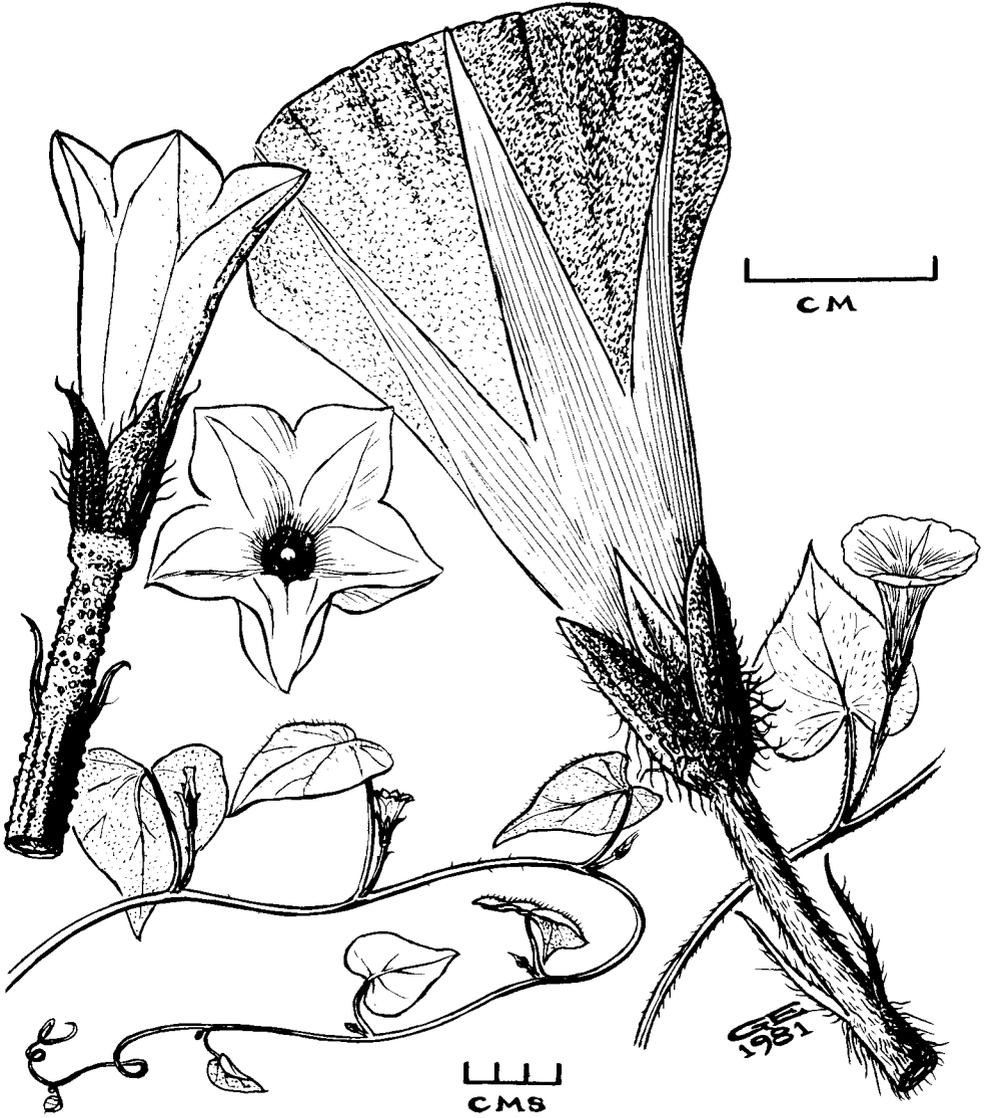
BOOKS WANTED

I am involved in grassland conservation and am anxious to acquire:
"Scientific Management of Plant and Animal Communities for Conservation"
edited E. Duffy and A.S. Watt.

"Grassland Ecology and Wildlife Management", Duffy et al. (Clapham and Hall 1974).

J.A. NEWBOULD, 1 Holywell Place, Wharnccliffe Hill, ROTHERHAM, S65 1HH.

MORNING GLORIES



I. lacunosa

I. purpurea

del G.M.S. Easy © 1981

Additional Notices

PERMANENT WORKING COMMITTEES FOR 1983 – 1984

CO-ORDINATING	J.F.M. Cannon (<i>Hon. Sec.</i>) A.O. Chater, Miss L. Farrell, Miss J. Martin, D.J. McCosh.
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The President, Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Gen. Sec. are *ex officio* members of all the above committees.

ADVANCE NOTICE BSBI Committee for Scotland SCOTTISH RECORDERS' CONFERENCE 1984

A Recorders' Conference combined with Field Meetings will be held at the Fir-bush Point Field Centre, Loch Tay on June 16-17, 1984. Though preference will be given to Scottish Recorders, places may be available to other members. Cost will be about £12 per day. For further details and bookings, apply to:
Dr P.MACPHERSON, Hon. Sec., 15 Lubraig Road, GLASGOW G43 2RY.

CORRIGENDUM

Graham Easy has asked me to point out two serious errors which regrettably crept into his *Verbascum* hybrid captions in *News* 33; it seems that a wrong caption was corrected but then wrongly placed.

For *bombyciferum* × *pyramidatum* (p 20) insert *bombyciferum* × *thapsus* and for *pyramidatum* × *thapsus* (p 21) insert *pyramidatum* × *bombyciferum*.

Adrian Grenfell

STOP PRESS

THE TASCO POCKET MICROSCOPE

There was a strong response to the announcement in *BSBI News* 34 p. 19, enquiring as to the availability of this instrument. Thanks to the collaboration between Margaret Perring and the Supplier we can now announce a **SPECIAL OFFER** to BSBI members of **£5 including post and packing**, for a limited period.

Orders, quoting your BSBI Membership No., and enclosing payment, should be sent to:
BSBI Publications, Oundle Lodge, Oundle, PETERBOROUGH PE8 5TN.



BOOKS FROM OUNDLE LODGE

Since the production of the new list (Autumn 1983), *The Rochdale Flora* and the *Churchyard* booklet are out of print, and the undermentioned price increases have been announced:

THE POLLINATION OF FLOWERS BY INSECTS	14.50 + £9.00
THE SHAPING OF CAMBRIDGE BOTANY	18.25 + £3.00
THE FLORA OF THE CLYDE AREA	18.25 + 50p
FLORA OF THE BRITISH ISLES (2nd Edition)	36.00 + £4.00
EXCURSION FLORA OF THE BRITISH ISLES	12.50 + £1.00
GUIDE TO THE IDENTIFICATION OF SOME OF THE MORE DIFFICULT VASCULAR PLANT SPECIES	4.25 + 25p
BRITISH MOSSES AND LIVERWORTS (3rd Edn)	13.50 + £2.00
THE MOSS FLORA OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND	14.50 + £1.00
WILLIS'S DICTIONARY OF FLOWERING PLANTS AND FERNS	45.00 + £2.50
THE IDENTIFICATION OF FLOWERING PLANT FAMILIES	3.50 + £1.00
AN INTRODUCTION TO PLANT TAXONOMY (2nd Edn)	6.50 + £1.00
WOODLAND CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT	25.00 + £4.50
PAXOS - WALKING AND WILD FLOWERS	2.50 + £1.00

We can also supply

Stella Ross Craig's Drawings of British Plants £120.00

Conf. Report 12 Taxonomy, Phytogeography & Evolution Valentine 1972 £32.00

Hybridisation and the Flora of the British Isles Stace 1975 £47.00

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